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Job, Victim of Ironies

A Linguistic Reevaluation of Job 1:10 in its Context*

Tobias Häner

Introduction

In the first heavenly scene of the Joban Prologue (Job 1:6-12), within three verses, we encounter three clearly marked questions¹. It is as if God and the Satan enjoy playing a question-answer ping-pong. After this series of questions, we are by no way surprised that also the next verse seems to begin with a question marker, namely the opening particle הֲ:

Job 1:10a הלא־אתה שכת בעדו ובעד־ביתו ובעד כל־אשר־לו מסביב

Consequently, Job 1:10a is rendered by most interpreters as a (rhetorical) question². An exception in this regard, however, is Alonso Schökel's and Sicre Diaz' commentary: "If you in person have hedged him in and protected, him, with his family and all his property!"³ It may be due to a rather free rendering

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¹ According to some scholars, as e.g. SCHWIENHORST – SCHÖNBERGER – STEINS, *Zur Entstehung*, and SYRING, *Hiob*, 151-168, the two heavenly scenes (1:6-12 and 2:1-7a) might be part of a secondary stage in the literary development of the Joban narrative. In the following analysis, however, we will leave the redactional critical questions aside and regard the Joban prologue in a synchronic perspective.

² A few examples may suffice for demonstration: "Are you not the one who placed a hedge round him, round his household and round all he possesses?" (HABEL, *Book of Job*, 76), "Have You not safely hedged him in, and his house, and all he owns, on every side?" (GORDIS, *The Book of Job*, 4), "Have you not put a hedge about him and about his house and about all that is his on every side?" (CLINES, *Job 1–20*, 2; almost identical to Clines' rendering is that of SEOW, *Job 1–20*, 249).

³ ALONSO SCHÖKEL – SICRE DIAZ, *Job*, 95; English translation is mine on the basis of the Spanish original.

that the question form is omitted in this Spanish commentary. However, the example draws our attention to the question whether the first element in the verse, הלא, indeed signals the beginning of an interrogative clause.

In the following, I will question the seemingly clear evidence in four steps: Firstly, I will go into linguistic studies which claim that הלא in some cases might serve as an asseverative or presentative particle rather than being a combination of ה + לא. Secondly, I will reassess possible criteria that might indicate the non-interrogative and non-negative use of הלא. Thirdly, I will apply these criteria to the occurrences of הלא in the Book of Job as well as in Psalms and Proverbs. Finally, turning back to Job 1:10, I will argue that the verse is better understood as an ironic assertion than as a rhetorical question. As we will see, the Satan's provocative challenge to God in 1:10a plays an important role in the narrator's subtle irony that pervades the Joban prologue.

1 Non-Interrogative Use of הלא/הלוֹא in Classical Hebrew

In some cases, הלוֹא/הלא⁴ in the Hebrew Bible clearly has a non-interrogative and non-negative function, as e.g. in the formula הלא הם כתובים⁵, and in other instances where the element appears to be interchangeable with the particle הן/הנה⁶. According to Brown and Sivan – Schniedewind, this evidence matches with etymological considerations⁷. As they point out, namely Ugaritic and Aramaic cognates suggest that, beside the combination of interrogative ה and negative לא, in Classical Hebrew existed a non-interrogative and non-negative

⁴ The short form הלא occurs 127 times in the Hebrew Bible with more than 10 uses in Judges (13), 1–2 Kings (25), 1–2 Chronicles (18), Job (15), and Psalter (12); the plene-form הלוֹא appears 147 times, mainly in 1–2 Samuel (33), 1–2 Kings (20), Isaiah (20), and Jeremiah (14); the full list of references is provided by MCAFFEE, Reassessment, 115, n. 2. In the following, I will use the non-plene form הלא as referring to both spellings.

⁵ The formula הלא/הלוֹא הם כתובים occurs in 1 Kgs 15:7.31; 16:5.14.20.27; 22:39, 46; 2 Kgs 8:23; 10:34; 12:20; 13:8.12 ed. alt. (27 times), cf. Deut 3:11; Est 10:2; it is paralleled by the formula הנם כתובים in 1 Kgs 14:19; 15:11; 2 Kgs 15:26.31; 1 Chr 29:29; 2 Chr 16:11 ed. alt. (15 occurrences).

