BODHISATTVA AND MESSIAH: THE COINCIDENCES AND CONCORDANCES IN THEIR THEORIES AND DOCTRINES

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Abstract: This paper explores the concordances and the coincidences in the theories and doctrines of Bodhisattva and Messiah. The doctrines of Bodhisattva dominantly prevail in Buddhism, in its scriptures, and the literature about it. Likewise, the concept of the Messiah is also equally pervasive in the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible. The theories and doctrines of Bodhisattva and Messiah have coincidences and concordances in their essence. They both accord in their ideals and missions to lead humankind to salvation, redemption, and Nirvana or enlightenment. Despite the differences, both Bodhisattva and Messiah have a similar primal grounding on sacrifice and renunciation to liberate and redeem humankind. To accomplish this goal, both depict themselves as the saviours. Therefore, it is essential to recognize that the fundamental doctrines of Bodhisattva and Messiah are not only just because of random development; rather the crosscurrents between the two religions enriched the theories and ideas about them. The simultaneous development of these two religions has harmonized the concepts of Bodhisattva and Messiah. By providing a new outlook, this study adds the qualitative insights of the knowledge about these two aspects from Buddhism and Christianity. The congruity in their ideas demonstrates how the different roads lead to the same destination of truth and reality. To meet the objectives, this article has applied the qualitative approach to research. So, comparative research design and thematic analysis method have been implemented to formulate new interpretations while exploring the concurrences in the theories and doctrines of Bodhisattva and Messiah.

Keywords: Bodhisattva, Buddhism, Christianity, Messiah, Nirvana, redemption

I. INTRODUCTION

The present study interprets the coincidences and the concordances in the doctrines and theories of Bodhisattva and Messiah. Bodhisattva, a recurring concept in the Buddhism, is a way to enlightenment. Similarly, the concept of Messiah too drives the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible. The ultimate goal of Bodhisattva and Messiah is to redeem humankind. The spirit of renunciation and sacrifice equally harmonize their ideals. Because of these aspects, a new interpretation becomes justifiable to explore basic concepts of Bodhisattva and Messiah that becomes a

milestone to establish the proposition that truth is always the same, but only differs in the exemplifications and explanations. In this sense, the great saying from Rig Veda, the earliest religious book, becomes contextual which says, "Truth is one, the wise call it by many names" or "One truth, many paths" (as cited in Goldberg, 2010, p.10). Bodhisattva and Messiah have the same mission with different names and forms. They both have the same chime.

The concepts of Bodhisattva and Messiah bear a great significance both in Buddhism and Christianity. These

two concepts coincide a lot in their ideas, in their practices, and in their theories. Even though there is no fixed ground on the influence of these two religious' thoughts, the concept of saviour is fundamentally grounded in them. The doctrines of Bodhisattva found their development after the rise of Mahayana Buddhism when Christianity was flourishing. Damien Keown (2013) opines that this similarity is because of the Mahayana (Great Vehicle) Buddhism. The new movement occurred during the time of Christ that flourished between 100 BC and 100 AD. Because of this reason, there might have been some amalgamations between these two trends (The Mahayana: a new emphasis). That's why; anyone who ascribes to the ideals of Bodhisattva unknowingly pays reverence to Messiah and vice versa.

"Bodhisattva" is a Sanskrit word, and in Pali, it is known as "Bodhisatta". Pali is the language derived from Sanskrit that was a popular vernacular at the time of Buddha. The word "Bodhi" occurs, the first time, in the first Sanskrit religious scripture Rig Veda v. 75, vol. iii. It implies the meditative state and the mind with one-pointedness. This word demands many interpretations. In fact, the word "Bodhi" means 'enlightenment' (Dayal, 1970, p.4), and the word "Satva" also signifies different layers of meanings. It means "essence, nature, true essence" (Dayal, 1970, p. 4). Then, Bodhisattva would mean the one who knows the true nature, dynamics and essence of Bodhi. The sacrificial fact with Bodhisattva is that he does not accept the enlightenment and nirvana until he is sure that his fellow being would attain it. Capra (1991) describes that Bodhisattva is an evolved individual who is on the path to attain Nirvana. He is so selfless that he does not agree to attain the Buddhahood until the fellow creatures get the path to salvation. He is a pathfinder (pp.110-11). Therefore, he takes the birth again and again. The term "Messiah" also has great significance. Simply speaking, it signifies "the anointed one." It has a more complex history, theories, and doctrines that reveal the development of Messiahship. Westfall (2007) justifies that semantically it "refers God's eschatological divinely appointed and anointed agent whose saving acts would restore free Israel from

oppression and or inaugurate the Day of the Lord" (pp. 210-11). If Messiah carries God's plan for salvation and redemption, then it coincides and concords with the theories of Bodhisattva.

