



LEARN TO LIVE WITH OTHERS:

A Spiritual Reading of the Story of Abraham-Lot (Gen 13: 1-12) in Relation
to the Indian Family

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABD	The Anchor Bible Dictionary
ANET	Ancient Near East Text
ed.	Editor
eds.	Editors
EVD	Editorial Verbo Divino
ITS	Indian Theological Studies
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
NCC	National Council of Church
NJBC	New Jerome Biblical Commentary
TDOT	Theological Dictionary of Old Testament
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

N.B. : All scripture quotations have been taken from The New Revised Standard Version, Bangalore, Thomas Nelson for TPI, 1994.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The family is a social institution. It teaches to be social. It protects every individual and gives opportunity to survive. The desire for family is strongly felt in men and women. Children are born and brought up in a family only. Even the parents who work outside are dependent on family for comfort, protection and peace. It is the environment where children learn values and principles and pass those values on to their children. It is also the domestic Church where attitudes about God and religion are formed and nurtured. It is the basic building block of every modern society.

In India, the word 'family' gives good feeling and atmosphere. Everyone carries family identity wherever he goes. It is a country of diverse culture and many languages. It is a country of numerous cultural taboos and many beliefs. In the west, even the women are the bread winners of their families on equal part with men. But in India, it is almost an unwritten rule that men should go out for job and women should stay at home looking after domestic jobs, but in this postmodern age, due to good education and exposure to the wider world range, there is lots of inter mingling of cultures and values. Indian women have almost reached a state where they compete with men in terms of educational qualifications, holding big public offices and running administration etc., The influence of Western culture seems to be there in many Eastern countries. Many cultural values of Western countries seems to be impacted in the life style of Eastern countries.

0.1 Indian family system

The Indian family is called Joint family or nuclear family. Indian traditional family was known for its joint family system. In joint families everything is common for the members. They shared their joys and sorrows and supported each other. There is no loneliness, there is always someone for somebody. But in course of time joint family system was disappeared increasingly.

This age has almost become an age of nuclear families. Today families have become smaller compared to olden days. In the past, the more the number of the members of the family the more prestigious it was. To be a big family was prestige for the people of the past. But in this age, to be a big family is outdated, unnecessary and almost burdensome. People want to be happy as a small family. Some couples have a maximum of three children or they are happy with just one child Parents want to have less responsibilities. They want to be free

and enjoy a happy life. They say that the economic constraints prevent them to have a big family.

Due to the modern trends such as pragmatism, consumerism and materialism, etc., People want /look to be more and more independent and self-sufficient. The idea of living relationships is an outcome of the search for independent living, Marriage seems to be a bond which restricts one's freedom. Therefore, some people are interested in living together as partners without getting married, such a living makes it easy for them to separate when they want.

0.2 Modern Impact on the family

The family is not only the biological continuity of the human race but also the cultural continuity of the society. It transmits ideas and ideologies, customs and traditions, beliefs and values from one generation to the next. The family system undergoes a change. It is no longer necessary in its traditional form. So we see many single parent families, same sex families, peer families. In other words, the family has been redefined to basically mean any common collection of people. Thus, the important values of virtue (both moral and secular), and a true sense of God are very difficult to pass on. It gives way to the conflict between the generations.

Another factor that has added its share to the separation of family members from one another is the movement of people from place to place in order to look for a good job on being transferred by their companies etc. In the olden days, it was considered very important that the family stays together not only in spirit but also in physique. The members were available and present to one another both physically and mentally. In the case of some couples, one spouse is far from another only mentally. Today the fabric of social relationship is eroded. Lack of strong family bond causes many problems in the family. A sense of belongingness is lost in the modern family due to various stresses in job environment which weakens family life and relationship.

The biggest challenge I find is industrialization. It has impact on the Indian family. The reason is that they want to become economically strong. The family (migrate from villages to cities) moves from one place to another area. They look for better (job and salary for survival and comfort life style) place for survival. Due to this reason, the industrialization affected the family system. In a traditional Indian family, the woman stays at home, she looks after the children, and the aged parents. Now, the women want to go for work as men. They want to contribute to the family or control the family. Due to this situation, the joint families

become nuclear families, where they find easy to maintain. Some families remain as a joint families, but conflict arises and that leads to break up in the joint families. The change of value system affected much the family life in India. Peripheral life and consumeristic culture entered in very strongly in the family life. It destroyed family in a subtle way. All these values are perpetuated and popularized by mass media. They glorify and communicate the values of globalization as something precious and invaluable through powerful visual media. Today our families are ruled and controlled by multinational cooperation. Our families became global without roots in local. So our families are rootless families and under the constant threat of insecurity.

Modern technology has had an interesting impact on the family. The family is a place for love, sympathy and affection. We get so busy working, and rushing around, that we don't get to spend a lot of time communicating with each other. It's important to develop a bond with a family members, and it's hard to do that when they don't spend enough time together. Children, and even adults, are drawn to technology for entertainment. Sometimes too much time is spent on that, and not enough time is spent on each other. On the other hand, when families are living far away, technology can be used to keep in close contact. They use Facebook a lot to keep in touch with family members. One can still feel close, even if they're far away. It can be a bit of a problem for the younger generation. They are not ready for the relationship. They ignore the relatives and family members. There is a relationship gap between the family members.

The cultural change affects the family system. Indian Hindu marriage is traditionally arranged marriage. The two families come together and discuss about the marriage. When the agreement is reached, they go for marriage, otherwise they ignore each other. The caste system and the social system are cause for the concern for the parents. They don't accept the inter-caste marriage. Every caste has many sub-caste divisions. The elders are very particular with these things. But the young generation choose the partner for themselves. They don't accept the arranged marriage. This change affects the family system, the young married couple are separated from the family or from the parents. They have no contact in future.

My last observation that affects the family system is family property. In India, traditionally the parents divide the family property and distribute to the children. The distribution is not equally made. The parents give more to the sons and less to the daughters. But according to the law, the daughters have equal right as sons to acquire family property. When the daughters revolt against the decision of the parents, the whole family separate them

from the family. They keep no contact with them. There is no love and family bond among them, instead, there will be constant legal fight among them. Many families are victims for this problem.

Every society has its own ways and means towards survival and sustenance. As the society undergoes a rapid change, the family also adapt some of the elements. There is a constant struggle between the old and new. This conflict is more when they fail to understand it or overcome it. Therefore there is conflicts and fights among the ethnic groups, between the caste system, between the language groups, and in larger level, between the states. There comes a question: Is it possible to coexist? We have lot of differences and conflicts in the society and in the family particular. Why don't we try to coexist with others? This coexistence brings peace among the family members. It gives space and place for relationship and unity.

0.3 The purpose of the thesis

A man born in this world longs for love, peace, and harmony. He keeps these virtues as objectives for his own well-being of life. But as he grows, power, position, money, and wealth influence him. The society discriminates the people economically, politically and religiously. The poor wants to come up in the life but the rich want to enjoy their royal status by suppressing the poor. So there is contrast and conflict between rich and poor, the have and the have-nots. The desire towards power, position, and wealth grows in every human being. Why does the conflict come? Is it wrong to acquire wealth? Every human being has a right to possess individual property for his own survival. But due to selfishness the person acquires more wealth, which belong to other persons. The political leaders loot the money, which belongs to the poor people. The country makes war against other country for natural resources. Even today we have witnessed a number of conflicts in this regard. Thus there is conflict in the family, society and in the world.

The worst form of conflict is that which emerges within a family circle. Today, the Indian families encounter such problem, which is indeed tragic. The husband-wife relationship is unique and it is the fertile land in which the character of their children grows. Parents must maintain cordial relationship with their children and must maintain good and genuine husband-wife relationship. The family consists of parents-children and husband-wife relationship in which one part should not be abandoned by giving importance to the other. This is the Classical beauty of a family. If there is no proper relationship within the family, it paves way to a conflict situation. There is no peace in the family because of the sons who fight for the maximum portion of the father's properties. The traditional Indian families are

not ready to face the new challenges, new ideas and new changes of the modern world. So the conflict arises in all walks of life.

It is not something new for us. When we look back the history, it happened from the time of the origin of humanity. The whole book of Genesis bears witness to this fact. The family systems was developed in the patriarchal period for the survival of its members and for the continuity of cultural heritage. It fostered the close relationship between the members of a family. But the conflict emerged within a family for power and wealth. There were conflicts between Abraham and Lot, Jacob and Esau, and Isaac and Abimelec, Jacob-Labon, Isaac-Esau, Sarah-Ahar, Rackel-Leah, Joseph-other brothers. The conflict goes to the extent that they cheat each other and divided the family. The need for survival brought them back. It was a constant struggle for the patriarchs to handle the conflicts in the family.

The Indian family undergoes changes and faces challenges as that of Patriarchal family. In this situation, we need a model and method to arrive or set a goal. I have taken the text from Genesis 13: 1-12. The text explains how the conflict comes in the family between Abraham households and Lots households. Abraham plays a vital role to solve the conflict and bring peace among them. His method introduces the element “Coexistence”. The history shows how the relationship was existed between Abraham and Lot. This attitude or method is perfect model for the Indian family.

0.4 The development of the thesis

The thesis is structured with four chapters to arrive at possible conclusion. The four chapters and its important contents are introduces as below.

In the first chapter, I am going to deal with the general remarks on the book of Genesis. Its purpose is to highlight and situate the text, which I have chosen for my study. By studying the book of Genesis, we will gradually understand the text itself. It deals with literary analysis, authorship and different sources that constituted the book of Genesis.

In the second chapter, I am going to deal with the parent child relationship in the ancient Israel. It will serve as a context to the text. It deals with the family system of ancient Israel. It deals with the role of father, mother and children in the family. It also deals with the conflict management. Since Abraham and Lot live under the same roof, they are considered to be a one unified family. This chapter gives the sociological environment of the text. When we know the system, we know what goes wrong. This chapter serves us the intensity of conflict in the family.

In the third chapter, I am going to deal with exegetical study of Gen 13: 1-12. It is to draw the true meaning of the text. This chapter deals with each verse and its meaning. It gives many dimensions to the text. The reader understand finally the inner core of the text. It explore the meaning of the text. The exegetical part consists of literary analysis and the critical analysis of the text. The literary analysis explains the historicity of the text and the critical analysis explains the meaning of the text.

In the fourth chapter, I am going to deal with the Abraham method with the Indian family system. The Indian family undergoes a rapid change. The family system is affected by many factors. The Indian family finds struggle to maintain its tradition and culture to the next generation. The elders or the parents have responsibility to hand over the traditional values to the younger generation. At the same time the younger generation have different view towards life and family values. The Abrahams method helps in the time of conflict. This chapter particularly deals with the Abrahams method and the solution for the family conflict in the Indian family. The final message of Abraham method conveys the coexistence, where there is peace and unity among the family members.

Some important sources and books that supported for this work are given as follows: Carol, Mayers, "The Family in Early Israel", in D.S. Browning and I.S. Evison, (eds.), *Families in the Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster Press, 1997); Cassuto, Umberto, *From Noah to Abraham, Vol. II*, Trans., Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1964); Clifford, R.J., and Murphy, Roland E., "Genesis" in R.E. Brown, J.A. Fitzmayer and R.E. Murphy (eds.), *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Bangalore: TPI, 1999); Hamilton, Victor P., *The Book of Genesis 1-17: The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990); Helyer, Larry R., "The Separation of Abraham and Lot: Its Significance in the Patriarchal Narratives", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 26 (1983); Pederson, Johannes, *The Israel: Its Life and Culture* (Delhi: Atlantic Press, 1991); Perdue, Leo G., "The Israelites and early Jewish Family", in D.S. Browning and I.S. Evison (eds.), *Families in the Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster Press, 1997); Seters, John Van, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, (London, Yale University Press, 1975); Skinner, John, *Critical Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (Edinburg: T & T Clark, 1912); Vaux, Roland de., *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institution*, (London: Dorton, 1961):

Therefore, it is undeniable fact that the family life is taking different styles and dimensions. All that we have to wish is that the family stays happy and peaceful always. The

wellbeing of the family is the priority of all the family members. In this way, all the members participate accordingly with their individual role in the family. Each member has to play vital role to keep the family in peace and harmony.

“Learn to live with others” is much needed today for peaceful and amicable coexistence. This title insists of ‘relationship’ as a first priority than the interests and sustainability of family. The thesis will give an orientation to this dimension.

CHAPTER -I

GENERAL REMARKS ON THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Introduction

Pentateuch is the combination of five books. Genesis was one among the five books of Pentateuch. Being the first book of the Bible, it is for several reasons one of the most interesting and fascinating portions of scripture. Genesis portrays God as the creator, sustainer and redeemer. It portrays creation event, the origin of human life, and its culture. It is to note that Genesis in many of its contents resembles the ancient Near Eastern texts. So, in this chapter we shall deal with the general remarks about the book of Genesis: its authorship, source, time, and divisions. It will be helpful to the better understanding of the book Genesis.

1.1 Title

The title “Genesis” comes from the Greek word, which means: “beginning” or “origin”. In the Hebrew the first book is known by the opening word, “bereshith” which means “in the beginning”.¹ The title is the post Biblical Hebrew usage of the title. This follows the custom of naming the books of the Pentateuch on all bases of their first word, or an expression near the beginning of the first verse.²

Some Hebrew manuscripts like Samaritan text from the Middle Ages used titles like “First born”, “Book of the Creation of the world” and “Book of the Righteous” for Genesis. Midrash Habiur calls Genesis the Book of “Yashar” (the righteous), because it contains the history of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who were called the righteous.³ As the title clearly indicates, it is essentially and pre-eminently a Book of origins. It deals with a number of Charateristic: “Beginning“. It records the beginning of creation, of man and women, of grace, of agriculture and of the chosen people.⁴

1.2 Authorship of Moses

The author of this book is unknown. Tradition attributes it and the entire Torah to Moses, but scholars have shown that this understanding is not factual. The scholars began to question the authorship of Moses.

¹ Cf. K. Luke, *Companion to the Bible, Vol. 1* (Bangalore: TPI, 1987), p. 71.

² Cf. R.J. Clifford and Roland E. Murphy, “Genesis” in R.E. Brown, J.A. Fitzmayer and R.E. Murphy (eds.), *NJBC* (Bangalore: TPI, 1999), p. 8

³ Cf. Victor P. Hamilton, *The book of Genesis Chapter 11-17* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), p. 1

⁴ Cf. Bruce Vawter, *A Path through Genesis* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), p. 6.

1.2.1 Authors' Perspectives

In the first century A.D. Philo of Alexandria and Josephus thought that they could explain Mosaic authorship by saying that Moses had foretold his own death, including even the external circumstances. In the Talmudic period, the view prevailed that Moses had written this book. In the twelfth century, Jewish medieval scholar Ibn Ezra gave very cautious expressions to his doubts about Mosaic authorship. Ibn Ezra drew the conclusions from Deut 3: 11, 34: 3-9, and Gen 22: 14 that Moses cannot be the author of the Pentateuch. The Catholic jurist Andreas Marius contested the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and declared that Ezra has put it together from older documents.⁵

Richard Simon, a French priest was one of the first to question the sole authorship of the Pentateuch by Moses. He argued that it is in fact a compilation of diverse documents. In the seventeenth century, Habber and Spinoza are the known pioneers among these who questioned the Mosaic authorship.⁶

There are some references in Genesis that speak against Moses authorship. We will see some of the opinions of the authors and the references. These references are found throughout the book of Genesis.

We read twice, "At that time" the Canaanites were dwelling in the Land (Gen 12: 6 and 13: 7). This presupposes a period many centuries after Moses when the Canaanites had either been assimilated or driven out. But that was certainly not the situation at the time of Moses' activity. In other words it is a period, which lay a considerable time after Moses.⁷

There are many repeated stories in Genesis. These repeated stories show that there cannot be a single author. If it is one author, he cannot write one story in two places in different manner. There could be more than one author or different sources. Lawrence Boadt gives the following three references that give enough reason for the authorship of the book of Genesis:

- The three different accounts of the patriarch (Abraham) who lies about his wife as his sister are given in Gen 17, 20 and 26.
- The two creation stories portrayed in Gen 1 and 2

⁵ Cf. Otto Kaiser, *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Presentation of its Results and Problems* (Minnapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1975), p. 34.

⁶ Cf. Antony R. Ceresko, *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Liberation Perspective* (Bangalore: TPI, 1992), p. 53.

⁷ Cf. J. Alberto Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1976), p. 82.

- The two accounts of how Abraham sends out Hagar with her son Ishmael to the desert is shown in Gen 16 and 21.⁸

Gen 30:31 mentions a king in Israel, which takes us to a period not earlier than that of Saul, in the last decades of the 2nd Millennium B.C.E.⁹

The account of creation in Gen 2: 4b-25 has human beings created first, while Gen 1:1-2:4a placed human beings last. From these above two parallel texts, we understand that there could not be a single author, rather it is a compilation of different sources.¹⁰

We have two-repeated stories of the flood which have been combined. In one of them the flood lasts for a total of 40 plus 21 days and in the other for 12 months plus 10 days. In one of them there are seven of each clean animal and in the other just a single pair of animals.¹¹

Therefore we must conclude that Pentateuch does not have any internal elements, which prove its relation to Moses. Genesis was not composed in a single draft. It is a product of a redaction process. Many authors have given many references from the book of Genesis. Many repeated stories and events gave suspicion that a book is not the work of a single author.

1.2.2 Documentary Hypothesis

Many of scholars contributed to the development and refining of what came to be known as the Documentary Hypothesis for the formation of the Pentateuch. The attempts were also made to solve the disputes over Moses authorship of the Pentateuch. Richard Simon, the French priest was one of the first to question the sole authorship of the Pentateuch by Moses that we have mentioned earlier under the title ‘Authors’ perspectives’ (1.2.1). We understand the difference in detail between the two creation accounts in Gen 2:4 and 7; Gen 1: 26-27 reflects two sources woven together in Genesis. Also one of the starting points for early literary critics was the variation in the name used to designate Israel’s God. Some passages in Genesis used generic term “*Elohim*”, while other passages used “*Yahweh*” for God. We see the diverse names for the sacred mountain in Exodus (*Sinai and Herob*) and two different names for Moses’ father-in-law (Rael and Jethro). These differences led scholars to

⁸ Cf. Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction* (New York: Paulist Press, 1969), p. 94.

⁹ Cf. J. Alberto Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 82.

¹⁰ Cf. Antony R. Ceresko, *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Liberation Perspective*, p. 54.

¹¹ Cf. J. Alberto Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 82.

isolate two, and then three, and finally four separate sources, which seem to have been woven together into the composition as the Pentateuch.¹²

The four sources contain basically two kinds of materials namely: narrative and legislative, and generally stem from two separate geographical regions: north, and south. The narrative, which uses the generic term “*Elohim*” for designation Israel’s God, is called the *Elohists* or *E Source*. *E* source can also recall Ephraim one of the principal tribes of the north in the early days of Israel. The southern narrative of Israel’s origins is represented in the *J* or *Yahwist* source (the *J* comes from the German spelling of *Jahve*), with Yahweh being the personal name of Israel’s God. This source employs the personal name for God right for the opening pages of Genesis. The *J* source also recalls the name of the principal southern tribe Judah.¹³

The second kind of material is concerned primarily with legislative. It is a collection of social, economical, organizational, and religious laws and customs. The legislative materials, which have their origin from south are known collectively as the *Priestly* sources or *P*. This source reflects the ritual concerns of the Levitical priesthood in the temple of Jerusalem. The People in the north developed their own set of customs and legal traditions parallel to the southern *P Source*. This body of laws and customs developed in the north is known as the *Deuteronomist* or *D source*.¹⁴

Thus the Documentary Hypothesis paved the way for composition of the Pentateuch and explained the authorship of Pentateuch.

1.3 History of Four Sources

Julius Wellhausen gave this documentary theory, which convinced the most of the scholars by drawing up a history of how each source came to be. He indicated clearly the time and place from which each source came.

The Israelites were united as one nation during the reign of King David. This condition was continued during the time of King Solomon. When Solomon died, the nation split into a northern kingdom, which is called as Israel, and the southern kingdom, as Judah. The northerners need a Revised Version of the traditions, which would not glorify Jerusalem and the Kings of Judah so much, they produced a second and revised account of the Old

¹² Cf. Antony R. Ceresko, *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Liberation Perspective*, p. 53.

¹³ Cf. Antony R. Ceresko, *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Liberation Perspective*, p. 54.

