

Dashavatara and Progressive Revelation

A Comparative Study of Hinduism and the Bahá'í Faith

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There is a unique commonality of the Eternal nature of Religion as the foundational principle of both the Hinduism and the Bahá'í Faith which is to say the 'Sanatana Dharma'¹ and 'the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future' respectively. Thus it's no hazard that the Hindus are so receptive to the Message of the Bahá'í Faith.

Dashavatara are a series of ten most prominent Avatars or the Manifestations of God of Hinduism in Indian sub-continent.

This study is concerned with the correspondence of Dashavatara and the concept of Progressive Revelation from the Bahá'í Teachings. Both Hinduism in its practices and the Bahá'í Faith in its unifying expressions encourage within it a great diversity of life styles and aspirations contributing richly to the ennobling and advancement of the civilization.

Hinduism

Hinduism

- Evolved from the Vedic religion of ancient India.

- Principally, a grand conglomeration of diverse but essentially compatible set of philosophy, beliefs and religious practices.
- Carrier of the oldest known civilization, still practicing ancient habits.
- Real name “Sanatana Dharma,” meaning ‘The Eternal Law’
- Believes in Eternal Unknowable Creator ‘Brahman’ and His emanations of gods and goddesses and Avatars: The Manifestations.
- Spiritual Liberation, attaining of Moksha is the final aim of life.
- Avatars are sent to help humanity in this final aim whenever humanity slips from its divine course.
- Realization of this Greater Truth helps Hindus stay tolerant (appreciative of its diversity of beliefs and practices).
- World’s largest body of scriptures in comparison with Bahá’í literature belongs to Hinduism. Divided in two basic categories of Shruti and Smriti, literally “That which is Heard” and “Remembered” respectively akin to the Revelation and Tradition in Semitic Faiths.
- Shruti includes Vedas, Bhagavad-Gita and Smriti includes epics like Ramayana, Mahabharata and the scriptures such as Puranas and Upanishads².
- Study of Hinduism is important for the Bahá’ís, since they:
 - Form a very receptive group of people to Teach.
 - Number over a billion, the 3rd largest faith in the world.
 - Have traveled and migrated globally and are found in receptive large numbers as early inhabitants in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Indonesia,

Malaysia, Singapore, Mauritius, Fiji, Surinam, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago in addition to almost all the western countries especially in UK, US and Australia.

In this thesis, Dashavatara is represented by Sri Krishna and His Words principally through Bhagavad-Gita as the most representative source of teachings of Hinduism. Progressive Revelation is represented principally through the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

The concept of God in Hinduism and the Bahá'í Faith

God is the objective of knowledge and devotion in the Bahá'í Faith and Hinduism. Bahá'u'lláh in His revealed daily prayer states:

*I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee.*³

Sri Krishana in Bhagavad-Gita states:

And whoso thus discerneth Me in all, and all in Me, I never let him go ... because he knows and worships Me ...⁴

Looking at the nature of God expressed in both Hindu and the Bahá'í literature, Arjuna in Bhagavad-Gita addressing the Absolute Divine Reality of Sri Krishna declares:

Thou art Parabrahma! The High Abode! The Great Purification! Thou art God Eternal, All-creating, Holy, First, Without beginning! ... neither gods nor men Nor demons comprehend Thy mystery Made manifest, Divinest! Thou Thyself Thyself alone dost know, Maker Supreme! Master of all the living! Lord of Gods! King of the Universe!⁵

And as stated by Bahá'u'lláh:

*...no tongue, however deep its wisdom, can befittingly magnify Thy name, nor can the bird of the human heart, however great its longing, ever hope to ascend into the heaven of Thy majesty and knowledge.*⁶

Arjuna declaring his helplessness in knowing the Divine Reality wonders:

How shall I learn, Supreme Mystery! To know Thee,
though I muse continually?⁷

And Bahá'u'lláh states:

*He is, and hath ever been, veiled in the ancient eternity
of His Essence, and will remain in His Reality
everlastingly hidden from the sight of men.*⁸

Arjuna continues his wonderment stating:

Under what form of Thine unnumbered forms Mayst
Thou be grasped?⁹

And Bahá'u'lláh states:

*Far be it from His glory that human tongue should
adequately recount His praise, or that human heart
comprehend His fathomless mystery.*¹⁰

Thus, we can make out that the Hindu and the Bahá'í view of God is one and the same, indicating both of them having emanated from a Same Source, and as attested by Sri Krishna and Bahá'u'lláh, the God is the Source thereof.

But one needs to be convinced of the existence of God in order to believe firmly of the process of the Revelations.. which is, in my understanding is a bottom up approach, the only feasible possibility of the belief and knowing God, it's not the top down approach. We find the signs of God in the created things and find the greatest amplification of those signs in the Manifestations of God and so through His teachings believe in the existence of a Supreme One Who is the Source of the Revelations.

But as per 'Abdu'l-Bahá, for intuitive people there is no need of a rational proof or the arguments of the existence of God which is necessary sometimes in order to clarify the conception of God at human intellectual level.

The Foundation and the Center of progressive revelation is the God. It is God Who is revealed progressively in order that

human can know Him. All things in a Faith revolves around the concept of the God. But how approachable is the God? Bahá'u'lláh states that God is immensely exalted above any possible human conception and would remain so. Humans can't know Him but He is aware of everything. As said earlier by 'Abdu'l-Bahá that God, the Creator can essentially know the created and not vice-versa.

The Nature of Man in the Bahá'í Faith and Hinduism

The Revelation pertaining to human beings has to be according to its nature and concomitant need. Thus in order to investigate the Revelation from God, it is worthwhile to investigate human nature attuned to which the Divine Revelation is revealed in its objective evolutionary education.

