A Proposal for the Restoration of Job 34:26-30 in Elihu’s Second Speech

ARON PINKER (MARYLAND, USA)

ABSTRACT

Commentators found the unit Job 34:26-30, in Elihu’s second speech, difficult to interpret and translate because of its thematic incoherence, abrupt style, and use of ambiguous terms. It has been generally assumed that the unit underwent some corruption in the historical transmission process. This paper attempts to restore a sound thematic flow to vv. 26-30 using standard text-critical methods. It is being shown that relatively few minor text-critical emendations allow to obtain a simple and coherent text, having a typical (for the Book of Job) 3:3 meter. The resolution of the difficulties in the unit is premised on the notion that the unit is focused on potentates that have lost their moral compass and God’s reaction to their deeds. From this perspective, vv. 26-30 fit contextually the larger unit in which it is embedded (vv. 16-30), which deals with God’s righteous management of nations and people. Job’s personal problem is addressed only indirectly. Job can deduce from Elihu’s words that: his punishments indicate that he sinned; he is ignorant of God’s ways and abandoned moral behavior; he has caused anguish to the destitute, which reached heaven; he cannot compel God to confront him; and, God works in mysterious ways. Elihu’s message to Job is hard hitting, but it is not devoid of hope.

KEYWORDS: Job 34:26-30; Elihu’s second speech; public punishment; Deus absconditus; divine sovereignty; timeliness

A INTRODUCTION

In vv. 26-30 Elihu states:

He strikes them down with the wicked
Where people can see,
Because they have been disloyal to Him
And have not understood any of His ways;
Thus He lets the cry of the poor come before Him;
He listens to the cry of the needy.
When He is silent, who can condemn?
If He hides His face, who will see Him,

When He is silent, who can condemn?
If He hides His face, who will see Him,
Be it nation or man?
  The impious man rule no more
  Nor do those who ensnare the people.

Even a casual reading of this well-known NJPS translation strikes one as being a collection of unrelated statements. The translation seems to assume that Elihu describes in vv. 26-30 what God did to the mighty (כַּבִּירִים), which were mentioned in v. 24, and where the word תַּחַת has also been used (thus, intertextuality would imply thematic similarity). However, this would mean that the כַּבִּירִים were not necessarily wicked: besides, תַּחַת nowhere else means with the, and סְפָקָם is never associated with the down position in the Tanakh.¹ These are some of the difficulties in the first short verse. One might add that in the following verse the awkward אֲשֶׁר עַל־כֵּן is used for because, when כִּי would have sufficed. In the next verse MT has no word corresponding to Thus He lets.

If Elihu wants to say that God can do whatever he wants, as is generally understood, then his argument would be strengthened by using opposites. However, silent (יַשְׁקִט) and condemn (יַרְשִׁע) are not opposites. Also, be it does not correspond to Hebrew וְעַל. Finally, it is difficult to anchor the translation of the last verse in the MT.

The NJPS interpretation of v. 29 also raises some troubling thoughts. Andersen observes,

… verses 29f. are not satisfactory, and some have found in them a darker and more disturbing thought. Even if God is quite inactive, leaving evil unchecked, who can condemn? If He chooses to hide His face, who can make Him show it? … The prophets were able to entertain the thought that the Assyrian was the rod of God's anger (e.g. Isa 10:5), and Habakkuk could think the same about the Babylonians. But they always added that these nations, despite such use by God, were fully accountable for their evil deeds, and would in due time pay for them. But this involves a historical stage, group guilt, and long spans of time, which are not used in the book of Job. This keeps the problem focused on the apparent injustice of God's treatment of one man, Job.²

Indeed, one might rightly question the relevance of Elihu’s words to the Jobian context.

¹ BDB, 1065a-1066a. The authors (1065b) note: “Peculiarly Jb 34:26 (si vera l.) = as if they were, like; but text very dubious.”
Driver and Gray believe that v. 26 in the MT is corrupt. They find that in v. 28 “the consequence being represented as the intention.” In their opinion vv. 29-33 are

as a whole unintelligible, the details being, if not unintelligible, then (as in 29) very ambiguous, and the ambiguities, in face of the extreme uncertainty of the remainder, insoluble. In addition to its unintelligibility, the formlessness of much (29c, 30, 31, 35) of the passage points to considerable corruption of the text.

Pope says that vv. 28-33 “are replete with difficulty. LXX originally omitted them entirely. Modern critics have emended freely, with imagination and originality.”

The purpose of this paper is to restore vv. 26-30 into a coherent unit using standard text-critical methods. It will be shown that such a restoration is possible making only minimal violence to the consonantal text. The restored text has a typical (for the Book of Job) 3:3 rhythmic structure, while securing an unforced sense. Elihu indirectly accuses Job of being wicked, but raises the hope that if Job has a valid case then it has been heard and would be in due time resolved.

The following section (B) presents a detailed analysis of a representative sample of exegetical studies in which the text under consideration has been addressed. In it, an attempt has been made to capture the challenges that the text presents, reveal the spectrum of views that exist, and identify the shortcomings of the exegetical efforts. In a first reading, the details, semantic technicalities, and range of sources might be somewhat distracting. A reader that is eager to become engaged quickly in the proposed solution would be well-advised to skip section B, continue with section C, and in a second reading return to section B.

B ANALYSIS

The translations/interpretations of the ancient versions and modern exegetes will now be considered. This analysis will illustrate the difficulties that the translators and exegetes faced, how they tried to overcome them, and the weaknesses of these efforts.

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1 Ancient Versions

Tov observes that: “The differences between the Septuagint (LXX) and the traditional Hebrew (Masoretic Text) stem from the Greek translator’s free approach: the LXX rephrases and frequently streamlines ideas and verses in the MT, probably in response to the often verbose and repetitive Hebrew text.”

For vv. 26-30 the Septuagint has

26 And he quite destroys the ungodly, for they are seen before him.
27 Because they turned aside from the law of God, and did not regard his ordinances.
28 So as to bring before him the cry of the needy; for he will hear the cry of the poor.
29 And he will give quiet, and who will condemn? And he will hide his face, and who shall see him?
30 causing a hypocrite to be king, because of the waywardness of the people. (Ἕσβεσε δὲ ἁσεβεῖς, ὦρατοὶ δὲ ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ. Ὑπέκλην τὸν νόμον Θεοῦ, δικαιώματα δὲ αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐπέγνωσαν, τὸν ἐπαγαγένε 
 ἐπὶ αὐτὸν κραυγὴν πενήτον, καὶ κραυγὴν πτωχῶν εἰσακούσεται. Καὶ αὐτὸς ἴσχυν παρέξει, καὶ τίς καταδικάσεται; καὶ χρύσει πρόσωπον, καὶ τίς ὄψεται αὐτόν; καὶ κατὰ ἔθνος καὶ κατὰ ἀνθρώπον ὁμοῦ. 
Βασιλέως ἀνθρώπον ὑποκριτῆν ἀπὸ δυσκολίας λαοῦ).”

The Septuagint’s translation does not render תחת, in MT of v. 26, but has דירש = “and he quite destroys” (Ἕσβεσε δὲ), under the influence of וידכד ל in the preceding verse. It also attaches ספקם to the second colon and paraphrases רואים במקום ספקם by “for they are seen before him” (Ὅτι ἐξέκλει 
ἐκ νόμου Θεοῦ, δικαιώματα δὲ αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐπέγνωσαν, τὸν ἐπαγαγένε ἐπὶ αὐτὸν κραυγὴν πενήτον, καὶ κραυγὴν πτωχῶν εἰσακούσεται. Καὶ αὐτὸς ἴσχυν παρέξει, καὶ τίς καταδικάσεται; καὶ χρύσει πρόσωπον, καὶ τίς ὄψεται αὐτόν; καὶ κατὰ ἔθνος καὶ κατὰ ἀνθρώπον ὁμοῦ. 
Βασιλέως ἀνθρώπον ὑποκριτῆν ἀπὸ δυσκολίας λαοῦ).”

