

# EPICUREANISM

*Inception:* ~ 300 BCE    *Adherents:* Unknown



## The Golden Rule

*"It is impossible to live a pleasant life without living wisely and well and justly (agreeing 'neither to harm nor be harmed')"*

— Epicurus (341 BCE - 271 BCE)

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***Primary Value Proposition:*** Freedom from Fear

### *The Word of (about and / or attributed to) God*

- Epicureans believe that a Supreme Deity either doesn't exist or, if It does, either wants to eliminate bad things and cannot, can but does not want to, neither wishes to nor can, both wants to and can.

### *Core Beliefs*

Epicurus believed that the basic constituents of the world are atoms (which are uncuttable, microscopic bits of matter) moving in the void (which is simply empty space). Ordinary objects are conglomerations of atoms. Furthermore, the properties of macroscopic bodies and all of the events we see occurring can be explained in terms of the collisions, reboundings, and entanglements of atoms.

Because Epicurus believed that nothing comes into existence from nothing, he thought that the universe has no beginning, but has always existed, and will always exist. Atoms, too, as the basic building blocks of all else, cannot come into existence, but have always existed. Our particular cosmos, however, is only a temporary agglomeration of atoms, and it is only one of an infinite number of such cosmoi, which come into existence and then dissolve away.

One of the greatest fears that Epicurus tries to combat is the fear of death. Epicurus thinks that this fear is often based upon anxiety about having an unpleasant afterlife; this anxiety, he thinks, should be dispelled once one realizes that death is annihilation, because the mind is a group of atoms that disperses upon death.