Compare And Contrast Socrates And Krishna Essay, Research Paper

Plato?s Socrates and, The Bhagavad Gita?s Krishna are two very important characters who have strongly impacted the lives of many. These two characters share many similar qualities, as well as many contrasting qualities. In this essay, I will thoroughly compare and contrast these two remarkable characters.

Though it seems that Krishna and Socrates were greatly dissimilar in their views and values, they did have some similarities. For example, both of them were extremely persuasive when it came to giving advice. They both had a very distinct ways of getting their points across and making others listen to them. Many people looked up to them. Another example of how the two characters are alike was the fact that they both felt that duty, both civic and spiritual, was very important. Fulfilling their duty to the gods, as well as their duty to the state, was an extremely important factor in both Socrates and Krishna?s lives.

Though they did share some similarities, Socrates and Krishna were also very dissimilar in many ways. For example, while Socrates believed in individualism, Krishna believed in collectivism. Socrates felt that people should think and live for themselves. He felt that people should come to their own conclusions. He believed in free will. By this he meant that everyone has his or her own choices in life. Socrates also believed that a man of wisdom takes individual responsibility for his actions. His most important virtue was justice. Krishna, on the other hand, believed in determinism, or necessity, not in free will. He also believed that, in contradiction to Socrates, a wise man does not take responsibility for his actions. Instead, he detaches himself from the consequences. For example, Krishna tells Arjuna to go to battle without thinking about the consequences of going to battle. Krishna feels that one should not be concerned with the results of an action, but only with the necessity to act. One should simply act on a sense on duty. Another example of how the two characters were different is seen in their attitudes toward the future. Krishna felt that the future is closed. He believed that everything is predetermined. Therefore, if one can?t do anything about a certain matter, then one should simply change one?s outlook on it. Socrates, in contrast to this, felt that the future depends on the actions one takes.

Tradition also plays a major role in both characters? lives. Socrates, after all, was accused of, and put to death for questioning tradition. Socrates wanted to reform society. He wanted to make it a better place. He did this by questioning old rituals and traditions. He persuaded people to change their lives for the better. He felt that old customs didn?t matter when it came down to living a good life. Krishna is strongly opposed to this. Tradition, for Krishna, is supposed to come first in one?s life. It is the standard. He felt that everyone should do what tradition dictates and should never question it. He felt that one?s happiness did not matter; only one?s soul mattered.

Although Socrates and Kirshna shared many similarities, they also had many differences. The most important factor in life for both was to serve god. Though they had their own different views on how to go about doing this, they both seemed to be heading in the same direction; and that would be to become one with god.