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How to start the spiritual life



Those of us who wish to start the spiritual life, to go out of the wordly things, to go out of Egypt and to fly from Pharaoh, certainly need some Moses as a mediator with God and from God, who, standing between action and contemplation, will raise hands of prayer for us to God, so that guided by Him we may cross the sea of sin and rout the Amalek of the passions.

That is why those who have surrendered themselves to God, deceive themselves if they suppose that they have no need of a director. Those who came out of Egypt had Moses as their guide, and those who fled from Sodom had an angel.

The former are like those who are healed of the passions of the soul by the care of physicians: these are they who come out of Egypt. The latter are like those who long to put off the uncleanness of the wretched body.

That is why they need a helper, an angel, so to speak, or at least one equal to an angel. For in proportion to the corruption of our wounds we need a director who is indeed an expert and a physician.

Why we need toil when we start the spiritual life

Those who aim at ascending with the body to heaven, need violence indeed and constant suffering especially in the early stages of their renunciation, until our pleasure-loving dispositions and unfeeling hearts attain to love of God and chastity by visible sorrow.

A great toil, very great indeed, with much unseen suffering, especially for those who live carelessly, until by simplicity, deep angerlessness and diligence, we make our mind, which is a greedy kitchen dog addicted to barking, a lover of chastity and watchfulness.

The God’s help is certain

But let us who are weak and passionate have the courage to offer our infirmity and natural weakness to Christ with unhesitating faith, and confess it to Him; and we shall be certain to obtain His help, even beyond our merit, if only we unceasingly go right down to the depth of humility.

Based on Saint John of the Ladder

In the photo the cell of the Mount Athos’ ridge

— Source: asceticexperience.com