

Opposition Is True Friendship: C.G Jung, Ibn ‘Arabi & the Answer to Job

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Abstract

This essay examines the intriguing connections between Carl G. Jung, the Sufi mystic Ibn ‘Arabi, and Jung’s engagement with the Biblical “Answer to Job,” bridging vast cultural and temporal gaps. It explores Jung’s transformative dialogue with Pueblo spirituality and his introspective challenges with Islamic concepts of divine submission, culminating in an analysis of “Answer to Job” through the lens of Ibn ‘Arabi’s Divine Names. The discussion highlights the paradoxes within divine attributes and the human perception of God, offering a unique interpretation of Jung’s confrontation with the God image. By integrating Jung’s psychological insights with Sufi mysticism, the manuscript provides a nuanced perspective on divine justice, mercy, and the quest for spiritual understanding. Keywords: Carl Jung, Ibn ‘Arabi, Answer to Job, Psychological theology, Sufi mysticism.

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A Life in Sacred Order

In 1923 Jung made a short field trip to a Pueblo reservation in New Mexico. Although he found the Pueblo were very secretive about their religion, he was able to engage in a dialogue with their chief, Ochwiay Biano. At one point in the conversation Ochwiay told Jung exactly what he thought of the white man:

See how cruel the whites look. Their lips are thin, their noses sharp, their faces furrowed and distorted by folds. Their eyes have a staring expression; they are always seeking something. What are they seeking? The whites always want something; they are always uneasy and restless. We do not know what they want. We do not understand them. We think they are mad.

Then Jung asked him why he thought the whites were crazy:

They say they think with their heads, he replied.

Why of course - what do you think with? Jung asks him in surprise.

We think here, he said indicating his heart.ⁱ

For Ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240) and indeed for Sufism in general, the heart (qalb) is the source of true knowledge and comprehensive intuition.ⁱⁱ Ochwiay's gesture of pointing to his heart had the effect of awakening this knowledge in Jung. He went into a long meditation and for the first time he viewed the "triumph of the West" through the eyes of a Native American.

Jung successfully bridged the cultural divide between his modernity and the mythological outlook of a Pueblo chief. Could he have done the same if he had been in a dialogue with Ibn 'Arabi? His candid admission that he "could never really relate to Islam" ⁱⁱⁱ suggests they would have passed each other like ships in the night. His difficulty is encapsulated in a dream he had in 1948. He met his deceased father who was now the custodian of an 18th century house. Paul Jung takes down a huge bible covered in fish skin and gives such a recondite exposition of a text that the son and his companions cannot understand a word of it. In the next scene father and son go upstairs to the second floor. They enter a vast circular room, a gigantic mandala. Jung had seen such a room in India, the council hall of the Sultan Akbar (the divan- i - kass). There is a steep flight of stairs in the centre leading to a small door high in the wall. Jung's father tells his son that he will lead him to the highest presence and prostrates himself Muslim style. Carl does the same with great emotion *but he cannot bring his head all the way down and stops a millimetre from the floor.*^{iv}

Jung admitted he really should have touched the floor with his forehead but something prevented him from doing so:

There are things that awaited me hidden in the unconscious. I had to submit to fate, and ought really to have touched my forehead to the floor, so that my submission would be complete. But something in me was saying, "All very well, but not entirely". Something in me was defiant and determined not to be a dumb fish and if there were not something of the sort in free men, no Book of Job would have been written several hundred years before the birth of Christ. Man always has some mental reservations in the face of divine decrees. Otherwise, where would be his freedom? And what would be the use of that freedom if it could not threaten Him who threatens him.^v

Traditionalist Muslim scholars maintain that to refuse to submit to highest presence is to refuse revelation. Michel Chodkiewicz makes this very clear in his essay on *Those Who Are Perpetually in Prayer*.