¹⁴ Cf. Antony R. Ceresko, *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Liberation Perspective*, p. 54.

traditions, which used the word “*Elohim*” for God. The names of the places were familiar to their part of the country. They also stressed the role of the covenant of Moses over the role of kings. They avoided much of Yahweh’s intimate language about God, who was walking and talking with humans. They favoured instead a more spiritualized and awesome sense of God’s dealings with Israel. These two accounts existed side by side as long as the two Kingdoms lasted.¹⁵

When northern Kingdom fell into the Assyrian army in 722 B.C.E., the northerners who fled to the south carried their written *Elohistic* source with them. The *J* and *E* documents were then combined as one during the following Century for the people who lived only in Judah. At the same time, a group of priests, Levites and Prophets attempted to reform many bad practices of the faith in Judah. Out of their efforts came the book of *Deuteronomy* (*D*). This arose partly in reaction to the primitive ideas about the theology of promises and blessing for the Promised Land in *J* and *E* sources. Although put together out of the best of both northern and southern traditions during a long period from Hezekiah (715-688 B.C.E) through Josiah (640 B.C.E.), it was only discovered hidden away in the temple when Josiah began his reform in 622 B.C.E. The king and people recognized its authority and genuine Mosaic flavour. Deuteronomy was joined with *J* and *E* sources as part of their nation’s sacred tradition.¹⁶

Finally when the whole country went into the exile under the Babylonians in 597 to 586 B.C. E., a school of priests seems to have gathered cultic and legal traditions together. This priestly work thus formed a fourth source. Priestly school edited it after the exile ended in 539 B.C.E.¹⁷

1.4 Characteristics of Four Sources

The book of Genesis consists of Four Source documents that were woven together more or less skillfully by a redactor. They are given below.

1.4.1 The Yahwist Source

It was written around 950 B.C.E. in Judah. *Yahwist* source starts with the primeval history (Creation). This source is one of the artistic masterpieces. God is portrayed as intimate and familiar with human begins. In this source, God even appears in human form. For

¹⁵ Cf. Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction*, p. 94.

¹⁶ Cf. Antony R. Ceresko, *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Liberation Perspective*, p. 54.

¹⁷ Cf. Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction*, p. 94.

instance, God plants a garden like a farmer (Gen 2: 8), God walks in the garden in the cool of the evening.¹⁸

1.4.2 The Elohist Source

It was written around 850 B.C.E. in Israel. This source starts with the patriarchal history (Abraham). This source focuses on fear of God as a key attitude of human beings. The immediacy of God with human being is severely limited in this *Elohist* Source.¹⁹

1.4.3 The Deuteronomistic Source

It was written around 620 B.C.E in northern Israel. Deuteronomy has a style, which is particularly easy to recognize. There are many stereotyped phrases like “with all your heart and with all your mind”, a formula which describes love towards God.²⁰

1.4.4 The Priestly Source

It was written around seventh century B.C.E. It represents the legal traditions preserved and developed in the south (Judah). In the *priestly* source, we find a minimum of narrative and artistic movement. The *priestly* tradition is mostly editorial and not a unified composition. It is mostly dry and technical.²¹

The important elements that make difference from one source to the other are different terminologies, importance of theology and the geographical aspects.

1.5 Date

The book of Genesis was in an oral tradition around 1800-1200 B.C.E. Oral tradition was primary means of preserving the stories of faith in Yahweh. During the period of King David, the written traditions of the Bible began. The Yahwist tradition was written around 950 B.C.E in Israel. When the Israel was divided into two kingdoms, the *Elohist* tradition was written around 850 B.C.E. in Judah. The *Deuteronomic* tradition was written around 620 B.C.E. When the Israel had gone for Babylon Exile, the priestly tradition was written around 550 B.C.E. After exile the scribe put together all the sources and edited as one tradition. Finally the book of Genesis received its final form around the sixth century B.C.E.²²

¹⁸ Cf. Gerard Von Rad, *Old Testament Library: Genesis* (Gottingen: W & J Molley, 1956), p. 24.

¹⁹ Cf. Antony R. Ceresko, *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Liberation Perspective*, p. 54.

²⁰ Cf. J. Alberto Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 114.

²¹ Cf. Gerard Von Rad, *Old Testament Library: Genesis*, p. 26.

²² Cf. Ronald W. Withrup, *The Bible Companion: A Handbook for Beginners* (Bangalore: Claretian Publications, 1999), p. 52.

1.6 Division

There are two main divisions in Genesis based on its content: Primeval history (chaps 1-11) and Patriarchal history (chaps 12-50). The primeval history is regarded as a prologue to the Pentateuch. It deals with creation accounts. It is not constituted in a single narrative sequence. Many of its stories have the origin in Ancient Near East text as their background.²³ The patriarchal history is essentially the history of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac and Joseph. It looks forward to the event recounted in the later books. This sets the stage for the stories of the oppression of their descendants by the Egyptians and Exodus.²⁴

There is also a geographical division in Genesis. According to author Victor P. Hamilton, it can be explained by following points.²⁵

Chaps 1-11 are set in Babylon.

Chaps 12-36 are set in Palestine.

Chaps 37-50 are set in Egypt.

1.7 Historicity of Genesis

Everything has a beginning. It happens in space and time. This part deals with the historicity of Genesis. We have already explained that the book of Genesis had no single author, its historicity is also a cause for concern. It will help us to identify the customs and tradition of that time. Each text is formulated or evolved from different perspective, we need to know the historicity. It will give correct orientation to the text that we are going to deal with in the later part of the thesis.

1.7.1 Primeval History

Primeval History specifies the beginning of first eleven chapters of Genesis. To assign a date or historical setting to these chapters (Gen 1-11) is not possible with any degree of certainty. They are in a sense, timeless. These stories could have risen at almost any time in the history of Israel. Certain features in the text point to a fairly late date. References like Ur of the Chaldeans in Gen 11: 28, 31 seem to rule out an early date in view of the late appearance of the Chaldeans on the stage. Many Babylonian traditions evident in several

²³ Cf. Roger Norman Whybray, *Introduction to the Pentateuch* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), p. 29.

²⁴ Cf. Roger Norman Whybray, *Introduction to the Pentateuch*, p. 49.

²⁵ Cf. Victor P. Hamilton, *The book of Genesis Chapter 11-17*, p. 10.

chapters, raise the question, how could have been known to Israel before the period of Babylonian influence on Israel from the late seventh century.²⁶

1.7.2 Patriarchal History

Gen 12-50 deals with the patriarchs. The life times of patriarchs are clearly set before the period in which Israel was in Egypt and so can be dated no later than the Fourteenth B.C.E. It reflects most faithfully the customs and usages of the period around 2000-1500 B.C.E. It was known because of the archaeological discoveries. For example according to ancient oriental law, a childless wife could give her maid to her husband and claim as her own child born of this union. This custom was followed in Gen 16: 1-4, where Sarah who was barren gave her slave Hagar to Abraham to obtain a child through the girl.²⁷ However Roland de Vaux concluded that no exact dates could be given to the beginning or at the end of the patriarchal period. It might be inclined to the first half of the second millennium because of patriarchal names, and their customs with the Amorites.²⁸

1.8 Structure

As we look at the structure of Genesis, we become conscious of the recurrence of a phrase, “*These are the generations*”, or “*The book of the generations*”, and we observe that it occurs no less than ten times. It refers, not to what proceeds, but to what follows. This view clearly born out by the meaning of the word translated “generation” (*toledoth*), which comes from the Hebrew “*Yalad*” (to beget). It refers to results, not cause, to origin but not effects. The choice between these two depends mostly on the nature of the material following the formula.²⁹

Victor P. Hamilton has worked on the structure of the book. According to him, the structure of the book is analysed as given below.³⁰ The ten *toledoth* narratives are:

- (1) 2: 40: These are the generations of the heavens and the earth.
- (2) 5: 1a: These are the generations of Adam.
- (3) 6: 9a: These are the generations of Noah.

²⁶ Cf. Roger Norman Whybray, *Introduction to the Pentateuch*, p. 29.

²⁷ Cf. K. Luke, *Companion to the Bible, Vol. 1*, p. 73.

²⁸ Cf. A.G. Wright, “A History of Israel” in R.E. Brown, J.A. Fitzmayer and R.E. Murphy (eds.), *NJBC* (Bangalore: TPI, 1999), p. 1225.

²⁹ Cf. Bruce Vawter, *A Path through Genesis*, p. 3.

³⁰ Cf. Victor P. Hamilton, *The book of Genesis Chapter 11-17*, p. 3.

(4)10: 1a: There the generations of sons of Noah

(5) 11: 10a: These are the generations of Shem

(6) 11: 27a: These are the generations of Terah.

(7) 25: 12a: These are the generations of Ishmael.

(8) 25: 19a: These are the generations of Isaac.

(9) 36: 1a, 9a: These are the generations of Esau.

(10) 37: 2a: These are the generations of Jacob.

The closer examination reveals that in five of them the formula is followed by narrative (1, 3, 6, 8 and 10). In the remaining of five of them, the formula is followed by genealogy (2, 4, 5, 7 and 9). These five genealogies in Genesis fall in to one of two types. One type is the vertical genealogy, which traces one line of descent (2, 5). The second of genealogy in Genesis is horizontal segmental type in which the genealogy is not traced through one son, but through various children (4, 7, and 9).³¹

In ancient near east text, the existences of colophons are well documented. A colophon may be defined as an inscription usually placed at the end of a book or manuscript. Usually it contains facts related to its production. Because of this Colophon, D.J. Wiseman and R.K. Harrison argued that the formula must be taken as a conclusion and not as introductory part. But by the noun form of “*these are the toledoth of*”, we get the conclusion part. But in the genitive form of “*these are the toledoth of*”, we get a starting point, the origin. So there is no problem in taking formula as introductory part, which leads into what follows. Example: 2:4a is introductory of 2:4bff.³²

Therefore the structure of Genesis suggests a movement from a starting point to finishing point, from a cause to an effect.

1.9 Narrative Tempo of Genesis

It is hardly accidental that four -fifth of Gen 12-50 describes the history of only 4 generations (Abram-Jacob), while one-fifth of Gen 1-11 describes the history of 20

³¹ Cf. Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p. 145.

³² Cf. Roland Kenneth Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Inter-Varsity Press, 1969), p. 544.

generations (Adam- Abraham). Genesis is pre-occupied maximally with the 4 generations and minimally with 20 generations. Creation story is an indispensable part of Genesis and it receives only 2 chapters, while the Abraham story is allotted for 13 chapters. The “fall” is limited to one chapter, while Joseph narrative occupies three chapters of Genesis”.³³

1.10 The Literary Forms in Genesis

The book of Genesis has within many literary forms. These different forms constitute a book. Literary forms help us to understand the text clearly. It serves us well when we read the book of Genesis. It is a composition of many elements such as saga, story, narrative forms, myths and reports about the past events. It has got the following literary forms. This part will explain some of them.

a) Saga

The saga is a popular story, folk story, or simply a story. It sets in the past, is specific to place and names of the characters, and is rooted in reality. There are two kinds of sagas. They are primeval saga and the family saga. The Primeval saga is subjected to the account of creation (Gen 1: 1-11:9). The family saga is a heroic story of individual in groups E.g. Abraham 12: 1-25: 18, Jacob 25: 19-36: 43.³⁴

b) Story

It is a narrative that arouses interest by creating a tension and resolving it. Every story has a beginning, middle and the end. It is oriented to entertain employing certain folklore motifs. The example might be the story of Joseph (Gen 48: 1-16).³⁵

c) Eponymous Narrative

It means a person, real or imaginary, from whom a tribe, clan, or group takes its origin and name, and who is known as the eponymous ancestor or hero. Thus the tribal groups such as the Ishmaelite (Gen 37: 28) and the Edomites (25: 30) are said to be the descendants of Ishmael and Esau.³⁶

³³ Cf. Victor P. Hamilton, *The book of Genesis Chapter 11-17*, p. 10-11.

³⁴ Cf. John Scullion, “Literary Forms in Genesis” in David Noel Freedman, (ed.), *ABD, Vol.2* (New York: Double Day, 1992), p. 958.

³⁵ Cf. John Scullion, “Literary Forms in Genesis”, p. 57.

³⁶ Cf. K. Luke, *Companion to the Bible, Vol. 1*, p. 58.

d) Aetiological Narrative

It means the science of causes. Its purpose is to explain the customs, an event, and a name. These stories account for remarkable phenomena, such as a salt pillar with human feature (Gen 19: 20), usage (Gen 32: 24-25), place names (Gen 28: 12-16) and tribal names.³⁷

e) Legend

It represents some particular characteristic of the narratives' hero. The characteristic is a virtue of High value E.g.: Gen 22: Abraham as a man of faith.³⁸

f) Myths

It is one of the popular literary forms of ancients. They are stories about gods and goddesses. It is mostly deals with the creation events in the Ancient Near East text also. E.g.: The story of the marriage of the sons of gods (Gen 6: 1-4).³⁹

g) Report

This genre communicates the events for the sake of the record and without developing a narrative. E.g.: Birth report (Gen 4: 25-26: Seth and Enosh).⁴⁰

1.12 The Influence of ANET in Genesis

a) Enuma Elish

It is a Babylonian creation epic, which records the great battle between the forces of order and those of chaos among the gods and has many parallels to Gen 1. The tree of life is well known in the Babylonian circle as a symbol of long life, or even immortality. The picture of a paradise garden in the East is known from Sumerian Poems. The mystical power of the great rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, is praised in many Babylonian hymns.⁴¹

b) Legend of Adapa

It is a Mesopotamian myth. It tells that how the first man was allowed into the Council of the gods where he was offered the bread and water of life to give him immortality and

³⁷ Cf. K. Luke, *Companion to the Bible, Vol. 1*, p. 58.

³⁸ Cf. John Scullion, "Literary Forms in Genesis", p. 957.

³⁹ Cf. John Scullion, "Literary Forms in Genesis", p. 958.

⁴⁰ Cf. John Scullion, "Literary Forms in Genesis", p. 960.

⁴¹ Cf. Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction*, p. 119.

divine status. But he refused it, thinking it was a trick, and so lost the opportunity to be among the gods forever. It resembles the fall of Adam and Even in Genesis.⁴²

c) Gilgamesh Epic

The Babylonian story of an ancient king Gilgamesh, who sought immortality but failed to find it. In the process he hears the story of the great primeval flood from Utnapishtim, who build an ark and was saved by the gods. Many parallels are found between this story and Genesis Chaps. 6-9.⁴³

d) Ziggurat

The narrative dealing with Tower of Babel has Babylonian background of Ziggurat. The Ziggurat is a kind of Building, which was built by the ancient Mesopotamian to glorify God by the construction of this massive cathedral. They thought that proper communion with God could be possible at ziggurat.⁴⁴

The tradition relating to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob is background of second Millennium B.C.E social life from Mari and Nazi. Therefore the use of multiple literary forms in Genesis is not indicative of disparate documents, but is characteristic of Ancient Near Eastern stylistic usage.⁴⁵

1.12 Theological themes in Genesis

Genesis is well constructed as a unified drama. It has many theological themes woven skillfully throughout the book. The important themes are given below:⁴⁶

Creation is divinely planned, ordered and good (Gen 1)

Humans are in God's image and Gods Servants (Gen1: 26-30)

God has blessed humanity (Gen 1:21-the ground; Gen 1:28-all humanity; Gen 5: 2-Adam; Gen 9: 1-Noah; Gen 12: 3-Abraham; Gen 20: 54-Isaac; Gen 21: 29-Jacob and Gen 48: 1-16-Joseph)

Sin is turning away from God (Gen 4: 1-12)

⁴² Cf. Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction*, p. 119.

⁴³ Cf. Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction*, p. 119.

⁴⁴ Cf. Roland Kenneth Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 560.

⁴⁵ Cf. Roland Kenneth Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 563.

⁴⁶ Cf. Lawrence Boadt, "Genesis" in William R. Farmer (ed.), *The International Biblical Commentary* (Bangalore: TPI, 2004), p. 403.

God is both punisher and forgiver (Gen 32)

God has specially chosen Israel (Gen 12: 1-3)

The story is a story of promise (Gen 27: 27-29)

God uses crooked lines to write straight (Gen 25: 27-34-Jacob's deception of Esau).

Genesis is a story of faith (Gen 15: 1-6-Abraham's trust)

Importance of worship (Gen 2: 1-3)

1.13 How to approach reading Genesis

Genesis needs no introduction. Its stories of Creation, the Garden of Eden, the flood, the great ancestors Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph are well known texts. But one has to take proper step to read genesis in order to know the plan and purposes and the religious message in it. The first step is to read the entire book once and getting a sense of what is it and how each narrative flows in to the text. The main actors and the major changes into the plot are to be noted. The second step is to see Genesis as beginning of the Pentateuch, the sacred Torah or foundational basis for Israel's way of life. It begins in Genesis with the creation of all things and ends with Israelite people gathered on the border of the land of Palestine as a permanent home for them.⁴⁷

Genesis is also the beginning of the whole Bible. It makes up the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures. It has all kinds of Literature: legal codes, legal chronicles, poetries, prophecy, wisdom saying, model stories and even love song. Genesis as a beginning is applicable to New Testament also. We see the book of revelation ends with a new creation being established in perfection very similar to the first creation of Genesis. This even includes details found in Gen 2 about the Garden of Eden.⁴⁸ There is a chronological thread running through the entire book, and all its parts are so interdependent that if one were omitted it would create a gap, and entirely rob the book of its unity.⁴⁹

Conclusion

The first chapter deals with the book of Genesis in general. The origin of Genesis, its authorship, literary form and composition of different sources are presented. Genesis is a

⁴⁷ Cf. Lawrence Boadt, "Genesis", p. 400.

⁴⁸ Cf. Lawrence Boadt, "Genesis", p. 401.

⁴⁹ Cf. Bruce Vawter, *A Path through Genesis*, p. 6.

collection of legends. It was originally transmitted orally. These had already been collected in the cycles at the oral stage. The sources are more the production of redaction than of creative works, and simply provided the pre-existent material with a framework and contexts. They are not the works of individuals, but of schools and narrators.

The title “Genesis” comes from the Greek word, which means: “beginning” or “origin”. It deals with a number of Characteristics: “Beginning“. It records the beginning of creation, of man and women, of grace, of agriculture and of the chosen people. The author of this book is unknown. Tradition attributes it and the entire Torah to Moses, but scholars have shown that this understanding is not factual. The scholars began to question the authorship of Moses.

In the first century A.D. Philo of Alexandria and Josephus thought that Moses had foretold his own death, including even the external circumstances. In the Talmudic period, the view prevailed that Moses had written this book. In the twelfth century, Jewish medieval scholar Ibn Ezra gave very cautious expressions to his doubts about Mosaic authorship. Ibn Ezra drew the conclusions from Deut 3: 11, 34: 3-9, and Gen 22: 14 that Moses cannot be the author of the Pentateuch. The Catholic jurist Andreas Marius contested the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and declared that Ezra has put it together from older documents.

There are some references in Genesis that speak against Moses authorship. We read twice, “At that time” the Canaanites were dwelling in the Land (Gen 12: 6 and 13: 7) “This presupposes a period many centuries after Moses when the Canaanites had either been assimilated or driven out. But that was certainly not the situation at the time of Moses’ activity. In other words, it is a period, which lay a considerable time after Moses.

There are many repeated stories in Genesis. These repeated stories show that there cannot be a single author. If it is one author, he cannot write one story in two places in different manner. The three different accounts of the patriarch (Abraham) who lies about his wife as his sister are given in Gen 17, 20 and 26. The two creation stories portrayed in Gen 1 and 2. Therefore we must conclude that Pentateuch does not have any internal elements, which prove its relation to Moses. Genesis was not composed in a single draft. It is a product of a redaction process.

Many of scholars contributed to the development and refining of what came to be known as the Documentary Hypothesis for the formation of the Pentateuch. The attempts were also made to solve the disputes over Moses authorship of the Pentateuch. The scholars

finally identified four separate sources, which seem to have been woven together into the composition as the Pentateuch. The four sources are namely: *Yahwist* or *J* source, *Elohist* or *E* source, *Priestly* or *P* source, *Deuteronomist* or *D* source

The book of Genesis was in an oral tradition around 1800-1200 B.C.E. During the period of King David, the written traditions of the Bible began. The Yahwist tradition was written around 950 B.C.E in Israel. When the Israel was divided into two kingdoms, the *Elohist* tradition was written around 850 B.C.E. in Judah. The *Deuteronomic* tradition was written around 620 B.C.E. When the Israel had gone for Babylon Exile, the priestly tradition was written around 550 B.C.E. After exile the scribe put together all the sources and edited as one tradition. Finally the book of Genesis received its final form around the sixth century B.C.E.

There are two main divisions in Genesis based on its content: Primeval history (chaps 1-11) and Patriarchal history (chaps 12-50). The book of Genesis has influence from the Ancient Near East texts like Enuma Elish, Gilgamesh, and Ziggurat. There is a chronological thread running through the entire book, and all its parts are so interdependent that if one were omitted it would create a gap, and entirely rob the book of its unity.

