


2006

God's Gift of Woman to Man: A Jewish-Christian Perspective on Genesis 2:18-24

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SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

GOD'S GIFT OF WOMAN TO MAN: A JEWISH-CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE ON
GENESIS 2:18-24

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JEWISH-CHRISTIAN STUDIES
IN FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF JEWISH-CHRISTIAN STUDIES

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APRIL, 2006

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DEDICATION

**THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED TO ALL YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN WHO SEEK
TO WALK IN THE PATHWAYS OF GOD AS MARRIED COUPLES OR
CELIBATES**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

God is omniscient and the source of wisdom. He gives his wisdom to those whom He loves. I am most grateful to Him for the ability He has given me to undertake and complete this challenging academic program successfully in Seton Hall University, New Jersey, United States of America.

From the depth of my heart I express my gratitude to my Local Ordinary, Most Rev. Dr. Camillus A. Etokudoh, who granted me the permission to do Jewish-Christian Studies.

I am in no small measure indebted to the Director of the Institute of Jewish-Christian Studies, the Rev. Dr. Lawrence Frizzell, who has been a father to me since my arrival in United States and whose wealth of wisdom and exemplary life have enriched me so much. I also thank him as my moderator who painstakingly went through this thesis again and again offering some corrections, suggestions and contributions. My sincere thanks also go to the Chairman of the Department of Jewish-Christian Studies, Rabbi Asher Finkel, from whom I learned how to think and write independently through his famous phenomenological method. I am grateful to him also as the moderator of this work. I am thankful to my lecturer, the Rev. Dr. David Bossman, who has exposed me to the history of the Jews from ancient to modern times. Equally I am grateful to the Secretary of the Department of Jewish-Christian Studies, Jay Wolferman, who always responded to my needs. Finally I thank all others whose help in one way or the other led me to a success. May God bless you all.

ABSTRACT

God created us, loved us, made a covenant with us and commanded that we live our lives in accordance with the words of the covenant. In other words, it is the will of God that we live our lives in imitation of him, *imitatio Dei*, by walking in God's way (cf. Lev 19:2; Matt 5:48).

Founded on monotheism as against polytheism the text of Gen 2:18-24 expresses the biblical concept of reality of marriage that proclaims the essential goodness of life and universal moral order governing human society. By speaking to us through this text God lays the foundation of the sacredness of marriage and brings order to the relationship between man and woman. "It is not good for man to be alone" (Gen 2:18) serves as a preface to what God intended to do for humankind. God then created the woman and brought her to the man as his complement, by which act God intended the unity of marriage and its monogamous nature. This means one man to one woman and one woman to one man bonded as one flesh. Jesus Christ upheld what God instituted from the beginning of the world when he said that "he who made them from the beginning made them male and female and for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife in the intimacy of one flesh" (Matt 19:5-6; cf. Gen 1:27; 2:24). Drawing from the teaching of Christ the Church maintains that "the matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament" (CCC, #1601).

By the same token rabbinic scholars conceive marriage as “KiDDuŠiN, a sacred relationship whereby the wife is consecrated to her husband and forbidden to all others during the duration of the marriage” (b. Talmud, Kid 2a-b). At the same time, it is not a mere legal contract devoid of spiritual content, in that the covenant of the marriage is compared with the holy (QoDeŠ) covenant of God with his people. Holy is “set-apartness” that is governed by purity; as the Holy Covenant is subject to desecration, so is the marital covenant when it is broken by a man taking another woman (Mal 2:11).

The text situates the institution of marriage in halakhic and haggadic pathways through which man journeys to his Creator. The God of creation is not lawfully or morally indifferent. Laws and morals are determined by the very essence of God’s truth. Considering the secularism that has eaten deep into the fabric of our societies, marriage means different things to various people and as a result so many people drift away from the authentic meaning of marriage as God decreed it. The Jewish and Christian interpretation of Gen 2:18-24 as carried out in this thesis in a way reaffirms the meaning of marriage, and show the need for the preservation of the institution, hoping that it would help to direct the minds of our youths (in Ikot Ekpene Catholic Diocese of Nigeria who ask so many questions about marriage, celibacy, divorce, single-parenthood, homosexuality, incest, rape and human-trafficking, etc) on the pathways of God.

ABBREVIATIONS

Chron.....	Chronicles
Col.....	Colossians
Deut.....	Deuteronomy
Ecclus.....	Ecclesiasticus
Eph.....	Ephesians
Exod.....	Exodus
Ezek.....	Ezekiel
Gen.....	Genesis
Hos.....	Hosea
Josh.....	Joshua
Kgs.....	Kings
Lev.....	Leviticus
Matt.....	Matthew
Prov.....	Proverbs
Ps.....	Psalms
Rom.....	Romans
Sam.....	Samuel
11Q Temple.....	Cave 11 Qumran Scroll, Temple
b. Talmud.....	Babylonian Talmud
BCE.....	Before Common Era
CCC.....	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CD.....	Damascus Document
CE.....	Common Era
Impf.....	Imperfect
JBL.....	Journal of Biblical Literature
Kid.....	Kiddushin
m. Avoth.....	Mishnah Avoth
RSV.....	Revised Standard Version
S.C.R.	Sacred Congregation of Rites
S.I.D.I.C.....	Service International de Documentation judéo-chrétienne
Sif.....	Sifra

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis opens with the examination of Jewish and Christian interpretations of the text of Gen 2:18-24 in order to establish the intentionality of the sacred author concerning God's gift of woman to man. The biblical prologue sets the divine purpose in marriage to procreate that gives rise to subsequent generations. This introductory text was chosen for the phenomenological study because at the present time human societies are becoming more secular and seem to drift away from the biblical orientation of marriage as God intended. The careful interpretation of Gen 2:18-24 should help to reaffirm the meaning of marriage, show the need for the preservation of the institution and direct the minds of our youths on the right paths to life under God. This second story of creation is the complement of Gen 1:26-31, the first story with view to 5:1-2.

In the New Testament Jesus Christ took up the text and expounded on it (Mark 10:2-12; Matt 19:3-12). In dealing with the question on marriage, Christ returned to the original state of marriage at creation to re-enact marriage as heterosexual monogamy, its indissolubility and to declare celibacy as an alternative way of life. The deuterio-Pauline Letter to the Ephesians used the text to expound a profound meaning of marriage by likening it to the relationship between Christ and the Church, a relationship that culminated in a mystery (Eph 5:21-33). It is also of interest that both Jews and Christians agree in their interpretations of Gen 2:18-24 that it is essentially heterosexual monogamous relationship that is governed by mutual love that gives rise to procreation and education of children in the love of God and of neighbor (Deut 6:5; Lev 19:18; Matt 22:34-40).

The phenomenological approach is the predominant method used for this research work. This approach is a method through which an experiential setting of a text is sought. In order to discover this *Sitz-im-Leben* of the text, the reader enters into the world and the mindset of the writer in order to excavate his intentionality. This method served as a yardstick by which the entire work was measured. With some reservation the approach to the textual study also included other methods applied to the gospels, like criteria of discontinuity (words or deeds of Jesus that cannot be derived either from Judaism at the time of Jesus or from the early Church after him), multiple attestation (those sayings or deeds of Jesus that are attested in more than one independent literary source) and of coherence (the sayings or deeds of Jesus that fit in well with the preliminary data base, which enhances the probability of being historical). In addition, attention was given to sociological methodology in order to update and relate the work to our societies. The combination and implementation of these methods underscored the mindset of the entire work.

This research work is treated in four chapters. Chapter I presents the historical background, the authorship, place and date of writing and the composition criticism of the Book of Genesis. Chapter II deals with the text of Genesis 2:2:18-24 and its background, which is divided into a literature review concerning the text, textual criticism, the structure of the text, an analysis of the text and the theological inference of the passage. In chapter III the union of man and woman becomes the focus, under which the following points are treated: love of husband and wife, procreation and education of children; and divorce, remarriage and celibacy. Chapter IV draws inferences from the preceding three chapters. In this chapter the following topics are treated: "God's gift of

woman to man”, which is further broken into the following: “God’s purpose for the gift of woman to man”; “the beauty of God’s gift of human family”; and “the responsibility to preserve and transmit the gift of human family”. This was followed by conclusion drawn on the entire work. It is important to note that no part of this work may be considered a full treatment, because of the extremely wide scope it covers. In this work the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Catholic edition, was used consistently while paying attention to the original wording.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1. The Historical Background of the Book of Genesis:

The Book of Genesis is the first book of the Torah (The Pentateuch or The Five Books of Moses) and of the entire biblical tradition. The Hebrew title for this book is BeRe'SiTh and it is derived from the first word of the Book in accordance with the standard practice of the Jews and the people of the Ancient Near East who referred to a literary work by its initial word or phrase.¹ In the rabbinic sources, this title is modified to read SeFeR BeRe'SiTh (The Book of the Beginning),² the beginning of the cosmos and of human genealogy. The name "Genesis" comes from the title given to the book in the Septuagint (the first Greek translation of the Old Testament). Most scholars agree that the Greek title of the Book is derived from its translation of 2:4: 'eLLeH TeLeDoTh HaŠŠaMaYiM WeHa'aReŠ... (These are the generations of heaven and the earth...). The key Greek word in the translation that gives the Book its name is γενεσεως, which means "origins". Furthermore, it occurs also with the meaning "generations", "births" or "lineages"; it may imply "history" or "story". Genesis is the book of the beginnings. This relates not only with the genesis of the cosmos, but also genealogies of the human race.

The Book of Genesis, which is born out of religious experience, is founded on monotheism as against polytheism. Moses, who remains unchallenged as the founder of the Israelite nation based on a solid body of religious beliefs, an integral system of law and a specific territorial location of land promised to Abraham and his descendants,

¹ E. A. Speiser, 1994 *The Anchor Bible: Genesis*, Doubleday, New York, xvii.

² Nahum M. Sarna, 1989, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis*, The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, xi.

founded the nation on monotheism, an unprecedented feat in the history of the world. With the establishment of Israel as a political entity in the land promised to the Patriarchs (Gen 12:7; 26:3; 35:12) self-consciousness became a common place among the Israelites and they started to trace their history to Moses, to the Patriarchs and to God. Thus the Israelites looked out on the world they knew and looked back into the past with a view to explaining their nation's place in world history³ as it was presented in the Ancient Near East at that time. Thus the Israelites' religious experience coupled with national consciousness gave birth to the Torah (the Pentateuch or the Five Books of Moses), a means by which as a single society they effectively established monotheism in the midst of polytheistic nations.

As a nation Israel was born in the second millennium BCE into a society where the effect of Mesopotamian polytheism on the local civilization had already been well rooted. She finds herself in a society where theogony was inextricably tied up with cosmogony – the gods themselves were created, the first supernatural beings were demons and monsters while the god of creation in the Mesopotamian myth had no preexistence but given birth to at a fairly late age in the theogonic process.⁴ In this society the cosmos was viewed as a state in which ultimate authority was vested in the collected assembly of the gods.⁵ To bring out the distinction between the God of Israel (YHWH) and the gods of the Mesopotamian nations Umberto Cassuto remarks that in the nation of Israel it is

not many gods but One God; not theogony, for a god has no family tree; not wars nor strife nor the clash of wills, but only One Will, which rules over everything, without the slightest let or hindrance; not a deity associated with nature and identified with it wholly or in part, but a God who stands absolutely above nature,

³ Gordon J. Wenham, 2003 "Genesis", *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, James D. G. Dunn, et al. (eds.), William B. Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 33.

⁴ Nahum M. Sarna, 1970 *Understanding Genesis*, Schocken Books, New York, p. 10.

⁵ E. A. Speiser, xlix.

and outside of it, and nature and all its constituent elements, even the sun and all the other entities, be they never so exalted, are only His creatures, made according to His will.⁶

Since the Mesopotamian system was vulnerable chiefly because of its own type of polytheism, a possible remedy that an inquiring mind might discover would lie in monotheism. From the finds of archaeologists it has become a common knowledge that Palestinian nations had their national gods: Yahweh in Judah, Qos in Edom, Milkom in Ammon, and Ba'al in Phoenicia, and so on.⁷ Among the nations of Palestine and of the Mesopotamian world, Israel was the only monotheistic nation. It has become clear regarding the tremendous task the Israelites had to go through in order to enthrone monotheism with the name of their national God, YHWH, towering above all others. But to conceive of such an ideal initially without any known precedent in the experience of humankind calls for greater resources than those of logic alone. For the Israelite nation it meant a resolute rejection of common and long-cherished beliefs, a determined challenge to the powers that were believed to dominate every aspect of nature, and the presentation of a single Supreme Being.⁸ The Israelites took this bold step to believe and teach the whole world that the God of creation is eternally existent, removed from all corporality, and independent of time and space. He is neither given birth to nor has he any biography.⁹ He is the Creator and Supreme Sovereign of the world whose will is absolute. He is outside the realm of nature, which is wholly subservient to Him.¹⁰ Based on their belief in One Supreme Being the Israelites were able to establish a universal

⁶Umberto Cassuto, 1978, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Jerusalem, The Magnes Press, p. 8.

⁷Ephraim Stern, 2001, Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, Vol. II, Doubleday, New York, p. 200.

⁸Ibid. xlviii.

⁹Nahum M. Sarna, Understanding Genesis, pp. 10, 12.

¹⁰Ibid. p. 3.

moral order that governs human society through the revelation of the Torah of which Genesis is part. In view of this feat Nahum M. Sarna comments that

Israel, alone, was able to withstand and overcome the powerfully erosive and homogenizing forces of contemporary paganism to develop a unique religio-moral civilization of universal and eternal value. This was an accomplishment of stupendous proportions, rendered all the more astonishing because it came about in an area of the world in which the burden of tradition lay very heavily on men and in which other peoples always exhibited an amazing conservatism and an obstinate resistance to change.¹¹

The Israelites emerged from the Ancient Near Eastern world where cultural patrimony was common to all peoples in the region with the Book of Genesis empty of polytheistic motifs and filled with well refined, dynamic vibrant monotheistic content. By affirming monotheism Genesis denies polytheism and its concomitant beliefs, such as theogony, divine ignorance, weakness and caprice. Whereas the Mesopotamians looked on the creation of man as an afterthought for the god's benefits, Genesis affirms the centrality of man in the divine purpose and God's concern for human welfare.¹² In the contemporary world the Book of Genesis remains a masterpiece in matters of faith and morals, and even among world literary classics.

1.2. The Authorship, Place and Date of Writing of the Book of Genesis

The authorship, place and date of writing of the Book of Genesis are highly complicated issues which cannot be resolved without some difficulties. Traditionally the Book of Genesis and the rest of the Pentateuch are attributed to the authorship of Moses. In his remarks on the Mosaic authorship of the Torah, David M. Carr contends that "attribution of Genesis and the rest of the Pentateuch to Moses does not emerge explicitly

¹¹ Nahum M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, xxx.

¹² Gordon J. Wenham, "Genesis", *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, p. 37.

until Israel had come into intense contact with the highly author-conscious Greek culture”¹³ In the 18th century Richard Simon (1638-1712) made a bold statement that “Moses was the source of the laws, but not the author of the Pentateuch in its present form”.¹⁴ Hinning Bernhard Witter (1683-1715) noted the different names used for God in Genesis 1:1-2:4 and 2:5-3:24 as well as the different content of these passages. Jean Astruc (1684-1766) moved a step further to identify the different names for God throughout Genesis and also drew the conclusion that there are two documents, one using YHWH and the other Elohim.¹⁵ While the problem remains, Astruc’s criterion was a point of departure in the search for the author of Genesis. He has created a path that other scholars would follow.

The quest for the author of the Book of Genesis and the rest of the Torah came to high point with Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918). In his book entitled Prolegomena to the History of Israel (printed in 1878; 1883; 1889), Wellhausen published his classical documentary hypothesis to give definitive form to the formation of the text of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible.¹⁶ He drew the attention of his contemporaries and beyond to the fact that “the Pentateuch was the final product of the juxtaposition of three documents running parallel to each other and covering virtually the same material, plus a fourth document, Deuteronomy”.¹⁷ These four documents, J, E, D, P, written in that order over a period of four to five centuries, were combined in the post-exilic period to

¹³ David M. Carr, 2000 “Book of Genesis”, Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible, David Noel Freedman, et al. (eds.), William B. Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 492.

¹⁴ John J. Scullion, 1992, Genesis: A Commentary for Students, Teachers and Preachers, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, p. 2.

¹⁵ John J. Scullion, p. 2.

¹⁶ Ibid. pp. 1, 3.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 1.

form the Five Books of Moses, the Torah or the Pentateuch.¹⁸ Presently a refined form of this hypothesis is acceptable to most scholars. However, scholars agree that, J, E, and P make up the Book of Genesis, though some strands of D are clearly discernible in some of the narratives particularly Gen 2-3. The Yahwistic document (the written document that referred to God's name as YHWH) represents the first literary synthesis of the narrative material which until the 10th century BCE was transmitted orally. The Elohist document (the written document that referred to God's name as 'eLoHiM), a local variant of Yahwistic document, came from the Northern Kingdom of Israel about ninth century BCE. In the 6th century BCE the Priestly writers (a school with an unbroken history reaching back to early Israelite period and continuing until the Exile and beyond¹⁹) elaborated on the Yahwistic and Elohist narrative materials and synthesized them to give the present framework to the Book of Genesis. Apart from the editorial framework, scholars identify some texts in Genesis as the work of Priestly writers. These include: the seven-day creation account (1:1-2:3); genealogies, genealogical headings; a significant strand of the flood narrative; and priestly promise-oriented texts (17:1-27; 26:34-35; 27:46-28:9; 35:9-15; 48:3-6). It is noted also that in form and subject matter Elohist materials are closely related to Yahwistic and together they stand apart from the Priestly ones which are predominantly of genealogical content. Yahwistic and Elohist materials are sometimes difficult, in some instances impossible, to distinguish from each other.²⁰ Scholarship agrees that in most parts Yahwistic and Elohist materials make up the rest of the Book of Genesis. Suffice it to say that to discern which materials belong to each of these two groups of writers is beyond the scope of this work. In summary it may be said

¹⁸ John J. Scullion, p. 2.

¹⁹ E. A. Speiser, xxvi.

²⁰ Ibid., xxx.

that the Book of Genesis was written by Yahwistic (J), Elohist (E) and Priestly (P) writers between 10th and 5th century BCE in Judah and the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The authorship of the Book of Genesis can only be determined by scholarly consensus, while the brilliant creative authors who actually wrote it down remain unknown to us.

At this juncture it is pertinent to note that this thesis considers the Book of Genesis as organic whole with God in the center and as such it is not going to study Genesis as that which is broken into different components; rather it aims at what motivated the final redactor to edit the work the way he did. This is what Brevard S. Childs refers to as the canonical approach.²¹ However, this writing does not limit its method to canonical approach which is focusing on understanding the nature of the theological shape of the text rather than to recover an original literary or aesthetic unity.²² The thesis harmonizes both the diachronic source criticism of Wellhausen (which asked how and when a work came into existence; what source did it come from? etc.) and the synchronic approach of the contemporary scholarship (which aims at understanding a book as a coherent piece of work written within a duration of time).²³ The harmonization affords this work the flexibility to inquire into the authorship, place and date of writing and the freedom to use any part of Genesis as that which complements the other. Thus the contributions of Richard Simon, Hinrich Bernhard Witter, Jean Astruc, especially Julius Wellhausen, Hermann Gunkel and others in the study of Genesis from the perspectives of source and literary criticisms constitute only a part of the organic whole, while the main focus is on the theology offered from the viewpoint of monotheism by the final redactor.

²¹ Brevard S. Childs, 1979, Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, p. 74.

²² Ibid. p. 74.

²³ Gordon J. Wenham, 1987, Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1-15, Nelson Reference and Electronic, Colombia, xxxiv.

It is not enough to inherit this brilliantly told narrative and tight structure literary masterpiece, Genesis, which has so much influence on every epoch in history, without inquiring into what motivated the writers and the final redactor to put it together. An attempt to satisfy this curiosity shall be offered in composition criticism, which is our next step in this essay.

1.3. Composition Criticism:

Self-consciousness is an important factor in tracing the origin of things. The Israelites were not there at the beginning of creation to keep records of what God was doing. They came into existence as a nation only in the second millennium BCE, when the world had been in existence for thousands of years²⁴. How and why did they record events of the primeval period of which they did not witness? The approach of composition criticism shall not be limited to the primeval period; it shall cover as well the other parts of the Book of Genesis.

The final redactor set out to provide the current framework to Genesis not so much because he intended to describe the process of cosmology, origin and constitution of matters or demonstrate his concern for the physical world, but because of his religious experience. It was through the experience of Israelites' redemption from Egypt that the narrator learned that YHWH is the God of his forefathers and the redeemer of his nation. This led to the realization that YHWH is the sole Creator-God of the world and of all humankind. From this standpoint, the narrator traced origins of the Israelites to the patriarchs, and carried it over into the primeval history. In line with this Brevard Childs

²⁴ See Addison G. Wright, Roland E. Murphy and Joseph A. Fitzmyer, 1968, "A History of Israel", The Jerome Biblical Commentary, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, pp. 672-678.

explains that “Genesis was conceived of by the final redactor as the introduction to the story of Israel which began in Exodus”.²⁵ In his explanation Umberto Cassuto states: “The Torah made use of the concrete traditions that found expression in the ‘Wisdom’ literature and in the ancient heroic poetry of Israel, and drew from them material for its structure. Choosing only what it deemed worthy, it refined and purified the selected matter, and moulded the entire narrative to a pattern of its own – a pattern befitting its purpose and educational aim”.²⁶ For the narrator ktisiology (the theology of creation) was secondary to, and dependent on soteriology (the theology of salvation).²⁷ The narrator conceived cosmic and human origins in the light of the origins of the chosen people. Giving more details concerning the types of material used by the narrator, Eugene H. Maly highlights that the narrator made use of all kinds of materials available to him, ancient creation stories, genealogical lists, songs, proverbs, etiological tales, legend, etc and shaped these materials to suit his purpose²⁸. These materials in some cases were common to the Mesopotamian nations. For instance there are numerous points of contact between Genesis and the Mesopotamian version of cosmic origins found in the so-called Babylonian Creation Epic, or Enuma elish “When on High” (ANET, pp. 60-72)²⁹, which could be represented thus:

Enuma elish	The Book of Genesis
Divine spirit and cosmic matter are coexistent and coeternal	Divine spirit creates cosmic matter and exists independently of it

²⁵ Brevard S. Childs, p. 130.

²⁶ Umberto Cassuto, p. 12.

²⁷ Eugene H. Maly, 1968 “Genesis”, *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, p. 8.

²⁸ Eugene H. Maly, p. 7.

²⁹ E. A. Speiser, p. 9.

Primeval chaos; Ti'amat enveloped in darkness	The earth a desolate waste, with darkness covering the deep (TeHoM)
Light emanating from the gods	Light created
The creation of the firmament	The creation of the firmament
The creation of dry land	The creation of dry land
The creation of luminaries	The creation of luminaries
The creation of man	The creation of man
The gods rest and celebrate	God rests and sanctifies the seventh day

Table "A": This table shows the source of the materials, which the author of Genesis used in his account of creation. Despite the fact that the account of Enuma elish is so similar to that of Genesis, the latter remains monotheistic, while the former is mythopoetic and polytheistic.³⁰

A close look at the table shows that the biblical version is dominated by the monotheistic concept in the absolute sense of the term. In essence the supreme characteristic of the Mesopotamian cosmogony is that it is embedded in a mythological matrix, while the biblical account indicates the complete absence of mythology in the classical pagan sense of the term.³¹ Thus the two are both genetically related and yet poles apart.³² The narrator made use of the materials that originated from Mesopotamia and blended them

³⁰ E. A. Speiser, p. 10.

³¹ Nahum M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, p. 9.

³² E. A. Speiser, pp. 9, 10, 11.

so beautifully from the viewpoint of monotheism such that Genesis serves as a prologue in the historical drama that unfolds itself in the ensuing pages of the Bible.³³

The final redactor of Genesis begins the book with the choicest sentence, BeRe'ŠiTh BaRa' 'eLoHiM... (in the beginning God created...). By starting the writing of Genesis this way, the writer demonstrates his knowledge of God in relation to creation and in contrast to the concept of cosmogonic gods and goddesses in the neighboring countries of Mesopotamia. In the Ancient Near East polytheistic accounts of creation the gods experience birth, growth, sex, hunger, disease, impotence, senescence and death. They are dependent upon physical existence and their immanence in nature limits their scope.³⁴ The gods are often at war among themselves at the end of which winners impose their wills upon others. Since the abode of the spirits is thus characterized by instability, human beings as a result experience lack of absolute and universal principles.

On the contrary, the biblical cosmology demonstrates that God is outside the realm of nature. Indeed, unlike the Mesopotamian cosmogony which is embedded in mythological matrix, the narrator showed that God is outside the realm of nature, which is wholly subservient to Him.³⁵ In the opening sentence of Genesis the final redactor presents to us the omnipotent, sovereign, unchallengeable will of the absolute, transcendent God to whom all nature is completely subservient, and thereby they emancipate the human mind from the limitations of the mythopoeic.³⁶ Commenting on the Genesis account of creation scholars observe that the narrative does not begin with a statement about the existence of God, to the narrator God's existence is as self-evident as

³³ Nahum M. Sarna, Understanding Genesis, p. 9.

³⁴ Ibid. p. 11.

³⁵ Ibid. pp. 3, 9.

³⁶ Ibid. p.12.

is life itself; the Hebrew concept of God is implicit in the narrative, not formulated abstractly and explicitly, and that the Genesis begins immediately with an account of the creative activity of the preexistent God.³⁷ The proof of God's existence is, therefore, unnecessary before giving the account of creation. God brought creation into existence simply by divine *fiat*. God alone has the power to create (BaRa'); a language which cannot be used of human creative activities³⁸ or those of other beings. The final redactor tries to unveil that God brings non-existent in existence by mere pronouncement: WaYYo'MeR 'eLoHiM YeHi...(and God said let there be..., Gen 1:3). Commenting on biblical creation of the cosmos Rabbi Finkel holds that the creative act of God revealed to humanity the ultimate reality of the Creator-God, whose being is unbegotten and who transcends all knowledge. This God alone creates the cosmos and all therein in goodness and endows humanity with His image. Of all creatures of the universe the human being enjoys thereby a freedom to create, shape, discover and choose by his or her own will and thought. The human person remains God's creature, subject to affections, limitations and morality.³⁹ The author of John's Gospel understood very well the theme of the creative act of God and employed it in relation to the preexistence of Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate, when he wrote: "In the beginning was the Word (Λογος) and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... all things were made through Him..." (John 1:1-3). Thus it is through the creative word of God that all things in creation come into being (Gen 1:1-2:1). The final redactor of Genesis was very scientific in his presentation of the creation narrative.

³⁷Nahum M. Sarna, Understanding Genesis, p. 10.

