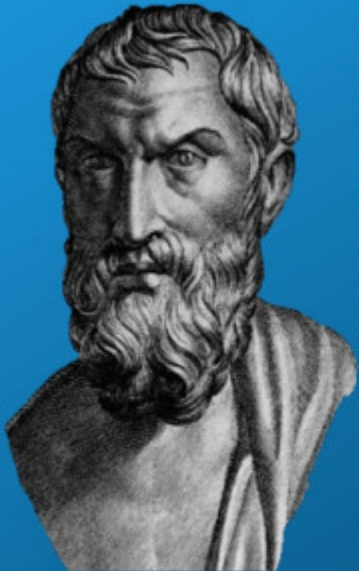


Epicurean Cites on The Issue of Impossibility of Pure Happiness While Accepting Religious Fables



A man cannot dispel his fear about the most important matters if he does not know what is the nature of the universe but suspects the truth of some mythical story. So that without natural science it is not possible to attain our pleasures unalloyed.

- Epicurus Principal Doctrine 12



After
a

couple of heated arguments today (with relatives!) about the existence of supernatural gods, I need to go back and compile a list of the Epicurean texts which say things to the effect that unless you totally dismiss fables from your mind you can't be truly happy. In other words, "I don't know" isn't good enough. I found a couple below, but I know that there are some in Lucretius on which I can't put my finger, and probably other sources as well. I think I specifically remember parts of Lucretius to the effect that learning a little science can even make things worse unless you dismiss the idea of religious fables. I will eventually find these myself, but it might be a good exercise to talk about, and maybe others will think of cites that I have missed. Please post any more that fit this same theme:

PD12. A man cannot dispel his fear about the most important matters if he does not know what is the nature of the universe but suspects the truth of some mythical story. So that without natural science it is not possible to attain our pleasures unalloyed.

Letter to Pythocles: "Unless this be done, the whole study of celestial phenomena will be in vain, as indeed it has proved to be with some who did not lay hold of a possible method, but fell

into the folly of supposing that these events happen in one single way only and of rejecting all the others which are possible, suffering themselves to be carried into the realm of the unintelligible, and being unable to take a comprehensive view of the facts which must be taken as clues to the rest.

"All this, Pythocles, you should keep in mind; for then you will escape a long way from myth, and you will be able to view in their connexion the instances which are similar to these. But above all give yourself up to the study of first principles and of infinity and of kindred subjects, and further of the standards and of the feelings and of the end for which we choose between them. For to study these subjects together will easily enable you to understand the causes of the particular phenomena. And those who have not fully accepted this, in proportion as they have not done so, will be ill acquainted with these very subjects, nor have they secured the end for which they ought to be studied."

Lucretius: