

Job : Rebel or 'Anaw'?

Introduction

The Book of Job, a magnificent piece of literature in the whole Bible, has a universal appeal. A young married woman burnt alive for failing to pay the dowry, an innocent lad run over by a truck for no fault of his, an honest manual labourer who is paid a pittance for his day-long sweat and stink, an upcoming young man diagnosed to be afflicted by a deadly cancer, an elderly widow robbed of all her jewels and savings by a wayside thug – these and a host of others are the "Jobs" we see and meet in our day-to-day experience. So long as the earth continues to move around, there would be no lack of "Jobs". In fact it is possible that we ourselves are victims of this Job-experience right now!¹

The Book of Job shares with us one such experience and invites us not merely to be spectators of, but participants in this universal phenomenon. The fact that Job, the hero of this story is not a Jew, but an Edomite from the land of Uz (1:1; cf. Gen 36:28), and the author of this literary piece remains anonymous, may be pointers to show that the frustrating conflict Job undergoes and the peaceful resolution that is worked out in the story could be true for all times and places.

Though suffering itself is a problem, unmerited and innocent suffering remains ever an irreconcilable enigma. Many a sage and thinker, philosopher and religionist round the globe has tried to find an adequate answer to this riddle of suffering. The Book of Job is one attempt to find out

1. Gutierrez, G., *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*: Orbis Books, New York, 1987, pp. xiii-xiv; Beaucamp, E., *Man's Destiny in the Books of Wisdom*, Abba House, New York, 1970, pp. 46-47; Scott, R. B. Y., *The Way of Wisdom*, Macmillan Co., New York, 1971, pp. 140-147.

the “Why?” of such innocent suffering, and it is at the same time an enquiry into God’s role in human life as it unravels itself in the sad plight of one individual, namely, Job.

Job : a Paradox

The Book of Job is a paradox in which the author celebrates a strange marriage of incompatible literary forms, prose narrative (1:1-2:13 and 42:7-17) and poetic dialogues (3:2-42:6).² The person of Job too is presented in paradoxical categories.

Comparatively young (15:10), Job is pictured both by the author and by God as a man of outstanding calibre (1:1, 8; 2:3). He is consistent in his character (“blameless”), upright in his actions (“righteous”), reverential in his dealings with God (“fearing God”) and scrupulously honest and discerning in his choices (“avoiding evil”). Elsewhere in the Bible he is portrayed together with Noah and Daniel as a paragon of righteousness (Ez 14:14-20) and alone, as an example of patience and steadfastness in the midst of suffering (Jam 5:10-11). Besides these qualities of natural goodness Job enjoyed impressive holdings and the happy company of a fairly large family (1:2-4).

But totally unexpected at once is the picture of Job presented as one who had lost all his possessions, his servants, sons and daughters in rapid succession, and smitten in his own body with a disfiguring and disgusting disease. He has only his life to call his own and of course, also a cynical and hyper-critical wife (2:9)!

The reason for this round-about turn of events and fortunes is presented in terms of a dialogue between God and the Adversary (“the Satan”) in the heavenly court (1:6ff

2. Crenshaw, J. L., *Old Testament Wisdom*, SCM Press Ltd., London 1982, p. 100; Habel, N. C., *The Book of Job*, SCM Press Ltd., 1985, p. 23 calls it an “assumed disjuncture”.

and 2:1ff). It is God himself, with evident pleasure, initiates the action by calling attention to "my servant Job" and thus giving a clean chit for his loyalty to him as opposed to the Adversary who is only an agent with permission to work on Job and who judges him to be selfish. "Does Job fear God for nothing" (1:9) is his sole problem!

(Job indeed rises up to the test. Far from answering the problem from a philosophic point of view he resolves it in the sphere of faith. Instead of taking refuge in purely rational analysis he has recourse to disinterested piety. He expresses unshakable trust in God not for the hope of reward but for God himself. "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (1:21); "Shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive evil?" (2:10) are words which underscore the irrationality of the faith of Job. But they at once vindicate God's faith in Job and Job's faith in God and deliver a deadly blow to the wrong presumption of the Adversary. Job thus has stood the test and succeeded. That is the reason why at the end of it all, "the Lord accepted Job's prayer" (42:9) and "gave him twice as much as he had before" (42:10).)

But one must still face the question of the suffering of good people like Job, in history, in our own times. The paradox of innocent suffering has hunted humankind from time immemorial as it continues to do so today!

Of old the Sumerians avowed that suffering was the consequence of one's own evil actions and sinful deeds. One has to pray to his god so that he may intercede for him in the assembly of gods. The Babylonians in similar vein attributed the sufferings of the just to unwitting transgressions of the sufferer himself or to the arbitrary dealings of the gods. The Egyptians however contested the traditional

doctrine of sufferings of the innocent and found a way-out through suicide!³.

The wisdom of India articulated in two streams, Buddhism and Hinduism, its answers to human suffering. Buddha the Enlightened one traced the cause of all sufferings to desires of all kinds. To arrive at “Nirvana”, according to Buddha one must overcome all desires. Called the “Job of the East”, the Markandeya Purana of Hinduism affirms that unmerited sufferings have to be endured for the sake of keeping truthfulness intact. Sufferings of the good are a test to prove their fidelity. Sufferings are probationary and not punitive.⁴

The poetic dialogues in Job (3:2-42:6) are a search into this problem of suffering of the innocent, by three learned persons: Elipaz, a wise man (cf. 4:17; 5:17-28 etc.), Bildad, a traditionalist (cf. 8:8-10), and Zophar, a moralist (cf. 11:4, 12 etc.) and Elihu an angry young man (cf. 33:15-19; 36:15 etc.). The following section will try to present Job in conversation with these men, all cock-sure of their wisdom, on the one hand, and of Job's guilt and iniquity (4:7-8; 8:20; 11:13-14 etc) on the other.

Job the Rebel

A doctrinaire system soundly based on the theory of retribution closed every door against the problem of suffering in the case of an innocent victim, like Job. The system was simply fool-proof as is testified to in Ps : 37 as elsewhere too. For the psalmist it was crystal clear that the good must “dwell in the land” and “possess the land” (Ps 37:3, 9, 11, 22, 29, 34) and the wicked must be “cut off

3. Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-144.

4 *id. ibid.*, pp 144-145 where he cites the Indian example from Pargiter, F. E., the Markandeya Purana, tr. with Notes (1904) p. xx.

from the land" (37:9, 22, 28, 38). The eternal die is cast and there is no escape from it. The law is universal and allows no individual exceptions.

The friends of Job, Elipaz, Bildad, Zophar and also the young man Elihu were all wise, experienced, articulate and well versed in the rules of the game. While Elipaz a philosopher-theologian (4:7-9) and the most considerate among the others discoursed from the wisdom gained in life and from his experience of God, Bildad played the role of traditionalist citing the example of the forbears of yore (8:8-10). Zophar the most rabid among them took up the cudgels of a moralist and hammered out the rules of orthodoxy (20:4-5) and Elihu put on the robes of a young and impetuous teacher (32:6-10).

Everything was sound and fury; a lot of sparks but no light. Each one of them repeated in his own way "*ad nauseam*" the ineffable, immutable and unchangeable and almost universal iron law of retribution, the so-called "*lex talionis*" (cf. Ex. 21:23-25; Lev. 24:19-20; Dt. 19:21 etc). "From the effect they go back to the cause. They argue from his sufferings to his sin, while he argues from his integrity to his title to blessing".⁵ They reason from the point of view of a principle; but he argues from the point of view of its applicability in individual instances. They argue from the 99 cases which they have examined; but he pleads that the 100th case also be diagnosed. They are defending the laws; he is defending the person (much as Our Lord would do, in the case of the Sabbath law (Cf. Mk 2:23-28 and par.).

