

BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

**Doctrinal Notions About War, Violence and Peace:
Buddhist Mahayana and Catholic Christianity**

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this bachelor thesis is the work of my own and has not been published in part or in whole elsewhere. All used literature and other sources are attributed and cited in references.

Bratislava, December 2, 2019

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War, Violence and Peace in Catholic Christianity and Buddhist Mahayana

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Abstract

This research is concerned with looking into doctrinal foundations about war, violence and peace in Buddhist Mahayana and Catholic Christianity. The focus is on finding out what the two religions prescribe in the sphere of those aspects. Moreover, if there is some legitimization or promotion of violence present. Further, it looks closer into how these concepts operate and where similarities and differences arose and why. It shows how the notions of existence, sources of understanding, the morality of acts and leading principles relate to teachings about violence. In both religions, there were concepts at hand that allowed for violence in certain situations without considering it a religious offense. These concepts were quite different and what is more, they were illegitimate on each other's reading. What is considered the correct way of using violence in Catholic Christianity is not proper in Mahayana Buddhism and vice versa. Differences were connected with the structure of the religions in the notions about the reality of the world and of the human being. Mahayana Buddhism lacked a political aspect that was present in Catholic Christianity and thus, it had no conceptions of lawful war or punishment from authority. Also, Mahayana is more pacifistic and in particular cases

absolutely denies the possibility of using the violence. In the end, both religions aimed at the promotion of peace in the community of human beings.

Vojna, násilie a mier v katolíckej teológii a budhistickej mahájáne

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Abstrakt

Predložená bakalárska práca skúma, ako sa katolícka teológia a budhistické hnutie mahájány stavia k fenoménu mieru, násilia a vojny. Naším zámerom je zistiť, čo tieto náboženstvá hovoria o týchto fenoménoch a ako zdôvodňujú alebo odmietajú násilie. Naša práca skúma aj to, ako sa ich interpretácie násilia sformovali a kde a prečo vznikli rozdiely medzi danými dvoma náboženstvami. Venujeme sa skúmaniu pojmov existencie, zdrojov porozumenia, morálnej dimenzie konania a základných princípov, od ktorých sa odvíjajú nauky o legitimizácii násilia. Obidve koncepcie za určitých okolností oprávňujú použitie násilia. Avšak odlišujú sa spôsobom zdôvodnenia a čo je oprávnené v budhizme nie je oprávnené v kresťanstve a naopak. Tento rozdiel je spojený predovšetkým s koncepciou bytia vôbec a bytia človeka zvlášť. V budhistickej náuke mahájáni chýba politický aspekt ktorý, je prítomný v katolíckej doktríne. Náuka mahájáni nepozná pojem spravodlivej vojny alebo trestu udeleného štátnou autoritou. Mahájána je v niektorých prípadoch absolútne vylučuje použité násilia a požaduje mierové riešenia konfliktov. Základným zámerom obidvoch náboženských doktrín je však úsilie o rozširovanie mieru v komunite ľudských bytostí.

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Importance of Religious Discourse

Regardless of various successes of science and its influence over the everyday life of people, religious affiliation is still a big part of the world even to this day. A big part of the world population considers themselves to be part of different religions. Adherents to different faiths are shaped by their belief many times to the point where it influences their actions and morals. In certain situations, cases may occur when violence is tied to a religious belief. Numerous armed conflicts have been waged as a result of religious differences and continue to arise even today. For this reason, it is important to examine how religions operate on their most fundamental level. One has to start from examining doctrines, which set the base for the whole layout of religions moral concepts. Without looking into anything else, the doctrines provide a clear view of what religion prescribes and how it is ought to be practiced. The focus in this work will be on two religions Catholic Christianity and Buddhist Mahayana. These are two distinct religions originating in the different parts of the world. Hence, their conceptions of reality and moral principles are then also different in many aspects. Examining the doctrines of these two religions will then allow for understanding two different ideas about peace, violence and war. After that, it will be visible if these doctrines have any support for violence. The finds will then shed light on at least two possible sources of conflict or peace in the world. Then, by comparison, I can find out which of these religions is more inclined towards allowing or promoting violent actions.

The focus is on rules concerning violent actions and concepts that are forbidding violence and legitimizing it. I will start a very structuralized analysis of the layout of both doctrines starting from the fundamental conceptions about reality. It is necessary to start from there in order to understand how the doctrine about violence is formulated. The main aspects of these will be things like sanctity of life, order and punishment system, and leading principles. Following sources for understanding and laying out who is rightfully able to use any concepts present in doctrines in his/her life. These aspects are in direct relation to things like commandments in Christianity and Precepts in Buddhism, which teach about violence. The goal will be to lay this relation out in order to present how the doctrines operate. Then will follow a comparison of these

aspects the two religions in order to understand where difference and similarities arose. The aim will be strictly laying out the doctrine as it is written, not how it is taken into practice by different groups of people.

In other words, the focus will be looking at what are the doctrinal foundations about war, violence and peace in Buddhist Mahayana and Catholic Christianity. Mainly, if there are concepts in these religions that allow and/or promote violence.

I expect to find such concepts in Catholic Christianity legitimizing violence and war to a certain degree. In the case of Buddhism, I expect an utterly pacifistic approach with denial of any violent thought. These differences will emerge from suppositions about reality in aspects such as the sanctity of life, system and rewards punishment and leading principles. Nevertheless, the supposition is that both religions will be aiming towards the promotion of peace.

In the first part of this work, the doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism and in the second part of Catholic Christianity will be outlined. In both, I will start by examining the first conceptions about reality, moving into other parts of the doctrine connected with aspects about violence and then lay out the concepts directly concerning violent actions. In the third part, it will be shown how these first conceptions about reality are connected with specific aspects about violent actions and how differences between the two religions arose.

Religious Violence in Contemporary Discourse

Both religions have texts that serve as bases or their doctrinal foundations. In Catholic Christianity, the doctrine has a unified structure. The most necessary text to study is Catechism (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2000). This text serves perfectly in order to understand the Catholic religion on its doctrinal bases. It outlines how reality is perceived in the religion as well as concepts about violence, war, and peace. Of course, Christian thought has its fair share of thinkers, of which I will use Thomas Aquinas (Aquinas, 1988). However, with Catechism being unified, commonly accepted, primary source, it is not necessary for this research to use other sources. In terms of Mahayana Buddhism, the main texts that serve as the foundation for the doctrine are Mahayana sutras. The translation of which will be used as a primary source (A. Charles Muller). These are, however, a little problematic because their interpretation differs in different sects, and the texts themselves are hard to understand. Because of this, there is a big number of scholars interpreting these Sutras and constructing a unified doctrine. These are ones concerned with most fundamental structures such as (Boucly, Buddhism : The Complete Guide Of Buddhism: Everything You Need To Know To Practice Buddhist Teachings In Your Everyday Life, 2016). Then going into the nature of sutras, their origins and interpretations (Williams, 2008). As well as authors analyzing particular aspects of the religion (Harvey, 2000). Finally, supplementing the whole thing with other Buddhist thinkers that connect with the topic (Garfield, 2009).

Mahayana Buddhism and Catholic Christianity are religions which arose from very different cultures. However, the nature of today's global world and with Buddhism entering the western sphere more, there is a need to study the relation of these religions. Paul O. Ingram (Ingram, 2005) presents a pretty good overview of how the religious discourse between these two was conducted so far. Ideas of these two religions were already subjected to some dialogue. Ingram (Ingram, 2005) gives a few examples of how such dialogue can be helpful for the theological development of both religions. I will subject the doctrines of these two religions to a comparison mainly in the aspects of violence, war and peace. Works that are focused on violent aspects of these two religions are available as well. Oxford Handbook that is a collection of authors (Juergensmeyer, 2013) focuses on violence in both Buddhism and Christianity;

however, it is concerned with mostly specific cases where the violence occurred in practice. This kind of approach is quite common as D'arcy May (May, 2003) also does similar research but again focuses on specific cases but more recent. This research does not aim to merely describe the violence allowing concepts while looking at the cases where violence was used. The goal is to deconstruct the doctrines of these religions and present how they operate, which means going further than just presenting the violence allowing concepts but showing how they arose from the first suppositions about reality and existence. What is missing in these works is a direct comparison of the two doctrines and showing how the differences in concepts about violence arose. I will make such a comparison in order to gain an understanding of differences in these traditions on the most fundamental level, their doctrines.

