

# Psychology and Religion

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## PREFATORY NOTE <sup>1</sup>

The suggestion that I should tell you how *Answer to Job* came to be written sets me a difficult task, because the history of this book can hardly be told in a few words. I have been occupied with its central problem for years. Many different sources nourished the stream of its thoughts, until one day—and after long reflection—the time was ripe to put them into words.

The most immediate cause of my writing the book is perhaps to be found in certain problems discussed in my book *Aion*, especially the problems of Christ as a symbolic figure and of the antagonism Christ-Antichrist, represented in the traditional zodiacal symbolism of the two fishes.

In connection with the discussion of these problems and of the doctrine of Redemption, I criticized the idea of the *privatio boni* as not agreeing with the psychological findings. Psychological experience shows that whatever we call "good" is balanced by an equally substantial "bad" or "evil." If "evil" is non-existent, then whatever there is must needs be "good." Dogmatically, neither "good" nor "evil" can be derived from Man, since the "Evil One" existed before Man as one of the "Sons of God." The idea of the *privatio boni* began to play a role in the Church only after Mani. Before this heresy, Clement of Rome taught

<sup>1</sup> [Written for *Pastoral Psychology* (Great Neck, N. Y.), VI:60 (January, 1956).—EDITORS.]

From Carl Jung, *Answer to Job* (translated by R. F. C. Hull), ix-xv and 1-24, ©1973 Princeton University Press. Used by permission.

that God rules the world with a right and a left hand, the right being Christ, the left Satan. Clement's view is clearly *monotheistic*, as it unites the opposites in one God.

Later Christianity, however, is dualistic, inasmuch as it splits off one half of the opposites, personified in Satan, and he is *eternal* in his state of damnation. This crucial question of *πόθεν τὸ κακόν* (whence evil?) forms the point of departure for the Christian theory of Redemption. It is therefore of prime importance. If Christianity claims to be a monotheism, it becomes unavoidable to assume the opposites as being contained in God. But then we are confronted with a major religious problem: the problem of Job. It is the aim of my book to point out its historical evolution since the time of Job down through the centuries to the most recent symbolic phenomena, such as the *Assumptio Mariae*, etc.

Moreover, the study of medieval natural philosophy—of the greatest importance to psychology—made me try to find an answer to the question: what image of God did these old philosophers have? Or rather: how should the symbols which supplement their image of God be understood? All this pointed to a *complexio oppositorum* and thus recalled again the story of Job to my mind: Job who expected help from God against God. This most peculiar fact presupposes a similar conception of the opposites in God.

On the other hand, numerous questions, not only from my patients, but from all over the world, brought up the problem of giving a more complete and explicit answer than I had given in *Aion*. For many years I hesitated to do this because I was quite conscious of the probable consequences, and knew what a storm would be raised. But I was gripped by the urgency and difficulty of the problem and was unable to throw it off. Therefore I found myself obliged to deal with the whole problem, and I did so in the form of describing a personal experience, carried by subjective emotions. I deliberately chose this form because I wanted to avoid the impression that I had any idea of announcing an "eternal truth." The book does not pretend to be anything but the voice or question of a single individual who hopes or expects to meet with thoughtfulness in the public.

## LECTORI BENEVOLO

*I am distressed for thee, my brother . . .*  
II Samuel 1:26 (AV)

553 On account of its somewhat unusual content, my little book requires a short preface. I beg of you, dear reader, not to overlook it. For, in what follows, I shall speak of the venerable objects of religious belief. Whoever talks of such matters inevitably runs the risk of being torn to pieces by the two parties who are in mortal conflict about those very things. This conflict is due to the strange supposition that a thing is true only if it presents itself as a *physical* fact. Thus some people believe it to be physically true that Christ was born as the son of a virgin, while others deny this as a physical impossibility. Everyone can see that there is no logical solution to this conflict and that one would do better not to get involved in such sterile disputes. Both are right and both are wrong. Yet they could easily reach agreement if only they dropped the word "physical." "Physical" is not the only criterion of truth: there are also *psychic* truths which can neither be explained nor proved nor contested in any physical way. If, for instance, a general belief existed that the river Rhine had at one time flowed backwards from its mouth to its source, then this belief would in itself be a fact even though such an assertion, physically understood, would be

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deemed utterly incredible. Beliefs of this kind are psychic facts which cannot be contested and need no proof.

554 Religious statements are of this type. They refer without exception to things that cannot be established as physical facts. If they did not do this, they would inevitably fall into the category of the natural sciences. Taken as referring to anything physical, they make no sense whatever, and science would dismiss them as non-experienceable. They would be mere miracles, which are sufficiently exposed to doubt as it is, and yet they could not demonstrate the reality of the spirit or *meaning* that underlies them, because meaning is something that always demonstrates itself and is experienced on its own merits. The spirit and meaning of Christ are present and perceptible to us even without the aid of miracles. Miracles appeal only to the understanding of those who cannot perceive the meaning. They are mere substitutes for the not understood reality of the spirit. This is not to say that the living presence of the spirit is not occasionally accompanied by marvellous physical happenings. I only wish to emphasize that these happenings can neither replace nor bring about an understanding of the spirit, which is the one essential thing.

555 The fact that religious statements frequently conflict with the observed physical phenomena proves that in contrast to physical perception the spirit is autonomous, and that psychic experience is to a certain extent independent of physical data. The psyche is an autonomous factor, and religious statements are psychic confessions which in the last resort are based on unconscious, i.e., on transcendental, processes. These processes are not accessible to physical perception but demonstrate their existence through the confessions of the psyche. The resultant statements are filtered through the medium of human consciousness: that is to say, they are given visible forms which in their turn are subject to manifold influences from within and without. That is why whenever we speak of religious contents we move in a world of images that point to something ineffable. We do not know how clear or unclear these images, metaphors, and concepts are in respect of their transcendental object. If, for instance, we say "God," we give expression to an image or verbal concept which has undergone many changes in the course of time. We are, however, unable to say with any degree of cer-

tainty—unless it be by faith—whether these changes affect only the images and concepts, or the Unspeakable itself. After all, we can imagine God as an eternally flowing current of vital energy that endlessly changes shape just as easily as we can imagine him as an eternally unmoved, unchangeable essence. Our reason is sure only of one thing: that it manipulates images and ideas which are dependent on human imagination and its temporal and local conditions, and which have therefore changed innumerable times in the course of their long history. There is no doubt that there is something behind these images that transcends consciousness and operates in such a way that the statements do not vary limitlessly and chaotically, but clearly all relate to a few basic principles or archetypes. These, like the psyche itself, or like matter, are unknowable as such. All we can do is to construct models of them which we know to be inadequate, a fact which is confirmed again and again by religious statements.

