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HEKAMTHO

SYRIAN ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

‘Values and Virtues’



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About the cover painting...



||Theo-phostic Prayer||

by Ajiyan George | Acrylic on Canvas | 40x60 | 2007 |

“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” - John 8:31-32

This painting is about the eternal fight which is happening inside a mind. No one is free from this dual between the light and darkness, divine and evil, protective Holy Spirit (dove) and predatory evil (eagle) etc.

The word theophostic comes from the Greek word theo (God) and quasi-Greek phostic (light). Whenever someone is mindful and engaged in meditation, he/she is essentially in a state of theo-phostic, i.e., bringing divine light to the inner conscience.

Mindful Prayer enables us to expose the truth that we are not eternally imprisoned for our sinful thoughts and actions. Instead God can and will forgive us and cleanse us from all of our sins.

Editorial

In the lives of Christians when bad things happen it is viewed as an opportunity to learn to trust God and to rely on him. It is an opportunity to represent divine values and virtues to the world, personally, politically, and socially.

In this regard, the current issue of *Hekamtho* tries to elaborate upon few examples of how to uphold the Christian values and virtues especially during these difficult times. Also to strengthen our faith in God who will help us to tide over the pandemic and the miseries caused by it.

In the first article, *Easter: Celebration of Integral Spiritual Life and Bliss of Relationship* by Shibu Cherian, it explains the meaning and significance of Easter in the midst of a world torn by epidemics, tormented by refugees, broken by the disasters of climate change, fragmented by wars and terrorism, divided by disputes and bruised by poverty. He underlines the fact that Easter is not merely a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ; it is actually the opening to the joy of life, the bliss of relationships and the experience of oneness in God.

The second article, *Hosting the Outsider and Dancing with Diversity: Reading Genesis 14:18-20 through the Post-exilic Eyes* by Jobymon Scaria provides an indepth analysis of Genesis 14:18-20 and offers an alternate reading of the passage against the post-exilic contexts.

Susan Thomas, in her article *Colonial Enterprise and the Re-forming' of the Syrian Christians of Kerala*, illustrates the social, economic and cultural impacts of Colonial period over the value-system of Syrian Christians in Kerala.

The fourth article, *Patristic period in order to ponder over the early Christian another 'Food'*, R. Yaqub al-Bikaadi discusses the food of obedience. He also addresses the spiritual poverty that comes with disobedience, and argues that the church today has been holding back on another dimension of food.

Percy Arfeen, in her article *Christianity in the first Five Centuries of its Existence: An Overview* investigates the relationship between the spread and growth of Christianity and the geo-politics in the early ages of Christianity.

The Theopolitics of Vaccinations by Leyanna Susan George explains the role of religious politics in the health care system. It also investigates how religious factors operate through various behavioral and psychosocial constructs to affect health status through proposed mechanisms that link religion and health.

The final article, *Reunion of Joseph and his brothers: Narrative Analysis of Gen 42: 1 to 12* by Eldho MC provides an exegetical insight into the reconciliation of Jacob's sons. It illustrates the tale of a man who chooses to reject the empty revenge of bitterness and embraces the benefits of suffering. Here, suffering is not a strange occurrence, but rather viewed as a sign of God's work in our lives.

Hope this issue of Hekamtho benefits you to understand few examples of value and virtue based living in order to deepen the trust in God even in the midst of these unbearable circumstances.

- Fr. Dr. Ajiyan George
Editor

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Easter: The Celebration of Integral Spiritual Life and Bliss of Relationship

Shibu Cherian¹

Introduction

A world which is torn by epidemics, tormented by refugees, broken by the disasters of climate change, fragmented by wars and terrorism, divided by disputes and bruised by poverty is celebrating Easter, without knowing what it is or what it means for them. It is not merely a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God. It is actually an opening to the joy of life, the bliss of relationships and the experience of oneness in God. In order to grasp the real message of Easter, it is significant to know about the Garden of Eden experience and the incarnation of the Son of God. Incarnation was intended to recover the world from all its brokenness that began with the fall

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of Adam at the garden and bring it back to unity, peace and life eternal.

The Disintegration of Relationships

A proper understanding of human is necessary to understand sin, fall, brokenness and recovery. According to the creation narratives of the Bible, we are created in the image of God after his own likeness. Irenaeus, the bishop of Leon who lived in the 2nd century has well expounded the meaning of image and likeness. According to him, *imago Dei*, the image of God, is the human ability to communicate with God. Perfect image means perfect communication with God. We are created with ability to listen to and talk to God². Being in such a relationship with God, we reflect His abilities which are important for our life and growth. Likeness of God means the potential to grow to the fullness intended by God in the Creation. Adam was neither a perfect man nor a fully grown up person with regard to his personality. He had to grow to the fullness of his human-hood as later revealed in the perfect human-hood of Jesus Christ.

Relying on a fourfold relationship - relationship to God, to his own self, to fellow beings and to the nature, Adam had to grow³. These relationships strengthen and nurture him. This is also true with Eve, his God given partner. The desire to grow was important and God had blessed Adam with that. The desire is not supposed to exceed the limits set by God and this limitation is symbolised by the forbidden tree and its fruit. Exceeding the limits would harm themselves, their fellow beings as well as the nature. It will tear down the rhythm and harmony of the whole creation. The serpent represents the exceeded desires. Exceeding the limits of desire, Adam wanted to become like God, that is, the sole owner and absolute authority of the Earth. Any attempt to become like God or to be equal with God is nothing but rebellion

²Cfr. Osborn, Eric, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 215.

³Cfr. Grenz, Stanley J., *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei*, 177.

against God. Eating the fruit is the symbolic representation of this rebellion. This tendency in Adam, for exceeded growth, to rule over, to make everything his-own shall be called *adamic tendency*⁴. This act against the plan of God, the first sin, is a sin against God and the whole creation as it would cause disharmony among the creation and between God and creation. Being an attempt to become equal with God, it is a rebellion. So, this rebellion naturally distorted all the four relationship Adam needed to grow as all the relationships were in God and through God.

Disintegration: Relationship to Self

The relationship to the self was the first one to be distorted. After realising the commitment of sin Adam and Eve felt naked. So they covered their body with the leaves of the fig tree and hid behind the trees. Hebrew words for 'naked' and 'cunning' stem from the same root. The feeling of nakedness could also mean that they have felt they did something 'cunning', that nobody else should know.⁵ This nakedness is not of the body but that of the mind. So they felt naked even after being clothed with leaves. They admitted before God that they are naked. They felt ashamed of their own body committing that 'cunning act' and were unable to accept it. Adam was unable to respect himself and lost his self-esteem. Those fig tree leaves were not sufficient enough to cover the 'cunning act' (Genesis 3:1-7).

Adamic tendency, which is, to exceed the limits and to establish authority over everything else in this universe and to acquire the ownership of everything has created broken and disintegrated personalities all through the centuries all over the world. Mental disorders quite often arise from intra-personal conflicts. This may lead to family conflicts or any such conflicts in the community, work place or society at large. Mental disorders include depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and other psychosis, dementia and so on. According to certain

⁴ Oliver, Frederick S., *A Dweller on Two Planets*, 236.

⁵ Schäfer, Manuel (eds), *Clothing and Nudity in the Hebrew Bible*, 220.

statistics, 20 - 30 percentages of the people experience some sort of mental disorder at least once in their life.⁶

Broken people are unable to grow as well as contribute to the society or to relate properly with the members of the family or whomsoever they interact with. They feel incapable, guilty, and inferior and turn to be introverts. Some may even become sadists, masochists, autocrats, terrorists or criminals. Some of them will hurt the people whom they involve with or the community they live in. They could never trust anybody, even their close associates. They usually divide the society and sow the seeds of hatred to fulfil their personal plans. Being unwilling to take responsibility of their own acts, they, by and large, find scapegoats. When questioned about eating the forbidden fruit, Adam made Eve responsible for the whole deed, instead of admitting his own mistake. Such people never trust others and look at everything with fear and suspicion. For some everything in the world is for their use. Hitler, the one behind the massacre of millions, was a distorted personality. He never trusted anybody. He suffered a sort of masochism. There was a hidden vengeance in his motives. Many believe it is his bitter childhood experiences made him such a distorted personality. The same thing is observed about Joseph Stalin. Most of the autocrats never trusted others, even their close associates. Such associates who were murdered by the autocrats are numerous. The North Korean ruler Kim is notorious for that. They fear all, suspect everybody and annihilate the suspected with vengeance. Broken personalities create broken families, divided societies and distorted communities.

‘To rule over others’, a major trait of Adamic tendency, resulted in laying the foundation for empires and kingdoms, colonies, racism, caste system, gender discrimination and hierarchies- both religious and secular. People in whom the so-called Adamic tendency was very high, created slaves, murdered

⁶ Rowling, Lucie, *Adolscence and emerging Adulthood* in “Mental Health Promotion: A Lifespan Approach: A Lifespan Approach”, MimaCattan&SylviaTilford (eds), 108.

millions and produced refugees. Immoral religious conversion of colonised people and unethical control over weaker sects of a religion or the society are manifestations of this tendency.⁷ Most of the languages contain words to express inferiority and submissiveness created by such minds. Military alliances like NATO, intended to establish authority over others, is its creation.

‘To own everything’ is yet another trait of Adamic tendency. In order to become like God Himself, who owns everything, Adam ate the forbidden fruit. This is the reason why Cain murdered Abel. For Cain, everything, including the blessing of God was his sole-right that should never be shared. This continues through the generations and its manifestation is seen everywhere. Exploitative structures were created to grab the power, control the resources and subdue the human beings. Right from the beginning, human society is organised and controlled by structures created by people with high Adamic tendency. To make everything of their own, they have developed structures of exploitation. Patriarchy and Androcentrism exploit the women folk, racism exploits the blacks, caste system exploits the lower castes, market exploits the consumers, hierarchical structures exploit the people at the bottom, the state exercise control over the resources of a nation for the capitalists, and international organisations exploit the weaker countries. In all these, wealth is transferred to the rich and a few rich have become the ‘owners’ of the world. The rich never use even 1% of their wealth except to widen their economic empires and political power. The average per capita income of Switzerland is \$ 84410 and it is \$ 63083 in USA. People of the poor countries like India get \$ 2020 per year. It is \$1590 in Pakistan and around \$ 500 in many of the African countries.⁸ Many die of hunger, lack of safe drinking water or medical facilities. Poverty due to this exploitation makes their life miserable. But all these structures continue to support this

⁷ Handley, George B., *New World Poetics: Nature and the Adamic Imagination of Whitman, Neruda, and Walcott*, 288.

⁸ <https://tradingeconomics.com><12.06.2020>

inhuman exploitation for the sake of the selfish motive of a few, ie, to accumulate wealth. These structures are like Cain. He was in the village and owned the land. Abel was a wandering shepherd, who lived in the outskirts or jungles. He was never a threat and never claimed anything that belonged to his brother. Cain represents the civilized, powerful, organised people, who dwell in the political and economic centres. Cain lived in the village, the centre of the time, and had the means to control the nature. Abel lived in the periphery had no such means. But because of his selfishness, Cain murdered Abel. World still follows the pattern of Cain and Abel where those who dwell in the centres murder those reside in the peripheries.⁹

These systems and structures help the rich to take hold of everything and lead the poor to miseries and hunger deaths. It has create a world that moves from discrimination to division, division to suffering, suffering to poverty, poverty to hunger, hunger to slavery, slavery to malnourishment and malnourishment to death. International organisations, political and economic, create polarisation of wealth and power. People on the peripheries are always plundered, enslaved and killed by those in the centres. People living in the centres take it for granted that every resource on the earth belong to them. Cain is the personification of this Adamic tendency. Centres around the world are controlled by this tendency and they control and exploit the peripheries. It is due to this, billions suffer from poverty though we have enough for the needs of everyone even for centuries to come. Adam, Eve, Cain... nobody lived in peace and Abel was not allowed even to live his life. Craving for accumulation that results from Adamic tendency leads the world into frightening competition and enmity.

Nobody knows where or how this Adamic tendency affects the world. It may result in bloody revolutions, another world war, epidemics created by biological weapons or anything similar. When we look into today's world, there is no ray of hope for a better future, as the national and international structures and

⁹Cfr. Pareja, Reynaldo, *A Divine Invitation to Create a New World*, 110-112.

technology sharpen the claws of Adamic tendency. Such a tendency, along with the resultant brokenness inherited from the first parents will extinct human life if we do not realise the meaning of Easter and return to its real message intended by God. The expectation of Stephen Hawking that, we will live for another 1000 years is absolutely unrealistic in the present scenario¹⁰.

Disintegration in the Relationship to God

Relationship to God was the second of its kind to be distorted. Before the fall, Adam and Eve had an experience of joy and harmony with God. God made him the ruler and was assigned with the right to name every creature. The relationship with God, the base of all other relationships, was excellent and everything was one in God. Oneness and unity is always the base of love. Realising this, they tried to compete with God, rebelled against Him, and finally felt ashamed to face God. Since then, competition became the nature of human life. Prior to that, it was unity, love, harmony and joy. It should have continued so, for a meaningful life that was untouched by evil. Adam, unwilling to admit his mistake, indirectly pointed towards God for his mistake and the gap in the relationship with God started widening. For the question “who told you that you are naked? Have you eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded you that you should not eat?” Adam answered, “The woman ‘you’ gave to be with me, gave me of the tree and I did eat”. Implication is evident, if the woman were not given by you, I would not have eaten.

Accusing God is the next step of competing with God or rebelling against God. Rebelled Adam was unable to stand before the Most Kind. God was so kind with them that He fulfilled the two of their urgent needs. The first was their nakedness and they needed clothes. Instead of saying ‘let there be clothes’ God made clothes in front of them and thus, taught them to makes clothes. The next problem faced by them was the presence of God. It was

¹⁰Cfr. <https://edition.cnn.com/2016/11/17/health/hawking-humanity-trnd/index.html>
<03.04.2020>

impossible for the fallen people to live in the presence of God. Their only relief was to move to a place where they need not see God face to face. The merciful God let them go and was kind enough to caution them about the difficulties they were about to face in the earth (Genesis 3: 15-19). Though God was so gracious, Adam and Eve could not live in the relationship with God which was intended by Him in the creation. Increasing distortion furthered in the subsequent generations. Abel's murder was clearly another rebellion challenging God's decision to bless Abel.

God is the sole-source and ground of every human being and we are to reflect God's image. The distance and the distortion in the relationship with God made it difficult for them to reflect the image of God and live as per His will.

This made our thoughts dark and ways precarious. The image of God the Creator made Adam and his decedents capable of inventions and discoveries. But, due to the distorted relationship with God, they were unable to reflect this image properly. Thus, we invented destructive weapons, destructive ways of amassing wealth and destructive modes of relationships. From bow and arrow we have grown to nuclear weapons and inter-continental missiles. Computer viruses and biological viruses were created. In order to achieve billion-dollar businesses and even beyond, medical companies sought to unethical practices and doctors were made as prey for them. Each and every day, health issues were seen as opportunities. Making use of the patent laws and international trade laws, food and medicines were denied to the poor, those in the third-world countries. Technologies for the ruthless exploitation of the natural resources were developed. Poverty, hunger and starvation are the creation of the defective system developed by the distorted brains and dishonest minds that never reflected the image of God or realised His divine Will.

In actual practice, religions hardly manifest any relationship with God or seek the will of God in their mission or reflect the image of God in their administration or ministry. Sexual and

financial allegations question the very presence of God in the churches too. Misuse of money and power has reached disgusting heights. World leaders behave like war lords and are seeking to solve national and transnational issues through war or sponsored terrorism. Rulers are spending huge amounts for acquiring weapons even though poverty and hunger deaths are taking the lives of millions every year. Economic planners increase the number and misery of the poor. All these witness to the minds with distorted or disintegrated relationship with God. Racism and casteism simply reflect minds that never knew who God is. All our sufferings are mainly the result of the distortion our creative abilities received through the image of God and the distance with God, the Creator.

Disintegration: The Relationship to Fellow Beings

Being caught guilty by God, Adam put all the responsibilities on Eve. Actually, Eve trusted and loved her partner which made her to stand before God. She would have never thought that Adam would denounce her. Love gave way to hatred and, affection to hostility. Living with a traitor like Adam was unimaginable for Eve. With regard to Adam, he lost everything because of Eve and her greed. He never thought of anything against the commandment of God. He enjoyed the love of God and the charm of the nature. But he lost everything in a short time. His mind got filled with dudgeon and malice and, hatred marked his personality. Thus, the first family on earth was born, bound together not only by love but also physical necessities¹¹.

The first child of the unfaithful couple, Cain, was born with a terrible negative mind. He could not accept Abel or his good. His mind was filled with hatred, destructive competition, fear, suspicion and vengeance. He murdered Abel and went away from the presence of Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod. Unable to face God, Adam and Eve moved from the Garden of Eden to the earth.

¹¹Cfr. Walton, John H., *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2- 3 and the Human Origins Debate*, 138.

Though they were unable to face God, and did not see God face-to-face as in the Garden of Eden, they still experienced God. But, Cain moved from the presence of God to Nod. He could accept neither God nor his own brother. He was a dividing, schismatic person, who never knew love, never accepted realities or realised short comings. Being the decedents of the first family, we have inherited their tendencies and are moving further and further away from each other. We struggle, compete, fight, murder, rape and exploit in a world built upon the brokenness and negatives of Adam, Eve and Cain.

Much more is spent on destructive weapons rather than food or drinking water. In 2019, the countries around the world spent 1917 billion dollars for the military protection of 7.6 billion people. It means that each person is spending more than \$300 (around Indian rupee 20000) per year for arms, ammunitions and their use. This is much more than the average income of the bottom 25 percentage people of many of the Asian and African countries.¹² If half of it was separated for the fight against poverty or for health care, it would have eradicated poverty and epidemics in the 20th century itself. If one third of it was invested regularly in the field of agriculture, irrigation and water supply, there would have been no shortage of food or safe drinking water. If a portion of it was spent on education, illiteracy would have got eradicated long ago.

Then, why are we spending so much on destructive weapons by ignoring the basic needs of hungry billions? We know the weapons never feed or cure. India, which is the home for the largest hungry population in the world, is the owner of the fourth largest air force in the world. Why the world is so blind to the needs and suffering of the poor and needy? Our inheritance! The manifestations of the strained relationships which we have inherited from the first family are growing. Mistrust, suspicion, competition, vengeance, greed and fear have been the basis of our relationships. The privileged classes capitalise on the

¹² <https://defproac.com/?p=990> <03.04.2020>

underprivileged. Lifesaving medicines that are produced for one or two dollars are marketed for hundred or even more. In trade relations, the powerful (countries/ corporates) capitalise on the weak (countries/ firms/ people). Medicines banned in the rich countries are unethically marketed in the poor countries. The relationship that was intended in Adam and Eve was complementary and supportive. But, since the fall, it has been of mistrust, fight, exploitation, division and so on. Nazism, one of its worst forms, is still spreading the philosophy of hatred. Neo-Nazism will spread fast and will pose a serious threat in the post- Covid-19 scenario due to massive job cuts. Until recovering from the distorted and strained relationships we inherited from our first family we will never know peace on the earth.

Disintegration: The Relationship with Nature

Before leaving for the earth, God cautioned Adam and Eve about the difficulties they were about to face and the unfavourable nature. As the earth was cursed because of Adam and Eve, it will not yield well though they work hard. Life-threatening enemies like snakes will prevail on the earth. Since then, the earth never yielded well and human life was a fight against the forces of nature. Every human involvement, particularly since the industrial revolution, had disastrous effects on the earth and human life. Even the sky was not spared. The danger paused by the depletion of the ozone layer is frightening. The earth lost its fertility in the areas where chemical manures and pesticides were used extensively. After few decades of green revolution, there were reports of considerable decline in the yield and the farmers are still suffering. In India, the state of Punjab, which was the cradle of green revolution, suffered the worst. A train named Bikaner Express is called 'The Cancer Express' because of the huge number of cancer patients travelling in it¹³. All of them are aged farmers, green revolution victims, travelling to Rajasthan,

¹³Das, Paulomi, <https://www.businessinsider.in/the-shocking-tale-of-indias-cancer-train/articleshow/52690219.cms><22.06.2020>

for cheaper cancer treatment. With every decline in the yield, more and more chemical fertilisers and pesticides were used. This unrestrained use has resulted in serious health hazards in other parts of India too. Foods preserved using preservatives resulted in increased cases of cancer and lifestyle diseases. Number of species facing extinction due to this aggression against nature is not small. Climate change has resulted in increased epidemics, flood, drought and climate refugees have become a new challenge to humanity. As cautioned by God, relationship with the nature was always inimical. Increased involvement with the nature with an aggressive mode has resulted in increased problems. Scientists have started predicting the end of life or at least of human race on earth¹⁴.

