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FROM THE TETRAGRAMMATON TO THE NAME OF JESUS: A NEW LOOK AT GOD'S PRESENCE IN THE HOLOCAUST

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The following article is an attempt to answer the question which many Jewish people have asked concerning God's presence in the Holocaust. While this problem has been discussed on many occasions, the intent here is to look at this question from a new perspective: the Tetragrammaton as both a promise and a fulfillment of God's perpetual presence among His people.

1. ISRAEL'S IDENTITY AND THE REVELATION OF THE TETRAGRAMMATON

Israel's trust in the Creator has its origin in the promise which the Lord made to Abraham: "I will make of you a great nation, and I will

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bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing (Gen. 12:2). This covenant-promise was reaffirmed in God's words to Jacob (Gen. 28:15), later in Egypt and eventually by the Exodus.

Another important reason for trust in the Lord's promise was the revelation of the divine Name to the Israelites (Exod. 3:13–16). The Tetragrammaton – יהוה (YHWH) – can be found for the first time in the Book of Genesis (2:4). It seems to have been known at the time of Abraham (Gen. 12:8) and even before the flood (Gen. 4:26)¹. Still, it is only to Moses that the divine Name is given with an explanation, although the explanation is not clear and distinct. In fact, it appears to differ radically from other human names. This is evident from the Lord's answer to Moses in response to his question concerning God's identity (Exod. 3:13). The answer concentrates not so much on the four-letter term itself (יהוה), as on its meaning (Exod. 3:14–15)². Accordingly, God first refers to His Name by the expression "I am who I am" (Exod. 3:14a). Next He shortens it to "I am" (Exod. 3:14b). Afterwards, He expresses the divine Name in another way, with the term "LORD" (Exod. 3:15). In the Septuagint the three references above are as follows: *ego eimi ho on* ("I am the being" – Exod. 3:14a), *ego eimi* ("I am" – Exod. 3:14b) and *kyrios* ("Lord" – Exod. 3:15). The Hebrew text provides the three following parallel references: *eheyeh asher eheyeh* (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה) – "I will be what (who) I will be" (Exod. 3:14a); *eheyeh* (אֶהְיֶה) – "I will be" (Exod. 3:14b) and finally the Tetragrammaton YHWH³ (יהוה) (Exod. 3:15). Clearly, then, in the Hebrew

¹ T. Fretheim, *Yahweh*, in: *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. W. A. VanGemeren, Grand Rapids (MI) 1997, vol. 4, p. 1295.

² J. A. Motyer, *The Revelation of the Divine Name*, Leicester 1959, pp. 12–17.

³ While the Septuagint translates the Hebrew term YHWH – יהוה (the Tetragrammaton) in most instances as *kyrios*, this, nevertheless, is not the meaning of the term. Since Jewish tradition does not pronounce the word YHWH (יהוה), it has come up with another word which serves as a substitute whenever the Tetragrammaton is encountered. This term is *adonai* – אֲדֹנָי ("my Lord"). Philologically, the Tetragrammaton consists of the root *hwh* (הוה) which means "being", to which the letter *yod* (י) is added. The end result – which is the Tetragrammaton – is a peculiar form which can function as a verb. It is a term which points to the future (as a verb in the future tense in the third person singular), just like the two expressions which refer to the divine Name in Exod. 3:14 (*eheyeh asher eheyeh* – "I will be the one whom I will be" and *eheyeh* – "I will be"). More on this subject, see D. N. Freedman, M. P. O'Connor and H. Ringgren, יהוה YHWH, in:

text of the Old Testament, the first two references to the divine Name are explanatory or interpretative in nature, while the third reference is not really a name – by Hebrew standards – but a term which in some enigmatic way refers to God. It must be emphasized, though, that all three references point to the future as a confirmation of the fact that God will always be with His people, no matter what befalls them⁴. This way, there is a sense in which God's Name becomes a source of confidence for the Israelites to whom the Almighty has revealed it. By the same token, any situation where God may seem to have forsaken His people would appear to contradict the expression "I will be what (who) I will be", because it refers not only to the fact that God will always exist, but also to the reality that the Almighty will forever remain with His people.

The first instance where the Hebrew word *ehey* ("I will be" – אֶהְיֶה) appears in the Masoretic Text occurs in the Lord's speech to Isaac within a covenantal context, as God's promise to Abraham is being echoed: "Stay in this land, and I will be (*ehey*) with you and bless you" (Gen 26:3). Furthermore, God uses the same term – "I will be" (*ehey*) – when He promises Isaac's son, Jacob, that He will be with him as well: "Return to the land of your fathers, where you were born, and I will be (*ve-ehey* – וְאֶהְיֶה) with you" (Gen. 31:3). Therefore, the term *ehey* ("I will be") points not only to God's everlasting existence, but to His everlasting being *with* His people as well.

