

Trust is Job One

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‘Quality is Job One.’ The slogan was Ford’s. As another company’s blogpost puts it, ‘quality was going to be “built in,” not just “inspected in” at the end of the production process.’ Erik Erikson would disagree. In his essay, ‘The Eight Ages of Man,’ Erikson identifies a person’s first psycho-social task, or job, as developing ‘Basic Trust.’

The eighth and final job is, indeed, to ‘inspect’ the whole process and come to a sense of what Erikson calls ‘ego integrity,’ a sense of acceptance and affirmation of one’s life as a whole—the alternative being despair. But it all starts with trust. And trust is not left behind in moving on to subsequent developmental tasks. It continues as the sub-structure and platform that affords the traction on which they proceed.

For Erikson, trust is ideally learned in the context of ‘maternal care,’ in ‘the quality of the maternal relationship.’ As he says, ‘Mothers create a sense of trust in their children by that kind of administration which in its quality combines sensitive care of the baby’s individual needs and a firm sense of personal trustworthiness within the trusted framework of their culture’s life style.’ If trust is deficiently learned in the parental setting, subsequent developmental stages, along with their distinctive task-learnings, provide renewed opportunities for the remedial learning of trust. It takes a village to raise a child; sometimes with the parents, sometimes in lieu of the parents. This leads me to Erikson’s following observation:

The parental faith which supports the trust emerging in the newborn, has throughout history sought its institutional safeguard (and, on occasion, found its greatest enemy) in organized religion. Trust born of care is, in fact, the touchstone of the *actuality* of a given religion.

I am arrested by Erikson’s caveat. If the ‘*actuality*’ of a given religion may be identified in its functioning as an ‘institutional safeguard’ of the sort of ‘parental faith’ that ‘supports the trust emerging in the newborn,’ what would be the identifying mark of

a religion that works as its ‘greatest enemy’? Surely, a religion, or a pathologized form of a religion, that trades on *mistrust*, a mistrust born of *fear*.

I take it that the capacity for trust and the capacity for fear are both important for one’s survival and flourishing. Total fearlessness, like the inability to feel physical pain, would render one oblivious to danger. But inability to trust anyone or anything would render one’s life, as Thomas Hobbes says, ‘solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.’ Trust, and mistrust; or, trust and fear, are both vital capacities. William Meissner, who builds on Erikson’s model, takes trust and fear as ‘polar capacities;’ and the developmental task is not to eliminate the negative, but to integrate these capacities in such a way that, ‘the positive disposition predominates.’ I take this principle to apply inter-personally, in a family, a society, and, as Erikson says, a religion. Where the fundamental disposition is fear, generating codes of conduct and criteria of judgment that trade on fear, we have a pathology—in an individual, a family, a polity, a religion.

Let me give you what I take to be an example of pathologized religion in the ancient world, and under the aegis of that religion a pathologized political empire. It is the religion of Babylon, as set forth in its creation myth, the *Enuma Elish*. This myth opens with a brief scenario that appears to have served as the expression of an earlier, relatively healthy religion, but that has now been overlaid and almost, but not quite, obscured by the pathologized form. This earlier religion correlated with pre-city-state forms of social and economic existence, and the scenario tells a story of two primordial gods, Apsu and Tiamat, sweet and salt water. These gods commingle and give birth to a succession of younger gods and goddesses, each one identifiable with this or that natural feature. (Think Tigris-Euphrates River system emptying into the Persian Gulf, the eddying waters producing a delta and a culture teeming with vegetable and animal life.) As mythic time goes on, the younger gods become rambunctious, as though restless to take over the farm. A counselor advises primal father Apsu to go to war against the young gods and destroy them. Primal mother Tiamat responds in horror, exclaiming, ‘What! Should we destroy that which we have built? Their ways indeed are most troublesome, but *nishdud tabish*.’ The verb, *shadadu*, means ‘to draw, drag, pull, bear along.’ It connotes painstaking, persistent effort. The adverb, *tabish*, is from the noun, *tab*, cognate with Hebrew *tov*, ‘good.’ Tiamat, the primordial mother, is opposed to war

