

Pros and Cons Of Considering Epicurean Philosophy To Be A "Religion"

Post by "Kalosyni" of January 23, 2024 at 11:04 AM

There appears to be two camps within the current resurgence of Epicurean philosophy:

- One camp who may wish to see a special kind of reverence and a special way of interacting and disseminating the historical ideas of Epicurus, by labeling it "a religion", and there-by appealing to those who are looking for something "bigger-than-themselves", and perscribing certain behaviors in line with "religious feelings", as well as creating a "priestly/teacher class" and a "student/disciple class" within a tight-knit community that shares the same urge for how to view Epicureanism.

I feel fairly certain that most of us here on this EpicureanFriends forum do not fall into this first camp. However if there are some who do, then you may enjoy the company of others who have that same belief by checking out what is offered by the [Society of Friends of Epicurus](#). From their [FAQ page](#) there is a link to a page explaining more about how they view things regarding [Epicureanism as a Religious Identity](#).

Now for the other camp, as I see it myself regarding my personal view of Epicurean philosophy, and which many others here on this forum may also hold as a beneficial view: Epicureanism is (and should be seen as) a philosophy and not a religion.

Here are a few benefits of seeing Epicureanism as a philosophy rather than a religion:

1. Your personal understanding comes first rather than having to depend on interpretations outside of yourself - you interpret the extant texts as it pleases you, because you apply them to modern life and your own unique situation.
2. If you are dealing with very troubling issues, you visit a therapist rather than rely upon Epicurean teachings (and rather then relying on religious rituals or potentially relying on "teachers" who are not therapists).
3. You are free to test Epicurean philosophy and reject the parts that do not work for you.
4. You are not expected to do any rituals or attend any meetings, and you will still be respected if you don't participate, and your respect will be based on your understanding rather than adherence to "religious goals" - and there are no religious goals or rituals, rather only personal goals which you freely choose for yourself.
5. It feels safe, free, and open for those who are atheists to participate in studying the philosophy of Epicurus - because there is no group requirement regarding the "gods/god" and this is something to be considered for each person privately.