'Abdu'l-Bahá states in Paris Talks:

*In man there are two natures; his spiritual or higher nature and his material or lower nature. In one he approaches God, in the other he lives for the world alone.... If a man's Divine nature dominates his human nature, we have a saint... But if, on the contrary, he rejects the things of God and allows his evil passions to conquer him, then he is no better than a mere animal." And it is the precise function of the Manifestations of God to encourage and evolve the Divine nature in human being.*¹¹

In Bhagavad-Gita, all beings, creatures, things, humans and human tendencies whether noble or wretched have arisen from God. Comprehending the "truth of truths" is to understand the 'mystic Majesty of God' which in the Words of Bahá'u'lláh is "...that the Seal the Kingdom is God's may be stamped upon the brow of all its people"¹². It means, in my understanding, that the people of the world need to understand and realize that everything is under God's power and His Rule. In other words, to realize the 'mystic Majesty of God' as stated by Sri Krishna:

Whatever Natures be to mortal men distributed, those natures spring from Me! Intellect, skill, enlightenment, endurance, self-control, truthfulness, equability, and

grief or joy of soul, and birth and death, and fearfulness, and fearlessness, and shame, and honour, and sweet harmlessness, and peace which is the same whate'er befalls, and mirth, and tears, and piety and thrift, and wish to give, and will to help, - all cometh of My gift! The Seven Chief Saints¹³, the Elders Four, the Lordly Manus¹⁴ set- Sharing My work- to rule the worlds, these too did I beget; And Rishis, Pitris, Manus, all, by one thought of My mind; Thence did arise, to fill this world, the races of mankind; Wherefrom who comprehends My Reign of mystic Majesty – That truth of truths – is thenceforth linked in faultless faith to Me:¹⁵

Again Sri Krishna states:

Sattwan, Rajas, and Tamas, so are named the qualities of Nature, “Soothfastness,” “Passion,” and “Ignorance.” These three bind down The changeless Spirit in the changeful flesh.¹⁶

Thus, Satva and Tamas, in agreement to the Bahá'í teachings, are the divine and animal nature of human beings respectively. It is the Rajas, the passions, the emotions which bind them to whatever they are focused upon whether they be noble things or lower things thus giving rise to happiness or unhappiness as a consequence of their attachment.

The nature of Soul

Man, the human, has a soul which is unknowable and indestructible. Humans have two tendencies: to incline towards the base and to rise upwards the lofty. Age to age this lift towards lofty is slowed and humans start to fall again. Then there comes another Force which empowers him in lifting himself towards the greater heights of knowledge and civilization. This is the view of the human nature according to Hindu thought. Soul in Bhagavad-Gita is indestructible and continues after human's physical death. The destined condition of the soul after death depends upon the merit of one's deeds before on this earth. Thus here, the Bahá'í Faith and Hinduism match their view and understanding of the life after

death. This is to be so since in both of them religion is eternal and the same truth spoken differently through different sages and prophets again and again in differing conditions of society progressively.

On deathless continuity of Spirit and physical death being just a change of condition, Lord Krishna states:

...when one layeth His worn-out robes away, and, taking new ones, sayeth, "These will I wear to-day!" So putteth by the spirit Lightly its garb of flesh, and passeth to inherit a residence afresh.¹⁷

Some of the qualities of the soul as stated by Sri Krishna:

I say to thee weapons reach not the Life; Flame burns it not, waters cannot o'erwhelm, nor dry winds wither it. Impenetrable, unentered, unassailed, unharmed, untouched, Immortal, all-arriving, stable, sure, Invisible, ineffable, by word and thought uncompassed, ever all itself, Thus is the Soul declared!¹⁸

Thus in other words understandably, physical bodies do not last for ever. After a span of few years, physical bodies disintegrate and the soul associated with this physical body passes to the New World and gets possessed of "new bodies". This is not to say that it's the physical reincarnation¹⁹ but a new form of existence for the soul, a new condition by which the soul stays in the higher realm and continues to live in an higher plane of existence and performs the function it is assigned. This new condition is a condition of indescribable joy which is an inherent outcome of this existence of higher understanding and consciousness. Here too there is a function as on the earth that the soul is subject to. Bahá'u'lláh states this function and the condition in which this function can be assigned to a soul.

Know thou, of a truth, that if the soul of man hath walked in the ways of God, it will, assuredly, return and be gathered to the glory of the Beloved. By the righteousness of God! It shall attain a station such as no pen can depict, or tongue describe. The soul that hath remained faithful to the Cause of God, and stood unwaveringly firm in His Path shall, after his

*ascension, be possessed of such power that all the worlds which the Almighty hath created can benefit through him.*²⁰

Soul is made of elements which are not physical. If it would be physical it would be manifesting physical properties of being touched, being disintegrable, visible or measurable. But since it has none of these properties, it is not earthly. It is untouched, stable and eternal, and cannot be measured by thoughts and words. Some ideas of Invisible, ineffable, by word and thought uncompassed, ever all itself, Thus is the Soul declared! are expressed by Bahá'u'lláh some five thousand years later establishing the essential oneness of the revealed Word of Avatars or the Manifestations of God, saying..

*Know, verily, that the soul is a sign of God, a heavenly gem whose reality the most learned of men hath failed to grasp, and whose mystery no mind, however acute, can ever hope to unravel. It is the first among all created things to declare the excellence of its Creator, the first to recognize His glory, to cleave to His truth, and to bow down in adoration before Him.*²¹

Soul being the sign of God, all its declarations about himself are in reality the declarations of the excellence of its Creator. In words of Sri Krishna the soul declared its attributes and in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh this declaration is accomplished with its objective in declaring the 'excellence of its Creator'.

Soul is that pristine entity which proclaims in loudest terms the existence of God, reveals His attributes and manifests the sublime nature of His creation. But as Bahá'u'lláh, according to Himself, is the most recent of Avatars or Manifestations of God, He has brought an added spiritual knowledge according to the forthcoming maturity of humans today. But, are people mature enough to understand the nature of the Soul? Has Bahá'u'lláh, therefore, revealed in full measure the nature of soul and its condition after physical death of human? And again as stated by Bahá'u'lláh:

Verily I say, the human soul is, in its essence, one of the signs of God, a mystery among His mysteries. It is one of the mighty signs of the Almighty, the harbinger that

*proclaimeth the reality of all the worlds of God. Within it lieth concealed that which the world is now utterly incapable of apprehending....*²²

Then He continues stating...

