

# Reverence and Awe In Epicurean Philosophy

Post by "Cassius" of November 2, 2020 at 7:58 AM

This is just an interim comment while I am thinking about it. I'd like to comment on this key sentence:

## [Quote from Martin](#)

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.

In being clear about what Epicurus' position was (rather than my own) I would like to address each clause there:

- (1) Epicurus saw no sensory evidence of gods,
- (2) (Epicurus) attributed the knowledge humans claimed to have of them to inner perceptions and
- (3) (Epicurus) stated that the gods were not supernatural.

Of these, I think (3) is absolutely and emphatically correct and any assertion to the contrary would hardly be worth the time of discussing.

Item (2) I think is quite likely incomplete. As written, it is likely a reference to "anticipations/preconceptions" despite the choice to use the term "inner perceptions." I am not sure that "inner perception" is an adequate way to refer to the full scope of anticipations, but more so than that, this presumes the answer to the debate and presumes that anticipations are the result of images. It seems to me the texts are pretty clear that there are two separate phenomena to consider (1) the receipt of images by the brain, and (2) a faculty which per the Velleius text is more of an "unfolding" or "etching" present at birth and prior to experience. I am thinking that these are distinct phenomena, and that "anticipations" are not simply something created by experiences after birth, so as written I would say item (2) is accurate so far as it goes, but incomplete.

Item (1) involves for me the definition of the word "sensory." This is pretty much the same issue as just discussed. Did Epicurus consider what we refer to in the word "sensory" to be limited to taste, touch, sight, sound, and smell? Or would the other two legs (anticipations and feeling) constitute something that we should consider under our own contemporary use of the word "sensory"? Since I am not ready to take a position on what we should consider the full meaning of the word "sensory" I am not able to say that I fully agree with item (1).