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This dissertation entitled

READING AND TRANSLATING GENESIS 28:10-35:15 AS A VOTIVE
NARRATIVE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE DINAH STORY

Written by

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN TRANSLATION STUDIES

**has been read and approved by the undersigned members of the Faculty of the
Africa International University Translation Study Department and External
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Professor Ronald James Sim

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Declaration

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I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other College or
University for academic credit

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Africa International
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Daniel Hankore Lechebo

March 2010

AFRICA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

READING AND TRANSLATING GENESIS 28:10-35:15 AS A VOTIVE
NARRATIVE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE DINAH STORY

BY
Daniel Hankore

A Dissertation presented to the Africa International University department of Translation
Studies in partial fulfillment of requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Translation
Studies under the Supervision of Professor Ronald James Sim

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ABSTRACT

Many critical readers of the Jacob story wonder: "What is the relevance of Genesis 34 to the Jacob narrative?" Besides, my close examination of different biblical interpretations and translations of the Jacob story of Gen 28:10-35:15 in general and the Dinah story of chapter 34 in particular demonstrates that the episodes of this narrative unit (Gen 28:10-35:15) are treated as if they were isolated episodes, which has resulted in misunderstanding and mistranslating of the story. Consequently, the readers of the Dinah story have difficulty to see its relevance to the Jacob story.

In this dissertation, I will attempt to address this problem and show how reading Genesis 28:10-35:15 as a votive narrative in the light of the Hadiyya culture and Relevance Theory will help us to explain the relevance of the Dinah episode to Jacob story. I wish to show that Gen 28:10-35:15 is a coherent narrative unit and each episode of the story, including the Dinah story, is a componential part of the building blocks of the discourse structure of Jacob's votive narrative. I will demonstrate how the coherence of the narrative is developed and explain the communicative intention of the story in depth. I also wish to suggest, in brief, how to translate it in order to convey the same message to secondary audiences. Thus, resolving this problem will crucially help the readers and translators of the story to draw the intended communicative intention and translate it.

I also intend to show that a correct understanding of the Hebrew concept נדר 'vow' in the context of the ancient Israelite's social institution is fundamental for the reading and translating of Genesis 28:10-35:15. This same institutional framework of the vow will assist us to explain the relevance of Genesis 34 to the Jacob story.

DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this dissertation to my beloved wife Dero Dutamo, to my beloved children and to all Bible translators with full appreciation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Finally, as a non-mother-tongue speaker of English Language I would like to express my appreciation to various individuals who have given me editorial assistance and I take full responsibility for all the remaining matters of style in this work.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Problem Formulation

The process of understanding a text from the narrator's point of view is crucial for the task of both interpretation and translation of the Bible. If the translator's understanding of a narrative from the narrator's point of view is erroneous, then the whole process of translating the message into another language may also fall into error. This nature of translation work poses Bible translators a difficult challenge: "How can we understand the narrator's point of view of the biblical stories which are culturally, geographically, and historically remote to us?" There is no easy answer to this question. However, from the outset, I presuppose that the African perspective of reading the Scripture complemented by Relevance-theoretic parameters may contribute to answering this question.

In this research, I will attempt to show how reading Genesis 28:10-35:15 in the light of Hadiyya culture and relevance theory will help to interpret and translate the same. In this regard, since understanding an utterance of a discourse is the first natural order of the translation process, in this dissertation, first and foremost, I will attempt to explain the intended utterance of Genesis 28:10-35:15 in depth before I propose in brief how to translate it. Thus, I wish to show that a correct understanding of the concept of the ancient Israelite vow in the framework of a social institution is fundamental to reading and translating Genesis 28:10-35:15 and this same votive framework will assist us to explain the relevance of Genesis 34 to the Jacob story.

A comparison of different translations of the Jacob narrative unit of 28:10-35:15 in general and the Dinah story in particular show that the story has often been mistranslated because the episodes are treated as if they were isolated episodes. One may wonder what is the cause for the mistranslation? The obvious answer is that this narrative unit and its component episodes were misread because of different assumptions the readers brought to the text trying to respond to it. In this dissertation I wish to show that the whole story is a coherent narrative unit and to demonstrate how the coherence of the

narrative is developed. Each episode of the story including the Dinah story is a componential part or a building block of Jacob's votive narrative. As I will show in chapters three and six an understanding of the institutions of vow and marriage is vital for explaining this coherence.

In terms of biblical interpretation, many critical readers of the story wonder "What is the relevance of the Dinah story to the narrative of Jacob?" Different biblical scholars propose different answers to this question as the following examples show: the Dinah story does not have any significant relationship to the Jacob story (Brueggemann 1982: 274); it was intended to be an example of banning exogamous marriage (Parry 2004: 136); it was intended to challenge the militant attitude to outsiders (Bechtel February 1991: 36); etc. However, the question to be asked regarding these answers is, what are the textual evidences provided by the narrator/communicator in this particular narrative discourse?

I argue that Genesis 34 was not thrown into the Jacob narrative accidentally; rather there must be a communicative intention which the narrator wished to achieve by including the Dinah story at this particular location of the Jacob narrative. Therefore, I presume that this presumptive communicative intention must have been manifested through the *ostensive signals of the communicative intention* for including it. In this dissertation I wish to address this question.

Hence, since the main reason of the mistranslation and misinterpretation of the story was misreading of the same, I intend to spend most of my discussion explaining that Genesis 28:10-35:15 is a coherent narrative unit of which the Dinah story is an integral part. It is worthwhile spending most of my discussion explaining the interpretation of the story because the story is huge and I believe my explanation will help the translators in a significant way.

Thus, in this dissertation I intend to show that the Dinah story is an intentionally included congruent part of the votive narrative of Jacob which comprises Genesis 28:10-35:15. As I already mentioned above, I will attempt to substantiate this hypothesis by the close reading of the whole narrative unit from the narrator's point of view as it is manifested by the linguistic/public representation of the narrator. From the outset, I suggest that the narrator's mental representation of the story, manifestly represented in

his linguistic organization of the narrative structure of the story, shows that the Dinah story was intended to explain that such a shameful and life-threatening event happened to Jacob, one to whom God promised protection wherever he went, as a consequence of Jacob's failure to fulfill his vow to God in Bethel according to the regulations of the vow institution that a vow must be carried out in a place chosen by God (28:10-22).[1]

2. Scope and Delimitation

This dissertation considers the whole Jacob story (Genesis 25:19-37:1 according to my own categorization of the narrative unit of the Jacob story) as an interwoven large story or narrative unit. However, I will focus mainly on the narrative unit of Genesis 28:10-35:15, giving special attention to the narrative role of Gen. 28:10-22 within this narrative unit. Thus, I propose that Gen. 28:10-22 is a foundational passage of the narrative unit, because the promise made by God to Jacob and the vow made by Jacob to God in 28:10-22 raise an expectation of relevance (searching for cognitive effects) in the audience which will reach its final fulfillment in 35:1-15 (cognitive effects). Thus Gen. 28:10-22 creates a topical or thematic context for the global and local coherence of the whole narrative. This helps the inferential processing of the rest of the episodes of the narrative unit in these chapters. Therefore, I describe Gen. 28:10-35:15 as a **'votive narrative'** which concurs with the public representation of other similar votive narratives in the Old Testament (1 Samuel 1:10-2:11 and Judges 11:30-39).

3. Methodology

In this thesis I intend to do a literary analysis of Genesis 28:10-35:15 by employing Relevance theory parameters (see section 1.5). First and foremost, this research is a

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[1] In terms of fulfilling one's vow, respecting both the appointed time and a place chosen by God is required: "If you make a vow to the LORD your God, do not postpone fulfilling it; for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and you would incur guilt." (Deut. 23:21-23; MT 23:22-24). "But the sacred donations that are due from you, and your votive gifts, you shall bring to the place that the LORD will choose." (Deut. 12:26).

* All the biblical references in this dissertation are taken from NRSV (1989) and from my own translation of Gen 28:10-22, unless mentioned otherwise.
* All the Hebrew references are taken from BHS Hebrew Bible (Leningrad Codex) in Unicode except some refereces which I manually typed, in which case I omitted the accents and the vowel indicators.

literary analysis that recognizes the text as a literary document or discourse, but is consciously aware of and considers the "interdependence between the world of the text and the situation which produced it" (Hayas 1982: 68). Thus, one will observe that the biblical writers integrated three features in the biblical texts: theology, history, and literary features (Ryken 1993: 16). Though I am aware of these features, as a translation-oriented reader, I will treat the biblical data as a literary document and it will be my main examinable data without giving much attention to the issues of the historical, redactor, and source criticism. However, I will closely examine the situation in which the narrative was produced and the communicative intention of the communicator which presumably reflects his historical and theological view. Adam Jaworski and Nikalas Coupland make a remarkable note about this feature of a text:

> Discourse is language use relative to social, political and cultural formation—it is language reflecting social order but also language shaping social order, and shaping individuals' interaction with society (Jaworski Coupland 1999: 3).

My use of 'literary document' is intended to denote the creative and artful procedures of this narrative discourse-presentation employed by the narrator to make his communicative stimulus more salient (Powell 1990: 4; Alter 1981: 179) in order to achieve his communicative intention, as opposed to the fiction and imaginative art of literature (Tate 2006: 199). Besides, it is my intention not to dichotomize between the intention of the author (author meaning), text meaning, and reader meaning because I argue that naturally the reader interacts with the communicative intention of the author through the constraints of the textual stimulus provided by the communicator (Alter 1981: 179).

Thus, my research is a synchronic approach to the text, analyzing it by employing the relevance theoretic parameters, without much worry about the diachronic aspect of the text. However, I repeat again, that since discourse is a context-dependent communication, the contributions of the historical and cultural context of the text will be examined closely for their contribution to the process of interpretation and translation. It is also worth noting that, in this dissertation, I am not intending to describe the detailed linguistic (formal) regularities such as making charts of sentences and clauses in order to describe topics, comments, focuses, and other linguistic features of the narrative. Rather,

my main interest is to describe and explain the ostensive linguistic signals which are intended to function as a stimulus to convey the communicative and informative intention (see section 1.5) of the speaker which will only be achieved by inference. Relevance theory explains that in the right context a hearer can infer from the narrator's point of view some feature of the intended interpretation of the discourse (Wilson 2000: 429). Inferring is pervasive in communication because, as I mentioned earlier, discourse is a complex phenomenon, one of its complexities being decisively dependent on its immediate context and on the behavior or attitude of a speaker (Blass 1990).

Therefore establishing the context of this utterance is crucial for the understanding of the speaker utterance and deducing appropriate premises and conclusion(s) in order to achieve the cognitive effects exactly intended by the speaker. Consequently this literary analysis requires employing both a description and explanation of the utterances. Therefore, I will employ both description and explanation of the narrative in order to explain the communicative intention of Jacob's vow to God and God's promise to Jacob at Bethel.

Secondly, from the outset, I assume that this narrative is an institutional narrative. Charlotte Linde recommends the importance of analyzing institutional narratives within the context of the institutions "in which they are told" and the work the narratives were intended to do "in and for that institution" (Linde 2001: 532). Based on this assumption I propose to analyze this narrative unit from the perspective of the institutions of the vow, the chosen people of Yahweh, the chosen place of worship (Bethel in this case), and the assumption of the promised land of Canaan, which I presume are the cognitive contexts in which the narrative was told from the relevance theoretic point of view.

The main feature of the principle of relevance theory is maximization of the ever-increasing relevance of the human cognition in its operation of processing inputs of communicative stimulus until its search for cognitive effects is fulfilled (Sperber & and Wilson 1995, Carston 2002, Blakemore 2002, Gutt 2000, Blass 1990). More specifically, I will employ this theoretic model in order to examine the importance of the vow of Bethel for the fostering of the institution of the chosen place of worship (Bethel in this case) within the context of the chosen community of Yahweh, and within the contextual assumptions of the promised land. I will also attempt to explain the expectations of

relevance this same utterance raises including possible consequences for the failed vow. In this regard it is worth noting that we need to approach the textual data comprehensively—reading the text without dichotomizing between the narrator, text/utterance, audience, and context of the story, because relevance theory deals with the speaker, text/utterance, audience, and context of utterance without dichotomizing them from one another in the course of the inferential processing of the communication.

It is worth noting that for translators a textual meaning is more than the meaning of the sum total of the discourse sentences (because discourses communicate more meaning than the meaning of the sum total of the text sentences). By interacting with a discourse, we go behind the text, to the communicator's world, but guided and constrained by the communicator's ostensive signals of the intended communication. The biblical text "allows the reader to penetrate the inner world of the biblical character, revealing their emotional and Psychological mindset which motivates them" to write the text (Levine and Autumn 2005: 307). Thus, drawing a communicative meaning is always decisively based on the literary structure and sentences of a text which function as an ostensive communicative stimulus. Therefore in this literary analysis I will closely examine, describe and explain the narrative (from the narrator's point of view: why did he/she narrate it in this way in this particular context).

Thirdly, I intend to employ a new approach for the close reading of the votive narrative of Jacob in general and to the Dinah story in particular. Since I have observed that there is a significant affinity between the Hadiyya culture and Ancient Near East (ANE) culture I wish to employ an empirical data analysis concerning the institutions of vow and marriage. Finn Rønne also observes that there is an affinity between some Ethiopian and ANE cultures; and specifically he remarks about the region of the South Ethiopia (which comprises the Hadiyya land) as follows:

> South Ethiopia may, in a way, be described as a border district and a meeting place, on the one hand on African soil and on the other in an area which has been subject to influences since the distant past from the northern and eastern parts of present Ethiopia and thus from North Africa, the middle East and the Mediterranean (Ronne 2002: 472)[2].

Thise affinity suggests that understanding the Hadiyya vows will help us understand ANE vows. Hence I assume the comparison between them will be helpful. Therefore, I

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[2] This quotation is taken from the English summary of his research provided in his book

will undertake a comparative study of these two cultural worlds regarding the concept of vow and the episode of the Dinah story (particularly showing possible different interpretations about the vow and the Dinah story and eliciting the role of the narrative for the moral, ethical, and religious value of the society) in order to reconstruct or obtain the necessary contextual assumptions which will help us to interpret the literary data of the narrative, not to influence it. I will also consider the understanding of the concept of vow among some other Ethiopian communities. In other words, since discourse is totally dependent on the context of the utterance I suggest that the study of the concept of vow of the ANE cultural context in the light of current Hadiyya culture will help us to get some insight about the real-life context of ancient Israel and will throw some light on the interpretation and translation of the votive discourse of Jacob in general and Dinah episode in particular. In fact the hypothesis of this dissertation was the result of my intuitive knowledge of vow which was triggered by the PhD seminar discussions on the book of the Genesis in February and March, 2006. In this regard, other reliable ANE sources and other complementary helpful models will also be considered.

4. The Hadiyya People

The major Hadiyya people group lives in southwestern Ethiopia around the town Hossana, about 230 kilometers south of the capital Addis Ababa, (the capital city of Ethiopia). Linguistically the Hadiyya people are categorized as the members of the Highland East Cushitic language family. Since 1992 the area has been known as the ''Hadiyya Zone'' for the administration purposes of the government of Ethiopia.

The Hadiyya land extends as far as the Omo River on the west. Some Hadiyya people even live across the Omo River in the area called Bosha mixed with the Oromo people. On the east they are bordered by the Silt'i people who are Semitic, on the south by the Wolaitta people who are Omotic and on the north by the Gurage people who are also Semitic[3].

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[3] There is another Hadiyya group in another district known as Woliso to the north of the Hadiyya people. In the early 20th century this group used to speak the Hadiyya language; but now they have completely switched to the Oromo language. Sim (1989) also noted that another Hadiyya group live in Bale Province

According to the Ethnologue record of the 1998 census, the Hadiyya population is 927,933 (Grimes 2005: 115). However, according to the National Central Statistical Agency's figure of 2005 the Hadiyya population is 1,506,623. There are four dialects of the Hadiyya language with relatively insignificant differences: Sooro Hadiyya, Leemo Hadiyya, Shaashoogo Hadiyya, and Badawaacho Hadiyya. The Badawaacho dialect is geographically separated from the other groups by the Kambaata, Alaaba, and Tembaro people and the speakers are in a physical contact with the Wolaitta language speakers to the south. So they experience linguistic influence from the Wolaitta people though their language status is not threatened so far[4].

Historical records concerning the origin of the Hadiyya people are limited. Ernesta Cerulli in his survey noted that "the name Hadiyya is derived from that of the Muslim trading state and spelt similarly in later Ethiopic chronicles" (Cerulli 1956:118). However, there is no sufficient evidence that this name was borrowed from Muslim traders. On the other hand some historical records indicate that Hadiyya was mentioned by some Arabic historiographers (Braukämper 1973:38).

The Hadiyya are religious people who have different religious institutions. Traditional Hadiyya people used to worship for example trees, rivers, stones, mountains, the sky (they thought that the blue sky is God himself), the sun and moon, by associating them with the supreme God, and spirits. However, they do not worship animals. They also believe in some patronal spirits of family gods called *Jaara* which usually possess or indwell his subject (man or woman) who are particular individuals of a family. Many families used to have this family god *Jaara* who used to make his subject prophesy, promise, or give warnings to the family and other clients. People go to such people for consultation. However the community does not build particular permanent venue for the diviners, although the diviners themselves may build a temporary shelter for the divination ceremony. Such divination practices are forbidden in Christian circles.

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and they also have completely switched to the Oromo language. For the purpose of this work I will focus only on the major Hadiyya group which lives around the Hossana (Waachamo) town.

[4] For more information about the Hadiyya people see Sim 1989 and Hankore 1998.

There was a particular family group called Anjamma who were believed to be rainmakers besides having other religious duties. They were consecrated as a special religious group and they received gifts for making rain. Other individuals like diviners *(boroodaano/kiiraano),* and people with special knowledge (*hiraagaano),* were very important figures in religious and social affairs.

5. Definition of Terms

Relevance Theory: Relevance theory is a communication theory which is based on a definition of relevance[5]. It recognizes that the mental faculty of the human being, which has the capacity to draw an inferential conclusion from the behavior of people, enables people to communicate with each other (Gutt 2000: 24). Communicators exploit this cognitive capacity of humans so that they do not say everything to their audience in communication.

In terms of this theory, relevance is a phenomenon "which makes information worth processing for a human being" particularly for the audience (Sperber and Wilson1995: 46). It argues that a speaker gives some unspoken guarantee to his audience (being optimally relevant) that his utterance is worth processing. Such utterances evoke a certain context, and the audience uses both utterance and context to draw certain contextual implictures.

There are two general principles of relevance which are described as the *cognitive* principle that human cognition tends to be primed to maximize relevance and the communicative principle that utterances and any ostensive communicative stimulus create expectation of optimal relevance in the audience (Wilson 2000: 419; Gutt 2000: 31). Thus, from this perspective, the term "relevance" comprises a property of inputs, produced by the communicator for the cognitive processes of his audience. This input is analyzed by the audience inferentially "in terms of the notion of cognitive effects and processing effort" (Wilson 2000: 420). When an utterance or any other ostensive stimulus (input) is processed by the cognitive process of the audience in a context of appropriate assumptions, it will produce or result in the intended cognitive effects. For example, I

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[5] See also Carston 2002: 12.

intend my friend to open the window but I say to him "The room is suffocating because the windows are closed." And then my friend opens the window based on this utterance. My utterance has two propositions: 'the room is suffocating' and 'the windows are closed'. The procedural marker 'because' denotes that the cause of the suffocation is the closed windows. The literal propositional meaning of my utterance expresses a state of affairs in the world, which is a suffocating room because of the closed windows. However, my friend's action of opening the windows shows that he correctly drew the conclusion "he requested me to open the windows" inferentially, which is the 'implicature' or a cognitive effect, which I did not say explicitly. This example shows that our utterance comprises saying, asking, or commanding, but they are processed according to the relevance, not according to their propositional or literal sense.

As I mentioned above, human communication is geared to maximize relevance because we cannot process everything. We select or maximize relevance based on cost-benefit. Thus, cognitive effects are in direct proportion to the relevance of input: the greater the cognitive effects, the greater the relevance of the input; "the smaller the processing effort the greater the relevance of the input" (Wilson 2000: 420). In this regard since relevance is context dependent and there is a huge potential store or resource of context in human cognition, context selection from the cognitive environment is inevitable (Allwood 2003: 52). The selection of the context is very sensitive to the amount of processing effort in order to optimize the contextual assumptions and optimization also includes keeping the processing effort or time spent on supplying the contextual assumptions to a minimum (Gutt 2000: 28). The outcome of this effort is described as a contextual effect or expected benefits of the processing effort (it is also described as a contextual implicature). There are three kinds of contextual effects: drawing a new contextual implication, strengthening or confirming the existing assumption, and eliminating the existing assumption by contradicting.

Context: According to relevance theory context is a psychological construct. It is a dynamic, and holistic notion which is described as the 'mutual cognitive environment' of the speaker and hearer rather than external and textual (Sperber & Wilson 1995:39). It comprises the speaker's and hearer's assumptions about the world. Thus the context of an utterance is a set of assumptions or premises employed by our mental processing device

in order to interpret the utterance (Gutt 2000: 26). The cognitive environment of a person comprises a huge amount of information which includes "information derived from preceding utterances plus any cultural or other knowledge stored there—and further information that can be inferred from these two sources" (Gutt 2000: 27). Any relevant information of this stored information in one's cognitive environment could be retrieved as the context of an utterance (Gutt 2000: 27). Therefore sufficient constraint must be provided by the speaker in order to guide the hearer, to choose the intended contextual assumptions from their cognitive environment which will help to avoid misunderstanding.

Interpretive resemblance: This refers to the shared meaning properties between the original and its companion which comprises implicatures and explicatures and an interpretive use of a communicative stimulus of the original. Since all human communicators depend on the presumption of inferential processing capacity of human cognition, not everything is literally expressed by the communicators to their audience. Thus an utterance is an interpretive expression of the speaker though not strictly a literal expression. Accordingly, only sufficient stimulus, optimally relevant or worth processing, is provided to the audience and the rest of the relevant linguistic propositional forms (explicatures) are reconstructed inferentially by the audience. If a representation is literal in an analytic sense (all the logical forms of thought and its representation) and all contextual implication (all what is intended to be conveyed) are the same then it is a limiting case (Gutt 2000: 41). Any descriptive representation of a thought has a propositional form and any propositional form of an expression has also a logical property. Hence, the propositional forms of an ostensive stimulus (companion of the speaker's original thought) share some logical properties with the propositional forms of the speaker's thought (which is the original one) and consequently they resemble each other. Such propositional forms are also constrained by linguistic forms such as procedurals (so, after all, anyhow, etc.) in order to direct the way an interpretation is processed.