as a way to restore peace among the gods. As parents of these obstreperous young gods, she urges they exercise painstaking kindness. But Apsu ignores her and goes to war. In the event, a younger god defeats and slays him. The younger gods again become rambunctious, and this time their older siblings complain to Tiamat, charging that she had not assisted Apsu against them, and asking, accusingly, ‘Are you not our mother? Clearly, you don’t love us.’ At this, and fatefully, she comes over to their side, declares war against the young gods, and marches against them. A young God, Marduk, rises up, slays her, and, splitting her dead body like a clam-shell, creates the cosmos within its two halves. This cosmos, fashioned within the walls of her dead body, has its earthly analog in the walled city of Babylon. Thus we have a myth that religiously legitimates the walled city of Babylon and the empire it controls. It is an empire controlled, ultimately, by the might of its armies and the fear they inspire.

Note again, then, the different responses *originally made* to the rambunctiousness of the younger gods. Tiamat, primal *mother*, counsels painstaking, kindly patience. Apsu, primal *father*, undertakes war. She displays implicit trust that matters can be worked out through painstaking goodness. He displays implicit fear. The result is a religion, and a political-imperial regime, whose founding and sustaining principle is coercive force arising out of fear and organized to rule through fear.

We see this principle in a number of state treaties of the second and first millennium BCE. In the second millennium, Hittite vassal treaties include stipulations governing the behavior of the vassal, and they end with sanctions designed to secure the vassal’s compliance. Those sanctions consist in a list of curses for disloyalty, and blessings for loyalty. But the curses come first. Notice, then, this ‘logic,’ or ‘theologic’: Blessing is a reward for good behavior. It is something to be earned. And behind the carrot of blessing looms the stick of the curses if one is disloyal.

In the first millennium, several treaties involving Assyria as suzerain don't even offer blessings for compliance; they only threaten curses for non-compliance. Which is to say that, in so far as religion, in those times, is the transcendental ground for statecraft, such religion seems pathological, grounded in fear and not in trust. And the fear is bilateral. A superior power that cannot trust the inferior power to respond freely and positively, must fall back on coerced response offered for fear of the consequences.

Just so, we arrive at my topic: *Trust is Job One*—that is to say, *Trust is Jōb One*. The issue between God and Satan, in Job chapter one, is the question of the motivation for Job's piety and uprightness, and the converse question of the basis on which God governs in human life. For both parties, is the basis trust? Or is it mistrust and fear?

This issue is mirrored in the exchanges between Job and his three friends, where the friends emerge as unwitting human proxies for Satan's point of view. They operate with a rationale of 'reward and punishment' that parallels the sort of logic illustrated in the vassal treaties I have briefly sketched. Blessing is a reward for obedience. But since Job suffers such calamities, he must be deserving of them, he must have done something terribly wrong. The underlying issue is identified in the very first of the friend's speeches, when Eliphaz reports the content of a mystical experience in which he hears a heavenly voice pose this question (Job 4:12-21): 'Can mortals be righteous before God? / Can human beings be pure before their Maker? / Even in his servants he puts no trust, / and his angels he charges with error; / how much more those who live in houses of clay / whose foundation is in the dust.' According to this so-called heavenly voice, which Eliphaz takes to speak for God, but I take to speak for Satan, God doesn't trust even the divinities that make up the heavenly court, let alone a mere finite human being. The implication is clear: God rules not through trust but through fear.

The importance of this passage is signaled in that when it comes Eliphaz's turn to speak again, he repeats this so-called heavenly message centering in God's *distrust* of any and all, in the heaven or on earth (Job 15:14-16). Its importance is clinched by the fact that it makes up the last of the friends' speeches, except that this time the speaker, Bildad, gives the message a preface, in which he says, (chapter 25), 'Dominion and fear are with God / he makes peace in his high heaven. Is there any number to his armies?' This is not the way Tiamat originally would have acted to 'make peace' among the gods. It is the way of her husband, Apsu, making peace through war. And it sounds like Tiamat herself, later on, as she becomes coopted into that logic by her older children. It is the logic in which dominion is achieved through fear of one's innumerable armies. But it not only achieved *through* fear; it is achieved *out of* fear. It is the fear *in* Apsu, and later on *in* Tiamat, that seeks dominion and so-called peace by instilling a *greater* fear in the perceived enemy. An imbalance of power as turning on an imbalance of fear.

