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### **MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.**

Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

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J. B. - The play and the Book of Job, 1959.

"J.B." - The Play and the Book of Job

When dark days came upon the people of Israel in the beginning of the sixth century, followed by the loss of their independence, the destruction of Jerusalem and the holy Temple, and the exile of all, but the poorest of the land, to Babylon, a great searching of heart and a questioning of all the accepted traditional values took place among them.

Had their God forsaken them? He permitted His beloved city and His own Temple to be destroyed and His chosen people to be led away captive by a wicked heathen might. Why? Were they being punished for their sins? Had the Babylonians, their captors, not sinned? And if many of their people had sinned there surely were many who had not. Why were they slain or driven into captivity? If the fathers had sinned, why were their innocent children punished? Is the way of the Lord just? And what of the future? Will future generations be saddled with the guilt of the present generation, so that there remains no hope ever for a fresh start, for a return and a restoration?

In these desperate years of the sixth century, there arose spiritual leaders among the people who frankly faced up to these grave spiritual problems and gave light and guidance to save their generation from spiritual chaos and a fatal loss of morale.

The anonymous prophet, whom we call the Second Isaiah, brought them, in his stirring and eloquent utterances, the divine assurance that the iniquity of the past has been forgiven, that the people had already received from the Lord's hand double for all their sins. He gave the exiles also a vision of a national destiny nobler than any they had ever envisioned before. They were destined to be



the Emissaries of the one true God, and carry His moral law to all the nations of the earth.

Another prophet of the exile, Ezekiel, faced the problem of individual responsibility. He took sharp issue with those who kept on repeating the proverb: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge". "As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. The son will not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father for the iniquity of the son. Only the soul that sins shall die". And there is always repentance for the sinner. "God has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, only that he should turn from his evil way and live".

But why do innocent people suffer? And why do the wicked often prosper? And is a man's suffering proof that he has been guilty of sin? These problems, which troubled the minds of men, constitute the theme of a remarkable book, the Book of Job, which was also written during the Babylonian exile, at about the turn of the sixth century, by a Jewish exile. Originally it was probably written in Aramaic, a Semitic language very close to Hebrew, which was spoken in Babylonia and elsewhere in the Near East. The Book was later translated into Hebrew when the exiles returned to Judea.

Except for the prologue, which was read to you this morning, and the brief epilogue at the end of the book, both written in prose narrative, the rest of the book is written in poetry - perhaps the most exalted poetry penned by any man- Jew or non-Jew - in the ancient world. Because of its style, the difficulties involved in translation, the peculiar oriental form of composition, the editing to which it was undoubtedly submitted through the ages, the blurring of time, and, of course, the obtuse nature of the subject matter itself, the book is not easy reading, but very rewarding.



Job is not a drama in the strict sense of the word. Except for its prologue and epilogue, it is a debate or a symposium - a problem-poem - in which one great theme and its corollaries are discussed from different points of view by four men, Job and his three friends. The final word is spoken by God, Himself. A fourth colloquist, by the name of Elihu, is introduced toward the end of the book - clearly the work of a later editor.

To restate the central theme of Job - it is this:

If there is a just God in the universe - why does the righteous man suffer? Why does the wicked man often prosper? Or, to put it in another way, - is a man's suffering and personal tragedy proof that he has sinned against God - and that God has therefore punished him? Or, broadening the question, why does a good and just God permit suffering altogether in this world - and why, having created man, mortal, weak and fallible, does He hold him to such strict accountability, and visit upon him such crushing punishment?

It is an amazing tribute to the theologic tolerance and spiritual confidence of those who finally composed the canon of the Bible that they permitted the inclusion of the Book of Job among the sacred books in spite of the many outspoken strictures and bitter challenges against God and the ordering of His universe which are found in it.

But then when we call to mind that these same men also permitted the inclusion of the Book of Kohelet among the books of the Bible - a book whose central theme is not only the apparent absence of justice in the world and the inexplicable suffering of the just, but the utter futility of all existence, and the meaninglessness of all life, even where it abounds in pleasure and prosperity - we realize that the Book of Books is such because it is the mirror of all life, reflecting all of its moods and touching on all of its problems. It evades nothing. The answers which it gives may not satisfy everyone - but no one can say that the Bible was unaware of any of the complexities and paradoxes of human existence, and refused



to face up to the cold, dark problems of man's life upon earth, such as are known to the most modern of moderns.

Job had suffered all the agonies and bereavements which a human being could possibly suffer - and he did not know why. Why had God broken him?

His three friends, who came to comfort him, tried to tell him why. They approached the subject from different directions and with varying emphases, but all their reasoning ultimately converged on one conclusion. Job must have sinned and God had punished him.

Job refused to accept their explanation. He bitterly resented it. He was conscious of no sin which would merit such punishment.

His friends become impatient with him. They regard his attitude as presumptuous, that of a man who is righteous in his own eyes. Each in his own way tells him that God does not pervert justice and that Job himself in the past had taught this truth to other men, but now that trials have come upon him, he has become impatient and tears himself in his anger.

The three friends do not represent three sharply differentiated philosophies or view-points, but rather three different emphases or temperaments.

Each friend speaks in turn and in turn Job answers him. As the debate proceeds in three cycles, each containing six speeches, the arguments become sharper and more direct and Job's retorts more passionate and bitter. No quarter is asked or given. The purpose of the friends' visit - that of friendship and condolence - is soon forgotten in the heat of the theologic controversy. Charges and counter-charges are hurled. But when the last speech is finally uttered, the issues are not at all resolved. God, Himself, then appears and out of the whirlwind utters the word which rebukes the friends and reconciles Job.

History and the experience of man-kind prove that the wicked are always destroyed and the just are always recompensed, argues one of his friends. Not so! - cries Job. "God destroys both the blameless and the wicked. If it is not He, Who then is it?" And why do the wicked live, reach old age, and grow mighty in power?



You say God stores up their iniquity for their sons. Why does he not recompense them directly so that they may know it? And what of the wronged of the earth, they who carry the sheaves for others, but themselves go hungry, these who tread the wine-press for others, but themselves suffer thirst?

Nobody on earth is innocent - argues another of his friends. No man is clean of sin. "Behold, even the moon is not bright and the stars are not clear in His sight, how much less man, who is a maggot, and the son of man, who is a worm". If so, retorts Job, who made him so? Who created man weak, mortal? "What is man, that Thou dost make so much of him, dost visit him every morning and test him every moment? If I sin, what do I do unto Thee, Thou Watcher of men?" "Are not the days of my life few? Let me alone that I may find a little comfort before I go whence I shall not return, to the land of gloom and deep shadows".

"You must have sinned, Job, o this evil would not have come upon you. Your wickedness must be great", one of the friends returns to the charge. It is quite likely that "God has exacted of you less than your guilt". "What guilt?" cries Job. What are my iniquities and my sins? Tell me. "You are whitewashing God with lies. Worthless physicians are you all. You speak falsely of God. Your maxims are proverbs of ashes and your defenses defenses of clay. I have not sinned!". "As God lives, Who has taken away my right, and the Almighty, 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. Far be it from me to say that you are right; till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go." Job demands that he be vindicated by God. He will not besmire his whole life and beat his breast in abject confession to sins which he did not commit in order to conform to the false and erroneous doctrines about God which these miserable comforters of his were proclaiming.



"I have understanding as well as you", says Job. "I am not inferior to you. What you know, I know also". My agony and anguish are great enough, I am a broken man and God has cast me into the mire, but I will not destroy my soul, the inner sanctuary of my rectitude and dignity, my last, sole and ultimate refuge, by acknowledging to guilt in order to satisfy your dogmas. I know that my vindicator lives - and that at the end He will arise; and in my own life-time, while my flesh and my skin are still on me, I will see the vindication of God ( ). For God must maintain the right of a man who is with God .

In all his bitterness and complaint, Job did not deny God. He did not accept his wife's advice: "Curse God and die". He simply did not understand the ways of God. He exercised what he regarded as his human prerogative to question, to complain, to be resentful - and when his friends goaded him by telling him that all his misfortunes were deserved, he became furiously angry and he uttered violent words bordering on sacrilege and blasphemy against the kind of a God Whom his friends championed. Job was waiting for his God, the true God, to arise and vindicate him.

And out of the whirlwind God speaks and answers Job. Job is vindicated by God. His friends are condemned not only for imputing sin to Job who had not sinned, but for not having spoken of God what is right, as Job had done. They must now ask Job to pray for them that God might forgive them, and not deal with them according to their folly.

