

CE (MAI) ÎNSEAMNĂ ASCEZA ASTĂZI? SENSUL EXISTENȚIAL AL EXERCITIILOR SPIRITUALE ÎN FILOSOFIA STOICĂ ȘI SPIRITUALITATEA CREȘTINĂ

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Abstract

It is known that the Christian life involves an ascetical dimension. But this statement has become a theological truism, because the very concept of askesis (gr. ἄσκησις – „exercise”) is sometimes given an elementary interpretation within the christian spirituality – especially within the Orthodox Church – by reducing it to the practice of fasting. Thus, in our times, the noetic side of asceticism (as mind training) is often omitted or, under the influence of hesychast tradition, reduced to the practice of devotional prayer. On the one hand, asceticism is seen outside the Church as anachronistic, restrictive and incompatible with the specific aspects of modern life, on the other hand, the clerics and the theologians (especially through pastoral discourse) also contribute to this misunderstanding by highlighting some reductionist aspects of askesis, which leads to a formalistic and legalistic interpretation of the ascetic dimension of the Christian life. Therefore, in this article, we propose to make an existential hermeneutic of this concept, bringing to light three spiritual exercises that we find in Stoic philosophy and Christian spirituality, which are relevant not only for monks, but especially for Christians who live in the city: (1) Exercising attention to the present, (2) Examination of conscience, (3) Premeditation of evil and contemplation of death.

Keywords: askesis, spiritual exercise, contemplation of death, christian spirituality, stoic philosophy, hermeneutics

Introducere

Considerăm că spiritualității ortodoxe, așa cum se manifestă ea în praxisul contemporan și mai ales prin ceea ce se livrează în discursul pastoral actual, îi este necesară o actualizare și o mai mare clarificare a ceea ce înseamnă asceza, pentru creștinul ortodox al secolului XXI.