This is the conception of God, and of the motive for human piety and virtue, that the friends are operating under; and this is the conception of God, and of Job's piety, that underlines Satan's question, *Does Job fear God for nought—hinnam*, freely? Satan's logic is that God has blessed Job as a reward for his piety and uprightness. But, Satan says, 'take away the hedge,' or wall of protection, that God has erected around him, and Job will curse God to his face. Satan assumes that the God-Job relation is based on fear and the sort of *quid pro quo* calculations that fearful parties must operate by in order for the weaker to remain safe and for the stronger to enjoy loyalty from the weaker.

How, then, are we to construe God's response, when God says to Satan, 'Job is in your hands'? I take this as an act of trust on God's part, God entrusting to Job the power to answer Satan's question. My grounds for such a take are manifold, some arising from Job's complaints *about* God and final addresses *to* God; some from God's addresses to Job from the whirlwind; and some from the striking parallels between the Prologue and the Epilogue. Let me begin with one such feature in the Epilogue.

The Epilogue opens with God addressing the friends. God says to Eliphaz, 'My wrath is kindled against you and your two friends: You have not spoken truly about me *as my servant Job has done.*' I take God to be taking aim directly at Eliphaz's so-called revelation concerning God's fundamental *mistrust*; and at Bildad's corollary that God rules through the might of God's armies. In this, says, God, 'you have not spoken truly concerning me.' What, then, of God's wrath? Bring curses down on their heads, as they deserve? But that would in fact *confirm* their view. This is what God says to them: 'Take seven bulls and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to enact *nevalah* with you.' Do you see the parallel with the Prologue? There, *God entrusted into Job's hands* the answer to Satan's question; here, he *entrusts into Job's hands* the question of how to deal with the three friends. In both instances, God *displays trust* in his servant Job. But what of that word, *nevalah*? It is usually translated, 'folly,' the opposite of *hochmah*, 'wisdom.' A Jewish scholar, Robert Gordis, defines *nevalah* as 'moral obtuseness and blindness to religious truth.' For God to respond in *wrath* to the friends' misrepresentation of God would be *nevalah*, fundamental moral and spiritual obtuseness. Specifically, for God to act in accordance with a *hochmah*, a 'wisdom,' that at its heart

consists in a transactional (indeed, fear-based, coercive) *quid pro quo* logic, would constitute, for Job's God, *nevalah*. Instead, God will have them take sacrifices and offer them in Job's presence, and Job will pray for them, and when Job does, God will accept Job's prayer on their behalf.

Go back, now to the Prologue. In chapter one, Satan had argued that, were God to withdraw the hedge or wall of protection around Job, and expose him to Satan's onslaughts, Job would curse God. In chapter two, when a second wave of calamities strikes Job, his wife says to him, 'Do you still maintain your integrity? Curse God and die!' Job responds, 'You speak as one of the *nevalot* would speak.' For Job to curse God, as she urges, would be for him to display moral and spiritual obtuseness. He goes on, 'Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?' His response reminds me of Mrs. Kohlhauser, a German immigrant farm-woman in northern Saskatchewan. Hard-working, the salt of the earth, she one day ended her tale of woe as recent widowed, by saying, 'But, *ve take ze bat vis ze goot*.' Such an attitude may strike us as *naïve*. But it is naïve in Erikson's sense of the word, displaying a disposition that persists as a substratum through all the vicissitudes, all the ups and downs, that can mark human life, a dispositional substratum of 'basic trust.' It is in such a spirit that Job responds to his wife. For, as he says to her, to curse God for supposed betrayal of some supposed *quid pro quo* would be an act of *nevalah*.

Do you see how the Prologue and the Epilogue come together to display Job and God 'on the same page,' vis-à-vis Satan, Job's wife, and Job's friends? For Job to curse God as Satan predicted and as his wife urges, would be *nevalah*. For God to respond in wrath to the friends' misrepresentation of God, would be *nevalah*. And the opposite of *nevalah* is *hochmah*, 'wisdom.' Not speculative wisdom, but moral and spiritual wisdom, a wisdom that enacts itself in trust.

