



On the Nature of the Gods

Marcus Tullius Cicero

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Cicero is one of the very few important Roman citizens that history has maintained a truly detailed account of. A learned philosopher, orator, lawyer and politician, Cicero amazed his peers through his sharp intellect and knowledge of Roman law, as well as Greek and Roman philosophy. *On the Nature of the Gods* (De Natura Deorum) is one of his most well-known works, a lengthy philosophical dialogue on the nature of religion and thought, as it was understood at the time by some of the most significant schools of thought contemporary to Cicero. The dialogue examines what can be considered one of the most controversial and difficult to approach topics of all time, and uses Epicurean, Stoic and skeptical theories to present its claims and counterclaims. Cicero himself masterfully narrates the entire dialogue, and while he does not play an active role in the discussion, his thoughts are reflected throughout the dialogue as some of the most insightful of any philosophical writing, even after his time. Philosophers who lived more than 1500 years later actively examined and inspired themselves from Cicero's dialogue, and it remains quite a genuine and valuable philosophical work today, aside from its obvious historical value, due to its supplementation of earlier Epicurean and Stoic texts that have scarcely survived the sands of time. Cicero's conclusions in *On the Nature of the Gods* reflect the views of many other enlightened thinkers before and after his time, pointing out that violence, anger and hate were never part of the nature of the Gods, while true Divinity expresses itself through immortal values of blessedness and benevolence. The dialogue also explores different views on the concepts of "gods" and "beliefs" themselves, thoroughly dissecting every aspect of religion, and breaking them down to their core elements. Anyone who enjoys a heated philosophical discussion featuring deep, meaningful and insightful comments on the nature of reality and divinity will definitely enjoy this detailed portrayal of ancient beliefs and wisdom.

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