This chapter contributes the origin or beginning of the book of Genesis. The general view on the book of Genesis helps us to understand the text with its composition, history and historicity, and the different sources that are combined in the text. For example, when we read, “At that time the Canaanites were dwelling in the Land” (Gen 12: 6 and 13: 7), we understand the historicity of the text. This chapter will contribute to the thesis to understand the source and composition of the text.

CHAPTER-II

CONTEXT TO THE TEXT: FAMILY SYSTEM IN THE ANCIENT ISRAEL

Introduction

Family is an institution as old as humanity. That is why it is held in high esteem by all in every culture. Every person owes much to the family for his birth, education, growth, and maturity and for the development of his personality. The Family is in fact a community, whose way of existing and living together is communion of persons. The family system fostered relationship between the members. The ultimate purpose of this chapter is to narrate family system and its fundamental nature. The book of Genesis gives the picture of many families and the struggles that they underwent. Like today, the ancient families had problems and conflict. They had lot of struggle and difficulties to survive. The thesis also deals with the conflict between Abraham and Lot. The study on family system gives clear understanding on what went wrong.

2.1 General view of the Ancient Israel Family

2.1.1 The Origin of Israel community

In the beginning, the ancestors of the Israelites lived a nomadic or semi nomadic life. Their ancestors were nomadic cattle herders. The greater need for water and food allowed them to make contact with sedentary communities. When added to livestock cattle, the pastor stopped being a true nomad. The community was established and began to cultivate the land and build houses but at least in winter and spring, a part of the group lived in the tent with the herds. In the desert, the social unit is restricted to allow mobility and to protect its own safety. This is provided by the tribe *matteh* or *Shebet*. The tribe was an autonomous group of families who considered themselves descendants of a common ancestor. In Israel there were twelve tribes, descendants of each of the twelve sons of Jacob Israel. A tribe it was called by the name or nickname of its ancestor, population or countries (Amalek, Edom, Moab Israel, Children of Israel, Sons of Judah).⁵⁰

Each tribe possessed traditions about the ancestor. The important thing was that every member thought of the same blood as that of the other members of the tribe. The relations between the different tribes were expressed as kinship. The tribes were composed of several

⁵⁰ Cf. C. Alfaro-Alejandro Noguera, *Actas del primer Seminario de estudios sobre La Mujer en la Antigüedad* (Valencia: SEMA, 1998), p. 20.

clans called as *mispahot*. Usually, the clan (*mispahah*) lived in the same place, or at least met for the common religious festivals and sacrificial meals. Several families (home, *bayit*) form the clan (*mispahah*).⁵¹

2.1.2 The Ancient Israel family

The Israelite family was an extended family known as the father's house or households. The family consists of two or more nuclear families or compositor families. The family headed by the father consisting of his wife, married sons and their wives unmarried children and grandchildren. There are others like servants, concubines, and sojourners as part of the household. Israelites were encouraged to have large families, not only to strengthen the base for protection but also to guarantee the survival of the people of Israel as a community faith. The family system fostered relationship between the parents and the children.⁵²

2.1.3 Three types of Family

There were three types of families in the time of ancient near eastern period (3rd and 2nd Millennium B.C.E). Since it was the beginning of the human civilization, it is important to know the growth and development of the families. First, in a fraternal family, the eldest brother is the head of the family, and this authority is handed on, along with the property, from brother to brother. Evidence of this type of society has been found among the Hittites in Assyria and Elam. Second, in a Matriarchal family, it is not the mother who exercises authority, but that a child's lineage is traced through the mother. The child belongs to mother's family and social group, and is not considered as related to its father's connection, even rights of inheritance are fixed by maternal descent.⁵³

Third, in a patriarchal family, the father played a very significant role in the family as well as in the broader social groups. The genealogies are always given in the father's line, and mothers are rarely mentioned. The father had absolute authority over his children, even over his married sons and their wives, in the patriarchal family; the father is the head of the family, whose authority is boundless.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Cf. C. Alfaro-Alejandro Noguera, *Actas del primer Seminario de estudios sobre La Mujer en la Antigüedad*, p. 20.

⁵² Cf. Allen C. Mayers., (et.), "Blessing" in *the Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Michigan: W.B.Eerdmans, 1987), p. 376.

⁵³ Cf. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institution* (London: Dorton, 1961), p. 19.

⁵⁴ Cf. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institution*, p. 19.

2.1.4 The main features of the family

In this section we are going to deal with the main features of the family. The main features are important to maintain the balanced family system. It is an identity of the particular family clan which is differentiated from other clan of the family.

2.1.4.1 Form of the household

There were three main features in the ancient Israelite family. The first main feature of the family was the form of the household, which operated within the larger social structures of the clan and the tribe. Households in ancient Israel were multigenerational, which lived in a residential complex of two or more houses connected together. Families were patrilineal (i.e. descent was reckoned through the male line), patrilocal (i.e. the wife joined the household of her husband), and at least became largely patriarchal.⁵⁵

Each family comprises not only the father, the wife or wives, and their unmarried children, but also the married, with their wives and children and servants. There were also other members like foreign residents, stateless persons, and widows and orphans, who lived under the protection of the family head. The Israelites were lived definitely as sedentary housing conditions in restricted cities. The number of family members lived under the same roof. The wife and unmarried children were left with the father under the same roof. When a son was married and founded a new family was said to “build a house”. The criteria for membership are a family of consanguinity, legal ties (marriage), or geographic proximity.⁵⁶

2.1.4.2 Economic stability

The second major feature of the family was its significantly economic character. The household provided the workers necessary for the survival of the whole. The traditions of the household includes its stories, customs, laws, and rituals, often exhibits an economic interest. The patriarchal complexion emerged as a means to ensure the households economic viability in the present and in the future.⁵⁷

The ancient people were very much dependent on land, but the land of Israel was not particularly fertile. Its southern area is desert, its middle portion is rocky hill country, and the northern section is what one would describe as fertile. Under such conditions, crops farming

⁵⁵ Cf. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institution*, p. 19.

⁵⁶ Cf. C. Alfaro-Alejandro Noguera, *Actas del primer Seminario de estudios sobre La Mujer en la Antigüedad*, p. 20.

⁵⁷ Cf. Leo G. Perdue, “The Israelites and early Jewish Family” in D.S. Browning and I.S. Evison (eds.), *Families in the Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster Press, 1997), p. 166.

and the raising of sheep and cattle demanded much effort from many people. The ancient Israel depended on large families to plant and harvest the crops and to shepherd the cattle, thus ensuring survival. Large families were also essential that at least some members would survive periods of drought and famine, pestilence and plague. Otherwise an entire family would be wiped out.⁵⁸

2.1.4.3 The solidarity among members

A third feature of the family values was the emphasis placed on solidarity grounded in the independence of the members that was necessary for the survival and continuity. The marginal economic viability of many households produced even greater sense of solidarity among their members. However, when a household was no longer having enough money, its survival members dispersed and sought to take up residence in related households in the clan. Even the development of the concept of individual responsibility did not suppress their prevailing sense of community.⁵⁹ In Israel's early days its farmers were able to resist the professional armies of the countries that desired to expand their power from the flatland into the mountains only when they helped one another. The fraternal solidarity was more important than paternal authority in ancient Israel.⁶⁰

2.2 The Structure of the family

In this section we deal with the structure of the family. It explains the formation of the family. It gives the role and activity of each individual in a family. We will learn how the members were related with one another.

2.2.1 The father

In patriarchal societies or ancient times, parents have full importance. The central figure is "the father". It is the fact of the whole generation and the offspring depended on parents. But it is obvious that human fatherhood is more than a biological event. In the Bible, there are the other aspects. At first it is the almost complete domination of the father over his children and other family members. Fatherhood is seen as domain, care, attention and responsibility. The father has many different tasks. Abraham makes war against the enemies of his brother and nephew (Genesis 14: 14-16); Lot frees his sons and daughters of the

⁵⁸ Cf. Alice L. Laffey, "Genesis" in C. Stuhlmuller (ed.), *The Collegeville Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996), p. 308.

⁵⁹ Cf. Leo G. Perdue, "The Israelites and early Jewish Family", p. 167.

⁶⁰ Cf. Annemarie Ohler, *The Bible looks at Fathers* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996), p. 90.

impending destruction of Sodom (Genesis 19: 2), David saves his family from their enemies (1 Samuel 30: 3-18), etc.⁶¹

The father arranges the marriage of their children, as Abraham does with Isaac (Genesis 24) and Laban with his daughters Leah and Rachel (Genesis 29). One of the most striking points is that the father had authority over his household. In case of violation of a virgin, the father of her who should be compensated. It is he who has to do what to do (Exodus 22: 16). He takes the responsibility for that virgin to arrive at marriage, the need to compensate also for possible slander about a young (Deuteronomy 22: 13-19). In a word, the father is the main protagonist of the ancient family. It was much more in patriarchal times.⁶²

All the authority within the extended family was vested in the Father or head of the household. His position in the family is expressed by his being as *Baal*. He is the possessor and master and the ruler. It is he who provides the bread and makes the soil yield up its wealth. He is the *baal* of his wife, his domestic animals, of his field and the whole of his property. He is an isolated despot, but he is the center from which strength and will are emanated through the whole of the sphere. He is also called father, kinship and authority also being expressed by the name of the father. To the Israelite, the name of the father always spells authority.⁶³ The fact that women and children could lose their freedom because they shared legal liability for the debts of the father, and that father would send his sons and daughters into slavery. Father has no mighty power in relation to his family when he disturbs the economy of the family.⁶⁴

2.2.2 The mother

As for the mother, the picture is very different. The mother is, firstly, who gives life. Motherhood is a function of all fundamental, because it is not a mere transmission of biological life, but human. The Maternity such as pregnancy and childbirth, with its difficulties and joys are seen in Genesis 3: 16, Isaiah 26: 17, 66: 7-8. Motherhood is something more basic and elemental, fundamentally linked to human existence. The recognition of its importance is clear, while emphasizing its relationship to life more than anything else. Being a mother is the best thing to be a woman in the Old Testament. Although this vision is predominantly the mother, the Bible also knows other ways. Since typical situation involves

⁶¹ Cf. Federico Pastor Ramos, *La Familia en la Biblia* (Madrid: EVD, 1994), p. 30.

⁶² Cf. Federico Pastor Ramos, *La Familia en la Biblia*, p. 31.

⁶³ Cf. Johnnes Pederson, *The Israel: Its Life and culture* (Delhi: Atlantic Press, 1991), p. 63.

⁶⁴ Cf. Annemarie Ohler, *The Bible looks at Fathers*, p. 158.

mothers Rebekah (Genesis 27: 5) and Bathsheba (1 Kings 1: 14) at the destinations of their respective children. The love and maternal dedication is totally clear that become proverbial. Figures like Hagar (Genesis 21: 14-16), the mother of Moses (Exodus 2: 2-9) are example for this kind of maternity.⁶⁵

Her husband characterizes the position of a woman in the family. In this, both the intimacy and subordination are expressed. The man is the center of the family, the woman his helpmate. First and foremost her duty is to give him children. Because motherhood is the patent of nobility of a woman, through it she acquires her place in life and share in the family. All the hard work at home certainly falls to her. She looks after the flocks, works in the fields, cooks the food, does the spinning and so on. Thus she is assisting him in creating a house and in upholding him within his family. The woman is dependent upon him, but not like the animals. She is closely connected with him and part of him.⁶⁶

From her family, the wife generally receives a present and serves as a tie between her and her father's house. It gives her a support and certain independence in her relation to her husband. She may have her own property as by the way of having a slave maid, and she can have her own tent (Genesis 24: 61, 31: 33). Jacob's wives did not get their share from their father (Genesis 31: 14-16).⁶⁷

2.2.3 The children

Many light, but time consuming tasks were undoubtedly assigned to children. As early as age five or six, both boys and girls might be assigned tasks of fuel gathering, caring for younger children, picking and watering garden vegetables, and assisting in food preparation. Children of that age eased the burden of female tasks, which probably consumed more total hours per day than did the male specific tasks. By age old 13, children typically reached nearly full adulthood were put in farm households, with workloads easily exceeding nine hours per day. Children by age of 7 or 8, they may have labored up to 4 hours a day.⁶⁸

Besides these functions, the household had important tasks to look after the fatherless child, widow and sick and the aged. The household offered care for the fatherless, i.e. children who were from broken families that no longer provided nurture and protection. The fatherless

⁶⁵ Cf. Federico Pastor Ramos, *La Familia en la Biblia*, p. 31.

⁶⁶ Cf. Johnnes Pederson, *The Israel: Its Life and culture*, p. 69.

⁶⁷ Cf. Johnnes Pederson, *The Israel: Its Life and culture*, p. 69.

⁶⁸ Cf. Carol Mayers, "The Family in Early Israel" in D.S. Browning and I.S. Evison, (eds.), *Families in the Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster Press, 1997), p. 27.

enjoyed the protection of the law (Deuteronomy 27: 19). The fatherless were to be the recipient of the households outside the kinship structure, to sustain their lives. Households were to leave houses and go into fields and gather fruit during harvests to support the poor, who included the fatherless. A widow who was childless could remain a member of her household's family. She can marry a kinsman in a family. A son produced by this union inherited the property. In the case of the widow mother, she served as a trustee for her children's inheritance from the dead father until they reached the age of adulthood. The members of the household gave care and concern to the sick and the aged. The grown up children cared the aged and the sick and provided them a proper burial.⁶⁹

Thus the function of all the males and females of a family group were heavily directed towards the household economy and toward assuring the survival of the family group on its land properties. All the functions were similarly were integral to the economic ones.

2.2.4 Household members

The function of the early Israelite family as a unit as well as particular responsibility of its component members can be viewed men, women, and children of several generation collectively carried out different household activities. Farm work was meant for males in the family. They were learning the technologies and nuances of a relatively fixed set of operation most efficiently and carried it out.⁷⁰

The gender differentiation that placed men in the fields and in constructive tasks perhaps hinged on their greater ability. The female involved in parenting infants and small children, to work at in interrupted tasks at a distance from the residential compound. Both men and women probably performed other kinds of agricultural tasks. Common female tasks in frontier farm settings involved keeping the home in order, caring for the small children, tending gardens and small animals, taking responsibilities for food preparation and preservation. Some of those tasks, such as shepherding or the related making of leather may have been done by males. But the caring, spinning, weaving, and sewing were part of a woman's repertoire of household labors.⁷¹

This shows that each one in the family had proper duty to perform for the good of the family. This system brought them peace and harmony among the members of the households.

⁶⁹ Cf. Leo G. Perdue, "The Israelites and early Jewish Family", p. 193.

⁷⁰ Cf. Carol Mayers, "The Family in Early Israel", p. 29.

⁷¹ Cf. Carol Mayers, "The Family in Early Israel", p. 24.

2.3 The special role of children

In ancient Israel, to have many children was a coveted honor, and the wedding guests often expressed the wish that the couple would be blessed with a large family. As Rebecca leaves her family, she is blessed with the words...mother of ten thousand (Genesis 24: 60).⁷² In the household, children were necessary economic commodities. They eventually became laborers within the family whose productivity contributed to the survival of the whole. They were also the means by which the household hoped to claim its future. Israelites wanted mainly sons, to perpetuate the family line and fortune, and to preserve the ancestral inheritance. For the most part, male children became the heirs to the family resources, especially the land that was to remain within the domain of the household's ownership.⁷³ The daughters were held in less regard. They leave the family when they are married, and so the number of its daughters did not measure the strength of a house. Daughters also involved in the agricultural works, and making food for the households.⁷⁴

2.3.1 Filial obedience

The obedience to the parents sometimes motivated gratitude for what has been received from them. It strongly condemns the lack of respect for parents (Exodus 21: 15-17; Proverb 30: 11). The legislation provides for no less than death for a child who curses his father or mother (Leviticus 20: 9) and also for the rebellious son (Deuteronomy 21: 18-21).⁷⁵

2.3.2 Caring of aged parents

A special case is the obligation of caring for elderly parents (Sirach 3: 12-16, 7: 27-28). It's kind of correspondence received from them and it is very important at a time when there was no such thing as old age pensions. The support of the elderly parents are their children.⁷⁶

2.3.3 Education

Most education occurred within the household through the oral transmission of knowledge and skills relating to household tasks, social customs, and religious traditions. Small children and girls were taught by the mother (Proverb 1: 8; 6: 20), while the father

⁷² Cf. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institution*, p. 41.

⁷³ Cf. Leo G. Perdue, "The Israelites and early Jewish Family", p. 170.

⁷⁴ Cf. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institution*, p. 41.

⁷⁵ Cf. Federico Pastor Ramos, *La Familia en la Biblia*, p. 35.

⁷⁶ Cf. Federico Pastor Ramos, *La Familia en la Biblia*, p. 36.

assumed responsibility for teaching boys especially at the time of transition to manhood and young man (Exodus 16: 7; 12: 26, Deuteronomy 4: 9; 6: 7).⁷⁷

During his early years, a child was left to the care of his mother or nurse.⁷⁸ She taught children how to walk, how to talk, how to dress themselves, and how to feed themselves, and she taught them how to help with gardening, herding, cooking, weaving, and making pottery. The mother in early Israel also taught her children, so that they could make lists and keep records. The general education, which the mother provided her children, included not only these skills, but other kinds of wisdom as well. It was the mother who taught children their roles of everyone else in the household and the village.⁷⁹

Once boys became young men and could participate in the communal labor of the village, the father of the household became responsible for their education. One of his most sacred duties was to teach his son the truth of religion and to give him a general education.⁸⁰ But even when girls became young women and could conceive a child, they continued to be educated by the mother in parenting, food preparation, and preservation and producing textiles and tending gardens. So it was not only the father who taught the law, traditions, of morality and religion, the knowledge and skills associated with economic roles, and social customs; the knowledge and skills associated with economic roles, and social customs; it was also the mother who has responsibility (Proverb 1: 5,6: 20).⁸¹

The child accompanied his parents to the sanctuaries (1 Samuel 1: 4-21), or to the temple at Jerusalem where he would hear the chanting of the psalms and the recounting of these historical episodes, which were connected with each great festival.⁸²

2.3.4 The role of the eldest son

The eldest son always acts with a certain authority and feels a greater responsibility than the others as was shown by Reuben when the brother wanted to kill Joseph (Genesis 27: 22). Among sons, the eldest enjoyed certain privileges. It is not the every son who has an equal share of the name of the father. The eldest son has received the first strength of the father, and it raises him above his brothers. Reuben, thou art my first born, my might and the

⁷⁷ Cf. Leo G. Perdue, "The Israelites and early Jewish Family", p. 172.

⁷⁸ Cf. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institution*, p. 48.

⁷⁹ Cf. Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *Social World of Ancient Israel: 1250-587 B.C.E.*, (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publication, 1995), p. 21.

⁸⁰ Cf. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institution*, p. 49.

⁸¹ Cf. Leo G. Perdue, "The Israelites and early Jewish Family", p. 172.

⁸² Cf. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institution*, p. 49.

beginning of my strength”, says Jacob (Genesis 49: 3). The abilities and claims, which are to be maintained by him who has most of the father in him. It is by this consequence of this state, he receives a greater inheritance than the others. The important factor is not the mother, but the fact that he is the first fruit of the strength of the father. On the same occasion we are told that inheritance of the eldest son was two- third. He stands against all the other sons.⁸³ During his father’s lifetime, he took precedence of his brothers (Genesis 47: 33). On his father’s death he receives a double share of the inheritance (Deuteronomy 21: 17) and became the head of the family.⁸⁴

Among the children, firstborn children have a special place. He has very specific rights, as in the stories of Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25: 31-34: 27:36) and Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 48: 17-20). This also appears on Reuben (Genesis 49: 3), Absalom (2 Samuel 13: 21), in the tenth plague, death of the Egyptian firstborn (Exodus 12: 29-30) and in the consecration of the firstborn to the Lord (Exodus 13: 13-15; 34: 19). Sometimes younger siblings outweigh the higher, but otherwise often be a common theme in many literatures, and conventional popular is abnormal to be explained. When Reuben proceeds brothers (Genesis 35: 22; 49: 3-4) Salomon older siblings (1 Kings 1), it is to be found a motivation to that event. Typically, the birthright is taken into account. The firstborn is loved in a special way (2 Samuel 13: 21) and especially mourns his death (Zechariah 12: 10).⁸⁵

There is a rule regarding the right of firstborn (Deuteronomy 21: 15-17) to avoid prejudicing the firstborn authenticity. The firstborn has to take care of his brothers (Genesis 27: 37), assuming they will be better able to do so and will continue the family clan. When children get a sign of divine favor and protection, it is normal that this appears more clearly in the first, which opens the next generation.

