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CHAPTER 1

Preface

Relying on the Grace of God, the topic for study for the Global Martha Mariam Vanitha Samajam of the Malankara Orthodox Church for the year 2020 is presented here. The main topic for meditation is **Breath that is given and Faith to be given**. The verse on which this is based is Job 27:3 “ *...As long as my breath is in me, And the breath of God in my nostrils, ...*”(NKJV). The book for study is ‘The Book of Job’. The main focus is naturally on Job, his trials and his triumphant stance through all these.

This book has four parts. In the first, we analyse the Book of Job and seek answer to the question as to who is this Satan mentioned therein. Alongside there is also a discussion on rewriting the doctrines of faith that existed in the Jewish Traditions. In the second part, theological insights and why trials and troubles occur is discussed. The third part is the teaching that the one and only way to meet trials and troubles successfully is through prayer. The archetype is Job, who stands close to God. In the Fourth Part, the verses to be memorised, prayers and songs are arranged.

We usually believe that the problems and conflicts that we face are created by Satan or that God is just testing us. Some New Age gospels teach that this is the result of black magic. This gospel is usually conveyed to people who either are going through various types of painful experiences or to women whose husbands are working abroad. The main purpose of this book is to think analytically about such distressing situations in the light of the sufferings of Job. This book tries to find an answer to the question, ‘why do such things happen?’.

May God bless everyone who helped in the creation of this small work, especially Reverend Father Rijo, Reverend Father Stalin, Deacon Benoy, Deacon Jerry, and Shri Mathew Oommen (Pulari Printers) who arranged for the quality printing of this book. I convey my loving regards.

Chapter 2

The Book of Job-A study

This is a work in the Old Testament which talks about Divine Justice. The history of Job is the evidence for the fact that man's question as to the reason for the trials and distresses in human life is centuries old. Whatever be the period in which Job lived, his message is timeless. The contents of this book impart strength to the people of Israel in their temporal and spiritual lives. '*Why? How? Why me?*' These questions are being asked even in the 21st Century. However, we cannot say that the life history of Job provides a completely satisfying answer to these questions.

The lives of the Jewish People were based on traditions and recorded writings, especially their Laws. It is through these that they perceived the living God, who saves them from troubles and protects and guides them. They could not even mention the name of this God in the early periods. It is for this reason that the name Jehovah is not mentioned in the Book of Ruth. Troubles and trials accompanied Job as a Divine Mystery till the end. However Job has an answer to this question which is being repeated even to this day.

An idea that is opposed to traditional thought.

Job analyses the paradox of innocent people suffering troubles and miseries and the evil living in prosperity. Job gives a different face to the righteousness of God, which is in opposition to the existing ideas regarding God's righteousness. The author of the Book, Job and God Himself admit that Job is a righteous man. (1:1, 6 : 30, 9 :15, 42 7): We may face the difficulties that we deserve but this Book teaches us how to face undeserved trials. The man born blind described in St. John's Gospel is one such. The Lord says, *Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him*" (John 9:3 NIV). So should we not understand that he became an instrument for the glory of God's name? We must remember that this means that he was the beloved of God. Scholars claim that this book has always been useful and appropriate for the consolation of the human spirit in distress. This work depicts the soul's distress which is beyond time and location and also points to the response which comes by standing close to God. St. Stephen, the first martyr and

all others who became martyrs saw this as occasions for perfect submission to the love of God.

Chapter 3

Analysis of the Protagonist- Who was Job?

a. A contemporary of the Patriarchs.

Job is considered to be a contemporary of the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob).

1. In the first chapter, the one who offers the sacrifices (as priest) is Job himself (1:5). It is to be surmised that the order and position of priesthood and the rules or customs regarding sacrifices did not exist during this period. Job also follows the method of the offering of sacrifices that was in existence in the ancient culture.
2. Job is equal to the Patriarchs as an advocate of unshakable faith. Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his only beloved son Isaac on Mount Moriah is a depiction of this faith.
3. In a footnote in the Septuagint, there is an indication that Jobab, the King of Edom, referred to in Genesis 36:33 is Job.
4. In the religious history of the Jewish Tradition, the Book of Job is considered a landmark.
5. It is said that a mosque has been constructed over the house of Job in the city that is described as the City of Islamic Traditions. It is a place of pilgrimage for the people of Islamic Faith. It is said that when Job called upon his saviour and prayed, God answered his prayers. God commanded and removed the sorrows that afflicted him. He gave him a family of his own of equal number. It is a blessing from us and a lesson for those who live in subordination to our commandments (Quran 38:41-44)
6. Following certain indications, Job is supposed to have been the inhabitant of Uz, towards the north of Arabia and south of Palestine, near Edom.

b. The first lyrical writing.