As the arguments and counter-arguments proceed, though not forward, but in monotonously repeated circles, one could see the exasperation of Job expressed in a language challenging, antagonistic to and denouncing God, a

5. Rowley, H. H., Job, Nelson and Sons Ltd., Great Britain, 1970, p. 4; Habel, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

manner and mode characteristic of any innocent sufferer any time, anywhere in the world.

a) *He curses himself*: The first public reaction to his misfortune makes Job turn upon himself and look at himself as the centre to which everything must be related, and around which everything must revolve.⁶ Hence the seven days of silent sympathy from his friends goads him on to lament loudly his sufferings and his misery (3:3-26).

In an anguished cry similar to that of Jeremiah (cf. 20:14-18), Job curses the day of his birth as well as the night in which he was conceived (Job 3:1-10). The five times repeated "Why" (3:11, 12, 16, 20, 23), similar to those of the anguished Psalmists (cf. Ps 10:1; 13:1-2; 22:1; 42:9; 43:2; 44:24 etc.), expresses his persistent desire that he should have died at his birth, and that God should not have permitted him to see the light of the day and the beauty of the cosmos.

One could understand the vehemence of his soliloquy which is ultimately a death wish. The whole orthodoxy of his time pointed out "beyond dispute that prosperity was the result and reward of god-fearing goodness, and disaster and suffering, of wrong doing. If his theology is correct, he is the chief of sinners, but he knows he is not." This is the whole problem. "The firm moorings of his life have vanished; the ship of his life is adrift on the dark ocean, without chart, without light, being carried he knows not where".⁷

Rather than sitting in judgment over all what Job says here as bitter, exaggerated, distrustful, delirious, audacious

6. Gutierrez, op. cit., p. 13.

7. Ellison, H. L., *From Tragedy to Triumph: The Message of the Book of Job*, Pater Noster Press, Exeter, Devon, 1970; p. 31; Habel, op. cit., p. 110.

and rebellious, we must enter into his intense emotions and feelings. Surely he does rebel, but not against God. "He does not curse God, but he does complain about God."⁸

b) *He confronts his friends* : Though the theoretical point of reference, namely, temporal retribution is the same for both Job and his friends, yet the concrete experience of Job shatters his own belief in that theology. Thus, although the friends would like to help him from the point of view of the doctrinal context, yet they are not able to reach him in his experiential anguish. Hence the confrontation takes place between him and his friends; between a lived experience and an abstract theology.

Arguing from the principle of cause and effect which governs the moral world, Elipaz confronts him asking "Who that was innocent ever perished? or, When were the upright cut off?" (4:7). Further, in much stronger terms he accuses Job of hidden malice and wickedness, especially against the poor : "Is not your wickedness great? There is no end to your iniquities. For you have exacted pledges of your brothers for nothing and stripped the naked of their clothing. You have sent widows away empty and the arms of the fatherless were crushed. Therefore snares are round about you..." (22:5-11). So does Bildad in the words, "How long will you say these things?...Does God prevent Justice? Or does the Almighty prevent the right?" (8:2-3). And Zophar is not far behind : "For you say, "My doctrine is pure and I am clean in God's eyes... He knows worthless men. When he sees iniquity, will he not consider it?... If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in your tents" (11:4-14). Elihu the young man too follows suit : You say, "I am clean, without transgression... Behold, in this you are not right. I will answer you. God is greater than man. Why do you contend against him?..." (33:9-18).

