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Chapter 4 questions

1) HH pope shenouda talks about how majority of people are more concerned about their bodies, and he explain to us how can we provide nourishment for the soul that help it grow, please explain.

In order to keep the spirit strong and growing, we should give her all nourishing necessities of all the means of grace such as prayer, fasting, spiritual readings, contemplations, prostrations, spiritual gatherings, and spiritual retreats and counselling. We should also enable the spirit to grow in the life of virtue through love that binds us to God and through the life of repentance which preserve the purity of our spirits. The apostle said: ***“for to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God...so then,those who are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8: 6-8).***

Carnal people cannot inherit the Kingdom of God because it is a spiritual kingdom, ***“for all that is in the world- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 Jn 2:16)***

2) Is the body a sin? Please explain.

No, the body is not a sin nor an evil otherwise God would not have created it.

- 1-** It is sufficient that God took a body.
- 2-** The apostle tells us: ***“or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you”, “do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?”(1 Cor. 6:19,15)***
- 3-** God will raise this same body on the last day as a spiritual and an illumined body (1 Cor .15)
- 4-** If the body were a sin we would not venerate the bodies of the saints.
- 5-** The body is holy because we were immersed into the water of baptism and was consecrated and took a new nature, it was anointed with the holy Chrism of Myron and became a temple for the Lord. (1 Cor 3:16).

This is how we should look at the body, we should view it with respect and dignity whether it is our own bodies or other people’s and remember what the apostle says: ***“if anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him” (1 Cor.3:17) “...therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God’s”.***

- 6- The body join the spirit in worshipping God, the spirit pray & the body stand or kneels or make prostrations or lifts up pure hands and pure eyes, the body fasts, it toils in the service and in helping others.
- 7- We look on the body as a small church, holy and consecrated with Myron, in which the spirit of God dwells. It is assumed that out of this small church comes praises, prayers, hymns, psalmody, and spiritual songs. ***“let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice” (Ps. 141:2)***

3) The Lord said to the angel of the church of Sardis” *I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead” (Rev 3:1), what does it mean?, explain and give example.*

The body which lives in its lust is considered dead even though it is throbbing with life, as the apostle said” ***...the body is dead because of sin” (Rom. 8:10).***

The body that lives in sin does not only rebel against its own spirit but also against the Spirit of God that dwells in it, the person that his body leads his spirit is degraded to the level of animals, because the true life is in God and he who is separated from God by sin is considered dead even though he is alive. The father said about the prodigal son: ***“...for this my son was dead” (Lk 15:24)***

The apostle gave us an example of the dissipated widow ***“she who lives in pleasure is dead while she is alive” (1 Tim 5:6).***

And he who repents returns to life as was said about the prodigal son when he repented: ***“...for this my son was dead and now he is alive again “ (Lk 14:24).***

4) What does the apostle mean when he said *“to be spiritually minded is life and peace”*

The person who puts before him that he has one spirit, and that if he directs it to the way of salvation he profits everything, but if he loses this spirit he loses everything, and as our Lord said: ***“for what is a man profited if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul” (Matt 16:26).*** he who walks in the spiritual path concerns himself with purifying his spirit and connecting it with God, he walks in the spirit, grow in the spirit and becomes a spiritual person. He returns to the image of God and preserve himself continually in the image of God. The spirit is the breath which God breathed in man and he became a living spirit whereas the body is the earthly element because it was created out of the dust of the earth. Through spiritual conducts man becomes similar to the angels and has friendship and communion with God.

The Holy Bible says: ***“walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh”(Gal. 5:16)***

5) What is the relationship between your spirit and the spirit of God?

The spiritual person submits his body to his spirit and submits his spirit to the spirit of God & this becomes the proof of his son-ship to God. The Holy Bible says: ***“for as many as are led by the spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Romans 8:14)***. if the spirit of God directs a person, he does not sin and ***“the wicked one does not touch him” (1 Jn 3:9)***, and indeed this is how the children of God are marked out from others. It is not only limited to the negative side of abandoning sin but from the positive side the fruit of the spirit is manifest. Concerning this the apostle says: ***“but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal 5:22-23)***. He also said ***“those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires”*** and added ***“if we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit”***.

The person who is led by the spirit of God does not quench the Spirit nor grieve the Spirit of God within him & does not resist the Spirit of God but he completely resigns to the work of the Spirit within him. He does not betray God by opening the doors of his heart or of his mind to sin which resists the work of the spirit but he co-work with the spirit of God, thus he enters into fellowship with the Holy Spirit. (2Cor 13:14) and becomes a partaker of the Divine nature (2 Pet 1:4).

Therefore, walking in the spirit; is walking in your spirit and the Spirit of God, then your spirit will be beautiful with virtues of love and humility, faith and labor for the sake of God, ready to meet God ***“as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev 21:2)***.

Therefore concern yourself with the beauty of your spirit so that when you take off your body, your spirit will be acceptable in heaven, having the pleasing aroma of Christ.

