

**SIMILARITIES BETWEEN
ISLAM AND HINDUISM – Part 1**

by

Dr. Zakir Naik

INTRODUCTION

In the series of articles on this subject, we shall seek to find similarities or common ground between two major religions of the world: Hinduism and Islam. The approach adopted in this work is based on the following verse of the Glorious Qur'an:

Surah Ali Imran Chapter 3 Verse 64:

Say "O People Of the Book!
Come to common terms
As between us and you:
That we worship none but Allah;
That we associate no partners with Him;
That we erect not, From among ourselves,
Lords and patrons other than Allah."
If then they turn back,
Say ye: "Bear witness That we (at least)
Are Muslims (bowing To Allah's Will).'
(Al Qur'an 3:64)

In this month's article, we shall focus on how one should try to have a correct understanding of a religion and also provide a brief introduction to Islam and to Hinduism.

CORRECT UNDERSTANDING OF A RELIGION

a. Don't observe followers of a Religion. Refer to Authentic Sources of that Religion

Followers of major religions, whether it be Hinduism, Islam or Christianity, have divided themselves and their beliefs into various sects.

It is not appropriate for one to try to understand a religion by observing the followers of that religion. Most followers may themselves not be aware of the correct teachings of their religion. Thus, the best and the most appropriate method of understanding any religion is to understand the authentic sources of that religion, i.e. the sacred scriptures of that religion.

b. Authentic Sources of Islam.

Allah (swt), Almighty God, says in the Glorious Qur'an:
And hold fast, All together,
by the Rope Which Allah (stretches out for you),
and be not divided among yourselves.
(Al Qur'an 3:103)

The "rope of Allah refers" to the Glorious Qur'an. Allah (swt) says that Muslims should not be divided and that the only unifying factor is the authentic source of the religion of Islam i.e. the Glorious Qur'an.

Allah (swt) also says in the Glorious Qur'an in several places including Al Qur'an 4:59:

O ye who believe!
Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger.
(Al Qur'an 4:59)

To understand the Qur'an better we have to refer to the explanation of the Qur'an by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) on whom the Qur'an was revealed. Thus the best and the most appropriate method of understanding Islam is to understand the authentic sources of Islam which are the Glorious Qur'an, (the words of Almighty Allah) and the authentic Ahadith, (i.e. the sayings and traditions of Prophet Muhammad).

c. Authentic Sources of Hinduism

Similarly, the best and the most appropriate method of understanding Hinduism is to understand the authentic sources i.e. the sacred scriptures of Hinduism. The most sacred and authentic Scriptures of Hinduism are the Vedas, followed by the Upanishads, the Itihaas, Bhagvad Gita, Puranas, etc.

Let us understand these two major religions of the world, i.e. Islam and Hinduism, by studying and analyzing the authentic Scriptures of these two major religions of the world.

d. Emphasis on those Similarities, which are not commonly known.

In this work on 'Similarities between Islam and Hinduism', we shall not lay emphasis on those similarities which are known by almost all the followers of both the religions e.g. a person should always speak the truth, he should not lie, he should not steal, he should be kind, he should not be cruel, etc. Instead, we shall consider those similarities, which are not commonly known by all the followers and hence are known only to those who are familiar with the contents of their sacred Scriptures.

INTRODUCTION OF ISLAM

1. Definition of Islam.

Islam is an Arabic word, which comes from the word 'Salm' which means peace and from 'Silm', which means submitting your will to Allah – the Almighty God. In short Islam means peace acquired by submitting your will to Allah (swt).

The word Islam is mentioned in several places in the Qur'an and the Hadith including Surah Ali Imran, chapter 3, verse 19 and verse 85.

2. Definition of a Muslim

A Muslim is a person who submits his will to Allah – the Almighty God. The word Muslim is mentioned several times in the Qur'an and Hadith including Surah Ali Imran Chapter 3 Verse 64 and Surah Fussilat Chapter 41 Verse 33.

3. A misconception about Islam

Many people have a misconception that Islam is a new religion that was formulated 1400 years ago, and that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was the founder of Islam. However, let me clarify that Islam is not the name of some unique religion presented for the first time by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) who should, on that account be called the founder of Islam.

The Qur'an states that Islam – the complete submission of man before his one and only Unique Creator – is the one and only faith and way of life consistently revealed by God to humankind from the very beginning. Noah, Solomon, David,

Abraham, Moses, Isaac and Jesus (peace be upon them all) – prophets who appeared at different times and places – all propagated the same faith and conveyed the same message of *Tawheed* (Oneness of God), *Risaalat* (Prophethood) and *Aakhirah* (the Hereafter). These prophets of God were not founders of different religions to be named after them. They were each reiterating the message and faith of their predecessors.

However, Muhammad (pbuh) was the last Prophet of God. God revived through him the same genuine faith which had been conveyed by all His Prophets. This original message was earlier corrupted and split into various religions by people of different ages, who indulged in interpolations and admixture. These alien elements were eliminated by God, and Islam – in its pure and original form – was transmitted to humankind through Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Since there was to be no messenger after Muhammad (pbuh), the Book revealed to him (i.e. the Glorious Qur'an) was preserved word for word so that it should be a source of guidance for all times.

Thus the religion of all the prophets was 'total submission to God's will' and one word for that in the Arabic language is 'Islam'. Abraham and Jesus (peace be upon them) too were Muslims, as Allah testifies in Al-Qur'an 3:67 and 3:52 respectively.

INTRODUCTION OF HINDUISM

1. Definition of a Hindu

a. The word 'Hindu' has geographical significance and was used originally to refer to those people who lived beyond the river Sindhu or the region watered by the river Indus.

b. Historians say that it was first used by the Persians who came to India through the North Western passes of the Himalayas. The word 'Hindu' was also used by the Arabs.

c. This word 'Hindu' is nowhere mentioned in Indian Literature or Hindu Scriptures before the advent of Muslims to India, according to the Encyclopedia of Religions and Ethics (6:690)

d. Jawaharlal Nehru, in his book 'Discovery of India', writes on pg. 74-75, that the earliest reference to the word 'Hindu' can be traced to a tantrik of the 8th Century

C.E., where it means a people and not a follower of a particular religion. The use of the word 'Hindu' in connection with a particular religion is of late occurrence.

e. In short the word 'Hindu' is a geographical definition or term which is used to refer to people who live beyond the river Indus or in other words to those who live in India.

2. Definition of Hinduism

a. Hinduism has been derived from the word Hindu. According to the New Encyclopedia Britannica 20:581, Hinduism was a name given in English language in the Nineteenth Century by the English people to the multiplicity of the beliefs and faiths of the people of the Indus land. The British writers in 1830 gave the word Hinduism to be used as the common name for all the beliefs of the people of India excluding the Muslims and converted Christians.

b. According to the Hindu Scholars, Hinduism is a misnomer and the religion 'Hinduism' should be either referred to as 'Sanatana Dharma', which means eternal religion, or as Vedic Dharma, meaning religion of the Vedas. According to Swami Vivekananda, the followers of this religion are referred to as Vedantists.

In the next month's article in this series, we shall examine the articles of faith in Islam and compare them with the tenets of Hinduism as mentioned in the Hindu Scriptures. We shall also study and compare the concept of God in Islam and in Hinduism.

And all praises are for the One and Only God and Creator Allah, who alone is worthy of devotion, complete submission and worship.

(To be continued)

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN

ISLAM AND HINDUISM – Part 2

by

Dr. Zakir Naik

ARTICLES OF FAITH (IMAAAN) IN ISLAM & COMPARISON WITH TENETS PRESCRIBED BY HINDU SCRIPTURES

Almighty Allah says in the Glorious Qur'an

It is not righteousness
That ye turn your faces
Towards East or West;
But it is righteousness
To believe in Allah
And the Last Day,
And the Angels,
And the Book,
And the Messengers;
(Al Qur'an 2:177)

Sahih Muslim Vol. 1 Book of Imaan Chapter 2 Hadith 6.

It is reported in Sahih Muslim:

"... A man came to the Prophet and said 'O Messenger of Allah, what is Imaan (faith)? He (the prophet) said: 'That you affirm your faith in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Meeting, His Messengers and that you believe in the Resurrection i.e. Hereafter and that you believe in Qadr i.e. destiny'.
(Sahih Muslim Vol. 1, Book of Imaan, Chapter 2, Hadith 6)

Thus the six articles of faith of Islam are:

- i) Concept of God (The first article of faith in Islam is 'Tawheed' i.e. belief in the one Unique Eternal Creator of all creation).
- ii) His angels
- iii) His books
- iv) His messengers
- v) The Hereafter i.e. Life after death and
- vi) Qadr i.e. destiny

Let's study what Hinduism says about these six articles.

Concept of God in Hinduism and in Islam

Let us examine the concept of God in these two major religions in light of their respective scriptures and study if there are similarities.

First we shall discuss the Concept of God in Hinduism.

a. COMMON CONCEPT OF GOD IN HINDUISM :

If you ask some lay persons who are Hindus that how many gods do they believe in, some may say three, some may say thirty-three, some may say a thousand, while some may say thirty-three crores i.e. 330 million. But if you ask this question to a learned Hindu who is well versed with the Hindu Scriptures, he will reply that the Hindus should actually believe and worship only one God.

b. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ISLAM AND HINDUISM IS THAT OF 'S

(Everything is 'God's' – Everything is 'God')

The major difference between the Hindu and the Muslim is that while the common Hindu believes in the philosophy of Pantheism, i.e. “everything is God, the Tree is God, the Sun is God, the Moon is God, the Snake is God, the Monkey is God, the Human Being is God”, all Muslims believe that “everything is God’s”.

The Muslims believe that everything is God’s. GOD with an apostrophe’s’. Everything belongs to the one and only unique eternal God. The tree belongs to God, the sun belongs to God, the moon belongs to God, the snake belongs to God, monkey belongs to God, the human being belongs to God.

Thus the major difference between the Hindus and the Muslims is the apostrophe ‘s’. The Hindu says, “everything is GOD”. The Muslim says, “everything is God’s”, GOD with an Apostrophe ‘s’. If we can solve the difference of the Apostrophe ‘s’, the Hindus and the Muslims will be united.

The Glorious Qur’an says

“Come to common terms as between us and you”,

Which is the first term?

“that we worship none but Allah”

So let’s come to common terms by analyzing the scriptures of the Hindus and of the Muslims.

UPANISHAD:

Upanishads are one of the sacred Scriptures of the Hindus.

i. Chandogya Upanishad Chapter 6 Section 2 verse 1

It is mentioned in the Chandogya Upanishad:

“Ekam Evadvitiam”

“He is one only without a second.”

(Chandogya Upanishad 6:2:1)

(The Principal Upanishad by S. Radhakrishnan pg. 447 & 448)

(Sacred Books of the East Volume 1, the Upanishads Part I Page 93)

ii. Shwetashvatara Upanishad Chapter 6 verse 9

It is mentioned in the Shwetashvatara Upanishad

“Nacasya kascij janita na cadhipah”

“Of Him there are neither parents nor Lord.”

