

Milton: *Paradise Lost* and the Question of Kabbalah

Rosa Flotats

ESTUDIS UNIVERSITARIS DE VIC

The proposal for analysing a poem taking Kabbalah as a point of reference may be regarded as an unfruitful and misleading approach due to the pejorative meaning it has for many people; however, if the most important traits are brought clearly into view one comes to realise that Kabbalah contributes decisively with the understanding and interpreting of a text. After all, Kabbalah is a mode of language and, especially, a mode of interpretation¹. When faced with the imposing task of reading or interpreting a text we are confronted with the question of how much of this text we are able to identify and how much of our personality we need to give up in order to come to grips with its reality and finality. It is hardly questionable that any final objective and the result obtained are always constrained by a combination of historical and/or traditional factors that will constitute the personality of that text. The reader who is also constrained by his own historical and traditional factors may feel forced to use what Harold Bloom names his own “belatedness”², those conditions that influence him when interpreting the text. According to Bloom in *Kabbalah and Criticism*:

A reader understanding a poem is indeed understanding his own reading of that poem. ...There are weak mis-readings and strong mis-readings, just as there are weak poems and strong poems, but there are no right readings, because reading a text is necessarily the reading of a whole system of texts, and meaning is always wandering around between texts (p.107).

It is this idea of “wandering between texts” and the importance of the reader’s meditation that leads us to the question of Kabbalah as part of a receiver’s belatedness.

Bloom states that Kabbalah must be understood as “tradition” and “reception”, the latter referring to the whole of Oral Law, and the former referring to “traditional wisdom”. It is a body of rhetoric or figurative language which offers a radical consideration of Man’s Being in relation to the world and to God. Gershom Scholem in *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* points out that Kabbalism establishes a state of interdependence of all the worlds and all existential levels³. It is indeed a philosophy of rhetoric that offers an interpretation of the Bible, especially of the *Torah*, or *Pentateuch*, under the influence of Neoplatonism and Gnosticism together with the entire Jewish tradition of interpreting the Bible found in the Talmudic writings. It is a mysticism of profound religious feeling that manages to keep the *Halakhab* (“Sacred Law”) and the *Aggadab* (“legend”, “myth”) in union. Scholem defines it in terms of “traditional wisdom”: “a doctrine which centres about the immediate personal contact with God, a highly personal and intimate form of knowledge”⁴. He also identifies it with other kinds of mysticism,

Kabbalah too draws upon the mystic's awareness of both the transcendence of God and His immanence within the true religious life, every facet of which is revelation of God, although God Himself is most clearly perceived through man's introspection. ...The second element in Kabbalah is that of theosophy, which seeks to reveal the mysteries of the hidden life of God and the relationships between the divine life on the one hand and the life of man and creation on the other. Speculations of this type occupy a large and conspicuous area in kabbalistic teaching. Sometimes their connection with the mystical plane becomes rather tenuous and is superseded by an interpretative and homiletical vein which occasionally even results in a kind of kabbalistical *pilpul*.⁵

To study the universe the kabbalists based their work on the Bible. Therefore by means of myth and rhetoric Kabbalah seeks to explain the cause and process of the Creation⁶ with the underlying idea that Man participates in it and is constantly improving or impairing it. The mysteries of the divinity, seen seated on the Throne, can only be revealed to a few elect; hence the use of certain esotericism and modes of language which conceal them from the uninitiated and untrained. The theory of the ten *Sefirot* or attributes of God, represent aspects of the inaccessible One, the Supreme *Ein-Sof* and *Ayin*, the "Deus Absconditus". Thus, the *Sefirot* form the active world of the Divinity, they are all contained in each other, and they are all the manifestation of God's immanence in the world. They evince His dynamic unity and the process by means of which He manifests Himself as Creator.