⁶ BROWN, *Is It Not?*, 215–218, mentions Gen 13:19 (cf. 20:15); 1 Sam 20:37; Ezek 38:14; Obad 8; Hab 2:13; Pss 54:2; 56:14; Prov 8:1; 26:19; Ruth 3:2; 2 Chr 25:26 where a non-interrogative use is apparent.

⁷ BROWN, *Is It Not?*; SIVAN – SCHNIEDEWIND, *Letting Your 'Yes' Be 'No'*.

particle **hālū* (or possibly **hallū*) that is etymologically unrelated to ה + אַל⁸. Consequently, in some cases, אַל הַל in the Hebrew Bible should be considered as an asseverative or presentative particle, similar to הַל/הַנָּה. Yet, these etymological arguments for a Hebrew particle **hālū* have recently been questioned by McAfee based on phonological and inscriptional considerations⁹. Furthermore, the suggested etymology does not help to distinguish between the instances where אַל הַל has an interrogative function and where instead it is used in a presentative or asseverative way, since the claimed etymological distinction is unrelated to the plene and non-plene spelling or any other graphical indication in the MT¹⁰.

Nonetheless, apart from the somewhat doubtful etymological hypotheses, the non-interrogative use of אַל הַל in some cases is evident¹¹, as pointed out by Brongers, who – beside a presentative function (“look”, more or less synonymous to הַל/הַנָּה) – suggests an emphatic or asseverative function in some instances („rather“, „certainly“, „indeed“, „surely“)¹². Moreover, also Hebrew Lexicons¹³ note an idiomatic usage of the composite הַל + אַל e.g. in Gen 4:7a, where a rendering with “surely” is proposed:

Gen 4:7a

הַלּוֹא אִם־תֵּיטִיב שֵׂאת

“Surely, if you do well, there will be acceptance”¹⁴

⁸ In particular, Sivan – Schniedewind and Brown mention Ugaritic *hl*, ancient Aramaic אַלוּ, El Amarna *allū*, and Biblical Aramaic אַלוּ and אַרוּ as cognates to the suggested non-interrogative אַל הַל II.

⁹ MCAFFEE, Reassessment.

¹⁰ As MCAFFEE, Reassessment, 128, notes, the distribution of the two spellings is probably “better accounted for on stylistic grounds rather than as a hypothetical confusion of two historically distinct particles”.

¹¹ The non-interrogative and the non-negative use of אַל הַל are intrinsically linked; therefore, in the following, the addition “non-negative” is usually omitted.

¹² Cf. BRONGERS, Some Remarks, 180-189. According to his analysis, אַל הַל is equivalent to הַנָּה in Judg 4:14; Isa 10:11; Joel 1:15; Josh 1:9; 2 Sam 13:28, and has an emphatic function in Gen 44:5; Judg 5:30; Josh 22:20; 1 Sam 21:12; 2 Sam 3:38; 11:10; Isa 8:19; Jer 26:19; 38:15; Am 5:20; Job 22:12. The non-interrogative use of אַל הַל was also discussed earlier on by GORDIS, Rhetorical Use; DRIVER, Affirmation, 108-09; cf. also the bibliographic references provided by MOSHAVI, Rhetorical Question?, 91, n. 2.

¹³ Cf. e.g. HAL, 487; BDB, 520; Ges¹⁸, 588; KAHAL, 262.

¹⁴ This translation is suggested in DCH IV, 492.

Therefore, although the claim of a distinct etymology seems somewhat debatable, not rarely a non-interrogative, non-negative use of הלא in the Hebrew Bible appears to be beyond doubt.

2 Syntactical and Contextual Indications of a Non-Interrogative Use of הלא

If there is no graphical distinction between the interrogative and the non-interrogative uses of הלא, are there any other signs that might indicate the different functions?