Goal and Methodology

This project focuses on the analysis of the religions on the level of their sacred texts, the doctrines. It is not concerned with any result in practice at this point. This will be done by firstly studying the doctrinal notions of both religions individually in order to outline what these religions prescribe in terms of notions about existence and reality, moving to the concepts about violent acts. The aspects which are connected with teachings on violence will be presented, and the connection explained. Then with having this as a base, the two doctrines will be compared. In the same manner, starting from the first suppositions about reality, it will be explained how the differences in these religions arose and in what moments they appear similar. This will be done by studying both primary and secondary sources concerned with the doctrinal notions of the two religions. In the part of this work concerned with Catholic Christianity, the textual bases will be mainly one primary source that is base for the whole doctrinal foundation of the religion. In Buddhist Mahayana, the primary texts will be used as well. However, it will be supplemented it with secondary literature in order to create a more unified structure. So then in the final part, the two unified structures can be compared in order to find differences and similarities in the two teachings.

Doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism

Buddhist Formation of Reality

To understand Buddhist foundations for violent behavior, one must start by examining the fundamental conceptions about the world and existence. The core of Buddhist teachings is an attempt to end constant rebirth in the existing realms and the suffering that is brought with it. There are numerous realms of existence which have their characteristics. Suffering is highest in the lowest realms in which existence consists mainly of sensory perceptions. Realms of existence stretch to the most pleasant, highest realms of existence where beings have god-like attributes (Boucly, 2016, s. 39). However pleasant they may be, all kinds of existence bring some suffering. Even in the highest, most pleasant realms beings are still subject to death - the only way to put an end to it is by achieving Nirvana. Nirvana, also referred to as enlightenment is a state where the endless rebirth cycle is put to an end, and with it, so is the suffering. Achievement of this state is a leading principle for which ethical rules are created and followed. These rules serve as guidance to avoid committing offenses which result in being reborn in the endless cycle. It is important to note that reaching Nirvana in a single life is immensely difficult. However, the closer one gets to Nirvana in a single life, the higher the realm of rebirth can be achieved in the next life. Moreover, the higher the realm is, the smaller the amount of suffering is present, making it easier to achieve enlightenment in the later lives.

Altogether, this world and everything in it is subject to Dharma, a natural law. It is a law similar to gravity rather than an entity with a will that can make decisions. It governs the movements of planets, changing of seasons, and in the moral spectrum is manifested as karma. Karma is a law that orients rebirth cycles of entities, not exclusively human, according to one's actions. It is not, however, a mere reward and punishment system as it is unpredictable in its results. This unpredictability is in the sense that one can expect to receive bad karma for morally wrong actions, but it is impossible to say how much exactly. In other words, it is difficult to foretell what the repercussions in terms of rebirth cycles will be. Accumulation of bad and good karma

is a result of one person's actions and its amount depends on the gravity of the given action. For example, a violent offense, such as murdering another being, usually results in the worst karmic consequences. Whereas speaking badly of someone, a less severe offense, results in a lesser amount of bad karma.

From the perceptions of reality stated above, the Buddhist teachings are formed. The base is also referred to as Buddha's teachings and is common to all branches of Buddhism. Buddhist teachings start with the four Noble truths. First, life is suffering because things such as old age, sickness, poverty exist. The second truth reveals that misery arises from associating bad feelings with these hardships. Additionally, attachment to worldly things may also result in one's distress. However, the third truth suggests that suffering can be put to an end by detachment and withdrawal of these cravings and desires. The last truth insists that there is a correct path leading towards the end of suffering. According to these notions about the existence moral principles of Buddhist thought are shaped. The path towards enlightenment is led by following an eightfold path which consists of: Right Understanding, Right Resolve, Right Speech, Right Action, Right livelihood, Right effort, Right mindfulness, Right Meditation. The first two are of intellectual background, also called wisdom. The third and fourth are concerned with the morality of actions (Boucly, 2016, chapter 4) from which Buddhist precepts are derived. The precept this work will focus on is the precept concerned with killing. In Buddhism, the ethics of restraint and non-harming are a big part of the whole doctrine (Boucly, 2016, s. 114). This precept is arguably the most important because acts such as killing result in the worst karmic consequences. This precept is mostly concerned with the direct act of killing done with a full will. Violence of any sort is against the precepts but does not fully break it. The same goes for accidentally killing another being. The gravity of the act depends on the being that is the victim. The higher the being, the graver the punishment (Harvey, 2000, s. 69). For instance, killing a human being results in a more severe punishment than killing a bug.

Generally, in all of the Buddhist thought, the focus on non-violent approach is vital. In conflictual situations, there must always be an attempt for a solution by peaceful means. By understanding that the cause of all evil and violence is attachment, Buddhists are supposed to act peacefully in any given situation. So, violence allowing conceptions are rare in Buddhist thought, but it does not mean they do not exist. The source of

violence is an attachment to material things and pleasures. These include pleasures of senses, material possessions, and even personal views and opinions. Attachment to such things can cause unwanted emotions like anger and or greed, which could consequently lead to violent actions. In other words, the poor fight for more fortune, the rich and powerful are driven by thirst for more, and ideologies drive people to fight for their truth blindly. The biggest issue is the conception of "I" which presupposes that there is some substantial nature of things. This conception is considered wrong because a big part of Buddhist thought is dedicated to abolishing one's ego. Furthermore, reactions in a violent manner bring more harm to oneself than others. Take for example; a person gets his belonging stolen and is overcome by anger, resulting in him reacting violently towards the offender. In such case, even though reacting violently was caused by an offence it is still a grave break of the moral precept and will result in much negative karma. So, feelings towards an offender should never be that of anger and vengeance. In this way, Buddhism is suggesting very pacifistic approaches to defusing conflicts. It is also noted that this kind of handling of an offense requires a lot of practice and development (Harvey, 2000, s. 239-247).

Mahayana Buddhism

More specifically, I will be looking into a Mahayana Branch of Buddhism, also referred to as a great vehicle. Mahayana is a spiritual movement that is an addition to the original Buddha's teachings. The motivation for this movement was sparked by the elitist position of monks (Williams, 2008, s. 5). Monks were considered superior to lay people because of their decision to leave household life. This superiority meant that they enjoyed certain exclusive religious rights and thus set themselves clearly above the laypeople practicing Buddhism. However, the arguments given by the lay people were that monks only renounce their household life, which does not mean they automatically attain higher spiritual development than people practicing religion at home. So, the simple fact of becoming a monk does not make a person more advanced on the religious path (Williams, 2008, s. 21-27). Mahayana, in response to that, created a framework that was closer to laypeople, namely the concept of Bodhisattva, which is a being that gave up enlightenment for the sake of all living things. By doing so, there was a shift

from supernatural Buddhas into beings that are closer to regular human beings (Harrison, 1987, s. 67-70). The doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism is laid out in texts called Mahayana Sutras, which outline the basic principles of the movement that are commonly shared. However, Mahayana does not operate as a unified religious school. Instead, it is led by sects in different monasteries. A result of this is fragmentation in the different doctrinal aspects. At the time when the movement started, the followers did not call themselves Mahayanist; instead, they characterized themselves by being different from other monks. Additionally, they followed concepts such as Bodhisattva, wisdom, emptiness, and skill in means. (Williams, 2008, s. 1-7).

