

## CHAPTER IV

### Sainthood as Seen in The Monotheistics' Holy Books<sup>1</sup>

#### *Different Levels of Languages*

In general, the world counts three Theocentric religions.<sup>2</sup> The three are monotheistic:<sup>3</sup> Judaism, Islam<sup>4</sup> and Christianity. The oneness of God is the cornerstone of the faith for these three religions. But unfortunately Judaism and Islam reduced this oneness to an arithmetic concept, *Al-Tawheed*.<sup>5</sup> They limit God to a number, while Christians have transcended the human mind's concept of knowledge, and as imparted by God's Theophanies, they know God revealed to creation to be three divine persons. The one God is manifested as three persons in order for man to grasp, through his physical senses, the hidden actions of the creative power.

God for the Orthodox Christians is above any arithmetic number. He is All in All. He is neither one nor three; He is not a formula. He is One in Three and Three in One. He is above any understanding. He is the Saint, *set apart* because of His uniqueness. This uniqueness set Him apart from all others and has distinguished Orthodox Christian

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<sup>1</sup> The Old Testament for the Jews, the Qur'an for Muslims, and the New and Old Testament for Christians.

<sup>2</sup> Some may count four religions by including the Bahai.

<sup>3</sup> In theology, monotheism (from Greek *μόνος* "one" and *θεός* "god") is the belief in the existence of one deity, or in the oneness of God. In a western context, the concept of "monotheism" tends to be dominated by the concept of the god of the Abrahamic religions.

<sup>4</sup> In regards of Islam: Muslims believe in the same forefathers of the Jews; they believe in Abraham, Moses and most of the Old Testaments prophets and Fathers. They were even mentioned in their Holy book the Qur'an (Al-Baqara, Chapter 2, Verse 133). Ibrahim or Abram is Ibrahim in Arabic. According to Muslims, Abraham is their Forefather too, but they believe that they are the descendants of Ishmail the son of Hagar (Genesis 16), Sarai's maid instead of Isaac, the son of Sarai. I call them the sisters religions..

Many verses in the Qur'an reveal the Trinitarian God, but Muslims don't accept the understanding these verses in such manner: "*when the angels said: O Mary! Lo! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a word from him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, illustrious in the world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near (unto Allah)*". (Ahl-el-Imran, Chapter 3, Verse 45). "*The Messiah Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah, and His word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers, and say not "Three" - Cease! (it is) better for you! - Allah is only One Allah. Far is it removed from His Transcendent Majesty that He should have a son. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And Allah is sufficient as Defender.*" (An-Nisa, Chapter 4, Verse 171).

Many scholars have regarded Islam as a Christian heresy especially since they believe that Issa Bin Maryam, Jesus son of Mary, has been elevated from the Cross and was not crucified: "*And because of their saying: We slew the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, Allah's messenger - they slew him not nor crucified him, but it appeared so unto them; and lo! those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof; they have no knowledge thereof save pursuit of a conjecture; they slew him not for certain. But Allah took him up unto Himself. Allah was ever Mighty, Wise*" An-Nisa, Chapter [#4](#), Verses # 157 & [#158](#)), and He is the one who will come again to judge the world: "*There is not one of the People of the Scripture but will believe in him before his death, and on the Day of resurrection he will be a witness against them*" An-Nisa, Chapter 4, Verse 159).

<sup>5</sup> The root is *WAHAD* which means one. It is the first number in arithmetic (Wahad 1, Tnein 2, etc.).

theology from the rest. Therefore, different levels of languages were established for the same God and His creative works.

In my opinion, Judaism and Islam are manmade religions even though the adherents of their faith believe, as the faithful Christian, in one God the Creator who created man and all creation. The three religions<sup>6</sup> believe in God as the Creator of the first man, Adam, who is the forefather of their human lineage from Abraham. But Judaism and Islam have conceptualized God as an image in man's manner, attitude and understanding instead of the opposite, where the true manner of man was created in God's image.