Integral Spirituality

Spirituality is the way of returning to God and finding harmony in all our relationships. Quite often, spirituality is limited to prayer, fasting and other religious practices. Social commitments and ecological responsibilities are usually ignored. Return to the state of the pre-fall Adam should be the first objective of spirituality. With baptism, we potentially enter into a new relationship with God and thereby the entire creation. In baptism we are dying with Christ and resurrecting with Christ. A baptised person is *in* Christ and thereby in perfect relationship with the entire creation. So, baptism is a commitment to newer relationships, paradigms of life, goals and, aspirations. But, practically, the Adamic tendency continues and we trail its path. It is through the return to the values of the Kingdom of God by which, we can realise the potential new creation and can begin our journey to the fullness indicated by 'likeness'. It is the way of *shalom*. This new creation is the greatest possibility and invaluable promise of God to 'His children'.

¹⁴Cfr. Taverne, Dick, *The March of Unreason: Science, Democracy, and the New Fundamentalism*, 142.

The move towards the growth begins with rectifying the strained relationships. With these strained, disintegrated and distorted relationships, we are unable to grow to the intended growth. To return to those relationships, somebody should correct the mistakes of Adam and Eve. It was not to pay the ransom or to please the Father with his blood, the Son became man. God who is love never demands ransom or is pleased with blood. To return to the state of Eden, the misdeeds which caused the expulsion should be rectified. It was to correct the misdeed of the humankind the Word became Flesh.

By reversing the acts of Adam and Eve, Jesus rectified all the misdeeds and paved the way for the restitution of the humankind¹⁵. Adam and Eve wanted to become like God and the Son of God became Man. By becoming equal with God they intended to be the ultimate authority and absolute owners of the rest of the creation. The Son of God became the suffering servant and gave everything including His life, body and blood for the world. They wanted to *go up* to become equal with God. But, the Son of God *came down*, even by ignoring His equality with God. They wanted to fill themselves with power and honour but, Jesus emptied himself. Adam and Eve disobeyed but, Jesus obeyed God unto death, even at death on a cross. (Philippine 2:8). Jesus remedied all the misdeeds that Adam and Eve committed and made it possible for all the descendants to return to the original relationship and its bliss.

According to Paul, every person in his baptism dies with Christ and resurrects with Christ. "Do you know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We are buried with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his." (Rom 6:3f). Beginning with baptism, every sacrament is an experience of being with God.

¹⁵Cfr. Grung, Anne H., *Bodies, Borders, Believers*, 61.

According to Bishop Gregory the Great, sacrament is a communion with the father through the Son by the Holy Spirit¹⁶. In baptism, we are united with Christ and potentially we are in Christ. Along with each sacrament, we grow in the experience of being in Christ. Being in Christ means to be in communion with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

As God is the creator of everything, every relationship is in and through Him. Rebirth in baptism means rebirth of all relationships. Life in communion with the Triune God will naturally restore all the relationships that were distorted due to sin. Reconciliation with God and His creation is an important part of every prayer, every sacrifice and every sacrament. Matthew 5:23 explains the necessity of reconciliation prior to confront God with our offerings. Matthew 5: 21-26; 38 – 48 extensively deals with reconciliation.

Holy Eucharist is the experience of being in Christ and thereby being in communion with the Triune God. “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in them.” (John 6:56). Reconciliation is a prerequisite to participate in the Holy Eucharist, the greatest of all the sacraments (Matthew 5: 23; 1 Corinthians 11: 27). Confession is the sacrament of reconciliation. It is the Holy Spirit calls someone to priesthood and it is a call for the reconciled. For a priest, his or her life is a ministry of reconciliation. It is a ministry of searching the prodigal children and bringing them back home, into the presence of the ever loving Father. Confession which includes reconciliation and prayers for the remission of sins is also important in the anointing of the sick. So, every sacrament is a communion with the Triune God and reconciliation with the world which we are in communion with¹⁷. Once we are in Christ, in communion with the Triune God, we are naturally in communion with the rest of the creation. With experience of sacrament we come together with God, our own

¹⁶Cfr. Murray, Alexander C., *A Companion to Gregory of Tours*, 509.

¹⁷Cfr. LaBoy, Felicia Howell, *Table Matters: The Sacraments, Evangelism, and Social Justice*, 59.

self, our own fellow beings and rest of the creation. Every experience of the sacrament provides us the potential to return to the relationship of Adam before his fall. With each sacramental experience, we take a step ahead in this direction. Any move towards an integral spirituality should begin with a move towards strengthening this fourfold relationship.

Liturgy and sacraments becomes complete only when it is followed by liturgy after liturgy¹⁸. It is the participation in the struggles of the people for a better life and thereby, a fuller humanity. It is an involvement in the struggle for making everyone one *in* Christ without any sort of discrimination on the basis of religion, caste, creed, gender etc. The death of Jesus, the Bread of Life, was for the entire humanity. This makes the Church responsible for ensuring 'bread for life' for all. This struggle is actually the liturgy after liturgy. It is an inescapable responsibility and commitment. The movement from ministry of 'bread of life' to 'bread for life' and vice versa makes the Holy Eucharist as 'the sacrifice for all', the sacrifice of Christ. As mentioned earlier, every sacrament must be completed by reconciliation. Liturgy is reconciliation and reconciliation is moving with people along with Christ.

It is the resurrection with Christ, the Easter experience, which gives us the ability, eligibility and potential to receive the sacraments and move towards reconciliation. Resurrection is potentially the resurrection to the harmonious relationship with the entire creation too. So, the celebration of Easter means reconciling with God, with self, with humanity and each member of the human community and with the entire creation. It is the renewal and the strengthening of all relationships by removing every obstacle and by bridging every gap. It is experiencing the bliss of Adam when he was with God, Eve and the entire creation. It is the partaking in the attempts to heal the wounds of self,

¹⁸Cfr. Bria, Ion, *The Liturgy After the Liturgy: Mission and Witness from an Orthodox Perspective*, 7.

Hosting the Outsider and Dancing with Diversity: Reading Genesis 14:18-20 through the Post-exilic Eyes

Jobymon Scaria¹

Introduction

Genesis 14:18-20 is one of the extensively researched narratives in the Pentateuch.² Historical critical scholars, with a very few exceptions like Nahum Sarna,³ have already noted some internal discrepancies in Genesis 14 and argued persuasively that Genesis 14:18-20 was not originally part of Genesis 14 since it interrupts the flow of the narrative and Abraham's meeting with

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² Albert de Pury, "Abraham: The Priestly Writer's "Ecumenical" Ancestor" in *Rethinking the Foundations: Historiography in the Ancient World and in the Bible. Essays in Honour of John Van Seters*, eds. Steven L. McKenzie, Thomas Römer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 178, Y. Muffs, Abraham the Noble Warrior: Patriarchal Politics and Laws of War in Ancient Israel, *JJS* 33 (1982), 81.

³ Nahum Sarna, *Genesis: The Traditional Hebrew Text with New JPS Translation, The JPS Torah Commentary* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 109.

the king of Sodom.⁴ Such scholars approach Genesis 14:18-20 as an insertion by the Davidic-Solomonic scribes.⁵ This view presupposes that there was Jebusite priesthood in Jerusalem, and David retained it to integrate the Canaanites to his kingdom.⁶

Nevertheless, I have some reservations against placing Genesis 14:18-20 in the Davidic-Solomonic courts and identifying Salem (שֶׁם) with Jerusalem since such proposals, as will be further explained, overlooked the possible post-exilic implications of Genesis 14:18-20 and alternate proposals for locating Salem, Melchizedek's kingdom. This paper, drawing from such overlooked aspects, seeks to offer an alternate reading of Genesis 14:18-20 against the post-exilic contexts.

Previous Research

Most scholars understand Genesis 14:18-20 as an example of a fusion between the Canaanites and Israelites.⁷ Rowley and Ronald Ernest Clements, for instance, note that David did not entirely exterminate the Jebusites or expel them from the city (2 Sam. 24:18-25), and suggest a possible accommodation between the Israelites and the Jebusites, which included the Jebusites accepting the religious practices of the conquerors. Genesis

⁴ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Melchizedek in the MT, LXX, and the NT*, Vol. 81, No. 1 (2000), 64, Eric F. Mason, "Melchizedek Traditions in Second Temple Judaism," in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only*, eds. Andrei Orlov, Gabriele Boccaccini, Jason Zurawski (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 344, J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, J. van (Jacques) Ruiten, Abraham in the Book of Jubilees: The Rewriting of Genesis 11:26-25:10 in the Book of Jubilees 11:14-23:8 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 85.

⁵ Walter Brueggemann, *Walter Brueggemann* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1982), 135, J. A. Emerton, "The Riddle of Genesis xiv," VT 21 (1971): 403-439, Terence E. Fretheim, *Abraham: Trials of Family and Faith* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2007), 72.

⁶ Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27-50:26* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2005), 153, Claude F. Mariottini, *Rereading the Biblical Text: Searching for Meaning and Understanding* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 68, H. H. Rowley, "Melchizedek and Zadok (Gen. 14 and Ps. 110)," in *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet*, eds., W. Baumgartner, O. Eissfeldt, K. Elliger and L. Rost (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1950), 461-472.

⁷ John Day, "The Canaanite Inheritance of the Israelite Monarchy", in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, ed. John Day (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 73.

14:18-20, they argue, seeks to recognise the Jebusite priesthood.⁸ Clause Westermann also indicates that Genesis 14:12-24 legitimises David's rule.⁹ Such interpretations explain how Genesis 14:18-20 functioned under the Davidic dynasty.

Nevertheless, I have some reservations against placing Genesis 14:18-20 in the Davidic-Solomonic courts. Scholars like Van Seters and Gard Granerød, for example, challenged this proposal. They claim that the author of Genesis 14:18-20 lived either in the Persian or the early Hellenistic period.¹⁰ So too, Michael Astour claims that the onomastics and typologies in Genesis 14 reflect the Spartoli tablets¹¹ that cannot be dated earlier than the seventh century BCE.¹² Such proposals include that this narrative can communicate post-exilic concerns also. Seters, for example, claims that Genesis 14:18-20 legitimises the Syncretism of the worship of Yahweh with that of El Elyon during the late Persian or early Hellenistic period.¹³ Such proposals are in line with the emerging scholarly consensus in Pentateuchal studies, which understand that the Pentateuchal narratives were joined together to form a connected narrative in the Persian period.¹⁴ Such a shift, I believe, demand further

⁸ H. H. Rowley, "Melchizedek and Zadok (Gen. 14 and Ps. 110)," in *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet*, eds., W. Baumgartner, O. Eissfeldt, K. Elliger and L. Rost (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1950), 461-472, Ronald Ernest Clements, *God and Temple: The Idea of the Divine Presence in Ancient Israel* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2016), 43. Please see also, Gwilym Henry Jones, *The Nathan Narratives* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 129.

⁹ Clause Westermann, Genesis 12-36: A Commentary, trans. John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985), 192, 205.

¹⁰ J. Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 308, Gard Granerød, *Abraham and Melchizedek: Scribal Activity of Second Temple Times in Genesis 14 and Psalm 110* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 148.

¹¹ The Spartoli tablets, often called as Chedorlaomer texts, kept in the British Museum have been particularly important in the history of research on Genesis 14. The texts were published by Theophilus G. Pinches. They were thought to contain names also found in Genesis 14.

¹² Michael C. Astour, "Political and Cosmic Symbolism in Genesis 14 and in Its Babylonian Sources", in *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations*, ed., Alexander Altmann (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 65-112.

¹³ Seters, *Abraham in History*, 308.

¹⁴ Frank M. Yamanda, "What Does Manzar Have to Do with Eden? A Japanese American Interpretation of Genesis 2-3," in *They Were All Together in One Place? Toward*

interrogation to revisit Genesis 14:18-20 through the Persian contexts.

Likewise, I have some reservations against the scholarly interpretation of Genesis 14:18-20 that depends heavily on the conventional identification of Salem with Jerusalem.¹⁵ Victor H. Matthews and Gordon J. Wenham, for example, have already raised their concerns against such identification. Jerusalem is never mentioned as Salem in extrabiblical texts.¹⁶ Jerusalem is called as *Urushalim* in the Amarna letters.¹⁷ There is no evidence for Jerusalem being called Salem in the royal period.¹⁸ Instead, Jerusalem is referred to as Jebus (2 Sam. 5:6-10; 1 Chron. 11:4-9) during David's siege of the city. Nevertheless, John Gammie locates Salem as a city just east of Shechem in Samaria.¹⁹ The Hebrew word usually translated as “safely” (šā-lēm/שלם) in Genesis 33:18 is the same as the name of Melchizedek's kingdom. Hence, the suitable translation of Genesis 33:18 could be, “Jacob came to Salem, the city of Shechem,” instead of the usual translation “Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem”.²⁰ The Septuagint also agrees with this reading (εἰς Σαλημ) along with

Minority Biblical Criticism, ed. Randall C. Bailey, Tat-Siong Benny Liew, Fernando F. Segovia (Atlanta: SBL, 2009), 97, Thomas Romer, “The Exodus Narrative According to the Priestly Document,” in *The Strata of the Priestly Writings: Contemporary Debate and Future Directions*, eds. Sarah Shectman, Joel S. Baden (Zurich: TVZ, 2009), 157.

¹⁵ The identification of Salem with Jerusalem depends on Psalm 76:3, where Salem and Zion are used as a synonym and its possible connection between Melchizedek and Zion in Psalm 110. The scholars who support this hypothesis understand Salem as an abbreviation or poetic and archaic form of Jerusalem. Please see, Yaira Amit, *Hidden Polemics in Biblical Narrative*, trans. Jonathan Chipman (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 151.

¹⁶ Victor H. Matthews, *Old Testament Turning Points: The Narratives That Shaped a Nation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 145, Gordon John Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 317-318.

¹⁷ M. D. Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch: Studies in the Psalter*, III (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 86.

¹⁸ M. D. Goulder, *The Psalms of the Return (Book V, Psalms 107-150): Studies in the Psalter*, IV (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 145.

¹⁹ John G. Gammie, “Loci of the Melchizedek Tradition,” *JBL* 90 (1971):385-396.

²⁰ Stephen L. Cook, *The Social Roots of Biblical Yahwism* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 261.

Vulgate and Peshitta.²¹ Judith 4:4 also agrees with this.²² Such instances necessitate further research, and this paper, drawing from the ideological and religious backgrounds of the post-exilic Yehud, seeks to offer an alternate reading of Genesis 14:18-20, presupposing that Salem is a place near Shechem in Samaria.

The Post-exilic Contexts of Genesis 14:18-20

The Pentateuchal narratives, except Genesis 14:18-20, seem to be unaware of Melchizedek. Genesis 14:18-20 introduces Melchizedek as an anonymous character, without genealogy, birth or death.²³ Where would have the final editor got the information about Melchizedek? The abundant References to Melchizedek in the post-exilic literature, I think, could be clue to locate the Melchizedek tradition.²⁴ *Genesis Apocrypha*, *11QMelch*, Philo and Josephus mention Melchizedek.²⁵ Likewise, Melchizedek was dear to some Jewish sectarian groups, who appropriated Melchizedek for their ideological purposes.²⁶ Such connections can indicate that the final editor got the Melchizedek tradition from post-exilic sources.

Admittedly, there are some challenges to a post-exilic anchoring. T. Desmond Alexander asks would a post-exilic author introduce a tradition about an ancient Canaanite priest-king.²⁷ It is to be noted, however, that the post-exilic society was

²¹ Magnar Kartveit, *The Origin of the Samaritans* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 250, Kevin S. Chen, *The Messianic Vision of the Pentateuch* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2009), 83.

²² Martin McNamara, *Targum and New Testament: Collected Essays* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 297.

²³ Eric F. Mason, "Cosmology, Messianism, and Melchizedek: Apocalyptic Jewish Traditions and Hebrews," in *Reading the Epistle to the Hebrews*, eds. Eric F. Mason, Kevin B. McCruden (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 68.

²⁴ Eric Mason, 'You Are a Priest Forever': *Second Temple Jewish Messianism and the Priestly Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 146.

²⁵ Kelli S. O'Brien, *The Use of Scripture in the Markan Passion Narrative* (New York: T&T Clarke, 2010), 167.

²⁶ Robert R. Cargill, *Melchizedek, King of Sodom: How Scribes Invented the Biblical Priest-King* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 6.

²⁷ T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 41.

not a homogenous community as Alexander suggests. Instead, it was heterogeneous, and there was an inclusive, often submerged, subversive voice among the community. The book of Ruth, often regarded as a post-exilic document presents a counter-history to the dominant attitudes of the Post-exilic community.²⁸ The present article assumes that Genesis 14:18-20 is a similar construct, composed in the Achaemenid Yehud.

Ultimately, some scholars have analysed Genesis 14:18-20 against the Persian contexts. Mark Walter Bartusch interprets this narrative as an attempt to glorify Abraham at a time when Judah was an inferior and powerless province in Syria-Palestine, hoping to inspire the community to re-establish itself in its homeland.²⁹ Bartusch's proposal is innovative. However, there remains much to be explored. Genesis 14:18-20, as Alexander hinted, does not denounce Melchizedek, the first Canaanite priest mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures as an idolatrous priest.³⁰ Instead, this narrative designates Melchizedek as a כֹּהֵן (kō-hên), a term Hebrew Scripture often reserves to denote a Jewish priest.³¹ So, Abraham is silent and Melchizedek overshadows Abraham. From such contexts, this paper will analyse the communicative intent of Melchizedek's positive portrayal and Abraham's silent against the

²⁸ Robert L. Cohn, "Overcoming Otherness in the Book of Ruth," in *Imagining the Other and Constructing Israelite Identity in the Early Second Temple Period*, eds. Ehud Ben Zvi, Diana Vikander Edelman (London: Bloomsbury, 2015) 181.

²⁹ Mark Walter Bartusch, *Understanding Dan: An Exegetical Study of a Biblical City, Tribe and Ancestor* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 25.

³⁰ Dongshin Don Chang, *Phinehas, the Sons of Zadok, and Melchizedek: Priestly Covenant in Late Second Temple Texts* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), 178, Fred L. Horton, *The Melchizedek Traditions. A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century AD and in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 157, Hebrew Bible uses כֹּהֵן (kōmer) to designate an idolatrous priest. Please refer 2 Kings 23:5, Hosea 10:5, Zephaniah 1:4 for more information on kōmer. See also, Eugen J. Pentiuc, *Jesus the Messiah in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Paulist Press, 2006), 82.

³¹ כֹּהֵן (kō-hên) appears over 750 times in the Hebrew Bible to designate the Israelite priest. Please see Marty E. Stevens, *Leadership Roles of the Old Testament: King, Prophet, Priest, Sage* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2012), 64 for more information on the terminology of כֹּהֵן (kō-hên).

Post-exilic contexts, believing that Salem is a place near Shechem.

The Post-exilic Community

The Post-exilic community, as hinted, was not homogenous. For example, the dominant view of the Post-exilic community included an exclusive, narrow concept of Israel as a holy seed.³² Such an ideology perceived outsiders as a threat to Israel's identity, purity, and orthodoxy, demanding the community to remain apart from the Canaanites, the Ammonites, the Moabites and the Egyptians. It also stipulated avoiding and even dissolving mixed marriages with outsiders (Ezra 4:1-5, 9:1, 10:11, Nehemiah 2:20, 9:2, 10:28, 13:3).³³ The hostility towards outsiders, therefore, was one of the central themes in the Post-exilic literature. The divorce and expulsion of the “foreign women” were part of these manoeuvrings.³⁴

The conflict between the Post-exilic community and the Samaritans is another incident.³⁵ Sanballat, the governor of Samaria and his associates, were not happy with the attempts of the Post-exilic community.³⁶ As Christoph Levin acknowledges, the historical details of this conflict may be uncertain. Nevertheless, the conflict led to the sanctuary on Mount Gerizim near Shechem.³⁷

³² Megan Bishop Moore, Brad E. Kelle, *Biblical History and Israel's Past: The Changing Study of the Bible and History* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 446, Ntozakhe Cezula, “De-Ideologizing Ezra-Nehemiah: Challenging Discriminatory Ideologies,” in *Restorative Readings: The Old Testament, Ethics, and Human Dignity*, eds. L. Juliana Claassens, Bruce C. Birch (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2015), 129.

