

Dr. N.F. Schmidt
Department Old
Testament, University
of the Free State,
Bloemfontein
SchmidtNF@ufs.ac.za

Prof. P.J. Nel
Research Associate,
Centre for Africa
Studies, University
of the Free State,
Bloemfontein.

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DIVINE DARKNESS IN THE HUMAN DISCOURSES OF JOB¹

ABSTRACT

The Biblical Hebrew text of Job narrates and debates the suffering of an innocent person from various perspectives. The poetic dialogues and discourses between Job and his friends emphasise their experiences of “darkness” (דְּשֵׁחַ) as Divine interventions in relation to Job’s situation. The article investigates the meaning of Divine “darkness” in terms of various understandings and interpretations linked to the suffering of Job. It illustrates how the characters conceptualise the same term differently, which eventually led to a communicative disintegration in the conversations between Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Elihu. Finally, in the YHWH speeches of Job 38-41, the concept of “darkness” is viewed from yet another perspective.

1. HUMAN EXPERIENCES OF DIVINE DARKNESS IN JOB

Hello [D]arkness, my old [F]riend, I’ve
come to talk with [Y]ou again ... (Simon and
Garfunkel, Sound of Silence 1999).

Heart of Darkness – originally published by Joseph Conrad in 1902 – tells of a White man’s journey into dark Africa. His portrayal of the central African interior as the “heart of darkness” certainly portrays the basic tenets of colonial thinking, in which White and Black represent the opposites of good and evil,

¹ This article is dedicated to Prof. Piet Strauss, with gratitude to the manner in which he has equipped numerous theological students at the Free State University for the congregational ministry with distinctive wisdom and discernment in ecclesiastical laws and history.

purity and debasement, truth and ignorance, as well as the beautiful and atrocious. Yet, for Joffe (1987:7), Conrad's consistent and insistent usage of the imagery of light and dark throughout the text questions more than the simple moral antithesis of colonialism, as *Heart of Darkness*

combines a concern with Europe's political and economic invasion of Africa, a geographic location, and an exploration of the hinterland of the human psyche, a metaphysical location.

Nearly seven decades later, in the classic Vietnam War film *Apocalypse Now*, movie director Francis Ford Coppola utilised the Orwellian doublespeak concerns of Conrad's novel to describe the inherent presence of those "hearts of darkness" in all of us as human beings.

Conrad (1987:73) uses the concept of "darkness" in more than one way. This becomes clear when comparing, for example, the different conceptualisations of "darkness" that Marlow (the narrator) reveals about his own journey into the dark African interior and in no uncertain terms for Kurtz (the main character):

We penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness. It was very quiet there. At night sometimes the roll of drums behind the curtain of trees would run up the river and remained sustained faintly, as if hovering in the air high above our heads, till the first break of day. Whether it meant war, peace, or prayer we could not tell ... The prehistoric man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us – who could tell?

Finally, for Conrad (1987:115-116), Marlow perceives in the dying Kurtz the "strength to hide in the magnificent folds of eloquence the barren darkness of his heart". For him, Kurtz's enigmatic life

was an impenetrable darkness. I looked at him as you peer down at a man who is lying at the bottom of a precipice where the sun never shines.

Over two and a half millennia prior to the English *Heart of Darkness* novel, the American *Apocalypse Now* film – and its post-colonial *Horrelpoot* adaptation² – another author and/or editor narrated the concept of darkness in a much-related, albeit very different way, to describe the struggle of a wise man amidst his failing health and the heart-broken losses of his children,

2 While *Apocalypse Now* was first released at the Cannes Film Festival on 10 May 1979, *Heart of Darkness* has since been modified by South African author, Eben Venter (2006), in the best-selling apocalyptic *Horrelpoot*, as the real-life experiences and reflections inherent to post-apartheid Afrikaans literature.

property and prestige, as being debated initially against his demons, wife, family, colleagues and, finally, against his God. Existential crises such as belligerent poverty and banal suffering, back-handed discrimination and bigoted criminality, banning eviction and blaming nationalisation, as well as bribing manipulation and blatant bureaucracy continue to persistently remind us of our human and haunting darkness, even while we are living under the blazing African sun. This article focuses on the variety of human experiences of conceptual darkness and its diverse interpretations in terms of the God YHWH, as metaphorically and theologically reflected in Job.

2. JOBAN REFERENCES TO THE DIVINE IN EXPERIENCES OF DARKNESS

According to Perdue and Gilpin (1992:12-14), the canonical text of Job underwent at least three lengthy literary and editorial transformations prior to reaching its present canonical form during the post-exilic times of the Second Temple Period:

- First, scholars reconstructed the folktale – preserved in the prologue and epilogue of chapters 1:1-2:13 and 42:7-17 – as the oldest narrative framework, which dates no later than the pre-exilic Israelite and Judean monarchies (ca. 1000-587 BCE).
- Secondly, the poetic dialogues and core chapters of Job 3-27, 29-31, and 38-42:6 were included, in order to reflect on the social circumstances of the ancient Israelites and early Jews during the Babylonian Exile (587-539 BCE).
- Thirdly, the Wisdom Poem and Elihu Diatribes of chapters 28 and 32-37 were finally included, as some scribal regressions that supersede the sceptical sagacity of Job and Qohelet with the optimistic and unproblematic wisdom of Proverbs, probably during the final edition of the text in the Persian era (539-332 BCE).

