The Bhagavad Gita Essay, Research Paper

Upon the reading of chapters 1-6 of the Great Scripture of Hinduism, The Bhagavad Gita (the Lord s Song ), I am completely and utterly fascinated. The story s emphasis on selfless acts, devotion, and meditation is like no other I have ever encountered before. Through the narration of Sanjaya and the conversation of Sri Krishna (Vishnu incarnate) and Prince Arjuna, the principles of Hinduism are eloquently illustrated.

In this story, the Lord Vishnu, whose duty it is to protect the universe from corruptive forces, takes the bodily form of Sri Krishna. He then lowers himself, out of love, and takes the humble position of charioteer to Prince Arjuna, a reluctant warrior. The battle is over a kingdom, one that will be, according to Price Arjuna, fruitless if it is won by the spilling of his relatives blood. Arjuna initially believes that when a family declines, ancient traditions are destroyed (Ch 1, 40-41). Though a noble belief, Sri Krishna tells him that he is incorrect. Krishna then begins to set Prince Arjuna on his path to salvation, teaching him the ways of a selfless life. The most amazing aspect of all of this, I find, is that throughout the entire story through all of Prince Arjuna s reluctance and stubborn beliefs Krishna, the deity, never abandons him. This love and devotion, shown by a deity for a subject, is amazing. It is a kind of two-way worship that I admire greatly.

The beautiful idea of the true Self, or Atman, is raised in Chapter Two. The Self is never born and therefore never dies, allowing one to work through life for the benefit of the greater good and not personal gain. This is reinforced by the idea of Java, the soul, traveling through Samsara, rebirth. This is the reasoning Krishna gives to Arjuna in order to convince him to fight for he will not actually be killing anyone. Though this seems to me like permission to murder his own relatives, I can appreciate the idea of rebirth. This ties into how one obtains a mystical union with Lord Vishnu, which is by acknowledging God within every living creature. Without having to worship formally (i.e. within a church or similar physical structure), one can observe God as being all around them. This coincides with what I have always personally believed about religion; that it is not necessary to designate a specific time and/or place to worship.

The discussion of Karma, also, caught my attention. As I had understood it, karma was that every action will have a result and those results will determine one s destiny. Sri Krishna, within The Bhagavad Gita, teaches Prince Arjuna of a way out of the cycle. Apparently, if one works selflessly and does not think of obtaining a reward, he or she will rise above karma and have obtained life s ultimate goal. This seems to deviate from the standard in other religions studied thus far.

Meditation, and the true definition of yoga, is also very appealing. The idea of temperate eating and sleeping as a virtue is similar to the beliefs of both Buddhism and Christianity, though here it is also a prerequisite for the ability to meditate. Krishna, within The Bhagavad Gita, uses meditation in his teaching of the inner side of spiritual life. Again, the love that exists within Hinduism is shown with the conversation of meditation. Prince Arjuna is unsure of his ability to progress in meditation, but Sri Krishna reassures him: Arjuna, my son, such a person will not be destroyed. No one who does good work will ever come to a bad end, either here or in the world to come (Ch. 6, 40).

My impression of Hinduism, thus far, is that this is a religion full of grace and sacredness. I find the primary beliefs to be beautiful and naturalistic and unlike any others I have observed before. On a personal note, I was mildly surprised to find that Hinduism is the first religion I have developed a complete respect for. I look forward to the reading of the rest of The Bhagavad Gita and will be interested to learn the other principles of this faith.