

# Epicureanism as the spiritual essence or 'religion' of an entire community

Post by “Peter Konstans” of January 17, 2024 at 9:52 AM

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The spirit of Epicureanism is of course inclusive. Cicero would want education only for the 'good families'. I want basic education for everyone (although basic doesn't include things like algebra and grammar for me) and I want advanced education for talented people regardless of social background. I don't want a distinction between schools for working class families and schools for rich people. In fact I would prefer to abolish private schools altogether. So I think I have more in common with you in the way I view education than with Cicero.

Now we're getting somewhere. Thank you for that clarification. That helps me understand your position a little better.

My follow up question is "What would you include in your 'basic education'?" Epicurus certainly wrote against παιδεία (paideia), the standard form of "education" or (better translated, in my opinion) "enculturation" of his time.

That's true but education always has enculturation elements in it. That's because education is a form of propaganda. Epicurus' rejection of paedia reflects his rejection of the values of the society he lived in.

Basic education would include everything in the following text. It's an adapted text from Xenophon taken from an ancient Greek language textbook intended for the use of Greek pupils.

Ἐν Αθήναις τοὺς παῖδας μετ' ἐπιμελείας διδάσκουσι καὶ νουθετοῦσι. Πρῶτον μὲν καὶ τροφὸς καὶ μήτηρ καὶ παιδαγωγὸς καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ πατήρ ἐπιμελοῦνται ὅπως βέλτιστος γενήσεται ὁ παῖς, διδάσκοντες ὅτι τὸ μὲν δίκαιον, τὸ δὲ ἄδικον καὶ τόδε μὲν καλόν, τόδε δὲ αἰσχρόν ἐστι. Εἶτα δέ, ἐπειδὴν οἱ παῖδες εἰς ἡλικίαν ἔλθωσιν, οἱ γονεῖς εἰς διδασκάλων πέμπουσιν, ἔνθα οἱ μὲν γραμματιστὰι ἐπιμελοῦνται ὅπως γράμματα μάθωσιν καὶ τὰ γεγραμμένα ἐννοῶσι, οἱ δὲ κιθαριστὰι τῷ κιθαρίζειν ἡμερωτέρους αὐτοὺς ποιεῖν πειρῶνται καὶ τὰς τῶν παίδων ψυχὰς πρὸς τὸν ῥυθμὸν καὶ τὴν ἄρμονίαν οἰκιοῦσι. Ἔτι οἱ παῖδες ἐν γυμνασίοις καὶ παλαίστραις φοιτῶσιν, ἔνθα οἱ παιδοτρίβαι βελτίω τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ποιοῦσι, ἵνα μὴ ἀναγκάζωνται ἀποδειλιᾶν διὰ τὴν τῶν σωμάτων πονηρίαν.

So basic education would include teaching right and wrong according to Epicureanism, (Epicurean enculturation) learning to read and write, learning musical instruments as well as strenuous physical education and sports. It would resemble a 'ludus' i. e. a disciplined playing ground of sorts for young people. It would not have the character of a boring academy.