According to Moshavi, there are four types of sentence structures that signal the non-interrogative uses of הלא¹⁵:

- clauses with a pre-verbal conditional clause (e.g. 1 Sam 15:17);
- clauses with a left-dislocated constituent (*casus pendens*) (e.g. Num 23:12; Judg 11:24);
- clauses with an initial constituent connected to the clause by a conjunction (e.g. 1 Sam 6:6; Isa 29:17; Obad 1:8);
- and finite clauses, where the subject or an object or adjunct precedes the verb (e.g. Josh 22:20; Judg 11:7).

As Moshavi points out, the last-mentioned syntactical criterion is relevant because the negative particle לא is normally placed immediately before the verb (as e.g. in 2 Sam 19:22). Since in Job 1:10a the subject (אתה) precedes the verb (שכת), this indication would confirm our thesis. However, we have to examine whether the criterion of word order is applicable to our case. In fact, in a recent study, Hawley comes to the conclusion that in marked polar (genuine as well as rhetorical) questions, in the majority of cases the questioned element is marked as the focus by fronting, as e.g. in the rhetorical question in Gen 4:9 (השמר אחי אנכי) “*The guardian of my brother am I?*”¹⁶. Consequently, in Job 1:10a, the position of the personal pronoun (אתה) before the verb would emphasize the subject as the focus of the interrogative clause rather than indicate the non-interrogative function of הלא. But nonetheless, the fronting of אתה might

¹⁵ MOSHAVI, *Syntactic Evidence*, 54-61; MOSHAVI, *Rhetorical Question?*, 92-94.

¹⁶ HAWLEY, *Linguistic Markers*. More generally, also GROSS, *Satzteilfolge*, 331-332 states that in verbal clauses, the position of the subject other than immediately following the verb may signal its being the focus of the clause.

still be a relevant criterion for the non-interrogative use of הלא provided we can find examples of similarly structured interrogative clauses, where לא is placed behind the pronoun that is functioning as subject, immediately before the verb. As the survey of the Hebrew Bible shows, on the one hand, there are in fact negative polar questions with a preposed subject where לא is placed right before the verb, as e.g. – in a passive construction – in Job 11:2a (הרב דברים לא יענה), or in Gen 18:25 (השפט כלהארץ לא יעשה משפט). Yet, on the other hand, out of the 14 instances in the Hebrew Bible where a personal pronoun is placed immediately behind the question marker ה, it is never followed by לא in the same clause¹⁷. Therefore, the alternative word order לא אתה שכת that would be distinct to the non-interrogative sequence הלא אתה שכת seems to be nearly impossible, and by consequence, the fronting of אתה before the verb doesn't provide a clear indication of the non-interrogative use of הלא in this specific case.

Yet, according to Sivan and Schniedewind, also the following contextual indications signal a non-interrogative use of הלא¹⁸:

- the occurrence in passages and formulas, where הלא is placed in parallel to emphatic particles such as הנה, בי, or כן resp. where in other instances these affirmative particles are used¹⁹;
- the use of הלא and לא in the same sentence (Ezek 18:25);
- the occurrence of the double emphatic כי הלא (1 Sam 10:1; 2 Sam 13:28, cf. Josh 1:9; Judg 4:6; cf. הלווא הנה in Hab 2:13);
- the use of הלא (instead of ה + אין) in a non-verbal clause (Gen 40:8; 1 Sam 17:29; 2 Sam 11:3)²⁰;

¹⁷ Isa 66:9; האנכי Num 11:12; Job 21:4; האתה Gen 27:21; Judg 13:11; 2 Sam 2:20; 7:5; 9:2; 20:17; 1 Kgs 13:14; 18:7.17; Ezek 38:17; האתם Judg 6:31. האתה is always used in (genuine) questions that expect an affirmative answer (“yes, it’s me” / אני).

¹⁸ SIVAN – SCHNIEDEWIND, Letting Your ‘Yes’ Be ‘No’, 213-219. As mentioned above, Sivan and Schniedewind argue that the non-interrogative use of הלא goes back to a supposed particle הלא II that is etymologically independent from ה + לא.

