

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

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### 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,*

תַּחַת־רְשָׁעִים סָפְקָם  
בְּמִקוֹם רְאִים  
אֲשֶׁר עַל־כֵּן סָרוּ מֵאַחֲרָיו  
וְכָל־דַּרְכָּיו לֹא הִשְׁכִּילוּ  
לְהִבִּיא עֲלָיו צַעֲקַת־דָּל  
וְצַעֲקַת עֲנִיִּים יִשְׁמַע  
וְהוּא יִשְׁקֹט וּמִי יִרְשָׁע  
וְיִסְתֵּר פָּנָיו וּמִי יִשׁוּרְנוּ

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*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.*

וְהוּא יִשְׁקֵט וּמִי יִרְשָׁע  
וְיִסְתֵּר פָּנָיו וּמִי יִשׁוּרְנוּ  
וְעַל-גּוֹי וְעַל-אָדָם  
מִמְלֶכֶת אָדָם חָגַף  
מִמְקֵשֵׁי עָם

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 (כְּבִירִים), which were mentioned in v. 24, and where the word תָּהַת has also been used (thus, intertextuality would imply thematic similarity). However, this would mean that the כְּבִירִים were not necessarily wicked: besides, תָּהַת nowhere else means *with the*, and סָפַקָם is never associated with the down position in the Tanakh.<sup>1</sup> These are some of the difficulties in the first short verse. One might add that in the following verse the awkward עַל-כֵּן אֲשֶׁר 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* (יִשְׁקֵט) and *condemn* (יִרְשָׁע) 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.<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> BDB, 1065a-1066a. The authors (1065b) note: "Peculiarly Jb 34:26 (si vera l.) = *as if they were, like*; but text very dubious."

<sup>2</sup> Francis I. Andersen, *Job: An Introduction and Commentary* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1976), 254.

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Driver and Gray believe that v. 26 in the MT is corrupt.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

Pope says that vv. 28-33 "are replete with difficulty. LXX originally omitted them entirely. Modern critics have emended freely, with imagination and originality."<sup>5</sup>

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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<sup>3</sup> Samuel R. Driver and George B. Gray, *A Critical Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job*, vol. 2, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1921), 260.

<sup>4</sup> Samuel R. Driver and George B. Gray, *A Critical Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job*, vol. 2, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1921), 300.

<sup>5</sup> Marvin H. Pope, *Job*, AB 15 (Doubleday: Garden City, 1986), 259.

## 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."<sup>6</sup> For vv. 26-30 the Septuagint has

<sup>26</sup> And he quite destroys the ungodly, for they are seen before him.

<sup>27</sup> Because they turned aside from the law of God, and did not regard his ordinances, <sup>28</sup> So as to bring before him the cry of the needy; for he will hear the cry of the poor. <sup>29</sup> And he will give quiet, and who will condemn? And he will hide his face, and who shall see him? Whether it be done against a nation, or against a man also: <sup>30</sup> causing a hypocrite to be king, because of the waywardness of the people. (Ἐσβεσε δὲ ἀσεβεῖς, ὁρατοὶ δὲ ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ. Ὅτι ἐξέκλιαν ἐκ νόμου Θεοῦ, δικαιώματα δὲ αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐπέγνωσαν, τοῦ ἐπαγαγεῖν ἐπ' αὐτὸν κραυγὴν πενήτων, καὶ κραυγὴν πτωχῶν εἰσακούσεται. Καὶ αὐτὸς ἡσυχίαν παρέξει, καὶ τίς καταδικάζεται; καὶ κρύψει πρόσωπον, καὶ τίς ὄψεται αὐτόν; καὶ κατὰ ἔθνος καὶ κατὰ ἀνθρώπου ὁμοῦ. Βασιλεύων ἀνθρώπον ὑποκριτὴν ἀπὸ δυσκολίας λαοῦ).<sup>7</sup>

The Septuagint's translation<sup>8</sup> does not render תהת, in MT of v. 26, but has ידעכו = "and he quite destroys" (Ἐσβεσε δὲ), under the influence of ידכאו in the preceding verse.<sup>9</sup> It also attaches ספקם to the second colon and paraphrases ספקם במקום ראים by "for they are seen before him" (ὁρατοὶ δὲ ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ).<sup>10</sup> The meaning that the Septuagint assigns to the word ספקם is not clear. In v. 27 Septuagint has אשר על-כן = ὅτι "because," מאחריו = "aside from the law of God" (ἐκ νόμου Θεοῦ), and וכל דרכיו = "his ordinances" (δικαιώματα δὲ αὐτοῦ). Dhorme notes that vv. 28-33 are

absent from Sahidic, marked with asterisk in Jerome, Syro-hexapla, and Colbertinus (with the exception of v. 32), did not exist in G

<sup>6</sup> Emanuel Tov, "Job 34," in *Outside the Bible, Ancient Jewish Writing Related to Scripture*, vol. 1, ed. Louis H. Feldman, James L. Kugel, and Lawrence H. Schiffan (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2013), 111.

<sup>7</sup> 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."

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> Georg Beer, *Der Text des Buches Hiob* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert, 1897), 218.

<sup>10</sup> Dhorme, *Job*, 521. Dhorme notes that Codex Alexandrinus has καὶ ὁρατοὶ ἐγένοντο ἐναντίον τῶν ἐχθρῶν; where, ראים = ὁρατοὶ and מקום = ἐχθρῶν.

[Septuagint]. The present text of v. 28 is derived from Theodotion.<sup>11</sup>

In this text עליו = אליו "before him" (ἐπ' αὐτόν).<sup>12</sup> In the next verse (also from Theodotion) והוא ישקט = "And he will give quiet" (Καὶ αὐτὸς ἡσυχίαν παρέξει).<sup>13</sup> Finally, in v. 30 Theodotion apparently reads ממליך = "causing to be king" (βασιλεύων), takes חנף = "hypocrite" (ὑποκριτὴν ὑποκριτῆν), and has for עם ממקשי = "because of the waywardness of the people" (ἀπὸ δυσκολίας λαοῦ).

Targum's literal translation reads:

<sup>26</sup> Instead the wicked he stroke them in a place that can be seen.  
<sup>27</sup> For therefore they turned from following him and all his ways they did not understand. <sup>28</sup> To bring upon him the outcry of the poor and the cry of the destitute he will hear. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> Appoints king a sycophant, because of snares among the people.

חלף רשיעי ספקנן באתר דחמין  
 דמטול היכנא זרו מבתרוהי וכל אורחתיא לא אשכילו  
 לאיתאה עלוי קבלתא דמסכנא וצעקתהון דעניי ישמע  
 והוא ישדיך ומן יחיב ויסלק שכנתא ומן יסכניה ומסער חובא על עמא ועל בר  
 נש כחדא  
 ממני מלכא בר נש דילטור מטול תקליא די בעמא

It takes אשר על-כן = "for therefore" (דמטול היכנא); סרו = "they turned" (זרו); מאחריו = "from following him" (מבתרוהי); עלוי = "upon him" (עלוי); יסתר = "will remove his presence" (ויסלק שכנתא);<sup>14</sup> ממליך = "appoints" (ממני); adds "visits a guilt upon" (מסער חובא); takes חנף = "sycophant" (דילטור); and, ממקשי עם = "because of snares among the people" (תקליא די בעמא).

