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THE THEOLOGY OF THE BOOK OF JOB AND
ITS USE BY SOME MODERN THINKERS

A Thesis presented for the Degree of Master of Arts
in the University of Durham.

July 1978

E. K. Baiden, S.T.B.,
St. John's College,
Durham.

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Abstract of my Thesis

The thesis is written in contrast to the conventional idea that the righteous is always rewarded and the wicked is always punished. It begins with an introduction about the development of the religious life of the Israelites in relation to the justice of God. God's justice appeared to be challenged when it was realized that the wicked triumphed in undeserved prosperity. The Psalmists lamented over the undeserved prosperity of the wicked. Isaiah 53, the vicarious sufferer and the book of Wisdom Chapter 5 are introduced to throw more light on the whole problem of suffering. The authorship of the book of Job, and the theology of sin and suffering follow. The prologue is introduced to provide a discussion about the prosperity of the righteous. Satan enters into a wager with Yahweh whether Job earns his prosperity by means of his righteousness. Job is stripped of his prosperity and of his honour to see what consequence this might bring. Job at first accepts the challenge calmly without argument, but his three friends who come to console him, turn against him and accuse him of committing sin that is why he is suffering. Job replies that he has not sinned. He even brings charges against God as a Judge. Job establishes his firm faith in God; since God is a righteous Judge, He will in the end pronounce the right judgement. At the last God vindicates Job of his innocence and justifies him by his faith. The wisdom poem shows that wisdom belongs to God. The Elihu speeches show among other truths that suffering is educative, for it humbles pride and draws man nearer God. The Yahweh speeches show that there are mighty things in creation compared with, which man is infinitesimal in God's providential care, and that though there are mysteries in the world, including suffering,

it is enough for man in his suffering to have God. The epilogue describes the restoration of the prosperity of Job and shows that God rewards man by grace and not by righteousness. Barth discusses Job as a faithful witness and emphasizes that God was not under obligation to Job and Job acted as a free agent; he did not know the argument between God and Satan. Jung describes the book of Job as a myth or an image and presents God as capricious in breaking his covenant for not protecting Job. Fortes introduces West African Religion with emphasis on fortune as not of one's making, but as one's destiny and this is equated with the doctrine of grace. The conclusion deals with suffering as a test of faith and as vicarious, with reference to life after death in Wisdom Chapter 5. It indicates how Jesus gives a better understanding of suffering on earth and in life hereafter.

CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|------|
| Aim | 1 |
| Synopsis | 3 |
| Chapter 1 - Introduction | 4 |
| Chapter 2 - The Authorship of the Book of Job | 18 |
| I Authorship | 18 |
| II The Scene | 29 |
| III Perfect and Upright | 45 |
| IV The Wisdom Poem | 62 |
| V The Elihu Speeches | 64 |
| VI Yahweh's Speeches | 68 |
| Chapter 3 - The Use of the Book of Job by Some Modern Thinkers | 74 |
| I Karl Barth | 74 |
| II Carl Gustav Jung | 88 |
| III Meyer Fortes | 97 |
| Chapter 4 - The Concluding Remarks | 110 |
| Bibliography | 120 |

THE THEOLOGY OF THE BOOK OF JOB AND ITS

USE BY SOME MODERN THINKERS

AIM

Suffering is sometimes regarded as a school of life; it is educative. The truth and meaning of suffering have been apprehended through experience. The book of Job is no less than the experience of one who has passed through suffering, and the writer of the book of Job describes the pain of suffering as the arrow of the Almighty piercing through the core of his being.

There are certain problems which are limited to certain individuals and environments whose causes are determined by the narrow limits of local environmental conditions, but suffering cuts across territorial boundaries. Suffering is a universal problem, it is found everywhere, in every continent, in every country and in every region and village. There is not one plausible universal solution to this dreadful and threatening problem.

In looking into this problem of suffering and the theology of this problem, my aim is to enter into the meaning and spirit of suffering as something real in the human situation. Suffering is true to real life and is echoed in the cry of humanity. My study and research is to help me to understand the causes of and the teaching about suffering in the book of Job which I hope will throw abundant light on this universal problem.

Particularly, I shall look to Karl Barth to give me more insight and understanding through his emphasis on the innocent sufferer who bears witness in his suffering to his belief in God.

Furthermore, I shall consider the teaching of Carl Jung in order

to understand the relevance of his attitude to patients who come to him with neuroses and emotional troubles for treatment and counselling.

I shall also hope to gain some insights from Meyer Fortes' approach to ancestor worship and his emphasis on fortune as something not of one's own making but as one's destiny and how this compares with the Deuteronomic theory of the prosperity of the righteous and the doom of the wicked.

I am hoping that by the end of my research I should be able to present a more developed understanding of the book of Job and the problem of suffering, of relevance to the thought of the modern world. Also I would hope to be able to show more clearly the nature of the reality to which the word 'suffering' refers and thereby to reflect the force of suffering as a challenge to the benevolence of God.

SYNOPSIS

1. The book of Job is about the undeserved suffering of the innocent, and the story of Job is presented with a Jewish background. I have therefore chosen to begin my thesis with an introduction which deals with the development of the social and religious experience of the Israelites and which shows that this experience is reflected in the book of Job. This forms the first chapter of the thesis.
2. Chapter two deals with the authorship of the book of Job, and the theology of sin and suffering implicit in the book. This theology is exemplified in the dialogue concerning the theory of the Divine Rule of Moral Retribution which was provoked by the three friends of Job. I shall discuss this Moral Rule in the light of the contrast between sin and the verses in the book of Job which are relevant to the perfect and righteous rule and the justice of God. Also, I shall discuss the question of the relevance of the wisdom poetry in Chapter 28, the Elihu speeches in Chapters 32-37 and Yahweh's speeches in 38-40: 1-2; 40: 6-41.
3. Chapter three deals with the use of the book of Job by modern thinkers. I shall examine the work of Karl Barth, Carl Jung, and Meyer Fortes and build upon their views of the book of Job.
4. The fourth and last Chapter contains my concluding remarks.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Some scholars are of the opinion that Job has some affinity with the Patriarchs because in the book Job is described as a founding father who is the head of a very large family. He had seven sons and three daughters, his substance was seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she-asses. Abraham was also the founding father of the Hebrew nation, who was counted as righteous by God because of his obedience and his firm faith in God. Job is therefore aligned with the Patriarchs because of his unflinching faith in God.

The book of Job is dealing with a religious problem: the goodness and love of God and undeserved suffering. Where can we find a religion, pure and undefiled, which is practised just for the sake of its intrinsic value and not for the sake of any material prosperity? A religion in which the God who is worshipped can never be seen physically, is always hidden in mystery, but yet very real, loving, true, kind and good? This God is neither the likeness of the sun, nor the moon, nor a star, nor any image, nor a mixture of some cultural and some religious beliefs; His wisdom is past finding out. Where can we find such an undiluted and unsullied religion; is it in the North, or South, or West, or East? Such a religion started in the East, amongst a people called the Israelites, through God's own Self disclosure, in order that they might carry it to the whole world, to the whole of mankind. I intend therefore to start my introduction to the Theology of the book of Job with a brief account of the history and the religion of the Israelites.

Briefly, the book of Job deals with four main theological strata, namely:-

- (1) The justification of God. People were eagerly looking for the justice of God. They felt that God should act promptly and immediately and decisively to show how just and mighty and great He is.
- (2) The search for an individual religion. People became interested in personal religion, for there was the conviction that the individual could have personal communion with God; he could be responsible for his own religion.
- (3) Reward and punishment. People believed that the righteous man is rewarded but the wicked suffer retribution.
- (4) The quest for wisdom. People became interested in the search for wisdom. It did not always follow that the righteous prosper and the wicked suffer. There were times that the wicked prospered whilst the righteous suffered.

Right from the beginning of their history, from the time they left Egypt, the Israelites were given a warning by the law-givers that if they wished to enjoy continued fellowship with their God, who had called them and graciously led them into the Holy Land, then they should be meticulously careful to keep His word lest the worse should happen to them.

"And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul. That I will give the rain of your land in its season, the former rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will give grass in thy fields for thy cattle and

thou shalt eat and be full. Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods and worship them. And the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, and there be no rain and that the land yield not her fruit, and ye perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord giveth you." (Deut. 11: 13-17)

Again, there is a similar warning in Exodus. "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God and will do that which is righteous in his eyes and will give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon thee which I have put upon the Egyptians. For I am the Lord that healeth thee." (Exodus 15: 26) In short, the kind of religious and social life which was required of Israel so that they could be an example to the world was a life of right relationship between them and God and between man and his fellow man.

The strong hand of God, which had protected the Israelites, was felt to be weak when they were defeated on entering Canaan to take possession of the land in the battle with the people of Ai. The apparent reason was that Achan had sinned against God. He had taken some of the devoted things declared prohibited and unholy for anybody to possess, therefore his sin had affected the whole nation. This had caused the Israelites to be defeated (Judges 7: 1f).

Another blatant example of sin which brought disastrous consequences to the nation was the reign of King Manasseh (2 Kings 21: 1-16). His son, King Josiah who was reputed as righteous was totally defeated in war (2 Kings 23: 26) and this defeat was attributed to the sin of his father Manasseh. Thus, time and again the Israelites found the hand of the Mighty God which had protected them less well-disposed

towards them because of sin. This was realized in their wars, for each defeat was interpreted by the prophets as the result of the sins of the nation. [Everyone], much more the King, had to repent, and put themselves right with God and their fellow men, and return to their God. This pattern continued until sin was seen as the cause of the subsequent victories of the Assyrians in 722 B.C. and the Babylonians in 586 B.C. when the Israelites went into exile.

If the Israelites became welded together as a nation then it was because of their religion. Their religion has bound them to God and to one another and united them as a nation. If one suffered all of them suffered, and if one achieved something good and beneficial all of them shared in the benefit. This is what is known in the whole of the Semitic World as group or family solidarity. Robert Gordis has written that:

"The doctrine of retribution could be held with total conviction because in the early periods of Hebrew history group consciousness was all powerful and the individual was conceived of as little more than a cell in the larger organism. From the stand-point of religion, a man's personal destiny has no existence apart from the family, the clan, and later the nation to which he belonged." (1)

The argument that ensued was that if God was Just, as the prophets were emphasizing, then He would not punish the younger generation by imputing the sin of their fathers to the sons. The popular cry was "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Jeremiah 31: 29) (Ezekiel 18: 29). The prophet Jeremiah pronounced the answer: "In those days they shall say no more,

(1) Robert Gordis - The Book of God and Man - The University of

the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity." (Jeremiah 31: 29-30). Jeremiah stressed individual responsibility. The time had come says Jeremiah that every act of sin will be determined, not only by group solidarity but on individual merit. The individual will be responsible for his own action whether good or bad.

2. If, on the one hand, a man sins and he is punished then, on the other hand, if a man is pious it follows that he is rewarded. The preaching of Ezekiel 18: 20 "the soul that sinneth, it shall die", brought new awareness of individual consciousness to their religion. There was an awareness of personal religion. A man must be pious in order to avoid sin but in avoiding sin he had the impression that his good deeds would earn him the favour of God to become prosperous. This Deuteronomic theory influenced the Israelites and so many of them entertained a very high and illuminating concept about religion. "The good triumph; the evil meet their doom" (Isaiah 3: 10-11). This period of personal and individual piety brought a turning point in the social-economic and religious life of the community of Israel. The people, many of them, practised religious piety. The argument was this, if the individual was responsible for his suffering then the individual was also responsible for his prosperity and if sin brought suffering then piety would bring prosperity. Those who were upright and righteous and feared God and eschewed evil thought that if they had become prosperous then it was by virtue of their religion and their righteousness. One instance is the case of Job whom God proudly defended for his righteous life and his fear of Him. Satan replied without any hesitation, that this behaviour was because he, God, had rewarded Job by virtue of his fearing Him and avoiding evil. If he

was given the chance of depriving Job of his material substance and was allowed to torture him by physical pain as well, Job would not continue to fear God but would curse God. Therefore, the stage was set and the scene began. The trial of Job and the contest between God and Satan continued as was seen in the prologue and the dialogue.

3. But the righteous did not prosper as the theory purports. Job, the righteous, lost all that he possessed and his very skin was threatened. On the contrary the wicked prospered and the righteous suffered. This realization is characterized by the individual laments and it is the cry of Psalms 49, 39, 33, 26, 73. It is also the cry of Jeremiah 11: 18 - 12: 3; 12: 5-6, and even the cry of Job. These people cried to God and complained against the impious and the wicked who were prosperous and troubled them. The simple reason for this complaint was the apparent undeserved good fortune of the wicked.

Various interpretations have been given to the wicked as regarding who they were. Some scholars identify the wicked with magicians, exorcists and witches, who had brought illness to the worshipper. This idea is suggested by Mowinckel and supported by Nicholson. Others, like Birkeland, suggest that the wicked can be aligned with the foreign nations and enemies of Israel. Eissfeldt does not seem to agree with either suggestion. He explains that "It is more likely that these evil doers are none other than the impious who not only trouble the pious by actual hostile behaviour but cause them anxiety by reason of what the latter regard as their entirely undeserved good fortune."⁽²⁾ He affirmed that Jeremiah and Job are among the individual

(2) Otto Eissfeldt - The Old Testament: An Introduction - Oxford, 1965. Pages 116-117

lament, and central to individual songs of lamentation is the complaint of bodily suffering and assaults by enemies. In Psalm 17: 5-6, 13-14, 15, the righteous man declares his innocence and protests to God that his enemies should be cursed. In Psalm 39 there are a varied series of observations, for example, the brevity of human life (5-6).

R. Gordis says that "God's justice thus continued to be challenged on the basis of two adverse historical trends - the triumph of arrogant pagan conquerors and the exile and degradation of Israel. How should one explain the misery and the homelessness of Israel? It could be identified with Israel's sin, for its worst, Israel was better than the heathen Babylonians... A message of hope and courage was needed, not only for Israel's sake, but for God's cause, for it was this people, weak and imperfect, that remained "God's witness" in a pagan world."⁽³⁾ This truth was completely hidden from the psalmist who in his lament continues to complain "I was envious at the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked" (Ps. 73: 3). Habakkuk for example could not understand how God could use an evil pagan conqueror like Babylon as an instrument to accomplish His purpose. James D. Smart says "We know of Jeremiah's intercession... for his people from his hearing God's command to intercede no longer for Israel. Habakkuk lays the complaint of his people before God and mounts his watchtower to await God's reply. But it is second Isaiah's voice that we hear most plainly in passionate intercession (chs. 51: 9-11; 62; 63: 15-19; 64), identifying himself with his people in their sin (ch. 64: 5-6) and pleading with God to have mercy."⁽⁴⁾ Up to this point I have been discussing suffering in the social and religious experience of the Israelites in connection with the book of Job but though the book of Job says nothing about the vicarious suffering servant in the

(3) Robert Gordis - The Book of God and Man - The University of Chicago Press, 1965-69. Page 144

(4) James D. Smart - History and Theology in Second Isaiah - Epworth Press. 1967. Page 214

Second Book of Isaiah and suffering in the life hereafter yet I intend to discuss them because they are important for without their discussion the answer to the problem of suffering is incomplete.

Vicarious Suffering

Now I intend to deal with Isaiah 52: 13-53: 12 because it has a bearing on vicarious suffering which is relevant to this paper. According to Chapter 52: 13, the servant will act prudently in connection with his mission. The shrewdness and the insight with which he will perform his work will eventually lead him to succeed in his mission. The gift of spirit and wisdom would help him to perform creditably as if God were working Himself. "He was marred more than any man" (Isaiah 52: 14). The servant was completely disfigured by reason of his suffering. His suffering had inconceivably changed him to the extent that people hardly recognize him. "So shall he sprinkle many nations..." (Isaiah 52: 13). He shall cause the nations to spring. His sudden victory will take people by surprise and cause a great stir that people will be startled. The sudden outcome of the victory of his work has taken even kings aback and reduced them to silence.

"He hath no form nor comeliness and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." (53: 2). He was regarded as an insignificant figure of no importance. He had been regarded as a mean person, unprepossessing in appearance, and therefore taunted by his contemporaries. Their attitude towards him was negative.

"He was despised and rejected of men... as one from whom men hide their face" (53: 3). In addition to looking him down with contempt he was afflicted with a heinous disease which has marred and disfigured him to the extent that he had become an eyesore to his contemporaries. As a result they hide their faces from him, trying to avoid him and thus he became estranged from them.

"Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (53: 4). The servant as a vicarious sufferer had to endure suffering by reason

of the bearing of sin; the penal consequences of the people's sin. The servant is stricken and smitten of God - $\bar{n}\bar{a}g\bar{n}\bar{a}$, an expression meaning that God has visited him with severe and sudden sickness, for example Job 1: 11 and 19: 21 where Job has become an object of Divine wrath. Leprosy was usually regarded as a sign of Divine wrath.

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities" (53: 5). The servant suffered because of the penalty due to the people because of their sins but it turns out to be the remedy by which the people were restored to spiritual health. "For he was wounded", some translators choose to use the word 'pierce', a metaphor to show that he was crushed, his situation was fatal (cf. Job 6: 9). He was chastised for our peace. This is pain inflicted for moral ends with remedial intent. The expression here is that the people could not heal themselves, it was the servant's voluntary submission to the Divine punishment that brought atonement between Yahweh and the people.

Who is this servant? It is very necessary to identify the 'servant'. Some scholars say he was Israel; yet other scholars say he was a future messianic figure that the author was anticipating in the near future who would come to fulfil this prophecy?

Israel had been called by God, to be Her servant to spread true religion as God wants it to be, throughout the length and breadth of this world. "Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel and come forth out of the waters of Judah" (Isaiah 48: 16). Again there is no doubt that because of her call she had faced a series of suffering, for example, the calamities of the exiles. This was a trial for her faith. Israel's exile was a bitter and unparalleled experience, but Israel did not cease to carry out her mission to the Gentiles. There in Babylon she confronted idolatry. The prophet

describes the idolatrous state like this: "He falleth down unto it and worshippeth, and prayeth unto it, and said; Deliver me; for thou art my god. They know not neither do they consider: shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?" (Isaiah 44: 17, 18a, 20b). Then follows the beautiful description of Isaiah (Chapter 52: 1). "Awake, awake..." Here the author describes the reviving spirit and the mission of Israel which takes a higher flight. She is to wake herself from stupor and put on her garment befitting her to continue her mission, but, unfortunately, she eventually carried out her mission to an end in a very exclusive way, as the book of Jonah shows. The author of the book of Jonah urged his country-men to accept their call and mission to the heathen lands but the appeal fell on deaf ears and found no echo in their hearts and eventually Israel remained a racial religion.

It is Jesus who has fulfilled this prophecy. How does Jesus fulfil the mission of God as a vicarious sufferer and servant of Yahweh? From the beginning of his ministry when he left the River Jordan to the wilderness, Jesus' faith in God, his Father, was put on trial. This is seen in the temptation stories (Matthew 4: 1-11; c.f. Mark 1: 12; c.f. Luke 4: 1-13). In his call to discipleship Jesus shows that it is a costly one (Matt. 8: 20; c.f. Lk. 9: 58). On the road to Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked his disciples a question and he answered to explain to them the nature of vicarious suffering. This marks a turning point in his ministry (Matt. 16: 13-28). Jesus explains his ministry as one of service and ransom for many (Mk. 10: 45). Jesus fulfils the prophecy in Isaiah 53: 10 (the pouring out of blood), in Matt. 26: 28. "For this is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many, unto remission of sin." Again He fulfils the saying in Isaiah 53: 9 in Luke 22: 37 "For I say unto you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in me. And he was reckoned with the

transgressors: for that which concerneth me hath fulfilled." In his earthly ministry, Jesus fulfilled this prophecy of vicarious suffering, which is another explanation for innocent suffering.

