

Hearing the invisible: The ears of Job, a psychoanalytic perspective

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Job's body is 'portrayed' in a text that can be nothing more than audible. Compared with the eyes of Job (mentioned 49 times explicitly), his ears (mentioned 13 times, i.e., four times less than his eyes, perhaps because his ears are less visible) play a much more subtle role, underlying even his final confession in 42:5-6, where it seems/sounds that his eyes gave him (only) his final in-'sight'. That leaves the impression that his ears give him access to the second-hand testimony of tradition but his eyes to his own, personal experience. The hypothesis of this study is that a psychoanalytical perspective can give additional meaning to this polarity and cooperation of the senses for both the main character and recipient of the book of Job in that Job's (in)sight depends on the foundation of the aural experience, even the musical experience.

Contribution: A psychoanalytical perspective adds to the breadth and depth of insight gained from studying the role of the sensory experience in the narrative about the psychic and spiritual development of the protagonist in the Book of Job.

Keywords: Book of Job; ears; hearing; psychoanalytical; acoustic; visual.

Introduction

One of the major changes that the Church Reformation affected half a millennium ago was the shift from the Roman Catholic *visual* sacraments to the Protestant *audible* 'Word' in the centre of worship and religious life, accompanied by an increased importance of church music. Today, the same church worries about the Word being heard in the new visual age (Schuringa 1995:passim). The medical doctor and theorist, Shlain (1998:46ff.), interpreted a similar shift much earlier on in the history of culture as the shift from a feminine, holistic to a masculine, linear mindset, when the alphabet replaced images as a written communication medium. According to Genesis, God created through God's 'Word'. Speaking is by nature a creative act and creates new realities. Subsequently, the Hebrew religion became aniconic, God's revelation coming through listening with an ear willing to hear the voice or name of the father (cf. Lacan 1981:154). Today, there is again a shift back to the visual in Western culture and one is reminded of the same tension between the visual and the aural aspects in the Book of Job.

Hearing, and therefore Job's ears, seems to be foundational in the religious experiences of the protagonist. This is also the base on which the recipient who hears the text, builds a reaction. Psychoanalysis has also been regarded as the talking cure, where the therapist's listening and hearing are, therefore, healing. In fact, both the analysand and the analyst become almost invisible as they do not face each other.

Several questions can arise when we listen to Job: to what extent is he healed by some sort of talking cure? To what extent is the recipient healed when listening to this talking cure if it does work for Job? Some light can be shed on these considerations by first surveying the instances of ears and hearing in the Book of Job, then by surveying the importance of silence in the book, thirdly by scanning some psychoanalytic insights about ears and hearing and finally, by interpreting the function of Job's ears and hearing in the book in terms of these insights.

It is recommended that this study be read in conjunction with another about the psychoanalytic significance of the mouth in the Book of Job (Van der Zwan 2022).

Acoustic instances in the Book of Job

From the 13 times that **אָזן** (ear) in any of its forms is mentioned in the book, it becomes clear that they are mostly mentioned by Job (six instances) and Elihu (five instances), leaving Eliphaz with the remaining two instances, one of which is, in fact, first mentioned in the book in 4:12,

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referring to his own 'ear' (in the singular). Eliphaz somehow opens the ears of the recipient by telling שִׁמְעֵה (whisper[ing unconscious?]; cf. 26:14) in 4:12 and in 4:16 of a וְקוֹל דְּמָמָה (a silence and a voice; probably a hendiadys: a still voice) he heard (*vide infra*). However, only in two instances does Job refer to his own ears, which is different from the case with his eyes, to which he refers so often and with which he seems to be somewhat preoccupied (Van der Zwan 2019:3). Job, there, seems to be less conscious of his hearing. The majority of the instances refer to the ears of some third person, mostly meant in the plural. This already suggests that hearing has to do with rumours and oral and aural traditions, from which Job somehow separates himself. However, as mediating, aesthetic form and revelatory content, hearing plays a background role on which Job's search for first-hand (in)sight is based.

Job's ears do not seem to be important to God either, as God never refers to any ears whatsoever. That is, ironic, specifically because God's voice is so important. It could, however, explain why God's own ears are never mentioned, although they are implied, but then experienced as not-hearing. Scarry (1985:231) reminds one that God's hearing ears are one of God's features that distinguish God from the idols which are mere external imitations without internal experience. Stiebert (2016:23) asserts that God's voice is less contested than God's body, even when God's voice implies God's body, or at least God's throat and mouth with all the parts necessary for speech, such as a tongue and lips. In the book of *Job*, God is recognised and 'pictured' in natural rather than anthropomorphic terms, such as, in 38:1, with the whirlwind, whence comes the voice of God.

