

CHAPTER III

Rejuvenated Sainthood

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard Him thus no longer. Therefore, if any one is in Christ; he is a new creation, the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.¹

The Incarnated Saint - The Messiah

The saint-man was broken. A continuous attempt to mend this brokenness, bore no fruits or fell short from its potentiality. The urge and the longing of human nature for its Creator have come to face the fallen man's limited powers of restoration and recreation. The saintly lineage was broken and a *hole* was engulfed between the Holy One and His holy, between the Whole and emptiness (*hole*). Man's craving was not powerful enough to mend the broken image and likeness. Yes indeed, the hidden sainthood had challenged its status quo and had looked upward to fill up its emptiness (*hole*), but it only filled it with concepts, with things that are insecure and with no foundation or concrete beliefs.

Although the saint-man was broken, he was still a seeker of things beyond his understandings, a seeker of mysteries. From ancient times, man created self-gods that would connect him with the mysteries of life that go beyond his reach, or perhaps would solely satisfy his desire for filling this emptiness. He created ways of communication and communion. He manifested his worship (longing) through symbolism, sacrifices and rituals. Even though he met God at Ur and on Mount Sinai, and built Him temples of stones and gold for worship, the saint-man was yet without true communication and communion with the Holy, the Saint, and the "Set apart" One. He was in communion with an unknown god, a distant and a created (false) god, rather than God the Creator, the True God.

The latter did not help the saint-man to mend his broken image and likeness in order to be healed. How can he heal his broken self? How and with what can he fill his

¹ 2 Cor. 5:16-18.

emptiness (*hole*)? How can he become saint (*whole*) once again? Man's endeavor to overcome the *hole* or to fill it was like a *cul de sac* because it had an end by its nature and name. It has limits and boundaries that would not lead anywhere. It is in need for a Saint (*Quiddis*, قدیس), the Holy One (*Quddous* قدوس) in action, the accomplisher, to fill the *hole* with its "W",² with its Beginning, in order for the saint-man to become "*whole*" once again.

The Holy One has reactivated holiness by revealing Himself in action. The Cause of Holiness, *set apart*, due to His nature prior to the beginning, has dwelled with the common in order to reveal the *setting apart* and its meaning. He has inhominated His sainthood in order to sanctify (activate), reawaken the hidden sainthood in man and fill his *hole* with holiness, therefore reattaching it to its Beginning.

This is Christ, the Incarnated, Inhominated, Crucified, Resurrected and Ascended God, the God in action. He is the Messiah (*Al Massih* المسيح), He who through His sacramental actions has wiped away (*masaha* مسح) the sins of the world and has healed the saint-man. He is the Anointed (*Al mamsouh* الممسوح) before all ages, who has emptied himself (*مسحها*) in order in order for Him to wipe out (*yamsah* يمسح), with His own blood, the *cul de sac*, and make it an ocean of God's grace.

Man knows none other than the Messiah, the Son of God, the Second hypostasis of the Holy Trinity, who heals the broken image and likeness of the saint-man and reactivated it in its proper sense and meaning. He is the Son of the Holy through Him the creation was made and through whom the Holy Spirit (the third hypostasis) was sent so that creation will be sanctified and the saint-man could become the minister of this holy service and healing.

Indeed, the history of man is full of attempts to establish a connection with divine powers but, as we have seen, they fell short in fulfilling this expectation until the fullest of time, the coming of Jesus Christ, had been realized. Prior to the Incarnation and the Inhomination, the saint-man was in a preparatory discovery through his own attempts. He was the initiator or the creator, if one is permitted to say. He was looking up to the distance, to the beyond, and his fantasies produced myths and ways of worship

² See the previous chapter, footnote 32, p. 14.

depicted from his own life style. But these did not last long since competitions were raised from various challenges which acquired the creation of other deities.