8. Gutierrez, op. cit., p. 7-8; Ellison, op. cit., p. 32.

It is evident from the arguments of the friends that Job is guilty and he needs to acknowledge his sins outright and come back to God (5:8). "In their view religion is a matter of trade, humility an insurance policy and morality a coin that buys peace of soul and prosperity. On the surface, their creed is a magnificent one and their theism unblemished. Looked at more closely, their belief is not faith... They are defending not God but their own need for security... Their theism has become a subtle form of idolatry."⁹

From the monotonous repetition, with minor variations, of the same arguments in several series of speeches by the friends, "the author of the book may be trying to tell us... that their theology is an exhausted mine and that it keeps turning in place like a serpent biting its own tail."¹⁰

But the response of Job to his friends is as experiential as their arguments are highly mathematical. He confronts each of them with his own litany of agonizing questions. He would challenge Elipaz with the queries: "Is there any wrong on my tongue? Can not my taste discern calamity?" (6:30). To Bildad he would pose the questions "How long will you torment me, and break me in pieces with words?... Are you not ashamed to wrong me?" (19:2).¹¹ Zophar is not spared either. "I am not inferior to you", says Job and in a sarcastic way lambasts him saying, "Who does not know such things as these?" (12:3). In fact, authors are of opinion, that coming as these last words are at the end of the first cycle they are a refutation of the

9. Terrien, S; Job; Neuchatel, 1963, p. 41.

10. Gutierrez, op.cit., p. 28.

11. Notice here that Job is paying back Bildad in the same coin using similar expressions as Bildad has used in 18:1-2.

arguments of all the three friends.¹² In a similar vein, at the end of the second round of arguments Job attacks the abstract theology of all the three with the words: "How then will you comfort me with empty nothings? There is nothing left of your answers but falsehood" (21:34). By all these replies, in biting sarcasm Job disclaims that his friends have the monopoly of all wisdom. He disproves that they are the only wise people (12:2). Instead of comfort they had offered only emptiness; instead of consolation they had pronounced only falsehood!¹³; instead of answers they had given rise only to more questions.)

In fact, the confrontation between Job and his friends has been expressed all through the speeches by means of the two irreconcilable opposites: academic and experiential, theoretical and practical, legal and personal, abstract and concrete, mathematical and mysterious. The one argues for the justice of God, the other for his loving mercy; the one for retribution, the other for relationship; the one speaks of God as judge, the other as benefactor; the one proposes a psalm of penitence, the other a psalm of innocence! These are opposites which one finds hard to reconcile. Hence, Elihu the angry young man appears in the scene rebuking Job as well as his friends (32:2-5) for their fruitless and weary disputations. His long-winding arguments too, that sufferings serve people as pedagogues (33:16-18, 29-30; 36:10-12, 22-23) fail to convince Job. We pass on now to the next stage in Job's exasperation.

12. Bergant, D., *Job, Ecclesiastes*; Wilmington, Delaware, 1982, p. 79. In 12:1, the words, "You are people" would mean, "You are perfect., you discern well" etc, referring to all the three.
13. The term falsehood here translates the Hebrew word "*ma'al*" which usually means a sacrilegious offense against God. It is implied that the friends are "speaking falsely for God" (13:7): Habel, *op.cit.*, p. 330.

c) *He challenges God* : Job is now left with no one except God to turn to. As all those who suffer adversity and pain finally approach God for an answer, so does Job. But Job is still struggling. He still plays a rebel till finally his rebellion is subdued by God himself. In his seemingly inconsolable and uncontrollable exasperation he appeals to the court of God for an umpire or an arbiter ('*mokiach*' 9:33) to adjudicate his cause, for a witness ('*edh*' - 16:19) to vouch for his integrity and for a liberator ('*goel*' - 19:25) to rescue him from his sufferings. Of course, "these three roles or functions represent three faces of one and the same God as experienced by one who suffers adversity and is searching"¹⁴ for an answer.