Suffering in the life hereafter

What is the teaching of suffering in the life hereafter? We do not have any adequate knowledge about it in Jewish history until the third century before Christ. E. F. Sutcliffe said "In the second century it was the prevalent view as shown in the history of the Maccabees and it is taken for granted in the later Book of Wisdom". We know in New Testament times in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles that the Pharisees believed in life hereafter but the Sadducees rejected it. (Matt. 22: 23; Acts 23: 8).

In the book of the Maccabees we are told of the courage of some of the Jews with which they faced suffering and death. These Jews suffered and died on behalf of their religion hoping that they would be vindicated by God in the life hereafter. There were some seven brothers. The second brother expressed his faith as he faced suffering and death "You accursed wretch, you dismiss us from this present life; but the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life because we have died for his laws" (2 Macc. 7: 9). When he was facing suffering and death, the third brother quickly put forth his tongue and courageously stretched out his hands and said. "I got these from heaven, and because of his laws I disdain these and from him I hope get them back again" (2 Macc. 7: 10f). The sixth brother, when he was facing suffering and death also said "Do not

E. F. Sutcliffe - Providence and Suffering in the Old and New Testaments

Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd. 1953. Page 120

deceive yourself in vain for we suffer these things on our own account, because of our sins against our own God; Therefore astounding things have happened. But do not think you will go unpunished for having tried to fight against God." (2 Macc. 7: 18f). The youngest of them when he was facing suffering and death also said "For we are suffering because of our own sins". "For our brothers after enduring a brief suffering have drunk of overflowing life under God's covenant; but you, by the judgement of God, will receive just punishment for your arrogance." (2 Macc. 7: 32. 36). Lastly, their mother also expressed her faith in the face of suffering and death in these words. "Therefore the Creator of the world who shaped the beginning of man and devised the origin of all, will in his mercy give life and breath back to you again since you now forget yourselves for the sake of his laws". Again to the youngest son she said "Do not fear this butcher, but prove worthy of your brothers. Accept death, so that in God's mercy I may get you back again with your brothers." (2 Macc. 7: 23, 29). This is the faith of the Maccabees, the Jews who stood for the laws and religion of their country. These people entertained the glorious hope that suffering would give. If they died on behalf of the laws and religion of their country, God would vindicate them of their suffering.

Such an expression of faith in life after death occurs in the book of Wisdom. "The just live for ever, And their reward is with the Lord And the care of them with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive the crown of glory And the beautiful diadem from the hand of the Lord." (Wisdom 5: 16f). As this wisdom literature is expressing the principle that the portion of the righteous will be victorious, the corollary also expresses that the portion of the wicked will be eternal doom. This is described in Revelation as true death, those who give themselves to evil works (Rev. 20: 6). It is also described

as the second death (Rev. 20: 14; Rev. 21: 8).

The wisdom literature does not conceive of death as the cessation of existence or loss of consciousness. In the life hereafter we shall be provided with consciousness and recognition and the wicked shall behold his folly and his wickedness. "Then shall the just man stand with great constancy Against those that afflicted him And made his labours of no avail, At the sight they shall be troubled with terrible fear And shall be amazed at his unexpected salvation. They shall say within themselves regretfully, Groaning in the anguish of spirit: That it is who we once held in derision And as a byword of reproach. We fools esteemed his life madness And his end without honour! Behold how he is reckoned among the Holy ones. So we erred from the way of truth. And the life of justice did not shine upon us, And for us the sun did not rise. We satiated ourselves in the ways of lawlessness and destruction, And through trackless wilderness was our path, But the way of the Lord we knew not." (Wisdom 5: 1-7).

The wisdom movement originated with the Egyptians. It was in Egypt that the Kings, and the high official, the scribal professions who were in the administrative position sought wisdom in order to become skilled counsellors, to provide advice about good manners, about moral behaviour, and even towards the solving of great problems. In course of time, wisdom spread out to the Near East. E. C. Kraeling says that wisdom existed in Palestine and that its close association might be seen from certain allusions in the book of Jeremiah. "In Judah too there existed a class of "Wise Men" who appear as a definite group alongside priests and prophets (Jer. 18: 18). From Jeremiah 8: 9, it is apparent that these wise men were at the same time scribes. Centuries later, Ben Sirah calls himself a wise man and a scribe."

Ecclesiastes could not understand why the righteous should suffer and the wicked should prosper. To him such a situation was a paradox and a mystery. In the midst of it he declares, "There is nothing better for a man than he should eat and drink and make his soul enjoy good in his labour" (Eccle. 2: 24). He continues "For all this I laid in my heart, even to explore all this; that the righteous, and the wise and their works, are in the hand of God: whether it be love or hatred, man knoweth it not; all is before them. All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good so is the sinner, and he that sweareth, as he that sweareth on oath." (Ecclesiastes 9: 1-2).

Ecclesiastes later realized that the situation of the righteous and the evil may seem to him to be alike, as Job also complained (Job 9: 22), yet God knows the limit of the wicked and there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heavens (Eccle. 3: 1f). God decides the time. The wicked will not triumph for ever, his days were numbered and God will determine his end. As for the Psalmist it was when he went into the Temple that he saw the eventual doom of the wicked. "Until I went into the sanctuary of God and considered their latter end..." (Ps. 73: 17-18) c.f. (Ps. 37: 16) c.f. (Prov. 24: 16).

CHAPTER TWO

I - THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK OF JOB

The 'Book of Job' opens with these words, "There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job" (Job 1: 1). The name 'Uz' appears in Genesis 10: 23 and is the name of a Son of Aram. Again, in Genesis 22: 21 'Uz' is mentioned as the brother of 'Buz' who in Jeremiah 25: 23 is associated with the distinctly Arabian names of 'Dedan' and 'Tema'. In Genesis 36: 28 and I Chronicles 1: 42 Uz is listed among the genealogy of Seir in the land of Edom. Josephus (Ant. 1. VI. 4) "states that *Oloys* the son of Aram (i.e. the Uz of Gen. 10: 23) founded Damascus and Trachonitis, i.e. the volcanic country beginning 25 m. S. of Damascus and 40 m. E. of the Sea of Galilee." (5) However, in Lamentations 4: 21 the land of Uz stands in parallel with Edom.

From this survey of references, S. R. Driver and G. B. Gray suggest that Uz in the book of Job may refer to scattered tribes, probably the Arabs who lived in the land stretching from Edom to Mesopotamia and that the name Uz may not necessarily refer specifically to one location. However, they affirm that the reference in Lamentations 4: 21 throws some light on the identification of Uz and connects it with Edom.

Peake's commentary also demonstrates that the Uz who is mentioned

(5) S. R. Driver & G. B. Gray - The International Critical Commentary - Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1921. Pages XXVII to XXVIII.

(6) M. Black & H. H. Rowley - Peake's Commentary on the Bible - Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., 1962, Page 392.

in Genesis 10: 23 as a son of Aram is also mentioned in I Chronicles 1: 17 as the son of Shem and in Genesis 22: 21 as the uncle of Aram. The writer emphasizes that the indentity of Uz was ethnic rather than that of an individual and that the ethnic race 'Uz' was the original or quasi-Aramaean people who lived east of the Southern Lebanon in Biblical times. (6)

Taking the references that I have given and the above analysis into consideration, my own point of view is that Uz is identified with Edom and that the people could speak Aramaic; that the folk-tale of the story of Job was originally narrated in Edom but underwent some changes and modifications with additions and thereby reached its present form; and that the prologue did not escape this process. For example "E. C. Kraeling rejects as secondary Job 1: 1-2: 10 but retains 2: 11-13". (7) This means that there are passages which have been added to the original story, as narrated in Edom, to give it a new meaning. Indeed, J. Lindblom goes to the extent of saying that in the original story as was known in Edom, "neither Job's wife nor Satan figured" (8) and that therefore these characters are a later insertion. Whatever statements and arguments are made about the story, the fact remains that it has undergone various changes in assuming its present shape as the book of Job.

Job is the principal character of the book of Job. The name is mentioned in Genesis 10: 29 as 'Jobab', giving its Hebrew readers a

(7) H. H. Rowley - From Moses to Qumran - London, Lutterworth Press.

1963. Page 161

(8) Ibid. Page 161

meaning of "The object of enmity." (9) Again the name Job is also connected with an Arabic root word meaning "Penitence". (10) In Ezekiel 14: 14 Job is mentioned as a righteous man alongside Noah and Daniel. In the passage Ezekiel 14: 12-20 God determines to destroy the world by famine and with wild beasts, war or even with pestilence, but these three men were saved because of their righteousness, a life of right relationship led amongst their contemporaries. Some scholars and Biblical students argue about the status of this passage. The Noah referred to in Genesis 6: 9f and Daniel the wise man in the book of Daniel are both the subjects of legendary stories. If the passage Ezekiel 14: 12-20 is taken only to allude to legends, there is still the possibility that there was once a righteous man who lived and whose name was Job.

With this background information to the book of Job as it now stands, let us now proceed to consider the authorship of the book. Some scholars claim that the author of the book of Job could be an Arab, for in Arab legend there was once a righteous king, Harischandra, who was tempted by a supernatural being, Rashi, who made a wager with another Rashi that no man's righteousness was proof against temptation. King Harischandra therefore had to face a series of bitter trials and disaster but in the end he came out triumphantly. As a result the wicked Rashi lost the wager and the King's fortunes were restored. But this Islamic righteousness cannot be compared with the religious and spiritual message of the innocent suffering of Job who struggled

(9) S. R. Driver & G. B. Gray - The International Critical Commentary -
Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1921. XXIX

(10) Ibid.

to know and to understand God better in the fellowship of his suffering. Other scholars claim that the author could be an Egyptian. They cite as evidence the Egyptian text called the "Complaints of the Eloquent Peasant" (11) which consists of a prologue and epilogue in prose, and nine speeches in poetry, and a "Dialogue about Human Misery." (12) But again, the argument breaks down because such texts cannot be compared to the religious and spiritual teaching and message of the book of Job. There are yet other scholars who claim that the author could be a Babylonian. They cite for instance the "Pessimistic Dialogue of a Master and a Slave." (13) Robert Gordis ventures to say that some scholars have dubbed these poems as "Egyptian Job" and "Babylonian Job." (14) In other words these books are described as only imitating the character of the book of Job, but they do not measure up to the message of the book of Job in any way. S. R. Driver and G. B. Gray go further to say that in the Babylonian Job there was a king who was as upright and as perfect as Job, who also suffered undeserved affliction. But the Babylonian Job accepted it coolly and calmly as a stoic, without any complaint, thinking perhaps he had committed something wrong which was only known to his god, whilst in the core of his heart he knew well that he had done nothing wrong. The Job in the Old Testament was not like that; he stood firmly on the

(11) N. H. Snaith - The Book of Job - S. C. M. Press Ltd., 1968.

Page 19

(12) R. Gordis - The Book of Man and God - The University of Chicago

Press, 1965-1968. Page 7

(13) Ibid. Page 7

(14) Ibid. Page 7

conviction that he had not committed any sin against anybody, and therefore complained bitterly, even to the extent of protesting against God, until eventually he was proved right and was restored to prosperity.

The scholars who claim that the book of Job has an Edomite authorship adduce the following reasons: (i) The internal evidence in the book of Job that the story occurred in the land of Uz (Job 1: 1). (ii) The passage in the book of Lamentations, on which I have already commented (Lam. 4: 21). (iii) In particular, Robert H. Pfeiffer maintains that the book of Job is the work of an Edomite because it has an element of 'Edomite Wisdom'. This is in line with his highly personal recasting of the Documentary Hypothesis of the Pentateuch. According to Pfeiffer, "The documents J. E. D. H. and P. which are traditionally in the Higher Criticism were augmented by an Edomite source, which he called S., for Seir, the mountain of Edom".⁽¹⁵⁾ He goes on: "The folk tale, which furnished the plot, the geographical, social and natural background, the philosophy, and the language of the book are characteristically Edomite... the simplest hypothesis is that the author of the book of Job was an Edomite."⁽¹⁶⁾

However R. Gordis rejects the possibility of Edomite authorship, pointing out that the Arab world with its polytheistic thoughtworld and with its primitive cultural and religious background could not produce such a highly spiritual and intellectual book as Job. He said that every literary document that is brought to light by archaeological

(15) Ibid. Page 211

(16) R. H. Pfeiffer - The Introduction to the Old Testament - Adam & Charles Black. 1952-1953. Page 682

discovery adds new words to our Hebrew dictionary. It is therefore no wonder that the author possessed an unrivalled command of Hebrew. He thinks that the author might have travelled extensively and that he had a poetic gift of description combined with a keen sense of observation so that he could describe mountains and valleys and the beautiful scenery of deserts and streams, and animals and trees, as well as constellations. He concludes, "We know virtually nothing regarding Edomite culture or religion, and what little is known of Edomite history would scarcely suggest that the spiritual level was calculated to produce a masterpiece like Job. Pfeiffer's theory of an Edomite provenance for Job may therefore be dismissed as wholly unwarranted."⁽¹⁷⁾

Scholars like Dhorme and Gordis who favour Israelite authorship say that the author was very familiar with the cultural and social life of his own people. He possessed a high sense of the religious structure of his society and has the high moral standard of his own people, the Israelites. They refer to many Old Testament passages which are paralleled in the book of Job. For example, Psalm 8: 5, 6 is parallel to Job 7: 17-18. Jeremiah 20: 14-18 is parallel to Job 3: 1f, which is a moving lamentation on birth. Job 24: 14-16 is parallel to Exodus 20: 13-15, Deuteronomy 5: 17-19, and Leviticus 19: 11 and reflects the religious and the moral life of the Israelites and the covenant made between God and them, pointing out that God abhors such actions as murder, stealing and adultery. Job 22: 6 and 24: 3, 9 are parallel to Exodus 22: 26 and Deuteronomy 24: 12-13. These verses refer to the retention of garments taken as pledges from widows and

(17) R. Gordis - The Book of God and Man - The University of Chicago

orphans which should be returned before nightfall. The violation of this injunction aroused the condemnation of Amos (2: 8) and Ezekiel (18: 12). Scholars who maintain the Israelite authorship of the book contend that the verses in Job 12: 17-25 refer to the Israelites exiled by the Assyrians and Babylonians in 722 B.C. and 586 B.C. respectively. The speech of Eliphaz mocking Job's claim to wisdom in Job 15: 7-8 is reminiscent of Proverbs 8: 21-32 which is a hymn in praise of wisdom. Job 14: 7-9, which refers to the stump of a tree, seems to have been derived from the same idea as the root of Jesse described in Isaiah 11: 1.

Robert Gordis argues that the Divine Names 'Yahweh' in Job 12: 9 and 'Adonai' in Job 28: 28 are exclusive to the Israelites and therefore point to Israelite authorship. Besides, in the prologue there are many occurrences of the Divine Name Yahweh and in the epilogue there are further occurrences of the Divine Name. In the Yahweh speeches, the Divine Name of Yahweh appears in 38: 1, in 40: 1, and in 40: 6. In Job's answer to God the Divine Name Yahweh appears in 40: 3 and again in 42: 1. Now, there is the argument that before the covenant event, God was known as El Shaddai, God Almighty, but after the covenant on Mount Sinai the exclusive Divine Name Yahweh came to be the privileged possession of the Israelites by which they were distinguished from all other nations (Exodus 6: 1-3). R. Gordis and other scholars who favour the Israelite authorship of the book of Job conclude that with such references the author has demonstrated his familiarity with the Israelite background and he could be no less than an Israelite.

Those scholars who adhere to the possibility of Edomite authorship, like R. H. Pfeiffer, dismiss some of the points raised for

Israelite authorship as follows: (i) The Divine Name Yahweh in Job 12: 9 is a textual corruption and Adonai in Job 28: 28 is a gloss.

(ii) The sins of murder, stealing and adultery mentioned in Job 24: 14-16 were generally recognised as sins and not peculiarly by the Israelites. (iii) The passage in Job 12: 17-25, which can be construed to refer to the exiles, Pfeiffer says could refer to any

exiles, not necessarily the Israelites, because in 745-727 B.C. the Assyrian King, Tiglath Pileser, deported other nations into exile.

(iv) Job 22: 6 which refers to the Israelite prohibition of the retention in pledge of a warm garment beyond nightfall (c.f. Deut. 24: 12-13) would have shocked the sensibility of an ancient non-Israelite as well. It would be an humanitarian act to return the garment.

My own point of view is that the author is an Israelite for the following reasons.

1. The enormous number of times the writer alludes to practices and beliefs mirrored elsewhere in the Old Testament means that he was immersed in the fabric of the religious, social and moral life of the society into which he was born and in which he had been instructed. This man could not be less than a Hebrew. The author is therefore an Israelite.

2. The use of Divine Name Yahweh in Job 12: 9 is dismissed as a corruption and Adonai in Job 28: 28 as a gloss, but the Divine Name Yahweh is used 23 times in the prologue and 4 times in the epilogue. In addition, the Divine Name Yahweh is used three times in the Yahweh speeches and twice in Job's answer to Yahweh. The passages which use the Divine Name Yahweh cannot all be dismissed as corrupt or as glosses or otherwise. The Divine Name Yahweh was exclusive to the Israelites according to the Pentateuchal tradition (c.f. Exodus 6: 1-3), as I

have explained previously. Whenever and wherever this name is used, it refers to the God of the Israelites as a nation. Moreover, the Divine Name Yahweh which was used in the prologue, in the Yahweh speeches, in Job's answer and in the Epilogue refers to Yahweh Himself because it was exclusive to the Israelites. One could also observe that in the whole book, the Divine Name, Yahweh, was never put in the mouths of the three friends of Job or Elihu who were regarded as non-Israelites. In Job 1: 21 the author put the Divine Name Yahweh in the mouth of Job because to say that "Yahweh gave and Yahweh has taken away; blessed be Yahweh", is to give a message of blessing and it is as if Yahweh is pronouncing blessing (Ps. 113: 2). The use of Divine Name Yahweh proves the author is an Israelite.

3. It is generally agreed that the folktale of the story of Job was originally narrated in Edom but has undergone some changes and some additional narrative has been added so that the book now stands in its present form. For example, E. C. Kraeling "rejects Job 1: 1-2: 10 but accepts as original 2: 11-13."⁽¹⁸⁾ This means that a later writer added 1: 1-2: 10. J. Lindblom maintains that in the original folktale which was known in Edom, "neither Job's wife nor Satan figured but that a later Israelite editor brought these in and substituted a new ending for the original one."⁽¹⁹⁾ Gordis claims that the Israelite author might have travelled extensively in the Near East to Egypt and Edom. It is possible that he read the original story, or heard it narrated in Edom, and that he adopted it as a frame-work for the

(18) H. H. Rowley - From Moses to Qumran - London, Lutterworth Press, 1963. Page 161

(19) Ibid. Page 161

poetry as it now stands in the book.

It is a well known fact that it was thought that one of the causes, if not the main cause, of suffering was sin. The suffering of the righteous and the innocent therefore caused people to start rethinking. Moreover, it came to be realized that the wicked also triumphed in undeserved prosperity. The suffering of the righteous became a subject of discussion. It was debated whether he earns his prosperity by means of his religion and his righteousness or whether he earns it by grace. This argument is presented in the prologue as a wager between God and Satan. It is said that by entering into this wager with Satan, God put Himself into a risky gamble but Job vindicated the trust placed in him by God, and so God defeated Satan. The writer is therefore trying to show that it is not sin that always causes suffering, but that the innocent or the righteous can suffer as a test of his faith in God, and that suffering does protect us against the temptation of pride, that we elevate ourselves, and so suffering humbles us and brings us nearer God. The whole book of Job evidences this truth. The prologue shows that suffering can be a test of faith. The ensuing dialogue presupposes the traditional and conventional belief that sin is the cause of suffering. The Elihu speeches, among other truths, show that suffering is educative, for it humbles our pride and brings us nearer God. The Yahweh speeches show that there are mighty things in creation compared with which man is infinitesimal in God's providential care, and that although there are mysteries in the world, including suffering, it is enough for man in his suffering to have God. The epilogue, by describing the restoration of the prosperity of Job after God has justified him, shows that God rewards us by grace and not by the measure of our righteousness. The different

parts of the book were composed by the same author, the Israelite, to show the different truths about suffering. Therefore, if one detaches one part of the story and attributes it to a different author, the unity of the story and the unity of the message disintegrates along with the genius of the monologue author, the Israelite.