If, therefore, in what follows I concern myself with these “metaphysical” objects, I am quite conscious that I am moving in a world of images and that none of my reflections touches the essence of the Unknowable. I am also too well aware of how limited are our powers of conception—to say nothing of the feebleness and poverty of language—to imagine that my remarks mean anything more in principle than what a primitive man means when he conceives of his god as a hare or a snake. But, although our whole world of religious ideas consists of anthropomorphic images that could never stand up to rational criticism, we should never forget that they are based on numinous archetypes, i.e., on an emotional foundation which is unassailable by reason. We are dealing with psychic facts which logic can overlook but not eliminate. In this connection Tertullian has already appealed, quite rightly, to the testimony of the soul. In his *De testimonio animae*, he says:

These testimonies of the soul are as simple as they are true, as obvious as they are simple, as common as they are obvious, as natural as they are common, as divine as they are natural. I think that they cannot appear to any one to be trifling and ridiculous if he considers the majesty of Nature, whence the authority of the soul is derived. What you allow to the mistress you will assign to the disciple. Nature is the mistress, the soul is the disciple; what the one has taught, or

the other has learned, has been delivered to them by God, who is, in truth, the Master even of the mistress herself. What notion the soul is able to conceive of her first teacher is in your power to judge, from that soul which is in you. Feel that which causes you to feel; think upon that which is in forebodings your prophet; in omens, your augur; in the events which befall you, your foreseer. Strange if, being given by God, she knows how to act the diviner for men! Equally strange if she knows Him by whom she has been given! <sup>1</sup>

557 I would go a step further and say that the statements made in the Holy Scriptures are also utterances of the soul—even at the risk of being suspected of psychologism. The statements of the conscious mind may easily be snares and delusions, lies, or arbitrary opinions, but this is certainly not true of the statements of the soul: to begin with they always go over our heads because they point to realities that transcend consciousness. These *entia* are the archetypes of the collective unconscious, and they precipitate complexes of ideas in the form of mythological motifs. Ideas of this kind are never invented, but enter the field of inner perception as finished products, for instance in dreams. They are spontaneous phenomena which are not subject to our will, and we are therefore justified in ascribing to them a certain autonomy. They are to be regarded not only as objects but as subjects with laws of their own. From the point of view of consciousness, we can, of course, describe them as objects, and even explain them up to a point, in the same measure as we can describe and explain a living human being. But then we have to disregard their autonomy. If that is considered, we are compelled to treat them as subjects; in other words, we have to admit that they possess spontaneity and purposiveness, or a kind of consciousness and free will. We observe their behaviour and consider their statements. This dual standpoint, which we are forced to adopt towards every relatively independent organism, naturally has a dual result. On the one hand it tells me what I do to the object, and on the other hand what it does (possibly to me). It is obvious that this unavoidable dualism will create a certain amount of confusion in the minds of my readers, particularly as in what follows we shall have to do with the archetype of Deity.

<sup>1</sup> Cap. V, in Migne, *P.L.*, vol. 1, cols. 615f. (trans. by C. Dodgson, I, pp. 138f., slightly modified.)

558 Should any of my readers feel tempted to add an apologetic "only" to the God-images as we perceive them, he would immediately fall foul of experience, which demonstrates beyond any shadow of doubt the extraordinary numinosity of these images. The tremendous effectiveness (*mana*) of these images is such that they not only give one the feeling of pointing to the *Ens realissimum*, but make one convinced that they actually express it and establish it as a fact. This makes discussion uncommonly difficult, if not impossible. It is, in fact, impossible to demonstrate God's reality to oneself except by using images which have arisen spontaneously or are sanctified by tradition, and whose psychic nature and effects the naïve-minded person has never separated from their unknowable metaphysical background. He instantly equates the effective image with the transcendental  $x$  to which it points. The seeming justification for this procedure appears self-evident and is not considered a problem so long as the statements of religion are not seriously questioned. But if there is occasion for criticism, then it must be remembered that the image and the statement are psychic processes which are different from their transcendental object; they do not posit it, they merely point to it. In the realm of psychic processes criticism and discussion are not only permissible but are unavoidable.

559 In what follows I shall attempt just such a discussion, such a "coming to terms" with certain religious traditions and ideas. Since I shall be dealing with numinous factors, my feeling is challenged quite as much as my intellect. I cannot, therefore, write in a coolly objective manner, but must allow my emotional subjectivity to speak if I want to describe what I feel when I read certain books of the Bible, or when I remember the impressions I have received from the doctrines of our faith. I do not write as a biblical scholar (which I am not), but as a layman and physician who has been privileged to see deeply into the psychic life of many people. What I am expressing is first of all my own personal view, but I know that I also speak in the name of many who have had similar experiences.

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# ANSWER TO JOB

## ANSWER TO JOB

The Book of Job is a landmark in the long historical development of a divine drama. At the time the book was written, there were already many testimonies which had given a contradictory picture of Yahweh—the picture of a God who knew no moderation in his emotions and suffered precisely from this lack of moderation. He himself admitted that he was eaten up with rage and jealousy and that this knowledge was painful to him. Insight existed along with obtuseness, loving-kindness along with cruelty, creative power along with destructiveness. Everything was there, and none of these qualities was an obstacle to the other. Such a condition is only conceivable either when no reflecting consciousness is present at all, or when the capacity for reflection is very feeble and a more or less adventitious phenomenon. A condition of this sort can only be described as *amoral*.

