KABBALAH AND THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

Some time ago, a Bro. proposed some interesting reflections about the ancient theme of good and evil, followed by an attended and enthusiastic discussion, demonstrating the appeal of the question.

I resume the subject from the perspective of Kabbalah, considered, where possible in its real context, so far from the cheapest esotericism and from the vulgar and simplistic versions which were offered, both from the shadow zone of mystery which Kabbalah were (necessarily and deliberately) created and developed in, considered that it was born and grew in small and extremely confidential circles.
Although it may be hard to talk briefly about things that have filled libraries, and that moreover, have in themselves an elusive character dealing with subtle issues to the limit of the inexpressible, a short introduction is necessary.

Gershom Sholem, one of the greatest early modern scholars, and the main source of the present work, defines the name as "the traditional term most commonly used to refer to the assets of the esoteric teachings of Judaism and Jewish mysticism, especially the forms that this last hired during the Middle Ages since the twelfth century ".

Insofar as, more than a systematic doctrine, it represents a set of theories, sometimes contradictory to each other, Kabbalah, in its various phases, presents a *corpus* of shared elements and symbols. The initial basic idea is that God, considered in His absoluteness, is not knowable or, perhaps, conceivable by man. We are talking about the concept of Ein-Sof, translated as "Infinity" but absolutely unattainable. The passage of this concept from "Hiding" to "Manifestation" remains an unfathomable mystery, solved in practice by recourse to a theory of emanation, not far from Neoplatonism and articulated using the system of Sefirot.

Obviously, in a perspective internal to Judaism, although Kabbalah is considered by many orthodox thinkers on the edge of heresy, the hidden God (Ein-Sof) and the manifest God (Sefirot) are One and the same Thing. A theory developed explicitly in the sixteenth century, proposes the attractive hypothesis that the origin of all has been a sort of "contraction" with which Ein-Sof withdrew into himself for leaving a blank space that would allow the creation of the universe, while previously, being only God could not be anything else.

Through a very complex process, the Sefirot emerge: 1) Keter ("Crown"), 2) Hokhmah ("Wisdom"), 3) Binah ("Intelligence"); 4) Gedullah ("Greatness") or Hesed ("Love "); 5) Gevurah (" Power ") or Din (" Judgment, Rigor "); 6) Tiferet (" Beauty "); 7) Nezah (" Endurance "); 8) Hod (" Majesty "); 9 Yesod ("Foundation"); 10 Malkhut ("Kingdom").

Between them and the created world there is an abyss but also an infinite number of relationships and correlations. The possibility that very few men can, as it were, "ascend" this rules are very limited and border on the impossible. As Giulio Busi writes, Kabbalah limits oneself to exploring the border areas of the unspeakable. Many theories and real mystical techniques have also constituted the charm of Kabbalism and there are at least two major strands, Ecstatic Kabbalah and Theosophical Kabbalah.

We need more concepts related to the "contraction" of the origins: the first two movements, consisting of the *regressus* of Ein-Sof in himself and his emanative and creator "return" into the empty space, led, among the consequences, at a concentration of the power of Din, the "judgment", which was previously undifferentiated. This power was mixed with the remains of the "light" left by the Ein-Sof. A variant of the hypothesis considers that "light" like a ray irrepressible that filled the empty space with the ten Sefirot. The light moved in two ways, "circle and line." First the Sefirot arranged themselves in a circle, and then in a linear way in the form of man, the '"primordial man", Adam Kadmon, symbolic foreshadowing and link, from which are derived even complex language interrelations related to Hebrew alphabet and Torah.

In any case, the element-light is collected in containers or vessels, but only those of the three higher Sefirot resisted to the impact. The others were broken or cracked, dropping and mingling together lights and fragments or kelippot, "shells". Perhaps, at the base of the disaster, there was the presence of roots of kelippot themselves in the process of emanation. In a way, the cosmic drama appeared inevitable, because only through it would be possible, as it were, purifying the great apparatus of the first emanation, helping to consolidate a "world of evil" structured and defined, and then start a massive movement of "redemption". The result is the process of Tikkun, or "restoration" of the state in which things go back to their proper place, with the fundamental contribution of man.

At first, the evil was conceived only as the result of the impossibility for man to approach the significant complexity of the Sefirot, but quickly emerged the traits of a thesis for which, in the origin of evil, it assumed a fundamental importance the Sefirah of judgment and rigor, Gevurah, as the power of "punishing" would tend to assume its role as a quasi-autonomous and excessive one, if not mitigated by the "mercy". In this context would be born the Sitra Ahra, the “On the other hand part”, by some conceived as a kind of alternative hierarchy, an "emanation of the left side" of the main one. A related issue is what binds the birth of evil to the separation of the Tree of Life, with its power of love and compassion, from the Tree of Knowledge, characterized by the power of judgment.

In the various Kabbalistic formulations, there are many hypotheses: for one of them evil constitutes a sort of "bark" or "shell" of the great Sefirotic tree, finding its place at the level of waste product or slag of the great process of emanation, while not coming to identify himself completely with the material world. For another, it is embodied and actualized only with the wrong actions of men. One of the most striking and disturbing is that the "two lights" were present from the beginning into the Ein-Sof, "the light which contained the thought" and "the light that did not contain the thought."

The first had the thought of creating worlds, the other tended to remain hidden within itself and to put up some sort of resistance to the same emanation, eventually becoming the source of evil and the structure of Sitra Ahra. In practice, the two opposite principles exist together within God. The final outcome of the titanic conflict, with different nuances, is the triumph of "light", which will come to permeate everything dissolving the "other side". In a text, it prefigures the conversion of Samael-Satan, symbolized by the fact that his name would eventually drop the letter *mem*, who was here for "death", *Mavet*, leaving Sa'el, one of the names of God.

In many Kabbalistic works, the dynamic relationship with the world of evil emerges in a paradox: on the one hand it is stated that " There is no true light except that which comes from the darkness... there is no good except what comes from evil", the other says you have to bring the light of redemption also falling into the abyss. In the Zohar, the true wisdom of the Kabbalist is considered incomplete without a direct knowledge of the "strength of the left" and to substantiate this bold claim is called into question the same King Solomon, generally regarded as an expert on magical knowledge.

The mystic must understand the mechanisms of evil, to go up against them. Ever since that text, we learn that the activity always reawakens magical forces of emanation "with an action below", but Kabbalah is aimed at the pure ones, while the magic evokes the force of the '"other side".
The overall picture that emerges from these cases is fascinating, because it is far from oversentimental and hagiography; the path of humanity itself is full of danger and the way of the seeker of truth turns out to be almost impossible to follow. The universe is dominated by evil and darkness, a place where few, lost sparks of light are desperately trying to meet to return to their origin. Nevertheless relationships are established firm between what goes up and what goes down, emphasizing the need for all creation, that man make efforts in knowledge and improvement, also coming to influence the condition of the higher ranks and spheres.

Indeed, human activity is presented as essential to the recovery of the primordial state of grace and the mending of the breach that has always marked every creature, act and thought, even the most subtle and imperceptible movement of the soul, eventually coming to a truth without dualisms, where even the negatives worlds are reintegrated into the whole.

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