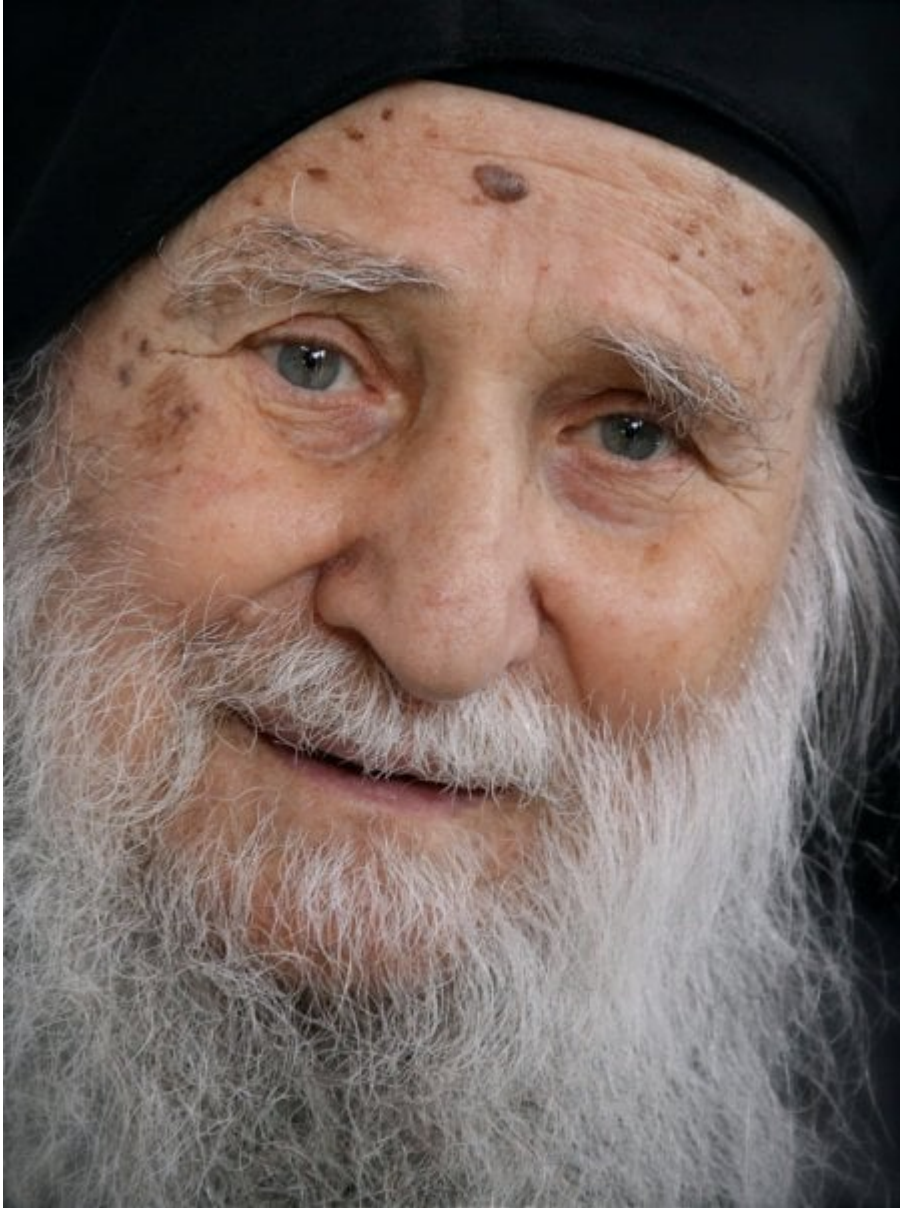


24 Φεβρουαρίου 2017

Testimony from Mount Athos, On delusion (Elder Joseph of Vatopaidi)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



I think that we will not

deviate from our subject if we give here a more detailed account of this demonic calamity which torments mankind. Delusion is the devil substantially and existentially. Through wrongful and selfish thoughts and judgements he has severed himself from the truth, God, from whom he had been receiving his participation in the “well being” and the entire normal performance of his

personality. Thus he became The delusion, because he has not been truly and correctly thinking and acting. Having then been subjected to a total reversal, he first revolted against his own self and then he passed on to his victims his own corruption.

According to our Fathers, only good has a real existence. The non good is devoid of personality and status. This is what has happened to the devil by necessity; He has lost his personality. However, when he is trying to assume a status and a personality, which he is naturally lacking, he forges it and this is what delusion is.

Of course the devil exists as an entity, because he has died in the face of the Lord as well as in the sense of any goodness, but he exists as a body of "death" in accordance with his corrupted entity. Nevertheless, he does not present himself under this nothingness but steals the methods and schemes of whatever is good, useful and beneficial- acting falsely and deceitfully- and deludes those who believe in him. He incessantly tries to haul human nature into the revolt of his own demise, either totally or partly. This act is and is called DELUSION.

Satan's first frontal attack was seen during the first appearance of divine revelation. The Creator's providence towards His created beings extends beyond His creating energy towards their preservation as a constant and prolonged intervention. The Devil cannot corrupt God's constructive intervention towards the creation in accordance with the unspeakable and unfathomable ways of His divine All Might. Thus he deceitfully interferes with the prolonged preservation and stewardship of the creation, especially of the rational beings.

He has launched his first attack on the forefathers. He has distorted before them God's precepts according to His providence, which He had promoted as necessary for the preservation and progression towards their final destination. After this success, the devil has assumed as a permanent obligation to follow the conditions and laws of corruption: to incorrectly convince man to rebel against all truth, bragging at the same time that he is obstructing the divine designs for the existence and destination of each being.