The propositional forms of an utterance of a speaker share some, but not all, of the logical properties of the propositional forms of his thought because the "speaker is presumed to aim at optimal relevance not at literal truth" of thought expressed in an

utterance (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 233). Therefore the resemblance between the propositional forms of speaker's thought and the propositional form(s) of his utterance is called interpretive resemblance.

Similarly, any utterance attributed to someone else's thought or utterance (reported speech) shares some logical properties (which comprise analytic implication or explicatures and contextual implication which the speaker intends to convey) with the original which makes them resemble each other (see Gutt 2000: 36-39). Since reported speech reuses or represents what someone has already represented it is described as a 'representation of representation' or 'metarepresentation' (Wilson 2000: 411). The resemblance between the original and representation cannot be perceived as strictly literal or verbatim because it is a common experience that reporters do not exactly repeat the original utterance. Rather they report only optimally relevant logical and linguistic information which enables the audience engaged for the inferential processing if the utterance is worth for the processing effort. Therefore, since the latter is not related to the former in a strictly literal fashion, but has "some logical properties in common" such as sharing all the logical and linguistic properties of the original speaker's thought and utterance, the resemblance between the original utterance and metarepresented (reported) utterance is called interpretive resemblance (Gutt 2000: 36). The speaker of such a representation could entertain it as a true thought or dissociate himself from it, simply representing it as someone else's thought, or he may show that he has a particular attitude toward it. In relevance theory such use is also described as interpretive use (Gutt 2000: 39).

Finally, relevance theory also explains translation (secondary communication) of an original work (primary communication) as an interpretive use. The translation resembles the original interpretively; the original being made to a second audience in a different context. Particularly all modern readers of the biblical text are secondary audiences; thus the effort of reading it in its original context is more difficult. Hence it requires a contextual adjustment (Gutt 200; Hill 2003; Sim 2006).

Metarepresentation: According to relevance theory metarepresentation is described as an act of attributing or representing one's utterance or any other public representation and thoughts to someone else's thought or utterance. Such attribution or metarepresentation

can be marked in several ways. But the most common ones are employing the device of direct and indirect quotation markers (which also may differ from language to language). The reporter of the metarepresentation may show his attitude toward the original thought—for example, he may endorse it or dissociate himself from it. Making an adjustment to the contextual assumptions between the original and reported utterance might be essential in order to make the resemblance between them accurate, because utterances are context dependent.

Echoic utterance: According to relevance theory an echoic utterance is a metarepresentation which uses someone else's thought or utterance interpretively to convey a certain attitude about the thought or utterance which is usually manifested in his utterance. For example according to the narrative representation of 2 Chronicles 18:1-27, the utterance of Prophet Micaiah: "Go up and triumph; they will be given into your hand" is an echoic metarepresentation. He ironically echoes what the other prophets said to the kings, and by this utterance he dissociates himself from the belief of the other prophets. His utterance shows that he has an attitude toward what they told to the kings: he does not believe that what they said is true; they are lying.

Ostension/Ostensive: an intentional behavior of a communicator aimed to attract the attention of his audience to a particular phenomenon (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 50).

Ostensive inferential communication[6]: Relevance theory explains that a communicator produces a stimulus by the means of an utterance or by any other way through which he intends to make manifest or more manifest a set of assumptions[7] to the audience which makes it mutually manifest to both the communicator and his audience. The means of making a set of assumptions mutually manifest to both the communicator and his audience is described as 'ostensive stimulus' (Wilson 2000: 423). An ostensive stimulus aims to attract the audience's attention to the communicator's intentions. From the

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[6] See Sperber and Wilson 1995: 156-159.

[7] **Meaning:** It is very difficult to describe 'meaning'. However, relevance theory describes it as a 'set of assumptions'. According to relevance theory, the communicative intention is manifest by the means of ostensive stimulus employed by the communicator which could be an utterance or any other means. The informative intention is manifest through the communicative intention and "the content of the speaker's meaning is the set of assumptions…embedded under the informative intention". When the informative intention of the communicator is made mutually manifest to both the communicator and his audience then transparency is achieved, which is perceived as a meaning (Wilson 2000: 424; Gutt 2000: 24).

communicator's side communication is ostensive and from the hearer's side the ostension is inferential because the communicator does not say everything[8]; thus it is sometimes called ostensive inferential communication (Sim 2006, Vol. 1: 46-47). This effort is necessary in communication because communication involves two parties (communicator and audience) and ostensive communication can be successful only if the communicator's effort successfully attracts the audience to pay attention to the ostensive stimulus (Sim 2006, Vol. 1: 52).

Raising expectation of relevance: Raising expectation of relevance is an ostensive act or behavior of a communicator with a tacit guarantee that his utterance or stimulus is relevant or worth processing.

Contextual assumption: Any assumption accessible through an utterance or a text employed by the communicator as a stimulus within a particular context to his audience is described as a contextual assumption. It is a logical premise formed from a stimulus in a particular context in order to draw a conclusion (implicatures).

Implicature: A thought is an implicature if we assume that the narrator or speaker intended the reader to come to this thought by inference, though it is not stated explicitly. Relevance theory describes such intended thoughts as implicatures or contextual effects.

Informative intention and communicative intention: According to the analysis of relevance theory inferential communication has two layers of intention: (1) The informative intention, which aims to make a certain set of assumptions manifest or more manifest to the audience; and (2) the communicative intention which aims to make the informative intention mutually manifest by the means of an ostensive stimulus (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 9-12; Wilson 2000: 423).

> **Informative intention:** This denotes that the intended communication will be accepted by the audience and it will influence their cognitive system such that they will eventually be ready to draw cognitive effects from the utterance. Therefore, the communicator's informative intention is described as an intention

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[8] "A hearer following the relevance-theoretic comprehension procedure should consider interpretive hypothesis in order of accessibility. Having found an interpretation that satisfies his expectation of relevance, he should stop. The task of the speaker is to make the intended interpretation accessible enough to be picked out. Notice that the best way of doing this is not always to spell it out in full. In appropriate circumstances, the hearer may be able to infer some aspect of the intended interpretation with less effort than would be needed to decode it from a fully explicit prompt" (Wilson 2000: 429).

aimed at modifying the cognitive environment of the audience (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 58). Thus, the informative intention aims to make a set of assumptions of the communicator mutually manifest to both the communicator and his audience (Sim 2006 Vol. 1: 46-47).

Communicative intention: The communicator shows that he wants to communicate and he is heard and understood. Thus, a communicative intention is an effort of making "mutually manifest to an audience and the communicator that the communicator has this informative intention" (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 61; Sim 2006 Vol. 1: 46-47).

Optimally relevant utterance: Relevance theory proposes that communication is controlled by the principle of cost-benefit optimization. The effort of achieving intended benefits, which are positive changes to the audience's cognitive environment, presumes that the audience will be geared to look for an ostensive stimulus which is adequate and without unnecessary processing effort. Any effort or utterance that fulfils these requirements is said to be optimally relevant for the processing effort of the audience (Sim 2006 Vol. 1: 52).

Commissive speech act: This is a type of utterance which a speaker employs in order to make a future course of action such as making promises. It is a commitment of a person to behave in a certain way (Levinson 1983: 240; Saeed 2003: 239f; Austin 1962: 11, 151f, 157f). This concept is not from relevance theory but is from speech act theory. But it is relevant to my research because it helps to explain the commissive speech act of the vow of Jacob. In the ancient Hebrew context נדר is much more than a simple act of making a promise as we shall see in chapter four.

Ad hoc concept: The same linguistic term may be employed and interpreted differently. Depending on a different context it can be used in different times, in different places, and involving different things or people. The inferential conclusions achieved in such contexts through different premises and conclusions are geared by searching for relevance and it is varied. Such mental processing is described as **ad hoc** processing. For example if a husband says to his wife metaphorically and sincerely "you are my honey", on hearing this expression the wife perceives that in this particular context her husband excludes some logical or defining features of the encoded concept 'honey' and narrows

down to the feature of 'sweetness' and at the same time he broadens the logical or defining features of 'sweetness' to cover his wife. There is no apparent semantic relationship whatsoever between 'sweetness' and a 'woman.' However, searching for relevance (relevance-driven processing) for adequate contextual effects, human cognition creates a new meaning on an ad hoc basis by connecting both woman and sweetness by inference (see Carston 2002: 349ff).

6. Overview

In this dissertation I intend to argue for the thesis in the following manner or line of arguments. Since the task of translation involves the process of interpretation before conveying the message into another language, in chapters two, three, four, five, and six, I will attempt to examine the communicative intention of the primary communication of Genesis 28:10-35:15 (exegesis) from the secondary audience's point of view. And then in chapter seven I will conclude with remarks on possibly more effective ways of bringing out and conveying the communicative intention of the story in the process of translation (secondary communication).

The boundary of the Jacob story will be defined in chapter two which will function as background information for the main argument of the thesis. In order to investigate the soundness of the hypothesis, the narrative context and structure of 25:19-35:15 will be closely examined, which I believe will exhibit evidence of the communicative intention of the narrator. I intend to describe the main points of this chapter in the following way: 1. defining the boundary of the Jacob story. 2. Defining the narrative structure of the narrative unit episode by episode in order to describe the role of Gen. 28:10-22 for the process of interpreting the narrative unit and in order to explain the relevance of the Dinah story to the Jacob story.

In chapter three I will attempt to describe the Hebrew concept of 'vow' and try to establish the encyclopedic information of the contemporary audience which will help us to access the contextual assumptions of the primary audience in this narrative. In order to achieve this objective I wish to examine the concept 'vow' in the light of the Hadiyya concept of vow *silet,* in terms of the Ancient Near East cultural context, Hebrew Scriptures, and ancient Israelite literature in order to describe or elicit the main

encyclopedic entries in the cognitive environment of the original audience. At the end of the chapter, I will make a brief comparison between the Hebrew and Hadiyya concept of vow. I presume that the discussion in this chapter will significantly help us in the task of interpretation for the translation of the concept of vow and the whole narrative unit in which it occurs. In this regard, I believe that access to the contextual assumptions of the primary audience will play a very significant role in interpreting and understanding the discourse.

And then, in chapter four I will closely examine Genesis 28:10-22, in order to establish its role in the process of interpreting the narrative unit of 28:10-35:15. Thus, the utterances of God to Jacob and Jacob's vow to God in 28:10-22 will be treated as an abstract of the narrative unit because God's promise to Jacob and Jacob's votive plea to God in Bethel raise an expectation of relevance which functions as a topic or a common theme about which the whole discourse makes a meaningful coherence-relation. Therefore, in this chapter I will propose that the utterances in 28:10-22 will be treated as a base episode of the narrative unit because these are the utterances which raise an expectation of relevance in the audience and they will thus be primed to search for relevance in the following episodes until their expectation of relevance is fulfilled or the cognitive effects are achieved. The search for relevance is primed to see whether God has granted Jacob's votive plea. If so, did Jacob fulfill his vow to God? Why did the narrator include the Dinah story in Jacob's votive narrative? All these features will be explained in this dissertation from the narrator's point of view. Thus, the discussion of this chapter will explain why the utterance of the vow at Bethel is relevant to the interpretation of this narrative unit.

In chapter five I intend to analyze all the relevant passages of Gen. 29:1-33:20 in terms of the fulfillment of the vow of Bethel in order to explain the relevance of the Dinah story to the narrative of Jacob from the narrator's point of view. I will attempt to answer the question "Was the cognitive effects of the votive utterance of Jacob achieved?" In order to answer this question, I will attempt to elicit all communicative clues /ostensive communicative stimuli used in the narrative and investigate all the episodes in Gen. 29:1-33:20 and see how the expectation of relevance raised in 28:10-22 are fulfilled (cognitive effects). Again, from the outset, I propose that the narrative

discourse presented in chapters 29-33 is an evaluative one intended to fulfill the hearer's expectation of relevance (cognitive effects), raised in 28:10-22. Thus I will treat the episodes of 29-33 as an evaluative narrative of the characters (God and Jacob) in terms of fulfilling the expectation of relevance raised in 28:10-22 and describe and explain any linguistic and contextual evidences available in the narrative in order to support this claim.

In chapter six I intend to explain the relevance of the Dinah episode to the votive narrative of Jacob. I will also show that the raised expectation of relevance achieved or caused by the utterance of the vow also includes the expectation of possible consequences, if the vow was not fulfilled.

Finally, chapter seven will conclude the dissertation by doing two things. 1) It will conclude the interpretation phase with a brief general summary of the interpretation, recapitulating the main supporting arguments of the same, describing the specific contributions made by this research; 2) It will discuss, in brief, the implications of the votive narrative of Jacob (Genesis 28:10-35:15) on translation into a secondary communication, and suggest how to translate it showing that Genesis 34 is a congruent part of the votive narrative.

CHAPTER TWO

BOUNDARIES OF THE JACOB STORY AND ITS LITERARY STRUCTURE

1. Introduction

Discourse is a "complex cognitive and social phenomenon" (Brown and Yule 1983: 271). Therefore interpreting and translating a discourse is primarily pragmatic although it definitely involves syntactic and semantic analysis. In this regard semantic and syntactic forms are an instruments used to express the speaker's or the writer's mental representation in order to achieve the communicative intention (discourse) (Brown and Yule 1983: 26).

A discourse can be either oral or written organized by the principle of functional connectedness or coherence. The main organizing feature or principle of a discourse is its 'coherence'. Relevance theory explains the discourse coherence as a mental principle of human comprehension in communication rather than as a textual feature (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 289; Blass 1990: 17-25). Hence, according to relevance theory, context and coherence of the discourse are psychological phenomena which are usually exhibited by the means of public representation of linguistic organization of the discourse[9]. Accordingly, a dictionary of linguistics and Phonetics defines the public representation aspect of the concept 'coherence' of a discourse as follows:

> Coherence (n) …refer[s] to the main principle of organization postulated to account for the underlying FUNCTIONAL connectedness or identity of a piece of spoken or written LANGUAGE (TEXT, discourse). It involves the study of such factors as the language users' knowledge of the world, the inference they make, and the assumption they hold, and in particular of the way in which **coherent** communication is mediated through the use of SPEECH ACTS." (Crystal 2003: 81).

Thus interpreting a discourse involves describing the communicative function of a text in a given context, the assumed shared socio-cultural knowledge of the

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[9] According to relevance theory the context of utterance interpretation is part of the interlocutors' 'beliefs and assumptions about the world' (Blakemore, 1992:18), or what is termed their ***mutual cognitive environment*** (Sperber & Wilson 1986:39). More specifically, the context of an utterance is that part of the interlocutors' mutual cognitive environment which interacts with the utterance to provide a coherent interpretation of the utterance (Sperber & Wilson 1995:15). Thus in terms of relevance theory, context and coherence are psychological, dynamic, and holistic notions rather than linguistic (See 'context' in chapter one).

communicator and his audience, and "determining the inference to be made" in the process of interpreting and translating (Brown and Yule 1983: 225). Therefore, it is crucial for the interpreters and translators of a discourse to recognize the organizing features of a discourse which contribute to its coherence so that they can be aware that every component of a discourse is a coherent building block. Hence it is essential for us to describe the feature of coherence in the narrative unit of the Jacob story from the narrator's point of view. In this regard, defining the boundary of the Jacob story[10] by stating its beginning and ending and describing its internal literary structure will help us to view the general contextual framework of the narrative which in effect will assist us to unfold the meaning of the text and translate it into other languages as a coherent unit.

Therefore, in the following discussion, I will attempt to address these issues in order to see the relevance of the 'vow' of Jacob and the Dinah story to the Jacob narrative. In order to achieve this, I will attempt to describe the probable textually signaled comprehensive theme of the Jacob story in particular and of the Genesis story in general; and then I will describe the development and structure of the Jacob story according to the theme showing episode by episode. I believe this endeavor will help us to explain the role and relevance of the vow of Jacob in Bethel (28:20-22) and the Dinah story (chap. 34) to the Jacob story.

Fishbane observes the importance of having the general framework of connectedness for the work of analyzing a particular narrative unit of the Jacob story when he says, "The episode of Jacob, his early life and trials, provide a rich context in which to study the patriarchal narratives in the book of Genesis" (Fishbane 1979: 40). Stanley D. Walters also supports this view when he says that Jacob's narrative has been "artfully arranged" around Jacob's return to the land of his fathers (Canaan) after his long stay in Padan Aram where he fled away to escape the revenge of his brother Esau (Walters 1992: 599).

These remarks show that it is essential to describe the theme of the Jacob story in order to describe its boundary effectively. As I have already noted above, defining the external boundary of the Jacob story and examining the internal structure of the story

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[10] Many biblical scholars attempt to define the boundary of the Jacob cycle about which I am skeptical. Thus I prefer to define it as a narrative unit because the boundary issue is so fuzzy.

from the outset of this research will significantly contribute to the comprehension of the narrative. The assumption in this regard is that every narrative unit of the book of Genesis is naturally connected to and distinct from the other, within the discourse-plot of the Genesis story, according to the episode(s) each narrative unit may comprises. However, it is not my intention to exhaust all the textual features of the narrative of Jacob.

2. Review of Other Works

2.1. Boundary of the Jacob Story

In this section I will attempt to explain the issues about the beginning and the ending of the narrative unit of the Jacob story within which its internal literary structure is organized. In this regard I have observed that different scholars have proposed different boundaries of the Jacob story. Therefore, it is important to review the main views of the scholars about the boundary of the narrative unit of the Jacob story before I propose my own view of the same.

During the course of my literature reading for this section I have observed that each scholar attempts to establish the contextual framework (theme) of the patriarchal narrative which will guide her or him to interpret the textual data of the patriarchs as well as to decide the boundary of each patriarch. Some of the themes of the Jacob narrative are summarized briefly as follows.

2.1.1. The Beginning of the Jacob Story

On the one hand several scholars define the beginning of the boundary of the Jacob story as Genesis 25. More specifically, it has been observed that most of the scholars who propose Gen. 25:19 or 25:21 (Gunkel 1997: 285) as the beginning of the Jacob story employ the genealogy and family criterion to decide the boundary of Jacob story. For example scholars such as von Rad (1972), Fishbane (1979), Wiseman (1985), Westernmann (1985), Wenham (1994), and Kissling (2009) use the genealogy and family story of the patriarchs as the criterion for deciding the boundary of the patriarchs. Consequently, they describe Gen 25:19 as the beginning of the family story of patriarch Isaac.

On the other hand several other scholars propose different beginnings of the Jacob story based on different criteria. For instance George W. Coats (1983) employs the theme *tolodoth* as a criterion for categorizing the patriarchal cycle and he describes Gen. 37:1 as the beginning of the Joseph story which is the tolodot (genealogy) of Jacob, thus beginning of the Jacob saga[11]. David W. Cotter also uses the theme of 'troubled family of the patriarchs, who were saved by God' in order to interpret the story of the patriarchs. Consequently he perceives the beginning of the family problem in the Jacob story as Gen. 37 and thus he describes 37:1 as the beginning of the Jacob story (Cotter 2003: 79). Leon R. Kass suggests that the story of the book of Genesis teaches how understanding the threat in life and the human limit to overcome that threat leads one to seek the way to a greater life. Thus self-relying Jacob understood the danger to his life and his limits to overcome it which eventually led him to seek the greater way of life as presented beginning from Gen. 28 (Kass 2003:402).

In summary the above evidence shows that the beginning of the Jacob story is fuzzy and it is difficult to state a definite beginning point because it keeps shifting depending on one's contextual assumptions. Although it is very difficult to show that the other scholar's view is wrong in this regard, I incline to agree with those scholars who propose the beginning of the Jacob narrative as Gen. 25:19 because of the following evidence: 1 The preceding narrative concludes the narrative of Ishmael, who is in the tolodot of Abraham in 25:18 which shows that the following narrative is a distinct unit. 2. The setting of the family story of the Isaac who is also in the tolodot of Abraham was introduced formally by the expression ואלה תולדת יצחק בן־אברהם 'these are the descendants of Isaac the son of Abraham' (Gen. 25:19). 3. The story of the two brothers—Esau and Jacob, which is mainly marked for the conflict, immediately follows the introduction of the narrative of the family of Isaac and it was continuously intensified, as the story proceeds (Gen. 25:22-26). However it is worth noting that these evidences cannot be claimed as strong boundary markers because there is no clearly stated evidence provided by the narrative itself that the narrator was intending to make distinct boundaries within the story of the patriarchs.

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[11] Generally, he describes Jacob story within the Isaac saga.

2.1.2. The Ending of the Jacob Story

There is a greater diversity in defining the ending boundary of the Jacob story than the beginning of the same. For instance, Gunkel (1997) reads Gen. 25:19-37:1 as the narrative which concerns Isaac, Jacob, and Esau. Consequently he proposes 37:1 as the end of the story because it is here that the closing report of the narrative about Isaac, Esau and Jacob was provided. Similarly, Wiseman reads Genesis 25:19b-37:2a as a genealogical story of Esau and Jacob (Wiseman 1985:69). Consequently he proposes 37:2a as the closing verse of the story because it is from there that the story proceeds to the narrative of the family of Jacob rather than Esau and Jacob; thus an end of the boundary.

Cotter and Coats employ the death report of the patriarchs as a criterion for deciding the ending boundary of the patriarchal cycles. Therefore they propose Genesis chapter 50 as the end of the boundary of the Jacob story because it is in this chapter that the death of Jacob was reported (Cotter 2003:79; Coats 1983:259-60).

Gordon Wenham treats the Jacob story within the family history of Isaac, which he contrasts with the family history of Ishmael (Wenham 1994: 166). He argues that the narrative of the Jacob story which is presented within that of the the family of Isaac covers Genesis 25:19-35:29 until the death of Isaac (who is the head of the family) was announced in 35:29 (Wenham 1994: 168). Then he describes the narrative about Joseph, which is usually known as the "Joseph story" as the continuation of the Jacob story and thus describes it as the Jacob-Joseph story that "ends with the last words and death of Jacob" who is the head of the family (Wenham 1994: 168).