(Shwetashvatara Upanishad 6:9)

(The Principal Upanishad by S. Radhakrishnan pg. 745)

(and in Sacred books of the East volume 15, the Upanishads Part II Page 263)

iii. Shwetashvatara Upanishad Chapter 4 verse 19

It is mentioned in Shwetashvatara Upanishad

“Na tasya pratima asti”

“There is no likeness of Him”.

(Shwetashvatara Upanishad 4:19)

(The Principal Upanishad by S. Radhakrishnan pg 736 & 737)

(and in Sacred books of the East Volume 15, the Upanishads part II, Page no. 253)

iv. Shwetashvatara Upanishad Chapter 4 verse 20

It is mentioned in Shwetashvatara Upanishad

“na samdrse tisthati rupam asya, na caksusa pasyati kas canainam”.

“His form cannot be seen, no one sees Him with the eye”.

(Shwetashvatara Upanishad 4:20)

(The Principal Upanishad by S. Radhakrishnan pg. 737)

(And in Sacred books of the East Volume 15, the Upanishad part II, Page no. 253)

BHAGWAD GEETA 7:20

The most popular amongst all the Hindu Scriptures is the Bhagwad Geeta.

Bhagwad Geeta mentions

“Those whose intelligence has been stolen by material desires worship demigods” that is “Those who are materialistic, they worship demigods” i.e. others as deities besides the True God.

(Bhagwad Geeta 7:20)

It is mentioned in Bhagavad Gita

“He who knows Me as the unborn, as the beginning-less, as the Supreme Lord of all the worlds...”

(Bhagwad Geeta 10:3)

YAJURVEDA

Vedas are the most sacred amongst all the Hindu Scriptures. There are principally 4 Vedas: Rig Ved, Yajur Ved, Sam Ved, and Atharva Ved.

i. Yajurveda Chapter 32, Verse 3

It is mentioned in Yajurveda

“na tasya pratima asti”

“There is no image of Him”

It further says, “as He is unborn, He deserves our worship”.

(Yajurveda 32:3)

(The Yajurveda by Devi Chand M.A. pg. 377)

ii. Yajurveda Chapter 40 Verse 8

It is mentioned in Yajurveda Chapter 40 verse 8

“He is bodiless and pure”.

(Yajurveda 40:8)

(Yajurveda Samhita by Ralph I. H. Griffith pg. 538)

iii. Yajurved Chapter 40 Verse 9

It is mentioned in Yajurved

“Andhatma pravishanti ye assambhuti mupaste”

“They enter darkness, those who worship natural things.”

E.g. worship of natural elements air, water, fire, etc.

(Yajurveda 40:9)

It further continues and says

“They sink deeper in darkness those who worship sambhuti i.e. created things”

E.g. created things such as table, chair, idols, etc.

(Yajurveda Samhita by Ralph T. H. Griffith pg. 538)

ATHARVA VEDA

i. Atharva Veda book 20 hymn (chapter) 58 verse 3

It is mentioned in Atharva Veda

“Dev Maha Osi”

“God is Verily Great.”

(Atharva Veda 20:58:3)

(Atharvaveda Samhita Vol. 2, William Duright Whitney pg. 910)

RIGVEDA

The oldest and most sacred amongst all the Vedas is the Rigveda.

i. Rigveda Book no. 1, Hymn No. 164, verse 46

It is mentioned in Rigveda Book no. 1, hymn No. 164 verse 46

“Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti”

“Sages (learned Priests) call one God by many names”.

(Rigveda 1:164:46)

Truth is one, God is one, sages call it by various names.

A similar message is given in Rigveda, Book 10, hymn 114, verse 5.

ii. Rigveda Book 2 hymn 1

Rigveda gives no less than 33 different attributes to Almighty God. Several of these attributes are mentioned in Rigveda Book 2 hymn 1

a. Brahma - Creator - Khaliq – Rigveda Book 2 Hymn 1 Verse 3

Amongst the various attributes given in Rigveda, one of the beautiful attributes for Almighty God is ‘Brahma’. ‘Brahma’ means ‘the Creator’. If you translate into Arabic it means ‘Khaliq’. Islam does not object to anyone calling Almighty God as ‘Khaliq’ or ‘Creator’ or ‘Brahma’, but if someone says that ‘Brahma’ i.e. Almighty God has got four heads and on each head is a crown and this Brahma has got four hands, Islam takes strong exception to it because such descriptions give an image to Almighty God. Such descriptions are also against what is propounded in Yajurveda Chapter 32, verse 3 which says:

“Na tasya pratima asti”

“There is no image of Him”.

(Yajurveda 32:3)

b. Vishnu – Sustainer - Rabb : Rigveda Book 2, Hymn 1, verse 3

Another beautiful attribute mentioned in the Rigveda Book 2, Hymn 1, Verse 3 is Vishnu. ‘Vishnu’ means ‘the Sustainer’. If you translate this word into Arabic it means ‘Rabb’. Islam has no objection if anyone calls Almighty God as ‘Rabb’ or ‘Sustainer’ or ‘Vishnu’, but if someone says that Vishnu is Almighty God and this Vishnu has four arms, one of the right arms holds the ‘chakra’ i.e. a discus and one of the left arms holds a ‘conch shell’ and Vishnu rides on a bird or reclines on a snake couch, then Islam takes strong exception to this, because such descriptions of Vishnu give an image to Almighty God. Such descriptions are also against what is taught in Yajurveda Chapter 40 verse 8.

iii. Rigveda Book 8 hymn 1 verse 1

It is mentioned in Rigveda

“Ma Chidanyadvi Shansata”

“Do not worship anybody but Him, the Divine One, Praise Him alone”

(Rigveda 8:1:1)

(Rigveda Samhiti Vol. IX, pg. 1 & 2 by Swami Satyaprakash Sarasvati & Satyakam Vidhya Lankar)

iv. Rigveda Book 5 Hymn 81 verse 1

It is mentioned in Rigveda

“Verily great is the glory of the Divine Creator”

(Rigveda 5:81:1)

(Rigveda Samhiti Vol. 6, pg 1802 & 1803 by Swami Satyaprakash Sarasvati & Satyakam Vidhya Lanka)

v. Rigveda Book no. VI, Hymn 45, verse 16

It is mentioned in Rigveda

“Ya Eka Ittamushtuhi”

“Praise Him who is the matchless & alone”.

(Rigveda 6:45:16)

(Hymns of Rigveda by Ralph T. H. Griffith pg. 648)

BRAHMA SUTRA OF HINDU VEDANTA

The Brahma Sutra of Hindu Vedanta is:

‘Ekam Brahm, dvitiya naste neh na naste kinchan”

“Bhagwan ek hi hai dusara nahi hai, nahi hai, nahi hai, zara bhi nahi hai”.

“There is only one God, not the second, not at all, not at all, not in the least bit”.

All the above quoted verses and passages from Hindu Scriptures clearly amplify the Oneness and Uniqueness of Almighty God, the Creator of all. Furthermore, they negate the existence of any other deity besides the One True God. These verses essentially propound monotheism.

Therefore only if one carefully studies the Hindu Scriptures, will one understand and realize the correct concept of God in Hinduism.

(To be continued)



SIMILARITIES BETWEEN
ISLAM AND HINDUISM – Part 3

by

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CONCEPT OF GOD IN ISLAM

The Qur'an too propounds monotheism. So you will find similarities between Hinduism and Islam even in the concept of God.

a. SURAH IKHLAS WITH EXPLANATION

(i) Translation

As per Islam, the best and the most concise definition of God is given in Surah Ikhlas of the Glorious Qur'an:

Say He is Allah,
The One and Only;
Allah, the Eternal, Absolute;
He begets not,
Nor is He begotten;
And there is none
Like unto Him.
(Al Qur'an 112:1-4)

The word 'assamad' is difficult to translate. It means that absolute existence can be attributed only to Allah, all other existence being temporal or conditional. It also means Allah is not dependant on any person or thing but all persons and things are dependent on Him.

It is the touch stone of Theology

Surah Ikhlas i.e. Chapter 112 of the Glorious Qur'an is the touchstone of Theology. 'Theo' in Greek means God and 'logy' means study. Thus 'Theology' means study of God and Surah Ikhlas is the touchstone of the study of God.

If you want to purchase or sell your gold jewellery, you would first evaluate it. Such an evaluation of gold jewellery is done by a goldsmith with the help of a touchstone. He rubs the gold jewellery on the touch stone and compares its colour with rubbing samples of gold. If it matches with 24 Karat gold he will tell that your jewellery is 24 Karat pure Gold. If it is not high quality pure Gold, he will tell you its value whether 22 Karats, 18 Karats or it may not be gold at all. It may be fake because all that glitters is not gold.

Similarly Surah Ikhlas (Chapter 112 of the Qur'an) is the touchstone of theology, which can verify whether the deity that you worship is a true God or a false God. Thus, Surah Ikhlaas is a four-line definition of Almighty God according to the Qur'an. If any one claims to be, or is believed to be Almighty God satisfies this four-line definition, we Muslims will readily accept that deity as God. This Chapter of the Glorious Qur'an, Surah Ikhlas, is the acid test. It is the 'Furqan' or the criterion to judge between the one True God and false claimants to divinity. Hence, whichever deity any human on earth worships, if such a deity fulfills the criteria specified in this Chapter of the Qur'an, then this deity is worthy of worship and is the One True God.

b. Is Bhagwan Rajneesh God ?

Some people say that Bhagwan Rajneesh or Osho Rajneesh is Almighty God. Please note my words, I have stated that some people say that Bhagwan Rajneesh is Almighty God. Once during a question-answer session there was a Hindu gentleman who misunderstood my statement. He said that Hindus do not worship Rajneesh as God. I am aware that Hinduism does not consider Rajneesh to be God. Rajneesh has followers, who are converts to his philosophy / ideology, but who were originally followers of various different religions.

Let us put this candidate Bhagwan Rajneesh to the test of Divinity as prescribed by Surah Ikhlaas, the touchstone of Divinity.

(i) The First Criterion is 'Qul hu Allah hu ahad' –'say, He is Allah one and only'. Is Rajneesh one and only? We know several such fake god-men and claimants of divinity amongst humans. Several are found in our country, India. Rajneesh is surely not one and only. Not as a human and not even as a human claimant to godhood. However, some disciples of Rajneesh may still state that Rajneesh is unique and that he is one and only.

(ii) Let us analyse the second criterion 'Allah hus samad'– 'Allah the Absolute & 'Eternal'. Is Rajneesh absolute and eternal? We know from his biography that he was suffering from diabetes, asthma, and chronic backache. He alleged that the U.S.A. government gave him slow poisoning while he was in their jail. Imagine! Almighty God being poisoned! Moreover, all are aware that Rajneesh died and was cremated / buried. So Rajneesh was neither eternal, nor absolute

(iii) The third Criteria is 'Lam ya lid wa lam yu lad' – 'He begets not, nor is begotten'. However, Rajneesh was begotten. He was born in Jabalpur in India. Like all humans, he too had a mother and a father. They later on become his disciples.

Rajneesh was a very intelligent person. In May 1981 he went to U.S.A. He established a town in Oregon and named it 'Rajneeshpuram'. It seems that he took America for a ride for the U.S. government arrested him and later deported him out of America in 1985. So Rajneesh returned to India and started a 'Rajneesh Neosanyas commune in Pune in India which was later renamed the 'Osho commune'.

