

## CHAPTER II

### The Hidden (CACHÉ) Sainthood

#### ***Man lost his sainthood through knowledge***

At the genesis of time, man was created to know only the “Good”, the “Perfect One”, the “Saint”. He was touched and formed by the hand of God and from His breath. He was in direct and ceaseless incomprehensible and mystical contact with the Cause of everything, the Provider. His created whole being was sanctified unswervingly and did not know anything else other than the goodness of God’s creation. Therefore, creation’s existence was for him, a means of learning and discovering the beauty and praise of the Triune God.

While he was in communion with God’s wisdom, man was in *ecstasy*. But right after he ate from the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge, the knowledge of “good and evil,”<sup>1</sup> he had a different wisdom that is in opposition to God’s wisdom. Then, he knew good and “no thing” (evil), “*because this tree produces a fruit blended and mixed with opposite qualities.*”<sup>2</sup> The good is mixed with nothing, with “no thing.”<sup>3</sup>

This tree of knowledge was wholly good. God planted it like all other trees and plants. They were all good and pleasant to the eye.<sup>4</sup> But the fruits of this specific good tree were forbidden for man to consume. The tree was meant to remain as an observance of God’s commandment. It was there in the middle of the Garden along with the tree of life to be seen and to be observed as a reminder of humility and obedience in order to sustain order and hierarchy.

Therefore, man did obtain by his consumption a forbidden knowledge, a tricky wisdom, in which man will be divided between his own wisdom and God’s wisdom. Through his disobedience, man created a god that didn’t exist, an imaginable god. However, at the

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis, 2: 9.

<sup>2</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, quoted from *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Vol. V, T&T Clark Eerdmans, p. 409.

<sup>3</sup> In fact, the tree of “good and evil” is a tree of good only because evil is zero and has no being. God’s creation is good, but instantly after man’s disobedience, the zero became an imaginable opposition to good and the cosmos lost its harmony. Instead of creation being controlled by man, who belongs to one Origin as totally and wholly good, it was distorted and affected by man’s misuses. It was lost between the yearnings of man that is in opposition to God’s yearning.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 2: 9.

end, he did create a zero, a “nothing”. Since he is a created being he could not provide or create anything out of nowhere, or out of nothing but only illusionary and imaginary things that have no realities nor particularities. He did revive in his fantasy the “nothing” that God purposely terminated by making creation. And therefore, the freedom of man became a struggling choice between the Truth and illusion instead of the full enjoyment of the Truth. His life became a mixture of reality and delusion, because evil is an illusion and its knowledge is a misapprehension. Man’s disobedience led him to a self-disconnection and excommunication from God’s grace, glory and mercy. It has created a schism in his relationship with his self, creation and His Creator. His life in *ecstasy* was changed dramatically to a limited life ruled by manners and attitudes, by ethics. His freedom became a controllable, slave-like freedom dictated by needs and desires. His sainthood, the being “set apart”, became general and ordinary. This man who was manifested as a saint became an ordinary creature looking for his lost sainthood and longing, once again, for the status of *ecstasy*.

Man, the living saint as at his genesis, lost his true life of sainthood after eating from the mixed fruit.<sup>5</sup> His true life became mixed and was not completely pure. His sainthood - wholeness in goodness - became fractioned and lost its completeness. Man as “whole” by his communion with God missed the “W”,<sup>6</sup> missed his beginning, and became instead a “hole”- empty. This is the fall from *ecstasy* (έκστασις) to in stasis (στάσις), from a living saint to a status quo saint, a dead saint.<sup>7</sup>

### ***The Role of the Hidden Sainthood***

After the fall, man, the saint, became inoperable, but his human nature was and is still embedded and mingled with sanctity. The sainthood of his nature became hidden, but man would always have the taste of sainthood, never losing it since it is a part of his properties. His thirst and yearning for this taste urges him to search for it, seek it,

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<sup>5</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, quoted from “*The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*” Second Series, Vol. V, T&T Clark Eerdmans, p. 410 “*it speaks of the fruit of the forbidden tree not as a thing absolutely evil (because it is decked with good), nor as a thing purely good (because evil is latent in it) but as compounded of both.*”

<sup>6</sup> “Whole” means complete, when we remove the first letter “W” the word “whole” becomes the word “hole”.

<sup>7</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, quoted from *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Vol. V,” T&T Clark Eerdmans, p. 410: “*that the tasting of it [the fruit of the forbidden tree] brings death to those who touch it.*”

uncover it and manifest it again through his ministry to his self, to creation and to the unseen world.

His hidden sainthood gave him an opportunity and allowed him to set his self apart to recognize his importance and responsibilities. Consequently he identified his self with a reason to exist, a goal and a purpose, and therefore acquired solutions and tools to achieve them. It permitted him to discern his emptiness. He began filling in his emptiness – the hole - with heroic actions in order to eliminate his “zerness.”

Man’s yearning to discover the potentiality of his hidden sainthood has revived the saint-man, but he is recognized only as a hero, rather than a saint. He was “set apart” by others only after his death, after his heroic proof. His life has to be martyred and taken away for a patriotic cause. The death certificate became the diploma of his graduation into sainthood in the eyes of the people. Once the saint-man was a living minister in God’s Providence, but now, he becomes a lifeless living body looking for heroic human works so as to be honored and idolized.