Revelation is not only message: it is also commandment. The message delivers its totality only to the submissive: to the true Muslim. The Quran opens its 'treasures' only to those who apply the Law it has established. The sharia (Law) and the haqiqa (the highest and most secret of truths) are inextricably conjoined.^{vi}

No wonder Jung had difficulty in relating to Islam! The degree of renunciation the Law requires is simply unsustainable outside a traditional culture. The *munazlat* has been irretrievably lost. This Arabic word means "an encounter between God and man, each having covered half the distance". For Ibn 'Arabi this reciprocal meeting is only possible "through the

most perfect conformity to the prescriptions of the Law".^{vii}

The millimetre of space between Jung's head and the floor defines the divergence between the religious and cultural attitudes of a modern man and a Muslim as devout as Ibn 'Arabi. Jung would not have been Jung if he had brought his head all the way down and Ibn 'Arabi would not be Ibn 'Arabi if he had declined to do so. Indeed, for an observing Muslim such a refusal is incomprehensible.

In his autobiography Jung spoke about his father's catastrophic collapse of faith. But unlike his son he had no difficulty in bringing his head all the way down to the floor. The dream seems to be saying: *Look, your father has regained his faith and submitted before the highest presence.* Paul Jung was an Arabic scholar who had written his doctoral thesis on the Karaites, an ultra-orthodox Arabic speaking Jewish sect. Like Muslims at the time of Ibn 'Arabi the Karaites were a culture of renunciation. Nowadays such a culture is commonly regarded as restrictive and joyless. But Jung was deeply impressed by the dignity and the serenity of the traditional people he encountered in America and the Islamic world. He also observed that modern Europeans are both more complicated and consequently slightly ridiculous.^{viii} Most of us have no idea how a ritual culture works and we do not begin to see the extent of our indigence. But it was not Jung who taught me this lesson. I learnt it from an eight-year-old child when I was on a supply teaching assignment in a West London school. I'm not sure whether she was Hindu or Sikh but she told me that going to the temple was the high spot of her week. Then she asked me if I went to the temple and I had to tell her that I did not. "Oh sir", she said, "you don't know what you're missing!" She spoke from the natural mind and she spoke from Tradition.

The great sociologist and Freud scholar Philip Rieff provided the best account I know of the dynamics of traditional cultures:

Culture, our ingeniously developed limitations is constituted by two motifs, which are dialectically related. These two motifs, which have shifting contents, I call interdicts and remissions from interdicts. Every culture is so constituted that there are actions one cannot perform, more accurately would dread to perform.^{ix}

A ritual culture will of necessity have a system of interdicts that we would regard as draconian. If the authorities were to tolerate deviations from the ritual codes, the entire social order would unravel. But it would be intolerable to live under a permanent regime of renunciations and so the burden of the interdicts is relieved by various remissions. This may even involve the temporary inversion of the hierarchy as in the medieval feast of fools. (See *On the Psychology of the Trickster*.^x) When such remissions go too far, as they did with the medieval saturnalia the balance between interdicts and remissions is disturbed and sacred order is undermined. Ibn 'Arabi lived in a ritual culture that had a stable equilibrium of interdicts and remissions. Like the Pueblo, he lived his life in sacred order. So did Jung's father until he lost his faith. When Carl Jung was with his father in the divan-i- kass he could not go back to a sacred order that no longer existed. It would have been an empty gesture for him to bring his head all the way down to the floor. Jung could build a bridge between modern and traditional cultures but he could not cross it.

In a letter to Henry Corbin warmly thanking him for his long review of *Answer to Job* he wrote that "The book came to me

during the fever of an illness. It was as if accompanied by the great music of Bach or Handel".^{xi} But the sheer fury of Answer to Job is a far cry from the serenity of Bach or Handel:

I shall not give a cool and carefully considered exegesis that tries to be fair to every detail, but a purely subjective reaction. In this way I hope to act as a voice for those who feel the same way as I do, and give expression to the shattering emotion that the unvarnished spectacle of divine savagery and ruthlessness produces in us.^{xii}