Children were required to render the utmost respect and obedience to their parents as stated in the Decalogue (Exodus 20: 12). Anyone cursing his father or mother was put to death (Leviticus 20: 9).⁸⁶ The adult children who married were also required to honor and respect to both parents while they lived within their birth household (Exodus 20: 12; Deuteronomy 5: 16). To honor the parents meant not only to obey them, but also to care for them in their old age and to provide them a proper burial. When woman joined her husband’s

⁸³ Cf. Johnnes Pederson, *The Israel: Its Life and culture*, p. 259.

⁸⁴ Cf. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institution*, p. 42.

⁸⁵ Cf. Federico Pastor Ramos, *La Familia en la Biblia*, p. 34.

⁸⁶ Cf. Joseph Kottachal, “Family in the Pentatuchal Tradition” in *Bible Bhashyam*, 20 (1994), p. 275.

household, obedience to her birth parents was transferred to the husband's head of the household.⁸⁷

2.3.5 The brothers

The brothers are another important element in the family. It could be brothers of single parent or both parents. The differences in either case are not decisive. However it does not take into account only mother's brothers. Often they are many. There are also cases of twins. Brothers often appear certain: Esau and Jacob, the children of the latter, Moses, Aaron and his sister Maria, among others, in the ancient stories, the Maccabee brothers. In stories names Cain and Abel need no introduction. And of course the brothers are anonymous, generally designated.⁸⁸

Activity siblings are collaboration, mutual help and responsibility, but there are rivalries and enmities even as between Esau and Jacob and Joseph's brothers or the sons of David (2 Samuel 13: 22). Armed with that possibility, which the brothers united is desirable and pleasant, a blessing from God (Psalm 133). Since it is assumed that greater closeness and solidarity among brothers, the betrayal of a brother is more painful than the stranger.⁸⁹

The idea of 'brother' is broader. It applies not only to those who now call blood brothers, but other close relatives, friends and others. It is not the stuff of few cultures and religious groups, particularly in the eastern ancient and modern environments.

2.4 Conflict Management of the Family

The Israel family had conflicts and problems. They followed some ways and means to deal with the problems. This part deals with the some of the issues that help and bring peace and harmony in the family. They followed some tradition and customs to avoid conflicts. The stability of living together was time and again established. The ancient Israel text gives a classical examples for us. Let us see some of them.

2.4.1 Power over life and death

Children were legally regarded as father's property, especially in the earliest patriarchal period. It seems that the father had even the right of execution over his children. Abraham determined to sacrifice his son Isaac, of course, in accordance with the word of God

⁸⁷ Cf. Leo G. Perdue, "The Israelites and early Jewish Family", p. 189.

⁸⁸ Cf. Federico Pastor Ramos, *La Familia en la Biblia*, p. 38-39.

⁸⁹ Cf. Federico Pastor Ramos, *La Familia en la Biblia*, p. 38-39.

(Genesis 22: 1-10). So also Jephthah sacrificed his daughter in accordance with his vow (Judges 11: 29-40).⁹⁰

Certainly there are not proofs of father's legal authority over children. But they show the extent of a father's power over his children. Lot's willingness to sacrifice his daughter's virginity (Genesis 19: 6-8) and a similar offer by an Ephraimite father in Gibeah (Judges 19: 11-29), Judah condemned to death his daughter-in-law Tamar when she accused of misconduct are indications of father's proprietary right over his children.⁹¹

The father can exercise his power over life and death by adopting sons and daughters into his household. Sons honored their father and mother by a willingness to form, to hear, and to bear children for the household. Because father gives the gift of life to their children, they remain always in his mercy and can never repay those all-encompassing gifts. When a son failed to honor his father and mother, it was the father who had the authority to judge the case. An assault against one member of the household by another was also a failure to honor its father and mother. However, the authority of the father was not absolute. For example he did not have the power of life and death over his grandson, his brother, or his uncle.⁹²

2.4.2 Inheritance

In ancient Israel there was no such thing as a will or testament. The fundamental rule is that sons alone have a right to the inheritance. Among the sons the oldest had a privileged position and received a double share of his father's goods (Deuteronomy 27: 17). The same provision is made in the Assyrian law, at Nazik and at Mari. the law safeguards the right of the eldest by forbidding father to show favor to the son of the wife he prefers at the expense of the eldest son (Deuteronomy 21: 15-16).⁹³

Abraham left his goods to Isaac and only made presents to the sons of his concubines (Genesis 25: 5-6). The sons of the slave woman Pilah and Zilpah were given equal rank with those of Rachel and Leah (Genesis 49: 1-28). They had an equal share with them in the land of Canaan, which was Jacob's inheritance, but the reason is that they had been adopted by Rachel or by Leah (Genesis 30: 3-30).⁹⁴ The male children were given preference.

⁹⁰ Cf. Joseph Kottachal, "Family in the Pentateuchal Tradition", p. 275.

⁹¹ Cf. Joseph Kottachal, "Family in the Pentateuchal Tradition", p. 276.

⁹² Cf. Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *Social World of Ancient Israel: 1250-587 B.C.E.*, p. 9.

⁹³ Cf. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institution*, p. 53.

⁹⁴ Cf. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institution*, p. 54.

Daughter did not inherit, except there are no male heirs. They were to find husbands from a clan of their father's tribe, so to prevent the family property from passing to another tribe. But in Babylon, she could acquire property, take legal action, be a party to contracts, and she even had a certain share in her husband's inheritance.⁹⁵

In principal only sons have the rights to inherit. Among them the first-born had a special status: he receives not just a double portion but two-third of his father's estate. According to adoption contract, an adopted son enjoyed the right of inheritance. The sons of the first marriage collectively receive two-third of the patrimony, the sons of second marriage only one third. This reputation gives the children of the marriage with the family property.⁹⁶

According to Deuteronomy 21: 15-17, a father is forbidden to disregard the order of the birth of his sons and to assign the privileged position to the major beneficiary of his possessions to his favorite son who is not the first born. This is called the right of the first born. The first born receives two-third of the entire inheritance, and all the sons received equal of the other third. If there were three parties concerned the first-born would receive two-third, if there were four parties concerned, he would receive two-fourth.⁹⁷

2.4.3 Succession

The head of the family appoints the eldest son born of his principle wife as successor with authority over all his brothers, sisters, sons and others. In this instance, the first-born would be the successor. But if it happened that the first-born was unfit or proved himself unworthy, the head of the family was free to confer the dignity on one of his younger sons. A remarkable instance of a first-born's loss of status and dignity survives in the biblical tradition regarding Reuben, the eldest of Jacob's sons. This sense here is that Reuben though the first-born will not be the successor. This is precisely the sociological background of the Old Testament, which accounts the choice of Isaac, Jacob, Ephraim, Perez, David and Solomon in preference to Ishmael, Esau, Manasseh, Zerah, Jesse and Adonijah. The biblical patriarchy had authority over his brother is amply clear from Isaac's Blessings: "be master of your brother" (Genesis 27: 24).⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Cf. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institution*, p. 54.

⁹⁶ Cf. E. Lipinski, "Inheritance" in Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (eds.), *TDOT, Vol. II* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1984), p. 327.

⁹⁷ Cf. M. Tsevat, "Bekhor" in Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (eds.), *TDOT, Vol. IX* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1973), p. 327.

⁹⁸ Cf. K. Luke, "Two Birth narratives in Genesis" in *Indian Theological Studies*, 22 (1980), p. 177.

So the motif of God's choice of the younger brother and the consequent rejection of elder must be understood in the light of the social condition of orient in the 2nd Millennium B.C.E. The choice of the younger in preference to the elder brother is terms of their peculiar family system, which continued to survive within the patriarchal set-up of ancient Israelite society.

2.4.4 The childless wife

The general custom is that the woman was expected to bear children for her husband. If she could not do so, he might marry another. Possibly the women might give her own personal slave to her husband to bear the children for her. This handmaid, although no longer a mere servant, must not become a rival to the original wife nor consider herself her equal.⁹⁹

The marriage customs in the patriarchal stories which has frequently been cited is reflecting the second millennium background. In Genesis 16, Sarah giving her handmaid Hagar to Abraham, her husband, so that he may have children by her. the childless Rachel does the same things (Genesis 30) by giving her maid Bilhab to Jacob, and even Leah, who already has sons but has stopped bearing giving her maid Zilpah to Jacob in order to increase her offspring (Genesis 30: 9).¹⁰⁰

The purpose of the priestess giving the slave girl to have children was to follow the law which prevents her from having natural offspring of her own. Marriage contract of Babylonia in this period confirms the fact that the regulation was for the wife's benefit but also show that this practice was restricted to priestess who were childless by law.¹⁰¹

On the other hand there is an old Assyrian marriage contract from the nineteenth century B.C.E, which provides that if the wife is still childless within two years she must purchase a slave woman who will bear a child for her husband. Afterwards the wife may sell the slave girl. The patriarchal stories show that the contract is for the benefit of the husband, so that he may have offspring. It also reflected the fact that the contract is for the sake of the wife, in order that she may have children of her own.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Cf. Tikva Frymer Kensky, *Patriarchal Family Relationships and Near Eastern Law*, Biblical Archeologist, fall 1981, p. 211.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (London: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 68.

¹⁰¹ Cf. John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, p. 69.

¹⁰² Cf. John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, p. 70.

There is another text from Nimrod, dated 648 B.C.E that is a marriage contract. The relevant portion states that if the wife does not bear offspring, the husband may take a maid and the wife will deposit her dowry for the future children. The maid's children then become her children, and the wife is also warned against treating the maid improperly. The text is certainly the closest to the patriarchal narrative because the whole provision for having children is presented from the wife's viewpoint. The children become her and inherit her dowry. And the warning against the improper treatment of the maid certainly highlights Sarah's behavior towards Hagar.¹⁰³

2.4.5 Adaptation

Adaptation is an act by which a man or woman acknowledges a person of different blood as his or her son or daughter, with the legal rights and duties of a child. Adaptation was practiced in Mesopotamia from a very early time. Its objectives were to secure for barren couples the benefits of children, and thus to provide them with help and support in their old age.¹⁰⁴

Every child was circumcised. This ceremony was to be performed on the eight day after birth. The father (Genesis 21: 14) carried out the operation, in the exceptional case (Exodus 4: 25) by the mother. It was a sign of incorporation into the life of the group, into the community of Israel (Genesis 34: 14-16).¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

In this chapter the family system in the patriarchal period is presented. It explains the origin of ancient communities and development of the family system in ancient Israel. This chapter serves as a context to the text. The social environment of the ancient Israel family is presented.

The ancestors of the Israelites and the Israelites themselves lived a nomad or semi-nomadic life. However, they were not true Bedouins. The greater need for water and food allowed them to make contact with sedentary communities. They began to cultivate the land and build houses but at least winter and spring, and a part of groups lived in the tent with the herds. The communities were composed of several clans called as *mispahot*. Usually, the clan lived in the same place.

¹⁰³ Cf. John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, p. 71.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institution*, p. 53.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institution*, p. 46.

The Israel family fostered the relationship between the members of the household, and in a smaller unit between parents and children. Each family comprises father, wife, and children with their wives and servants. The criteria for the membership are a family of consanguinity, legal ties (family) or geographic proximity. They were encouraged to have large families, not only to strengthen the base for protection, but also to guarantee the survival of the people.

There were three types of families. In a patriarchal family, the father is the head of the household. In a matriarchal family, the mother exercises the authority, and has rights of inheritance. In a fraternal family, the eldest brother is the head of the family. The authority is handed on along with the property from brother to brother.

Father is the head of the household. His position in the family is expressed by his being as *Baal*. He is the possessor and master and the ruler. It is he who provide the bread and makes the soil yield up its wealth. The mother assists him in creating a house and in upholding him within his family. All the hard work at home certainly fall to her. She looks after the flocks and cook the food. Intimacy and submission are the two essential elements from her to her husband. The children were the necessary economic commodities. They became laborers within the family whose productivity contributed to the survival of the family. The male children became the heirs of the household and the daughters were held in less regard.

The children were expected to obey the parents. Caring the aged parents was considered as a primary duty of the children. During the childhood the mother educated the children. The mother taught all the domestic works like food preparation and preservation and tending the gardens. Once the children became young men, the father trained them in the field of trading, agriculture and hunting. The parents had primary role towards their sons and daughters and legal relationship for administrative environment and the maintenance of peace and order in the family.

The family adopted some methods that fostered constant peace and order even the problem raised. They had solution and option for the problems. When the parents had no children, they adopted the children. They handed over the inheritance to the children. Having a children was a continuation of the generation. The Patriarchs strongly desired for children. They have invested hope and security in the children.

This chapter contributes to the thesis to understand the conflict of Abraham-Lot with social environmental background. The family system helps us a lot to know their life style, their customs and their type of society in which they lived. Though the whole book of Genesis represents the series of conflict between the brother and the clans, the peace was restored in the family with other option. The conflict between Abraham and Lot is clear example for the peace and harmony in the society. The Ancient Israel family followed the system and policy that avoided the disputes and conflicts in the family. This information or background will to understand the conflict of Abraham and Lot in the next chapter.

CHAPTER-III

THE EXEGETICAL STUDY ON GENESIS 13: 1-12: THE SEPARATION OF ABRAHAM AND LOT

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we have seen the ancient Israel family and its balanced system that fostered a bond relationship within the family members. The ancient family had established system and method to strengthen the relationship and at the same time avoid the disputes. The conflict is part of human life. When there are two persons, each one has different idea. And that way, the patriarchal narratives in the bible has lot of disputes within the family and with the neighbors. But conflicts are meant to be solved and that renew the relationship and the people get closer and they are united. The chapter 13 of Genesis also gives one type of conflict situation that arises between two brothers. This chapter deals with the families of Abraham and lot in particular. In this chapter, we are going to make the analysis on the text Genesis13: 1-12 where in, we focus our attention to Abraham and Lot, their conflict situation and how they have responded to the conflict.

The conflict situation makes a life difficult. When it occurs in the family, it makes a grave consequence in the relationship among the members of the family. We make choice in our daily life. The choice that we make brings the consequences too. The story of Abraham and Lot comprises all stages of conflict situation in human relationship. The text raises the following questions in the minds of the reader: What is the real cause of the conflict? What is the permanent solution? Will there be possibilities of restoring relationship between brothers in the conflict situation? What is the conflict management in the text? Let us analyze the text for the above stated questions in this chapter. It will give an orientation to the proper meaning.

3.1 Critical Analysis

Here, the critical analysis is made to understand the text with its context and meaning. In this part we are going to discuss about Gen 13: 1-12. The critical analysis includes the important themes of the chapter, literary form, settings, and historical environment of the text.

3.1.1 The socio historical environment of the text

Here, the socio historical environment of nomadic life is to be discussed. This nomadic life helps us to understand the life setting of the patriarchal culture. The patriarchal narratives are narrated with the movements of the places. We need to understand the life settings of the patriarchs whether they are nomads or permanent dwellers. Later in this part, we are going to discuss about the socio environment of Abraham whether he is nomad or permanent dweller.

The Nomads are primarily shepherds or herdsmen who move their livestock from summer to winter pasture along with their whole families. Because of this seasonal movement, they have no fixed abode. It was clear that the nomads did move with their total population at certain times of the year. The sheep-breeding nomads were limited in their movement to the region of the desert within proximity to a water supply for their animals. In this case, the owner of the flocks and the families of the shepherds remained stationary while only the hired herdsmen traveled with the animals.¹⁰⁶

Some of the nomads made the transition from pastoralists to farmers, while others were dependent upon trade or raiding for their agricultural products. They are described as constantly raiding and plundering the towns and agricultural land, so that designations for nomadic groups often became synonyms for robbers and outlaws. The common life situations for this people are the struggle for survival, the necessity to obtain food when it was scarce. Some entered into peaceful relations with the settled communities in exchange for certain seasonal pasturing rights and for purposes of commercial transactions.¹⁰⁷

Abraham is considered to have an original homeland in a settled region, whether Ur or Harran. It is true that he lived in tents and moved his livestock from place to place, but these movements do not clearly suggest transhumance. The theme of the land inheritance is utterly foreign to the nomadic way of life but a fundamental principle of the settled economy. In the Jacob story it is always assumed that the land of Canaan is Jacob's homeland, which he will give as an inheritance to his sons. Furthermore both Laban and later Jacob represent with

¹⁰⁶ Cf. John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (London: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 15. (I am going to use this book for the entire part, because the author describes very well about the nomadic life in general and nomadic life of the patriarchs in particular).

¹⁰⁷ Cf. John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, p. 16.

large flocks as well as other wealth, which their sons and hired shepherds pasture. There is nothing nomadic about this.¹⁰⁸

In contrast to the social and economic structures of nomadic society, the patriarchs represent single households augmented by various levels of subordinates, including bought and house-born slaves. In Genesis 14 Abraham is able to arm 318 of his slaves for his night attack; yet there is no mention of any assistance from fellow tribesmen. Likewise the herdsmen who are mentioned in some of the stories are always viewed as part of the personal household of the patriarch and not a reflection of a tribal unit. Such a slavery-based economy is not part of the nomadic way of life.¹⁰⁹

A social structure of the patriarchs reflects the complex system of a settled economy. Perhaps the most sedentary portrayal of all the patriarchs is that of Isaac (Genesis 26: 12-13), in which he is presented as practicing agriculture. This is usually explained as a semi-nomadic transitional step which should not be used to deny the general nomadic character of the whole traditions. On the other hand, most scholars who speak of the nomadism of the patriarchs have in mind the population migration of the second millennium, with which Abraham in particular is associated. This was not just a matter of regular transhumance, but a massive movement into the settled lands. Such a migration may have resulted from overpopulation of the region or from general famine.¹¹⁰

3.1.2 General themes of Gen 13: 1-12

In this part, we will see the themes in Gen 13: 1-12. There are three important themes that constitute the whole text. These themes contribute more novelty and interest among the readers. The reader will identify his own life with the themes that even today inseparable from everyday life.

3.1.2.1 Land as a theme

When we read Gen 13: 1-13, the theme of Land comes very often. There is always a tension about the land. Some of the verses speak only around the land concept. Let us see some of them.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, p. 18.

¹¹⁰ Cf. John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, p. 19.

Gen 13: 1 “So Abraham went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negev”; Gen 13: 3 “the land could not support both of them”; Gen 13: 7 “At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land”; Gen 13: 9 “Is not the whole land before you? Separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right, then I will go to the left”.¹¹¹

There is also question of ownership of the land. When we read the chapter 13, the ownership is changed from different stages. In v. 7 we see the land is the dwelling place of the Canaanites and Perizzites. We come to conclude although they are the owners of the land. However, in vv.8-9 it describes that Abraham is the owner of the land. He offers Lot a choice of a dwelling place. But at the end of the chapter, we see in v. 15, God acts as owner of the land. He gives to Abraham and his decedents.¹¹²

3.1.2.2 The separation of Abraham and Lot

The second major theme of this chapter is the separation of Abraham and Lot. This part of story between Abraham and Lot presents an authentic picture of shepherd nomads grazing their flocks in the territory, from which the Jordan Valley is visible. They were came together to help each other, but the wealth separates them. The story is connected with the ancient tradition found in Gen 19. But the author used it as an introduction to the renewal of the promise in vv. 14-18. This story is insertion of priestly source, in order to say that the decision of human wisdom will work ultimately for the fulfillment of the Divine one.¹¹³

Patriarchs followed a pastoral economy based on flocks of sheep and goats and sometimes herds of cattle. Their movements from place to place would be measured and slow depend on the availability of grass. They could go to hilly and remote places as long as they could arrange amicable terms with the farming communities who lived permanently. On occasion they would quarrel with the settled population and be driven out, and frequently they must have quarreled with each other. It was a reason for the separation. This theme is strongly developed in this chapter.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Cf. Dan Rickett, “Rethinking the place and purpose of Genesis 13” in *Journal for the study of the Old Testament*, Vol 36.1 (2011), p. 33.

¹¹² Cf. Dan Rickett, “Rethinking the place and purpose of Genesis 13”, p. 40.

¹¹³ Cf. R.J. Clifford and Roland E. Murphy, “Genesis” in R.E. Brown, J.A. Fitzmayer and R.E. Murphy (eds.), *NJBC* (Bangalore: TPI, 1999), p. 18.

¹¹⁴ Cf. John C.L. Gibson, *Genesis Vol. II* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1982), p. 40.

3.1.3 Influence of other sources with Gen 13: 1-12

There are some of the sources help to understand the text particularly Gen 13: 1-12. The aim of this part is to get more ideas and overall picture of the text. There are two sources which are compared with Gen 13. Let us see in detail.

