

The Letter to Menoecus - Translation By Cyril Bailey

Post by "Cassius" of December 19, 2021 at 8:55 AM

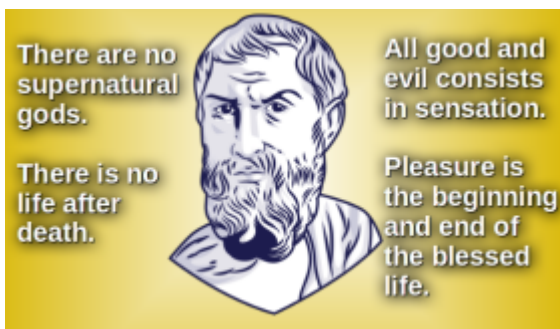
[Quote from Cassius](#)

Right there is never going to be consensus on this point so it makes little sense to worry about differences in position so long as the core implications are protected. I personally look to what I see as the total thrust of all the texts, including not just Epicurus but many others, and from that point of view I find it inconceivable that he did not believe that they existed physically. But as I said everyone has to reach his or her own conclusion about that. The implications of the different positions are not nearly as significant as would be divergences on more core issues, because none of us think that these gods are supernatural or intervene in human affairs or reward or punish either during life or thereafter, and those are the "big" issues.

Camotero if you see a practical implication that you think would be affected by the choice, be sure to mention that and we can address it.

I woke up this morning thinking that I better clarify my statement about the "practical implication" of the issue. I often make general comments like that on this subject and I better clarify the context in which I am saying that.

Here are what I consider to be the big core issues that the EpicureanFriends forum needs to always focus on keeping very clear as a matter of community standards:



Any argument that carries on for very long too far afield from those key positions needs to be reined in and pursued elsewhere so as to avoid confusion to those who are less familiar with the issues.

The issue of the actual physical existence of the [Epicurean gods](#) does not seem to me to be essential to any of those positions. Someone might at some point convince me otherwise, but I am pretty sure that our core people here are unlikely to diverge, and most all would hold that the position someone takes on physical existence of the gods won't play a major role in their confidence on these core points.

But if someone wanted to take a much more rigorous definition of what the term "practical implication" means, I am sure that everyone on all sides of the issue sees down-the-line ramifications of the position someone takes on that issue. In my case, I think that a full treatment of the problem would require an exhaustive review of the Philodemus "On Piety" material, and especially of the "On Methods of Inference / On Signs" material. We haven't done that here on the forum, and most of us have done only a limited review of that material individually. I know myself that I would like to spend a lot more time with both.

If we were to do so, we'd have a lot more data that we would need to incorporate on the issue of the actual physical existence of the gods, so my preference for myself and for discussions here at the forum is that people (everyone on all sides) keep something of an open mind and a generous tone toward all sides of the issue.