If source criticism's assumption is accepted that God's body disappears diachronically from the text of the Hebrew Bible as it is reduced to a voice or abstract, indirect presence at a distance, such as in the Priestly Source (Stiebert 2016:26), then the book of *Job* may be dated relatively late, even when Kwon (2018:49, 51, 52, 53, 63, 67, 68, 69, 71) has contested a link between the book and the Priestly Source. This reminds one of the perpetrators experienced as a mere voice by the victim in a torture scene, according to Scarry (1985:33), suggesting that the book of *Job* is the product of traumatic experience interpreted religiously. The accusing voices of Job's interlocutors could just as well be his own inner superego voices. In that sense, Job wishes to experience God as embodied in order to relate more intimately and immediately to God.

When שָׁמַע as a verb in the *hiph'il*-form in 33:1, 34:2, 16 and 37:14, for instance, is added to a listing of this stem, then Elihu clearly dominates the airwaves in this respect with five out of six instances on his lips, twice referring to Job's hearing. Job only once uses this verb, referring to God in 9:16 and then in the negative. That means that Elihu uses the root, that is, as both noun and verb, 10 times, whereas Job uses it seven times.

In 34:3, Elihu's voice almost reverberates Job's words in 12:11: לְאָזְלִיטְעוּמִןהַתְּהוֹמִילִיאוֹזְנִי (for the ear tries words, as the

palate tastes food) (*vide infra*). In both cases, the ear is a kind of judge and need not accept everything offered to it. What is heard cannot be taken for granted, as seems to be the situation with first-hand seeing.

It is interesting that these two characters are also the two who uses the root, קוֹל (voice), the most: Job in 3:18, 9:16, 21:12, 29:10 (hyperbolic suggesting respectful silence) and 30:31, whereas Elihu mentions it in 33:8, 34:16, 37:2 (in addition to הִנֵּה [sound]), 37:4 (thrice) and 37:5, the latter also dominating in this respect. Eliphaz once again occupies the third place but never uses it for a human voice. God uses the root three times even when God never mentions the ear. No character ever mentions God's ears either.

Surprising is that Job calls for hearing in 13:17 and not for looking at, that is, his decrepit body, for which no empathy has been expressed despite the many words of his chorus of interlocutors, and which is probably where they failed him most in their responses. His own words, therefore, seem to be a defence against their unsympathetic words, but in that way he is also colluding in the same verbal game they are playing. Yet, Ham (2013:535) recognises the soft tone in chapter 38, where God is the first to answer not to Job's claims of innocence in his last speech in chapter 29–31 as his companions have critically done, but to his suffering in his first lament in chapter 3: God verbally paints the bigger picture of order in creation by which Job's birth is held in grace. It is as if God goes below the radar of Job's defences and hears something different behind it: his real existential anxiety. Reik (1956:136), recommending a 'third ear' that listens to the tone rather than the content of what is said, reminds somehow of Socrates' invitation: 'Speak, that I may see you'.

God picks up on many of the keywords Job used earlier on (Ham 2013:537–539) to repeat them in a different key, as if in a musical canon and then raising them to a higher octave. This reminds one of the nature of effective psychotherapy where the therapist resonates with the patient's speech but interprets it by contextualising it within deeper and deeper levels of the unconscious, all the time circumventing the patient's resistance. For an outsider, the link between the patient's words and the therapist's interpretations would not be all that obvious because the therapist moves underneath the surface level of the patient's words, thanks to empathic attunement, resonating with 28:22–23, where even death and destruction have (metaphorical) ears, but no real understanding, as God has. This is one instance where hearing signifies indirect knowledge through a שְׁמָעָה (rumour) instead of first-hand experience and insight.

The Hebrew roots, שָׁמַע (hear, occurring 41 times, of which 16 times in the mouth of Elihu), קָרָא (call), אָמַר (say), דָּבַר (as verb [speak] and as noun [word]) and מָלָה (word, occurring overwhelmingly in *Job* compared with other biblical books, at least 34 times) also occur in the book but not to any different extent compared to other biblical books, except for מָלָה, and can be included for their significance in the extended, separate study of this theme.

