

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY AND FIGHTING

Many people who are seriously studying Systema and are trying to understand its spiritual basis, at one point face this question: If Christian Orthodoxy is love and peace, how can it be the foundation of a martial art? Balancing non-violence and acting in self-defense is an issue that every human being has to resolve for himself. So let's take a look at it.

Compare an athlete fighting in the ring and a warrior defending his homeland. Both are prepared to hurt another human being, but what a huge difference in justifying their actions! The goal of a ring fighter is to show that he is superior to the other fighters, to prove that he is the best. While the goal of the warrior is to save his family, his friends and his country from death and misery. The warrior clearly has a noble goal, at that moment he is close to God. While the main motivation of the ring fighter is PRIDE, the warrior is driven by LOVE, love for his family, friends and country. Thus, training to be a true warrior is not only justified, but is necessary. How else can we save the innocent people from evil? We have all seen the events in Beslan. How else can children held hostage by the terrorists be saved? Professionals such as soldiers and police officers are trained, armed and prepared for the task of saving lives. They put their own lives on the line with humility and honor.

Orthodox Christianity teaches us that fighting becomes a sin only when there is pride and aggression in it, or if it contains hatred, revenge or callousness, when the causes are greed, vanity, envy, desperation and other such vices. Otherwise, if it is fighting for defense, for rescue – it is a sin not to fight and let your loved ones get hurt or killed or have your country destroyed.

There are numerous examples of righteous warriors since the creation of the world. The first Warrior known to mankind is Archangel Mikhail – God gave him the sword – the power to fight evil; and with that sword He had banished the fallen angels (not killed but banished) from God's Kingdom, all those who no longer served God, but only served their own pride. It had to be done, so that evil does not take over.

We see the Prophets in the Old Testament – such as Gideon or Samson – they were blessed by God to fight the evil. All the way to our times, when during World War II, many nations had to go up against the evil.

The Word of God in the bible tells us that there is no bigger sacrifice than to give up your life for others. Thus, anyone who prepares to be a true warrior, who undergoes training and takes a weapon in his hand, accepts this possibility of sacrificing his life in the name of love for other people; in essence, he prepares to become a martyr. The ultimate quality that Systema develops in its practitioners is humility. Training in Systema lets the person see his own egotism and other weaknesses and gives him ammunition to overcome them. A humble person devotes his life to fighting the evil in his heart and constantly asks God to help him with that. In reward for his hard work and resulting humility, God gives him this amazing gift of peace, joy and absence of resentment no matter what happens.

If humility becomes our character, there is no more room for pride, aggression, vanity, greed and envy. Our spirit will always be with God and you will fight only when it is absolutely necessary, only for a noble cause, always causing the least possible damage to the opponents, in a calm, firm, fearless and professional way. We have to do it, otherwise evil will take over.