Especially the canonical dating of Job in the 4th century BCE – which is related to the experiences of the ancient Israelites and early Jews during the exilic times – concurs with the view of Clines (1989:xxxiv-xxxvii), who divides the threefold structural outline of the Biblical Hebrew text both in terms of its narrative framework and poetical core, as well as by means of the diverse series of speeches and dialogues that frequently mention the concept of $\sqrt{\text{דְּשֵׁחַ}}$ or “darkness”, as illustrated in the following diagram:

Structure	Outline	Character	Verses	(√חשך)
Prologue: Framework – Narrator (1:1-2:13)				
Dialogue: Core (3:1-31:40)				
First cycle (3:1-11:20)	Job	3:1-26	3:4, 5, 9	
	Eliphaz	4:1-5:27	5:14	
	Job	6:1-7:21		
	Bildad	8:1-22		
	Job	9:1-10:22	10:21	
	Zophar	11:1-20		
Second cycle 12:1-20:29	Job	12:1-14:22	12:22, 25	
	Eliphaz	15:1-35	15:22, 23, 30	
	Job	16:1-17:16	17:12, 13	
	Bildad	18:1-21	18:6, 18	
	Job	19:1-29	19:8	
	Zophar	20:1-29	20:16	
Third cycle (21:1-31:40)	Job	21:1-34		
	Eliphaz	22:1-30	22:11	
	Job	23:1-24:25	23:17; 24:16	
	Bildad	25:1-6		
	Job	26:1-31:40	26:10; 28:3; 29:3	
Elihu (32:1-37:24)	Elihu	34:1-37:24	34:22	
YHWH & Job (38:1-42:6)	YHWH	38:1-40:2	38:2, 19	
	Job	40:3-5		
	YHWH	40:6-41:34		
	Job	42:1-6		
Epilogue : Framework (42:7-17)				

Ryken *et al.* (1998:191) correctly view the repetitive references to √חשך in Job, as “a vision of calamity and despair, ... a small anthology of descriptions of darkness”. In the text, Job and his friends discuss and debate the suffering of an innocent person from various theological angles. Their perspectives – whereby human suffering is directly linked to Job's sins as

punishment due to God's intervention – are regularly defended from, substantiated by, and ingeniously interwoven into the narrative's five characters. Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, Elihu, and YHWH often, and sometimes even more than once, refer to Divinely instituted forms of “darkness” as part and parcel of the experiential conceptualisations of the main character's dilemmas and sufferings.³

3. CONCEPTUAL ANALYSES OF DARKNESS AS RELATED TO THE DIVINE

Human beings embody the concept of $\sqrt{\text{דשח}}$ as similar to night-time, in that it “refers to the period of darkness between sundown and sunrise” (Olojede 2015:724).⁴ $\sqrt{\text{דשח}}$ is transcribed in the Septuagint either as similar to *σκότος* (darkness) or the opposite *φως* (light). Among its 113 occurrences in the Hebrew Bible⁵, the word features 26 times in Job: 23 times as the noun $\sqrt{\text{דשח}}$ and three times in various verbal characterisations.⁶ As a cognitive schema and conceptual category, the content word of $\sqrt{\text{דשח}}$ exhibits an extensive field filled with positive (inclusive) and negative (or excluded) semantic properties.⁷

Apart from the fact that $\sqrt{\text{דשח}}$ denotes literal meaning in the Hebrew Bible, the concept also conveys clear ethical and religious overtones, which express figurative and metaphorical interpretations, especially in Job's poetic-dialogic corpuses (cf. Hahn 1980:420). “Darkness” clearly functions as a form of “polysemy”, namely a conceptual figure of speech and “linguistic term for a word's capacity to carry two or more distinct meanings” (Baldick 2008:264; cf. Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams 2003:173-176). The semantic properties inherent to content words, cognitive schemas and conceptual categories such as $\sqrt{\text{דשח}}$ cannot be directly and literally

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- 3 As indicated by the above schema, the concept $\sqrt{\text{דשח}}$ is mentioned fourteen times by Job, five times by Eliphaz, twice by Bildad, once by Zophar, and twice by Elihu and YHWH.
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 - 5 Verbal forms of $\sqrt{\text{דשח}}$ feature in 3:9 and 18:6 in the Qual and in 38:2 as part of the Hiphil stem formations.
 - 6 For a discussion of the above-mentioned embodied metaphorical DAY-AS-LIGHT and DARKNESS-AS-NIGHT conceptualisations, cf. Alden (1980:331); Conzelmann (1971); Mitchel (1986:258).
 - 7 For discussions of conceptual metaphors as cognitive schemas and conceptual categories, cf. Mitchel (1986:246); Price (1997:315); Clines (1996:331-332); VanGemeren (1997:52).

observed, but have to be conceptually inferred from, and linguistically related to people's experiences and emotions in terms of the Biblical root for "darkness" as part of human "terror, horror, agony, oppression, pain, evil and wicked activities" (Olojede (2015:724). Hull (2010:221) defines "darkness" as "one of our most compelling metaphors for the human condition [and an] inward confusion when ignorance frustrates our ability to find the way ahead".