Clearly this book is not a biblical commentary; but what exactly is it? I am indebted to the late Leon Schlamm who explained to me that *Answer to Job* is a particularly intense, even visceral work of active imagination. Jung was engaged in a dialogue with God in the depths of the unconscious. He was relating to his subjective reaction in a very objective way:

This meditative practice initiates a dynamic, confrontational exchange between consciousness and the unconscious, in which each is totally engaged with the other, which, in turn, activates a stream of powerful, unconscious emotions and impulses. For Jung the function of this meditative practice is to access numinous unconscious images concealed by these emotions and impulses.^{xiii}

Without a millimetre of space between ego consciousness and the unconscious psyche this meditative practice would be impossible.

So what effect did this confrontation with Yahweh through active imagination have on Jung? According to Schlamm: "It triggered his perception of the immensity of God"^{xiv}:

That is to say, even the enlightened person remains what he is, and is no more than his limited ego before the One who dwells within him, whose form has no knowable boundaries, who encompasses him on all sides, fathomless as the abysses of the ocean and vast as the sky.^{xv}

The Shaykh would have endorsed Jung's proposition but would have pointed out to Jung that the natural man is God's servant. The form of the relationship to the God image of a medieval Sufi master and that of a modern psychologist of the unconscious are poles apart. And yet the two are separated by only a millimetre of space! This paradox comes to a head in *Answer to Job*. There is a brief summary of Jung's book in the final section of this essay.

The Divine Names

First, I must provide a very brief summary of Ibn Arabi's central doctrine of the Divine Names and then I will read *Answer to Job* from this perspective. Jung's text might then appear in a different light.

According to Ibn 'Arabi God exists in and for Himself as the Divine Essence (Dhat) and He exists for us as the Divinity (al Uluha). The Divine Essence is 'the most indeterminate of indeterminates' and the Divine Names subsist in it as pure

potentiality. These Names are differentiated in the Divinity and brought to the threshold of manifestation. God is the hidden treasure yearning to be known and so he actualizes His Names in the creation of the world. Each Divine Name denotes an attribute of God. There are ninety - nine Names of God in the Quran and seven of these are most frequently invoked: Alive, Knowing, Desiring, Powerful, Speaking, Generous and Just. But there are as many Names as there are Divine attributes.

Insofar as every Name designates the Divine Essence it is identical with what it denotes. But each Name denotes a specific object that exists separately from the name assigned to it. Izutsu formulates this paradox very clearly in his study of Ibn 'Arabi in *Sufism and Taoism*:

Thus the most conspicuous feature of the Divine Names is their double structure, that is their having two designations. Each name designates, and points to, the unique essence, while pointing to a meaning or reality not shared by any other Name.^{xvi}

Muslim theologians classify the Names in terms of incomparability (*ʾanzih*) and of similarity (*tashbih*). Names such as Majestic, Inaccessible and Vengeful belong to the first category and Beautiful, Near and Merciful to the second. Some pairs of Names are complimentary like the Majestic and the Beautiful while others are contradictory like the Merciful and the Vengeful or the Life Giver and the Slayer. Whether they are complimentary or contradictory all the Names are one and the same insofar as they all refer back to the Divine Essence.

For Ibn 'Arabi any interpretation of the Quran or of any revealed scripture that does not do violence to the language was valid. But by answering Yahweh blow for blow Jung unavoidably does violence to the text. Ibn 'Arabi would be have regarded Jung's visceral anger and his confrontational stance towards God as extremely bad adab (spiritual propriety).

For his part Jung maintained that he had a prima facie case. Yahweh had entered into a wager with Satan. He had allowed his adversary to do his worst with Job providing his life is spared. If the pious Job laments the day on which he was born and curses his creator, then Yahweh has lost the bet. Who, Jung would ask, could consent to anything so monstrously gratuitous? Only someone who was blind to his own contradictions and oblivious to the terrible destructivity of his shadow. From a modern psychological point of view this seems to be self-evident. But how does the situation look from the perspective of the Divine Names? If the Names are to all intents and purposes infinite, some of them will inevitably be contradictory, for example the Vengeful and the Merciful. In the tragedies of Job, Oedipus and Lear the conflict between the Divine Names is played out on a human level.

