WISDOM, JUSTICE AND KNOWLEDGE

IN

THE BOOK OF JOB
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By

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This thesis examines various interpretations of the book of Job. These interpretations are found to be inadequate for different reasons. It is then proposed that an examination of certain key concepts - wisdom, justice and knowledge - and their usages suggests that the poet's objective is the definition of human knowledge and its relation to the divine.
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The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate that the central themes of the book of Job are wisdom, justice and knowledge. Certain other themes, such as vicarious suffering or the theological problems of the Exile, would be of greater contemporary interest to the sixth century reader or listener than the fifth. However, it is impossible from the insubstantial treatment of these same themes to determine their precise milieu and significance. The argument of this thesis is that wisdom, justice and knowledge are not issues whose understanding is restricted or noticeably enhanced by the exact delineation of their chronological milieu. They are not in the same category as, for example, the question of retribution and reward, whose central concern is the plight of the individual righteous sufferer. In that particular instance, it can readily be seen that such a topic would have especial popular interest in the exilic and post-exilic era (ca. 597-500) when the traditional
understanding of the inviolability of the House of David had, through necessity, been abandoned. Also, at that time both Jeremiah and Second-Isaiah were discussing in detail the plight of the righteous sufferer, although their discussion occurs within deuteronomistically-oriented literature. Thus for some


2 O. S. Rankin, Israel's Wisdom Literature, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936, p. 97, observes that the argument of the dialogue (chapters 3-31) "is constituted by the acceptance of the developed form of the theory of reward and retribution, which later in the work of the Chronicler we see applied to history and which regarded righteousness and prosperity, or wickedness and misfortune, as representing, as it were, two sides of a mathematical equation. 'The blameless righteous man could not fall into misfortune.'"

3 For a description of that literature see P. R. Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration, London: SCM, 1968, pp. 73 ff.
individuals the story of Job would have particular interest in the immediate exilic era; but recent research into the composition of the book tends 

4S.N.Terrien, "Job", The Interpreter's Bible (hereafter cited as IB), New York: Abingdon, 1954, 877-1198, argues that Job belongs between Jeremiah and Second-Isaiah. He contends (p.388) that Job has been inspired by one of the confessions of Jeremiah (Job 3:3-26 and Jer. 20:14-18) and that Job 21:7ff. is an elaboration of Jer. 12:1-5. He also refers to the literary evidence of Budde, Dhorme and Duhm. In emphasizing the numerous contacts between Job and Second-Isaiah (cf. also his article "Job et Dt.-Esaie", Supplements to Vetus Testamentum (hereafter cited as SVT), XV, Vol de Congres, Genève, 1965, 295-310, p.309) he gives Job priority over the latter, because, he maintains (p.389), "the figure of the servant in Dt.-Isaiah is strongly reminiscent of Job and shows that Job is not the borrower". He further argues that because Job does not consider vicarious suffering in his search for a solution to his problem it must follow that he has not heard of it. That is, he cannot be acquainted with Second-Isaiah.

Rowley, op. cit., p.197f. provides a list of the various dates suggested by many scholars for the composition of the book of Job. He concludes that it is "held by most to be post-exilic, and by many to date from 400 B.C." Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: an Introduction, New York: Harper and Row, 1965, p.467: "the question why the godless so often prosper while the pious suffer was being repeatedly discussed ... in the fifth-fourth century B.C. [It] arose with the rise of individualism". For a further discussion of the date see M.H. Pope, Job, The Anchor Bible, New York: Doubleday, 15, 1965, pp.xxx-xxxvi.
to place it within the period 500-450 B.C. in which age a discussion of Israel's traditions, but more especially of such fundamental problems as knowledge and wisdom, can be seen to have particular relevance. However, it is here suggested that the connections with the books of Jeremiah and Second-Isaiah are sufficiently numerous and compelling to suggest that all three books derive from a common milieu. But it is frequently asserted as more probable that borrowing has taken place. In the case of Job and Jeremiah, Job is

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said to be dependent on the latter for his source.

6 Cf. especially Job 3:5-26 and Jer. 20:14-18, also Job 21:7ff. and Jer. 12:1-3. (Cf. Terrien n. 4 above). For linguistic affinities, cp. Job 16:12 and Jer. 23:29 (the root וָּקַד) and Job 30:6 with Jer. 4:29 (the word נָהֳל 'rocks'). Job and Jeremiah also use certain words with the same nuance of meaning, for example 1) Job 7:2b and Jer. 22:13d - the word וַּעֲשָׂה 'work', 'deed'; 2) the verb יָצָא 'to go away'; Job 14:11 and Jer. 2:36 and 3) the Hiphil of the root לָשׁוּה 'to tell'; Hiphil 'to inform', 'denounce', Job 17:5 and Jer. 20:10. In both instances, according to Driver (S. R. Driver and G. B. Gray, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job, International Critical Commentary, (hereafter cited as ICC), Oxford, 1921, p. 111), the person denounced is in the accusative. That is, both Job and Jeremiah employ a similar idiomatic usage. However, it is extremely difficult to determine in the case of the parallel passages whether the material is 'borrowed', or reflects a common milieu. Cf. John Bright, Jeremiah, The Anchor Bible, New York: Doubleday, 1965, p. 134.

There is, indeed, little in all literature that compares with this piece, and nothing in the Bible, except perhaps the third chapter of Job, to which it is very similar. Whether Job develops the thought of this passage, or whether both derive from a common tradition is a question that cannot be answered with assurance; but kinship between the two is undeniable! The date for Jeremiah is approximately 626-580 B.C. He was, "one of the major prophets, whose activity spans the period 626-ca. 580 B.C. and whose book is second in the canonical order of the prophets", writes J. Muilenburg, "Jeremiah", Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (hereafter cited as IDB), Vol. II, pp. 523-35.

In the case of Second-Isaiah the date generally accepted is the sixth century. C. R. North, "Isaiah", IDB (New York: Abingdon, 1962) p. 737, writes, "It is almost unanimously agreed that the historical
Regarding Job and Second-Isaiah Job is believed to antedate Second-Isaiah. The chronological gap between writer and borrower (presuming it to be a case of borrowing and not just an instance of two writers using the same source) is difficult to determine. P.R. Ackroyd regards literary cross-references as unsatisfactory evidence of dating between Job and Second-Isaiah. He prefers the fifth or fourth century date "on the grounds that more direct allusion to the exilic situation might have been expected in a sixth century author, whereas to

background of at least chs. 40-48 is the Babylonian Exile (sixth century B.C.). ... In chs. 40-48 this [The Exile] has come about: the Jews have been despoiled (42:24-25) by the Babylonian-Chaldeans (47:6) in whose land they now are (48:20)."


7 *op. cit.*, p.246.
whereas to a later writer this experience is expressed rather in a more general understanding of the national fortunes. The stress upon the innocence and integrity of Job is not really a counter-argument, since this is so clearly an element in the folk-tale. However, Terrien's argument for placing Job prior to Second-Isaiah is not convincing. The absence of the 'solution' of vicarious suffering in Job is regarded by him as proof of Job's priority over the work of Second-Isaiah. He therefore places Job chronologically between Jeremiah and Second-Isaiah. But as John Gray and other scholars have objected, the idea of vicarious suffering was already present in the kingship ideology and therefore the idea must have been well-known throughout Israel. Terrien is correct in drawing attention to the many

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8 S.N. Terrien, "Job", IE.

9 Ibid., pp. 889-90.

10 So, John Gray, (McMaster lectures June, 1970). See especially, P.R. Ackroyd, op.cit., p. 123 and n. 42: "...we may nevertheless recognize that the Mosaic tradition contained an element of vicarious suffering (Ex. 32.32, cf. Rom. 9.3)."
similarities between Job and Second-Isaiah. ¹¹ R.H.

Pfeiffer stressed their importance in 1926:

the parallels in thought and expression between the book of Job and Isaiah 40-55 are sufficiently numerous and close as to make it reasonably certain that one of the two authors (Job and Second-Isaiah) was acquainted with the other. ¹²

However it is here understood to be the case, following Ackroyd, Gray and Guillaume, ¹³ that the book of Job is to be dated ca. 500-450 from which it must follow that the author of the book of Job is the borrower and that he is unmoved by the fact that Jeremiah had already discussed the righteous sufferer and un-attracted to the so-called solution of vicarious suffering in Second-Isaiah and elsewhere. Ackroyd convincingly argues that the book of Job belongs to

¹¹ "Les affinités verbales et thématiques qui unissent les deux œuvres sont trop nombreuses et surtout trop étroites pour permettre sérieusement la formulation d'une hypothèse d'indépendance." S.N. Terrien, "Job et Dt-Esaïe", p. 309.


¹³ P. R. Ackroyd, op. cit., p. 246; Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 470; Gray, loc. cit., cf. supra, pp. 3-4 and n. 5.

Tsevat places the composition of the book ca. the sixth to the fourth century B.C., "in which period
the period ca. 500-450:

to a later writer the experience of disaster is no longer to be explained in terms of sin and retribution, but in the larger terms of the whole purpose of God, and one element in the shaping of the writer's thinking may well be the consciousness that the acceptance of disaster in a way which does no dishonour to God, but results in a deepened appreciation of the relationship between man and God, is one of the things which the people could have learnt and in some measure had learnt from the historic experience [the Exile].

As mentioned above, the king's vicarious atonement for the sins of his people was commonly accepted as the popular expression of the people's repentance expressed in the person of the king in Israel. It is therefore again suggested that the poet of Job was not so much concerned with the problem of human suffering as with the knowledge of God.

the earlier doctrine of collective retribution had lost its sway without yet being replaced by the doctrine of individual retribution in the world-to-come. "Hebrew Union College Annual" (hereafter cited as HUCA), XXXVII, (1966), 73-106, p. 101.


But there are many problems for those scholars who place Job after Jeremiah and Second-Isaiah. There is general agreement that Jeremiah and Second-Isaiah are to be dated ca. 628-580 and 597-530 respectively. This chronology raises the problem of the author of Job's familiarity with and use of the writings of both the former works. Terrien has raised the question of the author's omission of the idea of vicarious suffering in the book of Job. Also it is unprecedented for an Israelite writer to ignore such issues as the Exile in Israel's history.