The contending parties are now God and Job. But Job feels that God is so powerful that even "if one wished to contend with him, one could not answer him" (9:3). He repeatedly affirms his innocence and integrity and at the same time comes close to even speaking ill of God. "He snatches away; who can stop him?" (9:12); "I do not believe that he would listen to my voice; ...he multiplies my wounds without cause; he will not let me get my breath, it fills me with bitterness." (9:16-18). Further, he criticizes God for his irrationality; "It is all one... He destroys both the blameless and the wicked" (9:22). Finally he comes to the conclusion of not being able to argue with him since "He is not a mortal as I am that I might answer him" (9:32). Job's words do not seem so bitter as those of Jeremiah who lamented, "I am under the rod of God's wrath; He has driven and brought me into darkness...against me alone He turns His hand .. He has made my flesh and my skin waste away and has broken my bones... Though I call and cry for help He shuts out my prayer... He is a bear lying in wait for me, a lion in hiding... He tore me to pieces... he shot into my vitals the arrows of his quiver... I have become the

14. Gutierrez, *op.cit.*, p. 56.

laughing stock of my people..." (Lam 3:1-18). "No one in Israel had ever depicted the action of God towards men in this way before. Those who prayed the prayers of lamentation were not exactly prudish when they reproached God for his severity. But here is a new tone which has never been sounded before."¹⁵

The first appeal of Job is for an impartial arbiter or umpire ("*mokiach*" - 9:33). But who could be the umpire to ensure a fair-play before God who is so powerful and who determines all cases against people and is always right? This could only be God himself¹⁶ with whom he wants to debate with (13:3).

His obsession to meet God continues now in another form as he realizes his innocence more and more cries out saying "there is no violence in my hands, and my prayer is pure" (16:17). It is at this moment he glimpses the presence of a mysterious witness or defender ("*edh*"-16:19). It could be the umpire mentioned earlier (9:33) since the verb used ("*yakah*") with reference to the witness is cognate with the term umpire ("*mokiach*"). "Attempts have been made to identify this witness as a heavenly being, angel or intercessor..., but once again, more probably it is God himself (Is, 26:21; Ez 24:6-9). He seems to be Job's adversary at

15. Von Rad, G., *Wisdom in Israel*, Nashville, Abingdon, 1972, p. 217.

16. Gutierrez. op. cit. 59. Notice that the phrase "there is no umpire between us" (9:33) could also be rendered: "Would that there were an umpire between us", or "If only there were an umpire between us" which express an yearning to meet God. Habel, op. cit., pp. 196-197 opines that this umpire need not refer to God but to a third party who "would have the capacity to subpoena God...(and who) would have the unenviable task of controlling El's violent nature and thereby preventing him from intimidating the defendent (9:34)".

law, but is really on his side.”¹⁷ Job is appealing to God against God!

The struggle reaches its climax and the protest becomes stronger and more bitter. Job now reproaches his friends in the words: “How long will you torment me, and break me in pieces with words? These ten times you have cast reproach upon me; are you not ashamed to wrong me?” (19:1-3). He lodges complaint against God saying, “God has put me in the wrong and closed his net about me... He has kindled his wrath against me and counts me as his adversary” (19:6-13).

It is at this stage of extreme desperateness and despondancy he seems to express his hope on a person whom he calls Redeemer or Avenger (“*Goel*” 19:25). The term “*Goel*” used here could denote someone next to a sufferer and one who is obliged to rescue him from slavery, curse, poverty etc. (cf. Lev. 25:25-34; Gen 38:8-9; Ruth 4:4-6; Dt. 25:5-10 etc.) Now, who is this Redeemer? Is he God himself or any other? Most authors are of opinion as in the previous two cases that he is God himself. “He is referring to God and not to an intermediary distinct from God.”¹⁸

In his struggle against God, we may say, he is moving towards a fuller encounter with God himself; his anguish is leading him to a profound hope in God; his tortured self is finding solace in God. “It might also be said that Job, as it were splits God in two and produces a God who is judge and a God who will defend him at the supreme moment; a God whom he experiences as almost an enemy but whom he

17. Mackenzie, R. A. F., Murphy, R. E, Job, in the New JBC, TPI, Banagalore, 1990, pp. 476-477; Cordis, R., the Book of God and Man : A study of Job, Chicago, 1965, p. 527; but Habel, op. cit., pp. 274-276 holds on the basis of 16:21 that a third party is meant here. cf. also the previous note here.

