

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

Post by "TauPhi" of March 22, 2024 at 8:45 PM

I'd like to offer some of my thoughts about few things you said in your last post [Cassius](#).

Before I start, I should clarify that I'm all on board with studying Epicurean theology as any other aspect of Epicureanism for the sake of understanding the philosophy. I do, however, see few problems with taking everything Epicurean at face value just because Epicurus came up with it. And by 'it' in this case I mean 'emulating gods':

[Quote from Cassius](#)

The point that even the gods require some form of activity to maintain their deathlessness would likely be a significant part of Epicurean theology, giving us another useful thing to consider as points of emulation. We too have to act properly to sustain our happiness just as they do - there's no supernatural state that "hands it to us free" for men or gods.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

If even the gods must act properly to maintain their happiness, who are we to complain that we must do the same? We should emulate the gods not only in the result of being happy, but also in the process of getting there, with both gods and men acting property to perpetuate our happiness.

Epicurus had exactly the same access to knowledge about the nature of gods as we do now two millennia later. No access whatsoever. His description of gods is grounded in pure speculation and wishful thinking. He had no empirical evidence, direct or indirect, to support his claims about gods' deathlessness, blessedness or any other 'nesseses'. So what exactly are we supposed to be emulating? Because the way I see it, it looks like we are supposed to give gods qualities we want them to have and then emulate the qualities we've given them. This kind of approach is similar to: I believe chewing a chewing gum makes people happy. Therefore, from now on I'll be chewing as much chewing gum as humanly possible.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

If even the gods must act properly to maintain their happiness, who are we to complain that we must do the same?

Well, I'm TauPhi and I'd like to complain that I must do the same because I don't know what 'the same' is. Since I have no way of establishing what 'the gods must act properly' is, would I be far off guessing that to act properly means sticking index fingers in strangers' ears every Tuesday?

I'm fully aware that my chewing gum and sticking fingers examples are absurd but giving gods serious qualities for emulation doesn't make anything less absurd.

Epicureanism is really close to my heart. There's a plethora of beneficial ideas in this philosophy that can be applied in our lives but there are also things demonstratively wrong, or worse, impossible to prove or disprove like [Epicurean gods](#) and trying to incorporate these ideas in our lives may not be such a good idea.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

We should emulate the gods not only in the result of being happy, but also in the process of getting there, with both gods and men acting properly to perpetuate our happiness.

There's no need to introduce a middleman in the form of gods. By trial and error we can establish things that make our lives worth living for ourselves. There's no need for shifting responsibility or seeking some form of reassurance in imaginary, better versions of ourselves. Instead of looking at fairy tale creatures, let's focus on studying our reality among people like us who also try to figure stuff out without an superpowers like immortality, indestructibility or other made up qualities.