Aesthetics

As poetry, the text was meant to be sung. Singing is, however, only mentioned twice (זְמִירוֹת [songs] in 35:10 and שָׁרְרוּ [have sung] in 36:24), and only by Elihu, just as he is also the interlocutor who uses קוֹל (voice) and the roots, אָזַן ([h]ear) and שמע (hear), the most (*vide supra*), in this way preparing Job for hearing God speak after him.

The aural aspects of the book contribute much to the appeal of the text and Seow (2010:496–497) already wrote about the musicality in the poetry of Job 14, as an example, taken up during its reception history, which has shown the different cadences of this chapter. The first stanza, verses 1–6, has often been written in a minor key to express its pessimism. The next stanza, verses 7–12, has been played with deceptive cadence but still in a minor key, starting with hope that is then disappointed. The final stanza, verses 13–17, written in a major key of hope, eventually still returns to the theme of the first stanza. This complexity of the movement without any easy resolution led musical compositions to emphasise a particular tonality.

Hearing this, the musicality of the book is in tune with the explicit mention of musical instruments in:

21:12: עֹבְדֵי קוֹלֵי יְשׁוּחִים וְכִנּוֹר וְתִבְרֵי שָׂאוּ (they sing to the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the pipe),

30:31: בְּכִי־מִקוֹלֵי עֲבָדֶיךָ וְכִנּוֹרֵי־אֶבְלָוִי (therefore my harp is turned to mourning, and my pipe into the voice of them that weep), both of these in the mouth of Job, and

39:24 and 25, where God refers to the שׁוֹפָר קוֹל (sound of the shofar/horn), punning perhaps with another root with the same consonants and meaning ‘beauty’.

The metonymic use of ears, so typical for the Hebrew approach to body-parts, is obvious in the stereometrical use of בָּאָזְנוֹי in 33:8a, where the physiological function is implied by the anatomical reference: בָּאָזְנוֹי־אָמַרְתָּ (you have spoken in my hearing). Incidentally, it is interesting that the word, מֵאָזֵן (balances, scales) in 31:6 resonates and agrees with the ears’ physiological function of balancing. In 33:16a, אָזֵן (ear) is either used metonymically for its associated attention or – ironically – metaphorically for insight, and obedience: אָנֹכִי־שָׁמַעְתִּי אֶזְנוֹי־גְּלוּתִי (then He opened the ears of men), as Elihu almost reiterates in 36:10 and 15.

As receptive orifices, the ears facilitate psychic introjection as building and strengthening of the ego, which in the book of Job can also be said to function as a protest against a cruel superego (cf. Van der Zwan 2022). This is eventually celebrated in the final chapter when the three sensory and sensual experiences are embodied by Job’s three ‘new’ daughters in 42:14, suggesting that he could once again get in touch with his own libido through introjecting the good from the external world, are expressed in their names, one of which is יְמִימָה (Jemimah), reminding in Arabic of the turtle-dove and

so represents hearing according to Clines (2011:1238). Job has moved past silence to appreciate sound and voices again.

Revelation

Elihu’s claim to a revelatory, aural communication in 4:12 (*vide supra*) is similar to what Elihu says in 33:16, when he also reminds one of God speaking in dreams, usually a predominantly visual experience, but in 33:14, he draws the attention of those who are figuratively deaf to God’s numerous ways of speaking.

Above all, chapter 38 narrates God’s aural revelation from the whirlwind, maybe speaking through the music in nature. The traditional notion of revelation through hearing seems, however, to be undermined by Job’s words in 42:5 if the possible copulative in וְעַתָּה is understood as being adversative: רָאִיתִיךָ עֵינָי וְשָׁמַעְתִּיךָ אָזְנוֹי לְשִׁמְעָה (I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You).

Silence as call and critique

Opposed to the verbosity and numerous Hebrew roots to suggest the aural aspect and speech in the book of Job, is the emphasis on silence subtly interwoven to serve as its contrast and critique. As with speech, Elihu is once again also the character who seems to refer most to silence, perhaps because he does not feel heard or believes silence to be a sign of humility and subservience.¹ Among Job’s human interlocutors, it is first Eliphaz in 5:1, then Zophar in 11:5 but specifically Elihu who deals with divine silence in 33:13, 34:29 and 35:12, 14. God is repeatedly accused of remaining silent, but gradually silence is ironically regarded as the ideal.