7 Eduard Dhorme, A Commentary of the Book of Job (London: Nelson, 1967), 521. Dhorme notes that “It is in error that Colbertinus and Jerome mark with asterisk vv. 26-27, which in fact exist in Sahidic and are not marked with asterisk in Syro-hexapla. The text of Theodotion does not begin before v. 28.”
8 Lancelot C. L. Brenton, The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English (London: Samuel Bagster, 1851; repr. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), 691. This translation is based on the Vaticanus version of the Septuagint.
9 Georg Beer, Der Text des Buches Hiob (Marburg: N.G. Elwert, 1897), 218.
10 Dhorme, Job, 521. Dhorme notes that Codex Alexandrinus has καὶ ὦρατοι ἐγένοντο ἐναντίον τῶν ἔχθρῶν; where, σήμερον = ὦρατοι and μόνον = ἔχθρῶν.
In this text יְלוּי = עִלי "before him" (ἐπ’, αὐτῶν). In the next verse (also from Theodotion) אוֹחֵי = אֵחֵי “And he will give quiet” (Καὶ αὐτὸς ἡσυχίαν παρέξειν). Finally, in v. 30 Theodotion apparently reads מָמלִיך = "causing to be king" (βασιλεύων), takes חֵנֶף = "hypocrite" (ὑποκριτὴν ὑποκριτὴν), and has for מִמקָשֵׁי = "because of the waywardness of the people" (ἀπὸ δυσκολίας λαοῦ).

Targum’s literal translation reads:

26 Instead the wicked he stroke them in a place that can be seen.
27 For therefore they turned from following him and all his ways they did not understand. 28 To bring upon him the outcry of the poor and the cry of the destitute he will hear. 29 And he will quiet and who will condemn him, and will remove his presence and who will see him, and he visits the guilt of both nation and individual. 30 Appoints king a sycophant, because of snares among the people.

It takes אשר על־כן = "for therefore" (דמטול;היכנא; סרו = "they turned" ( filmer hobba מכתהיה אל אשכלה; לאיתאה עלי קבלת משכנא עניין שמע; הווא ישיעיモノ ויהיاسل פנינהモノ ויסעהו חסנה על עמה על בר; נס חודה; ממליך = "appoints" (ממני;)

adds "visits a guilt upon" (מסערח חובא;)

and, עם ממקשי = "because of snares among the people" (תקליא די בעמא."

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11 Dhorme, Job, 522-523. Verses 28-33 were omitted from the Septuagint till the time of Origen, and do not occur in the Sahidic version. Tov (Job 34, 114) conjectures that “The Greek translator removed these verses because the same ideas are presented in the preceding chapter (Job 33:14-33).”
12 The confusion is well-attested in the Tanakh. For instance, 1 Sam 4:21 instead of עָלְיוּ (twice); 2 Kgs 8:3; Isa 34:14 instead of עָלְיוּ; Jer 21:9 instead of עָלְיוֹ; Jer 50:35-38 instead of עָלְיוּ; 1 Sam 20:24 (Keith) and אָל (Qere); Isa 29:6 instead of אָל; Job 34:15; Isa 65:7 instead of עָלָיו (K) but אָל (Q); Ezek 9:5 instead of עָלָיו (K) and אָל (Q); Ezek 39:28 instead of עָלָיו (K) but אָל (Q); cf. Tanakh Koren [Jerusalem: Koren, 1983], 13 end; Lev 16:14 MT has עָלְיוּ but Samaritan has אָל instead of אָל in 2 Sam 19:43, עָלְיוּ instead of עָלְיוּ in Josh 2:7; אָל instead of עָלָיו in Josh 5:14; in Job 19:12 אָל instead of עָלָיו.
13 Symmachus has αὐτοῦ δὲ ήρξαν οἱ διδόντος.
14 Pope, Job, 259. Pope notes: “The Qumran Targum reads [vyst]ר' נ'ח'ה 'מ' ח'ו 'ח' 'ח'ה 'ח' [and should he hide]j his face, who could make him return.’ The puzzling reading reflects a Hebrew verb yēšīḥennu instead of MT yēšīrēnnu.”
Peshitta paraphrases vv. 26-30, rendering:

26 Their works shall be crushed under the weight of their wickedness in a land of terror; 27 Because they turned aside from following him, and did not consider any of his ways. 28 The prayer of the poor comes to him, and he hears the cry of the afflicted. 29 When he forgives, who can then condemn? And when he turns his face away, who can forgive the people, or mankind altogether? 30 He sees to it that an impious and wicked man shall not reign over the people.

It apparently expands the text and attaches וידכאו (“shall be crushed”) of v. 25; takes רִשְׁעָם instead of רְשָׁעִים; takes מקום = “land”; connectsՐֶשָׁעִים with אָוֶה (“terror”); takes אשר על־כן = “because”; renders both ישקט and ישורנו by “forgives” (שַׂבָּק); and, takes ממקשי = “shall not reign over the people.”

Vulgate translates:

26 He hath struck them, as being wicked, in open sight. 27 Who as it were on purpose have revolted from him, and would not understand all his ways: 28 So that they caused the cry of the needy to come to him, and he heard the voice of the poor. 29 For when he grants peace, who is there that can condemn? When he hides his countenance, who is there that can behold him, whether it regard nations, or all men? 30 Who makes a man that is a hypocrite to reign for the sins of the people? (quasi impios percussit eos in loco videntium. qui quasi de industria recesserunt ab eo et omnes vias eius intellegere nohuerunt. ut pervenire facerent ad eum clamorem egeni et audiret vocem pauperum. ipso enim concedente pacem quis est qui condemnet ex quo absconderit vultum quis est qui contemptuler eum et super gentem et super omnes homines. qui regnare facit hominem hypocritamin propter peccata populi). 15

It takesתחת = “as, for” (quasi); עליה = רעש = “being wicked” (impios); עליה = אל “to him” (ad eum); הוא ישק = “for when he grants peace” (ipso enim concedente pacem); והוא ישתר פנים = “When he hides his countenance” (ex quo absconderit vultum); וממלך = “who makes a man who is” (qui regnare facit); היא = “hypocrite”; and, ממקשי = “for the sins of the people” (propter peccata populi).

The variations between the Versions do not indicate that they translated from a different Vorlage than the MT. However, it is obvious that they struggled with the thematic coherence of the text before them.

2 Modern Exegesis

Modern exegetes assumed that in vv. 26-30 Elihu describes God’s position with regard to a country’s rulers. It is God who punishes these wicked publicly (v. 26), for deviating from the Godly path (v. 27), thereby causing anguish to the poor and destitute (v. 28). God’s reaction to this behavior might be inaction or discontinuation of his grace to a collective or individual (v. 29), even the intentional appointment of an amoral individual as king (v. 30). However, most exegetes encountered difficulties in trying to reconcile between their particular perceptions of Elihu’s argument and the MT.

Clines’ relatively recent commentary on Job renders vv. 26-30 thus:

(26) He strikes them down for their wickedness, where all can see,
(27) because they turned aside from following him, and had no regard for his ways, (28) so that they caused the cry of the poor to come to him—and he heard the cry of the afflicted. (29) If he is quiet, who can condemn him? If he hides his face, who can see him? Yet he rules over nations and individuals alike, (30) so that the godless would not govern, and a people should not be ensnared.16

Clines’ translation, used as a current exegetical reference, assumes that:

• תחת = “down.” However, the term means in the Tanakh “under, beneath, in place of, instead of,” but not “down”; for which the term מטהת is used. Some commentators follow the Targum taking תחת = “place.”17 For instance, in Hirzel’s opinion: “תחת ist Subst. und Accus. des Ortes, wie v. 24, 36:16, 40:12, Jes 5:8.”18 Ehrlich says: “תחת heist hier nicht ‘unter,’ sondern, … ‘wie’ eigentlich ‘als’ wie dies zur Bezeichnung des Prädikatsnomens gebraucht wird.”19 Similarly, Dhorme explains: “The word ‘תחת’ under’ also means ‘in the place of’ and derivatively, ‘in guise of,’ ‘like.’”20 In Budde’s view, “ الديمقراطية nicht ‘unter, zwischen,’ noch ‘an der Stätte,’ sondern nur ‘anstatt’ = ‘als wenn

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17 Ludwig F. Melsheimer, *Das Buch Hiob* (Mannheim: Schwan, 1823), 70. Melsheimer renders v. 26: “Um Orte, wo einst Frevler wohnten, Shlägt, wer sie sah, die Händ’ zusammen.” This is more of a paraphrase than a correct translation.

sie Frevler wären,’ also etwa = כְּ. Hahn understands being multifaceted: “an der Stelle der Frevler, wie Frevler gestraft werden, und also als solche und wie solche.” Hitzig says: “auch kann התוּחָה nicht für התוּחָה gesagt sein. … Also denken wir lieber an Stelle, Standort (36:16, Richt 7:21, Jes 5:8).”