The fundamentals of Bodhisattva and Messiah still contradict to each other. Buddha says himself as "Son of Man" (Kerston, 2001, p. 119), but Christ is known as the "Son of God". The existence of God does not bear a significant value in Buddhism while the concept of God rules the Christianity. Osborne (2009) views that the two religions and the concepts related to them appear as direct contradictory. Buddhism has some similarities with the doctrines of Taoism, while Christianity relates to monotheistic group of Judaism and Islam (p. 1). Bodhisattva quests the light of wisdom. On the other hand, the theory of Messiahship projects that God presents "in the life of His Messiah, so truly present that the birth of Messiah was the birth of God's son" (Brown, 1993, p. 3). The differences between the two demand a systematic study. However, the exploration of concordances and coincidences in their theories and doctrines enriches and redefines the concepts of Bodhisattva and Messiah. They bear similar essence regarding their missions to redeem humankind.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concepts of Bodhisattva and Messiah invite and demand layers of interpretations. The more one ponders on these ideas, the more they lead to a zenith of knowledge. Cioccolanti (2007) views that lots of coincidences, reasons, and aspects instigate us to study these two religions (Introduction). Only the study and explorations drive us towards reality. We can see the layers of amalgamations between these two great religions. Loy (2010) opines that around the time Buddhism split into two parts namely in Theravada and Mahayana after the period of king Ashoka (after the third century BC) that was the time Christianity was flourishing (p.1). If so, there might have some intersections in the ideas between these two great religions. If Mahayana Buddhism got acquainted with Christianity and vice versa, then the ideas of Bodhisattva and Messiah must have an agglutinative relationship.

Dayal (1970) elaborates on the details of this intersection. He is of the view that Christianity must have influenced Mahayana Buddhism, and similarly adopted the impacts of Mahayana Buddhism too. It was because there were various channels of intersections between the countries in Western Asia, Africa, and Europe. Mahayana Buddhists could have maintained communication with Christians in Alexandria, India, and the central Asia (pp.40-41). In this regard too, these two concepts invite touches of novelty in interpretations.

The explanations trace the concordances between the theories and ideas of Bodhisattva and Messiah. Clarifying this idea, Kerstern (2001) says:

The early Christians of the East evidently displayed little or no opposition to Mahayana Buddhism, as is manifest, in the fourth-century manuscripts found at Turfan in east Turkestan.... Christians, Buddhists and Manicheans all lived there in harmony at the same time together, even using the same places of worship. Representations of Buddha as the Good Shepherd Jesus, and a Buddhist Jews-Messiah Sutra also have also been discovered in the area. (pp. 89-90).

The passage above clearly states the resemblances of theories of Mahayana Buddhism and Christianity. If so, then a systematic exploration of the ideas and theories of Bodhisattva and Messiah is essential.

Acharya (2004) has made a systematic analysis of Krishna, Buddha, and Christ. He views that the universal lord or saviour will be named in various forms like Krishna, Buddha, Osiris, and Christ (565). Whatever the concepts religion lands on to the world, the underlying pattern would be the same. Great scholar Huc (2004) is of the view that anyone who has studied Buddhism must have found lots of analogies in the doctrines, and precepts with the Christian thoughts (as cited in Acharya, 2004, p.15). It also proves that names and forms are different; the underlying pattern is the same. So, Bhandari (2021) claims that Bodhisattva and

Messiah have the same mission (p.106). The mission is no other than to redeem and liberate humanity.

The above interpretations open a ground for the study that invites a systematic exploration, regarding the congruity in the doctrines and theories of Bodhisattva and Messiah. This study, therefore, helps in the qualitative expansion in the knowledge that is related to Bodhisattva and Messiah.