II - THE SCENE

In the prologue to the book of Job there are five scenes in which the various incidents which took place, are recounted. Before I start describing the scenes in which Job experienced the various sufferings I will discuss the nature and effects of suffering, and the agents which bring suffering.

a. Nature of Suffering

Suffering is bound up with the pain which is borne by the sufferer. Suffering is a situation in which pain identifies itself. Sometimes, suffering is felt by way of bodily pain, or mental torture or spiritual torture. Suffering can attack a person physically by bodily affliction as in Job 2: 7: "So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his feet unto his crown." Suffering can affect a man mentally by torturing him. This kind of suffering may lead to all sorts of psychological complications like neurosis, hysteria, psychosis and paranoia. Furthermore, suffering can affect the soul of a man by disturbing the spiritual equilibrium of the victim. "I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. I will say unto God do not condemn me." (Job 7: 11). This kind of suffering makes the victim restless and gives him an uneasiness that ranges from mild discomfort or dull distress to acute unbearable pain.

b. Agents of Suffering

In the book of Job, we are made to understand that suffering may be caused through sin. Again, it may come through other people. Suffering can be imposed on an individual through the direct harmful

action of another human being. For example, two individuals who engage themselves in destructive fighting may wound each other and bring suffering upon themselves. Sometimes suffering comes through war and sometimes through the bites of harmful animals and insects. Thirdly, suffering can come through natural disaster. This kind of suffering cannot be attributed to any other beings, and it is largely beyond the control of individuals. It comes to man through earthquakes, floods, famines and epidemics.

c. The Scenes

1. In the first scene which happened on the earth, Job is described as a man of the east, the greatest among all of them, perfect and righteous and prosperous and one who feared God. He was a chieftain who had a family.

R. Gordis raises an objection that Job was not a "Patriarch, a man advanced in age". This he said is a false impression given by some scholars. His reasons are: (i) Job had sons and daughters who were not married before his suffering. (ii) After Job's restoration in the Epilogue he was a man still vigorous enough to beget children and build a large family. (iii) In some of Job's argument, in the poetry, he claimed that in the days of his prosperity, the aged stood up in his presence. (iv) Eliphaz argued in the poetry that he and other friends were older than Job's father. (v) The passion and the energy with which Job stood the test of undeserved suffering could not be less than that of somebody who had the energy of a youth. My own point of view is that the qualification of chieftaincy is not one of age only. There are other things to be taken into consideration. In addition to strength, wisdom and experience are to be taken into

consideration. Job must have had considerable experience and wisdom to enable him to manage a large family, if not a tribe, and to acquire faith enough to withstand his suffering. He was not less than a man who had advanced fairly in age.

2. In the second scene, which happened in heaven, God was holding court. He had assembled His sons, one of whom was Satan, who was returning from a circuitous tour from the ends of the world in which he had been opposing and perverting all that is good, as his name indicates. He was opposing even God Himself. God proudly and apologetically praised the righteous and pious Job and his fear of Him, which could be compared to no-one else of his time. Satan retorted that Job's unblemished and immaculate life, coupled with his fear of God was motivated by God's impenetrable protection and the abundant wealth He had given him, which was the source of the happiness of his religious life. He asked to be permitted to strip him of all his earthly possessions and inflict his body with pain and to see if the result would not alter Job's attitude and behaviour towards God.

3. The third scene is on earth again, where Satan having been given permission from God, stripped Job of all his earthly possessions. In this particular scene one discovers most of the causes of suffering. The first of his sufferings was caused through a human agency, namely through man - Job 1: 15. "And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away, yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword."⁽²⁰⁾ H. H. Rowley explains in Gen. 10: 7; 25: 3; Ezekiel 38: 13;

(20) R. Gordis - The Book of Job and Man - The University of Chicago

"Sheba is associated with Dedan and hence many scholars find the reference here to be either to a different Sheba from that in South Arabia or to the trading stations of the Southern Arabian state in North Arabia."⁽²¹⁾ Thus, the Sabeans were human beings and the first cause of Job's suffering was through human agency.

The second cause of his suffering was natural disaster. "The fire of God is fallen from heaven and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants and consumed them, and I only am escaped to tell thee." (Job 1: 16). The fire is described by S. R. Driver and G. B. Gray as "Lightning, but lightning of extraordinary destructiveness".⁽²²⁾

The third contribution to Job's suffering came through human agency. "The Chaldeans made three bands and fell upon the camels and had taken them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee" (Job 1: 17). E. Dhorme explains, "The Chaldeans here represent the nomadic Kaldu met within the history of the Babylonians and Assyrians. They dwell around the Persian Gulf and along the borders of Arabian countries. They form part of the ethnic group of the Aramaeans".⁽²³⁾

The fourth provocation of Job's suffering happened through natural

(21) H. H. Rowley - The Century Bible - Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd.,
1970. Page 33

(22) S. R. Driver & G. B. Gray - International Critical Commentary -
Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921. Page 17

(23) E. Dhorme - Commentary on the Book of Job - Thomas Nelson & Sons
Ltd., 1967. Page 11

disaster: "And behold there came a great wind from the wilderness and smote the four corners of the house and it fell upon the young men and they are dead; and I only am escaped to tell thee." (Job 1: 19).

H. H. Rowley explained that, "Since it struck the four corners of the house it must have been a whirlwind".(24)

H. W. Robinson described the way in which the suffering of Job came to him in these words: "The first and third, the loss of the oxen and the camels come through human agency, the second and the fourth, the loss of sheep and children are due to what we call natural causes only".(25) This substantiates the point that I made earlier in this paper that suffering comes to man through other beings and through natural causes.

4. In the fourth scene, which is placed in heaven, Satan was not satisfied with the harm done; that was not enough to make a man lose his religion. He wanted permission to strike Job with a heinous disease.

5. In the fifth and last scene, Job was struck with a disease which has been described by many scholars as being either leprosy or elephantiasis. This was a direct attack by Satan on the body of Job. H. H. Rowley explains that because of the description of the nature of the disease in other verses of the book of Job, it is hardly right to give any precise and exact name to the disease. The symptoms mentioned in the book are: "Inflamed eruptions (2: 7); intolerable

(24) H. H. Rowley - The Century Bible - Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd.,
London, 1970. Page 35

(25) T. W. Robinson - The Cross in the Old Testament - S.C.M. Press
Ltd., London. 1960. Page 21

itching (2: 6); terrifying dreams (7: 14); running tears blinding the eyes (16: 16); fetid breath (19: 17); emaciated body (19: 20); erosion of bones (30: 17); blackening and peeling of skin (30: 30)."⁽²⁶⁾ From the description given, the nature of the skin disease might be leprosy or elephantiasis or even boils. This illustrates that suffering can affect the physical body and disfigure a person. Thus the problem of suffering in the book of Job reflects all the causes of suffering both moral and non-moral through which suffering comes to man in general. We must now discuss a further aspect of the Drama of the book of Job - Job's underlying attitude to God.

d. Doth Job fear God for Nought?

At this stage of their national development, the Israelites believed in the Deuteronomic theory of reward and punishment, namely that the righteous prosper and the wicked suffer. Many people began to be concerned about religion. A new emphasis on individual religion gave rise to widespread questioning. The argument that arose was that if a person suffered and he was responsible for it because he had sinned according to Ezekiel's prophecy, ("the soul that sinneth, it shall die", Ezek. 18: 20), then its corollary is that if a person prospered he was also responsible for it because he had been righteous, and an axiom formed as follows: sin brings suffering, therefore righteousness also brings prosperity. The measuring rod by which people assessed prosperity was piety - individual religion, individual righteousness. If Job was prosperous then the only reason for his prosperity

(26) H. H. Rowley - The Century Bible - Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd.,

was that he feared God. Eliphaz emphasized this fact, "Is not ~~your~~ fear of God thy confidence" (Job 4: 6), "Doth Job fear God for nought?" (Job 1: 9). What is meant by the fear of God? Fear is defined as a disturbance of the mind caused by an imagination of an impending danger which produces an unpleasant emotion. There are ramifications of fear as follows:-

1. Slavish fear - A person who is a slave is constantly under the command and threats of his master. His role is to work to satisfy the master. If he does not work to satisfy the master, the slave is punished, and therefore he is constantly under fear of punishment to satisfy the master. This kind of fear is slavish fear. R. C. Mortimer says, "There is the fear inspired solely by threat of punishment. We desire our own happiness and we are deterred from sin because the wages of sin is death. But if we would be sure of avoiding God's punishment we should cheerfully and gladly continue in sin. This fear is called timor servilis. It is characteristic of the slave who obeys his master from fear, not from love."⁽²⁷⁾

2. There is another fear or awe which is caused by the wonder of external phenomena. This fear is a response to the vastness of nature or the deep silence of nature. People who travel by sea or through thick forest often encounter the variety of the immensity of nature, the sight of which prompts them to bow before the ineffable. This is called man's natural instinctive fear. Very often the African heathen is described as naturally having religion within him but instead of worshipping God, he ignorantly bows to stones and rivers and trees,

(27) R. C. Mortimer - The Elements of Moral Theology - Adam & Charles

Black, London. 1947. Pages 131, 132

for the sake of the wonder of the vastness and the immensity of these natural phenomena. The moon and stars have also evoked a popular fear of the supernatural.

3. Last but not least, there is the fear of love. A responsible father loves his children. He is responsible for caring and providing for the needs of his children. The children also love their father and are afraid to hurt the passionate feeling of their father lest they become unworthy and bad children. This is the fear that men should have for God, and this fear is the beginning of wisdom. God in like manner has loved mankind and men should fear him and love him. R. C. Mortimer comments on this kind of fear, "This fear is the beginning of wisdom... for if we love and as we love, we must always fear offending Him." This fear is the "beginning of wisdom" in another and deeper sense. It is the first fruits of wisdom: wisdom's first lesson is that man should revere God and subject himself to Him."⁽²⁸⁾

Was it this fear of God through love, which is the beginning of wisdom, that Job had for God or did he merely fear God in expectation of reward in terms of prosperity? This was the challenge made to God by Satan in the prologue: "Dost Job fear God for nought?" (Job 1: 9). The author of the prologue answered clearly that Job feared God because he hated to do evil so that he might not hurt the passionate feeling of God. This kind of fear finds its fullest expression in Job 28: 28 "Behold the fear of the Lord that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding". Job's fear of God did not merely loyally reciprocate the prosperity given to him by God. Job's fear was an act of free and spontaneous worship, which he did not do out of any motive to earn prosperity.

(28) Ibid. Page 132

e. The Identity of Satan and Nature of Sin and Evil

Having examined the nature of Job's fear, the identity of Satan and the nature of sin and evil must be established.

1. Satan is mentioned in Genesis 3 as a serpent which entered the Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve were living. In the dialogue that ensued, the serpent asked them why they had not eaten the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They replied that God had ordered them not to eat that particular fruit. Satan explained to them that God knew that if they ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil their eyes would open and they would see things in the same way as their Maker. Being persuaded, the woman took the fruit and ate, and she also gave some to the man who ate of the fruit and after that their eyes opened, they saw they were naked, and they hid themselves in the garden. God their Creator, who put them there, came to visit them as often as he wished. He called them but they answered from their hiding place that they were afraid of Him because they had disobeyed Him and were guilty. God asked them, how it all came about? The man answered, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me she gave me of the tree and I did eat" (Gen. 3: 12). The woman in turn put the blame on the serpent, "The serpent beguiled me and I did eat" (Gen. 3:13). Thereupon God cursed man and the woman and the serpent and thereupon the suffering of humanity began. Thus, in this story from the book of Genesis, Satan is known as the Adversary who deceives man and leads him to oppose the commands of God.*

In the book of Job, Satan is presented as an executive officer among the sons of God. He goes out, as it were, on a roving inspection and comes

* Ludwig Koehler says "The story knows nothing of a Satan, as it belongs to a period long before the Exile and Satan appeared only after the exile." The name Satan began to take meaning as the name of the adversary of man when Zechariah, the High Priest had a vision and found himself standing before the angel of the Lord and at the right side of the angel stood the Satan accusing and the angel of the Lord defending. (Zech. 3: 1-2) Old Testament Theology, p.177.

back to report and to receive fresh instructions. It was on his return from such duties that God asked him whether he had taken notice of his servant Job who was perfect and upright, one that feared Him and eschewed evil. Satan replies immediately that this was no surprise because God had given Job abundant prosperity and strong protection. Satan suggested that if God would allow him to strip Job of his wealth and afflict his body with disease, then it was certain that Job would reject God and curse Him. Satan was given permission for this to happen and thereafter he carried out his design. He brought unbearable suffering to Job and made his life wretched.

But how did Satan come into existence? Who created Satan? In Isaiah 14: 12 Satan is presented as a Day Star, Son of the Morning, who has fallen from heaven and been cut down to the ground. The rationale of the story, which may not be wholly biblical, is that Satan was first created as an angel among the angelic messengers in heaven. He was known to be beautiful and had all the graces as bright as the radiance of the morning star. He was given the first place among the angels, but as time went on, he was tempted to assume a position equal in status to God. Thereupon, God cast him down upon the earth among the nations and he lost his beauty and changed into the form and character of Satan, formed his kingdom of evil and persuaded the nations to join him in opposing God. It was pride that brought him low. Thus God, in his goodness, created Satan as an angel because in the beginning everything God created was good (Genesis 1: 31) but out of pride this angel became Satan, the adversary.

The fact that there is light and darkness, right and wrong, good and evil, has led some people to think of the world in terms of dualism. For example, Zoroastranism has a mythical story of the god Ahuramazda who is a symbol of light and goodness and the god Ahriman the god of evil and darkness. There is the belief that there is

continuous cosmic battle waging between good and evil and light and darkness because of the constant fighting between these two opposing gods. This idea of cosmic conflict is of course to be found in the old Canaanite myths, as for example in the Ugaritic text 67: 1-3.

"When thou smitest Lotan (=Leviathan) the evil dragon, even destroyest the crooked dragon, the mighty one of the seven heads..." This symbolism finds expression in the Old Testament in the book of Isaiah, Psalms and Job. Evil is symbolised as the dragon Leviathan. Psalm 74: 13-14 shows God's victory over the many headed monster: "Thou breakest the heads of Leviathan in pieces." Isaiah 27: 1 says: "In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the swift serpent and leviathan the crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." In Job 3: 8 it is stated: "Let them curse it that curse that day, who are ready to rouse up Leviathan." He, Leviathan, is associated with the evil that flourishes in darkness as opposed to light. In Job 41: 1 Yahweh says: "Canst thou draw out Leviathan with a fish hook? or press down his tongue with a cord?" Here God taunts Job with a rhetorical question which implies that God had put a hook through Leviathan's nose or lip and tied his tongue rendering him harmless. In Psalm 104: 26 it is stated, "There go the ships, there is Leviathan, whom thou has formed to take his pastime therein." Here God is the creator of Leviathan who is fed as a sea monster along with other living creatures. In his article on Leviathan in Biblical Motifs, Cyrus H. Gordon describes Leviathan as a "symbol of evil".⁽²⁹⁾ What then is the identity of the serpent in

(29) Alexander Altman - Biblical Motifs - Harvard University Press,
1966, Vol. 3, Pages 1, 4

Genesis, Chapter 3? In the Apocryphal book of the Wisdom of Solomon 2: 23-24 Satan is identified with the serpent: "For God created man for incorruption... but through the devil's envy death entered the world and those who belong to this party experienced it." In the above-mentioned reference to Leviathan from the book of Isaiah, the crooked and swift serpent is the symbol of evil. He is already being defeated by God but the final victory will come at the close of the age (Isaiah 27: 1).

2. Sin - It is a well known biblical view that sin is the root of all evils. John Hick puts it in this way "Sin, which is basic to all other forms of evil, is essentially irrational and indeed contra-rational."⁽³⁰⁾

An analogy to sin is that attitude of a child who rebels against the good advice and commandments of his father. Now, the Children of Israel rebelled against the covenant made by God at Sinai with Israel. God took the initiative, showed his love in calling them, and He kept his promise to be their father, but they rebelled against Him. "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." (Isaiah 1: 2).

A. B. Davidson says that "The term שׁוּב perhaps was the one that went to the root of the conception that sin was defection from God". He continues, "All sins are against God, for God is present in all the laws that regulate society; when we offend against men, it is against Him in truth that we are impinging."⁽³¹⁾

(30) J. Hick - Evil and the God of Love - Macmillan: London, Melbourne, Toronto 1966. Page 8

(31) A. B. Davidson - The Theology of the Old Testament - Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1904. Pages 227-228; 233.

(a) Sin can be described as an alienation from God. It is like an action taken by a child against the compassionate love of a father. It is like hurting the heart of a father because the heart is the seat of compassionate feeling. By doing that, the child incurs the displeasure of the father and thus alienates himself from the father. Because of his negative attitude, when the child hears the voice of the father he runs to a hiding place. Sin, therefore, estranges men from God. When men sin it is like a child hurting the compassionate love of God and they estrange themselves from God. A. B. Davidson says of sin: "It is the relation of two minds, mind and mind, love on Jehovah's part and alienation of affection on the part of the community."⁽³²⁾ "When Israel was a child, then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt." "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws and I laid meat before them." "And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they call them to him that is on high, none at all will exalt him. (Hosea 11: 1, 4, 7). "These ideas", continues Davidson, "which Hosea struck, run more or less through all the prophets."⁽³³⁾

I will give an example in West African mythology of how sin alienates us from God. There is a story which describes an old woman who was pounding fufu with a pestle. The firmament was then very close to man. During the process of pounding the fufu, the pestle incidently touched the firmament which was personified to be God. The old woman asked God to go up a little, and the firmament pushed up a little. The old woman continued pounding, and the pestle touched God who was

(32) Ibid - page 228.

(33) Ibid - page 228.

asked to go up still further. This process went on and on and the firmament went higher and higher so that we cannot touch it or get close to it any more. The story can be interpreted allegorically to mean that the firmament is God and the pestle represents our sin. Our sins have pushed away God. In other words we have been alienated from God by our sins.

(b) Furthermore sin has the connotation of impurity. Sin is impure. It stains and pollutes a person's mind, soul and body. The Psalmist cried "Against thee only have I sinned and done that which is evil in thy sight." "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." (Ps. 51: 4, 7). Bad behaviour, bad conduct and action are abominable to God, and much more so are impure thoughts and a bad conscience. Hence sin can be both subjective and objective. God is so Holy that He cannot countenance anything unholy and impure. Isaiah expresses it as the Holy One of Israel who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy "I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." (Isaiah 57: 15). Certain things are holy, set apart for ceremonial and holy use and should not be touched by a non-Levite who is not a Priest, unless through some recognised process of purification a person is purified. Thus Uzzah touched the Ark of the Lord when it was falling because the horse stumbled, and he was struck dead. (II Sam. 6: 6-7). Certain acts defile a person, David committed adultery with Bath-Sheba, the wife of Uriah, and he asked God to purge him with His Spirit else he remained stained, impure and abominable in the sight of God.

(c) In the Jewish community a woman was regarded as ceremonially unclean after childbirth and was required by Jewish law to wait forty days after which she has to present herself in the Temple for

purification (Lev. 12). A. B. Davidson summarises the nature of sin as follows:-

"In the sphere of truth, sin is falsehood

In the sphere of religion, sin is idolatry

because God's Holy Name is being profaned.