How the people of the Old Testament felt about their God we know from the testimony of the Bible. That is not what I am concerned with here, but rather with the way in which a modern man with a Christian education and background comes to terms with the divine darkness which is unveiled in the Book of Job, and what effect it has on him. I shall not give a cool and carefully considered exegesis that tries to be fair to every detail, but a purely subjective reaction. In this way I hope to act as a

voice for many who feel the same way as I do, and to give expression to the shattering emotion which the unvarnished spectacle of divine savagery and ruthlessness produces in us. Even if we know by hearsay about the suffering and discord in the Deity, they are so unconscious, and hence so ineffectual morally, that they arouse no human sympathy or understanding. Instead, they give rise to an equally ill-considered outburst of affect, and a smouldering resentment that may be compared to a slowly healing wound. And just as there is a secret tie between the wound and the weapon, so the affect corresponds to the violence of the deed that caused it.

562 The Book of Job serves as a paradigm for a certain experience of God which has a special significance for us today. These experiences come upon man from inside as well as from outside, and it is useless to interpret them rationalistically and thus weaken them by apotropaic means. It is far better to admit the affect and submit to its violence than to try to escape it by all sorts of intellectual tricks or by emotional value-judgments. Although, by giving way to the affect, one imitates all the bad qualities of the outrageous act that provoked it and thus makes oneself guilty of the same fault, that is precisely the point of the whole proceeding: the violence is meant to penetrate to a man's vitals, and he to succumb to its action. He must be affected by it, otherwise its full effect will not reach him. But he should know, or learn to know, what has affected him, for in this way he transforms the blindness of the violence on the one hand and of the affect on the other into knowledge.

563 For this reason I shall express my affect fearlessly and ruthlessly in what follows, and I shall answer injustice with injustice, that I may learn to know why and to what purpose Job was wounded, and what consequences have grown out of this for Yahweh as well as for man.

I

Job answers Yahweh thus:

Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer thee?  
I lay my hand on my mouth.  
I have spoken once, and I will not answer;  
twice, but I will proceed no further.<sup>1</sup>

And indeed, in the immediate presence of the infinite power of creation, this is the only possible answer for a witness who is still trembling in every limb with the terror of almost total annihilation. ~~What else could a half-crushed human worm, grovelling in the dust, reasonably answer in the circumstances?~~ In spite of his pitiable littleness and feebleness, this man knows that he is confronted with a superhuman being who is personally most easily provoked. He also knows that it is far better to withhold all moral reflections, to say nothing of certain moral requirements which might be expected to apply to a god.

Yahweh's "justice" is praised, so presumably Job could bring his complaint and the protestation of his innocence before him as

<sup>1</sup> Job 40:4-5. [Quotations throughout are from the Revised Standard Version (RSV), except where the Authorized Version (AV) is closer to the text of the Zürcher Bibel (ZB) used by the author in conjunction with the original Hebrew and Greek sources. Where neither RSV nor AV fits, I have translated direct from ZB. The poetic line-arrangement of RSV is followed in so far as possible.—TRANS.]

the just judge. But he doubts this possibility. "How can a man be just before God?"<sup>2</sup> "If I summoned him and he answered me, I would not believe that he was listening to my voice."<sup>3</sup> "If it is a matter of justice, who can summon him?"<sup>4</sup> He "multiplies my wounds without cause."<sup>5</sup> "He destroys both the blameless and the wicked."<sup>6</sup> "If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent."<sup>7</sup> "I know," Job says to Yahweh, "thou wilt not hold me innocent. I shall be condemned."<sup>8</sup> "If I wash myself . . . never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch."<sup>9</sup> "For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment."<sup>10</sup> Job wants to explain his point of view to Yahweh, to state his complaint, and tells him: "Thou knowest that I am not guilty, and there is none to deliver out of thy hand."<sup>11</sup> "I desire to argue my case with God."<sup>12</sup> "I will defend my ways to his face,"<sup>13</sup> "I know that I shall be vindicated."<sup>14</sup> Yahweh should summon him and render him an account or at least allow him to plead his cause. Properly estimating the disproportion between man and God, he asks: "Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?"<sup>15</sup> God has put him in the wrong, but there is no justice.<sup>16</sup> He has "taken away my right."<sup>17</sup> "Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. I hold fast to my righteousness, and will not let it go."<sup>18</sup> His friend Elihu the Buzite does not believe the injustice of Yahweh: "Of a truth, God will not do wickedly, and the Almighty will not pervert justice."<sup>19</sup> Illogically enough, he bases his opinion on God's *power*: "Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? and to princes, Ye are ungodly?"<sup>20</sup> One must "respect the persons of princes and esteem the high more than the low."<sup>21</sup> But Job is not shaken in his faith, and had already uttered an important truth when he said: "Behold, my witness is in heaven, and he that vouches for me is on high . . . my eye pours out tears to God, that he would maintain the right of a man with God, like that of a man with his neighbour."<sup>22</sup> And

2 Job 9:2.	3 9:16.	4 9:19.	5 9:17.	6 9:22.
7 9:23 (AV).	8 9:28, 29.	9 9:30-31 (AV).		10 9:32 (AV).
11 10:7.	12 13:3.	13 13:15.	14 13:18.	15 13:25 (AV).
16 19:6-7.	17 27:2.	18 27:5-6.	19 34:12.	20 34:18 (AV).
21 34:19 (ZB).	22 16:19-21.			

later: "For I know that my Vindicator lives, and at last he will stand upon the earth." <sup>23</sup>

These words clearly show that Job, in spite of his doubt as to whether man can be just before God, still finds it difficult to relinquish the idea of meeting God on the basis of justice and therefore of morality. Because, in spite of everything, he cannot give up his faith in divine justice, it is not easy for him to accept the knowledge that divine arbitrariness breaks the law. On the other hand, he has to admit that no one except Yahweh himself is doing him injustice and violence. He cannot deny that he is up against a God who does not care a rap for any moral opinion and does not recognize any form of ethics as binding. This is perhaps the greatest thing about Job, that, faced with this difficulty, he does not doubt the unity of God. He clearly sees that God is at odds with himself—so totally at odds that he, Job, is quite certain of finding in God a helper and an "advocate" against God. As certain as he is of the evil in Yahweh, he is equally certain of the good. In a human being who renders us evil we cannot expect at the same time to find a helper. But Yahweh is not a human being: he is both a persecutor and a helper in one, and the one aspect is as real as the other. Yahweh is not split but is an *antinomy*—a totality of inner opposites—and this is the indispensable condition for his tremendous dynamism, his omniscience and omnipotence. Because of this knowledge Job holds on to his intention of "defending his ways to his face," i.e., of making his point of view clear to him, since notwithstanding his wrath, Yahweh is also man's advocate *against himself* when man puts forth his complaint.

