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How did man used to live in Paradise? (Elder Joseph of Vatopaidi)

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Paradise was a divine place, a fitting abode for man, who has been created “in the image and likeness of God”.



He lived there in the bliss of the divine attributes, which were integrated into his very essence. He had the sense of being superior and steward of all other created

beings. He was dispassionate, lived without concerns, care, or officiousness for his life. He was not hard pressed for any necessity. He only had one task, that of the angels: to constantly and ceaselessly praise the Creator. The fullness of his likeness to God did not allow him to have any doubts and questions. His indulgence was to participate in the fullness of divine consummate love. According to Saint John of Damascus, "Man was residing in the most superior, unrivaled and most beautiful place, having God as a cohabiter. He had God as his bright garment, was surrounded by His grace and was taking delight in the sweetest product of His contemplation".

Is there any higher indulgence than the feeling that you are holding onto and possessing that which you love and especially if the subject of your love is God?



Excerpts from the book 'Discourse on Mount Athos' by Elder Joseph of Vatopedi.

Translated by Olga Konari Kokkinou from the Greek edition: Γέροντος Ιωσήφ Βατοπαιδινού, Συζητήσεις στον Άθωνα, Ψυχοφελή Βατοπαιδινά 13, Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου, Έκδοσις Α΄2003