<sup>11</sup> 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)."

<sup>12</sup> The אל/על confusion is well-attested in the Tanakh. For instance, 1 Sam 4:21 אל instead of על (twice); 2 Kgs 8:3; Isa 34:14 על instead of אל; Jer 21:9 על instead of אל; Jer 50:35-38 אל instead of על; 1 Sam 20:24 על (*Ketib*) and אל (*Qere*); Isa 29:6 על instead of אל; Job 34:15; Isa 65:7 על (*K*) but אל (*Q*); Ezek 9:5 על (*K*) and אל (*Q*); Ezek 39:28 אל אדמתם - על אדמתם in some MSS (cf. *Tanakh Koren* [Jerusalem: Koren, 1983], 13 end; Lev 16:14 MT has על but Samaritan has אל; על instead of אל in 2 Sam 19:43, על instead of אל in Josh 2:7; אל instead of על in Josh 5:14; in Job 19:12 אלי instead of עלי).

<sup>13</sup> Symmachus has αὐτοῦ δὲ ἡρεμίαν διδόντος.

<sup>14</sup> Pope, *Job*, 259. Pope notes: "The Qumran Targum reads [wyst]r 'npwhy mn ytybnh '[and should he hid]e his face, who could make him return.' The puzzling reading reflects a Hebrew verb *yēšībennū* instead of MT *yēšūrennū*."

Peshitta paraphrases vv. 26-30, rendering:

<sup>26</sup> Their works shall be crushed under the weight of their wickedness in a land of terror; <sup>27</sup> Because they turned aside from following him, and did not consider any of his ways. <sup>28</sup> The prayer of the poor comes to him, and he hears the cry of the afflicted. <sup>29</sup> When he forgives, who can then condemn? And when he turns his face away, who can forgive the people, or mankind altogether? <sup>30</sup> 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 רשעים = "their wickedness," reading רשעים instead of רשעים; takes מקום = "land"; connects ראים with ירא ("terror"); takes אשר על-כן = "because"; השבילו = "consider"; renders both ישקט and ישורנו by "forgives" (שבק); and, takes ממשקשי עם = "shall not reign over the people."

Vulgate translates:

<sup>26</sup> He hath struck them, as being wicked, in open sight. <sup>27</sup> Who as it were on purpose have revolted from him, and would not understand all his ways: <sup>28</sup> So that they caused the cry of the needy to come to him, and he heard the voice of the poor. <sup>29</sup> 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? <sup>30</sup> 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 noluerunt. 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 contempletur eum et super gentem et super omnes homines. qui regnare facit hominem hypocritam propter peccata populi*).<sup>15</sup>

It takes תחת = "as, for" (*quasi*); רשעים = "being wicked" (*impios*); עליו = "to him" (*ad eum*); והוא ישקט = "for when he grants peace" (*ipso enim concedente pacem*); ויסתר פנים = "When he hides his countenance" (*ex quo absconderit vultum*); ממלך = "who makes a man who is" (*qui regnare facit*); חנף = "hypocrite"; and, ממשקשי עם = "for the sins of the people" (*propter peccata populi*).

<sup>15</sup> This is the Douay-Rheims translation. Jerome has: 26. *et extinxit impios et gloriosos coram inimicis suis*, 27. *quia declinaverunt a lege dei, et iustitias eius non cognoverunt*, 28. *ut perferatur ad eum clamor pauperis, et clamorem pauperum exaudiet*. 29. *Ipse quietem dabit, et quis poterit condemnare? abscondit faciem, et quis uidebit eum? et contra gentem et contra hominem simul*. 30. *qui regnare fecit hominem hypocritam propter peruersitatem populi*. Cf. Carl P. Caspari, *Das Buch Hiob (1,1 - 38,16) in Hieronymos's Uebersetzung aus der alexandrinischen Version nach einer St. Gallener Handschrift* (London: Luzac, 1893), 102.

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.<sup>16</sup>

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

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

<sup>16</sup> David J. A. Clines, *Job 21-37*, WBC 18A (Dallas: Word Books, 2006), 745.

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

<sup>18</sup> Ludwig Hirzel, *Hiob* (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1885), 205.

<sup>19</sup> Arnold B. Ehrlich, *Psalmen, Sprüche, und Hiob* (vol. 6 of *Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinricks, 1918), 299. See commentary on v. 30:14.

<sup>20</sup> Dhorme, *Job*, 522. One finds in Sir 30:25 שְׁנוּת לֵב טוֹב תַּחַת מִטַּעֲמִים. Cf. also August Dillmann, *Hiob* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1891), 296.

sie Frevler wären,’ also etwa =  $\text{בְּ}$ .<sup>21</sup> Hahn understands תחת being multifaceted: “an der Stelle der Frevler, wie Frevler gestraft werden, und also als solche und wie solche.”<sup>22</sup> Hitzig says: “auch kann תחת nicht für תחת היות gesagt sein. ... Also denken wir lieber an *Stelle, Standort* (36:16, Richt 7:21, Jes 5:8).”<sup>23</sup>

Delitzsch explains: “תחת רשעים cannot signify: on the place of the evil-doers, i.e. in the place where evil-doers are punished (Hirzel, Hahn, and others), for תחת (תחתית) 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*).”<sup>24</sup> 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.”<sup>25</sup> Driver and Gray note that these interpretations of תחת “would imply that the כבירים were themselves not wicked: besides, תחת nowhere else means *like*. The text must thus be at fault.”<sup>26</sup>

Budde notes that:

Bickell beseitigte die Schwierigkeit, indem er תחת punktierte und als Subjekt hinter רשעים (zur Erklärung des Ausfalls besser hinter תחת) ergänzte: »sein Grimm zerbricht (Jes 9:3) die Frevler«. Damit wurde ספקם zu erwünschter Verlängerung von b frei. So für b auch Bickel.<sup>27</sup>

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.”<sup>28</sup>

Umbreit translates תחת רשעים by “Darum, das Frevle sie begingen.”<sup>29</sup> However, the meaning “darum” for תחת is not attested in

<sup>21</sup> Karl Budde, *Das Buch Hiob übersetzt und erklärt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1896), 206.

<sup>22</sup> Heinrich A. Hahn, *Commentar ueber das Buch Hiob* (Berlin: J. A. Wohlgenuth, 1850), 274.

<sup>23</sup> 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.”

<sup>24</sup> Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Book of Job*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1869), 257.

<sup>25</sup> Victor E. Reichert, *Job* (London: Soncino Press, 1960), 179.

<sup>26</sup> Driver and Gray, *Job* 2, 260.

<sup>27</sup> Budde, *Hiob*, 206.

<sup>28</sup> Driver and Gray, *Job* 1, 300.