III. STATEMENTS OF PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The theories and doctrines of Bodhisattva and Messiah have similar coincidences and concordances in their essence. They both have similar ideals and missions to lead humankind to salvation, redemption and nirvana or enlightenment. Therefore, this paper seeks to answer the following research questions: a) What are the theories and doctrines of Bodhisattva and Messiah? How do they project similar missions and goals? Why do the crosscurrents of theories and ideas between Bodhisattva and Messiah speak the same voice?

The study intends to explain the concordances and coincidences in the development of theories and doctrines of Bodhisattva and Messiah. It also aims to show how the two different religious philosophies bring a harmonious relationship in their essence.

IV. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study applies qualitative approach. Interpretivism has become major strategy to explore the themes and ideas of the Bodhisattva and Messiah, providing a new dimension. Interpretivism, according to Pant (2018), adds qualitative insights about the phenomena because the perceptions differ from person to person (p.22). In this regard, this present research paper compares the theories of Bodhisattva and Messiah, and formulates new interpretations, exploring only the concordances in their theories. Therefore, thematic analysis method has been used to explore the ideas and concepts of Bodhisattva and Messiah. The treatise, scriptures, the Dhammapada, and related literature from Buddhism have become the primary sources for the concept of

Bodhisattva. Similarly, the Holy Bible has provided the basic source for the concept of Messiah. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative applied research provides the general themes for the new interpretations (p.4). The themes enrich when they find revisiting with a new perspective. With the application of this approach in this paper, the general themes and doctrines related to Bodhisattva and Messiah have found new interpretations. Related reviews, critical commentaries, and other online resources have been considered as the secondary sources of information to achieve the objective.

V. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The subsequent sections provide in-depth interpretations and explanations, exploring the concepts and ideas related to Bodhisattva and Messiah.

Bodhisattva and Messiah: Redeemers for Humankind

The theories of Bodhisattva relate to the essence of Buddhism. Buddhists religious texts talk about the many Buddhas. The concept of many Buddhas presupposes that the Buddha in the former lives did not accept to attain his enlightenment because he did not want to leave his fellow beings behind. That's why; he has to be born as Bodhisattva again and again. Acharya (2004) says that even Buddhist religious scriptures do not agree about Buddha's birth. Some texts talk about 387000 Buddhas. Even 125000 Buddhas appeared before the Gautama Buddha of Kapilbastu. Before becoming the Buddha, he was born several hundreds of times (298). It makes the sense that before accepting Nirvana, the Buddha was born as Bodhisattva. The whole purpose was to liberate and enlighten humankind and fellow beings.

A Bodhisattva attains the summum bonum in his quest for the ultimate reality. He realizes the Buddha-jnana (the knowledge delivered by Buddha). Unlike the concept of Prateka Buddha developed in Theravada Buddhism, he is not content with Nirvana that he has attained; rather he wants to redeem the whole of

humanity with him. Then the goal of a Bodhisattva is to become a Buddha by the perfect realization of Bodhi. The doctrine of Bodhisattva is not only to attain the perfect realization, but to redeem the others. The Buddhist scripture Satha-sahasrika Prajna-parimita states the ideals of Bodhisattva:

The great Being, the bodhisattava, while girding on his armour, does not discriminate among the creatures, (saying): 'So many creatures shall I help to obtain complete nirvana, in which no material substratum remains; and so many creatures shall I not help in this way. So many creatures shall I establish in Bodhi; and so many (others) shall I not so establish.' But the bodhisattva, the great Being, verily dons his armour for the sake of all creatures. (As cited in Dayal, 1970, p.13).

It substantiates that Bodhisattva remains as a bridge that paves the path for Nirvana to others. Guided with the spirit of compassion, he is suffused within others and others within him. He is the medium to impart the Buddha's knowledge to others. He has the great mission to redeem humanity.

