

Knowledge of the Gods as "Manifest"

Post by "Eikadistes" of December 13, 2022 at 11:31 AM

This all makes me wonder: do we have any documentation from ancient sources that shows how they treated (*conceptually*) the occasion of inducing a religious experience through digestion or inhalation of psychoactive substances? I can approach Epicurus' statement a lot better if "the gods" are contextualized as the objects of one's perception during psychedelic experiences. Our visual cortices, in tandem with other nerve clusters produce visions of extraordinary "other-presences" during a trip. We have reproduced these experiences under laboratory conditions using high doses of LSD, DMT, and other chemicals for decades. Indeed, these experiences are "manifest".

I am entertaining the idea that we might still be thinking too heavily of "the gods" within the context of modern theology (usually as abstract beings only accessible through imagination or faith) versus "the gods" as "the objects of psychedelic visions". It seems reasonable to me to suppose that the average ancient Greek had a working knowledge of mind-altering substances used for religious purposes based on ubiquity of mystery rites and their mind-altering sacraments. The Greeks were aware that the Scythians used cannabis (thus, the word *cannabis* comes from ancient Greek), so I have to assume that they understood the concept of "consumables that induce visions of divine beings".

Having shared in that experiences, I can attest to a personal certainty that the statement "the gods exist and knowledge of them is manifest" *feels* very appropriate, but I still understand that they are **not** immaterial subjects who exist between cosmic dimensions. They are objects of a material mind that are induced by a material substance. The common experience of a "dream" is extremely comparable to the psychedelic experience, as are the objects (sometimes mistaken for *subjects*) of the dream. Using the concept of a "dream" as a comparison for the state of the mind that oracles achieve when they inhale volcanic gases would be an appropriate and available concept.

I speculate that the ancient mind would have associated altered states with religious practice more readily than ours does; Epicurus' propositions might have been commenting on the visions induced during mystery rites.