³⁸ Conrad E. L'Heureux, 1983, In and Out of Paradise, Paulist Press, New York, p.10.

³⁹ Asher Finkel, "The Other and the Stranger in Biblical and Rabbinic Tradition", S. I. D. I. C., 25(#3 - 1992, Rome), p. 2.

He ingeniously divided God's creative activity into six days in order to portray man as the zenith of God's creation, and above all, to teach the sacredness of the Sabbath rest on the seventh day (2:2-3). The beauty of the presentation of the narrative can be represented in a semiotic structural-analysis thus:

First Three Days	Second Three Days (containers of light)
1. Light and darkness	4. Sun, moon, stars
2. Upper and lower firmament: waters	5. Birds in the sky and fishes in the waters
3. Dry-land and the sea	6. beasts, domesticated and creeping on dry land
3b. three types of vegetation	6b. human: male and female

Table "B": This table demonstrates a semiotic structural-analysis of the creation narrative.

In his presentation the redactor endeavored to teach that correspondingly the creatures of the second three days are variously related to those of the first three days.

Though the Book of Genesis is about the origins of the cosmos and of man, it is worthy of note that of all the days enumerated in the opening narrative (1-2:4a) the writer gives more prominence to the seventh day. The mindset of the writer is so focused on the seventh day such that the closing narrative of Gen 2:1-4a is characterized by the number "seven", which points towards Sabbath. Also, Gen 1:1 consists of seven Hebrew words; in 1:2 there are fourteen (a multiple of seven) Hebrew words; while the number of Hebrew words in 2:1-3 is thirty-five (also a multiple of seven). Equally this opening

section is marked by a number of times a specific word or phrase occurs: “God is mentioned thirty-five times; “earth” appears twenty-one times; and “heaven/firmament” is found twenty-one times. All these are multiples of the number “seven”. The following appear seven times as well: fulfillment formula, “and it was so” (1:3, 7, 9, 11, 15, 24, 30), execution formula or description of act, “and God made” (1:4, 7, 12, 16, 21, 25, 27), and approval formula, “God saw that it was good” (1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31).⁴⁰ In a way this reveals that Sabbath was uppermost in the mind of the final redactor.

With well selected words the sacred writer solemnly described what God did on that day and thereby portrayed the nature of the day when he said: “and on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work, which he had done in creation” (Gen 2:2-3). This short text is very significant in the creation narrative, because Sabbath is uniquely identified with Israel as a monotheistic nation. In spite of the extensive efforts of more than a century of study on extra-Israelite Sabbath, the quest for the origin of the Sabbath outside Israel cannot be successfully proven. The Babylonian Sapattu of new (and full) moon, Kenite fire-taboo, etc, cannot be linked up with the biblical Sabbath without some leakage. In line with this, Gerhard F. Hasel observes that “no hypothesis whether astrological, sociological, etymological or cultic commands the respect of a scholarly consensus. Each hypothesis or combination of hypotheses has insurmountable problems.”⁴¹ The term “Sabbath”, which takes its root from the Hebrew, ShaBBaTh, and its Greek and Latin

⁴⁰ Gordon J. Wenham, 1987, Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1-15, Vol. 1, Nelson Reference and Electronic, Colombia, p. 6.

⁴¹ Hasel, Gerhard F. 1992, “Sabbath” The Anchor Bible Dictionary, vol.5, David Noel Freedman, et al. (eds.), Doubleday, New York, p. 851.

equivalents, Σαββατον, *Sabbatum* respectively, literally means rest, cessation from work. This is the only day to be named and not simply designated by an ordinal number.

The seventh day is imbued with a power unique to it based on the fact that God blessed (BiReK) it and consecrated (QiDeŠ) it for the simple reason that he (God) rested (ShaBaTh) on that day. Thus the seventh day is a holy day blessed by God. It is a gift from God to human beings and nature. It is a day that man and nature worship the Lord God: “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates...” (Exod 20: 8-11). In view of the import of this beautiful piece of work Rabbi Finkel comments thus:

This introduction determines the dichotomy of the secular and the holy in human awareness and experience of weekly period. Secular time of creative events is captured in the depiction of activities during a six-day period. Holy (QaDoŠ) time, however, is portrayed as the Sabbath of rest. Secular time represents the sequential quantitative development in the ordinal account of days. On the other hand, holy time signifies set-apartness. It is different, offering the qualitative experience of human perfection to be close to God and to enjoy the blessing in serenity.⁴²

With this short text the final redactor is able to lift Israelite nation out of secularism, and then bring man and nature to the worship of Creator-God.

Turning his attention to man, the writer begins with the preeminence of man over all other creatures by presenting him as a creature that has the image of God (*imago Dei*) in him and also dominion over the rest of creation (1:26-27). In his work the final redactor intends to teach that man has the duty to exploit the resources of nature for his own

⁴² Asher Finkel, 2003 “Millennium, Jubilee and Human History Under God”, Helgo Lindner (ed.), Ich bin ein Hebraer, zum Gedenken an Otto Michel (1903-1993) (Basel, Brunnen), p. 314.

benefits and to fulfill his task on earth by using his intellect, free will, self-awareness, consciousness of the existence of others, conscience, responsibility and self-control.⁴³ Man's endowments come as a result of his special relationship with God. "Man was created in God's image". Though he was created in the image of God (1:27), the narrator takes into account his original state of life with God, his fall, the destruction of man by flood, God's covenant with man (Noah), the call of Abraham, Jacob and his twelve sons. In fact, the rest of the story now becomes a human-centered orientation,⁴⁴ an aim which reveals the intentionality of the narrator.

The narrator wisely introduced the theme of the fall of man, and by so doing, he was able to deal with issues concerning man's free will, morality, existence of evil and the mortality of man. He showed that man enjoyed his original state of life with Creator-God up to the point that the man and wife were both naked and were not ashamed (Gen 2:25). In his explication Brevard S. Childs contends that "they were unashamed because they were complete beings, sharing an uninterrupted harmony with God and the world".⁴⁵ By implication the story of the Garden of Eden demonstrates that "evil is a product of human behavior, not a principle inherent in the cosmos and that man's disobedience is the cause of the human predicament".⁴⁶ Eugene H. Maly beautifully summarizes what the narrator intended to achieve with the story of Garden of Eden thus:

Man's original state was one of innocence (Gen 2:25) and friendship with God (Gen 3:8). Tempted to achieve a state beyond his created nature, man sinned (Gen 3: 1-6). The effects of this first sin became the common lot of all his descendants. They included loss of divine friendship (Gen 3:23-24), lack of

⁴³ Asher Finkel, 2003 "Millennium, Jubilee and Human History Under God", Helgo Lindner (ed.), Ich bin ein Hebraer, zum Gedenken an Otto Michel (1903-1993) (Basel, Brunnen), p.16.

⁴⁴ Nahum M. Sarna, Understanding Genesis, p.14.

⁴⁵ Brevard S. Childs, 1989, Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, p. 224.

⁴⁶ Nahum M. Sarna, pp. 27, 28.

mutual esteem (Gen 3:7), physical evils in accord with the nature of man (Gen 3:17-19) and of woman (Gen 3:16), and constant struggle against the power of evil (Gen 3:3:15). But the promise of ultimate victory in the struggle (Gen 3:15) is demanded of the God whose saving will was manifested so clearly in Israel's regard. The promise is the first message of the good news of final victory.⁴⁷

By telling the wise story of the Garden of Eden the author in a way intended to answer the fundamental questions about man in relation to God. The expertise with which the story is narrated deserves some commendation.

It is of a keen interest to note how the narrator in the account of the Flood in Gen 6-9 wittingly concluded one era and open a new one in human history. The story occupies a central position between creation and the advent of the people of Israel. At this point the narrator beautifully bridged the two eras through the genealogical catalogues which list ten generations from Adam to Noah and ten more from Noah to Abraham.⁴⁸ However, at this point the narrator did not hesitate to show that the God of creation is not at all morally indifferent but that laws and morals are determined by the very essence of God's truth.⁴⁹ It was only the virtuous who crossed over to the new phase of human history. It is an indisputable fact that the Flood Story has many parallels in the Mesopotamian epics. The narrator of the biblical Flood Story carefully eliminated the limitations imposed on the gods by the mythological polytheistic system, their subservience to nature and their singular lack of freedom, which characterize the Flood Story of the Gilgamesh Epic, to enthrone the One God who is absolute and transcendent in character, who is completely independent of nature and whose will is sovereign, as the God that caused the Flood in order to punish the evil men and preserve the righteous. The transition of the narrative from primeval to historical era earns the narrator some credit.

⁴⁷ Eugene H. Maly, p. 9.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 44.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 17.

At this point the narrator became interested in genealogies in order to link up the origins of the twelve tribes of Israel to the universal man (Adam) and to God. Accordingly the Book of Genesis has series of genealogies of Adam (5:1-32; 6:9-10); Noah (10:1-32); Shem (11:10-26); Terah (11:27-32); Ishmael (25:12-18); Isaac (25:19-26); Esau (36:1-43); and Jacob (37:2ff). The narrator paid so much attention to Abraham, a very important figure from whom the Israelite nation descended. In their writing they clearly brought out the call of Abraham (12:1-9), the cordial relationship of Abraham and his personal God, the sacerdotal blessing he received from Melchizedek, the Priest of God Most High, and his offering of tithes to the Priest (14:17-24), the covenant (BeRiT) made between God and Abraham, and the promise of land to Abraham and his descendants (15:17-21). The theme of the Promised Land is central to the mission of Abraham.⁵⁰ Later on these important features about Abraham would form antecedents to Israelite religion and nation. Other patriarchs that captured so much attention of the narrator are Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes of Israel, and Joseph, who preserved the lives of his brothers. In the narrative the final redactor carefully described Jacob's identity in its various aspects. He was a trickster, a founder of cult places, a man of blessing, a husband and father, a contender with God, and an eponymous ancestor.⁵¹ The redactors so arranged the genealogies such that no other family history comes after that of Jacob. His intention was to point out that the Israelites are the descendants of Jacob. It is an observable fact that from now on the main focus of the rest of the Scripture is on the house of Jacob, and the subsequent genealogies follow the line of the family history of Jacob (cf. 1Chron 1-3; Matt 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38).

⁵⁰ E. A. Speiser, p.10.

⁵¹ Ronald S. Hendel, 1992, "The Narrative of Genesis", *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 2, Doubleday, New York, p. 936.

The narrator of Genesis had the origins of things as their main focus. He narrated the origins of heavens and earth and all things contain therein, the creation of man and the procreation of human generations. All these came into existence by divine *fiat*. Inferentially it could be established that the final redactor started the Book of Genesis on the note of ToLeDoTh (histories of origins of the cosmos and man) and finished it with ToLeDoTh (origins of Israel). Scholars divide the Book of Genesis into four parts: i) Primeval History (1-11); ii) The Patriarch Abraham (11:27-25:18); iii) The Patriarchs, Isaac and Jacob (25:19-36:43); iv) Joseph and his Brothers 37:1-50:26). This essay is limited to 2:18-24, which belongs to the Creation of Man and Woman (2:4b-25) of the Primeval History.

CHAPTER TWO

The Text of Genesis 2: 18-24 and Its Background

2.1. Literature Review concerning the Text:

Under this literature review an effort shall be made to structure the basic determinants of Biblical thought that define the relationship of man and woman. The key to the basic determinants of the relationship of man and woman is found in Gen 2:18-24. The creation of woman for the man and vice versa is the starting point of the relationship between man and woman, a phenomenon to which Roland de Vaux refers as monogamous marriage according to the will of God.¹ Monogamous marriage embodies the basic and model for relationships between man and woman. In the earliest direct citation of the Gen 2:18-24 in the Scriptures that comes from the Book of Tobit, which was written probably in the early second century BCE, the author in his midrashic use of Genesis saw in the text the gift of Eve to Adam, procreation, fidelity and permanence of relationship. The citation is featured in the prayer of Tobias over himself and his wife, Sarah thus:

Blessed art thou...O God of our fathers...Thou madest Adam and gavest him Eve his wife as a helper and support. From them the race of mankind has sprung. Thou didst say, 'it is not good that the man should be alone; let us make a helper for him like himself'. And now, O Lord, I am not taking this sister of mine because of lust, but with sincerity. Grant that I may find mercy and may grow old together with her (Tobit 8:5-8).

In this text four points are prominent in the view of the author, namely, God gave (NaTaN) Eve to Adam (Tobit 8:6); from this unity human race came into being, HaYaH,

¹ Roland de Vaux, 1997, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, John McHugh (trans.), William B. Eerdmans Publishing, Livonia, Michigan, p. 24.

(Tobit 8:6); the unity of Tobit and Sarah was not because of lust (ZeNuTh), but with a sincerity of purpose (Tobit 8:7); and finally permanence in the relationship between man and woman (Tobit 8:7). As early as second century BCE the author of Tobit was able to capture the crux of the relationship between man and woman, which summed up in the couple as gifts to each other, procreation, fidelity and permanent relationship. Commenting on the view of the deuterocanonical text, Demetrius R. Dumm writes: “Tobit recalls the definition of marriage as it was intended by God, implicitly rejecting all the distortions of that original, wholesome image”.² Indeed, the midrashic view of the author of Tobit both portrays true relationship of man and woman and defines God’s intent in the relationship.

In his view Philo, who lived in the first century, contended that “when it is said that the two are one flesh, that indicates that the flesh is very tangible and fully endowed with outward senses, on which it depends to be afflicted with pain and delighted with pleasure, so that both the man and woman may derive pleasure and pain from the same sources, and may feel the same...and still more, think the same” (Philo, *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesim*, I. 29). Though there are some elements of metaphorism in what Philo wrote, a close examination reveals his view of man (’iŠ) and woman (’iŠŠaH) as beings of the same nature capable of thinking, feeling pain or experiencing pleasure in the same way. By the same token, Lawrence Frizzell teaches that “the most intimate human experience of mutual sharing and service is marriage and the family. The prophets Hosea (1-3), Jeremiah (3:1-5) and Ezekiel (16:1-6) took marriage and adultery as images to teach the unique nature of Israel’s union with God and the grievous implications of failure to keep

² Demetrius R. Dumm, 1968, “Tobit, Judith, Esther”, *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, p. 620.

the commandments, especially to avoid idolatry”.³ Here, it is made explicit that the union of husband and wife, in the words of the prophets, teaches the unique nature of Israel’s union with God, but husband and wife shoulder the responsibility of the keeping God’s commandments. Inferentially, like in the teaching of Philo, it could be said that in their mutual sharing, husband and wife experience joy and sadness together. Still in the first century CE Jesus, according to Matthew, appealed to the creation narrative in order to establish the original relationship of man and woman (Matt 19:4-9; par. Mark 10:3-9). In the passage the author supplements the text with Gen 1:27 to state the will and purpose of the Creator in making human beings male and female for which reason man and woman become one flesh (Gen 2:24) in the intimacy of marriage. Explaining this point further, Craig S. Keener holds that “the ultimate issue is God’s original desire for husbands and wives to be one flesh; ‘one flesh’ is the language of family ties and alliances as in 2 Sam 5:1...The Genesis principle from which Jesus draws this application ... opposes marital disharmony altogether”.⁴ It is an observable fact that in his explication Keener points to a deeper insight in the relationship of husband and wife as model of the transpersonal relationship of YHWH and Israel; similarly, Christ and the Church are depicted in the model of the marital relationship.

The author of the Letter to the Ephesians, a deutero-Pauline Letter, written between 80 and 100 CE, looks beyond the physical realm of the joining of a man to woman to become one flesh. The author used the word “mystery” (μυστηριον) to describe this unique relationship between a man and woman (Eph 5:21-33). The deutero-Pauline description of this interpersonal relationship implies that it (relationship) has a divine

³ Lawrence Frizzell, “Law at the Service of Human”, *S.I.D.I.C.*, Rome, xix, 3, 1986, p. 5.

⁴ Craig S. Keener, 1997, *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series: Matthew*, Grant R. Osborne, et al. (eds.), InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, p. 295.

origin. Later the thesis shall return to this deutero-Pauline statement. A Jewish scholar, Nahum M. Sarna, views phenomenologically as the author of Ephesians the significance of Gen 2:18-24. He states that the bond between man and woman “accounts for the mystery of physical love and the intense emotional involvement of male and female as well as for their commonality of interests, goal and ideals”.⁵ Eugene H. Maly sees in the text the divine ordinance by which woman is man’s proper companion, sharing his dignity and united to him in the indissoluble bond of marriage.⁶ R. Ovadiah ben Jacob Sforno (16th century), an Italian commentator on the Torah, offered a deep thought on the text when he wrote that husband and wife should endeavor in all their activities to achieve that wholeness that was intended by God with the creation of man as if the two were actually one.⁷ Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein finds Maly’s view to be the scriptural intent when he notes in the text an existential ideal for man and woman which provides couples with religious framework within which they can find love, comfort, security and companionship.⁸

Pope John Paul II in his scholarly exploration contends that “the formulation of Genesis 2:24 indicates that human beings, created as man and woman, were created for unity. It also indicates that precisely this unity, through which they become one flesh, has right from the beginning a character of union derived from a choice...The text of Genesis 2:24 defines this character of the conjugal bond with reference to the first man and the first woman. At the same time, it does so in the perspective of the whole earthly

⁵ Nahum M. Sarna, 1989, The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis, The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, p. 23.

⁶ Eugene H. Maly, 1968, “Genesis”, The Jerome Biblical Commentary, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, pp. 8, 9.

⁷ R. Ovadiah ben Jacob Sforno, “Sforno to Genesis 2:24” cited in Michael Kaufman, 1993, The Woman in Jewish Law and Tradition, Jason Aronson, Northvale, New Jersey, p. 20.

⁸ Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, 1997, How Firm A Foundation: A Gift of Jewish Wisdom for Christians and Jews, Paraclete Press, Brewster, Massachusetts, p. 136.

future of man.”⁹ From his exploration of Gen 2:24, Gordon J. Wenham declares that “God could have created any number of male or female partners for Adam, but in the event just one Eve is completely satisfactory; in other words, heterosexual monogamy is the Creator’s ideal”.¹⁰ By the same token, Rabbi Asher Finkel states that “God...intended his human creature to have two genders in order to promote procreation through the union of male and female in marriage (Gen 2:24)”.¹¹ Victor P. Hamilton reads the statement “a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh, 2:24” as a penultimate conclusion with programmatic exhortation.¹² Taking cognizance of the views of different scholars, which are like the proverbial door that none of them misses, and of the fact that it was “not good for man to be alone” the divine wish, thus, it may be said that God created the woman and brought her to the man in order to establish an absolute standard. The desired relationship between two corresponding beings of the opposite sex, one man to one woman, was the divine purpose that relates love to procreation.

2.2. Textual Criticism of Gen 2:18-24

The textual criticism is limited to the discussion of different versions of Genesis in order to bring out the best text to be used in this work, and also to ascertain the sources of the literary genre of Gen 2:18-24. Presently there are four major textual witnesses to the book of Genesis, namely, the Masoretic text (MT), the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP), the

⁹ Pope John Paul II, 1997, *The Theology of the Body*, Pauline Books and Media, Boston, p. 50.

¹⁰ Gordon J. Wenham, “Genesis”, *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, James D. G. Dunn, et al. (eds.), Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 40.

¹¹ Asher Finkel, “The Other and the Stranger in Biblical and Rabbinic Tradition”, *S. I. D. I. C.*, 25(#3 – 1992), Rome, p. 3.

¹² Victor P. Hamilton, 1992, “Marriage”, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 4, David Noel Freedman, et al. (eds.), Doubleday New York, p. 560.

Septuagint (LXX), and the Genesis fragments from Qumran. Other versions which are less important include the Peshitta, (S, the Syriac Translation), the various Aramaic targums (Tg) and the Latin Vulgate (Vg). Out of these the Qumran fragments of Genesis, which date back to the 1st century C. E., contain the oldest manuscripts, but the Masoretic text is well preserved and complete, and therefore, is more reliable. The Septuagint that was translated before the second century BCE has some complicated textual problems that cannot be solved within the scope of this work. Despite the relative lateness of the Masoretic manuscripts (preserved in the great majority of medieval biblical manuscripts) it is universally recognized that this tradition has preserved one Hebrew text with remarkable fidelity from pre-Christian era.¹³ Therefore, it is a wise choice that this thesis is based on the Masoretic text.

The text (Gen 2:18-24) on which this thesis is based is found under the subtitle of “Creation of Man and Woman” (Gen 2:4b-25). The narrator is well known for his narrative prose. He tells his stories in a clear and direct style, and his simplicity is that of consummate art. The unobtrusive word or phrase may become the means for the unfolding of character; a single sentence can evoke a whole picture.¹⁴ The narrator’s literary genre has a close dependence on extrabiblical sources from neighboring Mesopotamian nations. For instance the grammatical structure of the opening verses of Gen 2: 5-8 is similar to the structure of the opening of the Babylonian epic, Enuma Elish.¹⁵ The two could be compared thus:

¹³ Gordon J. Wenham, 1987, Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1-15, Vol. 1, Nelson Reference & Electronic, Colombia, p. xxiv.

¹⁴ E. A. Speiser, 1962, The Anchor Bible : Genesis, Doubleday, New York, XXVII.

¹⁵Ibid. p. 19.

Enuma Elish	Genesis
When on high the heaven had not been named, firm ground had not been called by name...no reed hut...no marshland...then it was that gods were formed within them, ANET, 60-61.	When Lord God made the heavens and the earth, there was not yet...nor was there any man to till the ground...the Lord God formed man of the dust from the ground....(Gen 2:5-8).

Table "A": This features the similarity of the grammatical structure of Genesis and Babylonian epic (Enuma Elish) to demonstrate a close dependence of the author of Genesis on extrabiblical sources of Mesopotamian nations. Genesis intrinsically remains monotheistic, while Enuma Elish is polytheistic.

Here it is pertinent to observe that in the Book of Genesis the narrator took the existence of God for granted, while the ancient writers of Enuma Elish acknowledged the formation of the gods. In his studies of Genesis Nahum Sarna concludes with a result that highlights both the concept of creation and literary genre of the early monarchical period of Israel, and even into the remote past of second and third millennia BCE; he writes thus:

Here, again, we are confronted with a familiar motif, the shaping of man out of clay. In Enuma Elish man is created from the blood of the rebellious Kingu. But in the Epic of Gilgamesh...the goddess Aruru 'washed her hands, nipped off clay' and fashioned it into Enkidu. An Old Babylon myth, paralleled in an Assyrian version, explicitly describes the creation of the first man from clay. That this motif is of very great antiquity may be shown by its presence in a Sumerian composition of the third millennium BCE conforming to the same conceptual pattern are the Egyptian paintings which depict the god Khnum sitting upon his throne before a potter's wheel busily fashioning men.¹⁶

¹⁶ Nahum M. Sarna, 1970, Understanding Genesis, Schocken Books, New York, p. 14.

It is pertinent to remark that the use of the conceptual elements shared in the ancient world help to highlight the role of God as a creator beyond any of the creatures. Now, it has become crystal clear that the religious experience and world view of the narrator helped him to shape the materials that he knew so well to serve the purpose of a monotheistic nation. That primordial materials have their roots in the Ancient Near East writings is true of our text Gen 2:18-24 except that the story of the creation of woman has no parallel elsewhere. In his writing the narrator consistently referred to God as either YHWH or 'eLoHiM, but in the text of Gen 2:18-24 he preferred to call God YHWH 'eLoHiM. Scholars attribute this combination to the work of the final redactor of the text and also agree that this text in its entirety belongs to the narrator who was so vivid and concrete in his style of writing. If textual criticism has revealed so much to us despite the remoteness of the text, what structure of the text is the thesis going to work with? This question brings us to the structure of the text.

2.3. The Structure of the Text Gen 2:18-24:

Following the motif of this work the text shall be structured into three parts: a) It is not good for man to be alone, verses 18-20: This contains the problem envisaged by God after he had made (YaŞaR) man from the dust ('aPhaR): "it is not good that the man (Ha'aDaM) should be alone", and the proposed solution to the problem, "I will make him a helper ('eZeR) facing him (KeNeGDDo)". Indeed, no other being was found to be helper fit for man. God executed his plan to relieve the man of his aloneness by forming from the ground every beast and bird, but none was found to be a helper fit for the man. Instead the man exercised dominion over them by naming them; b) God made a

corresponding being as a fitting helper for the man, verses 21-23: God then made a woman, a being of a corresponding nature, as a helper fit for the man, and he gave an acceptance speech: “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”, c) The comment of the sacred writer, verse 24: Here the sacred writer externalizes his deep reflection on the divine act of creation of man and woman: “Therefore, a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh”. In few words it could be said that the structure of the text features the inappropriateness of the aloneness of man, the gift of woman to man to remove the inappropriateness, and the meaning of this divine act. In the analysis these three parts shall be taken one after the other, beginning with verse 18-20.

2.4. An Analysis of the Text of Gen 2:18-24:

The analysis shall begin with the presentation of the text to be analyzed thus: *“Then the Lord God said, ‘it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him’. So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper fit for him. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, ‘this at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man’. Therefore, a*

man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh" (Gen 2:18-24). Certainly this text is common to both Jews and Christians, but how do they understand it? This question brings us to the analysis as we start from the first segment of the structure, namely, "it is not good for man to be alone" (2:18).

a) It is not good for man to be alone, 2:18-20:

After the creation of man God noted the inappropriateness of the aloneness of the man. That the man was alone (LeBhaD) demonstrates that something is lacking. The Hebrew word, LeBhaD (alone; by itself) shares its verb root (BDD) with the Hebrew, BaDaD, meaning "isolated", "be separate", "cause to withdraw", "disunite". At this point the state of man which is that of aloneness, isolation or not-in-unity presupposes that he should have been in unity of, in company of or communion with some being but did not. Charles T. Fritsch observes that man is by nature a gregarious creature. He was created for fellowship, not for being alone,¹⁷ but at this time it was not the case. Consequently, God declares his intention to make a helper suitable for the man. From the ground God formed all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air and brought them to the man. The man had the mandate to cultivate and care for the land (2:15), to name and have dominion over animals, birds, fish, and reptiles (2:19-20; see 1:28-31). This is to say, man, so far, has a subpersonal relationship. He has experienced his relationship with nature, which he has the responsibility to protect. Lawrence Frizzell explains this well when he says that "Most 'primitive' people have a deep sense of closeness to the earth and to all the forms of life that sustain them...Everyone had to develop a special concern for domestic animals (Exod 20:10; 23:4-5; Deut 22:1-4). Even the wild bird and its

¹⁷ Charles T. Fritsch, 1960, "The Book of Genesis", The Layman's Bible Commentary, Vol. 2, Balmer H. Kelly, et al. (eds.), John Knox Press, Richmond, Virginia, p. 29.

offspring were protected, so that the line would not be obliterated; it was forbidden to take the mother with the young (Deut 22:6-7). Destruction of trees, especially fruit trees, was likewise prohibited (Deut 20:19-20).¹⁸ Sharing in this view Rabbi Asher Finkel comments that the subpersonal relationship is determined by the imperative of human compassion and love.¹⁹ It is of interest to note that human relationship with nature – land, animals, reptiles, birds or fish – is not the same thing as a human relationship with another human being. Man is only a little less than God; and he has been given authority and dominion over all other creatures (Ps 8:5-8). The review of the subhuman creation before him makes the man conscious of his own uniqueness, his inability to integrate himself into that whole biological order or direct kinship with the other animate beings.²⁰ In fact, the narrator introduced the creation of animals into the narrative to emphasize by contrast the true role that the being of a corresponding nature will play. As a self-conscious being able to receive instruction (2:16-17) who has been created in the image of God (2:27), Adam enjoyed a transpersonal relationship with God as well as subpersonal relationship with nature. The condition of the man at this point was a cause for concern. He lacked an interpersonal relationship. Though both man and animals are living creatures formed from Ha'aDaMaH (the ground), none of the animals or birds has a nature corresponding to man. God is now taking the initiative to provide one for the man. How? This is what the next subtitle will reveal.