One would be even more astonished at Job's knowledge of God if this were the first time one were hearing of Yahweh's amorality. His incalculable moods and devastating attacks of wrath had, however, been known from time immemorial. He had proved himself to be a jealous defender of morality and was specially sensitive in regard to justice. Hence he had always to be praised as "just," which, it seemed, was very important to him. Thanks to this circumstance or peculiarity of his, he had a *distinct personality*, which differed from that of a more or less archaic king only in scope. His jealous and irritable nature,

<sup>23</sup> 19:25. ['Vindicator' is RSV alternative reading for 'Redeemer,' and comes very close to the ZB *Anwalt*, 'advocate.'—TRANS.]

prying mistrustfully into the faithless hearts of men and exploring their secret thoughts, compelled a personal relationship between himself and man, who could not help but feel personally called by him. That was the essential difference between Yahweh and the all-ruling Father Zeus, who in a benevolent and somewhat detached manner allowed the economy of the universe to roll along on its accustomed courses and punished only those who were disorderly. He did not moralize but ruled purely instinctively. He did not demand anything more *from* human beings than the sacrifices due to him; he did not want to do anything *with* human beings because he had no plans for them. Father Zeus is certainly a figure but not a personality. Yahweh, on the other hand, was interested in man. Human beings were a matter of first-rate importance to him. He needed them as they needed him, urgently and personally. Zeus too could throw thunderbolts about, but only at hopelessly disorderly individuals. Against mankind as a whole he had no objections—but then they did not interest him all that much. Yahweh, however, could get inordinately excited about man as a species and men as individuals if they did not behave as he desired or expected, without ever considering that in his omnipotence he could easily have created something better than these “bad earthenware pots.”

569 In view of this intense personal relatedness to his chosen people, it was only to be expected that a regular covenant would develop which also extended to certain individuals, for instance to David. As we learn from the Eighty-ninth Psalm, Yahweh told him:

My steadfast love I will keep for him for ever,  
and my covenant will stand firm for him.

. . . . .

I will not violate my covenant,  
or alter the word that went forth from my lips.  
Once for all I have sworn by my holiness;  
I will not lie to David.<sup>24</sup>

570 And yet it happened that he, who watched so jealously over the fulfilment of laws and contracts, broke his own oath. Modern man, with his sensitive conscience, would have felt the black

<sup>24</sup> Verses 28, 34, 35.

abyss opening and the ground giving way under his feet, for the least he expects of his God is that he should be superior to mortal man in the sense of being better, higher, nobler—but not his superior in the kind of moral flexibility and unreliability that do not jib even at perjury.

57<sup>1</sup> Of course one must not tax an archaic god with the requirements of modern ethics. For the people of early antiquity things were rather different. In their gods there was absolutely everything: they teemed with virtues and vices. Hence they could be punished, put in chains, deceived, stirred up against one another without losing face, or at least not for long. The man of that epoch was so inured to divine inconsistencies that he was not unduly perturbed when they happened. With Yahweh the case was different because, from quite early on, the personal and moral tie began to play an important part in the religious relationship. In these circumstances a breach of contract was bound to have the effect not only of a personal but of a moral injury. One can see this from the way David answers Yahweh:

How long, Lord? wilt thou hide thyself for ever?  
 shall thy wrath burn like fire?  
 Remember how short my time is:  
 wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?

. . . . .

Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses,  
 which by thy faithfulness thou didst swear to David? <sup>25</sup>

7<sup>2</sup> Had this been addressed to a human being it would have run something like this: "For heaven's sake, man, pull yourself together and stop being such a senseless savage! It is really too grotesque to get into such a rage when it's partly your own fault that the plants won't flourish. You used to be quite reasonable and took good care of the garden you planted, instead of trampling it to pieces."

'<sup>3</sup> Certainly our interlocutor would never dare to remonstrate with his almighty partner about this breach of contract. He knows only too well what a row he would get into if *he* were the wretched breaker of the law. Because anything else would put him in peril of his life, he must retire to the more exalted plane

<sup>25</sup> Psalm 89: 46, 47, 49 (AV; last line from RSV).

of reason. In this way, without knowing it or wanting it, he shows himself superior to his divine partner both intellectually and morally. Yahweh fails to notice that he is being humoured, just as little as he understands why he has continually to be praised as just. He makes pressing demands on his people to be praised <sup>26</sup> and propitiated in every possible way, for the obvious purpose of keeping him in a good temper at any price.

574 The character thus revealed fits a personality who can only convince himself that he exists through his relation to an object. Such dependence on the object is absolute when the subject is totally lacking in self-reflection and therefore has no insight into himself. It is as if he existed only by reason of the fact that he has an object which assures him that he is really there. If Yahweh, as we would expect of a sensible human being, were really conscious of himself, he would, in view of the true facts of the case, at least have put an end to the panegyrics on his justice. But he is too unconscious to be moral. Morality presupposes consciousness. By this I do not mean to say that Yahweh is imperfect or evil, like a gnostic demiurge. He is everything in its totality; therefore, among other things, he is total justice, and also its total opposite. At least this is the way he must be conceived if one is to form a unified picture of his character. We must only remember that what we have sketched is no more than an anthropomorphic picture which is not even particularly easy to visualize. From the way the divine nature expresses itself we can see that the individual qualities are not adequately related to one another, with the result that they fall apart into mutually contradictory acts. For instance, Yahweh regrets having created human beings, although in his omniscience he must have known all along what would happen to them.

II

575 Since the Omniscient looks into all hearts, and Yahweh's eyes "run to and fro through the whole earth," <sup>1</sup> it were better for the interlocutor of the Eighty-ninth Psalm not to wax

<sup>26</sup> Or to be "blessed," which is even more captious of him.

