

Democritus' "Nothing is truly real but atoms and void" statement

Post by "Cassius" of October 4, 2022 at 4:05 PM

This thread has me thinking back to what I think is very close to one of the (or the) ultimate points.

Epicurus seems to think that there is probably no greater plague on humanity than "otherworldiness." PD1 denounces the idea of a supernatural otherworldiness. PD2 denounces the idea of a heaven or hell otherworldiness. In emphasizing pleasure and pain, PDs 3 and 4 establishes the foundation for seeing that neither virtue nor platonic ideals nor anything other than the pleasure and pain of this world are of concern to us.

From that perspective, everything that focuses the mind on the importance of this life in this world is beneficial to us. Everything that distracts into thinking that this world is an illusion, or that minimizes the importance to us of this world, is detrimental.

It is certainly true from every atomistic perspective that only atoms and void have eternal unchanging existence. But we as humans are not eternal and unchanging beings. What matters to *us* is the world we have as we perceive it around us.

If a perspective about atomism assists us in a full understanding of our place in the universe and the way our world works, and allows us to tune our actions to live more happily, then it is beneficial to our well-being and important for us to understand and remember.

If a perspective about atomism leaves out the fact that we are mortal and changing beings, and implies that our existence is somehow of lesser rank or less important than the atoms themselves, then that perspective is destructive to our well-being, and I would expect Epicurus to denounce that incomplete perspective just as he denounces supernatural religion or false claims of life after death.