

Epicurus, gods and God

Post by “Godfrey” of October 13, 2019 at 4:36 PM

Lately I've been thinking about the [Epicurean gods](#) and would like to share some thoughts.

It's commonly acknowledged here that physics has advanced a great deal since Epicurus' time, but that Epicurean physics is still valid.

As for the gods, although it probably exists I haven't seen any discussion regarding the advance of religious thought since Epicurus. Today in the West there aren't gods, just God. Although valuable, the discussion of [Epicurean gods](#) is purely abstract to us living today as Epicurus was responding to the culture he lived in. Today God has replaced the gods, and it seems that is the idea that we must address if we want to truly live EP.

So, firstly, EP completely neuters the current idea of an all powerful God who created the universe and such. Therefore it seems that atheism is the only choice for an Epicurean, at least until further evidence becomes available. For me, having been raised Presbyterian, this isn't a choice that I make lightly even though I've been heading this way for a long time.

Secondly, what could have prompted Epicurus to make such an effort to retain the gods? What are the advantages of religion in general, regardless of which god or gods is/are concerned? Community, shared belief, safety.... He says that there is an anticipation of the gods; could this be simply awe and reverence for the universe we live in? Which I find increases once the idea of god is discarded.

What about Epicurus trying to avoid the charge of impiety? Or was he testing his ideas with the culture he lived in, which is something that we, too, must do.