In the Holy Bible, the books up to the Book of Esther, are made up of historical books. These are followed by five books written in a lyrical style. The Book of Job is the first and foremost of these and the most ancient. This book declares the meaning of true faith and the supreme authority of God. In the records of God, Job occupied a good position. He earned the right to be called a faithful servant. Jehovah permits the testing of Job because He knew Job intimately. The lesson that Job learned through his sufferings and the example that he leaves us are of considerable merit. In the end Job admits, "*I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear,*

But now my eye sees You.” Job possessed the qualities of faithfulness, steadfastness, and firmness of faith. In other words, we see in Job a man whose faith is to be a model for us.

c. The zenith of growth.

At the close of his tests, Job reaches the zenith of spiritual growth; that is a point where his spiritual brilliance is very bright. The period of trials has cleansed him to shine as gold purified in the furnace. When Job acknowledges God’s perfect glory and ultimate sovereignty, the perceptions that he held before his trials undergo a radical change. The questions that bothered him before, “Why all this?”, becomes irrelevant.

Chapter 6 of the Gospel of St. John starts with the feeding of five thousand with five loaves of bread. From verse 15, the topic shifts to His going alone into the mountains and the disciples crossing to Capernaum on a boat. The disciples on the boat face the challenges of currents and waves of the sea. The Lord comes to their rescue walking on water. When they see this, they are frightened. St. John described what follows after they recognise Him as the Lord. *“And they wanted to receive him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at that land to which they were going”*..(Aramaic .Bible in Plain English) As soon as the disciples were willing to receive the Lord aboard their boat, they reached their destination. It is not relevant whether the Lord climbed on board the boat. He is close to us in the midst of troubles and trials. However, it is essential to accept that He is the solution to all our problems.

d. Standing alongside the Redeemer in all conditions

Zacchaeus only wanted to catch a glimpse of the Lord. The Lord summons him down and holds him close. At the culmination of his repentance, the Lord comes to Zacchaeus’ house. At the end of Job’s trials, he gets double of whatever he had lost. Before this happens, Job, at the Lord’s commandment, offers sacrifices and prayers for his friends who had formerly criticized and blamed him. The attitude of Job who does not bow down before trials but stands trustfully before the Grace of God like a young child with his father, is extremely heart- warming. It is also written, *“Now my eyes see You.”*

e. Take up your cross and follow.

Our Lord has commanded, *“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”* The modern man’s life is as if he lives in a pressure cooker. When steam starts coming, a weight is placed to close the escape of steam and the pressure increases as the steam builds up. When the pressures of daily living build up, the condition of the mind, body and spirit also suffer. As a result, health deteriorates, headache, diseases of the digestive system and other chronic diseases assail us. The only way to escape pressure is to stand close to the Redeemer. We can also share our pains with those who have the Grace and Life of God in them.

Did not the friends who came to help Job increase his pressures? They could not reduce his burden with even one word. Job is the example of a person who is god-fearing and of impeccable character facing troubles and sufferings in life. Our Lord has not promised a life that is without troubles or sufferings. As St. Peter says, though we suffer, we do not lose confidence. At times we are assailed by doubt, but we do not lose hope, we may have several enemies, but we are not without friends. We may be injured, but we are not destroyed. Saint Paul addresses a person of true faith as a saint. The saint is compared to the Palm Tree. It grows in the desert. External injuries do not harm it. When one is in Christ he is a new creation. Divine Peace shall protect him and keep him balanced as do the shock absorbers in vehicles.