Once we examine the history since the creation of man, we see how the devil has consistently fought man always pursuing the same goal: to deceive him away from the knowledge of God. Even when he pretends to take the appearance of deity, with which he has been deceiving man for years, this is what he was aiming at: to deceive man not to look for and find the true God and consequently attain his salvation.

Word God by his incarnation has fatally crashed the deification of the evil one, revealing the true knowledge of God and recalling people to the truth. But again the unscrupulous devil has entrenched behind delusion in another form. Up until now, the fight was in the initial stages. It was preventing man from knowing God, Who is the Truth. This is one type of the general satanic combat.

The second kind was manifested, when man by the best dispensation of providence, perceived the revealed and spoken God. Since the enemy can no longer rescind the revealed truth, he does not try to convince man to deny it- even though this is what he partly tries to achieve these days- but to distort it, by falsifying the conditions and the dogmas of its authenticity in order to prevent its disciples receiving the forthcoming rewards, which are the divine promises and man's salvation.

This distortion from the proper belief is called 'heresy' and 'delusion'. Through the innumerable heresies the devil attacks the Church ever since its establishment. This is what the parable of the tares meant by "the evil man", who has sown dandel weeds among wheat. Our Lord has allowed the weed to coexist with the wheat until the day of harvest. This havoc maker splits up and confuses mankind through divisions, scandals, false religions, heresies, factions, and all kinds of delusions and divisions. Christ's Church, which is the truth, is striving to ride over such rage and disturbance. This is how and why these numerous scandals exist on earth and increase for as many days, causing many, who do not recognize this mystery, to feel uneasy. With the passing of time, all those who will be around when "*the fulfillment of the ages*" (A Corinthians 10, 11) comes, the signs of the times will be even gloomier because the deceiver of the universe will have a premonition that "*his time is short*". "*Then the dragon was enraged at the woman(the Church) and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring-those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus*" (Revelation 12, 17)

There is an even darker chaos than Satan's delusion, which is always timely and more fitting nowadays.

There are two motivations, which are entwined with human life and open the door to this type of delusion. One motive is man's intense wish to find out about his future and generally to understand the reasons why some misfortunes occur in his life. The second motive is his complex curiosity to learn about events beyond nature. The true knowledge of each supernatural event is acquired only through the grace which itself is beyond nature. The deceiver devil finds here the proper ground to sow delusion. As a spirit who is beyond nature presents himself in the role of divine grace to us, who have a material and thick body, in order to deceive us by presenting images and apparitions as true revelations.

Spiritual law, as the code of divine providence towards created beings, imposes such measures and means on elements and people, regulating the present life. This is how the cycle of the meaning of life is constructed. Through the various sad and painful events which occur in our lives, God regulates this life in the present and in the future, in accordance with the conditions and laws of the providence of His governance of beings. Most people are ignorant of the temptations of this kind. In their effort to avoid them, they fall into Satan's snares, while he pretends to be the Savior. Man has not managed to free himself from Satan's delusion, even though the latter has always been proved to be a deceiver and an impostor. He demands a high price to be paid by his subjects as a reward. The latter do not feel the extent of the damage done to them. When they submit to him they find it hard to get rid of his satanic authority, which just like slavery strangles their will and their freedom. The curious and the selfish are being deceived in the same way, when they enter the deep things of Satan, misled by false appearances in order to find the truth. Thus, these days we have the tragic victims among the youth. This causes unbearable pain to those in the know and indifference and apathy to the irresponsible 'responsible' officials. These days, the dragon, the ancient snake and Satan passes over his most deceitful messages through the eastern religions, which hold on to the ancient magic symbols and sings. Even after his fall, man who has been created "*in the image and likeness*" of God, still retains the concept and desire for that which is beyond nature as part of his existence. God Word, by His presence, not only has He revealed the essence of this concept but has also fulfilled it, imparting to man through His body, the Church, the authority and power to inherit the fullness of what is beyond nature, by becoming son of God through grace.

The most cunning devil imitates the various stages through which man participates in that which is beyond nature by the sanctifying divine grace. Then as usual he fakes the true appearance of God with the illusions of his own malice. That's how

he lulls his victims, prompting them to believe that they are doing well, since they see or feel things beyond nature, supposedly the same ones which the Church accepts as true. This is the trap into which the curious and the selfish fall. However, the essence of the communion with that which is beyond nature does not consist of a vision or of a comforting illusion, in which one moves a table or another thing, or if some strange voice is heard, or something is being lit, or something appears, a paper a book or whatever else interests the villain medium. Communion with that which is beyond nature occurs by the fulfillment of the divine promises, which our Lord has bequeathed to the faithful. *“To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”* (John 1, 12) – not just spectators of mysteries and gifts beyond nature, but heirs: *“heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ”* (Romans 8, 17). This can only occur by the divine mysteries of the Church, as the body of Christ.

The common denominator is repentance and its fruits are the holy virtues, which fulfill the personality and the character of the spiritual person. We can expect to receive the divine energies, which are beyond nature, as an enjoyment through repentance. We cannot receive them by the deceptions and mediations of crooks and fraudsters, by magic and the yoga of the demonic commands.

As a natural sequel to the issue of delusion, which we have briefly described, the issue of discernment follows as described by our most holy Elder, Joseph.

source: *Translated by Olga Konari Kokkinou from the Greek edition: Γέροντος Ιωσήφ Βατοπαιδινού, Αθωνική Μαρτυρία, Ψυχοφελή Βατοπαιδινά 2, Έκδοσις β΄, Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου, Άγιον Όρος 2008.*