³³ Richard D. Nelson, *The Historical Books: Interpreting Biblical Texts Series* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 176, Niels Peter Lemche, *The Canaanites and Their Land: The Tradition of the Canaanites* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 148.

³⁴ Johanna W. H. van Wijk-Bos, *Making Wise the Simple: The Torah in Christian Faith and Practice* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 146.

³⁵ Jonathan E. Dyck, *The Theocratic Ideology of the Chronicler* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 36.

³⁶ Moshé Weiss, *A Brief History of the Jewish People* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 26.

³⁷ Christoph Levin, *The Old Testament: A Brief Introduction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 130, 131.

Samaritans and the Post-exilic Community

The actual history of the Samaritans is very obscure. Nevertheless, Samaritans trace their origin to the Israelite tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh.³⁸ They share several core beliefs with the Jews like the worship of one God, rejection of idols, adherence to the Mosaic law, an attachment to the land of Israel, the same ancestral tongue and lineage from the patriarchs.³⁹ Nevertheless, the hostilities between the Jews and the Samaritans tended to poison the two communities during the Post-exilic period.⁴⁰ For example, the Post-exilic community considered the Samaritans as impure and refused the Samaritans' help in rebuilding the Jerusalem temple. As Yaira Amit rightly notes, such anti-Samaritan policies became progressively stronger.⁴¹ Consequently, the Samaritans opposed the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple (Ezra 4). Relations between the Jews and Samaritans deteriorated further over the next few centuries.

Nevertheless, there were priests in Jerusalem temple who tended to make alliances with the Samaritans amidst the conflicts.⁴² The behaviour of such priests, as Albert I. Baumgarten clarifies, did not accord with the standards that the community had imposed. Nehemiah, who succeeded Ezra reacted violently against such alliances and threw Tobiah, an associate of Sanballat, out of the Jerusalem temple when he found Tobiah got

³⁸ Clyde E. Fant, *Mitchell G. Reddish, Lost Treasures of the Bible: Understanding the Bible Through Archaeological Artifacts in World Museums* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008), 140.

³⁹ Kenneth A. Mathews, M. Sydney Park, *The Post-Racial Church: A Biblical Framework for Multiethnic Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2011), 153, Gary N. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans: The Origins and History of Their Early Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 2.

⁴⁰ Lester L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period, Volume 3: The Maccabean Revolt, Hasmonaean Rule, and Herod the Great (175-4 BCE)*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020), 202.

⁴¹ Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 206.

⁴² Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 206.

a room assigned in the temple (Nehemiah 13:7-9).⁴³ Hence, there were some dissenting voices among the Jerusalem priests who approved contacts with the Samaritans, while the dominant section disapproved the Samaritans.⁴⁴

The conflict between the Jews and the Samaritans worsened when the grandson of the High priest of the Jerusalem Temple married Sanballat's daughter. Nehemiah expelled the priest who had married the daughter of Sanballat.⁴⁵ Though the book of Nehemiah does not name the priest or elaborate his fate, Josephus names him as Manasseh.⁴⁶ Josephus further claims that the expulsion of Manasseh caused great disturbance among the public because many priests and Levites were engaged in similar practices.⁴⁷ Sanballat built a new temple upon Mount Gerizim, where Manasseh functioned as the high priest.⁴⁸ Many laypeople,

⁴³ H. H. Rowley, "The Samaritan Schism in Legend and History," in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*, eds. Bernhard W. Anderson, Walter Harrelson (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 217.

⁴⁴ Jacob L. Wright, *Rebuilding Identity: The Nehemiah-Memoir and its Earliest Readers* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 203, Donna Laird, *Negotiating Power in Ezra-Nehemiah* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 225-226.

⁴⁵ F. Charles Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 267.

⁴⁶ Josephus relates these events to the fourth century BCE and claims the temple was built in with the permission of Alexander the Great. However, there is a chronological inconsistency between the book of Nehemiah and Josephus' Sanballat Manasseh account. Archaeological excavations at Mount Gerizim have unearthed remains of a Yahwistic temple at Mount Gerizim apparently built in the fifth century BCE. This paper accepts that the reason for founding the temple on Mount Gerizim in the fifth century matches Josephus' account though Josephus got the date wrong and the Sanballat in question is Sanballat the Heronite, living at the time of Nehemiah. Please see Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme, *Before the God in this Place for Good Remembrance: A Comparative Analysis of the Aramaic Votive Inscriptions from Mount Gerizim* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 59.

⁴⁷ Flavius Josephus, *The Works of Flavius Josephus: To which are Added, Three Dissertations, Concerning Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, James the Just, God's Command to Abraham, Etc. with an Index to the Whole, Volume 2* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1825), 123.

⁴⁸ James D. Purvis, "The Samaritans," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism: Volume 2, The Hellenistic Age*, eds. W. D. Davies, William David Davies, Louis Finkelstein, William Horbury, John Sturdy, Steven T. Katz, Mitchell B. Hart, Tony Michels, Jonathan Karp, Adam Sutcliffe, Robert Chazan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 597.

as well as the Samaritan sympathisers among the Jerusalem priests, also joined Manasseh.⁴⁹

Mount Gerizim Temple and Jewish Samaritan Interactions

As noted, the Mount Gerizim Temple was built during the Persian period. The temple complex was further expanded during the Hellenistic period.⁵⁰ It functioned until the Maccabees destroyed it. The Samaritan temple did not differ much from Jerusalem temple, since both would have derived their cultic rituals from the Pentateuch.⁵¹ The Samaritans practised circumcision and observed the Sabbath like the Jews.⁵² Similarly, Hebrew speaking Aaronide priesthood led the Mount Gerizim temple.⁵³ Furthermore, the priesthood at Mount Gerizim shared a familial tie to the high priesthood in Jerusalem.⁵⁴ The inscriptions excavated from Mount Gerizim also show that the temple was a Yahwistic sanctuary.⁵⁵

The Mount Gerizim temple had some advantages also. The location was associated with seminal events in Israel's history. For example, the temple was located where Joshua proclaimed the blessings of the covenant (Deut 27:11-12, Josh 8:33) and directly over the Patriarchal city of Shechem where Abraham and Jacob built Altars, and Joseph was buried (Gen 12:6-7, 33:18-19, Joshua 24:32).⁵⁶ Hence, Jews and Samaritans shared several striking and significant cultural and religious features despite

⁴⁹ Claude G. Montefiore, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as illustrated by the Religion of the Ancient Hebrews: The Hibbert Lectures, 1892* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2004), 352.

⁵⁰ Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 167-76.

⁵¹ Timothy Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple and Early Christian Identity* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 117.

⁵² Timothy Wardle, "Samaritans, Jews, and Christians: Multiple Partings and Multiple Ways," in *The Ways That Often Parted: Essays in Honor of Joel Marcus*, eds. Lori Baron, Jill Hicks-Keeton, Matthew Thiessen (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018), 19.

⁵³ K. L. Noll, *Canaan and Israel in Antiquity: An Introduction* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 374.

⁵⁴ Julia Rhyder, *Centralizing the Cult: The Holiness Legislation in Leviticus 17-26* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 80.

⁵⁵ Magnar Kartveit, *The Origin of the Samaritans* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 359.

⁵⁶ Wardle, *Samaritans, Jews, and Christians*, 20.

their differences. The Mount Gerizim temple, as Gary M Knoppers notes, became popular among Judeans, who were dissatisfied with or disciplined by the Jerusalem temple authorities.⁵⁷ The new temple, however, did not signal a significant break between the Jews and the Samaritans. Indeed, there were tensions between the two communities, but no "schism" at this stage.⁵⁸

Two Yahwistic Sanctuaries and Furthering Tensions

The presence of two Yahwistic sanctuaries within the boundaries of the land of Israel was not without consequences.⁵⁹ The Gerizim temple attempted to compete with the Jerusalem temple.⁶⁰ The unwillingness of the Samaritans to recognise Jerusalem Temple as the only legitimate Temple to Yahweh furthered the tensions between Jews and the Samaritans.⁶¹ The Samaritan liturgical prayer book informs the position of the Samaritans:

We believe in You, O Lord,

And in Moses the son of Amram your servant,

And in your holy Law,

And in Mount Gerizim, the chosen and sacred, the choicest (mountain) in all earth.

There is only One God.⁶²

Jews, in turn, regarded the Samaritans with contempt, considering them as fools (Sir. 50:25-26, T. Levi 7:2) and

⁵⁷ Gary N. Knoppers, *Judah and Samaria in Postmonarchic Times: Essays on Their Histories and Literatures* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 221.

⁵⁸ Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1987), 169.

⁵⁹ Bob Becking, "Do the Earliest Samaritan Inscriptions Already Indicate a Parting of the Ways?" in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.*, ed. Oded Lipschitz, Gary N. Knoppers, Rainer Albertz (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007)220.

⁶⁰ Regev Eyal, *The Hasmonians: Ideology, Archaeology, Identity* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 71.

⁶¹ Hanan Eshel, "The Growth of Belief in the Sanctity of Mount Gerizim," in *A Teacher for All Generations* ed. Eric F. Mason (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 521.

⁶² Bob Becking, *Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Construction of Early Jewish Identity* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 111.

idolaters (Gen. Rab. 81:3). Samaritans considered Ezra as their archenemy, who had tampered with the text of the Scripture for partisan purposes.⁶³ Samaritan writings are full of derogatory comments about Ezra. In contrast, the Talmud considers Ezra to be a second Moses (Sanhedrin 2 ib) because he restored observance of Torah.⁶⁴

Noting similar instances, scholars like Anna L. Grant-Henderson designate the Gerizim temple as a rival temple.⁶⁵ Similarly, Jews regarded the Mount Gerizim temple as a pale imitation of the Jerusalem temple.⁶⁶ Literary sources point to the competing claims of the leaders in Jerusalem and Samaria to antiquity and legitimacy.⁶⁷ Gradually, Samaritans became the other used to define the Judean self.⁶⁸

The conflict might have affected the financial prospects of the Jerusalem temple negatively. Perhaps, the financial difficulties of the Jerusalem temple narrated in Nehemiah 13:10-13, which forced some Levites and musicians responsible for the service in the temple going back to their own fields, as Peter Altmann claims, might have been associated with the siphoning off of temple contributions to the newly built Gerizim temple.⁶⁹ Besides such difficulties, there were economical and administrative

⁶³ Louis H. Feldman, "The Concept of Exile in Josephus," in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, ed. James M. Scott (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 159.

⁶⁴ Joshua E. Williams, "Promise and Failure: Second Exodus in Ezra-Nehemiah," in *Reverberations of the Exodus in Scripture*, ed. R. Michael Fox (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 74.

⁶⁵ Anna L. Grant-Henderson, *Inclusive Voices in Post-exilic Judah* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 127, Keith N. Schoville, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (Joplin: College Press Publishing Company, 2001), 30.

⁶⁶ Ibid, Eric Moore, "Channelling Identity: The Fountain of Glauke in Corinth and Jacob's Well in John 4," in *Gods, Objects, and Ritual Practice*, ed. Sandra Blakely (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2017), 274.

⁶⁷ William M. Schniedewind, *A Social History of Hebrew: Its Origins Through the Rabbinic Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 159.

⁶⁸ Gary N. Knoppers, "Revisiting the Samaritan Question in the Persian period," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, eds. Oded Lipschitz, Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 265.

⁶⁹ Peter Altmann, *Economics in Persian-Period Biblical Texts: Their Interactions with Economic Developments in the Persian Period and Earlier Biblical Traditions* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 151.

inequalities between the Samaria and Yehud during the Persian period. Yehud was only a village with an administrative centre while Samaria was larger, urban area. Such economic disparity might have affected the intelligentsia of Jerusalem. Hence, the Judeans in the Persian era were not dealing with depopulated outback to the north but with a province that was more extensive and better established than Yehud.⁷⁰ However, such is not the entire story. The strained relations, as will be explained, do not preclude the attempts to build bridges between the Jews and Samaritans.

Hosting the Samaritan Outsider in Achaemenid Yehud

As noted, there existed some discontinuities between the Samaritans and the Jews during the Persian period. Nevertheless, as Knoppers observes, such instances do not hinder some Jews and Samaritans from attempting to bridge the gap.⁷¹ The Elephantine correspondence, for example, shows mutually enriching relations between Samaria and Judea, as their joint reply to Jews in Egypt attests.⁷² The archaeological and epigraphic remains also suggest that the contacts between Yehud and Samaria predated Nehemiah and continued after him.⁷³ The main artistic influence of the Samaritan coinage is categorically Achaemenid. More than half the Samaritan coin types, as Oren Tal rightly notes, show Achaemenid motifs and artistic influences.⁷⁴

Hence, the Jews and Samaritans had reservations against each other. Nevertheless, there were some spaces for mutual

⁷⁰ Louis C. Jonker, *Defining All-Israel in Chronicles: Multi-levelled Identity Negotiation in Late Persian-Period Yehud* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 97.

⁷¹ Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 119.

⁷² Wardle, *Samaritans, Jews, and Christians*, 19.

⁷³ Robert T. Anderson, Terry Giles, *The Samaritan Pentateuch: An Introduction to Its Origin, History, and Significance for Biblical Studies* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2012), 19.

⁷⁴ Oren Tal, "Negotiating Identity in An International Context Under Achaemenid Rule: The Indigenous Coinages of Persian-Period Palestine as an Allegory," in *Judah and Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*, ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Manfred Oeming (Winnona Lake: Eisenbrauns: 2011), 451.

interactions.⁷⁵ From such contexts, the final editor who lived in the Persian Yehud inserted the Melchizedek episode to bridge the emerging gap between the Samaritans and Jews, hoping to develop pan-Yahwistic solidarity amidst the competing Yahwistic temples in Jerusalem and Mount Gerizim. A decidedly non-dualistic and anti-separatist attitude, which even includes Melchizedek, a Canaanite priest-king from Salem, a place near Shechem, blessing Abram, and Abram offering tithe to Melchizedek, the editor expected, would inspire the Jews and Samaritans develop pan-Israelite solidarity amidst the ideological, ethnic, and religious boundaries created by the dominant views of the Second Temple community. If Abraham would accept the blessing of a priest-king from Samaritan territory, why would the Post-exilic community not accept the legitimacy of the Yahwistic Samaritans and their sanctuary at Mount Gerizim? It seems, therefore, that the Melchizedek episode would have promoted coalition-building among the Yahwistic temples at Jerusalem and Mount Gerizim amidst the emerging tensions between the Jews and Samaritans.

Conclusion

Melchizedek episode, seen from the post-exilic perspective, is a counter-text, which challenges the dominant ideas and assumptions of the Second Temple community. It functions as a robust and skilled counterblast, providing a viable theological alternative to the exclusivist claims of the Yahwistic temples at Jerusalem and Mount Gerizim. So too, Melchizedek episode offers an alternate account of history, reminding that biblical history is coextensive, and their meanings will be enhanced when we include all the elements and traditions.

⁷⁵ Knoppers, "Did Jacob Become Judah? The Configuration of Israel's Restoration in Deutero-Isaiah," in Zsengeler, *Samaria, Samaritans, Samaritans*, 39-67.

Colonial Enterprise and the Re-forming of the Syrian Christians of Kerala

Susan Thomas¹

Introduction

Colonialism was not an enterprise that merely involved military conquest of land and resources, but it also involved bringing into its sphere of influence the colonized people and recasting their socio-cultural aspects. This reforming and recasting was done through various strategies that have been well brought out by academic studies with respect to the various castes of India. But this ‘reforming’ that occurred in the 19th century and continued well into the 20th century laid the foundation of modern communities that we see today. This article will focus on the reforming of the Syrian Christians of Kerala, a community that dates back to the ancient period. Not much is known about the community of that period other than what we can glean from the famous copper plates and Persian crosses. The community was so well integrated into the socio-economic fabric of Kerala that they

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it would not be wrong to say that they were Christian in faith but was rooted in the locale so much so that they seemed similar to the *nair* caste.

This process of recasting or reforming involves the projecting of certain values as desirable when compared to older values and morals. It is probably only in the case of the Syrian Christian community of Kerala that even as co-religionist, the community had to undergo the experience of being reformed by the colonialist- both the Portuguese and the British. Thus while reform movements played out the reforming of the other Indian communities by the 19th and 20th centuries, the Portuguese tried social engineering in this community by the 16th century itself.

Values in this case as elsewhere were couched in terms of ethics and theology as far as this community was concerned. Norms of judgment is always derived from moral or personal values and these norms are located within the context of the society and can be decoded. Thus when judged on the norms of European Christianity which has a very specific European Christian habitus², the community was found lacking. This led to the forcible imposition of changes on to this community through Council decisions, Synods, Cannon laws and regulations. The basic argument of the paper is that no values are constant and they change with the social context. The article will try to trace how ‘new’ values were preached, propagated and enforced among the community.

The sources used for the articles include the Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Diamper,³ *Manuscript copy of the Sabha Niyamangal or the Cannons of the Church decided on 23rd of Meenam* (Malayalam month that roughly corresponds to the period of mid-March to mid-April) 1853 at Kottayam Seminary

² Here the term is used in the way it was used by Pierre Bourdieu – a system of unconscious and collective dispositions that structure both practices and representations.

³ Scaria Zacharia (ed.), *The Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Diamper 1599*, Indian Institute for Christian Studies, Kottayam; 1994, has been used as a source of the acts of the Synod for this study.

by the Jacobite Church, the Bull of Patriarch Ignatius Pathrose (Peter) III was issued in 1877 on the 'Rules regarding Beliefs, Practices, Customs and Sacraments of the Jacobite Syrian Church'⁴ *Kalpanakalum Niyamangalum* Issued by the Arch Bishop Leonardo of St. Louise, the Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly Archdiocese 1879 and the Palm leaf manuscripts discovered in the St. Mary's Jacobite Church, Nadama belonging to the late 19th century (1863-87).

Here I would also like to add the fact that the community that is referred to as the Syrian Christians are not homogeneous at present. This united community of the pre-colonial period underwent many splits as a result of the colonial interventions. The case of two factions, the Catholic faction and the Jacobite/Orthodox faction are the two major factions that have been looked into. But in spite of this division as they both claim a common Syriac heritage; the two are called Syrian Christians.

I will be looking at these reformations from three points of view: the regulation of the sacrament of confession⁵, the process of engendering⁶ through the regulation of sexuality and finally the 'dressing of the body'⁷.

The Syrian Christian Community and the Synod of Diamper

This community as said before can be dated back to the ancient period in Kerala and was associated with the trade of

⁴ *Rules regarding Beliefs, Practices, Customs and Sacraments of The Jacobite Syrian Church According to the Bull of Patriarch Ignatius Pathrose III of Antioch and all of the East*, Syrian Publications, Mulanthuruthy. This is one of the primary sources that have been used to analyze the community formation among the Jacobite faction in this article.

⁵ Here I would like to acknowledge the work of Ines G Zupanov, 'Sinners and Confessors: Missionary Dialogues in India, Sixteenth Century', in Pius Malekandathil, et.al. (ed.), *Christianity in Indian History: Issues of Culture, Power and Knowledge*, Primus Books, Delhi: 2016, from which I have built on this idea.

⁶ I will be using the term gendering to mean the engulfing of a body with it gender in this case the process of covering the female body with norms that are perceived to be suitable for the gender. See Devika J, *En-gendering Individuals: The Language of Reforming in Twentieth Century*, Kerala Orient Longman, Hyderabad: 2007.

⁷ See Nira Wickramasinghe, *Dressing the Colonized Body: Politics, Clothing and Identity in Colonial Sri Lanka*, Orient Longman, New Delhi: 2003.

spices. The community in the pre-colonial period had active links with the Middle East through trade networks. These contacts shaped their religious affiliation and they saw themselves as being part of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. The prelates who came in from outside catered along with the Arch Deacon, who belonged to the community, to the needs of the community. But the community was autonomous in matters of day to day administration as they were under the authority of both the Arch Deacon and the respective local rulers. Their customs and practices were moulded according to the existing socio-cultural practices of Kerala and by the end of the medieval period they were for all practical purposes a *jati* within the society.