To properly follow Mahayana Buddhism, one ought to follow Bodhisattva's path. The term Bodhisattva does not inherently suppose any lay or monastic distinctions in itself. Nonetheless, there are certain types of Bodhisattvas, mainly two - "Monastic" Bodhisattva and "householder" or "lay" Bodhisattva. The former is a person who left the household life to practice the religion fully, and the latter is one who practices the religion as a full member of society. Being lay Bodhisattva means that while staying at home, one must practice five precepts that are specific for those who choose to go on a Bodhisattva path while reading sutras and meditating (practicing). These kinds of lay people are part of the world but are not in it because to be attached to worldly things is an obstruction in the attainment of enlightenment. While laypeople can start a path of Bodhisattva, they must always think of leaving household life. Some suggest that laypeople practicing Buddhism in this way can never reach enlightenment. So even if Mahayana Buddhism brings the religion much closer to laypeople, it is evident that there will always be obstructions in this way. This is so precisely because the goal of Buddhism is to get rid of all material and worldly attachments (Harrison, 1987, s. 73-76).

From this, one can see that opposed to the traditional teachings, the focus of Mahayana is not merely on an individual achieving enlightenment but rather on the benefit of the community. It is precisely for this reason that in certain moments, the Mahayana doctrine is more flexible towards the use of violence. Bodhisattva is a being that prolonged his stay in the world for the benefit of all sentient beings. Such an act must

be motivated by strong compassion towards all living beings. Compassion is a fundamental principle in Mahayana Buddhism. It serves as the central factor in shaping Mahayana doctrine and the way the whole movement operates. Nevertheless, compassion will also be a factor in violent conceptions within this movement. Now then, Bodhisattvas act out of compassion towards benefitting the community, but they are only able to do so when they achieve something called wisdom in Mahayana Buddhism. Wisdom is a deep understanding of how things are, and its perfection is essential for any person aspiring to be a Bodhisattva. By perfection of wisdom, one is to realize the real emptiness of all things. This emptiness then means there is no-self that can be benefitted, and it follows that the effort one is to make must be directed towards the whole. So, if a person is to produce much good karma for himself, it does not result in him being reborn in the higher sphere of being. Instead, the good karma produced by one person leads all beings towards enlightenment. The karmic fruitfulness, as this concept is referred to, is shared in this way because no substantial self exists. That is why compassion towards all beings is so crucial in Mahayana. If one genuinely understands by the perfection of wisdom the true nature of things, compassion for others must become the leading principle – that is the goal of Mahayana (Harvey, 2000, s. 124-125). It is important to note here that the perfection of wisdom is not merely some kind of analytical production of learning. It is rather a deeper understanding of the nature of things resulting from spiritual practice. Therefore, it is not a simple thing to achieve, and for someone who has not experienced it, it is impossible to describe. Later in this work, I will elaborate on how significant achievement of this understanding is, in order to use any of the doctrinal conceptions present in Mahayana Buddhism.

Teachings on Violence

Ethics of Bodhisattva are laid out in the Brahma Net (Brahmajala) Sutra, which is the doctrinal foundation for moral rules. It outlines major and minor precepts for Bodhisattva ethics. The first major precept deals with killing. Killing or harming any living thing is strictly forbidden – this includes all forms of life. Such acts also differ in gravity according to the offender's mindset. Violence done for pleasure and benefit is

the worst kind of act that one can commit. In this case, it is considered a major offense that leads to instant failure as a Bodhisattva. Also, Bodhisattva is forbidden to encourage killing, plan killing, praise killing, or enjoy seeing someone perform the act of killing (A. Charles Muller, s. 44). Engagement in military affairs is also forbidden unless it is targeted towards peace negotiations. A Bodhisattva must never participate in negotiations when the target of such acts is raising an army. At first sight, Mahayana precepts may appear even stricter than precepts that originated from the first Buddhist teachings. However, Mahayana is more allowing towards mistakes. In other traditions committing such offense leads to the exclusion from monastic circles. As Harvey explains, "Precept is considered broken when a Bodhisattva is overcome by anger and hurts another in a violent manner and is not willing to take an apology and change his attitude (Harvey, 2000, s. 135)". The critical part here is the attitude one has towards his acts. In Mahayana, the purity can be regained by a specific ritual of repentance. This act of repentance allows the Bodhisattva to start his journey all over with the same possibility for success as a non-offender (Zimmermann, 2006, s. 79-80). So even though one commits an act such a killing, the path of Bodhisattva remains open. However, the karmic consequence will be still present, so the path to enlightenment will be longer. The only way a person can fail as Bodhisattva completely is abandoning the path rather than failing to follow it properly. Rules to stay on the Bodhisattva path are as follows: 1. Never abandon the true dharma (eternal law) 2. Never abandon the aspiration to enlightenment 3. Never refuse to confer Buddhist teaching on someone who sincerely wishes to study them and 4. To benefit sentient beings (Zimmermann, 2006, s. 85). What is important to note here is that if someone keeps deliberately killing and is let us say, retaking vows to become a Bodhisattva to gain some karmic fruitfulness or benefit, it will not work. The right point of view and intention is stressed. It follows then that such a person described previously would suffer even worse consequences than someone who is solely a murderer.

This kind of doctrinal framework created big flexibility regarding the justification of violent acts. The three main concepts at work here are skillful means, emptiness, and compassion. The concept of skillful means is quite a big part of Mahayana Buddhist tradition and is also a reason why some doctrinal aspects are more open towards using violence. The concept of skillful means is outlined in the Lotus sutra (mostly). Skillful

means suggest that the perfection of wisdom allows Bodhisattva to work around the doctrine in given situations. In other words, one can break precepts in a legitimate way when the act is done with compassionate motivation while supposing the Bodhisattva has reached the perfection of his wisdom. It is focused entirely on helping others to find their way to enlightenment. For this sake, Bodhisattva can employ things such as lying or violence when it results in the community's progression towards enlightenment. Regardless of its correctness, there is always the danger of suffering karmic consequences for such acts since, as I have mentioned before, karma cannot be predicted. The scope of this flexibility differs in different sects and texts, and it is difficult to outline the precise laws (Harvey, 2000, pp. 134-135). It is, however, a little ambiguous in terms of who can employ these tactics (MacQueen, 1972, s. 125-128). However, what is apparent is that a considerable degree of wisdom and practice is required. The understanding of the empty nature of things is a part of the justification of violence in Buddhism. This concept might suggest that human beings, as well as acts such as killing, lack this nature as well. Various texts suggest that killing has no nature of this sort and that there is no one to suffer the karmic consequences. According to this reading, killing a person who is slowing down the enlightenment of all living beings can only result in positive outcomes. Some texts go as far as suggesting that there is no karma, so again the diversity of Mahayana Buddhist thought is visible even in some of the most vital aspects of the doctrine (Juergensmeyer, 2013, s. 69).

The concept of skillful means gives rise to the concept referred to as a compassionate killing in Buddhist Mahayana. According to this, teaching a killing can be a legitimate act if it has been done out of compassionate motivation. Conditions for such an act are easy to explain with the example that this text gives. It goes that a Bodhisattva is a captain on a boat sailing with 500 merchants who are also aspiring Bodhisattvas. Of the 500, one is a bandit planning to kill them all. Through a dream, the captain comes to find out about this plot. The captain realizes that if he lets the bandit kill the merchants, the bandit will suffer a vast number of rebirths in hell for such an act. However, if he informs the merchants, and they all participate in the act of killing him, all of them will delay their path and suffer the karmic consequences. So, by skillful means, the captain decides to kill the bandit even though he knows it will cause him many rebirths in the lower realms. As a result, since the act was done with the right intention to prevent

others from suffering, with compassionate motivating and with the full knowledge of karmic consequence, the time spent in the lower realms is much shorter. The conditions for a killing to be regarded as compassionate is as follows: The act of killing can be legitimate if it is motivated by compassion, meaning that an actor has in mind the well-being of those he protects by his act as well as the well-being of the offender he is going to kill. The protection works both ways because victims are being saved from harm and the offender from bad karmic consequences. Another point is that the action must always produce more good than bad as a result. So, such a framework is only deployable in rare cases where a grave, violent act is saving a significant amount of beings and is more beneficial for the whole. The thing that is important to keep in mind is that any violent act like killing will always result in bad karmic consequences for the killer, even if all the conditions for compassionate killing are met. The offender must be fully prepared to face these consequences and is to never expect gain from it, or it will be even worse. The text suggests then that if a violent act is done in this way, it is legitimate in the Mahayana concept of compassionate killing and will result in less grave consequences. In terms of war, it is not as clear because in Buddhism being a leader of a political entity is never seen as something to be desired. Nevertheless, reasons for waging war are similar motivations and must always act as protection of one's subjects out of compassion. (Harvey, 2000, s. 135-137). Justification of violent acts in this way is employable in terms of protecting the Buddhist community and teachings as well. Violence may be necessary to use against oppression and the slandering of the Buddhist teachings. This kind of action justified is on the basis that such offenders are directly producing enormously bad karma by slandering the Buddhist teachings. So then from compassionate motivation, necessary violent acts can be carried out in order to protect Buddhist teachings and liberate the offenders. Again, the problem with describing a particular set of rules for Mahayana Buddhism is its secular nature. Each sect has its addition to the doctrine. Some texts condemn killing and violence absolutely, and some go as far as to suggest that people practicing religions that slander Buddhism are less grave to kill than ants. The latter concept is rather rare in Mahayana texts and is seen as an attempt to justify the violence done by particular sects.