Also it is unprecedented for an Israelite writer to ignore such issues as the Exile in Israel's history. Traditional writers had always interpreted historical events as signs of God's dealings with his people. However, aside from the fact that Job is

16 Supra, p. 4. n. 5, p. 8. n. 13.
17 Supra, p. 5-6. n. 6.
18 Supra, p. 3. n. 4, p. 8. n. 11.
19 Marvin Pope, op. cit., p. xxxiv, finds the absence of any national concern remarkable in a work supposedly composed by an Israelite. Similarly Pfeiffer (p. 21) in his argument for an Edomitic provenance for the work (Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (hereafter cited as ZAW), N.F.Ed. 5. (1926) 13-26) regards the lack of reference to the author's country of birth as "a feat unequalled in Jewish literature."
wisdom literature and therefore belongs to a different genre from either Jeremiah or Second-Isaiah, there is the significant reason that it appears to be the author's intention largely to ignore - to refute, if the friends are true representatives of that faith - traditional understandings of Israel's religion and specific issues of contention in that faith. Although some issues do occur which are also found in both Jeremiah\(^{20}\) and Second-Isaiah\(^{21}\) such as, for example, the problem of the righteous sufferer, yet it is felt that they are not incorporated in the book of Job for their traditional religious value, but because they are fundamental problems in any religious understanding.\(^{22}\) It is, perhaps, this dis-

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\(^{20}\) For example Jer. chs. 17, 18 and 20.

\(^{21}\) For example Isa. chs. 42, 49-53.

\(^{22}\) S. Rankin, *op. cit.*, p. 19:
Although the Book of Job stresses the incapacity of man's reason to harmonize the data of experience with the belief in the justice of providence, and thus foreshadows the conclusion to which many thinkers have come as to the futility of attempting a theodicy, this book and the succeeding wisdom-writings work out ideas upon the problem of evil, upon human and divine responsibility, and on providence, which, for the development of a reasonable theistic faith, are of first importance.

regard for the traditional Deuteronomic formulation of Israel's religion (for example of the validity of "the developed form of the theory of reward and retribution... which regarded righteousness and prosperity, or wickedness and misfortune, as representing, as it were, two sides of a mathematical equation. 'The blameless, righteous man could not fall into misfortune'"^{23}), together with the examination of fundamental issues such as the nature and extent of human knowledge, that have established the book's position of such particular interest for many poets, painters and philosophers.^{24} A further indication that the poet is preoccupied with the essential concerns of religion such as human knowledge in relation to the wisdom, justice and might of God,

^{23} O. S. Rankin, op. cit., p. 91 and supra p. 2 n. 2.

rather than with lesser subjects such as a new exilic or postexilic interpretation of Israel’s faith, is the fact that his thoughts on what might then be considered more relevant topics, such as, for example, as the Exile or righteous suffering, are respectively nonexistent and inconclusive. Such a philosophical position is, of course, in keeping with the speculative nature of wisdom literature to which the book belongs – which serves as a further explanation for the lack of comment on traditional Hebrew doctrine.

The following is an examination of some of these themes which comprise the composition of the book in order to suggest their relative (though secondary) importance within it.

Righteous Suffering and the Book of Job

Although as mentioned above the idea of vicarious suffering was already present in the kingship ideology, Second-Isaiah was the first of

25 Supra, p. 7, n. 10.
the major prophets to adopt this theme extensively in his work. Both Amos and Micah also experience suffering in order to illustrate their message, but in no way can their sufferings, for the most part assumed, be compared with the mental and physical agonies of Job, Jeremiah or the Suffering Servant in Second-Isaiah. In the latter instance the theme of the innocent sufferer achieved its most intense expression. But the author of Job does not appear directly to be concerned with re-interpreting and re-enacting Israel's historical religion in his own person. Even the dubious reference to the Exile in 12:17-19

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26 Cf. n.15 supra, p.9.

27 E. Dhorme, op. cit., clxvii, regards these verses as an allusion to the Captivity, "a comparison between II Kgs.25:7 and Job 12:18; 36:8 shows clearly that the events narrated in the Book of Kings are reflected in the descriptions of Job and Elihu. Moreover the role of Cyrus will be to 'ungird the loins of kings' (Isa. 45:1)." Cf. also N.H. Pope, Job, xxxiv. However that there is no direct reference to any specific character or event in the Exile in these verses is suggested by N. Sarna's translation of נ"ל ח"ף נו' 12:19 as "a specific class of Temple servitors"; נ"ל ח"ף נו' Job 12:17-19", Journal of Biblical Literature (hereafter cited as JBL), (1955), 272-3. His rendering suggests that these verses are an intrinsic part of a section referring to the power of God rather than to the Exile or any person involved with it.
does not suggest a concern with the traditional aspects of Israel's faith. This fact is all the more remarkable when one remembers that the accepted method for understanding Israel's covenantal religion was the interpretation of historical events as evidence of Yahweh's intervention in human affairs and of his covenantal relationship to his people.  

There are two reasons for this lack of concern:

First, the book of Job belongs canonically to that corpus of Israelite literature known as 'wisdom literature' - a literary genre within the Hebrew tradition but with different foci of interest.  

Second, and related to the above, the author of Job apparently felt it was more significant to ponder the nature of Yahweh's wisdom, might and justice in relation to that of man, as opposed to dealing with the traditional concern - the religious interpretation of historical events as signs of Yahweh's favour or disfavour.  

This concern with the essential questions of religion

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29 It belongs with Proverbs and Ecclesiastes and emphasizes the speculative approach in understanding Israel's religion.

30 Cf. especially Job 38-42.
explains the omission of a preoccupation with contemporary events and issues - the inconclusive discussion of which is further proof of the poet's lack of interest in what he must have considered matters of lesser importance. Nevertheless, it is evident from his extensive treatment of the problem of the righteous sufferer that, although the poet regarded such concerns as secondary in relation to his theme, he considered them sufficiently important questions in which and through which to present his dramatic understanding of the human situation. The question of undeserved suffering is then a basic issue in the inquiry into the nature of God and of his dealings with his people. It was also a matter of especial contemporary interest to the Israelite of the sixth-fourth century B.C. 31 when

31 Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 467 and supra, p. 31 n. 4, and Dhorme, op. cit., cxix. Cf. also Dhorme, loc. cit., "the prophets and psalmists recognize that in the Jewish nation as elsewhere not all incur the same responsibility...the famous proverb 'the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge', is contradicted by Jeremiah (31: 29-30), Ezekiel (18: 2ff), and Job (21: 19-20).
the separate identity of the individual was asserted. It was just then that the Deuteronomistic formulation of reward and retribution was being sharply criticised for its injustice.\textsuperscript{32} Job's eloquent espousal of the issue witnesses to his awareness of contemporary events and to his concern with them. But, more importantly, it indicates his desire that such questioning should lead to an examination of the \textit{fundamental issues} - the wisdom and justice of God and of his relationship to society and the individual. The poet's concern with contemporary problems in no way undermines his involvement with these fundamental issues. Rather, his discussion of contemporary problems is seen to relate to and point towards the major problems. In so doing the author demonstrates his ability to speak in depth on more than one issue and to an audience of varied intelligence simultaneously.

\textsuperscript{32} Eissfeldt, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 467.
The Edomite Provenance of the Book of Job

Another instance of the poet's ability to set his primary concern within the framework of lesser concerns is found in the Edomite situation of the story. It is particularly propitious to remember that in the sixth century relations between Israel and Edom were hostile. It would appear that the author of Job was being naive if he hoped for a receptive audience with such a setting for his drama. But against this quibble appear many substantial reasons for such a milieu:

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33 S.N. Terrien, "Job", pp. 388, "the sixth century of the Israelites to the Edomites was one of hostility bordering on fanatic hatred (Pss. 83: 4-6; 137:7; Isa. 34:5-6; Jer. 49:7-22)". Cf. also S. Cohen, "Edom", in "The Bible in Biblical Interpretation", pp. 26. However Cohen adds (loc. cit.) "the law of Deuteronomy is fairly lenient in the admission of Edomites into the community, Dt. 23:8." Dt. 23:7 requires the Israelite not to abhor the Edomite "for he is your brother". In v. 8 third generation Edomites are to be admitted into the 'assembly of the LORD'. Cf. also the book of Obadiah which is largely concerned with the Edomites.
i) Edom and the East were noted repositories of wisdom. Therefore the foreign setting of the author's work lends authenticity to the tale. The foreign situation is attractive in itself in that it represents the unusual and curious.

ii) The Edomitic situation enables the poet to speak universally and theologically. That is, he is not inhibited by indigenous beliefs and practices.

iii) Such a situation was conducive to a rapprochement between Israel and Edom as was required by Dt.23:7-8.

iv) It served as a timely reminder for those people who regarded Israel's fortunes as bound up with her political fortunes, that another people, despised by them, was capable of such artistry, emotion and thought.

The author's use of an extra-Israel source was preceded in the cases of the Moses and Joseph stories of the Pentateuch. But there are closer

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34 "The Eastern peoples had a special reputation for wisdom (I K.4:30-H.5:10);... S. Cohen, "The People of the East", IDE, II, p.4."
parallels, though perhaps later, in the instances of the books of Ruth and Jonah. In the latter the heroine is a Moabitess and the provenance, Moab, despite the injunctions against the Moabites in Dt.23:3-4 which required their exclusion.35 While some scholars suggest that the purpose of the book of Ruth is to emphasize the acceptance of Moab by Israel from which country the Davidic ancestry was traced, others maintain that its object is the denunciation of exclusivism in Israel's religion.36

35 This vigorous denunciation of the Moabite immediately precedes the regulations governing the Edomite and the Egyptian (vv.7-8). The rejection of the latter is only temporary, but of the former "none belonging to them shall enter the assembly of the LORD for ever". Ruth is usually regarded as belonging within the period 450-250 B.C. Cf. D. Harvey, loc. cit. The book of Jonah belongs to a slightly later time than Ruth. "The book of Jonah belongs to a slightly later time than Ruth. "The book is now mostly held to have been written ca. the fourth century B.C." W. Neil, "Jonah", JDB, II, pp.964-67, p.964.