The history of the saint man tells us about many mediators who were sought to resolve man's miseries and to mend his broken image and likeness. Many deities, prophets and leaders from ancient and contemporary times, were sought in awesome worship, pilgrimage, shrines, temples, sacrifices, exaltations and glorifications, but none of them were called saint or holy by their respective followers who witnessed and fought for their sake. Although they were "*set apart*" by their followers, they remained created beings. Their power remained limited and temporary as it vanished through their death. They were not from the same divine nature that the three Persons of the Triune God have in common. And they were not in direct communion with the One who was, is and will always be "*set apart*" by His own nature. None of them sacrificed his self for the sake of his followers and none was resurrected, appeared after His death, and ascended in front of a cloud of witnesses. All of them have tombs, and their followers' pilgrimages were towards their bones, while the followers of Christ's pilgrimage were towards an empty tomb.

Sainthood in Preparation

Sometimes the argument arises that the resurrection from the dead was not unique to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was known in many ancient beliefs. It dates back to the prehistoric age. Many cults believed that their kings were still present after their death, or following their death, or that they will resurrect or "*ascend to the gods from this tomb that [was] projected upward to heaven.*"³ For this reason, *residences for eternity*, like the pyramids, were built for their comfort and use. Wolfhart Westendorf describes it well in this paragraph:

*During his life time, the king was divine because of his lineage, while in death he became a god by the power of ritual. In the interment rites he returned to his primordial state, merging with this to become Osiris.*⁴

³ Wolfhart Westendorf, *Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture of Ancient Egypt* (New York / London: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1968) p. 8.

⁴ [Egyptian god](#) of life, death, and fertility, Osiris is the oldest son of the Earth god, [Geb](#), and the sky goddess, [Nut](#), as well as being brother and husband of [Isis](#), with [Horus](#) being considered his posthumously begotten son.

*Embalmed, as the mummified figure of Osiris, the king lies in the tomb and continues to act for the prosperity of his people. As a residence for eternity, the royal tomb was built in stone or hewn out of rock. A cult temple in front of the tomb provided for the dead king, who lived on here in the form of his statue and received the offerings. In addition to daily food, the tomb was equipped with household goods, utensils, weapons, and jewelry.*⁵

The saint-man's history is full of myths that resemble Jesus Christ's story of the three day death and resurrection. Such myths are found in Persia, Mithra,⁶ the deity of the light, and in Phoenicia, Adonis,⁷ whose story is closely related to the Egyptian [Osiris](#), the Semitic [Tammuz Dumu-zi](#)⁸ (the son who will rise or will be resurrected), the Etruscan Atunis and the Phrygian [Attis](#),⁹ all of whom are deities of rebirth and [vegetation](#). In addition, the 12th century Scandinavian Baldr takes his roots from them.

In the face of this tradition Anis Freiha¹⁰ states: *"Although they [exist] in different names and models they all agree or resemble in essence and in spirit."*¹¹ Furthermore Freiha

⁵ Wolfhart Westendorf, *Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture of Ancient Egypt* (New York / London: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1968) p.6.

⁶In older Zoroastrianism Mithra is seen as a creation of [Ahura Mazda](#) which is the [Avestan language](#) name for a divinity exalted by [Zoroaster](#) as the one uncreated Creator, hence [God](#). The word is from a root *mi-* "to bind", with the "tool suffix" *-tra-* which means contract, is thus described as a "means of binding". Mitra, therefore, could mean contract, covenant or friend.

*"The name of the Indo-Iranian god Mitra (Vedic Mitra, Avestan Mifra, Old Persian Mitra, Mifra instead of the genuine OP form *Miça) is based on the common noun mitra, "contract" with the connotations of "covenant, agreement, treaty, alliance, promise." This meaning of the common noun was recognized in the 19th century and codified by C. Bartholomae (AirWb., col. 1183)". "Mithra in Old Indian and Mithra in Old Iranian"* An article by Hans Peter Shmidth, January 2006, found at:

http://www.iranica.com/newsite/articles/ot_grp10/ot_mithra_i_20060114.html.

The same article contains different etymologies: *"Meillet used an etymology (derivation from an Indo-European root, *mei "to exchange") which is only one of several possibilities, none of which can be proved. L. Gray (1929, pp. 96 ff.) argued for a derivation from the root *me@ "to measure," assuming that Mitra was the designation of the sun as the "measurer" of the day and that the ethical aspects accrued to him secondarily (quoted with approval by Gh. Gnoli, 1979, p. 727)."*

⁷His name may be Semitic, a variation of the word "[adon](#)" meaning "[lord](#)" that was also used, as "[Adonai](#)", to refer to [Yahweh](#) in the [Old Testament](#).