Fishbane reads Genesis 25:19-35:22 by searching for symmetrical binary pairs. Consequently he perceives 25:21-34 and 35:1-22 as a binary pair because 35:1-22 is a fulfillment of the divine oracle of Gen. 25:21-34. In addition he perceives the problem of child-bearing in the pregnancy of Rebekah in 25:19-21 as a symmetrical binary pair with the child-bearing problem of Rachel in Gen. 35:16-20, which was resulted in her death. Thus Fishbane proposes Genesis 35:1-22 as the ending of the Jacob story because it is a denouement of the cycle which functions as a final conclusion of the *tolodot* of Isaac bringing the story to the final resolution (Fishbane 1979: 46). Gerhard Von Rad proposes Genesis chapter 50 as the ending of the Jacob story based on the criterion of the death

report of the patriarch Jacob (Von Rad 1972:263-4). However Westermann proposes 36:43 as the ending of the Jacob story because this is where the conflict between the two brothers culminated in the report of Esau's moving out of the promised land (Westermann 1985:23, 407). Kevin Walton reads the Jacob story in the context of Jacob's flight from Canaan and return to Canaan. Consequently he proposes 35:29 as the ending of the Jacob story because it reports Jacob's return to Canaan (Walton 2003: 3).

Finally Kass reads the Jacob story in the perspective of the human behavior of perceiving a possible danger or problem and recognizing the human limits to overcome it which eventually will lead one to seek the way to a greater way of life. Since this behavior of Jacob was revealed in two incidents: strife with and overcoming his brother (Genesis Chapters 25-28) and facing the future leadership problem (29-50) and finally addressing it in chapter 50; therefore, according to Kass, the ending of the Jacob story is Genesis 50.

2.1.3. Summary

The above-mentioned variations in the boundary categorization of the Jacob story show that it is difficult to determine a fixed boundary of the patriarch's story because the proposed boundaries can keep shifting due to the perceived theme of the story. Besides, I strongly agree with Kevin Walton who remarks that there is a significant overlap of the patriarchal stories that makes difficult to make a fixed beginning and ending of the boundary of the Jacob story (Walton 2003: 3). Consequently the boundaries of the patriarchs' cycles are fuzzy. This is true even with the criterion of *tolodot,* which is highly supported by many scholars as a narrative boundary marker in the patriarchal story. This is because there is no clearly stated textual evidence which shows that the narrator was intending to make a clear and distinct boundary for each patriarchal cycle. Moreover, the Jacob story shows that there is a significant overlap of the genealogy of Isaac, Esau, and Jacob within the same story. Why is these overlap if the narrator was intended to make a distinct boundary for each Patriarchal cycle?

In my opinion the traditionally called 'Jacob cycle' is simply a narrative unit of the continuation of the patriarchal story. Gunkel remarks that the story presented in the book of Genesis in different narrative units can be termed as the whole history of the

Israel's religion (Gunkel 1997: LXXXVI). Surely, it seems that the narrator of Genesis has a religious motive focused on Yahweh and his people Israel. According to the narrative of the origin of the life in the paradise of Eden, the sin of humanity was so rampant that God found or saved only a remnant and then chose Abraham and established a new people for himself from Abraham (Gunkel 1997: 1). Thus the narrator presents the creation story as a preamble to the patriarchal story, representing how the created people became so evil that God found only remnants from the line of Seth[12] who was the son of Adam (Gen. 5:3) and who was the ancestor of Noah, who was also the father of Shem. Shem was the ancestor of Eber (Brand 2003: 735) and Eber was the ancestor of Abraham and his descendants such that they acquired their ethnic name "Hebrews" from Eber[13] (Gen. 10:21-11:24).

Gunkel remarks that different narrative units of Abram and Lot are held together by the common clearly stated theme: how Abraham and Lot migrated from Padan Aram and how they arrived in Canaan and how their descendants became the heirs of their respective lands. This theme answers the question, "How did the people who name themselves after Abraham and Lot originate and come to these locals" (Gunkel 1997: 159). Thus, Gunkel summarizes the patriarchal narrative of Genesis as a story of a family which is based on a basic theme how, "God chose this family in order to raise up the people of Israel from it" and how Yahweh's intervention and providence was active in the beginning of the people of Israel and in bringing them into the land of Canaan. (Gunkel 1997: 158).

I concur with Wenham and Gunkel that the whole patriarchal narrative is a continuous story with different narrative units comprising an "ongoing account of the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham and renewed to Isaac and indeed to Jacob just before he left the land of Canaan" (Wenham 1994: 259). Thus this theme is pertinent to the content of Genesis. Accordingly, the narrative unit traditionally described as the Jacob cycle is the continuation and an integral part of the same theme or Genesis plot.

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[12] Seth was not the only son of Adam, in fact he was one of the sons of Adam (Gen.5:4).

[13] The ethnic name 'Hebrew' is related to Eber, grand-son of Shem and a progenitor of the Israelites (Hebrews). In this regard, the discourse structure of Genesis 10-11 is striking. In Genesis 10:21 Eber was introduced in a focused way as if the whole genealogy was organized around him and concerned him. In Genesis 11:16 he was referred to again up until his lineage came down to Terah, and then to Abraham. Thus the narrator puts Eber as a significant ancestor of Abraham (for the detailed discussions see my excursus on 'Hebrew' in Appendix 1).

Thus, the genealogy report of the patriarchs in this narrative unit is employed presumably as evidence to show that the descendants of the chosen line of Abraham and Isaac remain in the promised land in order to inherit the promise of Yahweh while the rest of the descendants of the patriarchs were moved or pushed out of the promised land.

Therefore, in this dissertation, I prefer to abandon the use of the phrase 'Jacob cycle' and intend to define Genesis 25:19-37:1 as a narrative unit of the continuing story of the patriarchs. Thus I concur with Gunkel that the ending of the narrative unit is Genesis 37:1. Presumably the narrative of the Jacob story was intended to explain how and why Jacob and his descendants became the sole line of the promised seed of the Abrahamic covenant to inherit the promise of Yahweh contrasted with Esau and his descendants (Walters 1992: 599-600)[14]. This intention becomes more apparent when the narrator concludes the narrative unit by reporting that Esau and his descendants were moved out of the promised land while Jacob and his descendants remained in the promised land as the chosen inheriting line (Gen. 36:43-37:1).

2.2. Literary Structure of the Narrative Unit of Gen. 25:19-37:1

It is worth reviewing the works of others briefly before I propose my own understanding of the literary structure of this unit. As I noted above, different scholars read the narrative of the Jacob story in different perspectives, which I have described as 'themes'. I have divided these themes into two general categories: genealogy-family and other diverse themes. I may repeat some points which I mentioned in the sections "beginning" and "ending" of Jacob story in this section for the sake of clarification.

2.2.1. Literary Structure Based on Genealogy and Family

Some scholars such as George W. Coats (1983), David W. Cotter (2003), and Paul J. Kissling (2009) even do not agree that Jacob story is part of the above mentioned larger

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[14] Walters remarks that Jacob story is "bracketed at the beginning and end by the genealogies of the 2 sons who stand outside the lines of promise, Ishmael (25:12-18) and Esau (chap. 36), so that Jacob's role as the bearer of the promise is unmistakable" (Walters 1992: 599-600).

narrative unit—25:19-37:1[15]. Thus they do not recognize Gen 25:19-37:1 as part of the Jacob story, rather they conider it as something else. In addition some scholars such as Walton, though they consider it as part of the Jacob story, do not organize a detailed literary structure of their readings of the story (see section 2.2.2.3). However, as we saw above several scholars recognize the Jacob story within this narrative unit and they

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[15] A) George W. Coats (1983), in his commentary on Genesis, uses the theme *tolodoth* as a criterion for the categorizing the patriarchal cycle. He categorizes the Jacob story under the Isaac Saga; and then he describes the Gen. 37:1-50:26 as 'Jacob the Saga' which comprises different individual stories. Thus he describes the Jacob saga as the Joseph story which is the genealogy of Jacob. He employs the death report of the patriarchs as a criterion of closing of the narrative of each cycle and he categorizes the main story line of the Jacob saga as follows:

The Jacob story	37:1-36
The Judah-Tamar story	38:1-30
The continuation of the Joseph story	39:1-47:27
Jacob's death report	50:15-21
Recapitulation of the Joseph story denouncement	50:15-21
Joseph's death report	50:22-26

B) David W. Cotter (2003) who interprets the book of Genesis in the context of God's saving action, which is his theme, perceives the succession of the patriarchs as a chosen family of God, which was troubled in different circumstances but saved by God. And then he categorizes the Jacob story within the scope of Gen 37:1-50:26 (Cotter 2003: 79) around this theme. Consequently he describes the symmetrical plot structure of Gen 37:1-50:26 in terms of the family strife as follows:

a. Joseph and the family strife he incites	37:1-36
a'. Judah and the family strife he incites	38:1-30
b. The descent and ascent of Joseph	39:1-41:57
b'. The descent of the brothers	42:1-47:27
c. Blessings: Joseph	47:28-48:22
c'. Blessings: all the brothers	49:1-28
d. The end for Jacob	49:29-50:14
d'. The end for Joseph	50:15-26

C) Paul J. Kissling (2009) describes Genesis 37:2-50:26 as the Jacob story based on the theme of genealogy (Kissling 2009: 25) and he categorizes the story according to the different episodes of the family story as follows (Kissling 2009: 44-48):

I. Internal Family Tensions Resulted in Joseph's Enslavement in Egypt—37:2-36
II. Judah's Story Begins Badly—38:1-30
III. Joseph Ends up a Slave and Prisoner in Egypt—39:1-23
IV. Joseph Interprets the Dreams of Pharaoh's Cup-Bearer and Baker—40:1-23
V. Joseph is elevated by Accurately Interpreting Pharaoh's Dreams—41:1-56
VI. The First Trip to Egypt Goes Badly—42:1-38
VII. On the Second Trip to Egypt Joseph Reveals Himself to his Brothers—43:1-45:28.
VIII. Israel Moves to Egypt—46:1-47:27
IX. Israel's Final Day—47:28:49-32
X. Jacob Death, Mourning and Burial—49:33-50:14
XI. Final Reconciliation between Joseph and His Brothers—50:15-21
XII. Final Day of Joseph—50:22-26.

perceive it as the genealogy and family narrative but they categorize the structure of the story diversely. The following are some examples:

1. Gerhard von Rad categorizes the narrative, structure in a more or less similar way to Wenham's, below in point 6 (von Rad 1972: 264-342). But then, regarding the Jacob story, he claims that one must recognize that the Jacob story is located in the following narrative which is traditionally called the Joseph story. He argues that this view is supported by the textual evidence provided in 37:2: "This is the history of the family of Jacob" which is concluded by the death report of Jacob in Genesis Ch. 50 (von Rad 1972: 263-264).

2. Fishbane, based on the same theme of genealogy also proposes the scope of the Jacob story as Genesis 25:19-35:22 (Fishbane 1979:40). He categorizes the structure of the narrative in a chiastic or symmetrical spectrum of the genealogical organization as follows:

    A. Struggle in Childbirth and birth right (25:19-34)

    B. Interlude; strife; deception; berakah-blessing; covenant with foreigner: (chap 26)

    C. Stealing of the blessing and flight from the land (27:1-28:9)

    D. Encounter with the divine (28:10-22)

    E. Internal cycle opens; arrival; Laban at border; deception; wages; (chap 29) Rachel barren; Leah fertile (vv.1-24)

    F. Rachel fertile; Jacob increases the herds (chap 30)

    E' Internal cycle closes; departure; Laban at border; deception; wages (chap 31)

    D' Encounters with divine beings at sacred sites; near border; berakhah (chap 32)

    C' Deception planned; fear of Esau; berakhah gift returned; return to the land (chap 33)

    B' Interlude; strife; deception; covenant with foreigner (chap 34)

    A' Oracle fulfilled; Rachel struggles in childbirth; *berakhah*, death, resolution (35:1-22)

However, there are no clear textual or linguistic markers Fishbane employed to describe the above chiastic structure in order to avoid any conclusion based on the 'eye of the beholder' or on the presupposed assumption of the reader.

3. John Skinner, in Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis describes Genesis 25:19-36:43 as "the third division of the Book of Genesis…devoted exclusively to the biography of Jacob."[16] He categorizes the story as follows:

The birth of Esau and Jacob, and the transference of the Birthright	25:19-34
Isaac and the Philistines	26
How Jacob secured his father's blessing	27:1-45
Isaac's charge to Jacob	27:46-28:9
Jacob at Bethel	28:10-22
Jacob's marriage with Laban's daughters	29:1-30
The birth of Jacob's children	29:31-30:24
Jacob enriched at Laban's expense	30:25-43
Jacob's flight from Laban; their friendly parting	31:1-32:1
Jacob's measures for propitiating Esau; his wrestling with the deity at Peniel	32:2-33
The meeting of the brothers; Jacob's march to Shechem	33
The outrage on Dinah	34
Jacob in Canaan	35

4. Wiseman describes the book of Genesis as a series of documents. He argues that the underlying "master key" of the compilation of the structure of the book of Genesis is genealogy (Wiseman 1985: 59). As a result he describes and categorizes the narrative of Genesis 25:19b-37:2a generally as the genealogical stories of Esau and Jacob (Wiseman 1985: 69).

5. Claus Westermann describes Gen. 25:19-36:43 as the Jacob-Esau cycle (Westermann 1985: 23, 412). He categorizes the narrative plot structure of the story around the theme of the family of Isaac which is marked by conflicts. He describes the family conflicts as super-ordinate and subordinate themes. He describes the super-ordinate

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[16] Skinner notes that chapters 26 and 36 are "misplaced appendixes to the history of Abraham and Edomite genealogies" respectively (Skinner 1980: 355)

theme as "what happened between brothers" (Gen. 25-36), which is the conflict between Jacob and Esau (27-33) and he parallels it with the narrative about what happened between parents and children (Gen. 12-25). He describes the subordinate theme as one which comprises the conflict between Laban and Jacob (23-31), as well as the conflict between Rachel and Leah (29:31-30:24) (Westermann 1985: 407).

6. Gordon Wenham divides the narrative of Jacob story into two phases which was split by the family history of Esau (36:1-37:1). The first phase of the Jacob story was represented within the family history of Isaac (25:19-35:29) which was concluded in 35:29 by the death report of Isaac. The second phase was represented within the Joseph story which was concluded by the death report of Jacob and Joseph (Chapters 37:2-50:26). Thus Genesis chapter 50 is the ending of the Jacob story (Wenham 1994:168). He categorizes the first phase of the Jacob story as follows:

First encounter of Jacob and Esau	25:19-34
Isaac and the Philistines	26:1-33
Jacob cheats Esau of his blessing	26:34-28:9
Jacob meets God at Bethel	28:10-22
Jacob arrives at Laban's house	29:1-14
Jacob marries Leah and Rachel	29:15-30
Birth of Jacob's sons	29:31-30:24
Jacob outwits Laban	30:25-31:1
Jacob leaves Laban	31:2-32:1 (31:25)
Jacob meets angels of God at Mahanaim	32:2-3
Jacob returns Esau's blessing	32:4-33:20
Dinah and the Hivites	34:1-31
Journey's end for Jacob and Isaac	35:1-29

7. Herman Gunkel bases his assumption on "Yahweh's providence over Israel's beginning" which he describes as the motto of the story (Gunkel 1997: 158). Then he employs the source and form critical methods and proposes the scope of the Jacob

story as 25:21-37:1[17]. He describes the literary structure of the family story of Jacob as follows:

a. The Jacob-Esau Narratives. Part I. With Isaac 25:21-28:9

b. The Jacob-Laban Narrative 28:10-32:1

c. The Jacob-Esau Narrative Part II, associated with the divine manifestation 32:2-33:17

d. Jacob in Canaan, which comprises Esau's genealogy 33:18-35:22; 36:1-37:1.

In summary one can observe that even though the theme of genealogy and family could be used as the organizing framework of the story, the categorizing principle of the structure of the story can be diverse depending on the individual's reading of the story.

2.2.2. Literary Structure Based on Various Themes

2.2.2.1. Yahweh's Faithfulness to His Covenant

Victor P. Hamilton also describes Gen. 25:19-36:43 as "The Isaac/Jacob story" probably because of the overlapping nature of the narratives of both patriarchs (Isaac and Jacob) in these chapters (Hamilton 1995: 173). He interprets Gen. 18-50 in terms of the thematic contextual framework of Yahweh's faithfulness to fulfill his promises and covenant "to those whom he has chosen." He categorizes the major plot structure of the Isaac/Jacob story as follows:

A. The birth of Esau and Jacob	25:19-26
B. Esau surrenders his birthright	25:27-34
C. Isaac and Abimelech	26:1-35
D. Jacob receives blessing through deception	27:1-45
E. Jacob meets God at Bethel	27:46:-28:22
F. Jacob meets Laban and Rachel	29:1-35
G. Jacob gains children and flocks	30:1-43
H. Jacob's flight from Laban	31:1-554
I. Encounters: Human and divine	32:1-33
J. Jacob is reconciled with Esau	33:1-20

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[17] Gunkel notes that Esau's genealogy of chapter 36 probably stems from an independent source (Gunkel 1997: 285).

K. The humbling of Dinah	34:1-31
L. From Shechem to Mamre via Bethel	35:1-29
M. Esauites and Edomites	36:1-43

2.2.2.2. Contrast between Divine and Human

Kevin Walton reads the story of Jacob by exploring "the contrast between divine and human", which is perceived as the paradox of divine presence and absence in the story of Jacob (Walton 2003: 2). He claims that the harmony of the Jacob story is based on the theme of Jacob's flight and return, which was caused by the family conflict (Walton 2003: 2). Consequently he concludes that the scope of the Jacob story covers 25:19-35:29. However he admits that "there is an overlap, and that the distinction is not complete."

Thus, Walton categorizes the Isaac/Jacob story in terms of Jacob's flight and return (Walton 2003: 3). He considers the expression: "These are the descendants of …" as a beginning of the new section (Walton 2003: 11). Then he views the literary structure of the Jacob story as follow: The divine presence in the life of Jacob (25:19-26), passages related to the issues between the presence and absence of God, and the human versus divine, showing that the divine plan will be accomplished in everything despite the deceptive nature of Jacob and his sons. The nature of Jacob and his children shows that "God's grace does not overcome human nature" (28 10-22; 34:1-35:29; Walton 2003: 59, 215). He argues that the story of Peniel shows the ambiguous nature of the divine presence in the life of Jacob. Divine working and human striving is contrasted. He remarks that although it is apparently implied that God is present in the life of Jacob yet it is indicated that there is still confusion about the presence of God as the things happening in his life show (Walton 2003: 90, 93). Probably the motive of the story is to correct the tendency or attempt of limiting God "to any predictable pattern." (32:23-33; Walton 2003: 91). It shows that human beings cannot discern the divine will. Consequently they fail to act according to God's will. However, the divine will is fulfilled through human failing, even where families are torn apart and the father deceived (26:34-28:9; Walton 2003: 124). God seems totally absent in the life of Jacob which is contrary to his promise to Jacob in Bethel that Jacob, was deceived by Laban and consequently he struggles for

justice. However at the end, God proved that he is at work for Jacob actively (29-33:20; Walton 2003: 179).

2.2.2.3. Seeking the Way to a Greater Way of Life

Leon R. Kass approaches the book of Genesis as a philosophical classic whose stories teach how "understanding the danger and accepting the limits of human power" helps to seek the way to a greater way of life. Thus, Kass reads the Jacob story in the perspective of the human behavior of perceiving a possible danger or problem and recognizing the human limits to overcome it which eventually will lead one to seek the way to a greater way of life. Thus he interprets Genesis chapters 25-28, the first phase, as how Jacob perceived the danger of losing the birth-right and at the same time he was aware about his limits to overcome the danger which eventually led him to seek the way to a greater way of life.

Then he claims that the second phase of the narrative covers chapters 29-50 and it concerns the challenges of the leadership of the fast-growing family of Jacob. The family of Jacob became a great community, and consequently faced the danger of "disintegration within and of assimilation without" (Kass 2003: 510). Thus Jacob realizes the need of effective leadership to resolve the challenges of the perpetuation of the new nation. Therefore, first, he nurtures Joseph as a leader and then he replaces the leadership position of Joseph by Judah before his death (Kass 2003: 648).

John Goldingay agrees with Kass' view of the second phase when he says that the basic driving motive of the patriarchal narrative is "the completing of the series of acts stretching from the call of Abraham to the giving of the land" (Goldingay 1980: 28). Leslie Brisman also concurs with Goldingay when he treats the Genesis story as a literature developed from different origins with distinct motifs and intentions. Thus he reads the narratives of patriarchs as a work fashioned in its most significant moments by literary art as well as theological and political motivations (Brisman 1990: xvii-xviii). However, the challenge is how to decide the assumed deriving motivation or theme of the patriarchs' narratives because, as Westermann observes, scholars hardly agree about what the narratives of the patriarchs tell us (Westermann 1976: 2).

