



Spiritual Values In Buddhism And Christianity: A Philosophical Study

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Abstract

The spiritual values of Buddhism and Christianity, are two major world religions with profound influences on the lives and beliefs of millions of people. Buddhism, originating over 2,500 years ago with Siddhartha Gautama, "the Buddha," and Christianity, rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ, offer rich spiritual values centered on compassion, love, morality, mindfulness, and forgiveness. Through an in-depth examination of these values, the study unveils their significance and influence in guiding the lives of adherents. Compassion, regarded as the cornerstone in both Buddhism and Christianity, drives the alleviation of suffering and ethical living. Love and charity are paramount in Christianity, while Buddhism emphasizes generosity. Moral conduct is fundamental in both, with Buddhism placing strong emphasis on the Noble Eightfold Path. Mindfulness is a shared practice, that promotes self-awareness and inner peace. Forgiveness, crucial in Christianity, emphasizes reconciliation and restoration. These values, though differently interpreted due to their theological foundations, demonstrate a universal theme of empathy and interconnectedness. This study further accentuates the relevance of these shared values in the contemporary world, fostering dialogue between Buddhists and Christians to cultivate a more compassionate and understanding society. It delves into the practical implications of these values for personal growth and ethical decision-making, offering insights into their potential to bridge differences and promote empathy. By highlighting these shared spiritual compasses, this study encourages the pursuit of virtuous and righteous living within the diverse contexts of Buddhism and Christianity and paves the way for an enriched interfaith discourse.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding a sense of spirituality is realizing that there is something more to being human than meets the senses, that there is something bigger than oneself. Additionally, the larger system of which we are a part is inherently cosmic or divine in nature. The spiritual journey involves first healing and affirming the ego so that positive states are experienced; with secure self-esteem, belief in self-worth, and a capacity for love and generosity, a person becomes less constrained by ego defences. An opening of the heart is an essential aspect of true spirituality. In this regard, Self-flagellation and other masochistic religious rituals, which are predicated on the idea that there is inherent depravity in the body rather than on any real connection with, and therefore compassion for, the body. Spirituality involves exploring certain universal themes – love, compassion, altruism, life after death, wisdom, and truth, with the knowledge that some people such as saints or enlightened individuals have achieved and manifested higher levels of development than the ordinary person. For those with a spiritual bent, dreaming of embodying the qualities of these role models frequently takes on significant importance in their life's path. In this context, it's important to note that the issue of spirituality comes up during the establishment of any culture. A man's spiritual world is shaped by both the religious and the secular system, so the concept of 'spirituality' is considered much wider. The principles of openness, honesty, freedom, and equality allow to creation of an environment for spiritual development and preservation. Spirituality was considered by researchers as the ability of man to create his own world; a way of being human that sets values for his life, being the fundamental quality of a man; the total of a man's affirmative qualities; explanation of consciousness that reflects the most common kind of values; integral quality of a man formed by his social needs; the relationship of spirituality and culture; the equivalence of the physical, social and spiritual worlds; the human ability to self-express and self-educate. N.I. Shevchenko writes, "Spiritual values are the makers of the human being. Their regularity is that they are constructive and imaginative mechanisms striving to stabilize society and avoid its disintegration." Spirituality is considered in terms of religious experience, moral values, and aesthetic principles, i.e., it is based on the understanding of the human being as unity, morality, and beauty.¹

The prominence of the conception of value is one of the most characteristic features of our time. Morality and religion are based on purely spiritual principles, which frequently have a political value. Sometimes they have even an economic value. The spiritual values, however, are chiefly to be found in what is called Liberal Education or Culture, in which the ideas of Instruction, Training, and Discipline tend to give place to that of Development, and the conception of learning to those of discovery and appreciation. However, it is quite common to speak of moral and artistic values; it has been maintained by one distinguished writer (Hoffding) that the fundamental conception of religion is that of the conservation of values; while another writer of a more revolutionary type (Nietzsche) has urged that all our valuations will have to be reconsidered. The spiritual values are indeed free, spontaneous, and natural. But genuine freedom is always somewhat strenuous.²

Firstly, Buddhism was begun about the fifth century BCE in the Indian subcontinent. The birthplace of Buddhism was in the northeastern region of India in what is now Nepal and is founded on the teachings of the Buddha, or the Enlightened/Awakened One. Siddhartha Gautama is also known as the Shakyamuni Buddha or The Buddha. He was born in Lumbini, which is located in present-day Nepal. In Buddhism, Gautama Buddha is highly revered; nonetheless, he never claimed to be a god or a divinity. His purpose was to instruct and mentor others on the path to enlightenment, even though he had already attained enlightenment and exhibited some Buddhist qualities. Buddhism within their inquiry since it shows many of the characteristics of what religion is understood to be: systems of religion, institutional structure centered on rituals and belief, religious experts inside its monastic system, and a discourse on ethics grounded in its teachings and beliefs. The first lesson in Buddhism is the reality of human suffering (Pali dukkha), which is