<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup> Pope suggests that the preposition תחת might mean here “among,” as in 40:12.<sup>31</sup> 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).<sup>32</sup> Hakham has תחת = “in the place of the wicked, the actual place” (מקום ממש, במקום רשעים).<sup>33</sup> Arnheim has strangely “die Stellvertreter der Freveler” for תחת רשעים.<sup>34</sup> 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 ידעכו. He says: “Vielleicht ist v. 26a so zu lesen (... ידעכו מתחתם רשעים): ‘die Frevler sind von ihren platz gestossen.’”<sup>35</sup> Habel renders תחת by “because,”<sup>36</sup> Kissane reads תחת instead of MT תחת.<sup>37</sup>

- 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 רשעים “wicked,” reading רשעים “their wickedness.” Barton thinks that taking תחת רשעים = כרשעים is “hardly defensible.” He opts for the read-

<sup>30</sup> Konstantin Schlottmann, *Das Buch Hiob* (Berlin: Weigand and Grieben, 1851), 429.

<sup>31</sup> Pope, *Job*, 259. Dahood observes that: “In the light of Aqhat: V:6f., *yīb bap tgr tht adrm dbgrn* ‘He sits at the edge of the gate, among the mighty men who are on the thrashing floor,’ J. Greenfield has proposed that *taḥat*, parallel to b in Isa 57:5b denotes ‘among.’ The recognition of this signification of *taḥat*, also parallel to b, but in reverse order, leads to a clearer, though not entirely satisfactory understanding of the verse.” Cf. Mitchell J. Dahood, “Northwest Semitic Philology and Job,” in *The Bible in Current Catholic Thought, Gruenthaner Memorial Volume*, ed. John L. McKenzie (New York: Herder & Herder, 1962), 71.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Gordis, *The Book of Job: Commentary, New Translation, and Special Notes* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1978), 391.

<sup>33</sup> Amos Hakham, *ספר איוב* (Jerusalem: Mosad HaRav Kook, 1981), 265. Cf. Exod 16:29.

<sup>34</sup> Heymann Arnheim, *Das Buch Job* (Glogau: H. Prausnitz, 1836), 200. Arnheim finds a strong connection between v. 26 and v. 24. He says: “Sinn: Jene frevelten unter dem Deckmantel des Geheimnisses: darum ist auch ihre Strafe in Nacht gehüllt; diese ließen sich durch das Beispiel ihrer Vorgänger nicht abschrecken.”

<sup>35</sup> Beer, *Der Text*, 219. Beer notes that Ken. 384 has תחתם.

<sup>36</sup> Norman C. Habel, *The Book of Job: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 474.

<sup>37</sup> Edward J. Kissane, *The Book of Job* (Dublin: Browne & Nolan, 1939), 230. He inserts from v. 27a at the beginning of v. 26a reading על-כן תחת רשעים “Therefore has he smitten the wicked.”

ing רָשָׁעִים.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, this emendation has been adopted by many.<sup>39</sup> However, Dillman argues that in the Tanakh רָשָׁעִים is always the plural of רָשָׁע and not of רָשָׁע.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, the term רָשָׁעִים is not attested in the Tanakh, though possible. Duhm reads instead of v. 26a in the MT: וַיִּדְכְּאוּ וַיִּתְחַתּוּ תַּחַת רִסְסִים "Sie warden zermalt unter Trümmern."<sup>41</sup> Hakham assumes that the reading כְּרָשָׁעִים "as the wicked" is implied, and v. 26a refers to the כְּבִירִים (v. 24a).<sup>42</sup>

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

etwas bedenklich und nicht erwiesen ist, dass סָפַק *percutere* überhaupt bedeuten könne; so schlag ich vor, סָפַקְם zu lesen von סָפַק, das sich nach dem Syrischen: evacuation, vacuitas geben läßt.<sup>43</sup> Delitzsch explains that: "סָפַק, صَفَق, *complodere* ['to clap'], and then *ictu resonante percutere* ['to smack'], as the likewise cognate سَفَق signifies first to box the ear (as سَفَق = صَفَق), then so to strike that it smacks."<sup>44</sup>

Hitzig says: "סָפַק, hier transitive (s. zu V. 37) wie Jer 48:26 aktiv, besagt: *er schlägt* d. h. schleudert *sie hin*, dass es schallt."<sup>45</sup> Tur-Sinai maintains that the root שָׁפַק, סָפַק has the primary meaning "to fill the hand." He renders סָפַקְם by "invests them."<sup>46</sup> Good takes סָפַקְם = "jeers at them," but fails to explain how would we know when God jeers at someone.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>38</sup> George A. Barton, *Commentary on the Book of Job* (New York: Macmillan, 1911), 265.

<sup>39</sup> 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.

<sup>40</sup> Dillmann, *Hiob*, 296. The use of רָשָׁעִים as the plural of רָשָׁע in Ez 21:34 is debatable.

<sup>41</sup> Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Hiob* (Leipzig: J.C.B Mohr, 1897), 166.

<sup>42</sup> Hakham, אִיּוֹב, 265.

<sup>43</sup> Johann F. Gaab, *Das Buch Hiob* (Tübingen: J. G. Cotta'schen, 1809), 52.

<sup>44</sup> Delitzsch, *Job 2*, 257.

<sup>45</sup> Hitzig, *Hiob*, 254.

<sup>46</sup> 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.

<sup>47</sup> Edwin M. Good, *In Turns of Tempest: A Reading of Job with a Translation* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1990), 144-145.

- במקום ראים = “where all can see.” Budde finds v. 26b “ein wunderlich abschwächender Ausdruck für ‘vor aller Welt, vor Aller Augen.’”<sup>48</sup> Driver and Gray agree that “The phrase seems rather weak.”<sup>49</sup> Ehrlich says that במקום has the same meaning (i.e., “like” or “as”) as תחת. He reads רעים instead of MT ראים, in parallel with רשעים. Ehrlich suggests that: “במקום רעים im Sinne von ‘als gemeine Verbrecher’ zu fassen.”<sup>50</sup> Good renders ראים by “those who see.” He comments: “I think that the word is less casual than ‘onlookers’ may suggest.”<sup>51</sup> Tur-Sinai avers that: “ראים is not ‘seeing ones,’ but ‘impure ones,’ as ראי, ראו above, 33:21.”<sup>52</sup> Dhorme says: “we prefer to keep the present text and to restore to the hemistich normal proportions by placing the relative אשר, which overloads the beginning of v. 27 between במקום and ראים.”<sup>53</sup>
- כי-על-כן = “because.” For instance, Hirzel takes אשר-על-כן = אשר על-כן “den darum,” though אשר ≠ כי.<sup>54</sup> He says: “כי על כן geht auf das Folgende, wie 20:2, und wird in להביא v. 28 wieder aufgenommen: darum, um gelangen zu Machen.”<sup>55</sup> One wonders if the author could have expected the reader to make easily this connection. Hahn says:

Das אשר ist nicht das Pronomen, bezüglich auf die hohen Sünder: sie, die deshalb u. s. w., auch ist es nichtbegründet im Sinne von כי; denn deshalb u. s. w., das אשר-על-כן durch das vorgesetzte אשר relative Bedeutung: darum, weil.<sup>56</sup>

The phrase does not occur anywhere else in the Tanakh, and is obviously awkward.<sup>57</sup> One may wonder why the author used this phrase when he could have improved the meter by having כי instead. Hitzig notes that

כי על-כן nur hier statt des Gew. אשר על-כן (Gen 18:5, 19:8, Richt 6:22ff.) wie denn auch sonst אשר später für כי eintritt. כי ist

<sup>48</sup> Budde, *Hiob*, 206. Budde is uncertain “ob man ihn [v. 26b] nicht in seiner unverhüllten Prosa zu belassen und mit v. 25 als Glosse zu streichen hat.”

