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## SIMILARITIES IN BHAGVAD GITA AND THE HOLY QURAN

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
<b>Article History</b> Published Online:	<p>There is a striking similarity in the teachings of Sri Krishnji in Bhagvad Gita and the teachings of the Qur'an. The characteristics of the two scriptures have great similarity. But what is more important is that there are commonalities in the teachings of Shri Bhagvad Gita and the Holy Qur'an in the matters of world view, concept of Man and in their vision of ideal Ethics. In this Papers, we in tend to deal with them. The main Characteristic of Islam is that it is Religion of the Middle Way having Realistic Worldview. Gita's teaching also advocate Middle way and the Realistic Worldview (1)</p>
<b>Keywords:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Gita,</li><li>➤ Qur'an</li><li>➤ Religious worldvie w</li><li>➤ concept of Man,</li><li>➤ concept of God,</li><li>➤ Commonalities among Religions</li></ul>	



## 1. COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

There are striking similarities between Bhagvad Gita and the Holy Qur'an in the matters of style. Here we point to some of these similarities.

### 2(a) Clarity

The first quality that strikes is its instant appeal for all, for Hindu and non-Hindu, for Pandit and a layman, for old and young alike. This is unique among all world Scriptures.

Rig Veda is no doubt highest Scripture of Hindu Religion. But if we are reading and studying Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Atharva Veda through translation, we may understand its greatness as the first Religious Book of Mankind, a religious monument of five thousand years before, but its greatness will not be grasped unless you have a commentary of a person like Swami Dayanand or Sri Auribindo. Upanishad no doubt greatest and most profound treasure of India's mystic thought, but even its greatness can be understood, only if you are reading with a commentary of a person like Dr Radhakrishnan or if you are well acquainted with its profound Philosophy.

The Quran is a miracle of Arabic language. Arabs were struck by its style instantly. Such was its flow and greatness that the Arabs accepted Islam just after hearing a few verses of the Holy Qur'an. But uniqueness of Gita among all world Scriptures is that even if you read Gita through translation you are struck by its greatness without help of the commentary or explanation.

This is something that has struck to me personally.

### 2. Comprehensiveness

The second quality of Gita is its comprehensiveness. This is also the Quality of the Quran.



These two Scriptures not only contain Hymns, Theosophy and Philosophy, rituals methods but are uniquely comprehensive and contain all aspects of life.

Gita contain all aspects of religion and life.

It is said by Islamic theologians that religion consists of four components –

Aqaid or beliefs

Ahkam or precepts of worship and norms of individual and social life.

Akhlaq or Ethics

And Irfan or Spirituality.

Gita contains guidance about all this

Major Aqaid or beliefs: belief in God, about the Saintly and Divinely guides, and about ways of salvation and Afterlife.

Gita has clear exposition about all of these.

Philosophy consists of world view, concept of Man and Philosophy of History. Gita has clear teachings about each of them.

Ways of salvation can be devotion, action and Meditation. Gita gives most eloquent concept of all these,

Norms can be personal norms or social norms. Gita gives guidance about each of them. The Qur'an is called a miracle not due to its matchless Arabic style and diction only but also due to comprehensiveness of its teaching. Gita is also a miracle of Comprehensiveness.

### 3. Practicability

One of the unique qualities of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an is their Practical nature. Some other Scriptures contain very beautiful teachings but they are not practical.

If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn the other cheek towards him. This is very beautiful, but is it practical. Likewise Biblical teaching "Judge ye not that ye shall not be judged" is very



beautiful and profound, but it is not practical to shut courts and abolish panel law.

### **SIMILARITIES IN WORLVIEW:**

More important than similarities in the style, are the similarities in the teaching of Sri Gita and the Holy Qur'an in the matters of worldview and concept of Man.

Here we point out some of these similarities. (2)

#### **Advocating the Middle Way**

Lastly, we come to the final characteristic of the Qur'an and Bhagvad Gita. That is the secret why Gita and the Quran are suited for today's Man. These are the Scriptures that advocate the MIDDLE WAY. This is main quality of the teachings of the Qur'an and it is also one of the main characteristics of the teachings of Sri Krishn ji.