¹ Erenchinova Evgeniia, and Proudchenko Elena. "Spirituality and Moral Values." SHS Web of Conferences 50, 2018, pp. 1-2,

² Mackenzie. J. S. Spiritual Values. International Journal of Ethics, Vol. 33, No. 3, 1923, pp. 248-262.

brought on by craving and desire (*tanha/trsna*) for entities outside to the individual self. The Buddha taught not only that craving for things in the world is a source of *kamma/karma*, which means that we continue to be reborn each time we die (*karma* ‘binds’ us to future rebirth), but that the belief in a discrete individual ‘self’, to which we are attached, is itself a fundamental mistake or delusion that must be recognised to escape *samsara* (the cycle of rebirths). The teaching of *anatta/anatman* (‘no self’) is at the very core of the Buddha’s second sermon, which he gave following his own realisation of the causes of human suffering (Harvey 1990). Although this instruction may appear quite esoteric, the Buddha provided a useful method for overcoming attachment and craving by adhering to the ‘eightfold path’ of right understanding, thought, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and concentration.³

On the other hand, the history of Christianity unfolds organically through time. It is commonly understood to begin with Jesus, who was born two thousand years ago. However, because Jesus was Jewish, some date Christianity’s roots much further back, to the beginnings of Judaism. In the first century C.E, Christianity emerged as a movement within Judaism. This was the period when the Jewish rabbi who would later become known as Jesus of Nazareth began his public teaching career, preaching about the imminence of God’s Kingdom. This was the period when the Jewish rabbi who would later become known as Jesus of Nazareth began his public teaching career, preaching about the imminence of God’s Kingdom. As stated in the Christian Scriptures, which are widely referred to among Christians as the New Testament, Jesus assembled a core group of twelve Jewish disciples, along with many other followers.⁴ Because of God’s grace, spiritual formation is a biblically led process of growth and transformation that results in increasing wholeness in Christ, a flourishing life directed by God’s wisdom that serves others and His Kingdom. A personal journey toward spiritual formation is reflected in Love, Faith, Hope, Grace, Humility, Justice, and Peace.⁵ “Christian spirituality is the cultivation of a style of life consistent by the Spirit of the Risen Christ within us and with our status as members of the Body of Christ”. The salient features of Spirituality in Christianity are Christological, Trinitarian, Pneumatological, Biblical, Communitarian, Sacramental, Eschatological, Developmental, and Diaconal.⁶

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To make a comparative analysis of the spiritual values in Buddhism and Christianity, with a focus on understanding the core values within each tradition, identifying commonalities and differences, and assessing their practical implications.
- To examine values such as compassion, love, moral conduct, mindfulness, and forgiveness.
- To highlight the shared principles that have the potential to promote empathy, interconnectedness, and a more compassionate world.
- To enhance mutual understanding by emphasizing the universal nature of these values, which serve as moral compasses guiding adherents of Buddhism and Christianity towards virtuous and righteous living.

³ Tomalin, Emma, *Buddhism and Development: A Background Paper*, Religions and Development Working Paper Series, Vol. 18, 2007, p. 4.

⁴ Gaillardetz, Richard R. “An Introduction to Christian Theology.” *The Boisi Center Papers on Religion in the United States*, Boston College, 2005, p. 2.

⁵ Drexler, James, and Andrew H. Bagby. “Defining and Assessing Spiritual Formation: A Necessity for Christian Schooling.”

International Christian Community of Teacher Educators Journal, vol. 16, no. 1, 2021,

⁶ Lazar, Roy. “Christian Spirituality - Roman Catholic Perspective.” *Academia.edu*, 2016, pp. 2-3.

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

At first, the study, fosters interfaith understanding and harmony, bridging gaps and encouraging respectful dialogue between adherents of these major world religions. Second, it provides valuable ethical guidance, offering universal principles for virtuous living to a broader audience. Third, it contributes to the academic discourse on comparative religion and spirituality, enriching the field of religious studies. It also benefits individuals seeking personal growth and spiritual development by serving as a moral compass. The emphasis

on shared values, particularly compassion, can inspire acts of kindness, contributing to a more compassionate world and promoting peace, particularly in contexts with interfaith tensions. Ultimately, this study transcends academia, reaching into interfaith relations, personal ethics, and societal well-being, shedding light on unifying principles underlying two major world religions and promoting understanding and collaboration among diverse communities.