<sup>49</sup> Driver and Gray, *Job* 2, 260.

<sup>50</sup> Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 6, 316-317. He says: “vgl. Hos 2:1, wo תחת במקום steht, wenn auch in einem andern Sinne.”

<sup>51</sup> Good, *Turns*, 144.

<sup>52</sup> Tur-Sinai, *Job*, 483.

<sup>53</sup> Dhorme, *Job*, 522. He reads: במקום אשר ראים.

<sup>54</sup> Robert D. Holmstedt, “The Relative Clause in Biblical Hebrew: A Linguistic Analysis” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 2002), 6-20, <http://individual.utoronto.ca/holmstedt/HolmstedtDissertation.pdf>.

<sup>55</sup> Hirzel, *Hiob*, 205.

<sup>56</sup> Hahn, *Commentar*, 274.

<sup>57</sup> A somewhat similar expression, כי על-כן, occurs in Num 10:31, Ps 45:3.

unwesentlich; in על-יכן (z. Ps 45:3) oder לכן (V. 25) findet Umkehrung von Grund und Folge stat.<sup>58</sup>

Tur-Sinai suggests that the phrase is equivalent to על אשר, על כי, and the כן was added for emphasis.<sup>59</sup> However, he does not explain how his assumption could have led to the MT.

Budde observes that:

“Insofern” oder desgleichen heisst על-יכן nicht. Stellt man um אשר על-יכן oder streicht man על-יכן, so lässt sich להביא gerundivisch fassen “indem sie bringen” und v. 27f. als Begründung der Strafe in v. 25f.<sup>60</sup>

Schlottmann observes:

Manche nehmen das על אשר כן nach chaldäischer Weise als Versetzung für על כן אשר, aber letzteres kommt nicht vor und dagegen spricht auch schon dies, dass dadurch der schöne Zusammenhang von V. 27 und 28 zerrissen und V. 28 auf unerträgliche Weise isoliert würde.<sup>61</sup>

Dillmann explains that

die persönliche Fassung von אשר genügt (s. V. 19), und ist kein Grund, es (Hirzel, Delitzsch, Hitzig) = על כן zu nehmen; על-יכן weist auf das folgende (vgl. 20:2) und wird in ... להביא erklärt.<sup>62</sup>

Indeed, Duhm takes על-יכן being the original for which the variant אשר has been proposed and became part of the text.<sup>63</sup>

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

<sup>58</sup> Hitzig, *Hiob*, 254.

<sup>59</sup> Tur-Sinai, *Job*, 483.

<sup>60</sup> Budde, *Hiob*, 206. Budde says: “Das על-יכן kann als Erläuterung an den Rand geschrieben und eingedrungen sein.”

<sup>61</sup> Schlottmann, *Hiob*, 429.

<sup>62</sup> Dillmann, *Hiob*, 296.

<sup>63</sup> 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.”

<sup>64</sup> Georg H. A. Ewald, *Commentary on the Book of Job* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1882), 338.

<sup>65</sup> Driver and Gray, *Job I*, 300.

<sup>66</sup> The wicked are jeered because they are wicked and are wicked because they are jeered.

אשר zu lesen בן 'so' zu streichen (Beer) statt das jetzigen 'die darum.'"<sup>67</sup> However, neither Beer nor Fohrer provide any justification for this emendation.

- לְהֵבִיא עָלָיו = "to come to him."<sup>68</sup> However, in Hebrew "to come" is לָבוֹא and לְהֵבִיא is "to bring." Clines also takes עָלָיו = אֵלָיו 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."<sup>69</sup> This translation preserves the reading עָלָיו, but is too intrusive on the deity.

Dillmann suggests that עָלָיו has here the sense "in his presence."<sup>70</sup> Dahood says that: "this insight is confirmed by Ugaritic *ʿl* (also inscrip-tional Aramaic), which with certain verbs denotes 'in the presence of.'"<sup>71</sup> Delitzsch renders עָלָיו = "before him" (perhaps with the idea of urging forward).<sup>72</sup> Similarly, Duhm renders the phrase: "Vor sich zu bringen."<sup>73</sup> 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.<sup>74</sup>

This is a rather strange theological perspective.

Driver and Gray observe that whether לְהֵבִיא "is dependent on עַל or on the verb in 27, the meaning is the same. The verse expresses the intention of the actions described in 27."<sup>75</sup> Dhorme says:

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

<sup>67</sup> Georg Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob* (KAT 16; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1963), 464.

<sup>68</sup> So also translate Beer (*Der Text*, 219); Kissane (*Job*, 229); and others. Kennicott MS 125 and Rossi MS 349 have אֵלָיו.

<sup>69</sup> Driver and Gray, *Job* 1, 300.

<sup>70</sup> Dillmann, *Hiob*, 296. Dillmann renders: "vor ihn zu bringen," relying on 2 Sam 15:4.

<sup>71</sup> Dahood, "Northwest," 69.

<sup>72</sup> Delitzsch, *Job* 2, 258. Similarly, Schlottmann (*Hiob*, 429) renders by "Um vor ihn zu bringen."

<sup>73</sup> Duhm, *Hiob*, 166. Duhm observes: "Der Satz [v. 26] führt die Rede auf ein Nebengelese; es handelt sich nicht darum zu erklären, warum gewisse Leute zermalmt werden, sondern darum, dass Gott die Schuldigen zu treffen weiss. Diese züchtigt er, wie v. 28 fortfährt."

<sup>74</sup> Ewald, *Job*, 338.

<sup>75</sup> Driver and Gray, *Job* 2, 261.

erately chosen because what is in question is a prayer which rises to God.<sup>76</sup>

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

- וַיִּשְׁמַע = "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 ישמע in v. 27. However, the word reflects God's reaction as do ישקט and יסתר. It should logically belong to v. 28.
- וְהוּא יִשְׁקֵט וּמִי יִרְשָׁע = "if he is quiet." Hahn notes that some commentators, relying on the Arabic سقط "to fall," gave the sense 'zu Boden stürzen.' However, in his opinion "Allein wir haben durchaus kein Recht abzugeben von der gesicherten Bedeutung des Wortes: Ruhe haben."<sup>84</sup> The verb יִשְׁקֵט, *defectiva hip 'il* imperfect of שקט, means "he quiets." In Hebrew "he is quiet" = שׁוֹקֵט or יִשְׁקֵט. The translation revocalizes יִשְׁקֵט and supplements "if." It should be noted that the *hip 'il* of שקט could be intransitive (Isa 57:20).<sup>85</sup> Moreover, the phrase וְהוּא יִשְׁקֵט is not

<sup>76</sup> Dhorme, *Job*, 523.

