

Marriage & children seem less pleasurable today: financial worry, relational problems, high rates of divorce. Are they worth the pain (tarakhē τάραχή) they entail?

Post by “Elli” of July 2, 2026 at 1:40 PM

Hello to all epicurean friends, 😊

Dear Raphael, sorry but your whole text is a measurement of turmoil, not pleasure. You count taxes, cost of living, politics, technology, decline, demographics, robots, migration, feminism, MGTOW, Schopenhauer, Augustus, Rome, Nietzsche, the West , but you do not count yourself. Epicurus says that every desire must be judged by the pleasure it brings and the disturbance it creates. You judge having children in terms of the market, not in terms of the Canon.

Physiology (biology) is clear; it has an unforgiving law: children are the future of the city. Without children, society dies. Lucretius describes how human nature softened when people first saw their children; children created friendship, empathy, cooperation. Biology, anthropology, and history agree: children are not a “cost,” they are a bond. They are the natural root of human sociality.

And here we must see something else: you invoke Schopenhauer - a man who saw the world through his personal trauma. Schopenhauer looked at his relationship with his mother, felt rejection and turmoil, and concluded that “the world is will and representation” and that life is suffering. But this is not the physiology of the world - it is the projection of his own psychological condition onto the world. Epicurus (the physician) would tell him: “If your mother did not love you, that is a condition that cannot be changed now, but it does not mean that nature is evil or that love is a trap. It simply means that you never learned to build the community that would support you.” Trauma is not philosophy; it is an obstacle. And when trauma becomes ideology, philosophy stops healing and starts fortifying. When we say “marriage is a trap,” we no longer need to risk rejection. When we say “everything is decline,” we no longer need to try to build anything. It becomes a convenient empty belief that protects us from the pain of possible failure.

But the Canon does not impose having children; it measures it. If having children increases your pleasure, have children. If it increases your turmoil, do not. A child is not an economic act; it is a desire. And every desire is judged by the pleasure and the disturbance it brings - not by its cost.

And here lies the real problem: if we are afraid, it is because we are alone. Our turmoil is not biological; it is socially constructed. It is borrowed from a society that supports no one. Epicurus said it clearly: "When the wise man limits himself to what is natural and necessary, he knows more how to give than to receive; such a treasure of self-sufficiency he has found." Self-sufficiency does not mean isolation; it means friendship. It means community. It means people who share burdens. It means you are not afraid to give, because you are not afraid of being left alone.

You measure having children inside a society that has dissolved into individuals without face and without identity - an amorphous mass. That is why it seems like a burden. When you live in a society where everyone is alone, where there are no communities, no support networks, no stable friendships, no functioning family structures, when everything has become individual and nothing is shared, then every burden feels unbearable. But in Epicurus' Garden, having children is not a burden; it is an act of pleasure. There, the children of friends are the children of all, the community shares the burden, friendship provides security, and giving creates self-sufficiency.

And here comes something very simple: even if you do not want children, you do not live in a vacuum. Some of your friends will have children. Some of your relatives will have children. Some people around you will carry burdens that you do not carry. And you, says Epicurus - as someone who wants to be wise and self-sufficient - can offer help. Do you know what pleasure you will gain from that? The pleasure of participation, of care, of community. The pleasure Epicurus describes: to give more than you take. Unless you do not want to help either friends or relatives, but then you go against one of the most beautiful Epicurean sayings: LXI.(61) "Beautiful indeed is our relationship with those around us, and especially with our relatives, who because of this become even more willing." Friendship and kinship are not burdens; they are sources of pleasure. And offering help to the children of friends and relatives is an act of self-sufficiency, not an act of cost.

Epicurean ethics shows that having children is not a burden when there is community. In his will, Epicurus cared for the children of his friends: he gave them guardianship, financial support, moral support. In the Garden, children are not a private matter; they are a shared responsibility. Friendship reduces the turmoil of having children. Community shares the burden. Community protects children. Community gives security. Community gives pleasure. Community gives a future.

Nietzsche said it clearly: "Unhappy marriages do not come from lack of love, but from lack of friendship." If you find friendship, you find companionship. If you find companionship, you find security. If you find security, having children is not a burden; it is pleasure. Friendship is the greatest security. Friendship is the foundation of self-sufficiency. Friendship is the foundation of the future.

In short, Epicurean philosophy says: Measure, and have children if it increases your pleasure. Do not have children if it increases your turmoil. And if you do not want children, offer help to the children of your friends and relatives - you will find a treasure of self-sufficiency. And if you want children but are afraid, find a community or create one yourself. Friendship reduces

turmoil and creates homeostasis. Community gives security. Security gives pleasure. And pleasure is wealth, because it is the foundation of life - the foundation that gives a future!