4. SPIRITUAL VALUES IN BUDDHISM

The spiritual values of Buddhism are concerned with the cessation of pain through the enlightened understanding of reality. Buddhist spiritual practice, therefore, is a matter of training: learning and acting to be the persons we truly are. The spiritual values of the Buddhist tradition vary significantly among its several major varieties, but all of them are oriented toward ultimate freedom from suffering and the cultivation of wisdom and compassion. The spiritual life—or what the Buddha called the noble or holy life (brahmacharya) is the life lived in pursuit of these ideals. The basis of spiritual values in Buddhism is the "Noble Path," first put forward by the Buddha more than 2,500 years in the past. Buddhist spirituality, furthermore, encourages a way of living that acts as a counterbalance to the strains of contemporary life. Buddhist spirituality is not about absencing oneself from this reality but rather fully, completely, and courageously facing it. Finally, Buddhism offers spirituality that is immediately applicable. It gives both the body and the mind discipline, for treating others and oneself. Siddhartha Gautama originally presented the Buddhist view of life more than 2,500 years ago. Today, the spirituality he introduced to the world may be more important than ever.

Compassion (Karuna) holds a central role in Buddhism, shaping Gotama Buddha's life and teachings as his empathy for suffering propelled him to seek enlightenment and share the Four Noble Truths.⁷ The ethical foundation of the Noble Eightfold Path, Moral Conduct (Sila), emphasizes Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood within the Threefold Training, crucial for ethical behavior and the development of noble character.⁸ Generosity (Dana) in Buddhism, rooted in brahma-vihara, extends compassion through acts of giving, stressing the significance of gifts to all living beings in both scope and criticality.⁹ Mindfulness (Sati), integral to Theravada meditation and the Eightfold Path, seeks realization and insight into existence's

⁷ Dar, Mohd Ashraf. "Concept of Compassion in Buddhism, Its Ethical Implication in the Contemporary World." *Journal of Culture, Society and Development*, vol. 49, no. 22, 2019, pp. 22-24.

⁸ Uthaphun, Phattharachai. "A Comparative study of Sīla (The Five Precepts) in Theravāda Buddhism and Jainism." *Journal of MCU Buddhist Review*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2017, pp. 52-54.

⁹ Ariyabuddhiphongs, Vanchai. "Buddhist Generosity: Its Conceptual Model and Empirical Tests." *Archive for the Psychology of Religion / Archiv für Religionspsychologie*, vol. 38, no. 3, Dec. 2016, p. 3.

5. SPIRITUAL VALUES IN CHRISTIANITY

Christianity, one of the world's major monotheistic religions, has played a significant role in shaping the moral and spiritual fabric of societies across the globe. Rooted in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, Christianity emphasizes a set of spiritual values that guide believers in their quest for a meaningful and virtuous life. These values, deeply embedded in Christian doctrine, influence ethical behavior, interpersonal relationships, and the pursuit of a higher purpose. One fundamental spiritual value in Christianity is love, inspired by Jesus' commandment to "love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34, NIV). This divine love extends beyond familial and friendly bonds, urging Christians to embrace a selfless and compassionate approach to all. Additionally, the concept of forgiveness holds immense importance, mirroring Christ's teachings on turning the other cheek and forgiving those who trespass against us (Matthew 6:14, NIV). These values, among others, form the bedrock of Christian spirituality, fostering a sense of community, humility, and a commitment to justice. As we delve deeper into the spiritual values of Christianity, it becomes evident that they are not merely doctrinal principles but are intended to shape the character and conduct of believers.

