

**The Problem of Despair:**  
**A Kierkegaardian Reading of the *Book of Job***

Richard Oxenberg

**Abstract**

The *Book of Job* is often read as the Bible's response to theodicy's 'problem of evil'. As a resolution to the logical difficulties of this problem, however, it is singularly unsatisfying. Job's ethical protest against God is never addressed at the level of the ethical. But suggested in Job's final encounter with God is the possibility of a spiritual resolution beyond the ethical. In this paper I examine the *Book of Job* as a response to the spiritual problem of *despair*; despair engendered by the ethical problem of evil. My reading is informed by Kierkegaard's analysis of despair in *The Sickness unto Death*, and Stephen Mitchell's extraordinary translation of the *Book of Job*, as well as his insightful commentary.

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There is a neat little conundrum in the philosophy of religion called 'the problem of evil'. It goes like this: If God is all good and all powerful, how could he allow evil in the world? The existence of evil seems to imply that either God hasn't the power to prevent it, or he hasn't the goodness. In either case, God would be less than we conceive him. This dilemma is often presented as if it represents a particular problem for God. God's reputation is at stake. The devout are called on to defend it. Milton tells us that he wrote *Paradise Lost* in order to 'justify the ways of God to man'. Various answers are contemplated. Maybe it's really all our fault: God's justice compels him to punish our iniquity. Or maybe we live in the best of all possible worlds: it's just that possibility isn't all it's cracked up to be. Or perhaps 'goodness' doesn't mean the same thing for God as it does for us: God slips through a divine loophole. Or maybe it's simply a 'mystery': we can't quite say how, but somehow, all the logic gets cleaned up in the end, with God's goodness and power intact.

Or, if we take the problem seriously enough, we might resort to atheism. Stendahl is reputed to have said 'God's only excuse is that he doesn't exist.' But although atheism may suffice to resolve the logical dilemma, there's a hitch. Having done away with God, we have still not done away with evil. The logical conundrum vanishes but what is left in its place is the bare fact of implacable evil – without even the charm of a logical puzzle to distract us.

The point is that the problem of evil was never a problem for God to begin with. God is, God isn't: evil remains. The problem of evil, on a spiritual level, is a problem for 'faith' – not faith in some particular concept of God or faith in some specific creed, but faith in

life itself. Given the evils of the world, given death and the inevitability of having all things stripped away, given disabling physical maladies, psychic torment, emotional heartache, human cruelty, how is one to avoid despair? This is the problem that 'evil' presents to the spirit of the human being. What is at stake is the worth of existence itself, and one's ability to affirm it.

In Kierkegaard's *The Sickness Unto Death* despair is identified with the state of sin itself. To despair is to be at odds with being, being as a whole, and one's own being in particular. Kierkegaard speaks of two types of despair – the despair of wishing to escape oneself and being unable to. And the despair of wishing to establish oneself in and by oneself and being unable to. These two forms of despair bear a dialectical relationship to one another. The inability to achieve perfect control over one's self and one's situation, i.e., establish oneself in and by oneself (which would entail perfect control over the universe as a whole), leads to the desire to escape one's self and one's situation. The desire to escape one's self and one's situation leads to the desire to establish one's self in and by oneself. Both forms of despair amount to a refusal, or inability, to accept one's situation for what it is: a finite life under God.

The Biblical book that is most often associated with the problem of evil is the book of *Job*. All of Job's worldly goods and comforts are stripped away from him and he is left in unrelenting pain and misery. In this state he maligns the justice of God. After some debate as to Job's sinfulness on the part of friends who come initially to console him but end by suggesting that he is to blame for his own misfortune, Job is visited by a vision of God. This vision, terrible and awesome, changes Job in some way, and he ceases to protest.

As a response to the logical problem of evil there is something extremely dissatisfying about the book of *Job*. God never defends himself against Job's accusations. He does *not*, like Milton, attempt to 'justify the ways of God to man'. In fact, from one point of view, his aim seems merely to intimidate Job into silence. He does not do this by threatening

Job himself, but by overwhelming him with a vision of divine might that leaves Job speechless. Job comes to see his impotence in relation to God and 'repents'.

What I would like to suggest, though, is that the book of Job might best be read, not as a treatment of the logical problem of evil, but as a response to the problem of faith and despair, understood precisely in the Kierkegaardian sense. In the following I would like to present a reading of the book of Job as informed by Kierkegaard's *The Sickness Unto Death*. I will be using Stephen Mitchell's extraordinary translation of *Job*, along with his penetrating commentary, for this purpose.

