

Chapter 9

The Dark Side of the Self and the Trials of Job: A Depth Psychology of Suffering

In this chapter, I would like to show how Job confronted the dark side of the Self, which he experienced as causing tremendous suffering. This confrontation transformed Job's image of the divine, which is one of the effects of suffering.

In order to describe Job's experience, the depth psychologist reads the Bible as a mythic text. This attitude offends those committed Jews and Christians who think that other people's sacred texts can be called myth, but the Bible is the Truth. However, the psychologist is in no position to grant any one sacred story preference over any other. For the psychologist, any book that has been accepted for millennia as sacred or divinely inspired must be taken to be emotionally important. We cannot comment on its literal or historical accuracy, but at least it must be true in the sense that it speaks to people symbolically, spiritually, psychologically, and metaphorically. A story like *Job* is important for what it means to people, for what it tells us about people's beliefs, and for the kind of God-image it depicts.

Our images of God can be derived from various sources, such as experience, revelation, tradition, cultural and family opinions, and the testimony of sacred texts such as the Bible. These texts are widely thought to describe the human encounter with the divine, or to be divinely inspired, so that they are accepted by many people as authentic accounts of revelation. Yet, it is

important to remember that, even if the origin of the Bible is in the divine realm, this source has to be filtered through the human levels of the psyche in order to be written down. We cannot be sure that biblical language and perceptions truly reflect the transcendent realm, which is surely beyond human concepts. Therefore Jung can say that the statements in the Holy Scriptures are utterances of the soul (CW 11, ¶ 557), meaning that religious statements are psychological facts as well as statements about our God-image. The authors of the Bible tried hard to describe their experience of the divine, but they are not describing the divine itself, only their image of it.

The image of the God within the Bible cannot be said to be all good, if we use human criteria to describe God's behavior. Sometimes he behaves morally, but sometimes he is quite immoral and unjust, angry, arbitrary and vengeful, even to the degree that he demands the sacrifice of his son to be reconciled with disobedient humanity. Obviously it can be argued that these are all human standards, and we cannot understand the mysteries of God, although this is an inconsistent argument if at the same time we insist on God's goodness, since goodness is also a human standard! In fact, the psychologist is not trying to understand these mysteries themselves; rather, we are trying to understand how they affect us. Sometimes they affect us painfully, and this is reflected in biblical experience. The story of Job is a typical example of the experience of the dark side of God. Like all mythic material, this is a story that has eternal relevance. When traditional explanations of what happened to Job are no longer satisfying, every generation has to ask the meaning of Job's experience. Job's question—why do the wicked prosper, while good people suffer?—has always been a part of the spiritual quest. I would like to look at this story from two points of view. First, the book depicts the experience of a severe emotional crisis that is resolved by a new vision of God. (This is analysis at a distance, based on

a text rather than a person, but it is the best we can do.) Then, as Jung pointed out in his *Answer to Job*, the book of *Job* offers insights into some of the problems contained within the traditional image of God.

The book of *Job* is one of the later works of the Hebrew Bible. Scholars date the book to the fourth century B.C.E., but the authors of *Job* were probably influenced by folk memories and oral traditions that stretched back into the distant past. The prophet Ezekiel, of the 6th century B.C.E., mentions Job, and Hebrew legend has Job as the grandson of Jacob's brother Esau. An early Sumerian version of the story is thought to be from about 2000 B.C.E., and a Babylonian poem mentions the suffering of a pious king who has been called the Babylonian Job. Later I will discuss some parallels between *Job* and an ancient Indian story about a legendary king called Vikramaditya. Presumably stories with this theme have lasted through the ages because they raise eternal questions about humanity, divinity and the problem of suffering.

Biblical scholars point out that *Job* is a composite work with more than one author. The text has come down to us through repeated oral and written transmissions, so that by now there must be many corruptions and deviations from the original. Another difficulty is that there is more than one way of reading the Hebrew original. Biblical scholars and comparative philologists continue to debate these issues, but these technical problems are not too relevant to the psychologist, since the fact that the pieces have been put together in this particular manner is itself meaningful. The book is greatly valued in its final form, which has stood the test of time as the official version. In whatever manner the poem came about, its acceptance by the religious community makes it a document that has psychological importance for many people. Here I will

keep to the version used in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, since this is the crystallization of many voices over many years, so it will tell us something about the prevalent God-image. Jung suggested that *Job* depicts the beginning of the dissolution of the all-good God-image, because the people of that time had realized that they could not rely on the divine promise that evil would be punished and good rewarded. In spite of this promise, the God of the Hebrew Bible could behave in unpredictable, often outrageous ways.

In this discussion, following Jung's warning, I hope it is obvious that I will only discuss the image of God portrayed in the text, since I have no idea to what extent the image and the absolute Reality correspond to each other. I would also note that, because Job himself portrays different attitudes to his suffering, some scholars have suggested that Job the patient and Job the impatient are actually two different characters who have been rolled into one to make the story. I think of them as two aspects of the same Job, since I imagine that he had mixed feelings.

The story is that Satan has questioned Job's faithfulness by asking God if Job's goodness and piety might be merely the result of God having blessed Job with riches and success. God agrees to let Satan test this theory by making Job suffer. We are not told why God allows this appalling wager, since he must know in advance what will happen, because he knows everything. In his book *God: A Biography*, Jack Miles makes the terrifying point that if God is this kind of gambler, whatever seems to come from God may actually come from Satan. Then we have no way to know whether any other of God's other actions actually came from God himself; perhaps the ten commandments were the result of a wager with Satan! In Miles's words,

"nothing God might henceforth do or say would deserve to be taken at face value" (p. 311).

This question haunts the whole book.

Evil and suffering quickly follow the conversation between God and Satan. From the human perspective, the marauders who murdered Job's servants and stole his animals were undoubtedly morally evil. The lightning that destroyed his men and his sheep, and the gale force wind that killed his seven children by collapsing their house, were forms of what is called "natural" evil. The story clearly tells us that Satan is behind all these disasters, acting with God's permission. In fact, Satan is described as "one of the sons of God." (He has not yet been promoted to the status of "prince of this world" [John, 12: 31]). The story tellers clearly believe that evil and suffering have a mixture of human and transpersonal origins—at this stage, evil has not yet been radically separated from the divine.

The irony of the story is that it is God who behaves without faith, not Job. Job remains faithful to God. Job accepts the news of his severe losses with what looks like resignation and acceptance of the will of God. First we see Job the patient. He worships God, grieves, and says: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (1: 21). Satan then insists that Job would not be so good if he were to become physically ill. God allows this experiment also, and Job is afflicted with "loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head" ((2: 7). At this point his wife, who has lost her children and her home for no apparent reason, bitterly insists: "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God, and die" (2: 9). But Job simply points out that if they have accepted good things from God, they should also accept evil.

Soon, Job's friends arrive to try to help him. It takes a while for them to recognize Job because he is in such a terrible condition. They are so stunned and hurt at his plight that they cannot speak to him for seven days, but simply sit and grieve with him. Their silence mirrors the unspeakable nature of his feelings. It is testimony to the power of his friends' silent empathy with his grief that only at the end of this period of mourning do Job's real feelings erupt. It is as if his feelings have been so strongly disavowed that he needs his friends' attunement to his distress before Job the impatient, the critic of God, is finally able to put his feelings into words. I suspect that without the presence of his friends he would have remained stuck in his grief without venting it. Job needed his friends to dispute with him so that he could become aware of his real feelings. Suddenly we see the rage that Job had been trying not to feel consciously. Job curses his own existence: "Let the day perish wherein I was born,/ and the night which said, 'A man-child is conceived'" (Job, 3: 3). He protests bitterly against having been born, and asks what was the point of giving him life, since now he only wishes that he would die: "Why is light given to him that is in misery,/and life to the bitter in soul,/who long for death but it comes not" (3:20-21). No wonder he broke out in boils trying to keep all this inside him; while he was being so patient and accepting at the conscious level, his body was expressing his unconscious feelings.

At this point, Job's friend Eliphaz suggests that, if Job appeals to God, things will work out in the end, because Job is good and only the wicked end up badly. According to Eliphaz, what has happened to Job is actually good for him, and if he repents and makes restitution he will end up better than before. Eliphaz has had a dream (4: 13) in which a spirit tells him that no

man can be righteous and pure before God, since God is even critical of his own angels. In other words, for Eliphaz, Job cannot win against this tyrannical God-image, no matter how he behaves. Like many people who are committed to a tradition, Eliphaz wants to generalize from his own beliefs and his own experience to everyone else. From our point of view, Eliphaz's dream is not necessarily relevant to Job.

Job realizes that his friend says this kind of thing because he is afraid of the calamity that has befallen Job, and he wants to make sense of it. But Job does not want anyone to talk him out of his despair. When we are in despair, brave words and common sense only mock the depth of how we feel; if they were any use, we would not be truly in despair. Job insists on his own truth; he knows himself, and he knows that he does not deserve what has happened, no matter what Eliphaz says. Job insists on not restraining his anguish: "I will complain in the bitterness of my soul" (6: 11). He reproaches God: "What is man that thou dost make so much of him...and test him every moment?" (7: 17). He complains that even if he has sinned, "what do I do to thee, thou watcher of men?" Job is no threat to God, so why has God made him a target, and why can God not forgive him? Here we also hear a painful need for connection to God, and a worry about the state of the relationship, as Job cries: "Why have I become a burden to thee?" Job reminds God that he must be quick if he wants the connection, because otherwise "now I shall lie in the earth;/thou wilt seek me, but I shall not be" (7: 20-21).

Job's questions are reasonable, but Job's friends, who really care about him—otherwise they would not have been able to sit with him for seven days—find this outburst too painful to bear. It threatens everything they believe, everything they have been taught. They are caught

between their love for Job and the way in which his speech is a threat to the foundation of their religious beliefs. There is a theology that wants to preserve the institution. Accordingly, his friends lose patience with Job, and they again insist that he must have done something wrong to have incurred all this suffering. They present the traditional theological ideas that suffering must be a punishment for sin, or that Job is being disciplined.

But Job insists that he is innocent, or that even if he has sinned these punishments are disproportionate. He bitterly complains that God is unfair. His friend Bildad maintains that God does not pervert judgment, but Job disagrees with this collective wisdom: "Though I am innocent, my own mouth would condemn me:/though I am blameless, he would prove me perverse" (9: 20). God is indifferent: "It is all one; therefore I say,/he destroys both the blameless and the wicked" (9: 22). No matter how pure he were to become, Yahweh would still "plunge me into a pit" (9: 28: 31). In a beautiful reminder of his creation, Job reminds God that: "Thy hands fashioned and made me;/and now thou dost turn about and destroy me./Remember that thou hast made me of clay;/and wilt thou turn me to dust again?/Didst thou not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese?" (10: 8-12). In other words, why make this amazing creature and then destroy it for no reason? His friends cannot tolerate this accusation of their God. Zophar insists that Job is even more guilty than he realizes. He again urges Job to repent, and points out the enormous power of God.