In summing up this review, we observe that there is a lot of similarity between the boundary description of Fishbane, Wenham, Hamilton, and Walton. These scholars, although they differ in terms of organizing the episodes of the narrative unit, show significant agreement in terms of boundary description of the same as the following synopsis shows:

Fishbane	
G. Struggle in Childbirth and birth right 25:19-34	
H. Interlude; strife; deception; berakah-blessing; covenant with foreigner: 26	
I. Stealing of the blessing and flight from the land: 27:1-28:9	
J. Encounter with the divine: 28:10-22	
K. Internal cycle opens; arrival; Laban at border; deception; wages; (29) Rachel barren; Leah fertile (vv.1-24)	
L. Rachel fertile; Jacob increases the herds 30	
E' Internal cycle closes; departure; Laban at border; deception; wages 31	
D' Encounters with divine beings at sacred sites; near border; berakhah 32	
C' Deception planned; fear of Esau; berakhah gift returned; return to the land 33	
B' Interlude; strife; deception; covenant with foreigner 34	
A' Oracle fulfilled; Rachel struggles in childbirth; *berakhah*, death, resolution 35:1-22	

Wenham	
25:19:34	First encounter of Jacob and Esau
26:1-33	Isaac and the Philistines
26:34-28:9	Jacob cheats Esau of his blessing
28:10-22	Jacob meets God at Bethel
29:1-14	Jacob arrives at Laban's house
29:15-30	Jacob marries Leah and Rachel
29:31-30:24	Birth of Jacob's sons
30:25-31:1	Jacob outwits Laban

31:2-32:1 (31:25)	Jacob leaves Laban	
32:2-3	Jacob meets angels of God at Mahanaim	
32:4-33:20	Jacob returns Esau's blessing	
34:1-31	Dinah and the Hivites	
35:1-29	Journey's end for Jacob and Isaac	
Hamilton		
A The birth of Esau and Jacob		25:19-26
B. Esau surrenders his birthright		25:27-34
C. Isaac and Abimelech		26:1-35
D. Jacob receives blessing through deception		27:1-45
E. Jacob meets God at Bethel		27:46:-28:22
F. Jacob meets Laban and Rachel		29:1-35
G. Jacob gains children and flocks		30:1-43
H. Jacob's flight from Laban		31:1-554
I. Encounters: Human and divine		32:1-33
J. Jacob is reconciled with Esau		33:1-20
K. The humbling of Dinah		34:1-31
L. From Shechem to Mamre via Bethel		35:1-29
M. Esauites and Edomites		36:1-43
Walton		
25:19-26	The divine presence in the life of Jacob	
26:34-28:9	Divine will is fulfilled through human falling	
28:10-22; 34:1-35:29	God's grace does not overcome human nature	
29-33:20	God proves that he is at work for Jacob	
32:23-33	Correcting the human tendency of limiting God	

2.2.3. Summary

The above discussion shows that categorizing or describing the literary structure of the Jacob story varies based on the thematic contextual framework or assumption one may

have when he/she reads this text. Thus the commentators' criteria used to decide the boundary of the patriarchal narrative is relative, and as a result the boundary is fuzzy. Consequently it is difficult to decide the boundary of the Jacob narrative. More specifically I wonder whether it is appropriate to categorize the patriarchal narratives into different cycles, as many scholars attempted, or simply consider them as a continous narrative, of which Genesis 25:19-37:1 is a narrative unit.

I admit that this issue is difficult to resolve. Nevertheless I think it is more appropriate to describe the story of Jacob as a narrative unit[18] of the continuing patriarchal story, devoted to explaining the sole line of the patriarchal descendants chosen to inherit the promise of Yahweh and how and why that patriarchal line was chosen while other descendants of the patriarchs were excluded from the promised land as well as other promises of Yahweh (Kissling 2009: 416). Thus I concur with Fishbane who affirms this view as follows:

> The Jacob cycle is a series of episodes in the life of Jacob framed by the genealogical lists of the excluded sons, Ishmael and Esau. It is thus part of a larger patriarchal cycle of tolodot in the Book of Genesis, linking the earlier "*tolodot*-account of the creation of heaven and earth" and the ante- and postdiluvian genealogies with the list of Israelites opening the Book of Exodus (1:1-7) (Fishbane 1979: 40).

Therefore, I prefer not to use the phrase 'boundary of the Jacob story' in its strict sense. Rather, I repeat, I prefer to consider Genesis 25:19-37:1 as a narrative unit of the patriarchal story employed to elucidate how and why Jacob and his descendants were chosen and how and why Esau and his descendants were pushed out of the promised land. It is a narrative unit which shows that Jacob the younger son of Isaac and his descendants became the heirs of the promise of Yahweh as contrasted to Esau, the older son of Isaac, and his descendants.

3. Contextual Framework of 25:19-37:1
In our discussion of defining the external boundaries of the Jacob story above I suggested that it is convenient to describe Genesis 25:19-37:1 as a large narrative unit of the continuing patriarchal story rather than the Jacob cycle in a strict sense because the

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[18] Narrative unit and Jacob story are used interchangeably

boundary is fuzzy. However, one may wonder what makes it a distinct narrative unit of the continuing patriarchal story. Therefore, I wish to elaborate this view a bit further.

Gillian Brown and George Yule note that a speaker or a writer of a discourse organizes each unit of a larger discourse strategically in order to influence the interpretation of his/her audience. Accordingly he/she sets an element of the discourse which he/she believes around which "every clauses, sentences, paragraphs, episodes, and discourse is organized" right at the beginning of the unit or discourse (which is also described as staging) (Brown and Yule 1983: 134, 148). This narrative strategy is employed in Gen. 25:19-23, when the narrator says:

> The children struggled together within her; and she said, "If it is thus, why do I live?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. And the LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples, born of you, shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger (25:22-23).

This abstract shows that the narrative unit is devoted to explaining why Esau and his descendants were excluded from inheriting the promised land. Accordingly, the narrative unit concludes by reporting Esau's and his descendants' moving out of Canaan to Seir or Edom (36:6) permanently (permanently because it seems that Esau used to live already in Seir as well as Canaan where his father lived Gen. 32:3) while Jacob and his descendants stayed in Canaan, the land where his father lived (37:1):

> Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the members of his household, his cattle, all his livestock, and all the property he had acquired in the land of Canaan; and he moved to a land some distance from his brother Jacob (36:6).
> Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan (37:1).

Therefore I presume that the whole stretch of this literary structure is a self-contained narrative unit probably intended to communicate the above mentioned one main point: explaining that God's covenant to the patriarchs to give the promised land to their descendants is limited only to one particular line of descendant(s) of Abraham and Isaac, excluding the other descendants of the patriarchs, and how that promise was fulfilled by God's active guidance and involvement as manifested by choosing Jacob and his descendants (Westermann 1976: 2-30; Wenham 1994: 168; Kass 2003: 509). Kevin Walton reflects this view when he says:

> On the one hand, Jacob is singled out by divine oracles as the one to receive the patriarchal blessing even before his birth, it is he who receives the name of Israel and is father of the twelve sons who become the twelve tribes, and he has the remarkable experience with God at Penuel (Walton 2003: 1).

Thus the narrative of Jacob story presents how Jacob the underdog, compared to Esau, acquired the birthright, the blessing of his father Isaac, and became the heir of the covenant given to Abraham, consequently inheriting the promised land while Esau was sent out of the territory of the promised land. The descendants of Esau, the son of Isaac who was the promised child of Abraham, were equally entitled to inherit the promise of Yahweh as Jacob was because both of them were descendants of the promised son Isaac (Gen. 25:21). In fact Esau should have been the privileged inheritor of the promise, not Jacob, because since he was the first-born of Isaac he had the full birthright (Gen. 25:25). But the story tells us that this was not the case. Thus, in this unit, the narrator labors to explain strategically how and why Esau, the first-born son of Isaac, lost his birthright and consequently was pushed out of the promised land with all his descendants while the descendants of Jacob became heirs of the promised land enjoying the privileges of inheritance. Leon R. Kass observes this view as follows:

> In each of the first two founding generations, the covenant of God with Abraham was successfully passed to one (the younger) of the founder's two sons—first Isaac, then Jacob— while the other son—first Ishmael then Esau—was cast to the side (Kass 2003: 509).

In summary, I propose that the contextual framework or theme of the narrative unit of the Jacob story could be described as 'Jacob and his descendants as a chosen seed opposed to Esau and his descendants'. The following categorization of the literary structure of this narrative unit also shows this view more clearly.

3.1. The Literary Structure of Gen. 25:19-37:1 Based on the Theme 'Jacob and His Descendants as the Chosen Seed'

As I have already noted earlier in the above literature review each of the scholars attempts to establish a comprehensive contextual framework (theme) of the Jacob narrative which will help him/her to interpret the textual data[19]. Similarly, I also stated from the outset that presumably the Jacob story is presented to show or explain how

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[19] This is a cognitive behavior of human communication in inferential processing aimed at the search for the optimally relevant interpretation of any ostensive stimulus.

Jacob was appointed as a line of the promised descendant of the covenant made by God to Abraham and Isaac to inherit the promised land contrasted to other descendants of Abraham and Isaac.

However, this privilege is based on a condition. That is, the realization of inheriting the covenant promises is dependent on Jacob's and his descendants' living up to the expected standard of the covenant of Yahweh as he said to Abraham: "Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant" (Gen.17:14). Thus being faithful to the binding speech acts like covenant, vow, oath, and swearing are very crucial in the life of Jacob and his descendants in order to realize God's promises.

Though my organizing theme of the narrative is different, I concur with Wenham and Fishbane in terms of sketching the literary structure of this narrative unit of the Jacob story (See section 2.2.1). Thus in this section I enhance particularly Wenham's proposal of the literary structure of the story. We can sketch out the story line of the Jacob narrative unit according to this theme, episode by episode, as follows:

- **25:19-26:34:** Draws a contrast between Jacob the supplanter and Esau the natural heir. The narrative tells us that Jacob was singled out as a chosen seed of Isaac by God even before his birth (25:23). In order to explain this view the narrator tells us that the infants were struggling even in their mother's womb (25:22) and the oracle of God describes them as two nations and the elder will serve the younger (25:23). Thus, Jacob is presented as a promised seed of Isaac with whom God carries on his covenant to give the promised land to him and to his descendants. In Wenham's words this phenomenon "points forward to Jacob's domination of Esau, to Israel's subjugation of Edom." (Wenham 1994:176). The oracle of God started to be fulfilled when Esau sold his birthright by his own will (25:31-34). Thus Jacob acquired the birthright which was already prophesied even before his birth. Therefore God's promises to Isaac to give the promised land to his seed in 26:3, 23-24 refers to Jacob by implicature. The digression in 26:25-33 reflects one of the severe trials and tests which the patriarch experienced in the promised land.

- **Gen. 27:1-28:9:** Jacob receives a decisive blessing from his father Isaac by deceiving him, which seals him as a seed of the covenant to inherit the promised land. Jacob's cheating provokes Esau to anger so that he threatened to kill him. Consequently Jacob runs away to his uncle Laban to save his life as well as to get a wife.

- **28:10-15:** After Jacob secured his position as a covenant seed (which was already confirmed by God even before he was born (Gen.25:23; Mal. 1:2-3)) by receiving the birthright and the blessing of Isaac, God reveals himself to Jacob at Bethel in a dream and confirms his covenant with him while Isaac is still alive. This promise resembles the promises God made to Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 13:14-17; 26:24) so that one can assume that it is consistent with the promises he made to Abraham and Isaac. In contrast God did not make such a promise to Esau, the elder son of Isaac. Thus the implicature is that Esau was excluded from inheriting the covenant promise and only Jacob and his descendants became the line of the covenant seed.

- **28:16-22:** Jacob responds to the revelation of God and he makes an echoic vow at Bethel (which will be discussed later) while he is in distress. The vow is based on three conditions: if God keeps him safe in his journey to Padan Aram, if God gives him food to eat and clothes to wear, and if God bring him back safely to the land of his fathers.

    29:1-33:16: God grants Jacob's plea that he gave him relief from his distress:

    1. God keeps him safe in his journey to Padan Aram 29:1-14
    2. God gives him wives 29:15-30
    3. God gives him children 29:31-30:24
    4. God blesses him with wealth 30:25-43
    5. God tells him to go back to Canaan, protects him from Laban and Esau on his way back to Canaan (31:1-33:16) and brings him back to the land of his fathers safely.

- **33:17-20:** After arriving back to Canaan safely Jacob fails to fulfill his vow at Bethel. The failure of Jacob creates another expectation of relevance (adverse consequence): What adverse consequence did Jacob suffer as the result?

- **34:1-31:** Jacob's negligence to fulfill his vow in Bethel results in a terrible adverse consequence.

  1. Dinah is involved in an attempted abductive marriage by Shechem (34:1-11
  2. Jacob's children (Dinah's brothers) take revenge on the Shechemites killing all the Shechemite men (43:12-29)
  3. Canaanites and Perizzites threat to revenge (34:30)
  4. Consequently Jacob is confused and perplexed, presumably wondering why God did not protect him from this terrible event, which is a threat to the value of his honor and which will also possibly result in terrible revenge from the people of the land and the possible extinction of his descendants from existence (30-31).

- **35:1:** Amid his confusion, God reminds Jacob to go to Bethel and fulfill his vow.

- **35:2-15:** Jacob responds to God and immediately goes to Bethel to fulfill his vow so that God's protection would resume. God appears to Jacob again and renews his covenant and confirms his promise to him as he did with Abraham and Isaac.

- **35:16-29:** Jacob and his family continue living in Canaan and his deceased family members are buried where Sarah and Abraham were buried, which also functions as an authenticating sign of claiming the inheritance.

- **36:1-43:** Esau and his descendants move out of Canaan (36:6-8) because he was already excluded from the promised land.

- **37:1:** Reaffirms, as a conclusion, that on the contrary Jacob and his descendants continue living in the promised land.

It is worth noting that the above outline of the plot is provisional at this stage and it will be clarified in the subsequent chapters.

3.2. The Relevance of Jacob's Vow and the Dinah Story to the Jacob Narrative

The nature of Jacob's vow in Bethel has been observed by several scholars who consider Gen. 28:10-22 as an episode which has a central place in the Jacob story (Pagolu 1998: 158; Cartledge 1992:166; Gunkel 1997: 314; Dumbrell 1974-75: 68). Thus although both the story of Jacob's encounter with God and his vow to God at Bethel appear making a self-contained narrative unit, both episodes are clearly connected to the preceding and following story of Jacob. From the outset it is worth noting that the Bethel story significantly strengthens and fosters the accessible assumption of the sanctuary of God at Bethel which the primary audience already had in their cognitive environment (Wenham 1994:220). (The significance of Bethel will be elaborated further in my close reading of Gen. 28:10-22 in chapter four). Thus, Wenham rightly observes that the beginning and ending of this unit-story was clearly designed in a way to link the surrounding story, both preceding and following, "closing with Jacob's vow in vv 20-22 which again looks back to his departure from home and forward to his eventual return" (Wenham 1994:219).

It is worth noting that the utterances in 28:10-15 (see my translation in appendix 2) has apparent interpretive resemblance with the promise Yahweh made to Abraham (12:2-3; 13:14-16) and to Isaac (26:2-4). As I already remarked elsewhere in this chapter, presumably the narrator's projected communicative intention or implicature was to show that Jacob and his descendants are the divinely inaugurated sole line of the promised seed of Abraham entitled to inherit the promise of God to Abraham and Isaac, contrasted with Esau and his descendants (Wenham 1994:223). Pagulo agrees with this view when he says that Gen. 28:10-22 has a central place in the Jacob story and that it brings the theological aspect of the Jacob-Esau story to the forefront (Pagolu 1998: 158).

As I noted above, the literary structure of this episode (Gen 28:10-22) shows that although the episode is clearly linked to the preceding and following narratives it is a distinct single unit. However, as Wenham notes, one may divide the story into two: 1. Jacob's encounter with God in his dream and his response (10-17), and 2. the vow of Jacob (20-22) (Wenham 1994:19). But it is more natural to take it as a single unit which has three features: Jacob's encounter with God in a dream (10-15), his immediate response to the encounter as it was reflected by expressing his emotional feeling (16-19), and making his echoic vow (20-22). His vow is apparently echoic to 28:10-15 (Wenham

1994:219). It was echoic because his utterance was an interpretive use of the thought of God which was represented by the utterance of God in 28:13-15.

What God spoke to Jacob contains the following promises to Jacob and his descendants: 1. He promised to be with him and protect him. 2. He will give the promised land to him and his descendants. 3. Jacob and his descendants will be a blessing for all families of the world. 4. He will multiply his descendants. 5. He will bring him back to the promised land. 6. He will never leave him until he fulfills what he has promised to him.

Similarly the echoic vow of Jacob contains the following plea represented by the conditional nature of the votive utterance: 1. If God will be with me; 2. if God protects me on my journey to Haran; 3. if I return in peace to my father's house then; 1. the Lord will be my God; 2. the stone which I set as a pillar shall be the house of God; and 3. I shall give tenth out of all God will give me. Thus the votive utterance of Jacob shows that Jacob echoically or interpretively selected the thoughts of God that are relevant to the context of his distress and flight from the promised land without any clear idea about his future fate. Therefore his echoic utterance of vow expresses that Jacob was encouraged, and consequently his positive emotional feeling about the event was aroused by the promise of God to him in his dream. Thus he validated it and believed that God would fulfill what he promised; and he committed himself to express his gratitude to God in a particular way if he fulfills what he has just said. Similar echoic utterance continues to recurr in the subsequent narratives: 31:3, 5, 42; 32:12-13; 35:1, 3, 13-15.

Thus this votive utterance raises an expectation of relevance: whether Jacob's votive plea was granted and whether Jacob fulfilled his vow or not (generally whether the intended cognitive effects were achieved). Thus the votive utterance of Jacob raises an expectation of relevance which integrates the different componential parts of the narrative of the Jacob story in chapters 29-35:15, which we will examine in the following discussion. Cartledge accurately observes this fact when he remarks that one of the several functions of 28:10-22, which includes Jacob's votive utterance, is that it "integrates the components of the Jacob/Esau and Jacob/Laban cycles" (Cartledge 1992: 166).

Thus I argue that the writer of the story had strategically put the vow of Jacob right at the beginning of this narrative unit as a staging in order to represent his cognitive organization of the discourse in his linguistic or public organization (Brown and Yule 1983: 148). Accordingly every linguistic means of the narrative unit (28:10-35:15) goes around this staging in order to achieve the intended cognitive effects (discourse).

4. Conclusion

In conclusion the above analysis shows that 28:10-35:15 is a distinct narrative unit presented within the Jacob story of Gen 25:19-37:1. Therefore, the interpreters and translators of the Bible should treat Gen 25:19-37:1 as a coherent story within which the votive narrative of Jacob (28:10-35:15) is embedded. Hence defining the relevance of the vow of Jacob in Bethel is crucial for defining the coherence of the narrative unit 28:10-35:15 and for the task of interpreting and translating it. Once again the summary given above of the literary structure of the story shows that the vow of Jacob was made within the larger context of the story of Jacob because its immediate context, Gen. 28:10-17, which is in fact echoed in the utterance of Jacob's vow (28:20-22), is strongly linked to the preceding and following narrative of Jacob (Cartledge 1992:166).

Gen. 28:10-22 is linked to the preceding narrative of Jacob because Jacob's votive utterance is echoic to the utterance of God to him in his dream. (Its echoic aspect will be discussed in chapter four.) Likewise the utterance of God to Jacob in his dream is also linked to God's oracle to Rebekah in 25:23 as well as God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3; 13:14-17 and to Isaac in 26:2-6. Similarly it is linked to the following story of Jacob because the fulfillment of this vow was apparently presented at the key places of the following narrative of Jacob: 31:3, 5, 42; 32:12-13; 35:1, 3, 13-15. Therefore, Genesis 28:10-22, beyond its linkage to the preceding and following story, functions as a framework for the narrative unit of Gen. 28:10-35:1-15.

In this regard it is crucial to understand the Hebrew concept נדר 'vow' and its practice in its ancient Israelite context so that we may be able to understand what kind expectation of relevance the votive utterance of Jacob creates or raises in the mind of the contemporary audience.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CONCEPT OF נדר 'VOW' IN THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

1. Introduction

In chapter two I showed that Genesis 28:10-35:1-15 is a narrative unit within the larger Jacob story and at the same time it is also a coherent part of the larger story, challenging from the outset the Bible translators and interpreters to treat it as a coherent part of the larger story. I have also argued that the vow-making of Jacob in Genesis 28:10-22, beyond its immediate linkage to the preceding and following story, functions as a framework for the narrative unit of Gen. 28:10-35:1-15. Hence defining the relevance of the vow of Jacob in Bethel is crucial for defining the coherence of the larger narrative unit and for the task of interpreting and translating the Jacob story.

As a first step to demonstrating this it is now necessary to describe the concept נדר which is usually translated into English as 'vow'. Once again, understanding the concept of נדר is crucially relevant before I embark on reading Genesis 28:10-35:15 because the narrator employed the נדר of Jacob in Bethel as a framework of his narrative presentation. Therefore, I wish to define the concept of נדר of the Hebrew Scriptures in its Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) cultural context prior to my reading of this particular narrative unit. One of my main objectives in this regard is to establish whether there is an adverse consequence for the unfulfilled vow, which I presume will help us to interpret the votive narrative of Jacob in general and Genesis chapter 34 in particular. Thus, in this chapter I intend to describe this concept and show how understanding the Hebrew concept 'vow' will help us significantly to explain how the vow-making of Jacob in Bethel functions as the framework of the narrative unit and how the Dinah story is a coherent part of this narrative unit, which will also be discussed in chapters four, five, and six.

Being from a community which has an institution of the vow and actively practices it, I have observed to my surprise that the concept of the Hebrew 'vow' is described as if it were the same concept as oath. *The Encyclopedia of Judaica* (Rabinowitz 1971: 227-228), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Coppes 1980:

557-558), *the Encyclopedia of Religion* (Klinger 1987),[20] and *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Schiffman 2000: 621-623) all overlooked the need to make a clear distinction between the Hebrew concept נדר 'vow' and other similar Hebrew concepts like oath and covenant. Therefore, I also intend to show that the concept of the Hebrew vow is distinct from oath, covenant, swearing and any other similar commissive speech acts of the ancient Hebrew.

In this regard, I would like to examine the votive institution of the Hadiyya and other vow-conscious communities of Ethiopia and see what further light it may shed towards understanding the ancient Hebrew institution of the vow and the votive narratives of the Hebrew scripture. This is because the Horn of Africa, North Africa, and Near Eastern cultural areas have geographical, cultural, and linguistic links and they were culturally contiguous societies. Rønne observes this phenomenon when he notes that the Hadiyya and other neighboring ethnic groups might have experienced significant cultural influence of North Africa, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean since the distant past. He describes the area as follows:

> South Ethiopia may, in a way, be described as a border district and a meeting place, on the one hand on African soil and on the other in an area which has been subject to influence since the distant past from the northern and eastern parts of present Ethiopia and thus from North Africa, the Middle East and the Mediterranean (Rønne 2002: 472).