Although Jews and Muslims believe in the Eternal God, the Originator of everything, they believe in a mono-God as opposed to a Trinitarian God. This is the focal point that distinguishes around these different understandings. This difference in belief has restricted the Jews and Muslims from building a unique and personal communal experience with God. They constrained themselves from encountering the Incarnated God and therefore from a personal communication with Him and the Holy Spirit. They guarded themselves from meeting the True God, the Trinitarian God, who revealed His self through the history of the saint-man. For this reason, they created perceptions about an alienated God whose dwelling is in the Highest, but not in the Darkness of man, the inner sinful self of man, who has made a covenant with man commanding man to walk in His way. These perceptions have led them to a fearful God, a Judge, a Warrior, a condemner, while at the same time a protector, a God who has to be pleased out of fear of anger and will stand against them without guidance to the Promised Land which was promised to their Forefather Abram.<sup>7</sup> This is a different understanding of God from the Trinitarian God whose Grace, Love and Mercy fill our earthly life, and whose image, likeness, qualities and breath are forming our nature. Although the three Theocentric religions are believers in the omnipotence and supremacy of the uncreated God, Judaism and Islam have created a false image of God that has dramatically changed their theology into a philosophy. This has transformed their thoughts from

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<sup>6</sup> I believe that Christianity is not a religion but rather an imitation of Jesus Christ's way of life. If it must be called a religion, it should be named the sole Theocentric religion, because Jesus Christ has fulfilled the religion of the Jews and therefore Judaism should no longer exist. Furthermore, Islam only surfaced more than 6 centuries after Jesus Christ. See note 4 for their belief in Issa ben Maryam.

<sup>7</sup> *"When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said: "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly."*  
Genesis 17:1-2.

theology, God's logic, to man's logic and therefore, it blinded them from recognizing the qualities of God which He implanted in their created nature.

Two levels of languages and vocabulary have been suddenly created when Jesus Christ appeared in the flesh and was elevated to the right hand of His Father: a language that stayed on a human level and mind, and a language that has been transcended to a divine level, a higher level. This latter level is an exploration of that which is beyond seen and unseen, of the essence of things, of their true meaning and purpose. Everything that was, is and will be produced is the consequence of the work of God.

Therefore, a new relationship has been established between the saint-man and creation, a relationship of healing, a communion of saintliness. Thus is the gulf between Judaism and Islam on one hand and Christianity on the other. The first two use their human logismoi and neglect God's logismoi that is instilled in their created essence, while the latter is aware of and uses God's logismoi to seek to become instruments and vehicles of healing and saintliness.

Judaism defect of communication in such a divine language is their inability to recognize the Messiah who dwelled among them and thus still await the coming of their Savior. The Muslim defect is their consideration, like the Arians, of Jesus Christ as a mere messenger of God who came as a human being. Therefore, the restoration of the saint man is not yet accomplished and it is an eschatological event only.

We can detect such difference of languages by comparing the Old Testament, the Qur'an, the Hadith and the vocabulary expressed by scholars, the mystical Sufis and others on many subjects on one side, and the New Testament and the sayings of the Holy Fathers on the other side. Here we will consider only the comparison on the subject of sainthood, since this is the subject of this thesis.

### ***The Old Testament***

While searching in the English Old Testament, the New King James Version, for the word saint, we come across thirty-two verses that contain this word. But here we discover that the word saint used in the English translation does not mean the same as

the originals in Hebrew and Greek. Here we will also compare them to the early Arabic<sup>8</sup> translation in order to make a comparison in the same language as the Qur'an.