Another great scripture and Buddhist literature The Santarakaih crystallizes that Bodhisattvas are compassionate. They always "roll the wheel of the doctrine that will never turn back" (as cited in Dayal, 1973, p. 16). The concept of Bodhisattva presupposes the existence of many Buddhas. The Santarakaih, according to Dayal (1973), also explains that Bodhisattva is friendlier, genial and never hostile to the world and its creations. This concept of friendliness is maitre that forever helps them to secure liberation, redemption and eternal bliss not only for themselves, but to the whole mankind (p.6). The word Santarakaih is itself related to Shanta (peace in nature) that signifies saviour, redeemer, Messiah, liberator, pathfinder and so on. They live for the others. It is possible because they are in the highest mental equilibrium as Shri Krishna clarifies in the great Hindu scripture the Bhagavadgita, "Who sees, by reason of the likeness of Selves, as equal

everywhere pleasure and pain, that man is deemed, O Arjuna, the highest Ascetic" (Hill trans, 1973, p. 122). This attitude only makes one extinguish the boundary between mine and thine. Only the redeemer can do this. The Buddhist treatises like Asta-sahasrika Prajna-paramita in totality expound and expose these concepts of renunciation, redemption and Nirvana.

The doctrines of Bodhisattva show that he has vowed for the redemption of humankind. After the redemption of others, he attains Buddhahood. He teaches that there is a single reality. The Buddhist scripture Saddharna Pundarika, according to Dayal (1973), focuses that the moment Bodhisattva attains the Bodhi or wisdom, he starts to deliver the knowledge of the omniscient one (p.11). This treatise directed that in the early phase of Mahayana Buddhism, the Bodhisattvas did not get enough reverence because the concept of jnana (wisdom) dominated the ideals of karuna (mercy). In course of time, when the ideals of mercy (karuna) were centralized, then Bodhisattva doctrine got its culmination as it focused on the sacrifice for the sake of others. However, wisdom too got equally valuable. When karuna got its centrality, then the Bodhisattva became the symbol of love and compassion in whom wisdom, mercy, and love meet. This is the crux of the Bodhisattva doctrine.

The Jatakas are a collection of the incidents and stories about the previous lives of Buddha. The Rastrapala Sutra refers to them. All these narratives about the Buddha's past lives strengthen the concept of Bodhisattva. The narratives refer to the cyclic pattern of Bodhisattva. Buddha refers to this in The Dhammapada, "Looking for the maker of this tabernacle, I have run through a course of many births, not finding him; and painful is birth again and again" (11:153, Muller trans, 2013, pp. 42-43). This refers to the idea that Buddha must have gone through many ages as Bodhisattva so that he could redeem the fellow creatures and attain the Buddhahood.

Jataka narratives like Apadana, Buddhavamsa, and Chariyapitaka were composed in post- Ashoka period (third to first centuries BC). They consist of Buddha's

previous lives and his penance to attain realization. In this regard too, these narratives provide the model for the Bodhisattva's concept that prevails in Mahayana Buddhism. So, Boucher (2008) is right to say that these works of literature emphasize the Bodhisattva career and they provide the cultic inheritances of Shakyamuni of that period (p.22). Jataka narratives make a paradigmatic orientation in the Bodhisattva's career. Boucher (2008) notes that the Jataka reference in another Buddhist literature Rastrapala reveals Bodhisattva's birth as men, only two times as a woman and eighteen times as an animal (p.25). It justifies how difficult and complex life Buddha must have passed in his previous births. The above verse from The Dhammapada epitomizes the entire concept of Bodhisattva as well as the Jataka narratives related to the previous countless cycles of lives of the Buddha to redeem the fellow creatures. Because of these great sacrifices and the renouncement of the Bodhisattva, Buddha ultimately transcends all the world and suffering that he refers in the above cited verse from the Dhammapada. Only stoic endurance gives birth to Bodhisattva, whose renouncements for the liberation for others is beyond explanation and sometimes beyond imagination. If so, then does Bodhisattva resemble the concept of Messiah? Of course, there are coincidences and concordances in their doctrines, theories, and missions.

The Messianic explanation is related to God's designation to redeem the world. However, the basic point of departure between them is that God appoints the Messiah, but Bodhisattva attains the realization after a long sacrifice and series of births. Self-evolution becomes the fundamentals for Bodhisattva while carrying God's plan becomes the main mission of Messiah. God announces there will be the rule of God when Messiah delivers the divine message to humanity. Marshal (2007) notes the concept of Messiahship can be perceived as prophecy. It foregrounds God's plan. It needs to be understood that Messiah is a person with God's authorization to consolidate the plan and purpose (p.121). The plan is to redeem humankind and the fellow creatures. This is the point of concordance, regarding the purpose of Bodhisattva and Messiah.