6) What is the meaning of uprightness?

The spiritual person is an upright person, he is upright in his thoughts, in his conscience, and in his conduct before God and men. An upright person is a just person, he does not behave wrongly either consciously or unconsciously, he does not combine truthfulness with falsehood. He walks in a straight path from which he does not stray.

7) Explain uprightness versus extremity.

Exaggeration in the spiritual path is not acceptable, whether it be exaggeration in words or in description or in behavior, because exaggeration in words and description are kinds of telling lies, neither of them gives the real picture. Exaggeration in behavior is not upright because it is a type of extremity and may turn into pharisaism . Those who are strict with themselves become accustomed to rigidity and they constrain others. Then their judgment becomes unjust, cruel and perverted, our Lord upbraided the scribes and Pharisees because they bound heavy burdens, hard to bear and laid them on men’s shoulders (Matt 23:4), they gave people an unobtainable picture of the Kingdom of God, thus they closed the kingdom of heaven before people, they neither got in themselves nor allowed those who were entering to go in (Matt 23:13).

Extremity lacks steadfastness, the person may be extreme in the way he fasts and may continue in this way for some time, he may think that he has been raised to a higher spiritual level, but suddenly he is unable to continue, he may revert to a much lower level than those who walk in the way slowly, gradually, and gently.

The spiritual fathers used to counsel their disciples to avoid extremity because on one hand it does not agree with the truth and on the other hand it lacks continuity and may cause the person to change to the opposite extreme. They used to say "little with continuity is better than much with intermission".

8) Explain uprightness versus falsehood

A person might walk in falsehood through ignorance. Nevertheless his behavior is condemned as being void of uprightness, his way is not straight because it is against truth and against righteousness whether or not he is aware of it. Our Holy Bible says "***there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death***" (Prov 14:12, 16:25)

Pride may visualize to a person that all his behavior is straight, whereas the truth could be the complete opposite. Our Holy Bible says: "***the way of a fool is right in his own eyes***". (Prov 12:15).

Unrighteousness needs a humble heart which perceives its errors and rectifies its ways, but the haughty person continues in his wrong behavior because he rejects acknowledging the errors of his way. Here we observe the strong relationship between uprightness and humility.

9) Unrighteousness versus hypocrisy

Some people try to combine truthfulness and falsehood through hypocrisy, the outward appearance of such people is straight while from inside they are the contrary, they appear as righteous but the truth is they are sinners. They are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful from outside, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Through hypocrisy they combine two types of perversion; their erring inside is not straight, and their outward appearance of unrighteousness is an act of dishonesty, thus they fall into dual sin. Judah was of that kind; he kissed Christ the Lord as a friend while he was handing Him over to His enemies with a kiss. He sat next to Him, ate with Him, and dipped his morsel in the same dish while he received the price of his conspiracy against Him.

Also Delilah with Samson, she showed him love and intimacy while she handed him over to his enemies.

On a higher level is the devil, while he pretended that he was offering Adam and Eve the way to glory, he was acting towards their destruction, and with us he acts in the same manner. The hypocrite person often has two faces and two tongues, thus he is not upright in his behavior.

Another example is Balaam who tried to combine the money of Balak son of Zippor with the construction of seven altars for the Lord, he said "***how shall I curse whom God has not cursed?***"

Must I not take heed to speak what the Lord has put in my mouth? (Num 23: 8,12), and at the same time he presented Balak with the advice with which he would destroy the people. Balaam thought that it was enough that his tongue did not utter a curse to the people while his heart was seeking their destruction. The upright person's heart and tongue are together in one integral direction.

"These people draw near to Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me" (Is 29:13).

Also the false prophets who told King Ahab that he would prevail. (1Kin 22:13-22).

10) Uprightness verses deception

Jacob was not upright when he deceived his father Isaac & told him that he was his first born Esau (Gen 27:19), neither was he upright when he put the skin of the goat on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck.

His mother Rebecca was not upright when she advised him of all this, adding that may his curse fall on her (Gen 27:13).

Jacob brothers were not upright when they deceived their father Jacob by dipping Joseph's many colored tunic into the blood of a goat so that their father might think that he was devoured by a wild beast (Gen 37:31-33).

the upright per is open and explicit, he does not lie or deceive, nor that he solve his problems through deceit. Deceit is against truth, the upright person is truthful, he does not allow himself to be unfair to others, if he has an aim, he will obtain it through an upright way.

11) Uprightness verses artfulness

If a crooked person does not reach his aim through upright ways, he employs trickery, and if he still does not succeed, he employs artfulness, this involves going around in circles, the crooked line is not a straight line and the circle is not a straight line. The upright person rejects all the roundabout and devious ways by which a person tries to conceal his intension in order to achieve his aim

12) Uprightness and trust

The upright person is trusted by whoever communicates with him, his uprightness gives an idea of his spirituality and devoutness.

