Chapter 5

CONCLUSION
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Introduction

In dealing with the lives, the situations, the goals and the methods of Gautama on the one hand and John of the Cross on the other, we have systematically set forth information concerning Gautama first and only afterwards about John of the Cross. Our purpose in dealing first with Gautama and only next with John of the Cross was not only because chronologically Gautama preceded John of the Cross by about two thousand years but also because Gautama is much less sophisticated than Friar John and the views of Gautama can more easily be used as the basis of comparison and contrast.

As we may have noticed already there are innumerable similarities between the teachings of John of the Cross and those of the Buddha. As for the dissimilarities most of them can scarcely be called contrasts since they refer to themes and topics with which Gautama did not deal at all or did so only tangentially. For instance, topics like the immortality of the soul, the supernatural, union with God etc.

Similarities

As for the similarities between Gautama and John of the Cross many of them can be traced to the dictates of natural reason. Obviously, a good deal of what we call natural reason is recognizable in Gautama as well as in Friar John.
Critical studies in ancient ethics eastern and western note remarkable similarities between Plato’s cardinal virtues\(^1\) which were later elaborated by Aristotle and the qualities and attributes recommended by the Astangamarga. For Aristotle the norm of the virtues and the main criterion is none other than right reason. The same is true of the Stoics who agree that there is a natural law not only for the physical world of things but also for the moral world of human persons. If that is true as indeed it is, then Gautama who professed to be enlightened could not have escaped the universal appeal of the natural moral law claiming as he also did that his teachings conformed to reason.

He seems to have said: “Believe nothing, no matter where you read it, or who said it, no matter if I have said it, unless it agrees with your own reason and your own common sense.”\(^2\)

Friar John on the other hand should have been quite familiar with the moral philosophies of Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics. Plato maintains that human beings have a rational part for their souls and also an irrational part. The latter is inclined to anger, impatience and arrogance on the one hand and intemperance and sensuality on the other. These forms of irrationality are the cause of much unhappiness. The irrational part of the soul is in need of therapy and treatment. This is done through education whereby the rational part of the soul through governing and taming the irrational part brings about a happier condition. The four hinges on which this happy condition turns are prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice. Friar John and the educated people of his time especially the clergy
were supposed to be familiar with this Platonic teaching which as has been said, was elaborated by Aristotle and later refined by Thomas Aquinas with whose works Friar John was well acquainted.\(^3\)

There are many texts in the major works of Friar John that manifest his great respect and appreciation for natural reason.

“… God is ever desirous that insofar as possible people take advantage of their own reasoning powers. All matters must be regulated by reason save those of faith, which though not contrary to reason transcend it.”\(^4\)

In III book of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* he says, “Because virtues in themselves merit love and esteem from a human viewpoint, and because of their nature and the good they humanly and temporally effect, a person can well rejoice in the practice and possession of them. Under this aspect and for this reason, philosophers, wise men, and ancient rulers esteemed, praised, and endeavored to acquire and practice them. Although they were pagans who only cared for these goods in a temporal way, because of the temporal, corporeal, and natural benefits they knew would result, they did not merely acquire these goods and the renown sought through them. But in addition God, who loves every good, even in the barbarian and gentile, and does not hinder any good work from being accomplished, as the Wise Man says [Wis. 7:22], bestowed on them an increase of life, honor, dominion, and peace. He did this with the Romans because of their just laws. He subjected almost the entire world to them, paying them temporarily for
their commendable customs since, because of their paganism, they were incapable of eternal reward.”

From these last words “eternal reward” we may infer that Friar John made distinction between the natural and the supernatural. To this distinction, references have already been made several times in the previous chapters. The “supernatural” for Friar John depends entirely in the first instance on God and His revelation made through Christ to the human family. This divine revelation has been made as an invitation for whoever takes it seriously to participate in divine knowledge through faith and in divine love through grace. For Friar John this invitation to union with God Himself became the dominant passion of his life.

Both the Astangamarga of Gautama Buddha and *the Ascent of Mount Carmel* of Friar John contain expressions and injunctions with striking similarities. In fact, many a questioning reader would wonder how a Catholic mystic from the West could seem to echo distant melodies from the ancient East that promise happiness and fulfillment through self-denial and self-emptying and also how a believer in supernatural revelation could for any part of his journey towards the supernatural Revealer agree with an apparent unbeliever in God and religion. Tips to the answers to such questions may be found in the works of Friar John and the philosophers he followed.