Since I have also observed this phenomenon I will attempt to demonstrate that there is a close affinity between the Hadiyya concept of vow and the ANE concept of vow. Hence, I believe that it is worthwhile to consider the comparative study between the current Hadiyya concept of vow and ANE concept of vow in order to draw some light towards the understanding of the Hebrew concept נדר and about the adverse consequence of the unfulfilled נדר 'vow'. In this discussion, I wish to examine the Hadiyya concept of vow for the reading of the Hebrew concept נדר 'vow' but not to influence it.

In addition, this discussion will show that understanding the encyclopedic information of a term and its use in a particular context will help us to uncover the speaker-intended meaning so that we may be able to translate the meaning exactly as

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[20] Klinger claims that the distinction between vow and oaths is that "a vow is merely a personal promise, where as an oath is a promise made before some institutional authority." (klinger 1987: 301). He even claims that the Hebrew vows are unconditional (Klinger 1987: 303).

intended by the communicator for every use of the concept. Thus I suggest that this endeavor will help us in four ways:

1. It will help us to uncover the presupposed or assumed encyclopedic information of נדר 'Vow' in the cognitive environment of the primary audience.

2. It will help us to establish its conceptual distinctiveness or contrast with other similar concepts or speech acts like 'oath', 'covenant', and 'curse'.

3. It will help us with the task of analyzing and understanding the communicative intention of discourses in which it occurs. Because, as Roy Dilley remarks, the lack of mutually shared knowledge of a key concept(s), which otherwise would trigger the salient feature of the text, would let one misunderstand or escape without noticing this feature (Dilley 1999, 16).

4. It will help us to choose the most relevant expression of the target community in order to achieve the highest interpretive resemblance in the translation process.

In this regard, since it was the Hadiyya concept of vow which triggered my study of the votive narrative of Jacob, first I will examine the Hadiyya concept of vow and establish its encyclopedic information in the cognitive environment of the Hadiyya people. Secondly, I will attempt to investigate the nature of Hebrew נדר in three literary corpora: in the ANE cultural context, in the Hebrew Scriptures, and in other relevant Israelite literature. Thirdly, I will make brief remarks about the distinctiveness of נדר compared to other similar Hebrew concepts in order to establish sufficient encyclopedic information of the concept נדר, which presumably was in the cognitive environment of the original audience. Finally I will compare the conceptual range of vow in both ancient Hebrew and the current cognitive environment of the Hadiyya people, which I believe will help us in making decision in terms of choosing more appropriate expressions in the translation process.

2. The Hadiyya Concept of Vow

In this section I wish to examine the Hadiyya concept of vow *silet* with a view to interpreting the Hebrew concept נדר 'vow' by comparison. By examining the Hadiyya concept of vow, I intend to show two things: 1. that a vow-conscious society can sufficiently reconstruct the social institution of the Hebrew vow. Studying such societies' concept of vow will give us an opportunity to reconstruct the votive utterance and votive narrative in its institutional framework; 2. that an unfulfilled vow will result in adverse consequences.

2.1. The nature of the Concept of 'Vow' in Hadiyya

Making a vow is common among the Hadiyya people among both followers of traditional religion and Christians, and it is popularly practiced in the community. The concept of "vow" is lexicalized as s*ilet.* However, so far there is not even a single written document found about the concept *Silet* and about its practice among the Hadiyya people. Therefore I was convinced that it was necessary to do research among the Hadiyya people and other relevant people groups in order to understand about the encyclopedic information of *silet* in the cognitive environment of these people. I interviewed fifty people at different venues and places among the Hadiyya people as well as other places.

The interviewees include both men and women of different ages. The interviewees' geographical location included different parts of Ethiopia: Addis Ababa, Hadiyya, Central Shoa, Gondor, Gojam, Sidamo, Kambatta, and Wollo. I have also interviewed two Eritreans. The majority of the interviewees are from the Hadiyya people because in this research Hadiyya is taken as a sample language community for the purpose of this research. The following are summaries of the interview responses.

2.1.1. Summary of the Interview Responses

In the interview, I asked mainly fourteen questions about the Hadiyya concept of vow (see appendix 4) and then the interviewees responded to the questions as summarized as follows[21]:

Regarding my question about why they need to make a vow, all the interviewees, unanimously, said that certainly it is possible to pray to God without making a vow but making a vow is a kind of petitioner's commitment to express his thanks and appreciation to God in a particular way for granting his votive plea. I also asked them whether vow making is intended to influence God. Except for two scholars, one from Eritrea and the other from Ethiopia, all the participants said that making a vow is not intended to influence God. Rather it is caused by the distress of the petitioner. It is a reflection of the emotion of the petitioner because of his distressing situation or problem. They indicated that it is intrinsic for them to bring such gifts to God as a thanks giving if the deity helps the petitioner to get out of his distress. If the deity does not help, the vower is under no obligation tufilfill his vow.

All the interviewees were clear about to whom one makes a vow. They emphatically said that they never make a vow to another human being. A vow is always made by humans to a deity.[22] I also asked when or in what circumstances do people make a vow and they unanimously responded that people make vow only when they are distressed because of a specific problem(s).

Regarding where people make vows and where they fulfill their vows if a deity grants their votive plea, they responded that they can make a vow anywhere but they must fulfill their votive promise to the deity only in a place where they believe the deity resides.

Regarding when people fulfill their vows the interviewees said that they will fulfill their vow only when God answers their votive plea. About my question what would happen if one fails to fulfill his vow, they emphatically responded that it is a bad thing not to fulfill one's vow; terrible things will happen as an adverse consequence. Several of the

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[21] The questions and their answers are restructured here because of the flow but the content is retained exactly as the interviewees responded (See the full interview in appendix 4).

[22] A vow could be made to deities like God, the angel Gebre'el, the angel Michael, family spirits, Spirits which work through witchdoctors, etc.

interviewees illustrated by giving examples about their own experiences when and how they make their vows and when they fulfill their vows. I give one example here. A middle aged man told his own experience which I paraphrased as follows:

> Once I bought a goat and the goat was seriously sick, which distressed me a lot. So I made a vow to God saying: 'God if you heal this goat and if it produces many young then I will give you one out of them as a thanks-giving.' God healed the goat and eventually it produced so many goats. But I failed to fulfill my vow. Consequently God hit all the goats by the plague and all of them died. Thus I learned a lesson. It is not an obligation to make a vow but once it is made it is seriously binding.

The interviewees also responded that anybody can make a vow. They said that even a thief can make a vow to God saying: "God, if you give me success in my stealing I will give …to you."

They also responded that it is impossible to change their vows. They also said that they never annul a vow once it is made; it is very binding. But they are obliged to fulfill their votive promises if and only if the deity answers their votive plea.

Finally, regarding whether there are some things which are not supposed to be offered as a vow offering they told me that they can offer anything. I was told that some people even offer lice, rat, walking on barefoot to the sanctuary of the deity, building a sanctuary for the deity, etc.

2.1.2. Summary of the Hadiyya Concept of Vow

The making of *silet* 'vow' in Hadiyya is always perceived as a conditional commitment made by people to a deity. The necessary condition or context of making a *silet* is always distress—a person presents his plea to a deity in order to get relief from his distress, and commits himself to do something to a deity as an expression of his gratitude if the deity grants his votive plea. The cause of the distress can be anything: barrenness, war, poverty, sickness, desperate situation for achievement, journey or travel, etc. The commitment is not binding if the deity does not grant his plea.

The Hadiyya votive institution is not legislated; rather it is an informal institution. However, within the informal institution the concept of vow is well understood in the community, covering the essentials of the concept, including the level of expectation on

the human party for the grant of the conditions expressed, and to promptly fulfill the commitment made to God.

A vow can be made anywhere. However, the place of fulfilling the vow must be in the Church, or at the diviners' place, or at a tree or river or a mountain depending into whom the vow was made. The focus is on the deity, not on the location or a sanctuary. It is required that one must fulfill his vow exactly as he committed himself to the deity. Otherwise, it is expected that some kind of adverse consequence is inevitable to happen if one fails to fulfill his vow.

Finally the concept *silet* in Hadiyya has the following encyclopedic information:

1. It is always made between man and deity addressed by a human to a diety .
2. It is always conditional.
3. It is made in the context of distress.
4. It must be fulfilled on condition that the deity has answered one's plea.
5. It can be made anywhere.
6. It must be fulfilled at the place perceived as where the deity resides.
7. Adverse consequences are expected if one fails to fulfill ones vow.
8. Once it is made it can never be changed to something else.
9. It is never annulled.
10. You can promise to do or give anything you want as a thanks-giving to the deity.
11. Anybody can make a *silet*.
12. It is not intended to influence the deity rather it is an expression of emotion of the petitioner and his commitment to express his gratitude to God in a particular way if his plea is granted.

3. The Concept of נדר 'Vow' in Ancient Israelite Society

We have investigated the Hadiyya concept of vow in brief. Now let us investigate the ANE cultural context whether they had a similar institution of vowing and whether they conceived that the unfulfilled vow will result in adverse consequence. Since the Hebrew Scriptures were written in the ANE cultural context there is no doubt that the outcome of this investigation will throw significant light for the understanding of the biblical concept of vow; and it is more reliable light than the current Hadiyya concept of vow.

3.1 The Nature of נדר in the Ancient Near Eastern Context

This discussion concerns the nature of the concept נדר in the Ancient Near Eastern context before 3rd century BCE. Tony Cartledge (1992) has done a remarkable work in examining the Ancient Near Eastern culture regarding vow-making. He examined Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian, Hittite, Ugaritic, Old Aramaic, Punic and Neo-Punic texts (Cartledge 1992: 73) and argued that נדר in the Ancient Near Eastern cultural context was conditional, it was made only between God and man, it was done in the context of distress, serious adverse consequence was expected if one failed to fulfill the vow, and it served a similar function to the biblical vow in the life of the people. In this section I rely heavily on Cartledge's work.

3.1.1. Vows in Mesopotamian and its Culturally Contiguous Area

The broad geographical area of the Mesopotamia includes the region of the southwest Asia, eastern Syria, southeastern Turkey, and most of Iraq. This area was a center of ancient civilization whose culture influenced a wider geographical area including North Africa, as Edzard observes: "This area was a center of the ancient civilization whose cultural influence extended throughout the Middle East and as far as the Indus Valley, Egypt, and the Mediterranean" (Edzard 2003: 860). Thus, I believe it is relevant to explore the concept of the vow in the ancient cultural environment of Mesopotamia and in those other related areas which are culturally influenced by Mesopotamia in order to get some insight about the concept of vow in the Hebrew Scriptures.

3.1.1.1. Sumerian Vows

The literature resources we have access to so far about the Sumerian culture do not show that the concept of vow was lexicalized in the Sumerian language. However it is observed that the Sumerians practiced the vow in its conditional nature. For example people made petition to a deity for healing from an illness and they promised to do something in response to express their gratitude if the deity heals them (Cartledge 1992: 75). The promise of the vow includes "material gifts, temple service, or more commonly, public praise" (Cartledge 1992: 75). The vow was made in the context of distress, only between

deity and humans who wish to get out of distress. The fulfillment of the vow was held only in the temple (Cartledge 1992: 75).

3.1.1.2. Babylonian and Assyrian Vows

The Babylonian and Assyrian language is a dialect of East Semitic called Akkadian. The concept 'vow' was lexicalized as *ikribu* which is not cognate to the Hebrew נדר. However there is sufficient textual evidence which shows that the conditional vow making was extensively common among the Babylonians and Assyrians (Oppenbeim 1964: 26). Vow was made only between a human and a god. The vow of promise, including material promises, was fulfilled on condition of honored or granted votive request. The request comprises relief from sickness and different kinds of distress (Cartledge 1992: 77). The vows include singing songs of praise (Cartledge 1992: 80-81) and serving the deity in different ways like proclaiming his greatness (Cartledge 1992: 82-83), and making an image as a votive offering and depositing it in the temple of the deity (Leick 1994: 94). The praise has a public nature.

Most of the Babylonian and Assyrian prayers of vow are similar to the Hebrew Psalms. For example they promise to praise publicly on condition of honored request which is a promise of an abstract gift rather than a material gift (Cartledge 1992: 85). The fulfillment of the promise was seriously required and the failure could lead to a serious adverse consequence as Cartledge observes: "Failure to fulfill one's vows could lead to sickness or other troubles, and recovery was conditional on fulfilling the promised payment." (Cartledge 1992: 86). For example some letters written by two women narrate that some family members were attacked by sickness and the whole family was in danger because the god Assur let loose or unleashed the demons to attack them because a person called Pushuken failed to fulfill his vow to him (Cartledge 1992: 88). The location for the payment of the vow is the sanctuary/temple of the deity (Cartledge 1992: 90).

In summary the Assyro-Babylonian custom of practicing vows is similar to the Hadiyya counterpart of vow: it is conditional, it was taken in the context of prayer, the motivation of the vow was to seek relief from a distress, the content of votive prayers was

the promise of public praises, the vow was binding—it must be fulfilled, the unfulfilled vow will result in adverse consequence, and the fulfillment of the vow should be in the place where they believe the deity resides (Oppenbeim 1964: 242).

3.1.1.3. Egyptian Vows

Cartledge notes that there is no significant evidence in the Egyptian religious literature about the conditional vow compared with other Ancient Near Eastern cultures (Cartledge 1992: 99). He presumes that this was because all the accessible written documents were from the kings who used to consider themselves as gods. Consequently vow-making is not expected from them, because vow-making naturally implies a petition from a distressed human being to his god for special favor and help. However the few documents available from the common people show that conditional vow-making was practiced (1992: 95). The location for the fulfillment of the Egyptian vows was also the temple of the deities (Hoffmeier 1994: 284).

3.1.1.4 Hittite Vows

Unger notes that Hittites were non-Semitic people probably of Indo-European origin. Thus their language is categorized as one of the Indo-European language family. Hittites were one of the inhabitants of the land of Canaan at the time of the Israelite's conquest of the land (Unger 1988: 576). Thus ancient Israelites share the same cultural environment with the Hittites.

The Hittite religious literature shows that the conditional vow-making is extensively common in the Hittite culture (Bryce 2002: 175) and it was made in the context of prayer to get relief from distress (Cartledge 1992: 102). The concept of vow is lexicalized as *malda* (Cartledge 1992: 100). The fulfillment of the vow was considered as a joy that it is accompanied by a feast (Cartledge 1992: 101). The act of vow-making was so serious that it is believed that the failure to fulfill a vow will provoke the anger of gods and will result in punishment which was perceived by the Hittites as a reminder by gods to fulfill the vow (Cartledge 1992: 103-105). Making the promise and accomplishing the same was perceived as their confidence in the gods and thanks-giving to the gods for

answering their requests (Cartledge 1992: 104, 107). Thus reciprocity is observed in the inistitution of vow. The location of the vow-making and fulfillment was the temple of a god, and it should be done publicly.

3.1.1.5. Ugaritic Vows

The Ugaritic literatures also show that vow-making was common in the Ugaritic culture. The concept of vow is lexicalized in the Hebrew cognate *ndr*. But the concept of *ndr* in Ugaritic is broader than the Hebrew concept of נדר because it comprises a vow of man to god, a vow of god to man, and even a serious promise of one king to another king (probably to the superior) (Cartledge 1992: 108, 112). For example, the promise of the god El to King Keret (spelled also as Kirta) to give him children (Cartledge 1992: 112) and the Ugaritic king's promise to another king were referred as *ndr* (Cartledge 1992: 122). But I presume that the pragmatic sense of the term נדר when it is used in relation to the human vow to deity would be distinct from the other two. However my main focus here is to show that the Hebrew concept נדר parallels with the Ugaritic concept of vow as David Marcus rightly observes the similarity between the ancient Israelite's narrative vow and the Ugaritic narrative vows (Marcus 1986: 21).

The nature of the Ugaritic vow are: it is conditional which is also marked by the Hebrew cognate *hm* and it is made in the context of prayer motivated by a distress desiring to get relief from one's deity from one's distress (Cartledge 1992: 110-111; Hendel 1987: 48-51). The causes of distress are various including enemy threat, lack of children, getting a wife, and a long journey (Cartledge 1992: 117-118). For example see the vow-making of the Keret, King of Habur (transcribed as Kirta)[23]. The vow was presented in the poetry as follows:

> He there makes a vo[w, ki]rta the Noble:
> "As Asherah of Tyrians lives,
> The Goddess of the Sidonians,
> If I take Huraya into my palace,
> And have the girl enter my court,
> Her two parts I'll make silver,

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[23] Since the original inscription was syllabic different people supply different forms of vowels.

Her third part I'll make gold!" (Parker 1997: 19-20).[24]

The seriousness of the vow making is manifest in Ugaritic literature. For instance King Keret takes a vow for his successful journey to get his wife Huray (Cartledge 1992: 108-109). It is perceived that the king received from god what he requested: "sons of Kirta are as many as vowed; Huray's daughters are just as were vowed" (Parker 1997: 26). But he failed to fulfill his vow which resulted in a devastating consequence. It was perceived that the king was seriously ill because the goddess Asherah punished him for failing to fulfill his vow (Parker 1997: 27; Hendel 1987: 61). But when the King fulfilled his vow the god El brought healing to the ailing king by lifting the punishment (Cartledge 1992:114). Hendel compares the vow of King Keret and the vow of Jacob and observes similarity between the two stories except that he wrongly concludes that in the stories Keret was presented as failed to fulfill his vow while Jacob was presented as faithful to his vow (Hendel 1987: 61-63). In the Ugaritic concept the vow fulfillment was perceived as an occasion of joy or celebration and the location of taking and fulfilling the vow is the temple/shrine of god(s) (Cartledge 1992: 112).

3.1.1.6. Aramaic Vows

Aramaic literature also show that the conditional vow to a deity was practiced in Aramaic culture and the concept of vow was lexicalized by the Hebrew cognate *nzr* (Cartledge 1992: 127). However the evidences are limited and many of them are controversial. The nature of the vows was that the vow-making took place in the context of prayer and it was motivated by a distress. For instance King Bar-Hadad made a vow to a god known as Melqart in the time of war (Cartledge 1992: 125-126). Thus the vow was directed from human to a deity to get relief form the distress. The vow-making and fulfillment of the

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[24]The following is the Ugaritic transcription of the text:
 tm yrd krt t
Iitt airt srm
Hm hry bty iqb
Asrb gimt hzry
Tnh kspm atn
W tltth hrsm
Ylk ym wtn
Tlt rb ym (Parker 1997: 19-20).

same was held in the sanctuary of the deity although the evidence is limited about this claim (Cartledge 1992: 125).

3.1.1.7. *Phoenician, Punic, and Neo-Punic Vows*

Phoenician, Punic, and Neo-Punic texts provide an enormous corpus of votive literature. But Cartledge questions their relevance to the Ancient Near Eastern cultural context because almost all of them are from the third, second and first century BCE and most of them are from Mediterranean and North African cultural environments (Cartledge 1992: 129). However, the historical documents indicate that the Phoenicians were Semitic people who migrated from the Ancient Near East Mediterranean region and settled in North Africa and Western Spain (Unger 1988: 1005-1006). Thus there is no doubt that the migrants carried their culture along with them. Therefore I suggest that gleaning their concept of vow will contribute toward this discussion.

Phoenician: The practice of conditional vow-making is common in the Phoenician cultures. The nature of a vow was that it was made in the context of prayer, it was motivated by distress desiring to get relief from a deity, and the promise of vow was fulfilled only when the deity grants the petition (Cartledge 1992: 130). Fulfilling the vow is perceived as expressing one's gratitude to the deity for honoring the petitioner by answering his prayers. Therefore it should be a public celebration (Cartledge 1992: 130).

Punic and Neo Punic: Punic refers to Carthage, a West Mediterranean Phoenician (Punic) city (Crystal 1990: 988). The Punic literatures also show that the conditional vow-making to gods was widely common, particularly to Baal-Shemaim. The concept of the vow was lexicalized by the Hebrew cognate *ndr* (Cartledge 1992: 131). The nature of the vow was that it was made only between man and deity, and it was taken in the context of prayer, when the person who is in distress seeks relief from a god (Cartledge 1992: 133). A petitioner fulfills his vow only when he receives an answer from god for his prayer. Fulfilling the vow was perceived as expressing one's gratitude to the deity and his trust and request to the deity for continued blessing (Cartledge 1992: 133). The location of the fulfilling of the vow must be in the sanctuary of the deity.

3.1.2. Summary of נדר in Ancient Near Eastern Cultural Context

The nature of the vow in the Ancient Near Eastern Cultures could be summarized as follows (See also Cartledge 1992: 134-136):

1. Conditional vow-making was a common cultural institution in all Ancient Near Eastern societies. The tradition was most common among the Mesopotamians, Hittites, and the Phoenicio-Punic peoples.

2. Except for a very few unusual examples in the context of Ugaritic vow-making all the vows in the Ancient Near Eastern cultures were taken between humans and deity.

3. Vow-making frequently took place in the temple of the deity and was almost always fulfilled in the temple of the deity.

4. Vow-making to a deity was taken in the context of prayer motivated by the personal or national distress seeking relief and blessing from the deity. Some of the causes of the distress are physical illness, desire for long life, war, long distance travel, and desire for wife and children.

5. It is implied by the texts that the fulfillment of the vow by the petitioner is perceived as an expression of gratitude, joy, and praise to the deity for granting one's request. So it was held as an event of public celebration in the temple as a sign of recognition of the deity's power and loving care for his people at the same time desiring and requesting for the continued blessing of the deity. Thus the relationship of the humans with their deity is apparent in the process of the vow-making. Hence by nature the vow-making implies reciprocity between the deity and humans.

6. Finally most literatures of the Ancient Near Eastern culture show that vow making is a very serious matter. The petitioner must faithfully fulfill his vow without any delay. The failure to fulfill a vow will provoke a deity to wrath and may lead him or her to some adverse consequence.

Thus the examination of the Ancient Near Eastern cultural context shows that their vow-making practice is in great affinity with the Hadiyya practice of the vow-making as well

as with the ancient Israelites' practice of the vow-making which we are going to see in the following discussion.