The divine Name *ehey* – "I will be", does not resemble anything which – from a human perspective – one would consider to be a name per se. While the future tense (*eyehe* – "I will be") which this "name" consists of, refers to the perpetual aspect of God's closeness to His people, it also keeps the divine Name partially obscure. One gets the impression that the Lord did not want to fully reveal His Name to the Israelites. A full revelation of the divine Name was to take place in the future⁵. This is

Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, eds. G. J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren, Grand Rapids (MI), vol. 5, pp. 500–521; T. Fretheim, *Yahweh*, pp. 1295–1297.

⁴ Cf. A. Chacham, *Sefer Shmot (Daat Mikra)* [in Hebrew], Jerusalem 1995, p. 50; C. R. Gianotti, *The Meaning of the Divine Name YHWH*, "Bibliotheca Sacra", Jan.-Mar. 1985, pp. 45–48. See also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 207.

⁵ See Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth. The Infancy Narratives*, New York 2012, p. 30. See also the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 206.

where the New Testament comes in and unveils the part of the divine Name which had remained hidden since the time of Moses. The “unveiling” takes place when the Blessed Virgin Mary and Joseph of Nazareth are instructed to name God’s Son *Yeshua* – *Jesus*.

2. FULL REVELATION OF THE DIVINE NAME

The New Testament opens with the following verse: “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matt. 1:1). The word “Jesus” in this verse constitutes the first name that appears in the New Testament Canon. It occurs as the third word in the Greek text of the first verse of the first chapter of the Gospel of Saint Matthew.⁶ Interestingly, in the Hebrew text of the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, the term *elohim* – “God” – is also the third word in the verse.⁷ One could hypothesize that the Evangelist sought to juxtapose the name “Jesus” in his Gospel with the word “God” in the Old Testament, in order to affirm the divinity of Jesus. Such a conclusion would go hand in hand with the fact that Matthew is writing his Gospel to Christians of Jewish descent to help them recognize that the Old Testament finds its fulfillment in the Person of Jesus.

2.1. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME JESUS – YESHUA

It is the Father who chooses this name *Yeshua* for His Son and makes it known (Matt. 1:21; Lk. 1:31). In addition, whenever the New Testament authors quote Old Testament verses which contain the Tetragrammaton, they understand the Tetragrammaton in the Hebrew text as a reference to Jesus⁸. One can see it, for instance, in Saint Mark’s Gospel, where the Evangelist speaks of John the Baptist as a voice calling in the

⁶ Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ (Matt 1:1).

⁷ בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ – *Bereshit bara elohim et hashamaim weet haarets* (Gen 1:1).

⁸ N. Mundhenk, *Jesus is Lord: The Tetragrammaton in Bible Translation*, “Bible Translator,” 61, 2 (2010), p. 56.

desert, which prepares the way for Jesus (Mk. 1:1–11). Mark alludes to the Book of Isaiah, where the prophet speaks about a voice that prepares the way for God who is referred to in the Hebrew text by the Tetragrammaton (יהוה – Is 40:3). The same verse in the Septuagint uses the word *kyrios* in place of the Hebrew Tetragrammaton. Consequently, when Mark quotes this verse (Is 40:3) from the Greek Old Testament, he takes it for granted that the word *kyrios* is referring to Jesus.

Equating the Tetragrammaton with the name Jesus is something which can also be seen in the writings of Saint Paul who writes: “God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:9–11). Paul utilizes here a quotation from the Book of Isaiah: “To me every knee shall bend; by me every tongue shall swear” (Is 45:23). While the Tetragrammaton is not present in the Hebrew text of this verse (Is 45:23), it can be found two verses earlier: “Come here and declare in counsel together: Who announced this from the beginning and foretold it from of old? Was it not I, the Lord (יהוה), besides whom there is no other God? There is no just and saving God but me” (Is 45:21)⁹. One can conclude that the name Jesus – *Yeshua* is presented by the New Testament as the new Tetragrammaton, the fully revealed divine Name.

2.2. THE MEANING OF THE NAME JESUS – YESHUA

Unlike the Tetragrammaton, the name Jesus – *Yeshua* does not possess a future connotation, but a present one¹⁰. In fact, when the angel says to Joseph that he is to name the Child born of the Virgin “Jesus”, the Evangelist Matthew immediately comments: “All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘Behold, the virgin shall be

⁹ It is also worthwhile noting here, that just as the Hebrew Tetragrammaton YHWH – יהוה – contains four letters, so does the name *Yeshua* – ישוע.