Friar John says: “God does not destroy but perfects nature.” He derives this principle from Thomas Aquinas.
Friar John is of the opinion that the natural goodness of the being of the soul is not destroyed entirely even after the fall.² 

The similarities between the Buddha doctrine and the teaching of St. John of the Cross revolve chiefly, as has been pointed out, around the primacy of natural reason in relation to the passions and emotions. Although the Buddha seems to condemn all human desires, a closer study of the astangamarga reveals that he is not against all desires but only against the cravings. The word ‘craving’ would seem to refer to inordinate and irrational desires. Here Friar John, as we have seen above, agrees in the sense that nature confers desires on human beings as on other living creatures for a purpose. The fact that many people are misled by the desires does not make the passions themselves evil. What turns the desires into evil cravings is ignorance on the part of the mind and mismanagement on the part of the will.

Both the Buddha and Friar John strongly recommend mortification of the appetites and a process of self-purification that would appear to be so radical that the ego itself, the very self of the ego has to disappear. With respect to the Buddha who speaks of anatta, the non-self, the question may be raised about whether his “selflessness” is psychological or ontological. As for Friar John it is clear that his “selflessness” is not ontological. The phrase “union with God” implies two terms: both of which retain their identity; the ego of the mystic on the one hand and the Deity on the other – noting however, that the ontological ego is stripped of all psychological egoism.
Dissimilarities

The dissimilarities between these two sages seem to stem principally from religious faith and minimally from natural reason. Friar John believed with utmost conviction and total commitment in the Christian revelation. Faith in this revelation he attributed to grace. He experienced the invitation of this grace calling him to union with God as explained above in chapter three. The journey of the soul to union with God inevitably imposed on John a freedom from all cravings and liberation from the self in many respects similar to the demands of the Buddha and the astangamarga. The goal however was supernatural in the sense that it could never have been achieved without the revelation of God’s love in Jesus Christ and without His grace. Here we may note how the demands of the supernatural presuppose in some measure the highest aspirations of natural reason.

The Message

Both Gautama Buddha and John of the Cross strongly recommend detachment and freedom from the tyranny of cravings. The object of these cravings in our times, are predominantly material things. While the Buddha does not appear to emphasize the distinction between material and spiritual, Friar John does emphasize the distinction between the material and the spiritual at least in the sense that he considers the spiritual more worthy of attention and the material more transitory and transient.
Approach to Religion

Gautama lived at a time when religious ceremonies and rituals were given more importance than true religiosity.\textsuperscript{10} Religion was misused for the enrichment of a select few.

The Buddha discredited the sacrificial system\textsuperscript{11}; he censured with bitter irony the knowledge of the Vedic scribes as sheer folly if not as shameless swindle; Brahmanical pride of castes was not more gently handled. He who repeats the lays and sayings of the poetic sages of antiquity and then fancies himself a sage, is like a plebeian or a slave, who should mount up to the place from which a king has addressed his retinue, and speak the same words and then fancy himself also a king.\textsuperscript{12} The pupil believes what the teacher has believed, the teacher what he has received from the teachers before him. “Like a chain of blind men, I take it, is the discourse of the Brahmans: he who is in front sees nothing, he who is in the middle sees nothing, and he who is behind sees nothing, what then? Is not, if this be so, the faith of the Brahmans vain?”\textsuperscript{13}

Buddha’s disapproval of the practices by Brahmans has to be seen in the context of the transformations that were taking place at that time. Of all the ritualistic sacrifices then in vogue, sacrifices were the most important and the Brahmans were very much identified with them. Hence the Buddha pointedly and specifically attacked the Vedic sacrifices in which it was not unusual for 500 oxen, 500 male calves, 500 female calves and 500 sheep to be tied to the sacrificial post
for slaughter. Buddha remarked that such sacrifices did not produce any good results.\textsuperscript{14}

The views of the Buddha regarding the value of the Vedic sacrifices are contained in a conversation of the Buddha with a Brahman of high position, who had sought the Buddha’s advice about the essentials of a proper sacrifice.\textsuperscript{15} The Buddha narrates the story of a very powerful king who, after the conquest of the whole earth wanted to make a great offering to the gods. The king consults his family priest as to how to go about, who admonishes the king first to establish peace, prosperity and security in his kingdom before offering the sacrifice. The king agrees. Once everything is set right, the sacrifice is offered without doing any harm to any sentient creatures – cattle, sheep, trees or grass, but libations of milk, oil and honey are offered. But the Buddha says that there is yet a higher and more blessed sacrifice: i.e. to make gifts to pious monks, to build dwelling places for Buddha and his Order; and yet a higher offering is to take refuge with the Buddha, the Doctrine, and the Order; and still higher offering is to become a monk, detached from joys and sorrows of the world. But the highest offering is when he obtains deliverance and gains this knowledge: I shall not again return to this world. The Brahman hearing this discourse says: “I take my refuge with Buddha, with the Doctrine and with the Order.”