3.2. The Nature of the נדר in the Hebrew Scriptures

The term נדר occurs 31 times in the Hebrew Scriptures in its verb form while it occurs 59 times in its noun form (Kohlenberger & Swanson 1998: 5616). It is mentioned for the first time in the Hebrew Scriptures in Gen. 28:20-22. The importance of the utterance of נדר in the ancient Israelite society is indisputable. This fact is exhibited by the Hebrew Scriptures and other ancient Israelite literatures which will be examined and substantiated in the following discussion. Cartledge observes this fact when he notes that the Israelite traditions exhibit that the vow-making is extensively practiced throughout the history of the Israelites since the period of patriarchs (Cartledge 1992: 11). Right at the early phase of the process of the inception of their national status from Exodus to Canaan the Israelites practiced making a corporate vow to God (Cartledge1992: 12):

> Then Israel made a vow to the LORD and said, "If you will indeed give this people into our hands, then we will utterly destroy their towns." The LORD listened to the voice of Israel, and handed over the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their towns; so the place was called Hormah (Num. 21:2-3.)

Irrespective of their social and economic diversity every member of the society practiced vowing (Berlinerblau 1996: 166). Significant numbers of the Jewish religious literatures like Talmud and Mishnah[25] also reflect this fact (Rabinowitz 1971: 227).

One important question to be answered in relation to this discussion is the question of the intention of vow-making. In order to answer this question one needs to investigate the nature of the vow as presented in the Hebrew Scriptures in the Ancient Near Eastern context. At the outset I presume that the Hebrew Scriptures exhibit some apparent features of this concept which will help us to describe the nature of נדר. In this

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[25] "Talmud is the work which embodies the mental labors of the ancient Jewish teaching during a period of about eight hundred years (from about 300 BCE to 500 CE) in expounding and developing the civil and religious law of the Bible…Talmud contains two distinct works: the mishnah, as the text and the gemara as a voluminous collection of commentaries and discussions on the text." (Mielziner 1968: 3). Mishnah: it is "the authorized codification of the oral or unwritten law which, on the basis of the written law contained in the Pentateuch, developed during the second Temple and down to the end of the second century of the common era." (Mielziner 1968: 4).

regard, in the following discussions, I will briefly attempt to do two things: 1. I will elicit the different features of the נדר in the Hebrew Scriptures, and 2. I will briefly explore whether the essential nature of the concept נדר is consistent in different genres of the Hebrew Scriptures.

3.2.1. נדר is Made only between God and Humans

One of the most important natures of the concept נדר as presented in the Hebrew Scriptures is that in the ancient Israelite society vow-making always takes place only between God and humans (Skinner 1980: 379). Cartledge rightly observes this feature of נדר when he says "vows are usually motivated by some special need and always directed toward God (never toward another person)" (Cartledge 1992: 17). He adds: "vow begins with a plea of humans for divine action, followed by a conditional promise of the worshiper's response" (Cartledge 1992: 16). Accordingly all the uses of נדר in the Hebrew Scriptures show that נדר was a promise made by humans to God. Therefore I strongly argue that the action of the vow-making takes place only between God and man, never between man and man as all the available 90 references of the Hebrew Scriptures show this fact.

This nature is exhibited in all three major genres of the Hebrew Scriptures: narrative, wisdom literatures and the books of the prophets. All the votive narratives show that in the ancient Israelite's vow-making was only between God and man. For example see the vow-making of Jacob in Gen. 28:20-22. Similarly all the references of the נדר in the wisdom literatures (Example: Prov. 7:14; Ps. 116:18; Ecc. 5:4) and all the references in the prophets (Is. 19:21; Jer. 44:25; Jonah. 1:16; Mal. 1:14; and Na. 1:16) show that vows are made only between the deity and humans.

3.2.2. נדר is Always Taken in the Context of Distress

It is evidently observed that in the Hebrew Scriptures נדר is always taken in the context distress. All the utterances of the vow in the Hebrew Scriptures show that the vows are always motivated by distress and uttered to God in the context of calling upon the Lord for relief (Wenham 1994: 224). Cartledge rightly observes this fact and notes that "vows

are universally motivated by some sort of personal (usually) or national (occasionally) distress" (Cartledge 1992: 135). The cause of the distress could be sickness of oneself or one's relative, barrenness, rage of war, long journey, and etc. For example Hanna was distressed by barrenness that she prayed and made a vow to God as follows:

> She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD, and wept bitterly. She made this vow: "O LORD of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head." (1 Samuel 1:10-11).

The importance of making a vow in such situation is that when a petitioner utters a vow to God in such a distressing situation she/he feels relieved because he has full confidence in God that he will hear his/her solemn request. This aspect was evident from the behavior of Hanna after she made the vow: "Then the woman went to her quarters, ate and drank with her husband, and her countenance was sad no longer." (1 Sam. 1:18). Thus the practice of vow reflects a good positive relationship between God and the petitioner (Cartledge 1992: 136). This nature of the vow was evident in all the narratives concerning vows: Gen. 28: 20-22; Num. 21: 2, Judge. 11:30; 1 Sam. 1:11; 2 Sam. 15:7-8.

Similarly Psalms 132:2 also demonstrates that wisdom literature also represent that the ancient Israelites made vows in the context of distress. However the utterances of the vow in the books of prophets do not clearly express this feature of the vow, presumably because the utterance of the prophets was more focused on criticizing and evaluating the behavior of the petitioners rather than narrative aspect of the vow (Jer. 44:25; Mal. 1:14).

3.2.3. נדר as a Strictly Binding Utterance

The Hebrew Scriptures attest that vow-making is a free will commitment and it is not a religious duty. Consequently not every member of the Israelite community is expected to make a vow (Deut. 23:23). But once it is made it will become a seriously binding promise and it must be fulfilled promptly when God grants one's votive plea. In this regard the Hebrew Scriptures clearly state that נדר is a very serious binding utterance accompanied with some kind of sanction if one fails to fulfill his vow:

> When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it… Do not let your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake; why should God be angry at your words, and destroy the work of your hands? (Eccl. 5:4a, 6)

Similarly the Jewish Encyclopedia describes vow as "promise made under religious sanction" and such vows are so binding that a person is demanded even to replace a lost gift of נדר unlike other free will offerings (Lauterbach : 451-452). Therefore a person who makes a vow will be under strong obligation to fulfill his vow. An unfulfilled vow will result in serious adverse consequences for the human party because it will be a sin before God (Deut. 23:21-23) which will provoke him to punish the petitioner: "why should God be angry at your voice, and destroy the work of your hands?" Eccl. 5:6. Likewise, as we will see below, Mishnah, Talmud, and the Ancient Near Eastern cultural practice of vow also provide sufficient evidence about the seriousness of the consequence of the neglected vow. But it is worth noting that the type of the punishment is not stated as being of a particular kind.

Consequently anything dedicated to God as a vow offering, even including unclean animals becomes irreversibly holy to God (Lev. 27:9-10). As a result a person who made a vow to dedicate himself or herself for the service of the Lord can only redeem himself/herself by paying a set amount, equal in value to his actual service; otherwise he cannot annul or abolish the vow (Lev. 27:2-8). However there will be no expected consequence on God's side if he does not answer what the petitioner asked him for.

Because of this nature, according to the Hebrew Scriptures, the chance of annulling the נדר is strictly limited. The votive legislation of the Hebrew Scriptures declares that a vow can be annulled only for very limited reasons. For example women can take a vow equally like men. However, the father of a young girl with whom the girl is still living can make void a vow of his daughter immediately when he hears of it (Numb. 30:3-5). Similarly a husband of a woman can also make a vow of his wife void immediately when he hears of it. This also includes a vow of a woman who got married while her vow which she committed herself before her marriage is still in force (Num.30:6-8, 10-15). But the vow of widows and divorced women are binding (Num. 30:10).

The binding nature of the vow is evident in all the major genres of the Hebrew Scriptures. For instance the vow narrative of Jephthah demonstrates the serious binding nature of the ancient Israelite's vow. Similarly the wisdom literature also demonstrates this same feature as it is exhibited by the advice of the wise man not to neglect to fulfill the vow in order to avoid the undesirable consequence (Ecc. 5:6). Finally the prophets also presumably presupposed the mutually shared assumption of the ancient Israelites regarding the binding nature of the vow as it is demonstrated by the Prophet Malachi criticizing the behavior of the unfaithful petitioners (Mal. 1:14).

3.2.4. נדר is Always a Conditional Commitment

All the references of the Hebrew Scriptures show that all the utterances of the term נדר are absolutely conditional (...אִם־יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהִים 'if God...then...'). The petitioner, always motivated by some kind of distress, pleads to God seeking relief from his situation and takes a vow committing to express his gratitude to God in a special way only if God honors him by answering his request (de Vaux 1973: 465). Cartledge rightly observes that this nature is clearly exhibited mainly in the narrative texts by "if...then" construction (Cartledge 1992: 12). For example Gen. 28:20-22 clearly demonstrates this nature.

20 וַיִּדַּר יַעֲקֹב נֶדֶר לֵאמֹר אִם־יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי וּשְׁמָרַנִי בַּדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ וְנָתַן־לִי לֶחֶם לֶאֱכֹל וּבֶגֶד לִלְבֹּשׁ׃

21 וְשַׁבְתִּי בְשָׁלוֹם אֶל־בֵּית אָבִי וְהָיָה יְהוָה לִי לֵאלֹהִים׃

22 וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר־שַׂמְתִּי מַצֵּבָה יִהְיֶה בֵּית אֱלֹהִים וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר תִּתֶּן־לִי עַשֵּׂר אֲעַשְּׂרֶנּוּ לָךְ

> Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that you give me I will surely give one tenth to you."

This vow exhibits four distinct features: the narrative introduction which comprises distress of the petitioner, the call upon God by direct address, protasis[26] (condition) of the

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[26] I will be using protasis or antecedent and apodosis or consequent interchangeably throughout my research

vow introduced by אִם 'if', and apodosis (the commitment of the petitioner) (Cartledge 1992: 145). The conditional statement of this vow (protasis) is introduced by אִם 'if' with the imperfect verb: **אם־יהיה** 'if he will be with me' followed by three other requests: ושמרני בדרך 'keep me on this journey לאכל ובגד ללבש ˙ נתן־לי להם 'give me bread to eat and clothes to wear' and ושבתי בשלום אל־בית אבי 'will return in peace to my father's house', and all of them are perfect verbs prefixed with the vav consecutive. The apodosis (commitment) is introduced or begins with perfect verb: והיה יהוה לי לאלהים 'YHWH will be my God' and followed by two other promises both of them expressed by the imperfect verbs.

However, it is worth noting that my imprical examination showed that pragmatically the construction of the conditional clause (protasis) does not imply that the petitioner doubts the ability of God to answer his request. It is unthinkable for the ancient Israelites that God cannot supply what they requested. There is no evidence from the Hebrew Scriptures that they doubt God's ability. Therefore we can conclude that the conditional clause (Protasis) simply implies the solemn nature of the request that the petitioner puts his trust in God believing that only God can give relief to his distress, if he wills to do so, and he is bound to his vow only if God answers his petition.

One may wonder whether the apodosis (promise) was intended to influence or manipulate God or otherwise. The two probable reasons for employing the vows are: 1. the petitioner intended to influence God by his promise. 2. It was intended to signal a strong ostensive commitment that a petitioner puts himself in to give praises and thanks to God if he answers his request. On the one hand it is possible that the vow-making was intended to influence God. Cartledge also notes that the vow is intended to influence God when he says "one assumes that the deity also appreciates appeals by flattery or by the promise of gifts" (Cartledge 1992: 30). Pagolu agrees with Cartledge when he says that the prayer in Jacob's vow was used as an inducement (Pagolu 1998: 134).

However, it is difficult to believe that the ancient Israelites perceive God as a deity who can be manipulated by gifts that they created the behavior of vow to manipulate him. De Vaux notes that the purpose of the vow in the ancient Israel was intended "to add force to a prayer by making a kind of contract with God" rather than

manipulating him (Vaux 1973: 465). In any case this view requires further investigation to verify by the clear evidences that the vow-making was intended to influence God.

On the other hand it is more appropriate to argue that the fundamental intention of fulfilling a vow is to express the emotion of thankfulness, satisfaction, joy, and happiness resulting from God's act of giving relief from a distress by answering the request. Presumably accompanying such praise with a particular kind of physical gesture is intended to express the magnitude of deep emotional response of praise to God for what he has done. There is an evidence that it was a custom for the ancient Israelites not to appear an empty handed on a celebrative occasions: ולֹא יראה את־פני יהוה ריקם 'they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed' (Ex 34:20; Deut. 16:16). Probably it was intrinsic for the petitioners to promise to God in advance to appear before him with some kind of physical gesture in such an emotional occasion of thanksgiving, if he honors the petitioner by granting relief from their distress.

Some scholars argue that some vows like Nazirite vows are not conditional (de Vaux 1973: 466). In this regard we observe that there are various types of vows in the Hebrew Scriptures: an offering, abstaining, committing one's self dedicated to God, words of praises etc. We may categorize them into three types of vows as they appear in the Hebrew Scriptures each with some distinct features (Rabinowitz 1971: 227):

1. **Nedarim Vows:** Nedarim vows are making a promise to do something for God following receiving a solemnly requested blessing from God. Sometimes this type of vow is described as a positive vow (Gen. 28:20; 1 Samuel 1:11, 21-23).

2. **Herem vows:** it is making a vow to utterly destroy enemies with their property without taking any spoil of them (Num 21:2) and

3. **Nazirite vows:** The Nazirite vows are total devotion or separation to the Lord as holy/sacred (Num. 6:1-21). Usually the last two are described as the vows of abstinence. Such vows of self-deprivation are described as "*neder issar* 'promise of prohibition or deprivation'" (Lauterbach: 452).

Consequently some scholars categorize the vows into two: negative vows (negative in the sense of abstinence) which is abstaining "from something which is otherwise permitted (Lauterbach: 451-452; Rabinowitz 1971: 227) and positive vows which is sometimes described as performing something for God. However I suggest that

positive and negative are not appropriate categories because any vow involves some kind of self-deprivation. For example if a person takes a vow to offer a sheep eventually he will loose his sheep which is a kind of self-deprivation. Cartledge also points out this issue in his discussion (Cartledge 1992: 72). Therefore categorizing them in terms of negative and positive vows does not seem an appropriate alternative (Cartledge 1992: 71). Rather it is more appropriate to describe them simply as "different types of the votive objects" (dedicating one's self to God, abstinence, praise, gift) of the same conditional nature of the vow (Cartledge 1992: 71-72).

As I mentioned above in this section some scholars suspect conditional feature of the Nazirite vow of the Numbers 6 compared with the life-long Nazirite separation, like Samson's in Judges 13. However we can argue that according to the legislation of vow in Numbers 6, the Nazirite separation of devotion is only for the time being. On the contrary, a life-long devotion/separation of Samson which is also called Nazirite (Judges 13:3-5) is not a נדר at all. Rather it was a life-long separation for the particular purpose of God (see Cartledge 1992: 18-23). If it were a Nazirite vow he wouldn't defile himself by having contact with the dead body (Num. 6:6-7) as he did in Judg. 14:19. Besides, the narrative shows that he was not born as a result of vow either. Thus all Nazirite separations are not votive separations. Therefore the story of Samson is not a valid evidence to argue against the conditional nature of the Nazirite vow, because the Samson's case does not meet the requirements of the legislation of Num. chap. 6 (Chepey 2005: 4). Thus as Cartledge argues, the Nazirite vows of Num. 6 are all conditional vows (Cartledge 1992: 23).

The conditional feature of the vow is evidently shown mainly in the narrative genre of the Hebrew Scriptures marked by the linguistic construction of protasis and apodosis. The other three major genres of the Hebrew scripture: legislation, wisdom literature, and prophets do not explicitly mark this feature because of the nature of their communicative intention about the institution of נדר. The wisdom literature, like Ecclesiastes and Proverbs, focuses mainly on giving advice about the fulfillment of the vow, not on the linguistic form of the vow. Psalms focuses on making a vow in songs of poetry, focusing on the religious commitment of the vow rather than on the linguistic form (Ps. 56:2). Similarly the prophets focus on criticizing or evaluating the behavior of

the petitioner in relation to the institution of vow and so they do not bother to exhibit the linguistic form of the conditional nature of the vow. The torahic legislation literature also focuses on giving guidance and instructions regarding the social institution of vow without bothering about the linguistic form of vow. Nevertheless, I argue that the conditional feature of the ancient Israelite vow is implied in all Hebrew literature. They did not bother to represent the linguistic conditional form presumably because they presuppose that the conditional nature of the vow making is mutually shared knowledge. Thus the real linguistic conditional form of votive utterance manifests in the actual vow making event, which is usually represented in the narrative literature.

3.2.5. Making a נדר Raises Strong Expectations of Relevance

One can easily detect that Hebrew vows raise expectations[27]. As I have already pointed out elsewhere, vow-making is always a conditional promise which will take place in the future after the time of utterance. Consequently it will create or raise very high expectations of relevance in both God and the petitioner, immediately when it is uttered. (This feature will be shown in my discussion of the votive narrative of Jacob in chapter four.) On the one hand the vow maker will consciously expect and wait for the answer to his prayer from God. On the other hand it is perceived that when God answers the prayer of the petitioner he will also expect strongly that the votive pledge should be fulfilled promptly by the petitioner. Otherwise it will result in adverse consequence:

> "When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it… Do not let your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake; why should God be angry at your words, and destroy the work of your hands? (Eccl. 5:4a, 6)

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[27] In this chapter and elsewhere I use two different expressions: 'raises expectations' and 'raises expectation of relevance' in relation to the concept *neder*. It is worth noting that these two expressions are distinct. The expression 'raises expectations' is all about the cognitive principle of relevance. That is, knowing about the institution of the vow makes one watch to see (1) if it is granted (2) if the vow maker has fulfilled his votive commitment. That is what we observe will arise from our cognitive expectation within the framework of the votive institution, and is not necessarily communicated. However, the expression "raises expectations of relevance" denotes what is intentionally communicated. Hence, since we are being told the votive narrative of Jacob by the narrator in Gen. 28:10-35:15, the communicative principle of relevance is apparently involved. Thus, the presumption of relevance is involved in this votive narrative. That is, the narrator warrants us to hold a presumption that the story will be relevant in terms of having cognitive effects for his readers as they process his public presentation. Therefore, my use of the expression 'raises expectations', apart from the context of this story, within the context of mutually shared knowledge of the votive instituation is employed from the perspective of the cognitive principle, not from the perspective of the communicative principle.

Hence I argue that all the genres of the Hebrew Scriptures with the references of the vow-making demonstrate that the vow raises expectation in both deity and man.

3.2.6. Fulfilling the נדר was Perceived as a Praise to God

As I already metioned above, in the Hebrew Scriptures the fulfilling of a נדר was considered as praise to God. I also remarked above that one of the essential characteristics of the Hebrew vow is that all vows are taken in the context of calling upon God for relief which is accompanied with a conditional promise to God. The petitioner will be under obligation to fulfill his promise only if God grants his solemn request. Thus one can observe that there is reciprocity in the biblical vows: God grants one's solemn prayer and a person who receives the answer expresses his gratitude to God and praises God by fulfilling his vow. This nature is evident in all genres of the Hebrew Scriptures: (Lev. 7:16 Gen. 28:20-22; Num.21:2-3, Ps. 22:25; Job 22:27; Na. 1:15/MT 2:1).

The fulfilling of a vow was perceived as a joyful response of a petitioner for what God has done. Apparently it is an event of celebration and rejoicing for the faithfulness of God. Hence fulfilling a vow always follows the good deeds of God according to one's solemn plea and it was perceived as a public joyous occasion (Ps. 116:14, 17-18; 61:8; Num. 21:1-3). The fact that the Vow-offering should be eaten on the first or second day shows that it is similar to the peace offering which is an offering of rejoicing. It also shows a continued trust in God as well as one's love for God (Coppes 1980: 558):

> Look! On the mountains the feet of one who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace! Celebrate your festivals, O Judah, fulfill your vows, for never again shall the wicked invade you; they are utterly cut off (Nahum 2:1).

However the Hebrew Scriptures explicitly remind that the petitioner should not make unacceptable votive commitments. There are explicitly stated unacceptable נדר: anything abomination to God (Deut 23:18, 19), anything which are already belongs to God like firstborn of an animal and a tithe (Lev. 27:26, 28), and a vow-offering offered by a person with a wicked heart (Ps. 66:18; Prov. 7:14). The things referred above as abomination to God are described as any income of female or male prostitutes in the same passage.

3.2.7. Location and Time of Fulfillment

According to the Hebrew Scriptures the fulfilling of the נדר must be at the sanctuary of God or a place chosen by God because one of the legislative requirements for the fulfilling of a vow is that it must be done at the chosen place of God as stated in Deut. 12:26: "But the holy things which are due from you, and your votive offerings, you shall take, and you shall go to the place which the LORD will choose." Both narrative and poetic vows explicitly demonstrate that the vow was fulfilled in the sanctuary of the deity: 1 Sam. 1:24; Ps. 66:13. However the books of the prophets do not explicitly state the sanctuary as a place of the fulfillment of the vow. But I argue that they are consistent with other genres of the Hebrew Scriptures except that it was not explicitly mentioned by the prophets presumably because they presupposed that it was a mutually shared contextual assumption.

The Hebrew Scriptures are not specific about the time of the fulfilling of the vow. But the legislation of the נדר implies that the expected time of fulfilling of the נדר must be promptly after receiving the answer from God for the votive plea (Deut. 23:21-23/MT. 23:22-24). Similarly the words of wisdom in Ecclesiastes 5:4 implies that the time of fulfilling a vow should be immediately after God has answered what a petitioner solemnly has requested for: "When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it; for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow." (Eccl. 5:4). One can imagine that there is a good reason for such recommendation. When God responds to one's plea and gives relief from the distress it will definitely raise the emotion of excitement of relief, satisfaction, happiness, and joy in the petitioner which will eventually create a strong feeling of thankfulness to God. If the fulfilling of the vow delayed for so long the emotion of excitement will die out. Therefore I presume that the expected time of fulfilling the votive promise is promptly after receiving the answer for the plea. However some times it may legitimately be delayed. For example Jephthah delayed for two months (Judges 11:37), and Hanna delayed until the boy was weaned (1 Sam. 1:21-22).