Delitzsch explains: “ нельзя cannot signify: on the place of the evil-doers, i.e. in the place where evil-doers are punished (Hirzel, Hahn, and others), for התוּחָה (תַּחַת) only has this signification with the suffix (Hab 3:16); but not otherwise than: in the evil-doers’ stead, taking them and treating them as such, as Jerome has correctly translated: quasi impios (comp. Isa 10:4, Jerome, cum interfectis).” Reichert says: “The preposition is used here in the unusual sense of ‘as if they were.’ Although they are men of high station, they meet the fate of the common criminal.” Driver and Gray note that these interpretations of התוּחָה “would imply that the הבירים were themselves not wicked: besides, התוּחָה nowhere else means like. The text must thus be at fault.”

Budde notes that:

Bickell beseitigte die Schwierigkeit, indem er התוּחָה punktierte und als Subjekt hinter 이것은 ergänzte: »sein Grimm zerbricht (Jes 9:3) die Frevler«. Damit wurdeuszukommen zu erwünschter Verlängerung von b frei. So für b auch Bickel.

This approach is adopted by Driver and Gray, who render v. 26: “[His wrath] shatters the wicked, He slaps them in the place of (all) beholders.”

Umbreit translates התוּחָה קרה by “Darum, das Frevel sie begingen.” However, the meaning “darum” for התוּחָה is not attested in

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21 Karl Budde, Das Buch Hiob übersetzt und erklärt (Göttingen: Vandenhoep & Ruprecht, 1896), 206.
22 Heinrich A. Hahn, Commentar ueber das Buch Hiob (Berlin: J. A. Wohlgemuth, 1850), 274.
23 Ferdinand Hitzig, Das Buch Hiob übersetzt und erklärt (Leipzig: C. F. Winter, 1874), 254. He renders v. 26a: “An die Platz der Verbrecher schmeist er sie.”
26 Driver and Gray, Job 2, 260.
27 Budd, Hiob, 206.
28 Driver and Gray, Job 1, 300.
29 Friedrich W. C. Umbreit, Das Buch Hiob (Heidelberg: Mohr, 1824), 326. He means “for being wicked.”
the Tanakh. In Schlottmann’s opinion תחת רשעים = “mit den Ruchlosen,” literally “unter den Ruchlosen”; תחת has the same sense as in Isa 10:4. Pope suggests that the preposition תחת might mean here among,” as in 40:12. This sense for תחת is not attested in the Tanakh, and even Pope does not use it in v. 40:12. Gordis takes תחת = “in recompense” (Gen 44:4; 1 Sam 25:21; 2 Sam 16:12; Ps 38:21; 109:4). Hakham has תחת = “in the place of the wicked, the actual place” (יסוס רעים, ממש תחת). Arnheim has strangely “die Stellvertreter der Freveler” for תחת רשעים. He reads אשר תחת instead of תחת; apparently moving אשר from v. 27 to the beginning of v. 26. Beer connects the last word of v. 25 to the following verse but reads Ди舯ב derecho, instead of תחת. He says: “Vielleicht ist v. 26a so zu lesen (…) רשעים תחת.Smitten von ihren platz gestossen.” Habel renders תחת by “because,” Kissane reads חיתת instead of MT תחת.

- תחת רשעים = “for their wickedness.” The MT does not have anything that corresponds to “for” in the translation. This addition turns v. 26a into a statement of cause. The translation also revocalizes and emends MT תחת “wicked,” reading רשעים תחת instead of תחת רשעים is “hardly defensible.” He opts for the read-

30 Konstantin Schlottmann, Das Buch Hiob (Berlin: Weigand and Grieben, 1851), 429.
35 Beer, Der Text, 219. Beer notes that Ken. 384 has התנה.
37 Edward J. Kissane, The Book of Job (Dublin: Browne & Nolan, 1939), 230. He inserts from v. 27a at the beginning of v. 26a reading עליכם תחת רשעים “Therefore has he smitten the wicked.”
Indeed, this emendation has been adopted by many. However, Dillman argues that in the Tanakh תושעים is always the plural of רשע and not of רשע. Moreover, the term is not attested in the Tanakh, though possible. Duhm reads instead of v. 26a in the MT: "Sie warden zermalt unter Trümmern." Hakham assumes that the reading תושעים "as the wicked" is implied, and v. 26a refers to the הבירים (v. 24a).

- ספקם = “he strikes them.” The verb means “slap, clap” and by extension “chastise”; it does not indicate a forceful act. Gaab argued that:

etwas bedenklich und nicht erwiesen ist, dass ספק percutere überhaupt bedeuten könne; so schlag ich vor, ספק zu lesen von ספק, das sich nach dem Syrischen: evacuation, vacuitas geben läßt. Delitzsch explains that: " afsq, complodere ['to clap'], and then icru resonante percutere ['to smack'], as the likewise cognate afsq signifies first to box the ear (as afsq = afsq), then so to strike that it smacks.

Hitzig says: “ספק, hier transitive (s. zu V. 37) wie Jer 48:26 aktiv, besagt: er schlägt d. h. schleudert sie hin, dass es schallt." Tur-Sinai maintains that the root שפק, ספק has the primary meaning “to fill the hand.” He renders ספקם by “invests them.” Good takes ספקם = “jeers at them,” but fails to explain how would we know when God jeers at someone.

38 George A. Barton, Commentary on the Book of Job (New York: Macmillan, 1911), 265.
39 Cf. George R. Noyes, The Book of Job (Boston: James Monroe, 1838), 65; Barton, Job, 265; Habel, Job, 474; Gordis, Job, 391; Clines, Job 21-37; and others.
40 Dillmann, Hiob, 296. The use of the plural of רשע in Ez 21:34 is debatable.
41 Bernhard Duhm, Das Buch Hiob (Leipzig: J.C.B Mohr, 1897), 166.
42 Hakham, ז diminished, 265.
43 Johann F. Gaab, Das Buch Hiob (Tübingen: J. G. Cotta’schen, 1809), 52.
44 Delitzsch, Job 2, 257.
45 Hitzig, Hiob, 254.
46 Naphtali H. Tur-Sinai, The Book of Job (Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1967), 483. He translates v. 26 “he invests those (others) instead of the wicked, in the place of the unclean.” However, the wicked are not necessarily unclean.
47 Edwin M. Good, In Turns of Tempest: A Reading of Job with a Translation (Stanford: Stanford University, 1990), 144-145.
בִּמְקוֹמָן רֹאִים = “where all can see.” Budde finds v. 26b “ein wunderlich abschwächernder Ausdruck für ‘vor aller Welt, vor Aller Augen.’” Budde is uncertain “ob man ihn [v. 26b] nicht in seiner unverhüllten Prosa zu belassen und mit v. 25 als Glosse zu streichen hat.”

Driver and Gray agree that “The phrase seems rather weak.” Ehrlich says that 

בִּמְקוֹמָן רֹאִים has the same meaning (i.e., “like” or “as”) as תחת רעים instead of MT ראים, in parallel with רעים מימה. Ehrlich suggests that: “vgl. Hos 2:1, wohosts für ‘als gemeine Verbrecher’ zu fassen.” He reads רעים instead of MT ראים, in parallel with רעים מימה. Ehrlich suggests that: “vgl. Hos 2:1, wohosts für ‘als gemeine Verbrecher’ zu fassen.”

_good renders רואים by “those who see.”_ He comments: “I think that the word is less casual than ‘onlookers’ may suggest.”

Tur-Sinai avers that: “raim is not ‘seeing ones,’ but ‘impure ones,’ as above, 33:21.” Dhorme says: “we prefer to keep the present text and to restore to the hemistic normal proportions by placing the relative אֲשֶׁר, which overloads the beginning of v. 27 between רואים and רעים.”


The phrase does not occur anywhere else in the Tanakh, and is obviously awkward. One may wonder why the author used this phrase when he could have improved the meter by having יִשְׁרִיעַלְךָ instead. Hitzig notes that אֲשֶׁר רעים nur hier statt des Gew. יִשְׁרִיעַלְךָ (Gen 18:5, 19:8, Richt 6:22ff.) wie denn auch sonst später für eintritt. יִשְׁרִיעַלְךָ ist nicht das Pronomen, bezüglich auf die hohen Sünder: sie, die dashalb u. s. w., auch ist es nichtbegründet im Sinne von יִשְׁרִיעַלְךָ; denn deshalb u. s. w., das durch das vorgesetzte relative Bedeutung: darum, weil.

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49 Driver and Gray, Job 2, 260.

50 Ehrlich, Randglossen 6, 316-317. He says: “vgl. Hos 2:1, wohosts für steht, wenn auch in einem andern Sinne.”

51 Good, Turns, 144.

52 Tur-Sinai, Job, 483.


55 Hirzel, Hiob, 205.

56 Hahn, Commentar, 274.

57 A somewhat similar expression, יִשְׁרִיעַלְךָ, occurs in Num 10:31, Ps 45:3.
unwesentlich; in Ps 45:3 oder (V. 25) findet Umkehrung von Grund und Folge stat. 58

Tur-Sinai suggests that the phrase is equivalent to על כה, and the כה was added for emphasis. 59 However, he does not explain how his assumption could have led to the MT.