In the sphere of civil life, sin is injustice

In the sphere of the mind, sin is insincerity." (34)

3. Evil - 'Evil' is the English translation of two Hebrew words Ra^c and Ra^cah, the former has reference to wickedness, the latter to anything that opposes that which is good. On the one hand, evil has a teleological meaning. It designates lack of fitness. If a thing ceases to be good or fit and loses its vitality for that for which it was originally intended, then it turns and becomes evil. In other words evil is that which devalues an object in its intrinsic value.

On the other hand, evil connotes opposition to a goal. It is that which is dangerous, inimical, perilous, harmful, that which characterises the negative significance. In the Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible it is spoken of as chastisement and punishment sent from God, (cf. Deut. 31: 17; I Kings 14: 10; II Kings 21: 12; Jer. 26: 19). Again, something is evil when it is corrupt and worthless (Proverbs 25: 19) (Jer. 24: 2). Furthermore, evil has an immoral connotation. It indicates the wrong that men do to one another (Gen. 19: 7; Deut. 26: 6). Evil doers are wicked (Job 8: 20; Ps. 26: 5; Proverbs 17: 4; Jer. 20: 13). (35)

(34) Ibid - page 231.

(35) The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible - New York, Abingdon

Press Nashville. 1962 - page 183.

John Hick identifies evil in this way: "In English 'evil' is usually although not always used in a comprehensive sense and we then distinguish under it the moral evils of wickedness and such non-moral evils as disease and national disaster... In German 'Ubel' is a general term covering both moral or non-moral, though it can also be used specifically for the latter; while Böse refers more definitely to moral evil. In French le mal can be used to refer to all types of evil." (36)

In the above paragraphs, in which I have reviewed much biblical and extra-biblical material, I have tried to identify Satan and the nature of sin and evil, to relate them to one another, and to point out their significance in the discussion of the problem of suffering.

(36) J. Hick - Evil and the God of Love - Macmillan: London, Melbourne, Toronto. 1966. Page 18.

III - PERFECT AND UPRIGHT

Job is presented as one who led a perfect and upright life and as one who feared God. Having examined above the forces that were deployed against Job, it is now necessary to study the character of Job. After exploring the meaning of the word 'perfect' as applied to the life of Job, I shall use an investigation of the way in which Job was upright to analyse the dialogue between Job and his three 'comforters' and as a basis for understanding Job's assurance of his eventual vindication by God.

1. The word perfect is defined in the Theological Word Book of the Bible as "moral betterment", "the last stage of progress".⁽³⁷⁾ Its root meaning comes from the Hebrew word Tāmim meaning complete, whole, entire, free from fault and defect. 'Perfect' came to be associated with the sacrificial system in describing the wholeness of the unblemished sacrificial victim in post exilic cultic worship.

The Greek word for perfect means 'full grown', 'maturity' and the Latin word for perfect refers to an object 'thoroughly made or done'. In the book of Job perfect has the moral meaning of the Hebrew Tām, that is, blameless, honest, virtuous, pious. E. Dhorme says that, "Its exact meaning is that a thing or person is intrinsically perfect, whilst the root שׁוּ 'to be upright', just, rather suggests perfection in relation to others".⁽³⁸⁾ This would mean that a perfect life is parallel to the 'good' life and is rewarding, for it is believed to give perfect satisfaction to the person who practises it,

(37) Alan Richardson - The Theological Word Book of the Bible - S.C.M.

Press Ltd. Pages 202-204

(38) Ibid - Pages 202-204

and to the one to whom perfect love has been shown.

In the prologue, Job is presented as a perfect man, but after he had been struck with unbearable suffering by Satan he began examining himself. In Chapter 3, the perfect man Job started complaining, cursing the day on which he was born. He wished he had not come into this world. Then he recollected himself and realized that his erstwhile prosperity and even the life which he possessed were God's gracious gift. Then he realized that because they were given to him unconditionally, they could be taken away from him unconditionally at any time. He concluded: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord" (Job 1: 21). After further discourses he raised the question of perfection in Job 9: 21: "Though I be perfect, it shall prove me perverse. I am perfect; I regard not myself; I despise my life." He examined himself in regard to the standard of perfection in the eyes of God and he was reduced to silence and confusion. E. Dhome says of this verse that: "Job is incapable of perceiving whether there is good or bad in himself."⁽³⁹⁾ In fact, what the text is saying is that Job could not justify his perfection before God. Any argument he raises before God, who is perfection, falls to the ground.

2. 'Upright' means the same as 'righteous'. The life of one who is righteous is characterised by straightforwardness in association and dealings with other people and in the sight of God. The word righteous is a translation of the Hebrew word 'Tsedeq'. The Theological

(39) E. Dhome - A Commentary on the Book of Job - Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., London. 1967. Page 2

(40) Ibid - Page 139

Word Book of the Bible defines the word Tsedeq as "Conforming to the norm". "To the Hebrew it is the character of God Himself".⁽⁴¹⁾ God is just and righteous. The idea is ethical but is linked to the idea of salvation. Gerhard Von Rad argues that "righteousness is not the height of virtue, it is a notion concerned with relationship",⁽⁴²⁾ and the standard of this communal relationship is measured by the standards of the covenant made between God and Israel (cf. Deut. 26). Job claims he has this communal relationship with members of his society (Job 26: 11-17; cf. Job 31). The eighth century prophets like Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah stressed the importance of this right relationship and insisted that there should be fair dealing between man and his fellow man. They pointed out the gross injustices, bribery, and corruption which were practised in the law courts. Amos admonished them: "But let judgement roll down as waters and righteousness as a mighty stream." (Amos 5: 24).

Again, righteousness in the Old Testament has a tendency to denote attitudes which involve compassion for the poor over against the rich and the weak over against the strong. The word implies that a judge should show compassionate feeling in his administration of justice towards the innocent and needy: (Ps. 112: 9; Ps. 33: 5; Dan. 4: 27; Isaiah 11: 4). Again, righteousness implies that a wicked sinner who has repented and confessed his sins should have mercy shown to him (Ezekiel 18: 21). From the above description of righteousness, one

(41) Alan Richardson - The Theological Word Book of the Bible - S.C.M. Press Ltd. Page 202

(42) G. Von Rad - The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays - Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh and London. 1966. Pages 248-249

sees that while perfection aims at completeness or wholeness, righteousness is a direct personal relationship between people. A man should show right dealings in his association with man and with God. Right relationships for all people should be the norm.

T. H. Robinson explains that righteous first carried a legal meaning, then, by degrees, it finally assumed a moral meaning.

"Originally it belonged to the technical vocabulary of the law court. The word "righteous" was employed to designate the successful litigant, the man who won his case. So too, the common Hebrew word for "wicked" indicated the party which failed. Hence, to "justify" is in the first place to give a legal decision in favour of a person. By a not unnatural transition, the word came to imply also one who ought to win his suit and we not infrequently have phrases like, "justify the righteous" (e.g. Deut. 25: 1), "justify the wicked for reward" (Is. 5: 23). As the ethical sense developed, the term became even wider, and indicated moral and religious excellence without respect to any legal procedure."(43)

Righteousness as a legal term recurs throughout the poetry. In some passages, Job is represented as if he were litigating with his friends at a law-court. Thus Job speaks as follows:

- a. "Will it be well for you, were he to scrutinise you, seeing that as one trifles with a man you trifle with Him?" (Job 13: 9). The word scrutinise in this verse means to examine data with a critical eye. Job is exposing his three friends as incompetent judges and refers them to the formidable,

(43) T. H. Robinson - The Poetry of the Old Testament - Duckworth,

London. 1947. Pages 91, 92

searching and penetrating eye of a careful examiner who is the Righteous and Sovereign Judge, namely God.

- b. "He will certainly chastise you if you secretly show partiality." (Job 13: 10). The word chastise has a legal meaning 'to incriminate', that is 'to criticize in a debate' and therefore assumes a connotation of 'to make a charge against', 'to reproach one who shows discrimination in his judgement'. Job is saying that God the Righteous Judge will chastise his friends who are not showing a correct discernment in their judgement.
- c. "Will not His majesty terrify you and the fear he inspires fall upon you." (Job 13: 11). Here, Job is saying that when God, the Righteous One, comes to occupy His throne of judgement that moment will strike terror into the hearts of his friends and great fear will fall upon them.
- d. "Are not your memorable sayings tricky words of ashes. Your defences are become defences of clay." (Job 13: 12). The argument of the friends of Job, are referred to as maxims or proverbs. The friends are reciting words with which they want to console Job, but Job is saying they are ashes, symbols of fragility and as transient as the dust. As defendants in court, their arguments are as weak as fortresses with defences of clay. They are not strong enough to win a case. (44)

(44) E. Dhome - A Commentary on the Book of Job - Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd. 1967. Pages 184-186

In chapter ten God is represented as the righteous Judge who administers justice arbitrarily (10: 15-17) Job felt alienated from God. H. H. Rowley says that Job has said even if he is righteous he dare not raise his head, for if he did dare to raise his head, God would immediately attack him. But this protest is an answer to the accusation levelled at Job by his friends that Job has sinned and therefore the righteous Judge will not let him go free. H. W. Robinson puts it in this way, "His friends argued on this logical basis, 'All evil doers are sufferers, Job is a sufferer, therefore Job is an evil doer', (45) Bildad further argued that since God was a just Judge, he extended right judgement to all his people and if Job had not sinned it might be that his children had sinned, therefore his suffering was just. But Job repudiated the friends as quack doctors and inventors of lies. Job is sometimes represented as the plaintiff engaged in a suit at a law-court and God playing the parts of both the Judge and the defendant. Job would complain in despair that in such a situation, how could he, the plaintiff, win his case unless he could get an independent tribunal, independent of God. This emphasizes the importance of the tension between righteousness and justice.

Eliphaz, who claimed to be a mystic, said that the cause of Job's suffering had been revealed to him (Job 4: 12). He argued that in his vision he was shown that the angels were not pure before God, how then could mortal man be pure before God? Bildad reiterated that God, being just and righteous, does not make mistakes in giving exact measure in proportion to the quality of one's moral nature. Job should

(45) H. W. Robinson - The Cross in the Old Testament - S.C.M. Press
Ltd., London. 1937. Pages 35-36

accept that he had done something wrong as a result of which he was suffering. Zophar, who was like the common man in the street, had no special contribution to give except that he appealed to Job for repentance in a very harsh manner because Job by his continual protestations was making things worse. He could not find God by his searching (Job 11: 7).

The three friends came when they heard of the suffering of Job to give him comfort, but rather it seemed as if they had come to add insult to injury. Job saw them from the standpoint of a desert traveller who turned to a wady, a kind of valley, to find water to quench his thirst but, like a mirage in the desert, they had proved to be deceivers. He thought they had come as physicians to administer some cure but they had proved themselves to be quack doctors. They purported to have come as good councillors, but they were liars. A. S. Peake says, "It is not their accusations that provoke the anger of Job so much as their vacant platitudes, their superficial maxims, their sorry attempts to solve new problems by absolute methods, their blind, pedantic orthodoxy. Surely were they not bemused with a theology out of touch with life, they would catch the ring of sincerity in his voice, and brush aside the unworthy thought of secret sin adequate to so terrible a punishment. Their arguments fill him with scorn and irritation but their unkindness wounds him to the quick. He had counted on their sympathy, but had been disappointed in the same way as caravans which perish from thirst since the streams they had counted on are dry. At times, he even appeals to their pity: 'Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye friends. For the hand of God hath touched me'."⁽⁴⁶⁾ But more often he dismisses them with scorn and renews his

(46) A. S. Peake - The Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament -
Robert Bryant, Methodist Pub. House, London. 1904. Page 89

contention with God.

Now, it may be deduced from the argument between Job and his three friends that it was possible for a person not to sin and justice not to be done, because, in spite of the courtroom-style legal arguments in the drama, the friends were unable to specify the particular sin Job had committed. "If I have sinned what do I unto thee, O thou watcher of man?" (Job 7: 20). Their accusations were in general terms. They could not show any particular offence.

H. H. Rowley says that, "Job does not claim that he is sinless, but does maintain he had not sinned so egregiously as to have brought his troubles on himself..."⁽⁴⁷⁾ All through the poetry Job keeps on pressing the point that if he had sinned it should be pin-pointed or identified, therefore he repeatedly asked to be given the chance to appear before God and lay his complaint before the just Judge who could bring out the truth and who could administer proper justice. It seems as if Job is torn between the idea of a cruel God and the idea of a good and just God. Now he soliloquises:

"Oh, that I knew where I might find him. That I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me. Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power? Maybe he would give heed unto me. There the upright might reason with him. So should I be delivered forever from my Judge." (Job 23: 3-7). But long before this speech Job had already expressed this confidence and assurance, that one day he would be

(47) H. H. Rowley - The Century Bible - Thomas Nelson & Sons. 1970.

justified. "But I know that my redeemer liveth and that he shall stand up at the last upon the earth. (Job 19: 25).

At this juncture, it is helpful to review in summary Job's complaint to the point where he affirms his faith that his Redeemer liveth.

In chapter six Job complains of his loneliness. He was looking to his friends for comfort but they had disappointed him (Job 6: 18-21). In chapter seven he turned his attention to God and complained that God was responsible for all his pain and sorrow. ("When I say my bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; then thou scarest me with dreams and terrifiest me through visions" (Job 7: 13-14).) Thus Job had a sense of alienation. In chapter nine Job admits his own helplessness against the mighty power of God, but he protested at the absence of justice if God's mighty power was used in this way against a mere man. ("If we speak of the strength of the mighty lo he is there! And if of judgement who will appoint me a time? Though I be perfect it shall prove me perverse. I am perfect; I regard not myself; I despise my life (Job 9: 20-21).) In chapter ten he questioned the intelligence of God and His purpose in creating him and concluded by saying if he was destroyed then the original purpose of God was defeated. ("Thine hands have framed and fashioned me. Together round about yet Thou dost destroy me" (Job 10: 8).) In chapter fourteen we see hope and fear mixed up. Job waited, lurking in darkness, in a shadowy existence like a child till the father's fit of temper passed away, until God should remember him and call him from Sheol. ("That thou wouldst keep me secret until Thy wrath be past and remember me. If a man dies, shall he live again. All the days of my warfare would I wait, till my release should come" (Job 14: 13-14).)

In the face of seeming doubts and despair and in spite of protestations, Job has a glimpse of hope that his relief would come; therefore he would wait till the end. The actual meaning as to what these verses mean is ambiguous but this is where I think that Job's hope of justice begins. I think that Job is here beginning to be aware of a release. Job first expressed the expectation of a Saviour in 14: 14, but it unfolds itself better and finds its fullest expression in the words he uttered in 19: 25-27. "But I know that my Redeemer liveth and that he shall stand up at the last upon the earth And after my skin hath been thus destroyed, yet from my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself." (Job 19: 25-27). It is to be noted in this verse that Job expresses utter confidence in himself and would not abandon his integrity even in the face of death: "My righteousness I hold fast and will not let it go." (Job 27: 6). The word 'Redeemer' has its meaning derived from 'Goel' an avenger. T. H. Robinson says, "That a Goel is the legal representative of a person 'who' for some reason or other is unable to exercise the ordinary right of citizenship."⁽⁴⁸⁾ Thus, a woman needs a redeemer because she is the weaker sex and therefore needs somebody to stand for her to redeem her in times of injustice. Again the word relates to the situation of the widow, the fatherless and the poor. They are defenceless, so they need a redeemer. A slave or someone who has been dispossessed of property needs a goel, an avenger, to redeem him and recover his possessions from his opponent. Lastly, somebody who has been killed unlawfully for some reason or another needs a goel, a blood avenger.

(48) T. H. Robinson - The Poetry of the Old Testament - Duckworth,
London. 1947. Page 97

For example, Jehu became Naboth's blood avenger (2 Kings 9: 33).

Job needed a goel, a redeemer, to justify him, and he was sure that he would be redeemed at the last. "All the days of my warfare would I wait till my release should come" (14: 14). In fact, this verse is the beginning of Job's hope and it finds its fullest expression in the words: "Because I know that my redeemer liveth and that he shall stand at the last upon the earth." (19: 25). Job expected that his suffering would end and he was hopeful of his justification here on earth in this life. I have already explained the meaning of Job 14: 14 previously in this paper, but on Job 19: 25, the views of some scholars, including E. Dhorme and H. H. Rowley, are very divergent and some go to the extent of discovering in this verse a reference to a future life or resurrection. We therefore have to investigate the meaning of some of the concepts which relate to Job 19: 25, namely, Sheol, immortality and resurrection.

1. The Jewish idea of Sheol is that this is the place where the dead go. It is a place of darkness where both the good and the bad meet. The nature of existence there is shadowy, devoid of every kind of living. The dead there cannot even praise God; they have no relationship whatsoever with God. Job desired to go there to hide until the wrath of God had abated, when God would remember him like a father and call him back. But Sheol was not the theatre where the hope of Job 19: 26 would be realized because there was thought to be no life in that place.

2. The concept of the immortality of the soul had developed in Egypt, West Africa, and Greece. Belief in life after death was popularly current in these places as was the view that the souls of those who died went to a certain place. It was thought that the soul never dies; it is indestructable and when the flesh in its weakness gives up the

Ghost, or Breath of Life, the soul becomes free to go to the spirit world. The Greek idea of the immortality of the soul, is that as long as men live on this earth, the soul of man is imprisoned in the body. The soul is sometimes identified with the consciousness of man which they also believe never dies. When man dies, then the soul is released to return to a life which is beyond this life.

Many Africans, especially those in Ghana, believe that when the soul leaves the body it continues in life after death in the spirit world; it can be communicated with by the living by means of pouring libations and by means of evocation. The resurrection of Jesus Christ throws light on this age-long belief that there is life after death; that when we die we shall rise because Jesus rose from the dead. By contrast, St. Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 15, argues that we shall eventually be raised with a spiritual body. Of course, this is much debated and this is not the place for such an argument. Now, how does this apply to Job 19: 25-27? Peake observes that: "the hope of immortality is not expressed here, but only of a momentary vision of God, assuring him of vindication." "He could not work confidently with the conception of immortality. But he was clearly tempted by it and seems to look for light from it."⁽⁴⁹⁾

N. H. Snaithe says these verses, "can be made to refer to life after death only by a most liberal latitude in translation ... The Hebrew text is different but it is unlikely that the vindicator is God and Job almost certainly means that he will be vindicated before he is dead."⁽⁵⁰⁾ H. H. Rowley admits that the verses are one of the most

(49) A. S. Peake - The Problem of Suffering in Old Testament - Primitive Methodist Publishing House, London. 1904. page 103.

(50) S. N. Snaithe, Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament, The Epworth Press, 1947. page 90.

cryptic passages in the book, and argues that both the text and interpretation are far from sure. However, he "thinks it is possible that the author is reaching out after something more satisfying than the dreary doctrine of Sheol reflected elsewhere in his book. But he has not securely grasped it."⁽⁵¹⁾ He continues to say that there is a trend of belief that God will vindicate him one day, and Job was conscious of that. Yet, having said this, he would also say that no faith in an after life can touch the problem with which the book of Job is concerned. E. Dhorme says that the word Redeemer refers to God who will be Job's vindicator. He alludes to the words "At last",⁽⁵²⁾ in Isaiah 44: 6 and argues that God, being the first and the last, was awaited by Job as the vindicator, would come one day to the earth from heaven and justify him. T. H. Robinson concludes the argument in this way, "All things considered, this is a very extraordinary conclusion for Job to reach. When Pharisaic Judaism developed a belief in life after death, the doctrine normally took the form of resurrection and re-animation of the physical body. The conception of an immortal spirit, liberated forever from the bonds of matter, is Greek rather than Jewish, but here and in one or two other places, notably Psalm 73, we seem to have a tentative movement towards the other view. The characteristic Jewish psychology which, as has been well said, regarded man as an animated body rather than as an imprisoned soul, carried the normal stream of belief after death along other lines. But this poet was a pioneer, and had broken loose from all established tradition.