Consider now the very last phrase in the book. The Hebrew expression is nicely captured in the *Tanakh*, the recent Jewish Publication Society translation of the Hebrew Bible: 'So Job died old and contented.' That sounds very much like Erikson's eighth stage, of 'ego integrity.' Look more closely, then, at the word translated, 'contented': it is *sabea*, literally, 'satisfied, sated.' It is an appetite word. To catch its full flavor, hear it in this prophetic word to Israel in exile concerning the restoration of Jerusalem (Isaiah

66:10-11): ‘Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; / rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her; / that you may suck [*yanak*] and be satisfied [*saba*] with her consoling breasts; that you may drink deeply with delight from the abundance of her glory.’ Satiation at the breast, as consolation for Jerusalem’s destruction and promise of restoration. A satiation that is the foundation of trust.

And this image, in bringing the Book of Job to an end, draws to an end a thematic and an imagery that runs right through Job’s own words in the poetic dialogues. After seven days of silence in the company of his friends, Job breaks into speech by cursing the day of his birth and the night of his conception (3:1-10). Then he cries out (3:12, 20): ‘Why did the knees receive me? / Or why the breasts, that I should suck [*yanak*]? . . . Why is light given to one who is in misery, / life to the bitter in soul?’ Bitterness. A taste. The very opposite of *seba* ‘, ‘satiation.’ This theme of bitterness runs throughout Job’s words, from chapter 3 to chapter 27, eight times in all. How is such bitterness healed?

From time to time Job signals the experiential domain within which healing could come. In chapter 10 he cries out to God, ‘Does it seem good to you to oppress, to despise the work of your hands / Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese? / You did clothe me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews. / You granted me life and steadfast love; and your care has preserved my spirit.’ The appeal is to God as divine giver of Job’s conception, birth and early nurture.

We hear a similar expression, in chapter 14, where, with the outstretched arms of his imagination, he says, wistfully (14:7), ‘There is hope for a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its shoots [*yoneqet*, literally, its ‘sucker’] will not cease. / Though its root grow old in the earth, and its stump die in the ground, / yet at the scent of water it will bud and put forth branches like a young plant.’ At the scent of water. Of the five senses, it is the sense of smell that most powerfully evokes the memory of past experience. And some have linked this to the nursing infant’s scent of the mother’s breast and milk. A tree, if cut down, still puts out shoots—suckers—in hope of *scenting* water. The outreach of hope as grounded in trust.

Finally, in chapter 27 Job takes an oath of innocence: ‘As God lives, who has taken away my right, / and *Shadday*, who has made my soul bitter; / as long as my breath is in me, / and the spirit of God is in my nostrils; / my lips will not speak falsehood, and

my tongue will not utter deceit. / . . . / I hold fast my righteousness, and will not let it go; / my heart does not reproach me for any of my days.’

Job takes his oath in the name of the God who gave him his very life’s breath. And the name of that God is *Shadday*. Of the 48 times it occurs in the Hebrew Bible, this name occurs 31 times in Job. So it’s important for understanding the Joban story. To ask the old question, ‘What’s in a name?’ Its linguistic etymology is uncertain, but more important is what it comes to signify through the defining actions of God so named. Six times in Genesis, and twice in the Book of Ruth, *Shadday* is associated with childbirth and nurture. Consider just this passage, where Jacob, at the end of his life, blesses his twelve sons. Coming at the end to Joseph, he blesses him (Gen 49:25)

‘by the God of your father, who will help you, / by *Shadday* who will bless you / with blessings of heaven above, / blessings of the deep that lies beneath, / blessings of the breasts [*shadayim*] and of the womb [*rechem*].’

Under the name, *Shadday*, the God of the Bible is a God of water in the form of rain and deep ground water—at the scent of which the sucker of an aged tree stump would quicken into renewed life. And this *Shadday* is likewise the God of the blessings of the breasts, *shadayim*, and womb.’ And the play on words here, typical of name-punning in the Bible, is telling: *Shadday* as giver of the blessings of the breasts, *shadayim*.