Some Mahayana Thinkers

Shantideva was a Buddhist monk and a scholar living in the eighth century. He taught just how vital the perfection of wisdom is in order to understand and employ the Mahayana concepts. Perfecting wisdom means having the correct knowledge regarding the nature of things, their inherent emptiness, and also having the right mindset even when acting out of compassion. He underlines that if someone is acting solely out of the benefit for others without the right state of mind, such a person can still cause harm to himself as well as others. The mind must always focus on acting with the right motivation and the right intention. If that is not so, there is always a chance that something that is meant to help others will result in the wrong action. So firstly, one ought to realize the inherent emptiness of things in order to free oneself from suffering and attachment (causes for violent actions). Then the cultivation of mindfulness—constant focus on one's actions—is required. With that, a person is always able to act out of the right motivations and right intentions. These then relate to the concept of skillful means I have described earlier. It is crucial to underline that such concepts that allow breaking the doctrine and bending it towards justification of violence is not a simple everyday task. It requires a deep understanding and practice for it to be put in place, just as Shantideva describes (Garfield, 2009, s. 388-391).

Won Hyo, another important figure in Buddhist thought, goes as far as making an argument that precepts according to the basic teachings of Mahayana lack substantial value and are empty themselves. The path of Bodhisattva can vary in its nature if it does not lack correctness. By this, he opposes the view that precept that forbids killing if its broken can be repented by an acknowledgment of fault and effort for betterment. He suggests that the violation of a precept as an ethical convention has an empty nature—same as anything else in the Mahayana framework. According to Won Hyo's view, the act of breaking precepts over and over again in this way will have negative consequences in the realm of karmic punishments. In this way again, one can see how, in Mahayana Buddhism, it is difficult to outline a set of ethical rules which would be common for everybody (Garfield, 2009).

Doctrine of Catholic Christianity

Establishment of the Unified Doctrine

The Catechism of Catholic Christianity suggests that humans are religious beings. Throughout history, it was common to find some attempts for religious expression everywhere. However, according to the framework of Catholicism, not every religious expression is a correct one. Those assertions about the reality that do not conclude the existence of eternal God are subject to error. Sources for these misconceptions may be clinginess to the worldly good or religious ignorance. (Catholic Church, 2000, p. 14). Potential for a correct understanding of the world is inherently present in human beings. As stated in Catechism, "Moral conscience, sense of good and bad, infinite want of the eternal and happiness make a man question himself about God. All these are signs of the eternal spiritual soul". (Catholic Church, 2000, p. 15) It follows that something eternal as the soul is not man's creation nor has its end in man. Then, it must be the work of something that is eternal and exists because of itself, something as such is only God. This inherent nature of understanding seems like it is an essential part of the religion as it describes a proper way to believe. A person must have this kind of insight in order to be able to use concepts presented in doctrines truly. Merely reading the concepts and believing in God is not enough.

When it comes to Catholic doctrine, it has a very unified nature, which is shared with all the followers of the Catholic Christian Church. Its formation started with the Apostles, the first people to interpret the word of God, who then entrusted this matter to the church. The church includes all people from laity to clergy who are united by faith. The community of people who are faithful in this way cannot fail in establishing proper doctrine. The Magisterium of the church is an entity that is responsible for establishing dogmas. The logic of establishing doctrine in Catholic Christianity is as follows. First, as mentioned before, comes the word of God, which was interpreted by the Apostles as the earliest adherent. From these than sprung sacred traditions and sacred scriptures. All the faithful are responsible for reading and expanding on these.

Then, according to the hierarchical nature of the religion, the decision-making moves to the Magisterium, which is responsible for establishing commonly accepted doctrines. It is necessary to note that the Magisterium is not rulers of the doctrines. Instead, they are just servants of God who interpret on Earth.

Notions About Existence

In Catholic Christianity, human beings are considered children of God. Christ's sacrifice enabled humans to partake in the divine nature of God. Divinity, meaning an ideal or perfection one can only try to strive towards, is something ascribed to God. One can move towards divinity by living a proper life and performing proper actions. So, doing the right actions means acting towards God. This kind of movement must be achieved by individual effort, which is directed by the free will of a human being. Human beings are the only beings that God created with his image in mind, giving them an eternal soul with the capacity to freely move towards the divine. Humans are the only beings that exist for themselves and can attain what is called beatitude. Beatitude is eternal life, which is the reward for leading a good life in accordance with God. So, human beings in the Catholic Christian framework are considered superior above all other forms of life because they possess eternal souls and are capable of achieving blessedness. Nonetheless, a part of inherent human nature is the opposite of this good, which is original sin. Christianity is concerned with antipodes that are the center for decision making and evaluating the morality of actions. These are good and evil, freedom and slavery. Doing the latter is considered sinning, which is the equivalent of moving away from God. Human beings have free will in the sense that each person has the potential for freedom meaning movement towards God. However, when one fails to focus his free will on God, such an individual may become a slave to sin. Meaning, acting right is to make use of the potential that each person has, and sinning is falling victim to the slavery of sin. Freedom in choosing an action can only be present if the action is done voluntary and with knowledge. Responsibility for evil actions can be nullified if the action was done involuntarily or by force. When one is forced to lie by a threat of violence, his responsibility for the action is nullified. It is because human life is sacred, and the protection of it is crucial. The same goes for an evil action done from ignorance.

One is only able to exercise his potential for freedom when proper knowledge of right and wrong is achieved. It may seem that if the capability of understanding is inherent, then evil actions cannot be done without knowledge—it must only be done by choosing to ignore this capability. Still, a person guided by moral conscience towards God can err if this understanding is not cultivated by education from the Church or other authorities. (Catholic Church, 2000, pp. 421-431)

An act of sin is something contrary to the reason and love for God. The source for sin is an attachment to goods, and such passions can overcome a person who becomes a slave to sin. It is a desire contrary to freedom. Sins differ in their gravity from venial to mortal sins. The judgment of how grave the sin is relies on its object or what virtue it offends. Also, whether they are offenses against a neighbor, God, or oneself. A venial sin is an offense that is lighter such as greed. Such offense harms the charity in the heart of a person but does not destroy it completely. However, sin is mortal when the object of an act is in direct opposition to good. Moreover, such an act must be done with full knowledge and consent. Mortal objects are specified in the Ten Commandments, doing the opposite of what those Commandments prescribe with deliberation is automatically a grave sin. Now, if an offender who has committed mortal sin does not repent and asks for God's mercy, he will be excluded from God's kingdom eternally. So, forgiveness may be gained even for mortal offenses such as deliberately killing a person if the right mindset and effort are made (Catholic Church, 2000, pp. 452-458).

