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LISTENING AND BEING OBEDIENT TO GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF ABRAHAM¹

The idea of God who talks to a human, and the human, responsive to His word, who is obedient may be an interesting issue combining theology of both Old and New Testament. Previous attempts of an overall approach to the theological thought of both Testaments has not allowed for thorough expression by means of one or even several basic ideas of the relation of God to a human in its whole complexity and completeness. That is why, as suggested by Josef Schreiner². Biblical theology, especially the theology of the Old Testament, may only constitute a certain proposal and attempt of the approach of Gerard von Rad³, John Mc Kenzi, James Barr, Winfred Harrington, Xavier Léon-Dufour, or from the area of the research of Polish Biblicists such as Hugolin Langkammer, Antoni Tronina or Tomasz Jelonka, however, they do not exhaust richness and diversity of the biblical thought.

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² J. Schreiner, *Teologia Starego Testamentu*, Warszawa 1999, p. 7.

³ W. Harrington, *The path of Biblical Theology*, 1973.

Among the forms of the Old Testament, the main role is played by Abraham. In his life, we notice a clear image of the relation of “listening” and “reply” to God and His voice, expressed by “faith and obedience”. That is why, the biblical tradition, connected with the Christian one, names Abraham the father of all believers⁴.

It is difficult to define the time at which the figure of Abraham lived. However, following the Albright’s opinion, this is the period of ca. 1850 BC. The environment of life included in the information on Abraham in the Book of Genesis 12-25 is adequate to the situation from the period of the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1600 BC) when in Syria and Palestine, there was a boom of a new culture connected with settlement on the territories of western Semites. This inflow of people might also have attracted Abraham and his family clan⁵. Lively and free commercial contact of the countries from the North and South with East are confirmed in the information included in “Cappadocian Tables” dated back to such time (1850-1750 BC). In this period, there were not profound language barriers as on the lands of fertile grounds, people freely communicated by means of a western Semite language as well as Egyptian was comprehended in the majority of Palestinian cities. Archaeological excavations confirm that in this time there was no clear division between the a nomadic and settled lifestyle. Usually, nomads sheltered in fortified cities in winters, however in summer, they wandered with herds looking for pastures. It is greatly connected with the images from the life of Abraham, who is presented in the Bible as a nomad or half-nomad.

Obviously, we do not know the legal system of nomads in a written form, but the contact with the people from the East, influenced the assumption of similar legal regulations for social, commercial and family life as well as inheritance, in particular⁶. These legal and customary references confirm the historicity of the information on Abraham and patriarchs. In the studies on law history, scientists underline the existence of a basic right of the Ancient East which, along with, the expansion of the Babylonian culture, became common both in the East and West. Particular nations added their pieces adjusting their customs and traditions to common legal systems. Discoveries of ancient codes of Lipit-Ishtar from 1850 BC, the Bilalam Code from 1750 BC, the Hammurabi Code

⁴ See Ga 3,7-9.29, Rom 4,1-24..

⁵ C. Schedl, *Historia Starego Testamentu*, Tuchów 1996, v. II, p. 35.

⁶ Similar solutions coming from the later period of the Hammurabi Code from ca. 1700 B.C. indicates the existence of other sets of rights functioning in the Ancient East, being a common heritage of the entire East.

of 1700 BC, Cappadocian acts of commercial colonies of the 19th century BC or even later texts from Nuzi of 1500 BC, confirm the permanence and durability of a certain legal culture. Thus, even there is some distance in geographical time and space of the figure of Abraham, it does not make him distant from the cultural environment of Babylonia, out of which he wandered, but they place Abraham within the framework of time of that environment.

