

Reverence and Awe In Epicurean Philosophy

Post by "Martin" of November 2, 2020 at 6:02 AM

I am very late commenting in this thread because the topic does not interest me that much and religion can be very divisive. Here is my addition to some aspects of the discussion:

Epicurus saw no sensory evidence of gods, attributed the knowledge humans claimed to have of them to inner perceptions and stated that the gods were not supernatural. 2300 years ago, this did not constitute a contradiction.

Meanwhile, we have dramatically extended our senses with corroborated detailed scientific models and reliable instruments. As material beings, gods are not excluded from scientific examination.

Today's science refutes Epicurus' internal imagery of gods because no such special image particles are detectable.

Moreover, the spread of information through particles, waves or fields is essentially diluted by a law following the inverse of the square of the distance.

With the huge distances to the neighboring galaxies, solar systems and even planets in our own solar system, large telescopes are needed to produce images as demonstrated by our astronomers.

Our fairly detailed knowledge of anatomy leaves no space for such inner telescopes for internal perception.

The religions which have arisen in different cultures may have some overlap but they are mutually exclusive.

Taking the inner sensations of something god-like as relating to some actually existing being has produced thousands of cults contradicting about every other belief over the course of history and more cults keep springing up.

This indicates that there are no actually existing gods to which the religions/cults refer, no matter whether the gods are considered to be natural or supernatural.

Even within the same culture/religion, reasoning of different "priests" has typically led to a further splitting into more and more mutually exclusive sects.

The strength of the inner sensation of a god by people who have been or have themselves conditioned for this has probably been the driving factor of the waves of atrocities committed by religionists who misinterpret these inner sensations as factual evidence.

The global occurrence of religions is indicative of a genetic disposition to look for awe-inspiring beings. This science-based explanation refutes the claim that the perceived gods actually exist.

Modern science is a branched out further development of some parts of Epicurus' philosophy. Applying these principles of Epicurus' philosophy has lead to the refutation of Epicurus' imagery of gods into a supersensory brain as of today's science (with no claim on what future science may reveal in an unexpected twist).

Pleasure is central to Epicurus' philosophy, not the divine. Therefore, abandoning the conclusion from inner perceptions to existence of gods is preferred over keeping a revealed major inconsistency in the philosophy. This is similar to the much less controversial abandoning of other refuted parts of Epicurus' physics.

Other than postulating the existence of alien species (for which we might find tentative evidence at best but which would most likely be too far away to communicate with or travel to) and interpreting gods conceived by humans as symbolism, there is nothing credible left in Epicurus' gods.

In conclusion, there is nothing important left in Epicurus' gods other than the historic aspect for complete understanding of ancient Epicurean philosophy.

This does not need to prevent us from joyful participation in religious ceremonies and deriving pleasure from inner perceptions of imaginary gods.