*Verily I say, the human soul is exalted above all egress and regress. It is still, and yet it soareth; it moveth, and yet it is still. It is, in itself, a testimony that beareth witness to the existence of a world that is contingent, as well as to the reality of a world that hath neither beginning nor end.*²³

Soul declares the contingency of earthly realm but at the same time demonstrates through its attributes the reality of an absolute existence: a world that has neither beginning nor end. Each human is a soul and possesses a body and according to both the Hindu and the Bahá'í beliefs, the condition of the soul after physical death depends upon the human actions before on this earthly plane. But as different humans have got different states of existence on earth, there is going to be differing states of soul's existence after. And if it's so, then after the physical death do souls enter an absolute realm? Stating on this crucial theme, Bahá'u'lláh says:

*When the soul attaineth the Presence of God, it will assume the form that best befitteth its immortality and is worthy of its celestial habitation. Such an existence is a contingent and not an absolute existence, inasmuch as the former is preceded by a cause, whilst the latter is independent thereof. Absolute existence is strictly confined to God, exalted be His glory. Well is it with them that apprehend this truth.*²⁴

This also clarifies what Bahá'u'lláh says it will assume the form that best befitteth its immortality and is worthy of its celestial habitation; what Sri Krishna says that So putteth by the spirit Lightly its garb of flesh, and passeth to inherit a residence afresh.

Thus, the Celestial habitation has a form.. as the spirit putteth its garb of flesh, and passest to inherit a residence afresh.

Thus absolute existence is not for the soul and its journey towards God, but only for God.

And the form which the soul takes after the physical death depends upon its condition on this earth before the physical death, thus is preceded by a cause and so it is not an absolute existence. And on the theme of assuming of form, exactly same idea and concept of the condition and forms the soul attains after its separation of body is narrated by Lord Krishna revealing...

...And, at the hour of death, he that hath meditated Me alone, in putting off his flesh, comes forth to Me, enters into My Being- doubt thou not! But, if he meditated otherwise at hour of death, in putting off the flesh, he goes to what he looked for, Kunti's Son!²⁵ Because the Soul is fashioned to its like.²⁶

Sri Krishna states: the Soul is fashioned to its like. And Bahá'u'lláh states: *"it will assume the form that best befitteth its immortality and is worthy of its celestial habitation."*

Dashavatara

The term Dashavatara is made of two words Dash and Avatara. In Sanskrit, Dash signifies the numerical value of ten, and Avatara, a noun from infinitive Avataran, meaning the one who descends i.e. the descent of Divinity. Thus the term Dashavatara, the ten divine descents, are generally referred in Hinduism as the descent of Vishnu. Vishnu descends in ten (or more) different forms for the maintenance of the Universe i.e. the protection of virtuous and destruction of the evil; thus establishing the realm of Dharma i.e. righteousness. This group of sequential descents of the divinity, each descent having a different form as conceptualized in Hinduism is known as Avatara.

The Blessed Lord²⁷ said...

Yadhaa yadhaa hi Dharmasya Glaanir bhavathi
Bhaaratha/

Abhyuthaanam Adharmasya Tad Aatmaanam
 srujaamyaham//
 Paritranaaya Saadhoonaam Vinaasaaya cha
 Dushkritaam/
 Dharma Samsthapanaarthaayaya Sambhavami yugE
 yugE//

Meaning...

When Righteousness declines, O Bharata!²⁸ when wickedness is strong, I rise, from age to age, and take visible shape, and move a man with men, succouring the good, thrusting the evil back, And setting Virtue on her seat again.²⁹

This verse from Bhagavad-Gita emphatically states the fact that from age to age God manifests Himself. These are the Words of Sri Krishna stating the inevitable rise of the Avatara in every age. Dashavatara are the ten Manifestations of Vishnu. They are the most important manifestations of these Avataras. The list of ten Avataras is found in Garuda Purana. There are other lists like that of 25 Avataras of Bhagavat Purana, but these 10 Dashavatara are most famous and are the greatest Avataras who had the maximum influence. Out of the 10, the 9 Avataras so far are:

- Matsya (fish)
- Kurma (tortoise)
- Varaha (boar)
- Narasimha (half-man, half-lion)
- Vamana (dwarf man)
- Parashurama (Rama with an axe)
- Rama (the embodiment of Righteousness)
- Krishna (the supreme Teacher)
- Gautama Buddha (the enlightened One)...respectively.

And ...

- Kalki (time, the Eternal or the destroyer of foulness, quarrel)

As per the common Hindu thought, the tenth Avatara Kalki is yet to manifest Himself.

Dashavatara, the ten Avataras of Lord Vishnu, are meant for establishing 'Dharma'³⁰, whenever 'adharmā'³¹ occurs. The scientific facts behind Dashavatara are now under research, as it seems that these ten Avataras represent the evolution of mankind.

Counseling a wise man to meditate upon, Garuda Purana³² mentions the ten Avataras in the context of treatment of a sick person by the relatives:

Relatives, coming near the diseased, should not mourn. My holy name should be remembered and meditated upon repeatedly. The Fish, the Tortoise, the Boar, the Man-lion, the Dwarf, Paraśurâma, Râma, Krishna, Buddha, and also Kalki³³. These ten names should always be meditated upon by the wise. Those who recite them near the diseased are called relatives.³⁴

Dashavatara explains and elaborates the Hindu Avataras and gives the sense of evolutionary stages of humanity in which each of the Avataras have a form in conformity to that stage of mankind's physical, intellectual and spiritual condition.

4 Yuga³⁵ and Avataras in each one of these Yugas:

The following are the 10 principle Avataras of Lord Vishnu in 4 Yugas:

- 4 Avataras in Krita Yuga (Matsya, Kurma, Varaha and Narasimha)
- 3 Avataras in Treta Yuga (Vamana, Parasurama and Sri Rama)
- 2 Avataras in Dwaapara Yuga (Krishna and Buddha)
- 1 Avatara in Kali Yuga (the Kalki, yet to be)