In Answer to Job Jung argued that Yahweh is unconscious of his own internal contradictions. Where, he asked, was his divine mercy when he subjected Job to a display of his overwhelming might? Yahweh's confrontation with Job (Job:38-42) was, in Jung's opinion, stage managed and he described it as "an impressive performance given by the prehistoric menagerie".^{xvii} But Yahweh has already revealed himself for what he is in the cynical wager he struck with Satan and through the afflictions he visits on Job, his loyal servant. Naturally Yahweh does not want to look at what he has disclosed of himself and the conflict has become acute. Thanks to Job's steadfastness in extreme adversity a new factor emerges

out of this situation:

This new factor is something that has never occurred before in the history of the world, the unheard of fact that, without knowing it or wanting it, a mortal man is raised by his moral behaviour above the stars in heaven, from which position of advantage he can behold the back of Yahweh, the abysmal world of the shards.^{xviii}

In the Quran there is no reference to God's confrontation with Job. Job is afflicted by Satan and cries out to God who shows his mercy and restores Job's family to him. (38:41) In the *Ringstones of Wisdom* Ibn 'Arabi has a short chapter on Job. He puts the emphasis on the patience of Job and commends his refusal to seek relief from any other source than the Divine Mercy.^{xix}

Rudolf Otto on the Book of Job

There is a commentary on Job:38-42 in Rudolf Otto's book, *The Idea of the Holy* that Jung does not mention. This is puzzling because Otto's category of the numinous is a cornerstone of Jung's model of the psyche. Before into this commentary I will give a very brief outline of this influential book.

The Idea of the Holy was published in German in 1917 and in English in 1923. The book focuses on the experiential dimension of religion rather than the doctrinal dimension. According to Otto religious experience is sui generis. It can legitimately claim this status because the object of religious experience is not of this world; it is Wholly Other. An encounter with the Wholly Other is a numinous experience. The word numen denotes a spirit that inhabits a sacred grove and just as the noun omen can be converted into the adjective ominous, so can numen be converted into numinous. Otto differentiates two aspects to numinous experience: *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. The tremendum is conveyed unforgettably in the visions of Ezekiel and also in the theophany in the Book of Job. It corresponds to the Divine Name of the Wrathful. The fascinans corresponds to the feminine Names of God, for example the Merciful or the Gracious. Whereas an experience of the tremendum induces awe, the fascinans is alluring. Numinous experience, says Otto, is constituted by the co-existence of these aspects in "a strange harmony of contrasts".^{xx} This harmony of contrasts characterizes the experience of the transpersonal self which Jung described as an indefinable 'something' that is "strange to us and yet so near, a virtual centre of so mysterious a constitution that it can claim anything-kinship with beasts and gods, with crystals and with stars - without moving us to wonder, without even exciting our disapprobation"^{xxi}.

In chapter IV of *The Idea of the Holy* Otto says that the association of *mysterium tremendum* with the wrath of God has been problematic for both theologians and lay people. He acknowledges that divine wrath is indeed without moral qualities, like a hidden force of nature or stored up electricity suddenly discharging itself. Yahweh is incalculable and arbitrary. Naturally this is an offence to anyone who thinks of the deity only in rational terms. But the people of the Old Covenant did not think in this way:

For them the Wrath of God, so far from being a diminution of His Godhead, appears as a natural expression of it,

an element of “holiness” itself and quite an indispensable one. And in this they are entirely right. The wrath is nothing but the tremendum itself, apprehended and expressed by the aid of a naïve analogy from the domain of natural experience, in this case from the ordinary passionate life of man.