Man cannot escape from this state of being a refugee in a foreign land. The Lord who is the Way, the Truth and the Life must be our guide. In this journey we have favourable as well as unfavourable conditions and also the threat of attacking wild animals on the path. We need Job’s faith to face them. We must have the Holy Spirit as our guide. In a concise sentence, the Book of Job is a poem, a subject for contemplation, heart-warming and a lyrical creation of merit. Job does not minimise present sufferings. However, he does not forget past blessings in that burning fire. Job teaches us that we must communicate with God to survive suffering.

Chapter 4

Structure and Contents of the Book of Job.

This Book can be divided into the following five segments, 1, Introduction, 2, Debates between Job and his friends, 3. The discourse of Elihu, 4. The proclamation of God who appears in the whirlwind, 5. Conclusion. The introduction and conclusion are in

prose and the portions in between are beautiful poetry that contains many valuable messages.

In the beginning itself, the righteous life of Job is sketched. Satan manages to creep in along with the sons of God to His council. God praises Job, but Satan says that a man who has no problems in life can live a life pleasing to God; but when hard times come he would change his stance. God gives Satan permission to try Job. God knows Job, the man who has consecrated his life to Him. God is aware of the fact that even if he is surrendered for rigorous testing, Job would not change as long as the breath of God is in his nostrils. Satan takes away Job's children and his possessions. Job prays, "*The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.*". Satan goes one step forward and affects Job's skin and body. Even his wife starts to despise him. But Job's reply is, "*Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?*"

Three of Job's friends who hear about his troubles visit him. They remain silently with him for almost a week. Thereafter there is a discussion between Job and his friends. The people of Israel had believed that if the commandments were obeyed, the Law observed and God who had made a covenant with them was followed, they will be blessed. The conversation mentioned above imparts a view that differs from this notion. This book offers the teaching that God may have purposes beyond the justice of retribution. That is, it opens up a new level in the relationship between man and God.

The writer does not intend to make the three friends Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar targets of derision. It is just that they stand firm in the approach of the traditionalists. They are established in the philosophy of their period. However Job's view is unusual. That is the reason why the friends are mistaken. It is the same error that the disciples of Jesus Christ exhibit in St. John, Chapter 9. The disciples ask, "*Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?*"

Until Elihu enters the scene, each party stands firm in his argument. However, Elihu represents sufferings as a part of discipline. Job gives a brief answer. Then God

appears in the whirlwind. In God's answer there is the implied question, 'What do you know about creation?' God's magnificence and man's insignificance is revealed here. Hippopotamus and Crocodile are also brought into the discussion. Job confesses his frailty. Job is made to offer sacrifices for the forgiveness of the sins of his friends. God forgives Job's friends. Job also forgives them. Job receives a double share of God's blessings.

Our Lord, while being tormented on the Cross, prays for those who torment him. Here also the same model is seen. Even before blessing Job twofold, God asks Job to forgive his friends who had hurt him with their words and also to offer sacrifices on their behalf. The friends are also given certain instructions that are noteworthy. In order to obtain forgiveness for themselves, these friends who had verbally inflicted hurt on Job- the consecrated man of God- they are to bring the materials necessary for the offerings so that Job could offer the sacrifices for them.

In St. Mathew Chapter 18, our Lord gives instructions about forgiveness. A parable starts from verse 21. A servant who owes his master ten thousand talents goes away with his debts written off by his master. However on the way out, he harasses another who owes him a hundred talents. The master, who comes to know of this, punishes him. The Lord concludes, "*So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.*" (St Mathew 18:35).

In ancient times the Jews believed that prosperity was a sign of God's blessings. The Jews were unwilling to budge even an inch from this view. A world view that has now evolved among some New Age Christian groups is the 'Prosperity Gospel'. Is it not worse than the ancient Jewish philosophy?

In the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus Jesus teaches two things.

1. There was a belief among the Jews during the time of Jesus that whatever the sin that they might commit, Patriarch Abraham would ensure that they do not go to hell/ damnation. But Abraham, in the parable, makes it clear that this is not so.
2. If prosperity is the real sign of the Grace of God, it would have been the Rich Man who reached the lap of Abraham; but it is Lazarus who became eligible for that position.

The Book of Job is a landmark that stands between the period of Abraham and the period of Christ to teach us to accept sufferings. Sufferings are a call to trust God. May be this is the reason that the writer of the Proverbs say, "*For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.*" (Proverbs 3:12).