From the perspective of Cognitive Linguistics and Conceptual Metaphor Theory,⁸ and based on the observation that the different characters in Job relate Divine intervention to Joban suffering in diverse ways, the experiences and extensions of $\sqrt{\text{שׁוֹכֵל}}$ are conceptually, historically and theologically regarded as metaphorical expressions in the final edition of the Biblical Hebrew text. According to Cognitive Linguistics, the initial portrayals of the Joban author(s) and our eventual expositions are more conceptual than linguistic in nature, as it is natural for the human brain-mind to think of, and reason about one abstract schema or conceptual target domain in terms of another concrete image or conceptual source domain. In fact, conceptual sources are imaginatively expressed by, or identified in Biblical Hebrew phrases such as Job, to be creatively applied or mapped onto target domains for the establishment of conceptual metaphors, which relate phenomena of Divine intervention to the experience of human suffering in Job.

The Joban characters' multiple views on the results of Divine darkness influence their different experiences as possible explanations of Job's suffering. Because each character continuously conceptualises the same domains of Divine darkness and human suffering differently, this finally led to the narrator's note in 31:40: "[Thus] concluded the words of Job",⁹ which might indicate a breakdown in communication between Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, Elihu, and YHWH (cf. Clines 1989:xxxv).¹⁰ Finally, only the Divine discourses are able to adequately explain and meaningfully exposit the concept of $\sqrt{\text{שׁוֹכֵל}}$ as part of a new resolution and unique theological interpretation of the text's narrative plot or storyline.

8 Both Cognitive Science, Linguistics and Conceptual Metaphor Theory focus on the ancient biblical and contemporary human brain-mind processes, and argue that metaphor plays a central "role in human thought, understanding, and reasoning and, beyond that, in the creation of our social, cultural, and psychological realit[jies]" (Kövecses 2002:xi). Cf. Fromkin et al. (2003:180), Ryken et al. (1998:191); Lakoff & Johnson (1980).

9 Conveyed in the Biblical Hebrew of Job 31:40 as תַּסִּיף דְּבַר אִיב.

10 According to Habel (1985:440), 31:35-40 should be dubbed as part of "Job's final oath".

A cognitive linguistic application of conceptual metaphors – which apply to the identification of Divine darkness and human sufferings – may be deduced from linguistic expressions in the Joban textual sections. The following 26 phrases and expressions identify the more abstract target domains for $\sqrt{\text{דשח}}$ in Job, and characterise Divine darkness by means of more concrete source domains linked to the theological experiences of human suffering.

The conceptual analyses and identifications of the characters' semantic properties inherent to $\sqrt{\text{דשח}}$ as a domain matrix in Job may be attributed to the various word dictionaries and encyclopaedic lexicons in terms of the following translation and literal (concrete) and linguistic meanings, as well as figurative (abstract) and metaphorical conceptualisations.

Literal and linguistic meanings	Figurative and metaphorical conceptualisations
Cosmic time (Darkening)/Darkness Night (Opposite of light) Burglary (Place of hiding) Wicked (deep) darkness Physical darkness (Groped to find the way)	Death wish (Curse of birth) Godless/Evil/Wickedness/ Foolishness Human perplexity/Distress/ Depression/Affliction/Misery Human disaster/Death/Grave (Sheol) Spiritual blindness/Ignorance/ Inability/Confusion Human extinction/Fear/ Punishment/Destruction Human capability/Challenge/ Achievement Divine conflict (Chaos)/Control/ Protection Divine secrecy/Concealment

As revealed by the above textual data, source material and linguistic expressions on Job's suffering in terms of Divine intervention, at least three conceptual metaphors – pertaining to the characters' understandings of $\sqrt{\text{דשח}}$ and as part of the brain-mind processes of its narrator(s) and author(s) – may be mapped onto Divine darkness in terms of human destiny, death, and deliverance.

Text	Unit ^a	Concept		Morphology		Character(s) (Narrator)	Object Divine actor	Subject Human recipient	Contexts and settings				Note(s) Additional remarks
		Lit.	Fig.	Noun	Verb (Type)				Death (צלמות)	Light (אור)	Day (יום)	Night (לילה)	
3:4	3:1-13	+		+		Job	+	Job	-	+	+	-	גהרה
3:5	3:1-13	+		+		Job	-	-	+	-	+	-	כמוריי
3:9	3:1-13	+		-	+ (Qal)	Job	-	Open eyes	-	+	-	-	כוכב / שחר
5:14	5:8-16	+		+		Eliphaz	-	Sages	-	-	+	+	צחרים
10:21	10:18-22	+		+		Job	-	Job	+	-	-	-	שובי
12:22	12:22-25	+		+		Job	+	Deepness	+	+	-	-	עמק
12:25	12:22-25	+		+		Job	+	Leaders	-	+	-	-	שבור
15:22	15:17-35		+	+		Eliphaz	-	Wicked	-	-	-	-	חרב / שובי
15:23	15:17-35		+	+		Eliphaz	-	Wicked	-	-	+	-	לחם / כון
15:30	15:17-35		+	+		Eliphaz	+	Wicked	-	-	-	-	פי / רוח / שלבת
17:12	17:1-16		+	+		Job	-	Job	-	+	+	+	קורב / שיב
17:13	17:1-16		+	+		Job	-	Sheol	-	-	-	-	יצעו / רפד / קוה
18:6	18:5-10	+		-	Qal	Blidad	-	Wicked	-	+	-	-	עוהל / נר / דען
18:18	18:11-21		+	+		Blidad	-	Wicked	-	+	-	-	תבל / מדר / הדף
19:8	19:7-12		+	+		Job	+	Job	-	-	-	-	נתובה / אורח
20:26	20:4-29		+	+		Zophar	+ [?]	Wicked	-	-	-	-	אהל / אש / צפני
22:11	23:1-11		+	+		Eliphaz	-	Job	-	-	-	-	שפעה / כסה / מים
23:17	23:13-17		+	+		Job	+	Job	-	-	-	-	אפל / כסה / צמת
24:16	24:12-17	+		+		Job	-	Thieves	-	+	+	-	דעו / חתם / בית
26:10	26:5-14	+		+		Job	+	+	-	+	-	-	תכלים / מום / חוגו
28:3	28:1-11	+		+		Job	+	Man/God?	+	-	-	-	תכלית / אפל / שמי
29:3	29:1-6	+		+		Job	+	God	-	+	-	-	הלד / נר / חלל
34:22	34:16-30		+	+		Elihu	-	Evildoers	+	-	-	-	סורו / פעלו / און
37:19	37:14-20		+	+		Elihu	+	Friends	-	-	-	-	ערו / ידיעו
38:2	38:1-3		+	+		YHWH	+	+	-	-	-	-	דעת / עצה
38:19	38:16-24			+		YHWH	+	-	-	+	-	-	מקום / שכו / דרך