<sup>1</sup> Zechariah 4:10 (AV). Cf. also the Wisdom of Solomon 1:10 (AV): "For the ear of jealousy heareth all things: and the noise of murmurings is not hid."

too conscious of his slight moral superiority over the more unconscious God. Better to keep it dark, for Yahweh is no friend of critical thoughts which in any way diminish the tribute of recognition he demands. Loudly as his power resounds through the universe, the basis of its existence is correspondingly slender, for it needs conscious reflection in order to exist in reality. Existence is only real when it is conscious to somebody. That is why the Creator needs conscious man even though, from sheer unconsciousness, he would like to prevent him from becoming conscious. And that is also why Yahweh needs the acclamation of a small group of people. One can imagine what would happen if this assembly suddenly decided to stop the applause: there would be a state of high excitation, with outbursts of blind destructive rage, then a withdrawal into hellish loneliness and the torture of non-existence, followed by a gradual reawakening of an unutterable longing for something which would make him conscious of himself. It is probably for this reason that all pristine things, even man before he becomes the canaille, have a touching, magical beauty, for in its nascent state "each thing after its kind" is the most precious, the most desirable, the tenderest thing in the world, being a reflection of the infinite love and goodness of the Creator.

In view of the undoubted frightfulness of divine wrath, and in an age when men still knew what they were talking about when they said "Fear God," it was only to be expected that man's slight superiority should have remained unconscious. The powerful personality of Yahweh, who, in addition to everything else, lacked all biographical antecedents (his original relationship to the Elohim had long since been sunk in oblivion), had raised him above all the numina of the Gentiles and had immunized him against the influence that for several centuries had been undermining the authority of the pagan gods. It was precisely the details of their mythological biography that had become their nemesis, for with his growing capacity for judgment man had found these stories more and more incomprehensible and indecent. Yahweh, however, had no origin and no past, except his creation of the world, with which all history began, and his relation to that part of mankind whose forefather Adam he had fashioned in his own image as the Anthropos, the original man, by what appears to have been a special act of creation.

One can only suppose that the other human beings who must also have existed at that time had been formed previously on the divine potter's wheel along with the various kinds of beasts and cattle—those human beings, namely, from whom Cain and Seth chose their wives. If one does not approve of this conjecture, then the only other possibility that remains is the far more scandalous one that they incestuously married their sisters (for whom there is no evidence in the text), as was still surmised by the philosopher Karl Lamprecht at the end of the nineteenth century.

577 The special providence which singled out the Jews from among the divinely stamped portion of humanity and made them the "chosen people" had burdened them from the start with a heavy obligation. As usually happens with such mortgages, they quite understandably tried to circumvent it as much as possible. Since the chosen people used every opportunity to break away from him, and Yahweh felt it of vital importance to tie this indispensable object (which he had made "godlike" for this very purpose) definitely to himself, he proposed to the patriarch Noah a contract between himself on the one hand, and Noah, his children, and all their animals, both tame and wild, on the other—a contract that promised advantages to both parties. In order to strengthen this contract and keep it fresh in the memory, he instituted the rainbow as a token of the covenant. If, in future, he summoned the thunder-clouds which hide within them floods of water and lightning, then the rainbow would appear, reminding him and his people of the contract. The temptation to use such an accumulation of clouds for an experimental deluge was no small one, and it was therefore a good idea to associate it with a sign that would give timely warning of possible catastrophe.

578 In spite of these precautions the contract had gone to pieces with David, an event which left behind it a literary deposit in the Scriptures and which grieved some few of the devout, who upon reading it became reflective. As the Psalms were zealously read, it was inevitable that certain thoughtful people were unable to stomach the Eighty-ninth Psalm. However that may be, the fatal impression made by the breach of contract survived.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The 89th Psalm is attributed to David and is supposed to have been a community song written in exile.

It is historically possible that these considerations influenced the author of the Book of Job.

579 The Book of Job places this pious and faithful man, so heavily afflicted by the Lord, on a brightly lit stage where he presents his case to the eyes and ears of the world. It is amazing to see how easily Yahweh, quite without reason, had let himself be influenced by one of his sons, by a *doubting thought*,<sup>3</sup> and made unsure of Job's faithfulness. With his touchiness and suspiciousness the mere possibility of doubt was enough to infuriate him and induce that peculiar double-faced behaviour of which he had already given proof in the Garden of Eden, when he pointed out the tree to the First Parents and at the same time forbade them to eat of it. In this way he precipitated the Fall, which he apparently never intended. Similarly, his faithful servant Job is now to be exposed to a rigorous moral test, quite gratuitously and to no purpose, although Yahweh is convinced of Job's faithfulness and constancy, and could moreover have assured himself beyond all doubt on this point had he taken counsel with his own omniscience. Why, then, is the experiment made at all, and a bet with the unscrupulous slanderer settled, without a stake, on the back of a powerless creature? It is indeed no edifying spectacle to see how quickly Yahweh abandons his faithful servant to the evil spirit and lets him fall without compunction or pity into the abyss of physical and moral suffering. From the human point of view Yahweh's behaviour is so revolting that one has to ask oneself whether there is not a deeper motive hidden behind it. Has Yahweh some secret resistance against Job? That would explain his yielding to Satan. But what does man possess that God does not have? Because of his littleness, puniness, and defencelessness against the Almighty, he possesses, as we have already suggested, a somewhat keener consciousness based on self-reflection: he must, in order to survive, always be mindful of his impotence. God has no need of this circumspection, for nowhere does he come up against an insuperable obstacle that would force him to hesitate and hence make him reflect on himself. Could a suspicion have grown up in God that man possesses an infinitely small yet more concentrated

<sup>3</sup> Satan is presumably one of God's eyes which "go to and fro in the earth and walk up and down in it" (Job 1:7). In Persian tradition, Ahriman proceeded from one of Ormuzd's doubting thoughts.

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

580 Without further ado Job is robbed of his herds, his servants are slaughtered, his sons and daughters are killed by a whirlwind, and he himself is smitten with sickness and brought to the brink of the grave. To rob him of peace altogether, his wife and his old friends are let loose against him, all of whom say the wrong things. His justified complaint finds no hearing with the judge who is so much praised for his justice. Job's right is refused in order that Satan be not disturbed in his play.