¹⁸ Lawrence Frizzell, 1986, "Hebrew Bible and Peace", *World Encyclopedia of Peace*, Vol. 1, Pergamon Press, Oxford, pp. 406, 407.

¹⁹ Asher Finkel, "The Other and the Stranger in Biblical and Rabbinic Tradition", p. 3.

²⁰ Nahum M. Sarna, 1989, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis*, The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, p. 22.

b) God made a corresponding being as a fitting helper for the man, verses 21-23:

God is now going to make 'eZeR KeNeGDDo (a suitable helper; a helper corresponding to him; a helper equal to him; adequate to him) for Ha'aDaM (the man). The prepositional phrase with a pronominal suffix, KeNeGDDo, means in the literal sense "facing him". The type of helper that God is ready to make for the man is a helper corresponding to, equal to, adequate for and facing him. Scholars agree that this Hebrew phrase suggests complementarity rather than identity. Commenting on this Gordon J. Wenham states that "to help someone does not imply that the helper is stronger than the helped; simply that the latter's strength is inadequate by itself...the help looked for is not just assistance in his daily work or in the procreation of children, though these aspects may be included, but the mutual support companionship provides".²¹ Having caused the man to fall into a deep sleep (TaRDeMaH) God made (BaNaH), the rib (SeLa'), into a woman and brought her to the man (2:21-23). It is noteworthy that TaRDeMaH, as in Gen 15:12, suggests the mysterious and highly significant nature of the divine activity.²² Nonetheless, the signification in this context denotes Eve facing Adam in their union. In his contribution regarding the creation of Eve, Brevard S. Childs rightly observes that "the creation of the woman, which is sequential in time, forms a climax to the creation which resounds with joy... [and the] distinction between their roles in the creative order is...derived from the intentionality of the Creator".²³

²¹ Gordon J. Wenham, 1987, Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1-15, Vol. 1, David J. Wenham, et al. (eds), Nelson Reference and Electronic, Colombia, p. 68.

²² Eugene H. Maly, p. 12.

²³ Brevard S. Childs, 1989, Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, p. 191.

That the woman eventually emerged from the side of the man could be described as the mystery of the intimacy between the man and the woman and the indispensable role that woman ideally plays in the life of man, symbolically described in terms of her creation out of his body. The rib taken from man's side thus connotes physical union and signifies that she is his companion and partner, ever at his side.²⁴ Umberto Cassuto in his remarks note that "just as the rib is found at the side of the man and is attached to him, so also the woman, the rib of the man, stands at his side to be his helper-counterpart and her soul is bound up with his".²⁵ To this end, the woman was not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be loved by him.²⁶ It is only in this passage and in Amos 9:6 that the verb, BaNaH, is used of the creative work of God. Just as the creation of humankind (1:28) was preceded by divine self-deliberation, "Let us make man..." (1:26), so here the need for the creation of woman is adumbrated by God: "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper fit for him" (2:18).²⁷ Certainly the description of the creation of woman like that of man (2:7) is etiological. It becomes clear that two human beings of the corresponding nature of opposite sex were created in the image of God (1:27) and they complement each other. In truth, God fashioned the woman in relation to man to become the mother of living beings, a phenomenon inherent in the woman's name, Eve (Gen 3:20).

The creation of the woman was not an aimless act. God created and brought her to the man. This immediate and significant divine action in a sense defines the goal of her

²⁴ Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis*, p. 22.

²⁵ Umberto Cassuto, 1978, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, Israel Abrahams, (trans), The Magnes Press, Jerusalem, p. 134.

²⁶ Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1-15*, p. 69.

²⁷ Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary*, p. 68.

creation. In the midrash the image may well be that of God playing the role of the attendant who leads the bride to the groom (Yal. Gen. 24; cf. Gen. Rabba 18:4).²⁸ Rabbi Asher Finkel describes the picture of the whole episode as he says “in God’s presence the human couple solemnize their union as the realization of the divine intention. Their bond dramatizes the original union of Adam and Eve”.²⁹ In essence, this shows that the presence of Adam and Eve before God was the beginning of the solemnization of marriage. There is a deeper understanding that God not only played the role of attendant, but also caused the man and woman to become one. The man (Adam) recognized it as such, and then, made the first recorded human speech: Zo’Th HaPPa’aM ‘eŞeM Me’aŞaMa’ uBhaŞaR MiBBeŞaRi (“This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”). He proceeded to say that “she shall be called “woman” (’iŞŞaH) because she was taken out of man, ’iŞ, (2:23). Here the man gives her a generic name, not a personal name, and that designation is understood to be derived from his own, which he acknowledges woman to be his equal. Moreover, in naming her ’iŞŞaH, he simultaneously names himself. Before this, he is consistently called ’aDaM; he now calls himself ’iŞ (man) for the first time. Thus he discovers his own manhood and fulfillment only when he faces the woman, the human being who is to be his partner in life.³⁰ She is a gift to the man in marriage, and in loving response and, by his first human speech poetically framed, the man gave himself to her as a husband: “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh...” (2:23). This poetic formula was traditional Israelite expression for kinship. For instance, Laban said to his nephew, Jacob, “you are my bone

²⁸Nahum M. Sarna, 1989, The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis, p. 23.

²⁹ Asher Finkel, 1990, “The Jewish Liturgy of Marriage”, The Jewish Roots of Christian Liturgy, Eugene J. Fisher (ed.), Paulist, Mahwah, p. 75.

³⁰ Nahum M. Sarna, 1989, The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis, p. 23.

and flesh” (29:14; see also, Judges 9:2; 2 Sam 5:1; 19:13-14). The woman very different from animals at this moment is his equal. The expression woman (’iŠšaH) taken out of man (’iŠ) though without common etymological root (which turns out to be a better coincidence in English) connotes “the complete oneness of man and woman; their physical and spiritual unity, their mutual belonging as equals, their joy in each other. They are to form their own community of life...” (2:24).³¹ In his remarks, Brevard S. Childs maintains that “there are no notes of inferiority, but the relationship is not that of similarity, nor of dependence. Rather, the woman is assigned a function as helper which is not identical with the role of the one being helped”.³² In their equality, the man and the woman complement each other, but have different roles as helpers. How does the sacred writer react to this narrative of the creation of woman? Our next subheading answers this question.

c) The Comment of the Sacred Writer, Verse 24:

As the creation narrative creates impact on every epoch so it did even on its writer. Thus he comments: “Therefore a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh” (2:24). Indeed, the narrator’s remark serves as a theological conviction that had prompted and conditioned the story of woman’s formation, namely, the unity of marriage and its monogamous nature as willed by God.³³ His comment on the marriage of the first husband and wife becomes a universal principle to subsequent marriages throughout human generations. The comment of the narrator that a man shall leave (’aZaBh) his parents to cleave (DaBhaQ) to his wife and the two shall become one

³¹ John J. Scullion, 1992, “The Narrative of Genesis”, The Anchor Bible Dictionary, Vol. 2, Doubleday, New York, p. 942.

³² Brevard S. Childs, Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context, p. 191.

³³ Eugene H. Maly, p. 12.

flesh (BhaŚaR 'eḤaD) is so deep in meaning such that no explanation could exhaust its meaning. “To leave” ('aZaBh) here may mean to let go from being kept or supported by his parents; and once he attaches to his wife, they together establish their independence, in support of the other, establishing a new unit. When a man leaves, forsakes or loses ('aZaBh) his parents to cleave with his wife this does not take away the obligations of the fourth commandment: “Honor thy father and thy mother” (Exod 20:12). However, leaving the parents need not be interpreted in the literal sense. In Israel marriage was patrilocal, which means that the man continued to live in or near his parents' home. It was the wife who left her home to join her husband.³⁴ This is to be understood relatively. Moreover, the Hebrew term 'aZaBh, which means, “forsake”, is a word for a covenantal formula: “Israel is exhorted not to forsake the covenant (Deut 29:24) and God promises not to forsake Israel (Deut 31:8; Josh 1:5). This gives us a glimpse into the depth of marriage, which is modeled on God's covenant with Israel. Marriage is much more than what we perceive institutionally.

The Hebrew word, DaBhaQ, which means “cling to”, “cleave to” or “keep close”, brings up the idea of two distinct entities becoming attached to one another while preserving their separate identities.³⁵ The combination of these two words – “forsake” and “cleave” – evokes the Old Testament concept of marriage as covenant. According to the author of the deuterio-Pauline letter this relationship between husband and wife culminates in mystery (Eph 5:21-33). Some explanation shall be given to this deuterio-Pauline statement in the next subheading. With the gift of the woman as a being of corresponding nature and helper, man and woman enter into an interpersonal relationship.

³⁴ Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary*, p. 70.

³⁵ Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis*, p. 23.

In view of the above word construction, the Church draws her teaching from Tradition and Scriptures that come to highlight its pronouncement:

The divinely revealed realities, which are contained and presented in the text of sacred Scripture, have been written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For the Holy Mother Church relying on the faith of the apostolic age, accepts as sacred and canonical the books of the Old and New Testaments, whole and entire, with all their parts, on the grounds that, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author... Thus 'all Scripture is inspired by God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17)' (Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, #11).³⁶

In consonant with the teaching of the Church, it follows that the creation stories come to present revealed realities from God, and that they are good for instruction providing the ideals for human conduct. With her appeal to the divine revelation, the Church goes on to teach that "God did not create man a solitary being, from the beginning 'male and female' he created them (Gen 1:27), and that this partnership of man and woman constitutes the first form of communion between persons, for by his innermost nature man is a social being, (Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, #12).³⁷ Thus the relationship of the primordial man and woman has become a model not only for marriages, but also for entering into relations with others. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council further instruct: "The Creator of all made the married state the beginning and foundation of human society; by

³⁶ Austin Flannery (ed.), 2004, Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, Vol. 1, Dominican Publications, Dublin, p. 756.

³⁷ *Ibid.* p.

his grace he has made of it too a great mystery in Christ and in the Church”, (Vatican Council II, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, #11).³⁸

2.5. Theological Inference of the Text of Gen 2:18-24:

Under this subheading an attempt shall be made to answer the question: what theological inference do Jews and Christians draw from this text? In an effort to answer this question the Jewish and Christian teachings on the text shall not be treated differently. This subheading shall rather be treated as a single presentation in the spirit of Jewish-Christian orientation with the converging points at i) marriage covenant, ii) holiness of the marriage institution, and iii) monogamous nature of marriage.

i) Marriage covenant:

“It is not good for man to be alone” (Gen 2:18) serves as a preface to what God intended to do for humankind. God then created the woman and brought her to the man as his complement, by which act God intended the unity of marriage and its monogamous nature. This means one man to one woman or one woman to one man bonded as one flesh. According to the Gospels, Jesus Christ upheld what was instituted by God from the beginning of the world when he said that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female and for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife in the intimacy of one flesh (Matt 19:5-6; cf. Gen 1:27; 2:24). By this statement Jesus fully acknowledges the existence of the bond or the covenant between man and woman. The deutero-Pauline text used the word “mystery” (μυστηριον) to

³⁸Austin Flannery (ed.), 2004, Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, Vol. 1, p. 778.

describe this unique relationship between a man and woman (Eph 5:21-33). It is *μυστηριον* in the sense that what was formerly hidden is now revealed. For the writer of the deuterio-Pauline Letter to use a midrashic method to give the highest meaning to the union of husband and wife (Gen 2:24) in the light of the union of Christ and the Church is evidence that he must have had the knowledge of the Prophets' marriage metaphor, which portrayed the relationship between YHWH and Israel as husband and wife (Hos 1:2, 2:2-3:5; Jer 2:20-25; 3:1-3; Ezek 16; 23), from the Jewish tradition. Ephesians is regarded as "the continuation of the Pauline heritage amid his [Paul's] disciples who came to see how the unified church of Jews and Gentiles fitted into God's plan and brought to culmination the gospel proclaimed by Paul".³⁹ Paul himself studied under the famous Rabbi Gamaliel I, who flourished in Jerusalem between 25 and 50 CE (Acts 22:3). The bond that unites man and woman in marriage may be beyond human knowledge, but in our human language, how do we describe this link between the man and the woman?

The Old Testament concept of marriage is that of the covenant modeled on the covenant between God and Israel. In his teaching Rabbi Asher Finkel elucidates this as he maintains:

Prophetic speech utilizes matrimonial symbolism to express anthropopathically the dynamic relationship between God and Israel, for the prophet's personality is deeply affected by the divine pathos...A couple's initial encounter in marriage, a human experiential setting, is used by the prophet to present dramatically the free act of mutual acceptance, a union in joy and intimate concern for the other. God's covenant is expressed through a form of nuptial vow 'you shall be unto me a people and I shall be unto you a God'. Such a vow bound the parties to each other 'from this day on and forever', expressing their commitments and responsibilities in a marriage covenant. This nuptial form affects the

³⁹ Raymond E. Brown, 1997, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Doubleday, New York, p. 633.

deuteronomic understanding of the relationship between God and Israel (Deut 26:17-19).⁴⁰

The covenant between God and Israel may be considered as a solemn agreement between two unequal parties, seen as a sociopolitical treaty between a suzerain and a vassal. This type of covenant demands loyalty on the part of a party of a lower rank. In the marriage covenant equal loyalty is demanded from each party since husband and wife complement each other. In view of this Victor P. Hamilton contends that marriage is essentially a bond of covenant loyalty.⁴¹ A covenant can only be broken (Jer 31:32), not revoked (Gal 3:17). Once a marriage is contracted the bond (of the marriage) remains, even among the living of the two families after the deaths of the contracted parties. This is true of the Annang people of Nigeria. This very point constitutes a part of the mysterious aspect of the bond of marriage. Roland de Vaux goes back to the ancient time to relate that unlike Mesopotamia where marriage was a purely civil contract, in Israel marriage was viewed as covenant. By way of substantiating his point he relates that the Prophet Malachi calls bride “the wife of your covenant”, BeRiTh, (Mal 2:14); in Prov.2:17 marriage is called the “the covenant of God”; also in the allegory of Ezekiel 16:6 the covenant of Sinai becomes the contract of marriage between Yahweh and Israel.⁴² In agreement with the view of marriage as a covenant Lawrence Frizzell explains further that the definition of marriage as covenant, rather than the term “contract” of the 1917 Code of Canon Law goes back to the prophets of ancient Israel (Hosea 2:18-25; Jer 2:2, 3:1-5), who took the experience of marriage to be the most profound interpersonal model for the bond between

⁴⁰ Asher Finkel, 1990, “The Jewish Liturgy of Marriage”, *The Jewish Root of Christian Liturgy*, Eugene J. Fisher (ed.), Paulist, Mahwah, pp. 66, 67.

⁴¹ Victor P. Hamilton, 1992, “Marriage”, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 4, David Noel Freedman, et al., (eds.), Doubleday New York, p. 568.

⁴² Roland De Vaux, 1997, *Ancient Israel*, Grand Rapids, Livonia, Michigan, p. 33.

God and the chosen people, and that in the same way the relationship of Christian husband and wife exists because the Christ-Church relationship exists.⁴³ The Christian teaching of marriage as covenant is based on the deuterio-Pauline teaching on the relationship between husband and wife modeled on the relationship between Christ and the Church (Eph 5:21-33). The bond shared between husband and wife as being of the same nature (one flesh) is not all that constitutes marriage, in that the created reality of marriage has now become an integral part of new creation.⁴⁴ The implications of this profound union of husband and wife in the new creation is well highlighted in a nutshell in Markus Barth's definition of the Greek word, μυστηριον (mystery), as he states:

It denotes the unfathomable and inexplicable core, the miraculous or mystical essence, the overwhelming presence or praiseworthy experience of a special relationship [often expressed in]...the special way in which one man and one woman are united in one flesh; the unique union of Christ with the Church as established in the incarnation, crucifixion, or eucharist; the ontic, logical and noetical relation between the unity of the divine pair (Christ-Church), and of the human pair (husband-wife); the relationship between creation and redemption.⁴⁵

This definition finds both affirmation and explanation in the spousal archetype of St. John of the Cross (1542-1491) that "the beloved Son, sent from his Father to seek his spouse, the Church, bonded to her in the Incarnation, his love consummated on the Cross, a love in turn relived by the members of his Mystical Body – "one flesh", his flesh, one body, his body, one with the Bridegroom".⁴⁶ Elucidating this further Markus Barth views spousal union as "a give and take", an exchange of offering and receiving, seeking and finding, tension and fulfillment...They are true mates and a convincing pair inasmuch as

⁴³ Lawrence Frizzell, 2004, *The Nature and Implications of Covenant: the Catholic Story...*, (unpublished essay), p. 13.

⁴⁴ Peter J. Elliott, 1997, *What God has Joined...The Sacramentality of Marriage*, Alba House, New York, p. 13.

⁴⁵ Markus Barth, 1974, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, Doubleday, New York, p. 642.

⁴⁶ Peter J. Elliott, xvii.

each one of them is active and passive, imaginative and yielding, preceding and following, in carrying out their special responsibilities for one another.⁴⁷

It is of interest to note that the paradigmatic action of God's intention for marriage and procreation also reflects how the prophets viewed God's relationship to Israel. In the minds of the prophets, particularly the prophet Hosea, the covenant relationship between God and the chosen people and the relationship between husband and wife were not without some linkage or fusion. Gerlinde Baumann explains this point succinctly when at the end of examining the text of Hos 1:2, 2:2-3:5, in which the prophet's marriage is made analogous to the covenant relationship between God and the Israelites she concludes that

it cannot be determined at every point in the text whether the subject is Hosea's marriage to Gomer or YHWH's marriage to Israel... 'the tragic human story of the prophet interconnects with the metaphorical tale of Yahweh and Israel, so that the two stories become essentially one. The prophet creates in this fusion the powerful marriage metaphor to articulate the special covenantal relationship between God and Israel'.⁴⁸

If the two relationships (between YHWH and Israel; between husband and wife) are at a point intertwined, it means that the legal and moral responsibilities accepted by Israel are also true for the marital relationship because God also enters in their covenant relationship as man and woman. In his contribution in regard to this discussion, Francis Martin maintains that

the genius of Hosea lay in the fact that he took a metaphor with an established link between the legal dimension of marriage and that of a covenant and amplified that metaphor by adding the note of interpersonal relationship and love. Based on his own experience of his marriage to his wife, Hosea was able to understand that Israel's infidelity to YHWH offended not only against an agreed upon

⁴⁷ Markus Barth, p. 650.

⁴⁸ Gerlinde Baumann, 2003, Love and Violence: Marriage as Metaphor for the Relationship between YHWH and Israel in the Prophetic Books, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, pp. 88, 89.

relationship, but more profoundly against the love that was meant to animate that relationship...YHWH loves Israel, (Hos 3:1; 11:1, 4), [and Israel loves YHWH, Hos 10:11].⁴⁹

It becomes obvious that as Israel's love or infidelity to YHWH originates from obedience or disobedience to an agreed upon relationship, so also the spouses' love or infidelity to each other stems from the fidelity or infidelity to an agreed upon relationship. At this point Gerlinde Baumann carefully notes that "loving is to be understood not as much as the expression of an emotion, but rather as the maintenance of loyalty and fidelity to an agreement".⁵⁰ The fidelity of Israel to YHWH or the fidelity of human spouses to each other is in obedience to the word (DaBhaR) of the covenant (BeRiT), while the contrast shall be the case in disobedience to the word of the covenant. Gerlinde Baumann further points out that "In Deut 5:10 and similar texts, 'oHeBh 'loving' is parallel to 'keeping YHWH's commandment'. Apparently it was not a very long road from the 'contract love' of BeRiT-relationship to 'marital love'".⁵¹ The DaBhaR of the BeRiT refers to the Decalogue, commandments of God, (Exod 20:2-17; Deut 5:6-21). Thus in their relationships both Israel as the spouse of YHWH and human spouses in marriage either love or offend God depending on their stand in relation to the commandments of God. Throwing more light on this, Lawrence Frizzell notes that "the Decalogue and all other commandments are given within the context of the initial gift of the covenant... 'if you obey my voice and keep my covenant... I will be your God and you shall be my people' (Lev 26:12; Exod 6:7)".⁵² Scholarship agrees that "I will be your God and you shall be

⁴⁹ Francis Martin, 2001, "Marriage in the Old Testament and Intertestamental Periods", Christian Marriage: A Historical Study, Glenn W. Olsen, (ed.), A Herder and Herder Book, New York, p. 9.

⁵⁰ Gerlinde Baumann, p. 60.

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 60.

⁵² Lawrence Frizzell, 1993, "Temple and Community Foundations for Johannine Spirituality", Mystics of the Book, R. A. Herrera (ed.), Peter Lang, New York, pp. 182, 183.

my people” (Lev 26:12; Exod 6:7; Deut 29:12; cf. Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 36:22-30) is a legal formula. Moshe Weinfeld explains that it is “a legal formula taken from the sphere of marriage, as attested in various legal documents from the ancient Near East (cf. Hos 2:4), the relationship of the vassal to his suzerain and that of the wife to her husband, leave no place for double loyalty, and therefore are perfect metaphors for loyalty in a monotheistic religion”.⁵³ It is not only that such loyalty was in harmony with the way of life of the people of a monotheistic nation, certainly, among the Jews

the commandments in the Torah of Moses provide the practical norms whereby people structure their lives and teach their children. Thus people know where to go in serving God (HaLaKhaH). The other part of God’s instruction is the record of divine dealings with the patriarchs and matriarchs and subsequent generations of Israelites. This narration (HaGGaDaH) presents insights that assist listeners to imitate God’s righteousness and love.⁵⁴

Inferentially, as the Israelites were called to live their lives in imitation of God (*imitatio Dei*) by being holy (Lev 19:2) and by loving God (Deut 6:4-5) and neighbor (Lev 19:18), because they were created in the image of God (*imago Dei*), so also husbands and wives. By *imitatio Dei* husbands and wives in their covenantal union walk in God’s ways or in the awe of God (Ps. 1) of which the result is always the blessing (BiReK) of household protection, gift of children (Pss 127, 128), etc. Lawrence Frizzell explains thus:

The esteem for the human person evident throughout the Bible and other ancient Jewish literature is crystallized in the doctrinal insight that every human being is created in God’s image and likeness. Male and female are equals and partners in their collaboration with God in procreation and in ordering creation towards perfection (Gen 1:26-28). This understanding of the human being lays a heavy moral responsibility on the individual. The moral life consists essentially in the imitation of God (Lev 19:2) and the divine attributes (listed at length in the interpretation of the divine Name in Exod 34:6-7). The challenge is to serve God

⁵³ Moshe Weinfeld, art. BeRiTh, TDOT 2:278 cited in Gerlinde Baumann, 2003, Love and Violence: Marriage as Metaphor for the Relationship between YHWH and Israel in the Prophetic Books, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, pp. 60, 61.

⁵⁴ Lawrence Frizzell, “Temple and Community Foundations for Johannine Spirituality”, pp. 189,190.

with total dedication (Deut 6:4-6) and to imitate the divine concern for the poor, the widow, the orphan, the stranger, the sick and others who may be neglected or oppressed by the powerful in a given society.⁵⁵

In the New Testament Jesus summed up both the legal part (HaLaKhaH) and the narration (HaGGaDaH) of the Torah in the love of God and of neighbor (Matt 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34). As a complement to this two-fold principle he gave a new commandment (John 13:34-35); he then called on his disciples to imitate him, *imitatio Christi* (John 13:12-15). In line with this Frizzell highlights that “the New Testament writers follow this pattern of offering practical principles for responding to the challenges of life and, by focusing on the person, deeds and teachings of Jesus, they present the ideal for imitating God. Thus, the fourth Gospel shows how Jesus fulfills the Father’s commandment (10:18; 12:49-50; 14:30-31; 15:10) and then, in the Last Supper discourses, he challenges his disciples (13:34-35; 14:15, 21; 15:10, 12, 14, 17)”.⁵⁶ This portrays the great love (’aHaBhaH) that culminates in his gift, the blood of the new covenant (Mark 14:22-25; Matt 26:26-29; Luke 22:17-19; 1 Cor 11:23-26). Taking the explication further, Frizzell holds that “the Paschal Mystery of Christ’s death-and-resurrection constitutes the foundation for the new covenant wherein people are united in obedience to the commandments”.⁵⁷ It is noteworthy to observe that the commandment of the new covenant (διαθηκη) is love (ἀγαπη).

The prophets Hosea, Jeremiah and Ezekiel were concerned about love and fidelity to the covenant of YHWH in their marriage metaphors (Hos 1:2, 2:2-3:5; Jer 2:20-25; 3:1-3; Ezek 16; 23), though they used a legal formula, which also has to do with the legal

⁵⁵ Lawrence Frizzell, “Law at the Service of Humankind”, p. 5.

⁵⁶ Lawrence Frizzell, “Temple and Community: Foundations for Johannine Spirituality”, p. 190.

⁵⁷ Lawrence Frizzell, “The Nature and Implications of Covenant: the Catholic Story”, p. 11.

aspects of marriage. It must be stressed that God's covenant love is *ḤeSeD* (lovingkindness; steadfast love). In the Christian view "the new covenant in the love of Christ is implicit in the old covenant".⁵⁸ In his teaching on marriage Jesus moved beyond the legal aspect of marriage (Exod 20:24, 17; Lev 18, Deut 5:18, 21) and went all the way to the creation narrative to reenact the original love relationship of God with man and of man with woman, and vice versa (Gen 1:27; 2:24) and thereby accorded to the marriage state an indissolubility status (Matt 19:3-6). On the other hand, this thesis regards the legal aspects of marriage as a hedge put around the marriage institution, a hedge which protects marriage as an institution (Matt 5:27-30). However, both the legal and the moral aspects of marriage are complementary in building and sustaining the institution of marriage.

ii) Holiness of the marriage institution:

Marriage is holy in that the woman was created out of the side of the man; and they both were created in the image and likeness of God (Gen1:27). These two (the man and the woman), who shared in the same nature and who were bonded in the one flesh (Gen 2:23-24), were blessed (*BiReK*) by God (Gen 1:28). God saw that the creation of man and woman was very good, *ToBh Me'oD* (Gen 1:31), while the creation of all other creatures was good, *ToBh* (Gen 1:10, 12, 18, 25). The man and the woman as individual persons in their bond to each other share in the holiness of God. To demonstrate that marriage as ordained by God is holy Rabbi Asher Finkel in his explication holds that "the hierogamic (sacred marriage) understanding of the transpersonal relationship in prophetic thought clearly indicates a sacramental meaning of the interpersonal union. The covenant

⁵⁸ Peter J. Elliott, p. 172.