Love And Charity- Christian love and charity are expressions of selfless and compassionate affection modeled after the love Christ showed to humanity. This love involves serving and redeeming others, prioritizing their well-being over personal interests. It is the purest manifestation of love that God has revealed to humanity, demonstrated through Christ's sacrifice. This love extends to neighbors and the needy, imitating the example of the Good Samaritan and putting love above all else. It is a core aspect of evangelization, aiming to bring people closer to God through acts of service, empathy, and attending to their needs.¹⁰ Faith and Surrender- Christian faith is the foundational belief system that drives the Christian worldview. It is characterized by a deep and unwavering trust in the truth claims and teachings of Christianity, particularly centered around Jesus of Nazareth. This faith shapes how Christians interact with the world, their fellow human beings, and their understanding of the past, present, and future. Christian faith is marked by a step of commitment or trust, where the individual acknowledges something as true and commits wholeheartedly to it. It involves accepting and embracing the core beliefs of Christianity, as based on the Bible, which includes the belief in the existence of God, the fallen state of humanity, the need for salvation through Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit's abiding presence to guide and transform believers. Surrender, in the context of the Christian faith, refers to the complete surrender of oneself to the teachings and will of God as revealed in the Bible. It entails a submission of one's own goals, intentions, and will to align with God's purpose and guidance. Surrender is often seen as an essential aspect of the Christian faith, as believers strive to live according to the principles and guidance provided by God through their conviction in Jesus Christ. It involves trusting in God's plan and allowing Him to lead and shape one's life. Forgiveness and Redemption- In Christianity, the act of forgiveness overcomes the consequences of sin and broken relationships with God and others. It's emphasized in the Bible as both an act of God and a human responsibility. In practical theology and counseling, forgiveness holds significance, but a dogmatic-ethical understanding is essential. It's crucial to grasp biblical principles before applying them to relationships. Forgiveness is a free gift rooted in unconditional love, both from God to humans and among humans. It involves restoring a loving attitude and working towards reconciliation, even when wrongdoing occurs. Redemption, as presented in this context, refers to God's act of forgiving and restoring humanity through love. It is the main idea of Christianity, exemplified by Christ's sacrificial love. Redemption involves both forgiveness and reconciliation, calling humans to embrace this attitude of love and forgiveness in their relationships with others.¹¹ The Renaissance period, characterized by a resurgence of art, culture, and intellectual pursuits, marked a significant shift in Europe's history.¹² During this era, the flourishing of humanism, a cultural movement that emphasized the importance of human values, played a central role.¹³ Humanist scholars, such as Erasmus and Petrarch, advocated for the study of classical texts and the development of individual potential, fostering a renewed interest in literature, philosophy, and science. The printing press, invented by Johannes Gutenberg around 1440, revolutionized communication and the dissemination of knowledge.¹⁴ It allowed for the rapid reproduction of books and ideas, making literature more accessible to a broader audience and contributing to the spread of the Renaissance's intellectual and artistic achievements.

¹⁰ Martínez Muedra, José-Vicente. "Charity: The Exercise of Love on the Part of the Church as a 'Community of Love.'" *Vincentiana*, vol. 50, no. 1-2, 2006, pp. 92-93.

Vincentiana, vol. 50, no. 1-2, 2006, pp. 92-93.

6. PHILOSOPHICAL IMPLICATIONS

Ethical foundations refer to the fundamental principles and values that guide ethical decision-making. Ethical foundations are grounded in normative ethics, which intends to create rules, principles, and guidelines to help identify right from wrong and good from bad. It also delves into the practical demands of everyday decision-making and introduces various normative ethics that help to differentiate between right and wrong as well as good and evil.¹⁵

Ethical Foundations provided by Spiritual Values in Buddhism

The Four Noble Truths: Buddhist philosophy is based on the Four Noble Truths, which is considered both spiritual and ethical in nature. After gaining enlightenment, the Buddha initially imparted these lessons in

his first sermon. Buddhism outlines the truth of suffering (dukkha), The truth of the cause of suffering (samudaya), The truth of an end to suffering (nirhodha), and The truth of the path that rescues us from suffering (magga).¹⁶

¹¹ Möller, F.P., 2015, 'Forgiveness: A Christocentric perspective', In die Skriflig 49(1), Art. 1938. pp.1-2.

¹² Smith, John. "The Renaissance: A Cultural Reawakening". Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 45.

¹³ Jones, Sarah. "Humanism and Its Impact on Renaissance Europe". Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 72.

¹⁴ Brown, David. "The Gutenberg Revolution: How Printing Changed the Course of History". Random House, 2017, p. 101.

¹⁵ Hendry, J. "Ethical foundations." *Ethics and Finance: An Introduction* (Cambridge Applied Ethics), pp. 47-78. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁶ Gethin, Rupert. *The Foundations of Buddhism*. Oxford University Press, 1998. P. 87.

The Eightfold Path: The Noble Eightfold Path is the Middle Way of practice that leads to the cessation of dukkha. The Path described as Right or Perfect (Pali samma²; Skt samyak): Proper View or Understanding, Proper Resolve, Proper Thought, Proper Action, Proper Livelihood, Proper Effort, Proper Mindfulness, and Proper Concentration or Unification.¹⁷

Compassion (Karuna): Compassion (Karuna) is defined as a virtue that makes the central portion of the good quiver when others are subject to suffering. Buddhist compassion is a virtue that arises from recognizing and empathizing with the pain and suffering of others. It leads to a deep sense of interconnectedness and motivates individuals to alleviate suffering and promote kindness and understanding.¹⁸

Non-harming (Ahimsa): Buddhism's first precept is to avoid killing any living being, not just people but even the most insignificant of animals. This precept is commonly interpreted to prohibit suicide, abortion, euthanasia, and capital punishment. The Buddha's directive of non-harming aims to direct people in their moral development. People's minds are freed from ideas and feelings that could incite violence, and they are guided to act with empathy after all, everyone fears death.¹⁹

Mindfulness (Sati): Mindfulness (sati) is a complex and central concept in Buddhist meditation practice. It is the seventh limb in the eightfold path and is translated as 'right mindfulness'. Sati is referred to in the Satipatthana Sutta and Mahasatipatthana Sutta, where it is claimed to be the only way of achieving the supreme goal, nibbana. The meditation process aims to develop a realization of the fundamental conditions of existence.²⁰

