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Humans: after God, the most mysterious and enigmatic beings! (Joseph of Vatopaidi)

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There's no doubt that, after God, humans are the most mysterious and enigmatic beings. From the beginning of our history, it can be seen that within us co-exist two opposing forces which attempt to gain domination and win us over to their side: good and evil, life and death, God and the devil. Each in a different way and by different means. But what's the factor by which we feel and discern not only these circumstances, but all the realities which are in the perceptible world around us?



No sooner do we acquire our senses in this world than we see and feel with them and we describe all the material things around us. But though dumb beasts see, with their senses, the mass of an object without understanding either its essence or its particular character, when we people look at any form of matter we're able,

through some mysterious power, to describe it in all its dimensions. We determine its time, its features, its use, we change it, reduce it, increase it, dissolve it and transform it as we wish. In general terms, we subject it and manage it as we see fit. This mysterious thing within us is our spirit, which can't be described by material things, nor does it resemble them, nor can they accommodate it or surround it. Even we ourselves don't know its form or quality. And although, compared with matter, it's invisible, immaterial, and indescribable, it nevertheless constitutes not only the truest reality within the environment of material things (since the mysteries of the material world are interpreted and understood through the immaterial spirit), but it's also the measure against which they're assessed. Since it's reality, imagine how great the value of the spirit must be. 'For what does it profit people if they gain the whole world but lose their life? Or what can they give in return for their life?' (*Matth.* 16, 26), as our Lord Jesus Christ said.

The conclusion is that the whole of our visible life, which is acted out within space and time is founded on the invisible powers of the soul (that is, of the spirit): on feelings, perception, judgment, decisions and conscience. Our spirit is a miracle-working workshop within which the impressions which are received by the senses are transformed in an inconceivable manner into thoughts.

(To be continued)