

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

Post by "Cassius" of January 24, 2024 at 10:32 AM

Also I'd just like to interject before I forget: One of the biggest problems that gives me personally the most caution with "religion" is better described - at least for me - as "ritualism." "Rituals" give me the creeps and are generally a big turn-off for me. I realize there's a fine line between "ceremonies" and "memorials" and "habits," but I think the idea of mandatory and elaborate "ritual" helps describe at least a part of the problem. To me, "ritualism" goes along with the "mind control" that is often associated with religions, and things that seem like "rituals" have to be approached with caution. Joshua's quote from Lucretius 5:1200 really helps put this in perspective.

Here is the Daniel Brown edition version of that:

Quote from Daniel Brown's Lucretius 5:1194

Nor can there be any piety for a wretch with his head veiled, to be ever turning himself about towards a stone, to creep to every altar, to throw himself flat upon the ground, to spread his arms before the shrines of the gods, to sprinkle the altars abundantly with the blood of beasts, and to heap vows upon vows. To look upon things with an undisturbed mind, this is Piety. For when we behold the celestial canopy of the great world, and the heavens spread over with the shining stars; when we reflect upon the courses of the sun and moon, then doubts - that before lay quiet under a load of other evils - begin to awake, and grow strong within us. What! Are there gods endued with so great power that can direct the various motions of all the bright luminaries above? For the ignorance of causes gives great uneasiness to the doubting mind of man. And hence we doubt whether the world had a beginning, and shall ever have an end; how long the heavens (the walls of this world) shall be able to bear the fatigue of such mighty motions, or whether they are made eternal by the gods, and so shall forever roll on, and despise the strong power of devouring age.