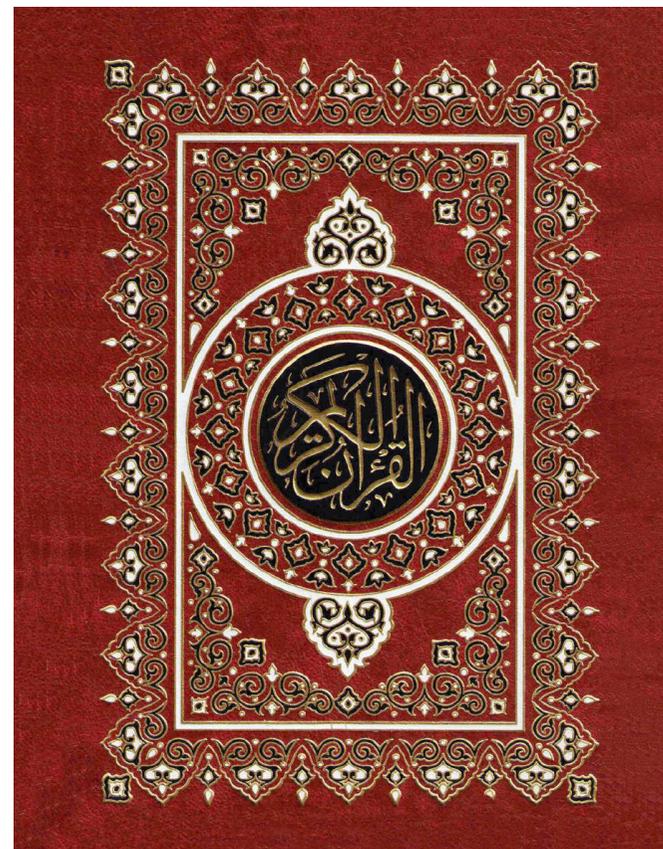


# GĪTĀ vs QUR'AN



By Pandit Sri Ram

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## GĪTĀ vs QUR'AN

The Muslims aver that the Quran is the final Revelation of Allah, every word of it is the word of God, eternal and perfect revealed to Muhammad the last of all prophets and the perfect example of a human being (*uswa hasana*). The Qur'an was revealed over a period of 20 years from 610 to 630 CE. It was revealed in two phases — the Meccan phase was revealed while Muhammad resided in Mecca and contained the "religious" component of Islam with a stress on multiculturalism and reconciliation between the four faiths Islam, Paganism, Christianity and Judaism, while at the same time denouncing the ancestral faith of his own tribe the Quraish and abusing their gods. Finally the Quraish grew weary of his verbal abuse and haranguing which was leading to the splitting of the community and social unrest and they began persecuting the Muslims. Finally Muhammad and the nascent community of about 150 converts emigrated to Medina in 622 CE — this is known as the *Hijra* and is the beginning of the Islamic calendar.

This move began the second phase of revelation which is known as the Medinan phase which was more "political" in nature. Medina was half Jewish and half pagan. Muhammad began harrasing the Jews and demanded they accept him as their prophet — when they refused the revelations from Allah became more and more strident and culminated in the exile of 2 Jewish tribes — the Banu Nadir and Banu Qaynuqa and the confiscation of their wealth and property. The 3rd tribe, the Banu Quraiza were finally defeated and all 800 males decapitated and the women and children sold into slavery. As the Muslims became more wealthy they began raiding the caravans of the Quraish and gained 1000's of new recruits. The Muslims became more and more aggressive and started jihad in earnest against all the unbelievers (kafirs). When Muhammed died in 632 most of the Arabian peninsular had been converted to Islam. His deathbed wish was that all remaining Jews and Christians were to be expelled from the Peninsular.