¹⁰ The letter *yod* (י) in the name *Yeshua* – ישוע does not serve as a reference to the future (as it does in the Tetragrammaton), because here it is part of the root *y-sh-a* (ישע) which means “to save”.

with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means ‘God is with us’” (Matt. 1:22–23). By recalling these words from the Book of Isaiah (Is 7:14), Matthew subtly connects the three expressions – *ehey ashher ehey* – “I will be who I will be”; *ehey imcha* – “I will be with you” and *Immanuel* – “God is with us”. The Evangelist shows that with the appearance of the name “Jesus” (*Yeshua* – “God saves”), there is a movement from a future promise (“I will be with you”) to a present fulfillment – “God is with us”. God no longer needs to say “I will be”, but “I am”. This is all the more remarkable when we realize that the Septuagint confirms the meaning of the divine Name in the present tense when it translates the Hebrew expression *ehey ashher ehey* (“I will be who I will be” – Exod. 3:14) into the Greek *ego eimi* (“I am” – Exod. 3:14).

The movement from the Tetragrammaton to the divine Name of Jesus is a manifestation of God’s gradual revelation. The Lord unfolds His plan and clarifies it with the passing of time. That is why, from a Jewish perspective, the fact that God reveals the divine Name to Moses in its future form through the Tetragrammaton (*YHWH* – יהוה) can serve as a reminder, that time is always needed for man to understand what the Lord does, what He permits and what He reveals about Himself and mankind. It turns out that this principle could shed light on one of the most troubling issues in the Jewish people’s relationship with the Almighty in modern times: God’s attitude toward His Chosen People during the Holocaust.

3. THE HOLOCAUST

3.1. SCOPE AND INTENSITY

In his Apostolic Letter on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the Second World War, Saint John Paul II wrote: “Among all these antihuman measures, however, there is one which will forever remain a shame for humanity: the planned barbarism which was unleashed against the Jewish people. As the object of the “Final Solution” devised by an erroneous ideology the Jews were subjected to deprivations and brutalities that are almost indescribable. Persecuted at first through

measures designed to harass and discriminate, they were ultimately to die by the millions in extermination camps. The Jews of Poland, more than others, lived this immense suffering: The images of the Warsaw Ghetto under siege, as well as what we have come to learn about the camps at Auschwitz, Majdanek, and Treblinka, surpass in horror anything that can be humanly imagined”.¹¹ No wonder, then, that the Jewish people would ask themselves during the War and in the years which followed it: what happened to God's promise to His Chosen People, that He will bless them and be with them until the end of time (Gen. 12:2–3; 28:15)? What happened to God's reassurance through the revelation of His divine Name to Moses, that He will always be the savior of His people and protect them from annihilation (Exod. 15:2; Ps 46)?

Some Jewish thinkers have observed that the question of God's “silence” in the face of evil recurs in history, so much so, that it is even possible to speak of “innumerable Auschwitzes”.¹² Yet the attempt to exterminate the Jewish people during WWII has two unique characteristics: the vast number of victims as well as the declaration of war on God through the attempt to eradicate those to whom the Almighty has revealed Himself directly. Pope Benedict XVI made this clear in Auschwitz: “those vicious criminals, by wiping out this people, wanted to kill the God who called Abraham, who spoke on Sinai and laid down principles to serve as a guide for mankind, principles that are eternally valid. If this people, by its very existence, was a witness to the God who spoke to humanity and took us to Himself, then that God finally had to die and power had to belong to man alone – to those men, who thought that by force they had made themselves masters of the world. By destroying Israel, by the *Shoah*, they ultimately wanted to tear up the taproot of the Christian faith and to replace it with a faith of their own invention: faith in the rule of man, the rule of the powerful”¹³.

All the more, then, the question of God's “silence” at the sight of His people's suffering, comes back with an even greater force. And among

¹¹ John Paul II, *Apostolic Letter on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Beginning of the Second World War*, August 27, 1989, 5.

¹² See E. Berkovits, *Faith After the Holocaust*, New York 1973, p. 90.

¹³ Benedict XVI, *Speech in Auschwitz-Birkenau*, May 28, 2006.

the attempts to give an answer to this question, there is one that comes from an unlikely direction: the Warsaw Ghetto.

