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FOUNDED BY EDWARD C. HEGELER

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CONTENTS

- 5 THE BOOK OF JOB.....65
A. P. Drucker Faculty Club 2035 Adelbert Rd.
Cleveland, Ohio.
- 5 THE TRAIL OF BLOOD.....79
San Marcos Trumbo Copeland, Kansas.
- 5 IDEALISM IN AMERICAN EDUCATION.....85
Edwin M. Slocombe 2811 Rivermont Ave.,
Lynchburg, Va.

THE NEW ORIENT

- 5 AN ARAB EDITOR SURVEYS JAPAN AND US.....93
Martin Sprengling Oriental Institute, Chicago
- 5 CURRENT NATIONALISM IN THE MOSLEM NEAR EAST.....107
Edgar J. Fisher 20 Shodbine Ave., Rochester, N.Y.
- 5 MAGIC WRITINGS IN MODERN CHINA.....125
I. V. Gillis

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السيارة المائية

اخترع المر نربيل أحد فواد
فرق المحوم النازية في لاسابا
سيارة تسير على الارض وبحق
الماء على السواء دون ان تحتاج
الى تعديل فيها وتغيير . وبما
حققت أهمية كانت تمد من قبل
الخيال

أكبر بيضة في العالم

عرضت في معرض الطيور الذي
أقيم أخيراً بكوفنت جاردن
بلندن بيضة من طير العطان .
وهي تعد أكبر بيضة في العالم .
ويبلغ طولها ١٣ بوصة . وقد
وجدت ضمن مخلفات المرحوم
جورج دوسون رولى العلامة
بالطيور . وتمثل هذه الصورة
المستر بيل كروس المروف
بمعاينه من الطيور ومنتجاتها ،
وهو واقف أمام تلك البيضة
الهائلة ويمسك بيده بيضة دجاجه
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THE OPEN COURT

Volume XLIX

April, 1935

Number 933

THE BOOK OF JOB

BY A. P. DRUCKER

THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE BOOK OF JOB

TO READERS of the Bible generally and to Biblical students particularly, there is no one portion of the Bible which presents so much that is vague, baffling, not to say contradictory, as the Book of Job. Taking it as a narrative pure and simple, they are rather at a loss to discover its real motive and interpret its various ideas in terms of such philosophical teachings and moral lessons as will clarify its obscurity and justify its acceptance into the Canon.

Perhaps the most general and plausible conclusion of the commentators hitherto has been that Job is essentially didactic, that its purpose is to teach the lesson of reward and punishment here on earth. Yet this idea is not too remotely hinted at to offer a satisfactory explanation, but—and the most cursory examination will show this—it is not even consistently worked out in the progress of the discussion. Thus, in the first round of the debate, the three Friends attribute Job's sufferings to his sins, which he himself stoutly denies;¹ at another time he admits his transgressions,² while they flatly contradict him, saying that he is no worse than the generality of mankind.³ In fact, as we proceed in the dialogue, we are lost in a maze of obscurity, Job now corroborating, anon denying the previous speaker's testimony as to the glory, justice, and righteousness of God.

Again, the plot itself seems to contradict the theory of the righteousness of God. At the very beginning we are told that it was not on account of his sins that Job was being punished, but because his faith and constancy were being tested; or, to put it more boldly, his afflictions were the result of a wager between God and Satan

¹Job 9:21; 16:17.

²*ibid.* 7:20, 21.

³*ibid.* 25.

to the effect that Job would not blaspheme God, under suffering. We thus see that Job was not punished for wrongdoing, as his Friends would have it. If then, he was smitten for the mere purpose of bearing out God's stand in a wager, Job's Friends are placed in a ludicrous position.