(51) H. H. Rowley - From Moses to Qumran - London, Lutterworth Press. 1963. pages 181-182.

(52) E. Dhorme - A Commentary on the Book of Job - Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd., London. 1967. page 283.

It is the less surprising than that he should have conceived of the future life in a form in which it could hardly find general acceptance among his direct successors. But he did reach this point and of the bitterness of his soul and horror of his experience, he formed a belief which has changed the whole outlook of the human spirit."⁽⁵³⁾

Margaret Crook gives a brief account of Babylonian and Canaanite stories of the gods of the nether world which have some reference to chapter 19. She said that the way leading to the nether world had seven gates and were guarded by demonic gods, the first custodian of the first gate being the serpent-like Leviathan, the sea-monster, mentioned in Yahweh speeches, whom the traveller had to pass to the nether world. It was the custom of the gods to travel there to visit other gods, who were living permanently there. It happened that Ishtar, the Babylonian goddess of love and queen of heaven, and her predecessor, Inanna, each visited the nether world. Both of them were well adorned with crowns and jewels, but as the way to the nether world was by no means easy and they had to struggle hard to reach there, they lost their adornments by the time they reached there. Inanna was unfortunate for, in addition to losing her crown and jewels, she became ill and was turned into a corpse hanging on a nail. Margaret Crook recounts that in a mysterious way, a benevolent god of the upper region gave Inanna the water of life and good food and she was restored to life, but he was asked to promise to find a substitute to replace her in the nether world and so she was sent under an escort of guards back to this world to see that the promise was fulfilled.

(53) T. H. Robinson - The Poetry of the Old Testament - Duckworth.

In the case of Ishtar she was fortunate to lose only her crown and jewels and retain her life and she sent her husband to the nether world as her substitute. Margaret Crook concludes "The return of these gods and goddesses to life and action shows a broad parallel with the words of Job in chapter 19. When, in his sudden access to faith and hope, the long afflicted job exclaims (19: 25) I know that my Redeemer lives..."⁽⁵⁴⁾ In this same chapter Job seems to express a similar experience when he had to pass through seven stages of his suffering to the point of being stripped of his glory and losing his crown. ("He hath stripped me of my glory, And hath taken the crown from my head." (Job 19:9).) Margaret Crook gives another story of the Sumerian Enkidu who was a friend and a servant of the hero Gilgamesh who sent him to the nether world. He was seized by the demonic gods of death and disease which guard the gates and which prevented his return. He was not killed but was rendered weak and unable to rise. Gilgamesh eventually appealed to the sun-god who made an opening in the nether world for Enkidu to escape. This story also seems to reflect Job's situation where he had to cry "He had broken me down on every side, and I am gone: And my hope hath he plucked up like a tree" (Job 19: 10).

My own point of view on this matter is that from the tone of the words of this chapter Job had passed through extreme human torture, he had experienced physical, mental and spiritual agony and he expressed and described this situation in these words. "For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: The

(54) M. Crook - The Cruel God - Beacon Press, Boston. 1959. Page 85

terrors of God do set themselves in array against me" (Job 6: 4).

This is a description of someone who had experienced personal suffering to the highest degree. In addition to the mental torture, the physical pain and spiritual agony, his flesh was wasting away every day; his flesh was emaciated and reduced, and his very life was threatened. He was at the point of death but not dead. But as Margaret Crook explained in her book, I myself believe that Job expected that a benevolent god, a Goel, a Redeemer would come to release him and adjudge him innocent. "All the days of my warfare would I wait, Till my release should come" (Job 14: 14). It is in this passage he began to hope and therefore, like a soldier, he was fighting hard in his affliction until the battle came to an end and after the victory the record thereof would be inscribed on pearls of stone for his children and the people to see in this world. The author of the book of Job, being an Israelite, does not believe in polytheism. If the story of Job were to be told in the context of Babylonian religion, another benevolent god would hear Job's cry and rescue him. But Job believed in only one God; therefore he would appeal to the same God whom he had accused, and in Him he had full faith.

"But I know that my redeemer liveth, And that he shall stand up at the last upon the earth": (Job 19: 25). The word redeemer means next of kin upon whom the duties of Avenger of Blood falls. In this passage Job is saying that God is his Redeemer. According to E. Dhorme the word 'last' in the passage refers to God as being the First and the Last (cf. Isaiah 44: 6; 48: 12) as has been explained above. Job believed that God, his Redeemer, lives and that He will eventually come upon this earth and vindicate him in his innocence concerning the false charges levelled against him by his three friends. According to

Deuteronomy 30: 15, 19 a man who is sick is between life and death, and this was the situation of Job. Psalm 63: 2-5 describes the worshipper's experience of his communion with God as one of spiritual feasting and as one of the inward refreshments of the believer; thus: "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness". Job knew this experience because once he had acted as a priest on behalf of his children (Job 1: 5), as he eventually did again on behalf of his friends. (Job 42: 8). In Exodus 33: 18f, there is recorded the experience of the vision of God, and Job had the experience and the privilege of seeing God. Job was between life and death and wanted life. He would seek the Lord and live (Deut. 30: 15, 19; cf. Lev. 18: 5). Thus he anticipated that which finds its fullest expression in the theophany, the vision of God, in Job 42: 4-6. In the Yahweh speeches Job did not only hear the voice of God but he saw Him by experiencing Him as a Personal God. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now I have seen thee with my eyes. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent!" (Job 42: 5-6). This is the deepest experience of a faithful worshipper who fights on with unwavering faith and keeps to his words until in the end his Goel, his Redeemer God, reveals Himself to him on this earth and justifies him by his faith and saves him.

Having thus extensively examined the core of the book of Job by using the theme of 'righteousness' as a reference point in my analysis, it is now necessary to give some account of three particular blocks of material in the book of Job - the digression about wisdom which constitutes chapter 28, the Elihu speeches of chapters 32-37, and the Yahweh speeches of chapters 38-39; 40: 1-2, 6-41.

IV - THE WISDOM POEM

Chapter 28 describes Wisdom; the chapter is divided into three parts. Verses 1-11 deal with the search for wisdom, verses 12-19 deal with the value and worth of wisdom, and verses 20-28 describe the continuing search for wisdom until it is found nowhere but with God.

The search first begins with the mine where there are precious metals like gold, silver and copper. The writer describes the labour and the effort employed in searching after them, in breaking open the shaft of the mine, and how light is employed in searching all the dark places of a mine, but wisdom is not to be found there. Again, he employs the strongest birds which soar higher and higher to the heavens in search of wisdom, but it cannot be found there. The search continues with the wild beasts which are flesh eaters and who go to the farthest ends of the earth in search of their food, but wisdom is not to be found anywhere. Then man searches for wisdom in far off places on the mountains, in rocks and in the streams but wisdom is nowhere to be found.

In verses 12-19, the writer goes on to compare the worth of wisdom with the value of precious stones and the metals gold and silver. But, however valuable these precious stones may be they cannot be measured against the worth and value of wisdom. In v. 15 the word 'gold' refers to gold bars. In v. 16 the gold of Ophir is the fine gold which is produced from the place called Ophir. In v. 18 Coral refers to precious pearls and crystal refers to hailstones (cf. Ezekiel 13: 11, 13; 38: 22). Rubies c.f. Lam. 4: 7, are precious stones and pearls with red colour. In v. 19, 'Topaz of Ethiopia' refers to a precious pearl with a yellow colour.

The writer re-iterates the question, where shall wisdom be found and where is the place of understanding? It is not found with Abaddon in v. 22 which is identified with destruction and death. The search continues but wisdom is found nowhere. Rather, wisdom is found with God. It is his property. It is God who discerns everything, and this wisdom, in a magnificent and wonderful way is employed to ensure the careful maintenance of every individual living creature. The marvelous way in which wisdom penetrates the mysteries of things uniquely belongs to God, and He has given some measure of wisdom to man so that he might fear Him and eschew evil.

Many scholars argue as to whether Chapter 28, the poem concerning wisdom, properly belongs in the book, and also whether the material of Chapter 28 should properly precede the Yahweh speeches. Dhorme thinks the chapter is by the author who wrote the rest of the poetry of the book of Job because of similarity of style and atmosphere. The magnitude of the knowledge of God is compared with infinitesimal knowledge of man. The editors of the Jerusalem Bible say the chapter prepares and paves the way to the Yahweh speeches and that the chapter has some affinity in style and language with them. R. H. Pfeiffer thinks it is an independent composition of the author and plays no integral part in the poem. But N. H. Snaith also thinks it is the work of the author who wrote the whole book of Job and therefore is necessary to the unity of the book.

My own point of view is that Chapter 28 is the work of the author of the book of Job and it is a necessary component to the structure of the book because it serves to prepare the way for the Yahweh speeches.

V - THE ELIHU SPEECHES

Elihu's speeches contain much material in common with the speeches in the dialogue, and it would be répetitious to give a full account of these chapters. I shall therefore deal with the more significant factors in his speech which have not been taken account of already in my treatment of the dialogue.

In Chapter 32, Elihu addressed the three friends about Job and God. He is known from nowhere in the book and therefore some scholars suggest he might have been a bystander who had been watching the scene and was not satisfied by the answers given by the three friends and so interrupted the dialogue in anger.

He told the three friends that in falling silent they had failed in their duty and evaded their responsibility. He said that in falling silent the three friends had abandoned the argument and had given the verdict to Job and effectively had condemned God. He said Job had been incorrigible and self-righteous, trying to vindicate himself before God, and bringing indictment against God. Elihu denied that wisdom was reserved only for the aged; it comes to man by the breath of God, and he was under compulsion to break the spell of silence and speak.

Turning to Job, Elihu appealed to him to listen to him as one who had come with a godsent message (Chapter 33). He addressed him: "O Job", treating him more gently as a sufferer but still frankly telling Job that he had gone beyond proper bounds in bringing God to judgement. He pointed out that it would be inconceivable that God should persecute an innocent man. God is too magnanimous to stoop to such an unworthy action. God who inhabits eternity could not be called to defend what

He had done, as Job was pressing Him to do. Furthermore, Job could never be blameless before God. Elihu said, God could speak to man through dreams and sickness, and if he listened they could serve as messengers. This is the way in which God sometimes calls man to Himself. He explained that when a man is attacked by illness, even to the extremity of the point of death, God could use illness to serve as a messenger, a mediator, to reclaim him to God. If the sufferer allowed the sickness to speak to him, and if he repented from his sin, then the man's condition would effectively plead with God who would then restore the sufferer back to life. The purpose of the mediator is not to justify the sickness but to bring moral uprightness. A reform is thus secured by the action of the mediator as an act of graciousness. Job should take his illness as being the justice of God, and repent so that he might be restored.

Elihu continues in Chapter 35: 9f with the cry of the afflicted. He said that oppressed men are driven to speak against their oppressors instead of being driven to God in their sorrow to seek Him. He said that for the oppressed man to speak against this oppressor, the sufferer forgets to find out the cause of his suffering, and instead becomes bitter against the oppressor and becomes preoccupied with hatred towards the oppressor rather than being drawn nearer to God. He said such was the case with Job. In this situation an oppressed man cannot listen and understand what God wants to tell him, and therefore Elihu concludes that God does not answer the cry of the oppressed. And this, Elihu thought, was the case of Job.

In his fourth speech (Job 36: 2-25) Elihu held that suffering is a means of education. This speech sets out a further meaning of suffering, namely, that suffering is a means of discipline. Elihu said

that God is not unkind to despise men by afflicting them, but if, perchance, men are afflicted with suffering then they must know that it is for the chastening of their soul and for the humbling of their pride. God's omnipotence is not only expressed in showing His might in strength, but also in upholding the sufferer and the pure in heart. If the righteous should suffer in the hands of the wicked oppressor, God delivers him, but through this experience God is seeking to teach him that through suffering He can refine him. The purpose of his suffering is to expose his moral faults and to awaken him to watch any tendency to pride. He who recognizes this is profited by his suffering and his deliverance serves as an education. He tried to offer this understanding of suffering to Job.

The rest of the Elihu speeches deal with (i) The work and wisdom of God (36: 16-25); (ii) God's work in nature (36: 26-37: 13), and (iii) the majesty and the unsearchable richness of God (37: 14-24). Since most of the material in these passages ^{has} ~~have~~ some affinity to the Yahweh speeches, I only refer to them briefly; so I do not duplicate my analysis when I come to deal with the Yahweh speeches in detail.

Some scholars have contested whether Elihu's speeches were the work of the author and whether they should necessarily be included in the book of Job. Those scholars who agree that the Elihu speeches are the work of the author include Margaret B. Crook who says that the author wrote them independently of the book of Job, but that after his death his disciples thought the material to be valuable, so they inserted it in the book as it now stands.

I think that the Elihu speeches are the work of the author who is seeking to give us further reasons for suffering which were absent from the other parts of the book, and without which the message of the

book would not be complete. In summary, the contribution of the Elihu speeches to the total understanding of suffering presented in the Book of Job is as follows: (i) that suffering may serve as a messenger mediating restoration with God; (ii) that if in suffering we turn our attention away from whoever may be our oppressor to God, we shall hear him speak to us in our suffering; (iii) that suffering humbles our pride and teaches us the lesson of humility. The position of this material between Chapters 1-31 and Chapters 38-42 prepares readers for the Yahweh speeches which are the climax of the book.

VI - YAHWEH'S SPEECHES

The appearance of Yahweh is preceded by a whirlwind which is followed by an interrogation "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" (Job 38: 2).

E. Dhorne says that: "'Counsel' is part of the attributes of God, just like wisdom, power and understanding (12: 13). This divine counsel is none other than the Providence by which He foresees all and provides for all in the light of that vision. This Providence is a light which the words of man can only 'darken'". (55)

The speech of Yahweh starts with the ordering of beings, and the movements of them. Creation is conceived in terms of the erection of a building, with foundation stones and supporting pillars. This is followed by a description of the movements of the constellations and the origin of the sea. The sea is described in terms of a child who has been thrust out of the womb and wrapped in clouds. Then follows the description of day and night. The formless surface of the earth takes a meaningful shape. The coming of the light drives away the darkness and reveals the works of the wicked. Job is then asked to show the range and the extent of his knowledge about things which are not visible to human understanding: the gates of death and its boundaries, the snow and hail kept in storehouses and brought out by the order of God. Job is challenged to realize that God's providence extends farther than the care of man who is infinitesimal compared with the mighty things in the great ocean of creation, but his narrow

(55) E. Dhorne - A Commentary on the Book of Job - Thomas Nelson &

Sons Ltd., London. 1967. Page 574

outlook renders him ignorant of the Divine design.

Now God continues his speech with a review of the mysteries of the animal kingdom and the birds of the air. He describes the king of the beasts of prey, the lion, then the mountain-goats found in the neighbourhood of Engedi; the wild ox is mentioned as a dangerous animal with two horns, and then various birds are referred to: the ostrich, known from its characteristic cry; the stork and heron, known for their parental affection; the hawk, which soars high to survey every corner where it can seek its prey; and the eagle and the vulture, that build their nests in inaccessible places; the horse, known for its strength as a beast of war is also mentioned. All these animals and birds find their prey and feed themselves without any human concern, for God has endowed them with instinctive wisdom to be cunning in searching for their food. Job is then called upon by Yahweh to answer the speech.

Job's complaint has been directed against the injustice he has suffered despite the rule of Yahweh. The Divine speech was first addressed to him to open to him the unfathomable realm of God's creation; it is unbounded and immeasurable. Then Job was invited to occupy the place of justice, to assume the rule of this universe, and to show how he could govern it better than Yahweh. Has Job the moral integrity and adequate power to govern and rule justly and orderly? H. H. Rowley says it was a challenge thrown down to him to show his incompetence to criticize God, and he should answer the question otherwise he forfeit any right to criticize. Job answered that he was insignificant compared with God's omnipotence and the magnitude of His knowledge.

The second part of Yahweh's speech centres very much on Behemoth

and Leviathan. H. H. Rowley says that probably Behemoth was an Egyptian animal because it is certainly not found in Palestine. Such scholars like Gunkel, and Pope say they are mythological creatures. Those scholars who regard Behemoth as real, identify it with the hippopotamus. These huge animals are identified with sea monsters which cause great havoc to fishermen and those who travel by sea. They cause the sea to be rough, for they are boisterous animals. No human being can tame them, yet God in his wisdom tames them and feeds them.

Then Job confessed that he had lived in a world of ignorance concerning the knowledge of the ways of God, but now, through his experience, the struggle he had had, he had come to a better understanding of God and his dealings with Him. He therefore repented "in dust and ashes". (Job 42: 6). He had spoken and passed judgement on things too wonderful for him. R. A. F. Mackenzie says, "Mystery was clarified by vision, experience came to verify, what had been desperately clung to by faith. The author presented Job as humbled yet consoled and satisfied by an immediate contact with the God of loyalty and love." (56)

Job did not repent of any sin he had committed during the time of his trial; rather, he repented of the charges he had brought against God. The fact that he had seen God and experienced His fellowship brought him much joy, he could now rest content in God even in suffering. Agony may be therefore turned into spiritual strength if man finds God through it.

Some scholars have argued whether the Yahweh speeches were

(56) R. A. F. Mackenzie - Biblica Vol. 40, Suptibus Pontifich Instituti Biblici, 1959. Page 438

necessary, and whether the second one was inferior to the first.

R. A. F. Mackenzie puts it in this way: "Many objections can be, and have been made against the authenticity of these speeches. Perhaps the most obvious one is that they do not seem to answer the questions that have been raised, with the utmost vehemence and emphasis, in the foregoing chapters."⁽⁵⁷⁾ My own views on this matter are:-

1. It must be remembered that there had been an argument in the prologue followed by a long debate. The three friends had challenged Job that sin was the cause of his suffering, and Job had vehemently refuted this allegation. There should be a third party to decide who was right in this confrontation. Job knew from the depths of his heart that he had committed no sin to warrant this extreme suffering. Both the friends and Job were ignorant of the conversation, or argument, between God and Satan as to whether immense prosperity in terms of material substance and good family was the cause of Job's righteousness. Satan's opinion was that Job's prosperity was the motivating factor of his religion, and Yahweh had challenged Satan to prove this contention; hence Job's suffering. The speeches of Yahweh were necessary to settle the truth.

In fact, all through the dialogue, Job was expecting a response from Yahweh and this is expressed in Job 13: 22-24; Job 16: 19-21; Job 19: 25-27; and Job 31: 35-37. Not only was Job expecting God to be his Judge, but also to vindicate him in his innocence. In like manner, the friends were also expecting God to prove their case (Job 11: 5-11). Yahweh's speeches were necessary to decide between the contestants.

(57) Ibid. Page 436

2. Job had fought Yahweh's battle for Him. Yahweh made a risky gamble by entering into a wager with Satan, but it was Job who settled the issue and confounded Satan's contention that Job was only faithful in worship because he was prosperous. Job had vindicated the trust Yahweh had placed in him. He had proved to be a loyal servant. "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" (Job 1: 8). A perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil; and the reply was, "Does Job fear God for nothing?" (Job 1: 9). Job had proved that he feared God neither because of the attraction of prosperity nor because God had built a hedge around him and had given him a comfortable life, but even in extreme poverty and suffering he would maintain his faith in God for even if He were to slay him, yet he would worship Him. Job had won a decisive victory for Yahweh.