To this, Job is merely sarcastic. He already knows about the power of God, and does not need his friends to tell him about it. What he wants is the chance to argue his case before God. But because of their own anxieties, and their need to preserve their beliefs, his friends are now so

lacking in emotional resonance with Job, so lacking in empathy with his feelings, that his connection to them is finally disrupted. Job becomes enraged at his friends: "As for you, you whitewash with lies;/worthless physicians are you all" ((13: 4). He tells his friends that it is dangerous for them to try to blindly vindicate God by lying, because if they give false testimony in his forthcoming trial, God will judge them severely. Job now takes his life in his hands and insists on presenting his case to God, even if God kills him in the process. He asks God to let him know what his sins have been, and he demands to know why God bothers to torture such a worthless, short-lived, insignificant creature. Why not leave him in peace?

In turn, Job's friends become angry with Job. Eliphaz reveals his real fear; if Job is right, then religion is undermined. Job *must* be sinful—their whole belief system rests on this being the cause of his suffering, and Job has questioned this fundamental premise. Sarcastic in his turn, Eliphaz asks: "Are you the first man that was born?...Have you listened in the council of God?" (15: 7-8). "What do you know that we do not know? /What do you know that is not clear to us? (15:). Perhaps remembering his dream, Eliphaz insists on human impurity and sinfulness, and that the fate of the wicked is painful in the end. But Job is not impressed. He's heard all this before, and he would say the same thing if he were in their shoes and they in his. As far as Job can see, God persecutes him "although there is no violence in my hands,/and my prayer is pure" (16: 17). But his friends are unable to understand his protests, so convinced are they of the traditional arguments. Job's friend Bildad accuses Job of treating them like stupid cattle. He accuses Job of wanting special treatment, perhaps revealing some envy of Job, and goes on to repeat the old story about the terrible fate of sinners. This lack of understanding tortures Job further. *God* is the problem, not him, and they are adding to his pain. Suddenly, in

the midst of his despair, Job breaks out into an extraordinary confession of faith that seems to come out of nowhere: "For I know that my Redeemer lives,/and at last he will stand upon the earth;/and after my skin has been thus destroyed,/then from my flesh I shall see God,/whom I shall see on my side,/and my eyes shall behold, and not another" (19: 25-27). Here Job actually tells God what he wants, which may be why God appears to him at the end of the story.

Meanwhile, Zophar feels insulted because Job has accused his friends of making things worse. Zophar has a great emotional investment in maintaining the traditional view about the cause of suffering. He loses his temper with Job, accuses him of pride, and repeats what Bildad has just said. Job tries to be patient with them, and says that if they would only listen carefully, that would really help him. In great sorrow, Job then points out some hard truths. Contrary to what his friends have said, wicked people become powerful and prosperous, and die happy. The wicked man does not care if his wickedness affects his children. Many good things happen to bad people, even though they reject God and do not serve him or pray to him. Don't his friends realize that the wicked are *not* condemned or punished? In the face of all this: "How then will you comfort me with empty nothings?/There is nothing left of your answers but falsehood" (21: 34).

When Eliphaz hears Job's account of how the wicked prosper, he interprets this to mean that Job's prosperity must have been due to wickedness. Eliphaz then outrageously lists all of the faults that he imagines Job must have in order to explain what has happened. He accuses Job of cheating and of greed and indifference to the needy, as if Job believes that God cannot see his actions. Eliphaz again recommends repentance, which Job ignores. Job desperately wants a

hearing so that God can judge him fairly because Job is convinced of his innocence, but he wonders how he can talk the whole thing over with God when he does not know how to find God? Job is also terrified because God is so persistently indifferent to human suffering. Why does God not seem to care about the wicked, or about the suffering of the poor? "From out of the city the dying groan,/and the soul of the wounded cries for help;/yet God pays no attention to their prayer" ((24: 12). Thanks to his own suffering, Job seems to have become very conscious of the plight of the poor: "They lie all night naked, without clothing;/hungry, they carry the sheaves..." (24: 10). This seems to be an indictment of God because of social injustice. Who, Job demands, is going to prove that what I say about God's indifference is not so? At this point, Job's friend Bildad, who seems to have grasped nothing of what Job has just said, makes another irrelevant speech about how human beings are just worms and maggots compared to the power of God. At this, with withering sarcasm, Job thanks his friends for their "help" and "advice." He swears that as long as he has breath in his body he will not speak falsely by admitting that they are right: "[T]ill I die I will not put away my integrity from me" (27: 5).

Sadly now, Job mourns the losses of his previous life style. He grieves the loss of his belief that God watched over him, the loss of his children, the loss of being universally respected by important people, and the loss of the feeling that he is blessed because of his good works (29). Some of his grief occurs because he sees his fallen status as a sign that he has lost his connection to God, but this part of the story also gives us a clue about an unacknowledged problem. Job says that he used to glory in his superior social position; he was so affluent that he was able to wash his steps with milk. When things were going well, Job was apparently rather self-satisfied and full of himself. For this reason, some commentators have suggested that before tragedy

struck Job had been rather complacent, even smug, and not quite as good as he portrayed himself—an allusion to Satan's original accusation. At times, although Job was sensitive to oppressed people when he was wealthy, he seemed to think that his wealth was simply his entitlement. That is another reason that his reversal of fortune came as such a shock.

Job complains that he is now so reduced that he is mocked by the meanest of people: "[T]hey do not hesitate to spit at the sight of me...they have cast off restraint in my presence" (30, 10-11). "God has cast me into the mire,/ and I have become like dust and ashes. /I cry to thee and thou dost not answer me;/I stand and thou dost not heed me" (30: 19-20). This is not fair, Job says to God. I helped people in distress, but "when I looked for good, evil came;/and when I waited for light, darkness came" (30: 26). Job also realizes that the same God made both him and his servants: "Did not he who made me in the womb make him?/ And did not one fashion us in the womb?" (31: 15). However, unlike his previous acts of charity from on high, as a rich man, charity that constantly emphasized his wealth, Job now has *real* empathy for the downtrodden because he has experienced their plight for himself. Perhaps the point here is that only those who suffer themselves can really understand suffering. Because poverty and suffering predispose to religious questioning, it is not an accident that new spiritual movements begin among oppressed people. Job had no reason to question his God-image before his suffering occurred.

Job bitterly remonstrates with God: What was the point of all my virtue if misery is not just for sinners? Isn't God keeping a proper record? Here we see what might be a guilty conscience; Job tells God that *if* he has been vain or deceitful, or lusted after other women, or

failed to respect the needs of his servants, or failed to care for the poor and needy, or sought riches, or secretly worshipped pagan gods, or wished evil on his enemies, or turned away strangers, or been unfair in business—then let him be punished. He's ready to account for everything he has done; but, he asks, where is my indictment, so that I can justify myself? It sounds as if Job is convinced that he has done none of these things. He demands of God: "Let me be weighed in a just balance" (31: 6).

At this point a rather self-important young man called Elihu takes over the conversation. He is angry because the three friends have not convinced Job that he is wrong. He points out that God speaks to us by means of dreams, which act as a warning. This reminds us that Job had earlier complained about frightening dreams: "...thou dost scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions" (7: 14), which suggests that the unconscious had been very active. It is often the case that an impending tragedy announces itself by means of frightening dreams. Elihu, like the other friends, tells us that Job has not been as righteous as he says. Job does not reply to Elihu, presumably because he is tired of hearing the same old attacks. The voices of his friends could be regarded either as people, or as aspects of Job's personality, internal voices with which he has to contend. In either case, their God-image seems to be built on guilt and retribution, very much a legalistic or a parent-child model of our relationship to God. Job's demand for justice is typically Hebraic, and not surprising, but Job does not only want justice. What the friends persist in failing to grasp is how much Job wants a personal relationship with God. This is one of the elements that makes the book relevant to us today. We too want a relationship, but one that is based on the way we experience the Self. We do not want a God-image that is imposed on us.

When the personal level is silenced, it is God's turn to speak. The fact that God answers at all is very important, since it acknowledges that a relationship is present. God responds to Job out of a whirlwind. The numinosum can take so many forms that the specific manner in which it appears to Job must have something to do with Job's personal psychology. This is what is meant by an *image* of the Self; the whirlwind is not simply "God" in the transcendent or theological sense of the word, but an immanent experience of the numinosum that is relevant to his personal psychology. The very idea that this is a wind has to be transmitted through the psyche for Job to have recognized it as such. God also *speaks* to Job, and we cannot have language without personal levels of the psyche being involved. Job's experience of the divine is therefore mediated or colored by his associations to winds of this type; whirlwinds mean something to him. This particular Self-image suggests that Job's God is a storm God, a God of the tempest, the same God that killed his children by blowing their house down in a wind. This is the image of God of which he has always been afraid, to whom Job would sacrifice in vain to prevent his children being punished. If we look at the content of what God actually says from the whirlwind, we will obtain an even clearer picture of Job's God-image. What follows is not a description of the Unknowable itself; it is an experience of the numinosum colored by projections that arise within the structures of Job's personality.

The response that Yahweh gives to Job out of the whirlwind is a poetic outpouring about how powerful God is compared to Job. God compares his power to Job's smallness, thus repeating what Job's friends have been saying all along. Usually this comparison is said to be simply ironic, an attempt to humble Job and bring him down to size. But I think that there is

more than a little rage and sarcasm in God's response, which is very important in understanding Job's God-image. I will emphasize the sarcasm by simply stressing the word "you" in the text. God says: "I will question you, and you shall declare to me./Where were *you* when I laid the foundation of the earth?/Tell me if you have understanding./Who determined its measurements--surely *you* know!" (38: 3-5). "Have *you* commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place...Have *you* entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep? Have the gates of death been revealed to *you*...declare, if you know all this...*You* know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is great!" (38: 16-21). After these unanswerable questions there follows a long list of God's creations that of course Job cannot match; the control of the seas, the coming of the dawn, the snow and hail, thunder, lightening and rain, the movement of the stars, and the ways of animals and birds. Strikingly absent in this list of divine achievements is any mention of humanity. In other words, for such an insignificant creature as a man to question the Lord of the Universe is ridiculous. Perhaps God stresses his creative power so much because of Job's early complaint about God having created him in the first place, and God wants Job to widen his perspective beyond his own life. Essentially, God says to Job "just who do you think you are? You don't know anything, and you cannot do all the amazing things that I can do." However, Job's knowledge of God's creative power was never an issue in the first place—it has been obvious to Job all along. It is therefore likely that God's questioning is an accusation, an indictment of a secret inflation in Job that Job has not been conscious of. In retrospect therefore, we wonder if the initial wager between God and Satan was actually a challenge to Job's arrogance, not his piety as such. We begin to wonder if "Satan" is an unconscious sector of Job's personality that accuses Job of arrogance.