To rephrase, these are the Dashavatara who in my opinion represent the continuum of human evolution on the planet. They represent the manifestation of the monotheistic God on earth among people from age to age. Thus Hinduism is essentially a monotheism recognizing the Supremacy of Brahman, the Eternal and all the gods and beings and everything else is lower to that. And these Ten are the most prominent representative ones out of the innumerable one which are sent as the divine educators of humanity from the time immemorial. The several mythological stories and anecdotes are later additions and it's but an effort to conceptualize their presence to the then masses on Indian Sub-Continent. Even though Avatars would be innumerable, these ten representatives, the most prominent ones, the never ending eternal process of the descent of divinity shall continue as it has been so. This is seen by the Avatara coming among the humanity as 'one among themselves', their physical form and characteristics represent the physical form and the characteristics of then humanity in general. Since they are the self same Spirit and not the body. (That's perhaps one of the reasons why as Bahá'ís we don't portray the physical form of a Manifestation.) And as most evident in evolutionary science which says that the human life began most probably in the sea as that of the Fish leading to amphibian life as that of a Tortoise or Turtle thereby to the life of the land, then being a mammal as that of the Wild Boar evolving into an Animal Man as that of The Lion Man, half man and half animal. This then leading to the early man of short stature The Dwarf and then to the savage man of Rama with Axe further leading to the complete man being the Rama with a Bow thereby again manifesting as a sophisticated supreme Teacher in form of Krishna evolving into the gentle and compassionate enlightened souls that of Buddha which seems to complete one cycle of human evolution finally leading to the Kalki. Thus we see that all of these Avatars were always sent in their form conducive to the state of mankind then, which in an approximation represents the state of mankind then under evolution which is further prophesized ending with Kalki ushering an era of peace and righteousness.

The Progressive Revelation

Progressive Revelation means the nature of God being progressively revealed to humanity so that humanity as individuals and as a whole is able gradually to identify itself with that Great Divine Being. And this identification happens by the example of the Manifestation of God. Bahá'u'lláh says:

O Salman! The door of the knowledge of the Ancient Being hath ever been, and will continue for ever to be, closed in the face of men. No man's understanding shall ever gain access unto His holy court. As a token of His mercy, however, and as a proof of His loving-kindness, He hath manifested unto men the Day Stars of His divine guidance, the Symbols of His divine unity, and hath ordained the knowledge of these sanctified Beings to be identical with the knowledge of His own Self. Whoso recognizeth them hath recognized God. Whoso hearkeneth to their call, hath hearkened to the Voice of God, and whoso testifieth to the truth of their Revelation, hath testified to the truth of God Himself. Whoso turneth away from them, hath turned away from God, and whoso disbelieveth in them, hath disbelieved in God. Every one of them is the Way of God that connecteth this world with the realms above, and the Standard of His Truth unto every one in the kingdoms of earth and heaven. They are the Manifestations of God amidst men, the evidences of His Truth, and the signs of His glory.³⁶

He Who is everlastingly hidden from the eyes of men can never be known except through His Manifestation, and His Manifestation can adduce no greater proof of the truth of His Mission than the proof of His own Person.³⁷

They only differ in the intensity of their revelation, and the comparative potency of their light. Even as He hath revealed: "Some of the Apostles We have caused to excel the others."³⁸

*Know of a certainty that in every Dispensation the light of Divine Revelation hath been vouchsafed unto men in direct proportion to their spiritual capacity.*³⁹

The seeming difference in the Divine Message and customs, traditions often leads to gradations of the different prophets and ranking of their Message by the adherents of the respective religions thinking their Faith to be superior or better Revelation of Truth than the other. And also that the revelation of these Manifestations differ because they are sent for people of differing capacities adapted to differing conditions. Upon this, Bahá'u'lláh states:

*That a certain attribute of God hath not been outwardly manifested by these Essences of Detachment doth in no wise imply that they who are the Day Springs of God's attributes and the Treasuries of His holy names did not actually possess it. Therefore, these illuminated Souls, these beauteous Countenances have, each and every one of them, been endowed with all the attributes of God, such as sovereignty, dominion, and the like, even though to outward seeming they be shorn of all earthly majesty....*⁴⁰

So, there is no point in considering one Manifestation being superior in worldly terms to others, because as per Bahá'u'lláh each one of Them are endowed with all the attributes of God whether manifest or not.

Often the people of various religions do not actively anticipate a new divine educator amongst themselves and they say that their prophet or the Messenger of God of their parents and forefathers is the final one and that there is no Revelation after theirs. The Bahá'í Faith claims that the Revelations are a seamless everlasting process and would continue to be in the form of new revelations for the education of mankind. Upon this, Bahá'u'lláh states:

Thou art surely aware of their idle contention, that all Revelation is ended, that the portals of Divine mercy are closed, that from the day springs of eternal holiness no Sun shall rise again, that the Ocean of everlasting bounty is forever stilled, and that out of the

*Tabernacle of ancient glory the Messengers of God have ceased to be made manifest.*⁴¹

This seems true within the dispensation of a Manifestation but also for the whole Eternal Progression of the Revelation indicating:

*In like manner, if the Sun of Truth were suddenly to reveal, at the earliest stages of its manifestation, the full measure of the potencies which the providence of the Almighty hath bestowed upon it, the earth of human understanding would waste away and be consumed; for men's hearts would neither sustain the intensity of its revelation, nor be able to mirror forth the radiance of its light.*⁴²

But Prophets of God have always been sent in all times, places and under all conditions, perhaps even to the worlds unknown to us perhaps in distant parts of the universe, the spiritual worlds including those after human physical life and many more. Here Bahá'u'lláh states:

*Through His potency the Trees of Divine Revelation have yielded their fruits, every one of which hath been sent down in the form of a Prophet, bearing a Message to God's creatures in each of the worlds whose number God, alone, in His all-encompassing Knowledge, can reckon.*⁴³

Synthesis of Dashavatara and the Progressive Revelation

In Bhagavad-Gita, in spite of several teachings and counsels, Arjuna is reluctant to go to the war for justice and is not able to recognize the Lordship of Sri Krishna. Then as a final resort, Lord Krishna shows His Viraat Vishwaswarupa Darshan (the Great Magnificent Universal Form)⁴⁴ to Arjuna. Thereupon being shaken from His core, Arjuna recognizes the Truth of God and thus requests Sri Krishna to come back to His ordinary human form since the Great Magnificent Universal Form is difficult to bear. (Such stories narrated from the life

stories of many of the Manifestation including that of Sri Krishna and Bahá'u'lláh.)

For not being able to bear longer than a few moments, Arjuna states:

In gentleness on me!
 Good is it I did see
 This unknown marvel of Thy Form! But fear
 Mingles with joy! Retake,
 Dear Lord! for pity's sake
 Thine earthly shape, which earthly eyes may bear!

