

The Importance of Jewish Influence on Foundation of Manichaeism Philosophical and Religious System

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Abstract : It is indisputable that the problem of the origin of Manichaeism is very complex. Manichaeism is characterized as a syncretic religion, which was influenced by many teachings, but it is difficult to define one which can be called fundamental. The aim of this paper is an attempt to regard Jewish apocalyptic tradition as one of the most defining source of formation of Manichaeism systems. To realize this aim a comparison of the Manichean texts and the Jewish apocryphal literature is made. Consideration is given first to the Coptic Manichaeism treatise Kephalaia, The Cologne Mani Codex and to books of Enoch. Under the article it is not denied that Manichaeism was influenced by different doctrines and, passed through centuries, it could adapt and strengthen this influence at an even deeper level. But the fact that the Judeo-Christian environment where Mani grew up and where the first sprouts of his teaching were formed had impact on future prophet seems obvious. Nevertheless, attempts to analyze the system of Mani within the Jewish tradition are quite rare, although such studies were carried out for Gnosticism. But Manichaeism, despite the Gnostic features it contains, is not 'one of the Gnostics' to place it under this term among the rest. Frequently, gnostic currents are pointed out as the main sources for the formation of Mani's teachings. But it seems possible that Mani's interest in Gnosticism was motivated by the fact that he considered it as something close to that interpretation of Hebrew texts, which he aspired to undertake. The question of understanding the Manichaeism system is connected not only with Manichaeism but also with other dualistic teachings, which were recognized by contemporaries as Manichaeism. It is seen that polemics between Manicheans and Hellenized Christianity separated from Judaism and continued to separate with every century, were polemics between adherents of initially two different worldviews who had, however, a common source. Therefore an analysis of the controversy in the context of interpretations of this common source by disputing parties is seen very important for further study.

Keywords : dualism, Jewish apocalypticism, Manichaeism, syncretism

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