The *Sefirot* are presented as a reversed tree with *Keter*, or "Crown" and "Divine Light" at the top, out of which emanate all the other Sefirot. *Hokhmab*, or "wisdom", forms the second Sefirah in the tree; *Binab*, or "understanding", is the third following *Hokhmab*. These three form the Supernal Triad—the realm of the first manifestation of the Divinity. The other seven taken conjointly are considered the *Sefirot* of creation, their names being, in order: (4) *Hesed* ("Mercy"); (5) *Din* ("Rigor/Judgement") or *Gevurah* ("Power"); (6) *Tiferet* ("Beauty") or *Rabamim* (Compassion); (7) *Nezah* ("Eternity"); (8) *Hod* ("Reverberation", "majesty"); (9) *Yesod* ("Foundation"); (10) *Malkbut* ("Kingdom"). Three lines or columns are exhibited: the active—to the right of *Keter*—, starting with *Hokhmab* followed by *Hesed* and *Nezah*; the passive—to the left of *Keter*—, starting with *Binab* and followed by *Din* and *Hod*. Finally, the central pillar, which descends from the Crown, *Keter*, to *Tiferet*, down to *Yesod* and then to *Malkbut*. This is also known as the pillar of "equilibrium"⁷.

The apparent complexity of the system seems to become clearer when interpreting God's attributes in their application to the lower world. Marjorie H. Nicolson in her article "Milton and the *Conjectura Cabbalistica*" stresses the influence Christian Kabbala received from Ramon Llull, Philo Judaeus, Neoplatonism, and neo-Pythagoreanism and how in its turn it influenced the literature of the Renaissance and made a special entrance into England in the second quarter of the 17th century (p.2-4)⁸. Christian Kabbalah began to evolve in the 15th century onward through certain mystics who tried to harmonize Kabbalistic doctrines with Christianity. Their intention was to demonstrate that "the true hidden meaning of the teachings of Kabbalah points in a Christian direction"⁹. According to Scholem, Christian Kabbalah spread from two sources: from the theological speculations of a number of Jewish converts from the end of the 13th century; and from speculation developed around the Platonic Academy in Florence during the time of the Medicis. Scholem gives an account of this in the following terms:

The Christian speculation about the Kabbalah that first developed around the Platonic Academy

endowed by the Medicis in Florence and was pursued in close connection with the new horizons opened up by the Renaissance in general. These Florentine circles believed that they had discovered in the Kabbalah an original divine revelation to mankind that had been lost and would now be restored, and with the aid of which it was possible not only to understand the teachings of Pythagoras, Plato, and the Orphics, all of whom they greatly admired, but also the secrets of the Catholic faith. The founder of this Christian school of Kabbalah was the renowned Florentine prodigy Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-94) ... his theses first brought the Kabbalah to the attention of many Christians. (Enc. Jud. p.643-644).

He also explains that such views were not approved by the kabbalists themselves. In the 17th century the writings of Jacob Boehme and of Knorr von Rosenroth gave an impulse to Christian kabbalism. In England such influence is met in the writings of some of the Cambridge Platonists such as Ralph Cudworth and Henry More. That Man is endowed with Free Will, the acceptance of a feminine part in God, and the acceptance of evil as a necessary requirement for the creation to take place are ideas that acquire some relevance in a theory that establishes pairs of opposites: light and darkness, good and evil, spirit and matter, male and female¹⁰. The *Sefer ba-Zohar*, or "Book of Splendour", written in Spain around the 12th and 13th centuries, is constantly setting and exhibiting clear contrasts at all the levels of reality¹¹. Thus Heaven finds its opposition with Hell: its landscape, hierarchical structure, palaces and so on have their counterparts in the world of darkness. Heaven and Hell are in God's mind. They received their being at the moment God thought about them; hence the belief in God's foreknowledge.

Kabbalism also offers the possibility of the return by an act of purification in repentance and suffering. The idea that suffering has meaning and that it is the consequence of exile had already been highlighted by Philo and the neoplatonists; it is this which encourages the movement of the return to the One or Monad. The Platonic idea that Man is a mirror of the great cosmos, himself a microcosmos, is taken up by the kabbalists. Philo, who united Hellenism and Judaism seems to be one of the most important influences on the kabbalists¹². His influence and that of the Biblical texts, Platonism, Pythagoreanism, Neoplatonism and Gnosticism play the significant role of turning the Kabbalah into a completely eclectic system and method of interpretation. Metaphor, allegory, oxymoron, and metonymy are some of the modes of speech that are given preference in Kabbalistic writings.

A certain esotericism is obviously implied due to the linguistic symbolism and myth it makes use of. Besides, all of these can be explained in terms of allowing the kabbalist student to adopt the approach and understanding that suits best their own creative nature. Kabbalah is a system that highlights free will, considering it a characteristic of humanity; therefore this system must be open, it can in no way restrict the freedom of any interpreter, follower, student, or reader.