The meaning of the word saint in Arabic is *Quiddis* قدیس which is derived from *Quddous* and means God's Holiness in action.<sup>9</sup> Ἅγιος is the Greek word which means Holy which is in line with the Hebrew *Kadosh* – קדוש. In this study we will take the verses in English that include the word saint and compare them to the Arabic, Greek and Hebrew verses, in an attempt to find the original meaning of the words saint(s) in the different verses. This will show how the people of the Old and New Covenants used them, as well as their use in the Qur'an, in order to prove the point of this thesis "we are living saints because of Jesus Christ" that is not known to the other religions because of their unbelief in Jesus Christ.

Also it must be noted that some versions of the English translations<sup>10</sup> do not record the word saint in their translations, the word saint remains and was used in the original texts. It has a significant meaning that is delivered to us for a specific purpose of teaching and revelation, and since many religions have included this word in their English texts (like Islam), we will research the meaning of the English word in the language that it was originally written in.

Thirteen of the thirty-two verses<sup>11</sup> that contain the English word saint, reflect *Kadosh*, *Agios* and *Quiddis*, while the remaining nineteen<sup>12</sup> verses are derivations of the word *Hasid*, *σσιοι* and *Taqi* which reflect the word pious, righteousness and/or devoutness. Two of the thirteen verses are from Deuteronomy chapter 33 verses 2 & 3,<sup>13</sup> one from Job 15:15,<sup>14</sup> four from the Psalms, Ps. 16:3,<sup>15</sup> 34:9<sup>16</sup> and 89: 5<sup>17</sup> and 7,<sup>18</sup> five from the

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<sup>8</sup> I am including the Arabic to compare with the Qur'anic texts that are originated in Arabic.

<sup>9</sup> *Quiddis* is the *Quddous* in action. It is explained in chapter III for the word *Massih* on p. 20.

<sup>10</sup> *Contemporary English Version, New Living translation, New Century Version, New Life Version, New Life Version, New International Reader's Version, Worldwide English and Today's New International Version.* According to the search engine of Bible Gateway.com

<sup>11</sup> The point behind this statement will be discussed in the paragraph on the New Testament in this chapter.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Sam. 2:9, 2 Chron. 6:41, Ps. 30:4, 31:23, 37:28, 50:5, 52:9, 79:2, 85:8, 97:10, 116:15, 132:9,16, 145:10, 148:14, 149:1, 5, 9 and Prov. 2:8.

<sup>13</sup> "The LORD came from Sinai, and dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, And He came with ten thousands of saints; From His right hand *Came* a fiery law for them, He loves the people; All His saints *are* in Your hand; They sit down at Your feet; Everyone receives Your words."

<sup>14</sup> "If *God* puts no trust in His saints, and the heavens are not pure in His sight."

<sup>15</sup> "As for the saints who *are* on the earth, "They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight."

<sup>16</sup> "Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints! *There is* no want to those who fear Him."

<sup>17</sup> "And the heavens will praise Your wonders, O LORD; your faithfulness also in the assembly of the saints."

Book of Daniel chapter 7 verses 18,<sup>19</sup> 21,<sup>20</sup> 22,<sup>21</sup> 25<sup>22</sup> and 27.<sup>23</sup> The last verse is from the Prophet Zechariah chapter 14 verse 5.<sup>24</sup>

These verses reveal that the saints are the people of God who stay (travel)<sup>25</sup> with Him, who are in His Hand and sit at His feet listening to His Wisdom.<sup>26</sup> They are the excellent people on earth<sup>27</sup> whom God can trust<sup>28</sup> and will defend,<sup>29</sup> the ones who can possess the greatness of Kingdoms, the everlasting Kingdom.<sup>30</sup>

They are the faithful assembly, those who are on earth and those who are in heaven ever praising God with fear, piety and reverence.<sup>31</sup> They are always with God and very close to Him. They are connected to Him. They are witnesses of Him doing His work.

These thirteen verses of the Old Testament give us an understanding of the saint's identity and role. It underlines that the SAINT (God) is at work and that He encompasses everything; through His Sainthood, His people are set apart. These people, those who are called saints, became saints because of Him, because they are with Him. Their role is to accompany Him, listen and witness to His work and therefore follow the teachings of the Ten Commandments<sup>32</sup> that were given to Moses on the two tablets of the Law.<sup>33</sup> Thus their sainthood becomes dependent on keeping the Law because they love God and they are His people. Theirs is an observatory role and not

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<sup>18</sup> "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all *those* around Him."

