

## **SOE13: The goal of religion**

**Post by “Elayne” of December 30, 2019 at 12:32 PM**

Hiram, here is an example where I think Philodemus shows some idealism. What on earth is "noble", unless it is tied to ability to get pleasure? His assertion that not harming others, generically, is something we should do because the gods did it makes zero sense. The gods as described were not at risk of harm from humans, so harming us would not cause them pleasure. If we were to threaten their pleasure, they would be wise to stop us even if the only way was to harm us.

Notice that Epicurus spoke of the "wise man" -- the man who has learned to get pleasure. In reality, this would require taking different actions in different conditions and subordinating nothing to pleasure. The wise person believes pure pleasure is experienced somewhere in the universe by material beings, and that such beings would not engage in human affairs because of their specific situation, and this reduces anxiety and provides hope for our own success at pleasure.

This bit of Philodemus sounds Christian in its level of idealizing non-harming. If Epicurus had written like that, I wouldn't be an Epicurean.