God ends his speech with a final attack: "Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty?" (40: 2). In other words, God says *you* are the problem, not me. In response to God's speech, Job becomes submissive and admits that God knows best: "Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer thee?/I lay my hand upon my mouth" (40: 40). It is hard to know what this means. It may be that Job agrees with God, or it may simply indicate that the power difference is too great for him to argue with God, or that the experience of awe is so great that it overpowers Job's questions about God's injustice. In any case, apparently Job's response does not satisfy God, so in case he has not made his point, God continues, apparently unable to contain his indignation and outrage. In this section, God adds some further impossible questions: "Will you even put me in the wrong? /Will you condemn me that you may be justified? / Have you an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like his?" (40: 8-9). In other words, "don't question what you don't understand. What I do does not conform to your categories of right and wrong." There follows another list of how strong God is and how much he can do, as if Job were still in any doubt. Job responds: "I know that thou canst do all things,/and that no purpose of thine can be thwarted...Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,/things too wonderful for me, which I did not know" (42: 2-3). Then the important lines: "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,/but now my eye sees thee; /therefore I despise myself,/and repent in dust and ashes" (42: 5-6). Until now Job had a traditional idea of God, based on what he has been told, but now he has a personal experience. Typically, the real thing is quite different than our expectations based on hearsay. I suspect Job is still angry about the injustice, but he is willing to accept it because it comes from a God that he can directly experience.

Job's final act of contrition seems to pacify God, who now agrees that, after all, Job was right and his friends were wrong. God condemns Job's friends, presumably because God agrees that they have tried to fit God into their own categories of morality. Interestingly, God tells Job's friends to ask Job to sacrifice and pray to God on their behalf. This must be an acknowledgment of the importance of their connection and their need to be reconciled with each other. Then, God tries to make it up to Job by restoring his material possessions and giving him new children, with the monstrous implication that this would somehow make up for the death of his first family. No comment is made on the fact that Job's children were simply innocent bystanders in the wager between God and Satan. It seems important that Job gives his new daughters an inheritance that is equal to that of their brothers, which was unusual for those male-dominated times, and another indication that he had learned about social injustice from his experience. The fact that God must have felt guilty is suggested by his giving Job twice what he had before, and his allowing Job a very long life. This happy ending was probably added by a different writer in an attempt to salvage his God-image, but it tends to miss the point of what Job has gone through. The real benefit is Job's direct experience of the numinosum—he is given a new vision of the Self. This vision is personal and it is directly relevant to his own psychology. Typically, it took tremendous suffering before this experience of the numinosum appeared, and the experience addressed Job's psychological difficulties, to which I would now like to turn. These difficulties reveal themselves both in Job's lament during his suffering and also in the context of his dialogue with God.

God's might-is-right whirlwind speech can be understood in various ways. At first glance it only seems to be evidence of divine narcissism, since God never says that he is just, only that

he is omnipotent, as if his sheer physical power justifies his behavior. Since it would be meaningless to attribute narcissism to the divine itself, it makes more sense to assume that the narcissistic, self-important, power-drenched aspects of this speech are the ways that Job has colored his God-image with his own difficulty. "Satan's" doubts about the reason for Job's piety represent Job's unconscious doubts about himself that he defends against with grandiosity. It is not an accident that during his laments Job stressed his wealth, his high position in the community, his charity and his righteousness. Apparently he was dimly aware that these were the ways in which he held himself together and maintained his self-esteem. When he loses all these supports, and with them the power that his wealth allowed, he has to re-evaluate his sense of who he is. It is no accident that his God-image stresses power over the world. In those days, it was taken for granted that the divine would be interested in dominion and domination. Power was a part of the collective God-image because human rulers were interested in power. Job unconsciously assumes that power is an aspect of the divine because power over others is so important to him personally. But we have a different experience of God when we are among the oppressed than we do when we are one of the élite; qualities such as justice, rather than the power of God, then become important. Job's suffering has made him more aware of the limitations of power, more empathic towards the suffering of others, less grandiose, and less self-important. Perhaps this was the point all along. The process was intended to change his values, deflate his narcissistic self-importance, and thereby speed up the maturation of his personality. This argument would be weak if it implied that intense suffering is the only way for this to happen. For Job this may have been the case, since many people with narcissistic character disorders only develop compassion for others when they have suffered themselves.

Apparently it took a good deal of suffering, and the appearance of God in a whirlwind, to deflate Job's inflation.

It is not an accident that God appears to Job in a storm. This intimidating imagery is a part of the biblical tradition, and it was part of the collective God-image at the time of Job. Yahweh appeared on Mt. Sinai in thunder and lightening and a thick cloud, which terrified the people (Exodus 19). Most scholars think that the biblical Yahweh was originally a storm god, like Zeus and Jupiter. The mythic storm gods tend to be judges and law-givers, like this one. Perhaps this is why it had to be a storm that killed Job's children. Job's God image is punitive, and even Job's frequent ritual sacrifices did not prevent the storm-god from killing his children. Yahweh is also a war god, often a merciless warlord who helps his people fight battles and conquer cities, tells them to kill all the inhabitants, and keeps the spoils for himself (Joshua 7, 1 Kings 20). In other words, he is very dangerous to cross. These are the cultural roots of Job's punitive God image. I suggest that there were also factors in Job's personal history that reinforced this angry God-image.

Instead of assuming that God and Satan are "out there," we can also imagine that the story of Job depicts a psychological drama, something that happened *within* Job. Satan is then not an outer figure, but rather he represents a sector of Job's personality. This sector can be thought of as a painful complex, or a severe emotional difficulty within Job. With good reason, Satan is traditionally known as the Adversary, since he challenges Job's conscious attitudes. Satan vanishes from the story as Job's experience gradually resolves the problem that he represents. As an aspect of Job's psyche, "Satan" had remained dormant or unconscious until it

was activated by the loss of Job's children and possessions, which plunge him into grief and depression. The story has it that Satan and God make their wager before these disasters happen, although this is the kind of idea that may have occurred to Job *after* these tragedies have occurred, in an attempt to make sense of what has happened to him. Job is constantly worried about whether God is displeased with him or his children, as evidenced by his constant sacrificing, and he would naturally consider the severe thunderstorm that killed his children to be a divine manifestation that he has failed to ward off.

Our fantasies about the reason for God's actions are often colored by our experience with our childhood caretakers. Theories about God that are not based on experience or revelation are always speculations, since we can only project onto the mystery or speak of how it affects us. We can often understand the content of a fantasy about God by looking at the life story of the individual, because our God-images are colored by life experiences. I suggest that Job's anxiety about God's behavior towards him tells us more about his experience with his father than it does about the divine itself. Job's father problem colors his God-image, and makes the collective God-image that he inherited even more frightening. Job's experiences with his father, combined with the cultural stories about God with which he has grown up, help us to understand the depiction of Job's God-image in the form of an angry sky-father who must be placated with sacrifices. Besides its other meanings, the story is then a depiction of the way Job experiences the divine through the lens of his personal psychology. This is not to say that he does not experience anything real, which might be a traditional psychoanalytic explanation; rather, he experiences the numinosum in a particular way that is radically colored by his cultural expectations and his personal psychology. Job experiences the archetypal sky Father in a

negative form; the devastating, whirlwind sky-God is the archetypal Father at the center of his father complex.

One line of evidence for the importance of Job's father is his name. According to the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, the name Job has two possible origins. One is a Hebrew verb meaning to bear ill-will, while the other is a contraction of the phrase "where is the divine father?" This combination of meanings is psychologically significant. Job's behavior as a father, and his worry about the ill-will of the divine Father, both appear early in the story. Job's sons were in the habit of giving parties, and after each one of these Job would offer sacrifices to God: "...for Job said, 'it may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.' Thus did Job continually" (1: 5). Presumably in those days sacrifice was a common practice. But surely there is a difference between ritual that is carried out because of devotion to God, or simply to fulfill a commandment, and ritual that sounds obsessive. To our modern ears, for a father to be so concerned about the behavior of his sons seems excessively scrupulous. Job's constant sacrificing "just in case" his sons did something wrong is suggestive of an obsessive-compulsive ritual. From Freud we have learned that these rituals are attempts to manage guilt about a forbidden impulse. The ritual tries to contain and bind aggression and fear so that they do not flood the personality. To me, Job's behavior suggests that he feels fear and hostility towards his father, which he transforms and projects into a constant worry about whether his sons have offended the divine Father. Job is worried about his sons' guilt because of his own guilt, which he wards off with his sacrifices to prevent divine retribution. This suggests that there is a good deal of fear behind his piety, not to mention the fact that the first sentence of the story stresses that Job "feared God," and later (28: 28) Job defines wisdom as the fear of God.

Job's fear suggests that his image of God is punitive and harsh. Typically, such a God-image is produced by childhood experiences with a harsh parent. Job's statement of repentance in his concession speech—"I have uttered what I did not understand...I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes"—can be understood on various levels. From the point of view of a child confronted with a powerful, angry father, an apology is the safest tack to take. Job's expression of utter humiliation is further evidence that the relationship is based on fear and submission rather than love and connection. Consider the uncanny parallels between Job's experience of God and the experience of a small child dealing with an angry father. During his ordeal, Job constantly complains that God is unreasonable, and he wants to hear God's own explanation for what is happening, although when God finally speaks from the whirlwind he does not really address Job's concerns. Instead, God lectures majestically about how he created everything and about how small and ignorant Job is in comparison. This is all irrelevant to Job, since he never questioned God's power in the first place. In fact, early on in the poem, Job acknowledged that God alone "stretched out the heavens" and "made the Bear and Orion" (9: 8-9), so the whirlwind speech does not appear to reply to Job's indictment of God's justice. However, I think that God's lecture *is* in fact a kind of reply, and it is circumstantial evidence that Job has colored his image of the divine with his feelings about his father, since God's speech is the typical comment of an angry father in response to his child's complaints of unfairness. Here is my paraphrase of God's reply to Job: "Who do you think you are, you little brat, what do you know about life, you wouldn't even be here without me! Be a man! Just do as you are told—you cannot understand what I'm doing since everything I do is hopelessly beyond your abilities." Job replies to God that he is "of small account," and, just like a child confronted by an

angry father, backs off from further confrontation. God (the Father) proclaims that the facts of his wonderful creation justify him and make Job's questions unimportant. But this wonderful creation contains the very problem of suffering and injustice that Job was complaining about, so God's response is entirely circular and avoids the real issue. That is why we are still struggling with Job's questions. Perhaps the importance of the book is that it maintains a continuing meditation on the mystery involved.

The self-depreciation in Job's submissive phrase "I despise myself" also suggests that Job is depressed. This depression is reflected in his wish to die (3: 17) or to have not even been born (3: 11-12). Like many seriously depressed people, Job feels that he is a burden to God (7: 20), just as many neglected children are made to feel like a burden to their parents. Job feels that God will not listen to him (9: 16), that he is cut off from God (30: 19-20) and that God has become his enemy (13: 24, 16: 9). This depressive state of mind is typical of the way a child feels when the child's relationship to an angry parent has been severed and the child cannot find a way to reestablish the connection. In order to try to reconnect, the child often has to simply ignore or bottle up his or her feelings. But Job's feelings are clearly expressed by his body. Although Job is usually portrayed as a model of resignation to the will of God, if we look at one of his afflictions as an expression of what is going on inside him, we see a different story. He breaks out with terrible skin inflammation all over his body, from head to foot. It is well known that the skin is an organ of the soul—consider how we blush with embarrassment. These angry eruptions are a bodily statement of Job's unexpressed rage at what has happened; he is not as resigned as it seems. The text says that Job did not sin "with his lips," meaning that he did not verbally express his feelings. I suspect that, as a child, it was unsafe to express anger, which is common

when the child's anger is so unacceptable that it threatens the connection with a parent. He then has to repress his rage and express it through the body. He is angry with God, and he assumes that God is angry with him. The abused child often projects his own reactions onto a parent, so that "I am angry with father because he has withdrawn from me" is converted into "father has withdrawn because he is angry with me." Or, "if father withdraws his love, he is bad" is transformed into "if father withdraws from me, I must be bad and unlovable."