Chapter 5

Through the chapters

Chapter 1.

In the first two sentences we see that Job was *'a man in the land of Uz, and that he was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil.'* He had seven sons and three daughters, and possessed 7000 sheep, 3000 camels five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household, so that he was the greatest of all the people of the East.

His sons would go and feast in their houses, each on his appointed day, and would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. After each feast it was customary of Job to offer the sacrifices of burnt offerings according to the number of his children because Job thought that maybe his children had sinned against God in their hearts. Historians say that he was a king. These feasts are the first family get together recorded in the Bible. Do our gatherings and the pomp of festivals and feasts depart from their basic purpose? This is worth our consideration.

In the sixth verse it is written that Satan came in to the gathering of the sons of God. Satan tells God that Job has never denied God because he has always been rich and blessed by God. Satan enters into an argument with God and God yields Job to Satan. Satan begins his work. There is a fact that Satan mentions in the midst of his arguments; there is a hedge made by God's Grace around Job and his household and all that he has on every side. Job's wife's advice is to curse God and die. Then his friends come to comfort him. When they came they could not recognize him for he had become dreadful in appearance. They tore their robes and threw dust into the air and on their heads. Their sorrow was extreme. The state of Job's friends was heart-breaking. They sat with him on the ground for seven days.

Chapter 2

On the seventh day Job himself starts to speak. His friends were at loss for words which indicates that the state that their friend Job was in was so distressing. The greatest among the people of the East, a man who would only do good to everyone, devout and faithful to God, these were the qualities that made Job stand out as a shining personality and now it was as if there was a state of total eclipse, shadowing

everything. For this very reason Job curses the day he was born and the night he was conceived. These words reflect his great pain and sorrow and suffering. In verses 3:25-26, the indication of the pain that he experiences mentally and physically is reflected *“For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, And what I dreaded has happened to me. I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, for trouble comes.”*

Chapter 3

Job also thinks that both happiness and suffering comes from God. The response of Eliphaz underlines these. Sufferings are God’s method of trying man (5:17), Job was one who had strengthened the weak, a good character, righteous, one who shunned evil and above all loved God and was guileless.

Chapters 4 & 5

Job’s friend Eliphaz begins in a manner that was sympathetic to Job. *“Surely you have instructed many, And you have strengthened weak hands.*

Your words have upheld him who was stumbling, And you have strengthened the feeble knees;”

This is the general opinion about Job at that time. Eliphaz then asks Job, *“But now it comes upon you, and you are weary; It touches you, and you are troubled. Is not your reverence your confidence? And the integrity of your ways your hope?”*

Thereafter he says that the innocent never perish and the upright are not cut off. But the evil shall reap the fruits of his iniquity. He describes poetically a vision that he had experienced the sum of which he describes in these words, *“Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his Maker? If He puts no trust in His servants, If He charges His angels with error, How much more those who dwell in houses of clay, Whose foundation is in the dust,”*

Eliphaz who talks about intercession states that intolerance and rebellion belong to the fool and the imprudent. Eliphaz who doubts the action of God blames Job as well. Eliphaz also says that had he been in Job’s place he would rely on God and surrender everything to Him. He says that God frustrates the devices of the crafty, catches the wise in their own craftiness,

and the schemes of the cunning are swept away. Eliphaz makes a noteworthy statement in 5:17. *“Happy is the man whom God corrects; Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. For He bruises, but He binds up; He wounds, but His hands make whole.”*

Chapters 6 & 7

These chapters are Job's answer. He does not accept the words of Eliphaz. He says that the Lord is the cause of his sufferings. The words of Eliphaz do more harm than good. Job says that what has happened to him is out of the ordinary. Job has a greater knowledge of God than Eliphaz.

Chapter 8.

These chapters are of Bildad. He says that these things could have happened because of the fault of Job's children. All Bildad's arguments are a reflection of the philosophy of that period.

Chapter 9.

Job speaks about the power of the invisible God; he complains about the silence of God in view of his sufferings state and expresses his grievances to God. Job experiences his period of sufferings as very long. Job laments that there is no mediator between him and God.

Chapter 10.