Job had come through his testing, unshaken in his faith in spite of all the terrible visitations which had come upon him. The moral of the parable is clear. A true man of piety remains steadfast in his faith, in spite of all loss, or torment or doubt, for that is the very measure and criterion of faith. Faith is not knowledge. Faith chooses the way of complete trust in the face of incomplete knowledge. What is paradoxical to the mind is not a block either to spiritual confidence or moral action.



A man of faith is frequently baffled in the presence of a meaning not yet grasped, perhaps never to be fully grasped, by man's limited mind, but he will never acknowledge defeat either in agnosticism or atheism. A man's faith must always function within the inevitable limitations of the human position - limited days, limited powers, limited comprehension, in a world whose laws he did not set, whose origin and destiny have not been revealed to him. But these are the unalterable terms of reference of his life. Within these terms and limitations God fashioned him - as He fashioned all creation - and charged him to grow and develop in mind and spirit, to live according to the moral law which He revealed to him, and to build the good society. The man of faith accepts both God's mandate and His terms.

Job had accepted God's mandate to lead a righteous life. He was a good and righteous man but he rebelled at the terrible terms and conditions of his life. He did not understand - and he wanted to know the why and the wherefore. God's answer is given to Job to remind him that he, Job, did not create the universe or set its laws. "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?" The conditions for all creation were set by God, not man. He alone knows the why and wherefore. Man, himself, is a creature, and has neither the power nor the wisdom to create or to understand the vast universe and the laws which govern it. Man can understand neither life or death, nor mind, nor cosmic origins nor the purposes of creation. God's justice is not the only mystery which surrounds the position of man. But if you, Job, discern plan, order, law and grandeur in the whole of creation, why do you not trust the Creator that the same wisdom and order obtain also in the human world which is also of God's making? Man's highest wisdom, Job, is not to question the ways of the Almighty. Trying to understand them will not advance or ennoble your life. "Behold, reverence for God that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding".



This, by the way, is the answer which is also given in the Bible to the complaints of Kohelet, the king who had everything and tasted everything, but who in his prosperity (not in his adversity, like Job) found everything stale and meaningless, - ( ).

"The end of the matter after everything has been said, revere God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole of man."

Job, the good man who in his tribulations had argued with God and had been a fault-finder, comes finally to understand this. "I uttered what I understood not, I spoke things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. I had heard of Thee (heretofore) by the hearing of the ear (imperfectly) but now my eye sees Thee (more clearly). Therefore, I despise myself (for what I have spoken) and repent in dust and ashes".

The playwright, Archibald MacLeish, has employed this superb parable of Job for the plot of his play, "J.B.". He has given it a modern dress and a contemporary setting. This is a legitimate undertaking, for the meaning of suffering is a timeless theme, and there have never been and there can never be the complete answers to eternal problems. The play J.B. has imagination, deep earnestness, poetic flashes of great insight and all the pathos of the suffering Job of old. Perhaps J.B.'s misfortunes suffer from an excess of harrowing details which the greater artistry of the Book of Job avoided.

J.B. is a successful, self-confident American business man, a religious man, a religious man, who has a loving wife and family. A series of tragedies, similar to those of Job, overtake them. His children are killed in war, in accidents, in foul rape and murder. He loses his fortune and is broken by disease. His wife finally deserts him because he will not curse God for the terrible misfortunes which He had visited upon them.

The three friends who come to pay him a condolence call are - "since each generation has its new comforters" - a psychoanalyst, a leftist sociologist and a religious fundamentalist. Their attempts, slyly travestied, to explain the reason



for human suffering, are perhaps the best intellectual tid-bits of the play. J.B. rejects their arguments. Two broken-down actors, selling pop-corn and balloons in the circus tent where the play is enacted, and who from time to time put on the masks of Satan and God, identify and comment on the action of the play as it goes along to heighten its tension. At decisive moments, the voice of God, Himself, is heard out of the void speaking the words which the Bible attributes to Him. There is introduced also something resembling a Greek chorus, composed of slatternly women of dubious character, whose function in the play is not quite clear, just as the business with the masks - also a Greek theatrical device - is also not clear.

On reading the play and later on on viewing it on the stage, I could not escape the impression that modern man has not advanced much beyond the man of ancient times in understanding man's relation to God or God's way in the world. In fact, MacLeish throws in the sponge in the second act. Up to that time he had been moving confidently along in the footsteps of his ancient model, poignantly restating the problem - the innocent sufferer and the unapproachable God. But when you look for MacLeish's own solution - you are keenly disappointed. You feel let down. The play seems to fall apart after J.B. acknowledges his littleness before God. What follows is simply a complete non-sequitar - a volte face. It does not flow logically from what went before. MacLeish offers no solution except to veer away from the problem altogether, and to confront human suffering as a non-religious, secular existentialist would face it. But, of course, if there is no God, who concerns Himself with man, there is no problem of God's justice. But that problem is the very theme and substance of the religious debate which is Job. In Job, God remains central at all times both to the problem and its solution. In "J.B.", God is deftly, almost imperceptibly whisked away, towards the end of the play, and thereafter a non-religious humanism takes over, seemingly to insure clear sailing into a safe harbor. J.B. recovers from his leprosy, and in spite of all that had



happened to him and his family, assures us that he is now willing to begin life all over again. He becomes the symbol of the undefeated man. His wife, Sarah, who had deserted him, because he would not curse God, now returns to him, because Job has finally understood that there is no justice in the world - only love. She must be referring, of course, to human, not to divine justice, for if the killing of her children was not divine justice, it certainly was not divine love. But if there is no possibility on earth even of human justice, what then is the meaning of all man's striving to build the just society? And if men can never be just to one another, how can they ever come to love one another?

The contrast between justice and love, whether human or divine, is nowhere raised in the Book of Job. In J.B. it constitutes the very climax of the play, but it is altogether unrelated to all that preceded. I am afraid that Mr. MacLeish could not resist his early Church training where the now discredited antithesis between ~~the~~ ~~divine~~ O.T. justice and N.T. love was made much of. The problem of Job, however, was not whether men should love one another or be just to one another, but whether God is just and loving.

Conceivably one could write a secular, non-religious play on the theme how best man can come to terms with misfortune. It is doubtful whether the climax of such a play would be any more comforting than Job's, to parents whose hearts had been torn by the tragic loss of all their children, and who themselves were broken in fortune and health. And one wonders whether, after listening to declamatory rhetoric about "homo invictus", "my head is bloody but unbowed. I am master of my fate, I am captain of my soul", they would not be inclined to cry out with Job: "I have heard many such things before; miserable comforters are you all, when will all such windy words have an end?"



But such a play could be written; in fact more than one has been written. But Archibald MacLeish has lashed his play on to the Book of Job and would have you believe that it is written true to its spirit, in spite of the fact that he has rather high-handedly converted an ancient religious classic, whose alpha and omega is God, into a secularist tract, whose hero rises from the ashes, heals himself and announces that he is going to accept life again, "start over, get new children, face the same risks, the same hazards"- because he is a man!

MacLeish wrote, in explanation of his play, "that he derived it all from the story of Job itself, from the end of the book - a part of the myth that the theologians, for obvious reasons, neglect or disparage. And what excited me about the end was something that is obviously there but is omitted from the Biblical account - Job's action. In the Bible God gives Job back everything... but God's giving implies Job's acceptance. And it was that acceptance that haunted my mind... That is as pure and naked affirmation of the fundamental human belief in life in spite of life, the fundamental human love of life as life, and in spite of all the miseries ~~miseries~~ of life - as I have ever found. It is the more moving because the theologians have never noticed it. Or, more precisely, cannot notice it being theologians. The Book of Job is a human triumph - Job picking up his life again."

To all of which one is inclined to say: it is true that all this was omitted from the Biblical account for obvious reasons, for obviously it was never intended to be there. The theologians never noticed it, because it was never there to be noticed. The end of the parable of Job - how God restored Job's fortune as a reward for his faith and steadfastness - was never ignored by theologians - except by some modernists who, attracted to this superb classic, sought to make it present their own views and attempted arbitrarily to fit their own tailored notions on the book.



7        The love of life and the clinging to life, is shared also by animals, and possessed no special moral virtue or significance.

At the end, Job of the Bible goes on his way confidently with God, confirmed in his integrity, and trusting in the justice and goodness of the Creator of the universe, though His ways are not always clear to him.

At the end, J.B. of Archibald Macleish, goes on gropingly without God, relying on his own strength in an hostile and darkened world:

"Blow on the coal of the heart.  
The candles in churches are out.  
The lights have gone out in the sky.  
Blow on the coal of the heart  
And we'll see by and by....."

