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**OLD TESTAMENT FUNDAMENTS OF THE
IMIASLAVIC MOVEMENT**

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The theme of God's name is one of the themes that has aroused interest over time in each generation, without being exhausted, because the perception of the name has changed over time. The present research focuses on highlighting the Old Testament perception of God's name, as well as its reception and use in arguing the imiaslavian theological-philosophical teaching, a concept according to which the name is identified with its bearer and therefore knowing the name means knowing the bearer.

Regarding the Old Testament conception of the name in general, and of the name of God in particular, we will start from the text of Exodus 3:14, the main passage for the theme of the name and the context in which the revelation of the name that God Himself describes is described. Then, we will seek to present how the people of Israel, throughout its history, having referred to this revealed divine name, having as a reference the divine exhortation to honor the name, found in the third commandment of the Decalogue. At the same time, we will mention the other names or names used by people to describe and designate the divinity, in order to have a broader perspective on the Old Testament conception of God's name.

God's revelation to man is gradual, as man develops and opens to receive and understand revelation. As an axiomatic truth, we can say that God reveals himself in different times, places and ways. The name is one of these ways of revelation, but in a much more complex way than it seems at first glance. First, names and nominations were created by men and given to God. By these appointments, people described the way they understood God or certain of His actions and manifestations in creation throughout history. Second, God's proper name, Yahweh, is considered to be the pinnacle of revelation because it best describes the essence of God, who He is, what He wants, and when He wills. Being revealed by God Himself, he is a sacred name, the holy name of God, which is why the people are urged to honor him. Even God imposes its use with great decency, forbidding its use in vain or for dishonest purposes, its dishonesty is attracting the divine punishment.

The foundations of name theology are found throughout Scripture, but especially in the Pentateuch, where the name is seen as an ad extram manifestation of God, but also a sign indicating His presence, as He was understood by the people. The sacramental character of the name is based

on the fact that the name is closely related to the Divine Person. For this reason, the divine name invoked in prayer mediates our communion with God. The closeness to God and the penetration of the depths of the divine being depend on our personal evolution.

This Old Testament conception that the revealed divine name is holy because it is God's proper name and because it is God's representative on earth has been taken up and used by the Imiaslavs, that is, by those who claim that God's Name is God Himself. , this being the main premise of the Imiaslavic teaching.

In order to argue their teaching on names, they claim, based on the Old Testament conception, but also on New Testament texts, that God's name is His very energy, which is why he is eternal and through him they work miracles. Therefore, in order to understand how this conception of the name is used in Imiaslavic teaching, we aim to present the beginnings of this teaching, but also the development of mystical movements, and later theological-philosophical, which was based on it. We will try to understand the environment and the reasons for its appearance, in order to later try to penetrate and understand the Imiaslavic doctrine and the arguments brought by its supporters, be they biblical, patristic or liturgical.

The Imiaslavic doctrine is based on the idea that God is present, invisibly, in His name, this idea appeared in the writing of a russian schemamonk, Ilarion, who wanted to share his personal experience of Jesus' prayer. Trying to explain his experience and how God works through His name, he put this idea of the presence of the name in writing. However, due to the inappropriate language, his writings attracted criticism and controversy.

Behind this research is a double motivation. First of all, it is a practical reason, in the sense that prayer, whether public, through divine service, or private, cannot be performed without invocation of the name of God, to whom we address prayer. By name we draw near to God, who is the link between us and Him. Without invoking the name, prayer cannot exist, for thus it would have no recipient. Therefore, we want to highlight the role of God's name in man's religious life and how man relates to it. Secondly, there is a personal motivation. This topic aroused my interest since I was a student, when, in a discussion about the bachelor's thesis, Father Chirilă Ioan also introduced me to the topic of Imiaslavie, which would translate into the glorification of the name. My curiosity and desire for knowledge were aroused by Father Ioan Chirilă, who proposed the translation of the largest study dedicated to the Imiaslavie movement, a monumental book, over 900 pages, by Metropolitan Ilarion Alfeyev of Volokolamsk, the Holy Sacrament of the Church,

introduction to the history and issues of the imiaslavic disputes, the translation of which I also took part in. The translation of the book provided me with a lot of valuable information on this subject, being the most complex research that presents and analyzes the theme of the name from the Old Testament to the imiaslaviv disputes.

Our work is structured in six chapters, three shorter chapters (1, 2 and 6) and three large chapters (3, 4 and 5). More precisely, the first chapter aims to familiarize the reader with the literature, with the most important works in Romanian and international theology. The second chapter consists of Preliminaries, where the ideas and concepts related to the theme of the name are highlighted, more precisely, the fact that the name is a means of revealing God, at the same time, a means of spiritual growth, of closeness to God, through the name used in prayers. In this way the name becomes an access to God.