(BeRiT^h) of marriage is compared with the holy (QoDeŠ) of God”.⁵⁹ According to Finkel, the Hebrew word for marriage, KiDDuShiN, means the couple set themselves apart. In other words, man and woman consecrate each other in marriage.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, marriage in Judaism does not convey the same meaning of sacrament as in Christianity, where the union of two baptized persons, which is permanent, indissoluble and exclusive, is modeled after the union of Christ and the Church. “Sacrament” (μυστηριον) as a technical ecclesiastical term refers to “one of the seven principal liturgical rites of the Church through which participants experience the love and power of God (grace) that flows from Christ’s passion, death and resurrection”.⁶¹ The sacrament of matrimony is one of these sacraments, details of which are beyond the scope of this work. Clement of Alexandria agrees that marriage is a holy state and it is even commanded by the Old Law (*Stromata*, 3.12).⁶² St. Cyril of Alexandria in view of John’s account of Cana, saw Christ sanctifying marriage by his presence at the wedding feast (*In Ioan*, 2.1).⁶³ St. Cyril’s comment is *ad rem*, because the Fourth Gospel (John’s Gospel) is the Good News of σημειον (“the book of sign”). On examining the wedding at Cana (2:1-11), it is discovered that John does not mean to relate the sign worked by Jesus, he rather presents the whole text as a sign. Here, it is thoughtful to analyze the text of John’s Gospel in an attempt to expose the sanctity of the marriage institution and the importance accorded to it by Jesus and Mary. John states that “on the third day there was

⁵⁹ Asher Finkel, “The Jewish Liturgy of Marriage”, p. 67.

⁶⁰ Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, 1997, How Firm a Foundation: A Gift of Jewish Wisdom for Christians and Jews, Paraclete Press, Browster, Massachusetts, p. 138.

⁶¹ Mark R. Francis, “Sacrament”, The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism, Richard P. McBrien, et al. (eds.), HarperCollins Publishers, New York, p. 1146.

⁶² Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 3.12, quoted in Peter J. Elliott, 1997, What God has Joined... The Sacramentality of Marriage, Alba House, New York, p. 76.

⁶³ St. Cyril of Alexandria, In Ioan, 2.1, quoted in Peter J. Elliott, 1997, What God has Joined... The Sacramentality of Marriage, Alba House, New York, p.77.

wedding at Cana in Galilee” (2:1). The Jews do not have names for the days of the week except Sabbath. They number other days of the week according to their closeness to the Sabbath day – Sunday is the first day of the week, while Tuesday is the third day of the week. The third day in the Jewish tradition has “double good” in it and the Jews choose that day as a day for wedding. The reason is that at creation God punctuated his work of creation with “good” on the first and second day, but when God created the earth and the seas on the third day, it was double good. In his affirmation Umberto Cassuto states: “Two works were performed on the third day, the separation of the sea from the dry land and the creation of plants; hence the formula ‘that it was good’ is uttered twice on this day”.⁶⁴ Hence, the Jews choose the third day as a day for Jewish wedding. “The third day” in the Christian context, which is quite different from Jews’, is symbolically interpreted as the day of Jesus’ resurrection. Commenting on this J. Martin C. Scott explains that “...the third day...was an established code for “the day of resurrection among Christians in the late first century”.⁶⁵ Wedding (γάμος) itself is good. It is an institution created by God (Gen 1:27-28; 2:21-24) and it is pure. At the wedding his mother presents a request to Jesus, “They have no wine” (οἶνον οὐκ ἔχουσιν) (John 2:3). The word “they” - taken from the Greek, ἔχουσιν, present indicative, third person plural of the verb, ἔχω, “to have” - refers to the couple whose wedding ceremony Jesus and Mary attended. Wine in Aramaic means HaMRa. This request is much deeper than what can simply be grasped at the surface. What the mother is actually requesting is that the couple have not yet gotten the “Lamb” (aMRa, in Aramaic), they have not gotten

⁶⁴ Umberto Cassuto, 1978, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, The Magnes Press, Jerusalem, p. 41.

⁶⁵ J. Martin C. Scott, 2003, “John”, *Eerdmans Commentary of the Bible*, p. 1166.

“forgiveness”⁶⁶. Jesus is the Lamb of God (John 1:29,36; cf. Rev 5-7; 17:14; Exod 12; Isaiah 53:7). The mother knows this. But Jesus answers her mother, “my hour has not yet come” (2:4). In his highlight on the “hour of Jesus” Bruce Vawter maintains that “the ‘hour’ of Jesus is that of his glorification, crucifixion, death and resurrection by which salvation is achieved (cf. John 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1). Just as it is in this glorification that Jesus achieves his destiny, so it is in virtue of it alone that Mary’s intercession can have efficacy”.⁶⁷ Already the symbol of purification was there – six stone jars. Wedding means purity.⁶⁸ It has to do with being set apart or holy. Granting the request of his mother, Jesus turned water into wine (John 2:6-9). In his remarks Craig R. Koester notes that “by transforming the water in the water jars, Jesus also transformed the way purification was to be understood”.⁶⁹ In this sign the blood of Jesus, which the wine symbolizes, became a new way of understanding purification. This act of purification was accomplished by Jesus on the wood of the cross on Friday the 14th day of Nisan according to Johannine tradition. Marc Girard is right when he says that the miracle at Cana is the imperfect preparation (six jars) for the seventh sign (the lifting up

⁶⁶ The discussion on the “Wedding at Cana” (John 2: 1-11) is an excerpt from the lecture entitled “Jewish Texture of the Gospels” by Rabbi Asher Finkel in Spring Semester, 2004, at Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey.

⁶⁷ Bruce Vawter, 1968, *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, p. 427.

⁶⁸ In the Jewish tradition the act of purifying the intended couple begin at the betrothal. At this sacramental act (KiDDuŠiN), which is carried out in public, a blessing of sanctification is pronounced over the sacramental wine prior to the symbolic act of betrothal, the placing of the ring. The betrothal event, which only symbolically ties the bond, prepares the couple to enter into the joy of marriage. As the couple solemnize their union in the presence of God with the biblical-oriented community witnessing to God, the blessings (from The Seven Benedictions of Wedlock) are recited over the cup of wine, signifying a sacramental act. The participation at the meal and the recital of the blessings at the wedding ceremony affectively move the couple and the community from the present anguished reality to the anticipated joy open to a future generation. In this marriage liturgy the Jews recall the redemptive act of God in history and at the same time they look forward to the eschatological joy. This beautiful tradition, which may throw more light on the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11), is rooted in the biblical tradition, but it can be traced only back to the Babylonian academy of the third century CE (Talmud Ketuboth 8b; see Asher Finkel, “The Jewish Liturgy of Marriage”, pp 65-76).

⁶⁹ Craig R. Koester, 2003, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, p. 182.

of Jesus on the wood of the cross), which effects the blood that becomes the drink giving eternal life.⁷⁰ Pseudo-Barnabas explains the purification by the blood of the “Lamb” very well as it states: “It is indeed with this purpose in view that the Lord endured to surrender His body to destruction: we are to be sanctified by the remission of sins, that is, through the sprinkling of His blood” (The Epistle of Barnabas, 5:1-2). Relating this to the Johannine tradition Koester comments:

The transformation of the water at Cana suggested that purification would now be accomplished through revelation. Ritual ablutions cleansed people from physical and moral defilement; and in John’s Gospel sin is conceived radically as the deep-seated human antipathy toward God, which is expressed in one’s manner of life. God purges away the hatred at the root of sin by revealing the glory of his love for the world in the death of his Son. Through that revelation, God ‘cleanses’ by transforming sin into faith.⁷¹

That the couple lacked wine in the context of wedding banquet is puzzling; and that wine was provided in the context of wedding banquet is even more puzzling. In the context of this sign at Cana propitiation or purification was necessary before the wedding banquet could be enjoyed fully. Indeed, this is what we celebrate daily at the Lord’s Last Supper as the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council stated:

The Eucharistic Sacrifice is the source and the summit of the whole of the Church’s worship and of the Christian life. The faithful participate more fully in this sacrament of thanksgiving, propitiation, petition and praise not only when they whole-heartedly offer the sacred victim, and in it themselves, to the Father with the priest, but also when they receive this same victim sacramentally (Vatican Council II, Introduction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery, S. C. R., *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, #3).⁷²

⁷⁰ Marc Girard, “Signes dans le 4^e Evangile,” *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses*, 9 (1980), Lawrence Frizzell, (trans.), pp. 315-324.

⁷¹ Craig R. Koester, p. 182.

⁷² Austin Flannery, p. 104.

That the couple had no wine and Jesus gave it to them at the intercession of his mother, Mary, may be read as the purification of the couple, an ideal which stands for all couples who are in the process of being born into the holy marriage institution. The marriage institution as created by God is holy (QaDoŠ), the couples born into it need forgiveness or purification of which the ultimate source is the blood of the sacrificial “Lamb” (cf. Matt 26: 29; Heb 9:11-14).

iii) Monogamous nature of marriage:

It is the will of God that marriage be monogamous in nature (2:18-24): one man to woman and one woman to one man. This was the ideal type of marriage among the ancient Israelites; and it is still the ideal marriage among Jews and Christians. Jewish scholars are of the view that

the biblical conception of marriage is essentially monogamous (Gen 2:24)...the many references to marriage in the Wisdom literature seem to take it for granted that a man had only one wife (Ps 128; Prov 12:4; 18:22; 19:14; 31:10-31; Eccles 25:1; 26). The prophets using marriage as a metaphor for God’s attachment to Israel (Isa 61;10; 62:5; Ezek 16; Hos 2:21-22; also Song of Songs, if interpreted metaphorically clearly have monogamous marriage in mind, since God did not enter such a special relationship with any other people.⁷³

In support of this viewpoint David Daube notes that “Job, we learn from Rabbi Judah ben Bathyra of the first third of the second century CE, decided never to have more than one wife...because he considered that ‘if it had been fitting for Adam to have ten wives, God would have given him ten, but he gave him only one’”.⁷⁴ In the Christian conception “marriage is a loving partnership of the whole of life, established by the free consent of

⁷³ Raymond Apple, 1973, “Marriage”, *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. II, Cecil Roth, et al. (eds.), Keter Publishing House, Jerusalem, pp. 1027, 1028.

⁷⁴ David Daube, 1956, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, The Athlone Press, London, p. 77.

the spouses, and ordered equally to the mutual well-being of the spouses and to the procreation and nurture of children. When such a marriage is between two believers, the Catholic Church teaches, it is also both covenant and sacrament”.⁷⁵ However, for the Jews “marriage is not a sacrament in the Christian sense, since its dissolution through divorce, though regrettable, was possible”.⁷⁶ Rabbinic scholars conceive marriage as “KiDDuŠiN, a sacred relationship whereby the wife is set apart for her husband and forbidden to all others during the duration of the marriage (Kid 2a-b). At the same time, it is not a mere legal contract devoid of spiritual content. Thus, while the husband acquires rights over his wife’s ’iŠuTh (“wifehood”), though not over her person, and he undertakes duties toward her”.⁷⁷ Heterosexual monogamy as against all other forms of marriage is the ideal type of marriage in the biblical tradition.

In the primordial period Seth’s descendants up to Noah and his sons were said to be monogamous (Gen 7:7), while polygamy (in the sense of polygyny – one husband with more than one wife) first appeared in the reprobate line of Cain, when Lamech took two wives (Gen 4:19).⁷⁸ In the patriarchal age Abraham had only one legal wife, Sarah, but at the same time he bowed to the custom of the society in which he lived that if the legal wife is barren alternatively she could provide her husband with a concubine. Indeed, Sarah gave her maid to Abraham as concubine since she did not bear children for him. The Code of Hammurabi (about 1700 BCE), the code of law said to be in operation approximately about Abraham’s time inscribed that “the husband may not take a second wife unless the first is barren, and he loses this right if the wife herself gives him a slave

⁷⁵ Michael G. Lawler, 1995, “Marriage”, The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism, Richard P. McBrien, et al. (eds.), HarperCollins Publishers, New York, p. 822.

⁷⁶ Raymond Apple, p. 1028.

⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 1028.

⁷⁸ Roland De Vaux, 1997, Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions, Grand Rapids, Livonia, Michigan, p. 24.

as concubine. The husband can, however, himself take a concubine, even if his wife has borne him children; but the concubine never has the same rights as the wife, and he may not take another concubine unless the first is barren".⁷⁹ It is generally said that Hagar (Gen 16:1-2) and Qeturah (Gen 25:1) were concubines to Abraham (Gen 25:6), though Qeturah was taken after Sarah's death. That the latter could have been Abraham's legal wife is subject of discussion among the rabbis. Concubinage (a state of cohabitation of a man and woman without the full sanctions of legal marriage) has been in existence right from the Patriarchal period, biblically speaking. But it is not a legal marriage, in other words, it is illicit form of marriage; to this end Jesus recommends its dissolution (Matt 5:31-32). This point shall be explained in detail in the next chapter. Jacob had two wives (Rachel and Leah) and two concubines, one each from the two wives (Gen 29: 15-30; 30:1-9). Esau had three wives who were of equal rank (Gen 26:34; 28:9; 36:1-5). Concubinage and polygamy were practiced in such a way that there was no limit to number of women a man could take. In highlighting this point Roland De Vaux states that: "There was, it seems, no limit to the number of wives and concubines a man might have. Much later, the Talmud fixed the number of wives at four for a subject and eighteen for a king. In practice, however, only royalty could afford the luxury of a large harem, and commoners had to be content with one or two wives at the most".⁸⁰ Among the kings, David had seven named wives (1 Sam 18:17-30; 25:38-43; 2 Sam 3:2-5) and additional unnamed ones (2 Sam 5:13); Solomon had a royal harem (1 Kings 3:1; 11:3; Canticle 6:8); and Rehoboam had eighteen wives (2 Chron 11:21). Polygyny is not the best choice in marriage, because the presence of several wives did not ensure peace in the

⁷⁹ Roland De Vaux, p. 24.

⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 25.

home: a barren wife would be despised by her companion, the fruitful one (cf. 1 Sam 1:6), even in the case of concubinage (Gen 16:4-5); the barren wife could be jealous of one with children (Gen 30:1); the husband's preference for one of his wives could make this rivalry more bitter (Gen 29:30-31; 1 Sam 1:5); and this attitude has left its mark on the language, which calls the wives of one man "rivals" (1 Sam 1:6).⁸¹ De Vaux maintains that this was the case until the law (HaLaKhaH) intervened by preventing the children of his favorite from receiving more than their fair share of the inheritance (Deut 21:15-17).⁸² Polygamy is common among nomadic, semi-nomadic, and agrarian societies as a means of providing for the needed work force. In the explanation offered for the acceptability of polygamy in ancient Israel, Gerlinde Baumann states: "Also unlike today, in ancient Israel marriage was essentially a hierarchical relationship. Nevertheless, in individual cases an egalitarian relationship of the two marital partners would have been possible. Essentially, marriage served to provide a framework for maintaining the family, blood bonds and economic relationships were thus regulated".⁸³ But it (polygamy) is not a commendable form of marriage. It does not fit into the picture of God creating only one woman for one man. God could have created more than one woman for the man, but he did not. That overseers and servants were expected to be husbands of one wife (1Tim 3:2, 12) shows that in the Second Temple Period polygamy was very much in practice. As a form of marriage it is neither explicitly mentioned in the New Testament for a purpose of discussion nor favored by Christian teachings. Also, in Judaism "Polygamy is no longer a live option in Judaism; monogamy is now universal".⁸⁴

⁸¹ Roland De Vaux, 1997, Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions, Grand Rapids, Livonia, Michigan, p. 25.

⁸² Ibid. p.25.

⁸³ Gerlinde Baumann, p. 40.

⁸⁴ Robert Gordis, 1990, The Dynamics of Judaism, Indiana University Press, Indianapolis, p. 152.

Throwing more light on the issue of polygamy and the Jews, Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein teaches that, “while polygamy was practiced in biblical times, it came into disuse among Jews long before the Common Era and was formally prohibited by the edict of Rabbi Gershom in the beginning of the eleventh century C.E.”⁸⁵ At this point Peter J. Elliot remarks that “until Christ comes to make marriage a sacrament, specifying monogamy as essential to marriage, it is difficult to provide strong natural law arguments against polygamy”.⁸⁶ Also it is of interest to note that the form of marriage called “polyandry” (one woman with more than one husband) is altogether non-existent in the Bible.

Levirate marriage (YeBaMoT), which is biblically rooted (Deut 25:5-10), is identified with the Israelites (cf. Ruth 4:6). The word “levirate” (which gives this form of marriage its name) is rooted from the Latin word “levir”, meaning brother-in-law, though in the context of this writing the Hebrew term is preferred. “YeBaMoT is derived from the Hebrew word YaBaM, which means, a man who is under obligation to marry his deceased brother’s wife if he died childless”,⁸⁷ but when the brother-in-law chooses not to marry the widow, the ceremony of removal his sandal and of spitting on him by the widow is done in the presence of the elders as witnesses for the purpose of freeing the widow who now has full control of her destiny.⁸⁸ For rabbinic Judaism Levirate marriage proved increasingly problematic. It is noted that a man’s cohabitation with his brother’s wife seemed to be categorically forbidden by a passage in Leviticus 18:16 (cf. Matt 14:3-4; Mark 6:14-16; Luke 3:19-20). However, the Rabbis met this contradiction by declaring that the prohibition in Leviticus and the injunction in Deuteronomy were both

⁸⁵ Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, p. 137.

⁸⁶ Peter J. Elliot, 1997, What God has Joined... The Sacramentality of Marriage, Alba House, New York, p. 11.

⁸⁷ Ben Zion Bokser (trans.), 1989, The Talmud Selected Writings, Paulist Press, New York, p.130.

⁸⁸ Victor P. Hamilton, “Marriage”, The Anchor Bible Dictionary, Vol. 4, p. 567.

pronounced simultaneously on Sinai and that both were equally binding. The Rabbis drew a conclusion that the prohibition in Leviticus referred to the lifetime of the brother, while the levirate obligation in Deuteronomy was operative after the brother's death.⁸⁹ In his further explanation Robert Gordis contends that "levirate is a striking illustration of an institution that can be traced from its earliest stage, when it was compulsory, to the present, when it is forbidden".⁹⁰ Jesus Christ rejected this form of marriage (Luke 20:27-40). Hence, in the New Testament levirate marriage is not approved. Following the problematic nature of levirate marriage (Deut 25:5-10) and its unsuitability in the modern age Jews and Christians relegate the law of levirate marriage to the remotest part of the laws on marriage. The Scriptures, both the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, are in support of monogamy (cf. Exod 20:17; 21:5; Lev 18:8,11,14-16, 20; 20:10; 21:13; Numbers 5:12; Deut 5:21; 22:22; Prov 12:4; 18:22; 21:9; Ecclesiastes 9:9; Job 31:1, 9-12; Sirach 26:1-4; Matt 19:4,6; Eph 5:21-33), because it is the ideal form of marriage instituted by God.

To ensure orderly and peaceful coexistence among members of the family, clan or society marriage as established by the Creator is preserved and guided by related Mosaic halakhic legislation as to who could be married to whom, or who could not be married to whom. To this end marriages within the family with very close relations were forbidden, because one does not unite with "the flesh of one's body" (Lev 18:6); this amounts to the prohibition of incest.⁹¹ An impediment of consanguinity prohibited marriages along the direct line between father and daughter; mother and son (Lev 18:7); father and granddaughter (Lev 18:10); and in the collateral line between brother and sister (Lev

⁸⁹ Robert Gordis, p.151.

⁹⁰ Ibid. p.153.

⁹¹ Roland De Vaux, p. 31.

18:9; Deut 27:22).⁹² Marriage to a half-sister, which was permitted in the patriarchal age (Gen 20:12) and even under David (2 Sam 13:13) is forbidden by the laws (Lev 18:11; 20:17); also marriage between a nephew and aunt of which Moses was born (Exod 6:20; Numbers 26:59) is prohibited (Lev 18:12-13; 20:19). Equally the impediment of affinity exists between a son and step-mother (Lev 18:8), between father-in-law and daughter-in-law (Lev 18:15; 20:12; Gen 38:26), between mother-in-law and son-in-law (Lev 20:14; Deut 27:23), between a man and the daughter or granddaughter of a woman he has married (Lev 18:17), between a man and his uncle's wife (Lev 18:14; 20:20), between brother-in-law and sister-in-law (Lev 18:16; 20:21) and lastly, marriage to two sisters which might seem to have been authorized in the case of Jacob and Rachel/Leah is prohibited as well (Lev 18:18).⁹³ Considering the direct or collateral lines involved in the prohibited marriages, the halakhic legislation, which follows a natural rhythm, indeed assumes a universal nature. But Christians have their ways of dealing with the problems of prohibited marriages. The Roman Catholic Church in particular is guided by the Code of the Canon Law in matters of marriage, details of which are beyond the scope of this work.

The creation of the woman for the man (2:21-23), the bonding of the two in one flesh and being blessed (BiReK) as a complementary body expresses the divine intention that this ideal marriage as instituted by the Creator is monogamous and holy (QaDoŠ), and that the two human beings of opposite sexes share together in the nuptial covenant in which they are bonded as one flesh. This institution called marriage then becomes the one expression of kinship and family patterns, in which typically a man and woman's

⁹² Roland De Vaux, p. 32.

⁹³ Ibid. p. 32.

union is recognized publicly as a permanent social unit.⁹⁴ “Thus the man and woman, who ‘are no longer two but one’ (Gen 2:24; Matt 19:6), help and serve each other by their marriage partnership; they become conscious of their unity and experience it more deeply from day to day” (Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, #48).⁹⁵ That they are no longer two but one flesh (2:24) marks the beginning of the interaction between the members of a household, between members of one household and other households in the society. Indeed, it marks the beginning of interpersonal relationships. The marriage as ordained by God and modeled on the relationships between YHWH and Israel, and between Jesus Christ and the Church brings joy to the husband and wife and helps them to realize their unity more deeply for the good of the family and the society at large. Though there are some forms of marriage like polygamy and levirate marriage, none of these ensures an orderly and peaceful society as monogamy does. Founded on monotheism as against polytheism, the text of Gen 2:18-24 expresses the biblical concept of reality that proclaims the essential goodness of life and the universal moral order that govern human society. In reality heterosexual monogamy is the ideal form of marriage for all men and women, who choose marriage as their way of life. Indeed, the text is a programmatic exhortation designed by God and expressed in human language for the benefit of human beings of all ages. Obedience to this great exhortation means unity and love of a man and his wife as well as procreation and education of their children. We shall develop this further in the third chapter of the thesis.

⁹⁴ Jon L. Berquist, 2000, “Marriage”, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, David Noel Freedman, et al. (eds.), William B. Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 861.

⁹⁵ Austin Flannery, p. 950.

CHAPTER THREE

The Union of Man and Woman

3.1. Love of Husband and Wife:

It is highly symbolic that God created the woman and brought her (WaYeBhi'eha) to the man. God could have created the woman and left her somewhere to be discovered by the man, but the Creator did not accomplish it that way. He brought (BW') her to the man. BW' is the Hebrew verb root of the word "come". In Gen 2:22 the verb root, BW', is used in Hiphil form, which means, "cause to come", "bring" or "bring near". In this context God caused the woman to come to the man or brought her to the man, that is, to accompany her and deliver her to her companion. This phenomenon points to the fact that the woman was for the man as the man was for the woman; God created her for him for a purpose which serves the interest of the Creator and the human race, as we shall see later. The Midrash depicts the image of God in this context as that of an attendant leading the bride to the bridegroom (Yal. Gen 24; Gen Rabba 18:4).¹ In loving response to the divine gesture the man spontaneously and poetically made a passionate cry of self-giving to complement this (Zo'Th) gift of same nature – the gift that no other animal could replace. To emphasize the import of the woman brought to him, the man repeats the demonstrative pronoun, Zo'Th, (this one) three times. Adam cried out in the poetic rhythm of two is to two in the first line; and three is to three in the second line to reveal his innermost feeling in the presence of the woman thus:

¹ See Nahum M. Sarna, 1989, The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis, The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, p. 23.

Zo'Th HaPPa'aM (this at last)//

'eŞeM Me'aŞaMaY (bone of my bones) //

UBhaŚaR MiBBeŚaRiY (flesh of my flesh)// The meter of 2:2.

LeZo'Th YiQQaRe' 'iŞŞaH (she shall be called woman) //

Kî Me'iŞ LuQoHaH'Zo'Th (for she was taken out of man)// The meter of 3:3.

The poetic structure here is complementary. This cry evokes the man's emotional outpouring of his whole being unto the woman who so corresponds to him because she shares the same nature with him. Now, the God who caused the woman to come to the man also caused the man to make the speech of acceptance, that is, giving himself in return to the woman. This was the first occasion of human speech in the Bible. The beautiful result of this dramatic expression of joyous cry with parallel stresses of the two, namely, bone and flesh constitute a body. This then results in the reference to two persons of different genders with one root to complete the purpose of creation as God's act. The biblical text ends with the lesson that the two persons (man and woman) are now one flesh (2:24). "Their unity denotes above all the identity of human nature; their duality, on the other hand, manifests what, on the basis of this identity, constitutes the masculinity and femininity of created man. The ontological dimension of unity and duality has, at the same time, an axiological meaning".² The presence of the man before the woman, or vice versa, was the starting point of love ('aHaBhaH, rendered in the LXX as ἀγαπη) because of their corresponding nature and complementarity. It is the moment

² Pope John Paul II, 1997, The Theology of the Body, Pauline Books and Media, Boston, p. 45.

that love (’aHaBhaH; ἀγάπη) flows from the man to the woman and from the woman to the man. The love between this man and the woman is ’aHaBhaH or ἀγάπη, which refers to, “God’s love for man” (Hos 11:4; Jer 31:3; Isa 63:9); “man’s love for God” (Jer 2:2), “Christian love”; the spiritual bond of love between God and man, and between man and man or between man and woman; it connotes a life-enhancing action that flows from God to the human (Rom 8:37; 2 Cor 9:7) and vice versa (Matt 22:37-40); it is the love of husband and wife (Eph 5:25, 28; Col 3:19).³ In this context ἐρως (erotic love or sexual love) or φιλος (love of friendship) is not relevant. Dealing within this context is the type of love that is “an inner quality expressed outwardly as a commitment to seek the well-being of the other through concrete acts of service”.⁴ The love of Jewish or Christian husband and wife (or nuptial love) is modeled on the love between God and Israel, or love between Christ and the Church.