At the end, Job humbles himself before God, while preserving his own spiritual dignity. He trusts God, and leaves the management of the world to Him. Job accepts the world and, abandoning all futile questioning and rebelliousness, carries on in faith, prepared to do whatever God assigns to him.

At the end, J.B. refuses to humble himself. He still remains resentful of the hard, unheeding world about him for which God has no concern whatever. Defiantly he will pick up his life again, even if it means going through the same series of disasters as before. For he will now have the love of Sarah, his wife, with him, Sarah who first abandoned and then returned to him.

But Sarah and her love were with him before the disasters overtook him. Why did they not suffice then? And will love suffice when the next horrors sweep over them?

I rather think that J.B. will have a sadder road to travel alone than Job of old with his God. If the play J.B. sends people back to read the Book of Job, Archibald MacLeish may turn out to be, however unwittingly, a true benefactor of the glowing religious faith of the Biblical author of Job.

DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

DECEMBER 20, 1959



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Had their God forsaken them? He permitted His beloved city and His own Temple to be destroyed and His chosen people to be led away captive by a wicked heathen might. Why? Were they being punished for their sins? <sup>But</sup> ~~even~~ if many of the people had sinned there surely were many who had not. Why were they slain or driven into captivity? If the fathers had sinned, why were their innocent children punished? Is the way of the Lord just? And what of the future? Will future generations be saddled with the guilt of the present generation, so that there remains no hope ever for a fresh start, for a return and a restoration?

In these desperate years of the sixth century, there arose spiritual leaders among the people who frankly faced up to these grave <sup>5/31/21, final</sup> problems and gave <sup>to</sup> ~~their people~~ light and guidance ~~in their gropings for answers which would save them from spiritual chaos and a fatal loss of morale.~~

The anonymous prophet, whom we call the Second Isaiah, brought them, in his stirring and eloquent utterances, the divine assurance that the iniquity of the past <sup>has been forgiven</sup> ~~is forgotten~~, that the people <sup>had</sup> ~~have~~ already received from the Lord's hand double for all their sins. And he gave the exiles a vision of a national destiny nobler than any they had ever envisioned <sup>before</sup>. They <sup>were destined to</sup> ~~would be~~ the emissaries of one <sup>true</sup> ~~spiritual~~ God, <sup>and</sup> ~~to~~ bring His moral law to the whole of mankind.

Another prophet of the exile, Ezekiel, faced the problem of individual responsibility and moral independence. He took sharp issue with those who kept



on repeating the proverb: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge". "As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel". The son will not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father for the iniquity of the son. Only the soul that sins shall die." And there is always repentance for the sinner. God has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, only that he <sup>he</sup> should turn from his evil way and live.

But why do innocent people suffer? And why do the wicked often prosper? And is a man's suffering clear proof that he <sup>has been</sup> guilty of ~~some~~ sin? These <sup>which trouble the minds of men constantly</sup> problems ~~are~~ the theme of a remarkable book, the Book of Job, which was also written during the Babylonian exile, at about the turn of the sixth century, by a ~~Babylonian~~ Jewish exile. Originally it was probably written in Aramaic, a Semitic language very close to Hebrew, which was spoken in Babylonia and elsewhere in the Near East. The Book was later translated into Hebrew when the exiles returned to Judea.

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book, <sup>clearly</sup> the work, ~~undoubtedly~~, of a later literary hand. <sup>editor</sup>

To restate the central theme of ~~this book~~ <sup>Job</sup> - it is this:

If there is a just God in the universe - why does the righteous man suffer? Why does the wicked man often prosper? Or to put it in another way - is a man's suffering and personal tragedy proof that he has sinned against God - and that God has therefore punished him? Or to put it in yet another way - why does a good and just God permit suffering altogether in this world - and why, having created man, mortal, weak and fallible, does He hold him to such strict accountability, and visit upon him such crushing punishment, even if he had sinned?

It is an amazing tribute to the theologic tolerance and spiritual confidence of those who finally composed the canon of the Bible to have permitted the inclusion of the Book of Job in the sacred collection in spite of ~~so~~ <sup>th</sup> many outspoken strictures, bitter challenges and complaints against God and the ordering of His univers which are found in it.

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# MISSING PAGE (S)





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History and the experience of mankind prove that the wicked are always destroyed and the just are always *recompensed*, argues one of his friends. Not so - cries Job. God destroys both the blameless and the wicked. if it is not He, Who then is it? And why do the wicked live, reach old age, and grow mighty in power? You say God stores up their iniquity for their sons. Why does he not recompense them directly *that* ~~that~~ they may know it. And what of the wronged of the earth, they who carry the sheaves for others, but themselves *are* ~~are~~ hungry, these who tread the wine-press for others, but themselves suffer thirst?



Nobody on earth is innocent - argues another of his friends. No man is clean of sin. "Behold, even the moon is not bright and the stars are not clear in ~~his~~ sight, how much less <sup>a</sup> man, who is a maggot, and the son of man, who is a worm." If so, retorts Job, who made him so? Who created man weak, mortal. "What is man, that Thou <sup>dost</sup> ~~does~~ make so much of him, dost visit him every morning and test him every moment? If I sin, what do I do unto Thee, Thou Watcher of men?" "Are not the days of any life few? Let me alone that I may find a little comfort before I go whence I shall not return, to the land of gloom and deep shadows".

You must have sinned, Job, or this evil would not have come upon you. Your wickedness must be great, one of ~~the~~ friends returns to the charge. It is quite likely that God has exacted of you less than your guilt. "What guilt?" cries Job. What are my iniquities and my sins? Tell me. You are ~~whitewashing~~ God with lies. Worthless ~~physicians~~ are you all. You speak falsely of God, and speak ~~deceitfully~~ of Him. Your maxims are proverbs of ~~ashes~~ and your ~~defences~~ <sup>defences of clay</sup> ~~for trying to show partiality toward~~ ... I have not sinned! "As God lives, Who has taken away my right, and the Almighty, Who has made ~~xxx~~ 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. Far be it from me to say that you are right; till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go. ~~my heart does not reproach me for any of my days.~~" Job demands that he be vindicated! He will not besmirch his whole life ~~of decent conduct and~~ <sup>and beat his</sup>

~~"I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame; I was a father to the poor and I searched out the cause of him which I did not know and will beat his breast in abject confession to sin, which he did not commit in order to conform to the false and erroneous doctrines about God and His providence which these miserable comforters of his were proclaiming. "I have understanding as well as you!" says Job. "I am not inferior to you. What you know, I know also". My agony and~~ <sup>anguish</sup>



are <sup>great</sup> ~~just~~ enough, I am a broken man and God has cast me into the mire, but I will not ~~utterly~~ destroy my soul, the inner sanctuary of my ~~own spiritual~~ rectitude and dignity, my last, sole and ultimate refuge, by acknowledging to <sup>quiet to satisfy</sup> ~~the degradation to which you~~ <sup>your dogmas.</sup> ~~ask me to acknowledge.~~ I know that my vindication <sup>is</sup> lives - and that at the end ~~He will~~ He will arise; and in my own life-time, while my flesh and my skin are <sup>still as we,</sup> ~~as one,~~ I <sup>will</sup> ~~want to~~ see the vindication of God ( <sup>side note please</sup> ).

For God must maintain the right of a man who is with God.

In all his bitterness and complaint, Job did not deny God. He did not accept his wife's advice: "Curse God and die". He <sup>simply</sup> ~~did not~~ understand the ways of God. He exercised his human prerogative to question, to complain, to be resentful - and when his friends goaded him ~~to furious anger~~ by telling him that all his misfortunes ~~have come upon him~~, were deserved because he had sinned <sup>he became furious</sup> ~~against a just~~ <sup>angry and</sup> ~~God~~ - he uttered violent words bordering on sacrilege and blasphemy against the kind of a God Whom his friends championed. ~~But~~ Job was waiting for his God, the true God, to arise and vindicate him.