3.2.8. Synopsis of the Discussion According to the Four Main Genres of the Hebrew Scriptures

The above discussion, besides describing the concept of נדר in the Hebrew Scriptures, attempted to answer the question whether the concept of נדר remained the same throughout Israelite history as well as in different genres of the Hebrew Scriptures. The major conceptual natures of נדר which were evaluated in this regard are: its conditional nature, the nature of utterance directed only to God and never to man, taken always in the context of distress, must be fulfilled in the sanctuary of the Lord, and it is a serious utterance with an implication of serious adverse consequences if one failed to fulfill one's vow. Another way of evaluating this feature, although it is very simplistic, would have been to go through all the different references of the occurrence of the term נדר in different genres of the Hebrew Scriptures and exegete them. However I didn't do that because it is not my intention to do exegesis on every occurrence of the term נדר in the Hebrew Scriptures, unless a passage shows a different interpretation opposed to the above-mentioned major characteristics of נדר. In the following three sections I will recapitulate the three major genres of the Hebrew Scriptures: narrative/history, Torah, and wisdom literatures as summary statements.

3.2.8.1. נדר in the Narratives

The main narrative or historical books of the Hebrew Scriptures comprise all the historical books from the book of Joshua to Esther. There are eleven references to נדר in these historical books: five in verbal form and six in nominal form. But the five narrative vows presented in the Hebrew Scriptures are found both in the Torah and the historical books: Gen. 28:20-22; Num. 21:2; Judges 11:30-31; 1 Sam. 1:11; and 2 Sam. 15:8 and all of them exhibit the essential nature of the Israelite vow. One of the most referred narratives of a vow in the historical books is the vow of Hannah in the book of 1 Samuel:

> She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD, and wept bitterly. She made this vow: "O LORD of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head." (1 Samuel 1:10-11).

Unlike the vow of Jacob, the protasis (condition) of Hannah's vow begins with combination of infinitive absolute and imperfect verbs: אִם־רָאֹה and followed by two perfect verbs both prefixed with vav consecutive. On the other hand the apodosis (commitment) is expressed by the perfect verb which is also prefixed with the vav consecutive. However both utterances of the vow clearly demonstrate the expected nature of the narrative vow: narrative introduction of the vow, calling upon God, protasis (condition) of the vow, and apodosis (commitment of the petitioner) (Cartledge 1992: 145). Thus like other narrative vow, Hannah's vow also clearly demonstrates the essential nature of the נדר, 'vow': it is conditional, it is made by a human to God, and it is taken in the context of distress. Thus these features of the vow were perceived in the cognitive environment of the people of Israel in that particular social and cultural context.

3.2.8.2. נדר *in the Torahic Legislation*

Except for the Bethel story of נדר in Gen. 28: 20-22 and the vow of Israel in Numbers 21:1-3, most of the references about נדר in Torah are legislations about the Israelites' institution of the vow. Making legislation about such social institution is usually intended to prevent or to control misuse, abuse, or mischief, and to clarify unclear cases, which could be described as case law. Hence making legislation for such institutions tends to be later action based on the reflection on the practice of the institution, particularly when problems turn up. Probably the same is true with the legislation of the ancient Israelites' votive institution.

Therefore, the combined reading of the legislation of the institution of vow in Leviticus 7:16; 22:21; 27:2; Numbers 15:3, 8; 30:3-4; and Deut 12:26; 23:21-23 shows that the vows presuppose the same encyclopedic information as the narratives texts about vows. Thus, the above mentioned major characteristics of נדר were intrinsically perceived in the cognitive environment of the ancient Israelites when they encountered with the legislation of the vow. The legislative references explicitly indicate that the form of נדר was conditional, it was uttered only to God, it was made in the context of distress, it should be fulfilled promptly, and a failure to fulfill the vow will result in adverse consequences. In addition, the encoding of the custom of נדר in the legislation of Torah shows that the practice of vow in the ancient Israel was common.

3.2.8.3. נדר *in Psalms and Wisdom Books*

In this discussion the wisdom literature comprises Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. I intend to distinguish between the wisdom literature and Psalms in this discussion because the use of the vow in the wisdom literature focuses on the reflection of making a vow, while in Psalms the vow focuses on religious commitment.

The wisdom books employ נדר as advisory, particularly in terms of cautionary, to those who make the vow. Thus the use of נדר in wisdom literature is a reflection on the concept of the vow and its use. All of the references about נדר in the wisdom literature are found in Ecclesiastes. Eccl. 5:4-6 clearly implies that the above major characteristics of the נדר were also perceived in the cognitive environment of the ancient Israelites:

> When you make a vow to God, do not delay fulfilling it; for he has no pleasure in fools. Fulfill what you vow. It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not fulfill it. Do not let your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake; why should God be angry at your words, and destroy the work of your hands? (Eccl. 5:4-6)

Some scholars claim that the conditional nature of the vow was lost in the Psalms so that they become "more like simple promise" (Vaux 1965: 466). This is mainly because the poetic genre does not present the literary structure of the utterance of the vows with protasis and apodosis. However I argue that it is unrealistic to expect the same linguistic structure in both narrative and poetic genres. In the narrative genres the story is told by the reporter. The intention is to tell what the participant(s) did and said. On the contrary the Psalms are songs and they are intended to express their religious commitment directly, in some cases without necessarily including the lexeme נדר. Thus the Psalmists are focused on their religious commitments rather than linguistic form. In some cases of votive Psalms נדר is verbally mentioned (Ps 61:5-8; 116:14, 18) while in other cases it is not verbally mentioned at all, particularly in the Psalms of lament. Nevertheless the fact is that the votive utterances are evident. For example the following utterance is a votive utterance without using the lexeme נדר:

> Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog!
> Save me from the mouth of the lion!...
> I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you (Ps. 22:21-23 RSV)

In this votive utterance, the linguistic conditional form is absent. However it is clear that the expression "*Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog! Save me from the mouth of the lions*" stands as protasis (conditional) while "*I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you*" stands as apodosis. If it were in the narrative form it would have been something like the following:

> **If** you deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog, and save me from the mouth of the lion, **then** I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise your name.

The linguistic conditional form of the vow is absent in the votive Psalms more likely because of the fact that it is not narrated, but is being enacted in song to God. However despite the absence of the linguistic markers of the votive utterance, the essential features of the נדר : distress, calling upon God for help, protasis (conditional feature), and apodosis (commitment) are evident in the above Psalm of lament (For full discussion, see Cartledge 1992: 150-160). The votive commitment of the Psalmist is described as praises; which may or may not be accompanied by other material gifts (Ps 61:5-8; 116:14, 18).

3.2.8.4. נדר *in the Prophets*

There are eleven references of נדר in all the prophets: six in nominal form and five in verb form. Jer. 44:25 and Mal. 1:14 are used in the context of criticizing the people of Israel for the wrong application of the vow. The prophets criticize the behavior of the vow-making people, but never criticize the institution of vow and its practice at all. The rest of the references to נדר are found in Is. 19:21; Jonah 1:16; 2:10; Na. 1:15/2:1 and are used positively. Hence, all the representations of vows in the books of prophets clearly show that the concept of נדר was an utterance of humans only to God, never to other humans, and thus consistent with vows in other genres.

3.2.9. Summary of נדר in the Hebrew Scriptures

We can summarize that presumably all the references of the Hebrew Scriptures presuppose that the essential nature of the concept 'נדר' was consistently mutually shared

knowledge among the ancient Israelites even in their different contexts (Cartledge 1992: 50). This mutually shared knowledge of the nature of נדר includes the following features:

1. It is a promise made by humans to the deity: vow making takes place only between God and humans.

2. In essence it is made in the context of distress, calling upon God for help.

3. Making a vow is a free will commitment and to make it is not a religious duty (Deut. 23:21-23; Coppes 1980: 558). Not every member of the Jewish community is expected to make a vow (Deut. 23:23). But once it is made it is binding; it must be fulfilled. Otherwise it will be sin (Deut. 23:21-23).

4. Vow-making is strictly conditional. It is perceived as a give-and-take action between God and human which shows a positive relationship between God and the individual: God answering one's solemn request and a person expressing his gratitude and praises by fulfilling his vow (Lev. 7:16 Gen. 28:20-22; Num.21:2-3, Ps. 22:25; Job 22:27). Thus individuals are in full control on deciding the type of their vows, not the religious leaders.

5. A vow can be an offering, abstaining, committing one's life to serve the deity etc.

6. One can make a vow to dedicate a person or himself/herself to the Lord. But if this vow is too difficult to fulfill because of some serious reason a person can be redeemed by paying a set amount, equal in value to his actual commitment. In Leviticus such a vow is linguistically marked as *yapla-neder* יפלא נדר 'make a difficult vow' (Lev. 27:2) probably to denote a sense of extraordinary or difficult nature of such commitment (Lev. 27:2-8). The term פלא occurs in the hiphil and pi'el verb forms collocating with God or humans. On the one hand when its hiphil form collocates with God it denotes the wonderful, incomprehensible, and unusual thing which is beyond human capacity caused to happen by God (Gen. 18:14). On the other hand when this same form collocates with humans it denotes something beyond human capability to make happen (Deut. 17:8; Hamilton 1980: 723). Note that the verb is in the hiphil form. Thus in this context it denotes the sense of making too difficult a vow for one to fulfill. Hence probably this regulation of valuation is aimed to avoid the possible tragic effect by unwise or rash vows the like the one concerning Jephthah's daughter (Cartledge 1992: 52).

However it cannot be seen as a change of the original commitment, but as a substitute because a vow cannot be changed (Cartledge 1992: 33).

7. Vow-making is an utterance which creates strong expectations of relevance on both parts—human and divine.

8. Fulfilling of a vow was perceived as a response to what God has done and apparently it is a celebration and rejoicing for the faithfulness of God. Thus fulfilling a vow always followed God's good deeds according to one's solemn prayer and it was considered as a joy (Ps. 116:14, 17-18; 61:8; Num. 21:1-3). The fact that the vow-offering should be eaten on the first or second day shows that it is similar to the peace offering which is an offering of rejoicing.

9. The place of fulfilling a vow must be at the chosen place by God (Deut. 12:6, 11)

10. The time of fulfilling a vow should be immediately after God has granted what a person solemnly requested (Gen. 28:20-22)

11. If the utterance was made by a married women or unmarried girl only her husband or her father, respectively, can annul it. This also must be done immediately when they hear of it, otherwise it is binding.

12. A vow offering cannot include anything that is an abomination to God (Deut 23:18) as well as anything which already belongs to God (Lev. 27:26).

13. Anything dedicated to God as a vow offering, even including unclean animals, becomes holy to God (Lev.27:9-10).

14. If there is wickedness in the heart of a person who makes a vow, his vow will not be accepted by God (Ps. 66:18; Prov. 7:14).

3.3. The Nature of נדר in Other Literature of the Israelites

It is possible that gleaning other literatures of the ancient Israelites also will throw some light for the understanding of the conceptual features of נדר mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures. Therefore, in this section I wish to explore Dead Sea Scrolls, the Talmud, and the Book of Jubilee.

3.3.1. Dead Sea Scrolls

Joseph A. Fitzmyer documents some evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls[28] (Fitzmyer 1992: 142) which reveals that the נדר was practiced during the 2nd century BCE through 1st Century[29] CE. Similarly the Dead Sea Scrolls of the Second Temple period exhibit that any violation of the vow will lead to transgression and punishment (Schiffman 2000: 621). Consequently, these sources discourage people from making a vow on the assumption that they would violate the votive commitment, or strongly advises them not to delay to fulfill the vow because of its seriousness (Schiffman 2000: 621), which is in the line with the advice of the Ecclesiastes 5:4-6.

In addition the legislation (laws and rules) found in the Dead Sea scrolls named as Damascus Documents declares that the fulfilling of the vows must be carried out even at the sacrifice of one's life as stipulated in the books of Torah (Schiffman 2000: 622). However the wisdom texts of the scrolls advise husbands to abolish all the vows of their wives, probably in order to avoid the adverse consequence of unfulfilled vows (Schiffman 2000: 622).

Likewise the Temple Scroll also advises to avoid vow-making. However it states that if it is uttered then it must be fulfilled. But if a father of a daughter who still lives with her father or a husband of a wife hears of it and wants to annul or abolish it he must do it on the same day he hears of it (Schiffman 2000: 622) and then God will forgive the woman for not fulfilling her vow. If the annulment was not done on the same day then the father or the husband will be held accountable for the transgression (Schiffman 2000: 622). Thus these evidences show that the legislative representation of the the Dead Sea Scrolls about the נדר focus, just like most of the ancient Israelite literature', mainly on the binding nature of the נדר. Schiffman also notes that early Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism also followed similar trends (Schiffman 2000: 622-623). Thus these rules show that the concept of vow during the time of the writing of the Dead Sea Scrolls was consistent with the legislation of Torah.

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[28] Fitzmyer fails to make clear distinction between oaths and נדר.
[29] The development of the Dead Sea Scrolls covers approximately 520 BCE to 70 AD (Unger 1988: 291).

3.3.2. Talmud

Most of the Talmudic documents discuss mainly the views of different Rabbis regarding the application and binding nature of the vow rather than discussing about the nature of the vow in detail (Epstein 1935: 562; Epstein 1938: 148, 212, 430, 560, 687, 804, 805). For example the Talmud discusses questions like who can effect and declare the annulment of the vow (Epstein 1935: 495-6); Gentiles cannot take the vow of a Nazirite (Epstein 1948: 437); a vow offering should be something which is not already consecrated to the Lord (Epstein 1948: 497); fulfilling a vow requires inclusion of a drink offering (Epstein 1948: 550, 554); one should fulfill exactly what he vowed (Epstein 1948: 629, 632); the votive offering should be fulfilled in the sanctuary/Temple (Epstein 1948: 671); authorization of husbands to annul the vows of their wives (Epstein 1935: 556); how to exempt a person from a votive obligation if he becomes so poor that he cannot afford to fulfill his vow (Epstein 1935: 649); the consequence of the neglected or unfulfilled vows that has resulted in the death of one's wife or children (Epstein 1938: 148); vows can be annulled on the Sabbath by a husband and a vow can be absolved if this is necessary for the sake of the Sabbath (Epstein 1938: 212, 803); the necessity of a qualified person to annul the vow of a Nazirite leper (Epstein 1936: 18); deciding the appropriate age of a child to take a vow ((Lauterbach : 452) or how to decide the process of fulfilling the previously taken vow of a sister-in-law who cohabited with a new husband by the law of levirate marriage (Epstein 1936: 728, 781); an illegitimate husband cannot annul a vow of a woman (Epstein 1936: 593); a woman is expected to inform her prospective husband about her vow, otherwise she should be divorced and he cannot remarry her (Epstein 1936: 453, 467); guidance regarding the duration of sexual abstinence because of a vow (Epstein 1936: 369); and the valuation of the vow of a hermaphrodite[30] (probably while the person is still with the parents) (Epstein 1938: 687).

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[30] The term 'hermaphrodite' refers to a person who has both female and male sexual organs. The Jewish Rabbis gave attention to this physical character of a person in relation to vow-making because according to Lev. 27 the valuation of the vow depends on the sex and age of the vow maker. According to the Talmudic view a hermaphrodite above 20 years is considered as a male (Epstein 1938: 687-8). This is probably because the ancient Israelite society was a male superiority oriented society so that the hermaphrodites at this age may be consciously inclined to opt to be identified as males rather than females. But this decision does not solve the questions about the hermaphrodites below age 20 in relation to the vow. For instance we have seen that the legislation of the vow declares that a father can make a vow of his daughter, who still lives with him, void. Similarly a husband can make his wife's vow void including her vows before she got married. The question in this regard is that whether the hermaphrodite before age 20 should be treated as a

In summary, like the Dead Sea Scrolls the Talmud also advises one to avoid vow-making in order to avoid the adverse consequences of the neglected vow. One of the Rabbis says: "Children die as a punishment for [unfulfilled] vows" (Epstein 1938: 148).

However one needs to read the Talmudic description of vow cautiously because it is evident that Talmud also fails to make a clear distinction between oath and vow. For example an oath of a sales-woman for her husband: "May all the produce of the world be forbidden to me if I misappropriated any of your goods or money" was described as נדר 'vow' (Epstein 1936: 547), although it is rather an oath, from my point of view.

3.3.3. Book of Jubilees

The book of Jubilee claims that the content of its message is a revelation given by God to Moses "through the medium of an angel…and contains a history divided up into jubilee period of forty-nine years, from the creation to the coming of the Moses" (Charles 2001: vii). Although the authority and accuracy of the narration of the book of the Jubilee is questionable, the narrator relates that when Jacob came back to Canaan he told his father Isaac about his vow in Bethel and requested him to go to Bethel with him to participate in the celebration of fulfilling his vow. But Isaac declined to go with him because he was very old. But he warned Jacob not to neglect his vow and urges him to fulfill his vow. Then Jacob went to Bethel and celebrated the fulfillment of his vow and "he rejoiced and blessed the God of his fathers, Abraham and Isaac" (Charles 2001: 161). This story shows that the book of Jubilee also, as the Talmud and Dead Sea Scrolls, emphasizes the obligation of fulfilling the vow (Charles 2001: 161).

3.3.4. Summary of נדר in Other Israelite Literature

In summary, besides the Hebrew Scriptures, other literatures of the ancient Israelites also presuppose the consistency of, or at least the essential nature of the נדר, throughout the different historical and social contexts of the ancient Israelites accorded with the teaching

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male or female? Most likely the parents may opt to treat them as females because it gives them a chance to annul their vows.

of Torah about נדר (Cartledge 1992: 71). The evidence from other literatures of the ancient Israelites (apart from some cases in the Talmud) show that the vow was always made only between God and man, it is taken in the context of distress, and it is seriously binding. Besides, the attempt of the religious leaders to legislate the institution of vow based on the Torah shows that it was a popularly practiced custom. These literatures unanimously show that the adverse consequence of neglecting to fulfill a vow will result in a punishment by God. Finally, they also show that the expected location of fulfilling the vow must be the sanctuary or place chosen by God.

3.4. Distinctiveness and Contrast of נדר with Other Similar Hebrew Concepts

Coppes (1980) and Cartledge (1992) observe that unlike other similar concepts, vow-making implies a conditional solemn utterance of commitment only directed to God in the context of calling upon him for relief in the time of distress. Coppes says: "The biblical 'vow' is always to deity, never a promise between man and man" (Coppes 1980: 557). Cartledge also concurs with Copper's view when he says: "In the Hebrew Bible one may swear to another person, but may vow only to God" (Cartledge 1992: 12). He adds:

> [V]ow *must* (emphasis mine) always be understood as taking place within the context of prayer, in an address to God. In Biblical usage, *vows are always conditional promises to God, to be fulfilled only when and if God answers the petitioner's request*" (1992: 12).

The three Hebrew concepts which are similar to נדר (noun) 'vow' (Gen. 28:20) are ברית (noun) 'covenant' (Gen. 17:2), שׁבוּעה (noun) 'oath' (Gen. 26:3) and אלה (noun) 'swearing' (1 Sam. 14:24). Except ברית, which requires an auxiliary verb כרת the rest occur both as noun and verb in the Hebrew Scriptures. Basically they all denote binding speech acts of the ancient Hebrew language. However each of them has its own distinct conceptual nuance(s) which make them contrast with one another, though their distinction is very subtle. It is beyond the scope of this work to discuss the differences between them in detail. However I will give very brief description of each concept at the risk of simplifying.

3.4.1. אלה (Swearing)

אלה: The concept אלה does not constitute or make or establish some kind of binding agreement, but it accompanies a constitutive commissive speech act like covenant and oaths. It functions as an instrument to strengthen/reinforce other commissive speech acts or it may be employed to reinforce some serious utterances like witnessing, to show that the witness is telling the truth. Usually oaths and covenants, which constitute a solemn agreement are accompanied by אלה, marking that the one who takes an oath or covenant was making a true and binding utterance (Ruth 1:17, 1 Sam. 20:13). Sometimes אלה can be uttered by raising hand or putting hand under the thigh (Dan. 12:7; Gen. 14:22; 24:2-3). אלה implies the utterance of verbal swearing or invoking the name of God or a greater authority or highly valued person or things, in the process of making an oath and covenant. It involves two parties and implies consequences for breaking the oath or covenant (Scott 1980: 45). Because of its instrumental nature it is used in the sense of invoking some kind of horrifying event in swearing if one is not faithful to his oath. It could be employed as "If I …then let what happened to people of Judah…also happen to me!" (Jer. 44:12). It is also used to show a conviction that the one uttering אלה is telling the truth thus such swearing is employed in public witnessing (1 King. 8:31; Prov. 29:24; Lev. 5:1). In the case of public witnessing, אלה functions as a help or means (instrumental nature) to determine the truth when there is no other alternative to prove the truth.

3.4.2. שבועה (Oath)

שבועה: The concept שבועה has a constitutive nature. Once it is uttered, it constitutes or makes and establishes an agreement which must be done or must happen. Thus it implies the general act of making a sacred commitment which may include performing some kind of physical gesture like slaughtering an animal as well as a verbal act of swearing (אלה) in order to signal one's unbreakable sacred commitment to perform something faithfully or not to perform it (Hamilton 1980: 904; Cartledge 1992: 15-16). Because of its constitutive nature or sense, it is employed as a sacred commitment between one person and another (Gen. 21:22-31; 24:28), or it could be a sacred commitment of God to humans (Gen. 26:3), or it could be an utterance made by a person to bind himself by an oath (Is. 45:23). In this regard the use of the Niphal stem in שבועה denotes the reflexive

sense of "binding oneself by an oath" (Hamilton 1980: 899). The utterance of an oath comprises, as stated above, the act of swearing (אלה) by invoking another person "tacitly and mutually assumed to be greater or more precious than the one making the oath" (Hamilton 1980: 904), or some kind of horrifying event (Jer. 44:26) or even one may swear by invoking one's wife, or one's child, or heaven, or earth, and etc. Thus, when God makes such an oath he invokes by himself because there is no one greater than he (Heb. 6:13).