Job complains that God is aware that he is innocent and is yet punishing him without reason. In verses 8 & 9 he points to the relationship between creation and the creator. He testifies that his breath is by God's love and favour. (10, 12) Job laments the day he had been formed in the womb.

Chapter 11

This chapter contains the words of Zophar the Naamathite. The summary is, 'you have been given a punishment that is lighter than your error. You do not recognize God's forgiveness of your errors because God is beyond your understanding. If you accept this truth you can forget your sufferings.'

Chapter 12.

Job's response. He refutes his friend's arguments. All of creation know such information about God, God controls everything, the life of everything and the breath of all mankind is in His hands. (12:10) Job's state is divine judgement; God can transform anything. Nobody can change His judgement, argues Job.

Chapter 13.

Job ridicules the worthless platitudes of his friends. He asks them, "*Will it be well when He searches you out?*". In verse 15 we see his consistent trust in God. Job asks God to make him know his transgression and his sin.

Chapter 14.

Job laments man's frailty. God has fixed man's days. His life is like that of a flower. When his life ends in this world, where does he go? Man cannot understand these things with his intelligence. Job becomes very eloquent about the unlimited power of God and the limitations of man.

Chapter 15

Eliphaz the Temanite denounces Job for his arrogance, Eliphaz says that Job's own mouth condemns him and that man is corrupt from birth. Job's misfortunes arose because he shook his fist at God; the godless will conceive trouble and give birth to evil. Eliphaz portrays Job as a godless /evil person. Eliphaz forgets the purpose of his visit. It is not offering of comfort but charges of condemnation that he extends.

Chapter 16

Job calls his friends 'miserable comforters'. Their longwinded speeches never end. He weeps at their cruel words of scorn. He believes that he has only the recourse of prayer as a remedy and that even then, his witness is in heaven.

Even today, some people offer comfort in a similar manner. They behave as if they are omniscient. Job's attitude here is as lofty as that which is in the New Testament. Our Lord says in Mathew 18:11, '*I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the*

face of my Father in heaven'. The Lord is speaking in the context of those who undergo oppression and suffering. When Job faces trials from God, his friends oppress him further through their words.

Chapter 17

Even though Job imagines that his breath is weakening and that he is surrounded by mockery, he still holds on to an extreme hope. Therefore he asks himself, '*where then, is my hope?*' (17:15) Job has the inner instinct to stand firm in his hope which is not confined to this world, but will survive even after his body turns to dust.

Chapter 18

The 18th chapter is the censure of Bildad the Shuhite against Job. He connects Job's state to that of the wicked and godless men. The refutation of Job in Chapter 17 disturbs Bildad. This chapter is Bildad's retaliation. The evil undergo sufferings and his memory is wiped off the face of the earth.

Chapter 19

Job's reply is in the form of a complaint against his friends. Job describes his status. He is estranged from everyone and he requests his friends to be kind to him. Only skin and bones remain in Job ; but the hope that he would be able to see God drives him. Job is aware of judgment and redemption even in the midst of his suffering.

The portions from chapter 25 establish us firmly in the New Testament Faith. When the Lord incarnated and approached John the Baptist for being baptised, he carried the burden of human nature on his shoulders. He renewed the decayed image of Adam. In verse 25, Job says, '*I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth*'. Job also talks about the resurrection of the glorified body and that his eyes shall behold the Lord. We can see a prediction of the Second Coming in these lines.

Chapter 20

Then Zophar replies that the victory of the wicked is short-lived. He compares their evil to cobra venom. The wicked oppress and steal from the poor to become rich. However

his wealth shall not last. Zophar describes the dreadful end that awaits the wicked and he estimates that their wealth and fortunes are also temporary.

Chapter 21

Job questions the prosperity of the wicked. He talks about the growing fortune of their offspring. He assumes that God must be reserving judgement. In verse 22 he asks, *“Can anyone teach God knowledge?”*

He concludes that there is falsehood in his friends’ answers. Their words of consolation are futile.

Chapter 22

Eliphaz then speaks of the wickedness of Job. He argues that the attitude of Job to the poor and oppressed in society was complete indifference. He says that Job should become more humble. God would listen to his prayers and accept his offerings only when he gets involved in society for its good. Eliphaz advises that even the one who is not innocent *‘will be delivered by the purity of your hands’*. (22:30)

Chapter 23.