In the modern theater the playwright often presents the same kind of a situation as in Job to provoke the mirth of the audience. He creates some puzzling situation to which the spectators, having been duly informed of the truth beforehand, have the key; whereas the characters of the play apparently grope helplessly in the dark for some solution, and in their vain attempts hazard various wrong guesses. These wrong guesses convulse the naïve spectators with laughter, because they are beguiled into the illusion that they know more about the perplexing incident than the persons in the play, who appear to be so dull-witted. Now it would seem as though the author of Job employed the same kind of device. He, too, in the Introduction, takes the audience into his confidence, letting them hear of what went on in heaven, thus informing them of the actual reason for Job's sufferings. Then he brings in the three Friends, with their ingenious explanations, as if to heighten the comedy to the situation and minister to the amusement of the audience. If the author intended the Book of Job to inculcate a moral lesson, he surely resorted to the wrong method, since in the plot we are given one apparently true reason for the tribulations of Job, and in the debate another reason is given; and, inasmuch as these two reasons, according as the old interpretations contradict each other, we are at a loss to divine the author's true motive.

Another point to consider in searching for the purpose of Job is that not one of the motives hitherto ascribed to the composition explains adequately the function of God's appearing in a storm-wind. What is his mission? What his powerful and all enlightening message? He makes no startling revelation, says nothing which in substance has not been said again and again by the Friends of Job. In the Greek drama the *deus ex machina* usually disentangles the perplexing knots that have baffled men, opens the eyes of the hero, and communicates some new truth to the spectators. Why does not Job's God likewise assign the true reason for all the sorrow that has befallen the poor sufferer? Or is He ashamed (or afraid) to confess that it was all for a mere wager? Admitting that He not only add nothing to what the three Friends have already

said, but positively reiterates their mistaken assumption, would not His epiphany in the storm-wind seem a factor also in increasing the obscurity?

There is, however, one statement made by God to Eliphaz which demands our special consideration. In the discussion between Job and his Friends, the former denounces God as unjust, careless of human right.⁴ The Friends, on the other hand, defend him, endeavoring to convince Job of the divine righteousness and goodness. Always they speak and counsel to the best of their ability in the most pious and reverential manner. And still, the battle over, the sky again clear, God emerges from the storm-wind, and his first word to Eliphaz is: "Mine anger is kindled against thee and thy two friends, for you spoke not rightly of me, as my servant Job." In the light of the old theories, does not this rebuke show God to be very unjust? After upholding the divine cause, maintaining his justice so eloquently in the face of Job's bitter revilings to be told that their praise was less acceptable to him than Job's impious utterances—that rebuke is disconcerting, to say the least. For notwithstanding the fact that Job at first refrained from "speaking foolishly against God" and that he "sinned not with his lips," even after he was "afflicted with boils," nevertheless, further on, he uttered many words that must have pleased Satan immensely. Yet God was angry with the Friends of Job who spoke of his justice and righteousness.

If the author had any desire to teach a moral lesson or lay down a philosophy of reward or punishment, he would have constructed his plot far differently. Instead of telling us the real cause of Job's suffering at the outset, he would have reserved that for the end, thus working up to a climax which would have been the clearing up of the mystery by the descent of God in the storm-wind, or why tell us at all of the wager between God and Satan? Let him simply state that Job suffers because God wished to try him.

But the author clearly had no such lesson to teach; hence he cast his plot in a different mold. The question, therefore, is quite pertinent: What was the purpose the writer had in mind with this book? Before entering upon an attempt at solving this question, it might be well to mention that the same extraordinary, incompatible use of the name of God found in the Pentateuch is met with here.

In the Introduction, the name of Yahawe is employed in refer-

⁴Job 9:24.

ring to the supreme God. It is to Yahawe that the Sons of Elohim come to pay homage. It is only after obtaining permission from Yahawe that Satan can inflict suffering upon Job. The same appellation for God is also used at the end of the story; Yahawe it is who answers Job out of the storm-wind; Yahawe, too, who disapproves of the utterances of the Friends;⁵ and again Yahawe who restores Job to his prosperity and happiness.⁶ In contradiction to this, in the entire discussion or debate, Yahawe is not once mentioned, except by Job.⁷ It is to El, Eloha, Shaddai, that the Friends constantly refer. This change in the appellation of God can scarcely be accidental, for there are numerous opportunities throughout the debate for employing the name of Yahawe. Is there some reason for this peculiar incongruity? The explanation made by a few commentators, that the plot and the discussion are not by the same author, is rather a makeshift. As stated above Yahawe is mentioned in the discussion by Job. Then too, the epiphany of Yahawe and the discussion are correlated. For the plot without the discussion is just as lame as the discussion without the plot; the characters, ideas, and situations are so closely interwoven that one cannot stand without the other.