This is indeed naïve but, says Otto, “the analogy is most disconcertingly apt and striking.” And it retains its value even now because it is “an inevitable way of expressing one element in the religious emotion”.^{xxii}

In Job:38-42 Yahweh reveals himself out of a whirlwind. After such an overwhelming experience of the mysterium tremendum Job declares that he has uttered words he did not understand and now “abhors himself and repents with dust and ashes”.^{xxiii} His words are an expression of “numinous unworth” or “creature feeling” and not gestures of self-abasement. According to Otto this sense of unworthiness does not necessarily arise from the awareness of any moral transgression and may have no relation to the superego at all:

It is not based on deliberation, nor does it follow any rule, but breaks, as it were, palpitant from the soul- like a direct reflex movement at the stimulation of the numinous.^{xxiv}

Jung thought otherwise. He maintained that Job’s response is not a reflex but a very astute move in the face of Yahweh’s overwhelming might. Job’s dream of a benevolent and just god had been shattered and he has realized that Yahweh is a phenomenon and “not a man”:

Shrewdly, Job takes up Yahweh’s aggressive words and prostrates himself at his feet as if he were indeed the defeated antagonist. Guileless though it sounds, it could just as well be equivocal.^{xxv}

Otto maintained that Job was not dissimulating at all. He is indeed overwhelmed by the tremendum but he has not been merely silenced by superior strength. When Job says that he abhors himself and repents in dust and ashes this is “an admission of inward conviction and conviction, not of impotent collapse and submission”. Nor, contrary to Jung, is God seeking a capitulation from Job. His theophany is also a theodicy which is far superior to that of Job’s friends: “For latent in the weird experience that Job underwent in the revelation of Elohim is at once an inward relaxing of the soul’s anguish and an appeasement which would alone and in itself perfectly suffice as a solution of the problem of the Book of Job”.^{xxvi} This appeasement does not derive from the notion that Yahweh’s ways are higher than those of mere mortals and his actions are beyond human comprehension. That would be a teleological justification and the theophany shatters all such rational constructs. The extraordinary descriptions in Chapters 39-41 of the mysterious and inexplicable instincts of the eagle, the ostrich, who leaves her eggs exposed in the sand, the wild ass and the unicorn, not to mention Behemoth and Leviathan all suggest “the downright stupendousness, the well-nigh daemonic and wholly incomprehensible character of the eternal creative power”. Yahweh does not answer Job’s prima facie case. His reply “is incommensurable with thoughts of rational human teleology and is not assimilated with them; it remains in all its mystery”. But as the mysterium becomes felt in consciousness “Elohim is justified and at the same time Job’s soul brought to

peace". He kneels before "the wholly uncomprehended Mystery, revealed yet unrevealed, and his soul is stilled by feeling the way of its working, and therein its justification." ^{xxvii} God had revealed the totality of his Divine Names to his servant Job.

In 1961 a young Jewish medical student had volunteered to deliver a sermon on Answer to Job at his synagogue. He wrote to Jung to seek his advice:

I would suggest a reduction of your program, namely that you deal with the most important aspect. It would be a fundamental fact of the pair of opposites united in the image of God, i.e., Yahweh. The two are Love and Fear, which presuppose an apparently irreconcilable contradiction. Yet such an opposition must be expected whenever we are confronted with an immense energy. There is no dynamic manifestation without a corresponding initial tension which provided the necessary energy. If we suppose the deity to be a dynamic phenomenon in our experience, its origin must be an opposition or paradox. ^{xxviii}

For Ibn 'Arabi the irreconcilable contradiction between the Divine Names was annulled in the Divine Essence. But for Jung the contradiction was resolved in and through the reflective consciousness of creaturely man. Herein lies the millimetre of space between the two of them.

A Summary of Answer to Job

In *Aion* and then in *Answer to Job*, we find Jung stripping away the New Testament idea of God so as to work back to the monistic conception in the Old Testament. The God-image in the Old Testament is a numinous totality embodying good and evil, justice and injustice. From a psychological point of view Yahweh is entirely lacking in self-reflection and his various aspects are not integrated. They can fly apart into mutually contradictory acts. Job is a casualty of Yahweh's terrible shadow but he holds his ground. In doing so he brings about a transformation of the God image.