Buddha’s disapproval of some brahminical practices does not show that he was against Brahmins as people. In fact his closest disciples Sāriputta and Moggallana were Brahmins. He was opposed to the mystification with which the
Brahmins were surrounding themselves by blunting the consciousness of the people, and also to their worldliness in the name of priesthood. More important, he was opposed to their claim of supremacy over the other classes of people.\textsuperscript{16}

Buddha found in the rival ascetic leaders and their monastic orders more subtle and dangerous opponents than in the champions of the ancient faith. The spirit which animated many of the communities was allied to the spirit on which Buddha’s own work was based.\textsuperscript{17}

What more than anything else distinguished the Buddha from the most of his rivals was his dissentient attitude towards the self-mortifications in which they saw the path to deliverance. We saw in the first chapter how Gautama Buddha himself in the period of search through which he passed, had endured self-mortifications in their most rigorous severity and had found out their uselessness in his own case. What drives earthly thoughts out of the soul is not fasting and bodily mortification but self-culture, above all the struggle for knowledge, and for this struggle, man derives the power only from an external life, which is far remote alike from luxury and from privation and still more from self-inflicted pain.\textsuperscript{18} The true spiritual life is compared to a lute, the strings of which must not be too loose nor stretched too tensely, if it is to give a correct sound. The balance of the faculties, the internal harmony is that which Buddha commands his followers to aim at securing.\textsuperscript{19}

St. John of the Cross too understood very well how some forms of devotion encouraged attachments that are enemies of true spirituality.
Speaking of the harm resulting from surrender to sensible gratification in the use of devotional objects and places in chapter 41 of Book Three of *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* he says:

Spiritual persons incur many kinds of interior and exterior harm by their desire to get sensible delight from the use of devotional objects. As for interior harm, one will never reach inward recollection of spirit, which consists in passing beyond all these sensory delights, making the soul forget them, entering into the living temple of spiritual recollection, and acquiring solid virtue. With regard to exterior harm, individuals will be rendered incapable of praying everywhere. They will be able to pray only in those places suited to their taste, and thus be frequently wanting in prayer. As the saying goes, the only book he knows is his own village. Moreover, the appetites of these individuals will be the occasion of considerable instability. Some never persevere in one place - nor even at times in one state - but now you see them in one spot, now in another; now choosing one hermitage, now another; now decorating one oratory, and now another.20

He says some people also spend their time on earth changing states and modes of life. The fervour and joy they find in their spiritual practices is merely sensible, and they never make any effort to reach spiritual recollection through denial of their wills and submission to suffering discomforts. Consequently, as often as they see a seemingly devotional place, or way, or state of life that fits their disposition and inclination, they immediately leave what they have and follow after it. And since they are motivated by sensible gratification they soon begin to look for something else, for sensible satisfaction is inconstant and quickly fails.21
Further in chapter 43 he speaks of those ceremonies that are used by many today with indiscreet devotions. Some people attribute so much efficacy to methods of carrying out their devotions and prayers and so trust in them that they believe that if one point is missing or certain limits have been exceeded, their prayer will be profitless and go unanswered. As a result they put more trust in these methods than they do in genuine prayer, not without great disrespect and offense toward God. For example, they demand that the prayers be a particular number and kind and that they be recited at certain times and with certain ceremonies, and neither before nor after, nor in any other way; and that the person performing the ceremonies have certain endowments and characteristics. And they are of the opinion that nothing will be accomplished if one of these points is lacking.22

Friar John draws our attention to the fact that some people even desire that their petition be granted immediately i.e. at the end of some superstitious ceremonies. He says such a desire would amount to nothing more than tempting God and would thereby seriously provoke His wrath, adding that sometimes God allows the devil to deceive them through an experience and knowledge of things which is far from profitable to their souls. They deserve this because they do not put all their trust in God and nothing turns out well for them.23

Speaking about the manner of directing the joy and strength of the will to God in these devotions24 he says that individuals should know that the more trust
they put in these ceremonies the less confidence they have in God, and that they will not obtain from him the object of their desire.