This two phase revelation has resulted in some exegetical problems. The assumption is that the Qur'an in its entirety is complete, final and perfect and valid for all eternity. But then there are verses from Meccan phase which advocates living in peace with unbelievers and there is no compulsion in religion, justice and kindness are to be practiced etc. Then there are contradictory verses which demand the wholesale killing of all unbelievers, the confiscation of their property including women and children, the injunction against befriending the unbelievers, and the cultivating of hatred, distrust and hostility towards them. How is this contradiction to be reconciled? The Islamic scholars have solved it through the doctrine of "abrogation" — *nasikh was mansukha*. The Medinan verses abrogate and nullify the previous Meccan verses. In practice when the Muslim community is weak and outnumbered then they should quote and practice the Meccan injunctions, but when the community is strong and powerful then they should activate the verses of the sword (*ayat es-saif*) — the injunction to wage war — jihad — in order to convert the kafirs by force. Thus Islam has a double standard when it comes to ethics. One standard applies to the beloved of Allah — the Muslims and another standard to the despised of Allah — the kafirs. There is also no objective concept of good and evil — there is only what is permitted and forbidden. About 60% of the Qur'an concerns unbelievers and their despicability and destiny — the eternal fires of hell (about 500 verses).

Hindus believe that the Gita is the eternal and perfect word of Bhagavan spoken directly to his disciple Arjuna over 3000 years before Islam. The Gita was spoken by Lord Krishna in one session prior to the battle of Kurukshetra. Although the theme of war is common to both the Qur'an and Gita the enemy is different. The battle in the Qur'an concerns Muslims fighting Kafirs to advance the cause of political Islam. The battle in the Gita is between two branches of the same family over the inheritance of the kingdom. The battlefield is the setting

for the revelation of Truths concerning the nature of God, the Self and the way to spiritually advance and achieve Liberation from the cycle of births and deaths. Battle (jihad) is an eternal theme in Islam whereas the battle of Kurukshetra is a past event with no relevance to the present.

Neither the Muslim nor Hindu claim to revelation can be objectively substantiated and both are ultimately based on personal *faith* alone. If the god of the Hindus is same as the god of the Muslims then two opposing and incompatible revelations have been made, according to time, place and circumstance. If they are different gods then the

revelation of one must be objectively superior to the other — it is up to the discerning reader to decide which is which.

This booklet is only a sampling of these two important Sacred Texts and not an exhaustive study.

Sri Rama Ramanuja Achari

(Sydney 2014)

## On the Nature of God.

### Qur'an

### Gītā

3:2. Allah. There is no god but He, the Living, the Self-Subsisting, Eternal.

3:62. This is the true account: There is no god except Allah, He is indeed the Exalted in Power, the Wise.

2:89. The curse of Allah is on those without Faith (kafirs).

2:98. Allah is an enemy to those who reject Faith (kafirs).

3:4. Then those who reject Faith in the Signs of Allah (kafirs) will suffer the severest penalty, and Allah is the Lord of Retribution.

4:46 Allah has cursed them (the Jews) for their Unbelief;

4:52. They are (Jews) whom Allah has cursed:

33:64 Lo! Allah has cursed the unbelievers (kafirs), and has prepared for

10:8. I am the source of all; everything emerges<sup>1</sup> from Me.

7:6. Therefore, I am the origin and the dissolution of the whole universe.

7:7. There is nothing whatsoever higher than Me, O Arjuna. All this is strung on Me, as clusters of gems on a thread.

9: 4. This entire universe is pervaded by Me, in an unmanifest form. All beings abide in Me, but I do not abide in them.

9:29. I am the same to all beings; to Me there is none hateful or dear; but those who worship Me with devotion abide in Me and I in them.

9:23. Even those who, endowed with faith are devoted to other gods, they worship Me alone, O Arjuna, in an indirect manner.

9:24. For, I alone am the enjoyer and the only Lord of all sacrifices. They do not recognise Me in My true nature; hence they fall.

10:3. One who knows Me as unborn and without a beginning; the great Lord of the worlds — is undeluded among mortals and is liberated from

<sup>1</sup> Indian philosophy holds that quantum matter itself is the substance of God.

them a flaming fire.