The Prophet Hosea portrays YHWH as the husband of Israel. YHWH’s marriage to Israel was more than master-slave relationship: Israel would call YHWH her husband, ’iŠ, (literally, my man), she would no longer refer to YHWH as her “my master”, Ba’aLi (Hosea 2:18). In view of this Gerlinde Baumann explains that “the image of YHWH as ‘lord’ or ‘master’ in the marriage, into which the husband metamorphorizes in Hos 2:16, is contradicted in Hos 11:9: now YHWH no longer wants to be regarded as ’iŠ, but as ’eL: ‘while there in Hos 2:16 YHWH’s ‘wife’ will address him as ’iŠi, ‘my husband’....”⁵ By so doing Hosea raised the status of a wife from the status of mere

³ William Klassen, 1992, “Love”, The Anchor Bible Dictionary, Vol. 4, David Noel Freedman, et al. (eds.), Doubleday, New York, p. 384.

⁴ Laurie J. Braaten, 2000, “Love”, Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible, David Noel Freedman, et al. (eds.), Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 825.

⁵ Gerlinde Baumann, 2003, Love and Violence: Marriage as Metaphor for the Relationship between YHWH and Israel in the Prophetic Books, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, p. 153.

property (Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21) to the status of partnership or trusted friend. In the same vein the Prophet Ezekiel used idiomatic expression to explicate the marital imagery between YHWH and Judah: “I spread my skirt/wing over you” (Ezek 16:8), says the Lord, which means “I marry you” (cf. Deut 22:30; 27:20; Ruth 3:9; Mal 2:16). Here it may be of a little distraction to note that “in marriage the man’s garment covers the woman’s nakedness, whereas adultery uncovered it”.⁶ Ezekiel sees in the bond of this relationship a covenant between YHWH and Judah, meaning that, in marriage the relationship between husband and wife is more than mere contract; it is indeed a covenant by which the two are bound together (Ezek 16:8; Mal 2:14). By using this metaphor to portray YHWH as the bridegroom of Israel, the Prophets did not detract from their Hebrew tradition in which YHWH is never conceived of as having sexuality, an imagery that abounds in non-Israelite religions where god and goddesses were explicitly sexual,⁷ even though there are some hints in Amos 3:2 - “you only have I known of all the families of the earth”. From her viewpoint Gerlinde Baumann observes that “apparently these metaphors were not perceived as competing or contradictory. The YHWH-image of the BeRitTh-relationship to Israel implies more distance than does that of the ‘husband’ in the prophetic marriage imagery”.⁸

In this imagery of “husband” and “wife” relationship the undertone of jealousy is very clear (cf. Hosea 2:18; 3; Ezek 16:8), meaning that, in their development of the imagery the Prophets must have been informed by the Torah, which hints at such a relationship discussed by the Prophets. YHWH is a jealous God (Exod 20:5). The related noun that describes the agitation of a husband who is suspicious of his wife’s infidelity is QiN’aH,

⁶ Victor P. Hamilton, 1992, “Marriage”, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 4, p.566.

⁷ Ibid. p. 566.

⁸ Gerlinde Baumann, p. 66.

jealousy (Numbers 5:14, 30). QiN'aH is derived from the verb, QaNa', which means, "be jealous" or "zealous". In this context YHWH is jealous of Israel running after other gods or the term expresses God's zeal or protective care for Israel. This sums up the love of God for Israel. The love of husband for his wife and vice versa is modeled on God-Israel relationship. In fact, in Prov 6:34 QiN'aH is used for the description of passionate feelings of a husband towards the wife. To crown it all, the poetic and passionate cry of the man that takes the form of QiN'aH when God brought the woman to him, reveals the husband's zeal for his wife; it is such love that brings out the whole being of the man on trust to his wife. This is the true love (ἀγάπη) between husband and wife. Commenting on the true love between husband and wife, Rabbi Finkel holds that, "the correspondence between the transpersonal and interpersonal relationships in biblical thought affects also the axiological significance of the marital covenant. The type of love expressed in a covenantal union, which determines attitude and behavior, is called ḤeSeD [lovingkindness]. It is manifested in a persistent, steadfast, loyal and faithful concern for the other (ἐλεος), as it flows from the deep sense of ἀγάπη (altruistic love)".⁹ This is what the deutero-Pauline Letters refer to when they admonish husbands to love their wives as Christ loves the Church (Eph 5:25, 28; Col 3:19). On this subject also the Rabbis taught that when a husband loves his wife as himself, and honors her more than himself fulfills the saying: "and you shall know that your tent is at peace" (b. Talmud, Yebamot, 61b-64a). The Church teaches that "man is created in the image and likeness of God who is himself love. Since God created him man and woman, their mutual love becomes an image of the absolute and unfailing love with which God loves man. It is

⁹ Asher Finkel, 1990, "The Jewish Liturgy of Marriage", The Jewish Roots of Christian Liturgy, Paulist, Mahwah, p.73.

good, very good, in the Creator's eyes" (CCC, #1604). Husband and wife have the duty to love each other as each of them loves God.

Unlike the marriage love between YHWH and Israel or between Christ and the Church that has nothing to do with sexual relations, the love of husband and wife is expressed in the sexual relation which brings the marriage to consummation. This nuptial love is often expressed in self-giving of each party to the other. Pope John Paul II beautifully explains this process thus:

In the mystery of creation, the woman was 'given' to the man. On his part, in receiving her as a gift in the full truth of her person and femininity, man thereby enriches her. At the same time, he too is enriched in this mutual relationship. The man is enriched not only through her, who gives him her own person and femininity, but also through the gift of himself. The man's giving of himself, in response to that of the woman, enriches himself. It manifests the specific essence of his masculinity which, through the reality of the body and of sex reaches the deep recesses of the 'possession of self'...He is capable both of giving himself and of receiving the other's gift.¹⁰

In a summary it could be said that this love is expressed in consummation of marriage. Rabbi Joshua b. Levi comments that, "a person who knows his wife to be a God-fearing woman and he does not have marital relations with her is a sinner, as it is written; 'and you shall visit your habitation and you shall not sin'" (b. Talmud, Yebamot, 61b-64a). This is similar to St. Paul's view that a denial of wife's right over her husband or husband's right over his wife except on grounds of mutual agreement is of great consequence (1 Cor 7:3-5). Nahum Sarna observes that "sexual relations between husband and wife do not rise above the level of animality unless they be informed by and imbued with spiritual, emotional and mental affinity".¹¹ In making this statement Sarna has also taken into consideration the injunction of the Decalogue on sexual relations:

¹⁰ Pope John Paul II, pp. 71, 72.

¹¹ Nahum M. Sarna, 1989, The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis, p. 23.

“You shall not commit adultery” (Exod 20:14; Deut 5:18). The marriage institution involves existence of a covenant between husband and wife; it is monogamous and holy. As God expects Israel to be faithful to him always as a party in covenant, so the husband expects the wife to remain faithful to him and vice versa, for the protection of the marriage institution. By virtue of reasoning the two need mutual agreement to engage themselves in this act of self-giving. This sexual relationship is for a married couple who share in the same bond of marriage to the exclusion of all others. God so orders that sexual relationship should only occur within a particular marriage and no more: God only created Eve for Adam and Adam for Eve and the two became one flesh (Gen 2:21-23). All that it entails is that one should stay within one’s marriage sexually. The institution of marriage was created holy right from the beginning, and so, the commandments prohibiting adultery (Exod 20:14; Deut 5:18) and fornication (Deut 22:21; Jer 5:7; Hosea 4:14; 1Cor 6:9) constitutes a fence that protects the institution of marriage. Jesus further strengthens this fence in his Sermon on the Mount by declaring that “whoever looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt 5:28). Biblically speaking, both Christianity and Judaism forbid adultery, fornication, or any other acts capable of destroying the marriage institution, like homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, and so on. The early text called *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* reiterates the Torah and the injunction of Jesus: “Do not commit adultery...do not fornicate...do not be lustful, for lust leads to fornication” (Didache, 2.2; 3.3). Lending their voice to this edifying teaching, the Rabbis state: “Turn away your eyes from the charms of another man’s wife...” (b. Talmud, Yebamot, 61b-64a). In other words, do not allow yourself to be trapped by the beauty of another man’s wife, or simply, do not covet your

neighbor's wife (Exod 20:17). In support of this Rabbi Asher Finkel holds that marriage institution "is to be guarded by the restrictions of incest, adultery, homosexuality and child abuse".¹² Sexual relations constitute a very sensitive area such that the couple sharing in the same bond must enjoy this relationship in order to procreate in a context of consent and respect. It was for this reason that God gave Eve to Adam (2:19-23). On this point Pope John Paul II comments:

The communion of persons could be formed only on the basis of a 'double solitude' of man and of woman, that is, as their meeting in their distinction from the world of living beings (animalia), which gave them both the possibility of being and existing in a special reciprocity. The concept of 'help' also expresses this reciprocity in existence, which no other living being could have ensured".¹³

In this special relationship married couples are called to live conjugal chastity (CCC, #2349). This is what Tobias meant when he prayed that he did not take Sarah because of lust (ZeNuTh), but for a noble purpose (Tobit 8:7). Tobias took Sarah not out of erotic desire, but for the purpose of sharing with her the covenant of marriage. In support of conjugal chastity the Pharisees by analogy transferred the holiness (QaDoŠ) of the Temple to the nuptial bed. The Pharisees contended that commandments governing service at the altar have their parallels in those governing preparation of food (so that every meal can reflect the covenant bond between God and Israel) and sexual activities (so that the partners in marriage reflect the covenant bond between God and Israel). In the same way the husband and wife in marriage have particular responsibilities and roles so that the commandments governing the menstrual cycle be respected. It is equally plausible that the Temple stands for the pure consecrated body of the worshipper and that

¹² Asher Finkel, "The Other and the Stranger in Biblical and Rabbinic Tradition", *S. I. D. I. C.*, 25(#3, 1992, Rome), p. 3.

¹³ Pope John Paul II, p. 46.

the rules which protect the sanctuary from defilement repeat by analogy the rules which protect the purity of the human body from wrong sex and the people from false gods.¹⁴

The teaching of the Pharisees may be represented thus:

Place	Temple	Field and kitchen	home
agents	Priests and people	Farmer and homemaker	Husband and wife
focus	Altar	table	Bed

Table one: the commandments governing service at the altar have their parallels in those governing preparation of food and sexual activities. As the Temple stands for the pure consecrated body of the worshipper, so also it stands for the purity of food in the kitchen and of husband and wife in their marital bed¹⁵.

In fact, “as devout lay people who were educated in understanding the Scriptures, the Pharisees maintained that the entire community of Israel was ‘a kingdom of priests, a holy nation’ (Exod 19:6). They extended and adapted the ideals of priestly holiness in the context of a life in Temple service to their synagogue and homes. Meals were framed by prayer and became an opportunity for family and friends to sense God’s presence in their midst”.¹⁶ In our context the Pharisees are saying to husbands and wives be holy in all aspects of your lives including conjugal life, for the Lord is holy (Lev 19:2) and his holiness is felt in the Temple. Here the teaching of the Pharisees is echoed in the Letter

¹⁴ Lawrence Frizzell, 1995, “Mary and the Biblical Heritage”, *Marian Studies*, #46, p. 32.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p.32.

¹⁶ Lawrence Frizzell, 1993, “Temple and Community: Foundations for Johannine Spirituality”, *Mystics of the Book*, R. A. Herrera (ed.), Peter Lang, New York, p. 183.

to the Hebrews: “Let marriage be honored among all and the marriage bed be kept undefiled” (13:4). The writer of the Letter extends the responsibility of the keeping the marriage bed holy to those outside the marriage in order to show the significance of marriage. Sexual relations in marriage involve human reasoning, mutual consent and respect, and the awe of God by which the very act portrays the dignity and the holiness of marriage. Truly, “human sexuality is of a wholly different order from that of the beast. It is a blessed gift of God woven into the fabric of life, and as such, it cannot of itself be other than wholesome (ShaLoM)”.¹⁷ The result of this mutual expression of nuptial love elevates married couples to be co-creators with God. Consequent upon procreation as co-creators is education of children. How do Jews and Christians handle this challenge?

3.2. Procreation and Education of Children:

God created them (human beings) male and female (Gen 1:27; 2:21-23), he blessed (BiReK) and commanded them to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:28). God’s blessing on humankind is like that pronounced on the animals in (Gen 1:22). Like the animals man is to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen 1:28); the marked difference is that in the case of animals God simply gives a command, whereas in that of man “God said to them”, thereby drawing attention to the personal relationship between God and man.¹⁸ By blessing them directly the transcendent God of Creation transforms himself into the personal God, who enters into unmediated communion with human beings¹⁹. The blessing given to both the man and woman bestowed on them the dynamism to increase.

¹⁷ Nahum M. Sarna, The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis, p. 13.

¹⁸ Gordon J. Wenham, 1987, Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1-15, Nelson Reference & Electronic, Colombia, p. 33.

¹⁹ Nahum M. Sarna, The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis, p. 13.

The command to be fruitful and multiply carries with it an implicit promise that God will enable man to fulfill it. It is clearly repeated to Noah after the deluge (9:1), and recalled to the patriarchs (Gen 17:2, 20; 28:3; 25:11). Equally the genealogies bear silent testimony to its fulfillment (Gen 5, 9, 11, 25, 36, 46).²⁰ Genealogies mark the difference between the Book of Genesis and other books of the Bible because the former is about giving birth to humans and other beings of creation. Procreation engenders transmission of life from one generation to the next and married couples are co-creators with God by virtue of their ability to reproduce. In view of the fact that married couple become partners with God in the propagation of human race Rabbi Finkel comments:

God intended his human creature to have two genders in order to promote procreation through the union of male and female in marriage (2:24). Indeed, the first commandment in the Bible is to procreate (1:28). Heterosexual marriage, through mutual consent and love, is the sacred institution that gives rise to the natural family in the establishment of social goodness.²¹

In rabbinic thought sexuality is a potentially positive drive, because without sexual desires, no man would build a house, marry a wife, or have children (Gen. Rab 9:7). He who, by denying his legitimate instincts fails to produce children, is as if he shed blood, diminished the image of God, and made the ŠeKHiNaH (God's presence) depart from Israel (cf. Yebamot 63b-64a). Both Jews and Christians consider procreation as the fruit of marriage (cf. Psalm 128:1-6). The aim of marriage does not consist exclusively in procreation as barrenness does not terminate the nuptial covenant.

Taking the whole picture of man-woman relationship into consideration, the Fathers of Vatican Council II commented: "In virtue of the sacrament of matrimony by which they signify and share the mystery of the unity and faithful love between Christ and the

²⁰ Gordon J. Wenham, p. 33.

²¹ Asher Finkel, "The Other and the Stranger in Biblical and Rabbinic Tradition", p. 3.

Church, Christian married couples help one another to attain holiness in their married life and in the rearing of their children” (Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, #11²²; cf. Code of Canon Law, # 1055). It is not only that married couples bear children as a result of their unity, also their parenthood conveys on them the responsibility of rearing (training and educating) the children. The Fathers further explain that “in what might be regarded as the domestic Church, the parents, by word and example, are the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children. They must foster the vocation which is proper to each child” (Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, # 11).²³ The Church directs parents to teach their children the love of God and train them in different vocations through which they might earn their living. The Council Fathers’ teaching on education of children is rooted in the command of the Torah that fathers should teach their children diligently the love of God when they sit in the house, walk by the way, lie down and when they rise (Deut 6:4-9). What is taught to children “is a covenanted love, love which must be expressed in loyalty, in service, and in unqualified obedience to the demands of the Law”.²⁴ The Israelites took this injunction much more seriously in their lives, because it was a disgrace for Israelite parents to father or mother a badly brought up son or daughter (Sirach 22:3). “The homiletical presentation of the text (Deut 6:4-9) reveals that there was some connection between the process of teaching children and what was being taught. Scholars see here a link between wisdom and Law/faith. The laws are inculcated

²² Austin Flannery (ed.), 2004, Vatican Council II: Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, Vol. 1, Dominican Publications, Dublin, p. 362.

²³ Ibid. p. 362.

²⁴ William L. Moran, 1963, “The Ancient Near East Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy”, CBQ, Vol. XXV, 1, P. 78.

into children by the process of intellectualization”.²⁵ In a way, wisdom now becomes the vehicle of instilling the laws in children. In this regard, Philip R. Callaway holds that “wisdom and legal traditions find a point of convergence in the topic of parent/offspring relationship”.²⁶ In his own contribution Kris Owan contends that: “That which is proverbial or amenable to the proverbial [wisdom] is easily put into good use in the rearing of children at home or in school”.²⁷ The responsibility of teaching the children diligently rested not only with biological parents but also with the prophets, priests, wise men and others who found themselves in positions similar to parents to impart knowledge. That, apart from bearing children, man has the responsibility of children-upbringing maps out the difference between the blessing God gives to man to be fruitful and multiply and the blessing God gives to animals. As a being who has a special relationship with God and received a direct blessing from God, man has the sacred duty of caring for his offspring as God cares for his creatures because he has the image of God (*imago Dei*) in him. This duty is inherent in the nature of man and cannot be dispensed with. For the joy of their unity as one flesh and of begetting children and caring for them, husband and wife are not expected to part ways. Death alone separates the union (1 Cor 7:39). What about divorce? This is the issue at stake.

3.3 Divorce, Remarriage and Celibacy:

In the beginning God created a woman out of the side of the man for the man and united

²⁵ Linus Akpan, 1999, Parental Responsibility in Child-upbringing in Deut 6:4-9 and Among the Annang of Nigeria, Unpublished Thesis, C.I.W.A., Port Harcourt, P. 72.

²⁶ Philip R. Callaway, 1984, “Deut 21:18-21: Proverbial Wisdom and Law”, *JBL*, p.341.

²⁷ Kris J. N. Owan, 1992, “African Proverbial Wisdom and the Good News of Christ the Wisdom of God”, Inculturation and the Mission of the Church in Nigeria, Joseph Brookman-Amissah, et al. (eds.), C. I. W. A., Port Harcourt, Nigeria, p. 123.

the man and the woman as one flesh (Gen 2:21-24). By this very act God established the heterosexual monogamous and indissoluble union as the ideal of all marriages. Jesus only reenacted the will of God when members of the Shammai House of the Pharisees²⁸ confronted him with long debated halakhic question: “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause [πασαν αίτιαν]?” In Matthew 19:3 the phrase, *πασαν αίτιαν* (“any cause”, “reason”, “accusation”, “charge”, “guilt”, or “wrong relationship”) plays vital role in the question. In the parallel text of Mark 10:2-12 the phrase is omitted. Scholarship has it that the question in the Markan text was raised in the Gentile territory that has no need of the phrase, whereas the Matthean community was predominantly Jewish. Hence the inclusion of the phrase – “any cause”.

The question thrown to Jesus has its origin in Deut 24:1-4, which permits a man to write a bill of divorce (SePheR KeRiTutH) and give it to his wife to divorce her because he has found something indecent (‘eRWaT DaBhaR) about her. The Hebrew phrase, ‘eRWaT DaBhaR, which means “nakedness of a thing”, “improper behavior” or “something indecent” (Deut 23:15; 24:1) is translated in the Septuagint as *ἀσχημον πραγμα*, meaning, “unbecoming or unpresentable thing”, “affair”, “event”, “happening”, “deed”, or “undertaking” (Deut 24:3, LXX). Owing to the vagueness of the meaning of the phrase, ‘eRWaT DaBhaR, the Rabbis debated among themselves as to what interpretation could be given to the text. Two great rabbis, Hillel (60-9 BCE) and his contemporary Shammai, who also lived before Jesus Christ, took different stands on the interpretation of the text. From the conservative point of view Shammai interpreted, ‘eRWaT DaBhaR, to mean “unlawful sexual behavior”, “sexual impropriety” or simply

²⁸ Zealotic members of Pharisaism, a religious sect of Judaism, who accepted both oral and written Law, and also believed in resurrection, existence of angels and spirits (Acts 23:8).

put, “adultery”. This means a woman could be divorced on grounds of adultery (cf. Mishnah, Gittin 9:10). On the other hand, Hillel, from a liberal viewpoint, interpreted the phrase to mean “any reason whatever” including childlessness, cultic offenses, and even, burning his food (Mishnah, Gittin 9:10). At the time of Jesus the controversy over the interpretation of this text was still looming. When he was confronted with the controversial question he went all the way back to Genesis to provide the answer. In answer to this all important question, Jesus maintains that he who made them from the beginning made them male (ἀρσεν) and female, (θηλυς) (see Gen 1:27), and that a man shall leave his father and mother to cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh (ἐσονται οἱ δυο εἰς σαρκά μιαν), they are no longer two but one flesh, therefore, what God has joined together let no man put asunder (cf. Gen 2:24). In his position Jesus upholds the original state of heterosexual monogamy and its indissolubility and thereby condemns the practices of polygamy and divorce (cf. Matt 19:3-12; Mark 10:6-9). In the passage Jesus put more emphasis on the permanence of marriage: “...the two shall become one flesh, they are no longer two but one flesh” (Matt 19:5-6). In his opinion David Daube expresses that “so the words ‘and the two shall be one flesh’ are not, for him, of sufficient force; he needs the clause which may be interpreted as a direct, open rejection of divorce – and he shall cleave to his wife’. In other words, according to Matthew, Jesus’ argument against divorce is not veiled but intended to be intelligible to all”.²⁹ The content of Jesus’ answer to the Pharisees portrays his intelligible open rejection of divorce. Here the phrase, σαρκῆ μιᾶ, is repeated twice to show the import of marriage as a permanent state in human life. The deutero-Pauline Letter to the

²⁹ David Daube, 1956, The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism, The Athlone Press, London, p. 83.

Ephesians in dealing with Gen 2:24 follows the path of Jesus. The text sees the union of man and woman as a mystery (μυστηριον) revealed in the messianic era that as Christ and the Church form one body so also the husband and wife. The word, μυστηριον (secret of something formerly unknown but now revealed) is translated in the Vulgate (St. Jerome's Latin Translation of the Bible) as *sacramentum*, which in this context assumes the meaning of the Greek word from which it is translated. It has little to do with marriage as sacrament in Christian theology. However, if the union between Christ and his spouse, the Church, is a permanent one, so also is the union between husband and wife, which was made in that way from the beginning of the world but only to be revealed (Eph 5:21-33) to us through God's Son, Jesus. Alluding to the Book of Genesis, St. Augustine defended marriage as a created reality, which enjoys three intrinsic goods: *proles* (the procreation of children), *fides* (the mutual fidelity of the spouses), and *sacramentum* (the permanence of the union). He further comments that the "sacrament" means that a marriage is not to be broken apart, not even so that the abandoning party or the abandoned may marry again in order to have children (*De Genesi ad litteram*, 9.7.12).³⁰

Divorce is not a positive act; a virtuous man can only engage in a noble act. Before the time of Jesus on earth, the Prophet Malachi had acknowledged the permanent state of marriage because God made man and woman into one flesh and he abhorred divorce (Mal 2:14-16). Rabbi Eliezer upheld the word of the Prophet Malachi as he said, whoever divorces his first wife, even the altar sheds tears because of him. This is because the Lord was witness between him and the wife of his youth, whom he has

³⁰ St. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 9.7.12, quoted in Peter J. Elliot, 1997, *What God Has Joined...The Sacramentality of Marriage*, Alba House, New York, p.79.

betrayed, though she was his companion and his wife by covenant, Mal 2:13-14 (b. Talmud, Sanhedrin, 22a-22b).³¹ In support of this, Rabbi ben Nahman explained that for everything there is a substitute, except for the wife of one's youth, for it is written "the wife of one's youth – how can one reject her?" (Isaiah 54:6) (b. Talmud, Sanhedrin, 22a-22b).³² In teachings both the Prophets and the rabbis bypass the law on divorce in Deut 24:1-4 only to reenact the original law of The Creator. In marriage husband and the wife are united physically, psychologically and spiritually such that no human language could explicate exhaustively what marriage truly is. Karin Heller expresses some insight into the amazing union between a husband and the wife when she says that "Israel perceives in its constitution, which is to be two in one flesh not only the secret of its divine origin, but also its identity and its divine vocation, which are hidden in God himself".³³

Marriage involves the mutual exchange of consent without any atom of compulsion in which case the husband vows "to take his wife as his lawful wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part" (cf. Exchange of Consent, Rite of Marriage of the Roman Catholic Church). Rabbi Asher Finkel explains this marvelous self-giving of the persons bound in nuptial covenant thus: "A couple's initial encounter in marriage, a human experiential setting, is used by the prophet to present dramatically the free act of mutual acceptance, a union in joy and intimate concern for the other. God's covenant is expressed through a form of nuptial vow: 'you shall be unto me a people and I shall be

³¹ Ben Zion Bokser (trans.), 1989, *The Talmud: Selected Writings*, Paulist Press, New York, pp. 205, 206.

³² Ibid. p. 206.

³³ Karin Heller, 2003, "The Interpersonal Communion of Trinity, Origin and Aim of Communion between Man and Woman", *Dialoghi Sul Mistera Nuziale: Studi-Card. Angelo Scola, G. Merengo, et al. (eds.)*, Lateran U. P., Rome, p. 11

unto you a God'. 'Such a vow bound the parties to each other 'from this day on and forever' expressing their commitments and responsibility in a marriage covenant".³⁴ If by so doing the husband and wife are so bonded physically, psychologically and spiritually, then, how can this state be reversed so that the one flesh becomes two? Truly, this was the situation Jesus Christ faced when the Pharisees further tested him with the question: "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to put her away"? (Matt 19:7).

Jesus' answer to this question extends to remarriage and celibacy. Jesus said to Pharisees in reply: "For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery; and he who marries a divorced woman, commits adultery" (Matt 19:8-9). The response of Jesus was familiar to Palestinian and the Greco-Roman societies: Firstly, "the rabbis, like other ancient legal scholars, recognized 'concession' as an established legal category – something that was not quite right to begin with, but had to be allowed because people would not be able to do what was full right".³⁵ Secondly, In the

Greco-Roman society adultery had always been seen as a shamefully immoral act, a breach of covenant that constituted the theft of another person's most precious possession – the sole affection of his wife. Suspicion of improper activity with upper class men's wives could lead to severe penalties, such as banishment to an island. Adulterers also could face death at the hands of husbands or fathers under certain circumstances. Adulteresses were forbidden remarriage to freeborn Romans. Adultery had long been grounds for divorce in Greco-Roman and Jewish law. In fact, Roman and Jewish law compelled the husband to divorce his

³⁴ Asher Finkel, "The Jewish Liturgy of Marriage", pp. 66, 67.