3. The speeches were necessary because Job only knew about God by what he had heard about him: "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear" (Job 42: 5). Job first knew Him as a God of benevolence, who gave him all that he needed - property, family and honour - but then prosperity vanished and he became bitter and even went to the extent of accusing God of cruelty. But this time, Yahweh did not only speak but revealed Himself to Job. The God of Love was now known through extreme suffering. He had known Him face to face through experience. God had become a fact and a reality in his existential situation. He had experienced God in the fellowship of suffering.

4. Through the speeches, God has disclosed the fact that His rule transcends the rules of justice and moral retribution. Although these rules are mysteriously involved in his ways of dealing with us, yet He is a God of Love; full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and in truth (Exodus 34: 6).

5. The second Divine speech was necessary because it was after this that Job realized his fault; he had passed judgement on things too wonderful for him. He had been ignorant of the knowledge of the ways of God with man, and had brought charges against Him. He had seen that God's ways are mysterious and beyond the imagination of man's mind, and so, beyond discovery. This truth was brought home to Job after the second speech, after which he submitted and was justified, and rested content in God.

The Yahweh speeches are an integral part of the book. It is part of the genius of the author that he does not want to leave his readers in suspense and therefore wrote the speeches to end the debate and to bring the story to a meaningful end.

CHAPTER THREE

The Use of the Book of Job by some Modern Thinkers

I - KARL BARTH

(1) The Presuppositions of Barth's idea of evil

Before one can satisfactorily discuss Barth's idea of evil or sin, it is necessary to consider first his idea of revelation before going on to examine how he builds his idea of 'Nihil', 'Das Nichtige', Nothingness.

The fact that God can be known (i) through creation in the natural order, (ii) through carefully ordered rituals, (iii) through exemplary lives of men and (iv) through chance occurrences and accidents of life does not particularly concern Barth; rather his emphasis is on the uniqueness of revelation. For him, the only revelation is the Incarnation, God taking our flesh upon Himself and becoming man in the Person of Jesus Christ. For Barth, the same God who chose the people of Israel, revealed Himself to them on Mount Sinai, and entered into a covenant with them and gave them the decalogue, has presented Himself in a human lifespan in the flesh of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. One of the principal references which Barth uses concerning the revelation of God in Jesus, of God becoming man, is: "For of his fullness have we all received and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1: 16-18). Barth holds that outside the Incarnation it is impossible to know God. It is when we begin to take the Word of God as written in scripture and begin to make a proper

exposition of the Word that we begin to know Jesus, who reveals God as a person, and through whom God is, as it were, speaking to us directly. If we meet Jesus then we have met God who is Father, Saviour and Judge. We see in Jesus the God who is true, good, patient and loving. Again, it is in Jesus Christ that we see the power of God; because God is God, he used his power to raise Jesus from the dead and therefore by the power of the resurrection God has defeated death and the power of evil, and the works of darkness. Barth does also recognise that there is the HOLY OTHERNESS of God, the Transcendent God, whom man can reach by faith, but he "rejects any abstract idea of God, any idea of God as impersonal: Absolute, the Supreme Good (summum bonum), the World-Spirit or the World-Cause for instance, and he also refuses any contemplation of God's being in abstraction from His real work and action." (58)

It is in Jesus that we see the real image of God, the Real and the Ideal Man, how man ought to be. Jesus is the real prototype of man and how he ought to live, both in his constant communion with God and in his relationship with his fellow man. Jesus divested himself of all pride; he did not make himself equal in status with the transcendent God but was humble and obedient; and he was without sin. This is the way man ought to live. In Jesus we have the revelation of the Divine and at the same time the Human. "To Barth this is the central mystery of the Incarnation, revealed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as it means that in Jesus not only God and man, Divine nature and human nature, became one in an inconceivable manner but that in

(58) Herbert Hartwell - The Theology of Karl Barth - Introduction -

Him the Creator has become Himself a creature."(59)

Barth holds that that which sustains man and maintains him as the image of God should be his close communion with the Transcendent God, on the pattern of Jesus, but that man through sin and evil has broken this communion and rebelled against God. Man has therefore become depraved.

(2) The nature, cause and origin of human depravity in Barth's thought

The cause of depravity is that which Barth calls 'Nihil'.(61) He defines Nihil as "Das Nichtige" meaning "that which has been brought to nought".(60) He posited a 'Yes' which is the goodness of God's creation affirmed in Jesus Christ as the True and Good Man, and a 'No', which is the reverse of goodness, and this is the Nihil. He identifies Nihil as sin, evil, chaos, or death. He calls Nihil impossible possibility and he said that it is like the agony seen in the cross of Christ but by Jesus' resurrection God has defeated Nihil. In the cross there was the Nihil "For by His death and resurrection He has triumphed over sin, evil and death, and thereby has demonstrated the ultimate powerlessness of the forces of evil... as that which has already been finally defeated on the Cross of Golgotha."(61) Barth continues his argument that anything inimical to God's purpose of the goodness of creation is evil and this is Nihil. God did not create it, says Barth, for this has no part in God's good creation, for the Nihil is always confronted with God's wrath and judgement. God can only create

(59) Ibid - page 79

(60) Ibid - page 117

(61) Ibid - page 117

that which is in conformity with His own nature, His own reality and therefore can only create that which is good. Barth does not conceive the forces of evil to have an independent existence confronting God as though the Nihil were a sort of anti-god. Nihil, or Evil, was not willed by God nor created intentionally by Him, but exists as part of God's creation and is not beyond the orbit of the power of God, but is ruled and controlled by Him. Nihil therefore cannot be said in a real sense to exist, it can only be the opposite of the real, that is it is the non-real.

"We stray on the one side if we argue that this element of nothingness derives from the positive will and work of God as if it were a creature, and that the Creator Himself and His Lordship are responsible for its nothingness, the creature being exonerated from all responsibility for its existence, presence and activity. But we go astray on the other side if we maintain that it derives solely from the activity of the creature in relation to which the lordship of God can only be a passive permission and observation, an ineffectual knowledge and a subsequent attitude. In the one case, the obvious error is to misinterpret the fact that God is Lord, to fail to understand that for that reason His lordship cannot be effected by nothingness. In the other case, the error is to misinterpret the meaning of lordship, namely that God rules in sublime and unlimited majesty over every sphere, and therefore over that of nothingness as well. But how is it possible to avoid the one error without falling into the error?"(62)

Barth's discussion on the problem of evil, which revolves around

(62) Karl Barth - Church Dogmatics - Vol. III The Doctrine of Creation
Part Three. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. 1960. Page 292

his idea of Das Nichtige, that which is nought, leaves in its aftermath an ambivalent situation. To use his own term, Nihil is crushed though not totally vanquished in this world. There follow, therefore, two questions which have figured in scholarly debate of this matter:

- (a) If God did not create evil intentionally, as Barth proposes, but it just came accidentally to exist amongst the created things, then this affirmation appears to compromise the position of God as Omnipotent; Omniscience; and Omnipresent in creation.
- (b) If Barth's explanation of evil as Nihil, Das Nichtige, meaning that which is nought, that is, nothing, is accepted, then it is impossible to treat of the existence of evil and therefore the problem of evil cannot be faced realistically.

This latter question is exactly posed by Carl Jung. Christians try to regard evil as if it were not there. Whilst I think that Barth makes his point clear that evil is the reverse side of the Good, I am strongly convinced that as long as we continue to live in this world, and extenuate the good there will always be evil. In other words, as long as the good exists and continues to exist as the good, we shall experience the value of the good in the full sense and meaning of the word. But, as soon as the good loses its vitality and dynamism as a reality, it is not the good any more and becomes less than the good; it has become extenuated, less valuable and therefore assumes an opposite character; it has become evil, the perversion of the good. As long as man does not exercise the full use of the good as it is intended to be for him, but extenuates the good value of it and operates it on a less effective plane, there will come in its place the negative or the opposite, the evil or wicked, or the bad. God did not create

evil. God created the good but men by their perverse actions have created evil. If men continue to practise good actions and maintain good relationships between themselves, men will experience Goodness all through life, otherwise, we shall experience the perversion of the good. If we continue to be evil, destructive and wicked, suffering will also continue to be in the world. This is one of the causes of suffering.

Barth makes another point about suffering saying that once a person becomes a Christian and turns his back on the world he is bound to suffer because the moral demands of Christ are not in conformity with the world. The moral demands of Christ are completely at variance with the world, and therefore the true Christian will always suffer as he witnesses to his faith.

The witness of the Word of God, the true exposition of the Word, and the preaching of the message of Good News to a world that has rebelled against God, summons the disciple to be good as it was originally that he should be. In this the disciple will have to face opposition. The true disciple will suffer in the course of his witness.

Barth goes on to say that this kind of suffering is not unprecedented because the Master of the disciples, namely Christ had to experience this same treatment, though Christ's suffering cannot exactly be compared to that of Job.

Barth writes that: "On the other hand, since the vocation to be a Christian is essentially and decisively the vocation to be a witness, a man cannot possibly become and be a Christian without having to experience and endure affliction as the work of the surrounding world."⁽⁶³⁾

(63) Karl Barth - Church Dogmatics: Vol. IV, The Doctrine of Reconciliation, Part Three, Second Half: Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. 1962.
Page: 618

He continues: "We have seen that it is first and last Jesus Christ Himself who brings the Christian into affliction. It is for His sake, for the sake of His name, in fellowship or union with Him...."(64)

Barth repeatedly emphasizes this fact that the Christian should entertain the conviction that suffering has come in the face of the witness of the gospel. As the disciple witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ he has to demonstrate the truth of the Power of the Gospel and if by that the disciple or the Christian has to suffer he has to endure suffering in order to be loyal to his Master, for if he gives up in the face of suffering it will be a denial of Christ and a failure of the faith he professes. In other words, the affliction or the suffering of the innocent Christian is nothing but 'A Test of Faith'.

In this view of the problem of suffering Barth echoes the message of the book of Job, that, the true witness, is put on trial as a 'Test of his Faith' in God.

(3) The use of the Book of Job by Karl Barth

In his book 'Church Dogmatics' Volume 4, Part 3, under the heading: "The falsehood and condemnation of man", and the subheading "The True Witness", (65) Barth cites Job as an example of a true witness of God. He explains that it would not be difficult to give illustrations drawn from the New Testament, but that it would be mere repetition of exegetical proofs already adduced in other parts of his Church Dogmatics.

(64) Ibid - page 641

(65) Karl Barth - Church Dogmatics - Vol. IV-3 Second Half. Edinburgh,

He outlines the book of Job as follows: (i) chapters 1-2 and 42 make up the folk story of the rich Job who was tried and remained faithful to God, and was justified and blessed by Him; (ii) chapters 3-31 are the main poetical account of the speeches of Job and his three friends; (iii) the Elihu speeches of chapters 32-37; (iv) the poem of Behemoth and Leviathan chapters 40-41, and parts of 38-39 dealing with the cosmos and the animal world; and (v) chapter 28 on Wisdom.

He starts with Job as the man of Edom who was one of the rare people outside the covenant of Yahweh who was a true witness among the prophets of Yahweh. He said Job was attested as a perfect man, religiously and morally by:

- (i) the author of the book of Job in 1: 1, 22; 2: 10.
- (ii) by Yahweh in 1: 8; 2: 3.
- (iii) by Job himself in 23: 10-12; 27: 1-6; 31.

Barth considers that "To this there corresponds what we are told concerning Job's relationship to God, his practical commitment to Him, his obedience. It is not in God's praise of him that we hear of this. In accordance with the purpose of the book we may again refer to the concluding speech attributed to Job (chapters 29 and 31) in which, with no intention of self-righteousness or self-boasting, he depicts and maintains the positive character of his life before and with God with a confidence quiet unparalleled. A picture of pure and exalted piety for which there is hardly a parallel in the Old Testament."⁽⁶⁶⁾

Barth deals with Job's witness in three separate parts:

- (i) His relationship with God as one of fear and reverence and obedience; he hated evil and therefore, became a representative witness not only attested in his own land but on the

whole earth, and therefore, he was called by God "My Servant Job".

(ii) His personal relationships in which he avoided being a deceiver, he did not disrupt any marriage, he respected the rights of others, even the rights of his menservants and maidservants. He did not despise widows or orphans and he did not persecute anybody.

(iii) He went to the extent of exercising a priestly function pleading with God on behalf of his children, thinking perhaps that they might have sinned and cursed God in their hearts when they met in each other's houses for a common meal.

Barth considers that the relationship between God and Job was one of free volition, therefore there was no coercion either on the part of God or of Job, so that when God proudly mentioned Job as being perfect and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil, Satan became jealous and suspicious saying: "Does Job fear God for nothing." (Job 1: 9). Job did not know that this argument had taken place when Satan put Job to trial; he stood the test and creditably passed the examination. Barth goes on "For it is all grounded in and fashioned by free obedience on the part of God... There can be no question of any material grounds of interest in Him. His conduct towards him shows this. It is one long demonstration of the boundless confidence which he has set in him and the fidelity which he has plainly sworn to him."(67) God's action in bestowing the prosperity was a free gift without obligation. Job's action in fearing God and hating sin has no

(67) Ibid. Page 387

ulterior motive; he did not have any promise of future restoration, therefore, when Satan was allowed by God to test Job and afflict his body with disease God freely, without any reservation, gave Satan permission to do what he wanted. Thus Satan began the test. He inflicted a sequence of suffering upon Job. Barth said that the storm of life raged violently against Job. He lost everything in life until Job could realize the impermanence and the futility and the transience of prosperity. "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1: 21). Barth goes on: "God would not be God if He were not free both to give and to take away"⁽⁶⁸⁾ and Job also would not be Job if he were not free to receive evil as well as good. Barth points out that when Job's wife asked him to curse God he replied: "Shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive evil?" (Job 2: 10). Thus Job feared and loved God freely, regardless of any ulterior motive. Barth says that as a result of the free service of Job, it is a true witness of God that comes to be the target of Satan's scepticism, but Job proved himself beyond all doubts and refuted Satan's scepticism that he was a true witness of God.

I myself can only agree that Job was a true witness. God entered into a very risky gamble with Satan. Had Job failed, God would also have failed; therefore Job had fought a steadfast battle to win a decisive victory. He had vindicated the trust placed in him by God and dispelled the doubt of Satan. Now, by Job's confession that "the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1: 21) he has given a very clear indication that he has no claim on God to secure the gifts God bestows on man, and that every

(68) Ibid. Page 387

gift that comes to man is a free and gracious gift of God. The gifts of God are therefore for all people, both the righteous and the wicked because God is a loving and responsible Father full of grace and mercy.

In the main body of the book of Job we find protestation upon protestation, and complaint upon complaint from Job. Barth says that it is quite surprising to see a man who, at the very beginning of the book in the prologue, accepted his fate quietly and resignedly, afterwards flare up and burst into a fiery passion. He had expressed contentment in the grace of God, "The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away, blessed be the Lord" (Job 1: 21); but now he turns to violent opposition towards God. Barth holds that the reason for this change in the attitude of Job is that Job has to come to an experience of God commensurate with the recognition which he had afforded Him in the prologue. What this means is that Yahweh takes as well as gives, that evil is to be received as well as good and should be borne to the bitter end. Barth then goes to the heart of Job's complaint by quoting these passages; "My saying is my daily bread, and my roarings are poured out like water" (3: 24). Job's whole existence is his suffering. And so in 3: 3f, he can only protest, in the same way as Jeremiah did in words which are almost more extreme (Jer. 20: 14-18), against the fact that he must exist, against the day when he was born, and even against the night when he was conceived. "Wherefore is light given to him that is misery, and life unto the bitter in the soul!" (3: 20; cf. 10: 13f) "Only so long as his flesh is on him does he have pain and so long as his soul is in him does he mourn" (14: 22). Job regretted ever being alive. If he had died at birth he would now have the peace of kings buried in the pyramids constructed by them

(3: 13f), or of a hidden untimely birth (3: 16). He even asks "That it would please God to destroy me: that he would let loose his hand and cut me off (6: 9f)".⁽⁶⁹⁾

Now Barth makes a very significant point about Job's protestations and complaints. He said that the protestations and the complaints can give rise to a paradoxical situation. He said that it is difficult both to put Job in the right and at the same time to say he was completely wrong. On the one hand Job describes his situation like this: "God maketh my heart soft, the Almighty troubleth me" (23: 16). "He hath also kindled his wrath against me and he counteth unto him as one of his enemies. His troops come together and raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my tabernacle" (19: 11). "For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me" (6: 4). "For he breaketh me with a tempest and multiplieth my wounds without cause. He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness" (9: 17f). "He breaketh me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me" (10: 8). But, on the other hand, despite the resenting God's cruelty, Job cleaves to this same God. Barth sees Job as not abandoning God. Barth insists that: "There can be no question of God abandoning him, but keeps him inescapable in His grasp." "He firmly sees his God and not another in what overwhelms him." But "he cannot curse God. He cannot separate himself from Him. He wishes he could. This is why he longs for death. This is why he hazards the bold conjecture whether God will perhaps grant him security before Him in the underworld. But

(69) Ibid. Page 399

he knows too well - hence the futility of suicide - that even in death and in the underworld he will still have to do with God whether for good or ill. It is in the very proximity to God which is such a burden to him that he is for good or ill a contestant with God, a true Israel (Gen. 32: 28)."⁽⁷⁰⁾ Job does not only express his faith in this God but continues to say that this same God will be his vindicator as standing on earth (19: 25) as living in heaven (16: 19) as being his only guarantor (17: 3) his Advocate, Avenger and Redeemer (19: 25).

In the prologue we discover that when Satan attacked him with a sequence of suffering he accepted it with equanimity: "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the Lord" (Job 1: 21), and he continues to suffer even though his life is threatened; yet he expresses extreme confidence in God who will not only save him but vindicate him of his innocence. In this, Karl Barth said, lies the uniqueness of Job's witness. Barth affirms of Job that: "He is unmistakably endowed with the characteristic of that figure of the suffering righteous which is formally so distinctive of the whole witness and materially so constitutively important for it, which we also meet especially in the prophet Jeremiah and the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53, but also collectively in Lamentations and both individually and collectively in so many of the Psalms."⁽⁷¹⁾ "In this way", continues Karl Barth, "and in this way alone Job is a real witness of the truth and as such also a witness of Jesus Christ."⁽⁷²⁾

(70) Ibid - Page 403-404

(71) Ibid - Page 401

(72) Ibid - Page 425

For the wisdom poem of chapter 28, Barth accepts the explanation offered in the book of Job, that wisdom is only found with God, and that it was with wisdom that God created the world.

Barth describes Elihu as John the Baptist, the Forerunner, who prepares the way for the one who is to come, and such was the nature of Elihu's speeches. He accepts Elihu's speeches as a preparation, heralding the speeches of Yahweh.

On the teaching of the "Falsehood of man", Barth accepts the statement "For ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath" (Job 42: 7) as a true verdict against the attitudes and actions of the three friends which were tantamount to the falsehood of man. According to Barth's interpretation, Yahweh said that the friends did not speak things that could heal but rather things that would torture, and that their words were presented as if they were true but were really untrue. They illustrate the falsehood of man as it emerges in confrontation with the true witness of Job. But such a judgement only belongs to Yahweh, and He pronounces his verdict after the body of His own speech (42: 7).