If you visit this 'Osho commune' in Pune you will find it written on his tombstone, "Osho - never born, never died, only visited the planet earth between 11th Dec. 1931 to 19th Jan 1990". They conveniently forget to mention on this tombstone that Rajneesh was not given a visa for 21 different countries of the world. Imagine Almighty God visiting the earth and requiring a visa! The Arch Bishop of Greece had said that if Rajneesh was not deported they would burn his house and those of his disciples.

(iv) The fourth test is so stringent that none besides the One True God, Allah (swt), can pass it. 'Wa lam ya kullahu kufuwan ahad' which means, 'there is none like Him'. The moment you can imagine or compare the candidate or claimant to godhood to anything, this candidate is not god. Neither can you have a mental picture of God.

We know that Rajneesh was a human being. He had one head, two hands, two feet, and a white flowing beard. The moment you can think or imagine what the claimant to godhood is, he or she is not god.

Suppose someone says, "God is a thousand times as strong as Arnold Schwarzenegger". Arnold Schwarzenegger is one of the strongest men on earth. He was given the title 'Mr. Universe' in (the year). The moment you can compare Almighty God to anything, whether it is a 1000 times stronger or a million times stronger, whether it be Darasingh or Kingkong, the moment you can compare the claimant to godhood to anything, he is not God. 'Wa lam ya kul lahu kufwan ahad' 'there is none like Him.'

c. ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

To Allah belong the most beautiful names:

(i) The Qur'an mentions in Surah Isra Chapter 17 Verse 110:
Say: "Call upon Allah, or
Call upon Rahman;
By whatever name ye call
Upon Him, (it is well):
For to Him belong
The Most Beautiful Names
(Al Qur'an 17:110)

You can call Allah by any name but that name should be beautiful and should not conjure up a mental picture. The Qur'an gives no less than 99 different attributes to Almighty God. Some of these are Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, Al-Hakeem; Most Gracious, Most Merciful and All Wise. 99 different names / attributes and the crowning one, the hundredth one is Allah. The Qur'an repeats this message that to Allah belong the most beautiful names in:

- (i) Surah Al Aaraf Chapter 7 Verse 180
- (ii) In Surah Taha Chapter 20 Verse 8
- (iii) In Surah Al Hashr Chapter 59 Verse 23 & 24

d. NAME ALLAH PREFERED TO THE WORD 'GOD'

The Muslims prefer calling Allah (swt) with His Name Allah, instead of the English word 'God'. The Arabic word Allah is pure and unique, unlike the English word God which can be played around with.

If you add 's' to God, it becomes 'gods' that is plural of God. Allah is one and singular, there is no plural of Allah. If you add 'dess' to God, it becomes 'goddess' that is a female God. There is nothing like male Allah or female Allah. Allah has no gender. If you add father to God, it becomes 'godfather'. "He is my Godfather" means that "he is my guardian". There is nothing like Allah Abba or Allah father in Islam. If you add mother to God it becomes 'godmother, there is nothing like Allah Ammi or Allah Mother in Islam. If you put tin before God, it becomes tin god i.e. a fake God, there is nothing like-tin Allah or fake Allah in Islam. Allah is a unique word, which does not conjure up any mental picture nor can it be played around with. Hence, the Muslims prefer the name Allah when referring to the Almighty Creator. But sometimes while speaking to non-Muslims we may have to use the inappropriate word God for Allah.

Allah is mentioned by Name in Hindu Scriptures

The Word "Allah", which refers to Almighty God in Arabic, is also mentioned in
Rigveda Book 2 hymn 1 verse 11
Rigveda Book 3 hymn 30 verse 10
Rigveda Book 9 hymn 67 verse 30
There is an Upanishad by the name ALO Upanishad.

IIA. THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN ISLAM

We had earlier stated that as per Islam the best and the most concise definition of God is as given in Surah Ikhlas of the Glorious Qur'an:

Say He is Allah,
The One and Only;
Allah, the Eternal, Absolute;
He begets not,
Nor is He begotten;
And there is none
Like unto Him.
(Al Qur'an 112:1-4)

i. Similar Verses in Hindu Scriptures

There are several passages in the Hindu Scriptures, which have the same or similar meaning as Surah Ikhlas.

1. Say: He is Allah, The One and Only.
(Al Qur'an 112:1)

It has a meaning which is very similar to:

“Ekam Evadvitiam”

“He is only one without a second.”

(Chandogya Upanishad 6:2:1)

2. Allah, the Eternal, Absolute.

He begetteth not,

Nor is He begotten;

(Al Qur'an 112:2-3)

It has similar meaning as:

“He who knows Me as the unborn, as the beginning-less, as the Supreme Lord of all the Worlds.”

(Bhagvad Gita 10:3)

and “Of (check – or For Him?) Him there is neither parents nor Lord.”

(Shwetashvatara Upanishad 6:9)

3. And there is none

Like unto Him.

(Al Qur'an 112:4)

A similar message is given in Shwetashvatara Upanishad & Yajurveda:

“Na Tasya pratima asti”

“There is no likeness of Him.”

(Shwetashvatara Upanishad 4:19 & Yajurveda 32:3)

Remember, the Brahma Sutra of Hindu Vedanta is:

‘Ekam Brahm, dvitiya naste neh na naste kinchan’

“Bhagwan ek hi hai dusara nahi hai, nahi hai, nahi hai, zara bhi nahi hai”.

“There is only one God, not the second, not at all, not at all, not in the least bit”.



SIMILARITIES BETWEEN
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Concept of Angels in Hinduism and in Islam

We shall now examine the belief in angels of God in these two major religions and study if there are similarities.

1. Angels in Islam

Angels are a creation of Allah (swt). They have been created from light and are normally unseen. They do not have a free will of their own and hence they always obey the commandments of Almighty Allah. Due to the absence of free will they cannot disobey God. Different angels have been appointed by Almighty Allah for different activities. For example, Archangel Gabriel (Jibreel) was appointed to convey the revelation of Allah (swt) to the prophets of Allah.

Since angels are a creation of God, and not God, Muslims do not worship angels.

2. Angels in Hinduism

There is no concept of angels in Hinduism. However Hindus believe that there are certain super-beings, which perform acts, which cannot be done by normal human beings. These super-beings too are worshipped as deities by some Hindus.

CONCEPT OF REVELATION IN HINDUISM AND IN ISLAM

Let us now study what the Hindu and Islamic scriptures state regarding God's revelations or books revealed by God for the guidance of humans:

(i) Concept of Revelation in Islam

1. Allah (swt) has sent a revelation in every age.
Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an:

“For each period
Is a Book (revealed)
(Al Qur'an 13:38)

2. Four Revelations mentioned by name in the Qur'an:
There are several revelations sent by Allah (swt) in different ages for the guidance of human beings of the respective ages. Only four revelations are mentioned by name in the Qur'an: these are the Torah, Zabur, Injeel and the Qur'an.

Torah is the Wahi, the revelation which was revealed to Prophet Moses (pbuh).
Zabur is the Wahi, the revelation which was revealed to Prophet David (pbuh)
Injeel is the Wahi, the revelation which was revealed to Prophet Jesus (pbuh)
and

The Qur'an is the last and final Wahi, the final revelation, which was revealed to the Last and Final Messenger Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

3. All previous revelations were only meant for a particular group of people and for a particular time period.

Each of the revelations, prior to the revelation of the Glorious Qur'an, was meant only for a particular period and for a particular group of people.

4. The Qur'an was revealed for whole of Humankind

Since the Qur'an was the last and final revelation of Almighty Allah, it was revealed not only for the Muslims or the Arabs but it was revealed for whole of Humankind. Further, the Qur'an was not revealed only for the era of the Prophet but it was revealed for the all of Humankind until the Last Day.

a. Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an:

Alif Ram Ra. A Book
Which We have revealed
Unto thee, in order that
Thou mightest lead mankind
Out of the depths of darkness
Into light - by the leave
Of their Lord – to the way
Of (Him) the Exalted in Power,
Worthy of all Praise!
(Al Qur'an 14:1)

b. Here is a Message for mankind;
Let them take warning therefrom,
And let them know that He
Is (no other than) One God:
Let men of understanding
Take heed
(Al Qur'an 14:52)

c. Ramadan is the (month)
In which was sent down
The Qur'an, as a guide
To mankind, also clear (Signs)
For Guidance and Judgement
(Between right and wrong)
(Al Qur'an 2:185)

d. Verily We have revealed
The Book to thee
In truth, for (instructing) mankind
(Al Qur'an 39:41)

Al Qur'an is God's Word. It is the most sacred scripture of Islam. It is the Last and Final Revelation of Almighty God which was revealed in the sixth century of the English Calendar to the last and final messenger Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

5. The Qur'an is mentioned in the previous scriptures and in scriptures of other religions
It is mentioned in the Qur'an:

Without doubt it is (announced)
In the revealed Books
Of former peoples.
(Al Qur'an 26:196)

The mention of the Glorious Qur'an, this last and final Revelation of Almighty God, is made in all the previous scriptures and in the scriptures of various religions.

6. Hadith
The other sacred scripture of Islam besides the Qur'an are the hadith i.e. the sayings and traditions of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). These hadith are supplementary to the Glorious Qur'an. They do not and cannot overrule the teachings of the Qur'an nor will they contradict the Qur'an.

(ii) BOOKS OF HINDUISM

INTRODUCTION

There are two kinds of sacred writings in Hinduism: Sruti and Smrti.

Sruti means that which has been heard, perceived, understood or revealed. It is the oldest and the most sacred of the Hindu's Scriptures. The Sruti is divided into two main parts: the Vedas and the Upanishads and these two are considered to be of divine origin.

Smrti is not as sacred as the sruti. Yet it is considered to be important and is popular with the Hindus today. Smrti means memory or remembered. This Hindu literature is easier to understand because it speaks about the truths of the Universe through Symbolism and Mythology. The smrti are not considered to be of divine origin but are accepted as human composition. The Smrti lists rules governing the actions of the individual, the community and the society, which

regulate and guide individuals in their daily conduct. They are also known as Dharma Shastra. Smritis consist of many writings including the Puranas and Itihaas.

There are several Holy Scriptures of the Hindus; among them are the Vedas, Upanishads and the Puranas.

1. VEDAS

i) The word 'Veda' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'vid', which means to know. The word 'Veda' therefore, means knowledge par excellence or sacred wisdom. There are four principal divisions of the Vedas. (Although according to their number, they amount to 1131 out of which about a dozen are available. According to MahaBhasya of Patanjali, there are 21 branches of Rig Veda, 9 types of Atharva Veda, 101 branches of Yajur Veda and 1000 of Sam Veda)

ii) The Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda and the Sam Veda are considered to be more ancient books and are known as 'Trai Vidya' or the 'Triple Sciences'. The Rig Veda is the oldest and has been compiled in three long and different periods of time. The 4th Veda is the Atharva Veda, which is of a later date.

Rigveda is mainly composed of songs of praise.

Yajurveda deals sacrificial formula.

