

Episode 207 - Cicero's On Ends - Book Two - Part 15 - Does Epicurean Philosophy Lead to Injustice?

Post by "Cassius" of December 26, 2023 at 2:27 AM

[Quote from waterholic](#)

If the wellbeing of the whole society (and individuals) depends on how well individuals understand and accept the covenant, isn't it easier to have the majority believe in a simple fairy tale (punishment after death and the all seeing eye of god)?

If "the wellbeing of the society" were indeed the ultimate Epicurean goal, then that argument would at least be entertainable. But the great weight of the evidence in the texts is that "the wellbeing of the society" is **NOT** the ultimate Epicurean goal, so using such a presumption would not carry much weight with an Epicurean.

[Quote from waterholic](#)

isn't it easier to have the majority believe in a simple fairy tale (punishment after death and the all seeing eye of god)?

And that might be true too if you're content for the society to be composed of people who are ignorant of natural science, but there's no evidence that an Epicurean would be content with such a thing.

And as far as the relative hardness of convincing people to believe in 'virtue' for its own sake (and I would say this also applies to trying to people who have studied natural science to believe in a god:

"For it is hard to convince men that "the good is to be chosen for its own sake"; but that pleasure and tranquility of mind is acquired by virtue, justice, and the good is both true and demonstrable. " --

[Cassius to Cicero](#), [15.19] [Brundisium, latter half of January, 45 B.C.]

[Quote from waterholic](#)

as individuals some may choose the truth, while others would prefer comfortable ignorance.

And those individuals who would choose "comfortable ignorance" rather than truth would not be following Epicurean philosophy. Choosing "comfortable ignorance" would not be consistent with choosing wisdom, and as Torquatus put it:

[46] XIV. But if we see that all human life is agitated by confusion and ignorance, and that wisdom alone can redeem us from the violence of our lusts and from the menace of our fears, and alone can teach us to endure humbly even the outrages of fortune, and alone can guide us into every path which leads to peace and calm, why should we hesitate to say that wisdom is desirable in view of pleasures, and unwisdom to be shunned on account of annoyances?

EDIT: I had to add the *NOT* early in the post above to correct a typo/admission that changed the meaning of my sentence. Hopefully the mistake was obvious, but it is corrected now 😊