

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

Post by “Eikadistes” of March 26, 2025 at 3:15 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

We do not have evidence of any of the above in ancient Epicureans, and the extant texts of Epicurus do not provide any guidance for this.

I think we have a lot of material from the Epicureans, but, from our eyes (I'm speaking from mine, in particular), Epicurean spirituality doesn't look like "spirituality" because of the historical victory of anti-Epicureans in appropriating terminology. "Spirituality" in general, *should* mean something closer to "psychology", but, instead, has taken on the connotation of "metaphysics" and "mysticism". "Religion" should mean something more like "wisdom tradition", but is often weaponized to mean "Proper Observance of The God". Still, I think we qualify:

- **Beliefs and Practices:**

Religions typically involve a set of beliefs about the nature of reality (**countless particles in an infinite void**), the divine (**blessedness, defined as pure, uninterrupted pleasure**), and the afterlife (**a non-conscious re-arrangement of particles**), along with practices like prayer (**heavily encouraged by Epicurus and Philodemus in *On Piety***), rituals (**civic festivals such as the *City Dionysia* and *Anthesteria* as well as personal cults to deceased family members and close friends**), and ceremonies (**Eikas and Hegemon Day**).

- **Sacred Things:**

Durkheim's definition emphasizes the concept of "sacred things," which are objects, places, or ideas that are set apart and treated with reverence and respect. (**Greece in general and Athens in particular, for its historical significant based on the salvific mortals who lived there, as well as using pictures of our Leaders as decorations. We treat Herculaneum, itself, as a sort of necropolis, and privilege true knowledge over vain fantasies, as well as referring to bad habits as "sins" that must be extinguished to protect our happiness**).

- **Moral Codes:**

Many religions also include a system of ethics or moral guidelines that dictate how individuals should behave and interact with others. **(The Epistle to Menoikeus covers the general guidelines en masse, and the fragments provide specific pieces of advice, such as a general warning against holding political office, rejecting betraying friends, approving of sacrifice for loved ones, and caution against careless attitudes toward casual sex).**

- **Community:**

Religion often fosters a sense of community among believers, who share common beliefs and practices. **(This is something the Epicurean tradition does *better* than other traditions, and may be seen as one of the founding traditions that emphasized a unique, community of initiates who lived together. Though, they were not judgmentally exclusive. The primary rituals of our tradition are communal. We are encouraged to study with others along with ourselves. Our holidays are meant to be shared).**

- **Worship:**

While not always a defining feature, many religions involve the worship of a deity or deities. **(Epicurean worship looks different than most other forms of worship. I think that's fair. Our expressions of deity-worship look a bit more like Jain and Buddhist expressions, minus the intensive, psycho-psychical, meditative practices), but, again, the culture in which we live sometimes even rejects Jains and Buddhists as proper examples of religious worshippers, so ... this is being gate-kept by Jews, Christians, and Muslims. That's my biggest comment on this section. Science is its own form of spirituality. Deities don't have to be magical, and worship doesn't have to be wish-fulfillment.)**

I think we check all of the boxes.