And out of the whirlwind God speaks and answers Job. Job is vindicated by God. His friends are condemned not only for <sup>imputing</sup> sin to Job, who had not sinned, but for not having spoken of God what is right as Job had done. They must ask Job to pray for them that God might forgive them and not deal with them according to their folly. Job had come through his testing unshaken in his faith ~~in God~~ in spite of all the terrible visitations which came upon him. A true man of piety remains steadfast in his faith in spite of all loss, or torment or doubt, for that is the very measure and criterion of faith. Faith is not knowledge. It chooses the way of complete trust in the face of incomplete knowledge. What is paradoxical to the mind is not a block either to spiritual confidence or moral action. A man of



faith is frequently baffled in the presence of a meaning not yet grasped, perhaps never to be fully perfect, by man's limited mind, but he never acknowledges defeat either in agnosticism or atheism. A man's faith must always function within the inevitable limitations of the human position, ~~limited days~~, limited <sup>powers</sup>, limited comprehension, in a world whose laws he did not set; ~~a world~~ whose origin and destiny have not been revealed to him. These are his terms of reference. Within these terms and limitations God ~~has~~ fashioned man - as He fashioned all creation - and charged him to grow and develop in mind and spirit, to live according to the moral law which He revealed to him, and to build the good society. The man of faith accepts both God's mandate and His terms.

Job had accepted God's mandate to lead a righteous life. ~~xxxxxxJobxxxxxxrebelled~~  
He was a good and righteous man ~~and by doing it to Job, his friends had grievously~~  
~~sinned - but~~ <sup>he</sup> ~~had~~ rebelled <sup>under the frightful onslaught which the</sup> ~~conditions of~~  
his life <sup>had</sup> ~~forced upon him~~. He did not understand - and he wanted to know the  
why and the wherefore. God's answer comes to Job and reminds him that he, Job, did  
not create <sup>this</sup> ~~the~~ universe - or set ~~xxx~~ its laws. "Where were you when I laid the  
foundation of the earth?" The conditions for all creation were set by God, not man.  
Man, himself, is a creature and has neither the power nor the wisdom to create or  
to understand the vast universe and the laws which <sup>govern</sup> ~~control~~ it. Man can understand  
neither life or death, nor mind, nor cosmic origins nor the purpose of creation.  
God's justice ~~in His relation to man~~ is not the only mystery surrounding the position  
of man. <sup>But if you, Job,</sup> ~~You~~ discern plan, order, law and grandeur in the whole of creation, <sup>Why</sup> ~~Why~~ do  
you not trust the Creator that the same wisdom and order obtain <sup>also</sup> ~~also~~ in ~~your~~ the  
human world which is under God? <sup>Job,</sup> ~~You cannot judge God by human standards of justice~~  
~~or injustice~~. Man's highest wisdom is not to question ~~the wisdom xxxxx is not~~  
~~to question~~ the ways of the Almighty, <sup>for</sup> ~~and~~ by trying to understand them, he will not  
advance or ennoble his life. "Behold, reverence for God that is wisdom, and to







for human suffering, are perhaps the best intellectual tid-bits of the play. J.B. rejects their arguments. Two broken-down actors, selling pop-corn and balloons in the circus tent where the play is enacted, and <sup>who</sup> from time to time <sup>put on</sup> ~~the masks~~ <sup>the masks</sup> of Satan and God, identify and ~~comment~~ <sup>comment</sup> on the action of the play as it goes <sup>along</sup> ~~always~~ to heighten its ~~terrifying~~ tension. At decisive moments, the voice of God, Himself, is heard <sup>out of the void</sup> speaking the words which the Bible attributes to ~~him~~ <sup>introduced</sup>. There is also something resembling a Greek ~~chorus~~ <sup>chorus</sup>, composed of slatternly women of dubious character, whose function in the play is not <sup>quite</sup> ~~very~~ clear.

On reading the play and later on on viewing it on the stage, I could not escape the impression that modern man has not advanced much beyond the man of ancient times in understanding man's relation to God or God's way in the world. In fact, MacLeish throws in the sponge in the second act. Up to that time he had been moving confidently in the footsteps of his ancient model, <sup>prigantly</sup> restating the problem - the innocent suffer and the unapproachable God. But when you look for MacLeish's <sup>own</sup> solution - you are <sup>keenly</sup> disappointed. You feel let down. The play seems to fall apart towards the end after J.B. acknowledges his <sup>bitterness</sup> before God <sup>for</sup> ~~simply~~ because what follows is <sup>7th Part</sup> ~~such~~ a complete non-sequitur - a volte face. It does not <sup>flow</sup> ~~follow~~ logically from what went before. MacLeish has no solution except to veer away from the problem altogether, and <sup>confront</sup> ~~face~~ human suffering as a non-religious, <sup>secular</sup> existentialist <sup>would</sup> ~~could~~ face it. But, of course, if there is no God who <sup>has to do with man</sup> ~~concerns the laws~~, there is no problem of God's <sup>is that</sup> ~~relation to~~ man or of God's justice. But <sup>that is</sup> ~~this~~, the very theme, ~~and~~ the ~~sole~~ purpose of <sup>at all times</sup> this religious debate which is Job. In Job, God remains central to the problem and its solution. In "J.B." God is deftly, almost imperceptibly <sup>whisked</sup> away towards the end and thereafter <sup>humanism</sup> ~~humanism~~ takes over ~~xxxxxxxx~~



and there is clear sailing. J.B. recovers from his leprosy, and in spite of all that had happened to him and his family assures us that he is now willing to begin life all over again. Life begins when you know it to be a tragedy. He becomes the symbol of the undefeated man. His wife, Sarah, who had deserted him, because he would not curse God, now returns to him, because <sup>she</sup> he has finally understood that there is no justice in the world - only love. She is referring to <sup>of course not</sup> ~~divine~~ justice or love, for if the killing of her children was not divine <sup>justice</sup> ~~justice~~, it certainly was not divine love. The problem of Job, however, <sup>was</sup> /not whether men <sup>(whether?)</sup> should love one another or be just to one another, but where God is just and loving, ~~not~~.

Conceivably one could write a <sup>humanist</sup> play on the theme how best man can come to terms with misfortune. It is doubtful whether the climax of such a play would be more comforting <sup>than Job's</sup> to parents whose hearts had been torn by the tragic loss of all their children, and were <sup>themselves</sup> broken in fortune and health. One wonders if after listening to all the declamatory <sup>she love about</sup> "homo in victus," "my head is bloody but ~~unbowed~~. I am master of my fate, I am captain of my soul," they would not be inclined to cry out like Job: "I have heard many such things before; miserable comforters are you all, when will <sup>all</sup> such windy words have an end?" But <sup>a play</sup> ~~it~~ could be written, in fact more than one has been written ~~on this theme~~. But Archibald MacLeish has lashed his play <sup>on</sup> to the Book of Job and would have you believe that it is written <sup>true to</sup> in its spirit, <sup>while at the same time</sup> ~~although~~ he forcibly converted an ancient religious classic whose alpha and omega is God, <sup>into</sup> ~~with~~ a secularist tract, whose hero <sup>arises from the ashes</sup> ~~becomes suddenly and unaccountably~~ <sup>heals</sup> himself and announces that he is going to accept life again, "start over, get ~~new~~ new children, face the same risks, the same hazards" - because he is a man.



*in explanation of his way,*  
MacLeish wrote <sup>that</sup> he derived it all from the story of Job, itself,  
from the end of the book - a part of the myth that the theologians for obvious  
reasons, neglect or disparage. And what excited me about the end was something  
that is obviously there but is omitted from the Biblical account - Job's action.  
In the Bible God gives Job back everything ....but God's giving implies Job's  
acceptance. And it was that acceptance that haunted my mind...<sup>That</sup> is as pure  
and naked affirmation of the fundamental human belief in life in spite of life,  
the fundamental human love of life as life, and in spite of all the miseries of  
life - as I have ever found. It is the more moving because the theologians  
have never <sup>noticed</sup> ~~noticed~~ it. Or, more precisely, cannot notice it being theologians.  
The Book of Job is a human triumph - Job picking up his life again.

To all of which one is inclined to say: it is true that all this was  
omitted from the Biblical account ~~and~~ for obvious reasons, for obviously it was  
never there. The theologians never noticed it, because it was never there to be  
noticed. The end of the Book of Job - how God restored Job's fortune as a reward  
for his faith and steadfastness - was never <sup>ignored</sup> ~~found~~ by theologians - except by some  
modernists who, attracted to this superb classic, <sup>sought</sup> ~~seeking~~ to make it <sup>with their own</sup> ~~with their~~  
<sup>views and</sup> ~~open minds,~~ attempted to fit their own <sup>tailored garment</sup> ~~tailored garment~~ to the book.

At the end, Job of the <sup>Bible</sup> ~~Book~~ goes on his way confidently with God, Con-  
firmed in his integrity, and trusting in the <sup>goodness</sup> ~~justice~~ of the  
Creator of the universe, though his ways are not always clear to him.