The theories and doctrines of Messiah are often conjoined with Jesus, but it is not only so. Porter (2007) elaborates that the term signifies a more complex history, which should be detected in the Old Testament of the Holy Bible too (p.1). This concept is a systematic and long development like the theories of Bodhisattva with the plan to give salvation and eternity to fellow creatures. Mercy, compassion, and love became the dominant themes in the doctrines of Bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism. Similarly, Messianic theory also includes the similar pattern, adding the pattern of grace as well. It is important to refer to the verses from the Old Testament that substantiate the theory of Messiah:

The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So, I have come down to rescue them from the hand of Egyptians and bring them to up out of the land into a good and spacious land . . . I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring the Israelites out of Egypt." (Exodus, 3: 7, 8).

These words from God to appoint Moses as the liberator and redeemer of the oppressed fellow being radiate the heart of the matter of Messianic theory and doctrines. Whenever there is anarchism and violation of law and dharma (order), then God would appoint or take different forms of incarnations to liberate the fellow being. This notion has been enlarged in the Hindu system too where Lord Krishna in the Bhagavadgita says, "When righteousness is weak and faints and unrighteousness exults in pride, then my spirit arises on earth" (Mascaro trans, 1994, p.61). It proves that in the essence the message is the same, and only the truth prevails. To establish the truth, God appoints or incarnates himself in many forms; it might be Bodhisattva or Messiah. Here, it becomes clear that only the exemplifications might differ, but the voice of Buddha, Krishna and God in the Bible bear the same rhythms of truth.

Like the Jataka narratives, the Old Testament developed the theories of Messiah that clarify its mission and goal. This would help to clarify how and why Jesus carries God's purpose. The verses from Jeremiah section from the Old Testament also adds to the theory of Messiah, "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, A King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land" (23:5). When the situation demands, there will be the rise of the Messiah to redeem humanity. That may be in the form of Moses, David or Christ. Just as the Bodhisattva is for liberation and enlightenment, Messiah is for redemption and beatitude. Osborne (2009) relates that Christianity and Buddhism both teach to renounce the world and get the liberation (p 20). For that liberation, it becomes justifiable because they both introduce the concepts of Bodhisattva and Messiah.

The book of Isaiah in the Old Testament recalls and clarifies the real ideations and the purpose of the Messianic theory. The book recalls:

In the last days the mountains of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains: it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD." (2:2, 3)

This is the sole goal of the Messiah to redeem humanity like the Bodhisattva who with the true spirit of mercy and wisdom leads the fellow-creatures to the enlightenment, a state of Nirvana. The Messiah with the grace and love leads to the Lord's temple. There will be beatitude and bliss. The mountain of the Lord is the highest state of bliss, salvation and redemption. The book of Jeremiah in the Old Testament better adds value to this idea that God will, again and again, appoint and rise as Messiah to uplift humanity:

In those days and at that time
I will make a righteous Branch sprout
From David's line:
he will do what is just and right in the land.
(33:15)

The themes and theories of the Messiah resemble the ideals of Bodhisattva because both of them have the mission to redeem and liberate their fellow beings. To walk on the right course is the ultimate way for them. Therefore, their theories and doctrines have similar coincidences and concordances in the essence even though the way of formulating the theories and doctrines differ.

The New Debates on Bodhisattva and Christ as Messiah

Christianity believes in a personal God, but Buddhism does not accept it. However, the unification of the seekers to the blissful stage becomes the point of focus for both of these two religions. The crucifixion of Christ not only symbolizes the sacrifice and renouncement, but also signifies the annihilation of ego. The resurrection can be taken as the dawn of spirituality. For the Buddha, the elimination of the ego is also the way to transcend the flesh, which opens the way to ultimate realization. The Buddha focuses on self-evolution as he says in the Dhammapada: "Your own self is your master; who else could be? With yourself well controlled, you gain a master very hard to find" (Easwaran trans, 2015, p. 157). Christ's focus on salvation and redemption with the grace of God is the interiorization of externalization as he says: "For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks; the door will be opened" (Luke 11:10). He also proposes to seek and knock the door of reality and its realization. The door of self-evolution leads to salvation.