Silence somehow frames the book that starts off relatively early with the narration in 2:13 of his three comforters’ silence and almost ends with Job ironically voicing his silence in 40:4–5 as he listens to God’s voice in the whirlwind and in 42:2–6, where he reflects regretfully on his own words.

The silence of the three comforters is either a sign of respect or may also suggest that they are dumbstruck, not knowing what to say in this extreme borderline situation. It cannot be an empathic gesture showing identification with the dead in the land of silence (cf. Mathewson 2006:5), as no one has died in chapter 2 and the deaths of the servants and children already had a mourning rite at the end of the first chapter (cf. also Mathewson 2006:39). The silence in this mourning rite is, therefore, exceptional in the Hebrew Bible (Mathewson 2006:53) and this seems to be because of another trauma, where Job ‘touches’ death but survives (Mathewson 2006:2, *passim*).

The range of different roots and expressions, used in this regard, shows how nuanced and prevailing this subtheme runs through the whole book (Van der Zwan 2020):

1.(Cf. Freire 1970:88); cf. also silence demanded from those under age, ‘unmündig’ (not having a mouth, a voice, a vote) in German.

דברוֹאֵין (and none spoke a word; *vide supra*) in 2:13,
 דָּמָמָה in 4:16, the same root being used in 29:21–22, 30:27, 31:34,
 33:31, 33:33 and 41:4a,
 עֹנֵה־תִּי (is there any that will answer you?) in 5:1,
 פִּיהֶם־שָׁמֵטָה (keeping quiet) in 5:16, where it is associated with iniquity,
 חָרַשׁ in 6:24, 11:3 and 13:5,13,19, a root, which incidentally can also
 mean ‘deaf’,²
 פִּי־אֶחָד־שָׁמֵטָה (I will not refrain my mouth) in 7:11,
 יַעֲנֵנִי־לֹא (he could not answer Him) in 9:3,
 אַעֲנֵנִי־אֲנֹכִי־כִי־פָּאֵרָה (how much less shall I answer Him) in 9:14,
 אַעֲנֵנִי־לֹא (yet, would I not answer?) in 9:15,
 פָּה־עַל־דָּוָשִׁי־מִיָּד (and lay your hand upon your mouth) in 21:5, similar
 לְפִיהֶם־שָׁמֵטָה־מִן־כַּפְּיָם (and laid their hand on their mouth) in 29:9b,
 מִלִּים־עָצְרוּ (refrained from talking) in 29:9a,
 תַּעֲנֵנִי־לֹא (and You do not answer me) in 30:20,
 מֵעַתָּה־לֹא־יִשְׁקָבְתוּ [...] (they ceased to answer) in 32:1,
 מִלִּים־הִתְקַדְּמוּ־עִתֵּי־עֹדֵעַ־עֲנֵנָה (they answer no more; words are departed
 from them) in 32:15,
 עֹדֵעַ־עֲנֵנָה־לֹא־עֲמִדוּ־כִי־יִבְרָאוּ־לָפִי (because they speak not, because they stand
 still and answer no more) in 32:16,
 יַעֲנֵנִי־לֹא (He will not answer) in 33:13,
 יִשְׁקָטוּ־הוּא (when He gives quietness) in 34:29 and
 יַעֲנֵנִי־לֹא (but none answers) in 35:12. (p. 59)

In addition, in 9:32, 10:13 and 11:5, silence is implied but not explicitly stated. In many of these examples, silence is, however, because of not-responding rather than not-speaking.

The verb, *הָדַל*, has been taken to mean ‘be quiet’ by the Old Greek, Vulgate and Peshitta-translations as in 7:16 and 10:20. Yet, the word may have indeed another usual meaning: ‘to cease to be, come to an end’, as in the King’s James and the New International Versions. Silence, therefore, implies coming to the end of speech, as in death, suggested in 14:6–7.

Significant is that neither ears nor any produced sounds are perhaps mentioned for the two mythical model-animals at the end of the book. Yet, in 39:24 and 25, the horse of 39:19 hears but despises the sound of the horn. One would think that these animals are voiceless or silent movie images, exactly the opposite of the invisible but audible protagonist. Yet, that means that their silence, but, by implication, also their visual appearance and possibly their eye-sight instead of their sounds and hearing, are idealised as exemplary modes of being.