<sup>19</sup> "But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever."

<sup>20</sup> "I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them."

<sup>21</sup> "Until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made *in favor* of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom."

<sup>22</sup> "He shall speak  *pompous* words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time."

<sup>23</sup> "Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High."

<sup>24</sup> "Then you shall flee *through* My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my God will come, *and* all the saints with You."

<sup>25</sup> As in Deut 33: 2 and Zech 14: 5.

<sup>26</sup> As in Deut 33:3.

<sup>27</sup> As in Os. 16:3.

<sup>28</sup> As in Job 15:15.

<sup>29</sup> As in Dan. 7: 21.

<sup>30</sup> As in Dan. 7: 18, 22, 25 and 27.

<sup>31</sup> As in Ps 89: 5 and 7.

<sup>32</sup> Exod 20: 2-17 & Deut 5: 6-21.

<sup>33</sup> Deut 4:13 "So he declared to you His covenant, the Ten Commandments, which He commanded you to perform and He wrote them on two tablets of stone."

an active one.<sup>34</sup> The work of sanctification is totally depended on God only. Their role is to obey and follow His Commandments in order to remain His people.

But who are these saints that God has called “My people”? In a nutshell, these saints are the people of the covenant, the descendants of Abraham, who was set apart by God from other nations. They were distinguished and recognized by the seal of the flesh (circumcision). They were those who were set apart from the Egyptians and who followed Moses passing through the Red Sea by the power of God traversing to a new land and receiving the tablets of Law. They are the circumcised travelers (nation) who were defended, guarded and guided by the Lord to His Kingdom.

### ***The Qur’an***

A search in the Qur’an results in no identification of sainthood in Islam. While the Qur’an in the original Arabic does not contain the words saint or saints, the word saint<sup>35</sup> appeared two times and the word saints<sup>36</sup> appeared once in the Pishkal English Translation. They are all the translation of the word *Siddiq* which means righteous. It is worthy to note that the word *Quddous*, the Most Holy, is one of the ninety nine names of God (*ASMA’ ALLAH AL-HUSNA*), The Most Beautiful Names of God, which appear twice in the Qur’an.<sup>37</sup>

From this we note that we cannot find in the Qur’an any description, characteristic or role of the saint-man in Islam. We cannot even take the prophet Mohammed as an example. He is but a righteous prophet. The saint-man does not exist. Sainthood is the property of God alone. It is His Name and therefore man cannot possess it. Although

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<sup>34</sup> This is the conclusion that we can obtain from analyzing the Ten Commandments.

<sup>35</sup> “*And make mention (O Muhammad) in the Scripture of Abraham. Lo! he was a saint, a prophet.*”

(سورة مريم, Maryam, Chapter #19, Verse #).

“*And make mention in the Scripture of Idris. Lo! he was a saint, a prophet;*”

(سورة مريم, Maryam, Chapter #19, Verse #56).

<sup>36</sup> “*Whoso obeyeth Allah and the messenger, they are with those unto whom Allah hath shown favour, of the prophets and the saints and the martyrs and the righteous. The best of company are they!*”

(سورة النساء, An-Nisa, Chapter #4, Verse #69).

<sup>37</sup> “*Whatever is in the heavens and on earth, doth declare the Praises and Glory of Allah, - the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Exalted in Might, the Wise.*” (Sourah Al-jumua 62:1).

“*Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god;- the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme: Glory to Allah. (High is He) above the partners they attribute to Him.*” (Al-Hashr 59: 23).