At the end, J.B. of Archibald MacLeish, goes on, <sup>graspingly</sup> ~~not so confidently~~ without  
God, relying on his own strength in an hostile and darkened world:

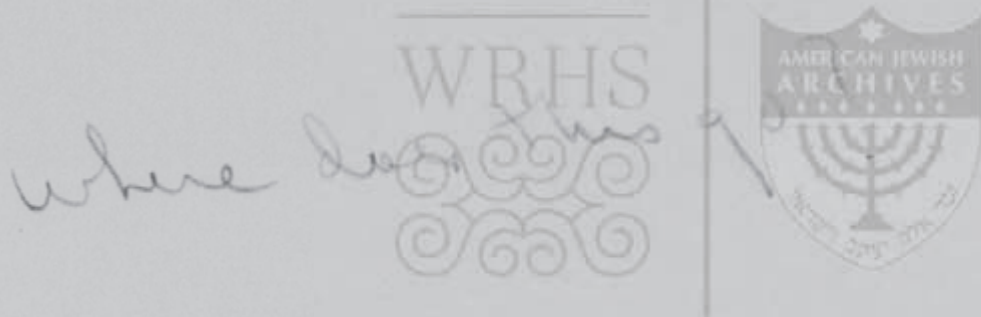
"Blow on the coal of the heart.  
The candles in churches are out.  
The lights have gone out in the sky.  
Blow on the coal of the heart  
And we'll see by and by..."

At the end, Job humbles himself before God, while preserving his own  
spiritual dignity. He trusts God, and leaves the management of the world to Him.



Over 1

The love of life and the clinging to life, because it is life, is also shared by animals, and possessed ~~not~~ special moral virtue or significance.





Job accepts the world and abandoning all futile questioning and rebelliousness, <sup>he</sup> carries on in faith <sup>prepared to do</sup> whatever God assigned <sup>S</sup> to him.

At the end J.B. refuses to humbly <sup>be</sup> himself. He still remains resentful of the hard, unheeding world about him for which God has no concern whatever. ~~But~~ Defiantly he picks up his life again, even if it means going through the same series of disasters as before. For <sup>he</sup> there will now <sup>have</sup> be the love of Sarah, his wife, <sup>with him, Sarah who first abandoned and then</sup> who ~~has~~ returned to him.

But Sarah and her love were with him before the disaster. <sup>are back here.</sup> Why did ~~this~~ they not suffice then? And will love suffice when the next horrors sweep over them?

<sup>P</sup> I rather think that J.B. will have a sadder road to travel alone than Job of old with <sup>his</sup> God. If J.B. sends <sup>himself</sup> back to Job, ~~has~~ Archibald MacLachlan will turn out to <sup>have</sup> been <sup>now, that is</sup> a great friend of the religious faith of the Biblical author.



When dark days came upon the people of Israel in the beginning of the sixth century, followed by the loss of their independence, the destruction of Jerusalem and the holy Temple, and the exile of all, but the poorest of the land, to Babylon, a great searching of heart and <sup>a questioning</sup> of all ~~the~~ accepted traditional values took place among them.

Had their God forsaken them? He permitted His beloved city and His own Temple to be destroyed and His chosen people to be led away captive by a wicked heathen might. Why? Were they being punished for their sins? <sup>Had the Babylonians then, captors, not sinned. And</sup> ~~But~~ if many <sup>of them</sup> of the people had sinned there surely were many who had not. Why were they slain or driven into captivity? If the fathers had sinned, why were their innocent children punished? Is the way of the Lord just? And what of the future? Will future generations be saddled with the guilt of the present generation, so that there remains no hope ever for a fresh start, for a return and a restoration?

In these desperate years of the sixth century, there arose spiritual leaders among the people who frankly faced up to these grave spiritual problems and gave



~~them~~ light and guidance to save <sup>their generation</sup> ~~them~~ from spiritual chaos and a fatal loss of morale.

The anonymous prophet, whom we call the Second Isaiah, brought them, in his stirring and eloquent utterances, the divine assurance that the iniquity of the past has been forgiven, that the people had already received from the Lord's hand double for all their sins. ~~And He~~ gave the exiles <sup>also</sup> a vision of a national destiny nobler than any they had ever envisioned before. They were destined to be the emissaries of <sup>the</sup> one true God, and <sup>carry</sup> ~~bring~~ His moral law to ~~the~~ <sup>all</sup> ~~whole of mankind.~~ <sup>the nations of the earth.</sup>

Another prophet of the exile, Ezekiel, faced the problem of individual responsibility ~~and moral independence~~. He took sharp issue with those who kept on repeating the proverb: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge". "As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel". The son will not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father for the iniquity of the son.



Only the soul that sins shall die". And there is always repentance for the sinner. "God has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, only that he should turn from his evil way and live".

But why do innocent people suffer? And why do the wicked often prosper? And is a man's suffering ~~clear~~ proof that he has been guilty of sin? These problems, which troubled the minds of men, constitute the theme of a remarkable book, the Book of Job, which was also written during the Babylonian exile, at about the turn of the sixth century, by a Jewish exile. Originally it was probably written in Aramaic, a Semitic language very close to Hebrew, which was spoken in Babylonia and elsewhere in the Near East. The Book was later translated into Hebrew when the exiles returned to Judea.

Except for the prologue, which was read to you this morning, and the brief epilogue at the end of the book, both written in prose narrative, the rest of the book is written in poetry - perhaps the most exalted poetry penned by any <sup>man</sup> ~~poet~~ -



Jew or non-Jew - in the ancient world.

- x Because of its style, the difficulties involved in translation, the peculiar oriental form of composition, the editing to which it was undoubtedly submitted through the ages, the blurring of ~~tears~~<sup>time</sup>, and, of course, the obtuse nature of the subject matter itself, the book is not easy reading, but very rewarding.

Job is not a drama in the strict sense of the word. Except for its prologue and epilogue, it is a debate or a symposium - a problem-poem - in which one great theme and its corollaries are discussed from different points of view by four men, Job and his three friends. The final word is spoken by God, Himself. A fourth colloquist, by the name of Elihu, is introduced toward the end of the book, - clearly the work of a later editor.

To restate the central theme of Job - it is this:

If there is a just God in the universe - why does the righteous man suffer? Why does the wicked man often prosper? Or, to put it in another way, - is a man's suffering and



personal tragedy proof that he has sinned against God - and that God has therefore punished him? Or, <sup>broadening the question,</sup> ~~to put it in yet another way~~ - why does a good and just God permit suffering altogether in this world - and why, having created man, mortal, weak and fallible, does He hold him to such strict accountability, and visit upon him such crushing punishment? ~~even if he had sinned?~~

It is an amazing tribute to the theologic tolerance and spiritual confidence of those who finally composed the canon of the Bible <sup>that they</sup> ~~to have~~ permitted the inclusion of the Book of Job <sup>among the</sup> ~~in the~~ sacred <sup>books</sup> ~~collection~~ in spite of the many outspoken strictures, <sup>and</sup> bitter challenges ~~and complaints~~ against God and the ordering of His universe which are found in it.

But then when we <sup>call to mind</sup> ~~realize~~ that these same men also permitted the inclusion of the Book of Kohelet among the books of the Bible - a book whose central theme is not only the apparent absence of justice in the world and the inexplicable suffering of the just, but the utter futility of all existence, and the meaninglessness of all life, even where it



abounds in pleasure and prosperity - ~~one~~<sup>we</sup> realizes that the Book of Books is such because it is the mirror of all life, reflecting all of its moods and ~~dwelling~~<sup>touching</sup> on all of its problems. It evades nothing. The answers which it gives may not satisfy ~~all men~~<sup>everyone</sup> - but no one ~~is able to~~<sup>can</sup> say that the Bible was unaware of any of the complexities and paradoxes of human existence, and ~~did not~~<sup>refused to</sup> face up to ~~all~~ the cold, dark problems of man's life upon earth, such as are known to the most modern of moderns.

Job had suffered all the agonies and bereavements which a human being could possibly suffer - and he did not know why. Why had God broken him?

His three friends, who came to comfort him, tried to tell him why. They approached the subject from different directions and with varying emphases, but all their reasoning ultimately converged ~~on~~<sup>into</sup> ~~one~~<sup>conclusion</sup>. Job must have sinned and God had punished him.

Job refused to accept their explanation. He bitterly resented it. He was conscious of no sin which would merit such punishment.



~~He will not justify God's actions by denying his own integrity.~~

His friends become impatient with him. They regard his attitude as presumptuous, that of a man who is righteous in his own eyes. Each in his own way tells him that God does not pervert justice and that Job himself in the past had taught this truth to other men, but now that trials have come upon him, he has become impatient and tears himself in his anger.