<sup>77</sup> Habel, *Job*, 474.

<sup>78</sup> A. Z. Rabinovitz and A. Abronin, *איוב* (Jaffa: Shushni, 1916), 85.

<sup>79</sup> BDB, 775b; Gordis, *Job*, 392.

<sup>80</sup> Hahn, *Hiob*, 274.

<sup>81</sup> Fohrer, *Hiob*, 463.

<sup>82</sup> Barton, *Job*, 265.

<sup>83</sup> Hitzig, *Hiob*, 254. Hitzig argues that common interpretations assume עליו = אליו relying on the identity of the suffixes in v. 27 and 28. He notes: "Aber sie lassen die Sache doch nicht selbstthätig (Ex 18:22) an Gott gelangen, bringen sie nicht an ihn; auch sollte Vers 27, sich nicht auf die negative Kategorieen סור und השביל לא beschränken, in welchen Bedrückung der Armen nicht enthalten und nicht angedeutet ist. In eine Verbindung wie diese konnte kein Leser על im Sinne von אל verstehn."

<sup>84</sup> Hahn, *Hiob*, 275. Cf. Umbreit, *Hiob*, 327.

<sup>85</sup> For instance Budde (*Hiob*, 207) observes: "יִשְׁקֵט als Hiph. kann zwar nach Jes 7:4, 57:20, Jer 49:23, Hi 37:17 'Ruhe halten' bedeuten; doch dürfte die Punktierung, zumal das von Gott nicht vorkommt, auf falscher causativer Auffassung beruhen. Lies daher יִשְׁקֵט." Schlottmann (*Hiob*, 430), for instance, prefers to consider here ישקט being intransitive.

conditional. Driver and Gray argue that “both lines [29a and 29b] are conditional sentences without conditional particles: for the rhetorical question as the apodosis.”<sup>86</sup>

Dillmann explains that:

השקִיט ist nicht Ruhe und Glück spenden Ps 94:13, sondern *Ruche schaffen* gegen die schreienden Gewaltthater 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.<sup>87</sup>

Ehrlich notes that:

Waw in והוא ist begründet, für יִשְׁקֵט ist aber יִשְׁקֵט zu vokalisieren und יִרְשֶׁע in יִרְשֶׁע zu ändern. Sonach erhält man für v. 29a den Sinn: den wenn er sich untätig verhält, wer kann dann gerettet werden?<sup>88</sup>

Dhorme rendered יִשְׁקֵט והוא by “if He rests.”<sup>89</sup> Good takes יִשְׁקֵט = “he gives content” (i.e. “freedom from care and discomfort”), which does not capture the sense of שקט in Hebrew and Arabic.<sup>90</sup> The reading יִשְׁקֵט has been adopted by many.<sup>91</sup> Guillaume notes that:

One MS has *yīšqôṭ*, 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 *yaqšîṭ* (see Prov 22:21 for the noun and of Arabic *qasata*, ‘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.’<sup>92</sup>

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

Hitzig says: “יִרְשֶׁע Gegensatz; und unter Vergleichung von Jes 14:16 mit 2 Chron 14:14 schreiben wir יִרְשֶׁע.”<sup>93</sup> In Deltzsch’s opinion,

<sup>86</sup> Driver and Gray, *Job* 2, 261.

<sup>87</sup> Dillmann, *Hiob*, 296.

<sup>88</sup> Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 6, 317.

<sup>89</sup> Dhorme, *Job*, 523.

<sup>90</sup> Good, *Turns*, 145.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Kennicott MS 235; Budde, *Hiob*, 207; Barton, *Job*, 266; Kissane, *Job*, 229. The *hip* ‘il of שקט nowhere else in the Tanakh refers to God.

<sup>92</sup> Alfred Guillaume, “Arabic Background of the Book of Job,” in *Promise and Fulfillment: FS for S. H. Hooke*, ed. F. F. Bruce (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1963), 122.

<sup>93</sup> Hitzig, *Hiob*, 255. The cited source 2 Chr 14:14 does not appear correct (1 Sam 14:47?).

The conjecture יִרְעַשׁ is not required either here or 1 Sam 14:47 (where הרשיע signifies to punish the guilty); יִרְשַׁע is also not to be translated *turbabit* (Rosenmüller), since רִשַׁע (رسع, رسع) according to its primitive notion does not signify "to be restless, to rage," but "to be relaxed, hollow" (opposite of צדק, صق, to be hard, firm, tight).<sup>94</sup>

Gordis says:

יִרְעַשׁ 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 יִרְעַשׁ (Hitzig, Delitzsch) and יִרְשַׁע (Ehrlich) are *Schlimmverbesserungen* (Budde).<sup>95</sup>

Rabinovitz and Abronin note that רשע is kindred to רתע in Aramaic, which means "to tremble, to be excited."<sup>96</sup> This meaning would fit ישקט better.

- וְיִסְתֵּר פָּנָיו וּמִי יִשׁוּרְנוּ = "If he hides his face, who can see him?" Budde says:

d. h. trotziger Versuch der Selbsthilfe ändert nichts, es gilt zu warten, bis Gottes Gerichte reif sind. Obgleich das zulässig ist, wäre hier eher an eine genauere Parallele zu ירשע, etwa מי יִסְרְנוּ 'wer dürfte ihn tadeln?' (vgl. 40:1) zu denken.<sup>97</sup>

Delitzsch observes:

The *Waw* of ומי 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.<sup>98</sup>

- וְעַל-גּוֹי וְעַל-אָדָם יָחַד = "Yet he rules over nations and individuals alike."<sup>99</sup> 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."<sup>100</sup> Gordis says that attaching

<sup>94</sup> Delitzsch, *Job* 2, 258.

<sup>95</sup> Gordis, *Job*, 392. Gordis finds in v. 29a an idea that is similar to that of Isaiah (Isa 57:20). The emendation יִרְעַשׁ has also been adopted by Beer (*Der Text*, 219); Dhorme (*Job*, 543).

<sup>96</sup> Rabinovitz and Abronin, *איוב*, 85. Cf. 1 Sam 14:47.

<sup>97</sup> Budde, *Hiob*, 207.

<sup>98</sup> Delitzsch, *Job* 2, 258.

<sup>99</sup> 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.

<sup>100</sup> Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 6, 317.



stich c to the next verse "improves the rhythm of both verses substantially."<sup>101</sup> Fohrer thinks that "Über dem Volk und über den Menschen insgesamt ist als erläuternde Glosse zu 'wahrnehmen' zu streichen."<sup>102</sup> Hirzel suggests that על = "gegen."<sup>103</sup>

Good takes אדם = "race," but most modern interpreters opt for "individual," in antithesis to גוי.<sup>104</sup> For instance, Delitzsch explains:

God rules both over the mass and over individuals alike, יחד gives intensity to the equality thus correlatively (*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.<sup>105</sup>

Habel keeps this colon in v. 29 and understands it as a detailing of who would not be able to see God.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Gordis, *Job*, 392. He suggests that "the double Vav means 'both ... and' as in Arabic *wa ... wa*" (BDB, 253a).