36 Cohen, "Edom", loc. cit., writes: The point stressed most frequently in the text is that Ruth was a foreigner (1:4, 22, 2:2, 6, 10-13, 21, 4:5, 10). Israel Betten... describes the theme of the book as the 'law of kindness which transcends national boundaries and makes all men kin!'. It is this double theme, with the emphasis more on universalism that
Whatever its purpose, and in so far as it is important, the point is that it is not unusual for an Israelite author to have a foreign situation for his drama. For the author of Job a foreign setting for his narrative was particularly advantageous for a variety of reasons.

Summary.

It is quite evident that the author, whoever he may have been, had an acute knowledge of foreign and domestic affairs, was highly cultivated and possessed a keen political and religious sensitivity.

As far as 'borrowing' is concerned it goes beyond national boundaries than on the simple friendship of Ruth for Naomi, that goes through the book as a whole. "According to D. Harvey ("Ruth", IDR, 131-34, p.133), "the concern of postexilic Judaism with this problem of particularism and universalism, and the emphasis of Ruth on the acceptance of the foreigner and on her goodness, is one argument for the date of the book."

37Gray, following Guillaume (op. cit.), maintains that the author's knowledge was received from the caravaneers who passed through the Hijaz.
should be remembered that the Israelite writer was not restricted by copyright, but was free to incorporate the reflections of other writers within his own work as and how he thought appropriate. Also, originality was not a prerequisite for a good story as the frequent occurrence of similar tales in Near Eastern literature and elsewhere would indicate.\(^{38}\)

The familiarity of Job's predicament establishes a common ground for narrator and audience. Similar themes occur in Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Greek and Indian literatures.\(^{39}\) Again, regarding 'borrowing',

\(^{38}\)N.H.Snaith, *The Book of Job*, p.32, writes: the author of the Book of Job has produced a typical Near East wisdom writing, and he has reproduced the traditional characteristics of similar writings from Mesopotamia, Egypt and the Hittite country. He has been inspired in particular by the poem known to us as 'The Babylonian Job', but in characteristic Hebrew fashion he has transformed it into his own religious world.

\(^{39}\)Snaith, *op.cit.*, p.19, lists seven such similar texts: three Egyptian, three Babylonian and one Sumerian.

The Egyptian texts are:

3) "A Dispute over Suicide", J.A. Wilson, *ANET*, pp. 405-7.

The Babylonian texts are:

1) "The Babylonian Theodicy" (otherwise known as 'The Babylonian Ecclesiastes', or 'A Dialogue about Human Misery'),
it is conceivable that the story of Job owed its origin to the Indian tale of Harischandra or, and more plausibly, "Ludlul bel Nemeqi" is the source for the Hebrew poet. 40

R.H. Pfeiffer, ANET, pp. 438-40.


3) "Ludlul bel Nemeqi" ('I will praise the Lord of Wisdom', otherwise known as 'The Babylonian Job'), R.H. Pfeiffer, ANET, pp. 434-37. Also, R.W. Rogers, Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament, 1912, pp. 164-9. Ludlul bel Nemeqi is generally regarded to have had the greatest influence on the book of Job (cf. Snaith, op. cit., p. 21f.).

The Sumerian Text is:

The Indian parallel tale is the legend of Harischandra, A. and M. Hanson, The Book of Job, Torch Bible Commentaries, London: SCM, 1953, p. 9, "the parallel with the Job legend is very close indeed here, but it is expressed in terms of the Hindu concept of righteousness."

40 Supra, pp. 4-6, n. 6.

Regarding the relationship to Greek literature recent investigations into common motifs in Semitic and Greek legends is shedding much light on the background of these narratives. Cf. E. Kallen, The Book as a Greek Tragedy restored, New York: Moffat, Yard and Co., 1918; M. C. Astour, Hellenosemitica: An Ethnic and Cultural Study on West Semitic Impact on Mycenaen Greece, Leiden: Brill, 1965 (cf. also the critical review of Astour's work in the Journal of Semitic Studies (hereafter cited as JSS) 13(1968), 2, 256-258. J. Paulus,
In brief, it can be seen from the preceding discussion that there are many advantages in the Edomitic situation of the book of Job but no compelling reason to regard the work as other than Israelite. The author had as precedent — if one is required — for the foreign situation of his drama the examples of the Joseph stories. The book of Ruth serves to emphasize the point that the Israelite writer did not regard himself as territorially or culturally restricted in his choice of setting. In Ruth as in Job the chief characters are non-Israelite, but Job is invested by the author with all the characteristics of a Hebrew patriarch.

Humour and Satire in the Book of Job

Again, in discussing the possible intentions of the author of Job it is quite conceivable that his objects were humour or satire when he situated his work in a country anathema to Israel. Or, more significantly for the Israelite, it may have been his intention to caricature Yahweh. Such a purpose may readily be seen in the Yahweh Speeches


Job chs. 38-42.
Yahweh overpowers Job by sheer verbal force. It would appear that Yahweh's objective is to coerce Job to submit in the face of impossible—since Job is incapable of competing in the same abilities because of his human limitations—comparisons and unrelenting invective against the latter's mortal weakness and ignorance. Thus, in this view, Job's confessions must be judged mere lip-service in the face of overbearing power, while the Yahweh Speeches should be regarded as a tour de force by a capricious deity, climaxed by an absurd repentance on Job's part which, in reality, represents his utter scorn for Yahweh. Also it is reasonable to doubt whether Job, who had endured so many tests of his integrity for so long, would repent and accept God since he had earlier stated that he was not to be coerced into such a position, even if Yahweh were to send a whirlwind.

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42 Snaith and Orlinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 24, consider that the core of Second-Isaiah's message was "that God was the only Deity in the universe, omnipotent and just." It might therefore be the author of Job's intention to destroy, or moderate, this concept by his work.


44 42:1-6

45 E.g. 9:11-24.

46 Chs. 9 and 38.
It may also be true that the author's object in this satire (supposing it to be such) is the destruction of a deity whom he regards as a mere contrivance of the human imagination. If this is indeed the case it would follow that he believes, as Freud does, that neuroses are detrimental to the welfare of the individual and that they should be cured. It is thus possible to regard Yahweh, as depicted in the book of Job, as an infamous deity who is easily persuaded to torture an innocent human for the sake of a wager with a malevolent adversary.

In such a view Job's speeches of repentance should be regarded as derisive commentaries on the nature of the Hebrew deity. It would follow from this definition of Yahweh that he is merely a capricious deity, subject to the whims of the Satan,

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48 Such a view may be supplemented by an appropriate selection of those texts which are then purported to comprise the original book of Job. In this case the epilogue should be excised as it records the restoration of Job and the overthrow of the false friends.

49 40:3-5 and 42:1-6.
and when challenged cannot reply in kind, but has to resort to such terrorizing displays of power that the dialogue degenerates into a farcical harangue of an innocent man. That is, "God torments him gratuitously." 50

Although this view is indeed possible, it is here regarded as inadequate. It fails to do justice to the author's description of Yahweh, particularly as he appears in the final four chapters of the book. The following arguments are intended to demonstrate further the inadequacy of this view:

First, the dialogue is set within a common folktale-framework. It follows that the poet is free to exercise considerable license in the composition of his drama. 51 The essential point then is not that Yahweh is trapped into wagering with the Satan at the expense of an innocent person. Such behaviour would indeed detract from the divine integrity, but in fact it is merely a descriptive detail - a means of posing the real issue. The central issue begins with the possibility of human righteousness

51 Cf. Rowley, op. cit., e.g. p. 185.
as exemplified in Job's predicament, and proceeds to an extensive examination of the possibilities for perfect human knowledge in relation to the divine. Similarly, in the closing scenes of the drama, that is, in the Yahweh Speeches and in the Epilogue, the poet is again using figurative language to express his thought. There, in extravagant terms similar to those of the Prologue, Job is doubly rewarded for his probity. Also, the folktales effect is heightened by the patriarchal notions of prosperity which describe Job's restored state. But again, the restoration of Job and the denunciation of the friends are simply necessary dramatic effects. They are merely the corroborative evidence that the drama is concluded and are of no intrinsic importance.

Second, the lengthy replies of Yahweh should not be judged by non-Semitic standards to

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52 chs. 38-42.
53 Cf. Snaith, op. cit., pp. 4f., 16f.
54 42:7.
be unnecessarily verbose harangues of an innocent man. It has been a recurrent feature of the drama for each of the participants to plead his cause at length and repetitively. Job, the three friends and Elihu all speak in this manner however tedious it may seem to the unaccustomed ear. Yahweh, at first appearance, may not seem to listen to what Job has said, but similarly, Job pays little attention to the remarks of the friends and vice versa. Lengthy monologues such as these are not uncharacteristic of this type of Ancient Near Eastern literature. 55

Thus the essential points of the narrative are here considered to be a) that Yahweh, despite Job's imprecations and fears 56 elects to manifest himself before Job, b) that he corroborates, though not in detail, Job's evaluation of the established order, 57 and c) that the theophany itself is not

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55 E.g. Ludlul bel Nemeqi.
56 E.g. 9:11-24.
57 42:7
simply a tour de force, but is, as it is here and throughout this thesis maintained, highly informative as to the author's views on human knowledge, on justice and on the nature of the Hebrew deity in his roles as creator, administrator, judge and source of supreme wisdom. The Theophany and Epilogue are essential to the narrative in that it would be inappropriate stylistically for the author to leave the main character stranded in this state of suspended animation. Also it is unwarranted theologically. Ahab is requited for his injustice to Naboth and David for his corrupt dealings with Uriah the Hittite. An even stronger (in terms of mental anguish) precedent occurs in the instance of Abraham who, following his ordeal on Mt. Moriah, is fully rewarded for his integrity.