WHY HAS THE BOOK OF JOB BEEN MISUNDERSTOOD?

We see, then, that the Book of Job, as explained by the commentators, is not explained at all. Its contents remain vague, incomprehensible, incoherent. Shall we conclude, then, that these commentators have pronounced the final word on the subject; that it is impossible to simplify this apparently conglomerate mass of ideas; and that the author himself had no clear idea or plan in mind when he wrote? Or, shall we not rather assume that the Book has been hitherto misunderstood, misinterpreted by its editors for one reason or another? If the latter assumption be accepted, we may feel free to give due consideration to any new theory which may purport to remove difficulties and clear up the vagueness of the composition.

One can easily discern one cause for the prevalent misunderstanding of the Book of Job in the great reverence with which the commentators have always regarded the Bible. Under their guidance, we are permeated with the idea that everything in the Scrip-

⁵Job 42:8.

⁶*ibid.* 42:12-16.

⁷*ibid.* 12:9.

tures holds a sublime religious thought, and hence, when we are confronted with some naïve, primitive expression, we hasten to explain it away, to allegorize it, and to fill it with a mystic significance, which, very likely, was far from the mind of the author. From this preconceived interpretation of the Bible, the Book of Job especially suffers. All its primitive ideas have been exalted and philosophic verities have been read into them, until such a confusion has resulted as would ensue were we to attempt to interpret Homer or Æschylus in terms of modern philosophic thought.

A further cause for the general misunderstanding of Job lies in the fact that it is ascribed to a very late period, and this error, in a measure, grew out of the former mistakes. Since the work is so full of "grand conceptions of God," we are told naturally, it must have been written at a high stage of Hebrew civilization, when Israel's religious consciousness had become poignantly awake. And this preconceived idea leads to further confusion; for when the commentator chances upon some really non-Israelitish concept, reasoning that such a concept could not have arisen in the mind of the God-intoxicated people of the post-Exilic period, he endows that expression with a cryptic meaning and ascribes to it a sublime moral or ethical lesson which it never had.

Now the reason which leads scholars to place Job at so late a period is not hard to discover. They refuse to attribute to the Hebrews a civilization or literature worthy of the name, before they came into direct contact with the Babylonians. But this prejudice regarding pre-Exilic Jewish culture is altogether untenable: first, because it is hard to believe that the long splendid intellectual period of Samuel, David, Solomon should have left no impress upon, have borne no fruit in, the literature of their times. Indeed, it would be rather extraordinary if all this rivalry and strife of the several religious cults had not produced a great literature of which some high concepts were not found.

But we know positively that the Jews had a notable, inspiring literature even before the Exile. Most scholars admit that Deuteronomy was composed in the time of Josiah.⁸ And a work such as this implies a long line of precedent literary works of which its monumental grandeur becomes the splendid consummation.⁹

We see, therefore, that the reason for putting the composition of

⁸ 2 Kings 22:8, 10.

⁹ See the author's book *The Culture of Ancient Israel*. Block Pub. Co.

Job at so late a period has no basis in fact; and as we find it no longer needful to read into its words later ideas, we can accept its naïve primitive ideas at their intrinsic worth and infer that the Book of Job was composed at a very early date, when Israel's religious knowledge was yet in its infancy, and when the people still had anthropomorphic notions about God and believed that he could be prevailed upon to do certain things in order to convince himself of the result. The moment we come to this conclusion, that the Book of Job is not coeval and therefore not of the same ethical level with the Books of the later Prophets, the meaning and import of its contents break upon us with a new helpful light.

