

Reverence and Awe In Epicurean Philosophy

Post by "Don" of October 26, 2020 at 7:04 PM

[Quote from Elayne](#)

Don, one thing I always remember is that it was against the law upon pain of death to refuse to participate in worship and rituals. No doubt in those rituals, things were said which completely went against Epicurus' description of the gods, because the prevailing religions went against his framing. We don't have his explanations for his choice, but I would guess he didn't feel like being put to death over it. I'd happily chant with supernaturalists if someone said they'd kill me if I didn't.

I'm not going to go so far as to say his whole teaching about the gods was for self protection-- some have suggested it, but that doesn't seem as plausible.

I think all this is definitely worth discussing in detail.

I have source amnesia but I remember reading somewhere that while Epicurus and his followers took part in the rituals and public ceremonies (in part, I'm sure to not be executed), they used them as opportunities to contemplate the "true" nature of the gods as they understood them. So, yeah, sure, I'm pouring a libation to "Zeus" but I'm considering the libation a celebration of my ability to conceive of the gods correctly, to emulate their happiness, to... Etc. The gods don't care about my libation and are most likely unaware of it nor does it have any power... But I can gain benefit from using this as an opportunity to meditate upon - to think deeply about - the nature of the gods.