The anxiety that is part of this father complex is usually controlled by Job's obsessive sacrificing, which is his attempt to ward off disaster. When tragedy affects Job, he realizes that his sacrificing has not worked. Then, the underlying complex breaks out in full force, and we see Job's fantasy of divine retribution that he had been trying to prevent by means of his rituals. The complex possesses Job in a horrible manner—this is one meaning of "Satan." Speaking psychologically rather than literally, Satan is a force within the personality that is more or less under control, but when it breaks loose it is like a loose cannon, causing all kinds of havoc. Job's father complex is split. One side is reflected in his image of God as reliable and creative, while the other side of the split is Satan, that aspect of Job's psyche that makes him suffer. Satan is an internal critic of Job that torments him, that tells him he is not good enough, that he will be in trouble if he does not behave properly, and that he must find a way to reconnect to God. Through contemporary eyes, the central theme of the story is Job's need to relate to God; instead, Job's friends make the mistake of focusing on morality, law, sin, and punishment. "Satan" is the means by which Job's everyday consciousness is disrupted so that he is forced to develop a new God-image. For this purpose Satan is essential.

When Job was overwhelmed by this Satanic complex, he felt a depressive sector of his personality that had remained unconscious, or dormant, until it was activated by his losses, which he assumed were a punishment. He is then plunged into his childhood experience of being cut off from his father because he is bad. Reconnecting with his father/God is a difficult task, because Job feels so persecuted. Here, he may be repeating a childhood experience; it is not unusual for small child to try to do whatever it takes to keep connected to a raging, dangerous parent. Children often sacrifice themselves to maintain the needed relationship and to extract whatever love is available.

The story's initial fantasy that Satan accuses Job of behaving well only because he has been bribed with material possessions, suggests that love has to be bought. This fantasy may reflect Job's relationship with his father, but under what circumstances would love have to be bought rather than freely given? Job may have had a father who was hard to please and who could suddenly become angry in a rather arbitrary way, whereupon he would treat Job unjustly, ignore his good behavior, and punish him excessively for little reason. His father might then realize what he had done, and try to make it up to Job by giving him gifts, to buy back the child's love and make reparation. Job projects these dynamics onto his God-image. He unconsciously assumes that God, like his father, has to be constantly placated because he is subject to unpredictable attacks of rage. Eventually, after the tantrum is over, Job is given gifts from a now-pacified father/God. But, because his father projection onto God is unconscious, while he is under attack Job feels like a divine victim who has no idea why terrible things are happening to him. This kind of projection of one's personal psychology onto a God-image is typical of all religious traditions, but it is important to remember that these images are themselves based on

numinous archetypal motifs, such as the archetype of the divine Father. Because the forces at the center of complexes are archetypal, they have tremendous emotional power and they are autonomous. The everyday ego personality cannot control them.

Job's experience of the divine in a whirlwind emphasizes the power difference between them, but apart from the fact that God responds to Job there is little hint of relationship or love in this interchange. Yet, the story goes on to say that Job recovers and lives a long life, so we can assume that this experience was also regenerative and helpful to him. The awesome experience of the numinosum at the core of his father complex is a typical example of the healing capacity of contact with the numinosum. Job's experience reveals how staying with suffering, and maintaining one's own position rather than following collective wisdom, may lead to such a healing experience. Job is sustained by his new vision of the numinosum, which is much more meaningful than simply hearing about the divine second-hand. A numinous vision of the divine Father has been granted him, so that Job is reassured that there is an Intelligence behind what has happened. His suffering was not meaningless, and the "Satanic" sectors of his personality—his narcissism, his lack of real empathy for the suffering of the poor—have been transformed. Our experience of the change in ourselves brought about by suffering can be helpful in the midst of a dark night. However, another, less pious, more skeptical reading of this vision of God is that Job becomes silent because he realizes what he has been dealing with all along. He sees an image of the archetype at the center of his father complex, and he discovers its violent, unrelated and demanding nature. Job is silenced by this insight, because he realizes that his whirlwind vision is an image of the divine colored by personal and cultural conditioning. That is why he is able to say "now I can see who you *really* are."

For the depth psychologist, Job's experience is typical of an experience of the dark side of the Self. It also illustrates how suffering may be transformative, and how it makes visible the archetypal underpinnings of our complexes. This approach can be contrasted with traditional explanations of Job's suffering, such as the idea that God has tested Job's piety. To me, this explanation reflects an aspect of the collective God-image that is based on parent-child or teacher-child psychology. The fallacy is obvious. Why does God not already know whether Job fears him? Job constantly expresses his fear of God in his sacrificing, so his fear does not need to be tested again. Is this a test of love? If we are sure that our children love us we hardly need to test this love, and we certainly would not do so by torturing them. We would only need to test love if we were insecure about it—is God insecure? The very problem that we are dealing with is that Job's relationship with his God is based more on fear than love, and God's behavior is hardly calculated to change this feeling.

The hard fact is that there often is no discernible relationship between a person's character and his or her fortunes or misfortunes in life. To insist that God rewards and punishes according to the way we behave is to deny reality. The traditional notion that God is just is simply another projection onto a collective God-image of a human virtue. Job's God admits as much when he says in his whirlwind speech that Job's friends were wrong to insist that suffering is the result of sin. The example that *Job* sets us is that while we are suffering we *must* ask questions about what this means. If we are fortunate, we may then experience an entirely new God-image based on a personal experience of the numinosum. What happened to Job has also happened on the collective level because the culture has suffered, so that our post-Holocaust, post-Hiroshima

God-image has to change in response to cultural suffering. These kind of events are the reason that Jung insists that the Self has a dark side to it. Here begins Jung's controversy with the theologians who did not appreciate the distinction between Jung's commentary on the biblical God-image in his *Answer to Job*, and the divine itself, about which Jung was consistently silent.

Although Jung was steeped in the Christian tradition, he did not read the Bible with the automatic assumptions of doctrinal Christianity. He often said that he was not concerned with theology. Rather, as a psychologist, he deals with "the layman's picture of theological concepts," or "people's common beliefs" rather than theological concepts of Truth (Letter to Philp, in *Jung and the Problem of Evil*.) This is why Jung does not get involved with biblical scholarship or the analysis of biblical language; the layman deals with the text that we have, and Jung feels that he is addressing the typical questions of the layman.

A Response to Jung's *Answer to Job*

In his *Answer to Job*, Jung points out that throughout his ordeal Job maintains his integrity, whereas the story reveals an abominable God-image. Job's personal ethical standards had evolved beyond those of the collective God-image that he inherited from an earlier era of history, so that Job came out of this encounter looking better than this God-image. To deal with what happened to him, Job's God-image had to radically change from its primitive state, which his friends try to insist on, into something that he could use. For Job himself this change occurred because of his experience, but there was also a need for a transformation of the collective God-image. Jung suggested that, in order to catch up with the level that humanity (in

this case Job) had reached, the collective God-image had to become human. Therefore, according to Jung, the incarnation in Jesus was the answer to Job. If the story of Jesus' incarnation had not emerged, the collective image of God might have become increasingly degraded, as the old images were seen to be less and less useful. Instead, Jung believed that Job's story forced a radical change in the collective God-image from that of an angry storm God into a God of love. Because he was a loving man, Jesus was able to embody this love, which had previously either been ignored or was unconscious, so that he could incarnate that aspect of the Self instead of focusing on God as a warlord or a lawyer.

The story implies that, when Jesus was tortured on the cross, God experienced what it is like to be mortal, and he realized how he had caused Job (who represents humanity) to suffer. That is to say, the new God-image that began with Christ takes into account human suffering in a way that does not radically split the human and the divine. Thus began a new mythology that is based on the idea of the incarnation of the divine into humanity. Job suggested the idea of God's becoming human when he protested to God: "Hast thou eyes of flesh? /Dost thou see as man sees?/Are thy days as the days of man,/or thy years as man's years?" (10: 4-5). But, Jung insisted, this incarnation is not confined to Jesus—it happens within all of us. The incarnation of the Self into a conscious, empirical personality inevitably causes suffering. This suffering in turn forces us, Job-like, to a new consciousness of the Self, and this new consciousness itself is a form of incarnation. Jesus became fully conscious of the Self—in Eastern terms, he was a realized being—but now the development of this consciousness is a task for all of us. This is why Jung can say that "God becomes conscious in the act of human reflection" (CW 11, ¶ 238).

The change in the collective God-image brought about by Job's experience was only partial. Job's suffering made him conscious of the dark side of the Self, but this aspect of Job's new God-image was not accepted into the collective Christian God-image, which preferred to stress the light side of the divine. Nevertheless, the process by which Job developed his new consciousness of the Self is a useful model. Job forced the Self into a dialogue with him by maintaining his own position and by not giving in to the collective God-image. He even forced the Self to acknowledge its own darkness in relation to humanity. It is as if Job acted as a reflecting consciousness for the Self, which made the Self conscious of its treatment of Job. According to Jung, the capacity for self-reflection is essential for us to be able to speak of consciousness. Sometimes we cannot be fully self-conscious without being in relationship with another mind. Jung thought that even the Self needs a reflecting consciousness at times, which is why God's doubt about Job is personified as Satan, as if the dialogue with Satan was necessary for God to wonder about Job. Without Satan and Job it seems as if God would not have reflected on what he was doing. This is why Jung made the startling comment, which landed him in trouble with the theologians, that God's behavior is so atrocious that he must be an unconscious God, or at least he must be unconscious of the light-dark split in his own nature. The theologians who were outraged at Jung's idea of an "unconscious God" did not grasp the fact that Jung was speaking psychologically, not theologically, although even then his meaning is not clear. Some scholars believe that Jung literally meant that the Self needs human consciousness to be aware of itself, which seems to be a dubious proposition to me, since I regard the Self as Consciousness itself. I read Jung to mean that our God-image is unconscious as far as the human ego is concerned. Until we begin to experience our God-image and think about it, our God-image is inaccessible or incomprehensible to us. This means that the actions of the Self are beyond our

moral judgments because we are not sufficiently conscious of its intentions. The Self is always active in us, but it is in an unconscious condition until we start to experience it directly rather than project it outwards onto a historical Jesus or some other figure.

We do not know the state of the Self in its transcendent condition, but at the human level the story of Job is a model for a certain type of relationship between the ego and the Self. Jung speculated that the Self seeks to become conscious and to differentiate itself through humanity. This occurs in various ways. Every time we work on any manifestation of the unconscious, be it a dream or a symptom, we are making some aspect of the Self conscious within us. Our developing consciousness of the Self occurs by means of human reflection on its workings. This work assists in its incarnation, and also in our discernment of its different aspects. The unconscious is an undivided unity until someone reflects on it, because in the Self opposite qualities such as good and evil, light and dark, are united, not split as they are in human consciousness. For Jung therefore, the Self can only become aware of the opposites within its nature by becoming incarnate in a human being. This suggestion is unprovable—it is a mythic image of God that reflects Jung's personal approach, based on his own needs and experience.