From faith tradition to personal faith

It is commonly assumed that the call of Abraham was in Ur. Indeed, he started his trek towards the Promised Land, however according to Genesis 11,32 his father Terach was the initiator of leaving Ur.⁷

Gn 11,31 Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot, son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and brought them out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to go to the land of Canaan. But when they reached Haran, they settled there.⁸

Abraham used to have a name of Abram, this name was changed later, along with the change of his function and call. Abram went out of Ur not by the direct order of God, but due to obedience to his father Terach. Abram, at the beginning, was a representative of traditional faith, obedience to the family and inherited faith. The decision of Abram to leave Ur is the decision of his father, which the son is obedient to. Terach, however, stopped and settled in Charan where he died and was buried. He stopped in the middle of the way. He heard the word of the Lord and he gave an answer to that, but he lacked persistence and, may be, time and strength to make the word fully effective. Then the Lord directed his word to Abram:

Gn 12,1 The LORD said to Abram: „Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father’s house to a land that I will show you.

Since then, Abram personally hears the voice of God and now, with his personal faith, being aware of his choice and personal reply to the voice of God, undertakes further walk towards the Promised Land. This first stage from Ur to Charan is the obedience faith which develops in personal faith.

⁷ The information locating the call for Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees is the information coming from the later information in Genesis 15,7.

⁸ Biblical texts in English by *The New American Bible*, 1970.

This is the way towards faith, which is the way of the majority of us. Who was asked by our parents whether we wanted to accept Christianity and be brought up in Catholic faith. Even later, less or more eagerly, but usually under supervision and sometimes pressure of parents, we attended religious instructions and received sacraments. Sometimes, we rebelled more or less. However, there was a day of entirely freedom and conscious hearing of the word of God and our maturity answered to his call. Our “yes” to the God’s call. Now, we do not following Him by the faith of our parents and tradition but also the faith of personal choice and decision. This transition from childlike faith and tradition to mature and conscious faith is necessary so as to freely and maturely give an answer to God and to the word of His promises.

Word of God’s promises and reply of Abraham

The family of Abraham and his nation is presented in the first verses of Genesis 12,1-4. It determines the scheme and structure of the story. This is a triple word of God and Abraham’s reply to it:

Gn 12,1-4:

1. Word of God – promise of a land

Gn 12,1 **The LORD** said to Abram: „Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father’s house to a land that I will show you.

2. Word of God – promise of descendants

Gn 12,2 „I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

3. Word of God – promise of blessing

Gn 12,3 I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you.”

4. Reply to the word of God – faith Genesis 12:4

Gn 12,4 Abram went as **the LORD** directed him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.

This whole expression is included in the name Yahweh, which is noticeable in the Hebrew text. This name begins the first promise and finishes the answer of Abram⁹. This suggests interpretation that the entire life of Abraham will be in presence of God and under His supervision. God is at the beginning

⁹ See bold text: Gn 12,1 and Gn 12,4.

and at the end. The element of the answer to God – faith is like a seal documenting the attitude of Abraham.

The stated numbers in the story of Abraham are rather symbolic. The number of 100 which emerges twice is a number of fulfilment. The hundredth year of age gives him Isaac, the son and promise as well as within hundred years he takes Canaan – the land of promise.

Land of promise

The native land of Abraham was Babylonia. Closer definition is suggested in Genesis 11,28, talking about Haran, the brother of Abram, mentions Ur of Chaldees:

Gn 11,28 Haran died before his father Terah, in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans.

Similarly, Genesis 11,31 locates the beginning of the way of Terach of Ur Chaldees:

Gn 11,31 Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot, son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and brought them out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to go to the land of Canaan. But when they reached Haran, they settled there.

Later information Genesis 15:7 indicates that God himself took Abraham out of Ur of Chaldees.

Gn 15,7 He then said to him, „I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as a possession.”

Maybe the stay in Babylonian captivity (in the 6th century BC) and vivid contact of Charan with Ur – the former important centre of political life from the times of Sumerian rulers, influenced this indication. Previous tradition included in the Book of Joshua mentions only the country “on the second river bank”.

Jos 24,2 Joshua addressed all the people: „Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: In times past your fathers, down to Terah, father of Abraham and Nahor, dwelt beyond the River and served other gods.

However, we may assume that Ur as a Babylonian county in a broader sense, is a place from which the Abraham’s travel starts, firstly led by his father Te-

rach, then after a short stay in Charan, Abraham headed to Canaan on his own. Archaeological excavations performed in Palestine confirm that in the period of the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1700) there were nations in the vicinity of Syria and Palestine as well as wandering of nomads at the edge of a desert. This may confirm wandering of Abraham and locate it in the place and time.