Different criteria exist regarding judging the morality of human acts. Those consist of intentions in mind, circumstances present, and the object of the act. The object is some good chosen, for example, helping a person in need. The intention is an individually chosen end towards which such action is aspiring. So, while the object is helping a person in need, the intention might be motivated by the love of God. One object of good can be chosen with different intentions in mind. When a good object is chosen like helping one in need, but the intention is gaining the recognition of others, the moral value of such action is much lesser. On the other hand, when the intention is love for God, and the object chosen is killing someone, it is not morally right action. The end does not justify the means in this way. This moment seems very important in Catholic Christianity since it diminishes any justification for persecution and violence done in the name of God. The circumstances can increase or diminish the moral value of an act

as well as responsibility for that act. So, morally right acts presuppose good objects, intentions, and circumstances simultaneously (Catholic Church, 2000, pp. 433-435).

The guidance towards such actions are inherent to every human being, this being a moral conscience. It is an inner voice that judges all actions to be good or evil and guides one towards what is right. When one does evil, the moral conscience, an ever-present witness, makes humans feel responsible for their acts. For moral conscience to guide a person more effectively, certain education and knowledge must be achieved. This cultivation is achieved by listening to the inner law of reason along with authorities, like the church. If the moral conscience is not habituated in this way, it is possible to stray from good and fall victim to the slavery of the sin. (Catholic Church, 2000, pp. 438-442)

To act in accordance with what is right, towards God, one must cultivate particular virtues in order to be successful. These are human virtues, which are personality traits achieved by individual effort and education. Another type of virtue is theological, which proceeds from human participation in divine nature. The former consists first of prudence, which means acting in accordance with the reason towards good. Then, justice, which means acting fairly towards all human beings. Next fortitude, which enables a person to act rightly even in tough situations faced by things such as fear. Finally, temperance, a virtue guiding a person to a moderate life with control over their appetites. The latter consists of faith, hope, and charity. From these three, charity is the most important as it ties together all of what is said above. It is the performance of all the Commandments by listening to our reason and moral conscience and performing all the virtues properly. It is the harmony of everything put together in order to strive towards the good, which is God. And most importantly, the fulfillment of all of this for the sake of good and the love of God. Charity is the essential guiding principle for the doctrine on violence as one of its fruits is peace, making it the direct opposition of violence and war (Catholic Church, 2000, pp. 443-450).

Teachings on Violence

Peace is described in Catechism as tranquility of order. That means not only peace as an absence of war, but also a just life lived by a community of people. Life in just

community includes the absence of corruption, stealing, and misconduct, with insurance of free communication and respect for dignity (Catholic Church, 2000, p. 555). Such tranquility of order is then the prosperity and the proper function of Charity. If it were the case that every person directed himself towards the proper functioning of charity, the peace would be attained automatically. Those who safeguard peace and work towards charity are the ones who understand the dangers and evilness of violence. Charity is then the most important leading principle in the formation of the doctrinal foundation on violence.

When It comes to safeguarding peace, the most important commandment to follow is the fifth one. The commandment says: "you shall not kill." Intentional homicide is a grave sin because it destroys God's creation, the human life that has been chosen above all to participate in divine nature. Thus, breaking the fifth commandment has the most significant consequences to the stability and functioning of charity. The same goes for indirect killing or exposing someone to mortal danger. Intentional killing is never without punishment and never legitimate. To safeguard peace on earth, one must avoid murderous anger no matter what. A person must never have the desire to hurt or kill the other even if the other is subject to punishment. One can desire justice and restitution from the offender, but hatred and desire of injury other than that is a sin and goes against charity. When injured, the want for vengeance must never turn into murderous anger, or for that matter, the intention to violate the offender in any way. Offenders must always be forgiven, feeling ill anger towards them is against charity (Catholic Church, 2000, pp. 554-555).

However, there is a way in which using violence against an offender can be legitimate. It is a concept called legitimate self-defense. This part of the doctrine teaches that a person can resort to violent acts in order to preserve one's life. Loving oneself is a fundamental part of Christian morality. It is not only allowed but also obligatory to resort to violence in order to preserve one's life, again because of the sanctity of human life. Now, if violence is used in order to defend oneself, the unwanted result might be killing of the offender. This situation can occur when the force needed to restrain the offender was so high that the killing of such a person was the only way of restraint. Important to note here that killing must only be a result of self-defense never the intention. Only as much violence to restrain shall be used, everything above that is not

legitimate. If someone does kill the offender with the sole reason of protecting his life, he is not guilty of murder (Catholic Church, 2000, p. 545).

A similar case can be said about the protection of the common good. The protectors of common good have a right to use arms against offenders in the same way as an individual. The force must be as little as required. Using more force would turn the protectors of the common good into offenders of other. The same goes for using authority within the state. The authority can punish all the threats to peace and charity. This punishment must be done in the way that punishment is just, and the result will be an improvement of the community. If the punishment is done unjustly, its result can be destructive. The use of the death penalty may be resorted to if the execution of the offender is necessary. However, such case is rare and must be avoided at all costs. An offender must be allowed for the redemption unless he is a grave danger to the community without a way of improvement (Catholic Church, 2000, pp. 545-546).

Now the next big topic is war, a state where everything is in the exact opposite of charity. Every government is obliged to make an effort to avoid war. If a situation is so grave that to war must be waged, it may be done in a lawful self-defense manner. This concept is also called a Just-war doctrine. It has a couple of points that need to be met for a war to be considered just (Catholic Church, 2000, p. 555). Firstly, the aggressor must inflict damage that is must be big enough, lasting, and it cannot be uncertain. Meaning a nation must not wage war against a nation that can potentially hurt them. Secondly, other means of making peace must have been ineffective before starting a war. Since starting a just war is solely to ensure peace, things like peaceful negotiation must be attempted first. Then, the war must be winnable. Sending soldiers into certain death is indirect murder. The final condition is that the war must not bring more evil than before. This a critical condition to consider with the existence of modern weapons. The common good must evaluate these conditions. Those who refuse to bear arms must not be forced to do so but are obliged to help the community in other ways. The soldiers who are willing to fight must do so in a certain way in order for their work to be honorable.

Even during a war, certain moral obligations must be in place because war is only waged to ensure peace and stability. Firstly, wounded soldiers, prisoners, and civilians

must be treated humanely. Then actions that would cause the crime against nations are forbidden. Even if a nation is attacked, it is still not allowed to perform genocide against an aggressor, and soldiers that are carrying out such an order are guilty too. Chemical, biological, atomic weapons and others that can destroy whole cities are strictly forbidden and are an offense against God and men. Also, things such as arms race, production and sale of arms are contrary to the goal of war and communities, which are ensuring peace. Such actions only provide more opportunities for conflict.

It is worth mentioning that there have been moments in history where the Catholic church used doctrine for violent purposes. These were the crusades done in 1095-1291, which were justified on religious grounds. The reason was reclaiming Jerusalem and Christ's tomb back to Christianity. It was war led against Muslims who were according to words of Pope Urban the Second "race alienated from god, which has neither directed its heart nor entrusted its spirit to god" (Juergensmeyer, 2013, p. 135). Even if the grounds were religious, the purpose of the war was political. Another kind of violent behavior justified on religious terms was an inquisition. People considered heretics or participating in any such activity were persecuted as it was seen as a denial of articles of faith. However, the reason behind it was also to a big degree political (Juergensmeyer, 2013, pp. 136-137). So historically, there were cases where Christian doctrine was used to justify violent behavior. However, such abuse seems to be in opposition to what the doctrine prescribes.

Thomas Aquinas and His Additions to Thought About Violence

Because of the size of this research, I cannot go too deep into other contributors of Christian thought. However, as one example, I will look into the work of Thomas Aquinas, where he introduces a few more notions on violent behavior in Catholic Christianity. In terms of killing an innocent man, it may seem that killing a sinner is worse than an innocent. The reason being that death for a sinner means eternity in hell, and for the innocent, it is eternal beatitude in heaven. According to this argument, more damage is done when a sinner is killed. However, according to the author, killing an innocent person is always worse. It is against charity because such a person acts in

accordance with charity and thus helps preserve it. Then, it is against the common good because an innocent man performs his role in the common good properly and thus is helping to advance it. Lastly, it is against justice because innocent person does not deserve death.

