

**Sergii ESKOV**  
**HESYCHASM IN THE DISCOURSE OF PHILOSOPHICAL**  
**ANTROPOLOGY**

*This article provides a philosophical – anthropological analysis of hesychasm reveals its essence and meaning. There are determined basic criteria of hesychasm: quietude; smart doing, the practice of inner prayer, catharsis of mind and heart, and a thereof combination; bodily techniques, aiming at union with God, contemplation of Tabor light from the Divine. Hesychasm also appears in two ways – as a meta-organic phenomenon, which is a compound of anthropological (individual) practice and historical (collectively, united) tradition, and, as a kind of monastic life.*

**Keywords:** *Lord, divine energy, anthropology, catharsis, mind, heart, mind-heart, smart doing, the practice of inner prayer, quietude, contemplation, uncreated light, deification, psychosomatic method, asceticism.*

**Problem statement.** In this era of the new millennium the phenomenon of spirituality updated review of practices experienced knowledge of God, again rising interest in Eastern Christian mysticism – hesychasm.

**Previous research.** The most profound investigator of this issue – it is St. Gregory Palamas in his fundamental work “The Triads in Defense of the Holy Hesychasts”, he advocates quietism leads and controversy over mental prayer, vision the Tabor Light by hesychasts of Athos, raises the question about the possibility of an experimental cognition of God through the knowledge is not the divine essence and His energies. Serious modern researcher is isichasm Horuzhy S. S. In his suggestive reference “Hesychasm. Annotated Bibliography” – It gives the definition of Hesychasm and smart doing, and in the work “To Phenomenology of austerity”, examines the principles and types of deeds of the Fathers, on the premises and hesychasm. Archimandrite Cyprian (Kern) in “Anthropology of St. Gregory Palamas” identifies criteria isichasm teachings of St. Gregory Palamas, as well as examines his doctrine of man and of deification, this position is protected on the basis of the teachings of the ancient Fathers. The publication “Philokalia” in Russian translation of Bishop Theophan the Recluse contains sayings and teachings of the Orthodox ascetics, is a spiritual reference point for the rest of the monks on the road to perfection. However, determination of criteria hesychasm through philosophical – anthropological analysis, no one previously has not been made.

**The aim** – identify key criteria of hesychasm reveal its essence and meaning.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Mf. 5, 8)” [1, p. 1015].

**Main body.** Man, created in the image and likeness of God, had the opportunity through communication with the Creator in Paradise experimental to know Him and grow in godlikeness. But after the fall, this opportunity was lost, and all the faculties of man, his spiritual and physical forces suffered distortion. Moving away from God, Adam immediately got a distorted view of Him. Because

Godforsakenness all subsequent existence of mankind was fulfilled longing for Paradise. The memory of it remained in the heart of Adam and passed many generations of his descendants. The whole history of mankind has been riddled with finding ways in which one could return to the lost bliss. And this way would not have been found if it had not happened event of the incarnation of the Promised Son of God. Truth incarnation is at the center of Christian anthropology, theology, soteriology and ecclesiology – all of that and believe what the Church lives. It has many tools that people can use to get onto a path leading to the personal encounter with Christ. And one of these means is hesychasm – a move that cover a wide range of Byzantine monasticism in XIII–XIV centuries and reached at the time of the life of St. Gregory Palamas, as expressed in his works, one of the highest moments of its development. The main center for the propagation of the movement was Athos. But we should not think that Athos hesychasm in XIV-th century was something completely new in the history of Eastern monasticism. Along with coenobitic monasticism, an active par excellence, in the Orthodox Church anciently existed silent direction, contemplative, that is, in fact, hesychast. Thus, already in the IV–th century monastic movement in the deserts of Nitria and Skete, lying to the west of the Nile Delta, in the Thebes, which lies above on the Nile river, the neighborhood of the Thebes, taking massive, spreading to other areas in the east of the Roman Empire and creates both the main channel of all the later Christian asceticism, cenobitic (kinoviynoe) and desert (secluded, hermit). This is evidenced not only by numerous lives of the saints of all eras of church history and stories of ancient patericon but, and extant, ascetic creation “silent” spirit. Outstanding representatives of this trend were: St Anthony the Great, St Macarius of Egypt, Evagrius of Pontus, the Reverend Neil Sinai, Abba Ammon, Amma Sinklitikiya.