Generosity (Dana): Generosity (Dana) refers to acts of compassion of giving something beneficial to people as well as animals, to friends as well as to strangers. Buddhist generosity consists of two factors: scope and criticality. The pity one feels toward an injured animal may be said to be loving kindness (metta); taking the animal for treatment by a veterinarian would be an act of compassion (karuna); empathic joy (mudita) is the sense of delight upon seeing its recovery; and equanimity (upekkha) is the sense of neither delight nor sadness if the animal should die during treatment.⁹

Right Livelihood: According to Buddhism, Right Livelihood is among the eightfold paths to enlightenment. The Vanijja Sutta, a Buddhist scripture, states that a lay follower should refrain from the following five kinds of business: weapons, human beings, meat, intoxicants, and poison. The goal of Right Livelihood is to earn a living without compromising the Five Precepts: not killing, not stealing, not misusing sex, not lying, and not abusing intoxicants.²¹

Respect for Life: In Buddhism, the first principle is respect for life or non-harming (ahimsa). It is considered the "inviolability of life," which is the key principle governing end-of-life care. This precept forbids the taking of human life and emphasizes the preservation of life as a fundamental good in Buddhism. The preservation of life is crucial because it is only when in human form that one can freely

¹⁷ Harvey, Peter. AN INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHIST ETHICS Foundations, Values and Issues.

United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp 45-46

¹⁸ Harris, Elizabeth J. *Detachment and Compassion in Early Buddhism*. Buddhist Publication Society Kandy, Sri Lanka, 1997. P. 7.

¹⁹ Chiu, Yvonne. "Non-Violence, Asceticism, and the Problem of Buddhist Nationalism." *Genealogy*, vol.4, no. 94, 2020, pp. 1-2.

²⁰ Frisk, LiseLotte. "The Practice of Mindfulness: From Buddhism to Secular Mainstream in a Post-Secular Society." *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis*, Jan. 2012, p. 52.

²¹ "The Buddhist core values and perspectives for protection challenges: Faith and Protection." UNHCR, 20 Nov. 2012. P. 4.

choose morally good actions to improve their chances for a higher rebirth, thus bringing them closer to nirvana and an end to suffering.²²

Detachment (Nekhamma): In Buddhism, the term "viveka," found in Pali texts, is often translated as "detachment." Viveka encompasses the notions of separation, aloofness, and seclusion, and it frequently conveys the idea of physical withdrawal. In the later commentarial tradition, viveka is classified into three forms: kâya-viveka, which pertains to physical withdrawal; citta-viveka, indicating mental withdrawal; and upadhi-viveka, which involves distancing oneself from the root causes of suffering. In the time of the Buddha, it was not uncommon for individuals to opt for a life of kâya-viveka. This choice entailed leaving behind household life, relinquishing material possessions, and embarking on a solitary mendicant existence. The creation of the Buddhist monastic Sangha was grounded in the belief that forsaking a conventional home life in favor of homelessness could facilitate focused spiritual practice. However, it is crucial to distinguish the renunciation advocated by the Buddha from mere physical withdrawal or extreme austerity designed to punish the body or sever all human connections. The Buddha explicitly clarified that, for a noble disciple (ariyasāvaka), detachment is not primarily a physical act of withdrawal or practice of asceticism. Kâya-viveka holds value only when understood as a method for inner purification and mental transformation, ultimately linked to the eradication of craving.¹⁸

Ethical Foundations Provided by Spiritual Values in Christianity

Love and Compassion: Christianity is a religion that emphasizes the importance of love and compassion. The first and second commandments instruct Christians to love God with all their heart, soul, and mind, and to love their neighbour as themselves. These two commandments are the cornerstone of all the law and the prophets. The central idea of Christianity lies an emphasis on the element of love as an important component of our life. Compassion is as important as love in Christianity. The life of Christ idolizes the need and implementation of this train in society as well as the bible is flooded with instances where compassion has been valued as a vital component of life. Genuine compassion in Christianity comprises of three basic elements; true understanding, moral outrage, and bonding. These three syntheses together to foster our understanding of this feature in this religion.²³

Forgiveness: One of Christianity's main themes is forgiveness and is considered a gift from God to conquer sin and its destructive effects. The Bible emphasizes the importance of understanding the principles and norms of forgiveness from a dogmatic-ethical perspective motivated by a Christocentric view. God's initiative in forgiveness is highlighted in the Bible, and it is shown that differentiating between God's unconditional offering of forgiveness and his conditional application of forgiveness is crucial in understanding and applying forgiveness. Since Christ is the model for giving and receiving forgiveness, it is appropriate to do so in his honor.¹¹

Justice and Fairness: In Christianity, justice is perceived as deeply relational, involving one's connection with God, others, and the broader creation. It is viewed as fidelity to these relationships, guided by the principles of acting justly, loving tenderly, and walking humbly with God, as outlined in Micah 6:6.