3.1.3.1 Midrash background

The text does not speak out the quarrel in detail. But it elaborates only the consequence of the quarrel. It would be interesting to see what type of quarrel. From Midrash Rabbah it is stated

*“The beast of Abraham our father would go out to pasture muzzled, whereas that of Lot was not muzzled. The shepherds of Abraham would thereupon chide them: Robbery has then been permitted? To which the shepherds of Lot would reply: thus did the Holy one blessed be He say to Abraham to thy seed shall I give this land, and Abraham is a barren mule who cannot beget children. Tomorrow he will die and Lot will inherit him so that even if they (the cattle) eat (violating the pasture of others), it is ultimately their own that they are eating”.*¹¹⁵

From Pesikta Rabbati the problem is stated as follows:

*“It was not because their substance was large but because of the strife that existed between the shepherds as it is written: “And there was strife between the herdsmen.”(...) Abraham’s shepherds began to contend with those of Lot saying to them: why do you bring the name of Lot into disrepute by taking out his cattle unmuzzled? To which Lot’s shepherds replied: on the contrary it is we who ought to protest against you muzzling the beast, for as much as you know that Abraham has no son and that tomorrow he will do and Lot will inherit him, (...) the Holy One blessed be He say to Abraham “to thy seed shall I give this land? Behold tomorrow he will die without children and Lot will inherit him”.*¹¹⁶

From the Midrash writings we understand the instrumental of the conflict. Midrash attempts to interpret the bible text from its own background. It brings out the reason and cause to the unclear bible text. The above given text gives the reason for the conflict in detail. It helps the reader to understand the text in a different view. The problem. The herdsmen were the instrumental cause for the conflict between Abraham and Lot.

¹¹⁵ Nehama Leibowitz, *Studies in Bereshit in the context of Ancient and Modern Jewish Bible Commentary*, Trans., Arych Newman (Jerusalem: Haomanim Press, 1974), p. 125.

¹¹⁶ Nehama Leibowitz, *Studies in Bereshit in the context of Ancient and Modern Jewish Bible Commentary*, p. 125-126.

3.1.3.2 Structural influence of Gen 12 with Gen 13

Dan Rickett gives the following structure between Gen 12 and Gen 13. The previous text (Gen 12) plays a background to the following text (Gen 13).¹¹⁷

A Interaction with God (12: 1-3)

B Abraham Journey (12: 4-6)

C Interaction with God (12: 7-8)

D Dilemma in Egypt (12: 10-20)

E Return to the land (13: 1-4)

D' Dilemma with Lot's herdsmen (13: 5-6)

C' Interaction with Lot (13: 8-10)

B' Abraham journey (13: 11-13)

A' Interaction with God (13: 14-18)

3.1.4 Form

The structure of Genesis 13: 1-12 is very clear and simple. It consists of two parts. The first part deals with itinerary and the second part deals with the narrative. We are going to see them in detail.

3.1.4.1 The itinerary Vv. 1-4

Each individual sentence in the vv. 1-4 is understood as a constitutive part of the itinerary. Vv. 1a, 3a deals with Abraham's journey while v. 1b deals with whom and what accompanied him. Vv. 3b, 4a gives details of the goal. First, elaboration is the invocation of Yahweh, and the second elaboration is about wealth in vv. 2 and 4. The itinerary knows neither a logical nor a narrative context. The movements from one place to another place form this. The elaboration occur each according to the need. The only new element is the elaboration which mentions the wealth of Abraham and Lot.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Cf. Dan Rickett, "Rethinking the place and purpose of Genesis 13", p. 42.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36 A Commentary*, Trans., John J. Scullion S.J., (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985), p. 172.

3.1.4.2 Narrative

The narrative consists of three parts:

- The starting point is a quarrel which has arisen Vv. 5-7
- The proposal of Abraham to settle the quarrel Vv. 8-9
- The acceptance of proposal by Lot Vv. 10-11

It is a quarrel narrative which is concerned with living space, and so with sustenance. It belongs to the same group as the narratives of quarrels about wells in Gen 21 and 26. This group of narratives is typical of the era of the patriarchs and accords with their life-style, as does the quarrel which ends with the two parties company. The group of small-cattle nomads cannot grow beyond a certain size and remains viable. Quarrels between herdsmen over pastures and wells are a system of the crisis. The only peaceful solution to the problem is for the subordinate group to divide with the small group. What is peculiar to the narrative is that the main thing is missing- the description of the quarrel. Only the reason for the quarrel is given, and the fact that it took place. It is similar to the quarrels over the wells in Genesis 21 and 26. The more the narrative is passed on, the more the details fade. There is no longer interest in who started it, how it proceeded, and what damage was done.¹¹⁹

The narrative closes with both parties settings off in different direction (Vv. 12-13). This is a well-known and typical conclusion.

3.1.5 Settings

The explanation of Genesis 13 given here differs from that of a number of scholars who understands it as an etiological narrative. R. Kilian has characterized the narrative as an acquisition of land etiology. Abraham and Lot are not individual here, but corporate personalities. Abraham represents the inhabitants of the hill country of West Jordan; Lot is the ancestor of a group of tribes in the Jordan area.

The etiology originated between 1300 and 1000 B.C.E. in Israel. The setting of the narrative is the question raised by the groups of tribes concerned, namely, how they came to possess the land originally. This explanation is questionable because the narrative in Genesis 13 has not the form of an etiology (Genesis 19:30-38 on the contrary is clearly an etiological narrative). However, there is a series of parallels (Genesis 21 and 26 and

¹¹⁹ Cf. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36 A Commentary*, p. 172.

among others) which show clearly that we have here a quarrel narrative, each details of which accords with the era and life style of the patriarchs.¹²⁰

The narrative of Genesis 13 as the whole cycle of quarrel narratives has its origin in events of the patriarchal era. The conflict about living space and sustenance formed an important part of the co-existence of this small group. The conflicts arose in nomadic groups and were initially handed down, so that the setting in which they took place cannot be determined.¹²¹

3.1.6 The structure of the text

According to author George W. Coats, the structure of the text is given below with different section.¹²² I have rearranged it in accordance with the opinion of different authors.

There are two major sections in this structure. The first section consists of vv. 1-4; the second section consists of vv. 5-12.

Section A

Vv. 1-5 Background itinerary: Egypt to Bethel

Vv. 1-2: Introduction of Abraham

Vv. 3-5: Change in location

Section B

Vv. 6-7: The conflict

Vv. 8-9: Abraham's proposed solution

Vv. 10-12: The process of Separation

v. 10: Description of the land

v. 11: Lot's choice

v. 12: Separation

¹²⁰ Cf. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36 A Commentary*, p. 173.

¹²¹ Cf. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36 A Commentary*, p. 174.

¹²² Cf. George W. Coats, *Genesis with an introduction narrative Literature* (Michigan: William B. Eermans, 1987), p. 116.

3.2 Theological Analysis

The theological analysis deals with the interpretation of the text. The interpretation helps us to understand the meaning of the text. Here, the text is interpreted verse by verse. The important phrases are also presented in detail.

3.2.1 Background (Vv. 1-5)

This part sets as a background for this chapter. It speaks about the movement, direction and condition of the character in the text. It is the primary part of the text which speaks about the persons in the socio economical context. It leads the rest of the text to understand in the same line of context.

3.2.1.1 The journey of Abraham (v. 1 and v. 3)

Abraham moves from place to place to find the best condition to live. Life is a bundle of different needs and desires. This part will give not only the reason of Abraham's journey, but also the theological significance as he is the father of faith.

The chapter starts with word "*went up from Egypt*" (v. 1). Abraham is here said to be coming up from Egypt. It is a possible allusion to the Exodus.¹²³ The move of Abraham from the Egypt is a symbol of freedom for the Israel later. The Israel moves to the land which flows milk and honey. Abraham moves to the land which God promised him.

The journey of Abraham is not only for the need of life but also the spiritual needs as we find in the text. "*He moved his camp by stages to Bethel*" (v. 3) clearly indicates that he is journeying from Egypt to get to Bethel. In Hebrew, he went away on his journey through the south as far as Bethel. He set out from Egypt not so as to enter the desert which he had left along with Egypt, but so as to come through the south, which is opposite to the north, to the house of God where his tent was in between Bethel and Ai.¹²⁴ In the journey of Abraham, the word comes as by stages. It is a term which indicates the stopping places of the Israelites in the wilderness (Exodus 17: 1, Num 10: 12).¹²⁵

¹²³ Cf. Dan Rickett, "Rethinking the place and purpose of Genesis 13", p. 38.

¹²⁴ Cf. C. Timothy Robert Hayward, *Jerome's Hebrew Questions on Genesis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 45.

¹²⁵ Cf. Gordon J. Wenham, "Genesis 1-15" in *Word Biblical Commentary* (Texas: Word Book Publishers, 1987), p. 296.

He had left Egypt and the desert entirely on this view, to go at once to the place of God's presence. This text is parallel to Exodus 3: 12, saying that Israel set free from Egyptian slavery at once worshiped God on this mountain.¹²⁶ There is also a parallelism between Abraham's journey and that of the book of Joshua concerning the site of the first battle. Just as Abraham encamped there when he came up from Haran, and also on his return from Egypt, in order to possess himself of the land of Canaan; even so his descendants began there the series of battles for the conquest of the country.¹²⁷

3.2.1.2 The position of Abraham in the text (v. 2)

This part explains about Abraham in two aspects. One aspect portrays him as a person of rich possessions, and the other aspect gives the spiritual nature of a person.

The first aspect is about his richness. "*Abraham was rich*": in Hebrew meaning, Abraham was exceedingly heavy, for he had been weighed down by the weight of Egypt. He is appeared to be rich consisting of flocks, gold and silver. For Rashi comments at this point that Abraham was heavy laden with burdens. But other commentators understood the riches as entirely proper for a pious man who had obeyed God.¹²⁸ Dan Rickett describes the word, "rich" as an allusion to the Exodus. The Israelites brought their belongings out of Egypt.¹²⁹

The property of the patriarchal times not only consists of flocks, but also in silver and gold. This is the way Abraham became rich. Josephus says that a part of this property was acquired by teaching the Egyptians arts and sciences. It was considered to be a great sign of God's fulfillment of His promise to Abraham.¹³⁰

Being rich is not a curse, it is considered to be a blessing of God. Matthews Henry interprets the richness of Abraham in the following way:

"The Hebrew word signifies for riches are a burden, heavy and weighty. Great possessions do but make men heavy and unwieldy. Abram was not only rich in faith and good works, and in the promises, but also he was rich in cattle, silver and gold".¹³¹

¹²⁶ Cf. C. Timothy Robert Hayward, *Jerome's Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, p. 150.

¹²⁷ Cf. Umberto Cassuto, *From Noah to Abraham, Vol. II*, Trans., Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1964), p. 364.

¹²⁸ Cf. C. Timothy Robert Hayward, *Jerome's Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, p. 150.

¹²⁹ Cf. Dan Rickett, "Rethinking the place and purpose of Genesis 13", p. 38.

¹³⁰ Cf. Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary on the Bible* (Nashville: Baker Book House, 1967), p. 97.

¹³¹ Cf. Matthews Henry, *Commentary on the whole Bible* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), p. 28

The second aspect is about is spiritual significance and his devotion. “*He called on the name of the Lord*” (v. 4), Abraham went for two reasons. The first is that there he had formerly his tent, and the later reason is that there he had formerly had his altar also. He came to the place of the altar, either to revive the remembrance of the communion he had had with God in that place, or perhaps to pay the vows he had there made to God when he undertook his journey into Egypt. Abram did not leave his religion behind him in Egypt.¹³²

3.2.1.3 The position of Lot in the text (v. 1 and v. 5)

Since we have seen the character of Abraham, it is important to deal with the character of Lot here. It will help the reader to get the complete picture of two persons by contrasting and comparing between them. So conveniently this text is added in this section. One cannot deny the fact that the position of Lot serves as a background to the text to show the goodness and the kindness of Abraham.

Lot was the son of Abraham’s brother Haran, who had remained behind in the land of the Chaldeans when Abraham went to Canaan. Lot did not remain with his father. He might have caught up in the enthusiasm of Abraham’s decision to be a pilgrim or else merely desiring a change or a bettering of his condition.¹³³ Lot is always attracted to the newness in life.

“*Lot went along with him*”(v. 5):We cannot tell here whether lot went with Abraham of his own free will, and whether he was fully aware of the reason for this journey to an unknown country or whether he had been taken along by his uncle.¹³⁴ Lot followed his uncle Abraham on his extensive journeying, passing through the land of Canaan, accompanying him on his way to and from Egypt. But his return back to the Promised Land differed in some respect from his original journey from Haran to the Holy Land.¹³⁵

Regarding the departure from Haran it is stated, “*And Abraham took Sarah his wife, and Lot his brother’s son and all their sustenance*” (Gen 12: 5). Here, the author uses the plural form to the Lot’s household. According to Ancient Near East tradition, the household consists of man’s wife, children and servants. So this text indicates two

¹³² Cf. Matthews Henry, *Commentary on the whole Bible*, p. 28

¹³³ Cf. James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expository Commentary, Vol II*, p. 479.

¹³⁴ Cf. Nehama Leibowitz, *Studies in Bereshit in the context of Ancient and Modern Jewish Bible Commentary*, p. 121.

¹³⁵ Cf. Nehama Leibowitz, *Studies in Bereshit in the context of Ancient and Modern Jewish Bible Commentary*, p. 122.

separate families. Regarding Abraham's return from Egypt to Canaan, it is stated: "*And Abraham went out of Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and lot with him*" (Gen 13: 1). Here, the singular form is used. Lot is considered to be a part of a one family. He is one among the household, and not as a separate family.¹³⁶

When they departed from Haran, lot was an integral part of the family and their sustenance or property was evidently held in common. When they come back out of Egypt, however, we are confronted with the existence of two separate families. Lot is no longer mentioned immediately after Sara as part of the family, but someone who has attached himself to the group and accompanies them in an individual capacity.¹³⁷

According to U. Cassuto, the omission of Lot in the first section is because of the literary method of Genesis. It was not necessary to mention Lot. It was essential not to refer to him also. But in the second section, Lot begins to be personally significant, since it is necessary to prepare the ground for the account of his separation from Abraham. The second idea is that Lot was mentioned in order to show not one of Abraham's household was detained in Egypt.¹³⁸

3.2.1.4 The contrast between Abraham and Lot in the text

This is good example of how the narrative arises out of a situation. It is the steady increase of the property of both with the implication that it is the blessing at work that brings the increase. The enumerating the details, a clear distinction are drawn between the property of Lot and that of the wealth of Abraham.

- Abraham had possessed with cattle, silver and gold (v. 2).
- Lot's sustenance is purely nomadic: sheep, cattle and tents (v. 5).

The word tents and its overtones are important here. The text is the nomadic living unit and includes those who live in it, i.e. the families of the shepherds who are spoken of in v. 7. We learn here that several families belong to each patriarchal group, to Abraham's as well as Lots and they go along as shepherds. If we suppose that each had five or six shepherds, then we can count about twenty to thirty for each group.¹³⁹ The contrast between Abraham and Lot is made based on the position in the family and with

¹³⁶ Dan Rickett, Rethinking the place and purpose of Genesis 13, p. 46.

¹³⁷ Cf. Nehama Leibowitz, *Studies in Bereshit in the context of Ancient and Modern Jewish Bible Commentary*, p. 123.

¹³⁸ Cf. Umberto Cassuto, *From Noah to Abraham, Vol. II*, Trans., Israel Abrahams, p. 363.

¹³⁹ Cf. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36 A Commentary*, p. 175.

individual possessions. Later part of the chapter will also deal with other aspects such as temperament, character and values.

3.2.2 The Conflict (Vv. 6-7)

The conflict is an integral part of human development. Man tries to develop his personality. He creates his own identity. He shows others his uniqueness that differentiates him from others. He no longer lives under the shadow of someone. He seeks more and more his own comfort. This is how the conflict appears between Abraham and Lot. This section deals with the conflict between Abraham and Lot at three different levels.

3.2.2.1 The reason for the conflict: wealth (v. 6)

“The land could not support both of them living together” (v. 6a): The patriarchs are portrayed as semi-nomadic herdsmen living on the fringe of the settled population, indeed, in process of settling down themselves. The moments were dictated by the need to find pasture for their flocks in areas that were already partially settled and cultivated. Given the large increase in the patriarchal herds in Egypt (Genesis 12:16), genuine problems of sharing the limited pasturage would have arisen. Similar problems precipitated wrangles between Isaac and the Philistines (Genesis 26:12-22), Jacob and his uncle Laban (Genesis 30:43), and Jacob and Esau (Genesis 30:6-7).¹⁴⁰

As Abraham’s wealth was increasing, it was very difficult to keep them together. There were two increased herds (Abraham and Lot). They needed more harvest fields and water sources. Besides the two herds of Abraham and Lot, the available water sources and the fields were to be shared with the resident farmers of the places. Already the land is occupied by the local residents. The phases were not enough to accommodate the two herds. Therefore, it gave way to the conflict.¹⁴¹ The famine brought them together for survival, but the wealth brought them rift. According to John Skinner, *“quarrels about pastures and watering places are being a common feature of nomadic life and a frequent cause of separation”*.¹⁴²

“Their possessions were so great that they could not live together” (v. 6b): Abraham and Lot had much livestock and many servants. The Land was sufficient, when

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Gordon J. Wenham, “Genesis 1-15 Vol. I” in *Word Biblical Commentary*, p. 298.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis Old Testament Library*, p. 166.

¹⁴² John Skinner, *Critical Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912), p. 251.

they were less wealthy, but later they found out that the place could no longer support their needs. So, this phrase implies the immediate reference to the size of the Abraham and Lot properties and the land which is occupied by them becomes insufficient. In this situation, the petty quarreling between of the two men was bound to affect their own relationship.¹⁴³

3.2.2.2 The instrument of the conflict: Herdsmen (v. 7a)

“The herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle” (v. 7a): It is the beginning of the action, while v. 5 forms the exposition. The significance of this narrative becomes comprehensible only when it is realized that small nomadic groups cannot wage war. The war takes the place of the battle in which the larger unions from tribes engage. The war is concerned with living space and sustenance, as in war in later times, and is just as serious because it is a question of the very existence of the group. This leads to the conclusion that the quarrel narrative was once a highly developed type; only fragment of it are preserved in the patriarchal stories. It gives a sign that this quarrel type of narrative tells us only of the result of the quarrel, and not of the quarrel itself.¹⁴⁴

3.2.2.3 The intensity of the conflict: The neighbours (v. 7b)

“The Canaanites and the Perizzites were then living in the land” (v. 7b): There is a quarrel between Abraham' herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen. It is a kind of quarrel arises between semi-nomadic pastoral groups, namely rights over grazing. The quarrel might be for good pasture and good water. One area can accommodate limited number of sheep and cattle. We see in Gen 36: 6-7: Jacob and Esau part company for a similar reason, although there is no mention of any quarrel. Here, the problem is intensified by the fact that Abraham and Lot are not the only people living in the land. The presence of canaanites and the Perizzites has intensifies the conflict.¹⁴⁵

The same tone is reflected from the Midrash writings where in Ramban explains:

“The plain meaning of the narrative implies that the quarrel was over the cattle, since the land could not bear them and when Abraham's cattle were feeding in the meadow, Lot's shepherds would come along and feed there. Since both Abraham and lot were strangers in the country the

¹⁴³ Cf. James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expository Commentary, Vol II* (Michigan: Bakers Book, 2006), p. 481.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36 A Commentary*, p. 176.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Robert Davidson, *The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 27.

*former was afraid that the Canaanites and the Perizzites, natives of the country, would hear of the large numbers of cattle that were being pastured and would drive them out or smite them with the sword and take away their property and livestock. Residence in the land belonged to them at that moment and not to Abraham and this is the implication of the phrase: And the Canaanite and the Perizzites dwelt then in the land. Attention is therefore drawn to the fact that they were dwelling in the midst of numerous native tribes, and that their own cattle were too many for the land to provide for them both”.*¹⁴⁶

The word “canaanites” is used as a general term for all the people living in the land of Canaan, and in particular the word is applied to the people who make up the pre-Hebrew inhabitants of the land. The word “the Perizzites” means hamlet dwellers. It is a related word in Deut 3: 5, which gives meaning as “open settlements”.¹⁴⁷

But there is also other theological explanation for the term “*And the Canaanite and the Perizzites dwelt then in the land*”. In those days the time had not yet arrived for the Canaanites and Perizzites to be driven out for their sins and they still there at the Almighty’s pleasure. In these circumstances the land could not provide for Abraham, Lot and the existing tribes who lived there.¹⁴⁸

3.2.3 The Solution Process (Vv. 8-9)

When something goes wrong or goes against the plan, always the elder from the group or family gives the solution. The elder speaks out the problem and addresses the situation. Abraham, being the elder as well as the head of the whole group, proposes the solution to the problem. Abraham makes a proposal to settle the quarrel. It shows his responsibility towards others. He is interested in others wellbeing. The situation makes him to do something immediately, or else the consequence will bring more tragedy. A good man always tend to bend himself to the real cause. He never compromise the basic principles of life. Here, we will see how Abraham reacts to the problem. There are three parts to the proposal which Abraham makes to Lot.

