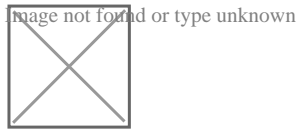


What are the characteristic attributes and the powers of human soul? (Elder Joseph of Vatopaidi)

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At no stage of

the creation did God the Creator, express His satisfaction, except during the creation of man, which strangely enough did not happen by command like the other beings for which “he spoke, and they came to be” (Psalm.33, 9). Neither man’s abode came to be by command since “the LORd God planted a garden in Eden, in the east” (Genesis 2, 8) Therefore, the most crucial trait of the human soul is God’s breath; that is, its likeness to its Creator. This means that the soul is able to assimilate the divine attributes. Word God has said so after His incarnation by calling us ‘friends and brothers and heirs of his Father and co-heirs with Him’. What else is mightier or more valuable than to become existentially kin with God? The Lord has granted us gifts which, according to Peter, “the angels long to look into” (A Peter 1, 12).

According to the teachings of our God-minded Fathers, the forces of the soul are four: Prudence, wisdom, valor and justice. These act through the so called “tripartite part of the soul”. That is, the rational, the emotional and the part which has to do with desires (επιθυμητικό). The task of prudence is to incite the emotional part; self discipline or wisdom to incite the rational part towards watchfulness and sound judgment; justice to rouse the ‘desire’-part towards virtue and the task of valor to regulate the five senses to perform rationally.

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