It is in the name of this God that Job, under a sense of the bitter turn his life has taken, takes his oath of innocence. And in that act, by naming his bitterness in direct address to *Shadday*, he implicitly opens his bitterness to *Shadday* in hope that *Shadday* will address it, and assuage it, or even heal it. And, as we hear at the end of the first speech from the whirlwind (Job 40:2), it is as *Shadday* that God responds to Job. The response addresses the experiential domain of *creation*, and the *generative blessing of rain* that renders all creation fertile and teeming with wild, exuberant life that resists being utterly domesticated by human hands, or tamed by human minds within categories of human logic. It is a creation teeming with blessing, and yes, risk. And it is in the rain that is so prominent in this first speech that God, as *Shadday*, responds to those outreaches of Job’s wistful imagination that I have briefly canvassed.

That Job hears, in these speeches, words that touch his bitterness and heal it, is signaled in the fact that when God asks Job to pray on behalf of the friends, Job agrees to

do so. He prays for them. And a final sign of the healing of his bitterness comes, as I have already observed, in the book's final word, 'contented'—*sabea* 'sated, satisfied.' In Erikson's terms, he dies in a state of ego integrity, the final form of trust. It is a state that Paul Ricoeur calls 'second *naïveté*,' a recovery of *naïveté* on the far side of experience.

That such a state is possible, in view of all that has happened to the Jobs of this world that would justify ending their life in bitterness and despair, I find attested in the life of a longtime resident of Terre Haute, Indiana. Eva Kor. A survivor, with her twin sister, of Auschwitz where these twins, like numerous other sets of twins, suffered under the so-called 'scientific' experiments of Dr Josef Mengele. In 1993 she traveled to Auschwitz, and there met a Dr. Münch whose job it had been to witness and certify the deaths in the gas chambers. He tells her that what he knows about those horrors has been 'fueling the nightmares he live[s] with every single day.' When he assures her that, yes, he is willing to sign an affidavit to what he has done and witnessed, she wonders what she can do in return. How, she asks, can one thank a Nazi doctor? Then it hits her. 'How about a simple letter of forgiveness from me to him? Forgiving him for all that he has done?' So she works on such a letter, to give him in exchange for the affidavit. But then, her former English professor, who is helping her draft such a letter, asks her if she would think of forgiving Dr. Mengele himself. 'At first I was shocked, but later I promised her that I would, for I realized that I had the power even to forgive the Angel of Death. "Wow," I thought, "it makes me feel good that I can do that. I have that power, and I am not hurting anyone with it." She goes on to describe what happens when, at Auschwitz on January 27, 1995, she witnesses Dr Münch signing his affidavit, and then reads her own statement of forgiveness and signs it. 'Immediately I felt that a burden of pain had been lifted from my shoulders, a pain I had lived with for fifty years: I was no longer a victim of Auschwitz, no longer a victim of my tragic past. I was free.' For she has acted *hinnam*, 'freely.' And in that act she participates in the free, life-embracing and life-giving generosity that the Book of Job associates with the name of *Shadday* and portrays in the character of Job. It is a story in which *trust is job one*, a trust that on final inspection is vindicated.

END NOTES

p. 1. Erik Erikson, 'The Eight Ages of Man,' in *Childhood and Society* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1950). All Erikson quotations are from this essay.

p. 1. The word, 'integrity,' resonates suggestively with a key word descriptive of Job in the Prologue. As reflected in a mathematical 'integer,' a 'whole' number and not a fraction, 'integral' means 'whole, entire' (OED), one might say, 'not partial, divided.' In Job 1, the narrator and God agree that Job is 'blameless and upright,' that is, *tam ve-yashar*. The Hebrew word, *tam*, means 'complete, perfect' in physical beauty, and morally, 'wholesome, having integrity' (Brown-Driver-Briggs, *Hebrew-English Lexicon*).

p. 2. William Meissner, *Life and Faith: Psychological Perspectives on Religious Experience* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1987), ch. 4, 'The Development of Spiritual Identity,' pp. 61-64.

p. 2. For an English translation of the *Enuma Elish*, see any edition of James B. Pritchard's *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton; Princeton University Press). For the original text, English translation and complete glossary, see Philippe Talon, *Enuma Elish: The Standard Babylonian Creation Myth* (Finland: Vammalan Kirjapaino Oy, 2005).