<sup>102</sup> 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 ישקט and ויסתר פנים: 'sei es nun über ein Volk, sei es über den [einzelnen] Menschen (hier auffallend für גבר oder איש) gleicherweise«, 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!"

<sup>103</sup> Hirzel, *Hiob*, 206. Cf. Aron Pinker, "Upon an Attack in Nahum 2:2," *JHScr* 4 (2002-2003), 1-4.

<sup>104</sup> Good, *Turns*, 145. Good consistently translates אדם by "race" also in v. 30. Driver and Gray (*Job* 2, 262-263) note that "the singular אדם 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 על אדם and גוי ועל אדם is the original text, and, if so, whether it means *towards a nation or towards an individual*." Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 6, 317, says: "Das erste אדם bezeichnet nicht einen einzelnen Menschen im gegensatz zu גוי, sondern hat ungefähr denselben Sinn wie dieses."

<sup>105</sup> Delitzsch, *Job* 2, 259.

<sup>106</sup> 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 יַעַר oder יַעַר [wacht er], vgl. Cap. 8:6.”<sup>107</sup> Ehrlich considers יחד being a corruption of יחז “he sees” (*achtet er*).<sup>108</sup> However, the *ketib-qere* apparatus does not attest to the ד/ז confusion.<sup>109</sup> Dahood explains that יחד is a dialectical form of חזי “see.”<sup>110</sup> Kissane reads יחז (or יחס) instead of יחד.<sup>111</sup> The *ketib-qere* apparatus does not attest to ד/ז or ד/ס confusions.

- מְמַלֵּךְ אֲדָם חֲנֵף = “so that the godless would not govern.” MT does not have a word that corresponds to “so,” and מְמַלֵּךְ ≠ “would not govern.” Delitzsch takes מ = מְהִיזֵת and renders “in order that godless men may not rule” (e.g. 2 Kgs 23:33, Isa 7:8 מעם, 25:2, Jer 48:2 מגוי, and the like).<sup>112</sup> Hakham understands v. 30 as meaning “because ... rules them” (מחמת ש... מולך עליהם).<sup>113</sup> Kissane reads מְלַךְ (“delivering”) instead of מְמַלֵּךְ, assuming מ dittography, and he takes חֲנֵף = “miscreant,” which is unattested in the Tanakh.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, Gordis notes that interpretations of v. 30a are often “an unconscious or tacit emendation of מְמַלֵּךְ to מְמַלֵּךְ, a reading which virtually all moderns propose.”<sup>115</sup>

The adjective חֲנֵף means “profane, irreligious, godless,” but not “wicked.” Duhm says: “In v. 30 halte ich אֲדָם חֲנֵף für ein Interpretament zu dem folgenden Ausdruck: einer von den Fallstricken des Volkes, einer der das Volk umgarnt und für sich ausnützt.”<sup>116</sup> Habel renders אדם

<sup>107</sup> Duhm, *Hiob*, 167. The וח/ע confusion is attested in 1 Sam 17:7 where we have וּחָץ (*ketib*) and וַעֲץ (*qere*); in Exod 28:26 עֵבֶר (MT) חֶבֶר and (Samaritan); in Deut 32:14 חֶמֶר (MT) עֶמֶר and (Samaritan); Septuagint reads in Job 24:12 חֲלָלִים instead of חָלָלִים; Septuagint reads in Job 29:7 שָׁחַר instead of שָׁעַר; there is an opinion that the Easterners (מדנחאי) had in 2 Chr 34:13 וַיִּחַתֵּר (*ketib*) and וַיַּעֲתֵר (*qere*); perhaps in Prov 26:17 one should read מְתַחֲבֵר instead of מְתַעֲבֵר; perhaps in Zech 12:3 one should read חֲמִסִּיָּה instead of עֲמִסִּיָּה. Cf. Aron Pinker, “On the Interpretation of Proverbs 12:27,” *JBTC* 18 (2013): 1-8.

<sup>108</sup> Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 6, 317. Ehrlich is followed by Dhorme, *Job*, 524.

<sup>109</sup> In Job 17:1, נֹזְעָבוּ is usually understood as נֹזְעָבוּ.

<sup>110</sup> Mitchell Dahood, “Ugaritic-Hebrew Lexicography,” *Bib* 45 (1964): [393-412] 407-408.

<sup>111</sup> Kissane, *Job*, 230.

<sup>112</sup> Delitzsch, *Job* 2, 259.

<sup>113</sup> Hakham (איוב), 266, note 25) considers v. being the continuation of v. 28.

<sup>114</sup> Kissane, *Job*, 230 and 229.

<sup>115</sup> Gordis, *Job*, 392.

<sup>116</sup> Duhm, *Hiob*, 167.

הַנָּה by “condemned,” which is unattested in the Tanakh.<sup>117</sup> Dhorme moves הַנָּה to the beginning of v. 31.<sup>118</sup>

- מִמְקֵשֵׁי עָם = “and a people should not be ensnared.” MT does not have the conjunctive. The noun מִקֵּשֵׁי cannot correspond to the verb “ensnared,” and the מ prefixing מִקֵּשֵׁי is not equivalent to “not” but to “from” (מִן) or “from being” (מִהְיֹוֹת) 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.<sup>119</sup>

Gordis renders v. 30b: “because of the snares set by the people”; i.e., because of the offenses committed by them.<sup>120</sup> Kissane reads עָנִי (“affliction”) instead of MT עָם, apparently assuming the ligature ם = גִּי.<sup>121</sup> Hakham assumes that מִמְקֵשֵׁי = מִמְלֶךְ מִקֵּשֵׁי.<sup>122</sup>

### 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?<sup>123</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Habel, *Job*, 474.

<sup>118</sup> Dhorme, *Job*, 524.

<sup>119</sup> Good, *Turns*, 144. Cf. Tur-Sinai, *Job*, 484. Tur-Sinai, *Job*, 484, suggests the reading מִמְקֵשֵׁי “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.”

<sup>120</sup> 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.

<sup>121</sup> Kissane, *Job*, 230.

<sup>122</sup> Hakham, אִיּוֹב, 266. Cf. Exod 10:7.

<sup>123</sup> 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.<sup>124</sup>

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.<sup>125</sup>

- (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:

Nämlich השקוט und הסתיר פנים können nicht die scheinbare Unthätigkeit Gottes beim hilfsgeschrei der Leidenden, als Gegensatz

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passionate, Delivering a miscreant from the snares of affliction." This would be injustice, not compassion.

<sup>124</sup> Good, *Turns*, 328.

<sup>125</sup> Habel, *Job*, 485. Habel (*Job*, 476) says that v. 30: "seems to be corrupt and miss- ing at least one verb."

zu der vorher beschriebenen richtenden Tätigkeit 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.<sup>126</sup>

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.<sup>127</sup>

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."<sup>128</sup> 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."<sup>129</sup> At least these sentiments suggest that תחת is

<sup>126</sup> Dillmann, *Hiob*, 296.

<sup>127</sup> Barton, *Job*, 266.