³⁵ Craig S. Keener, 1991, ...And Marries Another: Divorce and Remarriage in the Teaching of the New Testament, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, p. 42.

wife if she were found to be in adultery.³⁶

Though Jesus' response looked familiar to his contemporaries, certainly he did so in the light of his new authoritative teaching. In some extra-biblical materials there is some evidence suggesting that Jesus' absolute prohibition of divorce was paralleled in the Qumran community (11Q Temple 57:17-19; CD 4:12b-5:14). In the parallel text, taking into consideration the Markan audience, the evangelist's formulation of Jesus' teaching goes beyond the confines of the male dominant milieu of Palestine to include the Gentile non-Jewish community where civil law permitted a woman to start law proceedings against her husband if she intended to divorce him. The Markan Jesus prohibited a husband from divorcing the wife and vice versa of which any contravention on either side means adultery (Mark 10:11-12). Jesus's position on the indissolubility of marriage demonstrates that Moses' permission to divorce was a concession to the hardness of heart, which in essence constitutes a drift from the original ideal of the two remaining permanently in one flesh. "Given the multiple attestation of Jesus' teaching on divorce within the New Testament, there is a virtual consensus among scholars that Jesus was unequivocally opposed to divorce".³⁷ Now, could Jesus who is so firm in his position against divorce at the same time teach the reverse or favor some exceptions to the indissolubility of marriage? In other words, what does he mean by the phrase, "except for unchastity" (μη ἐπι πορνεία), which seems to make divorce possible? Does πορνεία answer the question of "for whatever reason" (πασαν αἰτίαν)? By this phrase, μη ἐπι πορνεία, Jesus is identified with BeTh Shammai (the school of Shammai) that interpreted 'eRWaT DaBhaR (Deut 24:1-4) as "unlawful sexual behavior" or

³⁶ Craig S. Keener, p. 31.

³⁷ Raymond F. Collins, 1992, "Marriage: New Testament", *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 4, David Noel Freedman, et al (eds.), Doubleday, New York, p. 570.

“adultery” to the opposition of BeTh Hillel (the school of Hillel), which favors divorce on any reason (πασαν αἰτίαν). To identify Jesus with BeTh Shammai will be a grievous mistake, because in his answer he made radical demands of his disciples that “they were not permitted divorce even in the case of adultery”.³⁸ Indeed, it is one thing to interpret what a person said and another to really examine the mindset of the person who said what he said.

It is pertinent to recall that during the Second Temple Period the issue of divorce and remarriage was one of the elaborate problems in the society. Philo of Alexandria (about 20 B. C. E. – 50 C. E.), a contemporary of both Jesus and St. Paul, recorded that

but those men who are frantic in their desires of others and at times even for those of their nearest relations or dearest friends, and who live to the injury of their neighbors, attempting to vitiate whole families, however numerous and violating all kinds of marriage vows...to defile the bed of one’s father after he is dead, which it would be right rather to preserve untouched, as sacred; and to feel no respect either for old age or for one’s mother, and for the same man to be both the son and the husband of the same woman; and again for the same woman to be both the mother and wife of the same man, and for the children of the two to be the brothers of their father and the grandsons of their mother, and for that same woman to be both the mother and grandmother of those children whom she has brought forth, and for the man to be at the same time both the father and the uterine brother of those whom he has begotten? (Philo, *Special Laws*, III, 11, 12).³⁹

In his history, Flavius Josephus (c. 37 – 100 BCE) relates that Herod the Great and his descendants lived incestuous lives. Herod himself at a time had nine wives among whom were his brother’s daughter and his sister’s daughter who had no children (Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* 17.1.2; cf. 18.5.4).⁴⁰ Herodias married her uncle Herod Antipas (Herod the Tetrarch), a marriage prohibited by the Law of Moses (Lev 18: 16; 20:21) and condemned by John

³⁸ Craig S. Keener, p. 33.

³⁹ C. D. Yonge, (trans.), 2004, *The Works of Philo*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, p. 595.

⁴⁰ William Whiston, (trans.), 2004, *The Works of Josephus*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, p.452.

the Baptist (Matt 14:3- 12; Mark 6:19-29). St. Paul ordered the Church in Corinth to penalize an incestuous man who knew his father's wife (1 Cor 5:1-5). All these examples give us a clue of what happened at that time in Palestine, Egypt, Persia, and in fact, the entire Greco-Roman world. It is noteworthy that at this time some Pharisees interpreted leaving father and mother to cleave to the wife (Gen 2:24) to mean forsaking unnatural incestuous marriages with sister or mother (b. Talmud, Sanhendrin, 58a) to join to a lawful wife. Did Jesus use the exceptive clause in support of this interpretation? There is no doubt that Jesus acknowledged the rabbinic interpretation of the Genesis 2:24 as prohibiting incestuous marriage⁴¹, but Jesus' exceptive clause followed the emphasis he laid on the two becoming one flesh, no longer two but one flesh (see Gen 2:24). However, from all indications it appears that Jesus' exceptive clause (μη ἐπι πορνεία), which is used as a protective measure for the institution of marriage, is much wider in scope.

At this point it is worthy of note that scholars interpret the exceptive clause, μη ἐπι πορνεία (except for unchastity), in different ways. In his opinion David S. Stern interpret it to mean "adultery" as he says "...a marriage must not be dissolved for anything less than the most direct insult to its one-flesh integrity, adultery".⁴² Craig S. Keener agrees with him but makes it more elaborate. Reading Matt 19:9 in the light of Matt 5:32 Keener interprets the exceptive clause to mean adultery, and that after the dissolution of marriage caused by adultery the innocent party has the right to remarry.⁴³ W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison are in support of Keener, stating that the exceptive

⁴¹ Robert W. Wall, 1992, "Divorce", *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 2, David Noel Freedman, et al. (eds.), Doubleday, New York, p. 218.

⁴² David H. Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, Jewish New Testament Publications, Clarksville, Maryland, p. 59.

⁴³ Craig S. Keener, pp, 3, 37, 44.

clause in Matt 19:9 is equivalent to that of Matt 5:32 and that “the clause is redactional, its meaning probably not ‘except in the case of incest’ but ‘except for adultery’...divorce is not adultery only when the marriage bond has already been broken by unfaithfulness”.⁴⁴ This thesis is not in favor of the interpretation of the exceptive clause (Matt 19:9; see 5:32) by Stern, Keener, Davies and Allison as “adultery”. For them the meaning of the Greek word, πορνεία, in the exceptive clause is specified to read “adultery”, which, according to them, dissolves marital bond. Raymond E. Brown speaks the mind of the author of this thesis when says that

...Jesus’ prohibition of divorce is normative...the Greek word [πορνεία] covers a wide range of immorality, but to allow divorce for every kind of unchastity would seem to nullify the force of the prohibition...μοιχεία is the proper word for adultery as attested in the related Matthean verb for ‘commits adultery’ a more likely interpretation [of πορνεία] would find a reference to marriages within what Jews regarded as forbidden degrees of kindred.⁴⁵

The Greek word, πορνεία, is derived from the verb, πορνεύω, which refers, “to prostitute the body for hire”, “to commit fornication”⁴⁶ or “to engage in any sexual activity not sanctioned by God’s word, 1 Cor 6:18; 10:8”.⁴⁷ Scholarship agrees that the meaning of πορνεία also includes incestuous marriage. The meaning of this key word in the exceptive clause, πορνεία, becomes much clearer when its equivalent in Hebrew, ZeNuTh (fornication or prostitution) is substituted. Its meaning does not end in the vague sense of sexual immorality; the Greek word, πορνεία, could be specified to read “fornication” (ZeNuTh) which means consensual sexual intercourse between a man and a

⁴⁴W. D. Davies, Dale C. Allison, 1997, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew, Vol. III, T and T Clark, Edinburgh, p. 16, 17.

⁴⁵Raymond E. Brown, 1997, An Introduction to the New Testament, Doubleday, New York, p. 194.

⁴⁶G. Abbott-Smith, 2001, A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament, T and T Clark, Edinburgh, p. 373.

⁴⁷Jay P. Green, et al. (eds.), 1987, A Concise Lexicon of the Biblical Languages, Sovereign Grace Publishers, Lafayette, Indiana, p. 104.

woman not married to each other. Really, if Matthew intended to communicate the sense of adultery (consensual sexual intercourse between legally married man and woman) as that said and meant by Jesus, he would have used more appropriate Greek word, *μοιχεία*, “adultery” (Matt 5:32; 19:9) to convey the message. A close examination of Matt 19:9 reveals that literally the sentence reads: “everyone who sends away his wife – except in the case of concubinage – makes her commit adultery”.⁴⁸ In essence, *πορνεία* in the context of this thesis refers to “sexual irregularity or immorality”, “fornication”, “incestuous marriage” and/or “living in concubinage”. It is now obvious that none of these could be referred to as marriage. They are illicit unions. Hence, Jesus called for their dissolution. Thus the exceptive clause of the Matthean Jesus brings to an end all forms of illicit union. The import of the exceptive clause cannot be overemphasized: instead of weakening Jesus’ stand on divorce, the clause reinforces it and makes it much clearer (cf. Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18). In his unequivocal condemnation of divorce in Matt 19:3-9, Jesus appeals to the Book of Genesis with emphasis: he repeats *ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς* (from the beginning) twice (Matt 19: 4, 8) and *σαρξ μία* (one flesh) two times (Matt 19:5, 6) in order to reenact the original law of the Creator on marriage. The text of Deut 24:1-4 on divorce is in reality not a command but a permissive rule regulating the relationship between a man and his wife. Jesus speaks the voice of God on the indissolubility of marriage.⁴⁹ Heterosexual monogamous marriage according to the mind of God is indissoluble because the two have been made into one flesh (Gen 2:24). In support of Jesus’ position, St. Paul teaches the indissolubility of Christian marriage in the absolute terms with which Mark 10:9 records our Lord’s prohibition of divorce. To

⁴⁸ John L. McKenzie, 1968, “The Gospel According to Matthew”, The Jerome Biblical Commentary, Raymond E. Brown, et al (eds.), Prentice-Hall, Engelwood Cliffs, New Jersey, p. 72.

⁴⁹ Edward J. Mally, 1968, “The Gospel According to Mark”, The Jerome Biblical Commentary, p. 44.

that teaching of Christ he appeals “not I, but the Lord commands” (1 Cor 7:10-11). In case of a separation, whether permitted for serious motives the Apostle does not mention. But the separated wife must remain single or be reconciled to her husband.⁵⁰ Paul only permitted separation in the case of married couple who were believers, no remarriage is recommended (1 Cor 7:10-11). The only clear case of divorce allowed by Paul is when one of the partners is unbeliever and will not live in peace with the believer in which case the believer is not bound (1 Cor 7:12-16). Commenting on this Raymond Brown holds that “the separation would seemingly involve divorce and possibly remarriage, although Paul does not address the latter issue”.⁵¹ However, later in “the fourth century CE Christian tradition, with some hesitation, concluded from this passage that the Christian convert was free to contract another marriage if the unbeliever refused to cohabit peacefully”.⁵² This was post-Pauline period, whereas Paul himself mentioned nothing about remarriage. Paul’s exception to the dominical command on divorce (1 Cor 7:10-16) is owing to the exigencies peculiar to his communities. In his studies of Paul’s technical terms for “separation” and “divorce” in 1 Cor 7:10-16 for the purpose of comparing Paul’s position in the Gentile neighborhood on divorce to that of the Jews, David Daube states:

...with reference to a marriage where both parts are believers, Paul uses the intransitive, χωριξασθαι, of the wife who ‘separates’, but the transitive, ἀφιεναι, of the husband who ‘dismisses’ his wife. This is in perfect agreement with the Jewish ideas on the subject...with reference to a marriage where only one party is a believer, he uses the transitive, ἀφιεναι, both of the dissolution of the marriage by the husband and of its dissolution by the wife. The latter application of ἀφιεναι is justified since the procedure he has in mind is a non-Jewish one, Roman or Greek. Again, he uses χωριξασθαι of the dissolution of the marriage

⁵⁰ Richard Kugelman, 1968, “The First Letter to the Corinthians”, The Jerome Biblical Commentary, p. 263.

⁵¹ Raymond E. Brown, p. 519.

⁵² Richard Kugelman, p. 264.

by an unbelieving partner, husband or wife. No special justification is here needed, the verb being a proper term for divorce.⁵³

However, in view of this comparison, it is worth noting that unlike Roman or Greek society where a wife can start the proceedings of divorce against the husband, in the Jewish culture it is the husband that divorces the wife, not vice versa.⁵⁴ Scholars approve of Paul's permission to divorce because in this case the grounds for divorce were more convincing.⁵⁵ Remarriage in the Pauline community still remains an issue to be examined since Paul, biblically speaking, mentions nothing about it. The Matthean understanding of divorce is shared by the rabbis. Although the Pharisaic schools have established grounds for divorce (b. Talmud Gittin 9:10), Rabbi Yochanan of the third century taught that such an act (divorce) is abhorred by God (b. Talmud Gittin 90b).⁵⁶

With the conclusion of the discussion on the exceptive clause, the remaining part of Matt 19:9 may read: "whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery" (Matt 5:31-32; par Mark 10: 11-12; Luke 16:18). There is need for those who are seeking higher values to resist divorce as an evil, because it (divorce) violates the love of God and neighbor and, therefore, is against the reign of God. In the face of necessity where divorce becomes a *conditio sine qua non* Rabbi Akiva, who lived in the second century CE, explains that "an incompatible marriage produces a situation of hatred in which the couple transgresses the biblical interpersonal injunctions forbidding vengeance, grudges and hatred, and commanding love of one's neighbor (Lev 19:17, 18). For this reason, Rabbi Akiva even permits divorce in case the husband is beset with thoughts of a

⁵³ David Daube, 1956, The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism, The Athlone Press, London, pp. 362, 363.

⁵⁴ David Daube, p. 363; see Edward J. Mally, p. 44.

⁵⁵ Robert W. Wall, p. 218.

⁵⁶ Asher Finkel, "The Jewish Liturgy of Marriage", p. 68.

prettier woman".⁵⁷ Here it is pertinent to note that Rabbi Akiva, like Moses, is not giving a command but permitting divorce. Divorce is viewed as a tragedy and a course of action that should be taken only out of calamitous necessity, after exhausting all other possibilities of maintaining harmony and tranquility in the marriage.⁵⁸ In the rabbinic period, divorce, though legal, was considered as a disgrace and was frowned upon by the community. The rabbis resorted to making peace between husband and wife instead of promoting divorce. In pursuit of this virtue Rabbi Meir allowed himself to be spat on seven times in order to ensure peace between the intended divorced couple.⁵⁹ But after every effort to make peace fails, Jewish law regards divorce as a legitimate and realistic possibility. In fact, the Talmud considers the divorce of an intolerable spouse to be praiseworthy (b. Talmud, Yebamot, 63b; Gittin 90a). Indeed, the law of divorce is given for the sake of peace and the couples who benefit from it bring good, not evil, upon themselves.⁶⁰ At divorce, presently in Judaism, the man pays the KeTuBBaH (lump sum of money) equivalent to at least one year support to the divorced woman, and she departs. After this, the divorced husband and wife are free to remarry another woman or man respectively. It is pertinent to note that a woman whose husband has deserted her or simply disappeared (*agunah*) without giving her a *get* (bill of divorce) and he (the husband) has never been proven dead may not remarry. This remains a problem in Judaism. In such necessity as to when divorce is unavoidable the Church considers as special cases the marriage between baptized persons that was not consummated, marriage

⁵⁷ Asher Finkel, p. 68.

⁵⁸ Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, 1997, How Firm a Foundation: A Gift of Jewish Wisdom for Christian and Jews, Paraclete Press, Brewster, Massachusetts, p. 139.

⁵⁹ Michael Kaufman, 1993, The Woman in Jewish Law and Tradition, Jason Aronson, Northvale, New Jersey, p.8.

⁶⁰ Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, p. 140.

between baptized and non-baptized persons, marriage between non-baptized persons and the separation of the baptized persons (Code of Canon Law, #1141 – 1155). In dealing with these extremely difficult situations the Church either applies the Pauline Privilege (cf. 1 Cor 7: 10-16) or permits separation with some conditions, which are beyond the scope of this work.

The next step usually taken after divorce is seeking permission to remarry. Where divorce is nonexistent, remarriage is equally uncalled for. Divorce and remarriage are so intertwined such that one cannot be discussed without the other. From the beginning there was no remarriage. Remarriage only came with the permission of Moses to allow divorce (Deut 24:1-4). Remarriage in this context is that of marrying the same woman twice, that is, a woman who was divorced from the first husband, married to another man, and coming back to marry the first man. This type of remarriage is prohibited by Moses (Deut 24:2-4; Jer 3:1-5). This prohibition in the halakhic sense is logical extension of the levitical prohibition against marrying a close relation as stipulated in Leviticus 18. In the Second Temple period, precisely in the first century C. E., the issue of remarriage in Deut 24:2-4 was still a problem. The historian, Josephus, gave a clear picture of what the situation was as he stated:

He that desires to be divorced from his wife for any cause whatever [‘eRWaT DaBhaR] let him in writing give assurance that he will never use her as his wife any more; for by this means she may be at liberty to marry another husband, although before this bill of divorce be given, she is not to be permitted so to do; but if she be misused by him also, or if, when he is dead, her first husband would marry her again, it shall not be lawful for her to return to him (Josephus, Ant. 4.8.23).

Admittedly there is a great difference between remarriage to the former husband or wife and remarriage to another man or woman. The discussion on remarriage in this work is

not limited to either remarrying the same man twice or another man, both are inclusive. In Judaism remarriage is permitted. On the issue of remarriage the Church states: “The remarriage of persons divorced from a living, lawful spouse contravenes the plan and law of God as taught by Christ. They are not separated from the Church, but they cannot receive Eucharistic communion. They will lead Christian lives especially by educating their children in the faith” (CCC, #1665).

Alternatively, Jesus declared that those who cannot receive the precept of marriage can still serve God through the life of celibacy. He states thus:

Not all men can receive this precept, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it (Matt 19:10-12).

By this statement – “there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 19:12) - Jesus declared celibate life as an alternative to marriage. The word “eunuch” (εὐνοῦχος) plays a significant role in the statement of Jesus. The word, εὐνοῦχος, whose equivalent in Hebrew is SaRiS, means “an emasculated man”, “one holding high office as of chamberlain, at court” [as he was in those days] (Acts 8: 27, 34, 36, 38, 39), or “one voluntarily abstaining from wedlock”.⁶¹ In the context of this thesis εὐνοῦχος refers to a voluntary abstention from wedlock for the sake of God’s kingdom, otherwise known as life of celibacy. It is “a way of life characterized by a priest’s [or a religious’] perpetual renunciation of marriage for the sake of the reign of God”.⁶² Craig S. Keener rightly notes that “Jesus’ graphic language

⁶¹ G. Abbott-Smith, 1999, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, T&T Clark, New York, p. 188.

⁶² James K. Voiss, 1995, “Clerical Celibacy”, *The Harpercollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, Richard McBrien, et al. (eds.), HarperCollins Publishers, New York, p. 289.

here, like his imagery of cutting off hands or feet elsewhere, is designed to communicate a solemn point: the kingdom is more important than anything else, including marriage, and it will cost some of Jesus' followers the right to marry".⁶³ However, it is noteworthy that both marriage and celibacy lead to God's presence. In the Hebrew Bible the Prophet Jeremiah alluded to a state of celibacy (Jer 16:1-2). The members of the Qumran Community practiced celibacy so that lives intended to be wholly consecrated to worship and wholly preoccupied with meditation on prophecy should be kept wholly and not just intermittently pure.⁶⁴ Scholarship agrees that there were some married persons among the members of the Community – "at Qumran some women's skeletons indicate that, during some period of its history, at least a few women lived there, though they were clearly the minority"⁶⁵ - but the more exalted way of life was celibacy. Testifying to the celibate life of the Essenes, Craig S. Keener maintains that

the most relevant and widely cited Jewish material on celibacy has to do with the Essenes. If any Jewish group practiced long-term abstinence or celibacy, it was they...this suggests that some pious Jews considered it especially holy to withdraw from public and family life to pursue the claims of God and his community in an undefiled way.⁶⁶

St. Paul cherished celibate life more than married life, because the unmarried person should be more devoted to the service of God (1 Cor 7: 32-38). Jesus, who declared a celibate life as an alternative to married life, set the pace as a celibate figure; his life of celibacy provides the most likely context for the original *Sitz im Leben* of the eunuch logion (Matt 19:10-12).⁶⁷ By his own statement, Paul is regarded as a celibate: "Indeed, I

⁶³ Craig S. Keener, p. 46.

⁶⁴ Geza Vermes, 1998, The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English, Penguin Books, London, p. 83.

⁶⁵ Craig S. Keener, p. 77.

⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 77.

⁶⁷ John P. Meier, 1991, A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus, Doubleday, New York, p. 344.

wish everyone to be as I am [without wife], but each has a particular gift from God, one of one kind and one of another” (1 Cor 7:7). Relying on extra-biblical sources, scholars entertain some doubts regarding Paul’s celibate life. Quoting Clement of Rome Eusebius, the historian, relates that “Peter and Philip indeed had children, Philip also gave his daughters in marriage to husbands, and Paul does not demur in a certain epistle to mention his own wife, whom he did not take about with him, in order to expedite his ministry the better” (Eusebius, Hist. 3.30). The conflicting statements about Paul’s celibacy remain a matter of conjecture for nobody has been able to prove it either way. Presently, since there are no sources that could assist in determining which statement is true, this work favors the statement, which came from Paul himself, that he was without wife. In Judaism “marriage, not celibacy, constitutes the highest state of holiness....”⁶⁸ But despite all odds in Judaism Ben Azzai embraced the celibate life in order to remain committed to the study of Torah, because the continuity of the world could be assured through others (b. Talmud, Yebamot, 61b-64a). Teaching on the subject of celibacy the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council stated:

By preserving virginity or celibacy for the sake of the kingdom of heaven priests are consecrated in a new and excellent way to Christ. They more readily cling to him with undivided heart and dedicate themselves more freely in him and through him to the service of God and men. They are less encumbered in their service of his kingdom and of the task of heavenly regeneration. In this way they become better fitted for a broader acceptance of fatherhood in Christ (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, #16).⁶⁹

Celibacy is a gift from God; it is an alternative to married life as given by Christ (Matt 19:10-12). The need of a woman in man’s life and vice versa cannot be over emphasized.

⁶⁸ Robert Gordis, 1990, The Dynamics of Judaism, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, p. 19.

⁶⁹ Austin Flannery, p. 892.

They need each other for love, procreation, upbringing of children and for the experience of mutual assistance each could offer to the other on the permanent basis of which death alone has the power to separate. The union of these two ensures the full concept of the human race and its continuity. It is a way of life ordained for those capable to take it. Those who do not find this as their own vocation have the option to relish in the singleness of life, which readily enhances not only the spiritual well-being of those in question, but also of individuals who have the awe of God and seek His face. As it is within our freedom to serve God through either way of life (marriage or celibacy), let us move up further to explore the purpose of God's gift of woman to man in the fourth chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

God's Gift of Woman to Man

4.1. God's Purpose for the Gift of Woman to Man:

This subheading sets out to establish that woman is a gift to man and vice versa; by their union God instituted the human family. Sexual relations are legally and exclusively for the married couple joined in the same bond of marriage. Inferentially it shall also state God's purpose for the gift of woman to man.

The aloneness of man was a great concern to God: "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen 2:18). In actualizing his intention to make a helper ('eZeR) fit for the man, God created a woman ('iŠšaH) out of the man ('iŠ) and brought (BW') her to him. The Yahwist narrator does not relate that Adam complained of his aloneness and thereafter asked for Eve; rather it is God who knew that man could not fit into the world of animals, which he created, and out of his graciousness proceeded to give the woman to the man. At this juncture it seems, indeed, very surprising that instead of creating a good number of human beings just as he did in the case of animals, God made only one woman for the one man. Taking note of this point Gordon J. Wenham states: "That God created all the animals as potential partners for the man is striking and shows that he could have created any number of male or female partners for Adam, but in the event just one Eve is completely satisfactory".¹ It was this one woman that he brought (BW') to this one man and left her with him. In other words, God gave Eve to Adam. The first biblical human

¹ Gordon J. Wenham, "Genesis", *Eerdmans Commentary of the Bible*, James D. G. Dunn, et al. (eds.), Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 40.

speech states: “This one at last is the bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”. Adam accepted the woman and at the same time gave himself to her (2:24). Based on this text

Pope John Paul II reflects:

Gen 2:23-25 enables us to deduce that the woman, who in the mystery of creation ‘is given’ to man by the Creator... She is accepted by man as a gift. The Bible text is quite clear and limpid at this point. At the same time, the acceptance of the woman by the man and the very way of accepting her, become, as it were, a first donation. In giving herself, from the very first moment in which in the mystery of creation she was ‘given’ to the man by the Creator, the woman ‘rediscovers herself’ at the same time. This is because she has been accepted and welcomed, and because of the way in which she has been received by the man.²

The author of the deuterocanonical Book of Tobit in the Second Temple Period pointed out that Eve was given (NaTaN) to Adam (Tobit 8:6, LXX), and that from this unity human race came into being (HaYaH) (Tobit 8:6, LXX). The act of giving in the context of Gen 2:18-20 assumes two dimensions: i) **God’s gift of woman to man**: That God gave a woman to man is very significant. Here the gift of God is wholesome in that it contains what the man and woman each receives from God (the gift of woman to man and the gift of man to woman) and also what the man and the woman will in turn give to each other. It is worthy of note that most often when man gives something to God it is “offering”; on the other hand, when God gives something to man (especially when man does not request for it) it is out of his lovingkindness (HēSeD). The Hebrew noun, HēSeD, may refer to “God’s lovingkindness in condescending to the needs of his creature”; “God’s lovingkindness in redemption from enemies and troubles (Gen 19:19; Exod 15:13), in preservation of life from death (Ps 6:5; Job 10:12), in quickening of spiritual life (Ps 109:26), in redemption from sin (Pss 25:7; 51:3), in keeping the

² Pope John Paul II, 1997, Theology of the Body, Pauline Books and Media, Boston, p. 71.

covenant (Micah 7:20)", or "God's mercies, deeds of kindness".³ When ḤeSeD applies to man it may mean "goodness or kindness of men toward men" (1 Sam 20:15), "kindness as extended to the lowly, needy and miserable" (Prov 20:28; Job 6:14) or "love to God (piety)".⁴ In our context ḤeSeD connotes God's lovingkindness in condescending to the need of his mere creature, Adam, in his aloneness. It is out of his lovingkindness that God created and entrusted Eve to Adam. Lawrence Frizzell sees ḤeSeD in a much wider context as it relates to God's covenant relationship with the chosen people. He states thus:

ḤeSeD may be rendered lovingkindness, steadfast love, mercy (Greek, ἐλεος) when it designates the divine action and gift. The human response is best translated by the terms 'devotion' or 'loyalty'. The term ḤeSeD is used frequently within the context of Covenant. Within the Covenant, the people of Israel gradually came to grasp that life is much more than our physical existence. The fullness of life is communion with the living God. As such, even death itself cannot threaten the members of the Covenant community. Their life transcends space and time, bringing them into never-ending union with God.⁵

Indeed, in return for his ḤeSeD, God demands loyalty from the couple (as it is shown in the subsequent chapter of Genesis 3:1-24), as he would later demand from his spouse, Israel, whom he redeemed from the house of bondage in Egypt (cf. Exod 20:1-17). In the Gospels Christ would demand this from his bride, the Church, whom he saved by his supreme sacrifice on the cross (cf. John 13:34-35; 14:15). **ii) the man's gift of himself to the woman and vice versa:** That the woman was taken out of the side of the man axiologically reveals that man belongs to the woman as the woman belongs to the man. Though the nature to which man and woman belong is mysterious, St. Paul endeavors to

³ Francis Brown, et al. (eds.) 2004, The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, p. 339.

