

## The “God, Where Art Thou?” Theme in the Literary Works of Auschwitz Survivors Ka-Tsetnik, Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel

Lily Halpert Zamir, David Yellin Academic College of Education, Israel

### Abstract

This paper focuses on the search for God in Auschwitz in the literary works of three surviving writers: Yehiel (Feiner) De-Nur (known by his pen name – *Ka-Tsetnik* (often spelled *Ka-Tzetnik*) 135633 – and referred to hereinafter as “Ka-Tsetnik”), Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel. These world-famous authors survived the inferno, yet returned to it again and again in their post-Auschwitz writings. Their works describe their personal experiences in the concentration camps, the inmates’ lives and their families and friends who were murdered in the gas chambers. Against this background, they tried to explain the underlying source of absolute human evil in Auschwitz. Although they came from different Jewish religious communities, their remonstrative grievance was the same: Where was God in Auschwitz?

A preliminary reading of their writings reveals their personal attitude to God in Auschwitz. Wiesel calls Him “the God of Bread” (Wiesel, 1967, p. 236), Ka-Tsetnik “the God of Soup” (Ka-Tsetnik, 1989, pp. 56-57), and Levi the “Supreme Chemist at the Auschwitz laboratory”, a “gigantic biological and social experiment of the human animal, where the struggle for life was conducted” (Levi, 1961, p. 80).<sup>1</sup> Each asked in his own way: Where was God in Auschwitz?

*Keywords:* Holocaust, Auschwitz, Ka-Tsetnik, Primo Levi, Elie Wiesel; concentration camps, absolute evil, divine responsibility

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<sup>1</sup> Wiesel and Ka-Tsetnik came from Eastern European orthodox Jewish families, while Dr. Primo Levi, a chemist from Turin, Italy, was an entirely secular-minded Jew.

## Introduction

The search for God in Auschwitz<sup>2</sup> in the literary works of Ka-Tsetnik, Primo Levi and Eli Wiesel (listed in order of date of arrival at Auschwitz) leads to the critical question: Where was God in Auschwitz? How can it be that the God of nature and history did not become involved and ordain some kind of miraculous redemption? In his theological-philosophical treatment of the presence of God in the Holocaust, Hans Jonas (2004, pp. 65–87), claims that: “Auschwitz added to the Jewish experience something unprecedented... and of a nature no longer assimilable by the old theological categories... What God could let it happen?” (Hans Jonas (2004, p. 68). Does God bear responsibility for allowing Auschwitz to occur?

### **Ka-Tsetnik** (Yehiel De-Nur [Feiner])

Ka-Tsetnik was born on 16 May 1909 in Sosnowiec, Poland, and died in Israel on 17 July 2001. He attended the Sages of Lublin Yeshiva and in his youth was known to be precocious. He even studied Kabbalah with the Head of the Yeshiva, composed music and wrote Yiddish poetry. Moreover, he was an activist in the Agudat Israel Youth Movement in Poland during the period between the two world wars. Ka-Tsetnik’s life story and its connection to his writings are dealt with at length by Szeintuch (2003).

During the Holocaust, Yehiel was arrested for underground activity and was taken from the Sosnowiec Ghetto to Katowice, where he was interrogated twice by a Gestapo officer whom he later discovered was none other than Adolf Eichmann. In August 1943 he was deported to Auschwitz, where his wife, children and members of his extended family were exterminated. In 1945, he wrote his first book, *Salamandra*,<sup>3</sup> in a Naples DP camp, where he gave it to a soldier in the Eliyahu Goldberg Brigade to bring to Israel. Yehiel explained the importance of the manuscript to the soldier: “The people who went to the crematoria wrote this book,” he said, signing it K. Z. (pronounced *Ka-Tset* in German) as an abbreviation of his pen name, Ka-Tsetnik,<sup>4</sup> an acronym-based nickname for a concentration camp inmate (German *Konzentrationslager*, with the Yiddish/Slavic suffix *nik*, meaning “person [of]”), adding his prisoner ID number, 135633 (Segev, 1991, p. 2).