2:90. Miserable is the price for which they have sold their souls, in that they deny (the revelation) which Allah has sent down, in insolent envy that Allah of His Grace should send it to any of His servants He pleases: Thus have they drawn on themselves Wrath upon Wrath. And humiliating is the punishment of those who reject Faith

3:85 "And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers."

8:12 "Remember when your Lord inspired the angels, saying: 'Verily, I am with you, so keep firm those who have believed. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who have disbelieved, so strike them over the necks, and smite over all their fingers and toes.'

3:29. Say: "Whether you hide what is in your hearts or reveal it, Allah knows it all: He knows what is in the heavens, and what is on earth. And Allah has power over all things.

3:97. Allah stands not in need of any of His creatures.

3:73. "All bounties are in the hand of Allah. He grants them to whom He pleases: And Allah cares for all, and He knows all things."

all negative acts.

7:21. Whichever manifestation (of the Divine) any devotee desires to worship with faith — that faith I make unshakeable and firm.

4:11. Whosoever takes refuge in Me in any manner whatsoever, in the same manner do I favour them; beings experience Me alone in different ways, O Arjuna.

9:29. I am the same to all beings; to Me there is none hateful or dear; but those who worship Me with devotion abide in Me and I in them.

18: 61. The Lord abides in the heart of every being, O Arjuna, spinning them round and round, by His power, as if they were mounted on a machine.

9:5. And yet beings do not abide in Me. Behold My divine Mystery, I am the upholder of all beings and yet I am not in them. My will alone causes their existence.

10: 8. I am the source of all; everything emerges from Me — realising this the enlightened ones adore Me with complete devotion.

## The Soul/Self — it's destiny

In Islam the soul (*nafs/ruh*) is identified with the body, hence the doctrine of the resurrection when all bodies will rise from the grave to be reunited with their souls on the Day of Judgement (*yom el-qiyama*). Some individuals like martyrs (*shahidoon*) are able to bypass the day of judgement and enter heaven immediately.

In Hinduism the Self is a spark of the Divine and the body is simply a vehicle, different and distinct. The primary focus of Hindu spiritual practice is "Self-realization" because it is ignorance of our true Self which is the cause of our suffering. Self-realization then leads to God-realization.

### Qur'an

3:145. Nor can a soul die except by Allah's leave, the term being fixed as by writing.

3:12. Say to those who reject Faith:— "Soon will you be vanquished and gathered together to Hell, an evil bed indeed (to lie on)!"

98:6 Lo! those who disbelieve, among the People of the Scripture and the idolaters, will abide in fire of hell. **They are the worst of creatures.**

35:36 But as for those who disbelieve, for them is fire of hell; it takes not complete effect upon them so that they can die, nor is its torment lightened for them. Thus We punish every ingrate.

3:56. "As to those who reject faith, I will punish them with terrible agony in this world and in the Hereafter, nor will they have anyone to help."

6:125 Those whom Allah (in His plan) wills to guide, He opens their hearts to Islam; those whom He wills to leave straying, He makes their heart closed and constricted, as if they had to climb up to the skies: thus does Allah (heap) the penalty on those who refuse to believe.

3:73. "All bounties are in the hand of Allah. He grants them to whom He pleases: And Allah cares for all, and He knows all things."

### Gītā

10:20. I am the Self, O Arjuna, dwelling in the hearts of all beings. I verily am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings.

16:21. Self-referent desire, anger and greed — this is the threefold gateway to Hell, ruinous to the Self. Therefore one should abandon these three.

16:22. One who has been liberated from these three gates to darkness, O Arjuna, practices what is beneficial to the Self and hence reaches the Supreme State.

12: 4. Having subdued all their senses, unprejudiced, intent on the welfare of all beings — they too come to Me alone.

5:15. The Supreme Being appropriates neither the demerit nor even the merit of any. Knowledge is enveloped by ignorance, thereby beings are deluded.