581 One must bear in mind here the dark deeds that follow one another in quick succession: robbery, murder, bodily injury with premeditation, and denial of a fair trial. This is further exacerbated by the fact that Yahweh displays no compunction, remorse, or compassion, but only ruthlessness and brutality. The plea of unconsciousness is invalid, seeing that he flagrantly violates at least three of the commandments he himself gave out on Mount Sinai.

582 Job's friends do everything in their power to contribute to his moral torments, and instead of giving him, whom God has perfidiously abandoned, their warm-hearted support, they moralize in an all too human manner, that is, in the stupidest fashion imaginable, and "fill him with wrinkles." They thus deny him even the last comfort of sympathetic participation and human understanding, so that one cannot altogether suppress the suspicion of connivance in high places.

583 Why Job's torments and the divine wager should suddenly come to an end is not quite clear. So long as Job does not actually die, the pointless suffering could be continued indefinitely. We must, however, keep an eye on the background of all these events: it is just possible that something in this background will gradually begin to take shape as a compensation for Job's undeserved suffering—something to which Yahweh, even if he had only a faint inkling of it, could hardly remain indifferent. With-

out Yahweh's knowledge and contrary to his intentions, the tormented though guiltless Job had secretly been lifted up to a superior knowledge of God which God himself did not possess. Had Yahweh consulted his omniscience, Job would not have had the advantage of him. But then, so many other things would not have happened either.

584 ~~Job realizes God's inner antinomy, and in the light of this realization his knowledge attains a divine numinosity.~~ The possibility of this development lies, one must suppose, in man's "godlikeness," which one should certainly not look for in human morphology. Yahweh himself had guarded against this error by expressly forbidding the making of images. Job, by his insistence on bringing his case before God, even without hope of a hearing, had stood his ground and thus created the very obstacle that forced God to reveal his true nature. With this dramatic climax Yahweh abruptly breaks off his cruel game of cat and mouse. But if anyone should expect that his wrath will now be turned against the slanderer, he will be severely disappointed. Yahweh does not think of bringing this mischief-making son of his to account, nor does it ever occur to him to give Job at least the moral satisfaction of explaining his behaviour. Instead, he comes riding along on the tempest of his almightiness and thunders reproaches at the half-crushed human worm:

Who is this that darkens counsel  
by words without insight? <sup>4</sup>

85 In view of the subsequent words of Yahweh, one must really ask oneself: *Who* is darkening *what* counsel? The only dark thing here is how Yahweh ever came to make a bet with Satan. It is certainly not Job who has darkened anything and least of all a counsel, for there was never any talk of this nor will there be in what follows. The bet does not contain any "counsel" so far as one can see—unless, of course, it was Yahweh himself who egged Satan on for the ultimate purpose of exalting Job. Naturally this development was foreseen in omniscience, and it may be that the word "counsel" refers to this eternal and absolute knowledge. If so, Yahweh's attitude seems the more illogical and incomprehensible, as he could then have enlightened Job on this point—which, in view of the wrong done to him, would

<sup>4</sup> Job 38: 2 (ZB).

have been only fair and equitable. I must therefore regard this possibility as improbable.

586 *Whose* words are without insight? Presumably Yahweh is not referring to the words of Job's friends, but is rebuking Job. But what is Job's guilt? The only thing he can be blamed for is his incurable optimism in believing that he can appeal to divine justice. In this he is mistaken, as Yahweh's subsequent words prove. God does not want to be just; he merely flaunts might over right. Job could not get that into his head, because he looked upon God as a moral being. He had never doubted God's might, but had hoped for right as well. He had, however, already taken back this error when he recognized God's contradictory nature, and by so doing he assigned a place to God's justice and goodness. So one can hardly speak of lack of insight.

587 The answer to Yahweh's conundrum is therefore: it is Yahweh himself who darkens his own counsel and who has no insight. He turns the tables on Job and blames him for what he himself does: man is not permitted to have an opinion about him, and, in particular, is to have no insight which he himself does not possess. For seventy-one verses he proclaims his world-creating power to his miserable victim, who sits in ashes and scratches his sores with potsherds, and who by now has had more than enough of superhuman violence. Job has absolutely no need of being impressed by further exhibitions of this power. Yahweh, in his omniscience, could have known just how incongruous his attempts at intimidation were in such a situation. He could easily have seen that Job believes in his omnipotence as much as ever and has never doubted it or wavered in his loyalty. Altogether, he pays so little attention to Job's real situation that one suspects him of having an ulterior motive which is more important to him: Job is no more than the outward occasion for an inward process of dialectic in God. His thunderings at Job so completely miss the point that one cannot help but see how much he is occupied with himself. The tremendous emphasis he lays on his omnipotence and greatness makes no sense in relation to Job, who certainly needs no more convincing, but only becomes intelligible when aimed at a listener who doubts it. This "doubting thought" is Satan, who after completing his evil handiwork has returned to the paternal bosom in order to continue his subversive activity there. Yahweh must have seen

that Job's loyalty was unshakable and that Satan had lost his bet. He must also have realized that, in accepting this bet, he had done everything possible to drive his faithful servant to disloyalty, even to the extent of perpetrating a whole series of crimes. Yet it is not remorse and certainly not moral horror that rises to his consciousness, but an obscure intimation of something that questions his omnipotence. He is particularly sensitive on this point, because "might" is the great argument. But omniscience knows that might excuses nothing. The said intimation refers, of course, to the extremely uncomfortable fact that Yahweh had let himself be bamboozled by Satan. This weakness of his does not reach full consciousness, since Satan is treated with remarkable tolerance and consideration. Evidently Satan's intrigue is deliberately overlooked at Job's expense.

588 Luckily enough, Job had noticed during this harangue that everything else had been mentioned except his right. He has understood that it is at present impossible to argue the question of right, as it is only too obvious that Yahweh has no interest whatever in Job's cause but is far more preoccupied with his own affairs. Satan, that is to say, has somehow to disappear, and this can best be done by casting suspicion on Job as a man of subversive opinions. The problem is thus switched on to another track, and the episode with Satan remains unmentioned and unconscious. To the spectator it is not quite clear why Job is treated to this almighty exhibition of thunder and lightning, but the performance as such is sufficiently magnificent and impressive to convince not only a larger audience but above all Yahweh himself of his unassailable power. Whether Job realizes what violence Yahweh is doing to his own omniscience by behaving like this we do not know, but his silence and submission leave a number of possibilities open. Job has no alternative but formally to revoke his demand for justice, and he therefore answers in the words quoted at the beginning: "I lay my hand on my mouth."

