

Why Minimizing All Desire Is Incorrect (And What To Do Instead)

Post by “Joshua” of December 5, 2024 at 3:58 PM

Quote

But can it not ALSO be used in a way that is entirely positive and pleasurable, in which the pleasure of anticipation and preparation for the experience are every bit as enjoyable as the experience itself?

Being elated by the anticipation of something seems to me to be part and parcel of "desiring" it.

Anticipating the fulfillment of a desire can be pleasureable, in the same way that anticipating the removal of a pain can be pleasureable. You wouldn't call a headache pleasant simply because you know relief is at hand.

In the case of romantic desire, the one who feels that desire (the sting of Cupid's arrow, if you will) may indulge in fantasizing about getting the person they want. The fantasy might be pleasureable, but when that person comes down from that high they are left with the bare pain of desire.

The fantasy which brings pleasure might actually postpone their joy;

Quote

VS18. If sight, association, and intercourse are all removed, the πάθος (pathos) of love is ended.

I am not willing to cede ground to the Buddhists who wish to demonstrate that life is bitter; they can make that argument themselves. My argument is that life is sweet, because the pain of desire has its happy resolution, not in renunciation, or in mortification, but in pleasure. Some desires we should satisfy. Some we should consider carefully before satisfying. Some we should recognize as unsatisfiable, and cast them off.

Quote

Some men say to themselves:

“No more shall my house admit me with glad welcome, nor a virtuous wife and sweet children run to be the first to snatch kisses and touch my heart with joy. No more may I be prosperous in my doings, a safeguard to my own. One disastrous day has taken from me, luckless man, all the many prizes of life.”

But these men do not add:

“And now no longer does any craving for these things beset me either.”

-Lucretius, Book III