

The Twelve Fundamentals - Discussion on Lucretius Today Podcast

Post by "Cassius" of January 4, 2023 at 11:42 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

After reading my post from last night in the light of day, I can still feel my visceral reaction to that Stoic article. However, I ask the forum: Am I being too harsh?

Epicurus certainly didn't spare his barbed words for people he disagreed with, but he also said it's better to believe in the gods than it is to accept hard determinism.

To me, though, it seems like accepting one's Fate decreed by Providence is combining **both** the gods **and** determinism and trying to sit that fence must surely be uncomfortable in the end. But if they find pleasure in "believing" that, am I to point out the precariousness of their position?

It seems to me that Epicurus also held that the best way to live was to understand how the universe actually works in reality.

Thoughts welcomed (at the risk of hijacking this thread).

This thread is becoming a catchall for everything it seems, but I realized this morning I had another comment on this post from Don.

This kind of reaction to supernatural religion is exactly the kind of reaction I think Epicurus had, and I suspect that Epicurus thought that **this** was actually his main "calling in life" for his philosophy. Yes the goal of pleasure and the mechanics of reaching it are very important, but they come **after** one has first rejected the supernatural / providential / "idealist" nature of the universe. And one does that - one gains confidence in rejecting the supernatural / providential / idealist viewpoint - through the epistemology and the physics.

That's the focus of Lucretius' manner of presentation to Memmius, that's the focus of what appears to be the **first** letter of Epicurus (to Herodotus), and I strongly suspect it was the focus the school as a whole. In addition, I think that also needs to be "our" focus on Epicurean friends as well. We don't need to lessen the importance of pleasure-seeking or anxiety-avoidance, but we need to keep them in their place, which is the path we take **after** we first establish the shared groundwork of a natural universe.

So to repeat the point of posting this, I think we begin to see our way to having an impact in real people's lives the more we see reactions like Don had to the Fisher article. The "modern atheists" attack religion and then stop, or else they veer off into "humanism" / idealism.

Epicurus was pointing to a different path, and that's the one I think we can accomplish a lot by working to reconstruct and support with modern presentations.