Surely, one of the reasons of Terach's refraining from further wandering from Charan was prosperity and development of his family in one of the richest cities of that region. After political, economic and ethnic unrest caused in Ur during the reign of Sumerian rulers and its outcome in form of Terach's emigration, there was a time of relative peace and prosperity. This was enough for Terach to settle down in Charan for long. He lived there 205 years of age. He achieved his goal – prosperity for his family. However, for Abraham, this is a further stage. He, indeed, also developed there and achieved riches, in terms of the size of his family, numerous slaves and great flocks of sheep and other cattle, however, he goes after the voice of the Lord “Leave your land, the house of your father” so, leave everything what you have achieved. Leave the entire stability, tradition and social position. Go to the country which I reveal to you. This is a poor, semi-desert, distant and new country. This is curious that the Hebrew text uses the word “I will show you”, אֶרְאֶךָ (ʿarʾékkā) in the meaning “I will reveal”. It may be seen that in the entire history of Abraham, the scheme is drawn in the first words of the promise:

God says – reveals

Abraham answers – believes (obeys).

Abraham heads to the land which is pointed, promised and given by God. This is the most important. This is not only a settled and gained land. This is a land of faith and fulfilment of God's promises, which Abraham believed in.

This is a land in which God shows to him and where Abraham as an expression of this faith, erects altars in His honour. Immediately after coming to Canaan, in the vicinity of Sychem, the oak of More, Abraham has a revelation and repetition of the promise of a land.

Gn 12,7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, „To your descendants I will give this land.” So Abram built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.

Gn 12,8 Stamtąd zaś przeniósł się na wzgórze na wschód od Betel i rozbił swój namiot pomiędzy Betel od zachodu i Aj od wschodu. Tam również zbudował ołtarz dla Pana i wzywał imienia Jego.

Gn 13,18 Abram moved his tents and went on to settle near the terebinth of Mamre, which is at Hebron. There he built an altar to the LORD.

This promise recurs, the land is given to Abraham and his descendants forever.

Gn 13,14 After Lot had left, the LORD said to Abram: „Look about you, and from where you are, gaze to the north and south, east and west;

This promise of a land is connected with the promise of ruling over the conquered nations which previously had settled this country.

Gn 15,18-21 ¹⁸ It was on that occasion that the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: „To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the Great River (the Euphrates), ¹⁹ the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰ the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, ²¹ the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.”

This is also a land where famine and hard life conditions will be experienced and during drought, it will be necessary to seek food while emigrated see Genesis 12:10.

Gn 12,10 There was famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, since the famine in the land was severe.

This is not an easy land, needed fighting for, which is confirmed by Genesis 14 (Abraham's fight with the kings' coalition). Victory over kings' coalition is a seal confirming God's promise that Abraham will really exercise rights to its ownership.

This is also a land of disputes, even with the closest, Genesis 13 conflict with shepherds of nephew Lot.

Gn 13,8 So Abram said to Lot: „Let there be no strife between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are kinsmen.

This is a land of alliance which has been formed by God with Abraham, his descendants from a generation to generation and who is granted the land forever.

Gn 17,7 I will maintain my covenant with you and your descendants after you throughout the ages as an everlasting pact, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. **8** I will give to you and to your descendants after you the land in which you are now staying, the whole land of Canaan, as a permanent possession; and I will be their God.”

This is a land where God does not tolerate sin and evil and as an examples we may present the story of destroying Sodom and Gomorra Genesis 19.

Gn 19,24 at the same time the LORD rained down sulphurous fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah (from the LORD out of heaven).

This is the land in which Abraham will die and, along with his wife, will be buried and stay forever.

Gn 25,9 His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron, son of Zohar the Hittite, which faces Mamre,

This is the land of answering God's call and the fulfilment of this difficult call, leave everything what has been achieved and go to the unknown, new, where God indicates. This is the land of trust in God.

Gn 12,1 The LORD said to Abram: „Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father's house to a land that I will show you.

