

# Metaphorically Picturing Epicurean Philosophy

Post by “Cassius” of January 11, 2023 at 11:14 AM

## [Quote from Kalosyni](#)

So would this be considered a much more clear (and modern) understanding of what Epicurus was beginning to present, by his looking to nature? When we use science correctly, is it a much more complex system compared to Epicurean philosophy? Maybe it might be good to have a table to graphically show similarities between Epicureanism and modern science.

It might be more complex, but that wouldn't necessarily make it more useful. Joshua was referring to this issue recently too in referring to the letter to Pythocles.

## Quote from Letter to Pythocles

[87] For we must not conduct scientific investigation by means of empty assumptions and arbitrary principles, but follow the lead of phenomena: for our life has not now any place for irrational belief and groundless imaginings, but we must live free from trouble. Now all goes on without disturbance as far as regards each of those things which may be explained in several ways so as to harmonize with what we perceive, when one admits, as we are bound to do, probable theories about them. But when one accepts one theory and rejects another which harmonizes as well with the phenomenon, it is obvious that he altogether leaves the path of scientific inquiry and has recourse to myth. Now we can obtain indications of what happens above from some of the phenomena on earth: for we can observe how they come to pass, though we cannot observe the phenomena in the sky: for they may be produced in several ways.

And again I think a paraphrase Diogenes of Oinoanda helps make the point:

If, gentlemen, the point at issue between these people and us involved inquiry into «what is the means of happiness?» and they wanted to say «SCIENCE» (which would actually be true), it would be unnecessary to take any other step than to agree with them about this, without more ado. But since, as I say, the issue is not «what is the means of happiness?» but «what is happiness and what is the ultimate goal of our nature?», I say both now and always, shouting out loudly to all Greeks and non-Greeks, that pleasure is the end of the best mode of life, while SCIENCE, which is inopportunistly messed about by these people (being transferred from the place of the means to that of the end), are in no way an end, but the means to the end.

You could put most any tool in that paragraph, and no matter how attached we are to the tool, we need to realize that it is just a tool and not an end in itself.