My summary of *Answer to Job* will follow the threefold sequence set out in Henry Corbin's long review of Jung's book: The Absence of Sophia, the Anamnesis of Sophia and the Exaltation of Sophia. ^{xxix}

The Absence:

The naïve assumption that the creator of the world is a conscious being must be regarded as a disastrous prejudice which later gave rise to the most incredible dislocations of logic. For example, the nonsensical doctrine of the privatio boni would never have been necessary had one not had to assume in advance that it is impossible for the consciousness of a good God to produce evil deeds. Divine unconsciousness and lack of reflection, on the other hand, enable us to form a conception of God which puts his actions beyond moral judgment and allows no conflict to arise between goodness and beastliness. ^{xxx}

Jung's Job starts out with this naïve assumption and would have continued with it had not Satan caused Yahweh to doubt the fidelity of one of his most loyal subjects. If his wealth and good fortune were taken away, Satan suggests, the pious Job would soon begin to curse his maker. A wager is then struck between Yahweh and Satan. On the condition that he spares Job's life, Satan is free to do anything he likes to compel him to curse the Lord. If Job does so, he has won the bet.

In a very short time, the fates hit Job with devastating force. He is deprived of his considerable wealth, livestock and servants, even his children are destroyed. But Job does not fail the test and Yahweh wins round one: "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord".^{xxxix} However, this is not enough for Satan who wants to make Job squeal. So Yahweh allows him to intensify the ordeal so long as it's not life - threatening. Satan then afflicts Job with loathsome sores. Despite this gratuitous affliction Job does not curse his maker. Instead, he holds his ground and demands to know directly from Yahweh what he has done to deserve all this punitive treatment. A long series of dialogues follow in which Job's three 'comforters' try to convince him that he must have sinned to merit such terrible retribution.^{xxxix} But they say nothing to dissuade him from bringing his case before Yahweh. Neither can the far more eloquent Elihu convince Job that he should drop his case and submit to the authority of the Lord. Of course, Job knows nothing about the wager between Yahweh and Satan.

Elihu's speech prepares us for the climax of the drama in which the Lord answers Job out of the whirlwind:

Who is this that darkens counsel by words without Knowledge?

Gird up your loins like a man

I will question you, and you shall declare to me.^{xxxix}

According to Jung Yahweh's speech shows that he is "still intoxicated with the tremendous power and grandeur of his creation." After such an awesome theophany extending through three chapters Job wisely submits to Yahweh's overwhelming might:

I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,

But now my eye sees thee;

Therefore, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.^{xxxix}

But, asks Jung, who is the real victor here? Confronted with such a display of omnipotence Job could only capitulate. But has he also maintained that crucial millimeter of space? Jung suggests that:

Yahweh's dual nature has been revealed and somebody or something has seen and registered this fact. Such a revelation, whether it has reached man's consciousness or not, could not fail to have far-reaching consequences.^{xxxix}

He then spells out these consequences a few pages further on:

Yahweh has to remember his absolute knowledge; for if Job gains knowledge of God, then God must learn to know Himself. It just could not be that Yahweh's dual nature should become public property and remain hidden from Himself alone. Whoever knows God has an effect on him. The failure of the attempt to corrupt Job has changed Yahweh's nature.^{xxxvi}

The Anamnesis

At this point a new figure enters the divine drama, “a feminine being who is no less agreeable to Him than to man, a friend and playmate from the beginning of the world, the first born of God's creatures, a stainless reflection of his glory and a master workman”. She appears in the Old Testament Wisdom literature which was contemporaneous with the Book of Job:

When he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him..., and I was daily his delight rejoicing before him always...and delighting in the sons of men.^{xxxvii}

Sophia was there at the beginning but Yahweh had become estranged from her or had forgotten her. Now they are reunited in the heavenly nuptials. Yahweh will incarnate himself in the child and in this way, God will become man. He will learn what it is like to be Job and rectify the injustice he had done to his exemplary servant. In *Answer to Job* Jung turns orthodox Christian dogma on its head. Instead of God redeeming fallen man, it is man who redeems God from the tyranny of his own unconsciousness.