Thus, the yearning of ordinary people for the divine, for holiness, has led them to “set apart” those who impressed them with power, authority and heroism. They divinized and sanctified their kings, rulers and emperors while they were living. They looked at them as an authoritative power that was “set apart” from above. They even looked at the king as a *“mediator between heaven and earth, part of both spheres, [who] is the guarantor of the divine order on earth...he is the offspring of a sacred marriage.”*<sup>8</sup> This is during the lifetime of the king, but at his death, *“he became god by the power of ritual.”*<sup>9</sup>

### ***The Pilgrimage for Identity***

This hidden sainthood urged man to idolize those in power and to uncover ways to communicate with that of which is lost with the deity. He began the pilgrimage in search of his lost beginning, the “W” of his identity,<sup>10</sup> which made him whole. He sought this “W” in various ways and through a multitude of concepts. In the Ancient time, he created gods in his own figure and resemblance, in his own needs and desires (and

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<sup>8</sup> Wolfhart Westendorf, *Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture of Ancient Egypt* (New York / London: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1968) p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> See footnote # 32, p. 14.

unfortunately, he is still creating gods even at this modern time). Even though when he got to know the "I AM WHO I AM",<sup>11</sup> man the saint, did not recover or even uncover his potentiality that is related to the Origin. He simply continued in the formation of his own concepts and continued to live in a deserted land away from the Origin and the Beginning of everything.

Instead of man achieving his potentiality through living, acting and activating his sainthood, as a king, prophet and priest, as a minister of the ministry of love, man became an individual who downloaded his sainthood on particular people: kings, emperors, heroes and myths. He deprived his self from his potential responsibilities and his role. He ignored his calling completely in such a way that he forgot about it. He became a nothing, a zero, an evil. Man in his effortless, in his status quo, gave existence to evil in his own physical form and presence. He did by his not doing, undoing, what God had already done, and he let evil act in his self. He gave permission to a nothing to become a thing and therefore gave rise to a different meaning, understanding and concept of sainthood. He eliminated continuity and communion, and became confused in a double identity, pulling himself in opposite directions.

But a few recovered and uncovered their hidden sainthood. They reactivated their roles and have strove to reach their potentiality. Alas, they sought it unintentionally and unwillingly, and even if the contrary were the case, sought it without recognizing that they were fulfilling the saintly role of the ministry of love for God's glory. The Midrash demonstrates it well: *"If the fathers of the world (the patriarchs) had wished that their resting place should be in the Above, they would have been able to have it there, but it is when they died and the rock closed on their tombs here below that they deserved to be called saints."*<sup>12</sup>

A kind of martyrdom (witness) was developed and recognized in the fallen world. Those who did not meet Yahweh created their gods and put their rulers as mediators between mystics and realities. Those who were promised to become the people of God have created their own concepts as well, and both did not recognize their saintly origin and the purpose of their life. Instead of holiness, "holeness" (emptiness) ruled.

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<sup>11</sup> Exodus 3:14.

<sup>12</sup> H.L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash* (Munich: C.M. Beck, 1926), 1:892, *Midrash Ps.* 16. 2.

In fact, the ancient civilizations should be credited for their searching to find their identity and potentiality since they did not know God nor had heard of Him. Their pilgrimage is a proof for the existence of the hidden sainthood in the nature of man. At the same time, we have to underline their efforts in the searching process and their attempts in solving their natural disasters by creating their gods from powerful, natural and invisible resources, and offering them sacrifices and due worship in order to be saved from these disasters. However, the people of Yahweh had known God as the Cause of life and salvation but they also missed their saintly origin and followed a law instead of their calling as *Kadosh* (קדוש).

Both groups were honoring kings, warriors and devoted people who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the population, thus paying respect, honor and reward. In fact, as Wendy Mayer writes: *“Many [concepts and practices that already existed in the ancient Mediterranean world] were already present in the society out of which Christianity grew and where familiar to people of all religious backgrounds. Chief among those which were already prevalent are the concept of martyrdom [which] was not just a preference for violent death over compliance with an official decree, but had attached to it recognition of the individual after their death and a notion that the individual will receive some reward.”*<sup>13</sup>

Although the pagans and the Jews were discovering their potentiality, they did not reach a point where they could uncover their saintly function while they were alive. The saint in man was always hidden and working through the longing of man for the unknown (the beyond), in an unseen and mysterious world. The hidden saint was not in communion with the Saint, the Holy, and the Cause of Holiness. Although, sanctity was blended with the particles of man's nature, it was not yet manifest; man in his wisdom obscured it and did not allow it to be epiphanized while yet alive on this earth.

This longing, yearning, searching and reaching out of man to the beyond, beyond the physical and the unknown, are vehicles for man to fill up the hole and his emptiness. It is the desire of hidden sainthood that wants to become alive and not hidden until after the death of the beholder. It wants to reveal its identity as that which man has obscured

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<sup>13</sup> Wendy Mayer with Bronwen Neil, *The Cult of the Saints, St John Chrysostom*, (Crestwood, N.Y: SVS Press, 2006), p. 12.

and yearns for recognition as the manifestation of the Creator in the physical cosmos while the beholder is among the living.