

Scientism, Atheism, And The Admissibility Of Spiritual Experience

Post by "Don" of November 2, 2020 at 9:07 AM

Quote from Cassius

So to repeat the main point of this post, I find the term "spiritual experiences" without further definition to be an obstacle to further clarity here

I think I see your point. To muddy the water even more 😊, i would say that (1) these are real experiences felt by persons and that (2) the experiences themselves are typically described using religious language. The only vocabulary available to people for much of history to describe these overwhelming and transformative experiences was language of a religious nature. The experiences were sometimes brought on by or the result of religious practice: intense prayer, deep meditation, etc. Although they could also be brought on spontaneously (e.g., Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus). Human nature has the natural capacity to experience these kinds of experiences. These are experienced as unusual, extraordinary, or significant. As such, humans try to incorporate them into an existing paradigm to make sense of them. The very significance of them calls for a significant explication. The only vocabulary that rises to the level of the overwhelming power of these experiences to the individual in most cultures is religious or spiritual vocabulary. The religious practitioner can replicate the experience with regular practice. I'm thinking specifically of the Tibetan monks or the Sufi dervishes. They believe and sense that they are communing with the divine. This brings them pleasure. I personally don't believe they are communing with a divine *presence* but they*are* experiencing a genuine sensation of [bliss](#). Isn't bliss (μακάριον blissfulness, blessedness) a defining characteristic of the [Epicurean gods](#)? Is this the same bliss experienced by dervishes and monks? If the religious practitioner is experiencing pleasure and bliss, do we tell them "No, you're not actually experiencing pleasure and bliss. You're doing it wrong!" If they don't have fear of their God, are they doing it wrong? I don't know, but that's my food for thought off the top of my head for now.