Some pray more for their own aims than for the honour of God. Although they pray with the supposition that if God is to be served their petition will be granted, and if otherwise it will not, they nevertheless over multiply their prayers. They are praying in this way because of their attachment to the desired object and their vain joy in it. It would be better to convert these prayers into practices of greater importance, such as purification of their consciences and serious concentration on matters pertinent to their salvation. Thus they ought to have far less regard for all these other petitions irrelevant to this concentration and purification. Through the attainment of more important goals, they will also obtain all that in this other aim is good for them even though they do not ask for it. And they receive this answer to their prayer sooner and in a better way than if they had put all their strength praying for their desire.\(^25\)

Friar John says one should not become attached to any ceremonies or modes of prayer but pray just as Christ taught his disciples\(^26\), for He did not teach numerous other kinds of prayers and ceremonies.\(^27\)

And he adds: “For God is such that if people live in harmony with him and do his will he will give them whatever they want, but if they seek their own interests it will be useless for them to speak to God.”\(^28\)

Moreover, he knew the Bible which condemns certain perversions of religion. For example, we read in the Book of Isaiah:
What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When you come to appear before me, who requires of you this trampling of my courts? Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and sabbath and the calling of assemblies – I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me, I am weary of bearing them. When you spread forth your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow.29

Or again, as we hear in the Book of Amos:

I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and cereal offerings, I will not accept them, and the peace offerings of your fatted beasts I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.30

This attitude of faith in rituals and ceremonies rather than paying due attention to personal and social moral values was not acceptable either to Christ or to the Buddha or to St. John of the Cross.
Peace of Soul

When the United Nations was formed after the horrors of the Second World War, the heads of Nations who gathered to sign the charter agreed that it should begin with the following preamble: “Since it is in the minds of men that wars begin, it is in the minds of men the ramparts of peace should be erected.” This very same sentiment is echoed in the first verse of the Dhammapada in which the Buddha states: “All that we are, is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage.”

The way to fight force is not by applying more force which in fact only leads to arms race between the nations. The advice of the Buddha to those who propagate antagonism and ill will, and who set men to war and rebellion against one another is: ‘Hatred does not cease by hatred; by love alone does it cease’. Although some may feel that the Buddha’s advice to return good for evil is impractical, it is in fact the only way to solve many problems. Very often it is our egoism and pride that prevent us from returning good for evil, fearing that we become cowards in the sight of others. Kindness (mettā) and gentleness (muditā) are not effeminate but show our real inner strength. It is the cultured method of settling disputes to bring about peace, sacrificing our pride or ahankara.

In order to establish peace and harmony among mankind, all must first learn to practise the ways leading to the extinction of hatred and greed which are
the roots of all evil forces that hinder peace. Only when these evil forces are eradicated, peace and tolerance will dawn on this restless world. Buddha, the compassionate one has this advice for the establishment of peace in the world: “All men tremble at punishment, all men fear death; remember that you are like unto them, and do not kill, nor cause slaughter.”

Peace is attainable, but the way to peace is not only through prayers and rituals; it is the result of achieving harmony between our fellow beings and our environment. Peace comes from tolerance, but to be tolerant we must get rid of anger and jealousy. “No enemy can harm one so much as one’s own thoughts of craving, hate and jealousy.”

The following verses of the Dhammapada show the importance Gautama Buddha gave to peace:

“Even though a speech be a thousand (of words), but made up of senseless words, one word of sense is better, which if a man hears, he becomes quiet.” In other words, better than a thousand hollow words is one word that brings peace.

“Happy is the arising of the awakened, happy is the teaching of the True Law, happy is peace in the church, happy is the devotion of those who are at peace.”

“Cut out the love of self, like an autumn lotus, with thy hand! Cherish the road of peace.”

“Let him not despise what he has received, nor ever envy others: a mendicant who envies others does not obtain the peace of mind.”
Friar John of the Cross maintains that as God leads the soul to union with Himself the soul enters into a very deep peace because God Himself is eternal peace and joy and also because the gifts of grace perfect human nature. And human nature finds peace when it is free from inordinate cravings and when the reason commands all the emotions and passions. On the contrary, disturbances, emotional upheavals etc. and all kinds of disorders are ultimately from the devil. And when the individual is disturbed, the whole society is disturbed. Thus, we can understand that many of the problems we face in today’s society like terrorism, communalism, fanaticism, racism, violence, rape, theft, murder etc. are due to absence of peace in the human soul. Therefore Friar John says:

“Abide in peace, banish cares, take no account of all that happens, and you will serve God according to his good pleasure, and rest in him.”