With this suggestion, Jung tries to address the mystery of why the Self would want to incarnate in us, and why God would create the world in the first place if God is already perfect. His idea belongs to the traditional notions that the divine expresses itself by means of humanity and becomes manifest in the human act of reflection. The mystics of several traditions have realized that not only does God create humanity, but humanity creates God, in the sense that it takes a person to *realize* that God is God. The divine becomes conscious when we are conscious

of it. This is a highly personal way of thinking about the divine; other peoples' God-image may be quite different than that of Jung, because such an image has to evolve out of one's own experience. Jung spent his whole life, and based his entire psychology, on making Self-images conscious because he found that he could help himself and his patients by doing so. In the process, he found that the Judeo-Christian image of God did not help everyone, and he focused his criticism of this image in his controversial *Answer to Job*.

Jung admits that he was possessed by intense emotions as he wrote his commentary on *Job*. Indeed, Jung seems to be so possessed by his anger at the God-image in this story that he ignores one of his own psychological principles, which is that consciousness of the shadow is crucial. If Jung had not been so personally involved with the story, he would have commented on Job's rather one-sided virtuous persona as well as Job's problematic God-image. Here, my focus on Job's shadow follows the lead of the poet William Blake, who believed that Job's problem was his self-righteousness—his imperial ego. For Blake, Job's piety was pretentious and excessive, and he was spiritually asleep. But Blake's account does not deal with God's injustice, just as Jung does not deal with the indications in the text that Job's shadow consisted of narcissistic elements within his personality. Before his losses, Job was rather smug, entitled, self-satisfied, unempathic, and guilt-ridden, so why does Jung ignore Job's own contribution to the situation and blame everything on God?

In Jung's anger at the biblical God-image, we can hear an echo of his father problem. Jung's father disappointed him. He felt that his father had foundered on the rock of his Christianity because he could not really believe the dogma of the Church in which he was a

minister. Jung tried to solve his father's religious problem by dealing with religion psychologically, focusing on numinous experience, because he could see from his father's life that reliance on belief and theological assertions without direct experience of the divine led to despair. Jung's emotional outbursts in his *Answer to Job* sound like a long pent-up reaction to the fact that his father was painfully hurt by the lack of help he obtained from the biblical God-image that his Church dictated. His father had to preach a set of theological ideas about God that were often meaningless to him, and of no help during his father's crisis of faith. I believe that Job's plight reminded Jung of the injustices that his father had suffered in relation to his God—there was much prayer and preaching, but no real comfort. Jung vented his anger by attacking the biblical image of God-the-Father, who contributed to the unhappiness in the young Jung's home life. Jung seems to identify with the suffering Job as he rails at God, as if Job speaks what is also in Jung's heart. Driven by his father's failure to answer his questions about the meaning of Christian doctrine, Jung developed his own approach to the Christian story. His anger at the biblical God-image is also motivated by concern for suffering people, which is why he begins his *Answer to Job* with the biblical quote: "I am distressed for thee, my brother..." (11 Samuel 1: 126). Jung wants us to be more conscious of the traditional God-image so that we can see how it needs to be changed to be of use to us today. This is why Jung wants us to include the dark side of the Self in our image of God, which is by-passed in most traditional interpretations of the story of Job.

The traditional interpretations of the book of *Job* are that no person is without sin, virtue is its own reward, and because we cannot understand the ways of God we should simply submit to the mystery. But there are problems with these arguments. Perhaps we are all sinful, but

surely that does not explain the disproportionate nature of some suffering, for example that of little children and animals. Neither does this interpretation explain the creation of such a situation in the first place, since the world could have been created with less pain. Today we are less tolerant of arbitrary abuse by ruling powers than were the people of the time of Job—in fact we may wonder if dictators have been tolerated because our traditional God-image sets us this kind of example!

To our modern ears, for God to allow terrible suffering just to see whether Job loves God for his own sake, rather than because of the blessings he has received from God, depicts a God with vulnerable self-esteem. This suggests that the story represents a projection of the behavior of human rulers onto a God-image. *Human* dictators are more interested in power than justice. To imagine that the divine is somehow like human dictators is simply another unconscious projection of human characteristics onto a God-image. The dark side of Job's God-image reflects cultural factors combined with Job's own difficulty—a power shadow that can cause arbitrary suffering, combined with a deep fear of not being loved that is personified in the encounter with Satan. Before his tragic encounter with Yahweh, Job's *conscious* image of God was rather pure, as if God was only on the side of justice and mercy. By contrast, God's whirlwind speech is all about submission and domination, suggesting that Job had been projecting his shadow onto his God-image. Satan's accusation forces Job to become conscious of a God-image that contains elements of Job's own difficulty. In fact, the story of Job could be seen as an example of the transformation of Job's narcissistic shadow. Since Job's shadow must include a partial incarnation of the transpersonal shadow, we cannot help wondering if the story could also be seen as the Self's attempt at self-transformation through Job.

Here I am obviously discussing images of the divine as they are portrayed in a story. I suggest that it is useful to discuss the dynamics of the Self in this way, as long as we remember that we are not discussing the divine itself, but the way it affects us. It is not very satisfying to be told that God is an impenetrable mystery—in that case, why is there so much theology? If God was truly totally mysterious, religious systems would not have developed. What was the point of creating a human intellect if it is inadequate? Or, are there some things we are allowed to understand and some things that we cannot grasp? If so, where is the dividing line? Perhaps we *should* ask questions about the mystery of God, since we ask questions about every other type of natural phenomenon. It may seem silly, or even arrogant, for a mere human to ask these questions, but I think they are legitimate, since the ego seems to be at the receiving end of a contract that it never signed on for. Indeed it is quite plausible that we were designed to ask these very questions, since if the divine wanted obedience and surrender alone, it would have simply created a world full of unquestioning but faithful animals. So we must ask our questions even as we realize that the answer is beyond thought. Only experience takes us where we need to go, and the experience can never be fully put into words. But the story of Job shows us how a person's protest, thought and questioning act as stepping stones *towards* the experience of the divine. All of Job's earlier sacrificing, worshipping, obedience and fear of God only produced a standard model of piety. Not until his suffering stimulated his questioning did he have a direct, healing experience of the numinosum. In this way are born new images of God.

Job realized that God is a mixture of light and dark, just as he is. There is a hint of such a mixed image of God in the Genesis story of the Garden of Eden, since God created the serpent

and presumably knew that the serpent would tempt Adam and Eve. But the serpent in the Garden does not dialogue with God directly as Satan does in the story of Job. Either this new twist represents an evolution in the God-image of the myth makers, or an evolution in the consciousness of the Self has occurred that produces a new mythic image—we cannot know which. What is clear is that, in this part of the Bible, the light and dark side of the Self—God and Satan—are now in relation to each other, in dialogue rather than totally disconnected. Unfortunately, this connection did not continue. The Church fathers intensified the split between light and dark when they made Christ all good and Satan his adversary, as if they were two opposing principles rather than two aspects of a single image. This led Jung to point out that the Christ of Christian theology is an incomplete image of the Self, because he has been depicted as if he lacks any shadow. The Antichrist, according to Jung, is the missing half of the Christian Self image, its dark aspect. Our contemporary task is to unite these two sides of the Self in our own mythic image of the divine. We can do this in two stages. First we can stop splitting off and projecting the shadow onto the figure of Satan, and acknowledge that the shadow is in us. Then, we can recognize that this shadow has an archetypal as well as a human component to it, because both the light and the dark side of God want to incarnate in us, and the dark side produces the core of our shadow. The story of Job shows us that consciousness of the human level of the shadow, brought about by the suffering it produces, will tell us something about those aspects of the archetypal shadow that are incarnate in us. By acknowledging that the shadow is both personal and transpersonal we will develop a more complete God-image that does not require the defense mechanism of splitting off what is too terrifying to deal with. We will then be less prone to color our fantasies about the divine itself with human projections, and

we will no longer equate the divine itself with our God-images. This serious error within the Judeo-Christian tradition has led to futile religious wars about whose God-image is correct.

Christian theologians have never been happy with Jung's distinction between God and the God-image; they have always suspected that Jung treated the image and the Reality as if they were the same, as if Jung thought that the divine itself has an evil aspect. Theologians also had difficulty with the wide variety of God-images that Jung described, because many of these did not fit into traditional Judeo-Christian formulas. Even though Jung wrote that "none of my reflections touches the essence of the Unknowable," it was difficult for traditionalists to grasp the difference between the God-image as a psychological phenomenon and their doctrinal descriptions of the divine itself, especially when these did not coincide. They therefore believed that Jung was actually doing metaphysics or theology disguised as empirical psychology. There is some truth to this claim when Jung is clearly speculating rather than speaking out of his experience. But I believe that as long as we stay with what can be experienced when we speak of God, we are entitled to call what we do psychology. The major problems arise when we try to explain the *origin* of numinous experience—here we do tend to drift into theory and speculation. Some speculation is inevitable in all disciplines, but as long as we are *clear* that we are speculating we are safe from the criticism that we are producing a new dogmatic system. For example, Jung is speculating when he suggests that the divine needs human consciousness to become conscious of itself, or that the Self becomes self-conscious within human consciousness. Jung is speculating when he suggests that human beings render the divine a service when we suffer the tension of the opposites within the Self, such as light and dark. Paradoxically, we are helped to resolve these tensions by means of numinous experience. This is Jung's way of saying

that, like Job, we have to ask God for help with God, because the source of our problem helps us with the solution to our problem.

The transpersonal and the human levels of the psyche interact at the level of the ego, where these levels of the psyche become continuous with each other. This is to suggest that as we study human beings we inevitably understand more of the Self, because we become more aware of how it operates within us. Jung's emphasis on the importance of human consciousness in relation to the Self is radically different from those traditions that locate the divine in a transcendent realm that is beyond the human. Jung's speculation opposes the idea of a God-image that is entirely self-sufficient and perfect in itself. Jung speculates that the Self must include everything that is in creation, including evil, the body, and the feminine, qualities that were excluded from the Christian God-image. These must all be a part of the Self if the Self is to be thought of as whole rather than partial. Every one of us must deal with the tensions produced by the contradictory qualities within the Self, just as Job had to deal with God's unacknowledged dark side.