3.2. KALONYMUS KALMAN SHAPIRA: A VOICE FROM THE WARSAW GHETTO

Shortly after WWII ended, when the ruined city of Warsaw was being rebuilt, a Polish worker found among the debris a small container in which there was a manuscript. It was written by Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, the former Grand Rabbi of Piaseczno, a town near Warsaw. After losing his closest relatives during a German aerial bombing in September, 1939 he decided to establish an underground synagogue within the newly formed Warsaw Ghetto. Rabbi Shapira would keep up the faith and the spirits of the Jewish community in the Ghetto. He worked diligently on sermons and lessons which he delivered to the Ghetto residents in his makeshift synagogue. Shapira's aim was to find an answer to the problem of God's apparent inaction at the face of Jewish suffering. His point of departure was the traditional Jewish understanding that suffering was the consequence of one's sins.¹⁴ Still, Shapira's Ghetto experience led him to expand this notion by drawing upon the frequently recurring rabbinic concept of divine suffering.¹⁵ God's suffering with His people is confirmed in the Psalms (Ps 91:15) and in the Hebrew text of Isaiah (63:9). The rabbi emphasized that since God is infinite, His ability to suffer with His people goes beyond human comprehension.¹⁶ Therefore, the Lord would never be indifferent to His people's fate, but will remain so actively present in their lives, that He would suffer with them and through them – although infinitely more than they could. At the same time, the Almighty does not want anyone to witness His suffering. Shapira notes that if God's sufferings were made manifest, the world could

¹⁴ See J. B. Soloveitchick, *The Lord is Righteous in all His Ways. Reflections on the Tishah be-av Kinot*, New York 2006, pp. 166–168.

¹⁵ See J. J. Petuchowski, *Theology and Poetry: Studies in the Medieval Piyyut*, New York 2000, p. 86.

¹⁶ K. Kalman-Shapira, *Esh Kodesh* [in heb.], Jerusalem 1960, p. 159.

not bear the sight of them and would be annihilated as a result.¹⁷ That is why the Lord makes the impression that He has withdrawn from His people.

Such understanding of God's suffering did not originate with Shapira. It has been known in Judaism as *hester panim* – "hiding of the face" (cf. Deut. 31:17–18; 32:20). It does not mean that God's People would remain on their own. On the contrary, as Shapira explained, by having access to God's word (the Torah) the Jews can still reach the spiritual "inner chambers" where the Almighty remains hidden, but not indifferent, because He suffers with His people in concealment.¹⁸ After the Lord tells Moses that He will hide His face from His people, He tells him to write a song which recounts God's mighty deeds for the Israelites (Deut. 32). Moses uses it primarily as a warning to remind the Israelites that faithfulness to the word of God will lead to a long life in the Promised Land (Deut. 32:46–47).

Nevertheless, this does not solve the problem of God's "silence", because Shapira – with the entire Jewish tradition – was not able to explain, how God who is spirit can be capable of suffering. Significantly, this is where Judaism attempts to draw on various biblical images, either in reference to individual persons or to the Jewish nation as a whole, not only as visible representatives of God's hidden presence, but also as chosen persons in whom the Almighty suffers. That is how Judaism has sought to explain the absence of any references to God in the Hebrew text of the Book of Esther, where the name "Esther" – *ester* (אֶסְתֵּר) (from the verb *str* – סָתַר – „to hide”) alludes to God's hiddenness.¹⁹ But it is a fruitful hiddenness, because according to Jewish thought it is when one seeks the Lord at a time of His apparent hiddenness that the highest progress in one's spiritual relationship with the Almighty can be achieved.²⁰ Obviously, this is not enough to put one's mind at ease, and hence the need to draw strength from the notion that God suffers with His people.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 160.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 189.

¹⁹ The name *Esther* (אֶסְתֵּר) contains the Hebrew root *s-t-r* (סָתַר) which means "to hide".

²⁰ See Y. Turetsky, *Hester Panim: Between Exile and Redemption*, in: "Purim-To-Go 5771," New York 2011, pp. 87–88.

This is especially true in the case of the mysterious suffering Servant in the Book of Isaiah, often understood by Judaism as the people of Israel²¹.

Why does Judaism look for a palpable manifestation of God's suffering with His Chosen People in their adversity? The reason is rooted in the innate desire of every suffering person to have the assurance that one is not alone. But it is here that Judaism reaches a stumbling block, because no matter how far one strives to find comfort in the notion of a suffering God, if this God does not have a human nature, then He remains removed from human suffering. That is one of the reasons why many Jewish thinkers, while searching for an answer to the problem of God's presence during the Holocaust, look for His presence in human beings who act as His agents.

3.3. ETTY HILLESUM: A VOICE FROM WESTERBORK

In one of his General Audiences, Benedict XVI spoke of a young Dutch woman of Jewish origin by the name of Etty Hillesum who perished in Auschwitz²². She could have escaped the fate of her Jewish brothers and sisters. Instead, she volunteered to assist Jews interred at the Westerbork German Nazi detention camp in Holland, where they were prepared for transportation to various concentration camps. Hillesum wanted to be with her people and assist them morally and psychologically. She considered herself an agent of God's goodness at a hopeless place. Eventually, she was forced to join one of the transports for Auschwitz where she perished.