Budde observes that:

“Insofern” oder desgleichen heisst ועל כה nicht. Stellt man um על כה oder streicht man ועל כה, so lässt sich ועל כה gerundivisch fassen “indem sie bringen” und v. 27f. als Begründung der Strafe in v. 25f. 60

Schlottmann observes:

Manche nehmen das ועל כה nach chaldäischer Weise als Versetzung für על כה, aber letzteres kommt nicht vor und dagegen spricht auch shon dies, dass dadurch der schöne Zusammenhang von V. 27 und 28 zerrissen un V. 28 auf unerträgliche Weise isolirt würde. 61

Dillmann explains that

die persönliche Fassung von על כה genügt (s. V. 19), und ist kein Grund, es (Hirzel, Delitzsch, Hitzig) = כי zu nehmen; ועל כה weist auf das folgende (vgl. 20:2) und wird in … להביא erklärt. 62

Indeed, Duhm takes על כה being the original for which the variant ועל כה has been proposed and became part of the text. 63

Ewald takes על כה = “they who only therefore.” 64 Driver and Gray render this phrase by “forasmuch as.” 65 Good has for על כה “that is why,” which turns v. 27 into a rationale for being wicked and leads to a circuitous logical argument. 66 Fohrer states that: “Es ist ועל כה

58 Hitzig, Hiob, 254.
59 Tur-Sinai, Job, 483.
61 Schlottmann, Hiob, 429.
62 Dillmann, Hiob, 296.
63 Duhm, Hiob, 166. Duhm considers v. 27 being a gloss, saying: “An diesen Satz [v. 26] schliesst sich v. 28 eng an, und schon deswegen ist v. 27 eine Glosse.”
65 Driver and Gray, Job 1, 300.
66 The wicked are jeered because they are wicked and are wicked because they are jeered.
However, neither Beer nor Fohrer provide any justification for this emendation.

- לָבֹא = “to come to him.” However, in Hebrew “to come” is and לֹא is “to bring.” Clines also takes and adds “so that they caused” at the beginning of v. 28. A somewhat fuller translation of this phrase is provided by Driver and Gray: “that they may cause to come unto him.” This translation preserves the reading, but is too intrusive on the deity.

Dillmann suggests that has here the sense “in his presence.” Dahood says that: “this insight is confirmed by Ugaritic ‘l (also inscrip- tional Aramaic), which with certain verbs denotes ‘in the presence of.’” Delitzsch renders “before him” (perhaps with the idea of urging forward). Similarly, Duhm renders the phrase: “Vor sich zu bringen.” In Ewald’s view vv. 27-28 convey the idea that these infatuated potentates, who, when their fate is looked at from the point of view of this end [v. 26], seem to have departed from God and to have fallen into unrighteousness simply in order to bring the complaint of those who are unjustly tormented the more cer- tainly before God’s throne.

This is a rather strange theological perspective.

Driver and Gray observe that whether is dependent on or on the verb in 27, the meaning is the same. The verse expresses the intention of the actions described in 27.” Dhorme says:

has the sense of a gerund (31:30). The verb, with before complement of person (Gen 18:19). The preposition is delib-

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68 So also translate Beer (*Der Text*, 219); Kissane (*Job*, 229); and others. Kennicott MS 125 and Rossi MS 349 have אֵלָיו.
69 Driver and Gray, *Job 1*, 300.
72 Delitzsch, *Job 2*, 258. Similarly, Schlottmann (*Hiob*, 429) renders by “Um vor ihn zu bringen.”
75 Driver and Gray, *Job 2*, 261.
erately chosen because what is in question is a prayer which rises to
God.76

Habel renders by “he lets reach,” which is unattested in the
Tanakh.77 Rabinovitz and Abronin suggest that “they
brought,” as in Gen 42:25 means “they returned.”78 Gordis says
that here is like “the Lamed of purpose becomes tantamount
to a Lamed of result.”79 Hahn takes “bringend vor Ihn.”80 Fohrer
renders the phrase by “so daß sie brachten.”81 Barton considers vv. 28-
to be “An interpolation—a fragment of a poem on kings.”82 Hitzig takes
the contrarian view, in which “upon,” refers to the wicked (of v. 26);
taking the phrase = “in dem er über sie bringt.”83

- “and he heard the cry of the afflicted.” The verse can be seen as being structured in a manner similar to v. 33:17 and suggesting quick processing. Commentators usually keep in v. 27. However, the word reflects God’s reaction as do and . It should logically belong to v. 28.

- “if he is quiet.” Hahn notes that some commentators, relying on the Arabic “to fall,” gave the sense ‘zu Boden stürzen.’ However, in his opinion “Allein wir haben durhaus kein Recht abzugeben von der gesicherten Bedeutung des Wortes: Ruche haben.”84 The verb,, deffectiva imperfect of , means “he quiets.” In Hebrew “he is quiet” = and supplements “if.” It should be noted that the could be intrasitive (Isa 57:20).85 Moreover, the phrase is not

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76 Dhorme, Job, 523.
77 Habel, Job, 474.
78 A. Z. Rabinovitz and A. Abronin, איוב (Jaffa: Shushni, 1916), 85.
79 BDB, 775b; Gordis, Job, 392.
80 Hahn, Hiob, 274.
81 Fohrer, Hiob, 463.
82 Barton, Job, 265.
83 Hitzig, Hiob, 254. Hitzig argues that common interpretations assume relying on the identity of the suffixes in v. 27 and 28. He notes: “Aber sie lassen die Sache doch nicht selbsthätig (Ex 18:22) an Gott gelangen, bringen sie nicht an ihn; auch solte Vers 27, sich nicht auf die negative Kategorien und beschränken, in welchen Bedrückung der Arme nicht enhalten und nicht angedeutet ist. In eine Verbindung wie diese konnte kein Leser verstehn.”
conditional. Driver and Gray argue that “both lines [29a and 29b] are conditional sentences without conditional particles: for the rhetorical question as the apodosis.”

Dillmann explains that:

шийיט ist nicht Ruche und Glück spenden Ps 94:13, sondern Ruche schaffen gegen die schreienden Gevaltthater der Mächtigen, vgl. Jes 14:7, Ps 76:9, wogegen Ruhe halten d.h. den Frevelern keine Hilfe geben einen V. 28 nicht ausgedrückten gedanken einmischt.

Ehrlich notes that:

Waw in והוא ist begründet, für שישקיט ist aber ישקט zu vokalisieren und שישקיט zu ändern. Sonach erhält man für v. 29a den Sinn: den wenn er sich untätig verhält, wer kann dann gerettet werden?

Dhorme rendered ושיקט by “if He rests.” Good takes ישקט “= “he gives content” (i.e. “freedom from care and discomfort”), which does not capture the sense of שקט in Hebrew and Arabic. The reading ישקט has been adopted by many. Guillaume notes that:

One MS has yišqəṯ, and the meaning could then be ‘if God by remaining quiet and not interfering, fails to condemn a man what right has anyone to do so?’ Nevertheless it is tempting to regard the verb as a metathetical form of yaqṣīṯ (see Prov 22:21 for the noun and of Arabic qasaṭa, ‘he acted justly’) and translate ‘If he declares a man just, who can then condemn him? At any rate only thus can the latent antithesis be clearly brought out.

However, the reader who is aware of the frame narrative would find such a perspective being contradictory.

Hitzig says: “ירשע Gegensatz; und unter Vergleichung von Jes 14:16 mit 2 Chron 14:14 schreiben wir ירנשע.” In Deltzsch’s opinion,
The conjecture ירעש is not required either here or 1 Sam 14:47 (where ירעש signifies to punish the guilty); ירעש is also not to be translated turbabit (Rosenmüller), since רעש (Rosenmüller) according to its primitive notion does not signify “to be restless, to rage,” but “to be relaxed, hollow” (opposite of צדק, to be hard, firm, tight).94

Gordis says:

ירעש must mean “stir up, disturb.” The meaning of the root probably derives from its etymology; cf. Arab. ras’a “be loose (of limbs).” The emendation ירעש (Hitzig, Delitzsch) and יושע (Ehrlich) are Schlammverbesserungen (Budde).95

Rabinovitz and Abronin note that רעש is kindred to רשע in Aramaic, which means “to tremble, to be excited.”96 This meaning would fit ישקט better.