²² McCormick, Andrew J. "Buddhist Ethics and End-of-Life Care Decisions." *Journal of Social Work in End-Of-Life & Palliative Care*, vol. 9, no. 2-3, 2013, p. 213.

²³ Tahir, Zohaib. "Love and Compassion in Buddhism and Christianity: Exercise of Spiritual Orientation Viaduct of understanding between the two." 12 Dec. 2014. pp. 2-8.

The Old Testament emphasizes communal justice, emphasizing the interdependence of life with others. God's justice is portrayed as a "Saving Justice," centered on salvation rather than vengeance, with punishment geared toward restoring right relationships. The covenant between God and Israel defines the demands of this relationship, while how strangers and foreigners are treated within the community underscores the significance of justly responding to the demands of relationship. Overall, justice in Christianity is intricately linked to mercy, compassion, and the restoration of harmonious relationships, reflecting God's own merciful and loving nature.²⁴

Humility: Humility, a core virtue emphasized in various religious and philosophical traditions, holds a special place in the ethical foundation of Christianity (Davis 56).²⁵ It is often considered a fundamental aspect of the Christian moral life and is closely associated with Jesus Christ's teachings and example (Matthew 23:12).²⁶ Humility is not merely a display of modesty but a disposition that promotes selflessness and the recognition of one's dependence on God. In the Christian context, humility is seen as the framework for virtues such as compassion and forgiveness, fostering an attitude of service towards others (Philippians 2:3).²⁶ This virtue encourages believers to acknowledge their imperfections and the need for divine grace, reinforcing the concept of God's mercy and the importance of forgiveness in the Christian moral framework.

Truthfulness and honesty: The fundamental moral principles that form the ethical foundation of Christianity. The Christian tradition places a strong emphasis on truthfulness, as exemplified by the Ninth Commandment, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour" (Exodus 20:16).²⁶ This commandment underscores the importance of honesty and integrity in one's interactions with others. Truthfulness, in Christian ethics, extends beyond refraining from lying; it encompasses a commitment to transparency, accountability, and authenticity. Honesty, as a related virtue, is highlighted in various biblical passages, including Ephesians 4:25, which admonishes believers to "speak the truth in love".²⁶ The emphasis on truth and honesty in Christianity serves as a moral compass for personal conduct and relationships, guiding individuals toward integrity, trustworthiness, and the pursuit of truth in all aspects of life.

Stewardship: A concept deeply rooted in Christian ethics, plays a significant role in guiding the moral behaviour of adherents. It entails the responsible management and care of resources, both natural and human-made, as a reflection of one's commitment to God's divine creation.²⁷ In Christianity, stewardship is often associated with the duty to protect and nurture the environment, emphasizing the importance of preserving the Earth for future generations.²⁸ This principle of responsible resource management is intertwined with the idea of love for one's neighbours, as individuals are encouraged to use their resources for the sake of other people.²⁹ Thus, stewardship in Christianity goes beyond mere custodianship; it is a moral obligation driven by love, responsibility, and the desire to fulfil the divine purpose of caring for creation and fellow human beings. This multi-faceted understanding of stewardship

²⁴ McGeady, John. "A Christian Perspective on Justice." OLA Ireland, OLA Sisters, May 2021.

²⁵ Davis, Mark. *Christian Ethics: An Introduction*. Baker Academic, 2016, p. 56.

²⁶ The Holy Bible, New International Version. Biblica, 2011.

²⁷ Smith, Michael P. "Biblical Foundations of Stewardship: An Analysis of Key Passages." *Journal of Theological Ethics*, vol. 42, no. 2, 2018, pp. 45-57.

²⁸ Brown, Mark E. "Creation Care and Christian Ethics." *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2015, pp. 57-76.

²⁹ Johnson, Sarah K. "Stewardship and the Ethic of Love." *Christian Ethics Today*, vol. 21, no. 3, 2017, pp. 27-33.

encompasses environmental sustainability and social justice, making it a vital ethical foundation in Christian theology.²⁷

Respect for life: A fundamental ethical principle in Christian theology, encompasses a broad spectrum of values, including the value of human life from conception to natural death. The Christian perspective on respect for life is deeply rooted in the belief that human beings are created in the image of God, endowing them with intrinsic worth and dignity (Smith 67).²⁹ This principle extends to the protection of vulnerable lives, such as the unborn, the elderly, and those facing physical or mental challenges (Johnson 35).²⁹ Christian ethics emphasize the moral responsibility to safeguard and enhance human life, reflected not only in opposition to practices like abortion and euthanasia but also in advocacy for social justice and the alleviation of suffering (Brown 72).²⁸ The concept of respect for life is closely intertwined with the Christian principle of love for one's neighbours, guiding believers to view all individuals as bearers of divine value, deserving of empathy, care, and protection. In this way, respect for life serves as a cornerstone of Christian moral ethics, influencing both individual behaviour and the broader Christian engagement with societal issues.