Be merciful, and show
 The visage that I know;
 Let me regard Thee, as of yore, arrayed
 With disc and forehead-gem,⁴⁵
 With mace and anadem⁴⁶,
 Thou that sustainest all things! Undismayed

Let me once more behold
 The form I loved of old,
 Thou of the thousand arms and countless eyes!
 This frightened heart is fain
 To see restored again
 My Charioteer, in Krishna's kind disguise.⁴⁷

Each one of this Dashavataras have been made to come down on earth in the form that the people could bear and which would resemble the known form existing among them. Going further perhaps in speculation that thus possibly during the time when man was mostly an inhabitant of jungle and forests in prehistoric savage form, the form of Parashuram (Rama with Axe) came forth. Even perhaps when man was in the physical form of a sea creature that an Avatara had come to teach them something in onward way of progress. So, during the

thousands of years from now, we would not have been able to imagine that state and so stories and mythologies with contemporary contexts have been build around the Matsya Avatara of Vishnu, around Kurma Avatara (the Turtle), around Varaha Avatara (the Wild Boar) and so on. Even the companions of Rama Avatara, who were said to be the monkeys, in the war with Ravana, could be another species of humans perhaps like Neanderthals and who later got extinct, and they are described as gentle monkeys. Or they would just be another group of humans unknown to the former and are not termed humans, even though just a few centuries ago that dark skinned from Africa were not considered human by some white skinned colonial rulers and slave traders. Or it could be other human group with somewhat different physical features. For scientists have put forward the theories of coming together of Homo Sapiens and the other species of humans not very long ago. But coming back to our discussion, Bahá'u'lláh states that the Prophets and the Messengers of God have come to humanity from its inception. That man exists from his origin and foundation as man, and that his species has existed from all eternity...⁴⁸ perhaps even before the existence of the earth.

And what was the objective of the coming of these 'Day Springs of eternal holiness' and how mankind has benefited from their appearance, and what have we learnt since they have come to us from the very beginning of existence?

Bahá'u'lláh states one vital role of the Manifestations of God in educating humans:

For were it not for those effulgent Lights that shine above the horizon of His Essence, the people would know not their left hand from their right, how much less could they scale the heights of the inner realities or probe the depths of their subtleties!⁴⁹

In Hindu line of Avataras, there itself is the progressive revelation. For each of these Avatara has come bringing an additional necessity from that which was the past. Providing the necessary spiritual nourishment and its social application in the form of laws and practices according to the needs of the time they manifest. Most Hindus believe in Krishna but they do also in Rama. For they know inherently that it is the same

Message with two versions. Rama taught the obedience in spite of prevailing injustice. And in seeming opposition, Krishna taught to fight for justice in spite of seeming disobedience. And this verifying and in conformity with the teaching of Bahá'í Faith that each Manifestation of God of the age reveals the teachings in conformity with that age and since situations and times change, these laws are either abrogated or new ones are created by Him.

As repeated by Bahá'u'lláh:

*Were He to decree as lawful the thing which from time immemorial had been forbidden, and forbid that which had, at all times, been regarded as lawful, to none is given the right to question His authority.*⁵⁰

The theme of repeated timeless coming of the Avatara is also pronounced in Hinduism. Evidently in Bhagavad-Gita when Sri Krishna having said that He is unborn and taught the knowledge of Yoga, the Union with the Divine, to Vivaswata, the son of the Sun god, who preceded time itself till present, perplexed Arjuna asks:

Thy birth, dear Lord, was in these later days. And bright Vivaswata's preceded time! How shall I comprehend this thing thou sayest, "From the beginning it was I who taught?"⁵¹

Thereupon Sri Krishna makes the reply as an Eternal Manifestation of God, the Sanatana Avatara comparable to defining Progressive Revelation saying:

Manifold the renewals of my birth have been, Arjuna! and of thy births, too! But mine I know, and thine thou knowest not, O Slayer of thy Foes! Albeit I be Unborn, undying, indestructible, the Lord of all things living; not the less- by Maya, by my magic which I stamp on floating Nature-forms, the primal vast- I come, and go, and come. When Righteousness Declines, O Bharata! when wickedness is strong, I rise, from age to age, and take visible shape, and move a man with men, Succouring the good, thrusting the evil back, And setting Virtue on her seat again.⁵²

As mentioned before by Bahá'u'lláh, many of the memories and records of the earlier Manifestations of God are lost in the dust of time and as repeated by Sri Krishna saying:

Manifold the renewals of my birth have been, Arjuna!
and of thy births, too! But mine I know, and thine thou
knowest not.

And also that the process of coming and going of the Avatara is eternal. Whenever there is a spiritual decadence in the world and the loss of moral and ethics, that the spirit of God is born in the form of an Avatara to guide humanity on the path of righteousness. But how often it happens that the people who have sought the coming of the Avatara have themselves turned against Him when He comes fulfilling the prophecies and anticipation in order to reestablish the reign of Virtue. Bahá'u'lláh states:

*Behold, how the divers peoples and kindreds of the earth have been waiting for the coming of the Promised One. No sooner had He, Who is the Sun of Truth, been made manifest, than, lo, all turned away from Him, except them whom God was pleased to guide... That hour is now come. The world is illumined with the effulgent glory of His countenance. And yet, behold how far its peoples have strayed from His path! None have believed in Him except them who, through the power of the Lord of Names, have shattered the idols of their vain imaginings and corrupt desires and entered the city of certitude.*⁵³

As repeated by Sri Krishna:

The minds untaught mistake Me, veiled in form;-
naught see they of My secret Presence, nought of My
hid Nature, ruling all which lives. vain hopes pursuing,
vain deeds doing; fed on vainest knowledge, senselessly
they seek an evil way, the way of brutes and fiends. But
My Mahatmas, those of noble soul who tread the path
celestial, worship Me with hearts unwandering,-
knowing Me the Source, the Eternal Source, of Life.⁵⁴

The Avatara has a dual nature as visible from the above quote from the Bhagavad-Gita, one is Divine which is one with

God and the other is the human which is like anybody else. That is the reason why Sri Krishna says that people mistake Him to be only a human being and do not recognize His Divine Nature. Adib Taherzadeh in *Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh*, volume 1 p. 58, speaks that in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh there are many statements concerning the dual station of the Manifestations of God and His Chosen Ones. In relation to God, these Holy Souls appear as utter nothingness, but in relation to the world of creation They are endowed with all the attributes of God and are closely identified with Him. As Bahá'u'lláh has stated in one of His prayers:

*When I contemplate, O my God, the relationship that bindeth me to Thee, I am moved to proclaim to all created things 'verily I am God!'; and when I consider my own self, lo, I find it coarser than clay!*⁵⁵

Similar statements have also been made in Islam. The following tradition attributed to Prophet Muhammad clearly indicates the dual nature of the Messengers of God.

