

The Repercussions of Rationalism in our Life (1) (Archimandrite Athanasios (Anastasiou), Former Abbot of the Holy Monastery of the Great Meteora)

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We might say that rationalism is excessive confidence in our reason, its elevation into the supreme authority and absolute value. It's a sinful way of thinking and living rather than a simple sin in itself. In essence, it's unbelief. Rationalism is the most characteristic and devious expression of pride, which is at the root of all our sins; it steals into every one of our actions; and it poisons all our good works. It leads to self-justification and, in the end, to unrepentance. Thus closing the door on divine mercy. Pride is the beginning and end of all evils. According to the late Elder Sophrony, in Essex, pride is 'the implacable enemy of human life; it lies at the root of all the tragedies of the human race; and it is the very essence of hell'. Proud people, be they laity, clergy or monastics, become proud individuals and bring

spiritual death, hell, not only to themselves, but also to their families, their monastery or their surroundings.



Rationalists subject pure and abundant faith to rational processes, in the search for arguments and proofs. They believe only what they can understand and what can be accepted by the brain. This is why most people today, including many of the Christians among us, doubt or even don't believe in the immortality of the soul, the existence of the next life, the resurrection of the dead, or paradise and hell. They even deny the existence of the devil, our pre-eternal enemy. They don't know that the devil is a person with a mind and will and that he is the source and cause of evil. Instead they accept, in general and vague terms, only the existence of 'powers of evil'.

They cast doubt on the sacraments of the Church, such as Confession, Holy Communion, and Marriage, the last tending to be replaced by simply living together in a free relationship outside marriage. They cherry-pick the dogmas of the faith, the Gospel commandments, worship, the religious life and tradition of the Church to suit themselves, since they're not able to conceive of them with their reason and their brain.

We should make it clear at this point that our reference to the negative

phenomenon of rationality and its repercussions on the spiritual life of each of us in no way entails any deprecation or rejection of reason itself, the highest of God's gifts to us, and the one which distinguishes us from the unreasoning animals and the rest of creation.

Rationalists replace reference to and trust in God, which is faith, with thought and ratiocination. But in this way, they essentially do away with faith, since God isn't proved but revealed to us. He's manifested in a mystical way. He's experienced in the heart, spontaneously, simply, humbly and without fanfare. This is why rationalism is actually unbelief, another form of atheism, perhaps worse than absolute and pure atheism, since it makes us complacent and deceives us into thinking that we believe- supposedly.

This is precisely what makes rationalism, the rationalist view of faith, one of the most important obstacles and most insoluble problems that threaten and alter the spiritual progress of the faithful today and stands in the way of our salvation.

We would say that rationalism isn't merely and only a specific sin, it's not a fall, an error that's natural and human and could happen to any of us who are struggling for our salvation, since no-one is sinless or infallible: all our sins and errors are forgiven when, with sincere repentance and heartbreak, we place them under the stole of our spiritual guide at the sacrament of confession. Rationalism, then, goes beyond the narrow boundaries of sin and works otherwise and differently, undermining the very foundations and essential nature of faith. It does away with relations, trust and hope because it's based solely on our logical conclusions, our individual notions and on our personal way of thinking and living.

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