At the very outset of the second (Part), the Qur'an declares that Islam is the 'Middle Way' and the Islamic civilization the 'Middle Civilization'<sup>1</sup> Prof Ali Mohammad Naqvi has propounded the theory in his book Islam: the Middle Way, which is Commentary on the 2nd Part of the Qur'an. According to his theory, there are three worldviews.

Idealistic

Materialistic

Realistic

#### **Idealistic Perspective is one extreme.**

- This Perspective considers the spirit as the only reality of the universe and denies the authenticity of the existence of matter.
- It regards man as purely a spiritual being and neglects body.

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- It advocates suppression of man's bodily urges and physical instincts.
- It belittles the earthly existence of man and is concerned only with the otherworldly salvation
- Social life, politics, prosperity, even social justice is considered of little consequence.
- This outlook negates science and technology, because these are thought to be concerned with worldly pursuits.

#### **Materialistic Perspective:**

The other extreme is the Material Perspective

- This Perspective, considers matter the only reality of the universe
- It considers man as nothing more than a physical entity
- It lays exclusive emphasis on the worldly success and progress of man.
- It is concerned only with economy, politics, technology and sciences or with money, power, affluence and earthly well being.

#### **Realistic Perspective of the Middle Path:**

The third world view that of Middle Way, which we call Realistic, because it considers both Spirit and Matter, Soul and body as 'real'.

- Unlike Idealistic or Materialistic Perspectives, the Realistic Perspective neither denies the reality of the 'Matter', nor the reality of the 'Spirit'.
- It considers man neither as a purely spiritual being nor a pure physical being, but as a two-dimensional being.
- It neither denies the importance of body and the physical instincts of man, nor the importance of soul and the spiritual needs of the human beings.



- . In this outlook, the main emphasis is on the spiritual and the religious aspects of life, but, as described earlier, it is also concerned with social, political and economic affairs of man.
- The Realistic Perspective not only believes in need for meditations, godliness and religion but also in promoting science and technology. It is concerned with ‘Theology’ and ‘Technology’ both, former as a means, while later as a goal.

The main Characteristic of Islam is that it is Religion of the Middle Way having Realistic Worldview. Gita’s teaching also advocate Middle way and the Realistic Worldview.

It is usually hold that Hindu Philosophy is Idealistic and denies reality r importance of matter and body, considering them Maya or delusion.

But Sri Krishna’s teachings in Gita are realistic recognizing reality of both, the spirit and the matter, soul and body.

- In the 13<sup>th</sup> Adhyay Sri Krishna affirms reality of Prakrity, Purush both, though Purush is ultimate reality
- In Adhyay 13, Ashloka 19 it is said: Purush and Prakriti are beginingless.(4)
- In Adhyaya 15 Gita says the interaction of spirit and matter has evolved the world process.
- In the Adhyaya 15 Ashlok 16 Gita speaks about two Purush-imperishable and perishable, Prakriti is Perishable. But both are spoken as having reality. However, Ultimate Reality is over them Asloka (5) .



### Soul and Body

In its concept of Man , ; Realism affirms both Soul and body, Spiritual and Physical existence of Man. This is viewpoint of the Quran and this is also viewpoint of Gita.