Samveda refers to melody.

Atharva Veda has a large number of magic formulas.

iii) There is no unanimous opinion regarding the date of compilation or revelation of the four Vedas. According to Swami Dayanand, who was the founder of the Arya Samaj, the Vedas were revealed 1310 millions of years ago and according to other scholars they are not more than 4000 years old.

iv) Similarly there is a difference of opinion regarding the places where these books were revealed and the Rishis to whom these Scriptures were given. In spite of these differences, the Vedas are considered the most authentic of the Hindu Scriptures and the real foundations of the Hindu Dharma.

2. UPANISHADS

i) The word 'Upanishad' is derived from 'Upa' meaning 'near', 'ni' which means 'down' and 'shad' means 'to sit'. Therefore Upanishads means sitting down near. Groups of pupils sit near the teacher to learn from him the sacred doctrines.

According to Samkara, Upanishad is derived from the root word 'sad' which means 'to loosen', 'to reach' or 'to destroy', with 'upa' and 'ni' as prefix. Therefore Upanishad means 'Brahma knowledge' by which ignorance is loosened or destroyed.

The number of Upanishads exceeds 200 though the Indian tradition puts it at 108. There are 10 principal Upanishads however some consider them to be more than 10, while others state that there are 18.

ii) The Vedanta meant originally the Upanishads, though the word is now used for the system of philosophy based on the Upanishad. Literally, Vedanta means the end of the Veda, Vedasya-antah, the conclusion as well as the goal of Vedas. The Upanishads are the concluding portions of the Vedas and chronologically they come at the end of the Vedic period.

iii) Some Pundits consider the Upanishad to be superior to the Vedas.

3. ITIHAS – EPIC

There are two Itihas or epics namely the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

i) Ramayana

Ramayana is an epic, which deals with the life story of Rama. Most Hindus are aware of the story of the Ramayana.

ii) Mahabharata

Mahabharata is another great epic, which speaks about the feud between the cousins: the Pandavas and the Kauravas. It also contains the life story of Krishna. The story of this epic, the Mahabharata, is also commonly known to most Hindus.

4. BHAGVAD GITA

Bhagvad Gita is the most popular and well known amongst all the Hindu scriptures. It is a part of the epic Mahabharata and contains 18 Chapters in Bhisma Parva Chapters 25 to 42. It contains the advice given by Krishna, in the battlefield, to Arjun.

5. PURANAS

Next in order of authenticity are the Puranas, which are the most widely read scripture. The word 'Puranas' means 'ancient' The Puranas contain the History of the Creation of the Universe, history of the early Aryan Tribes and life stories of the divines and deities of the Hindus. The Puranas are revealed books like the Vedas, which were revealed simultaneously with the Vedas or at sometime close to the revelation of the Vedas

Maharishi Vyasa has divided the Puranas into 18 voluminous parts. Chief among the Puranas is a book known as Bhavishya Purana. It is called so because it gives prophecies of future events. The Hindus consider the Bhavishya Purana to

be the word of God. Maharishi Vyasa is considered a mere compiler of the book the real author being God.

6. OTHER SCRIPTURES

There are several other Hindu Scriptures like Manu Smriti etc.

7. MOST AUTHENTIC HINDU SCRIPTURES ARE THE VEDAS

Amongst all the Hindu Scriptures, the Vedas are considered the most authentic. No other Hindu Scriptures overrule the Vedas. If there is a contradiction between the Vedas and any other Hindu scripture, the opinion of the Veda will prevail, according to Hindu Scholars.

Thus we have examined and highlighted similarities between the concept of angels and revelation in Islam and in Hinduism as mentioned in their respective scriptures. In subsequent articles in the present series, we shall study the similarities between the concept of prophethood, life after death, fate & destiny and worship in Islam and in Hinduism.

And all praises are for the One and Only God and Creator Allah, who alone is worthy of devotion, complete submission and worship.

Footnotes:

English translation of verses of the Glorious Qur'an is taken from Abdullah Yusuf Ali.



SIMILARITIES BETWEEN
ISLAM AND HINDUISM – Part 5
by

Dr. Zakir Naik

INTRODUCTION

In this series of articles, we are analyzing similarities and common grounds between two major religions of the world: Hinduism and Islam. In the article in the November 2004 issue of the Islamic Voice, we examined and highlighted similarities between the concept of angels and revelation in Islam and in Hinduism as mentioned in their respective scriptures. In this month's article, we shall study the similarities between the concept of prophethood, and the attributes of God, in Islam and in Hinduism.

CONCEPT OF PROPHETHOOD IN HINDUISM AND IN ISLAM

Messengers in Islam

Messengers or Prophets of Almighty God are persons chosen by Almighty God to communicate His message to the people.

Messengers were sent to every nation

a. To every people (was sent)

A Messenger: when their Messenger

Comes (before them), the matter

Will be judged between them

With justice, and they

Will not be wronged.

(Al Qur'an 10:47)

b. For We assuredly sent

Amongst every people a messenger

(with the command), "Serve

Allah and eschew Evil":

Of the people were some whom

Allah guided, and some

On whom Error became

Inevitably (established). So travel

Through the earth, and see

What was the end of those

Who denied (the Truth).

(Al Qur'an 16:36)

b. And there never was

A people, without a warner

Having lived among them

(In the past).

(Al Qur'an 35:24)

c. And to every people a guide.

(Al Qur'an 13:7)

25 PROPHETS ARE MENTIONED BY NAME IN THE QUR'AN

There are 25 Prophets mentioned by name in the Glorious Qur'an. Some of such prophets are: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad (peace be upon them all).

STORIES OF ONLY SOME PROPHETS MENTIONED IN THE QUR'AN

It is mentioned in the Qur'an:

Of some messengers We have
Already told you the story;
Of others we have not
And to Moses Allah spoke direct.
(Al Qur'an 4:164)

- b. We did aforetime send
Messengers before you: of them
There are some whose story
We have related to you,
And some whose story
We have not related
To you.
(Al Qur'an 40:78)

1,24,000 PROPHETS SENT BY ALLAH

According to a Sahih Hadith in Mishkatul Masaabih Vol. 3 hadith No. 5737 Ahmad Ibn Hambal Vol. 5 page 265-266: "There were 1,24,000 prophets sent by Allah (swt)."

PREVIOUS PROPHETS WERE SENT ONLY FOR THEIR PEOPLE

All the prophets that came before Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) were sent for their people and nation, and the complete message they preached was meant only for that time.

PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH) IS THE LAST AND FINAL MESSENGER

It is mentioned in Surah Al-Ahzab:

Muhammad is not
The father of any
Of your men, but (he is)
The Messenger of Allah,
And the Seal of the Prophets:
And Allah has full knowledge
Of all things
(Al Qur'an 33:40)

PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH) SENT FOR WHOLE OF HUMANKIND

a. Since Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was the last and final messenger of Allah (swt), he was not sent for only Muslims or the Arabs but he was sent for the whole of Humankind. It is mentioned in the Qur'an:

We sent you not, but
As a mercy for all creatures
(Al Qur'an 21:107)

b. We have not sent you
But as a universal (Messenger)
To men, giving them
Glad tidings, and warning them
(Against sin), but most men
Understand not.
(Al Qur'an 34:28)

c. It is mentioned in Sahih Bukhari:
"Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said every prophet used to be sent to his nation only but I have been sent to whole of humankind".
(Sahih Bukhari Vol. 1, Book of Salaah Chapter 56 Hadith 429)

AVTARS AND MESSENGERS IN HINDUISM

1. Avatar according to common Hindus

a. Common Hindus have the following concept of Avatar. Avatar is the Sanskrit term where 'Av' means 'down' and 'tr' means 'passover'. Thus Avatar means to descend down or to come down. The meaning of 'Avatar' in the oxford Dictionary is, "*(In Hindu Mythology) the descent of a deity or released soul to earth in bodily form*". In simple words, Avatar according to common Hindus means Almighty God coming down to earth in bodily form.

A Common Hindu believes that God Almighty comes down to the earth in some bodily form to protect the religion, to set an example or to set the rules for human beings.

There is no reference of Avatars anywhere in the Vedas, the most sacred of the Hindu scriptures i.e. sruti. However it is found in the smrti i.e., the Puranas and the Itihasas.

(b) It is mentioned in the most popular and widely read book of Hinduism

i) Bhagavad Geeta Chapter 4 verse 7-8:

Whenever there is a decay of righteousness, O Bharata,
And a rise of unrighteousness, then I manifest Myself.
For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the

wicked and for the establishment of righteousness, I am born in every age.
(Bhagavad Geeta 4:7-8)

ii) It is mentioned in Bhagawata Purana:

“Whenever there is deterioration in righteousness and waxing of sinfulness, the glorious lord incarnates himself.”
(Bhagawata Purana 9:24:56)

2. No Concept of Avatar but Messenger in Veda and Islam

Islam does not believe that Almighty God takes human forms. He chooses a man amongst men and communicates with them on a higher level to deliver his message to the human beings – such individuals are called Messengers of God.

‘Avatar’, as mentioned earlier, is derived from ‘Av’ and ‘tr’, which means to descend down or come down. Some scholars state that God’s Avatar indicates a possessive case and actually means the coming of a man “*who is in special relationship with God*”. Mention of such chosen men of God appears in several places in all the four Vedas. Thus if we have to reconcile Bhagavad Gita and Purana with the most authoritative scripture the Vedas, we have to agree that Bhagavad Gita and the Puranas, when they speak about Avatars, they refer to chosen men of God. Islam calls such men Prophets.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

ANTHROPOMORPHISM

a. God need not take human form to understand human beings

Many non-Semitic religions have at some time or the other propounded the belief in the philosophy of anthropomorphism i.e. the concept of God taking human form. Those who believe in it have a seemingly good logic for it. They state that Almighty God is so pure and holy that He is unaware of the hardships, shortcomings, weaknesses, difficulties, feelings, passions, emotions and temptations of human beings. He does not know how a person feels when he or she is hurt or is in trouble. Therefore, in order to set rules of behaviour and conduct for human beings, God came down to earth in the form of a human. On the face of it, this seems to be logical. But we need to examine this.

b. Creator prepares an instruction manual

Suppose I manufacture a tape recorder, do I have to become a tape recorder to know what is good or bad for the tape recorder? The manufacturer does

not have to himself play the role of a tape recorder to understand the stress caused by normal usage or even faulty usage of the tape recorder.

Hence, for the users, as the manufacturer, I write an instruction manual. In this manual I state, "in order to listen to an audio-cassette, insert the cassette and press the 'play' button. In order to stop, press the 'stop' button. If you want to fast forward press the 'Fast Forward' button. Do not drop it from a height for it will get damaged. Do not immerse it in water for it will get spoilt". Manufacturers write an instruction manual or a user manual, which contains the do's and don'ts for usage of the machine.

c. **The Glorious Qur'an is the instruction manual for human beings**

In a similar fashion, our Lord and Creator, Allah (s.w.t.) does not need to come to earth in the form of a human being to know what is good or bad for the human beings. He, who has created this vast universe, has complete knowledge of His Creation. He only has to reveal the instruction manual for the benefit of humans. Such a manual from the Creator informs and explains: (i) the purpose and objective of the existence of human beings (ii) who created them and (iii) what they should do and what they should refrain and abstain from in order to get eternal success.