<sup>128</sup> Beer, *Der Text*, 219.

<sup>129</sup> Fohrer, *Hiob*, 464.

suspicious. One also notes the structural and thematic similarity between v. 26 and v. 20aα (רָגַע יָמָתוֹ וְחָצוֹת לַיְלָה):

- (i) both verses head the respective units vv. 20-25 and vv. 26-30;
- (ii) 20aα is a 2:2 verse and v. 26 is 'almost' (*sans* רשעים) 2:2;
- (iii) in v. 20aα 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) במקום in v. 26 parallels ימתו in v. 20aα and correspondingly are ראים and חצות לילה anti-parallel.<sup>130</sup>

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

אחת 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 ת/א 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 ת in the paleo script, and demonstrated its utility for resolving the difficulties in Ps 22:17. He says,

Ps. 22,17 כי סבבוני כלבים עדת מרעים הקיפוני פָּאָרִי יְדֵי וְרַגְלֵי. Kaum ein Wort in den Psalmen hat zu so vielen, zum Teil sonderbarn Erklärungen Anlass gegeben wie פָּאָרִי. Statt dessen haben die Alten (Verss., מדרש תהלים, Massora, s. Grätz z. St.) ein verbum בארו gelesen, das zwar ebensowenig verständlich wie die Masoretische La. ist, aber dem Richtigen näher ist. Der Parallelismus mit Vers 13 בשן פְּתוּרֹנִי פְּרִים רַבִּים אֲבִירֵי בֶשֶׂן פְּתוּרֹנִי macht es fast zur Gewissheit, dass פְּתוּרֹנִי zu lesen sei. Die Aehnlichkeit von א und ת in der alten Schrift hat diesen Fehler herbeigeführt.<sup>131</sup>

Though Perles does not suggest other instances of the א/ת 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 וַתֹּאמֶר קְנִיתִי אִישׁ אֶת־יְהוָה.<sup>132</sup> If in this case א/ת confusion is assumed we obtain וַתֹּאמֶר קְנִיתִי אִישׁ תְּתִיחֶנּוּ ("I acquired a men to give God"). This interpretation, suggesting human sacrifice,

<sup>130</sup> The similarity between במקום ראים and חצות לילה is particularly noticeable in the Septuagint's interpretation of v. 26.

<sup>131</sup> Felix Perles, *Analekten zur Textkritik des Alten testaments* (München: Theodor Ackermann, 1895), 50.

<sup>132</sup> Naphtali H. Tur-Sinai, *כרך הספר* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1960), 410.

gives an intriguing twist to Cain's actions, which are rather puzzling in the MT. Another case might be the statement *אֵם-אֶתָּה לֹו שְׁמַעְנִי* in Gen 23:13. If *אתָּה* is understood as the 2nd person masculine then the following *לֹו שְׁמַעְנִי* does not connect logically with it. However, using the *א/ת* confusion we could read *אֵם-אֶתָּה לִי שְׁמַעְנִי*, and then the following cogent text is obtained: "If you gave (or, you are ready to give) it to me, then hear me."<sup>133</sup> Other instances where the *א/ת* confusion might have occurred could be:

- (i) In Num 24:21b one could read *מִזְשָׁבָד וְשִׁים בְּסֹלֶע קִנָּה* to improve its sense and inner parallelism.
- (ii) In Jer 4:11 one could read *רוּחַ צַח שְׁפִים בְּמִדְבָּר דָּרָךְ בְּאֶ-עַמִּי* "like a searing wind from the heights of the desert coming to my people" instead of MT *רוּחַ צַח שְׁפִים בְּמִדְבָּר דָּרָךְ בְּתֶ-עַמִּי*.
- (iii) In Ezek 21:28b one could read *וְהוֹאֲמִזְכִּיר עֹון לְהֶאֱפֵשׂ* "and he reminds his sin to nullify (them)" instead of MT *וְהוֹאֲמִזְכִּיר עֹון לְהֶתַּפֵּשׂ*.
- (iv) It is possible that the difficult Ps 77:3 should be read *בְּיוֹם צָרָתִי אֲדַנִּי דְרִשְׁתִּי יָדַי לַיְלָה נִגְדָה וְלֹא אָפּוּג* "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.<sup>134</sup>
- (v) In MT Ps 137:5, *אֵם-אֶשְׁכַּחַךְ יְרוּשָׁלַם תִּשְׁכַּח יְמִינִי*, one is confronted with the impossible notion that the hand has a memory, and what it will forget is not clear.<sup>135</sup> A more logical reading would be *אֵם-אֶשְׁכַּחַךְ יְרוּשָׁלַם אֶשְׁכַּח יְמִינִי* "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 *תחת* instead of the original *אחת* 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

<sup>133</sup> The form *תָּתָה* occurs in 2 Sam 22:41.

<sup>134</sup> Tur-Sinai, *ברך הספר*, 430. Cf. Ps 116:14, 18.

<sup>135</sup> Usually Ps 137:5 is rendered: "If I forget Jerusalem, let my hand wither." Cf. Tur-Sinai, *ברך הספר*, 122.

example for the coexistence of the two styles even at some later time.<sup>136</sup> Jewish papyri (*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.<sup>137</sup> 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 אחת during the period in which the two scripts coexisted. It is possible that a copyist, coming across אחת (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 אחת perhaps to argue that God reveals himself "only in one" way to humans. Moreover, the reading אחת makes eminent sense. The two phrases אחת ספקם (v. 26) and רגע ימתו (v. 20aα) seem to be expressing the same idea. Thus, v. 26 in MT is unbalanced, as most commentators noticed.<sup>138</sup>

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 אַחַת סְפָקָם בְּמִקוֹם רְאִים "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

<sup>136</sup> Samuel R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1890), xxii.

<sup>137</sup> Archibald H. Sayce and Arthur E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri Discovered at Assuan* (London: A. Moring, 1906), Papyrus 5.

<sup>138</sup> Dhorme, *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."



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say to God: Depart from us! And we desire not the knowledge of your ways.”<sup>139</sup>

These are not the only possibilities for resolving the awkwardness of אשר על-כן. It is obvious that v. 27 identifies the referent for v. 26, as in v. 20, אשר על-כן, does for the preceding line. Thus the relative particle אשר has to stay in v. 27 and אשר על-כן must be moved.<sup>140</sup> This approach leads to the coherent 3-beat colon אשר סרו מאחריו “that turned aside from following Him,” and makes v. 27 into a 3:3 rhythm verse.

Verse 21 is in essence a poetically expanded כל דרכי וצעדי איש יראה, which shares with v. 27b the words כל, דרך, and ישכיל = יראה. 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 וכל hat man וְאֵל zu lesen. אל השכיל ist dasselbe wie ל השכיל und heist, Rücksicht nehmen auf, berücksichtigen; sieh zu Prov 21:2 und vgl. Ps 41:2.”<sup>141</sup> 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*

אֲשֶׁר סָרוּ מֵאַחֲרָיו  
וְכָל-דַּרְכָּיו לֹא הִשְׁכִּילוּ

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 אשר על-כן “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).