*Manifold are Our relationships with God. At one time, We are He Himself, and He is We Ourselves. At another He is that He is, and We are that We are.*⁵⁶

Thus, we are able to understand the universal nature of Divine Unity in which all the Avatars or the Manifestations of God from different religions have a dual nature. This proves the inner essential unity and oneness of different religions and they having come from the same Source speaking of the same Knowledge. This is evident from the above examples of Sri Krishna, Prophet Mohammad and Bahá'u'lláh.

But this dual nature is the cause of much confusion and difficulty among the followers and also the outsiders of a particular religion. The followers mainly take only the divine form of their Avatars and while outsiders take mostly the human form, of the Avatars of the other religion. This is one of the fundamental reasons while they do not respect the Manifestation of God from the other religions as much as their own. And they give a lower rank to the Manifestations of God from other religions whereas often they go to the height of fanaticism for their own Avatars by replacing Him with God

Himself. An example in trinity⁵⁷ in Christianity and who do not believe in divine reality of Mohammad.

Every Manifestation of God validates and confirms the truth of the earlier Manifestation. Even as Moses had confirmed Abraham, Jesus had confirmed and validated the truth of Moses and His laws and Mohammad Jesus. This is one of the proofs in the Holy Books on the validity and truth of each new coming Manifestation of God that He shall confirm and validate the truth of the earlier One. Thus confirming the soundness of history.

Even as Bahá'u'lláh confirms the truth of Mohammad stating:

*Behold how the sovereignty of Muhammad, the Messenger of God, is today apparent and manifest amongst the people.*⁵⁸

Sri Krishna in Bhagavad-Gita has confirmed Rama Avatara while speaking in the voice of God comparing Himself to be the Best and Center of all things in the universe. Among things and beings of the world, Sri Krishna says,

Time's self I am; of woodland-beasts – buffaloes, deers, and bears – the lordly-painted tiger; of birds the vast Garud, the whirlwind 'mid the winds; *'mid chiefs Rama with blood imbrued*, Makar 'mid fishes of the sea, and Ganges 'mid the streams; Yea! First, and Last, and Centre of all which is or seems I am, Arjuna! Wisdom Supreme of what is wise, words on the uttering lips I am, and eyesight of the eyes. And “A” of written characters, Dwandwa⁵⁹ of knitted speech, and Endless Life, and boundless Love, whose power sustaineth each...⁶⁰

Influence of Hindu and the Bahá'í Revelations

Hinduism is the third largest community of religion in the world numbering almost a billion just after Christianity and Islam. What has kept the Hindu people together in cherishing the ideals of their common heritage in spite of consistent long assaults of corrupt practices like casteism and maltreatment of

women like many great religions of the world. Hinduism has not only influence on itself but on the wider world beyond the religious and spiritual ideas. Ancient astronomy, chemistry, medicine and especially mathematics show the indelible impact of Hinduism. Discovery and creation of decimal system and creative imagination of zero. From last three thousand years, hundreds of millions of Hindus have turned themselves to the healing spiritual message of epics like the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, scriptures like Bhagavad-Gita, Vedas and Upanishads. The philosophy of life and ideals present in these Books have given rise to a culture which is still continuing from its emergence of at least ten thousand years, which until now is unparallel in the history of world civilizations. Yoga with its similar ancient origin has its influence worldwide. Striving for justice and abiding by one's righteous duties in the face of challenges of one's passions and others' opposition is an eternal and universal Hindu principle of the foundation of peaceful and enduring social order. It has been a regular life-time habit of Indian masses to listen to and participate in the singing of devotional and moral characters of Mahabharata, Puranas, Ramayana and Bhagavad-Gita. Worship and altruism were the paramount values of individual and community life for thousands of years. This has given rise to spiritualizing of hundreds of millions and its effect upon the whole world. In spite of nearly two hundred years of western colonization, and the present waves of technology, diverse and differing modes of living, Hinduism is sustained in its vigour in giving a peaceful order to the people of India who are emerging as world leaders in modern technology and spiritual ways of life as Yoga.

The Bahá'í Faith in parallel even though being the most recent Divine Revelation in the religious history, has its first impact in Iranian society where it is conceived. It is the Bahá'ís who have established the first school for the girls in conformity to their teaching on the equality of man and woman, in Iran where girls were not considered fit to attend schools and acquire higher learning as the boys. Coming in majority from the illiterate and farming and lower social classes, Bahá'ís had established themselves as the most educated, progressive and prosperous community in Iran owing to their adherence to lofty spiritual guidance and values given by Bahá'u'lláh and later by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House

of Justice, the international governing Council of the Bahá'ís. Out of Iran in more than one hundred and eighty countries and independent territories, Bahá'ís have established their national communities and institutions. They are engaged in teaching the pacifying and unifying teachings of the Bahá'í Faith and also are doing disinterested service to the people world over through humanitarian enterprises such as schools, non-governmental organizations in addressing social issues like health, value education, tribal development and other socio-economic development actions. Bahá'í International Community has a consultative status with United Nations and thus Bahá'í teachings have their influence on world affairs. But first and foremost is the transformation which some six million people in the world have experienced and have dedicated their lives in dissemination of the healing message of Bahá'u'lláh and selfless and indiscriminate service to the human society. Thus while thinking globally and acting locally, Bahá'ís are assisting in bringing the immemorial vision of world unity in reality.

Conclusion

When Righteousness declines, O Bharata! when wickedness is strong, I rise, from age to age, and take visible shape, and move a man with men, succouring the good, thrusting the evil back, And setting Virtue on her seat again.⁶¹

The concept of God and His nature is defined identically in the teachings of Sri Krishna from Hinduism and the Bahá'í teachings. He is mentioned to be the Creator of everything that exists and He Himself is uncreated and self-subsisting, independent and unknowable. And that to let Himself be known, He cannot come in His Essential Form to people because people do not have the capacity to bear a full Revelation of God, so it is giving little by little age after age through each Avatara or the Manifestation. He sends His chosen Avataras or Manifestations and gives them authority and power from His own in order to educate people to gradually recognize His true nature and go away from the man made Vice and progress on the path of Virtue, thus, creating a new greater civilization each time of His appearance as an

Avatara amidst the people. Thus this phenomenon justifies in being called a Progressive Revelation. And this unchanging purpose of divine revelation is aptly named Sanatana Dharma, the Eternal Law.