The Exaltation

For the last third of his book, Jung turns his attention to the Revelations of John. Unlike the book of Job, with its straightforward narrative structure, The Revelations is a dense and complex work. To complicate matters further Jung speculates about the personal psychology of the author of the Apocalypse. He maintains, entirely on the grounds of psychological probability that the author of Revelations and the writer of the three letters of John are one and the same. All the talk of perfect love of a God who is all light in the Letters finds its devastating psychological compensation in the terrors of the Apocalypse. He is on thin ice. We cannot even be sure if 1, 2, 3 John are by the same hand; 1 John is anonymous, 2 and 3 are from “The elder”. Modern scholars see three or more authors represented in the Johannine corpus.

God has incarnated only his light side in his only begotten Son. This is symptomatic of the split in the Christian imago Dei into two irreconcilable halves, the Kingdom of Heaven and the fiery world of the damned. In the last book of the New Testament, The Revelation of John the fiery world of the damned returns with a vengeance. But John's visions are not all violence and cataclysm. There are moments that point towards a uniting symbol that could reconcile the warring opposites:

And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

She cries out in her pangs of birth while being threatened by a great red dragon who will devour both her and the child. But when the child is born it is taken up to God and the woman flees into the wilderness.^{xxxviii} The woman clothed with the sun is an ordinary woman, not a goddess or eternal virgin. The birth of her son anticipates a complete divine incarnation but this is for another future world so the child is taken up to God:

Only in the last days will the vision of the sun-woman be fulfilled. In recognition of this truth, and evidently inspired by the working of the Holy Ghost, the Pope has recently announced the dogma of the *Assumptio Mariae*, very much to the astonishment of all rationalists. Mary, as the bride is united with the son in the heavenly bridal chamber, and, as Sophia, with the Godhead.^{xxxix}

The Assumption of the Virgin Mary was proclaimed as dogma by Pope Pius XII in 1950. Jung, much to almost everyone's astonishment, claimed that the declaration of the Assumption was "the most important religious event since the Reformation". (CW11:752) In fact there are two events: the theophany of the woman clothed with the sun and the Assumption of the Virgin. This exaltation of Maria -Sophia is preparatory to a further stage in the Divine drama. At first there was the Incarnation when God the Father revealed himself in his only begotten Son. In the next dispensation God will be born again through the third person of the Trinity and the Holy Spirit will become incarnate in creaturely man:

This sending out of the Paraclete has still another aspect. This Spirit of Truth and Wisdom is the Holy Ghost by whom Christ was begotten. He is the spirit of physical and spiritual procreation who from now on shall make his abode in creaturely man. Since he is the Third Person of the Deity, this is as much as to say that God will be begotten in creaturely man. This implies a tremendous change in man's status, for now he is raised to son-ship, almost to the position of man-god... But that puts man, despite his continuing sinfulness, in the position of mediator, the unifier of God and creature.^{xl}

I will conclude with Henry Corbin's commentary on this passage:

No more divine wrath towards man and correlatively no more human terror exploding in furor. In shedding his shadow side, God unburdens man of it. God is born to man and man is born to God as Filius Sapientiae, son of Sophia. This is no longer the anamnesis of Sophia as we have in the Old Testament, but her reign and her exaltation, because we have here her mediatory work. She is the defender and the witness, the advocate in Heaven, and that is the answer to Job.^{xli}

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Footnotes

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- ^{vi} Chodkiewicz M. *An Ocean Without Shore, Ibn 'Arabi and the Book of the Law* (1993):101, trans. D Streight, SUNY, New York.
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