

The Original Sin and Eschatology

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Abstract

The pending of humankind between sin and death represents the ontological process transposed into its expiation before mystery. The sin of the first parents was inevitable. The original sin, seen as a calamity, as a genetic pest, banishes from the traditional theology the millennial movements together with their inherent aberrations, placing them at the limit of heresy. There are two “genes” which characterize the man, one of the nostalgia for the paradise lost, and another of fear of this sacred perimeter, which becomes more and more pregnant, and rules his existence together with the consciousness of death, assimilated to the Divine Tribunal, in esse with Parousia, reminding of the flaming swords of the cherubs who were ordered to guard the path to the tree of life. The tenseness, to which Adam Kadmon is subjected to, in the period from the original fall to the end of time, is expressed through the redemption of the original sin by the existence in this transitory world.

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The pending of humankind between sin and death represents the ontological process transposed into its expiation before mystery. Lev Sestov was right when he affirmed that “beginnings and endings mean, in other words, everything, except for the middle. We don’t need the middle because it is worth nothing in itself.”¹

The sin of the first parents was inevitable. In other words, its fulfilment did not represent an act in itself, but an immanent state, residing in the corruptible animated clay. Immanuel Kant concluded, respecting the truth, that “man has a penchant for evil”, but the rationalist did not separate the evil inherent to the moral

¹ Lev Sestov, *Începuturi și sfârșituri*, Institutul European, Iași, 1993.

system from the Evil, as an inherent entity of this “*civitas terrena sive diaboli*” (St. Augustin).

“By giving way to the tempter, Adam and Eve committed a personal sin, but this sin altered the human nature, which is consequently transmitted in a fallen state. (...) Furthermore, in *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* it is said that «The original sin is a transmissible sin for the following reason: it is a sin that was acquired, not committed, it is a state and not a deed.»²

The original sin, seen as a calamity, as a genetic pest, banishes from the traditional theology the millennial movements together with their inherent aberrations, placing them at the limit of heresy. Thus, theodicy has the value of truth. In the same way as *Dies Irae* gave birth to chiliasm, the first disobedience involving the divine apophthegm, created a series of the initiatic quest of the lost paradise, coming from the “nostalgia of paradise” (N. Crainic), inherent to the human immanence. There have always been spiritual illuminists who have tried to imagine that it irremediably lost place, reducing it to a cognoscible level, through language, but man, “that creature, bitten by the demiurgeous snake from the heart” (N. Ionescu), is no longer capable of being master of his inner nature in order to be panentheistic to the eckhartian deity and discern truth from falsity.

In the mystical thinking, paradise has been seen in different forms. Paradise as the *oicumena* between the biblical mountains of Sion and Sinai is to be found in the Book of the Jubilees, paradise as a space bordered by the Gange, Euftrat, Tigru and Ghihon is to be found at Flavius Josephus, and later, following the same research line, at Saints Theophilus, Irineus, Hypolite, and Epiphanius. Only with Saint Ephrem the Syrian this naturalistic vision was transcended, the paradise being conceived as a cosmic temple, reflected at the terrestrial level in the Temple of Jerusalem, thus being created a sacred geography. Isidore of Seville, influenced by the Augustinian conception, identified two types of paradises, a mundane one, *hortus deliciarum*, where the first parents had been placed and the celestial one, where the souls of those waiting for Redemption reside. Beginning with Venerable Bede, we can observe a theologising of the concept of paradise, by representing it as a symbolic image either of the Church, or of our future country, thus framing it in a true geopolitics of the sacred. Perhaps the vision of Priest John on paradise had the most profound impact on the collective mentality. He described the terrestrial paradise as residing on the top of four Indian mountains, from each of

² Walter-Jörg Langbein, *Lexiconul erorilor biblice*, Paralela 45, Pitești, 2007, p. 104.

them springing rivers full of precious stones and scented apples with thaumaturgic effects.

A complex image of paradise is given by Thomas Aquinas, who has as models those of Saint Augustine, Isidore of Seville, Venerable Bede and John of Damascus. “Those who say that paradise lies under the equatorial circle believe that in this area the climate is completely temperate due to the equality between days and nights throughout the whole year and to the fact that the sun is never too high, causing the weather to be too cold, neither is it too warm, because, although the sun passes right over one’s head, it changes position very quickly. Yet, Aristotle affirms very clearly in his *Treaty on Meteors* that this region is inhabitable, which seems plausible, because even where the sun does not pass right over one’s head, the weather is too hot, due to the proximity of the sun. In both cases, we must assume that paradise was laid in a temperate zone, either under the equator, or in another area.”³

Naturally, around this paradise there has been created a whole brilliant literature, from Dante to Milton, and the Flemish School, through Hieronymus Bosch and Peter Bruegel the Old, who, by the preciousness of their works, made it more approachable a vision of the ancestral land, but the one that made the best link between the original sin and *Dies Irae* is the modern alchemist Jean-Julien Champagne, better known under the name of Fulcanelli, who, by decrypting the occult message of the Cross of Hendaye, in the homonymous chapter of the second edition of “*Mysteries of Cathedrals*” indicates the refuge of the right from the apocalyptic catastrophe: “Praise thee, oh, Cross, sole Hope”.