The fundamental precepts of Moses, Buddha, and Christ show the best concordances in their theories and ideas. The ten commandments of Moses in the book of Exodus (20:3-17) are the deliverance of God's Messianic project for redemption. The Dhammapada is the most important scripture to include the teachings. In chapter fourteen, the Buddha sums up preaching and says, "Do not find fault with others, do not injure others, but live-in accordance with dharma. Be moderate in eating and sleeping, and meditate on the highest. This sums up the teaching of the Buddhas" (Easwaran trans, 2015, p. 170). Gautama Buddha's reference to several of "the Buddhas"

indicates the theories of Bodhisattvas, and it equally justifies that he passed the various cycles of previous lives as Bodhisattvas before becoming Buddha. He sums up their teaching in the above beautiful verse. If we see the underlying pattern of this teaching, we can find this teaching as the motive of Moses' commandments 20: 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 from the book of Exodus. So, scholars like Cioccolanti (2007) rightly note that Buddha was born one thousand years later than Moses, and it would be interesting to see Moses' commandments recurring in the Buddha's teachings. Even the great accordance emerges when one sees Christ recalling the commandments, "Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honour your father and mother" (Luke, 18:20). It clarifies that Moses, Buddha, and Christ as Bodhisattva and Messiah lead to similar paths to Nirvana and redemption.

The most interesting fact about the Buddha and Christ remains in the idea of Bodhisattva and Messiah. The Bodhisattva is a concept in Mahayana Buddhism. It refers to a person who is enlightened, and is deeply moved with the affinity of humankind. The enlightened one does not accept his bliss until the whole humankind is liberated. The Mahayana Buddhism further claims that Gautama Buddha was a Bodhisattva before he turned himself into the Buddha. Thus, the term Bodhisattva stands for the "compassionate beings who remain at the threshold of nirvana for the comfort and salvation of the world" (Zimmer, 2011, p. 535). He lives for the others; he is a liberator. The entire verses in chapters "The Wise," "The Saint," and "The Awakened One" from the Dhammapada note these ideations. The ideals prove that Bodhisattva is a man with the true spirit of renunciation. The concept is clear that he sacrifices himself for others. He agrees to live over and over many lives for the liberation of others. The Buddha says in the Dhammapada: "I have gone many rounds of birth and death, looking in vain for the builder of this body. Heavy indeed is birth and death again and again" (Easwaran trans, 2015, p. 151). It makes the point that the Buddha is a human of renunciation in action and an enlightened one who lives for the sake of others. He does not only enjoy his salvation until he takes humanity with him. He

is the redeemer and a bridge for Nirvana. This concept has great and exact coalescence with the concept of Christ as Messiah.

Christ as a son of the father is here to consume all sins within him. His crucifixion symbolizes the elimination of all the sins from which the whole humankind is suffering. He is a "messiah," who would be the saviour of the whole world. . . he would save all mankind from sin and blame. . . He preached salvation and God's forgiveness for everyone" (Gaarder, 1996, p. 158). The role of Messiah is to liberate humankind with mercy and grace of God as clearly stated in the Holy Bible:

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin (Roman, 5:18,19; 6:6).

The course disarrayed by Adam by tasting the forbidden apple was corrected by Jesus, the Messiah. He landed on the earth to correct the wrongdoings of Adam. As a Messiah, Jesus sacrificed himself for the sake of humans and all the creatures to redeem them from their sins. Woodhead (2014) opines this as a great triumph. She clarifies that anyone who can hear makes a confirmation that Jesus as a Messiah designs to carry God's plan. He is a liberator not only to end the sufferings, pains, tribulations, oppressions, but also the death by opening the path to redemption (p.11). Like Bodhisattva, Jesus too becomes the bridge for others to open the way for redemption and salvation because he transcended the death, providing the deliverance of God to humanity. As Bodhisattva is for Nirvana, Christ is for redemption. As a Messiah, he establishes the kingdom of God where there will be "a divine redemption for humanity" (Tarnas, 2000, p. 96). Christ even says, "I have not come

to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke, 5:31). The sermons on the mount in Mathew and Luke are the real essence of his ideations to open the way for the beatitudes for humanity forever and ever. In this sense, his crucifixion has symbolic value for the whole humanity. He sacrificed himself to liberate even the sinners. No one is left behind from his great plan. Only the messiah could do that. Even the horrible incident like crucifixion thus has become an epitome of deep faith for humanity.