Apart from these silences, the book is silent about many issues, which is precisely why interpretation has always been prolific to fill these intolerable gaps and lacunae in the text (cf. Van der Zwan 2022). The recipient of the text, therefore,

²It may be significant that deafness or dumbness is never mentioned in the Book of Job, where explicit empathy and assistance are expressed for other disabilities. The questions arise if these two impairments are not regarded as a disability or even subtly – unconsciously – seen as the ideal state, or if the deaf and dumb are simply not ‘heard’ (in the sense of noticed) by Job who is accused of hardly hearing his interlocutors.

shares similar experiences and tensions as the protagonist. The question arises whether these silences are indicative of anaemia recognised by Abraham (Török & Abraham 2009:212) when someone unknowingly betrays a gap in the unconscious because of a parental secret sensed but not recognised (cf. Van der Zwan 2022).

Psychoanalytical insights about ears and hearing

Psychoanalytic theory and psychoanalysis value hearing in an exceptional way. As talking (and listening) cure, psychoanalysis elicits speech to ‘excrete’ unresolved issues and so bring relief. In fact, the analysand’s speech constitutes a choir, or more often, a cacophony of dissonant voices, and all of this without the two main parties seeing each other: first, there are the analysands hearing their own words, or those of phantasised others, as in auditory hallucinations; then there is the hypnotic voice of the interpreting therapist, who also hears his own, inner, countertransference voice. Crying out over these is the voice of consciousness and conscience, haunting patients as their superegos, just as Job’s companions do. In this way, psychoanalysis shares the same preference as the Hebrew Bible for the aural aspect over the visual aspect.

Yet, without an empathic ear to contain and help digest these issues, this process ends up as a cul-de-sac for Job. The inverse becomes true for him: silence, so that he can introject through his own ears, even when he ultimately claims that he has eventually *seen* God.

This is because the voice is a unique psychoanalytic medium having two functions: as ambiguously terrible and joyful reminder of the O/other, and as an affirmation of the self. Firstly, it reminds of the very first experiences of the mother when the foetus hears her voice in the womb and, even when it does not comprehend her verbal message, it ‘tactically’ senses her mood in the melody and rhythm of her voice. The mother’s voice is the first (problematic) connection to the O/other and the immaterial substitute for the umbilical cord. This first sensory experience is also said to be the last experience before death.

In Lacan’s early work, the voice was mainly a symptom of a disorder, as it was for Freud, but with Lacan, it was specifically found among psychotic patients. Later, Lacan considered this disorder to be normal language where speech and the voice are the symptoms or signifiers of the unconscious as signified.

Lacan (2004) regards the ears and hearing as the invocatory drive (*pulsion invoquante*), one of the four partial drives, and the voice as its partial object, for the first time in *Seminaire X* of 1962/1963. Interestingly, he deemed this part of all his theories, about the voice and the gaze, as his most important contribution to psychoanalysis. The oral and the anal drives relate to need (*besoins*) and demand (*demandes*), whereas the scopical and the invocatory drives relate to desire (*désir*, in the singular). For Lacan, the gaze (*regard*) and the voice (*voix*) are

the two primary embodiments of the object *a*, with the voice even more primary, as it is the sign of life well before the mirror with its gaze is discovered. This concept of *objet petit a* refers to *l'autre* (other) as the object of desire, but then as its cause, not its aim, and also to the first letter of the alphabet as primary symbol represented by this algebraic, open placeholder. Desire as single force is expressed by various drives and most visible in the neurotic life. It can never be fulfilled or symbolically expressed, as the subject is defined by lack (*manque*). These two partial drives are structural and not stages as with Freud (Miller 1989:176). Just as the gaze is not limited to sight but can manifest itself in acoustic experiences, so voice can be found beyond hearing. Some voices are not heard through the ears, just as some visions are not seen through the eyes. As such, Lacan's views open up the possibility of some kind of 'synaesthesia' in the Book of Job as well (*vide infra*). The ears are, similar to the eyes, imagined as sexual organs which incorporate the love-object.

While with Lacan, this 'ideational' voice remains elusive, the French post-structuralist and post-modern philosopher of deconstruction, Jacques Derrida, exposed the voice as the ultimate source of self-presence against the O/other and constitutive illusion of interiority, consciousness (*s'entendre parler* – to hear oneself speak), the self and autonomy. In this way, the voice is profoundly narcissistic.