5:16. But to those whose ignorance is destroyed by Self-realisation, their enlightenment is supreme and illumines like the sun.

5: 29. Knowing Me as the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, as the Supreme Lord of all the worlds, as the Friend of every being, one attains peace.

## Dealings with other beings

### Qur'an

2:191 "And kill them (kafirs) wherever you find them<sup>2</sup>, and turn them out from where they have turned you out. Disbelief (*fitnah*<sup>3</sup>) is worse than killing."

4:89 "They wish that you reject Faith, as they have rejected, and thus that you all become equal. So take not friends from them, till they emigrate in the Way of Allah. But if they turn back (from Islam) take hold of them and kill them wherever you find them, and take neither friends nor helpers from them."

3:118 "O you who believe! Take not as your friends<sup>4</sup> those outside your religion since they will not fail to do their best to corrupt you. They desire to harm you severely."

5:52 "O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as your friends<sup>5</sup>, they are but friends to one another.."

8:39 "And fight them [the unbelievers] until there is no more disbelief (*fitnah*), and the religion will all be for Allah Alone [the translation adds: 'in the whole of the world'.]"

9:29 "Fight against those who believe not in Allah, nor in the Last Day, nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, and those who acknowledge not the religion of truth [i.e. Islam] among the people of the Scripture [Jews and Christians],

### Gītā

16:2,3. Non-injury, truthfulness, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquillity, freedom from slandering, compassion to all beings, freedom from hankering, gentleness, modesty, freedom from whimsicality; Refulgence, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, freedom from spite and humility these treasures, O Arjuna, belong to one who is born to a Divine Estate.

12:4. Having subdued all their senses, unprejudiced, intent on the welfare of all beings — they too come to Me alone.

6:9. One who regards with equality, well-wishers, friends, foes, the indifferent, neutrals, the hateful, relatives, and even the righteous and the unrighteous — excels.

12:13. Not prejudiced towards any living being, friendly and compassionate to all, free from the notions of 'I' and 'mine', and regarding all pain and pleasure with equanimity, and forbearing;

12:14. contented, constantly contemplating, self-restrained and firm in one's convictions, dedicating the mind and intellect to Me — such a devotee is dear to Me.

12:15. He by whom the world is not disturbed, and who is not disturbed by the world, who is free from joy and jealousy, fear and repulsion — he

<sup>2</sup> *Waqtuloohum haythu thaqiftumoohum* — many 'moderate' Muslims claim that this must be taken contextually — but if some verses are taken 'in context' it means they are limited by time and place and hence the Qur'an cannot be the eternal word of Allah!

<sup>3</sup> *Fitnah* is defined in many different ways but principally refers to polytheism, disbelief, following a religion other than Islam or even resisting or obstructing the spread of Islam in any way.

<sup>4</sup> The term used is *amanoola* sometimes translated as "intimates"

<sup>5</sup> The term used is *awlia* which some translate as "allies"

until they pay their Jizyah<sup>6</sup> with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued." is dear to Me.

2: 216. Fighting (kufar) is prescribed for you, and you dislike it. But it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you, and that you love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knows, and you know not.

9:73 "O Prophet! strive hard against the unbelievers and the Hypocrites and be firm against them. Their abode is hell an evil refuge indeed".

8:55 "Verily, the worst of living creatures before Allah are those who disbelieve."

8:22. For the worst of beasts in the sight of Allah are the deaf and the dumb, those who understand not.

3:110. You [Muslims] are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah. If only the People of the Book had faith, it were best for them: among them are some who have faith, but most of them are perverted transgressors.

48:29 Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are severe (*shadeed* = or ruthless, cruel) against disbelievers, and merciful among themselves.

9:113 It is not fitting, for the Prophet and those who believe, that they should pray for forgiveness for Pagans, even though they be of

3: 43. Thus, knowing that which is greater than the intellect and fixing the mind with the help of the intellect in Karma Yoga, O Arjuna, slay this enemy in the form of desire, which is difficult to overcome.