Human nature, using a different language in Hinduism and the Bahá'í Faith, is both spiritual and material.

The divine revelations are the successive stages in the Divine Plan as mentioned in both Hindu and the Bahá'í scriptures for greater recognition of God by humans. As seen in progressive nature of Dashavatara, the message was heroic in case of Matsya and Kurma and Varaha and Narasimha. Then Rama and Krishna brought the teachings of an exemplary way of life. Then it is Buddha who has brought the lessons of renunciation and relieving sufferings thereby living an enlightened unattached life. And it is Kalki who shall bring the union of differing people of the planet thereby culminating a major stage in the spiritualization of mankind.

This is the Indian line of Avatars and there are such lines in all the continents and the regions of the world ... which converge today into one universal convergence and union into the Universal Manifestation of the Glory of God, the Bhargodevasya the Maitreya Amitabha and so on...

Each of the Avatars have brought humanity to a stage further according to its contextual needs. And so each further progress enhances the receiving capacity of people. And as stated by Bahá'u'lláh, the divine revelations are revealed according to the conditions and receiving capacity of humanity at each successive stage of its evolution and promoting an ever advancing civilization. This is clearly evident in the phenomena of Dashavatara and amply justified in the concept of Progressive Revelation.

The soul in both Hindu and the Bahá'í views is uncreated and is eternal. But unlike certain interpretations of some groups of Hinduism if not all, the concept of reincarnation is not found in the Bahá'í teachings. But in the author's point of view, the soul having taken many forms as mentioned in Bhagavad-Gita does not mean many earthly forms, but rather several celestial forms or successive passing of the soul through different and

innumerable realms of God till eternity until it merges in union with her Creator. In other words, as the life in the human temple is the first stage of the life of the soul – as the child in the womb of the mother – it has the journey which begins on this earthly realm and there will be many other lives in the spiritual worlds.

The other meaning of Lord Krishna having been born several times and Arjuna too are the several successive revelations on earth by Avatars wherein the self-same spirit of an Avatara was present and self-same spirit of a sincere seeker, a devotee was present too thereby embodying the same divine grace and human receptivity at each stage of cosmic manifestation of Avatara.

In the author's finding, the spiritual message and even the details of the spiritual teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and Sri Krishna, for example the elements like the nature of man, concept of God, the purpose of human life, nature of soul and many others are similar to an astonishing degree. This leads the author to conclude the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and Sri Krishna to be two different versions of the same Reality, the reality of the same Religion of God, the same Revelation spoken in two different times by two different Persons, however in two different social, geographical and cultural context and perhaps with two different scopes of application. This gave rise to two different looks over the time to these Faiths, specially for Hinduism. Any casual observer who observes mostly the social form and cultural aspect shall find them different whereas a careful study of scriptures may compel us to see it to be the application of these two identical spiritual teachings spoken in two different languages, in two different times, in two vastly different human contexts and perhaps in two different geographical scopes.

Teachings of Bhagavad-Gita was limited to Indian sub-Continent for most of its life up to now fundamentally perhaps since means of communication and transport were limited up to very recent till a little over one and half century ago. Bahá'í teachings spread internationally from its birth in 1844 and much more globally from last half a century perhaps again owing to the improved means of communication and

transport in addition to it being an attractive, radiant and pertinent divine Message as per the need of humanity today. 24th May 1844, the first day of the birth of the Bahá'í dispensation is marked by the start of the communication revolution of sending of first telegraphic message in the world by Mr. Samuel F. B. Morse, the inventor of the telegraph from Washington to Baltimore, a message chosen from the Bible, from the Book of Numbers read: "What hath God wrought?"⁶²

Thus, these two different scopes of expansion from the very beginning of Hinduism and the Bahá'í Faith led to the social applications which gave rise to two different external looks of these Faiths whereas analyzing their spiritual teachings, its adherents share a one common faith in the core of their spiritual beliefs. Having said so, but for the Bahá'í Faith, owing to its recent origin, a reasonable conclusive statement as to its social form cannot be made since it is on its course of speedy evolution and some more years need to pass with at least a significantly comparable Bahá'í population to Hindus in order to speak conclusively of any resultant crystallized difference between the Bahá'í Faith and Hinduism in the social aspect or cultural elements of its practice.

Hinduism was mainly adhered by a large number, almost a billion, of Indians and Bahá'í Faith by a very small comparative numbers of a few millions of scattered people but living practically on every land of the Earth. Thus, over the time as a larger number of people accept Bahá'í Faith, the social reflection of its spiritual application would be more conclusive and of course different from the Hindu social reflection, even though spiritually or cosmically they may have identical form which we find in Bhagavad-Gita and the spiritual teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. Thus, these two identical teachings in two different social applications would give rise to different social forms due to the difference in worldly conditions of its receiving people.

One of the reasons is also that Hinduism has an ecclesiastical class whereas the Bahá'í Faith has an institutional administration. Enormous differences as these in my opinion would lead Hindu Faith and the Bahá'í Faith very different socially even though both of them live in and share this present

technological world together. But keeping a clarity of vision unclouded by these contextual differences the author, based on the teachings of Bhagavad-Gita and Bahá'u'lláh, concludes these two Faiths respectively to be spiritually identical but socially different.

Dashavatara being the most core phenomenon of Hinduism around which Sanatana Dharma is intertwined, a typical expression of it is taken by the author in Bhagavad-Gita which characterizes in clearest terms the elements of a revelation in Hindu flow. Various writings of Bahá'u'lláh slightly supplemented by some authoritative interpretive writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi are taken as full representation of the Bahá'í revelation. Thus giving a balanced comparative counterparts in both Hinduism and the Bahá'í Faith. And then these two revelations in their spiritual and social elements are compared.