THE DATE OF THE COMPOSITION OF JOB

It will be impossible for us to thoroughly understand Job, until we have fixed the date of its composition and surveyed the conditions of religious life of which it is the expression. Two sources will shed light upon its authorship: tradition and the contents of the Book itself. In the Talmud we find Job assigned to a very early period in Jewish history (Baba Bathra) and if we may not lean too confidently on the wall of Talmudic tradition, yet its averment adds weight to the arguments deductible from the Book itself. If we divest the composition of all its unwarranted sanctity, the naked plot will reveal to us a plain pre-Israelitish myth of a struggle between rival gods, and the success and victory of one Yahawe over the others. At the very outset, we are told how the Sons of Elohim came to pay homage to Yahawe; how Satan made a wager with him, that Job would speak blasphemous words if afflicted with punishment. What light does this plot throw upon the development of the God-idea in ancient Israel at this date. This we can determine by following the history of the latter up to the time of the author of this book.

From Exodus 6:2, we know that Yahawe was a new god among the Hebrews. There we are informed that Yahawe was not known to the Patriarchs of old; they knew only El,¹⁰ and Shaddai.¹¹ But we learn also from many other passages that the oldest gods of the Hebrews were known as the Elohim. Abraham was addressed by his neighbor Ephraim as a Prince of the Elohim.¹² Thus when the Children of Israel made the Golden Calf in the wildness, they ex-

¹⁰Genesis 28:19.

¹¹Exodus 6:2.

¹²Genesis 23:6.

ulted, "These are thy Elohim, O Israel!"¹³ Again in the days of the High Priest Eli, when the Ark was taken into the camp of the Hebrews, the Philistines cried out in dismay: "Behold, the Elohim came to the camp of Israel! Woe unto us! Who will save us from these mighty Elohim, who smote the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the Wilderness."¹⁴ These and other Biblical passages prove that the Elohim were the oldest and most popular gods in ancient Israel.

Under these circumstances it will appear self-evident that it took Yahawe's followers some time to drive out the Elohim cult and root instead into the minds of the people the name of their God. Even in the Creation stories we have one in which Elohim¹⁵ and another in which Yahawe,¹⁶ is the Creator. Likewise in the story of the Sacrifice of Isaac there is recorded a victory of Yahawe's mild religion over the harsher and more barbaric cult of Elohim.¹⁷ At the time of the Prophet Elijah, however, we find the Children of Israel given to the worship of the Baalim, the gods of their neighbors, the Phoenicians; but when Yahawe revealed his awful majesty and power on Mount Carmel through his servant Elijah, the people cried out, "Yahawe is Elohim! Yahawe is Elohim!" which would indicate that Yahawe and not Baal, became the recognized successor to Elohim; even more it would indicate that there came about a compromise, a kind of understanding, between the old and the new, between Elohim and Yahawe, who were henceforth regarded as identical.

From these data we can readily infer the date of composition of Job. Here Yahawe speaks with tolerance of Elohim.¹⁸ And while the author goes so far as to claim supremacy for Yahawe, still the latter is anxious that no good man should speak blasphemously or even slightly of Elohim.¹⁹ There are two other names that add to the mystery of the Book of Job. One is the designation "Sons of Elohim" and the other "Satan." The former are alluded to in but one other instance throughout the Bible: namely, where we read that the Sons of Elohim acted displeasingly to Yahawe.²⁰ This

¹³Exodus 32:4.

¹⁴1 Samuel 4:6, 8.

¹⁵Genesis 1.

¹⁶Genesis 2:4.

¹⁷See *The Drama of Ancient Israel*. A. P. Drucker.

¹⁸Job 1.

¹⁹Job 1:8; 2:3.

²⁰Genesis 6:2, 4.

name would then carry the Book back to a very early date. The reference to Satan, on the other hand, would point to a later origin for Job. Neither designation affords conclusive evidence, however, hence we must leave them entirely out of consideration.

The evidence in Job shows, however, that Yahawe was considered supreme. To him the Sons of Elohim come to pay homage. To him Satan shows courtesy, and without his consent, can do nothing. And yet this supreme Yahawe was desirous that none should offend the Elohim. We gather, furthermore, that he could be persuaded by Satan to act one way or another, even if the advice was wrong. And it would seem that there existed a rivalry between Yahawe and Satan, the spokesman of the Sons of Elohim (El, Shaddai, and Eloha). This evidence would place Job at a period anterior to the story of Elijah and before Baal invaded the land of Israel, and took over the struggle against Yahawe. This book was written when the struggle was between Yahawe and El, Shaddai, and Eloha.

