

# Thomas hobbes book leviathan philosophy essay



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Thomas Hobbes focused on the human nature regarding as state of nature. Hobbes thinks that there is always fight in state of nature because of equality between men. He asserts that human being is equal both bodily and mentally even if it is seemingly. At first, Human nature makes people to think about being strongest than anyone in terms of body. For example, the strongest one thinks that he can kill everyone who are weak than him, however, the weaker one can beat the strongest one through confederacy of with others. (Hobbes, 183) Therefore, it can be said that everyone in society is equal with each other one way or another. Additionally, Hobbes argues that men are equal mentally too. This equality comes from wise. In state of nature, everyone see themselves wise, however, they do not accept the other's wisdom and they do not believe that they have wisdom. That is to say, all of them are satisfied with their wisdom and they ignore other's wisdom so this means that it is not inequality actually it means equality. (Hobbes, p. 184) Therefore, this equality causes insecurity in society. This equality makes us to attain our ends. However, if they desire same thing, they become enemy with each other. (Hobbes, p. 184) To give an example, every person around the world has desires to live in extraordinary place such as palace. Let's thinks about that there is only one gorgeous palace all over the world and a group of people try to get it, at the end while trying to get it, there will be conflict situation. The ambition of getting what they desire makes them enemy and it leads to war amongst them. Additionally, in the nature of man, we find three principles which are competition, diffidence and glory. (Hobbes, p. 185) These feelings lead to war because these feelings make people to fight for gain, safety and for reputation. Shortly, in order to provide a peaceful society there should be an authority. If there is no

absolute power at the top, there is always fight in society. Hobbes underlines this issue as state of nature is a state of war of all against all. (Hobbes, p. 185) In this situation, that is to say, if there is no common authority, there is no justice because we cannot talk about true or false or anything contrary to law. Moreover, in such conditions, as Hobbes argues, there is no place for industrial development or art or anything making people to be civilized. Thus, life of men is solitary poor, nasty, brutish and short. (Hobbes, p. 186) This situation can be a block to live in a good society because people need an absolute power who can keep down them. Also this can shows us the necessity of commonwealth.

Right of nature has an important role for necessity of absolute power in terms of rights, rules and prohibitions. Right of nature gives the right man to do anything what he want and at any time to protect himself from the others who may damage him. That is to say, right of nature is a kind of freedom to what is wanted to do. Because of the state of nature, every men have right to do anything, even he can kill somebody else to protect himself.(Hobbes, p. 189) Actually, in state of nature, there is always risk of injury and death so people are ready to preserve themselves from possible attacks. For example, if a man, who is threatened by someone, can intimidates and can kill that men. If he could not, he could be killed. This creates chaos in society. The law of nature can be thought the opposite of right of nature. Thanks to law of nature, people give up their some rights and think about the other's right in order to protect both themselves and peace in society. (Hobbes, p. 190) It is important that, thanks to the law of nature, people cannot harm themselves and others. It is a stage of providing peace among people. The only way to

attain this peaceful environment is transferring of rights by covenant. At this point, the importance of rules which are made by absolute power can be understood.

As Hobbes suggests, human nature needs an absolute power in nature because the ultimate purpose of mankind is to protect them from other's possible attack, to be happy and to live in comfort. (Hobbes, p. 223) Therefore, the only way is to accept to be put under restraint by a sovereign. The necessity of a sovereign is also about how to establish a commonwealth system. According to Hobbes, the only way to establish a commonwealth system is based on transferring their rights to one person, one assembly or one committee. Hobbes suggests the way of establishing a commonwealth is making a covenant with every man. By making covenant, every man gives their right of governing themselves to a sovereign.

Although some people in society vote negatively, they also authorized the sovereign to govern them. (Hobbes, p. 227) Therefore, by transferring rights and will, the commonwealth system occurs. The sovereign who has unlimited power has to make rules and execute them. These rules should be in accordance with the necessity of common wills. There should also be fear of absolute power because if people in society do not afraid of absolute power they can break rules. Obeying rules is important for society in terms of order and peace.

