

Episode 234 - Cicero's OTNOTG - 09 - Dealing With Marcus Aurelius And The Canonical Basis For the Epicurean View Of Divinity

Post by "Cassius" of June 20, 2024 at 3:27 PM

You're making a distinction there Bryan that I want to be sure I understand. To be clear about my own view:

1 - I think that Epicurus thought that a solid case exists that the type of gods he is talking about not only serve a very useful purpose to reverence, but also that such beings do exist somewhere in the universe. So I think he would say that his evidence and argument mean that the statement "gods exist somewhere in the universe and are blessed and imperishable" is a true opinion. (I know some disagree with that, but that's my personal view.)

2 - I think however that I would not describe "gods exist somewhere in the universe and are blessed and imperishable" as a "sense." I would describe "gods exist somewhere in the universe and are blessed and imperishable" as statement or proposition or an opinion that I have adopted based significantly in part on the operation of a "sense" that assists me in the process of organizing the evidence and that "tells" me, in reaction to the opinion, that the opinion seems valid. Maybe here I might describe that at least in part as a "sense of confidence" that I sometimes have about opinions that are surely true, vs. a much less confident feeling I have when an opinion is on shaky ground. Talking about this reminds me that somewhere in the distant past of the forum there were comments made by some to the effect that a "sense of confidence" might be a part of the prolepsis picture.

3 - I think most of us agree that pleasure and pain are highly analogous to a "sense," in that we say we "feel good" or "feel bad" and the "feel" in that sentence seems naturally to associate with feeling smooth or rough or seeing color or hearing sound. But I still think to bring any clarity to this we would have to be more specific about "what" a faculty of prolepsis "processes" as its function. And the closer we get to saying that prolepses processes "ideas" such as "guilt" - such as to say that "feeling guilty comes only after a real and automatic sense of guilt" - then the further that intrudes into the conceptual reasoning process where true and false apply. In the case of justice or guilt, I'd be more apt to say that the prolepses is processing the "relationships" (possibly the relationships of the atoms in the images that we are processing), and that it is then the feeling of pleasure and pain that comes into play to assess whether we find the particular relationship agreeable or not.

So what I am looking for a position on is whether "gods exist and are blessed and imperishable" *IS ITSELF* a prolepsis, or - from the point of view of Epicurus - whether it is a "true opinion that has been formed taking into account the operation of the proleptic faculty and other things as

well."

I'm trying to focus on that because I can't see it proper to say that the eyes "flat out tell me" that "I see a bird" or that the ears "flat out tell me" that "I hear music" or that pleasure tells me that "I am eating honey." In turn I cannot see it proper to say that a prolepsis "flat out tells me" that "a god is imperishable" or any other statement that amounts to a "proposition." Each of those underlined statements seem to me to be "propositions" that are formed in the mind *after the use of* inputs from all three of the categories of faculties, including prolepsis, rather than conclusions of those faculties themselves.

Can you clarify further?