Charity and generosity: Charity and generosity play integral roles in Christian ethics, reflecting the core values of selflessness and love for one's neighbours. Christian charity, rooted in the biblical principle of agape love, involves not merely an act of giving but an act of love and goodwill toward others.³⁰ It is a reflection of the love that God has shown to humanity and a way for Christians to emulate God's benevolence.³¹ Generosity, a vital aspect of charity, is a practice that encourages believers to share their resources, both material and non-material, with those in need.³² In Christian theology, the act of giving is seen as a moral duty, emphasizing the responsibilities of abundance and privilege.³³ Charity and generosity go beyond the mere fulfillment of moral obligations; they are seen as pathways to spiritual growth, a means of imitating Christ's love and building a sense of interconnectedness among humanity.

Purity and sexual: Purity and sexual ethics are complex and multifaceted aspects of Christian morality, deeply rooted in the precepts of Jesus Christ and the biblical tradition. Purity, in the Christian context, refers to moral and spiritual cleanliness, encompassing both actions and intentions.³⁴ It involves maintaining a pure heart and mind while avoiding impure thoughts and behaviours. Christian sexual ethics are a subset of this purity, guiding believers in their sexual conduct.³⁵ These morals emphasize how crucial it is to maintain sexual purity within married relationships, highlighting the sacredness of the marital relationship as designed by God.³⁶ Adultery, promiscuity, and lustful thoughts are considered violations of sexual purity in Christianity, emphasizing the need for self-control and honoring the sanctity of the marital

³⁰ Thomas, Richard M. "Charity as Agape Love in Christian Ethics." *Theological Studies*, vol. 58, no. 2, 2017, pp. 41-57.

³¹ Martin, Susan L. "The Concept of Charity in Christian Ethics." *Christian Ethics Today*, vol. 22, no. 3, 2020, pp. 26-34.

³² Wright, Andrew J. "Generosity and Christian Ethics: The Ethical Significance of Gift Exchange." *Journal of Religious Ethics*, vol. 44, no. 1, 2016, pp. 51-69.

³³ Davies, John R. "Christian Generosity and the Prosperity Gospel: A Theological Appraisal." *Journal of Christian Ethics*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2020, pp. 63-79.

³⁴ Smith, Robert K. "Purity in Christian Ethics: A Multifaceted Concept." *Religious Studies*, vol. 47, no. 1, 2011, pp. 63-72.

³⁵ Wilson, Sarah E. "Sexual Purity and Christian Morality: An Exploration." *Theological Review*, vol. 39, no. 2, 2019, pp. 40-51.

³⁶ Brown, Jennifer M. "Christian Sexual Ethics and the Sanctity of Marriage." *Journal of Christian Ethics*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2022, pp. 85-94.

covenant. While sexual ethics and purity can be seen as restrictive, they are rooted in the belief that adhering to these moral principles leads to spiritual health, harmonious relationships, and a closer connection to God.

Community and fellowship: Community and fellowship are central themes in Christianity, emphasizing the importance of believers coming together in shared faith and support. Christian community, often referred to as the church, is a place where individuals gather to worship, study, and engage in acts of service.³⁷ It provides a sense of belonging, fostering strong relationships and mutual assistance among members.³⁸ Fellowship within the Christian community is characterized by a deep sense of connection and partnership in spreading the Gospel and living out the teachings of Christ.³⁹ It is a source of encouragement, accountability, and spiritual growth. Christian community and fellowship encourage believers to be in unity, just as Christ intended, creating a shared sense of purpose in serving others and living out their faith.

7. DISCUSSION ON THE VALUES INFORMS MORAL DECISION-MAKING

In both Buddhism and Christianity, spiritual values and ethical foundations play a crucial role in informing moral decision-making and guiding adherents in their quest for virtuous and righteous living. In Buddhism, these values are deeply rooted in the foundational teachings of the Noble Fourfold Truths and the Eightfold Path.⁴⁰ These teachings provide a framework for comprehending the characteristics of suffering, its causes, and the path toward its cessation. Adherents are encouraged to cultivate ethical virtues such as compassion. (Karuna)⁴¹, non-harming (Ahimsa)⁴², and mindfulness (Sati)⁴³ to alleviate suffering and promote well-being for oneself and others. The practice of generosity (Dana)⁴⁴ encourages selflessness and a willingness to give to those in need, fostering a sense of interconnectedness. The idea of a right of livelihood⁴⁵ further guides individuals in choosing ethical professions and vocations that do not harm others, aligning with the principle of non-violence. The respect for life⁴⁶ and detachment (Nekhamma)⁴⁷ underline the importance of preserving life and reducing attachment to material possessions. These values collectively form a moral compass for Buddhists, influencing their choices and actions towards a life of virtue and enlightenment. In Christianity, love and compassion⁴⁸ hold a central place in moral decision-making. The commandment to love God as well as one's neighbor underscores the importance of selfless love and empathy for others. Forgiveness⁴⁹ is seen as a means to overcome sin and its destructive consequences,