¹⁹ Apart from the citation formula in the Books of Kings and Chronicles mentioned above (cf. n. 5), Sivan and Schniedewind list Ps 56:14; Josh 10:13 (cf. 2 Sam 1:18); 1 Sam 20:22 (cf. 20:37); 1 Kgs 2:8 (cf. 2 Sam 15:35); Isa 10:11 (cf. Deut 12:22).

²⁰ Against this, MOSHAVI, Syntactic Evidence, 53, remarks that the use of אין after interrogative ה is rare (Judg 4:13; 1 Kgs 22:7; 2 Kgs 3:11; Jer 7:17; 49:1.7; Amos 2:11; Mic 4:9; Job 6:13; 2 Chr 18:6), therefore this indication is not very conclusive.

was negated in the rhetorical question (“wickedness” and “iniquities” for “fear” in 22:4-5, protection and blessing instead of “for nothing”/הַנֶּמֶס in 1:9-10). Therefore, it seems plausible to understand 1:10 the same way as 22:5, i.e. as affirmation that further emphasizes the implied assertion of the preceding rhetorical question. Another example of the same pattern underscores the non-interrogative function of הֲלֹא in Job 1:10:

Gen 20:4b-5 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדָנִי הַגּוֹי גַם־צַדִּיק תִּהְרַג הֲלֹא הוּא אֲמַר־לִי אַחְתִּי הוּא וְהִיא־
גַם־הִוא אָמְרָה ...

And he said: “My Lord, also a just people you destroy?
Behold, it was he himself who said to me: ‘She is my sister.’
And she herself said...”

The same as in Job 1:9-10, a rhetorical polar question is followed by הֲלֹא and a preposed finite clause that explains and affirms the implicit negation of the preceding interrogative. Furthermore, this pattern coincides with what Moshavi describes as justification, i.e. the support of a (preceding or immediately following) implied assertion by a confirmatory statement, or – more precisely – the justification of a claim that is implied in the foregoing rhetorical question²⁵. According to her analysis, this discourse context as well signals a non-interrogative use of הֲלֹא, although, as she concedes, the justification alone may result inconclusive as indication of the non-interrogative use of הֲלֹא²⁶. Finally, Moshavi also argues that where הֲלֹא introduces a justification, the latter is typically part of a three-part structure with a rhetorical question that is followed by a justification and a third element, which may be another rhetorical question, an assertion or a directive²⁷. Here again, Job 1:10 fits into this claimed structure,

²⁵ MOSHAVI, הֲלֹא as a Discourse Marker; MOSHAVI, Rhetorical Question?, 99-102. As examples of justifications (beginning with הֲלֹא) of claims implied in preceding rhetorical questions, Moshavi quotes Gen 44:15; Exod 14:11-12; 1 Sam 1:8; 2 Sam 11:20; 2 Kgs 4:28; in other cases, as e.g. Judg 11:7; 15:11; 1 Sam 9:21; 2 Sam 11:10; 1 Kgs 1:13, the justifying הֲלֹא-clause precedes the rhetorical question (MOSHAVI, הֲלֹא as a Discourse Marker, 177-180).

²⁶ MOSHAVI, Rhetorical Question?, 102. Further discourse contexts highlighted by Moshavi are announcements, internal realizations, predictions, and third-person narratives, cf. MOSHAVI, Rhetorical Question?, 94-99.

²⁷ MOSHAVI, הֲלֹא as a Discourse Marker, 184-186.

as it is preceded by a rhetorical question (v. 9b) and followed by a directive (v. 11a)²⁸.

In sum, we can state that the indications proposed by Sivan – Schniedewind and Moshavi concerning the non-interrogative use of אלה corroborate the thesis that 1:10a is not an interrogative, but rather an emphatic statement that underscores the implied assertion of the preceding rhetorical question.

3 אלה in the Major Writings

Both Sivan – Schniedewind and Moshavi, on whose studies our investigation up to now mainly relied, base their observations to a large extent on the textual evidence of the first two parts of the Hebrew Bible (Torah and Prophets). These texts provide a suitable basis for a linguistic comparison with Job 1:10 as far as they are mainly narrative. However, in order to further evaluate the non-interrogative use of אלה, in the following, I will extend the analysis to its further occurrences in the Book of Job, Psalter, and Proverbs (i.e. the Major Writings). Although poetic texts, the criteria identified above are valid also here, as will be shown; in addition, the synonymous parallelisms may give further hints to the function of אלה in its context.