589 He betrays not the slightest trace of mental reservation—in fact, his answer leaves us in no doubt that he has succumbed completely and without question to the tremendous force of the divine demonstration. The most exacting tyrant should have been satisfied with this, and could be quite sure that his servant—from terror alone, to say nothing of his undoubted loyalty—

would not dare to nourish a single improper thought for a very long time to come.

590 Strangely enough, Yahweh does not notice anything of the kind. He does not see Job and his situation at all. It is rather as if he had another powerful opponent in the place of Job, one who was better worth challenging. This is clear from his twice-repeated taunt:

Gird up your loins like a man;  
I will question you, and you shall declare to me.<sup>5</sup>

591 One would have to choose positively grotesque examples to illustrate the disproportion between the two antagonists. Yahweh sees something in Job which we would not ascribe to him but to God, that is, an equal power which causes him to bring out his whole power apparatus and parade it before his opponent. Yahweh projects on to Job a sceptic's face which is hateful to him because it is his own, and which gazes at him with an uncanny and critical eye. He is afraid of it, for only in face of something frightening does one let off a cannonade of references to one's power, cleverness, courage, invincibility, etc. What has all that to do with Job? Is it worth the lion's while to terrify a mouse?

592 Yahweh cannot rest satisfied with the first victorious round. Job has long since been knocked out, but the great antagonist whose phantom is projected on to the pitiable sufferer still stands menacingly upright. Therefore Yahweh raises his arm again:

Will you even put me in the wrong?  
Will you condemn me that you may be justified?  
Have you an arm like God,  
and can you thunder with a voice like his? <sup>6</sup>

593 Man, abandoned without protection and stripped of his rights, and whose nothingness is thrown in his face at every opportunity, evidently appears to be so dangerous to Yahweh that he must be battered down with the heaviest artillery. What irritates Yahweh can be seen from his challenge to the ostensible Job:

<sup>5</sup> Job 38:3 and 40:7.      <sup>6</sup> 40:8-9.

Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low;  
 and tread down the wicked where they stand.  
 Hide them in the dust together;  
 bind their faces in the hidden place.  
 Then will I also acknowledge to you  
 that your own right hand can give you victory.<sup>7</sup>

594 Job is challenged as though he himself were a god. But in the contemporary metaphysics there was no *deuteros theos*, no other god except Satan, who owns Yahweh's ear and is able to influence him. He is the only one who can pull the wool over his eyes, beguile him, and put him up to a massive violation of his own penal code. A formidable opponent indeed, and, because of his close kinship, so compromising that he must be concealed with the utmost discretion—even to the point of God's hiding him from his own consciousness in his own bosom! In his stead God must set up his miserable servant as the bugbear whom he has to fight, in the hope that by banishing the dreaded countenance to "the hidden place" he will be able to maintain himself in a state of unconsciousness.

595 The stage-managing of this imaginary duel, the speechifying, and the impressive performance given by the prehistoric menagerie would not be sufficiently explained if we tried to reduce them to the purely negative factor of Yahweh's fear of becoming conscious and of the relativization which this entails. The conflict becomes acute for Yahweh as a result of a new factor, which is, however, not hidden from omniscience—though in this case the existing knowledge is not accompanied by any conclusion. The new factor is something that has never occurred before in the history of the world, the unheard-of fact that, without knowing it or wanting it, a mortal man is raised by his moral behaviour above the stars in heaven, from which position of advantage he can behold the back of Yahweh, the abysmal world of "shards."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> 40:12-14 ("in the hidden place" is RSV alternative reading for "in the world below").

<sup>8</sup> This is an allusion to an idea found in the later cabalistic philosophy. [These "shards," also called "shells" (Heb. *kelipot*), form ten counterpoles to the ten *sefiroth*, which are the ten stages in the revelation of God's creative power. The shards, representing the forces of evil and darkness, were originally mixed with the light of the *sefiroth*. The *Zohar* describes evil as the by-product of the life

596 Does Job know what he has seen? If he does, he is astute or canny enough not to betray it. But his words speak volumes:

I know that thou canst do all things,  
and that no purpose of thine can be thwarted.<sup>9</sup>

597 Truly, Yahweh can do all things and permits himself all things without batting an eyelid. With brazen countenance he can project his shadow side and remain unconscious at man's expense. He can boast of his superior power and enact laws which mean less than air to him. Murder and manslaughter are mere bagatelles, and if the mood takes him he can play the feudal grand seigneur and generously recompense his bondslave for the havoc wrought in his wheat-fields. "So you have lost your sons and daughters? No harm done, I will give you new and better ones."

598 Job continues (no doubt with downcast eyes and in a low voice):

"Who is this that hides counsel without insight?"  
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,  
things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.  
"Hear, and I will speak;  
I will question you, and you declare to me."  
I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,  
but now my eye sees thee;  
therefore I abhor myself,  
and repent in dust and ashes.<sup>10</sup>

599 Shrewdly, Job takes up Yahweh's aggressive words and prostrates himself at his feet as if he were indeed the defeated antagonist. Guileless as Job's speech sounds, it could just as well be equivocal. He has learnt his lesson well and experienced "wonderful things" which are none too easily grasped. Before, he had known Yahweh "by the hearing of the ear," but now he has got a taste of his reality, more so even than David—an

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process of the *sefiroth*. Therefore the *sefiroth* had to be cleansed of the evil admixture of the shards. This elimination of the shards took place in what is described in the cabalistic writings—particularly of Luria and his school—as the "breaking of the vessels." Through this the powers of evil assumed a separate and real existence. Cf. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, p. 267.—  
EDITORS.]      <sup>9</sup> 42: 2.      <sup>10</sup> 42: 3-6 (modified).

incisive lesson that had better not be forgotten. Formerly he was naïve, dreaming perhaps of a "good" God, or of a benevolent ruler and just judge. He had imagined that a "covenant" was a legal matter and that anyone who was party to a contract could insist on his rights as agreed; that God would be faithful and true or at least just, and, as one could assume from the Ten Commandments, would have some recognition of ethical values or at least feel committed to his own legal standpoint. But, to his horror, he has discovered that Yahweh is not human but, in certain respects, less than human, that he is just what Yahweh himself says of Leviathan (the crocodile):