In conclusion, the view that the chief purpose of the book of Job is irony is misleading. It ignores the essential matter of the various

58 I Kgs. 21.
59 II Sam. 11-12: 25.
speeches, particularly the Yahweh Speeches, and, mistakenly focuses too much attention on inessential details.\textsuperscript{61} It takes no account of the significant fact that the book of Job is included in the Hebrew canon and is therefore unlikely to be an atheistic composition however sophisticated. Also such a view displays a total disregard for the conventions of Hebrew style and composition.\textsuperscript{62} The net result of this mistaken opinion is a complete misapprehension of the author's intention.

**Summary**

A discussion of some of the issues that occur in the book of Job reveals that the major problem underlying these issues is the question of the extent of knowledge, divine and human. It has been shown that although the

\textsuperscript{61} On what are in reality the stage props of the drama. Cf. Rowley, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 174.

the question of innocent suffering figures prominently it is not the central issue.\textsuperscript{63} Also, Job is neither involved with understanding or perpetuating the traditional historiography that represents Israel's religion. It becomes apparent in the Yahweh Speeches that the poet is concerned with knowledge as it affects human ability to comprehend creation\textsuperscript{64} and to control chaos\textsuperscript{65}. There the divine wisdom and might are contrasted with the human with the result that Job, righteous though he is, recognizes for himself his inferiority in comparison with the divine ability. As Maimonides writes:

In the same manner, as there is a difference between works of nature and productions of human handiwork, so there is a difference between God's rule, providence, and intention in reference to all natural forces, and our rule, providence, and intention in reference to things which are the objects of our rule, providence, and intention. This lesson is the principal object of the whole Book of Job; it lays down this principle of faith and recommends us to derive a proof from nature, that

\textsuperscript{63} As Rowley says (op. cit. pp. 194-5), "...if this [to solve the mystery of suffering] was indeed its purpose it must be pronounced a conspicuous failure."

\textsuperscript{64} Chs. 38-39 in which the main theme is creation.

\textsuperscript{65} Ch. 41 in which the control of creation is the principal concern.
we should not fall into the error of imagining His knowledge to be similar to ours, or His intention, providence and rule similar to ours. 66

It therefore follows that the next section of this thesis should concern itself with the

Joban author's understanding of knowledge divine and human and how it affects both society and the individual.

WISDOM, JUSTICE AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE BOOK OF JOB

It has been the intention of the foregoing to examine some of the so-called principal concerns in the book of Job and to suggest their relative importance within the work. The results of this inquiry have indicated that the main foci of the poet's attention are the wisdom and justice of God and how they relate to society as exemplified in the person of an exemplary Israelite, Job. The following is first, a discussion of the various Hebrew words for wisdom, justice and knowledge in Hebrew literature, and then as they are used by the author of the book of Job. The object of this examination is to demonstrate precisely the meaning of these terms as they are used by the author of the book of Job in order to establish a full critical appreciation of the poet's understanding of the nature of knowledge.

According to 42:7 Job has spoken about "what is right". It would appear from this state-
ment that Job's understanding of God and the world is nearer the truth than that of the friends. His 'sincerity' has prevailed in spite of the adverse circumstances of his suffering and false friends. ¹ His perseverance in adversity plus his refusal to accept any explanation for his suffering which was not true in his experience, whatever its traditional merit, results in his being admitted to a superior knowledge of God, namely wisdom. ² The author of Job was not so much concerned to refute inadequate theological formularies, such as that of retribution and reward, ³ as to determine the nature of the relationship between God and man. The author's view of knowledge is further manifested when he portrays the chief protagonist in his drama as a

¹ Kant, op. cit., p. 206 refers to "Job's plain sincerity" in contrast with the friends who "speak as if the Almighty, on whose affair they decide, and to gain whose favour by their judgment they have more at heart than the truth..." Cf. also p. 209.

² Ibid. p. 207, "for God deigned to discover to Job the wisdom of his creation, chiefly on the side of its inscrutableness."

³ Cf. O. S. Rankin, op. cit., p. 91.
sufferer striving in his agonies to find out the reasons for his plight. It is clear that he does not consider that these questions can be fully answered by the wealthy sheik who has not experienced any suffering (that is, he has not experienced the whole of life but just one side of it). In other words Job, in his pristine state of health, wealth and happiness, is severely limited in his experience of life. For the poet knowing means the disciplined involvement of both body and mind in the cognitive process which he demonstrates in the person of Job, the righteous sufferer.

Job considers all possible reasons for his misfortunes from the perspective of a sufferer in extreme mental and physical agony. Whatever explanation is proposed must therefore be relevant to both his physical and mental states. It cannot be merely an abstract

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*Disciplined* because Job maintains his innocence and integrity ('sincerity') throughout his afflictions.
philosophical statement because the author's understanding of knowledge is that it is both physically and mentally conditioned. Hence the theophany is not so much an argument put forward by Yahweh as a demonstration of the divine power in creation and in the control of chaos. The contrast between Job's religion and that of the friends is that for the former experience is the evidence of authenticity, whereas for the latter tradition occupies that rôle. Although Job does consider the traditional explanation for his situation, that is, the doctrine of retribution and reward, which accounts for his suffering as the result of sin, yet he emphatically rejects it in his case, because in his experience he is righteous. The dogma is incorrect in this particular instance and therefore possibly in other individual cases. Job's predicament requires a new solution. Otherwise, he would earlier have understood and acknowledged

5 Cf. O. S. Rankin, op. cit., p. 91, and supra, pp. 2, 12 and 16; also nn. 2, 23, 31.
his error because, so far as he is aware, he has been scrupulously exact in the fulfilment of his religious duties. 6

Thus the problem of undeserved suffering is the setting for Job's inquiry into the nature and extent of human knowledge in its relationship to the divine, and of its concomitants righteousness and justice.

An Examination of Certain Key Terms in the Book of Job.

It is necessary 7 to determine the full significance of certain words and phrases within this book as a full appreciation of their meaning will illuminate the nature of Job's righteousness and of his lack of wisdom. Their significance for a thorough appraisal of the poet's work will be demonstrated in the course of the discussion of the question originally

7 Supra, pp. 34-35.
posed by the Satan in the prologue, that is, whether or not Job possesses integrity, and if so the nature of that integrity. Although it is affirmed in the Epilogue that Job is indeed a virtuous man, yet it is here considered necessary, for a full appreciation of the poet's endeavour, to explore the nature of that integrity, and to compare and contrast it with that of the friends.

Righteousness - יְיָשָׁע, יְשָׁע, יְשָׁי and יְשָׁי

a) The Hebrew understanding of righteousness.

"The basic meaning of the root is 'straightness', 'hardness', 'firmness'." But the verb is too variously used to support any one consistent and overall interpretation and must therefore be understood in context. K-Br has grouped the noun

into the following classifications, the chief one being justice. For example, he regards justice "as of a terrestrial judge" to be evident in Gn. 18:19:

No, for I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice; so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.

Also II Sam. 22:15:

So David reigned over Israel; and David administered justice and equity to all his people.

For justice "of the divine judge" K-B selects the following texts: Isa. 5:16:

But the LORD of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness.

Jer. 9:23-24:

Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practise steadfast love, justice and righteousness


10 Cf. also: I K. 10:9; Isa. 5:7; Jer. 22:3; Ez. 19:5; Amos 5:7; Ps. 72:3; Pr. 16:12; I Ch. 18:14; II Ch. 9:8.
in the earth; for in these things I delight, says the LORD.'

For righteousness "as the behaviour of men which God expects towards himself" K-B selects the following texts: Gn.15:16:

And he believed the LORD; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness;

Dt.6:25:

And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us. 12

The importance of this brief survey of the verb \( \text{ righteous } \) and the nouns \( \text{ righteous } \) and \( \text{ righteous } \) is to show how they are essentially concerned with both righteousness and justice. \( \text{ righteous } \) refers to a proper community relationship, or attitude, towards God. The \( \text{ righteous } \) is the man who fulfils his religious and social obligations. 13 Thus \( \text{ righteous } \) "often stands

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11 Cf. also Isa.59:1 (where justice is implied), Mic.7:9; Ma.3:20; Ps.5:9.

12 Cf. also Dt.24:13; Ps.106:31; Isa.1:27. K-B further categorizes the noun \( \text{ righteous } \) as 'piety', e.g. Ez.3:20; 'God's justice', e.g. Dt.33:21; 'claims for right, just doing', e.g. Jer.51:10.

13 Gn.6:9; Job 12:4.
parallel with מַכַּה, 'to be clean' (Job 15:14);
with מַכָּה, 'blameless' (Job 9:20); or with מַכָּה, 'innocent' (Ex. 23:7; Dt. 25:1). 14

Within the Israelite community מַכָּה is the essential characteristic of the religious man. Yahweh recognizes that is, shows his favour towards the righteous:

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous but the way of the wicked will perish. 15

Yahweh, however, is the supremely righteous one, 17 in whom man's wisdom, might and glory must be understood.

Man's primary concern must therefore be with Yahweh. It is he who will be the final judge. 18

Achtemeier understands the term as follows:

Not only is he מַכָּה who fulfils the demands of the relationship in which he stands, and not only is he righteous who has been deprived of his right within such a relationship, he also is righteous who has righteousness imputed to him... e.g. Isa. 60:21. 19

Thus the righteous man is not only he who

14 E.R. Achtemeier, op. cit. p. 81.
15 'Knows' perhaps equals 'recognizes' here.
16 Ps. 1:5-6.
18 Amos 4:12-13; Ps. 14:5.
17 Jer. 9:22-23 (RSV: 23-24) 19 Achtemeier op. cit. p. 84.
behaves responsibly within his relationships, but also the righteous individual so designated by Yahweh.

Righteousness and Justice.

