

# Welcome Susan Hill!

**Post by “Joshua” of September 26, 2020 at 7:35 PM**

Welcome, Susan! It seems like ages since the Bhagavat Gita and the Upanishads were part of my regular reading ☐☐.

I do come from a background of intense interest in Buddhism. That was—to borrow a term—in another life, so I don't know how helpful I'll be. I expect you will have things to teach us!

As a student of Vedanta, you are already trained to understand a few of the most important Epicurean conclusions about consciousness. The first is that human consciousness cannot reasonably be unique. The Śramaṇas of India understood this well; any theory of consciousness that attempts to explain the human mind must also account for the mind of the rat in the sewers. It won't do to say that we are special; Epicurus believed that we are *all* sprung from celestial seed. Our minds emerge spontaneously from indestructible matter. Since matter is thought to be infinite, the number of conscious beings is thought to be infinite as well.

The second conclusion we share with Vedanta is that other minds are worth studying as a healthful practice for our own minds. There are minds as far exceeding ours in capability as ours exceed other mammals. The gods, if such exist, must be fully natural—not so far unlike ourselves. And if they pass their days in deepest happiness, as Epicurus reasoned they must, then they are a fit subject for human contemplation. Life is a long struggle in the dark, said Lucretius; and yet with philosophy, we may learn to rival Zeus in happiness. We also benefit from the honor we bestow on the wise.

There are many other comparisons to be made, and the disagreements between Epicurus and the schools of the East are broad as well as deep. But it is a promising position to start from!

Joshua