p. 4. For second-millennium Hittite treaties, see Pritchard, *ANET*, pp. 201-206; for first-millennium Assyrian treaties, see Simo Parpola, 'Neo-Assyrian Treaties from the Royal Archives of Nineveh,' *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (Autumn, 1987), pp. 161-189.

p. 5. Re: 'my grounds for such a take.' The book of Job is marvelously intricate in its interweaving of all the strands of human pathos, questioning, doubting, affirming, arguing, reasoning, assessing, despairing, hoping, together with their grounds whether stated, assumed or inadvertently implied. In the present essay I do not mean to obscure this intricacy, nor the almost infinite number of interpretive challenges and debating-points they raise. I have attempted to address them, to the extent of my ability, in my various books and articles, chiefly in my commentary, *Job* (1985), and then in *At the Scent of Water: The Ground of Hope in the Book of Job* (2009). I do think there is some virtue in attempting, after such close readings 'down in the weeds,' to stand back and see

if there is a fundamental issue on which they all turn, an issue that issues, finally, in one of two directions. In the old sense of these terms, does the book present a tragedy or a comedy? Does it end in catastrophe or in what Tolkien calls *eucatastrophe*? In Erikson's terms, does life end in ego integrity or despair? In the end, such 'interpretive challenges' lie at the heart of life itself. Perhaps it is the genius of this biblical book that in the end it places such questions before the reader (the way God places the universe before Job), in a way that calls for the reader's response in one direction or the other.

p. 6. Job 42:8, 'not to enact *nevalah* with you.' This clause has almost universally been translated, 'not to deal with you in accordance with your folly,' or words to that effect. Such translations take the word, *nevalah*, to describe the point of view and words of the friends as *nevalah*. To be sure, that is the case, and that is the reason for God's 'wrath.' But the grammatical construction simply will not support that translation. Two grammatical observations are relevant here.

First: The word, *nevalah*, occurs thirteen times in the Hebrew Bible. Of those thirteen times, it occurs ten times (including here) with the verb, '*asah*, 'do, practice.' In the other nine instances (Gen. 34:7; Deut. 22:21; Josh. 7:15; Judg. 19:23; Judg. 19:24; Judg. 20:6; Judg. 20:10; 1Sam. 25:25; 2Sam. 13:12; Is. 9:17; Is. 32:6; Jer. 29:23) *nevalah* describes, *not* the character of the party being acted upon, *but* the character of the act itself and, by implication, the character of the actor, the subject of the verb. Unless we fly in the face of what appears to be a stock expression, we should construe the occurrence of the idiom in Job 42:8 in the same way.

The point may be underscored from another, intersecting grammatical idiom. In this stock formulation, the verb, '*asah* is followed by the noun, *hesed*, 'kindness, loyalty' (or, once or twice, *tov*, 'goodness'), where the noun identifies the moral character of the action carried out by the subject of the verb. But this usage ('*asah* + *hesed/tov*) regularly includes a third component, the prepositional phrase, '*im* + Y,' where the preposition '*im*, 'with,' is followed by a noun identifying the party 'with' or 'toward' whom the loyal action is directed. And this, again, is precisely the construction in Job 42:8.

My point is supported by, among others, the commentaries on Job by Marvin Pope and Norman Habel. And it is supported in two modern Jewish translations of the Hebrew Bible. *The Holy Scriptures* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1917), 'that I do

not unto you aught unseemly;’ and the *Hebrew-English Tanakh* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003 – 5764), ‘and not treat you vilely.’ Also the *Revised English Bible* (1989), ‘by not being harsh with you.’

Why, then, the other translations, as still in the NRSV and the NIV? That construal of the clause is at least as old as the Latin Vulgate rendering, *ut non vobis inputetur stultitia*, ‘that folly may not be imputed to you.’ Such translations would seem to arrive out of a pious horror over the very notion that God could even hypothetically be thought capable of *nevalah*. Such are the disastrous lengths to which well-intentioned piety can at times drive people. Witness Job’s friends! But, the text here stubbornly says, for God to exercise the divine wrath in an action of condign punishment as what they deserve, would be to commit *nevalah*. God’s wrath issues in a divine call to repentance, and an ultimate restoration through Job’s intercession which God underwrites in advance.