II - CARL GUSTAV JUNG

(1) The Presuppositions of Jung's understanding of evil

In the book entitled Jung and the Problem of Evil, H. L. Philp summarises Jung's view of the Christian concern to present a satisfactory account of evil as follows: "You question if an experience of evil is reconcilable with the idea of a good God and you feel that you must make a contribution to the solution of this problem. You come to the conclusion that the forces of evil are dangerously near to victory over the powers of good. In addition your writings about evil include a strong condemnation of the doctrine of the privatio boni, much about Satan, the quaternity and the place and function of sin. You also make answer to Job, who raised problems about the goodness of God in the light of the evil of the unmerited suffering which man has frequently to face."⁽⁷³⁾

Jung builds an alternative scheme for the understanding of evil in which the principal elements, as far as this paper is concerned, are as follows:-

(a) Truth: For Jung, truth is a matter of experience; truth is truth for him because he has experienced it. It is not only a statement which corresponds to another statement that makes truth true, neither is it only an empirically verifiable statement which has been analysed and scientifically substantiated, which makes truth true. Truth can also be known through psychic experience. He goes on "Physical is not the only criterion of truth: there are also psychic truths which can neither be explained nor proved nor contested in any physical way."^(73a)

(73) H. L. Philp - Jung and the Problem of Evil - London. 1956. Page 1

(73a) C. G. Jung - Answer to Job - Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1954 Page xi

He uses the existence of truth as the background and premise to establish the fact of evil. He argues "Even if one says that something exists, such statement is only possible against the other statement that something does not exist. Thus when the Church declares that evil is not (not) *div* or a mere shadow, then the good is equally illusory, as its statement would make no sense." (74)

Jung believes that good and bad co-exist as opposites and they are experienced both by man, as positive, and negative elements. That in the world there is not only the good, as the Christian asserts, but there is also the evil, the so called perversion of the good, 'Privatio Boni', side by side with the good. He defines evil to mean something "awful and horrible". (74a) He said that the Christian closes his eyes to the fact of the existence of evil and regards it as if it were not there. He says that "Quite apart from everyday experience it would be extremely illogical to assume that one can state a quality without its opposite. If something is good then there needs be something that is evil or bad. The statement that something is good would not be possible if one could not discriminate it from something else. Even if one says something exists such statement is only possible against the other statement that something does not exist." (75)

(b) Evil: Jung explains evil to be a tendency which creates an unpleasant psychological situation and which dates back to early childhood. The bad tendencies were repressed into the unconscious mind in early life and cannot be confined there any more during adulthood but have

(74) H. L. Philp - Jung and the Problem of Evil - London. 1956. Page 18

(74a) Ibid. Page 31

(75) Ibid. Page 33

to come to the surface like bubbles of water and overshadow the whole outlook and behaviour of the person. Similarly, if the tendencies were good they would have influence and impact on the person.

Carl Jung, now uses the analogy of the conscious and the unconscious to establish a means of communication between man and God.

(c) The Conscious: On one side, Jung believes that when man becomes aware that he is conscious of himself, that moment of recognition or awareness is a realisation of the God in man. Therefore God speaks in the Conscious mind.

(d) The Unconscious: On the other side, Jung believes that God is the Great Unconscious. Jung stresses the fact that there is an arbiter in the chaos of conscious. He likens the unconscious to a source or spot from which springs of water flow to make what eventually is a large river. It is the unconscious that brings forth and feeds the conscious. The unconscious does not represent dead matter. To be unconscious means one is not aware of oneself at a particular moment or more often not aware of certain tendencies, whether good or bad, which lie buried in the unconscious mind, unrecalled. Immediately one recalls certain tendencies which lie buried to the conscious mind, one becomes aware of oneself. Therefore it is the unconscious that flows and feeds the conscious. In other words it is the Unconscious God which flows and bubbles into the conscious and animates and revives it to become aware of its existence. Jung says "After all, we can imagine God as eternally flowing current of vital energy that endlessly changes shape just as easily as we can imagine him as eternally unmoved unchangeable essence."(76)

(76) C. G. Jung - Answer to Job - Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1954.

(e) Satan: In presenting Satan, Jung speaks of Satan as the serpent in Genesis chapter 3.

Jung narrates at length the story of the serpent in Genesis 3 as I have already narrated in the early passages of this paper. In the Genesis story of the serpent, he speaks of a myth which refers to Adam as Son of Yahweh and Lilith a daughter of Satan or emanation of Satan who was given in marriage to Adam. This Lilith the daughter or emanation of Satan is the satanic correspondence to Sophia who was the Greek female god, the Pneuma, which had a pre-existence with God. He explains that as Eve led Adam to commit sin, so Sophia, the female counterpart of God, who was co-eternal with Him, might in some way have influenced God and caused the lack of proper reflection in Him in his relationship with Job. Jung goes on "If we consider Yahweh's behaviour, up to the reappearance of Sophia, as a whole, one indubitable fact strikes us - the fact that his actions are accompanied by an inferior consciousness." (77)

(2) The Use of the Book of Job by Carl Jung

Satan: In presenting Satan, he speaks of Satan as one of the Sons of God who brings suffering, evil and sin. Jung uses his understanding of the relation between the conscious and the unconscious to explain the story of Job. Jung says that Yahweh became jealous of the keener conscience that Job, his creature was possessing because God being the Unconscious could not possess this keener conscience because He was Unconscious. The fact that this keener conscience was possessed by Job was brought to light by Satan who with Yahweh's permission had been going to and fro as though he had been commissioned by Yahweh. Thus Satan made Yahweh aware of this in his servant. Yahweh realizing this became jealous and suspicious of Job's upright and perfect life, that there was an ulterior motive behind the moral character of Job. That he was upright and perfect might be due

(77) Ibid. Page 67

to his prosperity. Jung says "Could a suspicion have grown up in God that man possesses an infinitely small yet more concentrated light than he Yahweh possesses? A jealousy of that kind might perhaps explain his behaviour. It would be quite explicable if some such dim, barely understood deviation from the definition of a mere "creature" had aroused his divine suspicions. Too often already these human beings had not behaved in the prescribed manner. Even his trusty servant Job might have something up his sleeve ... Hence Yahweh's surprising readiness to listen to Satan's insinuations against his better judgement."(78)

Jung explains that the challenge thrown by Satan was that of a bet with Yahweh, which was more important than the insinuations cast by Satan. But it appears to be incongruous that the Unconscious God could become aware of a point raised against Him by Satan. H.L. Philp expresses this dilemma in this way: "If there is a 'Divine Unconscious and lack of reflection' it seems difficult to think of God being jealous and also impossible to think of Satan being part of Him."(79)

Sin: Sin is presented in a form of 'a Shadow' which takes a form in the consciousness made up of all sorts of tendencies, good and bad, as I have already explained previously in this paper. Jung said these could not be repressed all the time but have to come into the conscious mind sometimes and their evil influence and impact affect the behaviour of the person. He traces the genesis of these tendencies, as he did in the case of evil, to a person's earliest childhood and to environmental influences. These impressions or tendencies which may be good or bad were standards which the parents or society accepted as good or rejected as bad. The bad tendencies very often caused an unpleasant feeling, identified as morbid disease, which

(78) Ibid - page 21.

(79) H. L. Philp - Jung and the Problem of Evil, London. 1956. page 55.

affects the mind and even the body and may cause neurosis or hysteria, or psychosis or paranoia in a person. These early tendencies which he calls inferior, primitive, unadapted, must be known by the person and neutralized in order to become well adjusted. Even in adulthood a person may repress some things unpleasant in the subconscious mind but the tendencies may later find their way to the conscious and the impact and repercussions may cause mental torture and depression resulting in all sorts of psychological implications. In short, what Jung is saying is that sin is guilt feeling which causes emotional troubles and expresses itself in neurosis and psychosomatic disease of the skin.

Jung does not concern himself with primary theological beliefs about God, for he analyses the book of Job as he would treat a myth, or an image or even a dream. He goes on "It is in fact, impossible to demonstrate God's reality to oneself except by using images which have arisen spontaneously or are sanctified by tradition, and whose psychic nature and effects the naive-minded person has never separated from their unknowable metaphysical background." (79a)

The impression Carl Jung gets from his reading of the book of Job is that God is good as well as vindictive. This view no doubt reflects his background of dualism, as I have already explained in my outline about good and evil. This world is a world of dualism, good and bad; in man there are good tendencies as well as bad tendencies; so God can be both good and vindictive. Jung says of Job that he is one who does not care for moral opinion and who will not be bound by any form of ethics. In spite of this Job does not doubt the unity of God although he recognizes that Yahweh is at odds with Himself to such an extent that He can find a helper and persecutor in one. "Yahweh is not split but is an antimony - a totality of inner opposites and this is the indispensable condition for his tremendous dynamism, his omniscience and omnipotence." (80)

(79a) Ibid - Page xvii

(80) Ibid - Page 10

Jung emphasizes the fact that in spite of Job's doubts and complaints he entertained a glimpse of hope, and Carl Jung came to the knowledge of this fact by reading the following passages in the book of Job. "If it is a matter of justice who can summon Him" (9: 19). "He multiplies my wounds without cause" (9: 17). "He destroys both the blameless and the wicked" (9: 22). "If I wash myself... never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch" (9: 30-31). Then Job expressed the hope of a vindicator, in the God he had complained against. "Behold my witness is in heaven and he that vouches for me is on high... my eye pours out tears to God, that he would maintain the right of a man with God, like that of a man with his neighbour" (16: 19-21). "For I know that my Vindicator lives, and at last he will stand upon the earth" (19: 25).

Jung explains that in chapters 38-41, which deal with ~~the~~ providential revelation, he discovers that the whole speech does not give any reason why Job was exposed to an undeserved suffering. Instead, Yahweh shows His might in the created things, referring Job to monsters like 'Behemoth' and 'Leviathan'. Jung says that this is a threat to Job since he is only a finite and infinitesimal being compared to Yahweh who is omniscient and omnipotent; and Job realizing this has to lay his hand on his mouth. Jung points out, that the speech of Yahweh indicates Yahweh's pre-occupations and His own interest rather than directing his attention to the course of His servant who has been faithful to Him by defending him and protecting him from suffering. By His action, Yahweh has broken His covenant which He has made with His faithful servants, like Job.

Moreover, Jung explains that Job was not a member of the council of Yahweh and therefore did not know of the wager made between Yahweh and Satan and consequently the words "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without sight?" (38: 2), addressed to Job, are illogical, and incomprehensible and should have been addressed by Yahweh to Himself and not Job. He goes on "Counsel refers to eternal and absolute knowledge. If so Yahweh's attitude seems the more illogical and incomprehensible, as he could then have enlightened Job on this point - which in view of the wrong done to him would have been only fair and equitable. I must therefore regard this probability as improbable."

My point of view on Jung's statement on providential revelation is that we cannot understand every occurrence or event in terms of the laws of logic and reason. There are things beyond man's reason and we accept them by faith. Moreover, if God were to defend us and judge us immediately, people would serve Him as a matter of expediency and in slavish fear. By allowing us to suffer as Job did our faith is tried and as the body crumbles, the soul is let out, strengthened. So we get closer in fellowship with God in our suffering.

Jung connects the wisdom of God with Greek notion of Sophia. He said wisdom which is personified as Sophia was co-eternal and existent with God, before creation. This Sophia or pneuma, feminine in nature shares qualities similar to the Logos in the prologue of St. John. It is this which God used as the agent of creation and therefore it has a relationship with God. This wisdom is with God as the agent which reveals the bright side of God's nature, just and kind, the nature of God seen in Jesus Christ. This Wisdom, the bright side of God, is that

which overshadows the dark side of God Himself and of all His sons.

Jung does not mention chapter 28 of Job specifically but by mentioning Sophia, he by implication is referring to Wisdom as an agent of creation which was described as being with God in chapter 28.

III - MEYER FORTES

(1) The Presuppositions of West African Religions in connection with Suffering

In his book entitled Oedipus and Job in West African Religion, Meyer Fortes chose three ethnic African groups in West Africa, the Yoruba, Dahomeans and Bini people to represent the whole people in the religion of West Africa because he thinks the first three tribes have a common religion, common cultural and linguistic background. Again all these tribes, he thinks, have a common system of ancestor worship and a cult of gods or deified beings which are closely linked with the concept of destiny. This type of religion, he thinks, is typical of West African Religion. He goes on "I have dwelt on their beliefs because they are characteristics of West Africa and the ethnographic data are so good. Similar patterns of cult and belief occur among other West African peoples, including some with no obvious linguistic or cultural links with the Yoruba. The Tallensi, whose socio-religion I have studied in the field, are typical of one such non-Yoruba cluster. I turn to them with a particular aim in mind."⁽⁸²⁾ The other type of religion in West Africa, Fortes has in mind is Tallensi.

(a) Some types of West African Religion

In the religion of the three ethnic groups he had mentioned, namely the Yoruba, Dahomeans, Bini, and the fourth, the Tallensi, which he has studied in particular, Fate, Destiny and Luck play an important part in their belief in Cultic and Ancestor worship. He

(82) Meyer Fortes - Oedipus and Job in West African Religion -

defines Destiny and Fate to be a person's lot or his portion in life. The people believe that fate, destiny and luck accompany them from the cradle, even in pregnancy to death. He said the people believe in accidents of birth and which make some of them poor and some of them rich. These events in the life cycle are believed to be brought about by their ancestors yet they are interpreted as destiny, fate and luck. The pattern of beliefs amongst the Yoruba, Beni and Dahomeans may be analysed as follows:-

(i) Fortune starts with the child yet unborn in the womb whose soul is believed to be kneeling before a deity who chooses his fate on earth. Success depends to a great extent upon a reasonable request before the deity because those who make demanding requests thinking they have the right to expect whatever they want, do not receive them. Things come not as one wants nor as one expects, but what in life accident brings, that is luck. Requests for good fortune and enquiries into misfortune are done to a great extent through the instrumentality of a diviner who divines, a trickster, the custodian or the guardian of the shrine who explains a person's misfortune or even good fortune as one's fate, destiny and luck.

(ii) The individual's destiny is represented in cultic worship, Fortes continues, in the symbolism of a snake and a rain-bow which is usually an individual affair. The individual has his own private Destiny, or deity, to protect him from another person who plans against him to destroy him, and which even helps him to promote his own fortune.

(iii) There is the pantheon shrine for the family or the tribe which is different from the individual private Destiny deity, for that is represented in a symbol of sky or earth design, headed by and in a form of created divinity which is both male and female. This third form of worship which is ancestor worship, continues Meyer Fortes, "is a complex ancestral cult correlated with descent groups, local communities and political units. The ancestors of a descent group are collectively enshrined and worshipped in a room specially set aside for this purpose." (83)

The Yoruba, the Beni and Dahomeans have forms of worship and beliefs which are common, namely (i) Deity cultic worship embodied in a shrine with a custodian and guardian as the divine trickster who serves as the spokesman, (ii) the individual Destiny deity which is owned by the individual for his protection and then (iii) the pantheon ancestor shrine with its worship starting with a long line of descendents.

(b) Ancestor and deity Worship

The Tallensi domestic family and ancestor-worship which Fortes has closely studied comprises the major part of his description of the religion of West Africa. A family in Tallensi consists of a group of males. It begins with a man and his son, and the son's sons together with the wives of the adult men and their unmarried daughters. This he calls a typical patrilineal family with a common ancestor which may

(83) Ibid - page 24

be traced back to ten or twelve generations. The daughters can marry out of this family and the wives of the male members come out from adjacent lineages. Normally it is a localised group with some autonomy. The cultic worship of the ancestor starts with the localized group beginning with the segment of an ancestor group and joined by another segment until the segments become a union of segments and form one maximum cult worship of patrilineal ancestor, all tracing back to one common founding father or ancestor.

The man who succeeds a father who dies has to perform some rituals by which he emerges straight into the father's status. During the life time of the father the son who has come to adult age has to fulfil certain demands and has to perform his responsibility to the father in return for the care his father has taken in looking after him when he was young. This also applied to the mother who may not be as stringent in her demand as the father. The son must pay respect and honour, and give financial support to the father in old age until he dies. When the father dies there are some funeral rites the son has to perform before burial. If these obligations are not performed properly both during the life time of the father and during his death, it is believed that the father will visit the son and punish him with misfortunes like disease, pestilences and any kind of severe suffering, or even death. In fulfilment of this obligation the son who is the successor continues to pay loyal homage to the ancestor in the form of sacrifice and the pouring of libation to the soul of the departed father. Fortes goes on "The supreme act of filial piety owed by the sons is the performance of the mortuary and funeral ceremonies of the parents. It is felt by the Tallensi as a compulsion of conscience but there is a powerful religious sanction in the background. To fail in

it is to incur the everlasting wrath of the ancestors. For the mortuary and the funeral rites are the first steps in the transformation of parents into ancestor spirits, and worship of the ancestors is in essence the ritualization of filial piety."⁽⁸⁴⁾ I agree with Fortes that this is exactly how ancestor worship came into being. There is a strong sense of belief even now, in the more primitive areas in West Africa, to invoke the spirit of the ancestors by means of pouring of a libation to ask for prosperity and protection from the ancestors for the individual and the family as a whole. In fact good fortune for some people ^{is} ~~are~~ believed to be brought about by the departed ancestors. Some Africans even go to the extent of asking the ancestor to vindicate their innocence in a case of a controversial nature and to punish their persecutors.

Meyer goes on to say that every person in this tribe is supposed to be accompanied by a guardian spirit for the purpose of protection beginning from his infancy to death. In return for the good services rendered by the ancestor guardian spirit, the Tallensi offer sacrifice in the form of a fowl or guinea-fowl to the guardian spirit. One surprising thing about this is that if a six-year-old child, whose guardian spirit had been pacified by an offering of some sacrifice, dies in spite of the sacrifice, the cause is still attributed to his fate and destiny. The child's destiny was to die like that and his mother's fate was to be like that, that such misfortune should visit her. Even at the pre-natal period miscarriage of pregnancy is attributed to evil pre-natal destiny. The help of a diviner would be sought and sacrifices would be offered to avert further miscarriage or misfortune. On

(84) Ibid - page 29

the other hand, if good fortune attends someone in terms of children, animals and material wealth it is also attributed to the course of good destiny. It is his lot and destiny to have that as his life style.

Fortes explains 'Destiny Shrine' or 'Deity Shrine' as follows. A shepherd happens to take his sheep for pastorage, during the course of his work and taking the sheep to the bank of a river to drink, he finds a crocodile which threatens the life of the sheep so he shoots and kills the crocodile. Later there arose suspicion that the crocodile was the dead father or mother, who has manifested himself or herself taking the shape of the crocodile. Therefore the skull of the crocodile and the arrows used for shooting in killing the animal are collected and placed in a shrine which is built of dried mud and covered with variety of relics and other ritual paraphernalia, marked in appearance for each type, symbolizing a specific category, or configuration, of ancestor spirits. From the information so far given by Fortes, it appears to be incontrovertibly the case that there will be as many deity or destiny cults as there will be ancestor shrines, because of the erection of many ancestor shrines, and this no doubt accounts in part for the rise of polytheism in West Africa, and the worship of many deities.

(c) Taboo

Fortes again explains with a story. A farmer takes his hoe and cutlass with the intention of going to weed and cultivate corn. During the course of weeding he cuts himself and sustains injury and this results in sickness confining him to bed. He recovers, goes again to continue cultivation of the corn. Unfortunately for him, he

cuts himself again, sustains bruises and is unable to continue work. He goes home, consults a diviner who tells him his ancestor is causing all these unfortunate accidents because he does not want him to cultivate corn. It is an abomination for the ancestor. Thereupon the farmer resolves to abhor corn and henceforth he and his children after him do not eat corn anymore. Corn has become a taboo for the future generation.

This may be superstitious on the part of the descendent, but there must be a germ of truth in it. Whatever one may call it or whatever reason one will give for its rise, the truth is that some Africans do not take certain foods and the reasons may be religious.

In the whole of his description, Fortes does not mention any kind of sin or evil or Satan; instead he mentions fortune, destiny, luck, misfortune and good fortune and ancestor and deity worship. Definitely, if people do not have any knowledge of sin, or evil then there will be no sense of guilt. If there is no sense of guilt then there will be no sense of repentance. It seems from the description of this kind of West African Religion that the people do accept individual responsibility of some kind. To put it in another way, the individual has come to an awareness that it is his civic and religious duty to be responsible for parents but he does not claim that the good fortune he gets is in response to his duties to his parents or the deity. This sense or idea of one being responsible for his actions and bearing the blame or praise is completely ruled out in Tallensi society; instead every outcome of their life is attributed to luck, destiny and fate. The deity or the ancestor determines everything for the people.