Nevertheless, there may be a case where an innocent person is killed, and those who played a direct part in this act not guilty of sin. This is the case when a judge sends an innocent person to death by execution according to false witnesses. The one responsible for the innocent's death is the false witness and not the judge or executioner. Judge is responsible for carefully examining a witness if given witness seems suspicious, but other than that judge is just performing his role in common good by giving judgment according to law. The same goes for the person doing the execution. The executioner must listen to orders of his superior and is not liable to question his decision (Aquinas, 1988, pp. 223-225).

Next, Aquinas examines the concept of killing by chance. For an act to be sin in must be voluntary meaning done with full consent and knowledge. Chance is something that is not voluntary, so there might be a case where the act of killing by chance is not a sin. In that kind of situation, two conditions must be present. A person killing someone by chance must be occupied by lawful thing and do this with care. If these two conditions are met, and the result of such an act is killing someone, the doer is not guilty of sin. These two conceptions help even further to showcase how vital consent and knowledge in sinning. Only with full consent and knowledge the sin has truly evil character opposing God and charity (Aquinas, 1988, pp. 227-228).

Another subject that Aquinas famously touches on is the conception of lawful war. In this view, the legitimacy of lawful war is specified in three conditions. Firstly, a proper authority, then just cause and lastly right intention. Proper authority is that which has been chosen by people to protect the common good. One to wage war can never be a private individual or group seeking some benefits from the conflict. When an offender that attacked common good, did damage that he is unwilling to fix or stole something with no intention of repaying and continues to be a threat to that common good war can be justly waged. For a cause to be just the damage must always be significant enough to start a war. Finally, war must always be waged to safeguard peace and punish

offenders. Even if war is started by proper authority, with a just cause, but the intention is seeking benefit or revenge, the war is not considered lawful. All three conditions must be met (Aquinas, 1988, pp. 220-222).

Another source of violent behavior examined by the author is sedition. Sedition in proper common good where charity is flourishing is always a sin. Because such an act is meant to stir people against authority and the current system, so in a proper common good, it follows that it pushes people against charity. However, there is a case where sedition is not a sin. If a tyrannical order is in place, the authority is seeking only the benefits of individual, not prosperity of charity. In this case, performing sedition is not a sin, but the result of a protest must always be better than not protesting. If the protest was obviously unwinnable, and the result would be more death and despair than before, it is indeed a sin to perform sedition (Aquinas, 1988, pp. 231-232).

Contrast of Teaching on Violence in Buddhist Mahayana and Catholic Christianity

Conceptions of Reality

If we subject doctrines of these two religions to comparison, it is possible to see how differences in violence-allowing concepts arose from the first conceptions about reality. First important moment is human life and its relation to the whole of existence. In Christianity, the world and everything in it is created by God, eternal and omnipotent entity that has its own will, that chose to create human beings to partake in his divine nature. God is also governor of the world and is the judge for rewards and punishments for human beings. Only two options are left after one's dead, hell that is eternal suffering or heaven that is an eternal blessing. In Buddhism, one is dealing with an impersonal kind of natural law Dharma that orders the world and distributes rewards and punishments through karma. Human beings in the Buddhist scheme are just participators in existence along with other beings and are reborn to different spheres of existence according to their deeds. The result of these differences are two distinct views about human life in the sphere of the sanctity of life. In Buddhism, individual life is not that important since a person is always subject to a rebirth cycle until one reaches enlightenment. Human existence is also not the highest form possible and does not presuppose any superiority over other forms of life. In Christianity, there is only a single life for each person that is going to determine the person's after-life. Human beings are created in God's image and possess an eternal soul, which makes them superior to all other life. There are then implications arising from these concepts that determine different doctrinal structures. The obligation to preserve one's life is a big factor in the operation of legitimate self-defense teaching. The sanctity of a single human life creates this obligation in Christianity.

On the contrary, in Buddhism, since one has an infinite amount of tries to reach enlightenment, such self-defense is not promoted. In the ethics of a Bodhisattva are deeply rooted concepts of restraining from violent actions even in self-defense. At this point, Buddhism seems to be fundamentally much less open to any use of violent than

Christianity. However, this does not imply that Christianity is more violent in a strict sense because it is always working with the proposition that only as much violence must be used in order to restrain an offender. Buddhism seems at this point almost radically pacifistic, where no violent action is allowed even towards a violent offender.

Internal and External Sources of Understanding

After describing reality in a certain way, in the next part, the formations of teachings must be considered. In other words, how the specific doctrines came to be straying out of these conceptions of reality. In Buddhist thought, the main source is the figure of Buddha, who truly understands the works of dharma and realizes the way to enlightenment. Buddha then continues to spread his teachings, and the religion gains more disciples. Mahayana Buddhism is an addition to Buddha's teachings as a reaction to a particular problem that occurred in monastic circles during its first development. For a person to discover the Buddhist path, some interaction with the teachings from outside sources seems to be necessary. In Christianity, the sources for the understanding of the true nature of things is not external at first. According to the Christian framework, humans have an inherent capacity for discovering God by the function of moral conscious. A person questioning himself about the world must, by introspection, necessarily arrive at the conclusion that God exists. So, after the internal discovery of God person must cultivate the external part of understanding by cultivating human and theological virtues. These require both individual effort and guidance from authority. The internal part of understanding seems to come after the external in Buddhism. After discovering Buddha's teachings externally, one must follow the eightfold path with a lot of practice trough things such as meditation in order to cultivate the internal part. What seems to be the case is that the framework of both of these religions suggests that there are two things necessary to practice them truly. That is both the external part, which is guidance from other authorities and texts and the internal part, which is an individual effort. The difference here is that in Catholicism, the compass leading towards understanding is inherently present, and in Buddhism, this understanding though present in everyone, must be first stimulated by some external interaction. It is

important to mention that moral conscience can still fail to guide a person if it is not cultivated by proper learning.

This difference comes out of the conceptions of guiding principles. Dharma in Buddhism is an impersonal natural law that has no will; thus, human beings are not pushed towards its discovery. Moreover, the external part of understanding can come first because a person has numerous lives in order to find the proper way. In Catholic Christianity, there is a personal God with a will, who created human beings specifically to partake in the divine nature, plus their tries are limited to one. So then, necessarily, the understanding must be inherently present. Now regardless of which comes first, both external and internal must be present for a person to employ doctrines, like those on violent actions, in practical life. In Christianity, it is a faith in the proper sense, and in Mahayana, it is something called wisdom. If only the external is present, meaning a person knows doctrinal concepts like compassionate killing or legitimate self-defense, such a person cannot employ these concepts truly. Not unless the proper wisdom is achieved or is faithful in a proper sense. Without this understanding, one risks that violence will result in illicit consequences. This framework illustrates that doctrinal teaching on violence can only be employed with a deep source of understanding and practice in both religions. Merely knowing what the doctrines prescribe is not enough.

It is because of a lack of this kind of cultivation and understanding that people resort to violence. One aspect that Catholic Christianity and Mahayana Buddhism share in this sphere is that the cause of violence is an attachment to worldly goods and passions. Both religions see dependence on things like pleasure, wealth, and other of this sort as an obstacle in the spiritual progression of a person. Nonetheless, the differences come to rise as one looks deeper into the thought of both religions. In Christianity, all people are free in order to strive towards good, which is then also towards God. Acts, contrary to good, are contrary to freedom, and such a person becomes a slave to the sin. So, then a person performing violent action is failing to use the inherent potential for understanding given by God and thus becomes enslaved to sin. In Mahayana, the source of attachment is a lack of understanding of the empty nature of things. In reality, there is no self, no "I" that can benefit from the gain of worldly goods or pleasures. In other words, if a person performs a violent action for a gain of some goods, all it brings is much bad karma. This karma then transfers to existence as a whole, so in the end, no

one benefits in such a case. The conception of emptiness is a much broader concept that can be realized only through a considerable amount of practice, and it is not necessary to go into more details now. Still, from this, we can see that in both religions, the attachment to worldly goods is a source of violence. However, in Buddhism, it sprains from lack of practice and development of the understanding of reality, while in Christianity, it is not using the potential for freedom and moving away from god.