Hesychasm is a way of spiritual life and godliness. In the East, practiced this way for a long time the first founders of monastic asceticism, he did the same by an experienced knowledge of God, visions internal mystical insights. Orthodox theologians consider hesychasm in different ways: as a fundamental basis of Orthodoxy, a separate monastic tradition, or even an entire culture, but some are not allocating hesychasm a separate tradition, treat it just as a kind of monastic life. Other, as an example of Fr. John Meyendorff, believe that hesychasm “can’t be considered the only Orthodox mystical tradition” [2, p. 278], as a monastic mystical tradition has always taken various forms, one of which is hesychasm. Modern researchers hesychasm represent him as a model of synergetic anthropology.

The Orthodox Church saw the victory of the teachings of St. Gregory Palamas triumph not of any particular mystical teachings, but the victory of the Orthodoxy. St. Gregory Palamas raised theological issues such as the relation and the relationship between God and man, which have different nature and, moreover, the nature of God is not knowable by man, as the transcendent God manifests itself in the immanent world, how is it possible deification of human organs and which are involved in this? And the answers to them, and he saw in hesychasm as ways of knowing God experienced, who pointed to the knowability of God, not through its

essence and energy, through His manifestation in this world. St. Gregory taught that, though the essence of God is unknowable deity can directly contemplate and learn thanks to the presence in the world uncreated, existing eternally divine energies: “God is not contemplated in His essence super essential and worshipful in His gift, that is in his power in the grace of adoption, in the uncreated deification in hypostatic visible shining forth” [4, p. 22]. Opportunity to meet with God, hesychasts seen in cleansing themselves, their mind, heart, their soul from vices and passions. Devotees saw the need to eradicate the passions and purify your heart from the thoughts that their arguments, ruled by the entire person is “a treasure trove of reasonable powers of the soul and the main instrument of bodily reasoning” [4, p. 23]. Was mandatory and purification of the mind of sinful thoughts, deaf “bedspreads evil passions” [4, p. 31]. Focusing the mind hesychasts considered doubly – externally and internally. Externally mind should have been focused on the navel, for what opponents called them hesychasts omphalepsychos, believing that hesychasts learn about the location of the soul in the navel. Inner concentration of the mind considered in conjunction with the purified mind, pure heart and their concentration in a brief prayer of Jesus. In order to ascetic mind was not distracted or flew in reverie, as “there is nothing more elusive and volatile than their own mind” [4, p. 144], the saint pointed to the psycho –somatic reception in prayer, used by hesychasts to control your mind. Method was to “closely monitor the inhalation and exhalation of breath and a little restrain” [4, p. 148] to come to a state of concentration and relaxation. Thinking about the nature of mind, St. Gregory Palamas said that “the mind is not only mind’s contemplation light and not even the highest of visible light thus, but also contemplating the light, as if the eye of the soul – “a fusion with soul mind is her vision” [4, p. 148], because talking about contemplation the Tabor light, St. Gregory speaks of his vision not only sensual eyes, but through the mind, so that even if the “gouge out the eyes of the beholder in, he will see the light no less clear” [4, p. 148]. St. Gregory Palamas teaches the necessity of distinction between the essence of mind and his energy, because speaking about the connection of the mind and heart of the mind-heart with God, he says, about the energetic connection of all the energies of the ascetic with the energy of the Lord – synergy. This ascetic practice led to opening yourself to the divine uncreated energies which mysteriously personal God is fully present in the sacraments of any Orthodox Christian to some extent assimilate these energies that ascetic sees the light of the Tabor – the same one who saw the disciples of Jesus Christ at His transfiguration on the Tabor Mount, and vision of this light is the result of hesychia which determines that this light is not demonic but is divine: “Symptom same divine light, – says St. Gregory Palamas, – arises in the soul subdue evil pleasures and passions, sedation and ordering thoughts, peace and joy of the spirit, contempt for human glory, humility, in alliance with unspeakable joy, hatred of worldly love to heaven, return the same to the one God of heaven” [4, p. 148].