This paper deals with the relation between Kabbalah and *Paradise Lost*. When summarizing Kabbalah and extracting its main concepts, stripped of the extraordinary rhetoric that constitutes their flesh and dress, we realize that certain coincidences with Milton's thought as found in PL¹³ are astonishing. It is no wonder that Denis Saurat considered Milton's philosophical ideas truly kabbalistic¹⁴. He believed that Milton knew the Zohar and had read other similar documents. In *Milton, Man and Thinker*, Saurat presents his arguments in defence of the theory that Milton was widely influenced by the *Zohar* and other kabbalistic writings¹⁵, and highlights in particular these verses on God's retraction from PL (vii.170-2): "I uncircumscribed Myself retire,/ And put not forth My goodness, which is free/ To act or

not..." (p.102). In opposition to that, and according to Sanford Budick, PL should be read as a typological poem¹⁶. The similitudes with Judaism are brought about thanks to Milton's knowledge of the Hebrew Bible and of certain Midrashim. However, his eclectic and often syncretistic approaches to concrete beliefs allow and encourage an interpretation that goes beyond at of conventional typology.

Not everything in Milton agrees with Kabbalism. His interest in politics and history surpasses that of the kabbalists themselves; very often the poem needs to be read in light of its social and historical background to be properly understood. In addition to that, R.J. Zwi Werblowsky in "Milton and the Conjectura Cabbalistica" offers an analysis of all the flawed arguments of D. Saurat and refutes them thoroughly¹⁷. Zwi Werblowsky states that Saurat relied on a very bad translation of the *Zohar*, and that most of the points used by Saurat are simply Christian and/or mystical commonplaces. He also points out Saurat's misunderstanding of God's *Zimzum*, or "retraction". Still, there seem to be enough reasons to believe that drawing from kabbalism might have proved instrumental in the reinforcement and dramatization of some beliefs such as Milton's anti-Trinitarianism and concept of evil. The idea, found in H. Bloom¹⁸, which interprets the triads as the relation in the poem between a sign, its object, and the interpreting thought, together with his statement that the "Sefirotic tree is a working model for a theory of poetic influence" (p.53) well justify the use of some of these ideas in the overall structure of the poem, allowing it at the same time to remain open to different interpretations. A poem is also a creation and the poet is like the demiurge who gives essence and existence to something concrete.

There are a variety of ideas in PL that coincide with Kabbalism. However, Milton might have developed similar ideas and reached similar conclusions from his own reading, analysing, and thinking. One such issue that Kabbalah took from Jewish theology and which coincides with Christian theology as well is "Free Will", which Milton bounds up with reason, a faculty of Man that allows him to reach a state of balance or "equilibrium". The concept of freedom is perhaps the strongest in PL, it is constantly present and all the events that take place stem therefrom. This is all too clear in the following extract where God speaking to the Son foresees that man will fall:

For Man will hearken to his (Satan's) glozing lies,
 And easily transgress the sole command,
 Sole pledge of his obedience: so will fall
 He and his faithless progeny. Whose fault?
 Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of me
 All he could have; I made him just and right,
 Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
 Such I created all the Ethereal Powers
 And Spirits, both them who stood and them who failed;
 Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
 ...What praise could they receive,
 What pleasure I, from such obedience paid,
 When Will and Reason (Reason also is Choice),
 Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,
 Made passive both, had served Necessity,
 Not Me? They, therefore, as to right belonged
 So were created, (iii. 93-112)¹⁹

Free will, the rejection of Predestination, the possibility of choosing, and the comparison between man and angel as created beings are the issues dealt with in this extract. Milton presents freedom as the “high decree /Unchangeable, eternal” (iii. 126/7), and the explanation for God’s one command is conceived in terms of negating predestination and fate. Furthermore, these issues seem to hint at the kabbalistic belief that suffering has a meaning and is a way to purification. To be near the Father, to behold the Throne, which metaphorically signifies reaching a state of supreme happiness, a cathartic process seems to be required. In order to understand these signs of beauty and happiness we need to translate them, to find their reference in connection with *Keter*, the “Crown” and “Divine Light”. One underlying idea is that the Creator, being at the highest level in the hierarchy, emanates Light and Glory and Wisdom onto the lower worlds and levels of it. The Sefirot, and therefore the attributes they signify, emanate from the right of the Throne. This idea of hierarchy is clearly expressed in PL:

Now had the Almighty Father from above,
 From the pure Empyrean where He sits
 High Throned above all highth, bent down his eye,
 His own works and their works at once to view:
 About him all the Sanctities of Heaven
 Stood thick as stars, and from his sight received
 Beatitude past utterance; on his right
 The radiant image of his glory sat,
 His only Son. (iii. 56-64)

The Father “High Throned above all highth” with nothing above him is the inaccessible One; on his right and depending entirely on Him sits the Son; and, though we read “about him all the Sanctities of Heaven”, He had to “bend down his eye” in order to see them thus placing the angels on a lower level and further signifying the supremacy of the One. This extract exemplifies one of the moments in the poem where the Hierarchy of Light is described. The Son is the representative of the highest attributes of the Divinity, the first after the Father and the one that pleases Him most:

O Son, in whom my soul hath chief delight,
 Son of my bosom, Son who art alone
 My word, my wisdom, and effectual might (iii. 168-70)

In these two passages Milton sets forth one of the most controversial of mysteries –the question of the Trinity. In the *Christian Doctrine*, explanation of the essence of God is given in terms of being of the simplest nature and admitting no compound quality; therefore, the “Son cannot be co-essential with the Father, for then the title of Son would be least of all applicable to him, since he who is properly the Son is not coeval with the Father, much less of the same numerical essence, otherwise the Father and the Son would be one person”²⁰. This belief is highlighted at the moment the Son is anointed King and explanation of his duties is accordingly given. It is a very dramatic moment in the poem, and a crucial one, where the initiation of the Dyad takes place. The perfection of the One and the line of light that comes from it finds its counterpart with Satan, formerly Lucifer, who becomes the Creator of Evil and initiates the Hierarchy of Hell. This is possible due to the envy he felt when the Son was anointed King. Such envy

produced a “separation”, or according to the Lurianic Kabbalah a *Shevirab* (the “breaking of the vessels” or “process of emanation”), which is going to cause both a disordered multiplicity and the unavoidable fall. To the sin of envy there follows the sin of pride, and thereafter there seems to be a continuous process of sin referred to as a constant movement, specially conveyed by the word “err”: “Apostate! still thou err’st, nor end wilt find/ Of erring, from the path of truth remote” (vi. 172-3). Satan avows evil and affirms himself in it, thus becoming the contrary and opposing figure to the Son, his most absolute contrast and the maximum representative of evil. The following passage evinces the moment when God anoints the Son king, and the significance of this to the angelical orders below introducing at the same time an element of discord and discontent, which will give rise to the Dyad, or multiplicity:

My only Son, and on this holy hill
 Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
 At my right hand; your head I him appoint;
 And by my self have sworn to him shall bow
 All knees in heaven, and shall confess him Lord:
 ...: him who disobeys
 Me disobeys, breaks union, and that day
 Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls
 Into utter darkness, deep engulfed, his place
 Ordained without redemption, without end.
 So spake the Omnipotent, and with his words
 All seemed well pleased, all seemed, but were not all. (v. 604-17)

This is a dramatic moment that presents God’s word and justice, which will apply to those who disobey. It also indicates a concentration of the fifth *Sefirah*, *Din* or “Rigor/Judgement”, especially expressed by naming the Son “Lord” which means that he will apply justice in the name of God. Curiously enough this crucial event is related in Book V of PL coinciding numerically with *Din*. Biblical language is used to describe the heavenly world, as when the angels sing “Melodious hymns about the sovereign throne” (v. 656); all are happy but one. This image recalls that of the Throne in one of the visions in the Book of Revelation (7. 9-13). The angels take a variety of forms and perform a variety of activities which all fulfil the harmonious and balanced aim of pleasing the Father. They may be thought to symbolise prayer and a mystical experience based on the will to be near the Throne, like in Isaiah (6.3). The rest of the extract deals with the separation of the One by Satan. Here the drama reaches its fullest climax. In terms of Kabbalah, we have the aforementioned *Shevirab* which ends with a separation and exile, and this is exactly what happens to Satan first; his *Shevirab* or emanation is referred to by means of the multitude of angels that followed suit and fell with him.