He beholds everything that is high:  
He is king over all proud beasts.<sup>11</sup>

600 Unconsciousness has an animal nature. Like all old gods Yahweh has his animal symbolism with its unmistakable borrowings from the much older theriomorphic gods of Egypt, especially Horus and his four sons. Of the four animals of Yahweh only one has a human face. That is probably Satan, the godfather of man as a spiritual being. Ezekiel's vision attributes three-fourths animal nature and only one-fourth human nature to the animal deity, while the upper deity, the one above the "sapphire throne," merely had the "likeness" of a man.<sup>12</sup> This symbolism explains Yahweh's behaviour, which, from the human point of view, is so intolerable: it is the behaviour of an unconscious being who cannot be judged morally. Yahweh is a phenomenon and, as Job says, "not a man."<sup>13</sup>

601 One could, without too much difficulty, impute such a meaning to Job's speech. Be that as it may, Yahweh calmed down at last. The therapeutic measure of unresisting acceptance had proved its value yet again. Nevertheless, Yahweh is still some-

<sup>11</sup> Job 41:25 (ZB); cf. 41:34 (AV and RSV).

<sup>12</sup> Ezekiel 1:26.

<sup>13</sup> The naïve assumption that the creator of the world is a conscious being must be regarded as a disastrous prejudice which later gave rise to the most incredible dislocations of logic. For example, the nonsensical doctrine of the *privatio boni* would never have been necessary had one not had to assume in advance that it is impossible for the consciousness of a good God to produce evil deeds. Divine unconsciousness and lack of reflection, on the other hand, enable us to form a conception of God which puts his actions beyond moral judgment and allows no conflict to arise between goodness and beastliness.

what nervous of Job's friends—they "have not spoken of me what is right."<sup>14</sup> The projection of his doubt-complex extends—comically enough, one must say—to these respectable and slightly pedantic old gentlemen, as though God-knows-what depended on what they thought. But the fact that men should think at all, and especially about him, is maddeningly disquieting and ought somehow to be stopped. It is far too much like the sort of thing his vagrant son is always springing on him, thus hitting him in his weakest spot. How often already has he bitterly regretted his unconsidered outbursts!

602 One can hardly avoid the impression that Omniscience is gradually drawing near to a realization, and is threatened with an insight that seems to be hedged about with fears of self-destruction. Fortunately, Job's final declaration is so formulated that one can assume with some certainty that, for the protagonists, the incident is closed for good and all.

603 We, the commenting chorus on this great tragedy, which has never at any time lost its vitality, do not feel quite like that. For our modern sensibilities it is by no means apparent that with Job's profound obeisance to the majesty of the divine presence, and his prudent silence, a real answer has been given to the question raised by the Satanic prank of a wager with God. Job has not so much answered as reacted in an adjusted way. In so doing he displayed remarkable self-discipline, but an unequivocal answer has still to be given.

604 To take the most obvious thing, what about the moral wrong Job has suffered? Is man so worthless in God's eyes that not even a *tort moral* can be inflicted on him? That contradicts the fact that man is desired by Yahweh and that it obviously matters to him whether men speak "right" of him or not. He needs Job's loyalty, and it means so much to him that he shrinks at nothing in carrying out his test. This attitude attaches an almost divine importance to man, for what else is there in the whole wide world that could mean anything to one who has everything? Yahweh's divided attitude, which on the one hand tramples on human life and happiness without regard, and on the other hand must have man for a partner, puts the latter in an impossible position. At one moment Yahweh behaves as irrationally as a cataclysm; the next moment he wants to be loved, honoured,

<sup>14</sup> Job 42:7.

worshipped, and praised as just. He reacts irritably to every word that has the faintest suggestion of criticism, while he himself does not care a straw for his own moral code if his actions happen to run counter to its statutes.

605 One can submit to such a God only with fear and trembling, and can try indirectly to propitiate the despot with unctuous praises and ostentatious obedience. But a relationship of trust seems completely out of the question to our modern way of thinking. Nor can moral satisfaction be expected from an unconscious nature god of this kind. ~~Nevertheless, Job got his satisfaction~~, without Yahweh's intending it and possibly without himself knowing it, as the poet would have it appear. Yahweh's allocutions have the unthinking yet none the less transparent purpose of showing Job the brutal power of the demiurge: "This is I, the creator of all the ungovernable, ruthless forces of Nature, which are not subject to any ethical laws. I, too, am an amoral force of Nature, a purely phenomenal personality that cannot see its own back."

606 This is, or at any rate could be, a moral satisfaction of the first order for Job, because through this declaration man, in spite of his impotence, is set up as a judge over God himself. We do not know whether Job realizes this, but we do know from the numerous commentaries on Job that all succeeding ages have overlooked the fact that a kind of Moira or Dike rules over Yahweh, causing him to give himself away so blatantly. Anyone can see how he unwittingly raises Job by humiliating him in the dust. By so doing he pronounces judgment on himself and gives man the moral satisfaction whose absence we found so painful in the Book of Job.

607 The poet of this drama showed a masterly discretion in ringing down the curtain at the very moment when his hero gave unqualified recognition to the *ἀπόφασις μεγάλη* of the Demiurge by prostrating himself at the feet of His Divine Majesty. No other impression was permitted to remain. An unusual scandal was blowing up in the realm of metaphysics, with supposedly devastating consequences, and nobody was ready with a saving formula which would rescue the monotheistic conception of God from disaster. Even in those days the critical intellect of a Greek could easily have seized on this new addition to Yahweh's biography and used it in his disfavour (as indeed happened,

though very much later) <sup>15</sup> so as to mete out to him the fate that had already overtaken the Greek gods. But a relativization of God was utterly unthinkable at that time, and remained so for the next two thousand years.

608 The unconscious mind of man sees correctly even when conscious reason is blind and impotent. The drama has been consummated for all eternity: Yahweh's dual nature has been revealed, and somebody or something has seen and registered this fact. Such a revelation, whether it reached man's consciousness or not, could not fail to have far-reaching consequences.