This is the land of faith in which the promises given at the beginning of the call will be fulfilled Genesis 12, 1:4. The land in which Abraham and his descendants will be living under the care and supervision of God. This image of God's closeness and leadership will become an argument for Moses to force his compatriots to leave Egypt and come back to this land of fortunate being, under God's supervision¹⁰.

Son of promise

A descendant, especially of a male gender, for ancient nations was a guarantee of family durability. Additionally, having many sons confirmed God's blessing and clan's prosperity. Abraham, who achieved profound riches in Charan, did not have any heirs. His first wife Sara (=Princess) was infertile. That is why, due to the lack of heirs, according to the common law of inheritance, was to be Eliezer of Damascus. Sometimes this figure is wrongfully combined with somebody coming from Damask, Syria. The function of Damascus, means a servant, who functioned as the main manager of the property and all goods, understood as home. This was a person who may be called "majordomus"¹¹. Abraham feels sad, but even if he is rich, he lacks the most important: his own son.

¹⁰ C. Schedl, *Geschichte des Alten Testament*, Tuchów 1996, v. II, p. 23.

¹¹ See C.H. Gordon, *The Meaning of Damascus Gn 15,2 in Aramaic*, Or 21(1950), p. 496.

Gn 15,2 But Abram said, „O Lord GOD, what good will your gifts be, if I keep on being childless and have as my heir the steward of my house, Eliezer?”

Later legal Moses' regulations did not use adoption, that is why using adoption to the servant Eliezer in the Abraham's tradition defines older legal system, not Moses' yet. It greatly locates Abraham in the area of the Ancient East, where similar legal solutions may be encountered in codification of law performed by Hammurabi ca. 1700 BC and in later texts from Nuzi. Adopting a servant as a son was to provide childless spouses peaceful old age, decent burial and further existence of the family¹². However, despite the previous adoption, legal system of the East anticipated the case that if there is a son from the first wife, the earlier legal adoption becomes invalid.

In case of Abraham, we have a reference to such a legal solution.

Gn 15,4 Then the word of the LORD came to him: „No, that one shall not be your heir; your own issue shall be your heir.”

Abraham obtains a son as the second promise, who will be his own descendant. And his descendants will be very numerous, what is compared to the number of stars in the sky.

Gn 15,5 He took him outside and said: „Look up at the sky and count the stars, if you can. Just so,” he added, „shall your descendants be”.

Abraham is old. It is not usual that people bear children at such an age. The nature opposes as well as tradition and social determinants laugh at. Everything seems to be against the grain, however, he believed in the word of God.

Gn 15,6 Abram put his faith in the LORD, who credited it to him as an act of righteousness.

This act of faith is not only a practice and external, formal custom, but faith reaches inside. The result of the internal act will be an internal rhythm expressed by the alliance which is concluded with a human being. This is also another seal confirming the will of God and human so as to combine their fates together.

This Hebrew כָּרַת יְהוָה אֶת־אַבְרָם בְּרִית (kārāt yhw̄h ʿet-ʿabrām bərîṯ) = “form alliance”, really means “dissolve the alliance” or more exact “karat=cut” and

¹² See C. Schedl, *Historia Starego Testamentu*, Tuchów 41, v. II, p. 35.

“berit = between two” refers to the rite known in the Ancient East. This is a transition between the body of a sacrificed animal cut into halves which expressed sanctions waiting for these who has not meet the terms and conditions of an agreement. The system and obligations of partners is generating a greater and greater power and meaning. This act finishes with a resolution of the promise of a land given to Abraham’s descendants.

Gn 15,18 It was on that occasion that the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: „To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the Great River (the Euphrates),

However, he does not have his own son. There are promises, external rites, but he does not have his own son. That’s why, Sara, his first wife, proposes another legal resolution. She gives Abraham her slave Hagar, to bear him a child, adopt the child and that’s why, Abraham would have the desired son. This is an ancient solution known from the Hammurabi Code and other Eastern legal systems¹³. This child, despite born from a slave, was assigned to the lady who was infertile.

Gn 16,2 Sarai said to Abram: „The LORD has kept me from bearing children. Have intercourse, then, with my maid; perhaps I shall have sons through her.” Abram heeded Sarai’s request.