⁸ Life-death-rebirth Accadian diety.

⁹ Attis (sometimes written as "Atys"), a [life-death-rebirth deity](#), was the lover of [Cybele](#), her [eunuch](#) attendant and driver of her lion-driven chariot; he was driven mad by her and [castrated](#) himself.

¹⁰ Anis Freiha is a famous Lebanese novelist who has written extensively about Lebanese traditional village life. He is considered an authority on the topic and his books contain many descriptions of the origin of village names, traditions and stories. His books are often referenced as they are rich in architectural and detailed description of village artifacts and objects. Freiha's novels have inspired various narratives and plays on the culture of Lebanon's village. He obtained his doctorate from Chicago University on Semitic languages and he taught at Frankfurt University, Germany.

tries to make a parallelism between Christianity and Mithra's religion by saying: *"Many of the Christian traditions are found in Mithra's religion to the point that the people imagined that Christianity is a deviation of Mitra's faith but in a new transparent robe: both Mithra and Christ are gods of salvation, baptism purifies and Mithraen baptizes the people, the Christians gather to partake in the Eucharist and the Mithraens gather around a religious meal to drink and eat symbolizing their unity with Mithra....Christ is the light of the world and Mithra is the god of light."*¹²

But he continues by asking: *"Who is this god that transmigrates in various personalities? The purpose of his death? Was his death voluntary or obligatory? Can we recognize his worship now in our days or will he remain a puzzle forever?"*¹³

Rejuvenated Sainthood and the Holy Trinity

*But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law.*¹⁴

At the fullness of time, a God intervened and interfered in the saint-man's physical history when the Son of God spoke, ate, drank, cried, prayed, fasted, taught, touched, praised, healed, was condemned, crucified and buried, and whose tomb was, is and will always be, unlike others, empty. All the other gods have their beginning and their end, but Jesus Christ has a historical beginning and end. And yet He was present from the beginning of time and made history begin so that sainthood first entered the created cosmos. This is Christ who forgave the sinners, healed the sick, destroyed demons, raised the dead, and conquered death. All gods were the invention of man, whereas Jesus Christ, the True God, was the One who invented (created) man.

Does the above answer Freiha's questions? Does it satisfy the doubters and the atheists who proclaim that Jesus Christ is but another name for the same god who is transmigrated in different personalities. These considered Him to be a myth created by the cravings of man for salvation from the miseries of this world and whose teachings satisfy this hunger?

¹¹ Anis Freiha, *Historical Studies* (Beyrouth: Dar I-Nahar Press, 1980) p.45 - My translation from Arabic.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 45

¹⁴ Gal. 4:4.

This may be true for outsiders who watch from a far and do not have a relational experience with the Incarnated, Inhominated, Crucified, Resurrected and Ascended God and Lord Jesus Christ. This is true for those who do not invoke the name of Jesus Christ to be healed. This is true for those who do not put their trust in Him to be comforted. This is true for those who do not love beyond themselves, outreach beyond themselves and put their life out for the sake of others. This is true for those who do not listen to His voice through His words and follow His followers on their way to martyrdom. This is true for those whose lives are not transformed by His grace, humility and love due to their unbelief. This is true for those who do not speak His *Logismoi* and do not discover His theology. This is true for those who do not recognize and experience Him as a Trinity in His mystical sacramental movement. This is true for those who make assertions and denials different from the saying of the Holy Fathers, as Areopagite Dionysius summarizes: *“We make assertions and denials of what is next to it [the supreme Cause of everything], but never to it, for it is both beyond every assertion, being the perfect and unique cause of all things, and, by virtue of its preeminently simple and absolute nature, free of every limitation, beyond every limitation; it is also beyond every denial.”*¹⁵ This is true for those who want to know Him, analyze Him and explain Him, the One who is the Cause of all things, beyond any cataphatism or apophatism, who can dwell and be found at the same time in the darkness of our inner self.

