

# Theologie im Zeichen des Nihilismus

## Theology in the Era of Nihilism

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### Abstract

This essay is devoted to fulfilling a central task of theology that is examining the challenges nihilism poses for 1) theology, 2) the perception of time, and 3) the question of the human being within society. Referring to G.W.F. Hegel and Hans-Dieter Bahr, the essay shows that human existence is characterized by a certain „deprivation“, that is to say, all attempts to locate oneself and to find a perfect identity in this world are doomed to fail. The individual's mortality signifies the fundamental impossibility of any secure fundament and self-identity. Often, mythological attempts try to fill this lack through images. In the age of nihilism it seems to be the case that an empty and totalitarian nothingness is the dominant image that aims to fill and conceal this fracture within the Self and its world. This becomes especially visible in the modern approach to the dead, as their absence is filled by the image of absolute emptiness. Other ways in which this crushing nihilism shows itself can be found in the mechanistic conception of the world and in the static and chronological concept of time. In these conceptions, time loses itself in the infinity of nothingness and renders history meaningless. Another way in which this lack is often dealt with on a political level is through totalitarian claims to power. The author argues that the task of theology consists in the attempt to show that the passing of JHWH in the Bible signifies the lack of absolute identifiability. However, precisely this lack and deprivation makes the opening of a spiritual dimension possible. Theology's task would thus consist in introducing the name of God into the societal discourse so that it could serve as a critique of any human claim of totalitarian power. It could also detach the fundamental deprivation, fracture and openness within Being from nihilistic attempts to conceal it.

### Keywords:

Nihilism, Theology, JHWH, Hegel, Nietzsche, Death, Guest, Leibniz, Islam, Modernity