Muslims are the descendants of Abraham and they observe the rite of circumcision, the Qur'an does not call them saints as the Old Testament called the people of God. Moreover if we consider what the Muslims claim, that the Qur'an is *Munzal*, down handed, descended from God to the Prophet Mohammed through the Archangel Gabriel, we can conclude that God Himself does not call the Muslims saints.

### ***The New Testament***

While the Old Testament English version used the word saint for righteous, pious and devotion in nineteen of the thirty-two verses, the New Testament has used the word saint in one only meaning as a translation for the word Agios in the sixty verses that resulted from my research. This is a solid proof that Christians have deeper and clearer understanding of the saint-man, that there is a special place in the theology of the Church that differentiates it from other philosophies and so-called theologies.

The verses which reveal the saint-man in the New Testament has an active role along with an observatory role. Man is no longer recognized as a saint because of the sign of the flesh, but rather because he is as an active member in Jesus Christ. He is the one who was sanctified in Jesus Christ,<sup>38</sup> the beloved of God,<sup>39</sup> who was persecuted,<sup>40</sup> was shut in prison<sup>41</sup> and was martyred<sup>42</sup> because of his faith.<sup>43</sup> He is the beholder of faith,<sup>44</sup> the healer,<sup>45</sup> the preacher,<sup>46</sup> and the giver.<sup>47</sup> The saint-man is the one who ministers<sup>48</sup> with care and love.<sup>49</sup> He is the bondservant<sup>50</sup> and the fellow worker of Jesus Christ<sup>51</sup> who lives as a citizen with the members of the household of God<sup>52</sup> in a worthy manner<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> 1 Cor. 1:2.

<sup>39</sup> Rom. 1:7.

<sup>40</sup> Acts 9: 13.

<sup>41</sup> Acts 26: 10.

<sup>42</sup> Rev 16:6.

<sup>43</sup> Eph 1:18.

<sup>44</sup> Jude 1:3.

<sup>45</sup> Acts 9: 41.

<sup>46</sup> Eph. 3:8.

<sup>47</sup> Rom. 15:26 and 12: 13.

<sup>48</sup> Eph. 4:12, Heb. 6:10.

<sup>49</sup> Eph. 1:15.

<sup>50</sup> Phil. 1:1.

<sup>51</sup> Rom. 16:3.

<sup>52</sup> Eph. 2:19.

<sup>53</sup> Rom. 16:2.

without covetousness, fornication and uncleanness.<sup>54</sup> He is the apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God<sup>55</sup> who calls upon the name of His Lord in every place,<sup>56</sup> thus revealing the mystery that was hidden for ages and generations.<sup>57</sup> He is the heir<sup>58</sup> whose heart is blameless in holiness<sup>59</sup> and whose prayer is lifted up as incense<sup>60</sup> in supplication<sup>61</sup> and thanksgiving.<sup>62</sup> The saint-man is the edifier of the body of Jesus Christ,<sup>63</sup> the peacemaker,<sup>64</sup> the judger of the world<sup>65</sup> and the glorification of the Lord.<sup>66</sup>

The saint-man in the New Testament is a minister, a doer and a sanctifier. He is in the image of His God. His relationship to Jesus Christ teaches Him that ministry is love in action. His witness is an active ministry and witness. He is the member of the Body of Jesus Christ in whom each part has a significant and an important role to play so that the world will be sanctified.

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<sup>54</sup> Eph. 5:3.

<sup>55</sup> 2 Cor. 1:1.

<sup>56</sup> 1 Cor. 1:2.

<sup>57</sup> Col. 1:26.

<sup>58</sup> Eph. 1:18.

<sup>59</sup> I Thess. 3:13.

<sup>60</sup> Rev. 5:18 and 8:3, 4.

<sup>61</sup> Eph. 6:18.

<sup>62</sup> Col. 1:12.

<sup>63</sup> Eph. 4:12.

<sup>64</sup> 1 Cor. 4:13.

<sup>65</sup> 1 Cor. 6:12.

<sup>66</sup> 2 Thess. 1:10.