The third chapter focuses on the exegesis of the main biblical passages that refer to the name of God and are used to substantiate the Imiaslav teaching. This exegesis is intended to be more of an attempt to highlight, analyze and understand the Old Testament texts used by the imiaslavs in arguing their teaching. We will examine the texts in Genesis 4:26, Exodus 3:14; 20.7, Psalms 5.11; 8.1.9; 19.1; 53.1.6; 71.17; 85.11; 110.9; 112, 1-3; 148,13, Ezekiel 36,22-23 and Isaia 42,8, highlighting the context of their writing, and we will seek to understand the contribution of each to the image of God's name. These texts express people's understanding of the name and how it should relate to God's name, but they also present God's will regarding the revealed divine name.

The Imiaslavs claim that their teaching is based primarily on the Old Testament theology of the divine name, so they use biblical texts from the first book of Scripture, namely, the text of Genesis 4:26, where it is said that people have begun to call on the name of God. This marks for the first time the fact that in order to be able to call on God's name it is necessary to know God. Probably our forefathers knew the name of God or had a name by which they designated the Divinity, as did their descendants, because if they had not known it, they would not have been able to invoke it. Probably by turning people away from God he was forgotten. However, in the book of Exodus, 3:14, we have the text that shows us the discovery or rediscovery of God's name for people, by God Himself. It is the name Yahweh, known as the tetragram. The effect of revealing the name is the realization of the connection between God and people, of communion. Knowing God's own name, the people of Israel knew to who they was addressing. More specifically, by revealing the name Yahweh, God shows the people of Israel that the God that people began to

invoke in the time of Enoch is the same God who now reveals His name to reconnect with the chosen people, who will now be identified as Yahweh's people, for he had made a covenant with his Redeemer.

Because the knowledge of God's name meant the partial knowledge of God, the name being understood as the presence of God and even identified with God, it was appropriate that his invocation and use be done in a proper way. For this, among the commandments of the Decalogue (Exodus 20: 7), given to the people freed from the bondage of Egypt, is the commandment not to take God's name in vain, that is, not to use it in an abusive, improper or even for evil purposes, for they attract the wrath and punishment of God. It is thus highlighted that the holiness of God also passes to His name, and the veneration of the name means the veneration of God. So is dishonesty, this being one of the arguments of the Imiaslavs.

The following texts that the Imiaslavs use to substantiate their teaching are those from the book of Psalms. In these texts we can see how God's name takes on the qualities and characteristics of God. That is why the Psalmist David says of God's name that he is wonderful (Ps 8: 1,9), that he is protection for the chosen people (Ps 19: 1), that he is salvation, he is a savior for what they honor (Ps. 53,1.6), that the name of God is eternal (Ps 71:17) as is its Bearer, therefore, being eternal, he will be glorified forever (Ps 85:11). The nations around the chosen people, seeing so many times the power of God in caring for the Israelites, were frightened. If for the Gentiles God's name was frightening, all the more so for the chosen people God's name is holy and frightening (Ps 110: 9), but not only that, but it is also praised and blessed (Ps 112: 1-3). The praise of this name of God is not only of a human nature, that is, it does not come only from men, and it is praised both in heaven and on earth (Ps 148:13), both by men and angels, and by all creation. of God, of nature, of the sun, and of natural phenomena. The prophetic books are also places where the name of God is praised and honored, because even in these the name of God is shown to be holy, as is God (Isa. 36: 22-23). The sanctity of this name is affirmed by God Himself, He being the One who shows and restores the sanctity of His name, not only before the people, but also before the Gentiles who have dishonored the name of God. Therefore, God Himself states that His name is the Lord (Is 42: 8).

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the theology of God's name that helps us better understand the symbols and meanings of the name, as well as the relationship between God and His name. In this chapter I have tried to highlight the connection between God's Name and God,

more precisely the way God is present in His name. I have tried to highlight the way in which the presence of God is understood in His name through his own way of revealing the divine name. The name Yahweh is considered to be God's own name and the most important name. I also wanted to highlight its relevance in Old Testament theology, its meaning, pronunciation and sanctity, especially in the cultic use of the divine name and the pious pronunciation of the name. If the holiness of God is also transmitted to His name, it means that God is felt in the presence of the one who calls His name. God makes His presence felt through His name when called, both in worship and in personal prayer. The prohibition of pronouncing God's name emphasizes and substantiates the idea that God identifies and becomes present through His name. Research so far shows that the correct pronunciation of the tetragram, which was lost at one point due to the ban on pronouncing God's name so as not to desecrate it, is Yahweh.

The fifth chapter is dedicated to the theological-philosophical and hesychastic Imiaslavie movement. This movement is based on his teaching, according to which God identifies with His name, the theology and Old Testament conception of God's name, according to which God is present in His name, the name being considered the presence of God. Following this idea was created the saying that underlies the Imiaslav teaching, the Name of God is God Himself. For a better understanding of this movement and of the Imiaslav teaching, in Chapter Five I tried to present how this teaching emerged and how it developed. The environment in which he appeared is a monastic one, hesychastic, the saying representing the essence of the hesychastic experience of the schooner Ilarion, the author of the book *On the Caucasus Mountains*, from which it all began. The development of the teaching and its foundation was achieved especially through the creations of the hieroschimon Antonie Bulatovici who made a book called *Apology*, a book composed of scriptural, patristic and liturgical texts that refer to the theme of God's name.