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<sup>139</sup> 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.

<sup>140</sup> Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 6, 317. Ehrlich says: “אשר bezieht sich auf das im Vorhergehenden beschriebene Verfahren Gottes gegen die frevelnden Herrscher und ist Subjekt des Satzes, während das darauf Folgende das Prädikat bildet.”

<sup>141</sup> Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 6, 317. The א/כ 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 כן להביא to point on to להביא, 'who *therefore* have turned aside from after him, ... *in order to bring*.'"<sup>142</sup> This would assume knowledge of intent, which is speculative and unnecessary. It is possible to understand להביא = "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 עליו and context would make God as the most likely referent in v. 28. However, this would require reading אלו instead of MT עליו (cf. Gen 18:21). It is notable that the אל/על 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.<sup>143</sup>

It seems logical to attach ישמע to the next verse, since v. 28 is focused on the anguish of the poor and ישמע describes God's reaction, as do the verbs in v. 29a. Also, without ישמע a 3:3 verse is obtained, that reads:

על-כן להביא אליו צעקת-דל וצעקת עניים

*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 Eingreifens 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.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>142</sup> Driver and Gray, *Job* 2, 260.

<sup>143</sup> BDB, 41a, note that: "There is a tendency in Hebrew, especially manifest in Samuel, Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, to use אל in the sense of על."

<sup>144</sup> 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  
והוא ישקט ומי ירשע  
ויסתר פנים ומי ישורנו

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

ישמע והוא ישקט ומי ירשע  
ישמע ויסתר פנים ומי ישורנו

In addition to God's public (obvious) punishment of the wicked, it is also possible that God might seem apathetic (Hab 1:2-3), *יִשְׁקֵט*. He might hold back His benevolence, or metaphorically 'cover his face' not to see (Hab 2:13), *יִסְתֵּר פָּנָיו*. 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 *ועל* should be understood as *or if*,<sup>145</sup> thus, *ועל* = "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."<sup>146</sup>

It seems more logical and useful to connect v. 29b with v. 30 and read *יָחַר* instead of *יָחַד*. The likelihood of a *ד/ר* confusion is well-attested in the *ketib-qere* apparatus and the Tanakh.<sup>147</sup> *יָחַר*, which occurs many times in the Tanakh, is the *qal* imperfect of *חָרָה* "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

<sup>145</sup> BDB, 252b

<sup>146</sup> Ewald, *Job*, 338. There is nothing in MT that corresponds to "coming with punishment"; v. 29b has no verbs.

<sup>147</sup> One finds in the *Ketib-Qere* apparatus this confusion in: 2 Sam 13:37 *עמיחור* (*K*) but *עמיחוד* (*Q*); 2 Kgs 16:6 *וארומים* (*K*) but *ואדומים* (*Q*); Ps 19:19, Prov 19:19 *גַּל* (*K*) but *גַּל* (*Q*); Jer 2:2 *אעבוד* (*K*) but *אעבור* (*Q*); Jer 31:39 *השרמות* (*K*) but *השדמות* (*Q*); and Ezra 8:14 *וזבוד* (*K*) but *וזכור* (*Q*). Also, in Josh 15:52 *ודומה* but *ורומה* in some MSS (*Tanach Koren*, 11 end); 2 Sam 8 (many), 1 Chr 18 (many) *הדרעזר* – *הדרעזר* in some MSS (*Tanach Koren*, 12 end); in Hab 3:12 – Septuagint reads "you will bring low" (*ὀλιγώσεις*), probably reading *תצער* instead of *תצעד*; in Hab 3:13 – Septuagint translates *יסוד* as "bands or bonds" (*δεσμούς*), implying a reading *יסור* or *אסור*; Hab 3:16 – Septuagint translates *יגודנו* as "of my sojourning" (*יגורנו?*).

Einzelne verhängt Er in zorne vernichtende Strafgerechte."<sup>148</sup> 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 יָחַר instead of יָחַד, sets us obviously on a punitive interpretation of v. 30.

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

Dillmann rightly says: "Die Lesart מְמַלְךְ (Theodotion, Targum) erlaubt keine richtige Erklärung von מִמְקֵשִׁי."<sup>149</sup> This difficulty can be resolved by noting that a simple and frequent error of metathesis occurred. One should read מְמַלְכֵי instead of מִמְקֵשִׁי. קָמוֹשׁ is a collective term for "thistles, nettles."<sup>150</sup> The קָמוֹשׁ 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 מוֹקֵשׁ (21 times). The phrase מְמַלְכֵי עַם probably referred to the useless but potentially harmful among the aristocrats.<sup>151</sup> This term fits well the image of the חֲנֹף. If the word אָדָם is deleted and the construct form מְמַלְכֵי עַם is considered a single word v. 29b+30 becomes a 3:3 verse.<sup>152</sup>

Verse 29b+30 can be now restored as follows

וּעֲלֵ-גוֹי וְעַל-אָדָם יָחַר מְמַלְכֵי חֲנֹף מְמַלְכֵי-עַם

*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)

<sup>148</sup> Hahn, *Hiob*, 275.

<sup>149</sup> Dillman, *Hiob*, 297.

<sup>150</sup> Jehuda Feliks, *Plant World of the Bible (in Hebrew)* (Massada: Ramat Gan, 1968), 211. Feliks describes the קָמוֹשׁ as a plant that wildly spreads in areas that became uninhabited. Classical Jewish commentators (Ibn Ganah, Rashi, Radak) the קָמוֹשׁ as *Urtica*.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. Judg 9:9-15, where a bad king is likened to a bramble (אֶטֶד), and 2 Kgs 14:9-10 where an insignificant king is compared to a brier (חֹזֶה).

<sup>152</sup> Budde, *Hiob*, 207. Budde says: "Die Kürze des Gliedes ist ... störend: bei unserer Auffassung wäre ein מְשַׁל 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:

<i>Once he strikes them in the place of (those) seeing.</i>	אַחַת סָפְקָם בְּמִקּוֹם-רְאִים
<i>[Those] that turned aside from Him,</i>	אַשֶׁר סָרוּ מֵאַחֲרָיו
<i>And have not wised up to comprehend His ways.</i>	וְכַל-דַּרְכָּיו לֹא הִשְׁכִּילוּ
<i>Therefore supplying to Him,</i>	עַל-כֵּן לְהַבִּיא אֵלָיו
<i>the cry of the poor and the cry of the afflicted.</i>	צַעֲקוֹת-דָּל וְצַעֲקוֹת עֲנִיִּים
<i>He listens,</i>	יִשְׁמַע
<i>And if he keeps quiet, who can condemn him?</i>	וְהוּא יִשְׁקֵט וּמִי יִרְשַׁע
<i>And if he hides his face, who can see him?</i>	וְיִסְתֵּר פָּנָיו וּמִי יִשׁוּרְנוּ
<i>Or if upon a nation and man he angers,</i>	וְעַל-גּוֹי וְעַל-אָדָם יַחַר
<i>he enthrones a hypocrite from the 'thistles' of the elite.</i>	מִמְלֶכֶת חֲנֹף מִקְמֹשֵׁי-עַם

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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