In total, out of the 32 occurrences of אלה in the Major Writings (beside Job 1:10), in 14 cases a non-interrogative use is probable²⁹ and in 10 instances possible, but uncertain³⁰; only 8 times the interrogative function appears undisputable³¹. Regarding word order, in all of the 14 cases where אלה is used in preposed finite clauses³², its non-interrogative function is possible or even

²⁸ The same sequence of (1.) rhetorical question, (2.) justification with אלה, and (3.) directive is found in Judg 9:38 and 1 Sam 17:8, cf. MOSHAVI, אלה as a Discourse Marker, 185.

²⁹ Job 8:10; 10:10.20; 12:11; 13:11; 22:5.12; 31:3.4.15; Ps 54:2; Prov 8:1; 24:12; 26:19.

³⁰ Job 4:6.21; 7:1; Ps 44:22; 56:9.14; 85:7; 139:21; Prov 14:22; 22:20.

³¹ Job 21:29; Ps 14:4 par. 53:5; 60:12 par. 108:12; 94:9a, 9b, 10a.

³² Beside Job 1:10, we find אלה in a preposed finite clause in Job 8:10; 10:10; 12:11; 13:11; 31:4.15; Ps 44:22; 54:2; 60:12; 85:7; 108:12; 139:21; Prov 8:1; 24:12.

in 31:3-4 and v. 15 justify the foregoing rhetorical questions (31:2 and 14)³⁸. Beyond that, also in Ps 60:11-13 (par 108:11-13) and 85:6-8, we find the same discourse context as in Job 1:10, since in each passage the הלא-clause is preceded by a (set of) rhetorical question(s) and followed by a directive.

In sum, the examination of the occurrences הלא in the Major Writings confirms the plausibility that Job 1:10a is not interrogative. On the one hand, the non-interrogative use of הלא seems not unlikely or even probable in the majority of its occurrences. On other hand, the word order (preposed subject) as well as the discourse context (הלא-clause as justification of foregoing rhetorical question[s]) have proven to be valid criteria to determine the non-interrogative function of הלא.

4 Is Job 1:10a a Rhetorical Question?

In some cases, a clear-cut either-or decision between interrogative and non-interrogative use of הלא seems to be neither possible nor necessary. Rather, the indications of a non-interrogative function we were able to determine may signal tendencies. In conclusion, we may outline these tendencies in the following way:

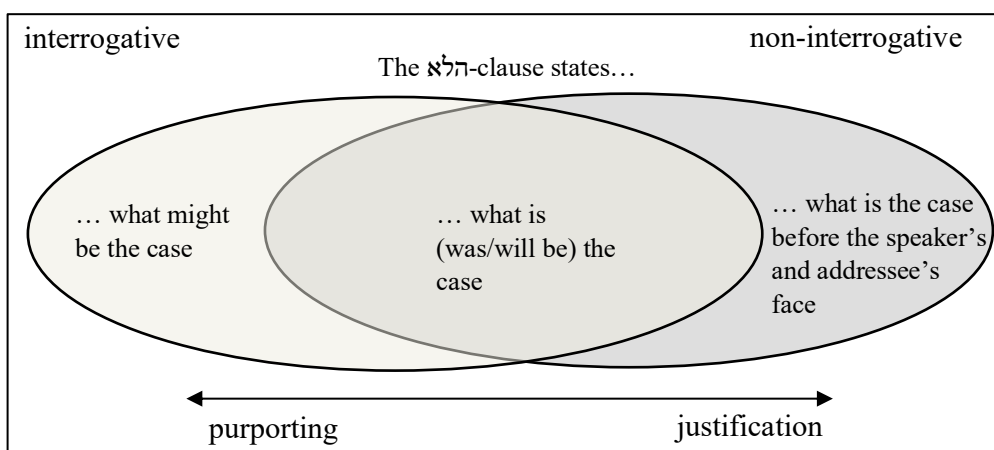


Figure 1: Interrogative and non-interrogative use of הלא

³⁸ Beside the discourse context (i.e. the sequence rhetorical question – הלא-clause as justification), also the word order confirms the non-interrogative function of הלא in the three verses, as we have either non-verbal (31:3a) or preposed finite clauses (vv. 4a and 15a).

