

Reverence and Awe In Epicurean Philosophy

Post by “Don” of December 23, 2020 at 9:25 PM

[Quote from Susan Hill](#)

I'm afraid I have to essentially agree with Matt at this point. I have not found anything further that makes Epicurus' theology more robust, integral, or informative to human life. He does not seem to have developed much by way of a praxis, so any further development would require comparison with other, possibly complementary theologies, or innovation. Epicureanism is missing the kind of in-depth philosophy of mind and consciousness that eastern schools have, so I do see anything like transcendence, moksha, or enlightenment being part of this package. I really think a mystic must look elsewhere..

Hi, @Susan Hill . It's good to see your posting. I would encourage you to take a look at some of the posts I've been making on Obbink's Philodemus On Piety if you're interested. There's more there than I expected. But I do hear what you're saying when you write "anything further that makes Epicurus' theology more robust, integral, or informative to human life." A huge problem is that we have SO many texts missing. If we had all 30+ volumes of On Nature and Philodemus's library and... But *if*. And we don't.

I also concur with your desire for praxis. I believe we can infer some things. We know Epicurus encouraged memorization. And there are ways to memorize texts by study, recitation, copying/writing. I think all these would be acceptable Epicurean praxis. There's also keeping a Gratitude journal given the importance of gratitude in Epicureanism. I also don't see a contradiction in some mindfulness practices and Epicureanism. I think getting a better handle on your mind would increase one's ability to discern the proper path to pleasure and make better choices and rejections. It should also allow one to enjoy pleasure in the moment: carpe diem! The places in On Piety that talk about forming correct views/notions/convictions of the gods may have some praxis-related options whether we decide they physically exist or not.

Quote

I do [not] see anything like transcendence, moksha, or enlightenment being part of this package.

I'm assuming you left out a "not" in there, and I would agree. But I would say the reason there is no "transcendence, moksha, or enlightenment" is because there's nothing to transcend, nothing to be enlightened of. If anything, we need to unlearn our acculturation, see the physical cosmos as that which only exists, and make our choices and rejections wisely in the full

recognition that we only have one life.

One of my favorite sayings is (to paraphrase): "Flee from all indoctrination, and set sail on your own little boat."

I also had mystic tendencies for a time, investigating Christian mysticism (i.e., https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Cloud_of_Unknowning , etc.), Buddhism (especially Zen and Tibetan varieties), and others. It all came down to the theology that I couldn't believe. Rebirth and karma seemed viable for a time to me, but I became disenchanted. That's also one of the things that turned me off from Stoicism and how I eventually discovered Epicurus. I'm not saying I'm 100% sold on the Epicurean Garden path, but I've found it fruitful both from a philosophy of life perspective and as an academic hobby.

I hope you continue to engage in the discussion whether or not you decide to think of yourself as an "Epicurean." I think you have an interesting and valuable perspective.