Yehiel came to Palestine in 1946, two years before the independent State of Israel was established. The public only became familiar with him on 7 June 1961, when he collapsed while testifying at the Eichmann Trial. At the time, he was explaining the origin of his pen name: “This is a chronicle from the planet Auschwitz... And the inhabitants of this planet had no names. They had no parents and no children... They did not live according to the laws of the world here... ” Years later, following medical treatment with LSD, he altered his testimony somewhat, avowing that Auschwitz is indeed on the planet Earth and that the perpetrators of evil there were people just like us: “You cannot say that Auschwitz is God’s doing... This is

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<sup>2</sup> Auschwitz, the largest and best known of Nazi concentration camps, was built in 1940 when the Nazis realized that they had more prisoners than prison space. It was liberated by the Red Army on 27 January 1945. Nine days earlier, all inmates capable of walking – 48,342 men and about 16,000 women, along with another 96 prisoners of war – were dispatched on foot via Austria to other locations in Nazi-occupied Europe. These evacuation campaigns would later be known as Death Marches, leaving about 6,000 sick inmates behind. The last of the Nazis left the camp on 24 January, three days before its liberation.

<sup>3</sup> In 1977, Yehiel’s wife, Eli-yah (Nina) De-Nur, produced an English version of *Salamandra* called *Sunrise over Hell*, attributing it to Ka-Tzetnik 135633 (see References).

<sup>4</sup> Yehiel Feiner’s pen name is not spelled consistently in the literature, appearing alternately as *Ka-Tsetnik* or *Ka-Tzetnik*. This article uses the former spelling, including the alternative in parentheses where relevant (bibliographical entries, for example).

the lesson I learned from the Holocaust, the moral of the story: It is not God who destroyed the world, but human beings. Auschwitz was only the dress rehearsal” (Ka-Tsetnik, 1987, p. 113).

Ka-Tsetnik wrote about 12 books, most of them dealing with the Holocaust. The best known among them is the autobiographical *Salamandra*, which he called the “chronicle of a Jewish family in the twentieth century.”

### **Primo Michele Levi**

Primo Michele Levi was born 31 July 1919 in Turin, Italy, to secular, enlightened parents. He spent most of his life in Turin, in an apartment on Re Umberto Street that his grandfather bought for his mother the day she and his father were married. In 1941 he completed his university studies in chemistry with honors.<sup>5</sup> On 13 December 1943, he was arrested for his activity in the anti-fascist underground. Having been denounced as a Jew, he was sent to the Fossoli Concentration Camp at the end of January 1944. On 12 February of that year, he was dispatched to Auschwitz together with another 650 Italian Jews, of whom only 20 survived. As of November 1944, he was working as a chemist at the Buna-Monowitz camp (Auschwitz III); he was spared the March of Death when he fell ill. Liberated on 27 January 1945, he returned to Turin, where he continued working as a chemist until 1977. From that year on, he devoted himself entirely to writing. On 11 April 1987, he committed suicide.<sup>6</sup> His tombstone in the Jewish cemetery of Turin bears his K. Z. number–174517.

### **Elie (Eliezer) Wiesel**

Elie (Eliezer) Wiesel was born into a Yiddish-speaking, Hassidic family in Sighet, Transylvania,<sup>7</sup> on 30 September 1928. In May 1944, he was deported to Auschwitz with the rest of that city’s Jewish community,<sup>8</sup> where he was given the number K. Z. A7713 (Wiesel, 1960, p. 49). Like Primo Levi, Elie and his father also worked in the Buna-Monowitz sub-camp. As the Red Army drew closer, they were sent on the Death March towards Buchenwald. His father died of dysentery several weeks before Elie was liberated on 11 April 1945 (Wiesel, 1960). At first, he refused to write about the Holocaust because he believed that there are no words capable of describing the extent of the horror, but his meeting with François Mauriac changed his mind. His first book, *And the World Remained Silent*, an extensive account of his life in the camps, was originally published in Yiddish. A briefer version, *Le Nuit* [Night], was translated into French and then into other languages, including English (Wiesel, 1960). In 1956, Wiesel immigrated to the United States and in 1986 was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his Holocaust remembrance work. He donated the proceeds of his numerous books to be used for humanitarian purposes. Elie Wiesel died in New York on 2 July 2016.

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<sup>5</sup> In August 1932, he registered for two years of Jewish studies to prepare for his Bar Mitzva in Turin. In 1934, he was accepted to a senior high school specializing in the classics, from which he was expelled when the Fascists rose to power. His 1941 bachelor’s degree diploma in chemistry bore the remark: “of Jewish race.” Levi’s profession saved his life in Auschwitz (Anissimov, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Three days before he took his own life, Levi remarked to one of his friends: “Even though the poison of Auschwitz no longer courses through my veins, I still think only of suicide” (Paz, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Hungary annexed Transylvania from Romania in 1940. Wiesel was expelled from the academic high school he attended in Debrecen because of race laws.