⁴ Francis Brown, p. 338.

⁵ Lawrence Frizzell, "The Magnificat: Sources and Themes", *Marian Studies*, 50(1999), p. 55.

explain that “a wife does not have authority over her own body, but rather her husband, and similarly a husband does not have authority over his own body, but rather his wife” (1 Cor 7:4). One can only have authority over what belongs to one. This is because taking out of one flesh (Gen 2:21-23) and rejoining to form one flesh (Gen 2:24) conveys on each one of them the right of ownership and authority. Explaining this point further Sarna states:

The mystery of the intimacy between husband and wife and the indispensable role that the woman ideally plays in the life of man are symbolically described in terms of her creation out of his body. The rib taken from the man’s side thus connotes physical union and signifies that she is his companion and partner, ever at his side.⁶

The intimacy of this physical union is expressed in self-giving of each person to the other. In his succinct explanation of this phenomenon Pope John Paul II articulates thus:

So she finds herself again in the very fact of giving herself ‘through a sincere gift of herself’, when she is accepted in the way in which the Creator wished her to be, that is, ‘for her own sake’ through her humanity and femininity. When the whole dignity of the gift is ensured in this acceptance, through the offer of what she is in the whole truth of her body and sex, of her femininity, she reaches the inner depth of her person and full possession of herself [this can also be said of the man]...This finding of oneself becomes the source of a new giving of oneself. This grows by virtue of the interior disposition to the exchange of the gift and to the extent to which it meets with the same and even deeper acceptance and welcome as the fruit of a more and more intense awareness of the gift itself.⁷

This self-donation culminates in the consummation of the physical union between the man and the woman of which the narrator comments: “The man knew (YaDa’) his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain” (Gen 4:1). It is of interest that “to know” (YaDa’), as related to “knowledge” (Da’aT) is unique, namely, experiential knowledge

⁶ Nahum M. Sarna, 1989, The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis, The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, p. 22.

⁷ Pope John Paul II, p. 71.

acknowledging giving oneself to the other and receiving too. Adam and Eve had children in their likeness and image (cf. Gen 5:3) whom they acknowledged to have acquired a man ('iŠ) by the help of the Lord (Gen 4:1). Thus present in this nuclear family according to the first couple's awareness were father, mother and child. This becomes the ideal for the multiplication of the human race. God made it this way and he willed it to continue in this pattern. In order to preserve this nuclear family God built a strong fence around it by instituting some prohibitions:

a) "You shall not commit adultery" and "you shall not covet your neighbor's wife" (Exod 20:14; Deut 5:18; Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21): The ninth commandment – you shall not covet your neighbor's wife - is apodictic and not casuistic; it is negatively formulated, hence less restrictive. It is always linked to the sixth commandment – you shall not commit adultery. The Catholic enumeration of the ten commandments followed here results from the special place accorded to the wife in Deut 5:21, in contrast to Exod 20:17)⁸. The word, "covet" (HaMoD) brings out the sense of "do not desire", "crave" or "envy" your neighbor's wife. These two commandments lend themselves to developing the sensitivity of conscience. They are considered as social commandments and their violation are sins against God and neighbor; and those who commit such sins are rendered unclean. It is apparent that many excerpts from the Fragments of the Damascus Document of the Second Temple Period found in Qumran reveal that "one who comes near to fornicate with his wife contrary to the law shall depart and return no more" (4Q270 7 i.12-13; cf. 4Q267 9 vi 4-5). Joseph Baumgarten wonders what the community

⁸ The discussion on the sixth and ninth commandment is an excerpt from the lecture entitled "Law and Ethics" by the Associate Professor Lawrence Frizzell, Spring Semester, 2004, Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey.

rule here is and he tries to find some references to specific transgressions committed by a man in violation of the law⁹; while Alexei Sivertsev suggests that

any relationship carried out 'contrary to the law', that is, contrary to the sectarian understanding of the law, was perceived to be fornication and led to expulsion from the sect. In other words, once the family or the head of the family was no longer prepared to accept the Zadokite interpretation of the law as authoritative, it automatically detached itself from the sect. 'Fornication with one's wife contrary to the law' indicates that one no longer conducts his family life according to the law of the sect.¹⁰

In this context the members of Qumran Community have their own standard to follow, while in an actual fact they are dealing with chastity within marriage. Philo condemns adultery as that which is intrinsically evil as he says "nor can one allege as an excuse that it is only the body of the woman who is committing adultery that is corrupted, but, if one must tell the truth, even before the corruption of the body the soul is accustomed to alienation from virtue, being taught in every way to repudiate and to hate its husband" (Philo, *The Decalogue*, XXIV, (124)¹¹.

Jesus further strengthens the hedge put around the marriage institution by his moral instruction: "But I say to you, everyone who looks at woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away...." Matt 5:28-29). Here Jesus does not ascribe to the capital punishment prescribed in Deut 22:22 for such an offence, he rather advocates a change of heart of the adulterer (cf. John 8:1-11). The Teaching of the Twelve of Apostles continues the moral instruction of Jesus as it states: "Do not commit adultery...do not fornicate...do not be foul-mouthed or give free rein to your eyes, for all these things

⁹Alexei Sivertsev, 2005, "Sect and Households: Social Structure of the Pro-Sectarian Movement of Nehemiah 10 and the Dead Sea Sect" *CBQ*, Vol 67, 1, pp. 74, 75.

¹⁰Ibid. pp. 74, 75.

¹¹C. D. Yonge, (Trans.), 2004, *The Works of Philo*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, p. 529.

beget adultery” (Didache, 2.2; 3.3). Like Jesus the Apostles condemn the act and also give some measure that may prevent people from falling into it. According to Pseudo-Barnabas whoever desires to walk in the Way of Light – in the way of Christ- must not commit adultery or fornication (The Epistle of Barnabas, 19.1.). St. Polycarp admonished everybody, particularly husband and wife, to make the Lord’s commandment their rule of life and that husbands should instruct their wives in the faith delivered to them, as well as in love and chastity; they (husband and wife) must attach themselves to each other with perfect fidelity, but love all others as well with perfect self-control, while they impart to their children an education based on the fear of God.¹² Adultery and fornication sometimes overlap. Obviously, there is no clear demarcation between the two. Roland de Vaux observes that “the older parts of Proverbs rarely refer to adultery (Prov 30:18-20) but they rank it side by side with prostitution (Prov 23:27).¹³ In the same vein John L. McKenzie notes that the distinction between adultery (μοιχεία) and fornication (πορνεία or ZeNuTh) is not so rigid as to make it impossible to say that fornication means adultery.¹⁴ It is a clear case when married persons or unmarried persons consensually indulge in sexual misconduct. But in the case of consensual sexual misconduct between a married man and unmarried girl, or between a married woman and unmarried man, how do we define these unlawful sexual relations? It is stated that a “man who goes after prostitutes dissipates his wealth and loses his strength” (Prov 29:3;

¹² St. Polycarp, The Second Epistle to the Philippians, 4. 1, 2, James A. Kleist, (trans.) Ancient Christian Writers, The Newman Press, New York, p. 77.

¹³ Roland de Vaux, 1997, Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions, John McHugh, (trans.), William B. Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 36.

¹⁴ John L. McKenzie, 1968, “The Gospel According to Matthew”, The Jerome Biblical Commentary, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, p. 72.

31:3), but he commits no crime in the eyes of the law”.¹⁵ On the other hand, “the daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the harlot profanes her father; she shall be burned with fire” (Lev 21:9) or the prohibition forbidding a father from his daughter’s profanation: “Do not profane your daughter by making her a harlot, lest the land fall into harlotry and the land become full of wickedness” (Lev 19:29; Deut 23:17-18). In her explanation of this disparity Gerlinde Baumann holds that

clearly more women than men break their marriages in Old Testament texts. The reason for this is that the conditions for adultery are different for the two sexes. Here again the understanding of marriage as in principle polygynous forms the background: while a man can marry several women, a woman can only tie herself to one man. ‘Adultery for men is only intercourse with someone married to another, while for a married woman it is intercourse with another man.’¹⁶

According to Rabbi Finkel, this viewpoint of Baumann does not agree with the teaching of Rabbinic Judaism. He further elucidates that “adultery always means ‘being with another married person’ and that a married woman cannot be with another man, since she is married. A husband cannot be with another married woman but in biblical times he could have other wives but cannot go to prostitutes or strange women”.¹⁷ It may not be right that Baumann uses the standard of her time to judge the people of the biblical times, but she has an issue to address. In the opinion of this thesis, marital infidelity on the part of husband or wife is sexual misconduct. Any sexual immorality, whether it is premarital or within marriage, is unlawful. Hence, Jesus condemns fornication as an evil that comes from one’s heart and defiles the body (Matt 15:19), and St. Paul condemns it in 1 Cor 6:12-20. Beside consensual illicit union, rape is also forbidden in the Sacred Scripture as

¹⁵ Roland de Vaux, pp. 36, 37.

¹⁶ Gerlinde Baumann, 2003, Love and Violence: Marriage as Metaphor for the Relationship between YHWH and Israel in the Prophetic Books, Collegeville, Minnesota, p. 40.

¹⁷ Rabbi Asher Finkel is the Professor of Judaeo-Christian Studies in Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey.

equivalent to murder (Deut 22:26). In his explanation Rabbi Asher Finkel contends that “rape in the Bible is equated with murder (Deut 22:26). For it is not only a violent act of egoistic possession of the person but also it ravages human dignity and worth”.¹⁸

b) You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination (Lev 18:22; Deut 23:18): Lying with a man as with a woman or lying with a woman as with a man, or simply put, an erotic activity between two persons of the same sex in the modern language is referred to as homosexual activity. The violation of the prohibition on homosexuality from the biblical viewpoint carries a capital punishment. This, indeed, shows the gravity of the unnatural act. “If a man lies with a man as with a woman or woman lies with woman as with a man, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death, and their blood will be upon them” (Lev. 20:13). In the New Testament, St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans cites indulgence in same-sex lust and the perverse actions of men with men, women with women, as deserving penalty (Rom 1:26-32). In the First Letter to the Corinthians Paul includes homosexual activity as one of the sins that bars a person from inheritance of God’s kingdom (1Cor 6:9-11). The First Letter to Timothy also lists homosexual activity as an offense of the wicked and godless (1 Tim 1:8, 11). In his teaching St. Polycarp maintains that “it is, indeed, a noble thing to cut oneself off from the lusts that are rampant in the world. Lust of any kind makes war upon the spirit, and neither fornicators nor the effeminate nor sodomites will inherit the kingdom of God”.¹⁹

¹⁸ Asher Finkel, “The Other and the Stranger in Biblical and Rabbinic Tradition”, S. I. D. I. C., 25(#3, 1992, Rome), p. 3.

¹⁹ St. Polycarp, The Second Epistle to the Philipppians, 5.3, James A. Kleist, (trans.) Ancient Christian Writers, p. 78.

The conjugal union of husband and wife is a symbol of the covenant relationship of God with his chosen people, of Christ and the Church (Hos 2:21-23; Eph 5:21-33). Sexuality in marriage is designed to be life-giving and love-giving; it leads to child bearing and rearing as well as establishing a permanent union of fidelity.²⁰ The Church in her teaching holds that “homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered. They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act from the gift of life. They do not proceed from genuine affective and sexual complementarity” (CCC, #2357). She then calls homosexual persons to chastity, and also expresses the hope that, “by the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection” (CCC, #2359). It is the teaching of rabbis that “intimacy between two men or between two women is in the category of the abhorrent practices of the Egyptians and the Canaanites” (Sif 9:8). The incidence of homosexuality was practically nonexistent among Jews. For this reason the sages permitted two bachelors to sleep in the same bed, though Rabbi Judah prohibited it (Kid. 4:14). Maimonides followed the opinion of the sages and explained that “Jews are not suspected of practicing homosexuality” (Yad, Isure Bi’ah 22:2). Orthodox Judaism opposes the modern tendency to legitimize homosexual behavior, but distinguishes between the homosexual act and the homosexual person. It is the homosexual act that is condemned as an abomination, not the individuals involved. Judaism encourages compassion for the individuals and efforts to change their sexual habits. The Church and the Orthodox Judaism have almost the same teaching on homosexuality.

²⁰ J. Keefe, 2003, “Homosexuality”, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd edition, Thomas Gale, et al. (eds.), The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, P. 67.

c) You shall not lie with any beast and defile yourself with it neither shall any woman give herself to a beast to lie with it. It is a perversion and carries death sentence (Lev 18:23; 20:16; Exod 22:19; Deut 27:21). This is quite unnatural and unethical; it would certainly reduce those indulged in it to subhuman level.

All these commandments and prohibitions constitute in the first place a strong fence around the marriage institution. Secondly, they (commandments and prohibitions) pass the message that the self-giving of the one man to the one woman and vice versa in heterosexual monogamous marriage leaves no room for the married couples to give themselves to others outside their very marriages, nor for the illicit union of the unmarried, incest, unnatural erotic activities of homosexual persons nor bestiality. In his affirmation Craig S. Keener states that “the only form of morally acceptable sexual activity in the Bible is between a husband and wife”.²¹ Biblically speaking, all other sexual activities only distort God’s intention for the union of husband and wife in heterosexual monogamy. Similarly, Brevard S. Childs notes with dismay that heterosexual aberrations and homosexual activities distort God’s intention for humanity.²² If God so protects the institution of marriage and preserves the sexual union only for the legally married couples, it shows the import of the institution as that in which a man or woman is no longer alone but enjoys the resultant love of an interpersonal relationship between the man and the woman, and also is recognized as a source of the basic unit of human society. In other words, it could be said that the purpose of God’s gift of woman to man is love and procreation. The Church makes it crystal clear that

²¹ Craig S. Keener, 1991, ...And Marries Another: Divorce and Remarriage in the Teaching of the New Testament, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, p. 28.

²² Brevard S. Childs, 1989, Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, p. 194.

“Marriage and married love are by nature ordered to the procreation and education of children” (Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, #50).²³

4.2. The Beauty of God’s Gift of Human Family:

Our focus here shall be on the fact that parents derive joy from giving birth to children and from the honor and love received from them, that children relish in the parental love received, and that in the family members have the strong sense of inclusion and love as well as preservation and transmission of faith.

The fruit of the wholesome self-giving of the man to the woman and of the woman to the man is children. It is in this way that man becomes a co-creator with God. Also, this is where the complementarity of the man and the woman is experienced in practice and the concept of humanity perfected. Adam and Eve were the first to experience this joy of which we learn from the narrator that Adam became the father of children in his likeness and after his image (Gen 5:3). Thus God instituted the human family of father, mother and children, a group of individual persons that forms a basic social unit of the entire human society. This is the primary unit where the “otherness” and the “bond of kinship” are first experienced - a unit of individual persons made up of completely different entities, and yet naturally bonded in their kinship ties. It is the structure wherein every individual first had the experience of interpersonal relationship. Family is a very important structure through which the individual person enters into the society and to

²³ Austin Flannery (ed.), 2004, Vatican Council II: Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, Vol. 1, Dominican Publications, Dublin, p. 953.

which he returns. Indeed, it is in this kinship structure that a person has a very strong sense of inclusion, identity, protection and responsibility.²⁴

God so structures the family that each member is so unique and irreplaceable and the natural role that each individual plays therein is equally unique to each person. From the biblical viewpoint God places the father ('aBh) at the head of the family (BeTh 'aBh). The 'aBh is the one who decides or has the last say in the family. He is loving, forgiving, protective and a provider for the rest of the family. He receives the command from God to teach his children the love of God or the Torah (Deut 6:4-9), a duty to which he is so committed in order to make his family BeTh YHWH (literally the house of the Lord), a basic unit that experiences and preserves the covenantal relationship with God just like in Christianity where parents, the first heralds of the faith to their children, by words and deeds make of their family a domestic church (Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, #11).²⁵ Here, there is a link between BeTh 'aBh and BeTh YHWH. The Hebrew phrase, BeTh 'aBh, means “father’s house”, “family” or “clan”. On the other hand, BeTh YHWH refers to “house or family of the Lord”. In most cases BeTh YHWH refers to Israel (Num 12:7; Jer 12:7; Hos 8:1) or “Temple”, that is, “where the Temple probably stands for the whole land and the people of God” just as in the New Testament where οἶκος του Θεου (the house of God) becomes the church (ἐκκλησια), (Eph 2:19; Gal 6:10; Heb 3:2-6; 1 Tim 3:15; 1 Peter 4:17).²⁶ From creation God dealt with individual families of which prominent ones were Adam, Noah, Abraham and Jacob, and he (God) made a covenant (KaRaTh BeRiTh) with them (4-50). It was

²⁴ C. J. H. Wright, 1992, “Family”, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 2, David Noel Freedman, et al. (eds.), Doubleday, New York, p. 762.

²⁵ Austin Flannery, p. 362.

²⁶ C. J. H. Wright, p. 769.

the individual families that grew with time into the nation of the chosen people and even the laws that governed individual families were expanded to meet the demand of a complex nation of Israel. Commenting on this, Lawrence Frizzell holds that “the simple apodictic form of the laws, enunciated without indication of a penalty, may derive from the admonitions of parents to their children. When the clan develops into a nation at Mount Sinai, sanctions are attached to these and other commandments (Exod 21-23) and complex cases are presented in casuistic (case law) form”.²⁷ In essence BeTh 'aBh grew into BeTh YHWH and the laws of father's house now developed into laws of God's house. In his highlight, Rabbi Finkel contends that originally humanity was governed by God's apodictic laws thus:

the seven Noahide laws offer a universal platform for humankind to live in God's presence, to realize his intended goodness for the world and to guide nations in the way of ShaLoM. These laws of Noah's covenant precede the Mosaic laws that are eventually given to the people of Israel in a covenantal context. At Sinai, Israel receives many more commandments, which the Rabbis determine from the seven Pentateuchal codes to be 613... These commandments govern the four realms of human relationship [transpersonal, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and subpersonal relationships], and relate to different persons within the community and outside as well as man, woman and child. These are directed to Israel in particular, as it 'shall become a kingdom of priests and holy nation' (Exod 19:6).²⁸

It is worthy of note that both the Noahide laws and the Decalogue are natural and universal, and that the Noahide laws are identifiable within the Decalogue. In other words, the sentence, “at Sinai, Israel receives many more commandments”, may indicate

²⁷ Lawrence Frizzell, “Law at the Service of Humankind”, p. 6.

²⁸ Asher Finkel, “The Other and the Stranger in Biblical and Rabbinic Tradition”, *S.I.D.I.C.*, 25(#3, 1992, Rome), p. 4. In this article Finkel enumerated the seven Noahide laws as follows: Blasphemy; the denial of the ultimate reality of God the Creator and Provider; shedding of blood; violating marriage and family through adultery and incest; violence; the prohibition of the violent use of animal flesh and blood in the subpersonal relationship; and the administration of law and order in the interpersonal realm.

that the laws of BeTh 'aBh developed into the laws of BeTh YHWH. In an exposition of the naturalness of both Noahide laws and the Decalogue it is stated that the

conviction of Vatican II expresses the core of natural law...that within the foundations of the consciences of all human beings there are nonconventional, nonarbitrary moral standards which make possible genuine moral self-criticism, and so true moral knowledge even for those who have not received the moral instruction of divine revelation. This core idea of natural law is neither sectarian nor uniquely Christian. John Calvin, for example, held that what was taught in the Decalogue is also dictated in some way by an interior law written in the hearts of all. And among at least some of the rabbis, a basis for discriminating between righteous and impious gentiles was found in the moral requirements of the covenants with Adam and Noah reported in Genesis. The moral knowledge given to these common ancestors of all humankind was widely taken by Jewish authority to be accessible to all insofar as it is inherently reasonable.²⁹

As the Decalogue governed both the BeTh 'aBh and BeTh YHWH, the Israelite family was the locus of key element in the continuity of Israel's faith ('eMuNaH) such as Passover, circumcision and the teaching of the Law just as in subsequent times the Christian family (οἶκος) would itself constitute the nucleus of a wider group of believers (ἐκκλησία, the Church) where preaching of the Gospel (Acts 5:42; 20:20), baptism (Acts 16:15; 1 Cor 1:16); breaking of bread – the celebration of the Holy Eucharist - (Acts 2:46) took place.³⁰ Deductively the Israelite family reflects the impressive presence of God in the Temple, while the Christian family the presence of Christ in his Church. Hence, the sanctification of homes is taken for granted. Here, it is significant to note how family life of father, mother and children becomes a nucleus from which biblical oriented life is experienced, and how it (family life) promotes a consciousness of God and the absolute standard of purity and sanctity.

²⁹ Joseph Boyle, 1992, "Natural Law", The New Dictionary of Theology, Joseph A. Komonchak, et al. (eds.), Liturgical Press, Collegeville, p. 704.

³⁰ C. J. H. Wright, pp. 768, 769.

Being of central importance to the experience and preservation of the covenant relationship with God, the family now has the filial relationship with God who is the Father. Throwing more light on this, Lawrence Frizzell maintains that “biblical tradition often presented the history of the relationship between God and his people as that of a father educating his children [in the Torah]. This people was born in Egypt, first-born of all nations (Exod 4:22-23)...Legislation played a fundamental role in the progressive education toward the realization of the ideal society, whose primary goal is to assure justice in human relations”.³¹ This is in line with Rabbi Akiva, who teaches that

Beloved of God is man for he was created in the image of God...beloved of God are Israel, for they were called children of the Omnipotent...beloved of God are Israel, for to them was given the desirable instrument...wherewith the universe was treated, as it is said, ‘for I give you good doctrine; forsake not my Law (m. Avoth, 3:14).

It is not only the Jews who refer to God as their father (Deut 14:1); Christians also have God as their Father by adoption through Christ (Gal 3:26-29; Rom 8:14-17). Giving further explanation to this, Frizzell maintains that “the covenant and the knowledge of the Lord...are understood to be patterned after the very manner in which the Father and Son know each other. Thus does the Son revealed the Father (John 1:18), enabling those who believe in his name to become children of God (John 1:12); they have eternal life, which is the gift of lasting communion with God.”³² Inferentially, it may be said that it is through BeTh ’aBh that all nations are blessed, BiReK (Gen 12:1-3) and that it is through BeTh YHWH or οἶκος τοῦ Θεοῦ that families are sanctified.

The experience of the covenantal relationship with God presupposes obedience to the words of the solemn agreement between God and man, which culminates in the love of

³¹ Lawrence Frizzell, 2004, “New Covenant and New Humanity in Jer 31:31-34”, Unpublished essay, p.2.

³² Lawrence Frizzell, “Temple and Community: Foundations for Johannine Spirituality”, p. 192.

God and neighbor. God's mandate to parents to teach their children the love of God is not something abstract but that which is to be experienced.³³ As parents through their transpersonal relationship experience the love of God, so also the children experience the love of God through the magnanimity of their parents, that is, God gives to the parents freely and the parents in turn give to their children freely. The parents ask God regarding their needs who graciously grants them (cf. Matt 7:7-8), and children in the same vein ask parents concerning their needs and they generously provide them (cf. Matt 7: 11). Indeed, it is in the family that the parents translate their transpersonal relationship with God into the interpersonal relationship of loving their children. It is in the family that a person first learns from parents how to pray to God in thanksgiving, penitence and petition or enter into a transpersonal relationship with God. Frizzell has written that

principles which advocate deeds of justice and peace govern the laws of the Bible relating to the social order. The Decalogue (Exod 20:1-17) moves from the commandments concerning God to a series of concentric circles of human interchange. The centrality of the family is emphasized, first in the lifelong obligation of honoring one's parents and providing for them in time of need, and secondly in the prohibition of sexual relations that would interfere with one person's commitment to a third party. Parents are partners with God in sharing life and they are the first to present the divine image and likeness to their children. Therefore, the command is to honor them in this context, and not only to love them as one is obliged to love every neighbor. The commandment forbidding adultery not only protects in the integrity of their relationship, but it also enables them to mirror God's fidelity to their children.³⁴

In the family parents teach their children the fear of God by exemplary life and by instruction. It is in the family that parents first teach their children the rudiments of social life, the do's and don'ts, history and secrets of the family. In general it could be deduced that "the social, economic, and theological realms are thus bound together and

³³ Linus Akpan, 1999, Parental Responsibility in Child-upbringing in Deut 6:4-9 and Among the Annang of Nigeria, Unpublished Thesis, C.I.W.A., Port Harcourt, p. 67.

³⁴ Lawrence Frizzell, 1986, "Law at the Service of Humankind", S.I.D.I.C., XIX, 3, Rome, p. 6.

converged on the focal point of the family”.³⁵ Accordingly God sets the father in honor over his children (Sirach 3:2). As a mother is entrusted with the responsibility of caring for the members of her family, God confirms her authority over her children (Sirach 3:2). The parents in the course of discharging their God-given familial duties refrain from provoking their children to anger, but bring them up with the training and instruction of the Lord (Eph 6:1-4; Col 3:21-22). While the parents enjoy the sacred duties and authority over the members of their household, the children have the corresponding duty of obeying and honoring their father and mother (Exod 20:12; Lev 19:3; Deut 5:16; Matt 15:4; Mark 7:10).

A common goal of Jews and Christians is loyalty to service expressed by obedience to the commandments.³⁶ God sets the parents in honor over his children (cf. Sirach 3:2); the children have the duty to obey the godly instructions of their parents (Prov 1:8). God gives the fourth commandment - “Honor your father and mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you” (Exod 20:12) – as imperative responsibility given to children towards their parents. The disciple of St. Paul notes that it is the first commandment with a promise attached (Eph 6:2). Generally speaking, the human relationship is modeled on the relationship between God and human beings. And particularly the relationship between parents and children is built on that between God and human beings.

Having gained so much from their parents, the children owe them glory (KaBhoD)³⁷, from the Hebrew verb, KaBheD, “to be heavy”, that is, “impressive”, “renowned”. In other words, they owe them honor, which must be translated into support and care. To

³⁵C. J. H. Wright, p.765.