- In Adhyay 13, Sri Krishna affirms both.
- In Ashlok one Adhyay 13 Sri Krishna says: This body is the field (6)
- In Ashloka 3 it is asked what is field, what is its nature. (7)
- In the Ashlok 5 and five the senses and five organs of senses or ten indriyas all are referred. So these have reality. (8)
- Prakriti has its modes or gunas . In Adhyaya 14 three guns Rajas, Tamas and Sattva are spoken. Important point is that all have reality.
- In Ashloka 5 of Adhyaya 14, it is said: Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas these gunas arise from Prakriti.(9)
- In Ashloka 20 of Adhyaya 13 it is said Prakriti is the cause of body ad senses, Purush cause of pleasure of pain. Clearly body and soul are spoken as both real. (10)
- Ashloka 21 says Purush abides in Prakriti.
- **But ultimate Reality is the Atman what is called in the Quran Nafakha-e Ilahi, the Divine Spark in Man.**
- Sri Auribindo says, according to Gita, soul of man is an eternal portion of the Godhead (11) )
- Spoken in Ashloka 31 Being without beginning, devoid of gunas, that Supreme Self is immutable

### Gives recognition to man's angelic and demonic nature

In the Islamic perspective also man has two natures and two possibilities *Mahiyate Malakuti* and *Mahiate Haiwani*. We can say *Mahiate ilahi* and *mahiate shaitani*,. It is exactly what Gita



says. Gita especially in Chapter 16 speaks about Divine and Demonical qualities of Man.

- The Yogi who's Unconscious is full of impressions based on Sattwa, begins to develop Divine qualities, which are known as Daivi sampat while those who are accumulated with impressions based on Rajas and Tamas they develop demonic qualities.
- In the 6: 1 and 2 Sri Krishna ji enumerate these qualities. In this Chapter Gita enumerates moral qualities of Divine Nature (12) In Islam they are called Karaim-e Akhlāqī
- Gita recognizes Man has higher Nature and the lower nature. In Adhyay 4 Sri Krishna emphasizes that the lower self must be controlled by the higher Self. All the lower impulses of the body,
- Mind and senses must be controlled by the power of the higher Self. Then the higher Self becomes one's friend. He who has perfect control of the body, mind and senses and is united with God,
- In the Chapter 16 verse 4 Sri Krishna ji says:
- He who is born with demonic nature in him, these qualities manifest: hypocrisy, conceit, pride, anger, harsh speech and ignorance. (13)

### **Worldly Success and Spiritual Salvation**

While The Idealistic traditions shun progress in science and technology and consider meditation and spiritual development only the worthwhile. But the Realistic- Islamic point of view teaches a person to seek development of science and technology and also the development of spirit. Both are considered

The Qur'an says:





"There are men who say: give us bounty in this World; they will have no share in the Hereafter. And there are some men who say: Our Lord! Give to us in this-World." Such men will have no share in the World to come. And there is who say: Our Lord! Give to us in this World, 'good' and 'good' in the World to come, and guard us from the punishment of Fire. They will have a share from what they earn .God is swift at the reckoning “. This is the true Muslim's prayer

The Islamic Realistic point of view is unique in this respect. Islam is the only religion, which ensures prosperity of this world and the salvation of the other-world. Islam is the only religion, which satisfies the hunger and thirst of spirit, at the same time preserving and promoting science and technology.

#### **Gita asks for Active participation in worldly life.**

- In Adhyay 3, Sri Krishna tells Arjuna although one has realized oneness with the eternal, one has to perform action through the force of Prakriti or Nature. . In this Adhyay , Sri Krishna ji tells Arjuna that The Lord tells Arjuna that each one should do his duty according to his nature, and that doing duty that is suited to one’s nature in the right spirit of detachment will lead to perfection.
- Islamic teachings say that all worldly actions become a religious and metamorphosis into spiritual, if they are done to please God.
- In Gita same is teaching of Sri Krishna ji in Adhyay 3 .perfection is attained not by ceasing to engage in action but by doing all actions as a divine offering, imbued with a spirit of non-attachment and sacrifice.



- In Adhyay 3 Ashlok 8, Sri Krishna says: Do thou perform thy bounden duty, for action is superior to inaction and even the maintenance of the body would not be possible for thee by inaction. (14)

### Spiritual Pursuits and Worldly Pursuits

- In Islam spiritual pursuits and worldly pursuits, like business and trade can be taken side by side. The Qur'an says: *There is no harm if you seek the bounty of your Lord, when you leave 'Arafāt.*
- In Gita, especially in the Adhyay 6, Sri Krishna has made it clear that Sri Krishna emphasizes once again that the Yogi or Sannyasin is one who has renounced the fruits of actions, not the actions themselves. In Ashloka 1 , he says: . He who performs his bounden duty without depending on the fruits of his actions—he is a Sannyasin and a Yogi, not he who is without fire and without action.