Due to the fundamental position of Dashavatara within Hinduism named as the Eternal Law or Sanatana Dharma, future researchers may like to explore in depth each of the cases of the Avataras and bring to light the scientific or logical reasoning behind the allegorical narration of the Life story of each of the Avataras. This may throw greater light upon the phenomenon of Divine Revelation as the educational process of mankind, its objective and tools.

Author has demonstrably discovered a remarkable resemblance of the messages of Bhagavad-Gita and the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. This then becomes a very promising field of comparative study in different themes of the Words and Writings of Sri Krishna and Bahá'u'lláh. Such a study would help in finding out the nature of Their Revelations and the nature of the audiences to which their respective revelations are addressed and also noting the progression, when and if any, in the themes of such messages.

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NOTES

- ¹ The Sanskrit phrase meaning "the eternal law" indicating timeless nature of the Religion.
- ² Major Hindu scriptures constituting core teachings of Vedanta-spiritual traditions concerned with self-realisation
- ³ Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, p. 313
- ⁴ Bhagavad Gita : Chapter 5, Verses 30,31
- ⁵ Bhagavad Gita : Chapter 11, verses 12-18
- ⁶ Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p.3
- ⁷ Bhagavad Gita : Chapter 11, verses 12-18
- ⁸ Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 97
- ⁹ Bhagavad Gita : Chapter 11, verses 12-18
- ¹⁰ Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 97
- ¹¹ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris talks p. 60
- ¹² Bahá'u'lláh, The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 112, from the tablet of The Great Announcement to Mankind.
- ¹³ Originally unnamed seven Saintly Patriarchs of the ancient Vedic Religion known as Saptarshi
- ¹⁴ Righteous kings, a principal executor, which occur each eon carrying out the divine plan of God.
- ¹⁵ Bhagavad Gita : Chapter 10, verses 4 -7
- ¹⁶ Bhagavad Gita : Chapter 14, verse 5
- ¹⁷ Bhagavad-Gita : Chapter 2, verse 22
- ¹⁸ Bhagavad-Gita : Chapter 2, verses 23,24,25
- ¹⁹ Reincarnation, literally "to be made flesh again", is a doctrine or metaphysical belief that some essential part of a living being (in some variations only human beings), often referred as the spirit or soul survives death to be reborn in a new body. Punarjanma, to be born again, is the word used in Sanskrit which has both indications to be

born again in physical birth in a flesh and in a material form or as a spiritual birth before or after the human physical death.

- ²⁰ Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 161
- ²¹ Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 158
- ²² Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 160
- ²³ Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 161
- ²⁴ Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 157
- ²⁵ Kountey in Sanskrit means Kunti's son. Here Krishana addresses Arjuna as Kountey. Arjuna is the son of Kunti and king Pandu and one of the five Pandava brothers mentioned in Indian epic Mahabharata. Kountey is one of the names of Arjuna. He is the compatriate and dearest disciple to Krishna. The dialogue between Arjuna and Krishana is Bhagavad-Gita narrated over the battlefield of Kurukshetra as mentioned in Mahabharata.
- ²⁶ Bhagavad-Gita : Chapter 8, verse 6
- ²⁷ Krishna, as referred in Bhagavad-Gita
- ²⁸ One of the names of Arjun, as addressed by Krishna, being the prince of Bharat dynasty in the epic of Mahabharat
- ²⁹ Bhagvad Gita, chapter 4, verses 7-8
- ³⁰ Meaning righteousness, the Law, the Divine order.
- ³¹ Antonym of 'Dharma' meaning unrightousness, lawlessness and the disorder against the divine pleasure.
- ³² Garuda Purana is one of the Puranas which are part of the Hindu body of texts known as Smriti. Garuda Purana is in the form of instructions by Vishnu to his carrier, Garuda (The King of Birds – a vimana of Lord Vishnu). This Purana deals with astronomy, medicine, grammar, and gemstone structure and qualities.
- ³³ Mentioned in Garuda Purana, the ten avataras, descents or incarnations of Vishnu, which appeared in archaic and ancient times, except Kalki, who is still to come.
- ³⁴ Garuda Purana, Chapter 8, verses 9-11
- ³⁵ The name of an 'epoch' or 'era' within a cycle of four ages in Hindu philosophy.
- ³⁶ Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh p. 49
- ³⁷ Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh p.49
- ³⁸ Bahá'u'lláh, Kitab-i-Iqan, page 103
- ³⁹ Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh p. 87
- ⁴⁰ Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 48
- ⁴¹ Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 23
- ⁴² Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh p. 88
- ⁴³ Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh p. 104

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- ⁴⁴ To demonstrate His divine nature to reluctant Arjuna who is completely confused in performing his divine duty, Krishna grants Arjuna the boon of cosmic vision (albeit temporary) and allows the prince to see His 'Universal Form'. Thus relieving Arjuna of all dilemmas and helping him attain a certitude of Faith.
- ⁴⁵ The crown with moving disc of halo.
- ⁴⁶ Anadem, Sudarshana Chakra in Sanskrit, is a spinning disc like weapon with very sharp edge, which serves as an attribute of Vishnu. Krishna being the Avatara of Vishnu is also manifested with Sudarshan Chakra. Lord Vishnu, also called Narayana and like him, Krishna is often portrayed with four hands, holding a Shankha (a conch shell), the Sudarshana, a Gada (mace) and a Padma (lotus).
- ⁴⁷ Bhagavad Gita Chapter 11, Verses 45, 46, Vishwarupadarshan
- ⁴⁸ Abdu'l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, p. 194
- ⁴⁹ Bahá'u'lláh, Gems of Divine Mysteries, p. 14
- ⁵⁰ Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 86
- ⁵¹ Bhagavad-Gita : chapter 4, verse 4
- ⁵² Bhagavad-Gita: chapter 9, verses 5-8
- ⁵³ Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 9 and p. 12
- ⁵⁴ Bhagavad-Gita: chapter 9, verses 12, 13
- ⁵⁵ Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p.234
- ⁵⁶ A Muslim tradition cited by Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 43
- ⁵⁷ In Christian doctrine, the Trinity is the unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three persons in one Godhead. Each of the *persons* is understood as having the one identical essence or nature, not merely similar natures. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church describes the Trinity as "the central dogma of Christian theology".
- ⁵⁸ Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 24
- ⁵⁹ A duel.
- ⁶⁰ Bhagavad-Gita, Chapter 10, verses 30-33
- ⁶¹ Bhagavad Gita, chapter 4, verses 7-8
- ⁶² King James Bible, Numbers 23:23