18. Gutierrez, op. cit., p. 65-121; cf. also note 16 and 17.

knows at the same time to be truly a friend... These are two sides of the one God. This painful dialectical approach is one of the most profound messages of the Book.¹⁹ We do not enter here into the problem of who this Redeemer or Avenger is; when the vindication would come about; or how this vindication will take place etc, since this whole text is somewhat obscure and susceptible to different translations.²⁰

In any case, the words of Job here betray the attitude of any sufferer. It is behind the God of 'violence' the sufferer experiences the God of love. It is in the midst of the very activities of the just God the sufferer discovers the God of mercy. It is in his very attempt at running away from God the sufferer is running straight to the same God. This is the mystery of suffering in the midst of which Job will cry out "I shall see him on my side".²¹

The movement from rebellion has slowly advanced to the attitude of humble submission, as in the case of many a psalmist. From the anguished cry of "How long, O Lord?" the pendulum has swung to, "But I have trusted in the Lord" (Ps. 13). From the loud lament of "Answer me when I call" the refrain has changed to "In peace I will both lie down and sleep" (Ps. 4). Thus the persistent rebellion in Job slowly yields itself to a soothing trust. Job the rebel turns into Job the "anaw"!

19. Gutierrez op. cit. p. 65; cf. Habel, op. cit., pp. 302-309 for the opposite view, as before in note 16, 17 and 18.

20. Mackenzie and Murphy, op. cit 478; Gutierrez, op. cit. p. 64; Habel, op. cit., p. 308.

21. Gutierrez, op. cit., in page 121, note 18 quotes a Spanish poet who wrote thus: "I will flee from you to Yourself". This quote is cited from Gordis, op. cit., p. 527.

Job the "anaw"

As the fire of anger in Job dies down, there still is left out a spark under the embers. He would throw one final challenge at God saying "Let the almighty answer me!" (31:35). Hereafter Job would not dare mention about his merits or his sufferings. The laconic statement of the author: "The words of Job are ended" (31:40) puts a stop to all Job's complaints.

Now, Job's silence makes God break his silence. But he refuses to be drawn into answering Job's question: "How many are my iniquities and transgressions?" (13:23-24). He does not allow himself to be cross-examined by Job, but poses a series of unanswerable questions himself to Job (38:2-41:34). It is in what is called "the magnificent irrelevance" of God's (now *Yahweh's* - 38:1; 40:6)²² speeches that the author of the Book reveals his purpose, namely, to put humans in their place in relation to God.

The battery of questions of Yahweh whether Job was present at the beginning of creation (38:4-15), whether he knows God's way of dealing with the created realities (38:16-24), whether he understands how to operate them (38:25-33), whether he has power and authority to deal with them (38:34-38), whether he is capable of providing for the living beings (38:39-39:30) etc., baffles him and brings him to an understanding, and discernment of the truth of the reality of things. Conquered and humbled perhaps, but not yet fully convinced, Job answers God in an attitude of humility and unworthiness typical of that found in the call narratives (Ex. 3:11; Is. 6:5; Jer. 1:6): "Behold I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on

22. The term Yahweh is the personal name by which the God of the covenant calls himself (cf. Ex. 3:14). The fact that it has not been used since the prologue denotes that Yahweh who came to the rescue of his enslaved people (Ex. 3:7-8) is the one who will also liberate Job from his anguish.

my mouth. I have spoken once and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further" (40:4-5). One who prided himself on his "glory" (29:20) is now reduced to utter silence. "Acknowledgement of his littleness may thus be an important step toward the abandonment of his anthropocentrism",²³ and at the same time the beginning of his "anawism",²⁴ a state of profound surrender to God. The case is seemingly closed for Job, but not for God!