The last and final instruction manual for human beings from their Creator is the Glorious Qur'an.

d. **Allah chooses Messengers**

Allah (swt) does need to come down personally for writing the instruction manual. He chooses a man amongst men to deliver His message and communicates with him at a higher level through His revelations. Such chosen men are called messengers and prophets of God. God conveys His revelations to such persons.

GOD WILL NOT AND DOES NOT TAKE HUMAN FORM:

a. **God cannot do everything:**

Some people may argue that God can do everything, then why can he not take human form? If God were to take human form, then He would no longer remain God because the qualities of God and the qualities of human beings are different.

(i) **God is immortal. Human beings are mortal.**

God is immortal; human beings are mortal. You cannot have a 'God-man' i.e. an immortal and mortal being at the same time. It is meaningless.

God does not have a beginning. Human beings have a beginning. You cannot have a person, who does not have a beginning and yet at the same time having a beginning.

God has no end. Humans have an end. You can't have an entity that has no end and still have an end at the same time. It is meaningless.

(ii) **God does not require to eat:**

Almighty God does not require to eat. Human beings need to eat. The Glorious Qur'an says in Surah Anam:

**And He it is that
Feeds but is not fed.**

(Al Qur'an 6:14)

(iii) **God does not require rest and sleep:**

God does not require rest. Human beings require rest. God does not require sleep. Human beings require sleep. The Glorious Qur'an says in Ayatul Kursi:

**Allah! There is no god
But He – the Living,
The Self-subsisting, Eternal.
No slumber can seize Him; nor sleep.
His are all things in the heavens and on earth.**

(Al Qur'an 2:255)

b. **Worshipping another human being is useless:**

If God takes human form, he would cease to be god and it is useless to worship a human being, e.g. suppose that I am a student of a very intelligent teacher and I regularly take his guidance and help in my studies. If unfortunately, my teacher meets with an accident and has amnesia i.e. an un-repairable loss of memory, it will be foolish of me to yet seek guidance and help in my studies from him. Because this person no longer has the expertise after the transformation of his memory due to the accident. In a similar fashion how can a human being worship and ask for divine help from a god who has given up his divine qualities and has transformed himself into a human being like you and I? If a person can worship a human being then why not others worship you and also worship so many humans around us?

c. **Human beings cannot become God:**

So an entity cannot be both: God and a human at the same time. For if God retains His divine powers then He is not a human because humans do not have divine powers. And if God were to become a mortal which is a human quality, then he is no longer God, for God is immortal.

Later on that same human being cannot become God, because it is not possible for human beings to become God. If it was so, you and I too would become God and attain divine powers.

That is the reason why God will never take or rather cannot take human form. The Qur'an speaks against all forms of anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphism is illogical.

d. **God will not do ungodly things:**

Islam does not say that God can do anything. Islam says that God has power over all things. Let us understand this with the help of some examples of matters that God cannot do simply because He is Divine.

(i) **God will not tell a lie:**

God only does Godly things; He does not do ungodly things. God cannot tell a lie. He cannot even have a desire to lie or to make a false statement. God will never, and can never tell a lie because to tell a lie is an ungodly act. The moment God tells a lie, He will cease to be God.

(ii) **God will not do any injustice:**

God cannot do injustice nor can He even harbour a desire to do an unjust act or take an unjust decision. He will not do it and He cannot do so because being unjust is an ungodly act. The Qur'an says:

“Allah is never unjust in the least degree.”

(Al Qur'an 4:40)

The moment God does injustice He ceases to be God. Please realize that God cannot be God and not-God at the same time!!! He cannot have divine qualities as a Creator, and yet have the mortal qualities and attributes of His Creation.

(iii) **God will not make a mistake**

Perfection is a quality only of the Creator. His creation can never ever achieve this quality. We can only try to continually improve and excel but we can never ever be perfect.

Hence, can God ever make a mistake? He will never make a mistake. He cannot make a mistake. To err is human. Making a mistake is an ungodly act. Qur'an says, “...**My lord never errs.**” (Al Qur'an 20:52)

Assuming without accepting that God was to commit a mistake, the moment God makes a mistake He ceases to be God.

(iv) **God will not forget:**

God will not forget because forgetting is an ungodly act. Qur'an says, “...**My lord never errs, nor forgets.**” (Al Qur'an 20:52)

The moment God forgets he ceases to be god.

e. **God only does Godly things**

i. **Allah has power over all things**

The Glorious Qur'an says in several places:
“for verily **Allah has power over all things**”

This same statement of Divine Wisdom is emphasized for our understanding in:
Surah Baqarah chapter 2 verse 106;
and again in:

In Surah Baqarah chapter 2 verse 109
In Surah Baqarah chapter 2 verse 284
In Surah Ale Imran chapter 3 verse 29
In Surah Nahl chapter 16 verse 77
In Surah Fatir chapter 35 verse 1

ii. **Allah is the doer of all, all He intends :**

The Glorious Qur'an says,
“**Allah is the doer of all he intends.**”
(Al Qur'an 85:16)

And by now I am sure you will yourself admit in all humility and sincerity that God only intends Godly things – not unGodly things.

By ascribing human-like qualities of forgetting, of making mistakes, of getting tired, of needing food, of getting jealous and the like – does one realize that one is mocking God and committing blasphemy by ascribing such attributes to God? Do you think we humans are in any way justified in attributing such human qualities to God?

Is it not a better choice, and a truthful one at that, to state that our Creator is free from all such blemishes that ignorant humans ascribe to Him?

For the Glorious Qur'an says:

Say: "Allah is free from all such things that they (unbelievers / polytheists) ascribe to Him".

Thus we have examined and highlighted similarities between the concept of prophethood, and the attributes of God, in Islam and in Hinduism as mentioned in their respective scriptures. In subsequent articles in the present series, we shall study the similarities between the concept of life after death, fate & destiny and worship in Islam and in Hinduism.

And all praises are for the One and Only God and Creator Allah, who alone is worthy of devotion, complete submission and worship.

(To be continued)



SIMILARITIES BETWEEN
ISLAM AND HINDUISM – Part 6

by

Dr. Zakir Naik

INTRODUCTION

In this series of articles, we are analyzing similarities and common grounds between two major religions of the world: Hinduism and Islam. In the previous article we examined and highlighted similarities between the concept of prophethood, and the attributes of God, in Islam and in Hinduism as mentioned in their respective scriptures. In this month's article, we shall study the various prophecies in Hindu scriptures of the advent of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

MUHAMMAD (PBUH) PROPHESED IN HINDU SCRIPTURES:

a. **Muhammad (pbuh) prophesied in Bhavishya Purana:**

According to Bhavishya Purana in the Prati Sarag Parv III, Khand 3, Adhyay 3, Shalokas 5 to 8

“A Malechha (belonging to a foreign country and speaking a foreign language) spiritual teacher will appear with his companions, His name will be Mohammad. Raja (Bhoj) after giving this Maha Dev Arab (of angelic disposition) a bath in the ‘panchgavya’ and the Ganges water (i.e. purging him of all sins) offered him the presents of his sincere devotion and showing him all reverence said, “I make obeisance to thee, ‘O ye! The pride of mankind, the dweller in Arabia, ye have collected a great force to kill the devil and you yourself have been protected from the malechha opponents”.

The Prophecy clearly states

- (i) The name of the Prophet as Muhammad.
- (ii) He will belong to Arabia; the Sanskrit word Marusthal means a sandy track of land or a desert.
- (iii) Special mention is made of the companions of the prophet i.e. the Sahabas. No other Prophet had as many companions as Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).
- (iv) He is referred as the pride of mankind (Parbatis nath).

The Glorious Qur’an reconfirms:

“And thou (standest) on an exalted standard of character”

(Al Qur’an 68:4)

‘Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah, a beautiful pattern (of conduct)’
(Al Qur’an 33:21)

- (v) He will kill the devil i.e. abolish idol worship and all sorts of vices.
- (vi) The prophet will be protected against his enemies.
Some people may argue that Raja Bhoj mentioned in the prophecy lived in the 11th century C.E.i.e. 500 years after the advent of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and that he was the descendant of the 10th generation of Raja Shalivahan. These people fail to realize that there was not only one Raja of the name Bhoj. The Egyptian Monarchs were called as Pharaohs and the Roman Kings were known

as Caesars. Similarly Indian Rajas were given the title of Bhoj. There were several Raja Bhojs who came before the one in 11th Century C.E.

The prophet did not physically take a bath in Panch gavya and the water of Ganges. Since the water of Ganges is considered holy, taking bath in the Ganges is an idiom meaning washing away or making immune from all sorts of sins. Here the prophecy implies that prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was sinless i.e. 'maasoom'.

b. **Muhammad (pbuh) prophesied in Bhavishya Purana:**

According to Bhavishya Purana in the Pratisarag Parv III, Khand 3, Adhyay 3 Shalokas 10 to 27 Maharishi Vyas has prophesied:

“The Malechha have spoiled the well-known land of the Arabs. Arya Dharma is not to be found in the country. Before also there appeared a misguided fiend whom I had killed; he has now again appeared being sent by a powerful enemy. To show these enemies the right path and to give them guidance the well-known Mohamad (Mohammad) who has been given by me, the epithet of Brahma, is busy in bringing the ‘Pishachas’ to the right path. O Raja, you need not go to the land of the foolish Pishachas, you will be purified through my kindness even where you are. At night, he of the angelic disposition, the shrewd man, in the guise of a pischacha said to Raja Bhoj, O Raja! Your Arya Dharma has been made to prevail over all religions, but according to the commandments of Ishwar Parmatama, I shall enforce the strong creed of the meat eaters. My followers will be men circumcised, without a tail (on his head), keeping beard, creating a revolution announcing Adhan (call for prayer) and will be eating all lawful things. He will eat all sorts of animals except swine. They will not seek purification from the holy shrubs, but will be purified through warfare. On account of their fighting the irreligious nations, they will be known as Musalmaans. I shall be the originator of this religion of the meat-eating nation.”

The Prophecy states that

- (i) The evildoers have corrupted the Arab land.
- (ii) Arya Dharma is not found in that land.
- (iii) The present enemies will be destroyed just as the previous enemies like Abraha had perished. The Qur'an speaks about these sorts of previous enemies in Surah Al Fil:

**“Seest thou not how thy lord dealt with the
Companions of the elephant?
Did He not make their treacherous plan go astray?
And He sent against them flights of Birds
Striking them with stones of baked clay
Then did he make them like an empty field
Of stalk and straw, (of which the corn) has been eaten up.**

(Al Qur'an 105:1-5)

(iv) Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has been given the title Brahma to guide the opponents of truth.

(vi) The Indian Raja need not go to Arab land since his purification will take place in India after the Musalmaan will arise in India.

(vi) The coming Prophet will attest the truth of the Aryan faith i.e. Monotheism and will reform the misguided people.

(vii) The Prophet's followers will be circumcised. They will be without a tale on their heads, they will keep beards and they will create a great revolution.