Now, in the light of this evidence, it is plain that the naïve sentiments, the mythical religious views of Job are to be taken literally, without gloss or explanation. Job is an old book written at an early epoch in Israel's religious experience. Accordingly, we must not seek for profound religious verities or philosophic reflections. We must take it simply as a beautiful myth of the time of Israel's youth, full of poetic fancy and childish sentiments. The plot, like its predecessors which deal with the strife and the victory of Yahawe, was put in the form of a drama and presented before an audience at a shrine of Yahawe to inculcate the lesson that Yahawe is supreme and that the other gods are subject to his will.

JOB AS A DRAMA

The Book of Job must have originally been a drama. Evidence is, that in spite of the manifold revisions, alterations, and amendments which the Book underwent at the hands of the later Jewish editors before it was accepted into the Canon, it has retained many of the original dramatic features and devices. In the first place, it has the primary requisites of the drama in its pathos, its poetic fancy, conflict of passions, and struggle of will against impulse. Furthermore, it has a spectacular setting, intense action, and impassioned oratory. Again, it employs the well-known technique of the drama since it has (a) a well-defined introduction, which strikes the keynote of the whole composition; (b) a climax (in Job's con-

stancy); (c) a denouement (in the appearance of Yahawe).

Another proof of the dramatic origin of the Book of Job is found in the device used in solving the problem involved in the story. How to present the solution of a play is one of the greatest difficulties experienced by dramatic writers. They cannot close with an additional note, an explanation, or personal reference like story writers. In the play every incident must be presented on the stage, through the actors and by means of actions. In a play of mystery the author cannot present himself before the audience and disclose the "real truth"; on the other hand, the actor, not having apparently been aware of it throughout the play, could hardly assume the role of informant at the end. In the drama of the Middle Ages the author resorted to the epilogue to explain away all the difficulties and disentangle the knots of the plot. This epilogue was recited by some one who had no part in the play itself. This method, however, was not very dramatic.

The Greek and Roman playwrights had recourse to a more ingenious method. When they constructed a problem drama dealing with Fate or Providence, they had in mind a religious assembly, which could readily believe in miracles and the intervention of the gods in human affairs. Accordingly, it was not at all out of the way for them to have a god appear on the stage to reveal the truth to erring men and unfold the mystery of Providence or Fate, and thus effect the denouement of the plot. This device aided the play in several ways: it was spectacular, impressive and inspiring; besides, it seemed quite natural that only a god who in his mercy had come to the rescue of the suffering hero should be able to shed light on the profound mystery involved. Indeed, so commonly was this method resorted to on the Greek and Roman stage that in all the great theaters provision was made to have a *deus ex machina* contrivance ready at hand, and this machine later became a permanent fixture on the classical stage.

Now the author of Job employs the same device in trying to clear up the problem involved in his plot. The situation at the end of the discussion is extremely embarrassing. Job and his Friends seem unable to come to an agreement. Each side remains stubbornly unconvinced, the plot is at a standstill, only a god can reveal the truth and reconcile the contradictions. And so we have Yahawe descending from the storm-wind, performing the office of *deus ex machina*, and opening the eyes of the erring to the truth. This

treatment in itself would seem sufficient to prove that Job was originally a drama.

There is more conclusive proof, however, for the author makes use of a device that is employed only in a composition written with a spectacular presentation in view. In a written narrative the author can paint a vivid picture of the entire plot by showing the events in logical progression. Since by his mere say-so he can transport the reader in imagination from place to place, he finds it more convenient to picture occurrences in action, as they happen, no matter where, and thus his story gains in clearness and vividness. Not so in the drama, which is written with the design of being acted out on a stage. Here the playwright finds it impossible to introduce in action every minor event connected with the story: first, because every event would require its individual scenery (a change that would entail great inconvenience and expense); secondly, because there would be need for a greater number of actors; and thirdly, because many scenes would confuse the audience, whose memory must not be taxed too severely with details. To overcome this difficulty, dramatic writers resort to various methods. The modern playwright introduces a confidante, a friend or servant, to tell of some event that happened at a distance. The classical playwright employed a messenger who told the people of minor events, connected with the plot, that took place somewhere else.

