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The carnal thought: how to fight it



He who drives away the carnal thought by prayer is like someone fighting with a lion; he who subdues him by his resistance is someone still pursuing his enemy; but he who has once for all reduced its appeal to nothing, even though he is still in the flesh, is as one who has already risen from his coffin.

If a sign of true purity is to be unmoved by dreams during sleep, then it is certainly a mark of sensuality to be subject to emissions from (impure) thoughts when awake.

How to fight the carnal thought

He who fights the carnal thought by bodily hardship and perspiration is like one who has tied his foe to a dry branch. But he who opposes him by temperance, sleeplessness and vigil is like one who puts a dog-collar on him. He who opposes him by humility, freedom from irritability and thirst is like one who has killed his enemy and hidden him in the sand. And by sand I mean humility, because it

produces no fodder for the passions but is mere earth and ashes.

One keeps this tormentor bound by struggles, another by humility, and another by divine revelation. The first resembles the morning star, the second the full moon, and the third the blazing sun; and they all have their home in heaven. But from the dawn comes light, and in the light the sun rises. So too with what has been said, we can reflect and make discoveries.

Based on Saint John of the Ladder

— Source: asceticexperience.com