### Live in the world and enjoy it without attachment.

Gita and the Quran do not shun possession or availing worldly things but ask that we should not develop attachment to them.

The *Gita* again and again emphasizes that one should cultivate an attitude of non-attachment or detachment. It urges repeatedly that an individual should live in the world like water on a lotus leaf. “He who does actions, offering them to Brahman and abandoning attachment, is not tainted by sin as a lotus leaf by water”—

- In Adhyay 2 Ashlok 44 ,Sri Krishna ji says: . Perform action, O Arjuna, being steadfast in Yoga, abandoning attachment and balanced in success and failure! Evenness of mind is called Yoga.(15)



- In Adhyay 2, Ashlok 57 Gita declares:. He who is everywhere without attachment, on meeting with anything good or bad, who neither rejoices nor hates, his wisdom is fixed.(16)
- In Adhyay 2 Ashlok 64 , it is said: 64. But the self-controlled man, moving amongst objects with the senses under restraint, and free from attraction and repulsion, attains to peace. (17)

Moving among the objects that is living among and using , even enjoying all worldly things , but not being attached to them.

In Ashloka 4 of Adhyay 6, Sri Krishna declares:

*When a man is not attached to the sense-objects or to actions, having renounced all thoughts, then he is said to have attained to Yoga. (18)*

### Concept of God

God is envisaged either remote or removed from people or incarnated in Man. Or only immanent with no mention that God is beyond all things. Islam believes in *tanzīh*, Absolute and finite do not meet, yet God in Islam is nearer to man than his jugular vein. In Hindu Philosophy also God is both Nirgun or tanzeehi and Sagun or Tashbihi, some schools tend to Nirgun God and some to Sagun God.

Gita treads the Middle Path. Sri Krishna both speaks about God as Sagun and as Nirgun.

God is both Personal and also universal. In Adhyaye 13, it is Sagun concept, Personal God that is dwelt. In Adhyay 9 Sri Krishna lays emphasis how he is nearer to us. The Quran also says: God is nearer from the jugular vein

. The Quran dwells on God's transcendental Nature, God cannot be seen. In Adhyay 12 Gita also implies God cannot be seen. Both present this fact in allegorical form of a story. The Quran says in Sura 7 Ahzab Ayayh 143 Mūsā asks God : Show your Vision to Me. In Adhyay 12 Ashloka 4: Arjuna asked Sri



Krishna show your Universal Form Arjun said: in Please reveal to me your Imperishable form. Likewise, the Quran says in Sura 7 A'rāf, Ayay 143: Musa said to God show me your Vision قال رب ارنى انظر اليك . Sri Krishna says in Ashloka 8 You can not behold my Divine Form. The Quran says : God said to Mūsā you cannot see Me لئن ترانى . But what happened when Arjun in Gita and Mūsā in the Quran insisted for seeing God's vision?

The Gita says : in Ashloka 14 When the Divine Vision is shown, *With hair standing, and mind filled with awe. In Ashloka 45* Arjun says: *My mind is terrified with fear.* About what happened to Moses after seeing a fleeting glimpse of Divine Vision . The Quran says: When his Lord appeared on the Mountain, the mountain was rendered level and Mūsā fainted and fell. Conscious. فلما تجلى ربه للجبل جعله دكا و خر موسى صعقا

### Conclusion

We have clearly seen that there is such a striking likeness between the teachings of Gita not only about worldview, but also in respect of the concept of God. All Scriptures are from one source and have striking similarities. Because their source is one. It is the unfortunate deed of vested interests and ignorance that creates a situation of clash of civilizations and faiths.





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