

Reverence and Awe In Epicurean Philosophy

Post by "Don" of October 26, 2020 at 11:17 PM

In returning to the original texts concerning the gods:

First, I found Dewitt's quote of the gods being friends of sages:

Philodemus, On the Life of the Gods, Vol. Herc. 1, VI col. 1: ... to the gods, and he admires their nature and their condition and tries to approach them and, so to speak, yearns to touch them and to be together with them; and he calls Sages "friends of the gods" and the gods "friends of Sages."

But also, here are some Fragments and their sources from [Attalus's website](#):

[U385]

Atticus, by way of Eusebius of Caesarea, Preparation for the Gospel, XV 5 p. 800A: {And as to our deriving any benefit from them while they remain in heaven,} ... in this way, even according to Epicurus, men get help from the gods, "They say, for instance, that the better emanations from them become the causes of great blessings to those who partake of them..."

[U386]

Philodemus, On Piety, Vol. Herc. 2, II.76.1 [p. 106 Gomperz] {Obbink I.27.754}: ... he says that as being both the greatest thing, and that which as it were excels in sovereignty, it possesses everything: for every wise man holds pure and holy beliefs about the divine and has understood that this nature is great and august. And it is particularly at festivals that he, progressing to an understand of it, through having its name the whole time on his lips, embraces with conviction more seriously

Philodemus, On Music, Vol. Herc. 1, I c.4,6: Now, these very important things may still be said at the present: that the divine does not need any honor; for us, nevertheless, it's natural to honor it, above all, with pious convictions, even through the rites of national tradition, each according to his proper part.

Philodemus, On the Life of the Gods, Vol. Herc. 1, VI col. 1: ... to the gods, and he admires their nature and their condition and tries to approach them and, so to speak, yearns to touch them and to be together with them; and he calls Sages "friends of the gods" and the gods "friends of Sages."

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Philodemus, On Piety, Vol. Herc. 2, II.108.9 [p. 126 Gomperz] {Obbink I.31.880}: Again, he says, "let us sacrifice to the gods piously and well, as is appropriate, and let us do everything well according to the laws. But let us do so not disturbing them at all with our opinions on the topic of those who are best and most majestic; again, we say that it is even right to do this on the basis of the opinion which I was discussing. For in this way, by Zeus, it is possible for a mortal nature to live like Zeus, as it appears."

Here are some other quotes on the gods from Epicurus:

VS 33. The body cries out to not be hungry, not be thirsty, not be cold. Anyone who has these things, and who is confident of continuing to have them, can rival the gods for happiness. [note] σαρκὸς φωνὴ τὸ μὴ πεινῆν, τὸ μὴ διψῆν, τὸ μὴ ῥιγοῦν· ταῦτα γὰρ ἔχων τις καὶ ἐλπίζων ἔξειν [hope or expect to have] κἂν <διὸ [dative of Zeus]> ὑπὲρ εὐδαιμονίας μαχέσαιο. [contend/compete]

Principle Doctrine 1. Τὸ μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον οὔτε αὐτὸ πράγματα ἔχει οὔτε ἄλλω παρέχει, ὥστε οὔτε ὀργαῖς οὔτε χάρισι συνέχεται: ἐν ἀσθενεῖ γὰρ πᾶν τὸ τοιοῦτον. [ἐν ἄλλοις δὲ φησι τοὺς θεοὺς λόγῳ θεωρητοῦς, οὓς μὲν κατ' ἀριθμὸν ὑφεστῶτας, οὓς δὲ καθ' ὁμοειδίαν ἐκ τῆς συνεχοῦς ἐπιρρύσεως τῶν ὁμοίων εἰδώλων ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἀποτετελεσμένῳ ἀνθρωποειδῶς.]

Perseus Project translation: 1. A blessed and eternal being has no trouble himself and brings no trouble upon any other being ; hence he is exempt from movements of anger and partiality, for every such movement implies weakness [Elsewhere he says that the gods are discernible by reason alone, some being numerically distinct, while others result uniformly from the continuous influx of similar images directed to the same spot and in human form.]

The word translated as "discernible by reason" is θεωρητοῦς which carries the connotation of "(of the mind) I contemplate, consider; (abstract) I speculate, theorize."

VS 65. It is foolish to ask of the gods that which we can supply for ourselves. μάταιόν ἐστι παρὰ θεῶν αἰτεῖσθαι ἃ τις ἑαυτῷ χορηγήσθαι ἰκανός ἐστι.

VS 79. He who is as peace within himself also causes no trouble for others. ὁ ἀτάραχος ἑαυτῷ καὶ ἑτέρῳ ἀόχλητος.

(NOTE - Just like a god from PD 1)

Letter to Menoikeus:

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/1733-reverence-and-awe-in-epicurean-philosophy/?postID=9565#post9565>

First, believe that god is a blissful, immortal being, as is commonly held. Do not ascribe to god anything that is inconsistent with immortality and blissfulness; instead, believe about god everything that can support immortality and blissfulness.

.πρῶτον μὲν τὸν θεὸν ζῶον ἄφθαρτον καὶ μακάριον νομίζων, ὡς ἡ κοινὴ τοῦ θεοῦ νόησις ὑπεγράφη, μηθὲν μήτε τῆς ἀφθαρσίας ἀλλότριον μήτε τῆς μακαριότητος ἀνοίκειον αὐτῷ πρόσσπτε· πᾶν δὲ τὸ φυλάττειν αὐτοῦ δυνάμενον τὴν μετὰ ἀφθαρσίας μακαριότητα περὶ αὐτὸν δόξαζε.

For gods there are: our knowledge of them is clear.

θεοὶ μὲν γὰρ εἰσὶν· ἐναργῆς γὰρ αὐτῶν ἔστιν ἡ γνῶσις·

[Knowledge of them is ἐναργῆς 1. visible, palpable, in bodily shape, properly of gods appearing in their own forms; so of a dream or vision; 2. manifest to the mind's eye, distinct:— adv. -γῶς, manifestly. 3. of words, etc., distinct, manifest]

Yet they are not such as most people believe; indeed most people are not even consistent in what they believe. It is not impious to deny the gods that most people believe in, but to ascribe to the gods what most people believe. The things that most people say about the gods are based on false assumptions, not a firm grasp of the facts [note], because they say that the greatest goods and the greatest harms come from the gods. For since they are at home with what is best about themselves, they accept that which is similar and consider alien that which is different.