We see in PL that the actual creation of the Earth and of Man will take place after the two opposing powers are clearly settled, with their emanation and energy the concepts of ‘time’ and ‘space’ get clear specification in the poem. They belong to lower worlds and not to the highest world of the divinity. However, to understand all of these, it seems necessary to return to Bloom interpreting Scholem. He explains that *Keter* signifies the “divine Will” of the Creator and the “divine self-Consciousness”; *Hokhmah*, “Wisdom”, is the active principle of knowing; and *Binah*, “Understanding”, signifies the reflec-

tion upon knowledge: “the veil through which God’s ‘Wisdom’ shines”²¹. The idea of *Binah* being the mother of the other *Sefirot* is developed at this point. Thus, the first contrasts are established at this high level: active and passive, male and female. Active corresponds to male and passive to female. This is another characteristic found in the poem with Adam as active and Eve as passive. Eve receives knowledge through Adam like *Binah* reflects the Wisdom it has received; besides, Eve being the mother of all mankind presents a parallelism with Binah seen as the mother of all the other *Sefirot*. In PL the *Zimzum* or “contraction” could be thought to precede the moment when Good and Evil originate; Good first, and Evil immediately afterwards as it has already been seen with the extracts from Book iii, otherwise there is no kabbalistic *Zimzum* in PL. Milton seems to have taken the Gnostic idea of the “divine fullness” or “pleroma” when dealing with the creation. Contrary to the kabbalists, he believed that God created out of matter. PL sings of one physical creation but leaves in the dark the creation of the superior worlds: the world of the ideas, of angels, and the world of the divinity, or high Heaven. It is this former origin and creation that has allowed for so much speculation on Milton’s use of kabbalistic ideas. The procession and/or emanation of good and evil have predecessors with neoplatonism and Philo Judeus. However at this point one tends to think of the “Big Bang” theory which is based on a big explosion which created a universe in expansion! PL having the universe as its background setting exhibits the expansion of both Good and Evil; the realms of the Son and of Satan as opposing energies indicate a creation which has not reached its end. Milton highlights the belief that the movement implied by the *tikkun* or “return” through repentance is not physical but internal; it is a question of adding virtues and love and “(thou) shalt possess /A paradise within thee, happier far.” Does PL not present itself as a true example of a triadic relation between a sign, its object, and the interpreting thought? A relation which is after all a decision of the readers, who need to use their own previous influence and creative energy to understand their own reading; together with a thought which is left free for them to abstract and use in their own cathartic meditation.

NOTES

¹ Harold Bloom. 1975: *Kabbalah and Criticism*. New York, The Seabury Press: 15-23.

² Bloom’s theory of “belatedness” is based on a theory of influence. See, “The Necessity of Misreading” in *Kabbalah and Criticism*: 95-126.

³ Gershom Scholem. 1965: *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*. New York: Schocken Books Inc., 1969. Translated by Ralph Manheim. I have used the Spanish version, *La Cábala y su simbolismo* 1989: Madrid, Siglo Veintiuno editores, 6^a ed. Traducción por José Antonio Pardo. See the chapter: “Tradición y nueva creación en el rito de los cabalistas”: 130-172.

⁴ G. Scholem. 1961: *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*. New York, Schocken Books Inc., 1974. See the “First Lecture: General Characteristics of Jewish Mysticism”: 1-39.

⁵ See the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. 10: KABBALAH, Introduction: 490.

⁶ Op.Cit. Scholem: *La Cábala y su simbolismo*. See chapter three: “Cábala y Mito” for myth and symbolism: 96ff.

⁷ Op.Cit. Scholem: KABBALAH in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*: 571-572. The most common pattern is:

Keter

Binah

Hokhmah

Gevurah/Din		Gedullah/Hesed
	Tiferet	
Hod		Nezah
	Yesod	
	Malkhut	

See the appendix, which offers a clearer representation of the Tree taken from G.G. Scholem: *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*: 213-214.

⁸ Marjorie H. Nicolson, 1927: "Milton and the *Conjectura Cabbalistica*", *Philological Quarterly*, Vol.VI, No.I, January: 1-18.

⁹ Op. Cit. G. Scholem: KABBALAH in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol.10: 644 ff. Hereafter the abbreviation "Enc. Jud." will be used to refer to this work. See also Marjorie Nicolson, "Milton and *The Conjectura Cabbalistica*": 2.

¹⁰ Op.Cit. M.H.Nicolson, "Milton and *The Conjectura Cabbalistica*". She gives special emphasis to the use of contrasts and their subsequent influence in the Renaissance period.