a Cf. Hartley (1988) for the different literary units wherein Job 1:1 to 42:17 should be subdivided. Alternately, cf. also the grammatical analyses of “darkness” in Koehler & Baumgartner (1953:341-342); Brown et al. (1968:364-365); Clines in Elwolde (1996:331-332).

4. DARKNESS IS DESTINY

Nearly all of the human experiences in Job metaphorically conceptualise “darkness” as gestalt experiences in some forms of Divinely ordained and retributive destinies. Such deductions may be derived from the cultural heritage and religious views of the ancient Near Eastern peoples, which were also subsequently reflected in the exilic worldviews and Diaspora beliefs of the ancient Israelite and early Jewish communities (cf. Price 1997:312-314; Clines 2006:613-614). Such perceptions were often mentally experienced by, metaphorically expressed and emotionally depicted in much-related, albeit ever-exclusive and life-changing events of life and death in terms of light and darkness (cf. Clines 2011:1107). Light is generally regarded as a common metaphor for the positive experiences of goodness, health, wealth, knowledge, power, life, prosperity, and God’s presence. Alternatively, darkness is mostly designated and identified with those bad influences and evil circumstances of hunger, misfortune, sickness, pain, trouble punishment, suffering, death, chaos, wickedness, punishment, evil, demons, as well as Divine absence.

As indicated by the previous schema, the day-night and life-darkness conceptualisations and polarities in Job amount to Divine darkness as initial forms of suffering that ultimately result according to YHWH’s determined outcomes of life and death. The experiential darkness-as-destiny gestalt is based on the conditions of Divine order and retribution, as decided upon by the Divine (cf. Piper 1962:130-131). A modified version of the previously narrated conversations paraphrase the concept of “darkness” in the following ways as responses to YHWH’s Divine order and retribution (cf. Schmidt 2002:109-110):

Job	“See what dark things God has destined for me!” “I experience the Creator as a Destroyer in my darkest dream-visions”.
Friends	“God wants to release you of your darkest destinies, if only you would repent of your dark ways and evil deeds!”
Eliphaz	“I have seen God’s darkness in a dream-vision, as I know Him from experience”.
Bildad	“I have perceived God in historical darkness, and I know Him from tradition”.
Zophar	“I encounter the Divine in mysteries, and I know his darkness in esoteric ways”.

Table continues

Elihu	"I experience God's Spirit in dark dreams, and I know Him from spiritual acts"
YHWH	"Yes, all of you have opinions about My dark destinies, but in fact you all know very little about my dark ways". "In a theophany I will show you something about my own darkness".

The first conceptualisation of Divine darkness as expression of human destinies in Job necessarily leads to the somewhat despondent second metaphorical construction in the brain-mind processes of the ancient Israelite and early Jewish sages.

5. DARKNESS IS DEATH

Perhaps the second experiential gestalt – whereby the initial darkness-as-destiny schema is extended via the light-as-life construct and its darkness-as-death metaphorical conceptualisation – constitutes what biblical expositors found to be the most problematic and disturbing. Moreover – and in contrast to the generally accepted Near Eastern perspective and Israelite-Judean conceptualisations of the light-as-life and darkness-as-death models – the Biblical Hebrew authors and scribal editors of Job rather metaphorically and problematically depict YHWH by means of his Divine presence and absence amidst cosmic darkness Himself, which ultimately led to Sheol as the final “domain of evildoers and demons, ... the netherworld, [and] the land of the dead” (Price 1997:314).