The Areopagite Dionysius opens his mystical works with this beautiful poem that could answer Freiha and other atheistic questions regarding the difference between the gods and our God:

*Trinity: Higher than any being, any divinity, any goodness!
Guide of Christians in the wisdom of heaven!
Lead us up beyond unknowing and light,
Up to the farthest, highest peak of mystic scripture,
Where the mysteries of God’s Word lie simple,
Absolute and unchangeable in the brilliant darkness of a hidden silence.*

¹⁵ The Classics of Western Spirituality, *Pseudo-Dionysius The Complete Work* (New York, Mahwah: Paulist Press) p. 141.

Amid the deepest shadow they pour overwhelming light on what is most manifest.

Amid the wholly unsensed and unseen they completely fill our sightless minds with treasures beyond all beauty.¹⁶

The presence of the Triune God is ever existing; either we acknowledge it or we do not. God's revelations are not relatively dependent on human beings and the created cosmos, nor will they vanish when man no longer exists. The validity of the other gods, however, relies and depends on man's existence. The Triune God is eternal. He exists and therefore everything else exist because He is the Cause of their existence and the presence of all things seen and unseen, heard of or unheard of, touched or untouched, sensed or unsensed, felt or unfelt. Yet describing His existence leads us to silence, astonishment and wonder, for no words are adequate. Our words are just an outreach of what He has seeded in us. They are our outcries for what is hidden and covered in our created nature, and holiness is but one of His revelations. No other god has dared to proclaim these revelations nor have any of these god's followers attributed it to their gods.

Manmade Religions and Godmade Religion:

Yes, I agree with Freiha in saying that Christianity is the new transparent robe of the ancient religions, but I must add that Christianity is the fulfillment of all religions and philosophies. Christianity is the Triune God's way of life. Through the Holy Trinity sainthood is reactivated, and the saint-man is healed and the *hole* is filled by the Holy Spirit in order to reach *theosis*. It will also remain active for the Incarnated Saint has reestablished communion and communication with the Triune God. In fact, other religions and philosophies were preparatory thoughts for the coming of the Son of God at the fullness of time, so that people might believe in God the Creator and not the created.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 135.

People created their own gods because of their need for perfectness and therefore these gods were created to fulfill a specific role. Christianity, however, is God's made religion and these people saw God in action. They witnessed His Divinity in action, His power and His authenticity. They followed Him after they rejected and ignored Him. They risked their lives for Him, they performed miracles in His name and they healed as He healed.

In Christianity the whole vocabulary of religion has been transformed. While the vocabulary of the other religions stayed on the level of vegetation, flood, rain, a fight between good and evil, human sacrifices and the cosmos cycle, Christianity's vocabulary spoke of and performed healing and forgiveness of sins. While the other cults offered human and/or animal sacrifices to their gods, the God of the Christians offered Himself for humanity. Is Jesus Christ, the God of the Christians, still another name like Adonis, Osiris, Mithra, etc.?

Here, a Godmade religion reveals that it is not a myth, unlike manmade religions, but a Way through and to True Life. This True Life's Way is sacramental by which the Christian becomes a Christ, to transform and transcend his self, others and the cosmos, to come to the Holy One. He is a saint-man, even he is broken. The Triune God who created Him did not deny or reject him but instead gave him the opportunity for healing by His continual Mystical Sacramental Epiphanies and Transfigurations.

Through the Church, these Epiphanies are well understood, but as the Holy Fathers have proclaimed and are still proclaiming, are not inclusively contained nor exhausted, nor described, nor expressed in any mode or symbols. All the words and the tools are only mere attempts to express, in our best ability, our human and limited love for the things that could lead us to our Initiator. It is through the Church the saint-man is healed and can be called saint.

It is because of the Holy One that the saint-man is called holy and is *set apart* from others. Because of the Holy One, the other gods, emperors, kings, warriors, heroes and martyrs were not *set apart* because they did not acknowledge Him and did not die for Him as faithful believers of the True God and Lord.

It is for this reason that the other religions, Monotheists and Atheists alike, did not dare to call their martyrs saints. The atheists do not know the Holy, so how could they call

their martyrs saints? And even though the Monotheists like the Jews who preceded Christianity, and the Muslims, who were formed after Jesus Christ, know, believe, and call God *Qodesh* and *Qoddous*, they do not name their witnesses saints.

The Old Testament, the Qur'an, the Hadith and the writings of the Sufis will speak for themselves in regards to this subject as we will discover in the next chapter.