The modern history of the community can be traced from the colonial period when profound changes were slowly being introduced into the community. The relations between the Christian community and the Portuguese followed a turbulent path. Initially the two communities cooperated with each other but slowly fissures started to develop when the Colonial power tried to introduce European Christian Habitus. The Portuguese wanted to wean away the Syrian Christians from their Middle Eastern ecclesiastical linkages and to Latinize them completely. This led to the tussle between the Portuguese and the Bishops who were sent by the Chaldean Catholicose, Mar Joseph and Mar Abraham. Initial attempts were to join them and try to reform the community. This was the practise that even the English followed in the 19th century through the CMS Missions. The community had always welcomed prelates from outside with great reverence. But before the colonial period, such attempts at drastic reformation were not attempted by the Bishops who had come in from outside.

In 1597, the Diocese of Angamaly was taken over by the Archbishop of Goa Alexis De Menezes. Thus battle lines were drawn when Menezes landed at Cochin from Goa on 1st February 1599.⁸ He toured Malabar visiting churches, ordaining the priests

⁸ Dates differ the current date is according to LW Brown.

and trying to instil the fact that Syrian traditions were heretical. The epoch making Synod of Diamper (Udayamperoor) was convoked on the 20th of June, 1599. The Synod was projected as an attempt to bring the Syrian Christian Community of Kerala more fully under the jurisdiction of the Catholic Church and to prohibit those customs of the St. Thomas Christians that did not conform to the Roman Catholic customs, including changes in the liturgy. To ensure the enforcement of these changes, the priests who accepted the Portuguese authority were appointed as Vicars to the churches. Though the picture presented by Menezes on the outcome of the Synod was a bright one, there were strong undercurrents and dissensions. The Synod was attended by 813 participants, of which 163 were priests. There were two sessions every day from 7am to 11am and from 2pm to 6pm⁹. This was the first of the series of reforms that were to be undertaken to reform the community according to western model of Christianity.

The changes introduced by the Synod of Diamper were with an aim to make the community more in line according to the European perception of Christianity and a Christian community. The sessions till the fifth day were concerned wholly with Doctrinal matters and the 'Nestorian heretical' practices in the liturgy and theology was cleared and the Catholic faith and theology was put in its place. On the sixth day matters relating to the sacraments of Holy Order and Matrimony were taken up. On the ninth day the reformations of customs were undertaken.

Mia Culpa: Confession as a Cultural Expression

The fourth sacrament of confession was dealt with in the Session VI of the Synod. The first introduction before the 25 Decrees talks in detail about this sacrament of penance.¹⁰ It lays down as to who all were to confess and to whom. All above the age of 8 was deemed to be old enough to confess. Those above the age of 14 had to necessarily do their annual confession.

⁹ Scaria Zacharia (ed.), *Ibid.*, p. 21

¹⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 145-153.

Families were entrusted the responsibility to make all their members including their servants and slaves confess at least once a year, at time of sickness or serious illness and in the case of women before childbirth. It was also the responsibility of the priest to see that no parishnor was to die without confessing. If such an eventuality happened as a result of his negligence, then the priest too would be punished by being suspended from his office for a year without any benefice. This was also applicable to the people who tended to the sick too. Though it was said that it should be practiced, once a year, Decree VII exhorts frequent confessions. Confessor was to be priest licensed for it unless the confessor's life was in grave danger. But in case of absolution, crimes of heinous nature were to be absolved by the bishop or those higher up in the hierarchy. The list of such crimes was given in Decree X. These included proscribed books and ceremonies of the Syrian Christians declared heathen by the Synod.

It is to be noted that language barrier between the European prelates and the Indian faithful led to the appointment of Confessors speaking Malayalam during the time of Lent when many people came in for confession. In the case of absolution too what was considered as crimes of higher nature the absolution had to come in from those higher in the hierarchy. This was more to show the people the gravity of their crimes and in this list many of the crimes that were included was to bring the folk tightly under the grip of the European prelates so as to root out what they considered as 'heathen'.

It is in the *Kalpanakalum Niyamangalum* Issued by the Arch Bishop Leonardo of St. Louise, the Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly Archdiocese 1879, that we see further strictures on Confession. It set out in clearer terms how the whole process should be done. Prayers were to be said to the Almighty and Mother Mary for help and clarity of thought. Decree III goes on to say how the confession box should be so that one who was confessing was not to be visible to the priest. The size of the holes in the screen was

prescribed to be no bigger than a peppercorn.¹¹ Before the yearly confession, the penitent had to go to the vicar and recite prayers to him and gain a chit for it.¹² The priests were also instructed as to what vestments they had to wear during the confession. This can be seen as the outward manifestation of the power and authority that was vested in them.

In case of women and girl children further injunctions were laid down. They were to have their confession strictly during the day time and within the box.¹³ Confessions were also to be used by the Priest to elicit information from the women on sinful practices like abortion and in such cases the vicar after enquiry could prescribe a penitence for 3 months and the person will be taken back into the fold.¹⁴

Thus confession now became a cultural expression which came about as a result of the believers now being conscientised to a whole new set of morality. Sins are now being enumerated and even in this list the gravity of them has led them to be classified as higher and lesser sins. For sins of a more grievous nature the absolution had to come from Bishop or higher order clergy. It also is interesting to note that there was also a list of sins in which case absolution was not to be given. This list of sins enumerated in the Decrees of the Synod of Diamper include, “willful murder, publically committed with violence on a person of an ecclesiastic, the voluntary firing of houses or of any goods belonging to Christians, formal simony both in the giver and receiver, marrying without vicar and two witness, schism and disobedience against the prelates,...reading of any of the books condemned by this Synod,.. performing public ceremonies like *Taliconum Coliconu*, the having of pagoda idols, in their houses and the giving them any veneration” All these sins were ones that incurred excommunication. The list has to be seen in the

¹¹ *Kalpanakalum Niyamangalum* Issued by the Arch Bishop Leonardo of St. Louise, the Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly Archdiocese 1879, Kunanmavu: 1879, p. 43.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 46, Clause 10.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 45, Clause 5 and 7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4, Clause 8.

backdrop of the customs as well as the opposition of the Christians to changes introduced by the Portuguese. Thus it is interesting to note that along with the universal list of sins that Christianity had a local list according to the ground situations in Malabar was also formulated which included performing of certain ceremonies or the participation in local festivals like Onam etc. that the Christians of Malabar celebrated.

Learning to be a sinner became an empowering act, providing the Christians with new social and cultural capacities.¹⁵ Thus a new moral sensibility was being introduced and by regulating the individual conscience, the morality of the community was also regulated. Church was being made as the centre of Christian spiritual life as argued by Ines G Zupanov. These Decrees and Regulation on Confession gave to the Syrian Christians a normative dialogue for the actual dialogue between the priest and the penitent who is actually the sinner.¹⁶

Codes, Decrees and the Regulation of the Sexuality

The colonial period saw the redrawing of familial relationships and gender roles. The socio-religious reform movements had played a key role in engendering the women. This process among the Syrian Christian women was not shaped by reformers or their movements but was a process that occurred from the 16th century through the introduction of codes, cannon laws and regulations by the church. This regulation of the self was in tandem with the norms and values of the renaissance that was being played out in colonial societies. The engendering of the women took place through these decrees, codes and regulation whereby gender codes were upheld, reinforced and reproduced.

This regulation of the self took place at two levels one the spiritual realm – where the self was brought to Christian salvation. This is effectively seen in the section above in a different context. Second was to wipe away unchristian practices

¹⁵ Ines G Zupanov, *Op.cit.*, p. 121.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

or heathen practices not in keeping with the European Christian Habitus. In this section the focus will be to see how marriage was being regulated and brought under the control of the church. This was an effort that was started at Diamper. Marriage for the church was a sacrament and defining it this, it was brought into the spiritual realm and in a sense universalized it by universalizing the preconditions and conditions of marriage. Like all patriarchal societies, we see how women's sexuality was being regulated through various strictures and ideological positions.

Decrees passed in the second half of Session VII of the Synod of Diamper regulated the sacrament of matrimony. Marriage now became the signification of that union between Christ and his church. The two main aims of marriage thus was the procreation of children and as a remedy for uncleanness and for some not to fall into sin.¹⁷ Marriage was regulated and the manner of its conduct was regulated. Decree I laid down that for marriages to be valid it need to be celebrated inside the church by the Vicar or the priest before two witnesses according to injunctions as laid down by the Council of Trent. The form of solemnization of marriage was laid down according to the Catholic rites. It laid down the decrees of consanguinity as well. Further Decree XII of the seventh session laid down monogamy as the condition for marriage and asks such men to return to their first wives on the pain of excommunication. Similarly Decree XI lamented that a great number of the people of the diocese had forsaken their wives and laid down that an ecclesiastical order was needed to do so.

A due process of marriage was also set up according to which, bans had to be read out and after the ceremony the marriage was to be recorded in the marriage register which had to be maintained with great care in the church. For marriages that had been conducted till contrary to this then dispensations were granted. It further laid down seasons other than those of the lent

¹⁷ Scaria Zacharia (ed.), *Op.cit.*, p. 170.

where by the ceremony could be conducted¹⁸ at the same time it forbidding the practice of selecting auspicious day or time for the ceremony.¹⁹ The ages of the bride and the groom was fixed as 12 and 14 years of age. The Decrees also specifically laid down that all local rites, heathen practices and ceremonies in the days before and following the marriage was forbidden. Though this was stated so we find that the codes of the 19th century that we have referred to too speaks of proscribing ceremonies that were performed that were very much local in nature like the songs and the dances

Clause 22 of the *Kalpanakalum Niyamangalum* of 1879 bans unchristian festivities like dance and music like the *Manavara Adachuthurapattu*, *Ammayiamma Pattu*, *Thozhimar chodiyam* violating the sanctity of the sacrament of wedding. A punishment of public penitence for four Sundays was prescribed.²⁰ By this time we also find the betrothal ceremony coming up when the consent of the boy and the girl was to be given before the vicar. But the rules also prescribe clear stipulations that the engaged couple were not to come in contact with each other. If such an incident happened then the permission to conduct the wedding had to be taken from the Bishop.²¹ In case of marriages which involved a diocesan change of the parties involved or for remarriage the permission of the Bishop was needed.²²

Session IX of the Synod turned its attention to what it called the ‘great scandal of Christianity,’ where ‘great number of Christians were cohabiting publically with concubines’. The Synodal decree entrusted the responsibility to make such people mend their ways by admonishing them thrice and still if they do not mend their ways they are to be excommunicated till effectively parted. If these women were slaves they were to be turned out of the house and still if they continued then they were to be turned out of the country so there was no danger of relapse.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.172-176.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

²⁰ *Kalpanakalum Niyamangalum*, p. 68.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.64.

²² *Ibid.*, Clauses 11 and 12, p. 65.

²³ In this case it was interesting to note that the vicar was empowered as against the *Palliyogam* or the council of the Church. Thus we see that marriage was now firmly placed in the spiritual realm and became tightly regulated by the church so much so that local festivities that accompanied the marriage were also banned by declaring a 'heathen'. Thus in a sense the local habitus was displaced by a European one.

The *Sabha Niyamangal* of 1853 talks about punishment in case of adultery and the leaves that was discovered at St. Mary's Church Nadama belonging to the latter half of the 19th century talks of cases of adultery that was tried by the *Palliyogam* in accordance to the above codes.²⁴ Thus one can see how these codes were applied in the lived world of the people. According to Section 76 of the *Sabha Niyamangal* the accused was to undergo both public and private penitence's. Public penitence for one year that was prescribed entailed standing in front at the foot of the altar inside the church and holding a cross during the Holy Mass. This form of punishment meant that the accused was singled out and isolated till the end of their penitence in the community by this very act of punishment. Here the act of shaming was used to control deviant sexuality and what is interesting is how shame as a mechanism operates in the whole process. Shame induces self-criticism leading to self-transformation. The very act of penance is indicative of the person's willingness to be self-critical and wanting to change. This willingness may be as a result of the fact that the penitents themselves had internalized the concept of the new morality that the church was trying to teach. The categories of sins were now being accepted. Once the period of repentance is over, they were to be readmitted. Thus learning to be a sinner became an empowering act, providing the Christians with new social and cultural capacities.²⁵

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

²⁴ Five palm leaves dealing with adultery trials were found at the St. Mary's Jacobite Church Nadama, which belonged to the period between 1863 and 1687.

²⁵ Ines G Zupanov, *Op.cit.*, p. 121.

Dressing the Syrian Christian Body

Body has always been seen by feminists and scholars as a site of social and political actions, while dress is both a sign and a commodity enmeshed in multiple webs of meanings and values. They have been part of the debate on identity and modernity.²⁶

The first instance of dressing the Syrian Christian body can be seen in the Synodal Decrees which proclaims that distinction between the faithful and the unbelievers by outward signs and habits has endeavoured as one may be known and divided from the other. It further noted that no such distinction would be made out between the Christians and the *nairs*.²⁷ It proscribed the piercing of lobes of men and asked them to cast away their earrings.

In the Bull of 1877 of Patriarch Ignatius Peter III on 'Rules regarding Beliefs, Practices, Customs and Sacraments of the Jacobite Syrian Church'²⁸, exhorts the men and women not dress like the Hindus. He decreed, "I hear that some among you do not wear an upper garment but go about naked This will lead to the birth of sin among you I order that henceforth women should wear full dress and a veil." Men were to wear a waist length half sleeve dress with an inner vest and a cap and the women had to wear full dress and an upper garment. The Bull asks old men to grow beard and the youngsters to keep moustache. In fact the bull calls it shameful to do otherwise.²⁹ Here we see that the body is being regulated keeping in mind the Middle Eastern sensibilities.

It was the *Kalpanakalum Niyamangalum* of 1879 that laid down minute regulations regarding dress, behavior and living styles. In clause 4 of section 3, it was laid down that girls above

²⁶ Nira Wickramasinghe, Op.cit., p. 2.

²⁷ Many of the descriptions of the Christian warriors of the pre-colonial period say that the men dressed exactly like the *nairs* and the only distinguishing mark was the cross that the Christians wore on the tuft of their hair.

²⁸ *Rules regarding Beliefs, Practices, Customs and Sacraments of The Jacobite Syrian Church according to the Bull of Patriarch Ignatius Pathrose III of Antioch and all of the East*, Syrian Publications, Mulanthuruthy.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.32.

11 years of age and young women should necessarily wear *chatta* (Blouse like top that falls up to the waist) both inside the house and when they go outside. The older women it was stipulated needed to wear *chatta* when they go outside but could cover their breast in any way they chose when inside the house. This meant that probably while inside the women like the *nair* women must have worn just a cloth across the upper part of the body known as *mulakachcha*. In case of disobedience regarding the dressing codes absolution was given by the higher clerical authority – the Bishop. In Clause 7 of Section 8, another stricture is added, women were proscribed to wear loin cloth like non-Christians (*tar udukukka*) and the parents were instructed to see that small girls should be dressed properly (*Adakkamaye udippikkanam*). The vicars were asked to exhort these to the faithful through their speeches to follow these instructions.

What is clear from the above is that as far as the dressing was concerned people still followed the old ways to some extent and these regulations show that the church was still trying to dress the body and make them as bearers of cultural signs. In this exercise, the identity of the Christians was being constructed with clothes being an important sign of affiliation to a social group.

Conclusion

Thus from the above we can see how values have never been constant and these have to be always read within the context of the society that they are enmeshed. With colonialism a European Christian Habitus decided the values of this community and through codes, cannons and regulations the ancient community of Syrian Christians fractured as result of colonialism into many factions was reformed in its customs and practices. Newer forms of sentitization to new forms of sins and codes of conduct laid down the basis of the community as we see it today.

Patristic Period in Order to Ponder Over the Early Christian Another ‘Food’

R. Yaqub al-Bikaadi¹

Introduction

It is a challenge and a conviction to write this uneasy paper on the topic of food. No, it's not what you're thinking. I am not going to appeal for more fasting or stricter observance of Lent. Across my engagement with various denominations of the Christian Family, I have not come across the following teaching, so one can be forgiven for thinking food here refers to the organic (or processed) material our bodies consume for kilojoules. One may also be forgiven for thinking this might be about metaphorical ‘food’ as *concepts* for the cognitive consumption of the mind. Though we shall be referring to both of these, the meaty part of what follows is the food of *obedience*.

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One of the concerns that pressed upon my heart last year during my theological studies at Tabor Bible College was the theme of Spiritual Poverty. In asking the Lord to teach me more about this issue, I am reminded of the axiom “be careful what you wish for”. This is because I came to discover my own spiritual poverty. Another axiom of relevance here is “actions speak louder than words”. Although it is not an explicit saying from the Bible, our Scriptures confirm its truth. Yet, many Christians flout this universal principle and “talk their talk” without walking their walk. And so, this paper addresses the spiritual poverty that comes with disobedience, and argues that the church today has been holding back on another dimension of food. As Chrysostom once taught, the deepest human happiness is grounded in holiness- God’s holy love and our responsive attempts to reflect it fittingly.²

In John 21: 15-19 the risen Lord three times asks Peter, “Do you love me?” and follows this with a request for evidence, “then feed my sheep”. James’ homily makes the point that faith bears evidence of works (1:14-21). Historically, there are three ways the handmaidens of the Lord have responded to this imperative: religiosity, community outreach, and teaching. Below we will problematize the first ‘food’; unpack the other two; and address another food that is not effectively cultivated in many of the churches I have known: obedience. There are reasons for its unpopularity but there will be no space to address them here. Ideally, this paper would provide a problem-solution model. Instead, it will be a frustratingly one-sided act of faith- identifying a need and hoping that the reader and her/his community will find

²Paraphrased from readings of both Chrysostom and John Wesley in Thomas C. Oden, (1983). *Pastoral Theology, Essentials of Ministry*. Harper Collins Publishers: New York, 262. Cf. John Chrysostom. In J.D. Douglas (ed), (1887). *A Selected Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series*, Christian Publication: New York. (13) p. 341 & T. Jackson (Ed.), (1877). *The Works of the Reverend John Wesley*, Wesleyan Conference Office: London. (7) p. 314; (10) p. 364. Cf. Heb 12:14.

creative ways to fill it in surrender to the Holy Spirit's deepest work, yet to be completed.³

Religiosity

"The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep".⁴

Churches today are diverse. Some have done backflips to "win souls" (sometimes to the point of libertine compromise⁵), others have held on to staunch faithfulness to the effective 'systematic witness' of former generations (sometimes the point of excruciating changeless inflexibility⁶). Yet, the influence of all our churches is waning in many parts of the world.⁷ Still, the remaining threads of attraction for the communities in which our congregations are located can range from their provisions for motivational worship/talking, to a sense of grounding stability in ritual, to opportunities to serve philanthropically. While the latter remain part of the social justice wing of the Body of Christ—and ought to be heavily encouraged (Luke 4:18-21; Lev 19:35-36; Matt 25:31-46)—the former aspects of 'motivational' expression⁸

³ Cf. 1 Cor 2:10-12

⁴ John 10:11b-13

⁵ To air some of our dirty laundry I can refer the reader to churches such as Elevationsits of the Internatinoal Church of Cannabis, Colorado and White Tail Chapel Virginia. Clearly, these congregations are in breach of such guidelines as we find in 1 Peter 4:7; 5:8-10; 1 Cor 6:9-10. As Wagner writes, "In our love affair with all models contemporary, we have left behind the model that God himself both authorised and illustrated". In E. Glenn Wagner (1999). *Escape from Church, Inc.: The Return of the Pastor-Shepherd*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 54

⁶ Examples of such provincial and irrelevant churches might include The Bible Missionary Church and many Presbyterian churches. Although there is nothing explicitly ungodly about them, they don't seem to be bearing any contemporary fruit.