- וְיָסְתֵּר פָּנִים וּמִי יְשׁוּרֶנּוּ “If he hides his face, who can see him?” Budde says:

  d. h. trotziger Versuch der Selbsthülfe ändert nichts, es gilt zu warten, bis Gottes Gerichte reif sind. Obgleich das zulässig ist, wäre hier eher an eine genauere Parallele zu ירעש, etwa מִי יְיַסְרֶנוּ ‘wer dürfte ihn tadeln?’ (vgl. 40:1) zu denken.97

Delitzsch observes:

The Waw of מִי if one marks off the periods of the paratactic expression, is in both cases the Waw of conclusion after hypothetical antecedents, and verse 29b refers to Job's impetuous challenging of God.98

- וְעַל־אָדָו וַעֲלַנָּהוּ “Yet he rules over nations and individuals alike.”99 The MT does not have anything that corresponds to “yet he rules.” Colon 29c is usually attached to the following verse. For instance, Ehrlich asserts that: “Das dritte Glied ist zum folgenden Verse zu ziehn, der für sich genommen keinen Sinn gibt.”100 Gordis says that attaching

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94 Delitzsch, Job 2, 258.
95 Gordis, Job, 392. Gordis finds in v. 29a an idea that is similar to that of Isaiah (Isa 57:20). The emendation ירעש has also been adopted by Beer (Der Text, 219); Dhorme (Job, 543).
96 Rabinovitz and Abronin, איוב, 85. Cf. 1 Sam 14:47.
97 Budde, Hiob, 207.
98 Delitzsch, Job 2, 258.
99 Hakham (איוב, 265), suggests that is a parenthetic clause which states that despite vv. 29a-29b God is near every nation and man. He seems to be reading into the text a theological view that cannot be anchored in the MT.
100 Ehrlich, Randglossen 6, 317.
stich c to the next verse “improves the rhythm of both verses substantially.”\footnote{101} Fohrer thinks that “‘Über dem Volk und über den Menschen insgesamte ist als erläuternde Glose zu ‘wahrnennen’ zu streichen.”\footnote{102} Hirzel suggests that לָעֵנ = “gegen.”\footnote{103} Good takes עם = “race,” but most modern interpreters opt for “individual,” in antithesis to γῆ.\footnote{104} For instance, Delitzsch explains:

God rules both over the mass and over individuals alike, דָּם gives intensity to the equality thus correlative (et — et) expressed (Targum, Syriac); to refer it to אדם as generalizing (LXX, Jerome et super omnes homines), is forbidden by the antithesis of peoples and individuals.\footnote{105}

Habel keeps this colon in v. 29 and understands it as a detailing of who would not be able to see God.\footnote{106}

\footnote{101} Gordis, Job, 392. He suggests that “the double Vav means ‘both … and’ as in Arabic wa … wa” (BDB, 253a).

\footnote{102} Fohrer, Hiob, 464. Fohrer renders v. 29b: “Wenn er sein Augensicht verbirgt – wer nimt ihm wahr?” This is also Budde’s position. Budde (Hiob, 207) says: “c gibt eine Erläuterung zu a und b, unmittelbar abhängig von יְשָׁרֵת פָּרֵשׁ und וַיֶּיסֶר פָּרֵשׁ: ‘sei es nun über ein Volk, sei es über den [einzeln] Menschen (hier auffallend für נָב or איש) gleichweise«, d. h. beide dürfen Gott nicht tadeln, wenn er einmal auf seine Hülfe warten lässt. Das ist freilich sehr prosaisch ausgedrückt und zudem nicht am Platze. Denn die Gerechtigkeit Gottes wird in c. 34 überhaupt nur an grossen Ereignissen, an Volksschicksalen, erwiesen, und v. 30 zeigt deutlich, dass es auch fernerhin dabei bleibt. Ein Interpolator oder Glossator hat es für nötig gehalten hervorzuheben, dass diese Ausführungen auch auf den Einzelnen, d. i. auf Hiob, Anwendung fänden, während der Verfasser dessen besonderen Fall absichtlich möglichst bei Seite geschoben hat und ihm selbst diesen Schluss zu ziehen überlässt. Streiche also c!”


\footnote{104} Good, Turns, 145. Good consistently translates עם אדם as “race” also in v. 30. Driver and Gray (Job 2, 262-263) note that “the singular עם does at times refer not to the race, but to individuals of it, and may sometimes be idiomatically rendered in English by any one; see, e.g., Lev 1:2, 13:2. It is, however, a different matter for this properly collective term to express the idea of the individual in contrast to a collectivity such as nation; and the dubious nature of the Hebrew text, ... leave it doubtful whether лицо is the original text, and, if so, whether it means towards a nation or towards an individual.” Ehrlich, Randglossen 6, 317, says: “Das erste איש bezeichnet nicht einen einzelnen Menschen im gegensatz zu γῆ, sondern hat ungefähr denselben Sinn wie dieses.”

\footnote{105} Delitzsch, Job 2, 259.

\footnote{106} Habel, Job, 474. He reads: “If he hides his face, who can see him – Be it a nation or all humanity?” This translation does not correspond to the MT.
Many emendations have been proposed for the word יחד. For instance, Duhm says: “Für יחד am Schluss von v. 29, an dessen Stelle ein Verb nötig ist, lese ich יער, oder [wacht et], vgl. Cap. 8:6.”\textsuperscript{107} Ehrlich considers יחד being a corruption of יהי, “he sees” (achet er).\textsuperscript{108} However, the ketib-gere apparatus does not attest to the ד/ד confusion.\textsuperscript{109} Dahood explains that יחד is a dialectical form of חזז, “see.”\textsuperscript{110} Kissane reads יָעֻר (or יָעִר) instead of יחד.\textsuperscript{111} The ketib-gere apparatus does not attest to ד/ד or ד/ס confusions.

- ממִלֶּךְ אָדָם חָנֵף = “so that the godless would not govern.” MT does not have a word that corresponds to “so,” and ממִלֶּךְ ≠ “would not govern.” Delitzsch takes המִלֶּךְ = מִלֶּךְ and renders “in order that godless men may not rule” (e.g. 2 Kgs 23:33, Isa 7:8, 25:2, Jer 48:2, and the like).\textsuperscript{112} Hakham understands v. 30 as meaning “because … rules them” (מחמקת הוא מִלֶּךְ וּמְלֻיָּה).\textsuperscript{113} Kissane reads מִלֶּךְ (“delivering”) instead of ממִלֶּךְ, assuming מִלֶּךְ = המִלֶּךְ, a reading which virtually all moderns propose.\textsuperscript{114} Indeed, Gordis notes that interpretations of v. 30a are often “an unconscious or tacit emendation of ממִלֶּךְ to מִלֶּךְ, a reading which virtually all moderns propose.”\textsuperscript{115}

by “condemned,” which is unattested in the Tanakh. \(^{117}\) Dhorme moves חָנֵף to the beginning of v. 31.\(^{118}\)

- מִמֹּקְשֵׁי עָם = “and a people should not be ensnared.” MT does not have the conjunctive. The noun מָכֵשׁ cannot correspond to the verb “ensnared,” and the מ prefixing מָכֵשׁ is not equivalent to “not” but to “from” (מן) or “from being” (מִהְיוֹת) as in 1 Kgs 15:3, Isa 7:8, etcetera. Good observes in despair:

Tur-Sinai’s comment (Job, 484) that this is ‘an unlikely expression even in Elihu’s peculiar style’ comforts me. The syntax of this and the two lines preceding escapes me, as does their relation to the couplet before them, though I think there is a connection.\(^{119}\)

Gordis renders v. 30b: “because of the snares set by the people”; i.e., because of the offenses committed by them.\(^{120}\) Kissane reads ענִי (“affliction”) instead of MT עָם, apparently assuming the ligature מ = נ.\(^{121}\) Hakham assumes that ממקשי = ממלךמקשי.\(^{122}\)

3 Observations

The preceding analysis leads the following observations:

(i) Exegetes had difficulty to define clearly what is the point that Elihu is trying to make in vv. 26-30? For instance, Kissane thinks that:

In this strophe, Elihu considers the great difficulty which can be raised against the doctrine of God’s justice: Why does He sometimes allow the sinner to go unpunished?\(^{123}\)