In the case of hearing, the voice is the love-object (Žižek 1996:90). Of course, the recipient of the book of *Job* can never hear first-hand any of the original voices of its characters, but can hear only the secondary voice of a third party or of the recipient when reading (not necessarily) aloud for oneself.

In a critical counterproposal to psychoanalysis, the schizoanalysis of the French philosopher, Gilles Deleuze, and the French psychoanalyst, Félix Guattari, an analysand and trainee of Lacan and his successor, Jean Oury, uses the central concept of a 'corps sans organs' (body without organs; Deleuze 1969:108), a 'corps sans image' (body without an image; Deleuze & Guattari 1972:14), where the surface of the world of words reverts to the depth of the body which produces and hears them, a schizophrenic, superior body, functioning only 'par insufflation, inspiration, évaporation, transmission fluide' (by insufflation, respiration, evaporation and fluid transmission), resulting in sounds and silence as a resolution of the mourning process initiated by the mouth. According to Engelbert (2011:162), however, these two thinkers view mourning solely as ingestion without digestion, resulting in the expulsion of the love-object. Hearing then does not seem to be introjection, but gets stuck at the level of incorporation. This is clearly not the case for Job.

Important is, however, the presumably traumatised state in which Job finds himself and which has been completely ignored by his counsellors. This could be the reason for him being able to hear what he regards as God's voice (Shinn et al. 2020:*passim*). Instead of pathologising it, this exceptional aural

ability could be regarded as compensatory growth and transpersonal development, 'thanks' to traumatic experiences.

Psychoanalytic significance of Job's ears

The distinction between Job's eyes and ears, between seeing and hearing, is not all that clear-cut, and some commenters such as Schellenberg (2016:100) have argued that the two senses are not really in opposition, with 13:1 and 29:11 as examples of a parallel use of eyes and ears. This possibility should be kept open if it is not a synthetic parallelism but then also explained in terms of the over-all textual evidence. One such explanation could be that there is a kind of synaesthesia (*vide supra*) where the confused but perhaps also enlightened Job fluctuates between his modes of observation. This conjecture is strengthened by 33:14 (cf. also 35:13): *יְשׁוּרָה לְאוֹיְבוֹ שְׂתִימָאֵל יְדַבֵּר בְּאָזְנוֹתָי* (for God speaks in one way, yes in two, though man does not perceive it), where the last word, *יְשׁוּרָה*, is derived from *שׁוּר* (behold, regard, observe), therefore referring to visual perception, as is also the case in 7:8, 17:15, 20:9, 24:15, 34:29, 35:5 and 35:14.

In the last five chapters, God is 'seen' through Job's ears (cf. Ross 2010:105), reminiscent of Exodus 20:18, where the people of Israel *רָאוּהוּ* (have seen) that God spoke to Moses (cf. also Psalm 34:9.... *טַעְמוּ וּרְאוּ* [taste and see...]). This should not be explained by regarding seeing as understanding, because *עֵינַי* (my eye) is specifically mentioned to make it literal and concrete.

In the end, Job's eyes have been opened to the transcendent not by suffering but by hearing the voice of God in nature. One can assume that Job hearing his own voice felt affirmed because of his natural narcissism and that the move to silence is a move beyond this narcissistic experience to a self-forgetting, observant mode.

Conclusion

Poetry can be said to be originally the lyrics added to music, that is, music preceding the lyrics. As such the book of Job, as much else in the Hebrew Bible, should be heard as a song, a chorus, with sometimes intentionally dissonant sounds.

Speech and silence are in constant tension and the breakthrough comes for Job when he can manage to hear and allow his ears to open his eyes for God's wonders. What people say and what Job sees are not the same.

Job's ears struggle with voices, above all his own, as these unconsciously represent his narcissism. The subtle striving for silence in order to hear God's voice is, therefore, a transpersonal longing for the realm beyond the ego. As this remains on an unconscious level, he confuses the aural and visual experience in a kind of synaesthesia, where he believes to have 'seen' God in the voice from/of the whirlwind, once the voices of his companions and his own voice have been turned down, as in meditation.

Finally, further research could investigate why Elihu is so dominant in the auditory domain: he dominates in using the roots, און and קול שמע, and yet refers the most to silence. Significant in this regard is that he is not one of those reprimanded by God in the end.

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Disclaimer

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