⁷ David Kinnaman (2011). *You Lost Me. Why Young Christians are Leaving Church... And Rethinking Faith*. BakerBooks: Grand Rapids, Michigan

⁸ For opinions on why contemporary music worship is limping along, see: <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/ponderanew/2015/09/04/3-reasons-contemporary-worship-is-declining-and-5-things-we-can-do-to-help-the-church-move-on/>

and ritual are trappings that “if enacted without *substance*” threaten to drain the church. One might say that the elation that comes from delightful songs and inspiring talks are bonuses to the divine-human relationship but non-essentials. Ritual too, although essential⁹, threatens to turn the people of God into Marthas during seasons where they are required to be Maries (Luke 10: 38-42) Something’s off-balance.

When expressed sincerely “in spirit and in truth” (Jn 4:24), worship, joyful proclamation and ritual can be authentic dynamics in the relationship of the Church with her Beloved. But when the relationship falls shallow, these things are the first to receive criticism. The prophet Amos says, “Remove from me the noise of your songs, and I do not want to hear the melody of your harps! But let justice roll on like the water, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (5:21-23). Also David says in Psalm 51:16, “For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering” (cf. 1 Sam 15:22-23). Such religiosity as superficial feel-good worship and therapeutic motivational talk do not constitute “food” for the sheep of Christ! Worship, empowering joy and creative expression of the revelation of God in Christ should be an *output* (either from having been or in expectation of being fed). Only then can we say that they are authentic. They are not *input*: food in and of themselves. By analogy, food is the grapes, and expression of appreciation is the wine. Painted-on colour is vastly different from the dyed colour that comes from being saturated in the vat (cf. Matthew 23:27-28; Gosp. Philip 63:25-30; Syriac Infancy, saying 37).

There is true worship and creative expression that serves a sacramental role in the life of the church. When theologically sound, it serves as a stimulus for unity. As such, it is a labour and

⁹ It is crucial to note that for Jesus there is “no distinction between internal and external circumcision”, as he fulfils both old and new covenants. Crowe, 97 (cf. Deut. 30:6; Jub. 1:23). A more universal Christian ritual is that Baptism. Another is that of the Eucharist, inaugurated by Christ around Passover.

a production that comes from drinking from the deep well of the Word of God (both the person of Christ and the knowledge of Scripture intended). But in the way of food—especially in an era of spiritual poverty—empty-worship and feel-good talk is like sipping at shallow muddy splashes around that well. It is inadequate and tantamount to regurgitated slop, void of nutritional value.

Community Outreach

“I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’”¹⁰

Community outreach begins with providing practical loving support for those in the Body. It also extends outside the four walls of the Church (our public assemblies and private home fellowships), as we love our neighbours as we would have them love us (Matt 22:39). This includes those disadvantaged out on the streets. As James says, “true religion is caring for the widow and the orphan” (James 1:27). To our detriment, however, the secular societies we live in today (sometimes insidiously, other times overtly) have placed pressures upon the Church to limit our focus *only* toward those most visibly vulnerable (the physically handicapped, mentally unwell, drug addicts and so on among the ‘uncivil’), while neglecting others. We have especially abandoned the middle and upper classes—for those outside the Body, afraid to evangelise them for fear of government crackdowns; for those

¹⁰ Matthew 25:36-40

inside it, acting as if financial affluence equates to spiritual health and autonomy.¹¹

Many leaders of churches appear to be busy scratching peoples' ears and this has resulted in a Therapeutic Deism among an elite that functions *above* a lower class 'graciously' invited to sit awkwardly on the doorstep of the church (2 Tim 4:3). This culture validates the superiority of those more fortunate and is at odds with Kingdom Culture (Luke 12:13-15; Phil 2:3). Among the children of such members of churches, the Gospel appears irrelevant or at best 'optional'; and so they are leaving the church. One might argue that it sets up an anti-Christ banquet hall where affluent members falsely believe they are in the Bridal Chamber dining with the Lamb when they are everything but.¹²

When philanthropy feels good (in the worldly happiness rather than the godly joy sense) there should be alarm bells. Serving those in need should come at a personal cost. It should be a part of 'dying to self', which results in humility. No servant is greater than his Master, and what an expense our Lord sacrificed to lavish his love upon us (2 Cor 8:9). That is what Jesus meant when he said "feed my sheep", as demonstrated with the feeding of the 5000. There was a risk involved and the disciples had to give up what they thought was barely enough for themselves (Matt 14:7). Paul's clashes with the Judaisers also addressed the issue of classism. All members should be sheep of one fold (Eph 4:5-6). The imperative to serve (selflessly) is obligatory and plays a role in the stitching together of a corporate Body of Christ. The communion that suffers together as well as rejoices together is what constitutes the solidarity of the citizenry of Heaven (1 Cor

¹¹ "Bradley explained that most upper and middle class white Christian leaders who live comfortably in suburbs tend to be more focused on helping lower class African Americans and Hispanics who live in inner city neighbourhoods within driving distance from their homes." -- <https://www.christianpost.com/news/are-evangelical-churches-abandoning-the-working-class.html>

¹² Here I unabashedly poke a jab at the Prosperity Doctrine camp. Scripture is clear: "God is with the poor" (Pro 9:17).

12:26). If we take that away or allow it to be malformed (grossly inadequately cultivated) then we are failing to feed Christ's sheep.

Teaching

“Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God.”¹³

Indeed, the letters of Peter demonstrate that feeding the sheep of Christ included passing on knowledge of our Saviour through the proclamation of the Gospel. Education has always been a major part of the service of the Church to humanity and it began with public preaching (Acts 2:14-47), as well as the use of the codex to disseminate the witness to the Word of God incarnated into tangible human history.¹⁴ There is no doubt that, like providing for the physical needs of God's people and their neighbours, teaching was intended to be a mode of providing ‘food’ to the followers of Christ (already and potential). Teaching is one of the gifting of the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:6-8). Catechism was one of the earliest practices of the Church.¹⁵ We are called to collectively grow in knowledge (2 Pet 3:18).

And yet, not only *unbalanced worship*, *non-intelligible ritual*, and *non-comprehensive service*, but also *conceptual formulas void of relationship* too can threaten the vitality of the Church. When a catchphrase is parroted without understanding and becomes a shibboleth for membership¹⁶, then it no longer serves the Gospel of the Kingdom but becomes a form of Gnosticism: salvation by *in-house* knowledge. Cognitive ascent was never the criteria for salvation in the early church; it was faith and repentance (Rom 10:9; Acts 20:21). Unfortunately, today too

¹³ Acts 20:28

¹⁴ Benjamin Harnett, ‘The Diffusion of the Codex’. In *Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 36 No. 2, October 2017; (pp. 183-235) DOI: 10.1525/ca.2017.36.2.183

¹⁵ Jonathan Draper, ‘The Apostolic Fathers: The Didache’. In *The Expository Times*, February 2006. 117 (5): 177-181

¹⁶ When people's true origins are identified based on their accent, this is known as shibboleth.

many leaders (from all manner of congregations) bully and/or peer pressure the sheep into uttering formulaic mantras in order to vindicate their presumed status in the kingdom. Sadly, many sheep believe that blindly voicing these quotes from Patriarchs or later Church thinkers are placing them in the favour of God—I *speak the consensus, therefore I'm saved!* The result is that they may no longer see the need for repentance and instead assume they have a 'free ticket' into heaven. This is no different to the magic keys (secret sounds, words, phrases) used by pagan and pseudo-Christian Gnostics when promising their devotees eternal life.¹⁷ We do well to remember that God looks at the heart (1 Sam 16:7; Psalm 51:17) and later heals the head, and that itself through meditating on the nature and accomplishments of the Trinity (John 16:13; Romans 12:2; 2 Tim 3:16-17)¹⁸. Like worship and convenient feel-good preaching, pharisaic membership formulas do not constitute "food" for the sheep of Christ. The role of the Church as a nation of priests is not to be the 'thought police' but to be fishers of men and shepherds who stir men's hearts toward God (Luke 22:32; Ezek 11:19; 36:26; 1 Cor 3:1-3)¹⁹.

Obedience

"You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked".²⁰

This last food is simultaneously the most difficult to cultivate and the most powerful to provide. When people see authentic obedience, it speaks volumes about the work of God in the life of

¹⁷ Robert Conner, (2014). *Magic in Christianity; From Jesus to the Gnostics*. Mandrake: Oxford

¹⁸ Psalm 1 reminds us that there are no shortcuts

¹⁹ Regarding the eschatological expectation that the people of God will be righteous see Jeremiah 31:33; *1 Enoch* 10:16-21; *Jubilees* 1:23-24; *Psalms of Solomon* 17:26, 32, 40-41; 18:4-9. See also John F. MacArthur Jr (1989). *Shepherdology: A Master Plan for Church Leadership*, MacArthur:USA, 50-52

²⁰ Rev 3:17

the believer and it also convicts of sin. A life of spirit-filled obedience is a rarity, and when seen, it instils a depth of faith the other types of foods cannot sustain. The 2000 year and on-going success of Jesus' ministry to date is a result of the impact of his obedience, which earned him the title 'Lamb of God' and crowned him with glory upon the cross (Heb 2:9; Phil 2:8; cf. Rom 8:17-18)—turning the pride of both demons and mankind on its head (1 Cor 1:21; Col 2:15²¹). In a reversal to the sin-septicity of Adam's fall, Jesus brings a "contagious holiness".²² And he makes it clear that this is for our consumption in John 4:34 when he says,

"My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work."

We are invited into his body and that work of obedience in his body. Obedience, such as Jesus entering the Jordan fosters an atmosphere of authority, and authority provides freedom (Acts 10:37-39). What better food could we wish for than the liberty of the Spirit (2 Cor 3:17; John 8:31-32; 16:13; Rom 8:14-16). We might sum this up as: obedience equals loving God and loving God equals obedience. We see this throughout the book of Deuteronomy.²³ But, this is not something we can achieve independent of Christ. His vicarious obedience inspires our hope, as he divides the spoil of a previous 'strong man': Satan, who had stolen Adam's sovereignty and founded a new kingdom.²⁴ Crowe writes:

"As in Mark, in 1 Peter we find not only an emphasis on the unique death of Jesus but also the call for Christians to follow daily in the footsteps of Christ's suffering. Just as Jesus was rejected by many but remained obedient to his

²¹ Crowe, 64 also addresses how demons were surprised at "meeting Jesus among the gentiles".

²² Crowe, 112

²³ Deut. 6:5; 7:9; 10:12, 18-19; 11:1, 13, 22; 13:3; 19:9; 30:16, 19-20. Notably, Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy more than any other book!

²⁴ Crowe pp. 159-162 and 204. Cf. John 8:44

Father' in all things, so must Christians follow the pattern of Christ that leads from suffering to glory."

In John we find the links

"The bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. (...) I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh'. (...) After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him."²⁵

If we are to love Christ we must take seriously his desire that we feed his sheep. Such a role is a privilege and it has been modeled to us by our Master. Just as the first humans were created to be the image-bearers of God (Gen 1:26-27; 5:1-2; 9:6), so too we are called to be the image bearers of Christ (Col 3:1-3; 1 Cor 12:27; Rom 6:6, cf. 2 Cor 4:4)²⁶. In the gospels, we neither see a focus on worship²⁷—a few instances of Jesus prostrating, that is all—nor a focus on feel-good therapeutic talk (Matt 6:34; John 16:33 and a few others). What we see is a shepherd growing in stature and authority through his obedience, i.e. through being a lamb. As shepherd, he defines what righteousness is; and as lamb, he fulfills it.²⁸ This double vision (king and servant) is foreshadowed by Isaiah and proclaimed fulfilled by Matthew.²⁹ Love and obedience were perfectly united in Jesus. He emulated Micah 6:8: "Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God".

²⁵ John 6:33-66 (selected verses)

²⁶ We do this by becoming parables of Jesus Christ. As Hansen says, "The greatest constant pressure in the ministry is to become an idol. (...) We are not symbols of God. [Instead,] Jesus has become the parable of God. People meet the Lord Jesus through us. By knowing Jesus as Lord, they come to know God". David Hansen, (1994). *The Art of Pastoring; Ministry without All the Answers*, Inter Varsity Press: Downers Grove, Illinois, 123-133

²⁷ This suggests that there is a great deal of latitude in what God accepts as worship.

²⁸ Crowe, 91

²⁹ Crowe, 144

Our union into Christ's holiness is not ideological; it is *total*. Shalom fills our entire being. Again, from Crowe we are reminded,

"First, the gospel is the message of the kingdom (e.g., Mark 1:14-15). Second, the message of the kingdom is intricately related to righteousness that defines the kingdom. That is, the kingdom of God is a kingdom of righteousness, which demands repentance (Matt 4:17; Mark 1:15). Third, the righteousness of the kingdom is realised by Jesus, the messianic king and last Adam, through his lifelong obedience. Significantly, it is because of the righteousness of the king that the benefits of the kingdom accrue to the people of God. Therefore, to speak most fully of the good news of the kingdom is to emphasise the obedience of the king who embodies the will of God and makes the blessings of the kingdom possible. To be sure, the death of Jesus is of vital importance in this regard, but the message of the kingdom was already being preached during the ministry of Jesus. This was possible because Jesus was inaugurating the kingdom [through his obedience] even before his death and resurrection."³⁰

He explains, the righteousness mentioned in Matthew 5:20 "marks the transition from christological fulfillment to the disciples obligation": a righteousness that is "deeper and more consistent" than that of the Pharisees—"the righteousness we must practice cannot be divorced from Jesus, who fulfills all righteousness".³¹

Concluding Thoughts

Faith includes believing that our High Priest has cleansed and atoned for the whole household (Lev. 16:1-16; Zech 3:1-4; Heb 8:6). The food that is Christ our Pascal Lamb is for our bodies (service), minds (teaching) and souls (obedience). In all these, we

³⁰ Crowe, 153

³¹ Ibid & p.91

might say the Trinity is alluded, as we do the Father's Work, put on the Mind of Christ, and surrender to the Guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is from this wellspring of Life that authentic worship and victory proclamation is generated, not the reverse. Sadly, it is possible to have worship and positive talk without the holy inner work of Christ but communities that choose that path can't survive the pressures of this world and will die. They must return to proper food.

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." - Gal 5:25

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." - 2 Cor. 5:17

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor circumcision, but a new creature." - Gal 6:15

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Christianity in the First Five Centuries of its Existence: An Overview

Percy Arfeen¹

It is undoubtedly challenging to outline the history of a topic such as ‘Christianity’, not only because it is a world religion with presently over 2.4 billion followers, but also because the accounts of its initial years are torn with debates comprising of extremely opposing schools of thought. This ranges from factions who regard the scriptures ‘the word of God’ and therefore a sin to question them, to those who question the very existence of Christ, to others who attempt to understand ‘Christianity’ just like any other event in history, placing it within the broader geo-politics of the context of the time, which in this case, is the gradually

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declining empire of Rome, one of the most powerful empires in antiquity. Considering the range of aspects, a multitude of views is of course, granted; however, due to a limited scope of this paper, I will focus primarily on Western Christianity and discuss two diverging schools of thoughts- first, the emergence of Christianity as a result of a prolonged struggle against Roman authority and second, a deliberate architecture of Christianity as a strategy of the Roman Empire to quell what seemed to be never-ending rebellions in Judaea. It is interesting to be noted that in both the cases we look at Christianity from the lenses of the victors- in the first case, Pauline Christianity which emerged victorious from amongst many sects, and in the second, as a ploy of the Flavian Dynasty to successfully curb the Jewish population by granting them the long awaited Messiah, but one that the Romans engineered.

Contemporary scholars agree that Christianity did not emerge as a monolithic distinct identity but rather quite the reverse- a multitude of ‘cults’ and varied (sometimes even contradictory) beliefs, which overtime got culminated under the umbrella term ‘Christianity’², one of the unifying (as well as dividing) factors being the centrality of Jesus Christ. The existence of Christ has continued to be a subject of ceaseless debates amongst scholars because there are no sources contemporary to his time that mention him. As Hastings states “The fact that he wrote nothing, and that nothing we now possess was written to record his life until some 40 years after his death, both increases the mystery in the figure of Jesus and permits a pluriformity of interpretation” (Hastings ed., 1999:2). Over a period of time, it is the letters of Paul that seem to take ground as more than half of the New Testament ultimately echoes his writings, so much so, that authors as the likes of Karen Armstrong have gone to the extent

²“In about 187 C.E. Irenaeus (Bishop of Lyons) listed about twenty varieties of Christianity; in about 384 C.E. Epiphanius counted eighty... Christian believers were deserting to novel sects” (Durant,1935:616); also reproduced in Kimrey, R. (2006: 241) and Andrews, E. (2017: 43).

of calling Jesus the source of Paul's religious experience (Armstrong, 1999[1993]: 107).

Paul (originally Saul), is one of the most decisive figures behind the popularisation of Christianity into the gentile world, so crucial, that some even argue that there would be no Christianity without him. As a Roman citizen, he was initially involved with the persecution of the Christians but after his very famous vision on the road to Damascus, he became Paul and travelled extensively around the Mediterranean preaching his version of Jesus. Scholars again differ greatly in accounting this event, some going to extent of calling it a mere solar mirage and not God's appearance, but validation or invalidation of popularly accepted events is not the aim of this paper. Irrespective of our standpoint regarding this, we cannot ignore the importance of Paul in spreading what he believed in. Being a Roman citizen, he was allowed to travel all around the empire without hindrance until the mishap of Rome in 64 CE (the great fire that wiped off about 70% of the city's buildings) when Nero, the then emperor needed a scapegoat and blamed it on the Christians as having infuriated the gods. As Ermatinger states "Nero proclaimed that the fire had been started by a new insidious cult, the Christians, and ordered that Christianity be outlawed... illegal and punishable by death...numerous Christians were captured and executed" (Ermatinger, 2007:67). Equally indispensable was Paul's strategic selection of sites to preach, which remarkably influenced the growth of the early Christian converts.³ This was facilitated by certain changes that were already occurring in the social structure, viz. the familiarity of the people with the idea of conversion, which was otherwise considered odd. As Martin Goodman states

³ Dr. Mark Wilson has worked extensively in the field along with the collaboration of various Archaeologists. Two of such locations are the city of Ephesus (the Temple of Ardemus and the city theatre) and the city of Cappadocia (safe house of the early Christians) researched by archaeologists, Dr. Julian Bennett and Dr. Veronica Kalas respectively.

"The First Christians", *Lost Worlds*, The History Channel: Atlantic Productions, originally aired on September 18, 2006: USA

“This custom was an oddity in the ancient world, for no other people is recorded into which it was possible to enter simply by self-definition... proselytism was to provide an important model for the growth of the early Church.” (Hastings ed., 1999:13). Traditionalist views claim that the Jews of the diaspora proved to be an important section of the newly converted Christians as it was perhaps easier to proselytise them as they were regarded ‘not much Jewish’ in the ethical sense. However, recent scholars working on early Christianity, as the likes of sociologist Rodney Stark, raises concerns of oversimplifying this historical phenomenon. Although the Jewish diaspora did indeed prove to be important places for Christian conversion and places like Asia Minor and North Africa were in fact where the earliest Christian churches and Christian communities appeared; archaeologists also show that several large synagogues continued to function well through the popularisation of Christianity (Stark, 1997: 50). What is imperative to realize, is therefore, not an ‘either or’ outlook but really a deeper understanding on the multifaceted networks of relationships between communities, as notions like ‘Christian synagogues’ and ‘Jewish-Christianity’ continued as late as the 5th century CE (Stark, 1997:49). What also needs to be realised is the regional variations in terms of extents of acceptability, outright rejections, as well as possible continuities of beliefs and practices across the Jewish diaspora.

