

Epicurean Philosophy vs Charvaka / Lokayata

Post by "Julia" of January 15, 2025 at 10:02 AM

[Quote from Eikadistes](#)

Theologically, the Epicureans endorsed the existence of deities, whereas the Indian materialists saw them as being pure fictions of misinformed, human imaginations.

Well...we have to take into account the dangers of "heresy" at the time, and also consider the complete re-definition of the word "gods" by Epicureans. When it comes down to it, don't Epicureans and Charvaka both think about the same of *supernatural* gods, gods in the sense of Zeus and Ganesh? I suppose that Charvaka rejected them more absolutely, whereas Epicurean philosophy remains open to the psychological/social usefulness of symbols and rituals?

[Quote from Eikadistes](#)

One of the biggest differences we notes between the Epicurean Tradition and ancient Indian materialism is the tone: Epicurus recommended that we treat our neighbors with respect, whereas the writings of Charvaka are fairly critical and mocking.

Interesting! Thank you for pointing that out. I wonder how much of that was by free choice and how much was more of a necessity, more of a product of the region and times? I've gotten the impression ancient Indians didn't shy away from open, direct critique and mockery, even slander – then again, how much was provoked by whom? Did the Charvaka keep up that fighting, or did the others continue to bash them harshly?

[Quote from Eikadistes](#)

The Charvaka were physical pluralists, like Empedocles, so they divided the material world into elements, and associated atomism with orthodox, religious philosophy.

Oh, I see. I suspected they just hadn't discovered atomism yet – thank you for pointing out they associated it with orthodox, religious philosophy! Given that, I shall withdraw my guess from post #4 that some might have improved on their core physics considerably. It now seems much less likely.