

In the Image and Likeness (Hieromonk Dionysios (†))

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



Our good God created us in His image and likeness. The image is common to all people, but only very few have the likeness.

So let's examine what the likeness is. The likeness is when we imitate God, as much as we can, as the Saints did. If people have only the image, not the likeness as well, it does them no good, even though they're human persons and supposed to be rational. When they possess reason and still do stupid things, how can they be called rational? When they don't imitate the Lord, insofar as this is possible, in humility, meekness, righteousness, charity, wisdom and purity, but instead engage in foolish and beastly works, how can you call people like that rational? When they vie with the lion in rage, the camel in cantankerousness, the wolf in rapacity, the fox in cunning, the snake in duplicity, the dog in savagery, the stallion in desire and the pig in greed, how can they be said to be rational?



Each one of the animals we mentioned has its natural passion. But if we wretched people manage to overcome our dominant passion, we gradually fall under the sway of all the other passions, and we end up imitating all the beasts in wickedness, which makes it difficult to come to repentance. It's difficult for us to drag ourselves out of the depths of such wickedness unless somebody helps us, and particularly, of course, our most merciful Lord.

We have to force ourselves to control our conscience. If we don't fight against what our conscience tells us is wrong and chastises us for, if it reproaches us for the God-pleasing actions we left undone, out of contempt for them, then gradually it stops doing so. Then we're like a sick person who's at the point of death. You ask them if they're in pain anywhere, they say no, and then you know that they'll soon be dead. Or again, like a wound that's been infected for ages: you put a salve on it and, no matter how bad it was, it doesn't feel a thing.

In the same way, when we wretched people fall into great wickedness, it doesn't matter how many threats we hear- about Hell, Gehenna, the fire or the sleepless worm- we don't care. We think that it's all a fairy-story and that the people who teach it are tiresome and annoying. We're senseless, like a shepherd who's bothered by his dogs barking at night and can't go off to sleep because of them, without thinking that, if the dogs are quiet, the wolves will take the opportunity to prey upon the flock, aided by the darkness of the night.

This life of ours is like the night, and the cunning, rapacious wolves are like the demons who long to drink the blood of our souls and to exclude us from the face of our God and Creator. I appeal to your love, let's not weaken, let's listen to the holy Scriptures, and let's not disparage those who remind us of God's words, however lowly and illiterate these people may be.

(to be continued)