

# Episode 249 - Cicero's OTNOTG 24 - Are The Epicurean Gods Totally Inactive, And Are We To Emulate Them Through Laziness?

Post by "Godfrey" of October 15, 2024 at 11:04 PM

Notes from a ruminaceous journey through my "innermundia" after reading the Raghunanan article:

- I didn't find the premise very convincing.
- Might it be most constructive to be satisfied with multiple possible explanations of the gods? And perhaps useful to look at the subject for practical insights, through modern eyes?
- If the goal is to live like gods among men, and since we have no direct evidence of their existence (others may feel differently) is there any point in trying to discern anything about them other than their blessedness and incorruptibility? Other than for the pleasure of scholarship, of course. One can live like a god by not troubling oneself or causing trouble for others by worrying about the form(s) of the gods. Instead, what if one were to think of a god as "the being whose blessedness is incorruptible" rather than "the blessed and incorruptible being"? I realize that this is a leap from the texts, but it may be a more useful way for us moderns to contemplate the gods by being more in line with our current understanding. Instead of troubling ourselves over the forms of the gods, we can focus on achieving a godlike state of blessedness.
- Also, could it be that one will only come to a proper conception of the gods when one has achieved a state of blessedness that one has a reasonable expectation of continuing? By focusing on the action, not on the form. There's no textual evidence of this that I'm aware of; I'm just ruminating. But it's kind of indirectly analogous to Eastern "enlightenment" or the rarity of the Stoic sage, although I'm not suggesting any direct connection, just ruminating.
- And "neither causes trouble for oneself or another" (which the author repeated several times) can also be read to say that an Epicurean isn't a selfish hedonist, but one whose "hedonic calculations" include the well-being of others as consequences of one's own pleasure. EP is a philosophy of personal responsibility: nobody is dictating what is right. Consider, though, that one of the greatest gifts is multiplying pleasure by sharing it.
- In sum, know that a god is a being whose blessedness is incorruptible.... Meditate on this and other things, and you will live like a god among men!