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117 Habel, Job, 474.
118 Dhorme, Job, 524.
119 Good, Turns, 144. Cf. Tur-Sinai, Job, 484. Tur-Sinai, Job, 484, suggests the reading מָכֵשׁ “those that harden themselves.” This emendation results in an incoherent sense for v. 30; “That the unbeliever reign not, those that harden themselves among the people.”
120 Gordis, Job, 393. Gordis says: “Verse 29 has indicated that God brings disaster upon men when He so chooses. In our view, v. 30 adds that God permits evildoers to hold sway in order to punish men and nations who have themselves been guilty of seeking to snare the innocent.” It is difficult to find in this view any relevance to the Jobian problem.
121 Kissane, Job, 230.
123 Kissane, Job, 234. Kissane (Job, 234) sees vv. 27-29b as presenting human concern at God’s non-intervention in cases of obvious injustice. In his view vv. 29c-30 give Elihu’s answer; “unfortunately, textual corruption has obscured the meaning.” Kissane (Job, 229) restores the text to mean: “With a nation, or with a man he is com-
However, Elihu gives no answer to this question. In Good’s view Elihu goes on in these verses with describing God’s opposition to the wicked. He ‘jeers’ (ספקם) at them (v. 26), turning those people away from him (v. 27). Simultaneously, Elihu argues that Job was wrong about the deity’s positive actions toward humans. Those who turn away from him fail ‘to bring to him the outcry of the poor,’ but he hears it nevertheless (v. 28). … But his language becomes garbled and his thought unclear in verses 29-32.124

Good’s perspective on vv. 26-30 is hardly a coherent thematic framework for the unit. Similarly, Habel presents a logically confusing perspective by saying:

For Elihu, God’s punitive action is not only righteous but executed “in ‘a public place.’” … The spectacle of Job’s suffering on the ash heap is evidence of just such indictments by God. Those who turn from the ways of the divine wisdom produce social oppression and moral evil in the community. The ‘cry of the poor’ reaching heaven testifies to the cruelty caused by such corruption in society. … By heeding their pleas for relief, God, as a just ruler, rescues them and thereby ‘silences’ them and any gainsayers. … If, however, he hides his face in displeasure because of public evil, the absence of his favor will be evidence of his anger. … The text of v. 30 remains obscure.125

(ii) Exegetes had difficulty to identify the contextual connection of vv. 26-30 to the preceding and following text.

(iii) Verse 28 seems to be contradictory, in suggesting that God needs the cry of the poor to be brought to him, yet he anyway hears it. Is it possible that ישמע is misplaced?

(iv) Is it possible that the order of the verses is incorrect, and v. 30 is the continuation of v. 28?

(v) Exegetes struggled reveal the logical connection between vv. 29 and 30? Dillmann observes:

Namlich השקי und der השאמט können nicht die scheinbare Unfähigkeit Gottes beim hilfsgeschrei der Leidenden, als Gegensatz passionate, Delivering a miscreant from the snares of affliction.” This would be injustice, not compassion.

125 Habel, *Job*, 485. Habel (*Job*, 476) says that v. 30: “seems to be corrupt and missing at least one verb.”
zu der vorher beschriebenen richtenden Thätigkeit besagen, weil in diesem Fall zwar die beiden Fragsätze einem guten, aber V. 30 keinen annehmbaren Sinn gäbe, sondern es muss vom Einschreiten Gottes zu dem V. 30 angegebenen Zweck die rede sein.126

Since the Book of Job deals with the fate of individuals alone, can it include such verses as 28-30? Barton notes:

Probably the interpolation [vv. 28-33] was introduced at some time of national oppression. It is particularly inept to the context here, where it comes between Elihu’s description of the way that God destroys the powerful, and his conclusion that wise men must consider Job a sinner.127

Clearly something is wrong with the MT of vv. 26-30. One would be hard pressed to confidently state the meaning of vv. 26-30, or even conjure the image that these verses suggest, within the framework of the MT.

C PROPOSED SOLUTION

Commentators usually agree that vv. 29-33 in MT are corrupt, few note the textual disorder of vv. 26-28. The solutions that are proposed for the difficulties in vv. 26-30 capitalize on some text-critical observations that have been frequently noted in ancient Hebrew manuscripts. The commonness of these observations makes it impossible to consider the textual disorders being intentional; the author’s artistic means for conveying Elihu’s excitement. This effort aims to restore a coherent thematic flow to the sub-unit that provides answers to the questions which were identified in the preceding section.

Verses 26-30 would be now discussed seriatim.

1 Verse 26

The difficulties associated with this verse stem from the words תחת and רשעים. In the solution presented here, the focus is on whether the inconvenient תחת is authentic and whether רשעים was in the original text. Our approach to the restoration of v. 26 capitalizes on the similarities between our verse and v. 20a.

Beer aptly noted: “‘Er geisselt sie wie (תחת) Freveler’ würde in sich schliessen, dass die also Behandelten keine Frevler sind—das widerspricht V. 24.”128 While Fohrer does not find v. 26 inexplicable he still finds: “Wörtlich ‘an Stelle von Frevlern … an der Stätte der Sehenden (=Zuschauer).’ Doch ist der text vielleicht verderbt.”129 At least these sentiments suggest that תחת is

126 Dillmann, Hiob, 296.
127 Barton, Job, 266.
128 Beer, Der Text, 219.
129 Fohrer, Hiob, 464.
suspicious. One also notes the structural and thematic similarity between v. 26 and v. 20aa (רָגִיעָה לָיְלָה וְחֲצוֹת יָמֻתוּ רְשֻׁעים):

(i) both verses head the respective units vv. 20-25 and vv. 26-30;
(ii) 20aa is a 2:2 verse and v. 26 is ‘almost’ (sans רְשֻׁעים) 2:2;
(iii) in v. 20aa the referent is delayed, and in v. 26 the referent ‘might’ have been originally delayed, if רשעים is assumed to be a scribal gloss;
(iv) both verses deal with the demise of the powerful and inability to hide;
(v) בָּפֶסְקָם in v. 26 parallels מָכָּה in v. 20aa and correspondingly are בָּפֶסְקָם וּצְרִיך לְקֹצָאוֹת לָיְלָה רְשֻׁעים and בָּפֶסְקָם וּצְרִיך לְקֹצָאוֹת לָיְלָה וְחֲצוֹת רְשֻׁעים.130

This remarkable similarity between v. 26 and v. 20aa suggests that should be emended to have like a sense of short duration. Such a sense is afforded by the reading אֶחָת instead of חֲצוֹת.

אֶחָת could mean “once, just once, only” (2 Kgs 6:10, Ps 62:12, 89:36, Prov 28:18, Judg 16:28), thus conveying a small number requiring little time. Is it possible that a א/ח confusion occurred? While such confusion is orthographically unlikely in the square script, it is possible in a mixed Hebrew paleo script and square script. More than a century ago, Perles called attention to the similarity between א in Hebrew square script and ח in the paleo script, and demonstrated its utility for resolving the difficulties in Ps 22:17. He says,

Ps. 22.17. Kaum ein Wort in den Psalmen hat zu so vielen, zum Teil sonderbarn Erklärungen Anlass gegeben wie כָּאֲרִי. Statt dessen haben die Alten (Verr., Massora, s. Grätz z. St.) ein verbum כָּאֲרִי gelessen, das zwar ebensowenig verständlich wie die Masoratische La. ist, aber dem Richtigem näher ist. Der Parallelismus mit Vers 13 macht es fast zur Gewissheit, dass כָּאֲרִי zu lessen sei. Die Ahnlichkeit von א in Hebrew square script and ח in the paleo script, has this Error herbeigeführt.131

Though Perles does not suggest other instances of the א/ח confusion, the case discussed by him is not likely unique. For instance, both early and modern scholars struggled to understand in Gen 4:1 the line תעְמוּר קְנַיְתָא אֵצְיָהוּת 132

If in this case א/ח confusion is assumed we obtain תֵתָּﬠְמוּר קְנַיְתָא אֵצְיָהוּת (“I acquired a men to give God”). This interpretation, suggesting human sacrifice,
gives an intriguing twist to Cain’s actions, which are rather puzzling in the MT.

Another case might be the statement אִם־אַתָּה in Gen 23:13. If אתָה is understood as the 2nd person masculine then the following שְׁמָעֵנִי does not connect logically with it. However, using the א/ת confusion we could read אתָה שְׁמָעֵנִי, and then the following cogent text is obtained: “If you gave (or, you are ready to give) it to me, then hear me.” Other instances where the א/ת confusion might have occurred could be:

(i) In Num 24:21b one could read תַּתָּה מְשִׁיקָה אֱשִׁים בָּשָׂלָה שְׁמִיךְ to improve its sense and inner parallelism.

(ii) In Jer 4:11 one could read הוּא שִׁמֵּס בּוֹא־עַמִּי דֶּרֶךְ בַּמִּדְבָּר שְׁפָיִם צַח רוּחַ "like a searing wind from the heights of the desert coming to my people” instead of MT הוּא שִׁמֵּס בּוֹא־עַמִּי רוּחַ צַח שְׁפָיִם בַּמִּדְבָּר רֶךֶד.