One of the most profound scholars of hesychasm in our time is S. S. Horuzhy which presents this mystical flow to the secular world as an element of synergetic anthropology, is a section of the secular philosophy of the mid-

twentieth century. He says that the concept of Hesychasm has many meanings and it involves special hand Orthodox worldview and beliefs – those associated with the concept of “deification” of the ascetic Christian already in this life, with the idea of the Divine Light vision in the depths of his own heart. “Deification” is achieved not only by human effort or personal charisma, but according to the movement of the human will and the will of God. Hesychasts commonly called ascetic monks who use special techniques “smart doing” – prayer as an inner spiritual work. She performed silently and wordlessly, mind “in the depths of the human soul” [6, p. 17–22]. Researcher, speaking on hesychasm, says he points to the element of the Orthodox world, which opens the way experienced the concept of knowing God. This is possible by way of familiarizing with the divine energies through inner spiritual work done in prayer. This work is done silently and wordlessly, accomplished mind, in the depths of the human soul, helping to maximize its purification for the perception of divine grace, leading to deification. Visible sign of deification is the same vision of the light of Tabor. In ancient times, this practice is called smart Delaney hesychia. Also S. S. Horuzhy says, that aim of practice itself, is hesychasm acquisition of the Holy Spirit and the deification of the soul and the body, it “covers all areas of human life intelligible prepared ascetic in the mind of Christ, and as revealing hesychast theology and practical teaching methods and ways God’s comprehension, sensual, clearing it from the filth of passion developed through practice in fighting sin and filled with the light of grace experiences, physical, manifested specifically in psychosomatic methods of prayer and committed manner, relegating fertile energy into the physical body. The ultimate goal is the transformation of quietism and the deification of the whole man in the image of the risen Jesus Christ” [7, p. 45–47]. Hesychasm determining not only as itself a mystical doctrine, but as an ascetic practice that lifts the veil that separates this world and heaven. The practice itself implies participation in the smart doing not only the mind or heart, body or soul, but indicates the holistic effect of all energies ascetic, concentrated all its forces together for the acquisition of the Holy Spirit. S. S. Horuzhy indicates the purpose and desire of every Christian fleeing – deification and transformation of the whole person: spirit, soul and body. Communication and unity of the whole human being with God, and not a separate mind, body and soul, and therefore points to the psychosomatic techniques of prayer, thus explaining a single ministry of body and soul to God, saying that this practice affects all spheres of human life, all of its essence. But the practice itself hesychasm he sees as the root of the whole tree grows in culture, a whole system, in which one particular ascetic spiritually and historically is a link in the entire set hesychasts defined in space and time, determining a certain ascetic practice itself as a driving, locomotive force that determines in its multiplicity of hesychasm as ascetic practice or tradition, or a mystical culture, arguing that “hesychasm as a spiritual practice, in general, there is a “meta – organic system”, which is a compound of anthropological (individual) practices and historical (collectively, unity) tradition – and in this connection there is a practice of the leading element, the tradition is constituted as a medium and means of implementing the practice – a kind of organism, in the bosom of which practice

can exist and reproduce itself, a structural analogue of the species or population... She also realizes itself in history, but its boundaries are defined by the criteria of a different kind, not external, but internal. If a public institution form the exterior structure, institutions, regulations, the spiritual practice Strive to form only and their experience, and, to a greater extent, the experience is not external actions and internal “smart” doing” [6, p. 25–27]. Collegiality, on the basis of personal ascetic practice smart doing some ascetics, S. S. Horuzhy calls “meta – organic system”, institute some special form of monasticism. This institution is not formed through any administrative instructions from above, and through the motivation of individual devotees to a single engage. It is a whole system hesychasm encapsulating the practice of certain devotees for a long period of time, forming a whole tradition that subsequently affected the entire culture of Eastern Christianity in general and Russian Orthodoxy in particular.

Famous Russian theologian of the twentieth century V. N. Lossky saw hesychasm not so globally, he did not consider it as a kind of spiritual renaissance movement or monastic spirituality in the fourteenth century. Not say more, as S. S. Horuzhy that hesychasm, there is some meta – organic system, or even a subculture, but argued on Hesychasm as a “monastic life devoted entirely to prayer” [3, p. 62], which aims to search not mystical states or desire to cause ecstasy by mechanical methods, and deification. He argued that the prayer technique hesychasts not be reduced to a mere external techniques directed towards mechanization of prayer, and pointed out that this technique is aimed at management of the body and soul. Speaking about Hesychasts, V. N. Lossky explained that they do not tend to reverie, charms or exaltation, and “tend to sobriety, to the inner attention to the connection of mind and heart to control heart mind to “keeping the heart” spirit, to the silence of the heart” [3, p. 62]. The very practice of prayer, being treated in the context of hesychasm implies unity of action and contemplation, merging “together in the implementation of spiritual practice” [3, p. 62]. V. N. Lossky argued that the quietism is not the vision itself uncreated energies, as interpreted hesychasm opponents seeing it as heresy, and “it is only an expression of communion with God, whom he constantly seeks” [3, p. 62], and the contemplation of the Tabor light as a visible manifestation of the divine energies is “contemplation benefits the next century, the divine reality” [3, p. 62]. Russian theologian as well as many others, describes a special technique of prayer in hesychasm practic – connection of prayers breathing or psychosomatic method of prayer. This technique leads to incessant stay mind at God, control of mind over the heart, that is the beginning of the spiritual sense . In this practice of silence, or hesychia holds also need to respect the purity of mind and heart from distracting from smart doing, thoughts.

Many well-known researcher of austerities and ascetic, St. Theophan the Recluse, revealing the concept of quietism, said that the essence of it is to stay in constant ascetic close communion with God – “face to face” [5, p. 309] with the Creator. Initial stage of hesychasts ascetic practice he saw an ascetic tradition to God and bringing heart at rest, in a “perfect without care” [5, p. 309], ridding it of all sorts of emotions, dreams or memories. Further, he singled out control of the

heart, so-called “keeping the heart doesn’t rob” [5, p. 310], which consisted of compliance by the heart from different affects. After the same, citing the quiet feelings, ascetic had to clear your mind, your mind of all thought and occupation, since it does not give rise to the mind of God: “Whoever wishes to present to God a pure mind and confuses himself care, he is like a firmly stood upon his feet and tried to go soon” [5, p. 310]. Therefore, before proceeding to prayer, the ascetic must purify the heart and mind of any thoughts. The next stage, Bishop Theophan the Recluse singled concentration ascetic all his consciousness into the thought of God, for this hesychast and clears your mind and heart, saying that there should be only one “does not rob thought of the Divine” [5, p. 310]. And, consequential final stage, incessant “without indolence” [5, p. 310] is a prayer that is made in hesychast focus all its forces in God. Fruits of the ascetic practices, according to St. Theophan are: “Mind unfermented, thought Purified delight in the Lord, insatiable guards does not rob prayer, everlasting tears, etc.” [5, p. 309–310], that is, the fruit of the practice itself is hesychia, which includes the concept of holistic aspirations of man to God, all his mental strength, loving Him with all our heart, soul and everything in thought, clearing off any thoughts of the mind and heart, which should be stored and unfermented thoughts, stay all the time with God, betraying himself to His good pleasure. About Tabor light ascetic vision hesychasm as the final stage, when St Theophan the Recluse says nothing .