Again, it seems from Fortes' description that the life of the individual is controlled by the demands of either the structure of the

society or the departed. The people's sense of moral judgement is based on what the society or the family expects from them. Life in this society is kept going and maintained by their traditional beliefs. The tradition seems to have its basis in their religion, of ancestor worship. This kind of social and religious relationship establishes the fundamental belief that fair dealings are the foundations of a good society. These foundations are respect for elders, practice of truth and justice among the people, and the love of God and man which brings its own rewards. Fortes was beginning to see some signs of rebellion from the younger generation in Tallensi society who could not give up their cultivated land. There are those who have grown up to adulthood and have got married. They want to break through this socio-religious structure of the society. Meyer goes on "But when sons grow up and begin to farm for themselves and to look for wives, the wish for independence arises. Then the rights of the father - to command his sons labour and property, to take responsibility for him in law, to sacrifice on his behalf to ancestor spirits, to discipline his manner and morals - become irksome."(85)

In his book entitled African Traditional Religion, E. C. Parinder emphasizes the truth that the African by nature lives in a spiritual triangular universe. "The relationship between these spiritual powers has been aptly represented by a triangle. At the apex is the sky, which symbolizes the Supreme Power from whom all life flows and to whom all returns. The base is the earth, sometimes personified as a goddess but always important as the producer of his food and the burying place of his dead. On the earth lives man and his chiefs and

(85) Ibid - page 28

kings... On one side of the triangle are his ancestors rising up in hierarchy by their increased powers."⁽⁸⁶⁾ In his desire to know his creator and the fear and reverence the African has for God, the primitive African may turn to God through intermediaries, what Fortes explained as deities and ancestors. Even when he is faced with the hazards of life like the scarcity of food, poverty, disease, and death, in fact suffering of any kind, the primitive African turns to his God in the sky through the intermediaries below for the cause and answer. He feels that the God who dwells in the sky is too Great and Holy to be approached and he can only speak to the God in the sky through the lesser gods, or the ancestors, the intermediaries. This may also account for the pantheon gods and polytheism, the worship of many gods, in West Africa. He pours libations to them in gratitude for their being instrumental to his good fortune, for giving abundance of food and for his protection from all sorts of suffering. On the one hand if he suffers any misfortune he attributes the cause or his failure to not being able to fulfil his duty to satisfy the demands of the gods as well as the expected standard of duty to parents and ancestors. On the other hand if he is blessed with fortune he attributes it to his luck or portion.

(2) The Use of the Book of Job by Meyer Fortes

I have dealt at length with West African Religion as presented by Fortes supplemented by my own comments, and now I shall dwell on the influence the book of Job has had on Fortes and his analysis of West African Religion.

(86) E. C. Parinder - African Traditional Religion - S.P.C.K. 1962.

Fortes makes it clear that, in African thought, right from the beginning of the individual's life in society, the god chooses its ward and the citizen knows his responsibility to the god, the ancestor and the parent. According to the structure of the society, the ward has to show respect, perform his household duties, be obedient and humble and show great respect to his parents. It is also the responsibility of the parents to maintain the child, train him and protect him as much as possible. When the child comes to the age of adulthood he learns to be responsible by cultivating the land and make it a viable business to support his family and his parents in their old age.

The child who has grown into adulthood, continues Fortes, does not only support the parents in old age but most important has some mortuary and funeral obligations to discharge as his duty. He is to see to the burial of his parents when they die. This is the first step to transform parents into ancestors. Furthermore in the cultic worship at the shrine, the citizen performs sacrifices to the god and pours a libation to both the god and the ancestor. In addition, the adult citizen has to observe taboo avoidance as his responsibility.

This social and religious responsibility of the West African citizen or Tallensi in the vertical and horizontal order, has in no way any claim for any material substance. It is in no way a certificate of favour or claim for good fortune. It is a duty and a responsibility required of them not to be rewarded in terms of material substance or any form of prosperity but a social duty, or a religious duty, a parental duty if you may choose to call it within the society. If he discharges his duty he becomes satisfied, and this is a reward sufficient for him that he has been able to perform his duty. Fortes goes on "They worship their ancestors because ancestry and more particularly

parenthood is the critical and irreducible determinant of their whole social structure. No fear or ignorance substitution but the moral bonds of filio-parental relationship are the springs of the Tate (Tallensi) ancestor worship. The significant parallels with Oedipus and Job lie in this."⁽⁸⁷⁾

The duty the people perform does not determine their fortune in terms of reward, for Fortes said that whatever the ancestor did was accepted as just and men had no choice but to submit. The people accepted their fortune whether good or bad as their luck or lot or destiny. They had no hand in it, it was given to them by the gods or ancestor. The prosperity that came to them was not their choice; it was determined by their god and they cannot dispute it for whatever the gods decree that is best for them. Fortes goes on "But unlike the Biblical hero, Tallensi do not attempt to dispute their ancestor rights and authority, they commonly plead with them for benevolence and sometimes protest their own deserts."⁽⁸⁸⁾ Fortes said that for Job he protested vehemently and brought charges against God. This was because he was misguided by his status and believed himself entitled to recognition and reward in terms of his own standards of virtue and right. Tallensi would not fall into this error in relation to their ancestors. He goes on; "Job's salvation comes when he recognizes his god's omnipotence as a phenomenon beyond question. He perceives that submission to his god must be absolute, whether or not it corresponds to norms of righteous conduct among men. This is the attitude of filial humility

(87) Oedipus and Job in West African Religion - Cambridge. 1959.

(88) Ibid. Page 59

and faith towards all powerful parents. In this relationship it is possible, and indeed inevitable, for the inferior to accept everything willed for him by his superior, whether it turns out to his advantage or not as an act of justice. In Job's case it makes his tribulations appear as the means by which he was taught a true understanding of the nature of his dependence on God and of the services befitting to his relationship. It is appropriate that he is in the end restored not only to God's favour but to health status and rank."(89)

The point Meyer Fortes is making is that Job in the end realised that his prosperity did not depend on his life of righteous living but on GRACE and though he had passed judgement on things too great for him yet by the grace of God he is restored to his former place twice as much, as the story of the epilogue goes. It is from God's gracious bounty that we are given material substance. Prosperity is therefore a free unmerited gracious gift from God's ocean of love and the Tallensi of the West African Religion has learned this from his god or ancestor as good fortune and he accepts it as his luck.

There is another aspect of the story of the book of Job which Fortes has got hold of. In the last chapter of Oedipus and Job in West African Religion he makes this statement "In this context the punitive aspect of ancestor figures has a disciplinary not destructive function."(90) This statement corroborates an earlier statement Fortes made about Job. He says "Job's sufferings are like severe measures of discipline that a father might use to correct a son who, while exemplary in his conduct, was getting too big for his boots and arrogating

(89) Ibid - page 75

(90) Ibid - page 77

to himself a status equal to his father's; and Job's salvation might be compared to the son's realising and accepting his filial dependence."(91)

Suffering as a discipline comes out in the speech of Elihu, pointing out that suffering can sometimes serve as a discipline. Fortes sees the suffering of Job as a tendency of pride to exaltation, therefore God, Superior ^{to} ~~than~~ Job in Majestic Omnipotence and as a Magnanimous Father is seeking to purge Job in his suffering, which will humble him as a child who wanted to be equal with his father. Thus suffering too will teach him a lesson of humility.

(91) Ibid - page 18

CHAPTER FOUR

"THE CONCLUDING REMARKS"

This book is set in contrast against this conventional and popular idea that the righteous is always rewarded and the wicked is always punished. The author therefore begins with the scene of God and Satan as one of His sons who sets the ball rolling. Does God reward a person because he worships Him, fears Him, speaks properly of Him, and hates to do evil? The author brings Satan to challenge God, the Giver of all things, that the prosperity of Job is in response to his fear of Him, and his life of righteousness. Job is stripped completely of all his prosperity, even his honour, to see the consequence of this and how Job will react against God. Job at first accepts the challenge quietly and calmly with all equanimity of heart, without any argument and submits: 'The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord' (Job 1: 21). Barth says that by confessing these words Job has given a clear indication that he has no claim in any way on the gifts God bestows on people and that every gift that comes to man is a free and gracious gift of God.

Does Barth interpret the book of Job correctly in giving Job the credit that he is a faithful witness? I think that this interpretation is right because one of the aims of the author of the book of Job is to prove that God's gifts to us and the prosperity we receive are not motivated by any action of ours and that we have no part in it, but they are free gracious unmerited gifts given to us from his bounty and Barth firmly emphasizes that God acted freely. God was not under any obligation to Job and Job also acted as a free agent because he, Job, did not know the argument and the wager God had made with Satan.

Furthermore, after this confession of Job in 1: 21, that Job has no claim on God's gifts and the objective of the prologue that suffering can sometimes be a test of one's faith, the author introduces the three friends of Job to prove that the conventional idea that the righteous is rewarded and the wicked punished is not always true as against the gift of God by Grace and innocent suffering as a test of faith. The dialogue begins with the conventional idea that the righteous is rewarded and the wicked suffers. "According as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, And sow trouble reap the same" (Job 4: 8). The dialogue continues to a point where God's Omnipotence is absolute and cannot be challenged, "He plunders, Who can prevent Him, Who will say to Him what are you doing" (9: 12). The dialogue still continues until it comes to a point that it is from God all things flow, sorrow as well as joy, wounds as well as their healing (Job 5: 18) riches as well as poverty (22: 18).

This absolute greatness and the power of God has led some people to describe God as vindictive, irascible and capricious. Among such people is Jung. Is Carl Jung interpreting the nature of God correctly in the book of Job? But I think Jung is wrong in his interpretation of God in the book of Job, because he has taken his perspective of the nature of God from only a section or narrow view of the book instead of following the whole argument through to the end. The author's argument in this book is that God does not always use suffering as a punishment but sometimes as a test of faith for the innocent sufferer and therefore he provides a dialogue making out that God is angry with the sinner. He tries to disprove this at the end of the dialogue by making the point of Yahweh's speeches that God's rule transcends the rules of moral retribution, and though they are mysterious, involved in

his ways of dealing with men, yet He is a God of love; full of compassion and gracious in mercy. Thus Jung has to follow the reading of the whole book to the end before he can detect this truth. It is dangerous to read the book of Job and take the truth of it in bits. This is to ruin the unity of the message. Though suffering in its non-moral and moral action are mysterious to us, yet it teaches us a lesson that when the innocent suffers, he is having his faith being put to the test and furthermore that God, through suffering, is seeking to educate us and to draw us to Himself. A faithful worshipper or witness always comes to fellowship with God in his suffering.

Meyer Fortes has got the right hold on the teaching of the book of Job, for Fortes accepts the sufferings of Job as severe measures of discipline that a father might use to correct a son who, while exemplary in his conduct, is getting too big for his boots and arrogating to himself a status equal to his father's, and Job's salvation might be compared to the son's realizing and accepting his filial dependence. Fortes discovers that however virtuous Job may feel he cannot measure himself against God's judgement and this is the gist of the providential revelation from the thirty eighth to the fortieth chapters of the book of Job.

Again Fortes emphasizes that all the characters in the book of Job agree that God is just, but the triumphing of the wicked is short. Another point Barth makes is that in the speech of Yahweh, Yahweh declared Job as the true witness and the friends as the false witness and it was indeed only Yahweh who can do this at the end of the Book. This is Barth's characteristic way of saying, if God says YES, it is yes, if NO, it is no. Barth correctly interprets the picture the book presents of God about the providential revelation. In addition, it is

important to recognise that the references in the Yahweh speeches to the attitude of the three friends of Job imply that we have to be judiciously careful in being judgemental towards other people, for no one has the absolute truth. There is the danger that by judging other people we might be wrong ourselves by emphasizing the wrong point and bring injustice to our fellow man. In this matter, Jung makes a valuable contribution by saying that the patient sufferer comes to us to soothe his suffering; and Jung is talking about neurosis and emotional troubles, We should not apply judgemental attitudes to others for they will recede into the background and take rebellious attitudes as Job did with his three friends. In the prologue, when Job was deprived of his property he took it calmly and coolly, "the Lord gave, the Lord had taken away blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1: 21), but immediately the three friends visited him and applied a judgemental attitude by saying that he had sinned and so he was suffering, Job changed his attitude and rebelled against them by confronting them. This brought no therapeutic solution. What we have to do is to enter into the situation of the sufferer and identify ourselves with him and try to understand him. By this we help him to bring out the cause of his suffering and help him, if we can, to resolve his problem. This the three friends failed to do. It is very easy to see the little piece of sawdust in your friend's eye and fail to see the beam which is in your own eye. There is nothing wrong in making a judgement about wickedness, but we must see that we make the right judgement otherwise we will make the situation worse. After all it is God, according to Barth who is able to say YES or NO as the Judge of all things, and when He did that in His speeches then both Job and the friends came to know themselves properly as they were. Ecclesiastes

3: 1 affirms that there is a season for every thing, and it is only God who knows that time and the purpose of that time but in the meantime we should allow both the wicked and the righteous to grow together until the harvest, when the day of reckoning comes, and Yahweh makes his speech.

The Teaching of the book of Job

In summary, the book of Job teaches us (i) That sin is not always the cause of suffering and (ii) That when an innocent man suffers it is not necessarily the case that he has sinned but it is because his faith is being put on trial. He is being tested on account of his faith in God. This is central in the book. (iii) That when sometimes we suffer it may be that God wants to put us right; suffering therefore becomes a corrective measure which is sent to humble our pride and to teach us the lesson of humility so that we may draw closer to God. We are therefore purified by suffering. (iv) That the material substance which we receive in terms of prosperity may come to us freely out of God's bounty, out of his free will and love. It is an act of Grace; it is an unmerited gift of Grace. It is invaluable gift from God. (v) That our righteousness does not enable us to claim anything from God. We are not justified because of our righteousness because it can never equal the righteousness of God. We are justified because of our steadfast faith demonstrated in God, an unmovable faith, rooted in God. (vi) That sacrifices and prayers are efficacious if directed to God on behalf of the sufferer. (vii) ^{But} ~~That~~ the book of Job does not exhaust all the possible solutions to the problem of suffering, which still remains a mystery to be found in the wisdom belonging to God alone. It is enough that the believer must have the fellowship

of God in his suffering and rest content in God.

But after all is said and done, the book of Job fails to deal with vicarious suffering and also suffering in the life hereafter. Vicarious suffering is dealt with in the book of Isaiah, chapters 40-55. In that book we read about the Suffering or Ideal Servant.

The servant is chosen as a servant of Yahweh who is endowed and imbued with the spirit of God and equipped for his work. His mission was to spread throughout the whole world, true religion of justice and righteousness. He would not coerce, nor use violence in his method of evangelism. The manner of his work was to be unobtrusive, gentle and unassuming.

The nature of his mission would be to give sight to them who are blind and to bring out captives from prison and those who sit in the darkness of prison. The area of his mission stretches to far off areas, to the islands and the regions of both the Israelites and the Gentiles.

His ultimate victory would take people by surprise and would arouse the amazement of all peoples, even kings; yet the path to such a glorious end would not be easy, it would be marked by martyrdom. He would be wounded for our transgressions and would be bruised for our iniquities. His sufferings would be by reason of the penalty of his people.

The Israelites had no belief in the life hereafter, their attention was very much centred in the pleasures of this world and on prosperity as the goal of life; but once they came to believe in life after death the God of the Israelites will bring everything to judgement; the righteous will have perpetual blessed and glorious life but the wicked will have torment. "The just live for ever and their

reward is with the Lord and the care of them with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive the crown of glory and the beauteous diadem from the hand of the Lord." (Wisdom 5: 15-16).

The teaching of Jesus Christ and the biblical teaching about his resurrection throw much light on suffering here on earth and in the life to come. Once he and his disciples were passing along, and they came across one who was born blind and his disciples put the question to Jesus "Rabbi who did sin, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." (John 9: 2-3). The first of the alternative cause of suffering suggested is that the man himself had sinned and that his blindness was a punishment, divinely sent; namely the doctrine of Divine Moral Retribution discussed in the dialogue between Job and his friends. This is the old conventional idea that sin brings suffering. Jesus at once refutes that idea by emphatically saying No, it was not the man. The other alternative cause of suffering suggested by the disciples was that the man was suffering because of the sins of his parents, his parents' sin has affected him and therefore the man is bearing the punishment thereof. This doctrine is frequently stated in the Old Testament e.g. Exodus 20: 5; Numbers 14: 18 and was vehemently repudiated by the younger Israelites during the latter part of the exile in Babylon and after the exile.

"The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." (Jeremiah 31: 29). Of course, Jeremiah and Ezekiel have dealt with this doctrine long ago. "But everyone shall die for his own iniquity." (Jer. 31: 30). "The soul that sinneth it shall die, the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father." (Ezekiel 18: 20).

Again, Jesus emphatically answered them in the negative that the cause was not the sin of the parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. Jesus' answer was that the blindness of the man was an occasion for God to exhibit his power that he can turn suffering into victory and that suffering is not out of the orbit of the power and control of God. Suffering has become an enigma in the world but God can turn it to a useful purpose so we might see the power of God which can do all things. Suffering which seems a riddle can be solved by God and this act of God usually deepens the faith of the sufferer as it did happen in the case of Job. There is no doubt that Jesus' whole intention and purpose was to do the will of God and he knew that that would bring disastrous consequences. But he was utterly confident of his calling since he was in fellowship with God His Father, and the worst of human scheming was mysteriously turned into victory and good purpose for God's own sake.

The relevance of suffering to the life hereafter is as follows:-

(i) I believe that suffering will have a better and fuller explanation in the life hereafter. Here on earth it still remains a mystery because we are finite beings and therefore we lack the power and insight to penetrate into the depths of things. We see things in part, because the body is still in prison in the flesh, our vision is also blurred, we see things dark and dim. (ii) That suffering here on earth as well as death is not a cessation. It is not the end of everything as is described in Sheol, but by all means we shall meet finally and the consequences of all our actions, as it were, on a judgement day, will be revealed. It is there we shall be made to understand the actual meaning of suffering; be it a punishment for the

wicked or a glorification. In the meantime we have known from the teaching of the book of Job that man is justified in the sight of God not because of his good purposes and intentions and works but his unwavering faith demonstrated in God. Again, we know now from the life and resurrection of Jesus which has thrown light on suffering that innocent suffering which is vicarious, will be mysteriously turned into exaltation by God and that death, the last agony on earth is now an entrance gate to God. (iii) That the fellowship which the believer started here in his suffering with God will be consummated in the life after death, and that fellowship will be a great reunion with God. The believer will have a greater and fuller contentment and his rest in God will be eternal. (iv) It is also to be hoped that the life of the wicked man's situation will be explained, those who did not do the will of God and rebelled against everything on earth. I am definitely sure that by all means there will be a dichotomy between the wicked and the righteous. In the meantime let them all grow until the harvest time.

Finally the writer of the book of Job is therefore trying to show that it is not sin that always causes suffering, but that the innocent or the righteous can suffer as a test of his faith in God, and that suffering does protect us against the temptation of pride, that we elevate ourselves, and so suffering humbles us and brings us nearer God. The whole book of Job evidences this truth. The prologue shows that suffering can be a test of faith. The ensuing dialogue presupposes the traditional and conventional belief that sin is the cause of suffering. The Elihu speeches, among other truths, show that suffering is educative, for it humbles our pride and brings us nearer God. The Yahweh speeches show that there are mighty things in creation

compared with, which man is infinitesimal in God's providential care, and that although there are mysteries in the world, including suffering, it is enough for man in his suffering to have God. The epilogue, by describing the restoration of the prosperity of Job after God has justified him, shows that God rewards us by grace and not by the measure of our righteousness.

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