

Episode 241 - Cicero's OTNOTG 16 - A Common Thread Between The Epicurean View Of "The Gods" and "The Good"

Post by "Eikadistes" of August 15, 2024 at 10:21 AM

I continue to have suspicions about the "Idealist" interpretation:

What good is a god that is just a dream?

The whole thing strikes me as an example of the placebo effect. The placebo effect tends to stop working the moment the test subject realizes that they are just a test subject.

For a different example, typically, after a child learns that Santa Claus is a cultural myth, they stop putting out milk and cookies before going to bed. Furthermore, there are no children who believe in one of the mythical figures (like the Easter Bunny) while simultaneously rejecting another (like Santa Claus). The principle that allows you to reject one is applicable to the others.

If you go from being a person who prays (as wish fulfillment), and then you learn that god does not listen to prayers and does not grant wishes ... what's the point of praying?

I go back-and-forth with my family on the latter point. They all recommend prayer, and either believes that God answers their prayers, or that the act of praying to God makes them feel peaceful. For me, I cannot find peace in a God that only exists as a symbol in my mind. In fact, that very acknowledgment is the thing that makes me feel like prayer is ridiculous in the first place.

Really, it's not just the "idealist" interpretation.

Honestly, what's the point of prayer if no one is listening?

I've really never been able to accept Epicurean theology ... unless we're talking about drugs. If we can all entertain the idea that "the image of god" is something that happens "when you drink kykeon during Dionysian mystery rites", then I am 100% on board. That is a real experience, it is repeatable, it is measurable, we have thousands of years of documented "encounters with gods" while ingesting intoxicants from every human group, during every time period in history. The experience is overwhelmingly positive. (If you have any personal doubts, just look at research being done with Psilocybin, LSD, and MDMA on post-traumatic stress and depression.)

Still ... I have equal doubts about my proposition that Epicureans were tripping.

Why couldn't Epicurus have just said "*Gods are no more real than monsters and other dream-entities. You are taking a huge cognitive risk in entertaining the possibilities of either one*"?