Another human calculation, an attempt to solve the problem on one’s own. Abraham agreed on that, Ishmael was born.

Gn 16,16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.

Ishmael was a legal and real heir of Abraham. However, God still promises a descendant from Sara, the first wife. The promise, along with the lapse of years, in human terms, seems to be less and less real.

There is a suspense of the story, revealing everything against the trust of Abraham. When he was 99 and his wife 80, there is an announcement of bearing a son.

Gn, 18,10 He said, „I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him.

The numbers of age are not real numbers of Abraham and Sara’s age, but they are symbolic underlining that this was an infertile couple. Biology and age are against fertility of Abraham’s family.

¹³ See Hammurabi Code, Paragraph 163. Similar solutions are found in the Code of Nuzi.

Gn 18,11-12 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years, and Sarah had stopped having her womanly periods. **12** So Sarah laughed to herself and said, „Now that I am so withered and my husband is so old, am I still to have sexual pleasure?”

Underlining the old age means that naturally, in the human understanding of life, there are no chances for fulfilling the promise of a son. Sara perfectly understands it and laughs when she hears about bearing a son. She, as a woman, knows the phenomenon of menopause and knows what it is in a woman's life, her biology does not allow her to be pregnant. That is why, she laughs in her heart at God's promise.

The motif of laughing is visible many times. Along with the promise in Genesis 17:17, Abraham, having fallen facedown before God, laughs at the thought that he will have a son at this age.

Gn 17,17 Abraham prostrated himself and laughed as he said to himself, „Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Or can Sarah give birth at ninety?”

Among numerous commentators, Fathers of the Church, this laugh was positive, cheerful, being an expression of faith despite the awkwardness of the situation, old age and public opinion. He fell facedown; he adored and thanked God for this what happened to a man a hundred years old. He laughed in a different way, he was cheerful.

Sara, was also laughing at this, however, according the said commentators, her laughing was negative, bitter and faithless.

Gn 18,12 So Sarah laughed to herself and said, „Now that I am so withered and my husband is so old, am I still to have sexual pleasure?”

God also laughs, the expression of the God's laugh is Isaac, whose name in the Biblical etymology means “God has laughed”.

Gn 21,6 Sarah then said, „God has given me cause to laugh, and all who hear of it will laugh with me.

יִשְׁחַק (yishḥaq) = Yahweh has laughed

Abraham believed and we can say that against biology, old age, tradition and human experience, exposed to mockery and laughing, against the grain - limitlessly trusted in God. This faith was his answer to God's word. He trusts and thanks to his faith, he achieves his target.

New name as the expression of Abraham's faith

The change of a name Abram into Abraham is symbolic and is connected with an answer of God to this trustful faith of Abraham. The name in the Biblical tradition means essence, nature, function and tasks which are undertaken. Abraham's faith in having descendants so numerous as sea sand or stars in the sky is expressed and confirmed by a new name. This name is the image of a change of the function which must be met up to now.

The name of Abram exists in a double form. Abram אַבְרָם – abbreviated form and Abraham אַבְרָהָם – form extended by the consonant ה. These forms derive from the Acadian language. In the cuneiform script, the name of Abraham exists as: “A ba am ra ma” or as “A ba ra ma” or “A ba am ra am”. In each case, we deal with a combination:

“A-ba” (Abam) is a form of a noun and means “father”

the second part “ra am” (ram) which is a verbal form means love or be haughty.

In the Western Semite language, the final vowel was eliminated and “Abram” remained. So, the name of “Abram” or “Abraham” is not the name of a god, but is the theophoric name, where God is named “the caring father” (abraham) or “haughty father” (ab ram)¹⁴.

The Biblical etymology included in Genesis 17,5 is folk and refers to the similarity of sounding, not internal content. This attitude does not explain “ה” existing in form of the name above. Phonetically, we have a similarity of the word הַמֶּן (hāmôn) meaning a lot of. So, the name of Abraham, in the Biblical etymology, we may extend as it is done in Genesis 17,6 אֲבִי־הַמְּנוֹן גֹּיִם (ʾab-hāmôn gōyīm) and express as “the Father of many nations”.

