



**From the Ban on Image to God's Name:  
On the Development of Two Jewish Elements  
in Adorno's Philosophy of Music**

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**Abstract:** The Jewish elements is a vital origin of the thoughts of the whole Frankfurt School, including Adorno. This essay intends to discuss the relationship between Adorno and the Jewish thoughts in terms of “the ban on image” and “God’s name”. “The ban on image”, which is always mentioned by Adorno, prohibits believers treating God as a visible finite image. The concept of negativity in Adorno’s philosophy receives a further religious justification through the ban on image.

This prohibition exhibits the distrustfulness of visible image, then the disclosure of truth content is dialectically delivered to sound. The most mysterious and philosophical example of sound is “God’s name”—it is called with “not being called”—in Judaism. Music, as an art of sound, then, speaks with the figuration of not being spoken” of “God’s name”. Adorno expects that the “speaking out” of music can liberate true humanity, which echoes his philosophical motivation of “saving the hopeless”.

**Key Words:** Tetragramm, Saving the Hopeless, Music’s Similarity to Language, The Ban on Image, The Language of Art