

Man's Existence on the Mission towards Theosis*

What is the destination of those created beings that have reason? Creatures of reason have BEING, not simply and by chance; it is their mission and destination. The created nature of the human being has THEOSIS as its mission: Man is to become, by Grace, like the CAUSE of his being, i.e. like GOD. This is because Scripture says: ***“Let us make man according to our image and our likeness”*** (Genesis, 1: 26). God, however, is the-Being-one, the One who Is. He is the one who by nature has BEING. If man does not orient himself towards BEING, he cannot become like God.

All humans are made in His image, but only those who obey God have his likeness; only those who have subordinated their free-will to the will of God and who have humbled themselves to their peers can be like God. Therefore, since our existence is for this purpose, let us abide by (*conform to*) this likeness with the archetype, with God- -from whom we have received existence, and from whom we have BEING according to His act, or Grace--observing the Divine Commandments and whatever is pleasing to God.

On the contrary, when we behave differently, we forget our mission, and our existence takes a course towards a dead end and reaches a futile position. The cause which leads us to such a spiritual precipice is acting according to our own volition, doing whatever we want uncritically and indiscriminately. When our mind leaves its freedom of volition unrestrained, volition throws us down (just as the rampageous horse throws down its rider) towards every spiritual deviation. For Scripture says: ***“The ways of an ungodly man are an abomination to the Lord; but He loves those who pursue righteousness. The instruction¹ of the virtuous man is recognized by those who pass by², but he who hates correction will end shamefully”*** (Proverbs, 15:9-10); that is, even people passing by can see that the innocent, unoffending person has training and discipline, while whoever hates admonition and correction has a disgraceful end.

Therefore, the person of reason must bring to bear all his study and effort in his struggle against his own volition, in order not to give it absolute, unbridled freedom. For Scripture says: ***“He who heeds instruction is on the path to life, but he who rejects reproof goes astray”*** (Proverbs, 10:17); in other words, instruction is that which secures a righteous way of life, while unguided upbringing results in an unstable, false life.

*to become like God, to become gods-by-Grace.

¹ παιδεία = education, guidance, the formation of a child.

² παρίοντος = whoever happens to be present, thus, anyone at all.

For a person to be secure, he must build and align his individual freedom in accordance with the will of God, but a person cannot achieve this by himself. He needs a spiritual guide who will give him the foundation, instilling in him the basic elements: the fear of God, prudence, and wisdom. For Scripture says: ***“Whoever loves instruction loves understanding, but he who hates reproof is foolish”*** (Proverbs, 12:1); that is, whoever loves to be disciplined and corrected, he truly loves wisdom and is sensible, while whoever hates to be checked is a fool. And Scripture says again: ***“Where there is no governance, they fall like leaves, but salvation is found in much counsel”*** (Proverbs, 11:14); in other words, they who do not have guidance fall as haphazardly as the leaves, while security exists where there are many advisors.

For creatures of reason to benefit from their existence and not to live in vain, they must take their existence, their BEING, seriously, and orient themselves to the source of their existence, to the eternal BEING, God, in order to secure eternal well-BEING, which is eternal blessedness. For Scripture says: ***“Seize instruction, lest the Lord be angered and you are dismissed from the righteous path. When his anger is quickly kindled, blessed will be all those who believed in him”*** (Psalms 2: 12-13); in other words, be diligent in the Commandments, and look after your soul by way of instruction, because the Lord, the provider of your existence, will be angered against you, and you will be lost from the road of righteousness, which leads to eternal life. On that terrible Day, when God’s anger is abruptly lit like a fire bursting into flame, blessed will be all those who have believed in Him and have entrusted their life to Him.

M. P. (in translation)