The three friends do not represent three sharply differentiated philosophies or view-points, but rather three different emphases or temperaments.

Each friend speaks in turn and in turn Job answers him. As the debate proceeds in three cycles, each containing six speeches, the arguments become sharper and more direct and Job's retorts more passionate and bitter. No quarter is asked or given. The purpose of the friends' visit - that of friendship and condolence - is soon forgotten in the heat of the theologic controversy. Charges and counter-charges are hurled. <sup>But</sup> when the last speech



is finally uttered, the issues are not at all resolved. God, Himself, then appears and out of the whirlwind utters the word which rebukes the friends and reconciles Job.

History and the experience of mankind prove that the wicked are always destroyed and the just are always recompensed, argues one of his friends. Not so!- cries Job. "God destroys both the blameless and the wicked. If it is not He, Who then is it?" And why do the wicked live, reach old age, and grow mighty in power? You say God stores up their iniquity for their sons. Why does he not recompense them directly so that they may know it? And what of the wronged of the earth, they who carry the sheaves for others, but themselves go hungry, these who tread the winepress for others, but themselves suffer thirst? *→ 5/6*

Nobody on earth is innocent - argues another of his friends. No man is clean of sin. "Behold, even the moon is not bright and the stars are not clear in His sight, how much less man, who is a maggot,



and the son of man, who is a worm". If so, retorts Job, who made him so? Who created man weak, mortal? "What is man, that Thou dost make so much of him, dost visit him every morning and test him every moment? If I sin, what do I do unto Thee, Thou Watcher of men?" "Are not the days of <sup>my</sup> ~~any~~ life few? Let me alone that I may find a little comfort before I go whence I shall not return, to the land of gloom and deep shadows". <sup>stop-</sup>

"You must have sinned, Job, or this evil would not have come upon you. Your wickedness must be great", one of the friends returns to the charge. It is quite likely that "God has exacted of you less than your guilt". "What guilt?" cries Job. What are my iniquities and my sins? Tell me. "You are whitewashing God with lies. Worthless physicians are you all. You speak falsely of God. Your maxims are proverbs of ashes and your <sup>defences</sup> defenses of clay. I have not sinned! "As God lives, Who has taken away my right, and the Almighty, 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. Far be it



from me to say that you are right; till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go." Job demands that he be vindicated <sup>by God</sup>. He will not besmirch his whole life and beat his breast in object confession to sins which he did not commit in order to conform to the false and erroneous doctrines about God which these miserable comforters of his were proclaim-  
stat- ing. "I have understanding as well as you", says Job. "I am not inferior to you. What you know, I know also". My agony and anguish are great enough, I am a broken man and God has cast me into the mire, but I will not destroy my soul, the inner sanctuary of my rectitude and dignity, my last, sole and ultimate refuge, by acknowledging to guilt <sup>in order</sup> to satisfy your dogmas. I know that my vindicator lives - and that at the end He will arise; and in my own life-time, while my flesh and my skin are still on me, I will see the vindication of God ( <sup>אני אראה את כבודי</sup> ). For God must maintain the right of a man who is with God.



In all his bitterness and complaint, Job did not deny God. He did not accept his wife's advice: "Curse God and die". He simply did not understand the ways of God. He exercised <sup>what he regarded as</sup> his human prerogative to question, to complain, to be resentful - and when his friends goaded him by telling him that all his misfortunes were deserved, ~~because he had sinned~~, he became furiously angry and he uttered violent words bordering on sacrilege and blasphemy against the kind of a God Whom his friends championed. Job was waiting for his God, the true God, to arise and vindicate him. <sup>step</sup>

And out of the whirlwind God speaks and answers Job. Job is vindicated by God. His friends are condemned not only for imputing sin to Job who had not sinned, but for not having spoken of God what is right, as Job had done. They must <sup>now</sup> ask Job to pray for them that God might forgive them, and not deal with them according to their folly. TP Job had come through his testing, unshaken in his faith in spite of all the terrible visitations which <sup>had</sup> come upon him. <sup>the moral of the parable is that</sup> A true man



of piety remains steadfast in his faith in spite of all loss, or torment or doubt, for that is the very measure and criterion of faith. Faith is not knowledge. <sup>Faith</sup> ~~It~~ chooses the way of complete trust in the face of incomplete knowledge. What is paradoxical to the mind is not a block either to spiritual confidence or moral action. A man of faith is frequently baffled in the presence of a meaning not yet grasped, perhaps never to be fully <sup>grasped</sup> ~~perfect~~, by man's limited mind, but he <sup>will</sup> never acknowledge defeat either in agnosticism or atheism. A man's faith must always function within the inevitable limitations of the human position - limited days, limited powers, limited comprehension, in a world whose laws he did not set, whose origin and destiny have not been revealed to him. <sup>By</sup> ~~These~~ <sup>the beings unalterable</sup> ~~are his~~ terms of reference <sup>of his life</sup>. Within these terms and limitations God fashioned <sup>him</sup> ~~man~~ - as He fashioned all creation - and charged him to grow and develop in mind and spirit, to live according to the moral law which He revealed to him, and to build the good society. The man of faith accepts both God's mandate and His terms.



Job had accepted God's mandate to lead a righteous life. He was a good and righteous man but he rebelled <sup>at</sup> the terrible <sup>terms and</sup> conditions of his life. He did not understand - and he wanted to know the why and the wherefore. God's answer <sup>is given</sup> ~~comes~~ to Job <sup>to</sup> ~~and~~ reminds him that he, Job, did not create this universe - or set its laws. "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?" The conditions for all creation were set by God, not man. <sup>He alone knows the why and wherefore</sup> Man, himself, is a creature, and has neither the power nor the wisdom to create or to understand the vast universe and the laws which govern it. Man can understand neither life or death, nor mind, nor cosmic origins nor the purposes of creation. God's justice is not the only mystery <sup>which</sup> ~~surrounding~~ the position of man. But if you, Job, discern plan, order, law and grandeur in the whole of creation, why do you not trust the Creator that the same wisdom and order obtain also in the human world which is also <sup>of God's working?</sup> ~~under God?~~ Man's highest wisdom, Job, is not to question the ways of the Almighty. ~~for by~~ <sup>by</sup> trying to understand them, ~~he~~ will not advance or ennoble <sup>your</sup> ~~his~~ life. "Behold,



reverence for God that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding".

This, by the way, is the answer which is also given in the Bible to the complaints of Kohelet, the king who had everything and tasted everything, but who in his prosperity (not in his adversity, like ~~that~~ of Job) found everything stale and meaningless, - ( *עליון* *לזן*). "The end of the matter after everything has been said, revere God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole of man."

Job, the good man who in his tribulations had argued with God and had been a fault-finder, comes finally to understand this. "I uttered what I understood not, I spoke things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. I had heard of Thee (heretofore) by the hearing of the ear (imperfectly) but now my eye sees Thee (more clearly). Therefore, I despise myself (for what I have spoken) and repent in dust and ashes". *slp*

The playwright, Archibald MacLeish, has employed this <sup>superb</sup> parable of Job for the plot of his play, "J.B.". He has given it a



modern dress and a contemporary setting. This is a legitimate undertaking, for the meaning of suffering and ~~the providence of God~~ is a timeless theme, and there have never been and there can never be <sup>the</sup> complete answers to eternal problems. The play J.B. has imagination, deep earnestness, poetic flashes of great insight and all the pathos of the suffering ~~Job of old.~~ <sup>perhaps too savagely particularized</sup> It is beautifully staged. <sup>Perhaps the J.B.'s misfortunes suffer from an excess of harrowing details, which the greater artistry of the Book Job - avoided.</sup> J.B. is a modern, successful, self-confident American business man, a religious man, who has a loving wife and family. A series of tragedies, similar to those of Job, overtake them. His children are killed in war, in accidents, in foul rape and murder. He loses his fortune and is broken by disease. His wife finally deserts him because he will not curse God for the terrible misfortunes which He had visited upon them.