(viii) They will announce the adhan i.e. 'call for prayer'.

(ix) He will only eat lawful things and animals, but will not eat pork. The Qur'an confirms this in no less than 4 different places:

In Surah Al-Baqarah chapter 2 verse 173

In Surah Al-Maidah chapter 5 verse 3

In Surah Al-Anam chapter 6 verse 145

In Surah Al-Nahl Chapter 16 verse 115

"Forbidden for you for food are dead meat, blood, flesh of swine and that on which had been invoked the name of other than Allah.

(x) They will not purify with grass like the Hindus, but by means of sword they will fight the evil-doers.

(xi) They will be called Musalmaan.

(xii) They will be a meat-eating nation.

The Qur'an permits humans to eat herbivorous animals in Surah Maidah chapter 5 verse no. 1 and in Surah Mu'minoon chapter 23 verse 21

(xiii) Commentary

According to Bhavishya Purana Part – III, khand 1, Adhyay 3, shlokas 21-23

Corruption and persecution are in seven sacred cities of Kashi etc. India is inhabited by Rakshas, Shabar, Bhil and other foolish people. In the land of 'Malechhas' the followers of the 'Malechah dharma' (Islam) are wise and brave people. All good qualities are found in Musalmaans and all sorts of vices have accumulated in the land of the Aryas. Islam will rule in India and its island. Having known these facts O Meeni, glorify the name of the Lord".

The Qur'an confirms:

"It is He who hath sent His messenger with guidance and the Religion of Truth, to proclaim it over all religion,

even though the pagans may detest (it).

(Al Qur'an 9:33 and 61:9)

and a similar verse ends with:

'And enough is Allah for a witness'.

(Al Qur'an 48:28)

c. Prophet Muhammad prophesied in Atharva Veda

In the 20th book of Atharva Veda Hymn-127, some Suktas (chapters) are known as 'kuntap sukt'. 'Kuntap' means 'the consumer of misery and troubles', thus meaning 'the message of peace and safety'. This translated in Arabic means Islam.

'Kuntap' also means hidden glands in the abdomen. These mantras are probably called so because their true meaning was hidden and was to be revealed in future. Its hidden meaning is also connected with the naval or the middle point of the earth. Makkah is called the 'ummul Qura', or 'the mother of the towns' or 'the naval of the earth' in many revealed books. It was the first house of worship of the One God where Almighty God gave spiritual nourishment to the world. The Glorious Qur'an says:

"The first House (of worship) appointed for men was that at Bakka (Makkah) full of blessing and of guidance for all kinds of beings."

(Al Qur'an 3:96)

Another name for Makkah is Becca. Thus 'kuntap' stands for Makkah or Becca. Several people like M. Bloom Field, Prof Ralph Griffith, Pandit Rajaram, Pandit Khem Karan and others have translated these kuntap suktas. The main points mentioned in the kuntap suktas in Atharvaved book XX Hymn 127 verses 1-13 are:

Mantra 1

He is narashansah or the praised one (Mohammad).

He is Kaurama the prince of peace or the emigrant, who is safe even amongst a host of 60,090 enemies.

Mantra 2.

He is a camel-riding Rishi, whose chariot touches the heaven.

Mantra 3.

He is Mamah Rishi.

Mantra 4

Vachyesv rebh 'Oh! Ye who glorifies.'

Mantra 14

We glorify or praise the great hero with a song of praise and a prayer. Please accept this praise so that evil may not befall us.

(i) The Sanskrit word 'Narashansah' means 'the praised one' which is the literal translation of the Arabic word Muhammad (pbuh).

The Sanskrit word 'Kaurama' means 'one who spreads and promotes peace'. The holy Prophet was the 'prince of peace' and he preached equality of human kind and universal brotherhood. 'Kaurama' also means 'an emigrant'. The Prophet migrated from Makkah to Madeenah and was thus an emigrant.

(ii) He will be protected from 60,090 enemies, which was the population of Makkah. The prophet would ride a camel. This clearly indicates that, it cannot be an Indian Rishi since it is forbidden for a Brahman to ride a camel. According to Manu Smriti chapter 11 verse 202 sacred books of the east, volume 25, Laws of Manu pg. 472 "A Brahman is prohibited from riding a camel or an ass and to bathe naked. He should purify himself by suppressing his breath".

(iii) This mantra gave the Rishi name as Mamah. No Rishi in India or any other prophet had this name. 'Mamah' is derived from 'Mah' which means to esteem highly, or to revere, and to exalt. Some Sanskrit books give the prophet's name as 'Mahamad' but this word according to Sanskrit grammar can also be used in the bad sense. It is incorrect to apply grammar to an Arabic word. Actually Mamah has the same meaning and somewhat similar pronunciation as the word Muhammad (pbuh).

d. Battle of the Allies described in the Vedas.

It is mentioned in Atharvaveda Book XX hymn 21, verse 6: "O Lord of the truthful! These liberators drink, these feats of bravery and the inspiring songs gladdened thee in the field of battle. When thou renderst vanquished without fight the ten thousand opponents of the praying one, the adoring one."

(i) This Prophecy of the Veda describes the well-known battle of Ahzab or the battle of the Allies during the time of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh). The Prophet was victorious without an actual conflict, which is mentioned in the Qur'an:

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN
ISLAM AND HINDUISM – Part 7

by

Dr. Zakir Naik

INTRODUCTION

In this series of articles, we are analyzing similarities and common grounds between two major religions of the world: Hinduism and Islam. In the previous article studied the various prophecies in Hindu scriptures of the advent of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). . In this month's article, we shall study, examine and highlight similarities between the concepts of life after death, and of fate and destiny in Islam and in Hinduism as mentioned in their respective scriptures.

THE CONCEPT OF LIFE AFTER DEATH IN HINDUISM AND IN ISLAM

LIFE AFTER DEATH IN HINDUISM:

1. Concept of rebirth in Hinduism – Reincarnation or Transmigration of the Souls

Most of the Hindus believe in the cycle of birth, death and rebirth, which is called 'Samsara'.

'Samsara' or the doctrine of rebirth is also known as the theory of reincarnation or of transmigration of the soul. This doctrine is considered to be a basic tenet of Hinduism. According to doctrine of rebirth, differences between individuals, even at the time of their birth are due to their past karma i.e. actions done in the past birth. For example if one child is born healthy while another is handicapped or blind, the differences are attributed to their deeds in their previous lives. Those who believe in this theory reason that since all actions may not bear fruit in this life, there has to be another life for facing or reaping the consequences of one's actions.

a) It is mentioned in the Bhagvad Gita
"As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, the soul similarly accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless."
(Bhagvad Gita 2:22)

b) The Doctrine of Re-birth is also described in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad:
"As a Caterpillar which has wriggled to the top of a blade of grass draws itself over to a new blade, so does the soul, after it has put aside its body draws itself over to a new existence. (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4:4:3)

2. Karma – The law of Cause and Effect:

Karma means act, deed, action or activity and refers not only to action undertaken by the body but also to those undertaken by the mind. Karma is actually action and reaction or the law of cause and effect. It is explained by the saying, "As we sow, so shall we reap". A farmer cannot sow wheat and expect rice to grow. Similarly, every good thought, word or deed begets a similar reaction which affects our next life and every unkind thought, harsh word and evil deed comes back to harm us in this life or in the next life.

3. Dharma – Righteous Duties:

Dharma means what is right or righteous duties. This includes what is right for the individual, family, the class or caste and also for the universe itself. In order to achieve good karma, life should be lived according to Dharma, otherwise it will result in bad karma. Dharma affects both, the present life and the future as well.

4. Moksha – Liberation from the Cycle of Rebirth:

Moksha means liberation from the cycle of rebirth or of 'Samsara'. The ultimate aim of every Hindu is that one day the cycle of rebirth will be over and he will not have to be reborn again. This can only happen if there is no karma to cause an individual to be reborn i.e. it loses its good and bad karma.

5. Rebirth is not mentioned in the Vedas:

The important point worth noting is that the doctrine of rebirth is not postulated, propounded nor even mentioned anywhere in what are considered to be the most authentic Hindu scriptures i.e. the Vedas. The Vedas make no mention of the entire concept of transmigration of souls.

6. Punarjanam does not mean cycle of rebirth but means Life after Death:

The Common word used for the doctrine of rebirth is 'Punarjanam'. In Sanskrit 'Punar' or 'Puna', means, 'next time' or 'again' and 'Janam' means 'life'. Therefore 'Punarjanam' means 'next life' or 'the life hereafter'. It does not mean coming to life on earth again and again as a living creature.

If one reads many of the references to Punarjanam in Hindu Scriptures besides the Vedas, keeping the life in the hereafter in mind, one gets the

concept of the next life but not of rebirths or of life again and again. This is true for several quotations of the Bhagvad Gita and Upanishad which speak of Punarjanam.

This concept of repeated births or of cycle of rebirth was developed after the Vedic period. This doctrine was included by humans in subsequent Hindu scriptures including the Upanishad, Bhagvad Gita and the Puranas in a conscious attempt to rationalize and explain the differences between different individuals at birth and the different circumstances in which people find themselves in, with the concept that Almighty God is not unjust. So to say that since God is not unjust the inequalities and differences between people are due to their deeds in their past lives.

Islam has a rational answer to this which we shall discuss later InshaAllah.

7. Life after Death in the Vedas:

There is reference to life after death in the Vedas. It is mentioned in:

a. Rigved Book no. 10, Hymn no. 16 verse no. 4

“The unborn portion, burn that, AGNI, with thy heat; let thy flame, thy splendour, consume it; with those glorious members which thou hast given him, JATAVEDAS, bear him to the world (of the virtuous)”
(Rigved 10:16:4)

The Sanskrit word ‘Sukritam u Lokam’ means ‘the word of the virtuous or region of the pious, referring to the hereafter. The next verse i.e.

b. Rigveda Book 10 hymn 16 verse 5 says:

“... Putting on (Celestial) life, let the remains (of bodily like) depart: let him, JATAVEDAS be associated with a body.”
(Rigveda 10:16:5)

This verse too refers to a second life i.e. life after death.

8. Paradise – Swarga in the Vedas:

‘Swarg’ i.e. Paradise, is described in several places in the Vedas including:

a. Atharva Veda Book 4 hymn 34 verse 6 (Devichand)

“May all these streams of butter, with their banks of honey, flowing with distilled water, and milk and curds and water reach thee in domestic life

enhancing thy pleasure. May thou acquire completely these things strengthening the soul in diverse ways.”
(Atharva Veda 4:34:6)

Atharva Veda Book 4 hymn 34 verse 6 (Ved Pra.)