Prevalent prophecies could have definitely influenced some (if not all) of the early conversions. Firstly, Jews had a long tradition of a messiah who would appear at the moment of trouble and save the kingdom of Judaea. The attack of Titus Flavian, which ultimately climaxed with the demolition of the temple of Jerusalem hence came to be interpreted as the coming of the end of the world. As Smith states “*finis hujus mundi, interitus mundi*...that is, the end of this world and the beginning of a new one, would follow immediately upon the destruction of the temple” (Smith, 1859:10). The prophecies also claimed that this Messiah would be widely misunderstood and that people will not

recognise him. As Isaiah 53:7 (KJV) states “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter... he openeth not his mouth.” Secondly, Jesus’ teachings very much paralleled extant customs and traditions and hence were relatable. Armstrong states “...faith healers were familiar religious figures in Galilee: like Jesus, they were mendicants, who preached, healed the sick and exorcised demons... Certainly Jesus’ teachings were largely in accord with major tenets of the Pharisees, since they also believed in charity and loving kindness... also taught a version of Hillel’s Golden Rule, ‘do unto others as you would have them do unto you’” (Armstrong, 1999[1993]:100). Aspects of continuity of previous teachings that adhere to the Torah are also recounted in Matthew 5:17 (KJV) “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.” Goodman therefore remarks “none of his ideas would have been incomprehensible or outlandish to his fellow Jews” (Hastings ed., 1999:16). Other factors of attraction for early conversions to the new faith discussed by Goodman include- a possible novelty and exoticism of Christian communities, a support system provided by these new communities⁴, an appeal of martyrdom⁵ and a ‘toleration’ of mixed marriages⁶ (Hastings ed., 1999:19-20). Rodney Stark has extensively discussed this novel yet widespread practice of secondary conversions through mixed marriages during the early centuries of the Common Era, particularly emphasising on the role of women in the growth of early Christianity (Stark, 1997:95-115). Scholars have suggested that the early converts could have also comprised of socially

⁴ “By contrast the new Christian communities provided social support, mutual aid and comfort from others whose own social identity also derived entirely from their Christian identity” (Hastings ed., 1999:20).

⁵ “It is likely that converts were encouraged rather than discouraged by stories of martyrdom: a knowledge that some had believed the Christian message to be of sufficient importance to be worth dying for strengthened those who were compelled to suffer lesser problems for their faith” (ibid).

⁶ “Christian toleration of mixed marriages (in the hope of the eventual conversion of the non- Christian partner) made the social break more bearable for some” (ibid).

marginalised sections of the society. For instance, Henry Chadwick makes the case of early conversions comprising of slaves. He also suggests this as a strategy of conversion by the early churches, as although there was a general consensus in early Christian preaching that the domination of an individual by another was wrong and Church funds were occasionally used to buy emancipation of slaves, it never took up a programme to abolish slavery (McManners ed. 2001:38).

Popularisation of early Christianity (or rather Chrisitanities) through diverse regions and cultures provided room for equally diverse opinions in the absence of a canonical literature. This was facilitated by the now emerging hierarchies in the church (both internal and external) which took up a collegial leadership. One of the chronic difficulties that the early churches faced was the ceaseless strife amongst its own adherents. This is perhaps something that has not changed over the years, although various attempts have been made under the leadership of several dignitaries. It warns us against homogenising Christianity into a single monolithic entity (as is the case with any other religion). In the early centuries of the Common Era there were Gnostics, Sabellians, Arians, Origenists, Platonists, Novatianists, Adoptionists, Manichaeans and so on and so forth- all preoccupied with a doctrinal ‘correctness’. The canonization of the New Testament and the increasing authority achieved by the church (Rome in particular, inheriting the vestiges of the gradually falling Roman Empire) was yet another remarkable development of this new religion that propagated a consciousness of belonging to a fellowship, the benefits of which was much amplified by surmounting the barrier of the Greek language.

Ultimately, with Constantine’s acceptance of Christianity and Theodosius’ declaring Christianity a state religion, one witnessed an unprecedented power-relation between the ‘secular’ and the ‘spiritual’ monarchs. It is then that what scholars call- a ‘ruralisation’ of Christianity takes place, climaxing with the establishment of a hegemonic Catholicism in the late 5th century

CE (though the process could be seen from as early as the 2nd century CE) where religious freedom was increasingly reduced, so much so that, even the questioning of scriptures resulted in excommunication. This gradual shift was visible in all socio-cultural aspects, however, due to a limitation of space, this essay elaborates on one of them- *Festivals*. Robert Markus mentions the intense struggle of the early churches in trying to distance the population from earlier ‘pagan’ festivals which continued to be celebrated in the now Christian Rome. Christianizing time was indeed very gradual, as Markus states “...late Roman Bishops worked slowly, by piecemeal additions and elaborations of regularly recurrent observances, to define a new sacred time in which the Christian life was to be wholly caught up, until the sacred time of the old pagan past was slowly forgotten, or emptied of its charge of religiosity” (McManners ed., 2001:76). Many Pagan festivals were integrated by somehow Christianizing their significance, including the birth of Christ which was included into the solar calendar only by 300 CE. However, towards late 5th century there grew a desperation with this prolonged process. By about 430 CE, there was a rise of unprecedented militant Christianity which led to massive persecution of the so-called pagans, and by the mid-5th century their population had severely reduced (McManners ed., 2001:41-45). The last of the remaining pagans were ridiculed and shamed into giving up their traditions. As Bishop Augustine had said for the remaining pagans of Rome “We fast for them on their feast days, so that they themselves might become the spectacle” (McManners ed., 2001:76).

This essay has heretofore explored the major changes that eventually succeed in institutionalizing Christianity as a victory. There is however, another school of thought which views the development of Christianity including Christ, as a Roman creation. This paper will briefly discuss one of such works that has been at the forefront of international debates in the last decade- *Ceaser’s Messiah: The Roman Conspiracy to Invent*

Jesus. This view suggests that the major changes incurred in the early centuries of the Common Era are not remarkable feats of Christianity, but are rather changes in the Roman politics and power structure. The author, Joseph Atwill, traces the emergence of Christianity within the geo-politics of the struggle and seize of power of the Roman Empire by the Flavian Dynasty⁷ whose reign, according to him, suspiciously coincided with the formation of two major benign religious groups- Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity.

The book paints a picture of the Roman Empire in decline and marked by political power shifts from the Caesarean dynasty to the Flavian, with the economy going bankrupt, endless wars being fought and religious uprisings at its peak. Atwill gives extensive examples of silent overlaps and parallels between the Flavians and the gospel figures. According to him, a suspicion arises when one compares the portrayal of society of the 1st century Judaea in the Dead Sea scrolls to that of the Gospels. Judaea in the 1st century was a war zone and the Dead Sea scrolls depict a violent and militaristic scenario as opposed to that of a pacifistic one depicted in the gospels (Atwill, 2011:18). He raises doubt over the fact that the gospels had been written down in Greek (the aristocratic diplomatic language of the time) as opposed to Aramaic or Hebrew, as they should have been, according to Atwill, if the authors were who they claimed to be. He also states that both Jesus and Titus preached ‘Gospel’ (*Euaggelion* in Greek), which literally meant “good news of a Ceaser, particularly birth or a military victory” referring to the same event of the destruction of Galilee (Atwill, 2011:150-151). Furthermore, he states that a lot of Gospels talk about turning away from the Jewish law and obeying the Roman law.

⁷ The Flavians, Vespasian and his son Titus were the famous military men under Nero who had successfully quelled the Druid uprisings in Brittany and Gaul. Nero had called the Flavians to deal with the never-ending rebellions in Judaea and in 66 CE they marched into Judaea with about seventy thousand troops, destroying the town of Galilee and demolished the temple of Jerusalem.

Questioning of scriptures is not unheard of, particularly when it comes to the nature of Christ. Several scholars have commented upon the benign nature of Jesus being at odds with the prophecy of the Messiah (Prophecy of Micah) which had promised a warrior messiah from the line of David. Atwill opines that the creation of this benign messiah was a strategy to quell the endless rebellions. Scholars have also remarked upon the *nature* of Christ as something possibly created in retrospect, for instance Robert Eisenman states that the *nature* of Jesus was a composite of many of the Messianic leaders of the time. He writes “Nor can we say that in the Gospels we do not have a composite re-creation of facts and episodes relating to a series of Messianic pretenders in Palestine in the first century, familiar from the works of Josephus, interlaced or spliced into a narrative of a distinctly Hellenistic or non-Palestinian, pro-Pauline cast” (Eisenman, 2019:iv).

Both Atwill and Eisenman regard Josephus Bar Mathias, (one of the Roman Prisoners of War from Judaea, who later became a historian of the Vespasian court and assumed the title, Titus Flavius Josephus) as a key figure for understanding the early Christian writings. Josephus in his accounts of the Jewish-Roman wars, mention that all artefacts from the temple of Jerusalem taken as spoils to Rome, were on public display except the Torah scrolls and other religious literature, which were locked in the private Flavian palace in Rome (Atwill, 2011:26-27). The Flavians collaborated with a number of Jewish intellectuals apart from Josephus, who later became an adopted member of the Flavian family. Atwill states that it is noteworthy that the earliest manuscripts of the New Testament included the history of Josephus and claims that the major figures of early Christianity were all related to the Flavians in some way or another, for e.g. Clement of Alexandria (Titus Flavius Clements) who is credited to have defined the first Christian symbols (Anchor, Olive Branch, Fish, Boat, Star and so on and so forth) which were also the symbols in the Flavian coins; Constantine (Flavius Constantine), who made Christianity the state religion and Philo

of Alexandria, the esteemed Jewish theologian, who belonged to the family of Alexanders of Egypt, one of the key families who funded the Flavians. He points out that some of the earliest Christian Saints of the Roman Catholic Church were even called the 'Christian Flavians', for instance, Flavia Domitilla and Pope Flavius St. Clement IST to name a few.

Atwill's thesis argue that the gospels follow a much prevalent art of writing, called 'Typology' which is essentially like creating archetypes, for instance, the 'son of man' prophecies of Jesus- that predicts three scenarios viz. the destruction of Galilee, Jerusalem being walled and the destruction of the temple, (all achieved by Titus Flavius), essentially created a stereotype much like Hebraic typologies that were meant to connect all the prophets. He further states that in the gospel of Matthew, events from the Old Testament were in the same sequence in the Life of Jesus Christ. Throughout his work, Atwill points out more than forty parallels in the scriptures in terms of names, locations and concepts, which he calls '*the Flavian Signature of the Gospels*' and argues that Jesus was in fact created as an allegory for Titus Flavius.

It is not the desire of this paper to present conclusions for or against any of the schools of thoughts on the theme of early Christianity, but to highlight the diversity of opinions on the same, all of which I believe are important in their own way to understand a broader picture. It is in no way meant to question faith, but nevertheless, to encourage questions from an academic point of view. There are several questions that remain unanswered, for instance- if the gospels were indeed about the Roman sentenced criminal, why weren't they destroyed? How did strong Christian churches manage to emerge in Rome, the capital city of the Empire, as early as 170 CE, if there was extensive persecution? Why does the story of Jesus bear incredible continuities with older 'pagan' traditions? Scholars as the likes of Timothy Freke in his work *The Jesus Mysteries: was the original Jesus a Pagan God?* have explored precisely that. Eminent

historians as the likes of Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch have extensively explored the theme of ‘silences’ in the history of Christianity alone, in his work *Silence: A Christian History*. Yet others have explored themes of ‘Othering’, for instance the inception of anti-Semitism⁸ around this time and wondered if in fact the canonisation of Christian scriptures could have been a political measure to rupture the unity of the Jews and incline a section of them towards Rome? Whatever be the case, there is definitely no doubt that all these developments, be it a crisis in the form of Roman oppression, or a controversy in the form of Roman creation, were vital in the survival of the religion altogether. As Stark brilliantly puts it “had some crises *not occurred*, the Christians would have been deprived of major, possibly crucial opportunities” (Stark, 1997:93).

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⁸ “Beginning with parts of the New Testament we find the early church fathers depicting the Jews as stubborn and eventually as wicked” (Stark, 1997:50)

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The Theopolitics of Vaccinations

Leyanna Susan George¹

Vaccination is considered to be one of the greatest public health achievements of the 20th century. It is a cost effective intervention that has helped to build a society free of vaccine preventable diseases and hence saved lives of millions of children across the globe.² Religion is one of the strongest belief systems that has existed for centuries. It provides a strict code of conduct for its believers to function in a non-primitive or cultured manner and to maintain camaraderie among its followers.³ Therefore, the ultimate goal of both religion and vaccination is the greater good

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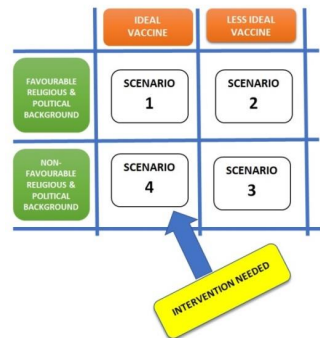
²Greenwood B. The contribution of vaccination to global health: past, present and future. *Philos Trans R Soc B Biol Sci* [Internet]. 2014 Jun 19 [cited 2020 Aug 28];369(1645).<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4024226/><1.3.2020>

³ McGivern R. Chapter 15. Religion. In: *Introduction to Sociology - 1st Canadian Edition* [Internet]. BCcampus; 2014 [cited 2020 Aug 28]. Available from: <https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology/chapter/chapter-15-religion/>

of mankind. However, when both these concepts get intermingled and influenced with negative politics, it may result in a negative outcome, contrary to the ultimate goal that it aims to achieve.⁴ Therefore, it is crucial to understand the inter play of the dynamic relationships that exist between religion, politics and vaccination.

A conceptual framework if drawn to showcase the complex interaction between religion, politics and vaccination would bring forth four different scenarios with four different outcomes. Since in most places around the world, religion and politics are intertwined, this framework considers religion and politics to be a single unit that complements each other. Hence, the four scenarios would be as follows:

Scenario 1 would consist of a situation where there exists potent & efficacious vaccines that would have significant positive impact on the lives of many and it is placed in a very favourable socio-political & religious background. This would be an ideal situation and would pave way for a successful immunization program. The Public health action required in this scenario would be minimal and only supportive measures would be needed.



In scenario 2, we have a strong socio-political & religious background that supports vaccinations, however if the vaccines are not that efficacious, then there would be no point in promoting such a public health intervention.

While scenario 3, would be based on a circumstance where we have a less impactful vaccine and less favourable socio-

⁴ NW 1615 L. St, Suite 800 Washington, Inquiries D 20036 USA 202-419-4300 | M-857-8562 | F-419-4372 | M. Human Enhancement: Scientific and Ethical Dimensions of Genetic Engineering, Brain Chips and Synthetic Blood [Internet]. Pew Research Center Science & Society. 2016 [cited 2020 Aug 28]. Available from: <https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2016/07/26/human-enhancement-the-scientific-and-ethical-dimensions-of-striving-for-perfection/>

political & religious environment. For example, in certain situations where vaccines against rare diseases like Kyasanur forest disease which are administered to only a selected few, the Public Health interventions required here would be minimal and would mainly focus on prevention of localized outbreaks.

In the last scenario 4, there is the presence of safe, potent and efficacious vaccines; however, the socio-political & religious circumstances are totally against it, preventing the successful implementation of vaccination campaigns. The “vaccine hesitancy” created in this scenario is of utmost public health importance and requires a full-fledged intervention to address the same. Interplay of different religious beliefs and mythology interlaced with politics are the main reasons for this vaccine hesitancy.⁵ This is the most critical scenario, which is often present across different parts of the world for which a unified emergency public health intervention involving multiple stakeholders is required.

A recent example of this vaccine hesitancy was seen in the Measles Rubella (MR) campaign conducted in India from February 2017 till April 2019. The campaign targeted to vaccinate 410 million children in the age group of 9 months to 15 years with a single shot of MR vaccine.⁶ The aim of the campaign was to introduce the MR vaccine into the routine immunization schedule and thereby lead to the elimination of measles and control rubella/congenital rubella syndrome by 2020.⁷ This campaign faced a lot anti vaccination propaganda. Multiple video

⁵ Baumgaertner B, Carlisle JE, Justwan F. The influence of political ideology and trust on willingness to vaccinate. PLOS ONE. 2018 Jan 25;13(1):e0191728.

⁶ India’s measles-rubella vaccination campaign a big step towards reducing childhood mortality, addressing birth defects [Internet]. [cited 2020 Aug 28]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/southeastasia/news/detail/05-02-2017-india-s-measles-rubella-vaccination-campaign-a-big-step-towards-reducing-childhood-mortality-addressing-birth-defects>

⁷ measles_rubella_vaccine_guidelines.pdf [Internet]. [cited 2020 Aug 28]. Available from: http://origin.searo.who.int/india/topics/measles/measles_rubella_vaccine_guidelines.pdf

clips were propagated through social media by the anti-vaccination lobby, which became instant hits and became viral especially among selected minority groups. These messages were being propagated by learned, respected, and influential people in the community such as doctors, spiritual leaders, etc. The videos portrayed that the hidden agenda behind this campaign was population reduction especially since it highlighted the importance of vaccinating the girl child creating even more suspicion among the general public. These messages did not go well with few minority groups and they termed this vaccination campaign to be an “anti-fertility drive”. The naturopaths and religious leaders also added further ‘colour and flavour’ to the already deteriorated situation.⁸

Lack of proper priming of the community prior to the launch of the vaccination campaign, use of old and rudimentary Information, education & communication (IEC) methods and delay from the government health sector to address these anti vaccination lobbies all worsened the situation even further. It created suspicion in the minds of the people making them question the genuineness of the intentions behind the campaign.⁹

This is just one of the examples of vaccine hesitancy. If we were to look at such examples from all around the world, most of the reasons behind vaccine hesitancy would broadly fall into three major domains. The first being, the religious domain which the anti-vaccination lobbyist often portray it as ‘population reduction agenda’ or ‘breach in religious practices’.¹⁰ The next important domain which is a lot more complicated is the Political domain which is quite similar but different at the same time in most

⁸ Krishnendhu VK, George LS. Drivers and barriers for measles rubella vaccination campaign: A qualitative study. *J Fam Med Prim Care*. 2019 Mar;8(3):881–5.

⁹ Smith TC. Vaccine Rejection and Hesitancy: A Review and Call to Action. *Open Forum Infect Dis* [Internet]. 2017 Jul 18 [cited 2020 Aug 28];4(3). Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5597904/>

¹⁰ Dubé E, Gagnon D, Nickels E, Jeram S, Schuster M. Mapping vaccine hesitancy—Country-specific characteristics of a global phenomenon. *Vaccine*. 2014 Nov 20;32(49):6649–54.

places around the world. The basis of similarity lies in the fact that it is often due to ‘power politics’ and it only differs based on the ‘parties’ involved. The underlying thread of the political dimension is the fight for power and lack of trust which is portrayed differently in different scenarios such as ‘anti-Western sentiment’, ‘conspiracy theories’ etc. Third is the personal belief or philosophical domain, where the anti-vaccination lobbyists picks upon various factors and portrays it in a very attractive and ‘believable’ manner that the ill-informed public becomes an easy prey to their vicious plot. They often capture the minor weaknesses in the implementation of the vaccination campaigns and blow it out of proportion creating fear and panic among the general public. This is often topped off by inputs from ‘naturopathy healers’ who put forward very ‘convincing ideas’ further worsening the situation.¹¹

Hence, it bring us to this big question at hand- What do we do now? Over the years we have realized two things. One, the Anti-vaccination lobby is super strong and they use social media to their very benefit.¹² Second is that for any vaccination campaign to be successful it would require a positive socio- political and religious background. Over the years, each one was on their own, fighting their own battle using rudimentary IEC tactics. Now, it is the time to build a unified multi-disciplinary team consisting of religious leaders, community members, public health specialists, clinical specialists, opinion leaders, politicians etc. who would jointly combat the anti-vaccination lobbyist promptly through various media and social platforms. However, in the long run in order to have a sustainable solution to this crisis we need to create a resilient health system based on a strong foundation of a positive socio-political and religious milieu in which the general public has ardent faith.

¹¹ Dubé E, Laberge C, Guay M, Bramadat P, Roy R, Bettinger JA. Vaccine hesitancy. *Hum Vaccines Immunother.* 2013 Aug 1;9(8):1763–73.

¹² Evrony A, Caplan A. The overlooked dangers of anti-vaccination groups’ social media presence. *Hum Vaccines Immunother.* 2017 Apr 13;13(6):1475–6.

Reunion of Joseph and his Brothers: Narrative Analysis of Genesis 42: 1-12

Eldho Malayil¹

1. Translation and text criticism

1.1 The use of the verb *raʾah* in *hitpaʿel*

The verb ‘ראה’ occurs 1,303 times in the Old Testament of these 1,129 are qal forms. In the book of Genesis this verb comes in qal form for about 123 times.² The use of the verb root ‘ראה’ in the *hitpaʿel* form is rare and occurs 5 times in the in OT, they are in (Gen. 42:1; 2 K. 14:8,11; 2 Ch. 25:17[Q],21)³ and Gen. 42:1 is the one and only occurrence in the book of Genesis, where the verb ‘ראה’ is in the *hitpaʿel* form. The meaning of this verb in the text is “to look at one another”⁴.