To this device the author of Job has recourse. Ostensibly to inform Job, but actually to tell the audience of the catastrophes that befell Job's cattle, flocks, servants and children, he introduces a messenger in each particular event. This method of using a messenger to tell what occurred instead of relating it directly proves conclusively that Job was written as a drama, with a view to presentation on the stage, where minor events could not be presented in action.

From these several methods and devices of the composition, we therefore conclude that the author of the Book of Job wrote it for presentation as a play. His main purpose was to prove the glory, the power, and the superiority of Yahawe. Accordingly, it would be a legitimate inference that it was a religious play, written by a Yahawe priest, for presentation at one of the Yahawe shrines.

THE PLOT OF THE DRAMA

We are now in a position to understand the full significance of the plot, and can readily follow its intricacies. We must, however, always bear in mind that the real hero of the play is Yahawe, while the villain is Satan. Job and Elihu, as their respective representatives, are only the pawns, with which hero and villain pursue the game of conquest. In the Introduction we have presented a picture of Job, prosperous in his material affairs, pious and religious in his conduct. Yahawe is very proud of him and sets him up as an example of his worshippers to the Sons of Elohim. The latter, envying him the possession of so loyal a subject, would fain seduce Job from his righteous way; but he is protected by Yahawe on all sides, and their attempts prove vain.

Now Satan, the heavenly mischief-maker, devises a trick which, if it succeeds, will rob Yahawe of his faithful servant. As Job under the protection of Yahawe is unassailable, Satan must needs secure the latter's permission ere he can touch Job. To obtain this, he resorts to a ruse. Yahawe, however, is vigilant. At first he allows Satan only to deprive Job of his possessions and his children; and even the second time, while he permits Satan to inflict punishment on Job himself, he is careful to stipulate that his servant's life must be spared at all hazards.²¹

Full of glee, Satan leaves the court of heaven, for now he has won the second skirmish in the conflict. Now will every one see that the servants of Yahawe are not always safe from suffering, as his priests contend. Now, too, will Job himself finally grow weary of his glorious Yahawe, who no longer protects his devotee, and go over to the worship of the Sons of Elohim.

To Satan's chagrin, Job's constancy again remains unshaken, even after the three Friends, the representatives of the Sons of Elohim, urge and exhort him to come over to the service of El, Shaddai, and Eloha.²² Their pleading is met with the answer: "Ask the Behemoth, and it will teach thee: or bend down to the earth and it will tell thee; the fishes of the sea will inform thee; in fact, who does not know that it was the hand of Yahawe which made all these," (which you attribute to other gods)²³. The Yahawe priest who composed the drama purposely took the spectators into his confi-

²¹The Talmud says that it was harder for Satan than for Job to preserve the latter's life.

²²Job 5:8, 11.

²³Job 12:9.

dence at the outset concerning the reason for Job's affliction, in order to turn them against the three Friends, the priests of the other gods, who are thus placed in a ridiculous position, to be jeered and laughed at for their gross ignorance and their false statements in declaring that Job's punishment was due to his sins.

The three Friends finally give up importuning Job. They can do nothing more, their words have no weight with him. It is, the terrible attack of Elihu, apparently a priest of El, which almost accomplished the design of Satan, misleading and nearly convincing Job that he ought to desert Yahawe and adopt the worship of El, for Job's silence is a virtual acquiescence in Elihu's testimony that El is the greater god.

