

# Nothing Can Be Created From Nothing

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## 1. Explanation

- *Click here for [a slideshow video explaining this doctrine](#). Find out more in our [Physics Forum](#), our [Wiki](#), and our [Discussion Guide](#). Listen to our special [Lucretius Today Podcast Episode 259](#) dedicated to this topic.*
- Working solely with the science available two thousand years ago, Epicurus observed that nothing ever arises from nothing, and nothing is ever completely destroyed to nothing. From this Epicurus deduced the existence of atoms - elemental particles moving through empty space from which over time all things are made and return. Given that nothing we observe ever comes into existence except through pre-existing atoms, Epicurus concluded that the universe as a whole has always existed, and that while bodies come and go, there was never a time before the universe as a whole came into being.
- Given that the universe has always existed, we can firmly reject the contention that the universe was created at some point in time by supernatural forces. All that we see around us is a result of the natural movement of atoms through void over time. This does not mean that *only* the atoms are real, however, because Nature tells us that bodies made from atoms are also real. More than anything else, this commitment to the true reality of Nature, and the rejection of all notions of the supernatural, is the starting point for everything else in the Epicurean worldview.
- As Epicurus wrote to Herodotus: "Nothing is created out of that which does not exist: for if it were, everything would be created out of everything with no need of seeds." (Bailey - line 38) This is the way Epicurus teaches us to reason - always stating the evidence behind our conclusions, and never accepting any possibilities based on pure speculation or wishful thinking. The atomic basis of the universe explains how all that we see around us came into existence neither randomly or chaotically, but *naturally* as a result of elemental particles moving through space. The properties of atoms, and not the dictates of any supernatural forces, determines what can, and what cannot, come into being.

## 2. Citations

1. Epicurus to Herodotus, line 38
  1. Bailey: "[N]othing is created out of that which does not exist: for if it were, everything would be created out of everything with no need of seeds."
2. Lucretius 1:146
  1. Bailey: "This terror then, this darkness of the mind, must needs be scattered not by the rays of the sun and the gleaming shafts of day, but by the outer view and the inner law of nature; whose first rule shall take its start for us from this, that nothing is ever begotten of nothing by divine will."

## 3. Notes

1. *Notes:* A more precise translation than Bailey renders would likely be: "Nothing can be created from that which did not previously exist." In general the point is that everything comes from that which already exists, meaning that nothing comes from that which does not already exist.

## 2. [Discussion Forum](#)