“Having pools of clarified butter, stocks of sweet honey, and having exhilarating drinks for water, full of milk and curds, may all these streams flow to us in the world of happiness swelling sweetly. May our lakes full of lotuses be situated near us.”
(Atharva Veda 4:34:6)

b. It is mentioned in Atharvaveda

“Bereft of physical bodies, pure, cleansed with the wind, brilliant, they go to a brilliant world. The fire does not cause burning in their male organ. In the world of happiness they get plenty of women.
(Atharva Veda 4:34:2)

c) It is mentioned in Atharvaveda:

May the realised ones, first of all, take the vital breath under their control from the limbs in which it has been circulating. Go to heaven stay firm with all the parts of your body. Attain the world of light and emancipation, following the path of the enlightened ones (your predecessors)”.
(Atharva Veda 2:34:5)

d) It is mentioned in Atharavaveda

“O both of you, start to accomplish it, make determined effort to accomplish it. Those having unflinching faith attain this abode of happiness. Whatever ripe offerings you have made in fire of sacrifice, may both, the husband and wife, stand united to guard them with care.
(Atharva Veda 6:122:5)

e) It is mentioned in the Rigveda:

“O Aila, the loud-sounding clouds, these divines say to you, since you are indeed subject to death, let your progeny propitiate your revered cosmic forces with oblations, then alone you shall rejoice (with me) in heaven”
(Rigveda 10:95:18)

9. Hell – ‘Nark’ in the Vedas

'Nark' or 'Hell' is also described in the Vedas and the Sanskrit word used is 'Narakasthanam'.

It is also mentioned in Rigveda:

"May the bounteous fire divine, consume them with his fiercely glowing sharp jaws like flames, who disregard the commandments and steadfast laws of most venerable and sagacious Lord.
(Rigveda 4:5:4)

LIFE AFTER DEATH – THE HEREAFTER

LIFE AFTER DEATH IN ISLAM

1. Live once in this world and then be resurrected in the Hereafter

It is mentioned in the Qur'an

**How can ye reject the faith in Allah?
Seeing that ye were without life,
And He gave you life; Then will He cause you to die,
and will He again bring you to life; And again to Him will ye return.**
(Al Qur'an 2:28)

Islam states that a human being comes into this world only once, and after he dies, he is again resurrected on the day of judgement. Depending on his deeds he will either dwell in heaven i.e. Paradise or he will dwell in hell.

2. This Life is a test for the hereafter

It is mentioned in the Qur'an

**He who created Death and Life,
that He may try which of you is best in deed;
And He is the exalted in Might, oft-forgiving**
(Al Qur'an 67:2)

This life that we lead in this world is a test for the hereafter. If we follow the commandments of the Almighty Creator and we pass the test, we shall enter Paradise i.e., which is Eternal Bliss. If we do not follow the commandments of our creator and fail the test then we shall be put into hell.

3. Full Recompense on the Day of Judgement:

It is mentioned in the Qur'an

**Every soul shall have a test of death.
And only on the Day of Judgment shall
you be paid your full recompense.
Only he who is saved far from the fire and admitted to the Garden
will have attained the object (of life).
For the life of this world is but goods and chattels of deception.
(Al Qur'an 3:185)**

4. Paradise – Al Jannah

a. Al-Jannah i.e. paradise is a place of perpetual bliss. In Arabic, 'jannat' literally means 'the Garden'. The Qur'an describes paradise in great detail, such as gardens underneath which rivers run. It contains rivers of milk unchanging in flavour and rivers of purified honey. In paradise is fruit of every kind. No fatigue shall be felt in paradise neither shall there be any idle talk. There shall be no cause of sin, difficulty, anxiety, trouble or hardship. Paradise shall thus have peace and bliss.

b. Paradise is described in several verses of the Qur'an including:

- I. Surah Ale Imran Chapter 3 verse 15
- II. Surah Ale Imran Chapter 3 verse 198
- III. Surah Al-Nisa Chapter 4 verse 57
- IV. Surah Al Maidah Chapter 5 verse 119
- V. Surah At-Taubah Chapter 9 verse 72
- VI. Surah Al-Hajr Chapter 15 verses 45-48
- VII. Surah Al-Kahf Chapter 18 verse 31
- VIII. Surah Al-Hajj Chapter 22 verse 23
- IX. Surah Al-Fatir Chapter 35 verses 33-35
- X. Surah Yasin Chapter 36 verses 55-58
- XI. Surah Al-Saffat Chapter 37 verses 41-49
- XII. Surah Al-Zukhruf Chapter 43 verses 68-73
- XIII. Surah Al-Dukhan Chapter 44 verses 51-57
- XIV. Surah Muhammad Chapter 47 verse 15
- XV. Surah Al-Tur Chapter 52 verses 17-24
- XVI. Surah Al-Rahman Chapter 55 verses 46-77
- XVII. Surah Al-Waqiah Chapter 56 verses 11-38

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ISLAM AND HINDUISM – Part 8

by

Dr. Zakir Naik

INTRODUCTION

In this series of articles, we are analyzing similarities and common grounds between two major religions of the world: Hinduism and Islam. In the previous article, we studied the various similarities between the concepts of life after death, and of fate and destiny in Islam and in Hinduism as mentioned in their respective scriptures. In this month's article, we shall study, examine and highlight similarities between the concepts of worship and jihad in Hinduism as mentioned in their respective scriptures. We shall also examine certain similarities in the teachings of the scriptures of Hinduism and Islam.

THE CONCEPT OF WORSHIP IN HINDUISM AND IN ISLAM

PILLARS OF ISLAM

1. ISLAMIC CREED:

a. It is mentioned in Sahih Bukhari

"Narrated Ibn Umar (r.a.) That Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said: Islam is based on (the following) five (principles):

1. To testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah and that Muhammad (pbuh) is the slave and messenger of Allah.
 2. Iqamat-as-salaah (to perform prayers)
 3. To pay Zakaat
 4. To perform Hajj (i.e. Pilgrimage to Makkah)
 5. To Observe Saum (i.e. fast) during the month of Ramadhaan
- (Sahih Bukhari Vol. 1, Book of Imaan, Chapter 1, Hadith 8)

b. TESTIMONY OF FAITH:

The First Pillar of Islam i.e. to declare, proclaim, testify and to bear witness that no entity or deity is worthy of worship, devotion, obedience and submission except Allah (swt) and to bear witness that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the last and final Messenger of Allah. This pillar of faith has already been discussed in the Pillar of Imaan.

2. SALAAH:

a. The second Pillar of Islam is Salaah.

Salaah is usually translated in English as prayer. To pray means to beseech or to ask for help. In Salaah we Muslims do not merely ask for help from Almighty Allah but we also praise Him and receive guidance from Him. I personally prefer describing it as programming towards righteousness. To elaborate, consider that during salaah, after Surah Fatiha, an Imaam may recite:

**O ye who believe!
Intoxicants and gambling,
(Dedication of) Stones,
And (divination by) arrows,
Are an abomination
Of Satan's handiwork;
Eschew such (abomination),
That you may prosper.
(Al Qur'an 5:90)**

Allah (swt) guides us, through this verse of the Qur'an, which is recited by the Imaam during salaah, that we should not imbibe intoxicants, we should not indulge in gambling, idol worship or fortune telling. All these are Satan's handiwork and we should abstain from these if we wish to prosper.

The English word 'prayer' does not denote the complete meaning of Salaah in its full and true sense.

b. Prayer restrains you from shameful and unjust deeds.

It is mentioned in the Qur'an:

**Recite what is sent
Of the book by inspiration
To thee, and establish
Regular Prayer: for prayer
Restrains from shameful
And unjust deeds;
And remembrance of Allah
Is the greatest (thing of life)
Without doubt. And Allah knows
The (deeds) that ye do.
(Al Qur'an 29:45)**

c. Five times Salaah for healthy souls.

For a healthy body, human require about three meals. In a similar manner for a healthy soul, it is required that we offer Salaah a minimum of five times every day.

Our Creator Allah (swt) has prescribed salaah for human beings for a minimum of five times a day in Surah Isra Chapter 17 Verse 78 and in Surah Taha Chapter 20 Verse 130.

d. The Prostration is the most important part of Salaah:

The most important part of Salaah is the 'Sujud' i.e. Prostration.

i. It is mentioned in the Qur'an:

**“O Mary! Worship thy lord devoutly,
Prostrate thyself, and bow down (in prayers)
With those who bow down.”**
(Al Qur'an 3:43)

ii. O ye who believe:

**Bow down, prostrate yourselves,
And adore your Lord; and do good;
That ye may prosper.**
(Al Qur'an 22:77)

Similarities:

One of the types of Prayers in Hinduism is 'Shashtang'

There are various different types of prayers and modes of worship in Hinduism. One of the types is 'shashtang'. The word 'shashtang' is made up of 'Sa' and 'Asht' which means eight and 'Ang' which means 'parts of the body'. Thus, shastang is a mode of worship touching eight parts of the body. The best way a person can do this is like Muslims who prostrate in their Salaah touching their forehead, nose, two hands, two knees, and two feet.

Idol Worship is prohibited in Hinduism:

i. Idol worship, which is very common amongst the Hindus, is prohibited in Hinduism. It is mentioned in Bhagavad Gita Chapter 7 verse 20:
“Those whose intelligence has been stolen by material desires they worship demigods i.e. idols.(Bhagavad Gita 7:20)

It is mentioned in:

ii. Svetashvatara Upanishad chapter 4 verse 19

As well as in:

iii. Yajurved Chapter 32 Verse 3

“There is no image of Him”

(Svetashvatara Upanishad 4:19, Yajurved 32:3)

iv. It is also mentioned in
Yajurveda Chapter 40 verse 9

“They enter darkness those who worship natural things (for e.g. air, water, fire, etc.). They sink deeper in darkness those who worship sambhuti i.e. created things (for e.g. table, chair, car, idol etc.)

(Yajurved 40:9)

3. **ZAKAT:**

a. **ZAKAAT MEANS PURIFICATION AND GROWTH**

Zakaat is the third pillar of Islam, which means purification and growth.

b. **2.5% IN CHARITY**

Every rich Muslim who has a saving which is more than the minimum level called ‘Nisaab’ which is 85 gms of gold, should give 2.5% of his excess wealth in charity every lunar year.

c. **IF ALL RICH GIVE ZAKAT NO ONE WILL DIE OF HUNGER**

If every rich human being gives Zakaat, then poverty will be eradicated from this world. There will not be a single human being who will die of hunger.

d. **ZAKAT ENSURES THAT WEALTH DOES NOT CIRCULATE ONLY AMONGST THE RICH**

One of the reasons for Zakaat is mentioned in Surah Al-Hashr

“In order that the wealth may not (merely) circulate amongst the wealthy”

(Al Qur’an 59:7)

e. **CHARITY IN HINDUISM:**

Charity is also prescribed in Hinduism.

i. In Rigved Bk. 10 hymn 117 verse 5

“Let the rich satisfy the poor implorer, and bend his eyes upon a longer pathway. Richest come now to one, now to another, and like the wheels of cars are ever rolling.”

(Translation by Ralph Griffith)

“If it is expected of every rich man to satisfy the poor implorer; let the rich person have a distant vision (for a rich of today may not remain rich tomorrow). Remember that riches revolve from one man to another, as revolve the wheels of a chariot.”

