

Scientism, Atheism, And The Admissibility Of Spiritual Experience

Post by "Cassius" of November 2, 2020 at 10:25 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

If the religious practitioner is experiencing pleasure and bliss, do we tell them "No, you're not actually experiencing pleasure and bliss. You're doing it wrong!" If they don't have fear of their God, are they doing it wrong?

"Doing it wrong" is difficult to say. However if they are leaving open the possibility that these experiences are based on presumptions that would leave the path open to a supernatural god having created the universe and manipulating human experience and all that follows from that, I think it would be fair to say that these people are creating conditions that in all likelihood would lead them down paths that would cause significant pain to them later on. That is what comes to mind from the caveats in this passage from Torquatus:

"The truth of the position that pleasure is the ultimate good will most readily appear from the following illustration. Let us imagine a man living in the continuous enjoyment of numerous and vivid pleasures alike of body and of mind, undisturbed either by the presence or by the prospect of pain: what possible state of existence could we describe as being more excellent or more desirable? One so situated must possess in the first place a strength of mind that is proof against all fear of death or of pain; he will know that death means complete unconsciousness, and that pain is generally light if long and short if strong, so that its intensity is compensated by brief duration and its continuance by diminishing severity. Let such a man moreover have no dread of any supernatural power; let him never suffer the pleasures of the past to fade away, but constantly renew their enjoyment in recollection, and his lot will be one which will not admit of further improvement."

There's also that other passage for which I always forget the cite, which is to the effect that those who turn their attention to the stars and start the investigation but do who leave open the possibility of supernatural creation are as bad off or worse as those who never start the investigation. Seems to me that this investigation of divinity has the same pitfall - if it opens doors to possibilities that would undermine the foundations that have been previously established, then it is dangerous for the person who is on that path without keeping the premises in mind.