Gn 17,5 No longer shall you be called Abram; your name shall be Abraham, for I am making you the father of a host of nations.

Abraham's trial of faith

The sacrifice of Isaac, beloved son of Abraham seems to be a cruel demand of God. More than hundred year old was lasting to have a son and when it comes, there is a trial of faith and trust in God. Abraham is to sacrifice his son.

Did God really demand this sacrifice? May be this was only a temptation arisen due to the pagan tradition, in which to honour a god and express full

¹⁴ See St. Łach, *Wstęp do Starego Testamentu*, Poznań-Warszawa 1973, p. 153.

dependency and obedience, first sons were even scarified. This was that what was the most precious in order to show how God is precious in their life.

May be this scene should be treated as the internal fight of Abraham with similar thoughts. Biblical images sometimes shorten a psychological path, revealing the entire lot of personal thoughts and doubts, which are solved by a human by himself. As the states of soul have a direct connection with God, the human somehow presents it with some background as the direct order of God. It may be assumed, following Schedl¹⁵ that only God equipped Abraham with this thought as a temptation and Abraham succeeds.

In the history of Bible, there are many references where people sacrificed others to God. Archaeological excavations confirm that such practices in the Bronze Age in the Middle East. At the gates of many cities and homes, we may see skeletons of children scarified not in form of burial but in form of a ritual sacrifice. In later time, we may also encounter many acts of such a kind. King Moab, being in a difficult situation, sacrifices his first-born son at the city walls as the final form of rescue (2 Book of Kings 16,3) as well as Manassas (2 Book of Kings 17,17). Hillel rebuilding Jericho, as foundations of city gates, he set his first-born son in the walls and when he finished, he sacrificed his youngest son. In Megiddo, there were found a child set into walls – 15 year old girl. There were acts of despair and exaggeration. In this cult and religious environment was Abraham.

The scene of Abraham sacrificing his son is full of drama and tension. Abraham readily answers to the God's call. „Here I am.

Gn 22,1 Some time after these events, God put Abraham to the test. He called to him, „Abraham!” „Ready!” he replied.

This form **הִנְנִי** (hinnéni) = „Here I am” is presented in the history of Abraham for many times. It means full readiness and obedience. The father heads to Saint Mount Moriah and he aims to sacrifice his son to God, as an expression of total obedience. We know precisely the drama of this scene. At the moment, when on the altar there is tied Isaac, God, by means of an angel, stops the Abraham's hand, the hand which is to kill his son. May be baroque painting, which is full of expression, shaped in us the dynamism of this scene. It is also probable that stopping the hand of Abraham was an internal enlightening and reflection that God does not want human sacrifices. This whole scene may be a statement and exposing of rights in the Chosen Nation, that God of Fathers: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, does not demand human sacri-

¹⁵ C. Schedl cited, p. 53.

fices, however in Canaan, such practices still existed. Recurring of the this right in form of ban on human sacrifices may be seen in many pages of the Bible. See Book of Leviticus 18,21; 20,1,5; Book of Deuteronomy 12,31; 18,10; Book of Jeremiah etc. In practice, maintaining of this right does not contradict inappropriate vow of Jephthah and that such practices were common.

Tying Isaac and scarified on the altar seems to be reflected in Jewish tradition expressed by עקדה „aqeda(h)”. This is the tradition of sacrifices and ties, so as not to divert from God. In Christian tradition, aqedah means ties of not rope but God and tying up to God and connection with God by love.

The place of sacrifice is mentioned as Moriah אֶל-אֶרֶץ הַמֹּרִיָּה without specific indication. May be it was primary “Land of Amorites” (erec ha amorijah) but later the Jewish tradition, connected with Christianity indicates Mount Moriah identified as a sacred hill in Jerusalem.¹⁶

The history of Abraham is worth reading from the final statement of God, being the key to the entire history of faith and devotion of Abraham. Genesis 22,12b. “Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.”

Gn 22,12 „Do not lay your hand on the boy,” said the messenger. „Do not do the least thing to him. I know now how devoted you are to God, since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son.”

