

On Use Of The Term Apikoros / Apiqoros / Bikouros Against Epicureans

Post by “Bryan” of January 15, 2024 at 9:11 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Just remember that the Hebrew word for 'heretic' is 'סורוקיפא' or 'Epikoros'.

I was reading The Oxford Handbook of Epicurus and Epicureanism (2020) and came to page 549, where it says *“The Term Epicurus, or Apiqoros as it is more often pronounced, is alive and well in contemporary Jewish culture.”*

It goes on to state *“Epicurus is a unique figure in Judaism - a Greek philosopher whose name has become a legal category. An Apiqoros cannot give testimony in court (Mishnah Torah 11.11), one may not return a lost object to Apikorsim (11.3), one is even obligated to kill them”* (page 551)

Here is the quote from the Torah:

(Mishneh Torah, *Rotzeah uShmirat Nefesh*, 4.10) It is a blessing to kill *minim* and *Epikursim*... *Epikursim* deny the Torah and the concept of prophecy. If there is the possibility, one should kill them with a sword in public view. If that is not possible, one should develop a plan so that one can cause their deaths. What is implied? If one sees such a person descend to a cistern, and there is a ladder in the cistern, one should take the ladder, and excuse oneself, saying: "I must hurry to take my son down from the roof. I shall return the ladder to you soon." Similarly, one should devise other analogous plans to cause the death of such people.

Different translation: "The [following are considered] Ha'Epikorsim (הַמְּסִרְוֹקִיפָא): those who worship idols or commit transgressions in order to provoke anger. Even if one eats non-kosher meat or wears garments of mixed fabric to provoke anger, he is considered an Epikoros (סורוקיפא). This includes those who deny the Torah and the Prophets. It is a commandment to kill them. If one has the power to kill them with a sword in public, he should do so. If not, he should employ subterfuge to cause their death. How so? If one of them falls into a pit and a ladder is inside, he should remove it and say, 'I must go and bring my son down from the roof; I will return the ladder to you,' and similarly in such matters."