

Discussion of the Society of Epicurus' 20 Tenets of 12/21/19

Post by “Elayne” of December 22, 2019 at 6:59 PM

Hi Hiram-- thank you, I got the link to the Tenets this morning. I am going to think through my responses, but for now I can say that I am not aware of Epicurus categorizing the senses as objective. We experience subjectively through our senses as well as our feelings. In fact, we have no option other than subjective experience. Scientists tend to call data objective when it has been repeatedly measured by different people using different equipment in different labs, etc, but our sensory experiences are still always subjective. Your references for 1 and 2 do not include any division into subjective and objective. Prolepses are also subjective. I think much of my response will be about what is not included, but that will take me a while. For now, I am curious about why you say Epicurus said the senses were objective.

Your book review I agree with, but I would just add that the Buddhist conclusion is not based on reason. They use reason to try and explain it-- to say the self is not legit because it is temporary, which I have always thought was silly. But that is just their explanatory overlay, which is based on what life feels like if you have altered your brain function through meditation. There is a fairly high rate of dissociative states in long term and/ or heavy meditators. Sometimes this sensation of depersonalization and/or derealization is permanent. They literally experience a sensation of having no self. I think there is some evidence meditation reduces activity of the default network, which is necessary for self-monitoring/ awareness, and there is a lot we don't know about how various practices alter brain function

This is a desirable outcome for some. For me, it sounds like brain damage. I guess the most that can be said is that for these people, they feel like they have no self. For the rest of us, we mostly feel that we are selves. No way to really argue over that one, right? But what they propose is that all of us will find out we are no-self, if we introspect through meditation. All that means to me is that my brain would become damaged, but they see it as current delusion on my part--that I'm already no-self and just don't know it. When they go that far, I think I can say they are incorrect about my current experience of self.