<sup>8</sup> His mother and younger sister were dispatched to the gas chambers on arrival and his two older sisters were sent to the women’s camp and survived. After the war, Elie was taken to an orphanage in France. As a young man, he studied French and philosophy at the Sorbonne.

## The Search for God in Auschwitz

The literary works of these Jewish writers who survived Auschwitz make no substantive reference to the Jewish tradition of Divine Providence and theodicy, as addressed in the Book of Job. Nevertheless, they do depict God as present in Auschwitz and responsible for all that occurs there.

Notwithstanding his declaration that it was not God but man who created Auschwitz, **Ka-Tsetnik** does seek God there: “I lift my eyes to the Auschwitz skies. Suspended against the horizon is the vision of the *shivitti* [contemplative images of a candlestick used by some Jews to meditate on God’s name]; like the one usually hung framed in the front of the eyes of the prayer-leader in the synagogue... The awe of it is upon me. I stand in the truck, ne, in a mass of skeletons; stand there and stare at the letters YHWH gleaming from within the *shivitti*... while I cry out: “God! God! Who decreed?! Who decreed?! God! God! Auschwitz— whose is it?” (Ka-Tsetnik, 1999, pp. 10–11).

Just as a Jewish prayer leader faces the *shivitti* on the lectern as he stands in awe asking God to open his heart to the worshippers, Ka-Tsetnik looks towards the *shivitti* in heaven and calls on God to open his heart to the dead, asking “Who decreed?” Was it God Himself or does He allow human beings to do such things without intervention? Remarkably, even as Ka-Tsetnik stands among the slaughtered innocents, he does not deny the existence of God.

A similar scene was described in his first book, *Salamandra*, concerning the Sosnowiec Ghetto and its destruction. When the order was given on Saturday night to set the synagogue on fire with all the worshippers inside, when women and their infant children tried to escape the flames and were shot by the Germans, Ka-Tsetnik took a defiant stance: “The Sabbath is over, and the God of Israel is intoning His *Havdala*<sup>9</sup> in his burning synagogue... over a full cup of Jewish blood... the blood of his chosen people” (Ka-Tsetnik, 1977, p. 34).

Even after he was deported to Auschwitz on 12 August 1943, as the Germans ordered their victims to speed up, causing them to tread on and trample one another, Ka-Tsetnik sought God: “The cry encompassed the square, breaking through to the highest heavens. The heavens then fell silent, as if they had become uninhabited and there were no God on high” (Ka-Tsetnik, 1946, p. 127).

Ka-Tsetnik’s awareness of the presence of God in Auschwitz comes at the time he found the body of his friend Marcel. He moved the body to keep it from being stepped on, then looked around and said: “The value of all the theories and methods of ethics... the true vision of the image of God...” (Ibid., p. 166). Honoring the dead man is evidence of the existence of God in Auschwitz and not the moral theories and practices that could not prevent his murder.

Ka-Tsetnik also encounters God in *The Clock* (Ka-Tsetnik, 1989, pp. 56-58).<sup>10</sup> The hero is in Auschwitz among the other living skeletons, waiting for soup. Here, “each skeleton yearns to

<sup>9</sup> *Havdala*: A ritual at the conclusion of the Sabbath in which blessings are recited over a cup of wine, revitalizing spices and a bright, flaming candle, followed by a final blessing praising God for distinguishing between the sacred and the earthly.

<sup>10</sup> The book was first written in Yiddish as *Der zeiger vos ibern kop* [The Clock Overhead], published by Y. L. Peretz Press. *The Clock* was the fourth in the *Salamandra* series, the chronicle of a Jewish family in the twentieth century. It begins in late August 1939, two days before the Nazi invasion of Poland and concludes in winter 1945, on Poland’s liberation. The clock is the same clock, the city is the same city; only Jews are no

be first in line” (Ka-Tsetnik, 1989, p. 55). And as he stands there in line, he realizes: “Death in Auschwitz, its body and essence—is soup! It’s the most horrible of horrors—the God of soup... O God! May my portion be a full one... O God! May it not come to pass that even a drop spills from my soup bowl” (Ka-Tsetnik, 1989, p. 58). All that God can do at Auschwitz is to see to it that not one drop of soup spills. That truly confirms the existence of God and not the murderous horrors.