18: 54. Having realised the state of Brahman, full of joy, neither grieving nor craving, being the same to all beings, one attains supreme devotion to Me.

6: 29. With the mind harmonised by Yoga one sees equality everywhere; one sees one's Self as abiding in all beings and all beings in one's own Self.

6:30. He who sees Me everywhere and everything in Me; I am not separated from him and he is never separated from Me.

6:31. The Yogi who, established in unity, reverts Me dwelling in all beings, he abides in Me, howsoever he may live.

6:32. One who, by reason of the identity of Jīvas, sees that pleasure or pain is the same everywhere; that Yogi, O Arjuna, is deemed as the highest

5: 25. The sages who are free from the pairs of opposites, whose minds are well directed and who are devoted to the welfare of all beings, become cleansed of all impurities and attain the bliss of the Brahman.

<sup>6</sup> *Jizyah* is a monthly poll-tax upon all non-Muslims living in a Islamic state. The usual practice based on this verse was for the tax collectors to humiliate the non-Muslims by slapping them on the back of their heads or necks (see verse 8:12 and 47:4 below) whenever they lined up to pay the tax.

kin, after it is clear to them that they are companions of the Fire.

3:134. Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger, and pardon (all) men;- for Allah loves those who do good;-

3: 56. "As to those who reject faith, I will punish them with terrible agony in this world and in the Hereafter, nor will they have anyone to help."

5: 11. Those who reject faith and deny our signs will be companions of Hell-fire.

17: 3. The faith of each person, O Arjuna, is in accordance with one's character. A person consists of belief systems, and whatever one's conviction is, that verily one is.

## Relationship to God

### Qur'an

### Gītā

3:102. O ye who believe! **Fear Allah as He should be feared**, and die not except in a state of Islam.

3:31. Say: "If ye do love Allah, Follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you your sins: For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

32:33. Say: "Obey Allah and His Messenger: But if they turn back, Allah loves not those who reject Faith.

3:4 Then those who reject Faith in the Signs of Allah will suffer the severest penalty, and Allah is Exalted in Might, Lord of Retribution.

33: 64 Verily Allah has cursed the Unbelievers and prepared for them a Blazing Fire

4:36. Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him; and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (you meet), and what your right hands possess (your slaves): For Allah loves not the arrogant, the vainglorious.

3:57. "As to those who believe and work righteousness, Allah will pay

10:10. To those, who are constantly harmonised with Me and who **worship Me with intense love**, I fondly grant the mental disposition (Buddhi-yoga) by which they attain to Me.

9:26. Whoever offers to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or some water, I accept this offering made with devotion by one who is pure of heart.

11: 54. But by single-minded devotion, O Arjuna, it is possible to truly know, to see and to enter into Me, who am of this form, O harasser of foes!

9:23. Even those who, endowed with faith are devoted to other gods, they worship Me alone, O Arjuna, in an indirect manner.

11:55. Whosoever serves Me, regards Me as the highest and is devoted to Me, free from attachment and devoid of malice towards any creature, comes to Me, O Arjuna.

9:30. If even the most sinful person worships Me with devotion to no other, he must be regarded as righteous, for he has rightly resolved.

6:40. Neither here [in this world] nor there [in the next], O Arjuna, is

them (in full) their reward; but Allah loves not those who do wrong."

2:62. Those who believe (in the Qur'an), and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians, any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

3:182. For Allah never harms those who serve Him.

3:11. **For Allah is strict in punishment.**

8:30. Remember how the Unbelievers plotted against you, to keep you in bonds, or slay you, or get you out (of your home). They plot and plan, and Allah too plans; but the best of planners is Allah.

16:90 "Verily, Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and giving to near relatives, while He forbids all indecent deeds, evil and rebellion."

there destruction for him. For verily, no one who does good, my son, ever comes to grief.

9:31. ... affirm on My behalf, O Arjuna, that My devotee never perishes.

5:29. Knowing Me as the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, as the Supreme Lord of all the worlds, **as the Friend of every being**, one attains peace.