The book of Job is divided into three sections, prologue, main body and epilogue. The prologue and epilogue are written in storybook prose, the main body is presented in stunning poetry, made especially vibrant in Mitchell's translation. The book begins with a visit to God on the part of the 'Accusing Angel':

"Once upon a time, in the land of Uz, there was a man named Job. He was a man of perfect integrity, who feared God and avoided evil. He had seven sons and three daughters; seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred donkeys; and also many slaves. He was the richest man in the East.

"Every year, his sons would hold a great banquet, in the house of each of them in turn, and they would invite their sisters to come feast with them. When the week of celebration was over, Job would have them come to be purified; for he thought, 'Perhaps my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.'" Job did this every year.

"One year, on the day when the angels come to testify before the Lord, the Accusing Angel came too.

"The Lord said to the Accuser, "Where have you come from?"

"The Accuser answered, "from walking here and there on the earth, and looking around."

"The Lord said, "Did you notice my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him: a man of perfect integrity, who fears God and avoids evil."

The Accuser said, "Doesn't Job have a good reason for being so good? Haven't you put a hedge around him – himself and his whole family and everything he has? You bless whatever he does, and the land is teeming with his cattle. But just reach out and strike everything he has, and I bet he'll curse you to your face."

The Lord said, "All right: everything he has is in your power..."<sup>1</sup>

Who is this Accusing Angel, and of what does he accuse? On one level, of course, he is accusing Job of insincere piety. Job is very careful not to offend God in any way. As Mitchell points out in his commentary, he goes so far in this as to have his children purified every year on the off chance that they might have *thought* something offensive to God 'in their hearts'. Job may appear to be 'a man of perfect integrity', says the Accusing Angel, but this is only because everything has gone so well for him. Make things more difficult and he will 'curse you to your face'.

In other words, the Accusing Angel is accusing Job of being susceptible to accusing God. Yes, says the Accusing Angel, Job is very satisfied with his life now, and praises God for it almost excessively, but Job is living in an illusion. Job hasn't seen what the Accusing Angel himself knows, that life is riddled with trouble and hardship. Just touch him with it, says the Accusing Angel, and his praise of God will crumble. Who, then, is the Accusing Angel really accusing? He is accusing God himself. He is accusing God's world, God's life, of being such as no one could affirm it, not even this man 'of perfect integrity'. The Accusing Angel, we might say, is the spirit of despair itself. He walks here and there on the earth, looking around and seeing the pain and anguish of earthly existence, and formulates an ultimate cynicism: life – and its Author – cannot be trusted. And this spirit knows Job. Mitchell writes, "When we look at the world of the legendary Job with a probing, disinterestedly satanic eye, we notice that it is suffused with anxiety. Job is afraid of God, as well he might be. He avoids evil because he realizes the penalties. He is a perfect moral businessman...goodness is like money in the bank."<sup>2</sup>

Job's faith, in other words, is not in God but in prudence. Job has figured God out – so much piety, so much reward – so long as this balance remains unshaken Job will be the perfect 'man of God'. But the Accusing Angel knows better. Underlying Job's piety is a fearful despair of which Job himself knows nothing. Job has never really grappled with life. He does not know what faith must comprehend, or even what faith truly is.

Kierkegaard writes, "Compared with the person who is conscious of his despair, the

despairing person who is ignorant of his despair is simply a negativity further away from the truth and deliverance. Despair itself is a negativity; ignorance of it, a new negativity. However, to reach the truth one must go through every negativity..."<sup>3</sup> This Job is about to do.

Job is plunged into suffering. His children are killed, his cattle are destroyed, his wealth is ruined, and, finally, his body is wracked with disease and pain. The problem with which Job must now grapple has nothing to do with logical incongruities. It has to do with the worth of being itself – and Job's ability to affirm it in the midst of his agony. Has being only conditional value? Is it only good so long as it is good to us? This is the attitude that Kierkegaard associates with pagan despair. The pagan, as Kierkegaard presents it, has no sense of the self's transcendent relation to the Eternal. Thus everything, including the value of life itself, is judged under the category of worldly utility. This accounts for the liberal attitude toward suicide in paganism. "Paganism was not conscious before God as spirit. That is why the pagan...judged suicide with such singular irresponsibility, yes, praised suicide, which for the spirit is the most crucial sin, escaping from existence in this way, mutinying against God."<sup>4</sup>

Suicide, of course, is the quintessential act of despair. But, if I read Kierkegaard correctly, it is not the act itself that is sin, but the attitude of despair that it reveals. Suicide is a rejection of being. It is the desire to loose oneself from what-is. It is the victory, in a person's life, of the Accusing Angel over God, of despair over faith.