Jung's focus on the experience of the Self is unacceptable to theologians for several other reasons. It contradicts the claims of some Christians that there is no way to know God other than through the specifically Christian form of revelation. As well, for some Judeo-Christian theologians, Jung's emphasis on the Self makes the divine seem rather too immanent, too intimate and not transcendent enough. The fact that there can be so many Self-images seems to threaten the principle of monotheism, despite the fact that there are several variants of monotheism, each claiming to be true, each offering its own Self-image. The God of this kind of

competitive theology is dead for many people, but the God of experience is very much alive. The believer in a dogmatic view of the divine may protest that we cannot know the objective truth about God if we rely on personal experience, since we need the scriptural accounts of revelation for this purpose. However, only the fundamentalist can insist that the scriptures are purely objective. It is no longer possible to argue with a straight face that we can know about the Unknowable because there is one particular version of revelation that is the only correct version. There are many assertions of metaphysical truths; whose shall we trust? Who has such authority? Today we are suspicious of "truth," because we recognize that what is called truth is often only an exercise in power; truth is defined by the beliefs of those with power. Let us be more modest in our assertions; we cannot accept arguments based on divine inspiration by people who advocate partisan religious politics. Our metaphysical assertions are simply anthropomorphisms, basically human fantasies and opinions about the divine. We know that our beliefs about the world constantly change as they are shown to be inadequate, so why should we believe that our beliefs about the divine are more reliable? So far, they have not done much for world peace! So why not turn to the notion that what matters is our experience of the divine as it is mediated by the psyche? One answer from the side of tradition is that the turn to individual experience is *too* personal, and ignores our accumulated religious wisdom. This was another reason that some theologians resented Jung's *Answer to Job*.

In this book, Jung ignores tradition and the consensus of the faithful. From a traditional point of view, Jung's interpretation of Job is far too idiosyncratic. But Jung is clear that he is not trying to be objective. He deliberately offers us his subjective reaction, his fantasy about Job's experience. Theologians felt that this method of reading Job obscured a more objective reading

of the book in terms of its own historical background and in terms of received truth. One Christian theologian, Father Victor White, suggested that Jung's protest about God's apparent injustice to Job was an immature reaction, the tantrum of a spoiled child, as if Jung were fixated at the infantile level in which "'love' means the egotistic 'I want!'" (Victor White: Jung on Job. *Blackfriars*, Vol. 36, March 1955, pp. 54-60). White went on to suggest that this book reveals a "paranoid system which rationalizes and conceals an even more unbearable grief and resentment." I'm not sure that it is fair to call Jung's outrage at God's behavior childish and paranoid. One of the oldest tricks in the book is to accuse your opponent of being immature and sick. Does such a personal attack on Jung really address his critique of the way God behaves? Does White really address Jung's suggestion that there is a dark side of the Self, which at least speaks to the horrors of Auschwitz and Hiroshima? The psychologist could retort that it is infantile for the theologian to maintain an image of an all-loving sky Father who benevolently takes care of us *in the face of* the suffering and radical evil that exists in the world. It is infantile to insist on all-good God-image in the face of all the evidence to the contrary. This kind of radical light-dark splitting, without being able to see the gray in a situation, is actually typical of early childhood. The theologians who were critical of Jung had to preserve their doctrine and the truth of their sacred texts at all costs, even to the extent of the disavowal of reality. They simply could not tolerate the idea that their God-image was not entirely reliable, an idea that would shake their faith. In other words, ironically, they used the same arguments as Job's comforters. From the perspective of the psychologist, they also made the mistake of confusing their God-image with the divine itself. Jung is quite definite about this distinction in his book: "It will probably have become clear to the reader that the account I have given of the development

of symbolic entities corresponds to a process of differentiation of human consciousness" (CW vol. 11, ¶ 758). That is, as our consciousness evolves, so must our God-images.

Instead of having to wriggle intellectually in order to explain why God behaves so cruelly towards Job, it is simpler to suggest that this brutal image of God is a human image, colored by a human being's turbulent emotional life. We struggle with archetypal forces that have intensely powerful emotional effects on us that we often cannot resist, try as we might. These are very real powers within the soul. We cannot persist in maintaining a God-image that ignores this fact. It *is* terrible to fall into the hands of the living God, because this God is experienced as a mixture of qualities that are *both* benign and loving and *also* very dangerous. Perhaps this is only true within the human realm, but this is the realm that we live in.

Job's experience of God seemed to make up for his suffering, but this is not everyone's experience. Job's experience is a mythic model for the development of a spiritually useful attitude to suffering. The way we think about suffering depends on our image of God and the type of relationship that we experience with the divine. What does it mean that God allows Job to suffer? Why is it that for a long time God is hidden to Job except for hearsay, but then God is revealed to Job out of his suffering? There are various ways of dealing with this problem, and it is worth contrasting the depth psychological attitude to suffering with the traditional Judeo-Christian attitudes. The traditional approach argues that suffering may not be as terrible as it seems; it only appears to be terrible, since it is for a greater good. This argument is based on the idea that suffering disciplines us, teaches us, allows spiritual development, strengthens our relationship to God, and tests our faith. The problem with this argument is that some suffering

has none of these effects. Suffering may merely brutalize people, causing them to be bitter and angry. On the other hand, we do see people like Job whose suffering increases their empathy for other people, improves their ability to relate, allows them deeper self-knowledge, and produces a radical change of values. Suffering may force a turn to the divine that otherwise would not take place. Even as Job yearned for an answer from God as he questioned what was happening, we sense that his yearning and questioning were themselves a form of connection. In the circumstances this was the best he could do, but it was preferable to his previous way of relating to God through constant sacrifice, which was based on a combination of convention, his guilty fear of retribution, and the attempt to constantly ward off the imagined wrath of an angry, unpredictable Father-God. Job's suffering led to his demand that God deal directly with him, and this at least opened the door to a relationship based on love and mutuality rather than submission and domination.

Job's story is an example of the potentially transformative effects of suffering. When a childhood situation such as loss is repeated during adult life, we suffer especially painfully. If we suffered a painful loss in childhood, it is as if we are allergic to loss, so that losses in adult life may be extremely difficult to cope with. Not only do we experience the current loss, but our reservoir of childhood pain and grief is also reactivated. However, there is the possibility of healing the original childhood trauma if the current situation can be re-worked in a different way than the way the situation ended in childhood. In the case of Job, this meant that he had to experience multiple losses without re-experiencing the situation as retribution from an abusive, angry father. In his childhood, Job was a helpless victim, full of rage and bitterness that he was too terrified to express directly. As an adult, Job was able to work on his losses in a new way,

because he was able to bring to bear his mature thoughts and feelings to the situation, as well as a personal spirituality that was not confined to collective platitudes. Instead of continuing to react like an abused child, the adult Job realized that something was going on that demanded understanding rather than submission. He realized that he needed a new form of relationship to the divine that was not simply based on fear. This awareness, and Job's steadfastness in maintaining his position, were essential. If we were to simply give in passively to whatever happens, then the idea of relationship to the Self would be meaningless, since, in a relationship, both parties must be able to influence each other; if not, we have slavery.

Thanks to Job's persistence, he finally sees an image of the Self that I believe was heavily conditioned by cultural and childhood factors. Such an eruption of the numinosum may only occur during periods of intense suffering and turmoil. When it does so, as we see from Job's experience, the experience of the numinosum imposes order and meaning in the midst of apparent chaos. We immediately realize that a larger Consciousness is involved with the situation, so that things are not as random as they seem.

In many situations of suffering, our problem is to develop a spiritual attitude that allows us to let go of what we think *ought* to happen in favor of trying to understand what *is* happening. This is why the question of meaning is so often crucial. Job constantly complains that he wants to understand why he is suffering. As I have discussed in chapter 5, psychologists like Jung and Frankel believed strongly that unbearable suffering could be made bearable if it is meaningful. However, the meaning that we find cannot always be generalized to others; it may be purely

personal, or it may be an existing traditional idea, such as the idea of *karma*¹ and rebirth, which suggests that the world is a school for the soul. The concept of *karma* fits with the idea that suffering may bring spiritual transformation. Like any traditional idea, the idea of *karma* can be used defensively, for example to support a masochistic character style that says "there is no point in trying to help myself, I must simply put up with my suffering." Neither should the idea of *karma* be used to avoid responsibility, nor must it be used in the service of denial, indifference to others, or selfishness. These reservations aside, this concept may help us deal with a difficult situation with some equanimity. For example, one attitude to painful *karma* is that we are playing a role in a drama, and we have to play our part. The idea of *karma* is typical of those mythic notions that satisfy our spiritual curiosity. This does not mean that the idea is not literally true, but it remains the kind of idea that cannot be conclusively proved or disproved. It is important to be sure that, when it is espoused by a suffering individual, the concept of *karma* really resonates deeply, at a feeling level rather than as a rationalization.

Such an idea may be meaningful because it produces intense emotional resonance in the body. These ideas can be helpful, and can allow a sense of purpose to be found in suffering. For example, as a result of our own suffering we can help others with problems similar to our own. Many recovered alcoholics or drug addicts have special insight into the needs of active addicts, and they find this work meaningful. When we have recovered from a period of suffering, we might be able to help others feel less isolated and alone with their suffering. We discover that our own suffering has created a kind of space inside us that allows us to contain the suffering of

¹ This ancient notion suggests that the soul, or a stream of consciousness with a set of qualities, periodically appears in a new body in order to develop itself. The specific problems we have in this life are the result of our need to encounter experiences that the soul created in the past. This idea suggests that, because every action has a reaction,

others. Suffering allows real empathy, and often provides an incredibly strong connection between people. Empathic understanding does not prevent our making judgments about behavior, but it may prevent outright dismissal or dehumanizing of another person when their actions are abhorrent to us.

One can tell if a traditional belief about suffering is defensive or not by its effects. An idea that helps one to deal authentically with suffering produces benefits such as increased self esteem, vitality, self-soothing, a new direction in life, more compassion for others, and more relatedness. These beneficial effects do not happen if we attribute neurotic meaning to suffering, such as "I can only be connected to God if I suffer," or if we develop a delusional meaning such as "I am the new suffering servant of God." These kind of solutions leave the personality brittle because they only paper over the cracks. Neurotic solutions are based on a false sense of self, while psychotic solutions are based on a delusional attempt to make sense of chaos. This kind of unreal meaning, or pseudo-transcendence, is really an avoidance of the problem of suffering. Real transcendence means that we have been through the problem and outgrown it; we have not just skipped over it. Transcendence of oneself means putting ones own self aside in the service of others, leading to the capacity for altruism and service. This needs sacrifice of the self, and the paradox is that we can only make this sacrifice without resentment if we have a firm sense of self.

We can sometimes see suffering as a kind of wake-up call from the Self, urging us to pay attention to ignored or neglected parts of ourselves. Jung thought that the Self produces

either in this lifetime or another we eventually reap what we sow. In any lifetime, we have to work in conformity with our basic karmic patterns.

symptoms such as anxiety and depression in an attempt to stimulate us to greater awareness of what is really needed, rather than what we think is needed. Unfortunately, as Job discovered, what the Self thinks is necessary is often contrary to what the ego wants, and this tension leads to considerable suffering. From a strictly spiritual point of view, everything that happens might be necessary in some way, but this is *only* true from the perspective of the soul, which is not the same as the perspective of the everyday personality. Sometimes suffering occurs as the Self tries to bring about change that is obviously overdue, but which we have been avoiding. Resisting such change is like trying to hold onto the edge of the dock as the ship is leaving. In situations when a problem is truly beyond our control, it is preferable to let go of the dock and see where the ship is heading. We can only really do this with a degree of trust if we have had some contact with the numinosum, so that we sense that a transpersonal process is going on that is beyond our capacity to understand. For some people this means an intuitive sense of connection to the Self, while for others trust is based on an experience of the numinosum. In either case we can allow ourselves to be affected by the experience of suffering as we try to discover its purpose and meaning. This requires acceptance and receptivity, and the traditional "letting go" of the ego's dominance, which puts the ego into a terrible crucible. The ego may have to let go of its conditioned ideas of what is good and bad, and of its likes and dislikes.