As can be seen from the preceding analysis of Hebrew righteousness the notion of justice is essential both in the nouns יִשְׁלֹשׁ, נִשְׁלֹשׁ and פִּיוֹתָה and in the verb forms of the root פֹּתָה. The forensic usage of the verb occurs particularly frequently in the book of Job. Generally it refers to the proper administration of justice. Gemser regards this usage as illustrative of theRib-pattern, that is, a kind of court-room terminology. He claims that theRib is basic to much of Israelite life, and that this forensically expressed understanding of the covenantal relation-

ship between God and the people of Israel and
inter alia in the community occurs with significant
frequency in both Job and Jeremiah.21 Job particularly
"abounds in judicial phraseology".22 Further,
Gemser considers the book of Job "the apex and
consummation of genuine religiousness conscious-
ness, and of a mentality and phraseology deeply
stamped with the ḫiph-pattern so inherent in the
Hebrew mind."23 It is obvious that the author of
the book of Job regarded such terminology and
the court of justice situation as the ideal
language and setting for the problems with which
he deals.

It can be seen from the proceeding dis-

22 Ibid., also n. 1:
Especially the chapters: ix, xii, xix, xxiii, xxx
(Job's oath of Purgation), xl (where Job is
characterized as the rab 'im ṣadday, the mōkiaḵ
 Elohim, 'the contender with the Almighty, the
arguer with God'), but formally it cannot be
better understood than as the record of the
proceedings of a ḥab between Job and God Almighty
in which Job is the plaintiff and prosecutor,
the friends of Job are the witnesses as well as
the co-defendants and judges, while God is the
accused and defendant, but in the background and
finally the ultimate judge of both Job and his
friends.
23 Ibid.
cussion that the primary meanings of the terms יִקְשׁוֹנָה, לָשָׁן יִקְשׁוֹנָה and the verb יִקְשׁו are twofold. The first refers to the administration of justice between God and man and in the community, while the second is descriptive of that state of being which is the result of achieved or imparted justice, namely righteousness.

Righteousness and Justice in the Book of Job.

Thus it can be seen that the question in Job, raised by the Satan, is the nature of Job's righteousness. But Job himself proceeds beyond this question believing that he is indeed righteous. It follows that in order to understand Job's dilemma an examination is necessary of the characteristics of Job's righteousness, as first described in the Prologue and then throughout the book, in order that an assessment may be made of Job's righteousness in relation to the conventional concept of proper conduct towards God and the community, that is, righteousness.
Righteousness and Knowledge in the Book of Job.

It is the contention of this thesis that Job lacks knowledge even though, by his conventional standards, he is perfectly righteous. He fully obeys the covenantal regulations for the proper conduct of life. Indeed his observance of these rites is almost excessive. Job accepts the traditional understanding that "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom." Despite this and Job's protestations of his righteousness he is afflicted. He therefore attempts to discover the reasons for his misfortunes, but even in this attempt he is not very successful.

It is evident from the text that Job lacks

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24 Cf. Mic. 6:8; Isa. 3:15-16; Jer. 22:15-16.
25 1:5.
26 28:28.
27 E.g. 9:13-24.
28 Even though 42:6 describes Job's new state as being one of greater awareness concerning the divine knowledge and ability. It would seem that Job then has a greater idea of what it is to know than a precise and detailed account of the nature of the divine knowledge.
knowledge since he is nowhere described as wise, despite his righteousness.\textsuperscript{29} He seeks to know and exceeds the normal requirements for the religious life, \textsuperscript{30} in order to elicit a response from God which, he is hopeful, \textsuperscript{31} will inform him directly of the divine will.

In the Prologue Job is described as:

\begin{quote}
��לד הילדה חינר עד ותלד
\end{quote}

RSV: "blameless and upright, one who feared God, and turned away from evil." \textsuperscript{32}

These are the qualities with which Yahweh describes Job to the Satan. \textsuperscript{33} It is proposed that an examination of these terms will lead to a more complete understanding of the nature of Job's righteousness and of his lack of knowledge.

\textsuperscript{29} There is nothing to suggest that Job possesses ר"ש 'discernment', ותלד 'wisdom' or חינר 'knowledge'.
\textsuperscript{30} Mic. 6:8.
\textsuperscript{31} Jer. 22:15-16.
\textsuperscript{32} For "and turned away from evil", NEB reads: "and set his face against wrongdoing."
\textsuperscript{33} 8.
The word \( נְעַם \) 'blameless', from the rootılan smelling to be resolved', 'complete', 'honest', seems basically to imply simplicity. Notions of wisdom or knowledge are not apparently inherent. Similarly \( עָשָׁר \) 'upright' is devoid of these implications and simply means 'upright', 'straight', 'smooth'.

\( חָשָׁב \) 'and fearing God' does, in a secondary sense suggest wisdom.\(^34\) The fear of LORD is the beginning of wisdom was obviously a popular saying.\(^35\) But the wisdom here alluded to is \( יָשָׁר \) which is the product of the careful observance of religious duties and is therefore more a state of spiritual achievement than a state of cognition. It is quite different from \( יָשָׁר \) 'knowledge'.\(^36\) It does not imply, as it is


\(^35\) Ps. 111:10; Prov. 9:10; Job 28:28.

\(^36\) Although may at one time have referred to "a quality in itself apart from man, above and beyond man, existing ideally with God and imparting form to creation" (S.H. Blank, IDB, IV, p. 353) it seems that at the time of Proverbs and Job, that is, ca. 500-450 the word referred to "a quality of mind distinguishing the wise man, by virtue of which he is skilled and able to live well and both succeed and counsel success." (Ibid., p. 352). Although it is difficult
here maintained the latter does, an intellectual appreciation of Yahweh, nor outstanding perception or discernment as, by contrast, seems to be the meaning of the term \( y\). Rather it describes the condition of the religious man whom Isaiah depicts as:  

He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, who despises the gain of oppressions, who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed and shuts his eyes from looking upon evil.

he will dwell upon the heights; his place of defence will be the fortresses of rocks, his bread will be given to him, his water will be sure.

Jeremiah corroborates this view:  

Do you think you are a king because you compete in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him.

He judged the cause of the poor and needy: then it was well.
Is not this to know me? says the LORD.

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to find any distinction in meaning between the various words for wisdom in Proverbs, it is here proposed that it is part of the purpose of the author of Job to make a clear distinction between these terms.

37 33:15-16.
38 22:15-16.
Job describes the same idea pithily:

And he said to the man, 
'Behold the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom (נָכָּר); 
And to depart from evil is understanding (יִתְנַחֵל).

Thus "נָכָּר יִתְנַחֵל" refers to the observance of religious duties, the careful practice of which is guaranteed to lead to a state of spiritual tranquility for the devotee.

The "and turned away from evil" is the correlate of the previous phrase. It follows that he who fears God will avoid evil. In fact, in Job 28:28 the same thought is expressed using the poetic device of parallelism to repeat the identical idea. That is, to fear God and to turn away from wrongdoing are the traits of the wise, or discerning, man. They are the apparently simple but basic requirements for the religious life of the Israelite.

Summary.

Thus it may be concluded from the Prologue

39:28

40:WEB: "and turned away from evil".
and the OT conditions for righteousness (ימין) that Job is a righteous man. He is "more than scrupulous" in his observance of the covenantal stipulations on righteousness. 41 He even intercedes on his children's behalf in case they have purposely or inadvertently done wrong. The evident signs of his spiritual rectitude are his large family and abundant possessions. 42 But the Satan is cynical about the connotations of wealth, particularly in Job's case. He maintains that the latter's virtuosity is dependent on his prosperity. Similarly, when Job suffers his friends are willing to believe, as tradition indicated, that his misfortunes indicate his lack of real righteousness. Thus Job is required to prove his integrity for both parties. But the non-appearance

42 Ibid., p. 13. Snaith notes the patriarchal notions of prosperity as apparent in the description of Job's life.
of the Satan in the Epilogue, plus Yahweh's denunciation of the friends, and his commendation of Job's discernment of "what is right" prove that Job has vindicated himself of all the charges that have been laid against him.

However, a more important issue has developed out of the question of Job's righteousness, namely the problem of knowledge. It has been shown that, although Job is righteous in the conventional sense, there is nothing in the text to indicate that he possesses wisdom or knowledge. Although it is possible that Job may always have wanted to know more about the world about him, and the possibilities of human and divine endeavour, yet the setting of the problem within the discussion on human suffering suggests it was the latter issue that brought the question to

43 42:7
44 Ibid.
45 Supra, pp. 46-50.
the forefront. Job now seeks to know in the most universal sense as much as it is possible for a human and perhaps even as Yahweh does. It thus becomes necessary to examine the meaning and connotations of the verb 'to know' and of the various nouns for knowledge—and

The Verb יֶדֶע and the Nouns יֶדֶע, יְדִיעָה and יְדִיעָת. 46

The verb יֶדֶע means 'to know' in many senses. 47 It can mean 'to know' in the sense of 'to observe', 'notice', for example, Lev. 5:3:

"Or if he touches human uncleanness, of whatever sort the uncleanness may be with which one becomes unclean, and it is hidden from him, when he comes to know it he shall be guilty."

The verb can mean 'to know' meaning 'to experience', for example, Isa. 47:8:

"Now therefore hear this, you lover of pleasures, who sit securely, who say in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one beside me; I shall not sit as a widow or know the loss of children.'"

46 A discussion of יֶדֶע follows because, it is here contended, a particular usage of the noun יְדִיעָה occurs in the book of Job.

47 Cf. K-R for a fuller discussion of the various uses of the root יֶדֶע."
'To know' in the sense of 'observing and reflecting'
occurs in Dt.8:5:

"Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines
his son, the LORD your God disciplines you."

Also, Jg.13:21:

"The angel of the LORD appeared no more to Manoah
and to his wife. The Manoah knew that he was the
angel of the LORD."

The verb can also occur in the more casual sense
of 'to know someone' (cp. Fr. connaître and Ger.
kennen), for example, Job 19:13:

"'He has put my brethren far from me,
and my acquaintances are wholly estranged
from me.'"

The sexual connotations of the verb are apparent in
Gn4:1 where the verb means 'to have sexual intercourse':

"Now Adam knew his wife Eve....".

'Known' in the sense of 'chosen by God' appears
in Gn.18:19:

"No, for I have chosen him..."

'Know' in the sense 'to discern', 'to distinguish',
occurs in Isa.40:21:
"Have you not known? Have you not heard?"