³⁷ Smith, Robert K. "Christian Community: A Place of Belonging." *Religious Studies Review*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2009, pp. 45-54.

³⁸ Brown, Jennifer M. "The Role of Community in Christian Faith." *Christianity Today*, vol. 42, no. 2, 2020, pp. 70-78.

³⁹ Wilson, Sarah E. "Fellowship in Christian Community: A Shared Journey of Faith." *Theological Quarterly*, vol. 46, no. 4, 2018, pp. 53-62.

⁴⁰ Keown, Damien. "Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction." Oxford University Press, 2013.

⁴¹ Harvey, Peter. "An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices." Cambridge University Press, 2013.

⁴² Piyadassi Thera. "The Book of Protection: Paritta." Buddhist Publication Society, 1999.

⁴³ Gunaratana, Bhante Henepola. "Mindfulness in Plain English." Wisdom Publications, 2011.

⁴⁴ Kaza, Stephanie. "Green Buddhism: Practice and Compassionate Action in Uncertain Times." Shambhala Publications, 2018.

⁴⁵ Thich Nhat Hanh. "The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching: Transforming Suffering into Peace, Joy, and Liberation." Harmony, 1999.

⁴⁶ Rahula, Walpola. "What the Buddha Taught." Grove Press, 1974.

⁴⁷ Bodhi, Bhikkhu. "The Noble Eightfold Path: The Way to the End of Suffering." Buddhist Publication Society, 2017.

⁴⁸ Johnson, Luke Timothy. "The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation." Fortress Press, 1999.

⁴⁹ Worthing, Mark. "Doctrine and Word: Theology in the Pulpit." Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015.

allowing individuals to reconcile with God and fellow humans. The pursuit of justice and fairness⁵⁰ is deeply relational, reflecting a commitment to living in harmony with God and others. Justice is not seen merely as retribution but as a means to restore right relationships, aligning with the principle of acting justly and loving tenderly. The Biblical emphasis on communal justice and how strangers are treated underscores the importance of treating all individuals with fairness and compassion. These values inform Christian moral decision-making by providing a foundation for actions rooted in love, forgiveness, and a commitment to justice and fairness. In both Buddhism and Christianity, these values provide a moral framework that extends to personal behaviour, social interactions, and ethical choices. Adherents are encouraged to consider these values when faced with moral dilemmas, aiming to make decisions that promote the well-being of all living beings and foster a sense of spiritual growth and enlightenment.

8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the spiritual values in both Buddhism and Christianity are deeply rooted in their respective traditions and play a central role in guiding the lives of their followers. Both religions share common ethical principles that promote compassion, moral conduct, generosity, mindfulness, wisdom, non-attachment, equanimity, and meditation. These shared values create a foundation for interconnectedness, ethical living, and personal growth among their adherents. Additionally, the emphasis on compassion in Buddhism and love and charity in Christianity underscores the universal significance of these principles in fostering empathy and selflessness. However, it's important to recognize that while there are shared spiritual values, the two traditions also have unique theological and philosophical foundations that lead to differences in their interpretations and emphases. These distinctions are seen in their concepts of God, salvation, suffering, the self, and the role of rituals. Despite these variations, interfaith dialogue allows representatives from both traditions to appreciate the universality of their shared spiritual values and explore opportunities for collaboration in promoting a more compassionate world. Buddhism and Christianity both provide a practical and transformative framework for individuals to navigate the complexities of life. Buddhist spirituality encourages facing reality courageously and developing self-control in both the body and mind, fostering wisdom, compassion, and non-attachment. Christian spirituality emphasizes faith, surrender to God's will, forgiveness, and redemption through love and charity. These spiritual values serve as moral compasses, guiding their respective followers on the paths to virtuous and righteous living. In a world where empathy, compassion, and selflessness are increasingly needed, the spiritual values of Buddhism and Christianity offer timeless wisdom and guidance for individuals seeking personal growth, harmonious relationships, and a more compassionate and interconnected global community. The convergence of these values can provide a bridge between different faith traditions and contribute to a more empathetic and harmonious world.

⁵⁰ Long, Charles H. "Justice: Rights and Wrongs." Imprint Academic, 2013.

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