“Consider that God reigns only in the peaceful and disinterested soul.”
Conclusion

Friar John is a firm believer in human reason; and rationality has an important place in his doctrinal synthesis. This is clear from what has just been said regarding his views on statues, ceremonies, sensible devotions, pilgrimages, religious objects etc. and from many other texts in his writings. He could almost be called a rationalist like the Buddha in a positive sense of the word. However, taking account of the various different systems of philosophy, he has to admit that human reason is not an independent entity or an independent light or an independent energy existing apart from mankind or apart from individual people. Paradoxical though it may appear, human reason of itself and by itself does not exist. Human reason is found in human individuals who are made up of a number of constituents which the Buddha calls aggregates. It follows that human reason like human persons depends on experience, sensations, perception, education, culture, presuppositions, tradition, society and a multiplicity of factors in its search for truth and happiness. The net result of all these variations and variabilities is the impossibility of reaching truth or even convictions agreeable to all. And even if human beings should reach convictions that are universally accepted, how can we be sure that they are ultimate? Francis Bacon who was partly a contemporary of Friar John skillfully describes the four sets of idols that are the causes of error in human reasoning. Considering a great variety of factors that can help or hinder reason in its search for truth Friar John could well argue that only a Divine Revelation can save human reason from error and from ignorance. So, the
rationalism of Friar John is limited but not his rationality in the sense that human reason reflecting on the general experience of humankind is compelled to recognize its limitation.

Religion (in the sense of religiosity) of Friar John as a human virtue is one of the manifestations of human reason. If so, we cannot categorically affirm, the Buddha had no religion. We said in chapter three that there are reasons to think that there is a high degree of compatibility between Buddhism and theism. The very fact that historically theism manifested itself more and more explicitly in later Buddhist thought proves that even initially, there was compatibility. Another reason for the compatibility is the elevated standard of Buddhist morality. It seems rather difficult to maintain high moral standards, without belief in some unshakeable foundation, which may, or may not be called God. And quoting Dr. Allan B. Wallace we said: to regard Buddhism as ‘non-theistic’ may be overly simplistic. But as pointed out above, factors like tradition, culture, education that affect human reason will consequently affect human religions. However, since in spite of differences and even great differences and great distances in space and time, there are some invariables and some constant that are recognizable and essentials and properties and attributes of human nature in general and of human reasoning in particular. In other words, the variations and varieties of human experience including religious experience has limited range. This is why we find so much similarity and consonance between the teachings of the Buddha on the one hand and of Friar John on the other.
How do we account for the differences? As already noted above, human reasons and human reasoning can neither lead to and end in universal agreement nor can they reach absolute certainty regarding the ultimate. This justifies Friar John’s recourse to a Divine Revelation. He finds nothing unreasonable in admitting the fallibility of human reason along with all its limitations and he finds that the Christian Revelation does not in any way contradict human reason. On the contrary, Divine Revelation confirms many of the insights of human reason and supports them. From this confirmation and support of human reason by Divine Revelation comes the marvelous similarity between many of the teachings of Friar John and the Buddha.

But it is not only the lack of certainty concerning ultimates that moves Friar John to have recourse to Divine revelation. John himself was born and brought up in a Christian milieu that did not for a moment question the Christian Revelation as an act of God who is the supreme and infallible truth revealing the Christian religion as a necessary means and way to eternal life and salvation. Friar John would argue that the Christian religion has many proofs in its favour especially the resurrection of its founder and the witness of thousands of martyrs. Friar John himself had personal experience of the Risen Christ and the Holy Trinity, of God’s transcendence and immanence. He knew he was privileged and could lay no claims to the privileges he received and hence never became a fanatic. He was imprisoned by some who did not want his reform or did not want it to spread. After escaping from prison he kept no grudge or resentment against his
persecutors. He seems to have had the conviction that true believers in Christ should through right attention and concentration dispose themselves for contemplative union with God rather than waste their energy in finding fault with others or condemning them. We do not have on record his attitude towards the crusades of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries or towards the Spanish inquisition. Of course it would have been risky for him to make negative statements about the Spanish inquisition. As for the crusades, he would have wondered whether some of them were true believers or not. What would he have said about the religious fanaticism that crops up from time to time in our twenty-first century world? Along with the Buddha he would have immediately recognized as a gross aberration inasmuch as it contradicts some of the fundamental principles of the Dhammapada on the one hand and the Sermon on the Mount on the other.