The verb again appears with reference to the possession of wisdom (Ger. _wissen_, _Einsicht haben_), Job 34:2:

'Hear my words, you wise men, and give ear to me, you who know.'

It can be seen from the references above that the verb _'V' is normally used to express knowing in an intensive form. It is employed to denote the acquisition of knowledge of specific kinds. But the predominant usage is to express more than a superficial knowledge. Indeed, in many cases, the precise intent of the verb is to understand the essence of something.\(^{48}\) Although the verb does indeed occasionally

\(^{48}\) For example Job 23:3, 37:16; Jer. 4:22.
occur in the sense of 'to know someone', yet that does not reflect the common usage of the verb which is 'to know' in the sense of 'to understand'.

'The' meaning 'to know' in the sense of 'to have sexual intercourse' occurs in Gn.4:1,17, 25;19:5;Nu.31:18,35;Jg.21:12;I K.1:4. Thus, 'to know' is not a means of cognition restricted to the intellect. The verb is here used to describe the intense awareness, perception and knowledge arising from this action of the most intimate association. The frequent usage of

49 For example Job 19:13.

50 Ivan Engnell ("Knowledge'and 'Life' in the Creation Story", SVT,III (1955), 103-119) demonstrates the importance of this connotation in his essay. Regarding Adam and Eve and the 'tree of knowledge', he notes that "the whole stress is laid on the ability to procreate. This is the decisive fact: Adam and Eve have not been allowed earlier to reproduce offspring." p. 116. Now that they have both eternal life and the ability to multiply themselves the theme of Genesis (so Engnell) "is to relate how mankind grows and spreads, consequent with inexorable decay."
sexual language to describe Israel's relationship to God 51 indicates that the understanding involved in such a relationship is vital and meaningful. Knowledge of God in the OT is not merely an intellectual appreciation, but a combination of the intellectual and the physical which results in an intimate understanding and appreciation. 52

Thus, for the Hebrew, cognition does not imply the rejection of rational means of knowing. It simply asserts that "knowledge is an activity in which the whole individual is engaged, not his mind only." 53 When Israel ignores her God it is the result of not knowing the correct relationship, or of feigning ignorance.

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51 E.g. Hosea and Ez. 16.
52 This understanding of the root will later be demonstrated in the book of Job.
53 J.A. Piper, "Knowledge", IDB, III, p. 43.
of it.

The ox knows its owner,
and the ass its master's crib;
but Israel does not know,
my people does not understand.

For biblical man knowledge of God is the
highest kind of knowledge. It is the highest because
it connotes the intimate relationship with God
not ordinarily attainable, "knowledge of God is an
experience of the reality of God, not merely know-
ledge of propositions concerning God..."

Another meaning for יִדּוּ is stressed by
Herbert Huffmon. He emphasizes the importance of

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54 Isa. 1:3.
55 Piper, op. cit.
56 "The Treaty Background of Hebrew יִדּוּ", BASOR, 181 (Feb., 1966) 31-37. Also "A Further Note on
the Treaty Background of Hebrew יִדּוּ", H.B. Huffmon
and S.B. Parker, BASOR, 184 (Dec., 1966) 36-38. See also:
E. Baumann, "YD' und seine Derivate. Eine sprachlich-
exegetische Studie", ZAW, XXVIII (1908) 22-41, 110-43;
James Barr, Comparative Philology and the Text of the
treaty terminology for understanding Old Testament linguistic usage of the verb 'VT' 57 For him, 'knowledge' is also concerned with "mutual legal recognition on the part of suzerain and vassal." 58 The verb 'VT' is also used as "a technical term for recognition of the treaty stipulations as binding." 59 In the OT this technical usage indicates "mutual legal recognition on the part of the suzerain and vassal, that is 8iJl between Yahweh and his servant(s)." 60 This usage is significantly illustrated in the following texts: Gn. 18:19; Ex. 33:12; Isa. 45:3-4; II S. 7:20; Jer. 1:5; Amos 3:2. It is just this kind of 'recognition' which Job looks for when he appeals to Yahweh to be his judge. Thus from this

57 The close links with "VT when the latter is understood as 'lawful right'.
58 He illustrates this from the Amarna Tablets, op. cit., p. 31.
59 Ibid., p. 53.
60 Ibid., p. 34.
connotation of the verb ידוע it can be seen that knowledge implies obligation and recognition. 61

One further meaning of the Hebrew root is provided by Mitchell Dahood, namely 'to sweat'. 62

Prov. 10:9:

He who walks in integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will be found out. 63

That is, in the RSV the text is not literally interpreted. Dahood translates the verse:

He who walks straight walks securely, but he who makes his paths crooked will sweat.

He derives his translation from the Ugaritic root ידוע and supports it from texts in which he maintains "sweating as outward manifestation mutual anguish is well documented". 64

61 Boaz recognizes his legal obligations towards Ruth after he has 'known' her.
63 "a blameless life makes for security crooked ways bring a man down". This too is an interpretation rather than a translation.
It is this intimate kind of knowledge together with a familiarity with traditional formularies of religion that represent Job's religious state in the Theophany. Like Abraham 65 Job is put to the test, but he emerges removed of any dross and refined in his religious awareness and understanding. The ground for this understanding is righteousness (ΠΡΣ) because, "only the righteous man can be said truly to know God (for example, Dt. 4:39; Jer. 22:15-16)". 66 Thus, for the Hebrew, the fullest and highest kind of knowledge was conditioned by his relationship to his God and the community. In conventional terms, prosperity was the outward and visible sign of righteousness. 67 Suffering and the lack of prosperity were the signs of the reverse. Therefore, in the popular mind as represented by Job's three friends, Job must undoubtedly lack righteousness. But in the Prologue

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65 Gn. 22.
66 Piper, op. cit., p. 43.
67 Thus the necessity for a definition of righteousness (ΠΡΣ). Cf. supra pp. 39ff.
Job is introduced as the perfectly righteous man. He is "blameless and upright ... fears God and turns away from evil". Also he is a man of considerable property. Job therefore possesses all the attributes of the righteous man. If it were not so it would be impossible for him to begin to know, for righteousness is the basis for knowledge. But as the author repeatedly interjects, Job is supremely qualified to possess the knowledge of God (יהוה) - in so far as any man is and in so far as righteousness is effectual. But for the questions to which Job requires an answer that is not sufficient. It is therefore necessary to examine in detail the words for knowledge and wisdom particularly as they are utilised in the Yahweh Speeches. Such an

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68 E.g. 1:2, 8.
69 Jh. 29 describes Job as righteous in word and deed. Not only is he zealous in the performance of the formalities of his faith but he also feeds the poor, looks after the widow - the traditional obligations of the rich and righteous.
70 Jer. 22:15-16.
inquiry will facilitate the investigation of Job's ignorance.
The Verb יול and the Noun יול

The root יול means 'to be distinct', 'discern', 'keep distinct', 'make clear', 'decide', that is, 'decide between alternatives', e.g. Job 6:20. 'To consider': Dt.32:29; Ps.73:17; Job 9:11, 13:1, 14:21, 23:8. The hiphil of the verb means 'to be discerning', 'have understanding': Isa.10:13. The Po'l means 'to take care of': Job 8:8; Dt.32:10. The Hiphil: 'to be able to discern', 'be judicious', 'intelligent', with יול 'discern between': I K.3:9. 'God's understanding': Job 28:23; I Ch.28:9. 'To show the distinction': Job 6:24.

יול or יול meaning 'interval', 'distance' are from the same root. Thus the primary intent of the verb is 'to distinguish', 'discern between', 'understand'.

The noun יול means 'understanding'.

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71 The analysis of the root יול and the noun יול is taken from K-B and supplemented by BDB.

72 K-B, pp. 121-2. יול occurs in: Dt.4:6; Isa.11:2; Job 20:3, 28:12, 20, 28; 59:17, 26. Isa.29:24; Prov.4:1; Job 38:4; II Ch.2:11, 12.
In Job the word is sometimes used to connote knowledge of the universe, of creation - knowledge such, for example, as an artisan would have, e.g. Job 38:4:

Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. 73

'understanding' is here best understood as 'knowledge of the artisan's skill'. 74 Elsewhere the noun is used as a parallel expression for the noun 'wisdom', but rarely as an alternative for . Thus it can be seen that the noun expresses knowledge of a comprehensive kind. It represents a technical ability rather than artistic intuition. 75

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73 Literally, it should read: 'Declare, if you know understanding'.
74 See also: Job 38:18, 20, 36; 39:17, 26; 42:3. Cf. ICC, Pt. I, p. 327, cp. Isa. 29:24; Prov. 4:1; I Ch. 12:23; II Ch. 2:11, 12.
75 It is possible that there may be some connection with the root 'to build', that is, both verbs are connected with creation in some form.
Summary

It can be seen from the analysis\textsuperscript{76} that the verb יָדַע is frequently used to express an understanding of the essence of something.\textsuperscript{77} Knowledge arising from this kind of comprehension is not "merely an intellectual appreciation, but a combination of the intellectual and the physical which results in an intimate understanding and appreciation."\textsuperscript{78} The use of this verb for sexual intercourse emphasizes the sensual connotations of the root. That is, for the Hebrew knowledge is not simply a rational means of cognition but is related to experience. For the Israelite this meant experience of God. For the former the highest kind of knowledge was conditioned by his relationship to the latter. Although righteousness is necessary for the acquisition of this knowledge it is not the

\textsuperscript{76} Supra, pp. 53ff.
\textsuperscript{77} Supra, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{78} Supra, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{79} Supra, p. 61.
inevitable consequent of being righteous.

'understanding' connotes a knowledge of the works of something. In the latter chapters of Job, it is used to express an understanding of the techniques involved in the creation of the universe. It does not suggest a supreme knowledge as ΔΥΔ does.

80 Supra, pp. 64-65.
The following is an investigation of the meaning and usage of the terms ינפ and יִיָּעַמ in Job 38-42, and in certain key passages in the Prologue and Dialogue. It is here intended to demonstrate precisely the nature of Job's ignorance vis-à-vis the divine power and knowledge, and of his knowledge in relation to righteousness.  