(iii) In Ezek 21:28b one could read וְהוּא מַזַּכֵּר עָוֹן לֶאָפֵשׂ “and he reminds his sin to nullify (them)” instead of MT וְהוּא מַזַּכֵּר עָוֹן לֶהִתָּפֵשׂ.

(iv) It is possible that the difficult Ps 77:3 should be read בּוֹשׁ אֲדֹנַי, דָרָשְׁתִּי יָדִי לַיְלָה נֶגְדָּה וְלֹא אָפוּג “In my time of distress I turn to the Lord, my hands [even] at night are in front of Him, I do not rest,” assuming the א/ת confusion. 134

(v) In MT Ps 137:5, יְמִינִי תִּשְׁכַּח יְרוּשָׁלָם אִם־אֶשְׁכָּחֵךְ, one is confronted with the impossible notion that the hand has a memory, and what it will forget is not clear. 135 A more logical reading would be יְמִינִי אֶשְׁכַּח יְרוּשָׁלָם אִם־אֶשְׁכָּחֵךְ “Forgetting Jerusalem would be like forgetting my right hand”; that is, it is impossible.

The preceding instances of possible א/ת confusion demonstrate that it is likely and might be more frequent than generally recognized. Whether this confusion could have played a role in writing תַּתָּה instead of the original אתָה depends on when the Book of Job was written. The interval of time proposed by modern scholars extends from 11th century BCE to the 3rd century BCE. There are no historical allusions in the book and its language does not allow an unambiguous dating. If the upper time limit is adopted, then it is possible that the book was written when the square script started to come in. At first the two script styles coexisted; the new script slowly replacing the paleo-script. The oldest inscription in the square script is that of Arak-el-Amir (Jordan), which dates from about 180 BCE. Though it contains only five letters it is a good

133 The form תַּתָּה occurs in 2 Sam 22:41.
135 Usually Ps 137:5 is rendered: “If I forget Jerusalem, let my hand wither.” Cf. Tur-Sinai, כרך הספר, 122.
example for the coexistence of the two styles even at some later time.\textsuperscript{136} Jewish papyri (\textit{Cowley papyri}) discovered in Assuan (Egypt) indicate that intermediate forms, between the paleo-script and the square script, might have been used in the long transition to the square script.\textsuperscript{137} This would imply that the א/ת confusion could have been made even in the original manuscript. If the book was written anytime within the dating interval, it is possible that the transmitted manuscript is a copy that was transcribed at the time when both styles of script coexisted.

Clearly, the א/ת confusion could have been a factor in writing תחת instead of the original תתחא during the period in which the two scripts coexisted. It is possible that a copyist, coming across תתחא (written in the square script), thought that the first letter looks more like the paleo-script letter ת. It is notable that in v. 33:14 Elihu uses תתחא perhaps to argue that God reveals himself “only in one” way to humans. Moreover, the reading תתחא makes eminent sense. The two phrases אחת ספרם (v. 26) and רגע אותו (v. 20aa) seem to be expressing the same idea. Thus, v. 26 in MT is unbalanced, as most commentators noticed.\textsuperscript{138}

Verse 26 becomes balanced if it is recognized that רשעים could be an interloping word. It is easy to imagine how this word made it into the text. Conceivably, a scribe felt that in v. 26a a reader would be at loss about who the referent is. He helpfully wrote the word רשעים between the two words (in the space between two lines). Subsequently, as was often the case, a copyist assumed that this gloss is actually a textual correction and included it in the text. If it is assumed that in v. 26a רשעים is a later insertion, intended to clarify the delayed referent, then the original v. 26 read אחת ספרם במקום אחרם “once he strikes them in the place of (those) seeing.”

2 Verse 27

Commentators have been baffled by the phrase אשר על־כן, which occurs only here. Kissane observes that:

In the beginning of the verse we have the impossible combination of the relative particle followed by “therefore.” One or the other is superfluous. Dhorme transfers the relative particle to 26; on the contrary, it is the particle “therefore” that is to be transferred. The relative particle is used here to introduce a hypothetical case as in Lev. 4:22; Deut. 11:27; Jos. 4:21. The verse recalls 21:13-14: “They


\textsuperscript{137} Archibald H. Sayce and Arthur E. Cowley, \textit{Aramaic Papyri Discovered at Assuan} (London: A. Moring, 1906), Papyrus 5.

\textsuperscript{138} Dhorme, \textit{Job}, 522. Dhorme notes: “There is a lack of balance between the two hemistichs. Various attempts have been made to connect with the 2nd hemistich and to extend the first.”
say to God: Depart from us! And we desire not the knowledge of your ways.”

These are not the only possibilities for resolving the awkwardness of

It is obvious that v. 27 identifies the referent for v. 26, as in v. 20,

Thus the relative particle has to stay in v. 27 and must be moved. This approach leads to the coherent 3-beat colon “that turned aside from following Him,” and makes v. 27 into a 3:3 rhythm verse.

Verse 21 is in essence a poetically expanded which shares with v. 27b the words כִּילוּ הִשָּׂלְלֵי וַאֲלִמְלוּ. The two verses seem to be juxtaposing the relationships of God vs. man and man vs. God; God being meticulous in observing and understanding human behavior, while man being remiss in his understanding of God’s ways. Ehrlich felt that: “Statt und ist dasselbe wie und heist, Rücksicht nehmen auf, berücksichtigen; sieh zu Prov 21:2 und vgl. Ps 41:2.” Perhaps, understanding וְכָל as “and comprehend, assess” (Isa 40:12) would better fit the context. If these considerations are incorporated in v. 27 it would read:

That turned aside from Him And have not wised up to comprehend His way

The delayed referent (for v. 26) are those that turned aside from God and did not make an effort to comprehend God’s ways. A pious scribe would consider such individuals being wicked (רשעים) and engaged in exploitation of the poor.

3 Verse 28

The phrase “therefore,” from the MT v. 27, belongs to the beginning of v. 28. This scribal error might have occurred because of the prevalent practice to correct errors of omission by writing the omitted word or phrase in the space between the lines. Verse 28 expands v. 27 by providing the consequences of the acts that it describes. The logic of vv. 26-28 is this: God publicly punishes (v. 26) those who abandoned God’s morality (v. 27) and are bringing to Him the anguish of the exploited (v. 28). This chain of logic is then followed by other possible reactions that God might have (vv. 29-30).

139 Kissane, Job, 234. It is doubtful that the religiously rebellious tenor suggested by Kissane is realistic for the setting of the book and its time.

140 Ehrlich, Randglossen 6, 317. Ehrlich says: “אשא bezieht sich auf das im Vorhergehenden beschriebene Verfahren Gottes gegen die frevelnden Herrscher und ist Subjekt des Satzes, während das darauf Folgende das Prädictat bildet.”

141 Ehrlich, Randglossen 6, 317. The confusion is not attested in the Ketib-Qere apparatus, and the two letters are not orthographically similar in the paleo-script or square-script.
Driver and Gray note that “Dillmann supposes על יbserv to point on to עלバイ, ‘who therefore have turned aside from after him, ... in order to bring.’” This would assume knowledge of intent, which is speculative and unnecessary. It is possible to understand עלבי = “to bring (repeatedly), bringing” and by extension “supplying.” One would naturally expect that the anguish of the poor would rise by itself to heaven and would not require any visible (or metaphoric) transfer by the wicked.

The singular עלבי and context would make God as the most likely referent in v. 28. However, this would require reading עלבי instead of MT עלבי (cf. Gen 18:21). It is notable that the עלבי/עלבי confusion is well-attested in the Ketib-Qere apparatus and the many ע’s in this and following verse may have predisposed the scribe to writing an ע. It seems logical to attach ישמע to the next verse, since v. 28 is focused on the anguish of the poor and describes God’s reaction, as do the verbs in v. 29a. Also, without ישמע a 3:3 verse is obtained, that reads:

עלבי עלבי עלבי עלבי עלבי

Therefore supplying to Him the cry of the poor and the cry of the afflicted.

4 Verse 29

Budde characterized v. 29 and the verses that follow being:

Die dunkelste Stelle des Capitels, die ganz zu entwirren wohl nie gelingen wird. Den sichersten Faden bietet v. 29. Die ersten beiden Glieder bilden je einen Vorder- und Nachsatz, der erstere setzt ein Tun oder Verhalten Gottes, der letztere spricht dem Menschen für diesen Fall Recht oder Möglichkeit des Tadels oder des Ein greifens ab. Da nun Gott durchgängig als Hort der Gerechtigkeit dargestellt ist, gegen dessen Tun Einspruch zu erheben niemandem einfallen wird, so kann das hier gesetzte göttliche Tun nicht mit dem bisherigen (von v. 18 an) gleichartig sein, sondern muss im Gegensatz dazu stehn.