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² H.-J. FABRY., ed. – H. RINGGREN., ed. – G.J. BOTTERWECK., ed., *TDOT*, 212.

³ H.-J. FABRY., ed. – H. RINGGREN., ed. – G.J. BOTTERWECK., ed., *TDOT*, 213.

⁴ L. KOEHLER – W. BAUMGARTNER, *HALOT*, 1161.

The use of this verb in this specific and rare form, exposes the uniqueness of the situation. We could easily assume it as a deliberative use of this verb in this specific form to show the complexity of the situation.

1.2 Variant readings

The LXX translation proposes a variant for the MT usage of 'רָאָה' i.e. for the 'תִּתְרָאוּ' form, the LXX gives the variant as 'תִּתְאַחֲרוּ'⁵ which has a different root (אָחַר) with the meaning 'to be behind', 'to delay',⁶ the LXX variant takes the verb in the piel form, imperfect, second person, masculine, plural, and translates it as 'ῥαθουμεῖτε' (Present. Indicative. Active. Second person. Plural of the verb ῥαθουμεῖω). The verb ῥαθουμεῖω means 'to dally, to delay'.⁷ For the same verb the Lexicon of T. Muraoka explains as 'to behave with indifference', ἵνα τί ῥαθουμεῖτε; 'why are you being so indifferent?'⁸ So the LXX translation gives us the understanding that, Jacob was asking them to do the required or they themselves should have gone, i.e. to go to the land of Egypt for stokes but they delayed and were ignorant to finding food or to what Jacob was saying. The MT took the verb in its reciprocal meaning, indicates that two or more subjects act in relationship to each other: "Come, let us look one another in the face" (2 Kgs 14:8).⁹ Because of this change the verb faced during its later usage that the MT text has been translated with such a meaning. Instead in the the reciprocal sense the text is trying to reveal the delay which the brothers made.

The second variant reading on this crucial verb is in Syriac version (Phesitta) and the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, the verb is taken as 'תִּירָאוּ', which is from the root 'יָרָא' with the meaning 'to be afraid'¹⁰ and is in the qal form, imperfect, second person, masculine, plural. This translation leads us to a previous event

⁵ A. ALT, – O. EISSFELDT, – P.E. KAHLE, – R. KITTEL, *BHS*, 69.

⁶ L. KOEHLER – W. BAUMGARTNER, *HALOT*, 307.

⁷ HAUSPIE, K., ed. – EYNIKEL, E., ed. – LUST, J., ed., *G-ELS*, 1042.

⁸ T. MURAOKA, *G-ELS*, 611.

⁹ Cf. B. T. ARNOLD & J. H. CHOI, *Hebrew Syntax*, 48.

¹⁰ T. O. LAMBDIN, *Biblical Hebrew*, 321.

(Gen 37:12--36), which depicts Joseph being sold to Egypt. So the brothers have fear in going to that land, to where they sold their brother. The second reason behind the fear of the brothers could also be related to the theme of slavery, since Egypt is seen as a land of slavery.

1.3 Relevant and acceptable text and form

In my point of view, while paying attention to the context, the LXX view point and the translation of the text is more acceptable. The LXX translation is as ῥαθυμεῖτε already mentioned, which mentions and tries to convey an idea of a delay or indifference. The addition of text in the succeeding verse i.e. in v.2 of Masoretic text also attest this fact. 'וַיִּאָמְרוּ' is not present in the LXX text, so by this specific inclusion in the Masoretic text, the text is trying to make it clear that Jacob's question in v. 1 went unheeded by his sons.¹¹ So both of the relevant text are trying to convey that, Jacob's sons were not obeying what Jacob was saying before. It is then clear that Jacob's sons delayed or they behaved with indifference. The later translation i.e. the Syriac Peshitta was trying to add or make clear the reason of the delay or indifference of the brothers by stating it as fear of the brothers, because they have sold Joseph to Egypt and Egypt is seen as a land of slavery. So the most valid and acceptable version is the LXX version of 'ῥαθυμεῖτε'.

1.4 Clarity of the Text

The better clarity on this verb leads us to a better understanding of this narration, because this narration is taking its major course from this action or taking this action as a base, so a clarity on this act will lead to a better understanding of the sequence which follows. The addition of the 'וַיִּאָמְרוּ' formula also affirms this claim, because such repletion is an indication of a failure of response by the interlocutors.¹²

¹¹ Cf. V. P. Hamilton, *Genesis*, 830.

¹² Cf. R. Alter, *Hebrew Bible*, 278.

2. Close reading of the text

Until now Everything happened as it was prophesized by Joseph. Chap. 41 ends by stating the severity of the famine (Gen 41:54,56,57). The transmission of power over the grains happens from Pharaoh to Joseph. Gen 41 also ends by stating two important things, “all the earth came before Joseph for grain” and “the famine was severe throughout the world”. The transmission of power from Pharaoh to Joseph is stated by the narrator, a trivial dialogue by the character of Pharaoh (לְכֹן אֶל-יֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר-יָאמַר לָכֶם תַּעֲשׂוּ: Gen 41:55) gives legitimacy to narrators claim. A gradual emphasis on the famine which struck the world is made.

Gen 41:54 - states the *beginning* of the famine.

Gen 41:55 - famine *struck* Egypt.

Gen 41:56 - famine was *severe* in Egypt.

Gen 41:57 - famine became *severe* throughout the world.

There are very few events in biblical narrative which have neither a causal nor a sequential role to play in the chain of the narrative.¹³ Here the incidents succeed one another in a chronological as well as a causal sequence, one incident being the outcome of the previous one and the cause of the one that follows it.¹⁴

2.1 The family in canaan in Gen 42: 1-5

Through gradual transition of power and the severity of the famine, the author has set the setting for the climax and final resolution of the events which began in Gen 37. The important thing to note is that, ‘וַיִּתְאַבֵּל עַל-בָּנָיו יָמִים רַבִּים:’, “and he [Jacob] mourned for his sons many days” (Gen 37:34) the verb used here is in the *hithpael* form with Iterative meaning – indicates repeated action.¹⁵ This makes the emotional state of the character of Jacob. Even though the narrative concentrates on the development of

¹³ S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 96.

¹⁴ Cf. S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 95.

¹⁵ B. T. ARNOLD & J. H. CHOI, *Hebrew Syntax*, 47.

events in Egypt, this verb elucidates the action and the state of Jacob's character in Canaan.

Narration time, namely, the time required for telling or reading the narrative, can be determined easily.¹⁶ A detailed narration of the travel and meeting is been done. *Narrative Time*: 21 years have passed after Gen 37:33.¹⁷ Joseph was sold at the age of 17, he was 30 when the famine began, and it has lasted 7 years.¹⁸ All in all, the narrator chooses to essentially report a series of encounters on which he sometimes extends a great deal, the pace of the narrative is therefore quite slow, with short transitions that allow you to move from one scene to another.¹⁹ But the first scene in this series is a very short scene, the narrator uses short descriptions and the dialogues delivered by the characters are short, the best example is Jacob in v. 1: לָמָּה תִּתְרָאוּ, even crucial responses from some important characters are not even noted in the text, instead certain actions of each characters speaks more than the words they say. For example, by referring to the delay of Jacob's sons (לָמָּה תִּתְרָאוּ), the narrator is making it clear that the situation of Jacob's family twenty years after Joseph's departure is the same. So the character of Jacob and his ten sons and the condition of the family remains the same.

2.2 Jacob's "mourning", "seeing" in v. 1 and "fearing" in v. 4

The chief character accords unity to the separate narratives, not only because he features in all of them but also because the permanent aspects of his personality are reflected in them all.²⁰ The threat caused by the lack of grain is expressed in v. 2, i.e. it is a matter of life and death. This presentation of famine and its impact upon the family could be seen as a move to enhance the authority of Joseph and this supports all his actions in the development of the plot. This is done to emphasize and it

¹⁶ S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 143.

¹⁷ E. I. LOWENTHAL, *Joseph Narrative*, 63.

¹⁸ V. P. HAMILTON, *Genesis*, 515.

¹⁹ A. WENIN, *Genesis*, 94.

²⁰ Cf. S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 135.

enhances the plot development. Our access to the story is through the narrator. Here in the first verse itself the reintroduction of Jacob happens, who was not in the scene from chap. 37. Jacob is the subject in v. 1, which initializes the action series. Why does Jacob spoke like that? what the text has to say about this?

In the first verse itself the narrator makes clear that Jacob has authority over his ten sons.²¹ The verb in the cohortative form in v. 2 also supports this. An outside observer can see that a person is looking, but is unable to tell what the person is seeing; in contrast to the verb 'look', the verb 'see' relates to internal occurrences,²² so “וַיֵּרָא יַעֲקֹב (Gen. 42:1)” points towards an internal occurrence. So from this internal tension the question of Jacob towards the ten arises. Jacob is now sure about the availability of grain in Egypt (the *waw* in v. 1 acts as the conjunctive *waw*, which connects the seeing of Jacob and the food in Egypt.). The understanding of Jacob and his reaction are closely connected.

Live and not die “וְנִחְיֶה וְלֹא נָמוּת” - Gen 42:2

The ordering of the words is important in the development of the plot.

It is not “so that we may not die” “וְלֹא נָמוּת”

It is “so that we may *live* and not die” “וְנִחְיֶה וְלֹא נָמוּת” “live” or the verb “חיה” is used in the cohortative form before the verb for death in the imperfect form. Life is emphasized. It clarifies the focus of this narration.

2.3 Decision Making and identity of a character explicit through “אמר” in Gen 42:1

The narrator is focusing on the decisions made by the characters, even though this is not evident, even for a vague reader this is made clear, when we analyze the literary part of the narrative, for example the usage of the verb in v. 1, (אמר) which we have already explained and the use of “וַיֹּאמֶר” afterwards it by

²¹ G. J. WENHAM, *Genesis*, 1015.

²² S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 21.

the MT shows the delay in decision made by the brothers. The decisions made by the characters could also be viewed as expressing the identity of the character in the narrative.²³ Because it involves choosing between alternatives, decisions reveal a person's scale of values. Here at this point the characters i.e. the ten sons of Jacob have to choose between their responsibility towards the family and their safety. So in consideration of the ethical side of decision making, they failed terribly, because they delayed, for the pleasure or safety of their flesh (the fear of Jacob's ten sons, which is obvious since Egypt is the land of misery and slavery and death – that is why they planned to sell Joseph to there)²⁴. So here the characters' (ten sons) actions are indirectly drawing our conclusions towards the outcome. The delay made by the 'ten' in the decision making process or in action could be seen as a justifiable claim for not sending Benjamin with the ten (which is said explicitly by the narrator in v. 4), because the ten delayed even when the concern of famine turned to be big question of living or dying. So there is a good reason for the Jacob to fear. The decision made by the ten at the beginning of this narrative shows their weakness in the moral side. So here the inaction of the ten i.e. the failure to act, the decision to refrain from action describes their character. we could answer the brevity of this statement by saying that in a long narrative the author chooses short sentences to describe the nature of a character. So here in the first verse itself the narrator is making a clear statement about the ten and it is acting in support of Jacob's fear. the narrative on occasions directs the reader's attention, whether overtly or covertly, to someone's inaction, and in this case it can be assumed that this is significant.²⁵ So the inaction of the ten specifies their characters. It is important to note at what point of narration this inaction is set?

²³ Cf. S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 80.

²⁴ Cf. E. I. LOWENTHAL, *Joseph Narrative*, 65.

²⁵ Cf.S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 83.

2.4 Interpeak and complication

In the larger plot line, Chap. 42 could be termed as the interpeak episode and this section maintains a high peak of dramatic tension. These verses are situated or this section is located between the climax of Joseph's rise to power and his denouement by himself to his brothers. This could be termed as the first descent of brothers to Egypt.²⁶ This section is a part of the complication in the Joseph novella.²⁷ Here in this section and in some verses preceding this section the situation is introduced and the crises arises when Joseph is accusing his brothers for spying. So when we consider the larger plotline, Joseph elevation to power in its first sense could be taken as a resolution in its immediate context and in the larger plot line it turns to be complication in the plot development.

2.5 Complication and an Exposition

The situation which the narrator explains in v. 1 and the details expressed by the narrator himself in the following verses could also be stated as an exposition, because this serves as an introduction to the new action described in the narrative, now the scene has been changed from Egypt to the family of Jacob, so v. 1 is supplying the background information about the situation in Jacob's family, it also says about the traits of the characters, like the fear of Jacob the delay of the ten. It has also solid information on the state in life of Jacob and his sons and the problematic relationship inside the family. All of these details provides the understanding for the advancement of the story. The facts serving as the background of the story is made known to the reader or to the audience in few words. Here we could see from the part of the narrator the tendency to include only the essential details. The information included in the exposition has its function in the

²⁶ R. E. LONGACRE, *Joseph*, 47.

²⁷ This could also be seen as a turning point in the storyline, since the story had its climax in Joseph rising to power in Egypt and the family suffering in the land of Canaan. So this verses could also be termed as a turning point in the life of each characters and even so as in the mind and thinking of the reader itself.

development of the plot and actions. So the information included in the exposition at the beginning of the narrative thus serves as a natural point of departure for the action itself,²⁸ here it is the grains in Egypt seen by Jacob serves as the natural point of departure for the action (the *waw* in v. 1 acts as the conjunctive *waw*, which connects the seeing of Jacob and the food in Egypt.), that is for the travel of the ten towards Egypt. Rather than providing making the reader informative about the flow of the story the information given in the exposition is given to emphasize the matters of importance. So here the delay of the ten is an important matter, which the narrator is emphasizing.

2.6 Narrative Time and events in vv. 3-5

So the time narrated in the story goes well with events narrated, specifically in the opening scenes of Gen 42, within the vv. 3-5 the brothers travel between Canaan and Egypt is noted, the time and the events during the travel is not noted, instead the narration redly shows the arrival of the brothers in front of Joseph. The means through which or the reason for which brothers are brought before the Vizier of the land is not explained instead the narration gives emphasis on the prostration of the brothers. The details which the narrator gives importance shows the movement of the storyline. The time which the narrator spends on each event is so crucial, because this is the longest sequence in the Joseph narrative (the journeys of the brothers) and the narrator is concentrating on Jacob's family, in that the reconciliation with in the family, so in the longest narrative in the patriarchal narrative series this narration and the narrator gives emphasizes on the crucial use of the time and the events. Because of all these reasons even though the narrative time in the journey and reunion narrative sequence is slow, the narrative time in noting certain specific events of narration is fast.

²⁸ S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 116.

2.7 Obedience in v. 3 and character shaping

A valuable contribution to the shaping of the characters is made by their (verbal) reactions to things that are said to them. However, these reactions are not always recorded. When a person issues a command (to someone of lower status) the speech is generally one-sided and does not develop into a dialogue. In these cases, it is usually only the implementation of the command which is recorded,²⁹ to make this clear the narrator is not recording any response from the part of ten or no resistance is shown from the part of the ten sons to Jacob's command, they are just obeying.

2.8 Jacob in v. 4

In v. 1 a new scene starts, because the characters are changing. The ten brothers are coming in. The participants are Jacob and his ten sons, Benjamin and Joseph. The conversation between Jacob and his sons is shown as bilateral, because the ten is shown as one entity i.e. Jacob's ten sons forms a collective character and it's the same with Joseph and the ten.³⁰ So to show the ten as one entity the *ason* relating to Benjamin is made clear in v. 4. The narrator took special care in saying it, even after v. 3 which depicts the departure of the brothers to Egypt, v. 4 says this and the notes on travel of the ten is repeated in v. 5. Benjamin is present but he is not saying anything for himself instead Jacob is speaking for him, reveals the dependency and debility of Benjamin's character even at this stage of his life, this makes clear that the things relating to every character in the family is the same as it was before Joseph departure.

Jacob and the ten are shown as members of two opposing camps as also with Joseph and the ten. In the first scene Benjamin also falls on to the camp of Jacob or both Benjamin and Jacob are

²⁹ Cf. S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 73.

³⁰ It is difficult to precisely say because the collective character of ten leaves the scene as a conversation in the bilateral level, it's a difficult choice between multilateral and bilateral.

identified as one entity, because Jacob is the voice of Benjamin. Here at this point of the narrative the narrator's knowledge is not limited, here the narrator is present in the inner thoughts and thinking of the characters. Narrator is aware of the inner fear of Jacob and even in the memory of Joseph. But he is not interested in the inner thoughts of the ten.

2.9 Emotive type of speech

The type of speech which is particularly effective in disclosing a person's psychological state is the emotive one. A classic example of this kind of speech, revealing quite clearly what is going on in the speaker's mind,³¹ this is done when Jacob speaks about his beloved son Benjamin, the psychological state of Jacob's mind is revealed. The narrator clearly says what is going on in Jacob's mind.

Gen 42:1 - לָמָּה תִּתְּרָאוּ -

Gen 42:2 - שְׁמַעְתִּי כִּי יֵשׁ-שָׂבָר בְּמִצְרַיִם רְדוֹ-שָׁמָּה וְשִׁבְרוּ-לָנוּ מִשָּׁם וְנַחֲיָה וְלֹא נָמוּת -

Both of his speeches which are at the beginning of this new series of events are correlated to this psychological state of mind i.e. the fear which Jacob is going through. The narrator clearly says that Jacob through his understanding of the delay of his sons has fear of life and death, not only of himself but also of his son Benjamin whom he should protect. This is sufficient enough to expose the emotional shock endured by their father. Here is the point where the narrator introduces “אֶסּוֹן” in all its impact. The importance of “אֶסּוֹן” in the narrative will be explained later in this study.

2.10 Sons of Israel identified with nations

Gen 42:5 – arrival of the ten and makes clear that the famine also reached the land of Canaan (The manner in which Joseph's brothers are depicted, among those who journeyed (42:5), reinforces the impression of weakness and lack of character.)³²

“וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְשֹׁבֵר בְּתוֹךְ הַבָּאִים” – the ten stated as the sons of Israel. Gen 32:27-31 makes it clear that Jacob is identified as

³¹ S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 68.

³² J. B. DOUKHAN, *Genesis*, 450.

Israel because of the blessing he received as the elect of God,³³ here when the sons are called as sons of Israel the same divine election is restated regarding them, but along with that they are identified with the others. On the completion of this act onwards the events are getting developed in the setting of Egypt.

2.11 Specific information and characterization in Gen 42:6-12

Direct characterization of Joseph is what follows after the identification of the ten with the nations. In v. 6 Joseph is the one selling grains to all the people of the land. Brothers' identification is for the fortification of Joseph's character. The meeting of the ten and Joseph is what happens in v. 6. The collision is between individuals. At this point of the narrative, the collision and conflict is happening at the beginning itself. The identity of the characters increases the intensity of the collision, the disparity between the ten and Joseph, even the translator who comes later the languages which both speak all helps intensifying this collision and leads to conflict.

The biblical narrator frequently makes use of this technique of introducing people and mentioning background details in their proper place, that is, at the point when they are discerned by the chief characters or become important as regards the development of the plot.³⁴

2.12 Joseph and “הַשְׁלִיט”

At this moment this background detail on the Joseph is important for plot development and also provided with specific intention also makes this characterization clear, for Joseph's character the “הַשְׁלִיט” in Gen 42:6 is given as an adjective instead of a verb. This difference in the designation which the narrator specifies, for the action which he is performing on the people or the land, is just said as an adjective of him specifies the characterization of Joseph's character more superior and he deserves it. Then his selling of the grains to the people is said in

³³ Cf. A. WENIN, *Joseph*, 24-25.

³⁴ S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 117-118.

the verb, because it came to him after the famine, but he is the “שליט” in the family. So Joseph is characterized extremely powerful. It is interesting to note that these expressions of direct characterization are noted by the narrator himself. This becomes crucial when we consider the fact that the narrator is making very few direct statements about the characters’ personalities. Here it is clear that the protagonist is introduced at this moment by the indirect speech. The reader as in the real life could draw conclusions about the people from what they say and do. Then an action of accusations which Joseph does afterwards is proper and upright for the narrator and the reader and both narrator and the reader will consider this as revenge from the part of Joseph, since he is the ruler of the land. We could easily say that the narrator uses the technique of characterization in the indirect form here and the character of Joseph is dynamic in this characterization, because his actions and words change as time passes. So the personality of Joseph remains mobile but his “שליט” (his adjective) is constant from the beginning of the narrative as of now and it is specified by the use of “ה”.