The case of Etty Hillesum is similar to the one of Rabbi Shapira in so far as Hillesum, as Benedict XVI has put it, "in her disrupted, restless life [...] found God in the very midst of the great tragedy of the 20th century: the Shoah. This frail and dissatisfied young woman, transfigured

²¹ Cf. Is. 42: 1–9; 49:1–7; 59: 4–9; 52:13–53:12. Other Jewish interpretations concerning the identity of the Suffering Servant include the prophet Isaiah, Jeremiah, some other known person who had an important role to play in the history of Israel, or even the Messiah himself. See A. Chacham, *Sefer Yeshahayahu (Daat Mikra)* [in Hebrew], Jerusalem 1984, vol. 2, pp. 575–576.

²² See Benedict XVI, General Audience, February 13, 2013.

by faith, became a woman full of love and inner peace who was able to declare: "I live in constant intimacy with God".²³ How was that possible? Like Rabbi Shapira, Hillesum drew strength from the word of God. Her writings include sixty scriptural references, with two thirds of them from the New Testament.²⁴ She considered it a supernatural gift to be able to affirm God's presence and love in spite of WWII's horrors, while at the same time to insist that God's presence was hidden in her as well: "There is a really deep well inside me. And in it dwells God. Sometimes I am there too. But more often stones and grit block the well, and God is buried beneath. Then He must be dug out again" (August 26, 1941).²⁵ For Hillesum, "digging out" God from His hiding place meant that human beings have a significant role to play in making God's presence felt. If He is hidden, then it is up to us to do something about it: "[God,] You cannot help us... we must help You to help ourselves. And that is all we can manage these days and also all that really matters: that we safeguard that little piece of you, God, in ourselves. And perhaps in others as well. Alas, there doesn't seem to be much You Yourself can do about our circumstances, about our lives. Neither do I hold you responsible. You cannot help us but we must help You and defend Your dwelling place inside us to the last" (July 12, 1942).²⁶

Hillesum never professed to be a Christian, but her approach points toward the Gospel's teaching. In the course of a conversation with an acquaintance, she once found herself explaining that by hating one's enemies one both destroys himself and makes the world a worse place. In response, her friend exclaimed that such an approach would be a promotion of Christianity, to which Hillesum replied in the affirmative.²⁷ This response was in line with her attempt to resolve the problem of God's hiddenness by a greater self-engagement. She accomplished it through the sacrifice of her life. She became a sign of God's presence to

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Y. Bériault, *Etty Hillesum. Świadek Boga w otchłani zła*, Warsaw 2011, pp. 92–93.

²⁵ E. Hillesum, *An Interrupted Life. The Diaries of Etty Hillesum 1941–1943*, trans. by A. Pomerans, New York 1983, p. 36

²⁶ Ibid. p. 151.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 180.

others. God expresses His closeness by means of those whom He sends as agents of His presence. This is how God's promise to Moses – "I am" or "I will be" – is fulfilled.

3.4. SAINT THERESA BENEDICTA OF THE CROSS – EDITH STEIN: A VOICE FROM AUSCHWITZ

Saint Theresa Benedicta of the Cross, formerly Edith Stein, a Carmelite nun of Jewish descent, spent the last hours of her life in Auschwitz-Birkenau assisting fellow prisoners while wearing her Carmelite habit. She, too, gave witness to God's presence in a place of extermination, but she did so as a Catholic nun who dedicated her life to Christ, the Suffering Servant who took upon Himself the sins of us all (Is. 53:11–12). Stein's love for the Crucified Messiah impelled her to imitate Him and join her sufferings to His to help alleviate the suffering of those among whom she found herself. Theresa Benedicta's understanding of how God acts began to develop under the influence of God's grace already when, as a searching philosopher, she attended a funeral of one of her professors. It was then that Edith was struck by the attitude of the deceased professor's wife who did not break down. Stein reflected: "This was my first encounter with the cross and the divine strength that it inspires in those who bear it. For the first time I saw before my very eyes the Church, born of Christ's redemptive suffering, victorious over the sting of death. It was the moment in which my unbelief was shattered, Judaism paled, and Christ radiated before me: Christ in the mystery of the Cross"²⁸.

