

# Episode 216 - Cicero's On Ends - Book Two - Part 23 - Why Does Epicurus Say Length Of Time Does Not Contribute To Pleasure?

Post by "Bryan" of March 2, 2024 at 7:40 PM

*If every Pleasure was fully condensed in time and also existed in the whole organism -- or [at least] in the most important parts of its nature -- then Pleasures would never differ from one another. (KD 9)*

Another argument using negative assumptions, showing that the opposite is true. This statement is in part a response to the view of the Κυρηναϊκοί (Cyrenaics), following Ἀρίστιππος ὁ Κυρηναῖος (Aristippus of Cyrene), that (1) pleasures do not differ from one another, (2) one pleasure is not more or less pleasant than another, and (3) any particular pleasure is momentary, unable to be prolonged. This incorrect understanding leads to indiscrimination in choosing pleasures.

In reality, even though pleasure cannot be increased beyond the absence of pain, pleasures are variable in duration (from momentary to continuous) and location (affecting different parts of the body, including the mind) and have different qualities. Therefore, discrimination is required in choosing pleasures.

κατεπυκνοῦτο "was fully condensed" sg imperf ind, from κατα·πυκνώ-[καταπύκνειν]: to pack tightly, compress, fill up; consider κατά·πυκνος-κατάπυκνος-κατάπυκνον: thick, close together; ἢ καταπύκνωσις-[τῆς καταπυκνώσεως]: condensation, densification; from πυκνώω "to thicken, condense." Consider ἢ πύκνωσις-πυκνώσεως: condensation, aggregation.

Consider «...πρὸς τοὺς ἐκ τῶν νεφῶν φάσκοντας **πυκνουμένων** τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος φύσιν ἀποτελεῖσθαι - καὶ νομίζοντας καὶ τοῦτο σημεῖον εἶναι ὡς ἐκ μιᾶς φύσεως ἅπαντα γίνεται **πυκνώσει** καὶ ἀραιώσει παρεξαλλαττούσης τὸν ἀέρα. (On Nature, Book 14, P.Herc. 1148, column 27, Fragment 6) ...to those who assert that the condensation of clouds results in the formation of water - and believe this to be a sign that everything is made from a single nature through the processes of condensation and rarefaction affecting the air.»

The prefix "κατα-" formed a technical term that seems to have been associated with Ἐπίκουρος. It is used mockingly by Ἀθήναιος (Athenaeus), author of Δειπνοσοφισταί (Deipnosophistae, Dinner Sophists), saying «Ἐπίκουρος οὕτω **κατεπύκνου** τὴν ἡδονήν' - ἐμασᾶτ' ἐπιμελῶς. Εἶδε τὰγαθὸν μόνος ἐκεῖνος οἶόν ἐστιν (Δειπνοσοφισταί 3.103b) Ἐπίκουρος

*in this way 'condensed pleasure' – he chewed attentively. He was the only one who knew what the good is.»*

Ἀλκίφρων (Alciphron), in his fictional letters, uses the word in association with Ἐπίκουρος «*Τοῖτο εἶναι 'τὸ τῆς σαρκὸς ἀόχλητον' καὶ 'τὴν **καταπύκνωσιν** τοῦ ἡδομένου'* (Τὰ Ἀλκιφρονεῖα 3.19.8) *This is 'the lack of disturbance of the flesh' this is 'the condensation of the pleased.'*»