The three friends who come to pay <sup>him</sup> ~~a~~ condolence call ~~on him~~ are "since each generation has its new comforters" - a psychoanalyst, a <sup>h</sup>leftist sociologist and a religious fundamentalist. Their attempts, slyly travestied, to explain the ~~meaning~~



~~and~~ reason for human suffering, are perhaps the best intellectual tid-bits of the play. J.B. rejects their arguments. Two broken-down actors, selling pop-corn and balloons in the circus tent where the play is enacted, and who from time to time put on the masks of Satan and God, identify and comment on the action of the play as it goes along to heighten its tension. At decisive moments, the voice of God, Himself, is heard out of the void speaking the words which the Bible attributes to Him. There is introduced also something resembling a Greek chorus, composed of slatternly women of dubious character, whose function in the play is not quite clear, *just as the business with the masks - also a Greek theatrical device - is also not clear.*

On reading the play and later on on viewing it on the stage, I could not escape the impression that modern man has not advanced much beyond the man of ancient times in understanding man's relation to God or God's way in the world. In fact, MacLeish throws in the sponge in the second act. Up to that time he had been moving confidently *along* in the footsteps of his ancient model, poignantly restating the problem - the innocent suffering ~~ing~~ *er* and the ~~un~~ *yn* approachable God. But when you look for MacLeish's own solution - you are keenly disappointed. You



feel let down. The play seems to fall apart ~~towards the end of the play~~ after J.B. acknowledges his littleness before God. ~~for~~ What follows is simply a complete non-sequitur - a volte face. It does not flow logically from what went before.

MacLeish <sup>offers</sup> ~~has~~ no solution except to veer away from the problem altogether, and ~~to~~ confront human suffering as a non-religious, secular existentialist would face it. But,

of course, <sup>if</sup> there is no God, who concerns Himself with man, <sup>WRHS</sup> There is no problem of God's justice. But that <sup>problem</sup> is the very theme

and <sup>substance</sup> ~~the purpose~~ of the religious debate which is Job. In Job, God remains central at all times <sup>both</sup> to the problem and its solution. In "J.B.", God is deftly, almost

imperceptibly whisked away, towards the end of the play, and thereafter, <sup>a non-religious</sup> humanism takes over, <sup>seemingly to insure</sup> ~~and there is~~ clear sailing. <sup>into a safe harbor.</sup> J.B. re-

covers from his leprosy, and in spite of all that had happened to him and his family, assures us that he is now willing to begin life all over again. ~~Life begins when you know it to be a tragedy.~~ He becomes the symbol of the undefeated man. His wife,



Sarah, who had deserted him, because he would not curse God, now returns to him, because Job has finally understood that there is no justice in the world - only love. She must be referring, of course, <sup>to human</sup> not to divine justice, for if the killing of her children was not divine justice, it certainly was not divine love. But if there is no possibility on earth even of human justice, what then is the meaning of all man's striving to build the just society? And if men can never be just to one another, how can they ever come to love one another?

¶ The contrast between justice and love, whether human or divine, is nowhere raised in the Book of Job. In J.B. it constitutes the very climax of the play, but <sup>it</sup> is altogether unrelated to all that preceded. I am afraid that Mr. MacLeish could not resist his early Church training where the now discredited antithesis between O.T. justice and N.T. love was made much of. The problem of Job, however, was not whether men should love one another or be just to one another, but whether God is just and loving.

Conceivably one could write a secular, non-religious play on the theme how best



man can come to terms with misfortune. It is doubtful whether the climax of such a play would be <sup>any</sup> more comforting than Job's, to parents whose hearts had been torn by the tragic loss of all their children, and <sup>who</sup> ~~were~~ themselves <sup>were</sup> broken in fortune and health. And one wonders whether, ~~they~~, after listening to declamatory rhetoric about "homo invictus", "my head is bloody but unbowed. I am master of my fate, I am captain of my soul", <sup>they</sup> would not be inclined to cry out <sup>with</sup> ~~like~~ Job: "I have heard many such things before; miserable





comforters are you all, when will all such windy words have an end?"

But such a play could be written; in fact more than one has been written. But Archibald MacLeish has lashed his play on to the Book of Job and would have you believe that it is written true to its spirit, ~~while~~ <sup>in spite of the fact that he has, rather high-handedly,</sup> ~~at the same time he forcibly converts~~ an ancient religious classic, whose alpha and omega is God, <sup>into</sup> ~~with~~ a secularist tract, whose hero rises from the ashes, heals himself and announces that he is going to accept life again, "start over, get new children, face the same risks, the same hazards" - because he is a man!

MacLeish wrote, in explanation of his play, "that he derived it all from the story of Job itself, from the end of the book - a part of the myth that the theologians, for obvious reasons, neglect or disparage. And what excited me about the end was something that is obviously there but is omitted from the Biblical account - Job's action. In the Bible God gives Job back everything... but God's giving implies Job's acceptance. And it was that acceptance that haunted my mind... That is as pure and naked affirmation



of the fundamental human belief in life in spite of life, the fundamental human love of life as life, and in spite of all the miseries of life - as I have ever found. It is the more moving because the theologians have never noticed it. Or, more precisely, cannot notice it being theologians. The Book of Job is a human triumph - Job picking up his life again."

To all of which one is inclined to say : it is true that all this was omitted from the Biblical account for obvious reasons, for obviously it was <sup>not intended to be</sup> ~~never~~ there. The theologians never noticed it, because it was never there to be noticed. The end of the <sup>is arguable</sup> ~~Book~~ of Job - how God restored Job's fortune as a reward for his faith and steadfastness - was never ignored by theologians - except by some modernists who, attracted to this superb classic, sought to make it <sup>present</sup> ~~offer~~ their own views and attempted <sup>arbitrarily</sup> to fit their own tailored <sup>notions</sup> ~~garment~~ on the book.

The love of life and the clinging to life, is also shared by animals, and possessed no special moral virtue or significance.



At the end, Job of the Bible goes on his way confidently with God, confirmed in his integrity, and trusting in the justice and goodness of the Creator of the universe, though **H**is ways are not always clear to him.

At the end, J.B. of Archibald MacLeish, goes on ~~graspingly~~ <sup>graspingly</sup> without God, relying on his own strength in an hostile and darkened world:

"Blow on the coal of the heart.  
The candles in churches are out.  
The lights have gone out in the sky.  
Blow on the coal of the heart  
And we'll see by and by....."

At the end, Job humbles himself before God, while preserving his own spiritual dignity. He trusts God, and leaves the management of the world to Him. Job accepts the world and, abandoning all futile questioning and rebelliousness, ~~he~~ carries on in faith, prepared to do whatever God assigns to him.

At the end, J.B. refuses to humble himself. He still remains resentful of the hard, unheeding world about him for which



God has no concern whatever. Defiantly he will pick up his life again, even if it means going through the same series of disasters as before. For he will now have the love of Sarah, his wife with him, Sarah who first abandoned and then returned to him.

But Sarah and her love were with him before the disasters overtook him. Why did they not suffice then? And will love suffice when the next horrors sweep over them?

I rather think that J.B. will have a sadder road to travel alone than Job of old with his God. If the play J.B. sends people back to read the Book of Job, Archibald MacLeish may turn out to be, however unwittingly, a true benefactor of the <sup>growing</sup> religious faith of the Biblical author of Job.

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver  
Sunday Morning  
December 20, 1959





## OF TIME AND PURPOSE—FROM THE RABBIS' DESK

Each year at this time my desk is deluged with calendars. Everybody, it seems, is concerned that I schedule my life, and eager that I carry out this schedule under the watchful eye of a company's trademark.

A culture reveals itself in small details. Our concern with dates and diaries is unique to the West. Time is for us our greatest asset and its swift passage our greatest frustration, while in Asia the calendar business is a poor one indeed.

Recently, I was particularly taken by a magnificent calendar which came to me from Israel. It was developed by one of Israel's new paper making industries. It features an amazingly accurate reproduction of twelve leaves from a medieval hand-illuminated holiday prayer book; and showing a consideration and a taste almost always missing in its American counterparts, each leaf is detachable from its calendar. The twelve sheaves can be bound and kept permanently without advertisement in a specially prepared folder. This folder includes an excellent explanation.

Time is important. Western culture has the right attitude. We have only so many hours and so many days to develop our talents, to build our families, to contribute to our communities and to help establish peace in our world. A lack of concern with time's swift passage is not the mark of superior wisdom, but of long-standing futility. It is a mark of a society in which the powers of special interests are so entrenched that change seems hopeless.

**SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE**  
**December 20, 1959**  
**10:30 o'clock**

**RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER**  
**will speak on**  
**J. B. — THE PLAY, AND THE BOOK OF JOB**

**FRIDAY EVENING SERVICES**  
**5:30 to 6:10**

**SATURDAY MORNING SERVICES**  
**11:00 to 12:00**

I especially like the idea of a calendar being appended to leaves of a prayer book. One can live frenetically but meaninglessly. We can be very busy but very wasteful of our time and indescribably frivolous of our energies. A reminder that life must be spent in worthwhile things is timely indeed. It helps us to balance our lives between the conflicting claims of society and communal service, of education and private entertainment, of family living and involvement in a thousand recreations which pull us outside of our homes.

