

2022 Epicurus vs Buddhism Compare and Contrast Thread

Post by "Kalosyni" of September 29, 2025 at 9:00 AM

[Quote from Robert](#)

I see the incompatibilities as stemming from the fundamentally different premises of the two systems. Buddhism is predicated on the idea that conscious life doesn't end with the breakup of the body


There are within ancient Theravadin Buddhist texts - the Pali Sutta - certain passages which point to how consciousness is dependent on factors (**Eye-consciousness:** Arises dependent on the eye and visible forms. **Ear-consciousness:** Arises dependent on the ear and sounds. **Nose-consciousness:** Arises dependent on the nose and odors. **Tongue-consciousness:** Arises dependent on the tongue and flavors. **Body-consciousness:** Arises dependent on the body and tactile sensations. **Mind-consciousness:** Arises dependent on the mind and mental objects. (Theravadin Buddhism was the earliest form of Buddhism, and texts date back before Zen texts and Tibetan texts).

When studying and understanding this properly, then one can see that there actually is no rebirth. But the idea of rebirth is so entrenched culturally in countries which have Theravadin monastic groups, (and a few textual passages do speak of rebirth) so then this rebirth idea keeps going forward, taught by Theravadin teachers.

[Quote from Robert](#)

The idea is that such a person lacks insight into the nature of samsara

The idea of "samsara" is a very negative view of life, but yet certain people do have a lot of suffering depending on their circumstances (war, poverty, low wage-slavery, lack of sanitary infrastructure in third-world countries).

Then there are the "first-world" mental sufferings ... ...and we can see that Lucretius wrote about that in the De Rerum Natura -- the [vessel analogy](#).

I believe that there are aspects Epicurean philosophy which can help relieve these "first-world" mental sufferings (and much more effectively than Buddhist teachings).

An major issue that I have with Buddhism is that it has an extremely "skeptical" take on the ability of the mind to understand things (as well as using skepticism as a method for how to overcome suffering through mental thought regulation rather than by taking actions). Parallels

can be seen between Pyrrhonism and Buddhism. (I just found this if you want to [read about the comparison between the two](#)). If a mentally unstable person practices this, it can have bad results (and likely bad results for a mostly mentally stable person also).

So a major difference is that Epicureanism takes a firm stand on things:

[VS41](#) - "We must laugh and philosophize at the same time, and do our household duties, and employ our other faculties, and never cease proclaiming the sayings of the true philosophy."

And also regarding the idea of rebirth:

VS14 - "We are born once and cannot be born twice, but for all time must be no more. But you, who are not master of tomorrow, postpone your happiness. Life is wasted in procrastination, and each one of us dies while occupied." (See [this thread to read about what is implied by "occupied"](#).)

(P.S. [Robert](#) I also studied and practiced Buddhism before discovering Epicurean philosophy).