- In v. 8a, we see the unwillingness of Abraham to quarrel. He approaches the problem
- In v. 8b, Abraham negotiate with Lot to solve the problem

¹⁴⁶ Nehama Leibowitz, *Studies in Bereshit in the context of Ancient and Modern Jewish Bible Commentary*, p. 123.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Cf. Robert Davidson, *The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible*, p. 27.

¹⁴⁸ Nehama Leibowitz, *Studies in Bereshit in the context of Ancient and Modern Jewish Bible Commentary*, p. 124.

- In v. 9, Abraham propose the solution Lot.

Let us see these three parts in detail.

3.2.3.1. Approach to the conflict (v. 8a)

Abraham's approach is not only positive that the conflict could be amicably solved, but also his attitude shows his responsibility in times of troubles and difficulties. Most interpreters speaks here of Abraham's nobility and readiness for a peaceful settlement. The quarrel between shepherds threatens the existence of both groups. It is a question of living space and the sustenance. Abraham does not make his proposal as an individual; rather he is responsible for his family and people. He comes to a decision in view the life and well-being of his group. In order to avoid at all cost a violent outcome to the quarrel, because this would not accord with Abraham's responsibility for his kinsmen, he makes the proposal. Here too Abraham is the father.¹⁴⁹

"Let there be not strife between you and me, between my herdsmen and your herdsmen" (v. 8a): Abraham's approach was for peace and harmony. The flocks were increased, the Canaanites and the Perizzites had already occupied a considerable part of the land, the enmity between two herdsmen of Abraham and Lot had grown. The desire for peace was essential in this situation.¹⁵⁰ Mathew Henry says, *"the people of God should always approve themselves a peaceable people. Abraham knew how to turn away wrath with a soft answer"*.¹⁵¹

3.2.3.2 Negotiation process (v. 8b)

"We are brethren" (v. 8b): Abraham gives a reason for peace instead of quarreling. He appeals to Lot that we are brothers. The word *"Brothers"* is used here in the sense of Kinsmen (Lev. 10: 4). Lot was Abraham's nephew, his brother's son.¹⁵² The term implies that Abraham and Lot are of the same family, worship same God and have same end. There is no point of strife between them.¹⁵³ Amidst the misery, selfishness and misunderstanding, a true man always identifies the factors that unite them. Abrahams word, *"we are brethren"* is a personal appeal to Lot for relationship and belongingness. It is an open call to establish the bond between them.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36 A Commentary*, p. 176.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*, p. 98.

¹⁵¹ Matthews Henry, *Commentary on the whole Bible*, p. 28.

¹⁵² Cf. Gordon J. Wenham, "Genesis 1-15, Vol. I" in *Word Biblical Commentary*, p. 297.

¹⁵³ Cf. Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*, p. 98.

3.2.3.3 The proposal to the conflict (v. 9)

“Is not the whole land before you” (v. 9a): As the head of the family, Abraham might have chosen his own portion first. He has right as patriarch, but he let Lot to choose first. He had a parental affection for his nephew. His intentions and feelings for Lot are pure. So he permitted him to make his choice first. Abraham intended only peace between them. He showed his magnanimity.¹⁵⁴

“If you go left, I will go right” (v. 9b): Here, left and right may be used simply to indicate opposite directions. Left may mean north, and right may mean south.¹⁵⁵ It is essential to this proposal that the increase in property of both subgroups should lead to the increase in strength of the groups as a whole. Abraham sees that there can be a peaceful solution to the quarrel only if they separate peacefully. This is a certain indication that the groups of nomadic shepherds were viable only as small units. The reason Abraham gives, for we are brothers, is to be understood from the patriarchal point of view. Responsibility for one’s brother can express itself in a solution to a quarrel which results in a peaceful separation.¹⁵⁶ When peaceful community is impossible, scripture prefers amicable separation. Abraham insists Lot to share the Promised Land with him, either to take the right or the left.¹⁵⁷

3.2.4 The process of Separation (Vv. 10-12)

There is a proverb: united we live, divided we fall. Abraham and Lot have come together to meet the challenges. This unity brought them prosperity and wealth. The same wealth brought division among them. This part explains the separation between Abraham and Lot. We have already made contrast between Abraham and Lot based on wealth. But this part explain the two different views on one object namely ‘land’. The object is one, but Abraham and Lot look at land in different view. It shows their nature.

3.2.4.1 The description of the land (v. 10)

“Lot raised his eyes towards Sodom” (v. 10): What he saw moved him to his decision. There is no need to narrate the consequence of what he saw. It is Lot’s gaze over the well-watered Jordan plain. This is the climax of the narrative. Lot looked upon

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Adam Clarke, *Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible*, p. 98.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Cf. Robert Davidson, *The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible*, p. 28.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36 A Commentary*, p. 177.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Gordon J. Wenham, “Genesis 1-15, Vol. I” in *Word Biblical Commentary* p. 297.

the land and staked his claim on what appeared to be the best. The land of his choice was well watered, making it ideal for his flocks and herds. It flourished with beautiful gardens and established cities. Lot likely believed the portion provided the greatest opportunity to increase his substance. It is this that resolves the tension, as it persuades him to accept Abraham's proposal and so end the quarrel. The Jordan plain that lies before him becomes something marvelous, arousing desire. It attracts Lot, and every other consideration close the door for him. Finally, Lot sets out.¹⁵⁸

"Like the garden of the Lord" (v. 10): the fertility of the Jordan valley is compared to that of the Garden of Eden described in Gen 2:9 as full of beautiful and fruitful trees.¹⁵⁹ *"Like the land of Egypt"* (v. 10): throughout Genesis, Egypt is the place to which the patriarchs resort in times of food shortage. The Nile ensured more reliable harvests than Canaan enjoyed. Powerful springs in the Jordan valley and besides the Dead Sea create very fertile areas, e.g. at Jericho, Ain Feshka and Engedi. According to Genesis, the whole area was much more fertile before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.¹⁶⁰

3.2.4.2 Lot's attitude: Selfishness and Discontentment (v.11)

"He chose all the plain of the Jordan" (v. 11a): The territory chosen by Lot lies outside the borders of Canaan. In choosing such a place for his grazing grounds, Lot effectively removes himself from any possible consideration as the one who shall inherit the land promised to his uncle. Ancient Near Eastern legal corpora do provide instances of adaptation of an heir in case of childlessness (Genesis 15: 2). But Lot's choice to dwell outside Canaan eliminates him as Abraham's heir. The promise that the seed of Abraham would inherit the land had made clear already that Lot could not be Abraham's beneficiary.¹⁶¹

Lot journeyed eastward (v. 11b): Eastward described his direction of travel. It may echo Adam, Eve, and Cain, who went east after sinning (Gen 3: 24; 4: 16). The men of Babel who journeyed in the east before commencing their ill-fated tower (Gen 11: 2).¹⁶² The history repeats the same thing for those who forget it. Lot has not learnt from the past. He repeats the same mistake by travelling to the east.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36 A Commentary*, p. 177.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Cf. Robert Davidson, *The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible*, p. 28.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Gordon J. Wenham, "Genesis 1-15, Vol. I" in *Word Biblical Commentary* p. 297.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis 1-17: The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990) p. 393.

¹⁶² Cf. Gordon J. Wenham, "Genesis 1-15, Vol. I" in *Word Biblical Commentary*, p. 297.

He contrasts Abraham, who acts with sober responsibility with regard to his people and kinsmen, with Lot, who allows himself to be drawn by the beauty of the well-watered land. This part of narrative allows us to glimpse the experiences of the era of the nomadic shepherds. They experience the rich, beautiful and attractive land, which is later becomes a danger and a threat.¹⁶³

3.2.4.3 Separation of Abraham and Lot (v.12)

Abraham dwelled in the land of Canaan (v. 12a): The place included the circle of Jordan. *“Lot pitched his tents near Sodom” (v. 12b):* It is interesting that he chose an area that reminded him of Egypt. Perhaps he missed Egypt and its earthy treasures. The land was also near the worldly cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot pitched his tent towards the wicked cities, knowing better than to live amongst sinners he was willing to live nearby in order to have the best the world had to offer. There is nothing wrong with having or choosing the best, however Lot made his decision based solely upon appearance. He never asked God for direction and failed to consider the wickedness he would surround his family with, or chose to ignore it.¹⁶⁴

3.3 Personal analysis

This part of the section deals with the personal reflection. As a reader, I have gone through many books and author’s opinions about Gen 13: 1-12. I would like to bring out my own view about the text. Here, the anthropological view, Spiritual view, and sociological view are presented. They would help us to understand the text in a new dimension.

3.3.1 Anthropological view

Every human being seeks the basic need of food and shelter. When one need is completed, he goes to the next level. It is also applicable to the other beings in the world. But man is unique from other being, but there is some uniqueness for human being. The patriarchs had problem of survival. They searched the place and possibilities for better life. It also happened to Abraham. But he showed some characters what is meant to be a human being. He and Lot are both on the level of survival. They both fight for food and shelter. They kept themselves safe from the local people. They walked together in moments of trouble and tribulations. They succeeded to some extent. The unfavorable situation and need for survival

¹⁶³ Cf. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36 A Commentary*, p. 177.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expository Commentary, Vol II*, p. 483.

kept them tight and united. But conflict made them to separate from each other. Only Abraham showed him favor. Abraham showed his goodness to Lot. The weak will go and the strong will survive. But as a Christian value, the weak has to be strengthened. Abraham restored in Lot the dignity and respect. He has gone beyond kinship, and respected Lot as a human being.

3.3.2 Spiritual view

God promised Abraham that he would give him the land and make him father of great nation. But practically, he was landless and moves from one place to another place. He was childless, and longing for an heir to succeed him. Nothing separated him from the promise of God. At the time of conflict with Lot, It would be ridiculing the promise of God, if he had claimed the piece of land ahead of Lot. The promise said that he would inherit the Land. If he takes small portion of land, then he shut the door for God's promise. He goes away from the promise. Asking Lot to choose the land he wants is to show that he is the owner of the land. Abraham kept the promise alive and carried it further to the fulfillment. As a spiritual man, Abraham prefer to believe in the providence of God, rather than the momentary needs.

The second aspect of the promise of God is that God would make him the father of the nation and give him a child. But Abraham was childless. The situation also was unfavorable to Abraham. He became old and his wife Sarah had reached the age, and almost out of hope of getting child. In this context, his relative Lot joined him. It might have given Abraham new hope that Lot would succeed him. The law allows him to choose Lot as his heir. But by doing so, he goes against the promise of God. So at the time of conflict, he ask Lot to separate from him. He kept the hope on God and not on Lot.

3.3.3 Sociological view

When we look at the sociological environment, Abraham is at the mercy of others. The promise of God was far away to the fulfillment. Abraham faces problem from the neighbors, local people, and local kings. He faces one by one, he adopts himself in the new sociological environment, where ever he goes for livelihood. Suddenly he faces the problem from his own household. The past experience says that Abraham lied to the king. He claimed Sarah as his sister and not his wife. He was afraid that he would be killed. There is a deep longing for survival. This experience and the conflict with his brother Lot teach him another lesson.

According to the sociological point of view, Abraham is head of the household. As a head of the household, he has power over the households. He can punish or put someone to death. But he did not do that, instead, he offers the rebellion brother a life to flourish. Every being has to adapt itself to the environment and situation for survival. Abraham sees this conflict and separation as a new beginning for Lot.

3.3.4 As a reader

Every day is not the same. Every day brings a new change and new hope to look at things in different perspective. We cannot give old solution to the new problem. We need to choose new ways and means to the new challenges.

With cleverness and openness, Abraham identifies the changes and affirms it. When they came to gather, the land was enough to accommodate both of them. Now the household properties were increased and cannot no longer live together. For better administration and care, they have to make small unit. Abraham proposes to Lot. It is a lesson for a modern family which undergoes rapid change.

Conclusion

A story of Abraham and Lot from genesis 13: 1-12 is a conflict that arises not only based on the property, but also the value system. Abraham is differed from Lot in all the good nature of human being. The character of Abraham is referred here as good man, and the character of Lot is understood as far from reality.

Abraham is always portrayed as humble man. He always cares the other. He lives for others. Being the elder and the leader of the house hold, Abraham treats Lot with gentle and loving. He gives the priority of choosing of land that he desires. He is a peace maker. When there was a problem, he identifies it and wants to maintain peace between them. He gives importance to the family feeling and reverence to the brotherhood. He is ever ready to subordinate his own interest to the preservation of kinship.

The conflict is normal in everyday life. The conflict between two persons becomes the conflict of small family. The other person is created to have interpersonal relationship in the universe. But for some, the other person becomes a constant treat. If one is interested in the existence of another person as our own extended reality, then comes the true relationship. Abraham is a peacemaker and he resolves the conflict. Lot is purely a worldly man; he finds the way to separate from Abraham. Our attitude directs our life. There are values and

principles for a peaceful life. Like Abraham we do avoid the conflict and show compassion with one other.

This chapter contributed to the thesis the intensity of the problem between Abraham and Lot. This chapter presented the problem in detail with exegetical work. The conflict between Abraham and Lot is exposed and the solution of the problem also identified. The aim of the thesis is to discover the method of Abraham as a model for the Indian family. This chapter contributed the model perfectly. This model will be applied in the coming chapter.

CHAPTER IV
A MODEL FOR THE INDIAN FAMILY: THE SPIRITUALITY OF
ABRAHAM

Introduction

The Family is regarded as a social institution. It is a fundamental unit of human Development. It is a backbone of social structure. The nature and purpose of family dramatically changed from time to time. In the ancient time, man and women came together and formed a family. Later, the purpose is changed in the form of living together without marriage obligation. The Indian family undergoes changes in terms of tradition, needs and survival possibilities. The modern world makes everyone to see things different way. This attitude is found in the family atmosphere. Two persons think differently. When two persons come together, there is conflict. The conflict grows and affects the family system. Once they are separated, they never come together. When there is disorder in the family, it brings consequence in the social order.

In this chapter, we shall analyze these points in detail and try to bring some solution to the family conflict from Abraham's perspective. The purpose of the chapter is to describe the Indian Family system and its conflicts, in order to find solution for co-existence. I use the word here 'Coexistence', because it brings balance between tradition and modernity, it is a bridge that connects the old and new generation. Those who adopt the new changes, they live peacefully with others. This chapter deals with the family and its ongoing problem in the modern world. It is a challenge for the family to establish itself in the new social world order. At the same time not to lose any of its essential nature.

4.1 General outline of Indian family

In this section, the definition and meaning of Indian family is presented. The Indian family undergo rapid change in modern times. The family structure is changed through culture, tradition and modernization. In this regard, one needs to understand the Indian family system to differentiate the changes and challenges from it.

4.1.1 The meaning of the word family

“Etymologically the word family is derived from the word *'famulus'* meaning servant. In the past, even servants were treated as a common members of the households. A family is

an ecologically balanced environment. Husband and wife are both together placed under the roof of a family”¹⁶⁵.

There is also the second meaning for the word Family. “The term family is derived from the Latin word *‘familia’* denoting a household establishment and refers to a group of individuals living together during important phases of their lifetime and bound to each other by biological and sociological relationship”¹⁶⁶.

4.1.2 The definition of Indian Family

The Indian family is considered to be strong and stable. Family also can be understood by the universal outlook by its appearance and significance. A family is a natural community which links and frees us from isolation of the solidarity individual and anonymity of the solidarity world. The family’s existence shows that we are not meant to be totally alone. This basic unit of society can provide a privileged environment for nurturing, growth, well-being and freedom of the individual members. The family is a unit of interacting persons that shapes the personality development of its members and is adaptive to social change.¹⁶⁷

4.1.3 The nature of the family

4.1.3.1 The Patriarchal Family

In India, the family of Vedic times was strongly patriarchal. The father exercised sole power over his wife and children. They could not own any property. In principle almost complete subordination marked the position of the wife. The Indian woman was subject to the will of her husband. It was her duty to obey her father before marriage, to obey her husband after marriage and to obey her son in her widowhood. In recent times the position of Indian woman has changed somewhat improved by prescribing many provisions in her favor. Still Indian society remains as Patriarchal.¹⁶⁸

There are very many factors show that the Indian society is Patriarchal society. The child gets the name of the father and not the mother. Every child is known by the name of the father. For example Paul Arasu Selvanathan, the name ‘Selvanathan’ is the name of the father. The children get the property of the father only. They have no right over the property of the

¹⁶⁵ Devadoss, *Hindhu Family and Marriage* (Madras: University of Madras, 1979), p. 69.

¹⁶⁶ Rakesh Chaddha and Koushik Sinha, Dep. “Indian Family System, Collectivistic Society and Psychotherapy” in *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 55(2013), New Delhi, p. 299.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Navamani Elia Peter, “A Christian view of the Family” in *NCC Review*, September 1996, p. 528.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. A.P. Thakur, *Indian Society* (New Delhi: Global Vision Publishing House, 2010) p. 299.

mother's family. The wife after marriage comes to live in the home of the husband. These are the things very common in Indian society.

4.1.3.2 The Matriarchal Family

In a matriarchal family the authority vests in the woman head of the family with the males being subordinate. She is the owner of property and rules over the family. The matriarchal family system found in Kerala and Assam. The property is transmitted through the females and is held by the females only. However the family property is indivisible. The property passes through the female but all female members do not share in the family property. The parents appoint one of the daughters as heir and she need not be the eldest or youngest. Although the woman owns the property, but it is controlled by the husband.¹⁶⁹

4.1.4 Types of family

There are more types of families in Indian family system, but I would like to highlight one two of them here, namely simple or nuclear family and Joint family. These two families are the fundamental base of the Indian family system.

4.1.4.1 Nuclear Family

The nuclear family or simple family is defined as “a unit which consists of a man, his wife and unmarried children”.¹⁷⁰ In other words, a nuclear family is one which consists of husband, wife and their children, soon after the marriage, the children leave their parental home and establish their separate autonomous unit free from the control of the elders.

In practice, simple family is free from the other relatives and elders. It is considered to be a modern type of family in India. After marriage the married couple wants to separate from the parents. In a nuclear family they have time for each other. They share love and care very deeply. They experience the freedom of choice in a nuclear family. They have freedom to adopt new style of life, new ideas and cultures.

4.1.4.2 Joint family

Joint family consists of husband, wife children, married sons, his brothers, unmarried sisters. They live under one shelter and eat from the common kitchen. The members work and pool their earnings of the family fund. The members of the family irrespective of the quantum

¹⁶⁹ Cf. A.P. Thakur, *Indian Society*, p. 301.

¹⁷⁰ Veena Dass, *Handbook of Indian Sociology* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004) p. 24.

of their contribution enjoy equal rights in the family property. It is appeared as a single unit. Thus the members are related to one another by property, and mutual rights and obligation.¹⁷¹

In practice, the joint family is big in size. Each member has his own interest which bring conflict often. The freedom is limited. Dependency is more in this type of family.

4.1.5 The essential elements of the Indian family

Here the essential part of the family is presented. It gives the essential features that constitute or formulate the Indian family. There are three things are common in Indian family. They are ownership, authority and hierarchy.

4.1.5.1 Joint Ownership

The Landed property is owned and used for the benefit of the entire family. In this way none of the family members fully possess the assets. The income too is put together, so that it could be used for the joint family. The joint ownership is so important for this type of family structure. The consequences of such a common ownership and use of property and of income are that everyone within the family is taken care of. The non-working children and the aged, the incapacitated and the orphaned children, the sick and even the handicapped all are looked after.¹⁷²

4.1.5.2 Authority

Authority of the father or the eldest male is one of the most important aspects of the joint family, especially of the patriarchal type. The authority of the father is undisputed and the brothers have to stay together as long as the father lives. It is he who distributes work, arranges the marriages and trains the youngsters for work. He has the final word in the family decisions. He presides over the family worship. He is the prime educator and manager of the family. After the death of the father, the brothers may choose to break into their own households, or to stay on together under the authority of the eldest brother.¹⁷³

4.1.5.3 Hierarchy

There is an ascending grade of authority and respect in the family, which we may call hierarchy. The most important and deciding factor is the place of the parents. Children owe

¹⁷¹ Cf. K.P. Neeraja, *Text Book of Sociology for Nursing Students* (New Delhi: Jaypee Brothers Publishers, 2005), p. 330.