While the first speech of God revolves around the divine plan (38:2) in which the gratuitousness of his love is revealed the second speech centers around his justice (40:7-14). "While the first has for its theme the Wisdom of God, the second, the Power of God".²⁵ The two fanciful mythological animals Behemoth (40:15-24) and Leviathan (41:1-34) are brought in by God to reinforce the fact that even the powerful hostile forces of chaos and disorder are ultimately subject to the inscrutable designs of God.²⁶

Both the speeches which highlight the unfettered freedom of God encounter Job in his limited human freedom. "Job's freedom finds expression in his complaints and rebellion; God's freedom finds expression in the gratuitous-

23. Gutierrez, op. cit. 76; Habel, op. cit., p. 349.

24. The Hebrew term "*ani*" and its Aramaic form "*anaw*" often have a religious connotation meaning afflicted, meek, humble etc, especially in the Psalms (cf. 10:17; 22:26; 25:9; 34:2; 37:11; 76:9 etc. cf. also Num. 12:3; Zech. 9:9 etc.) It is in this sense that I use the term "*anawism*" here.

25. Kissane, E., the Book of Job, N. Y. Sheed and Ward, 1946, p. xxviii; Habel, op. cit., p. 362.

26. Various explanations are given as to the identity of these animals. Some say they are real, some mythical, some as referring to Job himself! cf. Pope, M. H., Job AB15, Doubleday, NY, 1973, pp. 320-334; Rowley, op. cit., 328-340. We may understand them as belonging to the sphere of mythology.

ness of the divine love that refuses to be confined within a system of predictable rewards and punishments. Job's freedom reaches its full maturity when he encounters without intermediaries the God in whom he hopes...When human freedom meets the divine freedom it also penetrates to the depths of itself".²⁷

It is this true understanding of himself and God that leads to a total transformation in Job. While in his first reply to God (40:4-5) Job was looking at himself, in his second reply, on the contrary, the focus is more on God, his words and his actions (42:2-6) which lead him to a total abandonment of himself into the hands of God.

In his final response to God which is both ambiguous and terse one may find the clue to the total "anawism" of Job. Despite divergent opinions to the contrary,²⁸ we may go along with Gutierrez who sees in this speech of Job his total "surrender to Yahweh with renewed trust"²⁹ as it was also the case with Jeremiah who cried out "You seduced me Lord, and I let myself be seduced" (Jer. 20:7).

Yahweh has enquired of Job over and over again if he has known ("Yd" 38:3) and comprehended the power and the intricate designs of God ("esa" 38:2) in creation as well

27. Gutierrez, op. cit. p. 80.

28. Habel, op. cit., pp. 577-578 mentions 4 different opinions of scholars with regard to the interpretation of this final speech: that of Terrien who holds to the surrender and capitulation of Job to God; Gordis and Westermann who argue the point that Job comes to a new understanding of God and is therefore reconciled to God in humility; Robertson who proposes an ironic confession of guilt by Job though he is innocent; Curtis who holds that God, (according to Job), being unjust and cruel, Job expresses utter defiance to God. Habel himself comes to the conclusion that having been vindicated of his innocence Job withdraws his litigations against God (pp. 578-583).

29. Gutierrez, op. cit., pp. 83-92.

as in the preservation and protection of all the created beings. Job responds with the words "I know" ("Yd": v. 2), "a profession of faith in the power of God"³⁰ who can do all things (cf. Lk 1:37). At the same time he also avows his lack of understanding and discernment ("binah" v. 3) since Yahweh has challenged him before with the question "if he has understanding?" ("binah" 38:4). With these words Job affirms that he now is beginning to know the designs of God ('esa': 38:2) "things too wonderful for him" (42:3) namely, the plan of the gratuitous love of God which governs the whole universe and gives a profound meaning to it. He has begun to understand now the freedom and love with which God operates in the world. What he had learned through hearing is now made clear for him through seeing ("now my eye sees thee" : 42:5). His search for finding God (23:3) has led him to see him face to face (cf. also here 19:26-27). When he most needed God, God was with him. "For Job to see God is to have his wish granted and his challenge answered".³¹ Job therefore submits to God and can say with Jeremiah in the time of his crisis: "the Lord is with me" (Jer. 20:11) and with the psalmist: "I shall behold thy face in righteousness; when I awake I shall be satisfied with beholding thy form" (Ps. 17:15)".³² His search for (23:3) and his hope of (19:26-27) seeing God is now satisfied. Intemperate rebellion yields to contemplative love because his eye has seen him (42:5).