It is this despair to which Job now gives vent:

"God damn the day I was born  
 and the night that forced me from the womb.  
 On that day – let there be darkness;  
 let it never have been created;  
 let it sink back into the void.  
 Let chaos overpower it;  
 let black clouds overwhelm it;  
 let the sun be plucked from its sky.  
 Let oblivion overshadow it;  
 let the other days disown it;

let the aeons swallow it up;  
 For it did not shut the womb's doors  
 to shelter me from this sorrow.”<sup>5</sup>

'Let there be darkness' – the ultimate cry of despair, the wish for the undoing of God's creation, of God's 'Let there be light'. Job has *become* the Accusing Angel, as the Accusing Angel himself predicted. But has Job changed in some fundamental way? Has he been 'possessed' by the demonic and gone mad? Is he no longer himself? No, it is the same Job. It is the same Job faced with a new truth, a truth he cannot digest and now, cannot escape. Job's sufferings have forced out of him what was there all along, his deep discomfort with God and life – a discomfort and distrust that led him to perform the purification rites on his children once a year, lest they be punished for unholy thoughts. What sort of unholy thoughts was Job afraid they might be thinking? The very one's that are now pouring from his own mouth.

The problem of evil has now been engaged – not as a logical dilemma, but as the problem of faith and despair. And Job's friends are now on hand to 'justify the ways of God' to Job.

Eliphaz speaks first, and presents to Job essentially the same message as the others will present. Job's sins are responsible for his undoing. He must have done something, somewhere, sometime, to deserve what has now befallen him. Perhaps Job himself does not know what it is, but it must be there, lurking in the background, able to be sniffed out, for God's justice is an axiom.

How can man be righteous?  
 How can mortals be pure?  
 If God distrusts his own servants  
 and charges the angels with sin,  
 what of those who are built of clay  
 and live in bodies of dust?

For pain does not spring from the dust  
 or sorrow sprout from the soil:  
 man is the father of sorrow

as surely as sparks fly upward.<sup>6</sup>

One of the remarkable things about the book of *Job* is that it seems to be, in many ways, a critique of much of the rest of the Hebrew Bible. The equation between righteousness and reward, unrighteousness and punishment, is emphasized again and again in the Bible. Adam is ejected from Eden because of his disobedience. Israel is subjected to foreign conquest because of its apostasy. Bad things happen in response to bad deeds. That is the way the world is ordered, and the way Job has hitherto understood it. But Job now sees something else, and he cannot shut his eyes to it – if only because God himself has thrust it in his face. Job *knows* that he is innocent, and he cannot buy into the flaccid *assumption* of sin thrust upon him by his friends. He tells them:

You too have turned against me  
my wretchedness fills you with fear.

· · ·  
Teach me, and I will be silent  
show me where I am wrong.  
Does honest speech offend you?  
are you shocked by what I have said?  
Look me straight in the eye:  
is this how a liar would face you?  
Can't I tell right from wrong?  
if I sinned, wouldn't I know it?<sup>7</sup>

Job the Accuser is now accusing Eliphaz of falsity. Job sees that behind Eliphaz's justifications of God is fear, fear of truth and God: "My wretchedness fills you with fear." Eliphaz cannot accept what Job is saying because it would lead him into the same despair that has conquered Job. Eliphaz is afraid to really *look* at Job, and at what is happening. His confidence in the world's moral order is a shield that protects him from *his* despair. His inability to commune with Job in any real way is also his refusal to face his own fears, his own lack of trust in God. Eliphaz cannot love Job, because he is afraid of God. Job is now the loneliest man in the world. Having lost, so it seems, the sympathy of God, he has also lost the sympathy of all who fear the same fate may befall them.