The basic idea of Imiaslav teaching is that there is a close connection between the name of God and God, being the link between God and men. Thus, God is identified in His name, expressing His Being, not being able to be delimited by the One named, being a way of direct connection with God. Being sanctified by God and imbued with divine holiness, the divine name revealed, emanates holiness when uttered with reverence and honor, not only on the praying man but also on the environment and on the subject of prayer.

Opinions on this Imiaslav teaching were divided, positive and negative. Thus began the verbal and written debates, which later led to physical disputes. The two opposing groups, the

Imiaslavs and the Imiaborts, developed the conflict and thus created a whole controversy that involved in discussions and controversies not only hierarchs, monks and other clerics, but also lay people, especially those in higher, more cultured circles of Russian society at that time. The military actions on Mount Athos, the expulsion and punishment of the Imiaslav slaves, were considered suitable solutions to stop the disputes, which was not exactly the case. The beginning of the war and later the revolution slowly diverted society's attention from the imiaslav disputes and thus the imiaslav dispute entered a shadow cone. The final decisions, which were taken in the Russian synod of 1913 and in the Greek synods of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1913 and 1914, were decisions influenced by the political situation of those times, which I mentioned in the exposition of the emergence and development of this movement were taken under the pressure of time but also of the authorities or even because of some subjective reasons of some important people. For this reason, it is necessary to reanalyze the arguments of the two camps (Imiaslavs and Imiaborts), especially since later appeared writings, books and articles that analyzed the disputes in detail, in a very objective way.

Researching and analyzing fundamental Imiaslav writings and subsequent writings would help enormously in resolving Imiaslav disputes, which have not yet been completely extinguished and need to be resolved. The translation of Metropolitan Ilarion Alfeyev's book and the present research bring before the Romanian theologians the subject of imiaslav and new perspectives on these imiaslav disputes. Finally, the general opinion is that the Imiaslavie movement does not have a well-defined teaching, but rather consists of a series of writings (brochures, confessions, articles and books) that support or contradict Imiaslav's ideas. In the sixth chapter I tried to highlight the essence of Imiaslav teaching and the relevance of this teaching for the spiritual context of the times in which we live, all followed by some conclusions representative of fairly long research, conclusions that need to be further developed in other studies, specialized.

The main objective of this research work is to identify and highlight, through scriptural texts, the Old Testament conception of the name of God. The next objective is to identify and highlight the connection between this conception of the name and the Imiaslav conception of the name, because the latter is largely based on the former. Then, we aim to bring to the attention of Romanian theologians the issue of the Imiaslav dispute, so that, researching the topic, we seek to understand it and learn what is useful in the process of intellectual and spiritual growth of each of us, theologians, clerics and lay believers.

We want the originality of the work to be visible without our indications. Of course, the research is based on scriptural texts and later on the works of various authors of theological writings, Holy Fathers and older and / or contemporary authors. The novelty of the research is represented by the Imiaslav theme, too little known to both theologians and believers, but also its substantiation based on the Old Testament conception of God's name. Therefore, for a better understanding of the Imiaslav movement and teaching, I have dedicated about a hundred pages in which are presented: history, development, Imiaslav disputes that followed between Imiaslav and Imiaborts and the different opinions that form a possible Imiaslav doctrine on the name of God.

All the informations of this research required to be presented in a conclusion. The conclusions of this paper are aimed at highlighting God's name: What is God's name? What is the relationship between God and His name ?, as well as how people should relate to God's name, especially to avoid various divergences or disputes. We do not claim these conclusions to be definitive, but rather indicative for those who want to draw near to God through His name, whether they do so through prayer in general or through heartfelt prayer. Either way cannot be done without invoking the name of God, be it the Lord or God or Jesus, for the name of God mediates our communion with God.

With regard to names and nominations, we must emphasize that the name of God is considered to be one, the revealed one, Yahweh, the tetragram, the proper name of God, the name that best expresses what God is, the other names used for the designation of the Divinity being human creations that express what people have understood from the manifestation and actions of God in the world. For this, the names and appointments used to designate the Divinity can be considered to be a way of knowing God through which the impenetrable Being of God enters, because He is a personal God.

The approach to the theological theme of the name of God is of two kinds. The first of these is the approach that regards the name as something related to the one called - we can call it the mystical approach, specific to prayer and the Christian life. In this case, the name of God is considered to be inextricably linked to God, the essence of God. The divine being is expressed by this divine name. For this reason, the revealed divine name is considered to be holy and its utterance or use requires proper utterance or invocation. Invoked in prayer, the name becomes a sign of the divine presence, and the effectiveness of the prayer depends on how we relate to God and His name. The second approach to God's name is that the name is seen as just a distinctive

sign, which does not affect the being of the named. This can be called the scientific or rational approach.

Therefore, the name of God, Yahweh, is not the equivalent of the named, that is, of God, but defines His Being and indicates His presence, thus being a sign of God's presence, inseparable from God and intimately connected with God. Therefore, through names we approach God, the name being the way of communion with God, the one who transposes in the presence of God. God becomes a worker in us, through His name, because the divine name is the living presence of God in us and among us.