Job wishes to seek out God’s judgment seat and present his case before Him. He longs to listen to God’s answers. Job speaks with confidence that God would take note of him and he shall come forth as gold when God has tested him. Job believes that his present state has not come from the workings of dark forces, but from God Himself. What strengthens Job and makes him stand firm in his faith is his conviction that all these are the tests of his Heavenly Father. Job’s faith is very deep. He is convinced that forces of darkness cannot touch him. His faith is firm and splendid.

Chapter 24

He speaks about the actions of the evil (people) and God’s retribution. The evil torment the poor. Even though they are exalted for a little while, they are gone without a trace in a short time. In conclusion Job asks in verse 25, *“If this is not so, who can prove me false and reduce my words to nothing?”*

Chapter 25

“Dominion and awe belong to God.

How then can a mortal be righteous before God?....

*If even the moon is not bright and the stars are not pure in His eyes,
how much less a mortal, who is but a maggot— a human being, who is only a
worm!” says Bildad the Shuhite .*

Chapter 26

After describing God's care and His purposes for all creation, Job repeats that man cannot understand *'the thunder of His power. Man has only hears a small whisper of Him.* This is a significant theological statement.

Chapter 27

In the third verse Job says, *' God's breath is in my nostrils'*. This statement is also the equivalent of the New Testament faith. The breath that Job speaks about here is the breath that God breathed into man's nose at the time of creation. It is the duty of each god-fearing person to guard it and not to lose it. Job abhors wickedness and deceit because this breath is alive in him. He does not abandon his integrity. Even if the wicked receive prosperity from God and his children multiply, it is for the sword. He shall not escape God's retribution.

Chapter 28

The earth is like a treasure trove. Those who work hard can uncover its potential. However, wisdom cannot be grasped in this manner because only God knows its place of origin. *“the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, And to depart from evil is understanding.”* (verse 28). The writer of the Proverbs say, *' The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom'*.

Chapter 29.

Job recalls the days when the Almighty had been with him. He remembers the days when he had been surrounded by the members of his family He was righteous and a man of authority then. He describes that he was like a king. The golden age of a righteous king is pictured here. It was as if he had been an Emperor among kings.

Chapter 30

Job compares his present state to his earlier one of power and splendour. We should not rejoice in things that may be quickly and easily lost. Perhaps among the poems in the Book of Job this one is the most pathetic and out of tune with what was before. We see the exact opposite of what is written in the previous chapter in this one. Job, with a broken heart, says that God has departed from him.

Chapter 31

He talks about the punishments he would get from God for any possible sins that he had committed. Job teaches that however hard the sufferings that God inflicts turns out to be, it is still best to take refuge in God and not rely on anything else. Job remembers the first man trying to hide his transgression from God after eating the forbidden fruit. To the question whether he had eaten of the fruit that had been forbidden, he does not give a clear answer. *“The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate,”* was his answer. Should we not pay attention to such incidents in our lives also?

Chapter 32

Elihu's wrath is aroused against Job because he justified himself. He says that he had hesitated to speak because he is younger in age. But seeing that Job's three friends are at loss for a suitable reply, Elihu prepares himself to speak before them. Elihu says that there is no guarantee that the older is the wiser. It is also not a certainty that age ensures a better sense of justice (verse 9). Elihu says that he shall not show partiality to anyone not flatter any man; If he does so, the Maker would soon take him away.

Chapter 33

Elihu speaks to Job. He says that the Spirit of God has made him, and the breath of the Almighty gives him life. So he would only speak in all honesty. He calls Job to debate with him. He is a creation of God. He speaks with clarity. He says that if Job listens to him without arguments he would teach Job wisdom.

Chapter 34.

Elihu castigates Job. Elihu asserts that Job's stressing that he is a righteous man and that God has denied him justice is wrong. God is righteous and impartial. Elihu also warns that Job's sins are not hidden from God.

Chapter 35

Elihu continues to speak to Job, pointing out his faults. He says that God will not listen to empty talk nor will He regard it. God does not wish to listen to Job's useless words.

Chapter 36

Elihu carries on, saying that has to speak some more words on behalf of God. Even though God is mighty, He does not despise anyone. He is also mighty in His understanding. Thus he describes God's virtues.