We see the world through the lens of our conditioning. When our image of how things should be is radically challenged by painful events and losses, suffering occurs. We discover that we are not who we thought we were, and the world is not the way we would like it to be. Often the real wound is to a grandiose fantasy of ourselves. Letting go of such a fantasy is not easy when the sense of self is fragile, because we use fantasies of success, beauty, and brilliance

as glue with which we hold ourselves together. We hold on to our image of ourselves because it is too terrifying to let go of it. But in the end, if we are to go on living, we have to come to terms with the discrepancy between how we have been conditioned and what our suffering tells us needs to be changed.

The archetypal theme of necessary suffering is found in an ancient Indian myth called *The Greatness of Saturn* (Trans. by Robert Svoboda: Sadhana Pubs., Distributed by Council Oak Books, Tulsa, OK, 1997), in which King Vikramaditya suffers terribly at the will of the divine, personified as the planet Saturn. In this mythology, Saturn is sometimes called the Lord of the Oil Mill, because he grinds people down and extracts their true essence, leaving behind a residue of what was false. Saturn does this by making us experience what *must* happen to us. He is portrayed as especially dangerous to arrogant people. Like Job, Vikramaditya is philanthropic, religiously observant, protective of his subjects, and well thought of, but also a rather self-righteous and self-centered personality. Although Saturn makes him suffer terribly, the King learns to accept and embrace what happens as necessary for his development. He forgives all the people who hurt him during his period of suffering because he realizes that they too had to live out the roles that were given to them. Like Job, King Vikramaditya finally has the experience of a direct encounter with the divinity that tormented him, whereupon the King asks Saturn to be compassionate to others, because, as in the case of Job, suffering has produced a radical transformation of the King's capacity for empathy. One meaning of such a mythic tale is that we can think of the process of suffering as a kind of purging of what the Self does not regard as essential. This is a process that we typically resist, and resistance to radical change adds to our suffering—without resistance, our experience might be painful but not necessarily

cause suffering. This way of thinking about suffering uses the model of childbirth; a woman giving birth does not try to stop the process, even though it is painful. However this model is of limited use, since we are not always able to see what is trying to be born as we suffer, and suffering does not always lead to a creative outcome.

Most of us first turn to a human relationship for help when we suffer. Since we are all connected at the level of the Self, truly helpful relationships allow the Self to be experienced *between* people, as if we were contained within the field of the Self. The experience of the Self is not simply subjective, and is not only an I-Thou relationship. Often, healing is brought about by means of a deeply empathic connection with the suffering of another person, when special moments occur during which we both resonate with the same feelings. These bonds of connection teach us that at a deep level there is no separation between us, that we are all contained within the same matrix of consciousness. The presence of such a helpful connection to another person can make a decisive difference in determining whether suffering is eventually beneficial or harmful. Even if there is no one to whom we can turn during the suffering, we can sometimes draw on childhood experiences in which we needed help and soothing, when the presence of the right person (or even a pet) made all the difference. It is then as if the experience with someone from childhood—a loving parent, for instance—lives on inside us as an internal asset and a source of strength that we can use to help ourselves. The outcome of our early experiences with suffering foster a certain attitude to it that may persist into adult life.

Certain attitudes are not helpful when we suffer. An attitude of masochism, as if the only thing that will help is a kind of passive resignation to a greater power, is particularly problematic.

The theology of masochistic says that "God demands this pain of me, and I had better submit or else." This tends to be a hangover from a relationship with a domineering, powerful parent who made submission to his or her will the major condition for allowing the child to have any relationship with the parent. In effect, the child feels—but usually cannot articulate—"I have to give in to these unreasonable demands or I will have nothing, no connection to Mom or Dad at all." With such a parent, it is tempting to take the attitude of Job's friends and assume that we must be suffering because we have been bad. We then take responsibility for things over which we have no control. Instead, rather than assume that suffering occurs because we have been *bad*, it is preferable to try to discover in what way we have been *unconscious*.

If we simply transfer a childhood attitude to a current situation of suffering, rather than explore its meaning, we may end up in a blind alley. Our reaction to suffering may add additional problems to the primary problem that is causing us to suffer, thus making the situation worse. Typical of such reactions are those of excessive self-pity, disproportionate self-reproach, unreasonable blame of others, or pointless complaints about the unfairness of what is happening. Often these kind of reactions are automatic and unconscious because they have been learned in childhood. They may have been the only recourse in a home in which no one really cared how we felt. Some family values require that a child must feel that he or she is to blame for whatever goes wrong, to protect the parents' feelings. The child develops unconscious internal dialogues such as: "I have to blame myself because I dare not blame Dad—that would be too dangerous," or, "it's best to blame other people when things go wrong, because its too painful to feel responsible myself." Or, "I must be bad for these bad things to be happening to me." Or: "Maybe if I blame myself they won't hate me so much." These attitudes persist into adult life as

a misplaced form of loyalty to our parents. Another unconsciously held belief may be: "Nothing good ever happens anyway—it doesn't matter what I do—no one really cares what happens to me." Despair can become a learned habit if no one ever responds to a child's distress, leading to a chronic depression. These kind of attitudes become organizing principles within the personality that delay or prevent any possibility of healing, because they keep us tied to the situation without allowing us to develop the new sense of self that is needed in the new circumstances. They are ways of holding on to the edge of the dock as the ship is leaving, in order to try to preserve some sense of security based on our image of how we think things should be. At least we know the place we are in now; who can tell where the ship is going?

I suggest that these unhelpful reactions to suffering are a part of our cultural inheritance, such as the punishment theory of suffering. Because suffering is such a mystery, and so hard to reconcile with an all-good God-image, the Bible has many explanations for the existence of suffering. I believe that these "explanations" are in fact rationalizations. It is well known in science that intellectual dodges are often used to preserve a theory in the face of findings that tend to deny the theory's validity. Like scientists, theologians have ways of preserving their favorite theories. In order to maintain the theory of an all-good God, the biblical authors proposed a variety of explanations for why God allows evil and suffering. Beside the ubiquitous idea that suffering is the result of sin, we find other suggestions. Here is a brief selection: St. Paul (Rom. 5: 4) writes that suffering "produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope..." James (1: 3-4) believes that suffering is a test of faith that "produces steadfastness." Paul is content to suffer for the sake of Christ, "for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12: 10), and he tells us that God always works for the good (Rom. 8:

28), and if we suffer with Christ we will be glorified with him (Rom. 8: 17). The Letter to the Hebrews (12: 11) tells us that painful discipline eventually "leads to the peaceful fruit of righteousness," or in the words of the Psalmist (119: 67) "[b]efore I was afflicted I went astray;/but now I keep thy word." God tests us, and "didst lay affliction on our loins," (Ps. 66: 10-11) but in the end God makes things well, because God purifies us with suffering: "I will smelt away your dross as with lye/and remove your alloy...I have refined you...I have tried you in the furnace of affliction" (Isa. 1: 25; 48: 10)). Jesus himself says that if we suffer for the right reason we are blessed and will be rewarded with the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5: 10-11). Ecclesiastes (7: 3-4) says that "[s]orrow is better than laughter,/for by sadness of countenance the heart is made glad./The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning..."

Without further multiplying examples, it is obvious that the need to reassure people about the problem of suffering is a recurrent theme in the Bible. In the face of suffering, the theory of an all-good God has been preserved at all costs, even though the evidence simply demands that we modify the theory. Suffering may be beneficial if it can be used well, but sometimes this is impossible because the suffering is too great, or there is no help available. It is quite clear that, at times, suffering has none of the benefits that the Bible claims for it. The denial of this reality requires an explanation, beside the well-known fact that traditional religious ideas change very slowly. The idea that the Self has a dark side is terrifying if we think about its implications. We have to give up our infantile notions of an entirely protective benevolent sky parent, and we must admit that the divine can be really dangerous. Religionists are also are afraid that if we admit that the Self has a dark side, then the door is open to all kinds of bad behavior, as if we would have an excuse for our own darkness because of the darkness of God. However, I have never

seen a case where a numinous experience of the Self has led to antisocial or destructive behavior, although it is theoretically possible for this to happen. We remain morally responsible creatures, but we have to develop a basis for our ethical system that is more reliable than theological doctrine.

Jung pointed out that the traditional insistence that all good comes from God and all evil comes from humanity makes excessive demands on human nature. Elaborating this idea in his *Depth Psychology and a New Ethic*, Eric Neumann points out that this idea makes us entirely sinful, and makes good and evil absolutely opposite to each other. We then have limited alternatives. We can acknowledge that we are sinners and need divine redemption, and/or we can try to get rid of the shadow, which is impossible. Nothing goes away in the psyche—a personality trait may change, but it cannot simply vanish. If we insist on "turning the other cheek," loving our enemies, and make other attempts to strive for moral perfection by splitting off the shadow, we simply widen the split between light and darkness in the psyche. Jung's alternative suggestion is that we must affirm our human totality, which includes the unconscious and the shadow, and learn to live with (not in) our darkness. This means that we must pay attention to the rejected, unpleasant parts of the personality. It is as if there is a secret purpose to our shadow, which is to force us to transform it, to force us to become conscious of it. In order to develop an ethical life and to become more complete personalities, we must be able to struggle with the shadow and not deny it or project it. Because our personal shadow is a fragment of the dark side of the Self, what is needed is not simply self-affirmation but Self-affirmation, or world-acceptance, since the world too consists of light and dark.

Jung believes that if we had no shadow we would be automata or clockwork creatures; there would be no point to our existence. We must have the ability to "will otherwise," which is one meaning of the mythic Lucifer, who personifies rebellion against God. Lucifer brings light, or self-knowledge. Here Jung is using his own version of the "free will defense" for the existence of evil; responsibility for choice is given to human beings, but the choice does not arise because humans are sinful and God is totally good. Choice arises because we contain the potential for living out both the good and the evil dimensions of the Self. We have been handed a problem, because the divine incarnates both its light and dark side in us, and we have to deal with the conflict that this produces by becoming conscious of the darkness, and by integrating or synthesizing the many sides of our personality into some degree of wholeness.

How then do we know how to behave in a situation that requires an ethical decision? We can abide by the conventional code of morality, or we can try to discern the comments of the Self on the situation, and be courageous enough to act on them, even though we may make a mistake. We cannot avoid the torment that accompanies these decisions by resorting to a ready made moral code. To do so by-passes the self-knowledge that making such decisions forces on us. There is a good deal of difference between living according to a legalistic system that tells us how to behave, and an attempt to live according the way in which the Self appears to us, in keeping with who we truly are. Often the behavior that results might look the same. But abiding by the rules of society because of a fear of punishment is based on repression, while acting out of an authentic connection to the Self is a creative form of self-expression based on the importance of the relationship.