Sister Theresa Benedicta's conclusion was derived from a personal experience that showed her how faith in the Cross and in the Resurrection is both possible and practical. It is not abstract. It encompasses real life situations and concerns one of the most fundamental experiences of mankind – that of suffering. Moreover, she discovered that faith in the Cross and in the Resurrection enables one to share with others the divine strength which is inherent in this faith. This is especially evident when one entrusts his life to the Lord of life and death and so becomes His divine

²⁸ T. R. Posselt, *Edith Stein. The Life of a Philosopher and Carmelite*, Washington 2005, pp. 59–60.

instrument²⁹. It is no wonder, then, that this former atheist philosopher became such a strong source of encouragement for those whose fate she would share in Auschwitz-Birkenau. God became present in a place of earthy hell through a consecrated religious who handed her life over to Christ, so that she could become an instrument of His loving presence.

3.5. SAINT JOSEPH: A VOICE FROM KALISZ

The Jewish community of Kalisz was the oldest one in Poland. The town's Jewish population at the dawn of WWII amounted to almost half of the total number of its inhabitants³⁰. Kalisz had numerous thriving Jewish organizations, tradesmen, doctors, publishers and financiers³¹.

An important ingredient of Catholic life in Kalisz was a miraculous painting in one of the local churches which portrayed the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph³², with Jesus being shown as part of the Trinity. The painting has a unique element: the face of God the Father and the face of Saint Joseph are identical. This is how the artist conveyed the fact, that Joseph did not just represent God Father, but he was also a living sign and instrument of the Father's presence (c.f. Mt 1: 18–23). To emphasize this point, Matthew alludes to numerous similarities between the life of the Holy Family and the Israelites' persecution by Pharaoh as well as their sojourn in the desert on their way from Egypt to the Promised Land³³. Joseph is depicted as a new Moses who leads the new Israel (the Holy Family) from a place of danger, with Herod being the new Pharaoh.

²⁹ E. Stein, "Spirituality of the Christian Woman", in: *Essays on Woman*, trans. by F. M. Oben, Washington 1996, p. 126.

³⁰ A. Cygelman – D. Dombrowska, *Kalisz*, in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, eds. M. Berenbaum, F. Skolnik, 2nd ed., New York 2007, vol. 11, p. 740.

³¹ I. D. Beth-Halevy, *Toldot Yehudey Kalisz* [in Hebrew], Tel Aviv 1961, pp. 64–292.

³² More on the history of this painting and on the Shrine which houses it, see S. Kęszka, J. A. Splitt, *Sancte Joseph Redemptoris Custos. Ora Pro Nobis. Kaliskie Sanktuarium Świętego Józefa*, Kalisz 2012, pp. 114–152.

³³ See J. Stefanski, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt..." (Matt 2,13). *But Why to Egypt?*, "Teologia i Człowiek" 28 (2014) 4, pp. 163–183.

All this becomes pertinent when one recalls that it is to Moses that God reveals the Tetragrammaton as an assurance of His permanent presence among His Chosen People. But it is to saint Joseph, the “new Moses”, that God reveals the “new Tetragrammaton” which is the Holy Name of Jesus. Having received this revelation (with his Virgin Spouse – Lk 1:31), Joseph not only names the Son of God, but also – in accord with God’s plan – becomes himself the bearer of the Father’s presence, just as he is depicted on the Holy Family painting in the Kalisz church.

4. “MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME”? (MATT. 27:46)

The Father abandons us in His Son (Matt 27:46), in order to be even closer to us, also in His Son who lives in His Mystical Body, which is the Church. The Church, as an instrument of God’s presence becomes the living confirmation that the Lord is with us always (Matt. 28:20). And this is also true in so far as God’s presence during the Holocaust is concerned, precisely with regard to the Jewish people. It is tragic that the Catholic Church which has done more than anyone else for the Jews during the Holocaust is also the one which is often blamed for not having done enough to assist them during WWII³⁴. A case in point is Poland whose monarchs and rulers would welcome Jews throughout the centuries, who – in turn – made Poland one of the most flourishing rabbinical and Hasidic centers in Europe³⁵. Sadly, the large number of Jews in Poland was something which the Germans did not fail to notice and it was for this reason that they chose this country as the center of their extermination activity. Poland was the only country in the world where any aid provided to a Jew on German occupied territory was automatically punished by execution. While in other countries the threat of such

³⁴ For a thorough examination of this issue, R. J. Rychlak’s, *Righteous Gentiles: How Pius XII and the Catholic Church Saved Half a Million Jews from the Nazis*, Dallas 2005; *Hitler, the War and the Pope*, Huntington 2010. See also J. Stefanski, *A Disturbing Voice from a Roman Synagogue*, “Homiletic and Pastoral Review”, January 2011, pp. 18–23.