It would appear that if Gautama and Friar John were asked about the connection between war and religion both would agree that the ego (ahankara) is in some way at the root of the perversion of true religion, providing religion with a handle that turns it into a weapon for war. First of all, all the major religions, if not all religions, claim to have the truth. The next step, the religion I follow is my truth. Third step in ‘my’ conclusion: therefore your religion cannot be true. Further conclusion, at least my religion is superior to yours. Next step, therefore I am superior to you.

This is how more or less our ahankara is likely to argue not noticing the logical errors committed at each step. Hence, both Gautama and Friar John would
perceive that our *ahankara* in many cases distorts even our logic and does not permit us to be rational. This *ahankara* which begins with the individual can easily attain epidemic proportions leading to communal violence and war. Hence, although many people including some who are well-educated attribute violence and war to religion, in fact it is the distortion of religion by the ego or *ahankara* that is the culprit. It is the same *ahankara* that lies at the root of fanaticism.

At this juncture we have to admit that Buddhists and Christians seem to have forgotten quite often the Dhammapada on the one hand as well as the Sermon on the Mount on the other. The basic principles of these two great movements have often been laid aside in the education and day-to-day living of Buddhists and Christians alike. Hence people ask spontaneously: What good have Buddhism and Christianity done to humanity? An easy way of answering the question is by saying that neither Buddhists nor Christians are all real believers. We can only say that the teachings of these two movements or religions if followed in practice would contribute immensely to peace in the world. Perhaps it can also be said that although many people do not see the good they have done to humanity, the evil they have prevented also cannot be seen. I do hope that this research paper may contribute its mite towards making better known the philosophical and spiritual teachings and the humanistic approach of these two great spiritual masters in such a way that their teachings may be integrated into the educational system of many schools and colleges. If that is done we have a certainty that greater peace and prosperity will come into our country and into the world.
In the Pali texts [For example at Sn. I. 76; A. II. 42; IV. 151; It. 21; Sn. 303 etc.] five kinds of bloody sacrifices are frequently referred, viz., horse-sacrifice, human-sacrifice, peg-thrown site sacrifice, drinking of victory or strength, and the bolts-withdrawn sacrifice or universal sacrifice. In the Discourse of the Wrong Sacrifice and the Right (Kutadanta Sutta) of the Diigha Nikaya [D. I. 144 ff.] these immoral Brahmanical sacrifices with its three modes and its accessories of sixteen kinds are strongly criticized by the Buddha, who introduces new kinds of sacrifice, which is not bloodshed, less difficulty and trouble, but bringing greater fruit and advantage in this life and hereafter. These consist of (i) offering to moral sangha including individuals of high moral, (ii) putting up of a dwelling place (vihaara) on behalf of the sangha in all the four direction, (iii) taking refuge in the Buddha, his dhamma and his sangha; (iv) observing the five moral principles, namely, abstinence from destroying life, from taking what is not given, from sexual misconduct, from telling lies and from drinking alcohol, (v) observing the minor morality, (vi) developing confidence, (vii) controlling the five senses, (viii) cultivating mindfulness, (ix) Living in content and solitude, (x) cutting off five hindrances and cultivating the four jhaanas. Thus, the amoral ceremonialism and sacrificialism of Brahmanism is contrastedly substituted with the socially human moralism of Buddhism, such as love, sympathy, liberality and humanity etc. Cfr. "... [God] ... puts under the control of reason the two natural powers, the irascible and the concupiscible ...".

St. John of the Cross, The Ascent of Mount Carmel, 2, 22, 13; Cfr. also 2, 21, 4; 22, 9, 11. Hereafter ‘A’ and the number of the book prefixed.