But Eliphaz, of course, *is* Job. He is Job as of yesterday, before the calamity. And Job would very much like to be Eliphaz again. He longs to repent, if only he could understand what he'd done wrong. He pleads with God to explain it to him:

Accuse me – I will respond;  
 or let me speak, and answer me.  
 What crime have I committed?  
 how have I sinned against you?  
 Why do you hide your face  
 as if I were your enemy?<sup>8</sup>

Job's sufferings are not merely physical. It is as if he feels God's hot breath upon his neck. This is Job's 'dark night of the soul'. John of the Cross, commenting on this, writes, "The soul, because of its impurity, suffers immensely at the time [the] divine light truly assails it. When this pure light strikes in order to dispel all impurity, persons feel so unclean and wretched that it seems God is against them and they are against God. Because it seems that God has rejected them, these souls suffer such pain and grief that when God tried Job in this way it proved one of the worst of Job's trials..."<sup>9</sup> In despair at his sense of condemnation, Job cries out:

What is man that you notice him,  
 turn your glare upon him,  
 examine him every morning,  
 test him at every instant?  
 Won't you even give me  
 time to swallow my spit?  
 If I sinned, what have I done  
 to you, Watcher of Men?  
 Why have you made me your target  
 and burdened me with myself?  
 Can't you forgive my sins  
 or overlook my mistakes?  
 For soon I will lie in the dust  
 you will call, but I will be gone.<sup>10</sup>

Job has acquired the intensified despair of the man who knows that he stands inescapably under the eye of the Eternal. "What is man that you notice him?" – this is

said by the man who can no longer help but notice God. Job wants nothing but to escape, to be absorbed in oblivion, to quit from being. He wants out. But God has forced him to face his despair. It is precisely because Job has *not* merited his sufferings, has not 'sinned' (in any overt sense) that Job's despair now presents itself to him as insurmountable. If Job could identify some sin he'd committed everything would make sense again. Order would be restored. He could repent and make amends. He would be in control again. But Job's honesty won't permit him to falsify his experience. Job's anguish is not simply that he has lost his worldly goods, but that, his faith having been predicated upon these goods, he has lost his God. This is the spiritual problem of evil. It is not the problem that there *is* evil. It is the problem of retaining faith in the face of evil. Kierkegaard writes "We despair *over* that which binds us in despair – over a misfortune, over the earthly, over a capital loss, etc. – but we despair *of* that which, rightly understood, releases us from despair: of the eternal, of salvation, of our own strength, etc."<sup>11</sup>

Job's quandary is that he cannot escape the eye of the Eternal and he can no longer affirm it, his affirmation having been based on his concept of justice and his enjoyment of the goods of life. The Accuser cannot be comforted by the Eternal precisely because he confronts it in the attitude of accusation. Job cannot be comforted, not because God has judged him, but because he has judged God. The problem is not God's wrath, but Job's wrath. Job's friends, recognizing this on some level, would have Job suppress his accusations, as if the *articulation* of the accusations were the problem, the offense, for which Job is being punished. But Job knows, through a deeper piety than his friends can yet imagine, that it is God himself who has, in effect, compelled him to bring his accusations to light. He suggests to his friends that their *dishonesty* in the face of God is a greater impiety than his accusations.

Will you lie to vindicate God?  
 Will you perjure yourselves for him?  
 Will you blindly stand on his side,  
 pleading his case alone?

What will you do when he questions you?  
 Can you cheat him as you would a man?  
 Won't he judge you severely  
 if your testimony is false?<sup>12</sup>

This is a revealing moment, for it suggests that Job, for all his despair, has not really lost his faith in God. But the weight of his faith has shifted. Once it was expressed through scrupulous adherence to God's dictates, lavishing God with praises, engaging in purification rites, etc. But now Job is coming to see the superficiality of such outward acts of piety, to which his friends are still attached. God demands honesty, even if it is the honesty of raging against God. Job is now a battleground between faith and despair. He protests God in the name of God. Job's inner piety commands his outward impiety. Mitchell writes "All this bewilderment and outrage couldn't be so intense if Job didn't truly love God. He senses that in spite of appearances there is somewhere an ultimate justice, but he doesn't know where. He is like a nobler Othello who has been brought conclusive evidence that his wife has betrayed him: his honesty won't allow him to disbelieve it, but his love won't allow him to believe it. On the spikes of this dilemma he must remain impaled."<sup>13</sup>

Job is in the midst of what Kierkegaard regards as the greatest intensification of despair: despair had in the full consciousness of God. If Job could but escape God's eye, which is to say, his own consciousness of God, he might be able to crawl under a rock and die. But this he cannot do. He *loves* God too much. "Despair is intensified in relation to the consciousness of the self, but the self is intensified in relation to the criterion of the self, infinitely when God is the criterion."<sup>14</sup> The very fact that Job loves God intensifies his despair, for it puts him irreparably at odds with himself. He can't live with God and he can't live without him.

