



## **Main Ideas from *Philokalia***

(Edition of 1895-1900, Moscow)

### ***Spiritual Directions of Diadochus of Photiki***

The limit or the acme of faith is... immersion of the mind in God.

The limit of freedom from wealth is to desire to be possessionless even as others desire to possess.

The limit of humbleness is forgetting unfalteringly good deeds of oneself.

The limit of love is enhancing friendly attitude to those who insult and revile you.

### ***Spiritual Directions of Barsanuphius the Great and John the Prophet***

You call yourself sinful, but behave as if you are not.

The one who finds oneself sinful and guilty of many evils never disputes, quarrels, or feels angry with others, but holds everyone as better and wiser than himself.

### ***Spiritual Directions of Ephrem the Syrian***

Monk, neither desire meat, nor drink wine, lest your mind coarsen...Be not addictive to meat and wine-drinking, lest you make your mind incapable of receiving spiritual gifts.

God created man free, therefore for man are praise and punishment. Let spiritual seekers receive praise and laurels, and the negligent and criminals — punishment and pain.

The wandering eye causes much suffering to the one who follows it. Keep your eyes from wandering lest you find no straight way to chastity.

Wisely avoid adverse meetings to keep yourself in goodness.

If you want to conquer lust for wealth, love selflessness and sparing way of life.

If you want to conquer anger, develop meekness and generosity.

If you want to conquer lasting grief, mourn nothing transient; and if someone reviles at you, dishonors or irritates you, do not grieve, but, on contrary, be glad!

Grieve only if you have committed a sin, but even in this case do not grieve too much, otherwise you may become desperate.

If you want to conquer conceit, do not desire praise, laurels, nice garments, respect, favor, but like to be blamed and slandered by people, and reproach yourself as the most sinful among sinners.

If you want to conquer pride, do not say that your deed was done by your hands and might; say that with God's help and guidance it was done, not by my power and efforts.

### ***“General Principles of Spiritual Life”***

#### ***John of the Ladder***

Laymen asked me, “How we, living with wives and being encumbered with worldly duties, can know the perfect Christian life?”

I answered, “Do all good that you can, condemn no one, rob no one, deceive no one, be haughty with no one, hate no one, do not leave church assemblies, be merciful to the needy, tempt no one, do not violate the honor of others, be faithful to your wives. Living thus, you will approach the Heavenly Kingdom.”

#### ***Spiritual Directions of Abba Dorotheus***

Everyone judges about others according to one's own character... Say, someone happened to stand in night and three men are passing by him. The first of them, seen him, thinks: he is waiting for someone to commit fornication; the other thinks: he must be a thief; the third one: he arranged to go to pray with someone and is waiting for him.

I heard about a brother who, when visiting someone of the community and seeing his cell non-swept and non-cleaned, thought to himself: blessed this brother is, for he set aside the earthly concerns and is so immersed in the highest matters that has no time to tidy the cell. And if he came to a brother whose cell was tidy, swept, clean, he thought: as the soul of this brother is pure, so is his cell, and the order in his cell is in accordance with the state of his soul.

Do not desire the outcome that you want, but desire it to happen, as it will happen: thus will you be at peace with everyone.

Believe that dishonor and reproach are the medicine for curing the pride of your soul. And pray for those reproaching you as for the true healers of your soul...

In response to false accusations say: forgive me and pray for me! When people ask you whether it is true, tell the truth and then bow humbly and say again: forgive me and pray for me!

Never prefer your will to the will of your brother.

### ***“About Spiritual Struggle”***

#### ***John Cassian***

(There is) the state that consists in contemplating One God and in ardent love to Him; in this state the mind, permeated with that love, converses with God in the most direct way.

#### ***Ascetic Directions of Nilus of Sinai***

If disgrace befell over you, be glad: for if it is unjust, then your reward will be large; and if it is just, then, having learned from it, you can avoid the retribution.

There is the highest prayer of the perfect ones... — when by unsaid aspirations of spirit they

approach God, Who sees their open hearts.

### ***Spiritual Directions of Isaac of Syria***

The one of lowly mind never stays to look at a crowd, gathering of people, disorder, turmoil; pays no attention to words, talks, clamors, disturbance of senses: he seeks not to have much and be constantly busy, but to be free, without cares.

He is never in hurry or confusion; he has no hot and superficial thoughts; but he always stays in peace. There is nothing that can make him amazed, confused, terrified... All his joy and gladness is in that which is pleasing for his Lord. When he touches his forehead to the ground and directs the sight of his heart to the Holiest of the Holy,... he dares to pray only thus: whatever is going to happen to me let happen by Your will!

Desert soothes passions. But man has not just to soothe the passions but also to root them out, i.e. overcome them... The soothed passions wake up once there is a reason for them to become active again.

The one who wants to love God has to take care about the purity of the soul, first of all; this purity is attained through conquering the passions. (The one who has not conquered the passions cannot enter) chaste and pure region of the heart.

Do not hate a sinner, for we all are to be responsible.

### ***Spiritual Directions of Theodore of Edessa***

Only after we rid ourselves of passions and lust and put the desires of flesh under the control of Spirit, only then we accept the cross and follow Christ.

And “withdrawal from the world” is nothing but destruction of passions and manifestation of the innermost life in Christ.