In its interrogative use, הלא opens up a rhetorical question that tends to implicitly assert what might (but possibly is/was/will not) be the case and therefore is rather purporting; in its non-interrogative function instead, הלא introduces an assertion that rather highlights an actual fact (in its presentative use) or an unquestionable truth (in its asseverative use) and therefore may function as a justification of a rhetorical question and/or directive that immediately precede or follow the הלא-clause. In some cases, however, both functions (interrogative/non-interrogative) are plausible.

In the case of Job 1:10a, however, the distinction between interrogative and non-interrogative reading is not unimportant, since the interpretation of the clause as a rhetorical question risks to miss the primary pragmatic function of the passage in context of the Prologue narrative. In order to further develop this point, let me briefly go into the linguistic theory on the pragmatics of rhetorical questions. In general terms, the latter are, as Koshik states, “heard as asserting opinions rather than as seeking new information”³⁹. More precisely, with Ilie, a rhetorical question can be defined as “a question used as a challenging statement to convey the addresser's commitment to its implicit answer, in order to induce the addressee's mental recognition of its obviousness and the acceptance, verbalized or non-verbalized, of its validity.”⁴⁰ Concerning this function of inducing the addressee's recognition, as Rohde explains, the effect of rhetorical questions can be described as “commitment synchronization (...) to the upkeep and maintenance of the Common Ground. (...) Since rhetorical question usage is associated with strong bias, this predicts that midpoint values on a scale will be unavailable as obvious answers because they provide less ammunition for an emotional proclamation. If the obvious answer is a non-extreme value, the question is less effective because there are fewer conclusions to draw.”⁴¹ This function of rhetorical questions is clearly operative in 1:9b, since the proposed equivalent for Job's piety is an extreme value, namely “for nothing” (חנם)⁴², wherefore the implied answer is equally obvious. In 1:10a instead, the counterpart to חנם is not pushed to the extreme in a similar way, since the Satan doesn't describe the compensation for Job's fear of God in terms of “a little bit”,

³⁹ KOSHIK, *Beyond Rhetorical Question*, 147.

⁴⁰ ILIE, *What Else Can I Tell You?*, 128.

⁴¹ RHODE, *Rhetorical Question*, 161.

⁴² On the meaning of חנם in Job 1:10 and 2:3, cf. EBACH, *Ist es umsonst?*; DAVIS – LINAFFELT, *Translating חנם in Job 1:9*.

what would imply an affirmation that is equally obvious as the negation implied in 1:9b. Rather, Job's compensation is listed at length in 1:10, from what follows that, as a rhetorical question, v. 10a would be scarcely effective.

5 The Ironic Function of Job 1:10

Rather than functioning as a rhetorical question, Job 1:10a formally imitates the latter, but is better understood as an ironic assertion. This irony comes to the fore mainly by means of the following two elements:

- the paradoxical juxtaposition of the verbs שׁוך and פָּרַץ: Whereas the first one describes an action of containment (“to fence in”), the latter points to the opposite, the “bursting forth” of Job's livestock. In addition, both verbs give the divine blessing a negative connotation.
- the use of repetitions and exaggerations: In 1:10a, בַּעַד is repeated three times; in the same colon, כָּל and מְסֻבִּיב further underline the plenty of God's blessing in a way that reveals the insincerity of the Satan's uttering who by the means of exaggeration subtly criticizes God's acting on Job's behalf.