The law-and-order morality that we have inherited from the Bible leads to the attitude that dealing with crime is simply a matter of harsher sentences, more prisons and more police officers. The irony of this situation is that this approach is championed by many people who call themselves Christian, even though Jesus would have been aghast at this attitude. He believed that the letter of the law kills but the spirit gives life. Behavior based on repression ignores the God of love and reverts to the God of law. Morality based on repression can be superseded by a relationship to the Self, and out of *that* comes correct behavior. Of course this is an idealistic view, but the fact that the culture at large is not ready for this type of moral code does not mean that it is unworkable for those who choose to use it. The failure of our existing system of received morality stares us in the face every time we open a newspaper.

What we define as good and evil are not clearly obvious for every situation. Good and evil are potentials, archetypal categories that are colored by their passage through the human psyche and culture. Moses had to write down the ten commandments in a human language. Even if the commandments were divinely inspired, was the list not affected by his use of language, by his own needs and fears, and by those of his culture? Human beings have an archetypal capacity to recognize the difference between good and evil, but different people and cultures fill in that potential in their own way, with their own list of the nature of good and evil. There are few absolutes, because what we call morality participates in all the complexities of human concerns. During the presidential impeachment hearings of 1999, it was striking to hear members of the House of Representatives quote from the same Bible to support opposite points of view. This reveals a tension within the contemporary God-image, and shows how the Bible can be used to rationalize one's own emotional predilections. One side preferred a God of justice

and wrath, while the other focused on a God of love and forgiveness. This polarity is possible because the Hebrew Bible presents a mixed God-image, at times depicting a God who combines both justice and mercy and at other times depicting a God of pure brutality. Later, when the prophets arrived to announce their understanding of God, we see a stress on the righteousness of God, because moral standards had evolved, so that the collective God-image had to change. Later still, Jesus appeared and this image had to change again, as it must today. There is no reason to assume that our God-image has to remain static.

Our changing ideas about good and evil contribute to the change in our God-image. Some theologians were outraged because Jung said that God behaved in an immoral manner towards Job, so that Job's morality was of a higher order than that of God. But this is simply Jung's critique of a particular God-image. Jung is telling us that Job could no longer project a moral code onto his idea of God that was less developed than his own moral standards. Job had evolved beyond the collective projections about the way in which God is supposed to behave, projections that were based on current social thinking, so that Job needed a new experience of the Self. Biblical morality that is *attributed* to God is actually the projection onto a God-image of what people in that period thought that God would want us to do. A present day Moses might speak about the rain forest, the ecological crisis, homelessness, starving children, and other social injustices.

If we have absolute rules of behavior, we deceive ourselves about the real difficulty of making ethical decisions in ambiguous situations. Jung believed that the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus had discovered a universal law, which is that opposite qualities tend to

regulate or balance each other. Heraclitus called this the law of *enantiodromia*. Applied to the psyche, this means that when an attitude becomes too extreme or one-sided, life tends to produce the opposite attitude in an attempt to restore balance. Most people have a mixture of qualities within their personality, and we cannot engage with one pole without the presence of the other pole. If I consciously try very hard to be good, I must be concerned with suppressing my tendency to evil. If I am trying hard to be independent, I have to struggle with my need to be dependent. If I become excessively concerned with protecting my child, I am in danger of hurting her ability to be self-confident. If I am afraid of being too close to people, I am also afraid of being too distant. If I am excessively suspicious of people, I am protecting my gullibility and helplessness. These examples could be multiplied indefinitely. Depth psychology is uncomfortable with absolutes, because human nature is so complex and multi-determined.

Our spiritual and psychological response to suffering must also be a complex, multi-layered one. We need a perspective that is both large enough to help individuals and also capable of guiding our cultural response to suffering. It would be helpful to think of intense suffering rather the way we think of adolescence or old age, as an essential life transition with important psychological effects and developmental consequences. Not only is it important to focus on the transformative effect of suffering, but also on suffering as an experience of initiation into a new level of awareness and a new state of being. As I described in chapter xx, transition into new phases of life is an archetypal process that has been well described by anthropologists such as Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner. Initiation takes place in three broad stages. The first is separation from one's usual environment, followed by a threshold stage that is called liminality. When we suffer, especially when this happens suddenly, we are thrust into liminality.

The liminal or intermediate stage is one of ambiguity and confusion, because we lose our usual status, and change our body image and our sense of who we are, but we have no idea where we are heading. Turner calls a person in such a state a “transition-being.” In these situations, our usual sense of self has to change. Eventually, if the initiation is successful, we are re-incorporated into society with a new status.

In the liminal stage, the initiate or the suffering person is psychologically not quite out of the old status (of being happy and well) and not quite into the new one that the suffering will eventually bring. He or she is betwixt and between, in a situation of radical change. Liminal states produce uncertainty, confusion, and anxiety about the future. Serious illness always has this effect; not only is there pain and disability, but our usual methods of dealing with stress, such as relationships with others, the ability to hope, a feeling of control over one’s life, and a sense of purpose, are all threatened. Such transitions in life are always times of potential danger to the development of the personality, and people need help with them. If we are fortunate, suffering helps us understand who we really are, and acts as a bridge to a new orientation to life, to the person we might become. Turner regards liminality as a state of “pure possibility, whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise.”² He suggests that initiation may generate new thought, and this is surely important for those who suffer. In tribal cultures, during the liminal period, initiates are encouraged to think about their society, their idea of the cosmos, and the powers that sustain them. Liminality becomes a stage of reflection about our lives, which is important to encourage when we try to help those who suffer. Suffering may change our priorities and make us question our values and our commitments. We lose our innocence, we

² Turner, *The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage*, in Louise Mahdi, ed. *Betwixt and Between*, pub. Open Court, 1987.

lose any fantasies we may have had of invulnerability, and we feel vulnerable and afraid. We have to become a new being.

Turner pointed out that tribal cultures tend to regard the person in the liminal state as somehow polluting, which is why the initiates are always secluded from the rest of the tribe, or they are disguised in masks or costumes. We don't like what is unclear and contradictory to our usual values. Initiates in the liminal period are in a state of sacred poverty; they have no rights and no property—they are structurally invisible in their societies. Perhaps this human reaction helps us to understand why suffering people tend to be neglected or not given a proper place in our society except in institutions like hospices, which I think should be regarded as sacred spaces. We have a good deal to learn about the value of suffering, but our culture tends to want to ignore it or get rid of it as soon as possible, as if it had no value and no purpose, which is perhaps one reason that we marginalize poverty, old age, and death so that we don't have to constantly face them. Sometimes people seem to despise and avoid those who suffer, as if suffering were infectious. Those afflicted may hate themselves and induce this feeling in others, perhaps because of envy of the healthy. For all these reasons, we do not have adequate social structures for helping people who suffer.

When suffering begins, questions of meaning and purpose come to the forefront for many people. Suffering makes us think about what really matters to us, about what our life is really all about. The issue of discovering meaning is important, because states of meaninglessness are demoralizing, and serious demoralization seems to adversely affect disease processes. Prolonged negative emotional states such as despair, helplessness, and resentment have been shown to

activate recurrence of illness, and have been shown to be associated with a less good prognosis in cancer patients. Conversely, states of hope, purpose, gratitude, and joy seem to protect against the recurrence of many illnesses, presumably through their effects on the immune system.

Very often suffering makes us realize that life has become too dry, or that we have been living a life that is not right for us, a life that is not an authentic expression of who we are because it doesn't mean much, or it's not emotionally significant. For many people today, the question of meaning cannot be taken for granted; there is a good deal of uncertainty about whether life is meaningful, especially for those for whom collective religion has lost its power. People who can no longer believe in traditional religions are going through a major cultural transition. Organized Christianity used to provide a symbol system that would address all of life's problems, but this is no longer the case. Those of us in that position have to search for meaning individually. We no longer live in the paradise of a priori certainties, so the search for meaning presupposes an experience of chaos and crisis. For some people this is too terrifying, and they become fundamentalists, clutching to a pre-formed set of answers to life's difficulties.

When we become ill, medicine can treat pain, physical symptoms, and depression, but the question of the meaning of the suffering for our lives is a psychological and spiritual problem that is not addressed by medicine. Here I don't use the word "meaning" in the sense of knowing that a red light means stop. I mean a sense of subjective significance that allows us to affirm the value of our lives. I mean an experience that is deeply moving, of the kind that we experience with a powerful dream, a work of art, an authentic religious belief, or when we really love someone. For some people meaning is given by status or power or money because these shore

up a fragile sense of self. For others, meaning means the sense that life is purposeful, that we have something real to do, some work that is important, some person who matters to us, some reason for being here, rather than living a banal, day to day existence.

For most people, the search for meaning is a difficult night sea journey. Occasionally however, meaning appears spontaneously as a kind of revelation, or it may be given in a transpersonal experience such as a near death experience, in which the person realizes that his or her life is purposeful. When they suffer, even people who have always been super-rational become open to transpersonal possibilities that they might otherwise dismiss. With grace, we may have an experience of the transpersonal psyche that might point the way. This could be quite an orthodox manifestation of the numinosum, or it could be very unique, or it might be some combination of these. A man dreamed that he is at the foot of the cross at the time of the crucifixion. He looks at his shoes and discovers he is wearing Gucci loafers, which he liked to wear to display his status. As he looks at his shoes, they turn into the shoes of the Fool of the Tarot deck. He said to the figure on the cross: “what a fool I’ve been to reject you.” This kind of contact with the transpersonal seems to automatically give a sense of meaning. We then feel part of a larger order of reality, we sense that there is a supra-ordinate order going on and that life has a pattern to it. We are not an isolated consciousness. The important fact is that we realize this, and it does not matter if the collective does not go along with us. The philosopher Henri Bergson pointed out that humanity has for ever been surrounded by electricity, but it took millennia before it was recognized. Similarly, there are forces in the psyche that act as a source of life energy, and western psychology is only just beginning to discover them.

For suffering to produce a positive transformation of the sense of self, an active acceptance of suffering is preferable to feeling like a victim. Active acceptance is quite different than neurotic masochism. The willing acceptance of suffering occurs because of a conscious realization that our suffering is somehow necessary for our development, and has meaning in terms of a larger process. This is a kind of willing self-sacrifice or voluntary suffering for a larger purpose.³ Sophocles depicts this theme in his *Oedipus at Colonus*. Oedipus wanders for many years, cast into exile and penitent for his unconscious behavior after realizing that he has unconsciously killed his father and married his mother. When Oedipus comes to die at Colonus, he is granted an apotheosis, an elevation to the status of the divine, and he is blessed by the gods. Through his suffering and his search, he is redeemed. The story opens with Oedipus saying: “Acceptance—that is the great lesson suffering teaches, suffering and the long years, my close companions...” This drama had originated in his search for the identity of his parents, so that Oedipus would know who he really is. Perhaps Sophocles is telling us that we do discover who we are, but it is not who we think we are; as Jung suggests, who we are happens to us. If we are ill, the illness is a part of who we are. This does *not* mean that we must be passive and not try to deal with it, but even as we try to find a cure, the illness has to be accepted as necessary at the moment. Suffering cannot be transformed until it is accepted. One can tell that this has happened because the atmosphere around the suffering person seems to lighten; there is a sense that the person is more free.

³ For example, the Suffering Servant archetype of the Bible. Isaiah 52, 13-53:12 depicts him voluntarily taking on the role of a scapegoat who is “crushed for our sins,” and “through his wounds we are healed.”