The Buddha's meditation and Christ's crucifixion are the paths to perfection. They did not stand for themselves, rather they lived for others. Bodhisattva and Messiah have the same end that is to give perfect realization. Therefore, "For the Eastern world the Buddha's image is the state of meditation which is as significant as the image of the crucified Christ for the West" (Capra, 1991, p. 107). In this way, Bodhisattva's birth and rebirth to liberate humankind from dukkha (the state of impermanence and void), and Messiah's sacrifice to redeem humanity from all sins have a great confluence in concepts, symbols, and essence. The Buddha is the form of Bodhisattva in many lives, and Christ's with the message from God as the Messiah for salvation have a mysterious significance for us. They both claimed they were reformers. They proved to be Yogi, not hermit. A Yogi always binds oneself with the society though s/he can transcend the physical glories and desire. Both of them could have attained eternity. However, they both must have rejected it, and they paved the way to unite them with society for the liberation of humankind. They did not merely lose transcendence in sunyata, a point of complete emptiness or oblivion; rather they searched infinity in the pleasure of fellow beings. This was the mission of Bodhisattva born as the Buddha and Messiah as Christ. It is a concept of infinity, a divine vision of seeing oneself in others. This is the perfect path to eternity that the Tao Philosopher Chuang Tzu expresses, "The 'this' is also 'that'. The 'that' is also 'this'... That the 'that' and the 'this' cease to be opposites is the very essence of Tao" (as cited in Capra, 1991, p. 127). The Tao is the perfect path. The great point is that the Buddha and Christ realized themselves in the self of the entire

creation. This concept of infinity leads beyond death and decay. The framework of time remains no more there. The domain of reasons and senses are suspended. The Buddha's return from jungle to society and Jesus' connection to preach to the people is a return to hear the primal rhythm of humanity. Pattainaik (2015) says that it is the journey to the fundamental origin of humanity to be reconnected with those who have missed the way so that they find the way back to liberation (p. 232). It is a journey toward infinity. It is only possible when one seeks an inner journey for an inner evolution that these supermen have idealized to realize the eternity, redemption, and enlightenment.

VI. CONCLUSION

The theories and doctrines of Bodhisattva and Messiah have seminal resemblances in spite of the differences. One of the reasons might be the dimension of space and time. The split of Buddhism into two branches namely; Theravada and Mahayana from 100BC to 100 AD happened during the period Christianity was flourishing. This gave a platform for the concordances between them. It was Mahayana Buddhism that introduced theories of Bodhisattva in its treatises, and Jatakas helped the theories of Bodhisattva shone into the arena of religious philosophies. The fact that Bodhisattva ultimately attains the Buddhahood after paving the path for the fellow beings shows the sacrificial ideals of its theories. Until he is not sure about the path to Nirvana of fellow beings, he rejects his salvation and comes again to join with his fellow beings for their redemption. He is a liberator who sacrifices his personal glory for the sake of others. This theory found its climax in the preaching of Gautama Buddha. This genuine sacrifice for divinity finds the exact resemblance in the messianic doctrines developed in the Holy Bible. Messiah is a liberator, a redeemer who provides the radiance of redemption and beatitudes. This found its culminations in Moses and Christ as Messiahs. The interesting fact is that both Bodhisattva and Messiah have the mission of renunciation in action and sacrifice. This is the point of optimal concordance. The ten commandments of Moses, five great precepts of Buddha as Bodhisattva in the Dhammapada, and the commandments summarized and

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delivered by Christ in gospels of Mathew and Luke obviously reveal the coincidences and concordances between the ideas of Bodhisattva and Messiah. Humanity lies here and sure to exist in the days to come because the essence of Bodhisattva and Messiah inspires one to see the self in others. The whole humanity and the civilizations owe much for the postulation of such grand ideas. The ideals of Bodhisattva and Messiah always attract further explorations. Humanity exists because of vibes of liberation and enlightenment delivered by the theories of Bodhisattva and Messiah. May the whole of humankind feel blessed in the days to come by realizing the genuine spirit of Bodhisattva and Messiah!

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