

# Discussion of the Society of Epicurus' 20 Tenets of 12/21/19

Post by "Hiram" of December 23, 2019 at 10:45 AM

## [Quote from Elayne](#)

12-- I know of no evidence that Epicurus promoted idealism in anything. How would an idealistic or imaginary version of his gods be coherent with his philosophy as a whole?

Also, you tend to give your own writing as a source material, but sometimes you link to a book. The end notes would be stronger if you followed the traditional format and gave a full citation, including page numbers. It wouldn't be such a problem to use your own writing or YouTube videos as sources if those writings themselves contained the original source references, but generally they do not. However, this shouldn't be a big deal for you to tweak if you choose to.

13-- I am not a religious person, so I would not be interested in endorsing this tenet. All I can say is that all activities should be chosen for how they produce more pleasure than pain. But I do not equate effort with pain. Effort can often be quite pleasurable. There is nothing about effortless pleasure that I prefer over effortful pleasure (such as, say, dancing), if the pleasure itself is equal. This Tenet seems like another endorsement of static over kinetic pleasure, and we've discussed that a lot here, so I won't rehash. I would just say that I don't think there is strong evidence that Epicurus made a big deal about this distinction, and I would not make it something members of a group had to agree to one way or another.

12 - is an instance where post-Epicurus Epicureans posited their own ideas. The two interpretations accepted today by academics on the gods are realist (the gods are made of atoms) and idealist (the gods are not physical but have cultural / ethical utility as models). The third interpretation, which was originally advanced by Ilkka and then I supported, and is adamantly supported by people like Michel Onfray, is the atheistic one which calls for an atheology instead of a theology, which says that gods are neither justifiable by the canon nor useful in ethics. Here is the original post from the Menoecus blog (it also mentions the first two interpretations):

<https://menoecus.blogspot.com/2014/08/epicurean-gods.html>

13- this quote on "pure, effortless pleasure", if I remember correctly, is cited directly from Epicurus in Philodemus' scroll on Piety (cited in the notes). I believe it comes from Epicurus' scroll "On Holiness" (there are a few quotes there), which is lost to us. Some of the other

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/1319-discussion-of-the-society-of-epicurus-20-tenets-of-12-21-19/?postID=5580#post5580>

quotes:

*"We all regard our views as the true cause of our tranquility. ... In On Holiness, he (Epicurus) calls a life of perfection the most pleasant and most blessed, and instructs **us to guide against all defilement, with our intellect comprehensively viewing the best psychosomatic dispositions for the sake of fitting all that happens to us to blessedness ...**"*

It seems like the original Epicureans believe that pious practices have pleasant psychosomatic (both bodily and mental) health effects. Dispositions (diatheses) are an important concept in Epicuran ethics, also often neglected. But it is clear in On Piety that religious practices are meant as a tool for cultivation of happy and healthy mental and emotional dispositions (mental clarity, reverence, friendliness, kindness) in one's character. This is a neglected aspect of the tradition today, and I have not seen any consensus in our groups as far as carrying out "experiments in piety" following Epicurus' guidelines in modern times, so this remains unexplored.

However, I believe that in this we can furnish useful ethical guidance to any religious group that wishes to elevate their pious practices by applying Epicurean principles.