Archimandrite Cyprian Kern, analyzing interpretation isichasm Maximus the Confessor, concludes that “the language hesychasm Maximus the Confessor it – “apathy”, dispassion, and that for Palamas – “hesychia” (perfect silence, calm) – the highest degree of purified sobriety of mind” [3, p . 62]. Sobriety he understands as protect the mind from all thoughts, through its concentration in the constant repetition of the name of God or Jesus Prayer – the so –called “smart doing” [3, p. 63] or inner prayer. “The basis of this ascetic exercise is the simple psychological fact that because our minds are one (in this case the thought of the Name of Jesus), he can’t be occupied by no other thought” [3, p. 63]. That is the purity of heart and mind leads the ascetic practice itself “smart doing” rather than vice versa, purification of the mind and heart anticipates the practice, says in his definition of hesychasm by St. Theophan the Recluse, but these definitions are not mutually exclusive, but rather, complementary.

**Conclusions.** Hesychasm as a “meta – organic system” is defined as a personal act of a zealot and tradition come together in the historical chain of ascetic practices such ascetics. This tradition is caused by external ascetic solitude contributing to inner silence – the purity of heart and mind of thoughts, which is necessary for prayerful communion with God, thinking about him. On the other hand rest means and as an end result of ascetic struggle, as the goal toward which the ascetic. Isichasm inherent psychosomatic method of mental prayer, where every breath ascetic connects continual remembrance of God as the Jesus Prayer. In view of the unity of body and soul in our human nature to the creation of the Jesus Prayer, combined with the discipline of breath, to this repetition was really constant, it is, and was associated with a constant element of psychosomatic whole person – breathing. Hesychasm is treated the same as the teaching practice of

acquiring the Holy Spirit, this work is done silently and wordlessly mind in the depths of the human soul and leads to the purification of the soul for the perception of divine grace, leading to deification. Visible sign of deification is the same vision of the light of the Tabor. This contemplation of uncreated light, is inseparable from the ascetic making and reaches its peak in prayerful meditation . It involves a return of the mind (νοῦς) to its original purity and enlightenment of his Holy Spirit. This mystical concept includes aspirations of all people all his energies to God, loving Him with all our heart, soul and everything in thought, cleared of all extraneous thoughts the mind and heart to be kept by or for the oscillation of thoughts. As results were determined criteria of hesychasm such as:

1) Quietude. Striving for inner and outer peace. Solitude, silence, sobriety – promoting focus for prayer, this step is considered as the first step, and implies a final result – the rest of the passions in God.

2) Smart doing, unceasing, “smart” or “mind-heart” prayer, invocation of the Name of God (or the Jesus Prayer), the memory of God. This is the main criterion, the exact relationships in the practice of hesychasm as other criteria are either contributing to this, or its consequence, such as the following.

3) Purification of the mind and heart, their combination (the so-called “reduction” of the mind in the heart), control of the mind over the heart. This criterion implies an internal penance battle inside man for his integrity, but again the will of God through prayer and “sinking” mind in the heart.

4) Bodily techniques of prayer, in promoting prayer. This criterion is in close connection and unity of soul and body in prayer, that is, the soul can’t perform the prayer without a body. It is meant to be a psychosomatic method – Connect prayers and breathing and static method of concentration, as the focus on one part of the body.

5) The contemplation of the uncreated light of the Divine as the entry in the ascetic God’s vision and communion with God. This is the final criterion in determining isichasm as uncreated light is the practice in the achievement of all the previous items, as in a vision of light lifts the veil of future goods.

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*Анотація*

***Єськов Сергій. Ісихазм в дискурсі філософської антропології.***

*В даній статті приводиться філософсько-антропологічний аналіз ісихазму, розкривається його суть і значення, детермінуються основні критерії ісихазму: спокій; “умне ділання”, катарсис ума і серця та їх поєднання; тілесні прийоми, споглядання фаворського світла від Божества. Ісихазм представляється також подвійно – як мета – органічний феномен, що представляє собою з’єднання антропологічної (індивідуальної) практики і історичної (колективної, соборної) традиції, а також, як вид чернечого життя.*

***Ключові слова:*** Господь, божественні енергії, антропологія, катарсис, розум, серце, умо-серце, “умне ділання”, практика внутрішньої молитви, спокій, споглядання нетварне світло, обоження, психосоматичний метод, аскеза.