

# Happy Twentieth of May: Don't Surrender - Instead Retreat, Regroup, Advance!

**Post by "Cassius" of May 21, 2018 at 6:40 AM**

Thinking about my answers to this question last night, I think I probably wasn't clear on what is in my view of greatest practical importance. If there is anything unique about Epicurean philosophy, that gives body to the Epicurean way of thinking, and that represents what it is that the ancient Epicureans would have "gone back to" whenever they were challenged or had personal doubts, it is "nothing comes from nothing and nothing goes to nothing." And the reason is that THAT is the personally verifiable observation that serves as the starting point for everything else. Without that observation, that you can test for yourself and use to check all your other premises against, then all the rest of the framework that we talk about are simply arbitrary assertions with no way to "prove" their correctness. Opinions have no standards of correctness - and no reason for us to have confidence in their truth - unless we can compare them to observable, repeatable, facts - essentially the scientific method. Unless we have something by which to say "the idea of supernatural gods is wrong" and "the idea that there are eternal ideas/forms floating in the universe is wrong" then we have no ability to have confidence in our conclusions. On every streetcorner people are saying "My god reigns" and "Allah is great," and we can shake our heads and look down on their "lack of education," the ultimate answer is not how many books on Nature we can stack against their books on religion. The answer is "Show me your magic - Show me your God creating something from nothing. Show me your Allah destroying something to totally nothing." THAT is how we have confidence that the world operates on Natural principles - not because Einstein or a string of physicists said so.

I could go on and on about this but I think the essential point is clear. Without "nothing comes from nothing and nothing goes to nothing" Epicurean philosophy is nothing more durable than the latest fad self-help book at the local bookstore, and it's a lot less memorable than most of them. Nothing from nothing and nothing to nothing is our essential statement of commitment to and reliance on evidence - on science, rather than on wishful thinking.