Indeed, the prologue suggests that it is precisely Job's love of God that has brought all this upon him. Job's problems began when God boasted of Job to the Accuser. "Did you notice my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him: a man of perfect integrity, who

fears God and avoids evil." The Accuser, it seems, knew something that God didn't know: that Job would yield when beset by difficulties. But God, we must assume, knew something beyond that: that Job's yielding to his own despair, his facing it honestly, was the necessary prelude to his finally overcoming it. But he overcomes it, not through suppressing it, as his friends advise, but through rising to a new level of awareness.

God finally answers Job's cries, not by justifying himself to Job, but by granting Job a vision of his awesome grandeur.

Where were you when I planned the earth?  
 Tell me, if you are so wise?  
 Do you know who took its dimensions,  
 measuring its length with a cord?  
 What were its pillars built on?  
 Who laid down its cornerstone,  
 while the morning stars burst out singing  
 and the angels shouted for joy!<sup>15</sup>  
 . . .  
 Do you dare to deny my judgment?  
 Am I wrong because you are right?<sup>16</sup>

This last line, unique in its sense, I believe, to Mitchell's translation, is a remarkable one. God does not deny that Job is right. He merely denies that this makes God wrong. How can this be? How can Job and God both be right, given that Job has been accusing God of what amounts to wrong-doing? The answer seems to be that it is a matter of perspective, and Job's perspective is about to undergo a radical shift. From the standpoint of the ethical, which stems from God himself, Job is certainly right. He has done nothing to *deserve* such suffering. Job's anger and despair is, from an earthly standpoint, fully justified and understandable. Being, in its infinity, plows finite life under. "All flesh is grass", says the prophet. It is human, and understandably human, to stand opposed to this, to be shocked and dismayed and mortified by the ravages of existence – as Job is. To be anything less would be to abandon the ethical sense, the concern for self and other, that God himself has instilled in us. In this respect, the pagan who commits suicide when things go poorly for him acts well within the bounds of strictly human reason. But, as

Kierkegaard tells us, the *human* self is called by God to become the *theological* self – the self who stands beyond itself, under the consciousness of eternity. This is a very different perspective. This is a perspective that dwarfs the particularized concerns, and values, of finitude. This is a perspective that affirms Being in spite of its ravages, because it *Is* what *Is*. Because ultimately, even one's own protest against it, is powered by it.

Job's protest is *slaughtered* by this vision. He sees, not his littleness before God, but his nothingness *apart from* God. Job's nothingness is not what God reduces him to, it is what God *reveals* to him. Job's nothingness is not punishment, it is ontological necessity. God *Is* what *Is* and Job's being stands *under* this and *within* this, and cannot stand apart from it. Apart from God: nothing. God is the ultimate precondition which must, therefore, be affirmed unconditionally; if only because it is the very possibility of affirmation and negation itself. But this is not a logical conclusion Job arrives at through careful philosophical analysis. It is something Job *sees*. Job's protest against God is, so to speak, slain by what Rudolph Otto has called the 'numinosity' of God. Job has asked an ethical question but has received a numinous answer: God overwhelms Job with his awesome ultimacy. Rationally, such an answer is a nonsequitur. God has not really answered Job's question at all. But, the Biblical author suggests, he has, nevertheless, answered Job's *spirit*. It is an answer that resolves the question only by changing the questioner. In Job's final vision of God, so we may surmise, Job rises above his finite self-concern to experience his association with the *All in All*. This allows Job to transcend his private misfortune, and allows him, not to 'justify' God, but to accept him, and, thereby, himself. In this acceptance despair is conquered. The Accuser evaporates in the intensity of God's light, and all that remains is the awesome splendor of the divine itself.

I had heard of you with my ears;  
 but now my eyes have seen you.  
 Therefore I will be quiet,  
 comforted that I am dust.<sup>17</sup>

Mitchell's translation of these last lines give them quite a different sense from more traditional translations. The *New American Standard Bible* renders these same lines: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear;/ But now my eye sees Thee;/ Therefore I retract,/ and I repent in dust and ashes." I am not in a position to assess the accuracy of one translation over another, but it is possible to see Mitchell's interpretation buried within the traditional. When Job 'retracts and repents', what is he retracting and what is he repenting? We know from the prologue that Job's sufferings were not, in fact, due to any unrighteousness on his part. His protestations of innocence, therefore, cannot rightly be retracted or repented. Indeed, God himself, in the next few lines, affirms Job's protest. "After he had spoken to Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, I am very angry at you and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has."<sup>18</sup> This remarkable endorsement of Job's protest appears in both translations.