¹⁷² Cf. Paul Pudussery, *Indian family and its values* (Mumbai: Vivekananda Kendra Patrika, 1998) p. 76.

¹⁷³ Cf. Paul Pudussery, *Indian family and its values*, p.77.

permanent deference to their parents as long as they are alive. Among other members of the family, the two deciding factors are sex and age, and in the patriarchal joint- families, a younger male member. Among the brothers, respect and reverence is due to each according to his age.¹⁷⁴

4.1.6 The changing family patterns

The family as a basic social institution has been undergoing change. In this modern world, the Indian family differs from its traditional one. Both in its structure and functions changes have taken place. I try to bring out those changes and reasons behind it. This part will give the present condition of the Indian family.

4.1.6.1 Change in structure

Indian family is known for tradition and cultural diversity. Earlier the joint family was very common in the society. The old generation were very proud to constitute and hold joint family. They were proud of being the member of the joint family. The culture and the traditions have emerged and followed continuously for many years. It was recognized by the social structure. The feeling of togetherness and commitment were the essential to the joint family. It was kept high in the social order. But due to changes it has lost its position. It was considered as an outdated. The environmental setup, especially the urban side it was difficult to hold larger group in one house. Too much of dependency and single handed decision making gave way to the nuclear family.

In a nuclear family, they are independent and free to make choice. It was well fitted for the urban life. The nuclear family attracted and attracts many young generation to choose small family ahead of joint family. The family become smaller

4.1.6.2 Change in function

It is applicable for both nuclear and joint families. The Indian family remains no longer as a traditional one. In a traditional family, man goes out for work. He is the sole responsible for the economy. The woman remains in the family, she looks after the household activities. But nowadays, woman are more educated and empowered. They fight for equal position in the family as well as in the society. Women are now liberated from the traditionalism. They have become the earning member in the family. This functional change is

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Paul Pudussery, *Indian family and its values*. p. 77.

a big change to the traditional form. This change is considered as a positive one. Sometimes the woman takes responsibility for the sustenance of the family, and the man remains at home.

4.1.6.3 Urbanization and industrialization

The Indian family is constantly on the move. Industrialization and urbanization go together hand in hand to make impact on the family. The family moves to the better place to live and survive. India has most of the populations in the rural side. The people are moving to the urban side for better quality of life. The family moves to the urban side for education, medical facilities and work. This transition from one place to another put all other family bonding aside. This move foster the small family system for better accommodation and bright future. As a result, Family is cut in size. The industrialization also affects the family very much. The family move to the industrial area for jobs and financial growth. This move favors only the nuclear family. The joint family becomes burden in the new environment.

4.1.6.4 The spirit of individualism

The strong feeling of individualism brings changes in cultural and traditional forms. The young generation has a spirit of individualism. The parents can no longer make decision for the children. The children make decision for themselves. They have new ideas about the culture, tradition and the family values. They have new orientation towards marriage, religious values and tradition. The old generation can no longer control the young generation. There is always conflict between the parents and the children. As a result, religion, traditional values, morality are losing ground. The Indian families are restructured with individualism, freedom and independency. It goes to the secular outlook.

4.2 Family disputes in Indian family

To identify the real problem or conflict that exists in the family, the survey has been conducted in Vellore diocese, South India. Nearly 350 hundred families were participated in the survey. The aim of this survey is to identify the problems that create conflict in the relationship of the family members. Few villages in the south India were chosen for the survey.

4.2.1 The need of Survey Method

The survey method was followed to identify the conflict in the Indian family. It gives not only the existing problem, but also the current issues that affects the family system. The

survey method is chosen to address the conflict management. This method brings our problem directly from the people. It is not something abstract, but concrete one. It is evident in the survey and the results have shown the positive outcome.

4.2.2 The background of the survey region

This part will explain the background of the people. It is important to know the lifestyle of the people. The social, economical and political conditions are presented. In Indian society, these things are interrelated and inseparable from each other. They influence the everyday life or control them.

4.2.2.1 Social Condition

In these areas mostly people belong to lower class of the society. Three-Fourth of the population belongs to Dalit community. Based on caste these people are discriminated, humiliated and separated from the main villages. The remaining one-fourth of the high caste Hindus dominates the other dalits community people. The Human right claims and social privileges are denied to dalits by high caste Hindus. According to the high caste people dalits are basically polluted people, so they cannot attend any common village functions, cannot fetch drinking water from the common well or bore wells. These people socially suffer very much.

4.2.2.2 Economic Conditions

Dalit community people are economically very poor. All are landless labors go for daily wage in vast farmlands owned by the high caste people. They do not get enough wages for their hard work. For rupees 20 they have to work for a whole day. With that they cannot even meet their basic needs. Mostly people are living in huts made up of mud walls and thatched roofs. They have no toilet facilities in their houses. Most of the people have only one or two meal a day. Since people are economically very weak the children are able to finish even middle school studies. Most of the youth are school dropouts.

4.2.2.3 Political Condition

Politically these people are powerless and un-influential to lobby for their benefits. As most of them are illiterate, they are uninformed and unaware of the political situation, their human rights and privileges. They lend themselves to be exploited only as Vote Banks in party politics of our country by corrupt leaders to capture power. Since they are socially and

economically weak they are not able to fight for their rights. The politicians exploit the people for their own benefits.

4.2.3 The description of survey method

The descriptions are given below how the survey was conducted.

The question papers were prepared and distributed to the 350 families. The families are mixture of Nuclear families and the Joint Families.

The participants: Nearly 200 males, 200 Females and 100 students were participated in this survey. The number is restricted for easy calculation and explanation.

The people are daily workers and they were free before going for every day work. The survey was conducted in the morning time. For the students, the survey was conducted in the evening time, when the returned from the school.

The survey papers were collected and identified the important conflicts for further discussion.

The last step of the survey method is group discussion. The group discussion was conducted for different age groups and result were discussed. This is to clarify the life situation and settings, from which the problems or conflicts arises.

Based on the survey, facts and figures are given below.

Gender	Age	Sample Numbers
Males	24-60	200
Females	24-60	200
Students, Youth	16-25	100
Total		500

4.2.4 The conflicts in the Indian Families

With this background, the result of the survey is given blow. The percentage is given as each family mentioned the conflicts in a given sheets.

S:NO	CONFLICT ELEMENTS	Percentage
1	FAMILY PROPERTY SHARING	70
2	DOWRY	20
3	MARRIAGE	5
4	RESPONSIBILITY	2
5	RELIGION	2.5
6	AUTHORITATIVE ISSUE	0.5

4.2.4.1 Family property conflict

The survey gives the figure of 70 percentages to the property sharing conflict that affects the relationship. The family is either separated or the joint family system is disappeared. The people are poor, but invariably all the family have the small portion of family property. This is one of the major areas of conflict. The reason could be in terms of land sharing and the sharing of the household things. Very often the conflict comes as a result of traditional and judicial ways of sharing the property. The family tradition give the parents power to divide the property. In this way, the favorite son or daughter gets more attention. The weaker section is dominated by the stronger ones in the same family. The judicial system empower the weaker section or the victims. It spoils the natural bond of relationship among the family members. They separate from one another in such a way they never come back or live together.

4.2.4.2 Dowry

Dowry gets the second place in the family conflict situation. The 20% of the family is separated because of the dowry problem. It is the age old problem in the history of Indian family. Dowry is the term given to the property that could be movable or immovable property on the day of wedding celebration by the bride to the bridegroom. It varies from place to place, culture, caste and the economical situation of the families. This problem brings conflict

in the relationships. Here, the one who receives and the one who gives both are not satisfied by themselves. The Bridegroom expects more Dowries from the bride. The conflict arises when she brings less than what is expected from her. It causes sometimes death of a girl.

4.2.4.3 Marriage

Indian traditional marriage is an arranged marriage. The parents select the bride for their sons. The problem arises when the boy chooses his life partner by himself. The parents does not accept his choice. The parents want a girl from their own caste and community. Here I mention the term 'Community'. It means that there are many sub-divisions in every caste. In an arranged marriage, the parents choose the girl from their own community. By doing so, they want to restore and keep the family tradition. But, the young generation differs from this view, they do as they wish. As a result, after marriage, the sons are separated from the house permanently. They lose contact with each other. In some place, the disobeyed sons or daughters are not allowed to remain in the same village.

4.2.4.4 Authoritative

This is an important issue that needs to be recognized. The dominant role of the husband as the bread winner brings conflict among the family members. The productivity is determines who has the high authority in the family. The person who earns or the one who has educated takes the place of dominant role. It brings disaster in the family relationship. Family functions smoothly provided the leader, in spite of his authoritarian approach, remains supportive and sensitive to the needs of the dependents but resentment and rebellion may result if the leader becomes selfish and insensitive. Authoritative issues are closely associated with persons by education and qualified profession within the family members.

4.2.4.5 Responsibility

The family conflict comes as a result of lack of responsibility. The males have the financial responsibility in the family. They have to look after everyone else. The son has the moral responsibility of helping his parents in every way. That authority and responsibility go hand in hand. It is seen in a traditional Indian family. It is not only the authority of the father but also his responsibility towards his children. Finally, these responsibilities are considered more traditional than legal. Traditionally, the eldest son takes the responsibility from his father. The lack of responsibility affects not only the relationship, but also the economical situation too. The family breaks up in course of time.

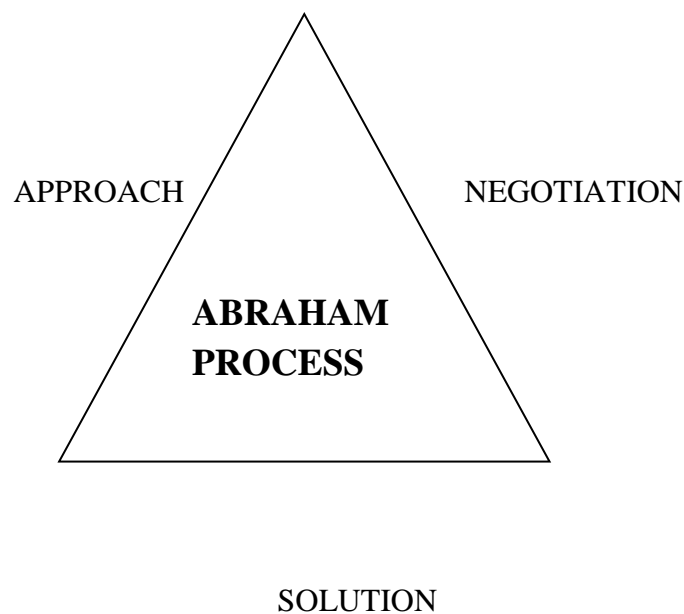
4.2.4.6 Religion

The family is the place for religious activities. Religion plays a vital role in the family. In every family there is particular religious rites performed by the elder of the house. It is passed on to the eldest son of the family. The conflict arises when the eldest son does not willing to take the position or changes the religion. In many family there is a problem of keeping this religious tradition.

4.3 Abraham method of resolving family conflict

We have analyzed the conflict situation that exists in the family. In this section, we shall try to find solution by Abraham's perspective. The diagram will give the complete picture to understand the process of mediation.

ABRAHAM PROCESS



4.3.1 Approach to the problem

In the mediation process, the first and important step is that there must be positive approach to the conflict. Abraham approaches the conflict situation. He initiates the dialogue with his brother to resolve the problem. He deals with the problem amicable way. We shall see these two parts in this section.

4.3.1.1 Initiative to talk first

Abraham takes the initiative to resolve the dispute. Although it was among the shepherds, he could see that also involved the family. In this step, the important elements are aware of the problem and take initiative to take about it. Abraham as soon as he knew the problem, he came forward to deal with his brother Lot. Though the problem started with the small quarrel among the servants, he took initiative to resolve it before it become worse. The approach is made with positive attitude. Abraham did not waste time. He could discern that relations become harder and worst consequences could come therefore takes the initiative.

The family system undergoes a rapid change. The members have different ideas, wishes and wills. There will be conflict in the family. But the initiative to have dialogue and positive approach to the problem may help to resolve the conflict. The joint family is disappearing increasingly because of the lake of initiative to address the problem. Everyone in the family knows the conflict or problem very well, but nobody comes forward to speak it out. The conflict grows more and more. Lake of communication is also a cause for concern. Abraham being an owner of the household, he comes down from his position and initiates the process. Today the Indian family needs of this.

4.3.1.2 Amicable approach

Gentleness and love rule the heart of men. Abraham is well composed. He approaches the problem with kindness and love. In the time of conflict between two parties, taking sides is dangerous and bring disaster. The neutrality make the two rebellion parties come together. It brings both the parties on common ground, on same platform. Abraham plays such a role with amicable nature. Amicable method gives space and hope for the solution.

It is over crowded in the house of Abraham. The respective employees of Lot and Abraham engage in verbal sparring. Each of them claims legitimate sovereignty over the parcel of land in question. Such quarreling is referred to as a dispute. In strict terms, the dispute can be properly used when the two disputing parties are unable to resolve their differences through either peaceful or violent means. As a result they turn to act as adjudicator. This is not the procedure pursued in Genesis 13, for Abraham and Lot are able to solve their quarrel without resort to a mediating party. Hence, the situation does not involve a lawsuit of any kind.¹⁷⁵ Jesus also gives the similar solution in the gospel to avoid lawsuit by

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis 1-17: The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Michigan: Wlliam B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990) p. 390.

way of reconciling one another. This confrontation towards a problem gives two parties in a peaceful situation. The lawsuit brings justice and solution towards the problem, but the parties remain in permanent dispute in relationship.

The notable point is that Abraham chose to settle the problem not with the lawsuit, but by the mutual agreement. If a lawsuit is not involved, strife is involved, and it is a strife that is not followed by reconciliation. The irony is that Abraham and Lot seem to be able to share the land with the Canaanites and Perizzites, for these peoples were also occupying or dwelling in the land, but there is not enough room for Abraham and Lot to dwell adjacently. But Abraham capitalizes on the chance to defuse the debate and settle it amicably.¹⁷⁶

Abraham clearly understood the important of solving the problem amicable way from the past experience. The Abraham now resettled in Canaan contrasts sharply with the Abram in Egypt. He who earlier fomented strife now moves to nip strife in the bud. In a family if there is a conflict, there are two options. One is approaching it with judicial way and the other is by the two parties by agreement. Often the judicial way gives pain and hounds in the human relationship. The reconciliation is far from reaching it.

Indian family need a positive approach to the conflict as Abraham. In the time of conflict, the strong will survive and weak will die. The stronger wins the weaker. The majority subordinates the minority. The stronger section destroys the weaker section. The conflicts become intolerable and end up with revenges. A settlement of conflict become difficult, because it hurts each other. Abraham's approach shows none of these things. He is the head of the family. He has authority to deal with the conflict in his favor. But his approach is remarkable. He takes the first step. The Indian family has to adopt his approach.

4.3.2 Negotiation process

In the negotiation process, the basic needs of others are taken care. In the negotiation process, not only the freedom but also the flexibility plays a role to resolve the conflict. Abraham is very flexible and gives freedom of choice to his brother Lot.

4.3.2.1 Negotiation to the relationship

The mediation of Abraham is very simple. On one hand, his mediation is to take care of other's need, so that the conflict is reduced.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis 1-17: The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, p. 391.

The words “*let there be no strife between me and thee*” have to do with a personal relationship. These words reflect the heart of Abraham that the relationship of kinship can be maintained for ever. Abraham and Lot were kinsmen, and between them there was the further bond of a long shared experience. It is easy to understand that Abraham, being the sort of man he was, wanted to prevent any strife with Lot and would go a long way to avoid it. But the words suggested a larger thought. The words show that he is a man of peace. It is a desirable and possible ideal that there should be no strife between human being.¹⁷⁷

Abraham appeals to Lot that we are brethren. They are of same family, worship same God in the same way. They have same promise and look for same end.¹⁷⁸ There is no reason for fighting. Let the quarrel not overpower us, or rule us, for we are brothers and remain as brothers.

Abraham mediation is to adopt the realities to survive peacefully. Organisms capable of adapting themselves to environments have survived; those who were incapable have perished. Abram plays a positive role. The more energetic and resourceful individuals or families have outstripped inferior ones, and in so doing have been the pioneer of advancing civilization. The family or individual who is relieved from any necessity to strive grows flabby. Abraham being a powerful man, mediating in such a way, the needed man Lot is met with full of choice of life.¹⁷⁹

Abraham method shows that the family will survive within the bond of brotherhood and kinship only when the members are open to the realities. The natural bond and the personal respect for each member can unite them in times of conflict.

4.3.2.2 Negotiation with flexibility

Abraham’s mediation on the other hand is not to exploit of weak one and bargains with superiority, but his dealing with Lot is to adjust the problem and make it correct. Abraham is remembered in his relationship with Lot, a bond of kinship, a desire for decent existence, for freedom from fear and freedom from wants, and chance for everybody to pursue their various ways in peace.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Cutbert A. Simpson, “Genesis” in *The Interpreters Bible*, George Arthur Buttrick (ed.), (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978) p. 584.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Adam Clarke, *Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible* (Nashville: Baker Book House, 1967), p. 98

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Cutbert A. Simpson, “Genesis” in *The Interpreters Bible*, p. 584.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Cutbert A. Simpson, “Genesis” in *The Interpreters Bible*, p. 585.

Negotiation shows an intensive conversation in which he expresses his feeling: we are brothers. His negotiation calls for new changes and transformation. There is a possibility of an understanding by negotiating a solution that is satisfactory for both the parties. There is peace and flexibility in his negotiation.

Abraham and Lot stood upon a platform of equality; religious principle should have dictated to the propriety of either what he believed to be the inferior quarter. Abraham was Lot's superior in age. He is entitled to take precedence of one who was younger. Besides, he is a guardian and benefactor to Lot. Abraham is worthy of acknowledgment and gratitude at the hands of the one whom he had enriched. But Abraham comes forward and stands upon the platform of equality. What was more important for the settlement of the question is the actual heir and owner of the land, to whom accordingly belonged the claiming not only its fattest portion, but its entire domain.¹⁸¹ But Abraham acts with flexibility.

In times of conflict, a little civility is of great importance in the concern of life. But Lot did nothing of it. He took his own way, trusted his own judgement and guided by the sight of his eyes.¹⁸² Abraham is elder to Lot. He is the guardian and owner of all the households. In spite of all these, he never threatened his brother Lot. He never played a superior role. Abraham did not force him in taking decision. But, he showed sympathy, concern and care for him. He had dialogue with him, making a request with him and sacrificed for his brother Lot.

In the family members, the complexity of superiority and the inferiority plays a negative role to bring conflicts and end up with disaster. If a member is interested only in himself, then the other family member will suffer and the consequence will be greater. The selfish motives, pride and power seeking attitude disturb the family relationship very much. There are enough and more conflicts that divide the family, but at the same time, there are many good virtues that unite the family members. Abraham is the model for the ideal family.

4.3.3 Proposal: Separation

In this final step, creating option and restoring relation is the ultimate purpose of the solution process. Abraham comes to a happy conclusion to resolve the dispute. They must leave, i.e. separated as good friends, not with bitterness or resentment roots. But the

¹⁸¹ Cf. H.D.M. Spence and Joseph S. (eds.), *Genesis and Exodus* (Michigan: Eermans Publishing Company, 1980) p. 198.

¹⁸² Cf. Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary on the Bible* (Nashville: Baker Book House, 1967), p. 98

magnanimity of Abraham lies in executing this process of separation. The separation proposed by Abraham is for the peaceful co-existence with one another.

4.3.3.1 Priority to co-exist

Abraham proposes the separation to his brother. Instead of living in conflict situation, Abraham prefers to live in peace. But by doing so, he creates the possibilities and gives priority to his brother. So that, the brotherhood and the family bond is maintained. The peace seems to be unrealistic. The separation give the peaceful coexistence for both Abraham and Lot.

Organisms capable of adapting themselves to environment have survived. All those organisms who are incapable have perished. Struggle and conflict are part and parcel of human life and its development. On the human level, the more energetic individuals or families are seen as a pioneers of advancing civilization. No society is free of strife and struggle. The utopian experiment was a classic example where the people were separated from the general life, and competition was renounced in a society where everybody was to take care of everybody else. They could not make what was called to be a strife less society.¹⁸³ The separation gives new beginning, new hope, new dimension, and new way of life. Peaceful separation is far more desirable than the perpetual conflict. Abraham handled the situation with peace. As man of integrity and cleverness, he seeks the possibilities for coexistence.

It is also applied to the family situation. Separation is the best way out of family conflict. Separation is the best way for the married couple, instead of permanent agony. Separation is a redemptive option for a man or woman in a joint family, where all other members are opposed to the remarriage or old outdated ideas which paralyzes the life. The ultimate goal is a possible coexistence.