³⁶Lawrence Frizzell, “Law at the Service of Humankind”, p. 5.

³⁷Lawrence Frizzell, “Law at the Service of Humankind”, p. 6.

honor or respect parents in appreciation for getting so much from them leads to the fulfillment of the promise attached to the commandment. A failure to honor parents led Jesus to rebuke certain Pharisees for nullifying God's word in favor of human tradition: These Pharisees declared that which they should have used to take care of parents "qorban", meaning, dedicated to God and thereby they disregarded God's commandment (Mark 7:8-13: Matt 15:1-20). Children have the sacred duty of honoring their parents in words and deeds in order to receive their blessings (Sirach 3:8). Children love their parents because they transmit life to them, love, care for and give them the rudiments for living God-fearing lives. Parents derive joy from seeing children as the concrete fruits of their wholesome self-giving to each other, as individuals brought up in the fear of God and as their own contributions towards building a morally sound society. Parental love and the corresponding filial love help both parents and children to experience that covenantal relationship between God and man – obedience to the words of the covenant or the awe of God is always a blessing. The memory of this experience is always strong and should not be lost. With the parents playing their proper roles in the family the continuity of the faith, history, law, and the traditions are ensured,³⁸ the preservation of that covenantal relationship is guaranteed. Thus God-fearing families become the seedbed for the worshipping community in synagogues, churches and a good society. God-fearing members of a family are the good members of synagogues, churches and of the society at large. In the families of God-fearing people true joys and sorrows are shared together and everyone feels loved and belonged either as a child, adult or an aged person. Explaining this further the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council state that

³⁸C. J. H. Wright, p. 764.

grow wiser and harmonize the rights of individuals with other demands of social life” (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, #52).³⁹ At this point, C. J. H. Wright observes that it can be understood how anything which threatened the stability of the socioeconomic structure of the nation would have serious repercussions on the family covenant relationship with God, because the family is undermined.⁴⁰

Family is something natural to man and it is designed by God. It is significant that by the gift of woman to man and procreation God established human family for human. Now, whose responsibility is it to preserve the human family?

4.3. The Responsibility to Preserve and Transmit the Gift of Human Family

This subsection is interested in God’s gift of human family through the creation of woman for man and vice versa. It shows first of all that life comes from God; he entrusted that life to the custody of human family, and that it is his will that the life continues. Also, it shows that the preservation and transmission of human life are necessary for future generation by maintaining biblical values.

Man is at the apex of God’s creation. Before his creation God consulted with the host of heaven, “let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gen 1:26). As a potter that shapes (YaŞaR) his vessel out of the clay (Isa 29:16; 41:25; Jer 18:4), God formed (YaŞaR) man out of the dust (‘aPhaR) of the earth (‘aDaMaH) and breathed (WaYYiPPaH, Qal impf with waw consecutive, of the verb, NaPhH, “to breathe”; “blow”) into him the breath of life (NiŞMaTh HaYYiM) and man (‘aDaM) became a

³⁹C. J. H. Wright, p. 956.

⁴⁰C. J. H. Wright, p. 765.

living being, NePheš ḤaYYaH (Gen 2:7). Commenting on this Gordon J. Wenham holds that the word,

“blew”, suggests a good puff such as would revive a fire (Isa 54:16; Hag 1:9). The closest parallel is Ezek 37:9 where the prophet is told to blow on the recreated bodies to resuscitate them, and then, filled with wind/spirit, they stood alive. It is the divine inbreathing both here and in Ezek 37 that gives life.⁴¹

The phrase, NišMaTh ḤaYYiM (the breath of life) is a rare expression in the Scriptures. Here it is only used of God in direct relationship to man (cf. Isaiah 2:22). Unlike other living creatures God breathed the breath of life directly into the man formed from the dust of the ground. In his explanation Eugene H. Maly holds that “man also has a special kind of life distinguishing him from all earthly beings, a life that comes from God, NišMaTh ḤaYYiM (the breath of life)”.⁴² It is this breath of life that makes man NePheš ḤaYYaH (a living being). Though this phrase, NePheš ḤaYYaH, is also used of animal creation (2:19), in the case of animal it simply means “a living creature”.

Explaining this further, Gordon Wenham argues that

it is not man’s possession of ‘the breath of life’ or his status as a ‘living creature’ that differentiates him from the animals. Animals are described in exactly the same terms. Gen 1:26-28 affirms the uniqueness of man by stating that man alone is made in God’s image and by giving man authority over the animals. There may be a similar suggestion here, in that man alone receives the breath of God directly (Gen 2:7, 19).⁴³

It is now clear that man did not only receive the breath of life directly from God (Gen 2:7), but (he) was also created in the image of God (Gen 1:27). If this point is taken further, it may be of interest to note that NePheš ḤaYYaH (a living creature) is used in

⁴¹ Gordon J. Wenham, 1987, Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1-15, Nelson Reference and Electronic, Colombia, p. 60.

⁴² Eugene H. Maly, 1968, “Genesis”, The Jerome Biblical Commentary, Raymond E. Brown, et al. (eds.), Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, p. 12.

⁴³ Gordon J. Wenham, p. 61.

combination with NiŠMaTh ḤaYYiM (the breath of life). That it is God’s breath of life that makes man a living being aptly defines the creation of man in the image of God (Gen 1:27), an expression that cannot be used for animals. The presence of the Hebrew word, NePheš, which means, “soul”, “living being”, “life”, “self”, “person”, “that which breathes”, “the breathing substance” or “being” further describes the nature of man. The equivalent of NePheš in Greek is ψυχη and in Latin it is “anima”, both the Greek and Latin equivalents mean “the soul” or “the inner being of man”. Deductively, man is not only made up of the body, but also of soul. This prompts Wenham to comment thus: “Genesis here implies that humans are both material, made from the ground to cultivate the ground (2:15; 3:17), and ultimately to return to the ground (3:19), and spiritual, filled with the breath of life (2:7).”⁴⁴ This goes a long way to show the importance of life and human family, which both Jews and Christians highly value. Commenting on the importance of human life, Elliot N. Dorff contends that “...God infuses each human life with inherent meaning by creating each of us in the divine image, thereby guaranteeing ultimate value regardless of a person’s abilities or quality of life”.⁴⁵ In support of this view William J. Byron maintains that “every human being is created in the image of God and redeemed by Jesus Christ, and therefore is invaluable and worthy of respect as a member of the human family”.⁴⁶

The description of man’s creation in Genesis 2:7 implies that God has absolute authority over man, who is only the work of his hand, and that man becomes a living

⁴⁴ Gordon J. Wenham, 2003, “Genesis”, *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, James D. G. Dunn, et al. (eds.), Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 39.

⁴⁵ Elliot N. Dorff, 2000, “Statement on Assisted Suicide”, *Life and Death Responsibilities in Jewish Biomedical Ethics*, Aaron L. Mackler (ed.), Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, p. 405.

⁴⁶ William J. Byron, “Ten Building Blocks of Catholic Social Teaching”, *America*, Vol. 179, 13 (October 31, 1998), p. 10.

being of body and soul because God gives him life. In order to sustain this life God first of all created the heavens, earth, waters, heavenly bodies, birds, fish, animals, all kinds of vegetation, and he formed man last and put him in the midst of the abundance of his creation (Gen 1:1-2:17). Here, there is a clue of the importance of land to man. Biologically man depends on land for his living – deprivation of land is deprivation of life. To ensure the continuity and preservation of this life, he created a woman for the man (Gen 2:21-23) and blessed them to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:28). The fulfillment of the command to procreate came when Adam and Eve received their children, Cain, Abel and Seth (Gen 4:1-2, 25). Adam acknowledged the fact that he got the children with the help of God (Gen 4:1). In this way Adam testifies to the fact that life comes from God. Now, it becomes explicit that God shapes man both from the dust of the earth (Gen 2:7) and from the womb (cf. Psalm 139:13; Jer 1:5; Gal 1:15). Sharing in this view Gordon J. Wenham holds that, “preeminently, God’s shaping skill is seen in the creation of man, whether it be from dust or in the womb (Isaiah 44:2, 44)”.⁴⁷

It is an observable fact that God did not give life to man without the intention to preserve that life. It was his will that the life given to man be left in the human family where it is protected and preserved. In other words, God gave life to man and entrusted that life to the custody of human family, an institution where a husband and the wife have not only been commissioned to share in the work of God’s creation of life, but also to transmit the life from one generation to the next (cf. CCC, 372). In this way the family becomes the locus through which human life enters into world, in which it is preserved and through which it exits from the world. To show the import of human life, at the

⁴⁷ Gordon J. Wenham, 1987, Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1-15, Nelson Reference and Electronic, Colombia, p. 59.

giving of the Decalogue God took the same step as at creation to protect human life: At creation God took the immediate step to protect the life he created by putting that life in the custody of the human family and in the Decalogue the commandment next to that of honoring parents (the fourth commandment according to the Church's reckoning) is that of protecting life (the fifth commandment). In this arrangement there is a hidden meaning that the life transmitted by parents is subject to immediate protection and preservation even in the larger society. Isn't this something fascinating? In the New Testament Jesus Christ fortified the fence surrounding human life by extending the fifth commandment to include anger and abusive words (Matt 5:21-26). Commenting on this John L. McKenzie says that "Jesus strengthens the prohibition of murder by going to the very root of mutual dislike".⁴⁸ In his beautiful contribution William J. Byron teaches that "human life at every stage of development and decline is precious and therefore worthy of protection and respect...the Catholic tradition sees the sacredness of human life as part of any moral vision for a just and good society".⁴⁹ By the same token "Judaism views life as sacred and understands human beings to have life on trust from God...since God's creation and ownership of our bodies put the decision of when life is to end in God's hand".⁵⁰

It is of interest to note that when life was threatened by the corruption of the world, God showed concern and preserved that life through the family of Noah (Gen 6-9). God renewed the command, which he gave to Adam and Eve - "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" - to Noah (Gen 9:1). As he did in the beginning, God put all other creatures under the dominion of Noah and his family in order to sustain that life (Gen

⁴⁸ John L. McKenzie, 1968, "The Gospel According Matthew", The Jerome Biblical Commentary, p. 71.

⁴⁹ William J. Byron, p. 10.

⁵⁰ Elliot N. Dorff, p. 405.

9:2-7). Again, when the life of the chosen people promised to Abraham (Gen 12:2; 15:1-6) was endangered by the barrenness of Sarah, God intervened in human history to preserve that life (Gen 21:1-3). From the episode in the time of Noah it could be said that a threat to the society is a threat to the families, while in the case of Abraham it becomes crystal clear that a threat to human family is a threat to the larger society. In line with this William J. Byron reiterates that “the centerpiece of society is the family; family stability must always be protected and never undermined. By association with others – in families and in other social institutions that foster growth, protect dignity and promote the common good – human persons achieve their fulfillment”.⁵¹ In reality to preserve the human life is to preserve human family and to preserve human family is to preserve human life. In the perspective of this work the preservation of the human family is a *conditio sine qua non* for the preservation of human life, because, among other factors, “a child surviving his parents conferred immortality upon them by ‘setting the name of the dead man over his inheritance’ and thus keeping him alive”.⁵² Deductively one concludes that it is the will of God that legally married couples continue to give birth to families and preserve them.

The responsibility to preserve and transmit the human family **first of all** rests with the married couples. The preservation of human family comes before the transmission of life. The preservation naturally exists in the well informed mind of the potential parent, who makes a move to actualize his or her dream by taking a spouse. Here the instructions inculcated into the potential parent in his childhood and adolescence to love God and neighbor (Deut 6:4-9; John 14:15; Lev 19:18; Matt 22:37-40; John 13:34-35)

⁵¹ William J. Byron, P. 10.

⁵² Robert Gordis, 1990, The Dynamics of Judaism, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, P. 187.

become pragmatic. With the awe of God and respect for life in him the transmission, protection and preservation of life have already been embraced in the heart of the would-be-parent. He now proceeds to donate himself wholly and entirely to his wife and the wife reciprocates in the same measure to the husband, because the fulfillment of the command to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:28) demands the two to become one flesh (Gen 2:24). In his theological reflection Pope John Paul II states:

We find ourselves, therefore, almost at the very core of the anthropological reality, the name of which is 'body', the human body. However, as can easily be seen, this core is not only anthropological, but also essentially theological. Right from the beginning, the theology of the body is bound up with the creation of man in the image of God. It becomes, in a way, also the theology of sex, or rather the theology of masculinity and femininity, which has its starting point in Genesis.⁵³

The right attitude to marriage and sincerity of purpose ensure the preservation and continuity of the human family. Where there is fear of God, the right attitude to procreation and sincerity of purpose in marriage prevail, while infidelity and other vices are altogether eliminated.

Biblically speaking, it is the sole responsibility of the married couples to transmit human life; should they say "no" to this sacred vocation, then, the preservation and the continuity of human family will be in jeopardy. If by procreation married couples fulfill the divine command, they are simply doing their duty. In this special calling the married couples "may not simply follow their own fancy but must be ruled by conscience" (Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, #50)⁵⁴, and of course, conscience in conformity with the law of love. If married couples could eschew the use of any agent that engenders the unnatural termination of

⁵³ Pope John Paul II, 1997, *The Theology of the Body*, Pauline Books and Media, Boston, p. 47.

⁵⁴ Austin Flannery, p. 954.

fertility, which in essence may render the other as mere sexual object to be used whenever the wish arises in order to satisfy their personal desires⁵⁵, then the preservation of human family will be more assured. Where unnatural termination of fertility is favored, Peter P. Elliot comments that, “the meaning of spousal union is falsified so ‘this leads not only to a refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality’”.⁵⁶ The comment of Elliot has nothing to do with barrenness, which is a genuine case of childlessness. It is pertinent to note that “where despite the intense desire of the spouses there are no children, marriage still retains its character of being a whole manner and communion of life and preserves its value and indissolubility” (Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, #50).⁵⁷ In order to follow the natural rhythm of life as ordained by God, experts in sciences particularly biology, medicine, social science, psychology and in the related fields are called upon to be of service to the welfare of married couples by using their findings to clarify thoroughly the different conditions favoring the proper regulation of births (Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, #52).⁵⁸ The fact that more hands are needed in the protection and preservation of human life demonstrates that the noble task is beyond the confines of the married home. It concerns everyone in the entire society. To this end Pope John Paul II admonishes thus: “Never be discouraged

⁵⁵ Peter J. Elliott, 1997, What God Has Joined...The Sacramentality of Marriage, Alba House, New York, p.213.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 215.

⁵⁷ Austin Flannery, p. 954.

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 957.

and never tire, dear brothers and sisters, of proclaiming and witnessing to the Gospel of life; may you be beside the families and mothers in difficulty”.⁵⁹

Secondly, celibate persons equally have some roles to play in the preservation and transmission of life, though they cannot be participants in its transmission. As those who seek to please God always by their way of life (1 Cor 7:32-35), the celibate helps in the molding of the characters of the young men and women who are preparing to enter into marriage, as well as married couples in their marital difficulties, through sound moral and religious instructions. They follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, the advocate of celibate life (Matt 19:11-12), who devoted himself to doing the will of his Father (John 14:31), and of St. Paul who devoted his whole life to preaching the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles. In support of this noble task, the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council teaches that,

it devolves on priests [and unmarried men and women religious] to be properly trained to deal with family matters and to nurture the vocation of married people in their married and family life by different pastoral means, by the preaching of the Word of God, by liturgy, and other spiritual assistance. They should strengthen them sympathetically and patiently in their difficulties and comfort them in charity with a view to the formation of truly radiant families (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, #52).⁶⁰

By molding characters the celibate men and woman contribute immensely in the preservation and transmission of human life. Marriage as a divine institution from the beginning was well planned and executed by God. It is the will of God that marriage be contracted in the way it was made. If this is adhered to, then, the challenges of

⁵⁹ Pope John Paul II, “Genuine Peace Requires Respect for Unborn Life”, Address of Pope John II to the Members of Italian Pro-life Movement, (May 22, 2003), p. 77.

⁶⁰ Austin Flannery, p. 957.

maintaining the biblical values regarding this divine institution shall not be a problem.

What are these values and how are they maintained?

4.4. The Challenges of Maintaining the Biblical Values of Marriage Institution:

What this thesis regards as the biblical values of marriage institution are as follows:

- i. The nature of marriage as heterosexual monogamy
- ii. The right attitude of the married couples toward procreation
- iii. Education of children
- iv. Respect for parents
- v. Preparing young men and woman for marriage
- vi. Preservation, protection and onward transmission of human life

An effort to explain each of these items in a nutshell shall now be made by taking them one after the other starting with the first.

- i. The nature of marriage as heterosexual monogamy:

Scholars (Asher Finkel, Eugene H. Maly, Victor P. Hamilton, Gordon J. Wenham and many others⁶¹) agree that by creating Eve out of the side of Adam and uniting the two to become one flesh, God willed heterosexual monogamy as the ideal of marriage. In heterosexual monogamy the husband complements the wife as the wife complements the husband. The two are equal. Their love ('aHaBhaH) for each other is modeled on the love of God for Israel (Hosea 2:18-25; Jer 2:2; 3:1-5) and on the love of Christ for

⁶¹ Asher Finkel, "The Other and the Stranger in Biblical and Rabbinic Tradition", *S. I. D. I. C.*, 25(#3, 1992, Rome) p. 3; Eugene H. Maly, 1968, "Genesis", *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, p. 12; Victor P. Hamilton, 1992, "Marriage", *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 4, David Noel Freedman, et al. (eds.), Doubleday, New York, p.565; Gordon J. Wenham, 1987, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1-15*, p.40.

the Church (Eph 5:21-33). Being fitting helpers (Gen 2:18-24) they assist each other to accomplish what the other would not be able to do as a single person, for example, the sacred duty of giving birth to children. Their complementarity gives an appropriate definition to the concept of humanity. They understand themselves more than outsiders do and what becomes the controlling power of the one flesh is peace or wholesomeness (ShaLoM).

ii. The right attitude of the married couples toward procreation:

Marriage is a vocation; it is not ordained for all, but for those who can receive it (Matt 19:3-12). Those who answer this call receive the command to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:28). Married couples are open to the reality of child-bearing, not merely to the satisfaction of their personal passion. They understand the responsibility embedded in their vocation. Tobias brought out the right understanding of marriage that embraces the duties that go with it when he prayed:

Blessed are you, O God of our fathers... You made Adam and you gave him his wife Eve; to be his help and support; and from these two the human race descended. You said, 'it is not good for the man to be alone'; let us make him a partner like himself. Now, Lord, you know that I take this wife of mine, not because of lust, but for a noble purpose. Call down your mercy on me and on her; and allow us to live together to a happy old age (Tobit 8:5-7).

Married couples cultivate the right attitude towards procreation; and with open arms they receive the fruits of their union from the Creator God. By obeying this first commandment from God to humans – be fertile and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it” (Gen 1:28) – given at the end of the sixth day of creation⁶², married couples

⁶² William J. Doorly, 2002, The Laws of Yahweh, Paulist Press, New York, p. 127.

walk in God's ways and live their lives in imitation of God (*imitatio Dei*). In this way they demonstrate their love for God in loving response to his lovingkindness (HēSeD).

iii. Education of Children:

In educating their children parents obey the command of teaching their children the love of God (Deut 6:4-9). By virtue of parenthood the father and mother know the importance of feeding, sheltering, clothing and educating their children. With their mind well informed in the love of God and neighbor, parents know what is good for their children; and they give it to them (cf. Matt 7:11). By this act the parents are not only giving an ascending response to the Giver of children but also laying up treasure for themselves.

iv. Respect for parents:

Having realized how much they have gained from their parents, children out of love honor their parents in words and deeds (Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16; Matt 15:4; Eph 5:1-2; Col 3:20). The command is to honor parents and not only to love them as one is obliged to love every neighbor.⁶³ This is in fulfillment of the fourth commandment (according to the Catholic reckoning). By so doing they are honoring God in their parents. The parents feel honored, while the children feel happy doing it in loving response for the blessings received.

⁶³ Lawrence Frizzell, "Law at the Service of Humankind", p. 6.

v. Preparing young men and women for marriage:

The married couples in their riches of marital experiences receive the command from God to diligently teach their children the love of God (Deut 6:4-9) so that they may love God in all their dealings. In carrying out this command the members of the Qumran Community maintained that “from his youth they [members of the Community] shall instruct him in the Book of Meditation and shall teach him, according to his age, the precepts of the Covenant” (1 QSa, 1.5-10). The Letter to Titus makes this point explicit as it instructs older women reverent in behavior to “train younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, chaste and good homemakers”, while men are to do likewise in relation to young men (Titus 2:1-8). The children in turn are to listen to the instructions of the parents (Prov 1:8). The celibates and professionals in related fields are also contributors to this noble task.

vi. Preservation, protection and onward transmission of human life:

The well informed minds of married couples are committed to preserving, protecting and transmitting human life for the sake of posterity and glorifying God. It is the will of God that human beings procreate (Gen 1:28) and that the life be protected (Exod 20:13; Deut 5:17; Matt 5:21; James 2:11). God desires the continuity of humans whom he created in his image (Gen 1:27).

According to the viewpoint of this work these are the good values emanating from heterosexual monogamy established by God from the beginning of creation. In our contemporary society marriage institution is faced with the challenges of adultery, divorce, single parenthood, fornication, contraceptives, premarital sexual relations,

prostitution, abortion, homosexual activity, trafficking of women, rape, child abuse, incest, oral sexual relations, pornography, media sex advertisements and commercialization, etc. Of all these challenges, one thing is certain that they are all man-made due to an individual search for self-satisfaction, which as a result involves a drift from the way God established the institution of marriage. By instituting heterosexual monogamy God wills the essential goodness of life, which assumes a universal moral order governing human society.⁶⁴ To aid every person to know the mind of God regarding marriage a great attention is devoted in the Jewish tradition to the divine institution both in halakhic injunctions, haggadic instructions; and in the Christian tradition similar attention is given to the teachings of Jesus Christ and the guidance of the Church. But it seems that in the eyes of modern secularized men and women, the Bible has lost its sanctity and relevance.⁶⁵ Taking his lamentation further Nahum Sarna notes with dismay that

ever since the break-up of the Middle Ages the impact of the Bible upon the lives of ordinary men and women has grown progressively weaker. In the long history of the Western world, to no other generation has the Bible been known so little and regarded as so spiritually obsolete as it is today. The 'famine...of hearing the words of the Lord', has indeed materialized, but in the spiritual malaise and moral chaos that characterize the [twenty-first century] men do not look to what used to be known as 'Holy Scriptures' for light and guidance.⁶⁶

Perhaps, people want it their own way, because the Bible has lost its impact on their lives. That the ordinary people are still hungry for the Word of God may mean that Biblical scholars and preachers have not done enough to bring the Word to them. However, as long as the individual person makes mistake at one time and at another time

⁶⁴ Nahum M. Sarna, 1970, Understanding Genesis, Schocken Books, New York, p. 3.

⁶⁵Ibid. xxi.

⁶⁶Ibid. xx.

he corrects it and insofar as our God is full of compassion and abounding in love for his erring children the maintenance of the biblical values is a necessity in order to bring back the strayed minds, especially the youths, to God and to pass on the marriage institution to future generations as God made it. This is true of “men [and women] who are trying to preserve and to foster the dignity and supremely sacred value of the married state” (*Gaudium et Spes*, #47). Like the Deuteronomists who brought back the Israelites spiritually to the plains of Moab to renew in them the words of Moses, like Ezra and Nehemiah who formed the Great Synagogue for the homecoming Israelites with the reading and interpretation of the Torah, a means through which they were revived spiritually, like Jesus Christ who by his passion, death and resurrection won the world for God, Jews and Christians have a common goal of holding onto the biblical values in a renewed spirit and to teach them to the members of our contemporary society. This will help in the maintenance of biblical good values regarding marriage and in the transmission of these values to future generations.

Conclusion:

From his life experience and the reality of God in human history the psalmist sings: “The teaching of the Lord is perfect; it revives the soul; the rule of the Lord is to be trusted; it gives wisdom to the simple” (Ps 19:8). Right from creation God through his teaching leads man in the right path and at the same time he does not deprive him of his free will, which enables him to accept or reject the leadership of God. In his teaching communicated to us through his divine revelation to humanity, God revealed in the text of Gen 2:18-24 a way of life to be lived according to his will. Founded on monotheism as against polytheism, this text expresses the biblical concept of reality that proclaims the essential goodness of life and universal moral order governing human society.¹ Along with Gen 1:26-28 it lays the foundation of the sacredness of marriage and brings order to the relationship between man and woman – one man to one woman. The text situates the institution of marriage in halakhic and haggadic pathways through which man journeys to his Creator. The God of creation is not lawfully or morally indifferent. Laws and morals flow from the very essence of God’s truth. Biblically God operates by an order which man can comprehend, and by this means a universal moral order had been decreed for society. It is the same universal Sovereign who brought the world into existence who continues to exert himself thereafter making an absolute, not a relative demand, upon man that he walk in his ways.

Taking cognizance of the fact that the world is fast changing and that it is becoming more secular each day, our society cannot grow viably without God. In his word of

¹ Nahum M. Sarna, 1970, Understanding Genesis, Schocken Books, New York, p. 3.

exhortation to the Christ's faithful gathered at the village of Subiaco in the mountains outside Rome, Pope Benedict XVI laments that

[the world] has developed a culture that, in a manner unknown before now to humanity, excludes God from the public conscience. Attempts to manage human affairs while disdaining God completely have led us to the edge of the abyss...Muslims do not feel threatened by our Christian moral foundations, but by the cynicism of a secularized culture that denies its own foundations...The same is for religious Jews. It is not the mention of God that offends those who belong to other religions, but rather the attempt to build the human community absolutely without God.²

The observation of Pope Benedict XVI has a great impact on human family, which is the nucleus of religious bodies and the society. Secularism has now become a threat to the marriage institution, our families and societies. To ensure the existence and continuity of marriage institution, we have a great need to rebuild our ways of life (marriage and celibate lives) on the solid rock of the awe of God. It is praiseworthy that both Jews and Christians - religious leaders and scholars - agree in their interpretation of Gen 2:18-24 that marriage is essentially heterosexual monogamous for the purpose of mutual love, procreation and education of children in the love of God and of neighbor. The Jewish and Christian right interpretation reaffirms God's intent for creating a woman for the man and vice versa. God out of love has established ways that lead to him for us all; it is left for us to embrace and uphold them, and at the same time pursue with vigor the values that go along with them and transmit same to our children. A response of this kind to God's lovingkindness (HeSeD) underscores our loyalty to God, brings more orderliness and dignity to humanity and peace (ShaLoM) to our societies. Indeed, how blessed are those who fear the Lord, and walk in his ways (Ps 128:1).

² Christopher Dickey, "Europe Near 'the Edge of the Abyss'", Newsweek, Vol. CXLVI, 7, (August 15), New York, p. 29.

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