

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

**Post by "Peter Konstans" of March 23, 2024 at 11:58 AM**

I agree that what you guys and DeWitt say about ancient Epicurean theology is accurate though I think there are missing elements to the puzzle. What might Epicurus have answered if he was asked what natural law necessitates the existence of the gods? Why couldn't the atomic universe simply do without them? Why couldn't they be fully mortal regardless of what the masses think? What would he have answered to Cicero's reasonable reservations about the logical coherence of a strictly atomic view of immortal gods? I am sure that there are some fine details about the system contained in his lost works that we simply don't know of.

At any rate nobody can doubt that Epicurean theology was supposed to function as a medicine against harmful notions regarding the supernatural. The ancient Epicurean conception of the gods worked well as a remedy but only in the context of the ancient polytheistic society it was developed for. Outside this context the medicine can't be expected to take effect. Just as we don't expect anyone to believe in Loki and Zeus today (and the few eccentrics claiming to do so are in reality engaging in what amounts to little more than a form of ancestor worship) it is equally difficult to make people believe in the [Epicurean gods](#).

Atomism continues to remain relevant and essential to Epicurean dogma. The eternity of the world remains relevant and essential too. But the ancient Epicurean conception of the gods is in my view outdated because it cannot play a viable medicinal role in today's environment.

So I think we need to work out a new theological medicine specifically designed for an era in which the most popular harmful notions regarding the universe are based on monotheism or on nihilism. A profitable solution would be to adapt the most crucial aspects of Epicurean theology to a single God only. The result would be a sort of deism but somewhat different from the enlightenment-era deism of the American founding fathers.

Another innovation that future Epicureans will need down the line is a specifically Epicurean place of worship. Ancient Epicureans were able to worship the gods in the same spaces as everyone else. But we modern Epicureans cannot do the same in churches/mosques/synagogues because modern religions lack the civic and folkloric character that pagan religions had which made them tolerable to Epicureans. Today we're dealing with religions that may be seen as fully-fledged rival philosophical systems and for this reason it is impossible to share quarters with them.