Cfr. 3A 2, 7-8
3A 2, 7
5 Thomas Aquinas, SummaTheologiae 1. 1. 8 ad 2.
6 1A 9, 3
7 Bhikkhu ThichNhat-Tu in his Distinction of the Buddha’s Teachings from Brahmanism and Sramanism, giving various Brahmanical, Upanisadic and Buddhist textual references, makes the following observation: "Ritualism, ceremonialism and sacrifices (ya~n~na//yaj~na) [On Brahmanas’ sacrifices, see M. I. 343-44; S. I. 75; A. IV. 41; D. I. 127, 141] are the most prominent features of Brahmanism as reflected in the Rig-Veda and the Brahmanas. These are most important part of Brahmical religion. They govern condition of human as well as animals. "Thing animate or inanimate are all under the magical spell of ceremony. Gods, men, living beings, lifeless things can all be equally moved through the power of prayer or sacrifice." Their existence was for the sake of the ceremony. The practice of human sacrifice was also found in the Brahmanas. A Brahmana named ‘Sunah’sepa about to be sacrificed in lieu of the son of a king was saved. In another passage of the Brahmans I. 8, this kind of immoral practice is mentioned in detail. The gods killed a man for their victim. But from him thus killed, the part, which was fit for a sacrifice went out and entered a horse. Thence the horse became an animal for being sacrificed. The gods then killed the horse, but for the part fir for being sacrificed went out of it and entered an ox. The gods then killed the ox . . . sheep, goat etc. The sacrificial part remained for the longest time in the goat, thence it became pre-eminently fit for being sacrificed. Such bloody sacrifices were considered to be necessary to propitiate gods. In the Pali texts [For example at S. I. 76; A. II. 42; IV. 151; It. 21; Sn. 303 etc.] five kinds of bloody sacrifices are frequently referred, viz., horse-sacrifice, human-sacrifice, peg-thrown site sacrifice, drinking of victory or strength, and the bolts-withdrawn sacrifice or universal sacrifice. In the Discourse of the Wrong Sacrifice and the Right (Kutadanta Sutta) of the Diigha Nikaya [D. I. 144 ff.] these immoral Brahmanical sacrifices with its three modes and its accessories of sixteen kinds are strongly criticized by the Buddha, who introduces new kinds of sacrifice, which is not bloodshed, less difficulty and trouble, but bringing greater fruit and advantage in this life and hereafter. These consist of (i) offering to moral sangha including individuals of high moral, (ii) putting up of a dwelling place (vihaara) on behalf of the sangha in all the four direction, (iii) taking refuge in the Buddha, his dhamma and his sangha; (iv) observing the five moral principles, namely, abstinence from destroying life, from taking what is not given, from sexual misconduct, from telling lies and from drinking alcohol, (v) observing the minor morality, (vi) developing confidence, (vii) controlling the five senses, (viii) cultivating mindfulness, (ix) Living in content and solitude, (x) cutting off five hindrances and cultivating the four jhaanas. Thus, the amoral ceremonialism and sacrificialism of Brahmanism is contrastedly substituted with the socially human moralism of Buddhism, such as love, sympathy, liberality and humanity etc." Cfr. http://www.urbandharma.org/udharma2/distinction.html, accessed on 27.1.2015.

Cfr. 3A 2, 7-8
3A 2, 7
5 Thomas Aquinas, SummaTheologiae 1. 1. 8 ad 2.
6 1A 9, 3
7 Bhikkhu ThichNhat-Tu in his Distinction of the Buddha’s Teachings from Brahmanism and Sramanism, giving various Brahmanical, Upanisadic and Buddhist textual references, makes the following observation: "Ritualism, ceremonialism and sacrifices (ya~n~na//yaj~na) [On Brahmanas’ sacrifices, see M. I. 343-44; S. I. 75; A. IV. 41; D. I. 127, 141] are the most prominent features of Brahmanism as reflected in the Rig-Veda and the Brahmanas. These are most important part of Brahmical religion. They govern condition of human as well as animals. "Thing animate or inanimate are all under the magical spell of ceremony. Gods, men, living beings, lifeless things can all be equally moved through the power of prayer or sacrifice." Their existence was for the sake of the ceremony. The practice of human sacrifice was also found in the Brahmanas. A Brahmana named ‘Sunah’sepa about to be sacrificed in lieu of the son of a king was saved. In another passage of the Brahmans I. 8, this kind of immoral practice is mentioned in detail. The gods killed a man for their victim. But from him thus killed, the part, which was fit for a sacrifice went out and entered a horse. Thence the horse became an animal for being sacrificed. The gods then killed the horse, but for the part fir for being sacrificed went out of it and entered an ox. The gods then killed the ox . . . sheep, goat etc. The sacrificial part remained for the longest time in the goat, thence it became pre-eminently fit for being sacrificed. Such bloody sacrifices were considered to be necessary to propitiate gods. In the Pali texts [For example at S. I. 76; A. II. 42; IV. 151; It. 21; Sn. 303 etc.] five kinds of bloody sacrifices are frequently referred, viz., horse-sacrifice, human-sacrifice, peg-thrown site sacrifice, drinking of victory or strength, and the bolts-withdrawn sacrifice or universal sacrifice. In the Discourse of the Wrong Sacrifice and the Right (Kutadanta Sutta) of the Diigha Nikaya [D. I. 144 ff.] these immoral Brahmanical sacrifices with its three modes and its accessories of sixteen kinds are strongly criticized by the Buddha, who introduces new kinds of sacrifice, which is not bloodshed, less difficulty and trouble, but bringing greater fruit and advantage in this life and hereafter. These consist of (i) offering to moral sangha including individuals of high moral, (ii) putting up of a dwelling place (vihaara) on behalf of the sangha in all the four direction, (iii) taking refuge in the Buddha, his dhamma and his sangha; (iv) observing the five moral principles, namely, abstinence from destroying life, from taking what is not given, from sexual misconduct, from telling lies and from drinking alcohol, (v) observing the minor morality, (vi) developing confidence, (vii) controlling the five senses, (viii) cultivating mindfulness, (ix) Living in content and solitude, (x) cutting off five hindrances and cultivating the four jhaanas. Thus, the amoral ceremonialism and sacrificialism of Brahmanism is contrastedly substituted with the socially human moralism of Buddhism, such as love, sympathy, liberality and humanity etc." Cfr. http://www.urbandharma.org/udharma2/distinction.html, accessed on 27.1.2015.