In this manner, Fulcanelli, with his illuminated hieratism, shows us the way, with the responsibility of an initiate in the sacred science. In the vision of the alchemist, we notice, that the chosen ones do not find their dwelling in a mundane paradise like the society, as one naively but beautifully described in F. Bacon’s or T. Campanella’s utopias.

Couldn’t we extrapolate Venerable Bede’s act of penitence,

“Thus I remembered the sins I committed
The dirtiness of life, the awful moment of death,
The great day of the Judgment with its terrible trials,

³ Jean Delumeau, *Grădina desfătărilor. O istorie a raiului*, Humanitas Publishing, Bucharest, 1997, p. 45.

And the eternal wrath of the Judge for the guilty ones.”⁴

to the consciousness of sin, empowering the matrices of S. Kierkegaard’s anguish?

“There are two eschatological perspectives, a personal individual one and a universal historical one. The conciliation of these two perspectives, as a result of the paradox of time, is extremely difficult. In the traditional Christian theology they have never been sufficiently explained. On one hand it is affirmed the individual solution of the personal destiny. On the other hand, it is expected the solution of the humankind and of the whole world at the end of time and history. Between these two perspectives there is a void.”⁵

It is from this “void time” that the anguish of the Danish thinker comes. “But the spirit bearing this anguish represents, in Kierkegaard’s view, the authentic human soul, the human consciousness that looks again at its existence penetrated by and placed under the spectre of the primordial sin, but also in the sphere of a possible redemption granted by the divine grace.”⁶

According to Cioran, the fall from time, the release from temporality has a granular aspect, given by the atomist vision on universe, and the supreme redemption is the passing into nothingness. Cioran’s *Weltanschauung* is founded on the aporetic antinomies, which impart their predilection for *sisifism*, and the installation of humanity’s paradise inscribes itself in an evolution towards descendant roots and barbarism, being marked by a personal paradise, that he had lost, once his childhood had passed. The understanding of the Romanian nihilist beauty of creation resides in perceiving the nuances that can be inferred in the *palinodia* that he uses iteratively in his philosophic approach. In this respect, J. J. Wunenburger, talking about the sacred dimension, considers that “it does not play the role of the mediator between man and God unless it integrates its extremes and participations to a correlation of contrary images.”

The fear of transcendent, distinguishable even at the first prophets, becomes “thrill” at S. Kirkegaard, feeding itself on the “*mysterium tremendum*” (R. Otto), whose reflection can be viewed in “the thousand-year kingdom”, which is

⁴ Bernard McGrinn, *Sfârșitul lumii și creștinismul timpuriu - Teoria Apocalipsei și sfârșiturile lumii*, Meridiane, Bucharest, 1999, p. 90.

⁵ Nikolai Berdiaev, *Încercare de metafizică eshatologică*, Paideia, Bucharest, 1999, p. 256.

⁶ Marius Cucu, *Cioran și exodul spre veșnicie*, Junimea, Iași, 2007, p. 184.

accompanied by the triumph of the righteousness through the infernal ordeal suffered by the sinners, materialised at Thomas Aquinas into an anticipated joy.⁷

There are two “genes” which characterize the man, one of the nostalgia for the paradise lost, and another of fear of this sacred perimeter, which becomes more and more pregnant, and rules his existence together with the consciousness of death, assimilated to the Divine Tribunal, in esse with Parousia, reminding of the flaming swords of the cherubs who were ordered to guard the path to the tree of life.

The tenseness, to which Adam Kadmon is subjected to, in the period stretching from the original fall to the end of time, is expressed through the redemption of the original sin by the existence in this transitory world. This incessant damnation of man longing for the primordial hearth, is expressed by V. Rozanov very suggestively: “Two angels sit on my shoulders: the angel of laugh and the angel of tears. Their incessant quarrel is my life.”⁸

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⁷ Berdiaev, *Încercare de metafizică eshatologică*, p. 257.

⁸ Vasili Rozanov, *Apocalipsa timpului nostru*, Institutul European, Iași, 1994, p. 58.