(Translation by Satyaprakash Sarasvati & Satyakam Vidhya Lankar) (Rigved 10:117:5)

ii. Charity has been prescribed in Bhagvad Gita in several places including:
Chapter 17 verse 20 and
Chapter 16 verse 3

4. SAUM – FASTING:

a. DESCRIPTION

'Saum' or fasting, is the fourth pillar of Islam. Every healthy adult Muslim is supposed to abstain from eating and drinking, from dawn to sunset, in the complete lunar month of Ramadhaan.

b. FASTING PRESCRIBED FOR SELF-RESTRAINT:

The reason for fasting has been mentioned in the Qur'an:

**O ye who believe!
Fasting is prescribed to you
As it was prescribed
To those before you,
That ye may (learn) self-restraint.
(Al Qur'an 2:183)**

Today the psychologists inform us that if a person can control his hunger, it is very likely that he will be able to control most of his desires.

c. FASTING DISCOURAGES ALCOHOLISM, SMOKING AND OTHER ADDICTIONS

Fasting for one complete month is a good opportunity for giving up one's wrong habits. If a person can abstain from drinking alcohol, from dawn to sunset, he can very well abstain from alcohol from the cradle to the grave. If a person can abstain from smoking, from dawn to sunset, he can very well abstain from smoking from the cradle to the grave.

d. MEDICAL BENEFITS

There are various medical benefits of fasting. Fasting increases the absorption of the intestine; it also decreases the cholesterol level.

e. FASTING IN HINDUISM

There are different types and methods of fasting in Hinduism. According to Manusmriti Chapter 6 verse 24
Fasting has been prescribed for a month for purification.
(Manusmriti edited by Dr. R. N. Sharma)

Fasting has also been prescribed in
Manusmriti chapter 4 verse 222
Manusmriti chapter 11 verse 204

5. HAJJ – PILGRIMAGE:

a. Description

Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam. Every adult Muslim who has the means to perform Hajj i.e. pilgrimage to the holy city of Makkah should at least perform Hajj once in his life time.

b. Universal Brotherhood:

Hajj is a practical example and demonstration of universal brotherhood. The Hajj is the largest annual gathering in the world where about 2.5 million people from different parts of the world gather, from U.S.A., from U.K. from Malaysia, from Indonesia, from India and other parts of the world. All pilgrims wear two pieces of unsown cloth, preferably white, such that you cannot differentiate whether a person is rich or poor, king or pauper. People of all races and of all colours gather together in unity to worship the One Creator.

c. Pilgrimage in Hinduism

There are various places of pilgrimage in Hinduism. One of the sacred places mentioned in

i. Rigved, Bk. 3 hymn 29 verse 4 is "Ilayspad, which is situated at Nabha prathvi."

'Ila' means God or Allah, and 'spad' means place, therefore Ilaspad means place of God. Nabha means center and prathvi mean earth. Thus this verse of the Veda prescribes pilgrimage to a place of God situated at the center of the earth.

Sanskrit-English dictionary by M. Monier Williams (*Edition 2002*) states that Ilaspad is "Name of a Tirtha" i.e. place of Pilgrimage – however its location is not known.

According to the Qur'an:

ii. **The first House (of worship)
Appointed for men
Was that at Bakka
Full of blessing and of guidance
For all kinds of beings.
(Al Quran 3:96)**

'Bacca' is another name for Makkah and we know today that Makkah is situated at the center of the earth.

Later after seven verses i.e.

iii. Rigved Bk. 3 hymn 29 verse 11

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is mentioned as 'Narashansa'.

Thus we can conclude that this Ilayspad, place of pilgrimage mentioned in Rigved is Makkah.

iv. Makkah is also mentioned as Ilaspad i.e. Allah's holy place in Rigved Book 1 hymn 128 verse 1

CONCEPT OF JIHAD IN HINDUISM AND IN ISLAM

JIHAD IN ISLAM AND IN HINDUISM

a. One of the greatest misconceptions about Islam, not only amongst the non-Muslims but even amongst the Muslims, is that concerning the concept of Jihad. Non-Muslims as well as Muslims think that any war fought by any Muslim for whatever purpose, be it good or bad, is Jihad.

'Jihad' is an Arabic word derived from 'Jahada', which means to strive or to struggle. For example, if a student strives to pass in the examination he is doing jihad.

In the Islamic context, 'Jihad' means to strive against one's own evil inclination. It also means to strive to make the society better. It also includes the right to fight in self-defence or to fight in the battlefield against oppression and against aggression.

1. Jihad is not holy war

Not only non-Muslim scholars, but even some Muslim scholars mistranslate the word 'Jihad' as holy war. The Arabic word for 'holy war' is 'harabum muqaddasah' and this word is not to be found anywhere in the Qur'an or in any hadith. The word 'holy war' was first used to describe the crusades of the Christians who killed thousands of people in the name of Christianity. Today, this term 'holy war' is used to falsely describe Jihad, which merely means 'to strive'. In an Islamic context, Jihad means 'to strive in the way of Allah for a righteous cause' i.e. Jihad fi Sabilillah.

2. Only one of the several forms of Jihad is fighting

There are different types of Jihad i.e., striving. One of the types is striving is fighting in the battlefield against oppression and tyranny.

Many critics of Islam including Arun Shourie quote Surah Al-Tawbah chapter 9 verse 5

"... Fight and slay the Mushrik/Kafir (Hindu) wherever you find them ..."
(Al Qur'an 9:5)

If you read the Qur'an, this verse exists but it is quoted out of context by Arun Shourie.

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This verse is revealed and instructs the Muslims to fight in the battlefield and kill the enemy wherever you find them. But natural, any army general to boost up the morale of the soldiers and to encourage them will say "Don't get scared, fight and kill the enemies, wherever you find them in the battlefield. Arun Shourie in his book 'The World of Fatwas' after quoting Surah Tawbah chapter 9 verse 5 jumps to verse 7. Any logical person will realize that verse 6 has the reply to his allegation.

Surah Tawbah chapter 9 verse 6 says:

"If any amongst the Mushriks (i.e. the enemies) ask thee for asylum, grant it to him so that he may hear the word of Allah and then escort him to where he can be secure".
(Al Qur'an 9:6)

Today the most merciful army general may tell his soldiers to let the enemy go, but Almighty Allah in the Qur'an says if the enemy wants peace do not just let them go but escort them to place of security. Which army general in today's day and age, or rather in the whole of recorded human history is ever known to have given such merciful instructions? Now will someone ask Mr. Arun Shourie why did he deliberately not quote verse 6?

4. Jihad (i.e. striving) in the Bhagavad Gita

All the major religions encourage their followers to strive in good works. It is mentioned in Bhagavad Gita

"Therefore strive for Yoga, O Arjuna, which is the art of all work."
(Bhagavad Gita 2:50)

5. Fighting prescribed in the Bhagavad Gita too

a. All the major religions of the world have prescribed fighting, at sometime or the other, especially in self-defence or for fighting against oppression.

Mahabharata is an epic and sacred Scripture of the Hindus, which mainly deals with a fight between the cousins, the Pandavas and the Kauravas. In the battlefield Arjun prefers not to fight and be killed rather than having his conscience burdened with the killing of his relatives. At this moment, Krishna advises Arjun in the battlefield and this advice is contained in the Bhagvad Gita. There are several verses in the Bhagvad Gita where Krishna advises Arjun to fight and kill the enemies even though they are his relatives.

b. It is mentioned in
The Bhagvad Gita Chapter 1 verse 43-46

(43) O Krishna, maintainer of the people, I have heard by disciplic succession that those who destroy family traditions dwell always in hell”

(44) “Alas, how strange it is that we are preparing ourselves to commit great sinful acts, driven by the desire to enjoy royal happiness.”

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN
ISLAM AND HINDUISM – Part 9
by

Dr. Zakir Naik

INTRODUCTION

In this series of articles, we are analyzing similarities and common grounds between two major religions of the world: Hinduism and Islam. In the previous article, we studied the various similarities between the concepts of worship in Islam and in Hinduism as mentioned in their respective scriptures. In this month’s article, we shall study, examine and highlight similarities between the concept of jihad in Islam and in Hinduism as mentioned in their respective scriptures. We shall also examine certain similarities in the teachings of the scriptures of Hinduism and Islam.

CONCEPT OF JIHAD IN HINDUISM AND IN ISLAM

JIHAD IN ISLAM AND IN HINDUISM

a. One of the greatest misconceptions about Islam, not only amongst the non-Muslims but even amongst the Muslims, is that concerning the concept of Jihad. Non-Muslims as well as Muslims think that any war fought by any Muslim for whatever purpose, be it good or bad, is Jihad.

'Jihad' is an Arabic word derived from 'Jahada', which means to strive or to struggle. For example, if a student strives to pass in the examination he is doing jihad.

In the Islamic context, 'Jihad' means to strive against one's own evil inclination. It also means to strive to make the society better. It also includes the right to fight in self-defence or to fight in the battlefield against oppression and against aggression.

1. **Jihad is not holy war**

Not only non-Muslim scholars, but even some Muslim scholars mistranslate the word 'Jihad' as holy war. The Arabic word for 'holy war' is 'harabum muqaddasah' and this word is not to be found anywhere in the Qur'an nor in any hadith. The word 'holy war' was first used to describe the crusades of the Christians who killed thousands of people in the name of Christianity. Today, this term 'holy war' is used to falsely describe Jihad, which merely means 'to strive'. In an Islamic context, Jihad means 'to strive in the way of Allah for a righteous cause'. i.e. Jihad fi Sabilillah.

2. **Only one of the several forms of Jihad is fighting**

There are different types of Jihad i.e., striving. One of the types is striving is fighting in the battlefield against oppression and tyranny.

Many critics of Islam including Arun Shourie quote Surah Al-Tawbah chapter 9 verse 5

"... Fight and slay the Mushrik/Kafir (Hindu) wherever you find them ..."
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If you read the Qur'an, this verse exists but it is quoted out of context by Arun Shourie.

The first few verses of Surah Tawbah before verse 5 speak about the peace treaty between the Muslims and Mushriks (polytheists) of Makkah. This peace treaty was unilaterally broken by the Mushriks of Makkah. In verse no. 5 Allah (swt) gives them an ultimatum to put things straight in four months' time, or else face a declaration of war. It is for the battlefield that Allah says "fight and slay the Mushriks (i.e. the enemies from Makkah) wherever you find them and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem of war".

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morale of the soldiers and to encourage them will say “Don’t get scared, fight and kill the enemies, wherever you find them in the battlefield. Arun Shourie in his book ‘The World of Fatwas’ after quoting Surah Tawbah chapter 9 verse 5 jumps to verse 7. Any logical person will realize that verse 6 has the reply to his allegation.

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(44) “Alas, how strange it is that we are preparing ourselves to commit great sinful acts, driven by the desire to enjoy royal happiness.”

(45) I would consider better for the sons of Dhritarashtra to kill me unarmed and unresisting rather than fight with them.

(46) “Arjuna, having thus spoken, cast aside his bow and arrow, and sat down on the chariot, his mind, overwhelmed with grief”.

c. Krishna further replies in
Bhagvad Gita Chapter 2 Verse 2, 3

2. “My dear Arjuna, how have these impurities come upon you? They are not at all befitting a man who knows the progressive values of life. They lead not to higher planets but to infamy.

2. “O son of Partha, do not yield to this degrading impotence. It does not become you. Give up such petty weakness of heart and arise, O chastiser of the enemy!”