

New Sedley Chapter On Ancient Greek Atheism

Post by “Matt” of March 23, 2022 at 11:31 AM

A somewhat relevant observation I've made about people and sincerity of belief has recently occurred in the military involving beards. As a standard rule of thumb, men's grooming and appearance disallow any facial hair with the exception of a well maintained mustache. Beards are not allowed unless there is a medical reason for not being able to shave like pseudofolliculitis. But such waivers are rare. However now “religious exemption” has appeared on the scene...

For years certain religions such as the Indian Sikhs were barred from joining most military branches due to the need for a clean shaven face and cropped hair. Short of a professional job such as a Doctor, JAG or Chaplain, no Sikh could join for many, many years. Then overnight the “Norse Pagan” people started popping up, claiming that to truly practice their religion they must maintain a full beard. The Sikhs are of a ethnic and cultural tradition that extends back to the Middle Ages, while the “Norse Pagans” are a 20th and 21st century fabrication and reconstruction of historical beliefs that went extinct back in the early Middle Ages with the advent of Christianity. What I do know is that many people are now claiming to be “Norse Pagans” when ultimately they are atheists or agnostics that truly don't care, but are only claiming this (which is a huge administrative process) so they claim this religious classification. Now if someone TRULY believes that Odin, Thor and the Giants are real...then more power to you, enjoy. However...if you are doing this because you want to sport a beard. I question your sincerity in general and whether you take anything seriously.

Which brings me to the reason WHY we shave: Gas mask seals. To maintain a properly sealed gas mask, a man must have a clean shaven face to make a proper seal. If the seal fails, chemical agents will seep in and disable or kill the wearer thereby putting themselves in danger...and everyone else. Just like the Greek phalanx we rely on our wingmen and battle buddies to be doing the right thing so we are working as a team to stay safe. So if someone goes down because of a beard, that may also put me in jeopardy.

Now I'm not going to exactly be happy if a pious Sikh is the cause of my demise because he couldn't get a seal on his mask...but I'm going to be DISGUSTED with the person who feigned religious belief and made this disaster possible. Thus there is a real world example of how sincerity of belief or disbelief can really effect the view people have of you.