

What you want to know about despondency



As we have already frequently said, this—we mean despondency—is very often one of the branches of talkativeness, and its first child.

Despondency is a slackness of soul, a weakening of the mind, neglect of asceticism, hatred of the vow made. It is the blessing of worldlings. It accuses God of being merciless and without love for men.

It is being languid in singing psalms, weak in prayer, stubbornly bent on service, resolute in manual labor, indifferent in obedience.

A person under obedience does not know despondency, having achieved spiritual things by means of sensory things.

Community life is opposed to despondency. But she is a constant companion of the hermit. She will never leave him till his death, and wrestles with him daily till his end. Seeing an anchorite's cell, she smiles, and creeps up and camps nearby.

A doctor visits the sick in the morning, but despondency visits ascetics about

noonday.

Despondency is a pretext for hospitality. She insists that by means of manual labor, alms could be given; and she urges us eagerly to visit the sick, recalling Him who said, 'I was sick and you visited Me'. She puts it into our heads to go out visiting the dejected and faint-hearted, and sets one faintheart to comfort another.

She reminds those standing at prayer of necessary duties. And, brutish as she is, she leaves no stone unturned to find some plausible pretext to drag us from prayer as with a kind of halter.

At noon the demon of despondency produces shivering, headache, and even colic. Before the meal tough, the sick man gathers his strength. And when the table is laid he jumps out of bed. But the hour of prayer has come; again the body is weighed down. He had begun to pray, but it steeps him in sleep, and tears his response to shreds with untimely yawns.

Based on Saint John of the Ladder

— Source: asceticexperience.com