

# Pros and Cons Of Considering Epicurean Philosophy To Be A "Religion"

Post by "Pacatus" of January 31, 2024 at 1:04 PM

@Nate: If religious feelings (e.g. awe and wonder) and sentiments – and rituals and the like, inherited or your own – bring pleasure, then embrace them. I always liked “high church” services – Episcopalian – with the bells and incense, etc., after a priest friend described it all as “holy fun”. And I can still take pleasure in Gregorian chant. And I can find inspiration and intuitive insight in contemplating various archetypes of the “divine” as representing the highest blessedness and eudaimonia, or as aspects of nature – even if I don’t think they exist in reality (I tend to the “idealist” understanding, but I also maintain a certain agnosticism on the subject), with what I take to be an Epicurean attitude (a strict-atheist psychiatrist that I briefly knew – not as a patient – suggested similar contemplation as usefully therapeutic).

But when I could not believe in, and bind myself to (*religare*), the “cultic” rules and commands of the church – adherence to received theology and creeds without question, confession of sins for salvation, etc. – then it was time to extricate myself (even if that was painful at the time). I suppose that one might participate in such religious ceremonies as a (secret) Epicurean, but I could not (or at least I would have to eliminate for myself certain contents of the service, and just be quiet).

Having travelled a long way from a darker version of Christianity to a more enlightened, open-minded version to Zen to (briefly) a neo-Stoicism, I find Epicureanism to be a kind of Kuhnian “paradigm shift” in thinking – in many ways, including questions of gods and religion, and religious activity. And I found [Joshua](#)’s point about *pietas* versus *religio* in post #25 helpful.

With all that said, I go back to [Kalosyni](#)’s 5 points in post # 16: If they apply to your understanding of religion, then I have no problem (but, again, that seems to reflect a kind of paradigm shift from more conventional understandings of the word).