In *Code: EDMA* (Ka-Tsetnik, 1987) as well,<sup>11</sup> Ka-Tsetnik returns to God in a Hassidic-Kabbalistic context—the four letters of the code<sup>12</sup> are what saved him from death in Auschwitz, when he was a *Muselmann* (camp slang for an emaciated, exhausted inmate awaiting imminent slaughter) standing before Mengele (Szeintuch, 2003, p. 121, Protocol No. 28). A supreme power, beyond the God of Soup, staring at the Jews ascending in flames, brings about his rescue: “There are things that one must not reveal lest they be burned. That is an internal matter... the code that has no tongue and no interpretation” (Israel Broadcasting Authority, 1988). His survival, in Auschwitz and thereafter, was made possible thanks to his mystic-Kabbalistic<sup>13</sup> devotion to the *shivitti*. The core of *The Code*’s structure is an appeal to God, calling upon Him by the Tetragrammaton *YHWH*, spread across the skies of Auschwitz: Ka-Tsetnik knew full well that God was present in Auschwitz. His silent appeal, “Lord God, answer me!”<sup>14</sup> is what saved his life. Ka-Tsetnik renders God present in Auschwitz, a place in which one could not conceive of the existence of God, thereby fulfilling the commandment to justify Divine judgment, by virtue of which he is rescued.

**Primo Levi** was a secular Jew<sup>15</sup> “who was ‘turned into a Jew by others’... If it hadn’t been for the racial laws and the concentration camps, I’d probably no longer be a Jew, except for my last name” (Lang, 2013, p. 91).<sup>16</sup> Hence he determined unequivocally: “There is Auschwitz, and so there cannot be God” (Giuliani, 2003, p. 51), having reached this conclusion after observing that decent inmates live no longer than three months at Auschwitz (Levi & De Benedetto, 2006).

Levi maintained that the greatest danger is not death, but a loss of humanity. He felt that concentration camp life necessarily turns human beings into wolves. Those who wish to remain human must struggle constantly with themselves (Levi, 1961). He did not end up in Auschwitz

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longer there... The book has no chapters, but rather stages, wherein Stages 4-6 focus on the speaker from the moment he arrives in Auschwitz until his dispatch to the gas chambers and Stages 7-12 describe everyday life in Auschwitz. In this article, we cite Stage 10: Prayer in Auschwitz, pp. 56-60 in the Hebrew version.

<sup>11</sup> The original Hebrew book was published following Ka-Tsetnik’s treatment with LSD in Leiden, in an attempt to cure him of PTSD brought on by his experiences in Auschwitz. It was later translated into English as *Shivitti* (see References). This name change has great symbolic value and meaning, as it relates to Ka-Tsetnik’s mystic conceptions of the existence of God even in Auschwitz, in the form of the Kabbalistic *shivitti*.

<sup>12</sup> The letters *E.D.M.A.* appear at the beginning of each of Ka-Tsetnik’s works. He claims that these letters kept him alive throughout his incarceration in Auschwitz. Essentially, they constitute another form of observing the *shivitti* commandment: I will keep the Lord before me always—a Biblical verse and its attendant insight that differentiate between Mitnagdic and Hassidic Judaism, as Szeintuch (2003, p. 105) explains.

<sup>13</sup> For a more extensive treatment of this issue, see Szeintuch, 2005, p. 277.

<sup>14</sup> “Lord God of Meir [the Mishnaic sage Rabbi Meir Baal Hanes], answer me!—*shivitti*” appears in a comment by Rabbi Moshe Isserles (known by the Hebrew acronym *Remah*) on the *Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥaim*, Section A, Paragraph A: “I have set the Lord always before me...” [Psalms 16:8] is a supreme principle of the Torah and among the virtues of the righteous who walk before God.” According to Szeintuch (2005, p. 282), the expression symbolizes the annihilation of the Jews by the Roman Emperor Hadrian and by Hitler.

<sup>15</sup> See Levi (1988, p. 68): “I, the non-believer, and even less of a believer after the season of Auschwitz...”