The covenant can be thought as the constitution of parties because parties make an agreement and they make rules for themselves and for the security of society. Thus, if there is an injustice or injury, the person in charge is not to be the sovereign. The injustice or injury reasoned by sovereign is not the

outcome of sovereign's own decisions or actions because of covenant.

According to Thomas Hobbes, if a person complaining about injustice, this means that person is complaining about his/her sovereign and this person cannot accuse someone else even he cannot accuse himself because of the covenant. That is to say the person who make a covenant and who make rules cannot injure himself/herself. (Hobbes, p. 232) Again Hobbes says that since the people in society are the governor of the actions and decisions, the actions and decisions which are made by sovereign cannot be named as injustice because people in society authorized the sovereign to govern themselves. (Hobbes, p. 232) The sovereign should implement the rules and punishment. To give an example, think about a rule which is related to protect society order, for example burglary, murdering etc. and think about the punishments of these abuses. If a person kill a man or steal someone's property there will be a violation of the order. The reason why to implement these rules, prohibitions and the punishments by the sovereign is to be rescued from state of nature and to reach peace in society. Thus, the sovereign must implement the rules, prohibitions and punishments.

Although people in society can be punished because of their actions, the sovereign cannot be punished because of his decisions or actions because the sovereign authorized to do anything to preserve the society and maintain the commonwealth system. Thomas Hobbes underlines that sovereign shouldn't be punished if he breaks the agreement because he is tasked with to govern and execute the state. The sovereign has unlimited power and he has decisions and actions according to covenant which is made by people. As Hobbes underlines, the liberty of the subject consists

with the unlimited power of the sovereign. The liberty of subjects doesn't mean that the power of sovereign for life and death abolished or limited because whatsoever he does can be called as injustice or injury. (Hobbes, p. 264) For example, if a subject who attempts to depose his sovereign can be punished or killed because he is the author of his punishment. (Hobbes, p. 229) Moreover, a subject can be killed so neither sovereign nor subject can be called as injustice. (Hobbes, p. 265) Additionally, the actions of the sovereign cannot be criticized by subjects because anything what he does cannot called as injustice and subjects cannot charge sovereign with being injustice. As Hobbes states sovereign can be cruel but they cannot be unjust. (Hobbes, p. 232) Moreover, the sovereign cannot be judged with his decisions and actions thanks to the covenant.

In conclusion, Thomas Hobbes starts with analyzing human nature and comes to this conclusion by reasoning necessity of commonwealth system. As he argues in the state of nature men are always in danger and there is no security. People in society are always fighting with each other, they are always competing with each other because of their desires and this makes their life full of horror. Therefore, Thomas Hobbes suggests that there must be a sovereign to control and to provide security in society in order to live in comfort. By transferring the rights to the sovereign they make covenant and at the end the commonwealth system establishes. The sovereign who is authorized by the subjects makes decisions and governs the society and so according to Hobbes the sovereign's decisions and actions cannot be called as unjust. Although, Thomas Hobbes asserts that his decisions and actions are not unjust, the sovereign who has unlimited power should be restricted.

If his decisions and actions cannot be restricted there will always be injustice because there is only one person who decides in the name of subjects. Additionally, the subjects who didn't vote for that sovereign should be thought because they are also under the decisions and actions of that sovereign even if they did vote negatively. Although, the commonwealth system has benefits such as unity, safety and comfortable lives in society, after transferring rights to the sovereign the only decision maker become sovereign and this makes conflicts in society. Subjects give their will to sovereign however, in some points subjects should have the right to analyze and criticize acts and rules of sovereign. Society may hand over its will but it should not be in all areas. Society could be interfere what is done by sovereign. Sovereign cannot be true in all areas and acts.