10:36. Of the fraudulent [activities], I am gambling. I am the brilliance of the brilliant, I am victory, I am effort, I am the magnanimity of the magnanimous.

4. 10: Non-violence, equanimity, cheerfulness, austerity, beneficence, fame and infamy — these different qualities arise from Me alone.

## The Goal

### Qur'an

### Gītā

3:28. But Allah cautions you (To remember) Himself; for the final goal is to Allah.

9:21. Their Lord gives them glad tidings of a Mercy from Himself, of His good pleasure, and of gardens for them, wherein are delights that endure:

22. They will dwell therein for ever. Verily in Allah's presence is a reward, the greatest (of all).

9: 72. Allah has promised to Believers, men and women, gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein, and beautiful mansions in gardens of everlasting bliss. But the greatest bliss is the good pleasure of Allah, that

9: 18. I am the Goal, the Supporter, the Lord, the Witness, the Abode, the Refuge and the Friend [of the universe]. I am the Seat of origin and dissolution, that which is preserved and the imperishable seed.

6: 41. Having attained to the realms of the righteous (heaven) and dwelt there for many long years, one who has fallen from Yoga is born again in the house of the pure and prosperous.

9:21. Having enjoyed the vast realm of heaven, they return to the realm of mortals when their merit is exhausted. Thus, those who follow the Vedic rituals and are motivated by desire, come and go.

7:23. But verily the reward gained by these persons of limited

is the supreme felicity.

55:56-57: In them will be bashful virgins neither man nor Jinn will have touched before. Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?

56:15-24 On lined couches, Reclining therein face to face. There wait on them immortal youths, with bowls and ewers and a cup from a pure spring, wherefrom they get no aching of the head nor any madness, and fruit that they prefer and flesh of fowls that they desire. And (there are) fair ones with wide, lovely eyes, like unto hidden pearls, reward for what they used to do.

understanding is finite. The worshippers of the gods will go to the gods but My devotees will come to Me.

9: 34. Focus your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, offer worship to Me, bow down to Me. Engaging your mind in this manner and regarding Me as the supreme goal, you will come to Me.

5: 24. One who is joyful within, whose pleasure is within, and similarly is illumined within — that Yogi, who having become the Brahman, attains the bliss of the Brahman.

5: 28. — having controlled the senses, mind and intellect, the sage who is intent on Liberation as the final goal, freed forever from desire, fear and anger — is indeed liberated forever.

## Ignorance and Wisdom

### Qur'an

### Gītā

2:7. Allah has set a seal on their [the unbelievers'] hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes is a veil; great is the penalty they (incur).

30: 59 Thus doth Allah seal the hearts of those who know not.

47: 16 Among them are some who give ear unto you (Muhammad) till, when they go forth from your presence they say unto those who have been given knowledge: What was that he said just now? **Those are they whose hearts Allah has sealed, and they follow their own lusts.**<sup>7</sup>

3:37. It is desire, it is anger, born of the Force of Passion (Rajo Guna); all-devouring, an impeller to transgress. Know this to be the foe here.

3: 39. Wisdom is obscured by this constant enemy of the wise, O Arjuna, in the form of desire, which is as insatiable as fire.

4:42. Therefore, with the sword of knowledge, cut asunder this doubt present in your heart, arising from ignorance concerning the Self. Arise and practise this [Karma] Yoga, O Arjuna.

4: 38. Verily, there is no purifier in this world equal to knowledge; one that is perfected in Karma Yoga discovers this (knowledge) spontaneously, in oneself in due time.

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<sup>7</sup> It seems most unfortunate that Allah randomly and capriciously seals the hearts of kafirs so that they remain in "ignorance" and reject him, and then punishes them with the most horrific torture for the rest of eternity! He can just as easily cause everyone to accept him and bring every one into heaven if he so chooses. But it seems that he actually relishes the idea of having most human beings burn for eternity! What a different personality Krishna is!