³⁵ More on this subject, see B. L. Sherwin, *Sparks Amidst the Ashes. The Spiritual Legacy of Polish Jewry*, Oxford – New York 1997.

punishment existed, too, it was only in Poland that the death penalty for assisting Jews was carried out systematically and without exceptions by the Germans³⁶. Still, God did not turn away from the Jewish people during their deadly persecution, but gathered them into Catholic homes, rectories, convents and churches to save them. It is estimated that between 40,000 and 60,000 Jews were rescued thanks to Poles who risked their lives on their behalf. But since it took more than one individual to save one Jewish person, it can be concluded that between 160,000 and 360,000 Polish people risked their lives and the lives of their families to save Jews.³⁷ This figure includes at least 1000 priests and more than 1500 nuns in at least 368 female religious convents.³⁸

4.3. PIUS XII – CHRIST'S VICAR

God was also present to the Jewish people in the person of the Servant of God, Pope Pius XII, who created an extensive underground network which served to save and serve the needs of tens of thousands of Jews during the War³⁹. After the German retaliation against Catholics of Jewish descent in response to the Dutch Catholic bishops' cry concerning

³⁶ Professor Israel Gutman, the former head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem, made it known that when he first became aware of historical documents concerning the actions of Poles who had saved Jews during WWII, it occurred to him that as a Jew who survived the Warsaw Ghetto and a few concentration camps, he would not have been able to do the same for his own people. See *The Jews of Poland between Two World Wars* ("Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry Series"), eds. I. Gutman et al., Waltham 1989, pp. 103–104.

³⁷ A. Polonsky, "Próba podziękowania." *Dam im imię na wieki (Iz 56,5): Polacy z okolic Treblinki ratujący Żydów*, eds. E. Kopówka, P. Rytyel-Adrianik, vol. 1, Oxford–Treblinka 2011, p. 10.

³⁸ P. Rytyel-Adrianik, *Priests and the Jewish People at the Time of the Holocaust. Heroism Amid Terror*, "The Marzheuser Lecture", Cincinnati, November 24, 2014.

³⁹ An enormous amount of evidence which shows beyond doubt the extent of Pius XII actions to save Jews during WWII has been gathered by *Pave the Way Foundation*. Its founder, Gary L. Krupp, himself a Jewish man, has been able to gather a lot of evidence which attests to Pius XII's heroic work to protect Jewish lives from death. A data base which is regularly updated can be accessed through the Foundation's website – www.ptwfw.org.

the deportation of Jews to concentration camps in 1942, it was clear to the Pope that his actions on behalf of the Jewish people had to be carried out primarily behind the scenes⁴⁰. He ordered cloistered monasteries to open their doors and used every possible channel to convey to bishops, priests and religious around the world the need to save Jewish lives and do everything which could be done in this regard⁴¹. As WWII ended, the chief rabbi of Rome, Israel Zolli (Israel Anton Zoller), upon becoming Catholic, took the name Eugenio on the day of his Baptism, as a sign of his admiration and gratitude to Pius XII for all that this Pontiff has done for the Jewish people⁴². After WWII, many Jewish dignitaries traveled to the Vatican in order to thank the Holy Father for all He had done for the Jewish people⁴³.

Since the Pope is the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth (cf. Matt. 16:18), the spiritual and material effort of Pope Pius XII to save Jews constitutes an important part of the answer to the question of God's presence in the Holocaust at the face of His promise that He would not to abandon His people. The expression "I will be with you" became a reality, primarily in the Person of the Incarnate Son of God, but also in many sons and daughters of the Catholic Church whose Mystical Body they comprise, under the Pope's leadership.

⁴⁰ Jews and non-Jews alike insisted that public condemnatory pronouncements by the Holy See should be avoided, in order to prevent further retaliatory Nazi atrocities against the Jewish people. See D. G. Dalin, *The Myth of Hitler's Pope. How Pope Pius XII Rescued Jews from the Nazis*, Washington 2005, p. 78–80.

⁴¹ More on this subject, see M. Riebling, *Church of Spies. The Pope's Secret War Against Hitler*, New York 2015; D. G. Dalin, *The Myth of Hitler's Pope: Pope Pius XII and His Secret War against Nazi Germany*, p. 99–103; G. L. Krupp, *Pope Pius XII and World War II. The Documented Truth: A Compilation of International Evidence Revealing the Wartime Acts of the Vatican*, Bloomington 2012.

⁴² Eugenio Zolli recounts his journey to Catholicism and his survival in Rome during WWII in his autobiography, *Why I became a Catholic*, Fort Collins (Co) 1953.

⁴³ The building which houses the Apostolic nunciature Rome was handed over to the Vatican as a gesture of appreciation by the Jewish people who wished to express their gratitude for Pius XII's solicitude for Jews throughout the War. See J. M. Bergoglio, A. Skorka, *On Heaven and Earth. Pope Francis on Faith, Family and the Church in the 21st Century*, London 2013, p. 181.