Although many of the findings of this investigation have already appeared throughout this thesis, yet it is felt that a repeated application of the derived meanings of these terms to their parent phrases in a key section of the text (that is Job chs. 38-42) would be singularly informative in elucidating Job's problem. This problem is seen

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1 It is hoped at some future date to pursue this distinctive usage throughout the book and at greater depth than is here the case.
2 Cf. supra the sections on righteousness, knowledge and understanding.
3 These chapters are the most important for the comprehension of the whole text, mainly because they contain Yahweh's response to Job, but also because it is usual to expect some sort of conclusive remarks at the end of a narrative.
to be Job's fundamental lack of wisdom and power,\textsuperscript{4} despite his righteousness. It has been shown above\textsuperscript{5} that, although righteousness is essential for the attainment of wisdom, the achievement of the latter is by no means the inevitable consequence of righteousness. Also, just as there are certain kinds of righteousness, those initiated by God as well as those achieved through human endeavour,\textsuperscript{6} so knowledge (\textit{חכום}) is differently imparted or attained and results in a type of wisdom called \textit{חכמת נפש}. But equally there is knowledge of a divine and cosmic nature, that is \textit{חכמת נפש}, which is not, according to the book of Job, ordinarily attainable, but some sense of which it may be pleasing to Yahweh to divulge. It is knowledge of this particular kind,\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{4}Which Job admits to in 42:3.
\textsuperscript{5}\textit{Supra}, pp. 47ff.
\textsuperscript{6}\textit{Supra}, p. 42.
the existence of which becomes apparent to Job in his righteous striving to understand his predicament, and which is recognized by Yahweh to be a correct intimation as to the true nature of "what is right" (יִכְּלָל). That Job's knowledge in the Yahweh Speeches is only partial is confirmed by Yahweh's comparisons between Job's knowledge of the natural world and that of the divine. What is right in Job's former strivings after Yahweh has been recognized by Yahweh, what is wrong he (Job) rejects, although the reader is not told that Job is aware of the distinctions. Neither are the latter divulged to the reader who is simply left with the impression that to be righteous is best and of the dangers of the converse. Knowledge of this sort, that is יָשֶׁר, is

7 42:7.
9 Supra, pp. 58-60.
10 42:7.
12 28:28.
apparently not attainable through the scrupulous observance of righteous deeds—or is it necessarily available for those who are already righteous in Hebrew understanding of that word, although that is the necessary basis. Like the latter, knowledge is something which it is Yahweh's privilege to impart should he wish, and towards which, with Job as an example, man is encouraged by the author to strive.

Yahweh's first reply to Job takes place in a whirlwind — a situation which the latter had regarded as being too dreadful for meaningful discussion on his part.\(^{13}\) Yahweh questions Job asserting his deficiency in knowledge:\(^{14}\)

RSV: "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?"

NEB: "Who is this whose ignorant words cloud my design in darkness?"

\(^{13}\)9:16-17. The tempest or whirlwind is another reminder of the desert location of the narrative and is in keeping with the patriarchal setting.

\(^{14}\)38:2.
Here in Job's opening words is an indictment of Job's essential ignorance. He does not possess knowledge (יִדּוּ). This is precisely the point which Kravitz, following Maimonides, makes when he writes "knowledge is not attributed to Job in the story." 15 He says later: "lacking true wisdom and misled by imagination, Job believed that he possessed the perfections of wealth, children and health. Yet none of these are true perfections... they form but an imaginary relationship to man." 16 But a closer contemporary to Job than either Maimonides or Kravitz was aware that Job spoke in ignorance. Elihu contends that when the latter echoes the thoughts of men of understanding (רַבִּים יִדּוּ), 17

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16 Ibid., p. 157.
17 34:34-35.
"Job speaks without knowledge, and his words are without insight."

Elihu continues later:

"For truly my words are not false; one who is perfect in knowledge is with you."

Referring to the righteous he says:

"But if they do not hearken, they perish by the sword, and die without knowledge." (בְּלֵבָם)

However, it should be noted, the Elihu Speeches are generally agreed to be a later addition to the book of Job. They are included in this discussion because they reflect an almost contemporary view of Job's dilemma, and also because they echo Yahweh's indictment in that they both accuse Job of speaking without knowledge.

In 38:3 Yahweh instructs Job to prepare

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18 36:12.
himself for the combat.\footnote{Girding up one's loins refers to belt-wrestling. Cf. C. H. Gordon, \textit{HUCA}, XXIII, 1 (1950), 131-36. That is, Yahweh is taking up Job's challenge to personal combat. Cf. Jacob whose knowledge of God was greatly enhanced after his all-night bout with the angel, Gn. 32:24-32.}

RSV: "Gird up your loins like a man, 
and you shall declare to me." 

NEB: "......and you shall answer me."

That is, Job is to cause Yahweh to know. He is to instruct Yahweh by a demonstration of his power and knowledge.

Again on the theme of Job's knowledge, Yahweh questions Job regarding the foundation of the earth: \footnote{\textit{Exod} 22}

RSV: "Tell me, if you have understanding."

NEB: "Tell me, if you know and understand."

Literally the phrase reads: "declare if you know understanding." \footnote{\textit{Exod} 22:4} \textit{Understanding} here is...
best understood as knowledge of the creative process, like the skill of the artisan. It is knowledge of the composition of the universe and the things in it, that is, a technical knowledge. Such universal knowledge no human, not even Job, could ever hope to possess.

Again in 38:18 Job is asked if he has this kind of knowledge:

Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? (=title)
Declare if you know all this. (Israel)

Here again the root יָּד occurs in the sense to refer to an ability to draw the distinctions, to perceive, to distinguish between. The same idea is conveyed in 38:20,36; 39:17,26; 42:3. In the latter instance (42:3) Job is repeating Yahweh's first question to himself to which he now replies:

'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?'

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24 Cf. יָּד 'between'. 
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

MT:

נִתְנָה נְפָלִיָּה דְּשַׁקְתָּכֶנְהָדוּדְנַה וּפֵתָלָה אָבָל

That is, Job now not only confesses he has been cut-spoken, he acknowledges his essential ignorance - he has not been able to discern (י"ב) the significance of the created order, neither has he been aware of this deficiency in himself, this lack of knowledge of the most fundamental kind (י"ת). But now he understands for himself:

I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees thee;

In 38:2 Yahweh's specific charge against Job is that he obscures his counsel (י"ת) by his ignorant words. He is not reprimanded for

2542:5

26 According to H.H. Tur-Sinai (The Book of Job: A New Commentary, Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1957, p. 521) the phrase י"ב י"ת "can only with difficulty be interpreted as 'darkening counsel', i.e. giving advice which instead of clarifying matters, obscures them. "He suggests instead י"ת י"ת "who is it that says of my counsel that it is false..."
forcing Yahweh into debate, as some would suggest is the force of the oath in ch. 31. 27 This knowledge (נִּלְתֶּן) is such that Job could never possess it because of his human limitations. 28 Job admits he does not possess knowledge, even in this technical sense of the creation (נִלְתֶּן). It follows that his ability to comprehend the knowledge of God (יָד and כִּי יִדָּעֵנִי 29) will be even less.

In the second Yahweh speech Job's specific lack is seen to be his inability to control chaos, as represented by Leviathan. There the paramount notion is 'power' rather than knowledge, although a knowledge of the techniques involved in controlling chaos is implied.

S.R. Driver accounts for Job's ignorance as

27 Cf. Gommers, op. cit.
28 Cf. Yahweh's description of that knowledge (נִלְתֶּן) in chs. 38-41.
29 Cf. Prov. 2:5.
30 40:6-41:34.
Job has been right in maintaining his integrity and that his sufferings were not due to his sins, as Yahweh subsequently (42:7) makes clear: he has been wrong in passing beyond this matter of personal knowledge, and in reproving God whose range of purpose and action lay so far beyond his knowledge.

That is, in 42:3, Job admits he has spoken without fully understanding what he has said. He therefore rejects his former self in the light of that understanding of the real state of his ignorance. It may be that he now rejects his earlier declaration that he has already both seen and heard all that religion has to offer. But even that ignorance is, as Yahweh declares, closer to what is right than are the statements of Job's friends. His present, more profound knowledge is brought about by Yahweh's

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32 42:6
33 13:1.
34 Or, perhaps that renunciation refers only to that formulation of Israel's religion as represented by the three friends,
35 42:7.
theophany and owes its new depth to Yahweh's acceptance of his thoughts and deeds. His awareness has also been intensified through experience in adversity but there is no indication that he has had all his questions individually answered. The OT practice of putting its righteous men to the test is seen in the cases of Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Daniel and Job. It was, perhaps, recognized that knowledge is only partial unless acquired with a struggle. Not only does Yahweh condone Job's words, he also bestows on him double his former prosperity—the visible sign of Job's spiritual rectitude.

36 Cf. Kant, *op. cit.*, who regards any philosophical attempt in theodicy as doomed to failure. According to him Job has triumphed because of his 'sincerity'.

37 Cf. J. Ellul (The Presence of the Kingdom, New York: Seabury, 1967, p. 140): "We cannot give everything into the hands of God (believing that God will open the eyes, ears and hearts of men), until we have wrestled with God till the break of day, like Jacob; that is, until we have struggled to the utmost limits of our strength, and have known the despair of defeat."

38 Contrary to those who adhered to the "developed form" of the doctrine of retribution and reward. Cf. supra, p. 2 and n. 2.
Although הָנֵד 'knowledge' is not strictly defined in the book of Job, from the implications and usages of the word and its root it would seem to reflect a knowledge of the highest kind in the Hebrew understanding.

The outline of the poet’s usage of the other noun for wisdom (תִּשָּׁד), which frequently occurs in these chapters, has been shown to refer to knowledge in the technical sense.