p. 7. ‘This theme of bitterness . . . eight times in all’; seven times with reference to Job himself (Job 7:11; 9:18; 10:1; 13:26; 21:25; 23:2; 27:2).

p. 8. ‘The name of that God is *Shadday*. . . Its linguistic etymology is uncertain.’ In English translations, based on the earlier Greek and Latin translations generally in the Bible, the name is usually rendered, ‘the Almighty.’ But, e.g., NRSV at Job 5:17 (and repeatedly, in Job and elsewhere) glosses its ‘the Almighty’ with the marginal note, ‘Traditional rendering of Heb *Shaddai*.’

p. 8. ‘twice in the Book of Ruth, *Shadday* . . .’ See Ruth 1:20, 21, where being ‘full’ is associated with having birthed and raised two sons, and being ‘empty’ is associated with being deprived of them through death. Compare also the scenario in Ruth 4:13-17, where she is ‘nourished’ and ‘restored’ in old age through an infant grandson who is placed in her bosom for her to ‘nurse.’ In addition, the plot of this book (which a nineteenth-century commentator has called one of ‘those quiet corners of history which are the green spots of all time’ [*OED* under ‘corner’ 6, ‘transferred sense’]) moves from the ‘emptiness’ of famine in the land to a later ‘barley-harvest’ that signals the land’s life-supporting ‘fullness.’ The thematics of the generativity of family and earth, in this book, are vintage *Shadday*, as made explicit in Gen 49:25.

p. 9. ‘resists being domesticated by human hands.’ See Job 39:5-12. ‘or tamed by human minds.’ See the ostrich in 39:13-18. The behavior of this creature flies in the

face of (conventional) ‘wisdom’ and ‘understanding.’ On the ‘rain,’ see especially chapter 38. The so-called ‘whirlwind’ of 38:1 may well be the winds that in the Fall of the year sweep in from the south-east, and serve as a harbinger of the soon-to-follow rains that sweep in from the north-west. See further, in context, my *At the Scent of Water: The Ground of Hope in the Book of Job*.

pp. 8-9. ‘Eva Kor.’ The quotations are from Eva Mozes Kor and Lisa Rojany Buccieri, *Surviving the Angel of Death: The True Story of a Mengele Twin in Auschwitz* (Indianapolis: Tanglewood, 2009). See also the documentary DVD, *Forgiving Dr. Mengele*, a film by Bob Hercules and Chen Pugh.

p. 9. ‘A trust that on final inspection is vindicated.’ One may compare the portrayals of the ‘Servant’ figure in Isaiah 40-55 (by most scholars, now, dated to late in the Babylonian exile). Especially one may note how this servant labors under false accusations (50:4-9), such that he ‘walks in darkness and has no light, / yet trusts in the name of the LORD / and relies upon his God.’ In a following, climactic portrayal, this figure comes through the ordeal at their hands only (like Job) to intercede for them, and even to share with them the ‘spoils’ of his vindication. While scholars continue to debate the date of composition of Job, Frank Moore Cross, in a brief note at the end of his *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (1973), dates Job within the same general horizon as Isaiah 40-55, and this makes sense to me.

Afterword.

I was introduced to the Book of Job in the Spring semester of 1957, in the course of general lectures on ‘the Writings,’ the third component of the Hebrew Bible, by my Professor of Old Testament, James Dunn Fleming Beattie, at Emmanuel College, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. For a term paper he assigned the topic, ‘The Religious Problem in the Book of Job.’ But I came down with an internal infection, I couldn’t write the paper, there were no incompletes in those days, and he said, Gerry, I’ll just submit a grade on the basis of your year’s work, and you can give me a paper in the Fall. But the infection persisted through a great part of the summer and I came back in the Fall without having written the paper. He said nothing. I graduated two years later without having written the paper. That was in 1959. Almost thirty years later my Job commentary was placed in his hands on his deathbed. And having written a commentary on the book of Job I thought, There, I’ve done it. Several further essays and a small monograph later, I had hoped to make up the incomplete. The present attempt, I hope, finally makes good the trust Jim Beattie placed in me.

P.S. This Afterword discloses the ‘sense,’ as I put it in the Acknowledgements prefacing my Job commentary, ‘in which I owe this book to him.’ But of course I owe him much more.