Peace and Violence

Before examining the teachings about violence, it is necessary to outline what peace means in the sphere of these religions. In Christian thought, peace means tranquility of order where charity is flourishing. Acts done in accordance with charity are done from free will towards God and to benefit all human beings. So, a peaceful community will be such where every person acts in line with charity. In Mahayana, peace is tied closely to pacifism, abstaining from any involvement in violence. This is tied with the benefit of the community, with compassion serving as a leading principle. However, exceptions, where compassionate motivation goes against abstaining from violence, are present. The same goes for Christianity, where sometimes violence is necessary for the protection of charity.

Now to examine particular teachings about violence. Rules about violence and killing are outlined in the Brahma Net Sutra of Mahayana. In this part of Buddhist Mahayana doctrine are outlined ethic of Bodhisattvas specified into precepts. The precept insists that Bodhisattva is strictly forbidden to kill or harm any living creature. Worst kind of offence of this sort is when it is done with full will and/or for pleasure. Moreover, a person on a Bodhisattva path is forbidden in participating in planning of killing, witnessing killing, enjoying or praising killing. Also taking part in a diplomatic negotiation that lead to things like raising armies is not allowed as well.

The precepts in Buddhism are similar to commandments in Christianity. The fifth commandment forbids people from killing an innocent human being intentionally. Breaking this commandment is in biggest opposition to charity because such act directly destroys what is created by God to take part in divine nature. The same case is with

Buddhism, act of killing is producing the biggest amount of bad karma, and hence is in biggest opposition to peace. In addition, in Christianity indirect killing and exposition of a person to mortal danger is also breaking the commandment. So, taking part in killing in anyway is seen as the worst act that person can perform in both religions. Now it is also case in Christianity as it is in Buddhism, that seeking retribution by act of violence inspired by hate is seen as offence. The motivation is different, in Buddhism it is being aware of emptiness of things, knowing that taking revenge only results in the whole community receiving bad karma. In Christianity having feelings of murderous anger towards offender is against working of charity. Both religions in this sense are against violence and share the view that harming human beings has the worst consequences. The logic behind it is different but promotion of peace is key factor. One big difference is that in Catholicism person that has been injured has right to seek justice and protection from the offender. This is a part when the doctrine starts being tied with political system. In Buddhism this aspect is not present because to practice it most effectively one has to leave a life of society in order to get rid of attachment. So, in terms if seeking revenge, Christianity differs from Buddhism in a way that person is not only to forgive the offender but can have means into seeking justice by law. This political aspect will then result in couple of differences in the teachings about protection a common good, waging wars, and violence as punishment.

In Catholic Christianity, there is a concept that suggests that if violent action is not done voluntary or with full understanding, responsibility for it can be nullified. In Buddhist Mahayana, this is not a case because karma, contrary to God, is an impersonal reward and punishment system that works naturally and has no will. In this way, Buddhist doctrine is suggesting again a radical pacifistic view where a person must refrain from violence even at the threat of death. In the Christian framework, a person faced with such a threat is allowed to perform the forced action. It is because of the sanctity of human life with which comes obligation to protect it. Moreover, God, with possession of a personal will, can judge the actions of a person as not voluntary and spare judgment. In the case of Buddhism, the bad karma is produced by any wrong action, regardless if it was voluntary or not. Refraining from the action even with the risk of losing life will produce less bad karma for the whole than responding to violence

by violence. So again, in this part, Buddhism seems radically oriented into producing as little violence as possible.

Next, I will look at the concepts of repentance. They are, to some degree, present in both religions. The Bodhisattva precept is broken when he is overcome by anger and violently hurts another. There is always a chance for regaining purity by taking up an apologetic attitude and participating in a particular ritual. No matter how bad the offense is, there is always a chance of returning to the Bodhisattva path. However, karmic consequences will always be present. In Catholicism, some sins/offenses are of lesser gravity and do not destroy the internal charity of a person. However, the sins that are called mortal sins cause absolute destruction of this charity, acts like killing. Such acts lead to exclusion from God's kingdom unless a person subjects himself to repentance and asks God for forgiveness. The difference in the doctrines again arises from basic assumptions about reality. In the case of Mahayana Buddhism, one can always return to the path, but it will be necessarily longer because karma will ascribe consequences and will result in the offender being reborn in a lower realm. However, working with the assumption that one possesses more than one chance to be born, there is no reason for giving up the path. In Catholic Christianity, God can choose to forgive a person on the merit of the apology. However, in both these cases, a person must take an apologetic attitude very honestly, or forgiveness will not be granted. Both God and karma are, in this sense, all-seeing and cannot be fooled with an insincere apology.

Concerning concepts that, on the contrary, allow for the violence in these two main ideas in the two religions, those are Compassionate killing in Mahayana Buddhism and Legitimate self-defense in Catholic Christianity. Both of them seem to be motivated by the well-being of the community in general, but in different ways. Legitimate self-defense is based on the sanctity of human life and personal soul. Love for oneself and preservation of one's life are of great importance in shaping this aspect of the doctrine. Since all human beings are chosen by God to take part in his divine nature and possess eternal soul, the protection of one's own life from violent offenders even by violent response is in accordance with charity. So, putting those two together, a person with an eternal soul taking a proper part in divine nature, in accordance with charity, is obliged to protect oneself. It is more beneficial for the prosperity of charity that an individual contributing to it stays alive than an offender destroying it. Even if some violence is

needed in order to restrain the offender. However, the intention of this act must always be the preservation of life and protection of charity, and only as much violence needed to restrain the offender used. If the amount of force needed to restrain the offender is so high that it results in death, this is not a murder. It is not a break of the fifth commandment and is not against charity. In Mahayana, where entities lack this eternal soul and are empty of inherent nature, such a concept does not stand. A person in the Buddhist framework should refrain from any violent response and even more from killing the offender. If a situation occurred that a person would protect himself from the violent offender by having to kill him, even with the intention of self-preservation, it would produce double the bad karma. It is because Mahayana's framework is in direct opposition with the two described principles of Christianity. Human beings lack the eternal soul and are not created above other beings, so self-preservation despite others is not legitimate. And then protection from violence by violence is against the benefit of community because it creates more bad karma than pacifistic response.

Regardless, there is in the doctrine of Mahayana concept allowing for violent actions that is not in line with Catholicism. The motivation for allowing Bodhisattvas to break doctrine is getting as many people close to enlightenment as possible. This focus on community is a decisive factor behind the concept called skillful means. These skillful means are that a person who has achieved a high level of perfection of his wisdom can break precepts when led by compassionate motivation. From this arises a concept in Buddhist Mahayana called compassionate killing. One performing this act must have in mind both the well-being of the victims as well as the well-being of the offender. Also, the act of killing must produce much more good than bad karma. So, the offender must be causing so much harm that the killing of this person will result in saving many beings. If killing is done in this way, it is in Mahayana Buddhism considered of little to no karmic consequences. In Catholic Christianity, this kind of reasoning is not legitimate. With the object of this act being the killing of a person, it must necessarily be an evil act. Just the intention of the benefit of a community does not give it enough grounds to be a proper act. In Christianity, both the intention and object of an act must be good in order for an act to be morally right. Even if a person knew that someone is harming or is about to harm a large number of people, one cannot decide to kill such a person to preserve charity. Arguably such an act could be legitimate if a person did it

with the object of helping people from harm, the intention of preservation of charity, and the circumstances were such that he must restrain the offender himself. Only in this case of an object, intention, and circumstances as such would then killing of offender resulting from the attempt to restrain him be legitimate on Catholic reading.

Political Aspect

The last point opens up a sphere that is very different in the two religions, and that is their political affiliation. As opposed to Christianity, Buddhism has a very pronounced refusal of any positions of leadership. Also, religious life in monastic circles is as far from any connection to politics as possible. As a result, there is no mirroring concept to just war concept in Catholicism. War is in Mahayana cause for the biggest amount of bad karmic consequences, and that is in absolute opposite of any benefit of the community. Christianity has this concept in place as it was and is not only a religion but a political entity with some amount of influence. Understandably, such a concept arose somewhere within the doctrine as the Catholic church needed to act as a common good in response to threats. By this, I want to illustrate that just war concept does not necessarily mean that the doctrine of Catholic Christianity is built towards the promotion of conflict. It is instead that such a concept is more likely to be needed if religion is operating as a political entity. Buddhism is much more secular and placed out of the spheres of everyday life. Moreover, it lacks the inner structure of authority; that is why it is not present in external affairs as well. This kind of political affiliation opens up the possibility of protection by authorities and of legitimate punishment towards offenders in Christianity. Again, as this aspect is missing in Buddhism completely, it is impossible to contrast it.