When Joseph character is indirectly depicted as dynamic, what is directly said about the character of the ten which is static, they are dishonest because they in their direct conversation says that, they are honest and later says among them they are guilty. The actions and reactions of the ten changes and shifts according to the situation and time, but the stable component which remains in them is this dishonesty. This makes it clear that all the characters at this point of narration is complex not flat. This will also have its effects on their actions and reactions, as we see it in the sequence of accusation and negation.

That is why we could see a direct and smooth transition from the information in the exposition i.e. on the lordship of Joseph in v. 6 to the questioning and the accusation of the ten. This happens immediately, the account or the background communicated at v. 6 of the narrative about the “לְיוֹסֵף הָיָה הַשְׁלִיטָה” i.e. the detail concerning the character of Joseph is immediately connected with

the account of events themselves, i.e. the accusations. Immediately after restating the “הַשְׁלִיט” of Joseph suddenly from v. 9 the development of plot by accusation and the trail happens (וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם מְרִגְלִים אַתֶּם). Here the information about Joseph functions as the point of departure of the action related to his character.

When we consider the wider plot line of the narrative, the turning point comes at the moment where the tension reaches its height. The accusation of the ten by Joseph could be seen as turning point in the narrative.

2.13 Repetitions in vv. 7-8

The narrative sequence develops in three stages which correspond to as many of the brothers' journeys to Egypt and to as many (often dubbed) encounters with Joseph. The sequence is marked by numerous indications of place and time which underline the continuity between the episodes and the scenes.³⁵ The events from the past are introduced in the narrative, events that are completely out of the chronological order; the remembering of the dream by Joseph is the best example. So its mentioning here is something special and has significance. Since Joseph's remembering of the dream which he dreamed is one such a moment. The following accusation is extremely moving, conveying the depths of emotional shock. This could be seen as a case of emotional memory and its reaction. How we could know that this has a tremendous impact? This is achieved through numerous repetitions of recognition (וַיִּכְרֶם וַיִּתְּנֶכֶר) and of accusation (וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם מְרִגְלִים אַתֶּם). Joseph actions after seeing (also could be taken as understanding, already explained) his brothers are these. These repetitions without forming a complete sentence could be taken as Joseph's inability to think logically during those moments. All these thoughts and accusations are concentrated on one object the ten brothers and Joseph is the subject in all those actions. As we have seen in chap. 37: 5-8, with

³⁵ A. WENIN, *Genesis*, 93-94.

Joseph's dream the complication in Joseph cycle begins,³⁶ is the same here the remembering of the dream leads to accusation and the dreams of Joseph generated hatred in brothers (the ten) towards Joseph, here it is implied an emotion of hatred in Joseph. The same verbs used in these chapters (37, 42 at this specific point of narration) points towards this.

A bridge is sometimes constructed between the separate narratives in a sequence through keywords whose reiteration hints at a substantive connection between the various narratives, at a unifying line and at the significance of the overall plot.³⁷ This is what the narrator does with chapter 37 and chapter 42 of Genesis. Gen 37 on the dreams of Joseph and Gen 42 on its actualization. The words used are the same but the word order is reversed. Gen 37: 8, "וַיֹּסֶפוּ עוֹד שְׂנֹא אֹתוֹ עַל־חֲלֻמֹתָיו וְעַל־דְּבָרָיו", "on account of his dreams and on account of his words," a gloss on "they hated him even more." Suggested purpose: to make explicit the twofold source of the brothers' hatred, viz. dreams and tale-bearing.³⁸ Now we know the reason why the dream is said in 42:9 instead of saying it just after the bowing of the brothers in 42:6, as in the beginning of the story the words and deeds of Joseph resulted in hatred here also the same is going to happen. Accusation is what follows the remembering the dream.

In the midst of all these broken sentences of accusations there is one complete sentence (פָּלְנוּ בְּנֵי אִישׁ־אֶחָד נִחְנוּ בְּנִים אֲנַחְנוּ לֹא־הָיוּ עֲבָדֶיךָ מִרְגָּלִים) in which theme of dishonesty is repeated in its complete sense. So at this moment of the narration it is not the brotherhood that what is lacking now, then what? [v. 11: פָּלְנוּ בְּנֵי אִישׁ־אֶחָד נִחְנוּ בְּנִים אֲנַחְנוּ ; v. 21: וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־אֶחָיו אָבֶל אֲשָׁמִים:], it is this contradictions which they keep in themselves that makes them appropriate for a test and Joseph is doing that and he is the proper one for that. So now it is clear that, from the beginning of this new narration the brothers are delaying even the plot is crucial and asking for steps

³⁶ Cf. A. Wenin, *Joseph*, 28.

³⁷ Cf. S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 135-136.

³⁸ D. B. REDFORD, *Joseph*, 29.

and actions towards resolution, even though the brothers who are in v. 1 (אָהר) which the narrator makes clear in the reciprocal sense is delaying themselves in finding the live stocks they themselves claim to be honest men (נָהֲנוּ כְּנִים). This is what they lack. So Joseph's accusations without stating the brotherhood are aimed to convey this feeling of dishonesty. So the remembering of the dreams developed into actions. The inner feeling of a character results in speech which expresses his emotion and teaches us a crucial thing about the interlocutor (the dishonesty).

Here the speech style is not polite, brothers and sisters tend to address one another with the term, 'my brother', or 'my sister' (Gen. 33:9).³⁹

Gen 33:9 - וַיֹּאמֶר עֲשׂוֹ יִשְׁלִי רַב אָחִי יְהִי לִּי אֲשֶׁר-לָךְ -

Here Esau, after Jacob return from Laban's house is addressing him back as "my brother". Even though Jacob is addressing his brother as (אֲדֹנִי: Gen 33:13) "my Lord" and himself as "his servant" (עַבְדִּי: Gen 33:14), and this pattern of addressing repeats in chapters 32 and 33. In all these cases the use of this kind of speech the speaker is trying to reflect his feeling of guilt towards his brother, for the crime he has committed towards him and by using all these terms the speaker is trying to appease the hearer. So by following this relevant pattern of speech here in this narration the narrator is keen in conveying two things to his readers. One is ten brothers' eagerness to please the vizier of Egypt, in front of whom they are standing, the other important factor which many of the readers missed is the guilt feeling which the narrator evidently conveys through the specific use of this speech.

In the same way in the Jacob narrative, the moment Jacob bows down seven times to the ground before Esau during the reunion, the reconciliation between Esau and Jacob happens (Gen 33:4, Esau comes and kisses Jacob), resolution is what follows that act of bowing (וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה שִׁבְעַת פְּעָמִים Gen 33:3), but in the Joseph narrative a reader who has prior knowledge of the Jacob narrator

³⁹ Cf. S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 67.

expects a resolution, instead here the things are getting complicated. The final reconciliation in the Jacob narrative happens after the reunion of the physically separated brothers after twenty years. Two peculiarities from the Jacob narrative is same with Joseph narrative, the brothers were physically separated and meets after twenty years, but in Joseph narrative instead of simple reconciliation what follows is the accusation. The “delay” from the part of the ten is so crucial in the Joseph narrative. This distinguishes Joseph narrative and even delay’s the final resolution.

2.14 The roles played by Jacob and Joseph

In relation to the brothers the character of Jacob fulfills the role of a responsible father who guides his sons; this is what emphasizes his personality in this part of the narrative. The negative behavior of the ten sons is emphasized in comparison to the positive traits of Jacob. The character of Jacob has now also hope, enthusiasm and courage to take steps. The characters of the ten in comparisons with Joseph’s character is picturized when they are in the court of the vizier, they answer what Joseph asks. The short question of Joseph and the detailed answers made by the brothers shows the difference in personalities. The actions done by Joseph (selling grains to the people) depicts him as a responsible ruler. The irresponsibility of the ten is highlighted in comparison with the responsible characters of Jacob and Joseph.

2.15 The verbs and deeds speaks more than adjectives

For expressing the views on the characters and the characterization the narrator uses more verbs than using adjectives. So the aspects of personality are illustrated using by verbs in a sense by the speeches and actions done as defined in the scene for specific characters

Jacob: see, say, [passively, i.e. by narrators account: sending ten and not sending Benjamin]

Benjamin: [passively may encounter *ason*]

Brothers: delaying, [passively: listening, to buy] went down, came down, bowing, not recognize, spying, see pass.

Joseph: [passively: ruling, selling grains,] seeing, speaking (saying), recognition, remember, dreamed pass., accusing pass.

Two acts Jacob – “accusing the ten for delay (not seeing what is to be seen/understood)” setting in Canaan

Joseph – “accusing the ten for (seeing what is not to be seen)” setting is in Egypt

The ten are characterized with negative actions and the important actions of seeing and recognition are absent from them. For this negativity they are accused, the changing in setting and the accuser (in v. 1: Jacob and in v. 9) is to show the unchanging negativity of the ten.

2.15.1 Different actions of the ten

For example, the words from the ten brothers are just responses or answers for the serious accusation which Joseph makes against them; they are not even saying anything as response to Jacob words, only actions from the ten follows Jacob's words. In a longer narrative, on the other hand—and it makes no difference whether this is one long one or several short ones in which the same character appears—it is possible to relate different actions illustrating the same tendency or characteristic.⁴⁰ Through different negative actions the narrator is emphasizing this aspect of the ten. So, the different actions of the ten brothers communicate the same thing.

2.16 The absence of “אחים” in Joseph’s statement

Even though the ten reveals that they are brothers and sons of one man, in Joseph's accusation when he is restating it in v. 14 he is excluding the term brothers (אחים) and sons of one man (בְּנֵי אִישׁ-אֶחָד). Why? Because the dishonesty of the ten and so the “אסון” is hanging on Benjamin.

2.17 The narrator in the narration

This is one of the important aspect of this part of the narration, that is why it is dealt at the end.

⁴⁰ S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 81.

In the narration of the brothers' journey to Egypt, specifically in the verses of our concern i.e. Gen 42:1-12, narrator is the one who is speaking the most. This is because a long narrative sequence has its beginning here,⁴¹ so the narrator is preparing the ground for the final resolution. So the things delivered at this point are from the narrator's point of view.

¹ וַיֵּרָא יַעֲקֹב כִּי יִשְׁשָׁבֶר בְּמִצְרַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב לְבָנָיו לָמָּה תִּתְּרֹאוּ: ² וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה שְׁמֵעָתִי כִּי יִשְׁשָׁבֶר בְּמִצְרַיִם רְדוֹ-שָׁמָּה וְשִׁבְרוּ-לָנוּ מִשֶּׁם וְנִחְיָה וְלֹא נָמוּת: ³ וַיֵּרְדּוּ אֲחֵי-יוֹסֵף עֲשָׂרָה לִשְׁבֵר בַּר מִמִּצְרַיִם: ⁴ וְאֶת-בְּנֵימִין אָחִי יוֹסֵף לֹא-שָׁלַח יַעֲקֹב אֶת-אָחִיו כִּי אָמַר פֶּן-יִקְרָאֲנוּ אִסּוֹן: ⁵ וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִשְׁבֵר בְּתוֹךְ הַבָּאִים כִּי-הָיָה הָרָעַב בָּאָרֶץ כְּנָעַן: ⁶ וַיּוֹסֶף הוּא הַשְּׁלִיט עַל-הָאָרֶץ הוּא הַמְּשַׁבִּיר לְכָל-עַם הָאָרֶץ וַיָּבֹאוּ אָחִי יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ-לוֹ אַפַּיִם אֲרָצָה: ⁷ וַיֵּרָא יוֹסֵף אֶת-אָחִיו וַיִּכְרַם וַיַּתְּנֶכֶר אֲלֵיהֶם וַיַּדְבֵּר אִתָּם קִשּׁוֹת וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם מֵאִין בָּאתֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ מֵאָרֶץ מִצְרָיִם כְּנָעַן לִשְׁבֵר-אֶכֶל: ⁸ וַיִּכֹּר יוֹסֵף אֶת-אָחִיו וְהֵם לֹא הִכְרֹהוּ: ⁹ וַיִּזְכֹּר יוֹסֵף אֶת הַחֲלָמוֹת אֲשֶׁר חָלַם לָהֶם וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם מְרַגְלִים אַתֶּם לָרְאוֹת אֶת-עֲרֹנוֹת הָאָרֶץ בָּאתֶם: ¹⁰ וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו לֹא אֲדֹנִי וְעַבְדְּךָ בָּאוּ לִשְׁבֹר-אֶכֶל: ¹¹ כָּלָנוּ בְנֵי אִישׁ-אֶחָד נָחֲנוּ בְּנִים אֲנַחְנוּ לֹא-הָיוּ עַבְדֶּיךָ מְרַגְלִים: ¹² וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם לֹא כִי-עֲרֹנוֹת הָאָרֶץ בָּאתֶם לָרְאוֹת: (Gen. 42:1-12)

The verses which are in red are from the narrator and which are highlighted in yellow is from Jacob the protagonist at the beginning and the sentences in green and blue are from Joseph (the transition happens from Jacob to Joseph) and this ten brothers respectively. This attests the fact that the author is the one who speaks more and he is adding the dialogues from each character to substantiate his narration. At this part of the narration the narrator has a major role in narrating the event in comparison to the direct speech by the characters.⁴² Along with that the author is extremely involved in the narration and gives extra care in narrating the minute details, since this episode establishes the framework for the development of plot in the succeeding chapters,⁴³ so this makes it important for a reader to concentrate on what the narrator is focusing

⁴¹ Cf. A. WENIN, *Genesis*, 93.

⁴² Robert Alter also details this in his book; R. Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 120.

⁴³ Cf. G. J. WENHAM, *Genesis*, 1014.

2.17.1 Narrator-character direct discourse

Along with that the divine-human micro-dialogue, which characterized the patriarchal narratives is now replaced, or at most subdued, in favor of a narrator-character direct discourse in third person style.⁴⁴

Gen 42:1 – narrator turns his attention towards Jacob, Jacob saw (ראה) grain in Egypt

Gen 42:3 – brothers leaving Canaan towards Egypt

Gen 42:4 – Jacob reserving Benjamin on fear of harm (אסון) (the narrator knows his human character in the level of emotion, before he mourned now he is in fear) – information about Jacob's mood is given, which is transient serves to create the personality of the character in the narrative.⁴⁵ Direct statement about character's mood is done by the narrator.

Gen 42:6 – Joseph ruler over the land and sold grains (Direct Characterization), bowing of the ten (- narrator validates his description by the action of the ten – characters action describes author's opinion)

Gen 42:7 – Joseph (ראה) his brothers, recognition (נכר) and acted as stranger (נכר) (narrator knows the character in the level of cognition)

Gen 42:8 – again the recognition (נכר) by Joseph and non-recognition (נכר) by brothers restated

Gen 42:9 – remembering of dreams by Joseph

2.17.2 Narrator's point of view

Neutral or objective narrators as opposed to narrators who adopt a definite attitude about what they are relating. The formers' mode of narration will be business-like, factual and devoid of personal involvement, while the latter's will evince approval or disapproval, acceptance or rejection, praise or censure, and perhaps even identification or abhorrence.⁴⁶ Our narrator is

⁴⁴ J. B. SELLEE, *Joseph Story*, 9.

⁴⁵ S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 58.

⁴⁶ S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 15.

adopting a definite attitude. Even though, at this juncture of the narration the story is been said from an external point of view. The narration fully depends and moves forward on the point of view of the narrator. The point of view of the narrator and the point of view of the protagonist i.e. Jacob and Joseph go hand in hand. Because in many cases where we find the word 'behold' (הִנֵּה) the narrator shows us a certain detail from the point of view of one of the characters. This is clearly evident when 'behold' occurs after a verb denoting seeing, as in the verses. In these cases, the narrator explicitly informs us that what is being described is what one of the characters is seeing at that moment, even though it has been proved to us that the narrator actually knew this beforehand or knows more than that character discerns at that moment. The events are described from the point of view of one of the characters.⁴⁷ Author's objective view submerges with the characters' subjective view.

In the point of view of the narrator the ten brothers of Joseph or the ten sons of Jacob are on the negative side of the story. How could we firmly state this at this point of the narration? That could be revealed by analysing the characterization of each character.

2.18 How are different characters characterized?

The characters of the ten are characterized in relation to the characters of Jacob and Joseph, because they are in one way or other, either in action or in speech are responding to the dialogues or actions of Jacob and Joseph.

Why Jacob speaks and acts like that. The answer is in the inner personality of a character. The narrator reveals the inner personality of a character through the speech.⁴⁸ For a quick example here we could see that, the ten sons of Jacob other than Joseph and Benjamin are characterized at the beginning of this new events from the words of Jacob (תְּרָאוּ), they are delaying. This shows the interest lack of interest of the ten towards the

⁴⁷ S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 35-36.

⁴⁸ Cf. S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 64-65.

crucial question of “וְנִחַיָּה וְלֹא נָמוּת” of the family and Jacob’s command to them in cohortative in v. 2 is to show his authority, it’s function is to generate suspense, if the ten will obey this time or not.

Through his words and deeds the narrator is trying to say that, Jacob is the same man which we saw at the beginning of Joseph novella, his favoritism for the sons of Rebecca, mourning for one and safe guarding the other, there is rift in the family, favoritism of the father and the trauma which it created in the family relationship. The narrator is the one who gives out all this understanding on Jacob’s character.

The way in which characters convey information frequently sheds light on their nature.⁴⁹ Gen 42:11; 21, does convey this message clearly.

In v. 11: כָּלָנוּ בְּנֵי אִישׁ־אֶחָד נָחֲנוּ כְּנִים אֲנַחֲנוּ

v. 21: וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־אֶחָיו אָבֵל אֲשָׁמִים

The same characters i.e. the ten brothers are giving contradictory statements. In v. 11 they say “they are honest” a few moments later the same characters are saying “truly we are guilty”. The admission of having sinned naturally proves that the individual has not behaved as required, but also indicates repentance and an inner change.⁵⁰ The ten brothers are characterized as dishonest and they are contradictory and the admission of guilt initializes the change.

3. “אָסוֹן” more than danger and death in v. 4

Jacob has the knowledge of the grain source and the delay. Jacob character as omniscient as the narrator, from this understanding only the use of “אָסוֹן” could be seen in its fuller sense, because the “אָסוֹן” on Benjamin is said in the narrator’s point of view. “אָסוֹן” is a fate worse than death; death is often thought to be the worst fate a person can endure. However, the Torah has not only a concept, but a special word, that defines a

⁴⁹ Cf. S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 76.

⁵⁰ Cf. S. BAR-EFRAT, *Narrative art in the Bible*, 85.

fate worse than death. That word is “אָסוֹן”, which occurs only five times in the entire Tanakh, and all of them in the Pentateuch.⁵¹

Gen 42:4 - כִּי אָמַר פֶּן־יִקְרָאֵנּוּ אָסוֹן:

Gen 42:38 - וַיִּקְרָאֵהוּ אָסוֹן בְּדֶרֶךְ

Gen 44:29 - וַיִּקְרָהוּ אָסוֹן

Torah recognizes this loss as for which healing doesn't come easily.⁵² Jacob in the Jacob narrative is not mourning when his beloved wife Rachel died (Gen 35:19-21). In stark contrast to this Jacob can't bear the death of his son Joseph and it is clear from the text that he can't be comforted (Gen 37:35). Why is this contrast in reaction for the death of two personalities, whom Jacob loved the most. The act of recognition or knowledge is what makes the difference between both losses. In Gen 35: 19-21, Jacob saw the dead body of Rachel and he buried her. But in the case of Joseph, he doesn't have any knowledge of his son. He could only recognize “וַיִּכְיֶרֶה” his tunic Gen 37:33. The lack of knowledge on his body. “אָסוֹן” is this terrible state of mind or condition which carries the intensity of pain which is more than a loss. So “אָסוֹן” is the sudden disappearance or abduction and the lack of knowledge which follows.

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⁵¹ J. Z. ABRAMS, «Ason, a Fate Worse than Death », 195.

⁵² J. Z. ABRAMS, «Ason, a Fate Worse than Death », 195.

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