Abraham does not withhold anything from God, he wants to sacrifice even more than God requires. In his devotion, we will also try to sacrifice his only son, which is an act of heroism. Abraham is a man of faith. He is a man who listens to God and gives his life as an answer to His call. Abraham is a person who fully trusts in God, he is a human who could wait, trust, give everything as a sacrifice and he fought the temptation and trial.

Pastoral conclusions

Each of us should hear the voice of God who talks to us as to Abraham and he tries to give God an answer. This is an expression of our faith.

Each of us must leave their Ur, the land of their father, the land of their tradition, customs, cannot stop halfway as Terach. You have to give an answer to God’s words and go up to the end. You have to transform from faith tradition to personal choices. This is our answer to his word.

¹⁶ L.H. Vincent, *Abraham a Jeruzalem*, RB 58 (1951), p. 360-371.

You need to have your aim, promised land which is revealed and indicated by God. This is not an easy land. This is the land of effort and fight for survival in our hearts. However, this is a land in which, under God's supervision, we may securely live and be led by his word.

The alliance of God with us is expressed by the sacrament of baptism and priesthood. This alliance is the source of blessing as well as obligations and requirements.

Faith is a comprehended obedience. Limitless faith of Abraham, against tradition and human experience, exposed him to laughing even from the side of the closest family. He believed in God against the grain – what can be described as pure rationalism, thus this attitude is a challenge in the time of common contestation and scepticism. This faith was his answer to God's word. He not only believed but also trusted.

The name of Abraham recalls that by means of faith, we become the children of Abraham and participate in blessing which is the participation of nations.

The attitude of the answer "Here I am" are the words of readiness and total, unconditioned answer to God and devotion. Let's recall the call of the Bishop and our reply "Adsum – Here I am" during holy orders.

Each of us has their own Mount Moriah – our trial of faith and sacrifice. Each of us must stand before themselves, their dreams, desires and gains and has to perform gradation, what is the most important in our life.

Each of us must carry it to their Mount Moriah and put on the altar. You need to recognise "Isaac of your heart". We need to struggle with each other and our values, plans and projects. We need to confront them with the highest value – God and His sacred will.

This experience and trial of faith is painful and difficult, causes sometimes resignation and change in life attitudes. However, it is creative, as it finally shows, what is the most important for us. Polish proverb says: What is the faith that is the sacrifice.

The figure of Abraham is a model of unconstrained trust in God so as to obtain unconstrained gift of blessing.

ŚLUCHAĆ BOGA I BYĆ POSŁUSZNYM BOGU NA PRZYKŁADZIE ABRAHAMA

Streszczenie

Postać Abrahama i jego postawa zawierzenia Bogu jest jednym z ważniejszych tematów podejmowanych w Roku wiary 2012/2013. Sylwetka duchowa patriarchy, została ukazana w oparciu o teksty biblijne Rdz 11,26-25,11 na tle historyczno-kulturowym Starożytnego Bliskiego Wschodu i rozpoczyna się od wyjścia, najpierw pod wodzą ojca Teracha z Ur, a potem już samodzielnie z Charanu do Kanaanu. W relacji duchowej to etap przejścia od wiary tradycji do wiary osobistej.

Schemat artykułu został oparty na pierwszych wersach opowieści o Abrahamie Rdz 12,1-4, które wyznaczają całą strukturę i układ sagi Abrahama i jego rodu. Jest to Słowo Bożych obietnic i odpowiedź Abrahama w następującym układzie. Obietnica ziemi, obietnica potomstwa, obietnica błogosławieństwa, wiara Abrahama jako dopowiedź na te obietnice. Zmiana imienia Abrahama ukazana jest jako wyraz jego wiary i nowej funkcji społeczno religijnej. Wiara ta jest poddawana próbie czasu, tradycji i opinii publicznej, jest doświadczana w gotowości ofiary syna obietnicy Izaaka.

Posumowanie zostało ujęte w formie wniosków duszpasterskich.

Słowa kluczowe: Abraham, obietnica ziemi, obietnica potomstwa, Izaak, próba wiary

Key words: Abraham, the Promise Land, the promise of offspring, Isaac, test of faith