It is important to realise that both Job and his friends place themselves wholly under the doctrine of retribution, as some religious belief practised by God according to the retributive principle of moral order (cf. Clines 1989: xxxix). That is why the friends reply to Job's suicidal motives with overwhelming perplexity. Eliphaz argues that Job must be struck with spiritual blindness and dark stupidity for wanting to regress to a state of cosmic chaos (cf. 15:4; 22:30; Clines 1989:146). Bildad ensures Job in 18:18 that the “emissaries of Death” and Darkness await him on account of his lack of repentance *coram Deo* (cf. 18:6, 18; Clines 1989:422). Additional counteracts of Job's “language of longing” and “complete helplessness in the face of reality” (Clines 2006:601) provide sufficient source material in the conceptual and metaphorical expressions for warfare to substantiate the divine-darkness-as-human-death gestalt experiences in

the brain-mind processes frames of historical post-exilic authors and their contemporary editors.¹¹

Lakoff's (2008) conceptual divine-darkness-as-human-death metaphor reminds us of cruel accusations, whereby people play "blame-games" with God and other authorial leaders in terms of the inferential semantic role of the Strict Father, and also constitutes the main reason, stated by Thomas (1971:128), as to why ordinary people prefer another option, over and against the first darkness-as-death conceptual metaphor of sages who do not necessarily "go gentle into that good night":

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lighting,
They do not go gentle into that good night.

The complication for the various characters rests in the view of Job and his friends that God simultaneously acts as the creator, controller and possessor of both the light of life and the darkness of death (cf. 12:22; 26:10; 38:19; Mitchel 1986:247-258). However, although God allows darkness to retain the dwelling and sphere of the wicked and evil,¹² it remains solely under the influences of demonic chaos, overshadowed by his sovereignty and prerogative. God may withdraw his Divine presence at any time in order to destroy human moral sinners on account of their lack of darkness of his absence and its dark consequences (cf. 15:22-23; 34:22; Clines 1989:358).

The most common detonator of the divine darkness is human death construct is personified by the central concepts and word-pair of שְׁאוֹל ("Sheol", the Subterranean Ocean or the "Underworld") and צֶלְמָוֶת (or the "shadow of death"). According to Ryken *et al.* (1998:192), "[I]n short, darkness keep[s] some very bad company, made all the more devious by virtue of the concealment of evil activity from ordinary view" (cf. Pedersen 1959:460-464). Job admits that neither Sheol nor the Death-Shadow is beyond God's ken and control (cf. 10:21; 12:22, 25; 17:13; Clines 1989:399, 443; 2006:780). Indeed, this constitutes his dilemma: God has plunged him into the world of darkness to such an extent that he would rather – like the evil and wicked – remain and live within a Godless world devoid of chaotic darkness (cf. 19:8; 12:22; Clines 1989:301). If it were not for a third possible metaphorical conceptualisation or connection between "Divine darkness" and human suffering, there would virtually be no difference between the

11 The concept of "death" is further supported with references to the "sword" and "fire" or "warfare" in 15:22, 24 and 20:26. Cf. Clines (1989:147, 357, 496).

12 For the conceptualisations of these terms, cf. Hahn (1980:422-423); Clines (1989:422); Conzelmann (1971:426-431).

initial destructive ambitions of evil and wicked and Job's eventual death wishes (cf. 24:21-23; 3:4-5, 9; 10:21; 30:26; Clines 1989:84, 88, 251).

6. DARKNESS IS DELIVERANCE

Following on the first two darkness-as-destiny and darkness-as-death schematisations, and due to their different views on suffering, as expressed in terms of Divinely ordained darkness, Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Elihu ultimately reached the catastrophic stage of Kuhn's (1996) "incommensurability",¹³ as the result and consequence of total communicative disintegration at the end of chapter 37, whereby they admit to being no longer able to neither translate nor understand the meaning of YHWH in their words and interpretations. Such views may necessarily contribute to the criticism and characterisation of God by contemporary scholars as a jealous Tyrant (Williams), false Comforter (Whedbee), and with disregard for his Divine speeches as either poor theology (Williams), sublime irrelevance (Good), beyond the absurd (Cox) or even tongue-in-cheek (Robertson).¹⁴

Only the Divine speeches of Job 38:1-42:6 adequately address the concept of "darkness" from yet another perspective, enabling humanity to reach some form of consolation, comfort and peace regarding God's involvement in human suffering and darkness. This is exactly what happens when YHWH addresses the concept of 'darkness' from yet another perspective. Job 38:2 metaphorically highlights the conceptual DESTINY and DEATH schemas, and condemns Job as one whose council darkens YHWH's Divine plan "through words without knowledge". However, in 38:19-21, God intimately and immanently (panentheistically?) situates himself within the spatial contexts of both light and darkness:

הַתְּבַנְנֶתָ עַד־רַחֲבֵי־אָרֶץ הַגֹּד אִס־יִדְעֶתָ כֶּלֶה:
 אֵיזֶה הַדָּרֶךְ יִשְׁכַּח־אֵר וְחֹשֶׁךְ אֵיזֶה מְקוֹמוֹ:
 כִּי תִקְחֶנּוּ אֶל־גְּבוּלוֹ וְכִי־תִבְיֵן נְתִיבוֹת בֵּיתוֹ:
 יִדְעֶתָ כִּי־אֲנִי תוֹלַד וּמֹסֵפֵר יָמֶיךָ רַבִּים:

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- 13 Kuhn (1996:200-202) defines incommensurability as a situation in which two or more persons perceive the same situation differently, while employing the same vocabulary in their discussion. Kuhn attributes such incongruities of people's incompatible usages of the same concepts to their adhering to distinctive paradigmatic perspectives. However, the view of Kuhn (1996:103,109) is rejected by Blank (1989:263-264): new paradigms in theology can be established only in relationship to older ones. Otherwise, it would be like an astronaut in space who severs his line with the spacecraft and wanders about lost in the universe.
- 14 For various interpretations of the Divine discourses of Job, cf. Schmidt (2002:142-143).

Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth? Tell me, if you know all this.

What is the way to the abode of light? And where does darkness reside?

Can you take them to their places? Do you know the paths to their dwellings?

Surely you know, for you were already born! You have lived so many years (cf. Job 38:18-21 NIV).

These metaphorical expressions basically and deliberately reveal YHWH, not only as present within the confines of light and darkness (cf. Isaiah 45:7),¹⁵ but also dissociates the Divine Creator as being above, beyond and transcendent to such dualistic realms (cf. 12:22; Clines 1989:302; Ryken *et al.* 1998:191-193). Clines (1989:302-303) aptly summarises the third conceptual divine darkness is human destiny metaphor over and against the other two divine-darkness-as-human-destiny-and-death constructs with the following remarks:

In Job's view God's powerful wisdom is hidden only because few had the opportunity to penetrate like Job to "the God beyond God", who make his deep wisdom visible for who have eyes to see, "by his chaos-creating acts in the world of humankind, his "deepness" is not in principle beyond human comprehension but –to Job at least – as clear as day, however unfamiliar to the mass of humanity ... On the whole, in the Hebrew Bible, it is light rather than darkness that is associated with God, but Job is not entirely alone in seeing God wrapped in darkness ... Yahweh dwells in thick darkness.

YHWH's transcended presence and immanent dwelling in Clines' "thick darkness" may, in fact, relate to the later post-exilic sections such as the Poem on Wisdom and Elihu speeches in Job 28 and 32-37. The literary genre of Job 28 has been interpreted as part of the third missing response of Zophar (Hartley), an anonymous poetic hymn (Gordis), a meditation (Dhorme), as an interlude (Andersen, Crenshaw), intermezzo (Westermann), cadenza (Hoffman),¹⁶ or even as an introduction to the Elihu speeches

15 The NIV translation in Isaiah 45:7 reads: *I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things.*

16 For the literary genre of Job 28 and 32-7, cf. Gordis (1978:536); Hartley (1988:26-27, 355); Dell (1991:196); Habel (1985:392); Janzen (1985:187). According to Viviers (1997:111), both Job 28 and 32-7 are "arguments from authority", which serve as reflective pauses of the narrative argument and anticipate the Divine discourses and YHWH's answer to Job in the theophany.

(Greenstein; Clines).¹⁷ Especially in light of the last-mentioned interpretation, an increasing number of Jewish scholars and Christian theologians attribute the first part of the Wisdom Poem to Divine rather than human activities, on the basis of the verb חקרו ("to investigate, explore, invent or search out") (cf. Holladay 1988:114-115) in 28:3 and 27. These verses metaphorically conceptualise YHWH's obtainment of Wisdom (cf. Proverbs 8-9) in a similar fashion as him archaeologically excavating the cosmic Underworld in search of its mythic treasures during the primordial times.¹⁸

Finally, despite the conceptual divine darkness is human and death constructs, the post-exilic ancient Israelite sages and early Jewish scribes show us that Job and his adversaries realise via the YHWH speeches and their gestalt darkness-as-deliverance experiences that one "cannot hide [from] nor [try to] limit God" (Alden 1980:331). Prior to his death, Hull (2010:226) wrote that his dark senses of pre-destined threat and deadly loss led him to a sense of hopeful deliverance:

Living with an overwhelming sense of loss is about as it ever gets this side of hell. How could God possibly shed any light in that total eclipse of my hopes and dreams? He did it in two stages. The first was negative, clearing my thoughts of false assumptions. The second was positive, giving a whole new perspective on what was happening to me.

Olojede (2015:724) similarly concludes that Divine darkness attributed to human suffering not only characterises terror, horror, agony, oppression, pain, evil and wicked activities, but also serves as

a time of revelation, of fellowship, and of divine activities ... [revealing] Yahweh as absolutely in control of the temporal order.

Clines (1989:xxxvi-xlvi) divides the narrative flow and outline of Job into three segments, namely exposition, complication and resolution, a statement that definitely concurs with the conceptual findings of this article:

- As part of the exposition, the divine darkness is human destiny schema sets the stage of the scene, introduces the characters, and establishes the plot or argument of the problems of Job's suffering and God's moral order of the world, in terms of Divinely-governed ways.

17 For various identifications of the Gattung of Job 38-41, cf. Clines (2006:911-912); Greenstein (2003:269-275); Van Hecke (2003:159-160).

18 Similar hermeneutical interpretations are advanced in the Septuagint and Targums, as well as by medieval Jewish expositors such as Rashi, Saadiah, Rashbam, and Ibn Ezra. Cf. Clines (2006:981-982); Greenstein (2003:269-275); Van Hecke (2003:139-160).

- In the complication, the divine-darkness-as-human-death construct enhances the characters' encounter and establishes the conditions for the plot's argument and problem.
- Finally, in the resolution, the conceptual divine darkness is human deliverance metaphor portrays how the narrative problem posed by the narrative is solved, mainly via the intervention of YHWH.

Clines (1989:xxxvii) continues to show how YHWH's speech is less of a reply to the friends'

views of human suffering than the introduction of a new approach: God takes the initiative by summoning Job to speak, but continues to do most of the talking Himself, thereby overshadowing Job to lay his hand on his mouth (40:4-5) and to submit *coram Deo* (42:1-6). Job's theology mainly affirms "the truth about the moral universe" (Clines 1989:xlvii).