Not a moment too soon does Yahawe learn of the ruse of his adversary. But now he rushes forthwith to the succor of his worshipper, and revealing his omnipotence at the critical moment, saves his cause. The mere fact that Yahawe should manifest himself was enough to convince the sufferer that his god would once again afford him protection. But now Yahawe is introduced on the stage, he is made to criticize the other divinities, to claim for himself all the power attributed by Elihu to El and Shaddai. In fact, Yahawe minimizes the work of these gods. Whatever El has made was not satisfactory,²⁴ it had to be changed or improved. Yahawe now also tells of the victory he has had over the two monsters, Behemoth and Leviathan.²⁵ He first describes their power and ferocity.²⁶ Then he turns to the priest of El with a triumphant taunt, "Didst *thou* draw Leviathan in the net? Or didst *thou* bore his tongue with a rope? Didst *thou* put an hook into his nose, or bore his jaw through with a thorn?" Yahawe thus jeers the priest of El to show that no one but he himself did all these things. He then dilates upon the great event when Leviathan (the Tiamath of the Babylonians) declared war upon the gods. How they all trembled! He alone subdued the wild animal.

Eliphaz and his two Friends, hitherto El worshippers, on witnessing the power of Yahawe and hearing the words, are, like the assemblage on Mount Carmel in the days of Elijah, soon convinced, and become willing converts to Job's god. But Yahawe announces to Eliphaz that his "anger is kindled against" him and his Friends,

²⁴Job 39:17; 38:41; 40:20.

²⁵See *Schöpfung und Chaos*, by Gunkel; Talmud.

²⁶Job 41:1-34; 40:15-24.

because they did not abet Job in his vindication of Yahawe. They are advised to entreat Job to pray for them, and to propitiate Yahawe with sacrifice. This they do and are henceforth accepted by the god of Job.

Here the drama is at an end. There is no need of informing the audience as to what becomes of Job. It knows that the merciful Yahawe will do everything to make him forget his misfortunes. At a later date, however, when this composition was adopted into the Canon and made over into a prose story, an epilogue was added to the original drama, telling all that Yahawe did for Job afterward, so that the reader might have it brought to him that Yahawe always takes care of his followers and helps and protects all who rely upon him.

THE PURPOSE OF THE DRAMA

The Yahawe priest, for such was undoubtedly the character of the author of the Job drama, had a manifold purpose in writing this work. He would prove, first, that Yahawe is the supreme ruler of the universe, to whom all the other gods are subservient, and without whose permission they can do nothing. Although he concedes that Elohim is the older divinity and indeed makes Yahawe speak with respect of him always, yet Yahawe is the Creator and the ruler of the world. Secondly, he would emphasize the fact that Yahawe always protects his faithful worshippers. "No evil ever comes from Yahawe," it comes instead from Satan, the spokesman of the Sons of Elohim. Thirdly, the author would demonstrate that Yahawe alone is able to reveal Himself to his servants in the hour of need. Fourthly, this Yahawe priest would hold up to ridicule the followers of El, Shaddai, and Eloha. The author has taken care to inform the audience in the Introduction of what took place in heaven, and thus of the actual reason of Job's suffering. Then he brings on the four Friends (Elihu comes in later), who, as representatives of the other gods, persistently contend that Job's afflictions are due to his neglect of the other gods (El, Shaddai, and Eloha). And one can easily picture the disgust and contempt of the spectators for these Friends who speak all that the people considered grossest falsehood and blindest ignorance. They who held the truth, how must they have regarded with disdain these false prophets that knew not like their own Yahawe priests the secrets of heaven. And fifthly, the author would prove that Yahawe can-

not be deceived by any one. He but seemingly allowed Satan to deceive him, in order to have the best of him in the end by capturing the representatives of the Sons of Elohim. Thus Satan falls into his own net. And finally, the author took this opportunity to reiterate the old stories of the conquests of Yahawe over the monsters Behometh and Leviathan, who had terrified all the other gods.²⁷ As it was Yahawe who subdued them, he must therefore be recognized as the supreme ruler.

This Job drama was a stroke of genius in every way, the work of a master and an artist. It awed and inspired, above all it taught the people not to believe the statements of the priests and prophets of the other gods. We will concur, then, that the plot and the debate were written by one and the same hand; the latter being an outgrowth of the former, the plot the framework of the discussion. All the difficulties now fall away, all the obscurities resolve themselves into essentials. What seemed at first a bewildering incoherence, is seen to be the ingenious arrangement of a master mind that devised the loftiest and most sublime methods to bring out his boldly conceived and inspiring purpose of presenting a wonderful picture of Yahawe before the worshippers of their common god.

²⁷Job 41:34.