<sup>16</sup> Lang also notes: “That he had been sent to Auschwitz *as* a Jew was never far from his consciousness; that those selected for the gas chambers were sent to their deaths as Jews would be a constant shadow” (Lang, 2013, p. 99).

because he was a Jew being persecuted at God's command, but rather as a result of people who sought to efface the humanity of others. They brought Levi there. Hence he was "turned into a Jew by others." This theory intensified when Peppo, a 20-year-old from Greece, was sent to the gas chambers. One inmate, Kuhn, thanks God for not having been selected, regarding which Levi declares: "If I [were] [sic] God, I would spit at Kuhn's prayer. (Levi, 1961, p. 124). For if God is responsible for Kuhn's rescue, He is also responsible for Peppo's murder. Levi added: "Today, I think that if for no other reason than the existence of Auschwitz, no one living in our times should ever speak of Divine Providence" (Levi, 1961, p. 152). The existence of God is an unsustainable assumption after Auschwitz.

Levi did believe that the people incarcerated in Auschwitz were capable of retaining their humanity and guarding freedom of thought. The culmination of this philosophy lay in his attempts to quote from Dante's *Canto of Ulysses* as he went to bring his comrades their soup, exerting efforts to recall the text so he could recite it to his friend Jean (Levi, 2012, pp. 118–121). Applying all his mental faculties, he drew an analogy between the Hell of Auschwitz and Dante's *Inferno* (Levi, 2012, p. 106). As a chemist with the requisite analytical abilities,<sup>17</sup> he perceived Auschwitz as a behavioristic laboratory in which people serve as guinea pigs for the Supreme Chemist (God), who examines the mouse/man and his psychological-sociological behavior under extreme conditions, under circumstances more abhorrent than those imagined in any known culture or ethos (Levi, 1961, p. 79). In Auschwitz, terror may be found everywhere. Hence there is no need to study the separate components of terror, but rather to examine them in the human compounds that result, as in chemistry (Dudai, 2002). In this analogy to Auschwitz, Levi does not deny the possibility of God's existence and certainly not of His presence in Auschwitz, even if only as a Supreme Chemist. According to Levi, humanity is only part of the natural reality in which the Supreme Chemist conducts His experiment. In the Book of Job, God tests Job's ability to withstand horrific torture yet maintain his faith. In Auschwitz, God conducts an experiment that studies extreme human life under laboratory conditions. If those subjected to these conditions deny God's existence, it is only the result of a divine experiment, so it means that Levi's God is real, He is the God of Job, even though Levi does not believe in Divine Providence and consequently does not perceive himself as a Jew, but rather as a human being whose Judaism is forced on him.

Elie Wiesel was raised among Wiśniczer Hassidim and did not cease believing in God during his incarceration in Auschwitz and thereafter, even though his belief in God was affected adversely. In Wiesel's narrative, the presence of God in Auschwitz is described in different ways. In the scene in which three Jews were hanged, He is called *God of the Gallows* (Wiesel, 1960, p. 65)<sup>18</sup> because He allowed a youngster to be hanged. In the food distribution scene, they call Him *God of Soup* because the soup that day was excellent, although it did have the taste of a dead body (Wiesel, 1960, p. 66). In both these scenes, He is the Harbinger of Death. But in one place, Wiesel calls him *God of Bread*, the staff of life and the object of every prayer in Auschwitz (Wiesel, 1967, p. 236). God is present in death and in perseverance (regarding the absence of God in Auschwitz, Treblinka, Majdanek and other camps, see Wiesel, 1988, p. 211). Although He was silent as His children were led to their deaths (Ibid.), He is revealed in the "still, small voice" that follows the din of destruction (Wiesel, 1966, p. 112). As such, perhaps when there are no Jews, there cannot be a God (Ibid., p. 154), only silence. Wiesel vacillates among the various possibilities of God's existence in Auschwitz, but as a religious

<sup>17</sup> For a more extensive description, see Jagendorf, 1993; Dante Alighieri, 2010, 55; Levi, 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Prisoners were compelled to view the hanging of three Jews, adults and youth. The narrator reports: "Behind me, I heard the same man asking: 'For God's sake, where is God?' And from within me, I heard a voice answer: 'Where He is? This is where – hanging here from this gallows'..." (Wiesel, 1960, Foreword, p. xx).

