

A Quote from Hobbes' "Leviathan"

Post by "Cassius" of August 13, 2019 at 7:29 AM

AR:

Epicurus would agree that being alive means the triggering of desires that need to be fulfilled for further life, health and happiness.

"We must also consider that some of our human desires are given to us by Nature, and some are vain and empty. Of the Natural desires, some are necessary, and some are not. Of the necessary desires, some are necessary to our happiness, and some are necessary if our body is to be free from trouble. Some desires are in fact necessary for living itself."

He would explain that it's up to us to resolve these toward health and happiness:

He who has a correct understanding of these things will always decide what to choose and what to avoid by referring to the goal of obtaining a body that is healthy and a soul that is free from turmoil, since this is the aim of living happily. It is for the sake of living happily that we do everything, as we wish to avoid grief and fear.

Cassius:

Yes I agree with AR and I should have started by highlighting that, since so many other philosophies and religions argue that eliminating desire should be the goal. Eliminating desire is perversely anti-Epicurean. It's the desires that lead to more pain than pleasure that should be reduced and if possible eliminated.

The desires that lead to more pleasure than pain are what life is all about. There's probably no better way to sniff out an argument that is anti-Epicurean than discussion which talks generically about elimination of desire being a good thing. And Stoicism is riddled through and through with that.

Also, the advice of Epicurus to the young man about reducing his desire for sex, or the advice to anyone about restraining desires, does not in any way contradict that.

The foundation that the desire for pleasure is natural and what life is all about was laid at a much more basic level, and that foundation is not contradicted by observing that *some* desires lead to more pain than pleasure.