Chapter 37

Elihu speaks describing the power of God over everything on earth. He instructs Job to remain still, listen and consider the wondrous works of God. He also adds that God is not partial to those that consider themselves wise.

Chapters 38,39.

These are the chapters in which the Lord talks to Job. Jehovah asks Job several questions. He tells Job "*Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.*" The Lord asks him questions that he is unable to answer.

Chapter 40

Job answers the Lord (Jehovah), "*I am unworthy—how can I reply to you?*" To this God again says, "*Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.*" And he continues His questions.

Chapter 41

In tune with the question, "*Does not everything under the sky belong to Me?*", the Lord describes the structure of one of His creations and thereby reveals the glory of creation. Leviathan is described and depicted as the king over all the children of pride.

Chapter 42

Job answers the Lord. He now realizes that the Lord can do everything, and that no purpose of His can be withheld from Him. He also apprehends that now his eyes see

the Lord. This section draws the picture of a repentant Job. Then the Lord informs that His wrath is aroused against Job's friends who have not spoken what is right about the Lord as Job had. He also tells them how to atone. (through the sacrifices and prayers of Job). Thereby Job is granted twice as much as he had before. God blesses Job abundantly The Lord promises to forgive Job's friends through the intercession of Job. Job is rewarded in double measure of all that he had and is blessed with wealth and prosperity.

Chapter 6

Who is the Satan of the Book of Job

The Fathers of the Church and theologians say that the Satan of the Book of Job is not the real Satan. The Satan of the Book of Job is to be considered as an angel in the court of God who tries/tests and purifies man on behalf of God. That is, they are like the lawyers who argue for the defendants in a King's court. The Satan described in the words of St. Paul is an example.(2 Corinthians 12). It is the same spirit that tricked Ahab, the King of Israel. The doubt of Job in Chapter 23 is relevant here.

a) The Real Satan.

It was the real Satan who entered Eden. He is the advocate of lies and a murderer.

The morning star, son of dawn who fell from heaven is also the real Satan (Isaiah 14:12). The Lord Jesus tells the Jews, *"You are of your father the devil,---. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him."* He is cunning. In chapter 3 of the prophecy of Zechariah, we see Satan accusing Joshua (verses 1-2) However, the Lord rebukes Satan and says, *"Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?"* This chapter contains details of such matters.

b) A small study.

This is indeed a subject that calls for further study. In the original language, Hebrew, the term was not used as a personal name, but as a name depicting a position. Many scholars claim that the Satan referred to here is the prosecutor appointed to accuse. His job is as investigator, judge by testing and such. In short, he is the advocate in the presence of God who examines various aspects of human character and tests man.

c) My Grace is sufficient unto thee.

In St. Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians he says," *And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."* (2 Corinthians 12:7-8) Does it not

appear that our Lord is sending an examiner to St Paul so that he does not become conceited and submit to the real Satan? Isn't pride the greatest sin and downfall? The apostle asserts that he had been given a thorn in the flesh so that he does not fall into this sin. A precautionary approach is always necessary to prevent our falling into the trap of Satan.

d) The Political Situation of the time.

The Persian Empire was very powerful during the period of BC 539 to 332. There were such advocates/spies in the court of the emperor. Their job was to go around the emperor's palace and court and collect secret information about the citizens and officials and convey it to the emperor. They were the eyes and ears of the emperor. The sage Narada of Hindu epics seem to have performed a similar duty. However, the real Satan is against the truth. He is the enemy who spreads false information to the persons in authority. He entered Eden and into Judas. His only skill is envy.

e) The Lord speaks about the real Satan.

Our Lord speaks to some of the Jews who believed Him, "*You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*" (John 8:44-45) His occupation is the spreading of falsehood. It is through a similar dissemination of falsehood that he caused the downfall of the first father and mother in Eden. The real Satan opposes all divinely appointed rules. Even today, in the church, society and families, some people spread falsehood to achieve their own ends. Such people have no hesitation to control those in positions of authority to submit to their will through the spreading of false and defamatory news and thus lead the society to destruction.

f) Those who revel in the disseminative power of falsehood.