Although the latter occurs in conjunction with other nouns for knowledge, such as הָנֵד and יִדְרָק, all three nouns carry somewhat different connotations, particularly when used together in parallel expression. But הָנֵד does not occur in parallel form as often as its counterpart תִּשָּׁד does. For example, הָנֵד appears in both 38:6 and 39:17 in conjunction with יִדְרָק. 38:36 reads:

MT: יִדְרָק "וַניִדְרָק אֲנִי צַעַק אָנִי מָרַע וַתָּמַעְרָנִי וְלָשׁון וּנְשׁוֹנִי"

RSV: "Who has put wisdom in the clouds, or given understanding to the mists."

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39 Cf. Prov. 2:5.
40 38-42.
41 Supra, pp. 64-67.
42 RSV margin: "the meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain."
NEB: "Who put wisdom in depths of darkness and veiled understanding in secrecy?"\(^{43}\)

and 39:37 reads:

"Because God has made her \[the ostrich\] forget wisdom (\[\Pi\Pi\Pi\]) and given her no share in understanding."\(^{43}\)

In these two instances the words \[\Pi\Pi\Pi\] and \[\Pi\Pi\] are seen to refer to a technical knowledge of the world and are to be distinguished from \[\Pi\Pi\] which, as shown above,\(^{44}\) refers to an intimate understanding, a total realization, that is, wisdom in the most comprehensive and ultimate sense. Von Rad emphasizes the dynamic character of this verb \[\Pi\Pi\] ('to know') when he writes:\(^{45}\)

"[It] never signifies purely intellectual knowing but in a much wider sense an 'experiencing', 'a being acquainted with', never an ability."

\(^{43}\) NEB margin: "Hebrew word unknown for secrecy."

\(^{44}\) Supra, pp. 55-58.

Summary.

It has thus become clear that Job's ignorance and impotence mark his inferiority to Yahweh, not a lack of righteousness nor even his human limitations. With regard to creation his knowledge (נַעֲשֶׂה) is strictly limited. But it is limited even more so with regard to the knowledge of God, in relation to which Job shows himself to be totally ignorant. As in Proverbs ch. 2 the way to acquire this knowledge of God (עֲשֶׂה) is through the practice and possession of righteousness. However, knowledge of this kind is, in fact, not acquired but given. It is the Joban poet's contention that although righteousness is indeed desirable and necessary for this knowledge, wisdom (יָדָע) is not inevitably its concomitant.

46 Cf. 38:2 and 42:3.

47 Although it seems to be the Proverbian compiler's other consideration that the practice of righteousness ultimately leads to knowledge: "For wisdom (יִדְעָה) will come into your heart, and knowledge (יָדָע) will be pleasant to your soul." Prov. 2:10.
Whereas in Proverbs 2:7 it appears to be the author's opinion that wisdom will automatically be granted on the practice of, or in the state of righteousness. This conception of the nature of wisdom it was evidently a part of the poet of Job's intention to rectify.
CONCLUSION

It can be seen from the preceding discussion of the various Hebrew words for knowledge that they all refer to knowledge of different kinds. It can also be seen, particularly in the Yahweh Speeches\(^1\), that Job's knowledge and understanding are quite different from that of his friends. Also Job's present understanding differs from his previous *Weltanschauung* in that he is now more aware of his comparative insignificance within the universe and of the power of God. But, more importantly, he is now conscious of the great gap fixed between his knowledge and the divine wisdom. He has been singled out by God for particular notice. Yet, although the latter treats him harshly, Job is still recognized to be superior to his

\(^1\) Chs. 38-42.
friends in his knowledge of the divine and his response to it. God manifests himself to the latter in such a manner that Job is able to recognize him and to realize his place within Yahweh's creation.\(^2\) Despite his former assertions\(^3\) that he would not believe even if Yahweh were to answer him,\(^4\) the sincerity of his renunciation and acceptance of God are apparent in chapters 40 and 42. His request to speak without fear of a divine retribution\(^5\) would appear to have been granted, but when the opportunity is available Job makes little use of it. The theophany has nullified Job's former questions. Such information as he then desired appears to have little or no relevance for his new situation. So far as his previous

\(^2\) Cf. Huffmon, op. cit., for his meaning of the term יִתְנַה "to know," supra, pp. 58-60.

\(^3\) 9:13-24.

\(^4\) Cf. Job's challenge to Yahweh in ch. 31.

\(^5\) 9:34-35.
questions are concerned, he is now aware of man's innate inability to transcend his finite understanding and to possess absolute knowledge, or even to comprehend it. 6

From Job's concluding speech, 7 and in conformity with the terms of the wager between Yahweh and the Satan, it is evident that Job has gained immeasurably from his trials, notably in wisdom and knowledge however limited they may be in comparison with the divine. Following the declaration of his new state 8 come the conventional attributes of the right relationship between man and God, but these are incidental to the theme. 9 Like Jacob he has gained incalculably in understanding from his wrestling with God. 10

6 Perhaps knowledge of this kind was at one time possible. Cf. Gn. 2:15-16, 3:1-24. The motif of the ordering of creation and the control of chaos appear both in Job and Genesis. Man's attempt to become wise as God is not tolerated in either case.

7 42:1-6.

8 Ibid.

9 Supra, p. 27f.

10 Supra, p. 79 and n. 37.
Job follows in the OT tradition of the trial of the righteous. Their election to such trials is, apparently, indicative of their righteousness (75). For some of these persons (for example, Noah, Abraham, Daniel and Job) a state of spiritual accord and material prosperity is the reward for their integrity and endurance. Yahweh acknowledges that Job has correctly outlined the status quo.11 The fundamental gap which remains to be bridged is that man is mortal and finite and therefore incapable of fully comprehending that which is immortal and infinite, despite all the strength and resolution of people such as Abraham, Jacob and Job.

The theophany is seen as Job's reward for, and the divine acknowledgement of his integrity.12 Yahweh does not simply say that it is impossible

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1142:7. נָהַשׁ is from the root נָהַשׁ 'to make straight', 'exist', 'fix'. נָהַשׁ means 'trustworthy, true things, words'. Perhaps the translation 'establishment' is apt here.

12In keeping with the traditional understanding, the good are rewarded in this life.
for man to know as he (Yahweh) knows. He explains his limitations in terms of his knowledge of this world and of his comparative significance and impotence within it. It is clear from this picture that man is relatively insignificant in terms of power and creative ability.  

Job, in turn, now has an increased awareness of the power and knowledge of God. The theophany makes it evident that God is, despite the weakness of man, sufficiently concerned that in his replies to Job he is moved to demonstrate something of the nature and scope of the divine ability. Job is thereby encouraged to continue to live fully and dynamically. His past appreciation of life has, in a limited but incalculable sense, been ratified by Yahweh. But concern with matters beyond the capabilities of human understanding is pointless – as the absurd comparisons between Job's

13 chs. 38-42.
14 That Job already had a considerable understanding is vouched for in ch. 9.
knowledge and power and the divine shows. Yahweh evidently approves of Job's integrity and speech, for otherwise he would not have appeared to Job. In contrast with his friends, Job's knowledge is the result of his experience and endurance of the problems of existence with which he has sincerely grappled. He has learnt from the theophany that, although his knowledge is imperfect, it is knowledge of a truer kind than the traditional lore of the friends. That is, his interpretation of traditional religion is correct because in his experience wisdom is the result of sincerely exposing his whole person to life and is not, simply, a legacy of ideas indiscriminately accepted. He now recognizes his place within society and the ordered universe and is, apparently prepared to accept it. He is especially privileged because his experience of the divine has been declared true and authentic at the end of his ordeal by
Yahweh himself.\textsuperscript{15} His knowledge, however limited, has been corroborated by the highest authority. He is now fully cognizant of the fact that, despite the apparent contradictions in the ordering of the universe, there is a God who is concerned with man and involved in the creation, who fully knows, understands and controls, but who, for inscrutable divine reasons,\textsuperscript{16} does not permit man to possess it.

The conclusion to the book of Job is concerned, not with the traditional problems of Israel's religion such, for example, as those posed by the Exile, the Jerusalem or the righteous sufferer, but with a larger issue, namely the possibility of perfect human knowledge. Although Yahweh refuses to grant this to man,\textsuperscript{17} he obviously

\textsuperscript{15} 42:7
\textsuperscript{16} The emphasis on the divine power and knowledge in the Yahweh Speeches suggest that these are the things which separate man from God.
\textsuperscript{17} It was traditional for Yahweh to refuse it; cf. Gn. 2-3.
concedes to Job a greater awareness of what it is
to know than the latter previously possessed - a
concession with which Job professes to be well
content. 18 Yahweh's concession is a divine acknowledge-
ment of Job's superior sensitivity to the truth
over that of the friends and is a reward for his
integrity. The theophany has confirmed for Job that
God is still involved with his creation and with
providence. It denies any universal validity to the
doctrine of retribution and reward. It condemns as
false the trite observations of the friends
regarding the nature of Yahweh's direction of the
world. Conversely, Yahweh's speech 19 asserts that Job
has spoken correctly without defining the precise
details of his rectitude. Job's knowledge, though
partial, is nearer the truth than that of the friends -
a fact corroborated by Yahweh. 20 But Job himself
is perhaps unwilling, but probably unable, to
communicate the exact nature of his knowledge. In

19 42:7.
20 42:7.
other words, the author of Job believes that no mortal, however good, is capable of possessing ultimate knowledge.
# ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AJSL</td>
<td>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALET</td>
<td>Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASOR</td>
<td>Bulletin of the American Schools for Oriental Research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BDB</td>
<td>Brown,Driver and Briggs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BJRL</td>
<td>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HUCA</td>
<td>Hebrew Union College Annual.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEB</td>
<td>The Interpreter's Bible.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Critical Commentary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible.</td>
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<tr>
<td>JBL</td>
<td>Journal of Biblical Literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCS</td>
<td>Journal of Cuneiform Studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSE</td>
<td>Journal of Semitic Studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEB</td>
<td>New English Bible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RER</td>
<td>Revue de l'histoire des Religions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSV</td>
<td>Revised Standard Version.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCH</td>
<td>Student Christian Movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVT</td>
<td>Supplements to Vetus Testamentum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZAW</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.</td>
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