

2022 Epicurus vs Buddhism Compare and Contrast Thread

Post by "Cassius" of January 28, 2022 at 2:41 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

But, in the *ultimate* analysis, we are simply momentary aggregates of atoms moving in the void.

I say much the same thing pretty often, but even here I would be careful that the word "ultimate" invests that perspective with something more than it probably deserves. I guess what we're really referring to is something like either "microscopic" (figuratively) or "eternal" (more literally) perspectives. From a strong enough microscopic ("vision") perspective, all we see if we look through the instrument is something like atoms and void. From a "time" perspective, if we could stand back and look to see what it is (if anything) that exists unchanged over an eternity, all we see is matter and void.

But do the perspectives of "time" and "vision" really deserve the deference of being called "ultimate?" I think what most of us are implying when we say "ultimate" is something like "the most important perspective of importance." And if we're using that as the definition, then indeed the most important perspective of significance of importance is a matter of importance "to us" and that's a lot more complicated than matters and void. That's "our" world of qualities and events and accidents and things that rise to the "shores of light" in our level of experience.

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Yes, thank you Cassius! I will carry on with my Epicurean studies

LOL. That makes it sound like I am rapping the knuckles of a student in grammar school 😊

[Quote from Don](#)

Well summarized! And, interestingly enough, there are some/many who would unfortunately describe Epicurean philosophy the same way: the removal of pain is the goal.

And unfortunately at this point in world history that "some/many" is probably the vast majority of people who've been exposed to Epicurean through the "orthodox" academic path.

I'm of course sensitive to not wanting us to be perceived as a "cult" or to accusations that this forum is dedicated to anything less than "totally free inquiry." But I think that it's almost a principal of physics to observe that the world doesn't operate in all the ways that we might like it to. Maybe we should look for an analogy to the hooks of atoms, or something else in Epicurean physics, that explains how "bodies" come into being at all, and that the universe doesn't remain a totally formless soup.

Unless we accept that there are natural principals of attraction and repulsion, and that some people will choose some paths and others will choose other paths, then we would neither have bodies and ultimately humans forming from the atoms and the void, nor would we ever have any organized patterns of thought that we could define as Epicurean or Stoic or Buddhist or anything else. The point being that the development and following of basic key principles should not be viewed as a bad thing, but as an example of how the glue of the universe works to hold anything and everything together.