¹¹ *El ZOHAR*. Revelaciones del "Libro del Esplendor" seleccionadas por Ariel Bension. Edición de Carlos Garrido. Barcelona, Ediciones de la Tradición Unánime, 41, 1992. See chapter three: "Revelaciones concernientes al Paraíso e Infierno": 79-94. Also, G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, the "Fifth and Sixth Lectures": 156-243. For Scholem the author of the *Zohar* was fascinated by evil and followed the Gnostic tradition that considered evil a "left emanation" forming an "ordered hierarchy of the potencies of evil, ...organized in ten spheres or stages." The ten holy Sefirot have their unholy counterparts: 177.

¹² PHILO: *On the Account of the World's Creation given by Moses (De Opificio Mundi)*. Trans. F.H.Colson & G.H.Whitaker. PHILO I. The LOEB Classical Library, 1929, London: William Heinemann Ltd. 1962.

¹³ *Paradise Lost* will be referred to with the initials PL.

¹⁴ Denis Saurat, 1922: "Milton and the *ZOHAR*", *Studies in Philology*, Vol.XIX, No.2, April: 136-151.

¹⁵ Denis Saurat. 1944: *Milton, Man and Thinker*. London, J.M.Dent & Sons Ltd, 1946.

¹⁶ Sanford Budick, 1986: "Milton and the Scene of Interpretation: From Typology toward Midrash" in *Midrash and Literature*, Hartman, G.H. and Budick, S. eds. New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1986: 195-212.

¹⁷ R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, 1955: "Milton and the *Conjectura Cabbalistica*", *JWCI (Journal of the Warburg and Courtland Institutes)*, Vol.18: 90-113. There is special mention of Saurat's errors on pp.: 97-99, and on the misunderstood notion of the Lurianic *Zimzum* as being pantheistic on pp.: 109-110.

¹⁸ Op.Cit. H. Bloom: *Kabbalah and Criticism*, 51-94.

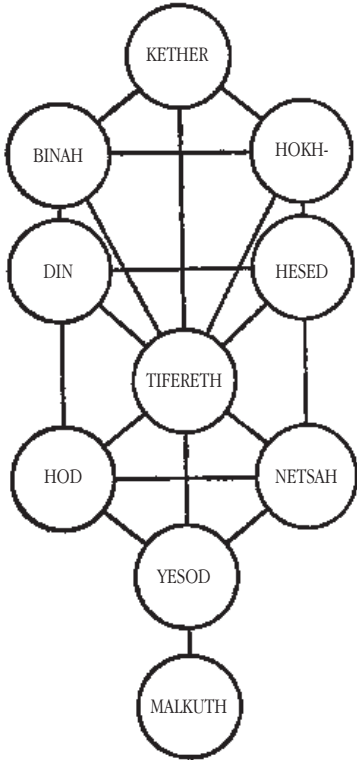
¹⁹ All the extracts of the poem are from, Alastair Fowler (ed.), 1968: *MILTON. PARADISE LOST*. London and New York, Longman, 1971.

²⁰ For more details about Milton's opinion and analysis of the Trinity, see "The Christian Doctrine" in *The Works of John Milton*. Patterson, F.A. ed. New York, Columbia University Press, 1933, Vol.XIV: Chapter V, "Of the Son": 177-356.

²¹ Op. Cit. H.Bloom: *Kabbalah Criticism*, 28-30.

APPENDIX

From, Gershom G. Scholem. 1961: Major trends in Jewish Mysticism. New York, Schocken Books Inc., 1967: 213-214. See notes 4, 7, 11.



1. *Kether Elyon*, the "supreme crown" of God;
2. *Hokhmah*, the "wisdom" or primordial idea of God;
3. *Binah*, the "intelligence" of God;
4. *Hesed*, the "love" or mercy of God;
5. *Gevurah* or *Din*, the "power" of God, chiefly manifested as the power of stern judgment and punishment;
6. *Rabamim*, the "compassion" of God, to which falls the task of mediating between the two preceding Sefiroth; the name *Tifereth* "beauty", is used only rarely.
7. *Netsab*, the "lasting endurance" of God;
8. *Hod*, the "majesty" of God;
9. *Yesod*, the "basis" or "foundation" of all active forces in God;
10. *Malkuth*, the "kingdom" of God, usually described in the Zohar as the *Keneseth Israel*, the mystical archetype of Israel's community, or as the Shekhinah.