I do not know whether you received this particular calendar, but I do hope that as you add up your achievements of the past year and plan for your activities of the coming year, you will pause and measure whether you have

simply tired yourself out running in place or whether you have truly progressed.

*Daniel Jeremy Silver*

### MUSIC FOR SUNDAY

Organ	Prelude in G minor	Bach
	Echo Bells	Brewer
	Meditation	d'Evry
Opening Psalm 96, Sheeru Ladonoy		Jacobi
Bor'chu (Congregational)		Sulzer
Sh'ma-Boruch (Congregational)		Traditional
Mi Chomocho (Congregational)		Sulzer
Kedusha		Spicker
Silent Devotion—May the Worlds		Schlesinger
	Miss Wischmeyer	
Before the Address:		
Toras Adonoy—Etz Chayim		Spicker
	Mr. Hakola and Choir	
Olelu-Vaanachnu		Goldstein



## The Temple

### Rabbis:

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

Associate Rabbi

Director of Religious Education

MILTON MATZ

Assistant Rabbi

### Staff:

MILDRED B. EISENBERG

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LEO W. NEUMARK ..... *Vice-President*

ELI GOLDSTON ..... *Vice-President*

MAX EISNER ..... *Treasurer*

EDWARD D. FRIEDMAN ..... *Associate Treasurer*

## THIS SUNDAY

Mr. and Mrs. Albert J. Goodman will be hosts for the Social Hall coffee hour preceding the worship service. Mrs. Goodman is President of The Temple Women's Association. During the coffee hour, merchandise of the Tuesday Activities groups of The Temple Women's Association will be displayed and sold by members of the Sisterhood.

Following the worship service, the congregation will meet in the Social Hall for luncheon, and then attend the special congregational meeting in Luntz Auditorium.

The flowers which will grace the pulpit are contributed in memory of wife and mother, Mrs. Ida Frankel, by Mr. Max Frankel, Dr. and Mrs. Carl Friedman, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Frankel, Mr. and Mrs. Byron Frankel and Mr. and Mrs. Donald Frankel.

## In Memoriam

The Temple notes with deep sorrow the passing of

JULIUS POLLOCK

JANET B. ROSENBAUM

and extends heartfelt sympathy to the members of their bereaved families.

## JOSEPH A. GUGGENHEIM

The Temple notes with sorrow the passing of a loyal member and honored friend, Mr. Joseph A. Guggenheim. Mr. Guggenheim was a vital factor in Temple life for almost three quarters of a century. He was a trustee of The Temple, a member of many important committees, and an Honorary Trustee for life. Mr. Guggenheim's unique area of service was as Chief of our Ushers Corps. He served in this capacity for a half century and more. In that time, until the very week of his death, he rarely if ever missed a service or Temple function. His is a record of lay ministry unparalleled at our Temple or elsewhere in American Jewry. Mr. Guggenheim will be sorely missed. The members, Board, Officers and Rabbis of The Temple extend to his family their deepest sympathy.

## THE TEMPLE

## CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Following the Service on Sunday morning,

December 20, 1959, at 12:15 p.m.,

a special meeting of Tifereth Israel Congregation

will take place in the

Social Hall of The Temple



At this meeting, among other items of business, the congregation will act upon the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted by the Board of Trustees, on November 10, 1959:

"RESOLVED that effective with the date of adoption of this resolution the title of Daniel Jeremy Silver as Associate Rabbi be and is hereby superseded by the title Rabbi."

A Buffet Luncheon will be served

## THE TEMPLE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

The following is a schedule for midweek classes during the winter vacation 1959 60:

Tuesday, December 22 — 9:30 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. TUESDAY Pre-Confirmation Classes and Special Hebrew Classes

Wednesday, December 23 — 9:30 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. WEDNESDAY Pre-Confirmation Classes

Thursday, December 24 — 9:30 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. THURSDAY Confirmation and Special Hebrew Classes and FRIDAY Confirmation Classes

The above scheduled classes will count for two sessions. Limousine service will be available as usual. There will be no classes on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, December 29, 30, 31, January 1.



## ANNUAL COLLEGIATE HOMECOMING

The Temple annually holds a special Sunday morning service to welcome the members of The Temple family who are presently attending college. The young people, home on mid-winter vacations, attend and participate in the worship service and then meet for luncheon in the Social Hall.

The Homecoming will be held on Sunday morning, December 27th, 1959, beginning with the regular Sunday morning worship service in The Temple at 10:30. Participating in the reading of the service will be Carol Goldman, University of Michigan; Lawrence Kahn, Yale University; Isabel Kravitz, Brandeis University; Linda Levenson, Oberlin College; and Richard Sampliner, Yale University.

The sponsoring committee, who will also act as ushers for the worship service and as hosts and hostesses for the luncheon, is comprised of: Norman Amster, University of Michigan; Eugene Appel, Cornell University; Barbara Cagen, Miami University; Nancy Eisenberg, Ohio State University; Stephen Evans, University of Wisconsin; Bruce Friedman, Williams College; Stanton Friedman, University of Pennsylvania Dental School; Michael Glueck, Cornell University; Betsey Gould; James Kendis, Western Reserve University; Richard Kotz, University of Pennsylvania; Melinda Luntz, Bard College; Carolyn Neumark, Barnard College; Myra Newman, Mt. Holyoke College; Marilyn Rosenberg; David Rosin, Oberlin College; Alan Samuels, University of Michigan; Martin Schock, Cornell University; Paul Schultz, Miami University; Sandra Steuer, Ohio State University; Elaine Task, Ohio University; Roger Conhaim, Cornell University; and Loren Roth, Cornell University.



### CHANUKAH IN THE SCHOOL

Chanukah candles will be distributed to the students of the Religious School on Saturday, December 19th and Sunday, December 20th. This gift is made possible through the generosity of the Sophie Auerbach Scholarship Fund. As in the past, children newly enrolled in our school will receive beautiful brass Menorahs, a gift from The Temple Men's Club. The newly enrolled children also receive a booklet, "Happy Chanukah", which was written and prepared by The Temple Religious School Committee. Children in the first grade are given a copy of "Happy Chanuko" by Jane Bearman.

On Saturday, December 26th, Junior

High students will celebrate Chanukah with a movie and a special service.

A Chanukah pageant, "The Dreidloch That Wouldn't Spin", will be presented to the Elementary school on Sunday, December 27th. Two performances will be given, at 10:00 A.M. and at 10:45 A.M. The cast includes students of the third and fourth grades and the Junior Choir.

Chanukah treats will complete the celebration for the children on Sunday morning. Mrs. Norman Copeland and Mrs. Samuel Weiner, Chairmen of the Holiday Committee, are planning the classroom parties.

### MR. AND MRS. CLUB CHILDREN'S CHANUKAH PARTY

The Mr. and Mrs. Club will give a Chanukah party for the children of The Temple family on December 30th, from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M. A program of special interest to the children will be held in Luntz Auditorium. Featured will be Captain Penny, television personality, who will talk to all the children. Refreshments will be served in the Social Hall, and favors will be distributed.

Bill and Rita Mack, Chairman, and Vice-Chairman Alan and Isralea Efroymsen and Marshall and Sue Nurenberg are in charge of arrangements for the party. Heading the Food Committee are Mike and Lucille Eckstein. Decorations are planned by Ed and Lois Bruder; and Publicity by Irv and Marti Weiss.



Published weekly except during the summer vacation.  
Fifty cents per annum.

**The Temple Bulletin**  
THE TEMPLE  
EAST 105th ST. & SILVER PARK  
CLEVELAND 6, OHIO  
SW 1-7755

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#### DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sunday, December 20 — Sunday Morning Services  
Congregational Meeting
- Tuesday, December 22 — Temple Women's Association Tuesday Activities
- Friday, December 25 — Light First Chanukah Candle
- Sunday, December 27 — Annual Collegiate Homecoming Sunday  
Morning Service and Luncheon

**THE TEMPLE LIBRARY** is open Tuesday through Friday 9:00 A.M. to 5:30 P.M., Saturday and Sunday 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 noon.

**THE TEMPLE MUSEUM** will be open at the close of Sunday morning services in addition to all occasions of organization meetings. Arrangements to view the Museum by special appointment may be made through The Temple Office.

**THE ISRAELI GIFT SHOP** is open during all Tuesday Activities sessions. Selections can be made at all times from the display case in the lobby through The Temple Office.