The reader of the Joban prologue is directed to the irony in the provocative challenge of the Satan by the signals of insincerity in the foregoing characterization of Job. In Job 1:1-5, we may distinguish three modes of hyperbolic speech⁴³: The apposition of four attributes in 1:1, the accumulation of the numeric pattern 7 + 3 and 5 + 5 in 1:2-3 (cf. also 2:11, 13 and 42:12-13), and Job's preventive sacrifice narrated in 1:5. As Brenner resumes, in that way Job appears as “a parody of faith rather than a climactic manifestation of it.”⁴⁴ These signals of insincerity that subtly question Job's blamelessness pave the way for the ironic assertion in 1:10, where the retribution principle as well as Job's piety get ironically undermined. For indeed, although the Satan's provocative assertion is directed at YHWH as his interlocutor, at the same time, in the perspective of the reader, in one single sentence Job's seemingly paradigmatic piety gets unmasked as rather utilitarian and self-interested.

⁴³ BRENNER, *Job the Pious?*, 39-44.

⁴⁴ BRENNER, *Job the Pious?*, 44.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I propose the following, non-interrogative rendering of Job 1:10a: “Behold, you are the one who placed a hedge round him, round his household and round all he possesses!”⁴⁵

The Satan does not try to convince YHWH of his viewpoint by means of a rhetorical question; rather, he refers to something that is plain and obvious, i.e. God’s blessing and protection on behalf of Job, but by the use of repetitions, contrastive juxtaposition and exaggeration, he subtly converts the factual statement to an ironic critique of both God’s care for Job and the latter’s piety.

The somewhat fastidious analysis of the non-interrogative use of אלה did not result in a hard and fast certitude on its assertive (or asseverative) function in Job 1:10a. Instead, it enabled us to dig into the subtlety of the Joban narrative. Behind the seemingly plain and simple story, we could recognize the ironic undertones that question the retribution principle and reveal Job as the victim of the narrator’s irony. Although the prologue has possibly been added to the poetic parts of the book by a later hand, its insincerities and subtle ironies introduce the reader to crucial features of the book as a whole.

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⁴⁵ The translation follows HABEL, *Book of Job*, 76, with the exception of changing the interrogative clause to an assertion.

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Zhrnutie

Veta v Jób 1,10a sa namiesto zvyčajného prekladu vo forme rétorickej otázky, lepšie chápe ako ironické tvrdenie. Môže pritom zostať otáznou, či sa častica אלה v danej vete v niektorých prípadoch má v klasickej hebrejčine pokladať za neinterrogatívnu a nezápornú časticu skôr ako kombinácia ה + אלה. Je však nepochybné, že často výraz אלה neuvádza opytovaciu vetu, ale má asertívnu alebo prezentačnú funkciu. Medzi kritériami, ktoré boli navrhnuté v nedávnom výskume ako indikátory neinterrogatívneho použitia častice אלה, sú osobitne dôležité dve: čelné postavenie podmetu pred slovesom v slovesných vetách a poradie rétorických otázok – אלה- veta. Obidve kritériá sa vzťahujú na vetu v Jób 1,10a, ktorá je z toho dôvodu najlepšie preložená ako tvrdenie. Satan pomocou opakovaní, kontrastného vzájomného porovnávania a prehánania jemne zmení vyhlásenie o Pánovom požehnaní Jóba na ironickú kritiku Božej starostlivosti a Jóbovej zbožnosti.

Kľúčové slová: Kniha Jób, rétorické otázky, irónia, pragmatika, preklad.

Summary

Contrary to the usual translation as a rhetorical question, Job 1:10a is better understood as an ironic assertion. It may remain questionable whether אלה should be considered in some cases as a non-interrogative and non-negative particle in Classical Hebrew rather than as a combination of ה + אלה. However, it is beyond doubt that not rarely אלה does not open up an interrogative clause but has an asseverative or presentative function. Among the criteria that have been suggested in recent research as indication of a non-interrogative use of אלה, two are of particular relevance: the fronting of the subject before the verb in verbal clauses and the sequence rhetorical question(s) – אלה-clause. Both criteria apply to Job 1:10a, which therefore is best translated as an assertion. By the use of repetitions, contrastive juxtaposition and exaggeration, the Satan subtly converts the statement on YHWH's blessing for Job to an ironic critique of both God's care and Job's piety.

Keywords: Book of Job, rhetorical questions, irony, pragmatics, translation.

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