4.3.3.2 Generosity to co-exist

There is a constant struggle between rich and poor, haves and haves-not, majority and minority. The owner exploit the workers, when they rebel against him. The majority group discriminate the minority, when it comes to the equality. Very few people are generous over others. Very few good people give dignity and respect to the weaker section.

¹⁸³ Cf. Cuthbert A. Simpson, "Genesis" in *The Interpreters Bible, Vol. I*, p. 584.

At separation, Abraham is generous with Lot. The generosity and the nobleness of Abraham are the central point of the separation. Abraham is seen as a man of faith, by refusing to insist upon his rights in reference to Lot.¹⁸⁴ The family members should seek the wellbeing of other members at the point of conflict. It is a Christian virtue also. Abraham ask Lot to choose first. The phrase *'the whole is before you'* shows how generous Abraham is. He gives Lot an open choice without any condition.

When there is a conflict, the family members can avoid the conflict by creating many possibilities, so that, the agreement is peacefully reached. There are many factors that bring disaster to the relationship, but the adjustment makes create many factors that foster good relationship and understanding among the family members. When a family gives importance to the value system, there is acceptance with each other. It reminds the bond, kinship and brotherhood in a family.

When the needs are growing day by day, the family has to adopt some methods in such a way the balance is maintained. The co-existence is possible among the members of a same family even when they live separately as a nuclear family. Instead of separating one another by conflict, separation by good understanding is the possible way of co-existence with others peacefully.

4.4 The relavance of Abraham's method in Indian family conflict: A case study

This part deals with the application of Abraham's method. A real problem is taken and the method is applied to it. It is to show how far the method is relevant to the family conflict situation.

4.4.1 Case

In Melpudupakkam, there is a christian family which consists of Father, mother and two grown up children. The grandparents are living with them. The first child is a boy, and the second one is a girl. Both the children are working. They support the family finacially as their parents have retired. The boy is called Karunakaran. He is 32 years old. He chose his life partner by himself without the consent of the parents. The girl is from a hindu family. The parents did not allow him to go for marriage. But he was very adamant to marry her only. This conflict went on for several months. Meanwhile, the girl was converted in to christianity.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Larry R. Helyer, "The Separation of Abraham and Lot: Its Significance in the Patriarchal Narratives" in *JOT* 26 (1983) p.77.

Later, they got married. They live under the same roof. The parents rarely speak with their son and the daughter in Law. The grandparents are neutral to this problem. But later, they accepted their marriage. They are the only medium for communication and good atmosphere in the family. But the problem remains the same between the parents and their son. It gets intensified day by day. The parents deny him the family property and the other benefits, as the family property is in the hands of the parents. The son is well educated and earning well. He wants to have only a good relationship with the parents.

4.4.2 The purpose of case study

The purpose of the case study is to describe the practical framework of the thesis by applying the method of Abraham to the family conflict and giving insight to the rest of the family conflicts. From the thesis, we have identified three simple steps for problem solving: namely, Approaching the problem, negotiating the problem and proposing the solution. This case study explains a real problem of a family. The method of Abraham is applied to this problem. It shows the relevance of the method that Abraham has followed. In short, this case study is the outcome of the thesis.

4.4.3 Method of Abraham

Here the method of Abraham is applied with the family conflict. A case study is taken and the method is applied. This will show how effective and relevance the method is.

4.4.3.1 Approach to the problem

Abraham is the head of the family. The problem starts between the two groups of the shepherds. the problem remains between the shepherds of Abraham and Lot. It has not yet reached to the greater level that disturb the relationship of Abraham with Lot. But Abraham aware of the potentiality of the problem that could spoil the relationship any time. Abraham takes the initiative. We see the two possibilities in this case: Abraham acts as a mediator, because the problem is between the two groups of the shepherds. On the other hand, Abraham is also a victim of the problem, since he is the head of the family. He is responsible for what happens in the family. So he takes initiative and approach the problem.

His approach shows that he is a man for peace and harmony. He never thought that it is a problem of the shepherds. He involves himself in the situation to bring peace. Abraham stands for values and spiritual things, whereas Lot stands for worldly desires. It is right to

have different ideas and interests. But good ideas and values bring peace within the family circle and in the society. Abraham tries to do so.

The same situation is applied with the family problem. The case study shows the conflict situation between the parents and the son. The possibility of initiation is seen from the side of son. Because he expresses his desire to maintain good relationship with his parents. So he can play the role of Abraham. No one can expect always that the elders should take the initiatives. Anyone who desires for peace, can take initiative to establish it. The parents are very traditional and conservative. They are not in a position to adopt the new changes. They want to keep the family tradition and values. It is evident that they can no longer look for relationship or reconciliation. The son can be a peace maker in the family. The son wants to establish good relationship with his parents. He can also initiate the process. He may approach his parents to discuss the problem.

Apart from the father and the son, there may be someone in the family to initiate the negotiation process. So we can't also deny the role the third party. As we have told already that Abraham also plays as a third party or mediator. Any one of the party has to take initiative to begin a processes of dialogue. When no one is ready for it, then the third person, who resides in the family can be a mediator. In all the family there will be one person who is considered to be experienced person in life and credible and acceptable person among the family or relatives. He meets persons individually and listens to their stories. The mediator will be very empathetic listener, patient and keep a balanced view towards reality. In the case study, the mediator could be the grandparents. They are accepted by both the parties. They are neutral to the both sides. They can play the mediator role between the parents and the son.

4.4.3.2 Negotiation

In general a negotiation process begins with peaceful conversation. Negotiating process is dialogical, where both the parties are brought together before the representatives. The conflict comes within the family, when the relationship is affected. They fight for their own ideas, opinion and interests. For some days after the fight they keep away from each other. They may not speak each other or avoid any interaction possible. It may go for some time. Then a third part or one of the parties takes initiative to solve the problem. In the beginning the representatives of the both parties meet together and talk the issue explaining the viewpoints of their respective parties. After some discussion, they go and communicate those conclusions to them whether they are ready to accept the terms and conditions of theirs.

If they agree the negotiation process come to an end otherwise they may continue the negotiations. It normal procedure in negotiation process, particularly in India.

In the negotiation process, Abraham softens the heart of Lot by saying: “*we are brothers*”. He helps Lot to identify once again his origin and belongingness to the family roots. The negotiation process rediscover the relationship and restore it. It is a process of going back to the old situation. In modern term, we call it “factory mode setting”. When the mobile is not functioning or repaired, there is also an option to set the original factory setting. The mobile starts functioning from factory setting.

The term, “*we are brothers*” appeals that Abraham and Lot are brothers and supposed to remain as brothers forever. Abraham is not negotiating with Lot to live under the same roof, but he negotiates for permanent relationship. When the negotiation put them together under the same roof, it is well and good. But the expectations are brotherhood, peace and harmony. There may be problems, misunderstanding and shortcomings, but it is wonderful, when they remain as brothers. The same attitude can be applied to the family conflict.

In the case study, the parents are dominated by the family tradition and values. Their reaction may bring more disaster to the situation. But negation bring them back to the family roots. As Abraham the son may appeal to his parents: “*am I not your son?*” Such conversation may reduce the problem and soften the heart of the parents. He may explore the reality of the facts regarding the issue before them. There may be problems, different opinions and ideas, but there is a real unchangeable bond between them. Nothing can separate them from this bond. For Christian family in general and particularly in this case, this idea is not new. This view is expressed by St. Paul: “nothing can separate from God’s love” (Rom 8: 38).

We cannot deny the role of the third party in the negotiation process. In this case, the grandparents can start the negotiation, when the two parties are not comfortable for the negotiation. The most important elements in the negotiation process are collaboration. As long the domination and reaction to the problem exist, the negotiation is difficult. The single minded goal is to bring reconciliation. The fruit of good negotiation bring possible solution.

4.4.3.3 Solution

It is a final step of the method. When there is a problem, there is also a solution. But ways and means play a vital role for possible solution. Abraham goes step by step and achieves the solution. The solution process begins with good proposals that are applicable for

both the parties. Abraham proposed a solution for coexistence. The coexistence establish the relationship between them. The proposals of Abraham to the solution are remarkable. He explores all the possibilities to Lot for peaceful coexistence.

Abraham gives up his position and asks Lot to choose the land. If he says: “you go this side, I will go another side”, then the conflict would have existed forever. The consequence that comes would have fallen on him. Instead, Abraham gives Lot right to choose first. This freedom requires responsibility from everyone. There is no question of blaming somebody for failure. This attitude is much needed to the family conflict situation.

When the conflict arises, we tend to put more restrictions or block the way to further improvement. A good proposal contains peace and prosperity for both parties, here father and son. The parents may respect the choice of their son, the son may respect the feelings of his parents. The solution may bring possible reconciliation between them. It gives way for coexistence. In spite of different ideas, opinions, customs and traditions, the possibility of unity is preserved. It is a beauty of coexistence.

Conclusion

The Indian family system and its types, the ongoing changes in the family system are presented in this chapter. The Indian family is divided based on the structure as joint family or nuclear family. The joint family contains two or more nuclear families. The nuclear family is a small family, consists of father, mother and unmarried children. The family is patrilocal, when the woman leaves her family and stays with the man after marriage. The family is matrilocal, when the man leaves his house and stays with the woman after marriage.

This chapter also dealt with the conflict between Abraham and Lot. Abraham does not want to quarrel with Lot. He wants to avoid conflict and maintain peace with him. When he heard of the quarrel, he took a walk with Lot and maintained peace. He follows some method for successful end, where both will retain the relationship till the end. The purpose is to apply the method of Abraham with Indian family conflict.

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Indian family is traditional. It is exposed to the world of change. It needs to update time again to keep balance in its basic principles and traditional values. The conflicts arises all the ranges of the social system. It occurs between two persons and in a family structure. It becomes serious problem when the family fails to avoid or solve such conflict. The Indian family is known as a joint family. It loses the roots and strength when grows in size when the conflict arises. The families members are no longer remain as a one unit. They are separated and never come again for social events with other members of the same clan. As they live together, they continue to live in perpetual conflict. They live together, but not in unity. The unsolved conflicts give them lifelong enmity to each other. There is a possible method to live in unity. Abraham has shown that method. It is a method of living as co-existence. It is wonderful when we live in unity.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The family is considered as one of the most important part of the Indian society. Everyone is treated as a family and related to the family background. It is a beautiful feeling that the person carry the name of the family wherever he goes. It is a unique tradition of Indian family. The relationship and love are backbone of the Indian family. But today, it undergoes a change due to modernization, industrialization and globalization. The family is no longer seen as a traditional form. It is also affected by transition such as culture and religion. These changes bring tension and conflicts in the family system. It is a failure of understanding and adjusting the new situation. As a result, there is constant struggle and conflict, which give way to disaster to the family system.

One language dominates the other language, one culture rules over the other culture, one caste overpower the other weaker caste, and amount of pressure and tension raise between the states in Indian society. There is no place for tolerance and openness. The society gives place for every human being for coexistence. Consequently the individualistic tendencies among the people increases more and more. They are not open with new changes, they are not ready to live with others peaceably and amicably. They considered “coexistence” as a constant treat for their existence. They seek more advantages over others. This attitude brings disaster to the family system.

The title of the thesis, **“Learn to live with others”** give a new dimension to the present problem of the Indian family system. The coexistence is the solution that foster relationship among the family members. It brings peace and happiness in the family. So I have taken Abraham-Lot narrative from Genesis 13: 1-12 for this purpose. The method of Abraham is a perfect model for the Indian family that undergoes a transition. I have developed it in four chapter to achieve the purpose and discover the fitting model for the Indian family.

The first chapter deals with the book of Genesis in general. The origin of Genesis, its authorship, literary form and composition of different sources are presented. Genesis is a collection of legends. It was originally transmitted orally. Theses had already been collected in the cycles at the oral stage. The sources are more the production of redaction than of creative works, and simply provided the pre-existent material with a framework and contexts. They are not the works of individuals, but of schools and narrators.

The title “Genesis” comes from the Greek word, which means: “beginning” or “origin”. It deals with a number of Characteristics: “Beginnings“. It records the beginning of creation, of man and women, of grace, of agriculture and of the chosen people. The author of this book is unknown. Tradition attributes it and the entire Torah to Moses, but scholars have shown that this understanding is not factual. The scholars began to question the authorship of Moses.

In the first century A.D. Philo of Alexandria and Josephus thought that Moses had foretold his own death, including even the external circumstances. In the Talmudic period, the view prevailed that Moses had written this book. In the twelfth century, Jewish medieval scholar Ibn Ezra gave very cautious expressions to his doubts about Mosaic authorship. Ibn Ezra drew the conclusions from Deut 3: 11, 34: 3-9, and Gen 22: 14 that Moses cannot be the author of the Pentateuch. The Catholic jurist Andreas Marius contested the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and declared that Ezra has put it together from older documents.

There are some references in Genesis that speaks against Moses authorship. We read twice, “At that time” the Canaanites were dwelling in the Land (Gen 12: 6 and 13: 7) “This presupposes a period many centuries after Moses when the Canaanites had either been assimilated or driven out. But that was certainly not the situation at the time of Moses’ activity. In other words it is a period, which lay a considerable time after Moses.

There are many repeated stories in Genesis. These repeated stories show that there cannot be a single author. If it is one author, he cannot write one story in two places in different manner. The three different accounts of the patriarch (Abraham) who lies about his wife as his sister are given in Gen 17, 20 and 26. The two creation stories portrayed in Gen 1 and 2. Therefore we must conclude that Pentateuch does not have any internal elements, which prove its relation to Moses. Genesis was not composed in a single draft. It is a product of a redaction process.

Many of scholars contributed to the development and refining of what came to be known as the Documentary Hypothesis for the formation of the Pentateuch. The attempts were also made to solve the disputes over Moses authorship of the Pentateuch. The scholars finally identified four separate sources, which seem to have been woven together into the composition as the Pentateuch. The four sources are namely: *Yahwist* or *J* source, *Elohist* or *E* source, *Priestly* or *P* source, *Deuteronomist* or *D* source

The book of Genesis was in an oral tradition around 1800-1200 B.C.E. During the period of King David, the written traditions of the Bible began. The *Yahwist* tradition was written around 950 B.C.E in Israel. When the Israel was divided into two kingdoms, the *Elohist* tradition was written around 850 B.C.E. in Judah. The *Deuteronomic* tradition was written around 620 B.C.E. When the Israel had gone for Babylon Exile, the *priestly* tradition was written around 550 B.C.E. After exile the scribe put together all the sources and edited as one tradition. Finally the book of Genesis received its final form around the sixth century B.C.E.

There are two main divisions in Genesis based on its content: Primeval history (chaps 1-11) and Patriarchal history (chaps 12-50). The book of Genesis has influence from the Ancient Near East texts like Enuma Elish, Gilgamesh, and Ziggurat. There is a chronological thread running through the entire book, and all its parts are so interdependent that if one were omitted it would create a gap, and entirely rob the book of its unity.

In second chapter, the family system in the patriarchal period is presented. It explains the origin of ancient communities and development of the family system in ancient Israel.

The ancestors of the Israelites and the Israelites themselves lived a nomad or semi-nomadic life. However, they were not true Bedouins. The greater need for water and food allowed them to make contact with sedentary communities. They began to cultivate the land and build houses but at least winter and spring, and a part of groups lived in the tent with the herds. The communities were composed of several clans called as *mispahot*. Usually, the clan lived in the same place.

The Israel family fostered the relationship between the members of the household, and in a smaller unit between parents and children. Each family comprises father, wife, and children with their wives and servants. The criteria for the membership are a family of consanguinity, legal ties (family) or geographic proximity. They were encouraged to have large families, not only to strengthen the base for protection, but also to guarantee the survival of the people.

There were three types of families. In a patriarchal family, the father is the head of the household. In a matriarchal family, the mother exercises the authority, and has rights of inheritance. In a fraternal family, the eldest brother is the head of the family. The authority is handed on along with the property from brother to brother.

Father is the head of the household. His position in the family is expressed by his being as *Baal*. He is the possessor and master and the ruler. It is he who provide the bread and makes the soil yield up its wealth. The mother assists him in creating a house and in upholding him within his family. All the hard work at home certainly fall to her. She looks after the flocks and cook the food. Intimacy and submission are the two essential elements from her to her husband. The children were the necessary economic commodities. They became workers within the family whose productivity contributed to the survival of the family. The male children became the heirs of the household and the daughters were held in less regard.

The children were expected to obey the parents. Caring the aged parents was considered as a primary duty of the children. During the childhood the mother educated the children. The mother taught all the domestic works like food preparation and preservation and tending the gardens. Once the children became young men, the father trained them in the field of trading, agriculture and hunting. The parents had primary role towards their sons and daughters and legal relationship for administrative environment and the maintenance of peace and order in the family.

The family adopted some methods that fostered constant peace and order even the problem raised. They had solutions and options for the problems. When the parents had no children, they adopted the children. They handed over the inheritance to the children.

The third chapter is the exegetical work of the text Gen 13: 1-12. A story of Abraham and Lot from genesis 13: 1-12 is a conflict that arises not only based on the property, but also the value system. Abraham is differed from Lot in all the good nature of human being. The character of Abraham is referred here as good man, and the character of Lot is understood as far from reality.

Abraham is always portrayed as humble man. He always cares the other. He lives for others. Being the elder and the leader of the house hold, Abraham treats Lot with gentle and loving. He gives the priority of choosing of land that he desires. He is a peace maker. When there was a problem, he identifies it and wants to maintain peace between them. He gives importance to the family feeling and reverence to the brotherhood. He is ever ready to subordinate his own interest to the preservation of kinship.

The conflict is normal in everyday life. The conflict between two persons becomes the conflict of small family. The other person is created to have interpersonal relationship in the

universe. But for some, the other person becomes a constant threat. If one is interested in the existence of another person as our own extended reality, then comes the true relationship. Abraham is a peacemaker and he resolves the conflict. Lot is purely a worldly man; he finds the way to separate from Abraham. Our attitude directs our life. There are values and principles for a peaceful life. Like Abraham we do avoid the conflict and show compassion with one other.

This chapter contributed to the thesis the intensity of the problem between Abraham and Lot. This chapter presented the problem in detail with exegetical work. The conflict between Abraham and Lot is exposed and the solution of the problem also identified. The aim of the thesis is to discover the method of Abraham as a model for the Indian family. This chapter contributed the model perfectly. This model will be applied in the coming chapter.

The fourth chapter is the main chapter of the thesis. The outcome of this chapter is the purpose of the thesis. The Indian family system and its types, the ongoing changes in the family system are presented in this chapter. The Indian family is divided based on the structure as joint family or nuclear family. The joint family contains two or more nuclear families. The nuclear family is a small family, consists of father, mother and unmarried children. The family is patrilocal, when the woman leaves her family and stays with the man after marriage. The family is matrilineal, when the man leaves his house and stays with the woman after marriage.

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The word separation gives negative meaning to many of us. It excludes some from common activities or participation. Sometimes separation is expressed as an underprivileged group. It is seen as a weapon against the revolted group. The word used to make weak the targeted group. Many families live with conflicts. It looks like peace and happy, but inside the bitterness eats away and destroys the family. This is the situation of the Indian family which undergo conflicts situations.

Separations are necessary to create peace and amicable coexistence. Abraham and Lot have separated because they could not live together anymore. They sought peace of separation, because the peace of coexistence was endangered. In a family, the members have to see the peace by consciously addressing the peaceful separation. The family seek the peaceful separation, because the living conditions have changed. The relationship is something precious that it must be preserved at all costs and even through possible separation, so that it does not come to conflict. It is the deliberate separation that allows inner peace and reconciliation in the family.

Indian family is traditional. It is exposed to the world of change. It needs to update time again to keep balance in its basic principles and traditional values. The conflicts arises all the ranges of the social system. It occurs between two persons and in a family structure. It becomes serious problem when the family fails to avoid or solve such conflict. The Indian family is known as a joint family. It loses the roots and strength when grows in size when the conflict arises. The families members are no longer remain as a one unit. They are separated and never come again for social events with other members of the same clan. As they live together, they continue to live in perpetual conflict. They live together, but not in unity. The unsolved conflicts give them lifelong enmity to each other. There is a possible method to live in unity. Abraham has shown that method. It is a method of living as co-existence. It is wonderful when we live in unity.

Coexistence is to live in harmony with fellow human beings. Living in peace requires respect and love for each other. Conflicts are not bad. Not all conflicts can be avoided. The clarity is always important to ensure peace when conflicts arise. Learn to live with others ensures the coexistence of fellow human being under the same circumstances, no matter what culture, religion or caste we have. It starts from the family and then reaches to the greater level.

I want to conclude with the bible verse: Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers live in unity (Psalm 133: 1).

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