St. Paul, in the second epistle to the Thessalonians reminds them thus, "*The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all*

will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.” Thus all those who take pleasure in injustice are in servitude to the one who is the embodiment of wickedness. We can see from the previous lines that God will destroy that creature of wickedness.

In accordance with what is mentioned above, the spirit of God abandons Saul, the first king of Israel, who had adopted ways that were alienated from God. Instead an evil spirit afflicts him. David’s presence would have provided him salvation. But he does not do that, but tries to destroy David who had been Saul’s protection and guard. (1 Samuel 16:14)

g) The spirit that lured Ahab.

In the history of Ahab, what amplified his wayward life was the advice of the Queen. Accepting her ways, the King sheds innocent blood. The host of heaven gather before the Lord to destroy Ahab as seen in 1 King 22 chapter 2 Chronicles, chapter 18, verses 18,19,20 . Here also we see the prosecutor that we see in the Book of Job. It is this investigator who gives the wrong advice to the mouths of the 400 prophets and the Spirit of truth to the mouth of Prophet Micah. It is only Micah who sees the Divine Assembly of heaven. The others do not see it. The reason is that even though they are the prophets of God, they prefer to flatter the evil king Ahab than to tread in the paths of the Lord. In the words of St. Paul, they take delight in lies.

h) Not everyone may experience the Mystery of God.

“Mystery for me and mine” must be as Micah saw it. We should be able to perceive the presence of God. In 2 Chronicles chapter 18, we must learn a lesson from the punishment that King Jehoshaphat received when, after acquiring riches and honour, he decided to forge friendship with an evil man. We also see prophets censuring Jehoshaphat.

i) David is tried and tested.

An incident concerning the life of King David is mentioned in 2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21:1. *“Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.”* He falls to the ruse of Satan. He counts the people against

the advice of Joab, the captain of his army. When David understands that this is against the will of the Lord and that God's wrath is now turned against him and his people, he seeks forgiveness. His lamentation, *"Was it not I who commanded the people to be numbered? I am the one who has sinned and done evil"*, should be a model for all in administrative power. Like St. Peter, when he realized that he had erred, David also approaches the Lord with penitence and reparation seeking forgiveness. After the punishment, David's offering is accepted by fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering. That sacrificial offering is made in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. It is here that the Jerusalem Temple was later erected.

j) Satan is rebuked when he judges Joshua.

In the third chapter of the Prophecy of Zachariah, we see Satan standing before the Lord to accuse High Priest Joshua. The LORD said to Satan, *"The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?"* (3:2). Joshua's filthy clothes are removed and he is dressed in fine garments. A clean turban is placed on his head. (The accusation in this case involves threat, insult, scolding and instilling fear). Here we see the real Satan.

k) At the zenith of spirituality through trials.

Though the trials faced by Job were extreme, actually it was an action by God through his messenger/angel to purify Job through fire as in the case of gold or a burning stick snatched from the fire. Prayer has to be learned through repeated training similar to the process of learning to swim. Job has reached the pinnacle of this. A father training a child to swim draws away his supporting hand that he had held below the child to block the downward force of gravity and to save the child from danger, when the child learns to thrash about with his arms and legs. It is not to kill the child that he does this but to challenge him to grow. However, the evil one would be waiting for an opportunity to pull him down by his feet. Or make him fall into the net of demonic attractions.

I) We shall be forgiven only if we forgive.

Job's friends had come to console him and to help him. But their words only increase the pressure of Job's trials. When his trials come to a close, Job forgives his friends. He does that in response to the commandment of the Lord.

According to the direction of the Lord Job offers sacrifices for them. God reprimands his friends and asks them to bring the materials for the sacrifices to Job. After reprimanding Job's friends and instructing Job to forgive his friends and to offer sacrifices on behalf of them, God blesses Job doubly.

(42:8-10).

Then Job replied to the LORD:

*"I know that you can do all things;
no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?'
Surely I spoke of things I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me to know.
"You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak;
I will question you,
and you shall answer me.'
My ears had heard of you
but now my eyes have seen you." (42:1-5).*

Thus at the end of his trials, Job survives the attraction of all the downward forces and reaches a state of ease. In a moment of deep meditation he says, '*Now I have seen you with my own eyes.*'

We sing, "Climb on the meditation seat and see with your inner eye".