Divine Dialogues: Comparing Job And Arjuna Essay, Research Paper

There is a distinct significance for humans forming a relationship with a higher being. To some, it may to be to establish a sense of self-gratification whereas to others it may be a form of help on their road to success. In either instance, forming the relationship helps in characterizing each person whether it is through personal dialogue or individual growth. The Book of Job and the Bhagavad-Gita are two texts that explore the characterization of two men under the instruction of a deity. By examining the significance of talking to the deity, Job and Arjuna are characterized through their relationship with the deity, personal spiritual quest, and learning of nature of the divine power.

The Book of Job tells a story of an upright man who had complete faith in God. He was tested by this divine power in order to increase his faith and steadfastness. Job was one of God’s most promising servants. Job proved his devotion through the trails he encountered. He was first stripped of his animals, servants, sons and daughters. Job still showed his faithfulness and he blessed the name of the Lord. He accepted what God allowed by saying “Naked I came out of my mother’s womb, and naked I shall return thither: the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away” (Norton Anthology, 72). Although God was pleased with Job’s response, he tested him once more with the destruction of his health. His body was covered with sores from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. Yet he still believed God to be true and just and he sinned not. Job’s friends and wife tried to sway him from his beliefs, telling him to repent for he had to have offended God in some way. He knew that he had not rebelled against God and couldn’t understand why he was being punished. Job was a humble man and did not question God for his acts but requested reasoning behind it. Their conversation was very significant in this story. It was through them that Job learned that God is omnipotent and his wisdom supersedes all. Through his trials, Job became stronger.

Arjuna had a different relationship with his divine power in Bhagavad Gita. He was more forward than Job. He questioned Krishna about his purpose as a discipline man because of his lack of understanding. The significance of their conversation was to teach Arjuna how to perform an action in the spirit of sacred duty through self-discipline. He was given instruction to go into battle and fight against his kin in order preserve the world. Krishna explained to him that he had to be disciplined in self and action. He told Arjuna that “action is far inferior to the discipline of understanding” and he could find a sense of safety in the knowledge of knowing that (Norton Anthology, 618). Arjuna questioned Krishna’s words whereas Job lived by God’s. He did not have as much faith in his deity as Job. Discipline over himself and his actions would sustain Arjuna more as a human. If he had control over his mind and thoughts, then he would have control over his sins. Arjuna’s relationship with his deity differed from Job’s because he didn’t have to suffer as Job did. He grew a bit more understanding but not as much as Job.

Both Job and Arjuna were characterized by their personal achievements. Job’s spiritual quest was to ultimately enter into “the house of the appointed for all living” (Norton Anthology, 77). In achieving his goal, he remained humble and said that he would wait until his change comes. During his journey as a servant of God, he inquires of his sufferings that he was unworthy of. God revealed himself to Job through his wisdom of creation as the Almighty, whose deeds could not be matched. Job admitted and accepted his misunderstandings of God’s works and was abundantly blessed for his devotion. His trials made him stronger and increased his dedication to God. He achieved his goal because of his faith and reverence of God.

Arjuna’s spiritual quest was to advance to emancipation of the spirit (Norton Anthology, 612). He was doubtful in his goal because he didn’t want to make the sacrifice to reach it. In order to achieve his religious purpose, he had to perform a necessary action in the spirit of sacred duty. Arjuna was expected to sacrifice a life, one of his kin, in order to preserve the world. He didn’t realize that Krishna’s teachings allowed him to venture on the quest without abandoning social responsibility. Arjuna finally accepts and follows Krishna’s instruction.

Job and Arjuna learned the nature of their divine power through sight, but in two different ways. Job claimed that he “heard of [God] by the hearing of the ear” but because of his wondrous works, he was able to see God with his own eye (Norton Anthology, 81). God revealed himself to through his earthly creations and blessings that were stored upon Job. Because their relationship was more personal, Job was able to encounter a lot more spiritually as well as naturally.

On the other hand, Arjuna couldn’t see Krishna with his natural eye because of his little faith. He had to be given a “divine eye to see the majesty of [Krishna's] discipline” (Norton Anthology, 624). Had he been more willing and acceptable of Krishna’s instruction and wisdom, he could have been blessed to see more than just through divine sight.

By closely examining the relationship of Job and his personal deity, it is evident that he was a smart and humble man who was willing to endure whatever to achieve what he wanted. He exemplified strength, devotion, and faithfulness. Arjuna wasn’t as faithful to or confident in his personal deity as Job was. He was, however, strong and open to the teachings of self-discipline that eventually helped him to grow as a human. Although his sense of character was different, he did expand his knowledge of Krishna’s ways of wisdom and was blessed in the end.