The dark night of the soul has given way to a savouring of the "face-to-face" encounter of God. The ascent to

30. id. *ibid.* p. 83.

31. Habel, *op. cit.*, p. 582; Rowley, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

32. Gutierrez, *op. cit.* p. 85; cf. also note 9 in p. 125 where he quotes the words of an ordinary Ayacuchan Workman: "...we poor folk are with God our Little Father at all times; we never leave him for even a moment."

the mount has been arduous. But the much yearned for destination has been finally reached. Therefore he is able to cry out: "I retract and repent in dust and ashes" (42:6).³³ He retracts, resents, rejects, repudiates, withdraws what he has spoken.³⁴ At the same time he also repents (*'nhm'*) namely, he abandons his position of lamentation and dejected outlook of an "isolated sufferer and humiliated litigant ...and is ready to return to normal life again...since his integrity is intact" and his innocence confirmed.³⁵

Job a rebellious "anaw": a prophetic-mystic!

The change of mind that has taken place in Job makes him see God differently, not as one to be confronted in a bitter law suit but as one who embraces everyone in infinite goodness and love; not as a God of cause and effect but one of freedom and gratuitousness.

It is here we see how from that of a prophetic way of speaking about his own sufferings and those of the poor (ch 31), Job moves over to a mystical way of experiencing God's love in his dealings with the humans. Justice is experienced anew in the creative love of God. Prophetic rage turns into mystic contemplation; protest becomes acceptance and surrender.

God has taught Job, and of course each one of us, that the language of prophecy must needs be complemented by the language of mysticism and contemplation; the transi-

33. This translation is from the new Jerusalem Bible.

34. The term "retract" (*m's*) has no object. But from the context of the whole drama, we may presume with Pope that "it does not need to be expressed" (Pope, op. cit. pp. 348-349). Cf. also Habel, op. cit., p. 576; Gutierrez, op. cit., pp. 86-87. 125-126; Guinan, M.D., Job Collegeville, Minnesota, 1986, p. 78.

35. Habel, op. cit., pp. 576; 582-583; Gutierrez, op. cit., p. 86-87; 125-126.

tion from fear to trust must be part of every one's pilgrimage of faith. Both are not to run on parallel rails, but must interject, crisscross and converge into one so as to form an integral whole. In fact "Mystical language expresses the gratuitousness of God's love; prophetic language expresses the demands this love makes"³⁶ and both gratuitousness and demands must correct each other and feed on each other.

This is "Jobian" spirituality; this is also "Jesuin" spirituality, for Jesus who made the prophetic cry 'My God, My God, why have you forgotten me' (Mt. 27:46) also closes his life with a mystic utterance: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Lk. 23:46). This is the dialectics of any genuine spirituality expressed of course differently by different people as prophetic-mystical or mystico-prophetic, horizontally vertical or vertically horizontal, contemplatively active or actively contemplative, or in our own Indian terms Bhakti in Karma or Karma in Bhakti!

In fact, the spirituality of Job which finds its realization in this bipolar axis may from our point of view be called "anawistically rebellious or rebelliously anawistic"! While the unjust structures in our polity and culture must always arouse in us the prophetic rage which Jesus exhibited, our faith in the crucified Saviour must always enkindle in us a mystic as well as mysterious love. The categories of worldly power and wisdom must always make us bend our knees before "the foolishness of God which is wiser than human wisdom and the weakness of God that is stronger than human strength" (I Cor. 1:25).

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36. Gutierrez, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-95; Pope, *op. cit.*, pp. LXXXIII-LXXXIV