Finally, Clines (1989:xxxviii-xxxix) concludes with two complementary, but provisional answers to the Joban concern pertaining to human darkness and suffering: a calm acceptance of the will of God, whereby the character of Job serves as a model of patience for sufferers (in the DIVINE DARKNESS IS HUMAN DESTINY AND DEATH models of 1:21 and 2:10), and the model of an impatient Job, who makes no attempt to suppress his hostility toward God for what has happened to him. This impatient Job "directs himself constantly toward God, whom he regards as the one who is responsible, both immediately and ultimately, for his suffering", and which eventually leads to Job's conceptual DIVINE DARKNESS IS HUMAN DESTINY CAPITULATION in 42:1-6. Clines' (1989:xxxix) "answer" to Job is:

By all means let Job the patient be your model so long as that is possible for you; but when equanimity fails, let the grief and anger of Job the impatient direct itself and yourself towards God, for only in encounter with him will the tension of suffering be resolved.

7. CONCLUSION

The article began with more negative perspectives on divine darkness in terms of the human destiny and death constructs, but ended with a more positive outcome by means of the post-exilic sages' experiential divine darkness-as-human-deliverance gestalt.

We conclude by referring to the various human interpretations of human suffering in Conrad's (1987:116-117) *Heart of Darkness*. On the last pages

of the novel, Marlow recalls the following scene about the last moments of Kurtz's life:

One evening coming in with a candle I was startled to hear him say a little tremulously, "I am lying here in the dark waiting for death." The light was within a foot of his eyes. I forced myself to murmur, "Oh, nonsense!" and stood over him as transfixed. 'Anything approaching the change that came over his features I have never seen before, and hope never to see again. Oh, I wasn't touched. I was fascinated. It was as though a veil had been rent. I saw on that ivory face the expression of sombre pride, of ruthless power, of craven terror – of an intense and hopeless despair. Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge? He cried in a whisper at some large image, at some vision – he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath: "The horror! The horror!" I blew the candle out and left the cabin.

Later on – when Kurtz's fiancé confronts Marlow regarding his final words – he lies by telling her instead that the last words Kurtz uttered were her name. Why? "But I couldn't. I could not tell her. It would have been too dark – too dark altogether ..." (Conrad 1987:126).

In contrast to the cynical views of Conrad and Coppola, Saint John of the Cross (1959:41) provides the final theological summary of Job:

Even so likewise the preparation which God granted to Job in order that he might speak with Him consisted not in those delights and glories which Job himself reports he was wont to have in his God, but in leaving him naked upon a dung-hill, abandoned and even persecuted by his friends, filled with anguish and bitterness, and the earth covered with worms And then the Most High God, He that lifts up the poor man from the dunghill, was pleased to come down and speak with him there face to face, revealing to him the depths and heights of His wisdom, in a way that He had never done in the time of his prosperity.

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ADDENDUM A

Linguistic phrases expressing 'darkness' חשך in
Job 3:1-42:6

3:4

הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הוּא יְהִי חֹשֶׁךְ אֶל־יְדִדְשֵׁהוּ אֵלֹהִים מִמַּעַל וְאֶל־תּוֹפֵעַ עָלָיו נְהַרְהֶה:

Let that day [of Job's birth] be darkness; let not God seek it from above, neither let light shine upon it.

3:5

וַיִּגְאָלְהוּ חֹשֶׁךְ וְצִלְמוֹת תִּשְׁקוּ־עָלָיו עֲנַנְגָּה וְיִבְעֹתָהּ בְּמִרְיֵי יוֹם:

וַיִּגְאָלְהוּ חֹשֶׁךְ וְצִלְמוֹת תִּשְׁקוּ־עָלָיו עֲנַנְגָּה וְיִבְעֹתָהּ בְּמִרְיֵי יוֹם:

Let darkness and death's shadow desecrate it; let a cloud hover over it [and] an eclipse [blackness of day] terrify it.

3:9

וַיִּחְשְׁכוּ בֹכְבֵי נְשָׁפוֹ יְקוּ־לְאֹר וְאֵין וְאֶל־רָאָה בְּעַפְפֵי־שָׁחַר:

Let the stars of its twilight be darkened, so that watch out for light in vain, and may it never observe a dawn [the opened eyes of morning light].

5:14

יוֹמָם יִפְגְּשׁוּ־חֹשֶׁךְ וְכָל־לַיְלָה יִמְשָׁשׁוּ בַּצְהָרִים:

Daytime they [the sages] encounter darkness and as midnight they struggle with the afternoon.

10:21

בְּטָרִם אֶלֶד וְלֹא אָשׁוּב אֶל־אֶרֶץ חֹשֶׁךְ וְצִלְמוֹת:

Before I finally leave [without return] to (the) land of darkness and (the) shadow of death.

12:22

מִגְלָה עֲמֻקּוֹת מִנִּי־חֹשֶׁךְ וַיִּצָּא לְאֹר צִלְמוֹת:

He [God] reveals deepness out of darkness, and uncovers out light from [the] shadow of death.

12:25

יִמְשָׁשׁוּ־חֹשֶׁךְ וְלֹא־אֹר וַיִּתְעַם בְּשֹׁכָרִים: יִמְשָׁשׁוּ־חֹשֶׁךְ וְלֹא־אֹר וַיִּתְעַם בְּשֹׁכָרִים:

They [= the leaders of the land] struggle with darkness without light, because He [God] makes them stumble like (the) drunkards.