More recently, Gordis observed:

These vv. are justly described by Driver-Gray (vol, 1, pp. 301ff.) as being on the whole unintelligible or at least ambiguous. The passage has probably suffered textual damage which is unfortunately not repairable today. LXX omits the vv.}

142 Driver and Gray, Job 2, 260.
143 BDB, 41a, note that: “There is a tendency in Hebrew, especially manifest in Samuel, Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, to use על in the sense of על.”
144 Gordis, Job, 392.
Gordis’ assessment is perhaps too gloomy. Most commentators rightly attach v. 29b to the beginning of v. 30. The restored v. 29 becomes then

ישמע
הוא יעקב ומי רעש
וישתר פגס ומי ישזור

a 4:4 verse (indicating a conclusion). It should be understood as if the word ישמע precedes each colon:

ישמע 하고ו יעקב ומי רעש
ישמע זהחר פגס ומי ישזור

In addition to God’s public (obvious) punishment of the wicked, it is also possible that God might seem apathetic (Hab 1:2-3), ישקש. He might hold back His benevolence, or metaphorically ‘cover his face’ not to see (Hab 2:13), ישחק פנים. In each case, as a sovereign deity He cannot be compelled to act and we cannot impose on Him our predilections.

5 Verse 30

In v. 29b the prefixing ו in על should be understood as or if; thus, והו = “or if upon.” Ewald correctly sensed that vv. 29-30 express God’s anger and his punitive reaction. However, his understanding of v. 28 reads into it more than it contains. He says that in Elihu’s view: “He then indeed, takes rest, i.e. giving no more help (Ps 83:2, Zech 1:12-13) and turning his face away, coming with punishment both upon a nation and upon all persons of the earth.”

It seems more logical and useful to connect v. 29b with v. 30 and read ירח instead of יחד. The likelihood of a ירח confusion is well-attested in the ketib-qere apparatus and the Tanakh, יחר, which occurs many times in the Tanakh, is the qal imperfect ofחרה

"burn of anger.” It provides a verb for v. 29b and allows anchoring in text typical interpretations of v. 29c such as “Ueber Volk und über Mensch zusammen, über ganze Völker vie über

145 BDB, 252b
146 Ewald, Job, 338. There is nothing in MT that corresponds to “coming with punishment”; v. 29b has no verbs.
147 One finds in the Ketib-Qere apparatus this confusion in: 2 Sam 13:37 (K) but (Q); 2 Kgs 16:6 (K) but (Q); Ps 19:19, Prov 19:19 (K) but יבשל (Q); Jer 2:2 (K) but ישור (Q); Jer 31:39 (K) but ישור (Q); and Ezra 8:14 (K) but חגור (Q). Also, in Josh 15:52 (K) but שרשמה in some MSS (Tanach Koren, 11 end); 2 Sam 8 (many), 1 Chr 18 (many) - שזרמה; in Hab 3:12 - Septuagint reads “you will bring low” (διαγώσεται), probably reading באש instead of באש; in Hab 3:13 - Septuagint translates איש as “bands or bonds” (δεσμούς), implying a reading איש or ישר; Hab 3:16 - Septuagint translates ישדר as “of my sojourning” (؟).
Einzelne verhängt Er in zorne vernichtende Strafgerechte.” \(^{148}\) Verses 29b and 30 have been understood as depicting God being protective (Peshitta, Ehrlich, Kissane, Clines) or punitive (Septuagint, Vulgate, Hirzel, Hahn, Ewald, Gordis). Reading יִחֵר instead of יחד, sets us obviously on a punitive interpretation of v. 30.

Following the ancients (Theodotion, Targum) many read מַמְלִ instead of MT ממלך “from reigning.” The reading ממלך suits the punitive interpretation that has been adopted in this solution; i.e., Elihu suggests that the enthronement of a חנף, “profane, irreligious, hypocrite” is a divine punishment. However, the phrase אדם חנף is problematic, since it never occurs elsewhere in the Tanakh. It seems likely that a scribe by mistake copied the word אדם from the nearby v. 29b and this word should be deleted.

Dillmann rightly says: “Die Lesart ממלך (Theodotion, Targum) erlaubt keine richtige Erklärung von ממקשי.” \(^{149}\) This difficulty can be resolved by noting that a simple and frequent error of metathesis occurred. One should read ממקשי instead of ממקשי ממלך ש. ממקשי ממלך is a collective term for “thistles, nettles.” \(^{150}\) The קמש word occurs only twice in the Tanakh (Isa 34:13, Hos 9:6); it is not surprising that a scribe confused it with the more frequent קמש (21 times). The phrase אדם ממקשי ממ👀 probably referred to the useless but potentially harmful among the aristocrats. \(^{151}\) This term fits well the image of the חנף. If the word אדם is deleted and the construct form ממקשי ממ👀 is considered a single word v. 29b+30 becomes a 3:3 verse. \(^{152}\)

Verse 29b+30 can be now restored as follows

בעלג ויעל-אפרים חור ממלך חנה ממקשיירה

Or if upon a nation and man he angers,
he enthrones a hypocrite from the ‘thistles’ of the elite.

Though the verse does not appear to relate to Job’s specific problem, it serves well to buttress Elihu’s general argument that God is righteous and metes out punishment to nations and races as he does to individuals (vv. 26-28)

\(^{148}\) Hahn, Hiob, 275.

\(^{149}\) Dillman, Hiob, 297.

\(^{150}\) Jehuda Feliks, Plant World of the Bible (in Hebrew) (Massada: Ramat Gan, 1968), 211. Feliks describes the קמש as a plant that wildly spreads in areas that became uninhabited. Classical Jewish commentators (Ibn Ganah, Rashi, Radak) the קמש as Urtica.

\(^{151}\) Cf. Judg 9:9-15, where a bad king is likened to a bramble (אטד), and 2 Kgs 14:9-10 where an insignificant king is compared to a brier (חוח).

\(^{152}\) Budde, Hiob, 207. Budde says: “Die Kürze des Gliedes ist … störend: bei unserer Auffassung wäre ein מושל vor b möglich. Ferner könnte man so auch 29 c zu v. 30 ziehen; doch erweckt der Satz auch in dieser Verbindung nicht mehr Zutrauen.” However, Budde’s emendation is entirely arbitrary.
even if He may seem as being apathetic and removed (v. 29a). As would be noted in the concluding section, the sensitized Job could have detected in Elihu’s general statements many personal implications.

**D CONCLUSION**

Relatively few minor text-critical emendations result in the following simple and coherent text:

\[\text{Once he strikes them in the place of (those) seeing.} \]
\[\text{Those that turned aside from Him,} \]
\[\text{And have not wised up to comprehend His ways.} \]
\[\text{Therefore supplying to Him,} \]
\[\text{the cry of the poor and the cry of the afflicted.} \]
\[\text{He listens,} \]
\[\text{And if he keeps quiet, who can condemn him?} \]
\[\text{And if he hides his face, who can see him?} \]
\[\text{Or if upon a nation and man he angers,} \]
\[\text{he enthrones a hypocrite from the ‘thistles’ of the elite.} \]

Orthographically, the restored Urtext does minimal violence to the consonantal text, while securing an unforced sense and a typical 3:3 rhythmic structure.

The unit is focused on potentates that have lost their moral compass and God’s reaction to their deeds. In this sense, the unit consisting of vv. 26-30 fits contextually the larger unit consisting of vv. 16-30, which deals with God’s righteous management of nations and people. Job’s personal problem is addressed only indirectly. Job could deduce relevant references to his situation from the following statements made by Elihu:

(i) Job’s visible punishments indicate that he sinned (v. 26).

(ii) Job is ignorant of God’s ways and abandoned moral behavior (v. 27).

(iii) Job has caused anguish to the destitute, which reached heaven (v. 28).

(iv) If Job has a case then it has been heard, though there may be a delay in God’s reaction (v. 29a).

(v) Job cannot compel God to confront him (v. 29a).

(vi) God works in mysterious ways (vv. 29b-30).

Elihu’s message is hard hitting, but is not devoid of hope. In the verses that follow Elihu spells out what he expected Job to do.
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Aron Pinker, 11519 Monticello Ave., Silver Spring, Maryland, 20902, USA.
Email: aron_pinker@hotmail.com