Jew, he could not deny it outright: “No space is devoid of God. God is everywhere, even in suffering and in the very heart of punishment” (Wiesel, 1995, p. 103). Thus, Wiesel’s conclusion is: “Nothing justifies Auschwitz...” (Wiesel, 1995, p. 105). Wiesel maintains that God was capable of and obligated to halt the deaths of innocent people, but He did not do so. Hence He is not a moral agent. The meaning of God’s presence in Auschwitz is a fact: “I have never renounced my faith in God. I have risen against His justice, protested His silence and sometimes his absence, but my anger rises up within faith and not outside it” (Wiesel, 1995, pp. 8–84). Wiesel maintained that God is present throughout Auschwitz, during acts of annihilation and at moments of grace. His world cannot exist without God, as Auschwitz demonstrates. Even God does not intervene. All that human beings can do, perhaps, is to charge God with the murder of his people and his Torah as well as with mass murder, just as Job demanded compensation for his suffering.

## Conclusion

The idea of God’s absenteeism with regards to Auschwitz troubled a substantial number of survivors, as Israel Aviram notes: “One night during the Ten Days of Penitence (between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur), his father woke him up<sup>19</sup> and asked him to climb into his pallet. ‘I have something important to tell you,’ he said to me: ‘God is not my God any longer!... No one knows the day of his death, how much the more so under the conditions we have here. Hence it is important to me that you know my feelings, thoughts and conclusions regarding a matter that is the center of my life as a Jew and a human being: Until today, I had never departed from full and perfect faith in the Almighty God of Israel. I have set God before me always. I never doubted that He is everywhere... He is here as well and all that occurs here is at His knowledge, at His will and by His power. Did He not decree it all from above?... So I have indeed reached the conclusion: What’s the difference? Either there is no God and all they taught us—and all I have taught—is false and there is nothing to say, or, if there is a God, then the necessary logical conclusion is that He is satisfied with all that happens here. Had that not been so, the Germans would have been unable to perpetrate their evil deeds, but if it is so, then the God of Israel is not my God. I do not want Him. I will not worship him, I will not appeal to Him and I will not obey His commandments’” (Aviram 1997, p. 2).<sup>20</sup>

This article focused on three authors who survived the Holocaust and sought God in Auschwitz. Ka-Tsetnik claimed that there is no connection between God and Auschwitz, because human beings are responsible for the inferno, although God was present there. Consequently, thanks to his devotion to God, he was saved. God watches over human beings in the Inferno as well, even if he does allow them to perpetrate the evil that they’ve created. By contrast, Primo Levi concluded that if God exists, he is the Supreme Chemist of the human laboratory called Auschwitz, where He determines whether people are able to maintain their humanity, even though he himself declared more than once: “I have no religion... I am not a believer” (Lang, 2013). No matter what the Nazis did, Levi’s incorrigible optimism reinforced his belief in the human spirit, human intellect and human good will. In this respect, he resembles Sisyphus, who “teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks... The struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man’s heart” (Camus, 1942). Levi is a Jewish Sisyphus, a committed humanist. Even after Auschwitz, he praises the good in people, despite their occasional moral lapses. For Levi, the Holocaust proved that the power of God is limited or

<sup>19</sup> The man was a Talmudic sage, a student of the Gerer Rebbe. His son, Israel Aviram – who was dispatched from Auschwitz to the Jaworzno Labor Camp—attested that he would gather Jews together so that he and his son could teach them Torah, Talmud and Mishna (Aviram, 1997, p. 3).

<sup>20</sup> Israel Aviram was a survivor of the Lodz Ghetto and Auschwitz, an educator and Holocaust eyewitness.

that He does not exist at all. Consequently, Levi disagreed with creative believers such as Wiesel, who avowed that God's deeds and choices are too lofty for human comprehension and that evil is not perpetrated by means of the Divine entity, but rather represents the outcome of human misuse of God-given free choice. Ka-Tsetnik, in turn, claimed that it was not God who created Auschwitz but human beings; nevertheless, at moments of truth, he sought the *shivitti* in Auschwitz. Levi remains strong in his belief: "Today I think that if for no other reason than that an Auschwitz existed, no one in our age should speak of Providence" (Levi, 1961, p. 152). By contrast, Elie Wiesel said God was responsible for His silence at the horrors of Auschwitz, but as a religious man, he maintained his belief that God is involved in everything, even in Auschwitz. Consequently, like Job, he wanted to charge God with murder of His people and his Torah. He had incontrovertible proof of God's negligence (Jonas, 2004).



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**Corresponding author:** Lily Halpert Zamir

**Contact email:** lilyzami@gmail.com