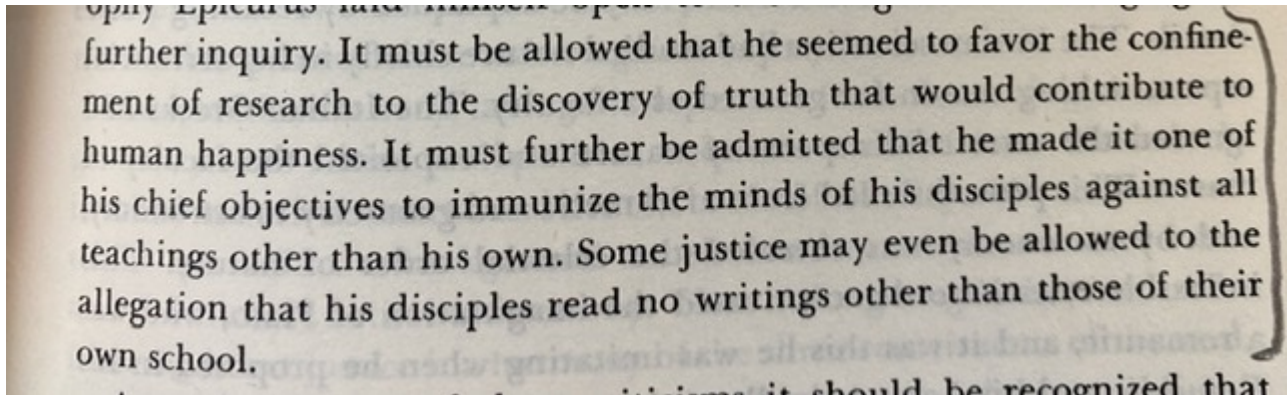


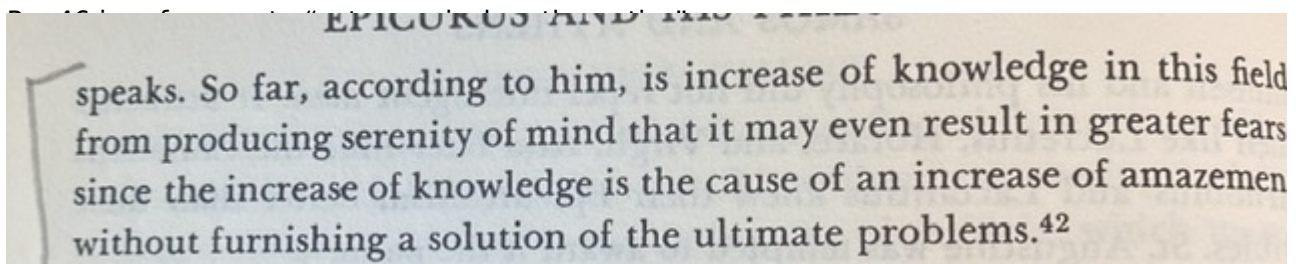
The Dangers of Misdirected Increase of Knowledge

Post by "Susan Hill" of October 9, 2020 at 10:10 AM

I have been very interested in some recent comments by members that touch upon an issue acknowledged by DeWitt in the following passages:



...further inquiry. It must be allowed that he seemed to favor the confinement of research to the discovery of truth that would contribute to human happiness. It must further be admitted that he made it one of his chief objectives to immunize the minds of his disciples against all teachings other than his own. Some justice may even be allowed to the allegation that his disciples read no writings other than those of their own school.



...speaks. So far, according to him, is increase of knowledge in this field from producing serenity of mind that it may even result in greater fears since the increase of knowledge is the cause of an increase of amazement without furnishing a solution of the ultimate problems.⁴²

This really hits the nail on the head as to why so much of metaphysics, eastern and western, has caused me grief, and why I am here!

Metaphysical theories, unsubstantiated by normal human perception and observation, are widely used to delineate entire systems of ethics, codes of behaviour, and ascetic disciplines, that for the sincere adherent, are meant to inform every moment of every day. In many cases, if one does not experience any benefit from following such teachings in this life, it is said to be because salvation is only to be experienced in the next life, or many lives down the road.

In this way, one may spend an entire lifetime in devoted study and contemplation of a theology or metaphysics that may have a mountain of books written about it by very intelligent people, yet have no practical value or means of personal verification in this lifetime. (I submit that this

could also apply to the “spooky” stuff we get out of modern quantum theory.)

My feeling is that EVEN THOUGH some of the claims of quantum theory, Advaita Vedanta, Buddhism, Platonism, or take your pick, MIGHT be correct, it does not serve us to endlessly study these things, or to ever prefer their teachings to those that can be confirmed by personal experience. It fills us with doubt and confusion and affords us no practical benefit.

My question is, do you agree with Epicurus that some areas of knowledge should be taboo to us as a waste of time and effort, and as harmful to our health and happiness? Also, have you ever had an experience of investing a great deal of time and effort into learning something, the knowledge of which proved harmful?