This is an important point. From an ethical perspective, Job is *right* in his protest against God. We are led to conclude that God wouldn't have had it any other way. Although God *exceeds* the ethical he does not negate it. There is, so to speak, method in God's madness, or – as Kierkegaard says in another context – although God exceeds the ethical he does so 'teleologically', i.e., toward a higher end. Job is being called into a relationship with God that exceeds rational calculation. What this relationship demands beyond all else is honesty, for honesty is the precondition to true relationship itself. Job's friends have not spoken 'truthfully', i.e., honestly, about God. They have averted their eyes and so will never *see*. But Job has engaged God with honesty, even if it is the honesty of outrage, and this honesty is finally rewarded with vision.

Still more, Job is right in recognizing that not all suffering can be attributed to sin. There is a superfluity of suffering in God's creation that is not to be accounted for by mapping every pain to a corresponding transgression. What is the reason for this? God nowhere tells us. The 'Voice from the Whirlwind' tells Job that it is not to be questioned,

and we may understand this to mean, not that God, who is finally revealing himself, is still hiding something, but that at the bottom of Truth there remains a necessity that cannot be further explicated. God has neither an explanation nor a justification for this superfluity of suffering, but he does have a response; he can heal the despair it engenders – by calling us into living relation with that which eternally stands beyond it.

So, again, what is it that Job 'retracts and repents'? It can only be his despair itself. Job's repentance is not contrition, but inner transformation. Job hasn't simply changed his tune, he has changed the heart that sings it. He sees God and his relation to God in a new light – the light of Eternity *beyond* the finite moment of suffering. Up to now, in his original piety and in his despair, he saw everything in the light of mundane, albeit 'ethical', calculation. And this afforded a measure of control and security. But God will not be calculated and controlled. Peace and joy come, not through control, but through deep acceptance; acceptance of self and other under the sublimity of God. This sublimity does not so much justify the moment of suffering as transcend it, and invites the human being to participate in this transcendence. It is this that finally brings peace to Job's soul.

In the epilogue God restores to Job all he has lost, including, miraculously, new children. Mitchell comments, "All the possessions, and the children too, are outer and visible signs of Job's inner fulfillment, present beyond gain or loss...Job's anxiety has vanished. Even his god, though he still cares about burnt offerings and ritual expiation, is not split into a Lord and an Accuser, and no longer needs to administer loyalty tests. Indeed, he rewards Job for having said that the righteous aren't rewarded, and mildly punishes the friends for maintaining that the wicked are punished."<sup>19</sup>

Job has 'repented' in the literal sense of the word, he has 'turned around'. He has gone through his despair and come out the other end. Kierkegaard writes, "If repentance is to arise, there must first be effective despair, radical despair, so that the life of the spirit can break through from the ground upward."<sup>20</sup> Job, having overcome despair, has arrived, at

last, at *faith*. This is far from the nervous piety of Job's earlier life. It is a true resting in God. As Kierkegaard defines it, "Faith is: that the self in being itself and in willing to be itself rests transparently in God."<sup>21</sup> It is this transparent, affirmative, resting in God, then, that is Job's solution to the problem of evil.



### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Stephen Mitchell, *The Book of Job* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1987), pp. 5-6.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xi
- <sup>3</sup> Soren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hing and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 44.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.
- <sup>5</sup> Mitchell, p. 13.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.
- <sup>9</sup> John of the Cross, "The Dark Night of the Soul", in *John of the Cross: Selected Writings*, ed. Kieran Kavanaugh (New York, Paulist Press, 1987), p. 202.
- <sup>10</sup> Mitchell, p. 24.
- <sup>11</sup> Kierkegaard, n. pp. 60-61.
- <sup>12</sup> Mitchell, pp. 34-35.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xvii.
- <sup>14</sup> Kierkegaard, p. 80.
- <sup>15</sup> Mitchell, p. 79.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxix.
- <sup>20</sup> Kierkegaard, p. 59.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

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Richard Oxenberg, Ph.D.  
[Roxenberg@live.com](mailto:Roxenberg@live.com)  
617-981-2177