1 Hermann Oldenberg, (Translated from the German by William Hoey), BUDDHA, His Life, His Doctrine, His Order, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, Delhi, 1997, p. 172.
2 See Ambattasutta (Digha Nikaya) as quoted in Hermann Oldenberg, BUDDHA, His Life, His Doctrine, His Order, p. 172.
3 Cankisuttanta(Majjhimanikaya) as quoted in Hermann Oldenberg, BUDDHA, His Life, His Doctrine, His Order, p. 172.
St. John of the Cross commenting on stanzas 20 and 21 of The Spiritual Canticle says: “In these two stanzas the Bridegroom, the Son of God, gives the bride-soul possession of peace and tranquility by conforming the lower part to the higher, cleansing it of all its imperfections, bringing under rational control the natural faculties and motives, and quieting all the other appetites mentioned in these two stanzas. The meaning of these stanzas is: First, the Bridegroom conjures and commands the useless wanderings of the phantasy and imaginative power to cease once and for all. He also puts under the control of reason the two natural powers, the irascible and the concupiscible, which were previously somewhat of an affliction to the soul. And, insofar as is possible in this life, he perfects the three faculties (memory, intellect, and will) in regard to their objects. What is more, he conjures and commands the four passions (joy, hope, fear, and sorrow) so from now on they will be mitigated and controlled by reason” (SC 20&21, 4).

“The devil, being envious and sad over the soul’s peace and good when God grants it recollection and sweetness in himself, strives to put horror and fear in the spirit so as to hinder that good. And sometimes he does this as though he were threatening her there in the spirit. When he becomes aware of his inability to reach the inmost part of the soul because of her deep recollection and union with God, he tries to cause distraction, wanderings, conflicts, sorrows, and dread, at least in the sensory part, to see if in this way he can disturb the bride in her bridal chamber” (SC 21&22, 9).

“It is quite true that even though the devil is ignorant of the nature of these very interior and secret spiritual communications, he frequently perceives that one is receiving them because of the great quietude and silence some of them cause in the sensory part. And since he is aware that he cannot impede them in the depths of the soul, he does everything possible to excite and disturb the sensory part, which he can affect with sufferings, horrors, and fears. He intends by this agitation to disquiet the
superior and spiritual part of the soul in its reception and enjoyment of that good.” (St. John of the Cross, 
The Dark Night 2, 23, 4. Hereafter ‘N’ and the number of the book prefixed.)
41 St. John of the Cross, Sayings of Light and Love 70. Hereafter Sayings.
42 Sayings 71.
43 Dorothy Figen “Is Buddhism a Religion?” Beginning Insight Meditation and other essays, Buddhist 
44 Dr. B. Alan Wallace, ‘Is Buddhism Really Non-Theistic?’ Lecture given at the National Conference of the 
American Academy of Religion, Boston, Mass., Nov. 1999, p. 8 as cited in 
45 The Sermon on the Mount is a collection of sayings and teachings of Jesus, which emphasizes his moral 
teaching found in the Gospel according to Matthew chapters 5–7.