15:22

לֹא יֵאֱמִין שׁוֹב מִנִּי־חֹשֶׁךְ (וְצָפוּי) הוּא אֱלֵי־חֶרֶב:

He [the wicked] does not believe that he will return out of darkness, because a sword is awaiting him.

15:23

נִדְדָה הוּא לֶלְחֶם אֵינָהּ יָדָע | כִּי־נִכְזוּ בְיָדוֹ יוֹם־חֹשֶׁךְ:

He [the wicked] wanders about for bread, [wondering]: “Where is it?” He realizes that [the] day of darkness is awaiting him [ready in his hand].

15:30

לֹא־יִסּוּר | מִנִּי־חֹשֶׁךְ יִנְקֹתוֹ תִיבֵשׁ שְׁלֵהֶבֶת | וְיִסּוּר בְּרוּחַ פִּי:

He [the wicked] will not depart from darkness, a flame will wither his branches, and he will pass away by the breath of His [God's] mouth.

17:12

לְיֵלָה לְיוֹם יִשְׁמֹו אֹזֶר קָרוֹב מִפְּנֵי־חֹשֶׁךְ:

They [Job's thoughts] exchange night for day, [and] light shortens [the] face of darkness.

17:13

אִם־אֶקְוֶה שְׂאוֹל בֵּיתִי בְּחֹשֶׁךְ רַפְדָּתִי יִצְוֵעִי:

If I wait, Sheol is my house, [then] I have made my bed in the darkness.

18:6

אֹזֶר חֹשֶׁךְ בְּאֹהֶלּוֹ | וְנִרְוֹ עָלָיו יִדָּעַךְ:

The light is dark in his [the wicked's] tent, because his lamp will be put out beside him.

18:18

יִהְדָּפוּהוּ מֵאֹזֶר אֱלֵי־חֹשֶׁךְ וּמִתַּבַּל יִגְדָּהוּ:

They will drive him [the wicked] out from light into darkness, since they will let him be locally/continentally banished [from the world].

19:8

אֶרְחִי גָדָר וְלֹא אֶעְבְּרוּ וְעַל גְּתִיבוֹתַי חֹשֶׁךְ יִשֵּׂים:

My path [wall] He [God] has blocked [build up] so that I cannot pass [climb over], and over my roads [pathways] He has placed darkness.

20:26

לִחֲשֹׁךְ טָמוּן לְצַפּוֹנָיו תִּתְּאָבְלֶהוּ אֵשׁ לֹא־נִפְחָ גֵרַע שָׂרִיד

Total darkness is reserved for his [= wicked/godless] treasures, an unfanned (not blown) fire will devour him; [only] evil will remain [survive] in his tent.

22:11

אוֹר־חֹשֶׁךְ לֹא־תִרְאֶה וְשִׁפְעֵת־מַיִם תִּכְסֶּךְ:

Either (because of) darkness you [= Job] cannot see, or due to abundant waters covering you.

23:17

כִּי־לֹא נִצַּמְתִּי מִפְּנֵי־חֹשֶׁךְ וּמִפְּנֵי כִסֵּה־אֲפֵל:

Because I was not annihilated from the face of darkness, since He [God] covered deep darkness from my face.

24:16

חֲתוּר בַּחֹשֶׁךְ בְּיָמֵם חֲתוּמוֹ־לָמוּ לֹא־יֵדְעוּ אֹר:

They [the thieves] dig in the dark through houses, [during] daytime they hide themselves, they do not know the light.

26:10

חִקְהָג עַל־פְּנֵי־מַיִם עַד־תִּכְבְּלִית אֹר עִם־חֹשֶׁךְ:

He (God) has limited [on] the face of the waters, until light will come together with darkness to an end.

28:3

קָצַן שֵׁם לִחֲשֹׁךְ וְלִכְלֵ־תִכְבְּלִית הוּא חוֹקֵר אֲבֹן אֲפֵל וְצִלְמוֹת:

He [= man/God?] makes an end to darkness, and unto [the] uttermost depths he searches (for) stones of blackness among (the) shadow of death.

29:3

בְּהִלּוֹ גִירוּ עָלַי רֵאשִׁי לְאוֹרוֹ אֵלֶיךָ חֹשֶׁךְ:

When his [God's] light shone over [upon] my head, (while) by his light I walked (through) darkness.

34:22

אֵין־חֹשֶׁךְ וְאֵין צִלְמוֹת לְהַסְתֵּר שָׁם פְּעֵלֵי אָוֶן:

(There is) neither darkness (and) nor shadow of death there for workers of iniquity to hide (themselves)

37:19

הוֹדִיעֵנוּ מִהֲנֹאמֵר לוֹ לֹא־נִעְרָד מִפְּנֵי־חֹשֶׁךְ:

Make us [Job's friends] known what to say to Him [God], [for] we cannot prepare [set order to] in [the] face of darkness.

38:2

מִי זֶה | מִחֹשֶׁךְ עֵצָה בְּמַלְיוֹן בְּלִידָעַת:

Who is this [human being] who lets council be darkened through words without knowledge?

38:19

אֵיזָה הַדֶּרֶךְ יִשְׁכֵּן־אֹר | חֹשֶׁךְ אֵיזָה מְקוֹמוֹ:

Where is the way where light dwells? And darkness – where is its place?