

Feedback From A User

Post by “Lee” of January 16, 2020 at 11:33 PM

The most pressing question I have is how Epicureanism accounts for the universal concepts of similitude which we formulate in the mind based on our sense experience. I am referring to ideas like horse, tree, or person. How can these only be material?

I believe Plato says we recall ideas after having sense experience because they are already present as innate ideas in our soul.

I recall that Aristotle updated the Platonic theory by saying the intellect abstracts the universal forms that exist in each particular sensible thing after repeated experience.

I find both accounts difficult to accept and yet it seems incontrovertible that we recognize the sameness of things. Otherwise, the world would appear to be filled with only particular things which we perceive through sense.

This ability to categorize particular things as the “same thing” (horse, human, etc.) seems to point to universal concepts that are difficult to account for as strictly material (atomic) in origin.

Are universal concepts real? If not, why/how do we all use them? If they are real, how can they be only material yet exist as the same in each thing and in our minds?

I hope I have formulated the question clearly.