CONCLUSION

The revelation of the Tetragrammaton's meaning, as an expression of God's presence among the Israelites has served as a source of confidence for the Jewish people. But the Tetragrammaton is only a partial revelation of God's divine Name. Its future tense points to the fuller presence of God among His people. While the Old Covenant with Abraham (and its renewal with Moses) remains valid, it finds its complete expression in the New Covenant, in the Person of the Son of God who has become *Emmanuel*, God-with-us, by taking on a human nature. His name – Jesus – constitutes a link between the Old Covenant Tetragrammaton and the New Testament's full revelation of God's presence and divine Name in the Person of Jesus. In His human nature, God the Son exposed Himself to human suffering to the greatest extent. His cry, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me", is an expression of all experiences of abandonment – including that of the Jewish people during the Holocaust. In uttering this cry, the Son of God remains close to those who experience abandonment at a time of trial. For the Jewish people, the closeness of God the Father who suffers with them in His Incarnate Son can be spoken of in both divine and human terms: in divine terms, in so far as Christ unites the sufferings of God's Chosen People to His; in human terms, in so far as Christ is the source of inspiration and strength for His followers who become the instruments of His presence. Numerous such followers – particularly Catholics, and most especially Catholic Poles – saved many Jews during the Holocaust. As such, these followers of Christ emerge as the personal fulfillment of God's promise that He would never leave His Chosen People, as affirmed by the old and the new Tetragrammaton.

Abstract. This article shows how God's revelation of His divine Name by means of the Tetragrammaton (Exod. 3:13–16) sheds light on the question of His presence in the Holocaust. Just as the reference to the future meaning of the divine Name implies that the Lord will not abandon His people, so does the meaning of the new Tetragrammaton (the name of Jesus in the New Testament) imply that God the Father does not leave His people in – and because of – His Son. The spiritual journeys of such Holocaust victims as rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, Etty Hillesum and Saint Theresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein) show that only an openness of Judaism to Christianity can provide an answer to the question of God's presence in the Holocaust.

It is primarily the Father's gift of His Son on the Cross which has made it possible for God to enter the world of suffering. It is the same gift of the Father which has enabled those who bear the name of Jesus – the new Tetragrammaton – through Baptism, under the guidance of Pope Pius XII, to courageously serve as instruments of God's presence among the Jewish people during the Holocaust.

Key words: Holocaust; Etty Hillesum; Jesus; Kalonymus Kalman Shapira; Saint Joseph; Moses; Poland; Pius XII; Tetragrammaton; Theresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein); World War II; Yad Vashem.

Streszczenie. Od Tetragramu do imienia Jezusa: Nowe spojrzenie na obecność Boga w Holocauście. Artykuł pokazuje w jaki sposób objawienie Imienia Bożego za przyczyną Tetragramu (Wj 3,13–16) rzuca światło na problem obecności Boga w Holocauście. Tak jak odniesienie do przyszłego znaczenia imienia Bożego w Księdze Wyjścia oznacza, że Pan nie opuści swojego ludu, tak też znaczenie nowego Tetragramu, jakim jest Najświętsze Imię Jezus w Nowym Testamencie oznacza, że Bóg Ojciec nie opuszcza swojego ludu w swoim Synu i ze względu na Niego. Duchowe wędrówki takich osób jak rabina Kalonimusa Kalmana Szapiry, Etty Hillesum oraz świętej Teresy Benedykty od Krzyża (Edyty Stein) potwierdzają, że tylko otwartość judaizmu na chrześcijaństwo może dać odpowiedź na problem obecności Boga w doświadczeniu zagłady żydowskiej podczas drugiej wojny światowej. Ofiarowanie Syna Bożego na Krzyżu przez Boga Ojca umożliwiło Bogu wejście w świat cierpienia ludzkiego. Ten sam dar Boga Ojca umożliwił chrześcijanom, czyli nosicielom imienia Jezus – nowego Tetragramu – służyć mężnie jako narzędzie Bożej troski i obecności wobec Żydów. Liczni katolicy, szczególnie Polacy, pod powszechnym pasterskim przewodnictwem Papieża Piusa XII ryzykowali i ofiarowali swoje życie w obronie Żydów. Byli narzędziem za przyczyną którego Bóg spełnił swoją obietnicę, że nie opuści swojego ludu, tak jak potwierdza znaczenie Tetragramu.

Słowa kluczowe: II wojna światowa; Etty Hillesum; Holocaust; św. Józef; Kalonimus Kalman Szapira; Yad Vashem; Jezus; Mojżesz; Pius XII; Polska; Teresa Benedykta od Krzyża (Edyta Stein); Tetragram.

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