Findings

This research was aimed to analyze doctrinal aspects of Mahayana Buddhism and Catholic Christianity regarding violence, war, and peace. The goal was to look for any concepts that might lead to legitimizing violence of any sort. The expectations were to find such concepts mainly in Catholic Christianity while supposing that Mahayana Buddhism will be practically spotless of any violence-allowing concepts. The first part of this project was focused on outlining the doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism. Mahayana doctrine is outlined in the texts called sutras, which are more poetry and discourses rather than structurally written rules. This, together with the secular and fragmented nature of the ideas, resulted in the need to study mainly secondary texts.

Nevertheless, it was possible to pinpoint some unified structure and outline the Mahayana doctrinal framework. There was one concept of the religion that was opposite to what seemed to be the case beforehand. There was an aspect where, under certain circumstances, violence is legitimized. This aspect has challenged my view of perceiving Mahayana Buddhism as a strictly pacifistic religion. In the next part, the focus was on Catholic Christianity, where the doctrine has a unified structure and is outlined in a single, very dense text. Concerning the way the religion operated in history, it seemed that there would be some legitimization of the use of violence. This concept was present as well on the individual level, as on the level of the Christian community as a political entity. This proved what I had expected in terms of such an idea being part of the Catholic framework. However, these concepts were not promoting violence in any way. Instead, it focused on using as little violence as possible to preserve peace. Now in the final part, the doctrinal notions, which were outlined in the first two parts, were compared to find how their similarities and differences arose. The findings were that teachings about violence were closely tied to the very first presuppositions about reality. This result is in line with primal expectations I had before conducting the research, and I have carefully presented how this relation has formed. Also, I have assumed that Mahayana Buddhism will be stricter towards using violence, which was also true, regardless of one concept for legitimizing violence present. An exciting find was that the concepts present to allow the use of violence in each religion

were in opposition. In other words, what Mahayana Buddhism saw as a legitimate use of violence was illegitimate in Catholic Christianity and vice versa. The fact being that both religions were focused on the preservation of peace and the benefit of the community. Both just had a different way of achieving it arising again from the first conceptions of the sanctity of life, reward and punishment system, and leading principles. Another important implication that emerged is that in both religions, in order to employ doctrines in a person's life, deep understanding and practice is required. This was rather unexpected find in Catholic Christianity where belief seemed to be enough. However, as one can see from this work, it takes a significant amount of inner understanding in order to arrive at a level of devotion in order to employ these doctrinal aspects truly.

This research was able to shed light on two possible sources of violence that can be based on religious beliefs. It shows how these concepts emerged, which allows for the understanding of differences in these two traditions. Moreover, it underlines the peaceful orientation of both religions when concerning strictly doctrinal foundations. Finally, it shows the complicated relationship between religious practice and the ability to employ such doctrines.

To expand the found knowledge further, it would be important to analyze other religious traditions in order to understand their view about war, violence, and peace in this way. Furthermore, looking deeper into how these doctrines were used in practice for both peaceful and violent purposes. This can lead to a better understanding of how moral and value systems can be abused in order to create conflicts or promote peace.

Resumé

Zámer tejto bakalárskej práce je analýza náuky o násilí v dvoch náboženstvách: budhistickej mahájáne a katolíckom kresťanstve. Usilujeme sa uviesť náuku o násilí do širších súvislostí. Prvá kapitola sa venuje budhizmu a budhistickému hnutiu mahájána. Jej cieľom je opísať doktrínu tohto náboženstva a nájsť jej jednotiace motívy. Prvá kapitola je rozdelená do štyroch podkapitol. Prvá podkapitola sa venuje tomu ako je vnímaná realita v kontexte budhizmu. Ďalšia podkapitola opisuje čo je škola mahájány, prečo a ako vznikla a o čo jej ide. Potom venujeme pozornosť špecificky učeniam o násilných činoch. Analyzujeme koncept súciteľného zabitia ktorý, je v koncepte mahájány jediný moment kedy toto náboženstvo povoľuje násilie. Posledná časť je venovaná Shantidevovi a Won Hyovi, dvom náboženskými mysliteľmi, ktorí prispievajú k doktríne mahájany rozvinutím pojmov prázdnota a múdrosť. Pri študovaní budhizmu bolo potrebné využívať veľa sekundárnej literatúry nakoľko je v tomto náboženstve prítomná veľká fragmentácie doktrín.

V druhej kapitole je pozornosť venovaná katolíckej doktríne. Je rozdelená opäť do štyroch podkapitol. Prvá opisuje genézu katolíckej doktríny a zdroje jej jednoty. Druhá časť sa venuje bytiu vôbec a bytiu človeka. Ďalšia časť je venovaná náuke o násilí, úvahám o tom, kedy človek môže reagovať násilne a kedy je taký čin považovaný za správny. Takisto analyzuje pojem spravodlivej vojny. Posledná časť je venovaná Tomášovi Akvinskému ako mysliteľom, ktorý najviac prispel k formulovaniu katolíckej doktríny. Najdôležitejším primárnym zdrojom katolíckej doktríny o násilí je *Katechizmus katolíckej cirkvi*. Pre veriacich katolíkov sú názory sformulované v *Katechizme* záväzné.

Tretia časť tejto práce sa venuje porovnávaní týchto dvoch doktrín. Je rozdelená do štyroch podkapitol, v ktorých analyzujeme jednotlivé aspekty týchto náuk. Prvá časť porovnáva videnia existencie v kontexte týchto dvoch náboženstiev. Rozdiely, ktoré sa nachádzajú v tejto časti majú potom vplyv aj na formáciu náuk o násilí. Ďalej porovnáваме zdroje porozumenia. Katolicizmus spája individuálne svedomie s cirkevným učením, kdežto v budhizme je učenie Budhu podmienkou formovania sa osobného svedomia. V katolíckej doktríne prichádza vnútorné porozumenie ako prvé a

potom nasledujú vonkajšie porozumenie sprostredkované cirkvou. V budhizme to bolo naopak kde musel byť kontakt s učeníami z vonku aby sa človek mohol rozvíjať vnútorne. Dôležité ale je, že je potrebné venovať sa obom zdrojom, keď chce človek skutočne porozumieť náuke o násilí. Ďalšia časť práce sa venuje už náuke o násilí v týchto dvoch náboženstvách. Najzaujímavejšie zistenie bolo že koncepty ktoré, povoľovali násilie v analyzovaných doktrínach sa navzájom vylučovali. Čo bolo považované za správne z katolíckeho hľadiska bolo považované za nesprávne v budhizme a naopak. Dôvodom bola rozdielna interpretácia bytia. Posledná časť opisuje rozdiely v náuke, ktoré pramenia z toho že budhizmus neposkytuje interpretáciu politickej sféry spoločenského života. Preto sa v ňom nenachádzajú koncepty ako spravodlivá vojna alebo trest udelený štátnymi inštitúciami.

Táto práca poukazuje na to, ako rozdielne sa tieto dve náboženstvá vzťahujú k fenoménu násilia. Zdôrazňuje ako tieto rozdiely vznikajú na základe rozdielneho chápania bytia a ľudskej existencie. Taktiež ukazuje na to, aký postoj obidve náboženstvá zaujímajú k násiliu ako takému. Mahájána je v niektorých momentoch viac pacifistická ako katolícka doktrína, pretože v určitých prípadoch požaduje úplne sa vyhnúť akémukoľvek násiliu. V konečnom dôsledku sa však obidve náboženstvá usilujú o zachovanie mieru a prosperity v ľudských spoločenských.

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