

2022 Epicurus vs Buddhism Compare and Contrast Thread

Post by “Joshua” of January 30, 2022 at 1:57 PM

I will attempt to take Cassius up on his request for an *epitome* of Buddhist teachings; assuming here that the Theravada school represents them best, and with the caveat that I have not studied these teachings for a number of years.

Let's pretend that what follows is the voice of a believer;

1. In spite of appearances, I am convinced after meditating deeply that I have no 'self'. ['No self' = *anatta* or no *atta*, Hindu *atman*]
2. Having no self, "I" shall not reincarnate; neither shall "I" die.
3. But something of me shall be reborn or passed on, the way the heat from one candle passes on to ignite a second candle.
4. I perceive other sentient beings; animals, and other humans, and also gods. I conclude that these also have no 'self'.
5. These, too, shall experience rebirth; even the gods are part of this cycle.
6. The condition of this cycle, from the lowliest cockroach to the wisest among gods, is the condition of suffering.
7. The way to end the cycle is to end suffering.
8. That part of me which has been reborn in this life cannot have ended suffering, else it should not have been reborn.
9. Therefore suffering leaves traces, a residue (*kamma*) and to end suffering I must erase the residue of suffering of my cosmic past.
10. If I can accomplish this, I will no longer be bound to the cycle: I will not be reborn, but will have achieved *nibbana*, a complete quenching of suffering.
11. This can only be achieved in a human rebirth; the lower animals have no ability to look beyond their immediate suffering, and as for the gods, they are too caught up in palliative pleasures to see the need to break the cycle.
12. To break the cycle is immensely difficult. It cannot be done in one life, but only by successive rebirths working toward the goal.

13. For most people it might not be possible at all---except that my master the Buddha has found the way.

14. He is not a god, nor a savior; he is only a guide. He attained *nibbana*, and tarried here long enough to show others the way, crying always, like a ferryman, "anyone for the other shore?"

15. I wish to end the cycle for myself; therefore, I am a Buddhist.

I take refuge in the Buddha [the awakened], the Dhamma [his teachings], and the Sangha [the body of his enlightened followers].

I will avoid the three fetters of 1. Belief in self, 2. Doubt, and 3. Attachment to rites and rituals.

I will avoid the three poisons of 1. Greed, 2. Ignorance, and 3. Hatred

I will follow the Noble Eightfold Path, of;

1. Right View

2. Right Intention

3. Right Speech

4. Right action

5. Right livelihood

6. Right effort

7. Right concentration

8. Right mindfulness

I can easily recommend Huston Smith's book on the World's Religions to anyone who wishes to know more, and I am happy to be corrected on any of the above points.