3.4.3. ברית (Covenant)

ברית: Another very important concept or constitutive utterance, very similar to שבועה, and often mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures is ברית. The basic concept of the term ברית is that it is a treaty for creating strong relationships apart from blood relationship between nations, (Josh. 9:14), between individuals (Gen. 31:44-47; 1 Sam. 18:3), between people and a king (1 Chron. 11:3), and between God and human (Gen. 15:18). Usually the process of establishing a ברית is accompanied by some kind of physical gestures, animal sacrifices, and binding solemn utterances of speech act (אלה) which will imply blessing for faithfully keeping it and punishment for breaking it (Smick 1980: 128-129).

One may wonder whether the above concepts could be interpreted generally as a concept of promise. It is worth noting that there is no specific lexical term in Hebrew for 'promise'. The common normal promises are communicated simply by declarative utterances which are introduced by דבר 'say' (Cartledge 1992: 14). Although the above concepts are basically promises or commissive speech acts they are apparently strongly binding types of promises which imply serious adverse consequences for violating them. Thus it is evident that the Hebrew language makes a distinction between the normal utterance of promises and other binding commitments. Hence the ancient Israelite society perceived that there were social institutions of vow-making, swearing, oath-making, and covenant-making; but there was no institution for simple promising.

The semantic relationship of these entities could be demonstrated by hyponymy, which denotes a semantic relation of inclusion (Saeed 2003: 68-70). Thus in Hebrew covenant, oath, swearing, and vow are hyponyms of the binding utterance of commitments or commissive speech acts as the following diagram shows:

Commissive Speech Acts in Hebrew

Binding utterances

Non binding utterance

ברית 'covenant'

שבועה 'oath'

אלה 'swearing'

נדר 'vow'

Any utterance of promise introduced by ויאמר (ויאמר)

Between humans or between humans and deity

Between humans or between humans and deity

Between humans or between humans and deity

Between humans and deity, but made by humans only to God

Constituting relationship

Sacred commitment to perform or not to perform something

An utterance of invoking on some one or something …

A conditional promise made by humans to a deity

The semantic relationship among ברית 'covenant', שבועה 'oath', אלה 'swearing', and נדר 'vow' can also be shown in a chart:

	ברית 'covenant'	שבועה 'oath'	אלה 'swearing'	נדר 'vow'
Between humans or between humans and deity	+	+	+	–
Between humans and deity only, but made by humans, only to God	–	–	–	+
Function	Constituting relationship	Sacred commitment to perform or not to perform something	An utterance of invoking on some one or something	A conditional promise made by humans to a deity

Thus, the nature of the biblical vow (נדר) makes it distinct form these other similar concepts.

3.4.4. Summary of the Comparison

The above discussion shows that unlike נדר all these speech acts or utterances involve swearing, but נדר does not involve swearing. However, violating anyone of these commissive speech acts will inevitably result in severe consequence. Besides, except for נדר, which is essentially made between humans and deity, all these utterances comprise a commitment between human parties as well as with the deity, and they are not intrinsically conditional, while נדר is essentially conditional[31]. Finally unlike the utterance of נדר they are not made in the context of distress (Cartledge 1992: 25). Thus, our investigation of the ancient Israelite's worldview about the concept נדר clearly shows that נדר was distinct from oath and other similar Hebrew concepts.

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[31] However contrary to the above summary discussion, the description of Lawrence H. Schiffman on the Hebrew lexemes—נדר 'vow', שׁבוּעה, 'oath', and אלה 'swear' in his article to the encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls implies that the Hebrew term נדר has the same concept as שבועה, 'oath', and אלה 'swearing' (Schiffman 2000: 621).

3.4.5. Commissive Speech Acts and their Adverse Consequences

If one breaks the above discussed binding utterances: אלה, שבועה, and ברית the consequence will be ארר 'curse' which is always a terrible negative effect; a condemnation resulteding from violating God's law (Gen. 3:14; Deut. 27:15-26). Thus as a speech act, ארר is an utterance of denouncing or adjuration or invoking bad fortune upon another person or people or even things, and it does not necessarily involve two parties.

As I already noted above it is intrinsic that being unfaithful to these binding utterances will result in adverse consequences. The following are some examples of the warnings about the adverse consequences of the failed binding utterances:

1. **Breaking an oath: a)** When Jonathan broke the oath which his father made for all the Israelites, (in fact he was not even aware of it), God refused to be with them to give them victory in fighting. Consequently the Israelites had to withdrew from fighting (1 Sam. 14:24-46). **b)** The Gibeonite people deceived the Israelites so that they made an oath not to attack them. When the Israelites knew that they were deceived they did not dare to attack them because they were afraid of the adverse consequence of breaking the oath (Joshua 9:20). When King Saul violated the oath and mistreated and killed the Gibeonites, the whole land was punished by three years of drought. But when the violation was restituted by killing seven family members of Saul, the normal rains resumed (2 Sam. 21:1-14).

2. **Swearing:** The people of Israel were warned not to make an oath in deception and swear falsely, otherwise they will be responsible for such an utterance (Lev. 19:12)

3. **Vow:** The Israelites were warned that any unfulfilled vow will make one guilty before God (Deut. 23:22-23; Num. 30:2 (MT 3)-15).

4. **Covenant:** Breaking a covenant will bring a curse (Lev. 26:15-16, Gen. 17:14)

4. Comparison of the Conceptual Range of נדר and Hadiyya Concepts of *silet*

Comparing both the Hebrew and Hadiyya concepts of vow at this stage will help us to see the difference and similarity between them which will also have a significant implication for the choice and decision making in the translation process.

The Hebrew concept of vow נדר	The Hadiyya concept of vow *silet*
1 It is a promise made by humans only to God.	1. It is always made between man and a deity.
2 Vow is usually made in the place chosen by God.	2. Vow can be made anywhere.
3 In essence it is a plea to God for relief when one is in distress.	3. It is made in the context of distress.
4 It is always conditional.	4. It is always conditional.
5 The fulfilling of a vow always followed (but not everyone fulfilled their vow) God's good deeds granted according to one's solemn plea and it was considered as a joy.	5. It must be fulfilled on condition that the deity has answered one's plea.
6 Making a vow is a free will commitment and to make it is not a religious duty.	6. Making a vow is a free will commitment and to make it is not a religious duty.
7 A vow offering cannot include anything which is an abomination	7. You can vow be anything you want to give as thanksgiving to the

	to God or anything which already belongs to God.		deity.
8	A vow can be an offering, an abstaining, committing one's life to serve the deity etc.	8.	A vow can be an offering, an abstaining, committing one's life to serve the deity, walking barefoot, etc.
9	The place of fulfilling a vow must be at the place chosen by God.	9.	It must be fulfilled at the place perceived as where the deity resides.
10	The time of fulfilling a vow should be immediately after God has answered what a person solemnly requested.	10.	The time of fulfilling a vow should be immediately after the deity has answered what a person solemnly requested.
11	Adverse consequences are expected if one fails to fulfill one's vow.	11.	Adverse consequences are expected if one fails to fulfill his vow.
12	Once it is made it is never changed to something else.	12.	Once it is made never changed to something else.
13	If the utterance of a vow was made by a married women or unmarried girl only her husband or her father, respectively, can annul it, which also should be done immediately when they hear of it; otherwise it is binding.	13.	It is never annulled.

14 If there is wickedness in the heart of a person who brings a vow-offering his/her offering will not be acceptable.	14. Anybody can make a vow.
15 A vow is not intended to influence the deity, rather it is an expression of emotion of the petitioner and his commitment to express his gratitude to God in a particular way if his plea is answered.	15. A vow is not intended to influence the deity rather it is an expression of emotion of the petitioner and his commitment to express his gratitude to God in a particular way if his plea is answered.
16 A vow shows a positive relationship and trust between the petitioner and God.	16. A vow shows a positive relationship and trust between the petitioner and God.
17 Anything dedicated to God as a vow offering, even including unclean animals, becomes holy to God.	17. Anything dedicated to God as a vow offering becomes holy to God, but they do not make a categorization between unclean and clean animals.
18 A person can make a vow to dedicate himself or herself to the Lord, and in such case a person can redeem himself by paying a set amount, equal in value to his actual service of vow.	

Based on the above comparison we can draw the following contrast between the Hadiyya concept of *silet* and Hebrew concept of נדר:

1. The Hadiyya culture does not have legislation concerning the vow making, but the Hebrew culture does. The Hebrew worldview has an implication of fear of vow-making because of the adverse consequences of neglecting a vow, so that they make legislation concerning vow-making. The Hadiyya worldview also has the fear of adverse consequences of neglecting a vow intrinsically, but they do not have explicit legislation concerning the vow-making.

2. The Hebrew view believes that if there is wickedness in the heart of a person who brings a vow-offering his offering will not be acceptable. But Hadiyya does not have such view.

3. In the Hebrew view, if the utterance of a vow was made by a married women or unmarried girl, her husband or her father, respectively, can annul it, which also should be done immediately when they hear of it. But Hadiyya does not have such regulation.

4. The Hebrew legislation explicitly states things which cannot be given to God as a votive offering: anything which is an abomination to God and anything which already belongs to God cannot be offered. The Hadiyya view implies the petitioner should offer something of value. but does not state what things cannot be included.

5. According to the Hebrew view, if a person made a vow to dedicate himself or herself to the Lord, he/she can redeem himself/herself by paying a set amount, equal in value to his actual service of vow. But this practice is not known among the Hadiyya people.

The above comparison shows that the concept of vow ancient Israel and among the Hadiyya people is basically similar except for a few differences which are mainly based on the legislation of the institution. This similarity implies that in appropriate circumstances the current Hadiyya people can easily reconstruct the Hebrew concept of vow, which makes translation easier.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Assyro-Babylonian custom of vow-making, and that of other related areas, and of the Hadiyya are similar to their Hebrew counterpart: it is conditional, it is made in the context of prayer because of distress, the motivation of the vow-making is to seek relief from distress, the content of votive prayers is the promise of public praises in a particular manner, the vow is binding—it must be fulfilled, and the fulfillment of the vow should be in the place where the deity resides (Oppenbeim 1964: 242), and all vows in all these cultures, that are unfulfilled, have adverse consequences. The similarity of this concept between the Hadiyya and some other Ethiopian cultures and the ANE cultures is not accidental because there is a linguistic link[32], a geographical link, and probably there was also a historical-cultural diffusion among them during ancient times.

As the discussion of this chapter shows, the essence of the biblical vow can be described as a human commissive speech act of solemn commitment directed only to God in the context of distress seeking to get relief from God. It is a conventionalized utterance, operating within a social institution and gives rise to conventional contextual assumptions and the expectation of the grant of a desirable outcome from God, with an obligation to fulfilling the votive commitment made to God. A further expectation of adverse consequences is raised if the votive commitment remains unfulfilled.

נדר is a conditional solemn promise to God by humans which will be fulfilled only if God honors the petitioner's plea by granting it. The commitment is given to respond to the deity in a specified way. This nature of the biblical vow sets it off in contrast with oath, covenant and other similar concepts and commissive speech acts.

Finally, based on all the arguments of this chapter I claim that the Hebrew concept נדר has the following encyclopedic information in the cognitive environment of the ancient Israelite society. The target audience's inferential process of interpretation within specific pragmatic context interacts with this encyclopedic information so that a particular relevant feature of the encyclopedic information would be mutually manifest in terms of forming relevant contextual assumption(s) and cognitive efects:

1. It is a promise made by humans only to God: vow-making takes place only between God and humans.

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[32] Cushitic and Semitic are both in the Afro-Asiatic family.

2. In essence it is made in the context of prayer when one is in distress.

3. Making a vow to God was perceived as a reciprocal action between God and a human: God answers one's solemn prayer and one expresses one's gratitude and praises by fulfilling one's vow. Therefore the fulfilling of a vow was perceived as a response for what God has done and apparently it is a celebration and rejoicing in order to express gratitude to God.

4. Thus the fulfilling of a vow always followed God's good deeds according to one's solemn votive prayer and it was considered as a joy.

5. Making a vow is a free will commitment and to make it is not a religious duty. Therefore not every member of the Jewish community is expected to make a vow. But once it is made it is binding. Therefore the uttered vow must be fulfilled. Otherwise it will be sin with a consequence of punishment which functions as a means of reminder. When it is fulfilled the normal situation of relationship between God and the petitioner will resume.

6. A vow can be an offering, an abstaining, committing one's life to serve the deity etc.

7. The place of fulfilling a vow must be at the chosen place of God.

8. The time of fulfilling a vow should be immediately after God has answered what a person solemnly requested.

9. If the utterance of a vow was made by a married women or unmarried girl only her husband or her father, respectively, can annul it which also should be done immediately when they hear of it; otherwise it is binding.

10. A vow offering cannot include anything of abomination to God or anything which already belongs to God.

11. Anything dedicated to God as a vow offering, even including unclean animals, becomes holy to God.

12. A person can make a vow to dedicate himself or herself to the Lord. In such case a person can redeem himself by paying a set amount, equal in value to his actual service of vow.

13. If there is wickedness in the heart of a person who brings a vow-offering his offering will not be acceptable.

14. Vow shows positive relationship and trust between the petitioner and God.

CHAPTER FOUR

VOW MAKING OF JACOB AS A METAREPRESENTATION

1. Introduction

In chapter two I suggested that 28:10-35:15 is a distinct narrative unit of the Jacob story, and the vow of Jacob (Gen 28:10-22) is employed by the narrator to function as a framework which gives coherence to the narrative unit. In chapter three I described the Hebrew concept of vow, which will help us to explore the relevance of the vow of Jacob in Bethel (Genesis 28:10-22) for the narrative unit (28:10-35:1-15) from the narrator's point of view. In this chapter I intend to show how the vow-making of Jacob in Bethel functions as a framework for the narrative unit.

In interpreting the vow of Genesis 28:20-22, we need to read it carefully, and here some principles of relevance theory are useful. Therefore, in this chapter I intend to investigate the nature of Jacob's vow and its contents by employing the relevance theoretic concept of metarepresentation. This approach seems helpful to examine the passage because of its explanation of echoic utterance; and its approach to interpreting the same from an inferential perspective more comprehensively. In terms of inferential interpretation, "the formation and recognition of communicator's intention is central" (Wilson 2000: 412). Hence, the relevance theoretic explanation of the metarepresentation argues that through hearing someone else's utterance or through reading a text we attempt to read some one else's mind inferentially in relation to what he/she said. Thus, metarepresentation focuses on explaining the communicator's view of representing another person's words or thought.

2. Definition of Metarepresentation

I intend to provide a brief definition of 'metarepresentation' here before I embark on the exegetical discussion of Gen. 28:10-22, because I believe it is going to be relevant for our reading of the passage. The narrator of this story apparently tells us that significant parts of his report were attributed to the thought of Jacob or God (13-15, 16-17, 20-22).

Deirdre Wilson discusses the depth and variety of the metarepresentational ability of the human mind deployed in linguistic communication and attempts to provide a pragmatic account for this ability. She notes that the metarepresentational ability helps humans to engage in the inferential communication or comprehension. She defines metarepresentation as "a representation of a representation: a higher-order representation with a lower-order representation embedded within it" (Wilson 2000: 411). Hence, metarepresentation involves representing someone else's utterance or thought in one's thought or attributed utterance (Noh 2000: 98). That is why Wilson described it as 'a representation of a representation': a higher-order representation (representation of a speaker's thought) with a lower-order representation (representation of some one else's thought) embedded within it" (Wilson 2000: 411).

Wilson provides an illustration to show how the lower-order representation is embedded within the higher order representation. The illustration is adapted here as follows:

Mary says to Peter: You are neglecting your job.

In understanding Mary's utterance, Peter might entertain a series of metarepresentations of this utterance as follows:

a. Mary said, "You are neglecting your job."

b. Mary said that I am neglecting my job.

c. Mary believes that I am neglecting my job.

d. Mary intends me to believe that I am neglecting my job

e. Mary intends me to believe that she intends me to believe that I am neglecting my job (Wilson 2000: 412).

Thus, Wilson observes that in principle the process of metarepresentation in our mind is infinite. But she illustrates only up to the fourth-order metarepresentation of the utterance. For example she illustrates that the fourth-order of Mary's utterance: *"You are*

neglecting your job"[33] is *"Mary intends me to believe that she intends me to believe that I am neglecting my job"* which is complex enough.

Wilson also notes that human language is full of metarepresentation which usually manifests in various ways in communication. She describes quotation (direct or indirect) as an utterance attributed to someone else's utterance or thought (Wilson 2000: 413). She also remarks that the Linguistic marking of a metarepresentation varies both in extent of explicitness and in the type of original representation they are used to represent, as the above illustration shows—direct quotation (Ex. Mary said, "You are neglecting your job"); indirect quotation (Ex. Mary told me that I was not working hard enough); mixture of indirect and direct quotation (Ex. According to Mary I am "neglecting" my work), free indirect quotation (Ex. Mary was pretty rude to me. I am neglecting my job.) In addition, a representation of an abstract thought like "to say 'Sit down!' is impolite" is a non-attributive representation because it is not attributed to anybody's particular thought or utterance (Wilson 2000: 413).

In this regard, Wilson attempts to answer the following questions: What is the role of metarepresentation in identifying the content of the meaning of a speaker? How can one define the meaning of the speaker without getting into an infinite regress, which is requiring infinite metarepresentation for full transparency in communication? How can we reconcile the theoretical goal of transparency and the practical goal of psychological reasonability? The answer is that although each metalevel representation is infinite in principle our inferential processing stops when the expectation of relevance is achieved because human communication is not geared to continue wasting one's effort if there is no further expectation of relevance.

Wilson also notes that the speaker's meaning is identical to the content of the set of the assumptions embedded under the informative intention of the communicator which is mutually manifest by his ostensive stimulus (Wilson 2000: 424). The speaker's meaning of an utterance may also contain a metarepresentational component which is usually very rich and diverse (Wilson 2000: 424). As I remarked above human mind has

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[33] Wilson also illustrates that there are other higher-order representations observed in the human communication but are not attributed to someone else's utterance or thought. Ex. "Shut up" is rude (Wilson 2000: 413).

the capacity of processing these metarepresentational components and other different types of informational phenomena it perceives and makes a mental representation of them. It can also represent this representation to others in utterance and in other ways in public representation. The human mind can construct the books we read and utterances of someone else we hear which itself is the representation of the thought of someone else and we can also represent them again to others (See Sperber 2000: 3; Noh 2000: 1). Dan Sperber explains four main categories of metarepresentations as follows[34]:

1. Mental representation of mental representation; e.g., the thought "John believes that it will rain".
2. Mental representation of public representations; e.g., the thought "John said that it will rain".
3. Public representation of mental representation; e.g., the utterance "John believes that it will rain".
4. And public representation of public representations; e.g., the utterance "John said that it will rain. (Sperber 2000: 3).

Thus, according to the representation argument, there is obvious regress in each metalevel (see Lehrer 2000: 299-310). Consequently, the requirement of the representation of each conflicting states in every metalevel, respectively, will create a complex representation structure or system (Sperber 2000: 10; Lehrer 2000: 299-310). So how can the human mind avoid the regress? Lehrer argues that it is avoided by exemplarization (Lehrer 2000: 305-306). He argues that exemplarization is based on a quotation and disquotation (direct and indirect quotation) process. Humans generalize and exemplarize the experiences and sensations in their mind and convert the states of that experience or sensation into exemplaric representation (metarepresentation) which is similar to the quotation and disquotation process of metarepresentation. Quotation and disquotation is the referential process that our mind employs to convert the complex system of perceiving information, making a mental representation of it, and evaluating it, and it involves regress into exemplar. In Lehrer's words: "A process of quotation and disquotation yields a report on the content of our thoughts" rather than the complex

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[34] I have restructured the quote.

system of regress. This is because the human mind employs quotation or disquotation in order to avoid the complex process of regress of representations in the metalevel.

Thus the tactic of quotation and disquotation is a "minimal report of meaning and content" of the complex process in our thought employed to resolve the problem of representational transparency. Exemplarization is the way that the inferential process of the mental capacity of the human mind works to communicate the complex metarepresentational process. Lehrer says: "Moreover thought about something is a matter of quotation and disquotation of some mental state in a similar loop of exemplarization" (Lehrer 2000: 305).

In summary, metarepresentation could be described as an act of attributing or representing one's utterance or any other public representation and thought to someone else's thought or utterance. Such attribution or metarepresentation can be marked in several ways. But the common ones are employing the device of direct and indirect quotation markers, which also differs from language to language.

The difference between direct and indirect quotation is that in direct quotation the saliency of shared property of linguistic expression between the attributed and reported utterance/text is high while in indirect quotation the saliency of the shared semantic or logical property is high (Wilson 2000: 426). For example:

Mary said, "You are neglecting your job"

Mary said that I am neglecting my job.

She calls this resemblance *metalinguistic* and *interpretive* respectively. In some uses of mixed quotation of both features we may observe that both the metalinguistic and interpretive resemblances are exploited. The quotations resemble the original, by sharing some properties of the original, and are not identical to the original (Wilson 2000: 426). Among the variety of resemblances, metarepresentations of thought are typically interpretive, which means resemblance in content by sharing the contextual implications. Metarepresentation accounts for all varieties of quotations including even the extended range of public, mental, and abstract features of quotations, so that the explanation would be more comprehensive (Wilson 2000: 425). In this discussion I use the term 'metarepresentation' to denote an utterance which is attributed to the utterances and

thoughts of someone else with some kind of attitude. Usually such utterances are marked linguistically.

2.1. Echoic Utterance and Metarepresentation

It has been argued that human communication involve interpretive representations (utterance attributed to someone else's thought or utterance) extensively rather than descriptive representations (representation of speaker's own thought) (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 23; 239-242; Gutt 2000: 41-42; Carston 2002: 158). We have already discussed in section one of this chapter above that the interpretive use of language also involves the case of utterances used to interpret someone else's utterance or thought rather than the speaker's own thought, which Eun-Ju Noh, among several others, explains in depth as "metarepresentation" (Noh 2000). In the case of reported speech, such attributive use may be explicitly marked by expressions like "as so and so said…"

However in other cases the speaker may not necessarily indicate or mark that he is using someone else's thought. One such tacit use is an echoic use. An echoic use is distinct from other interpretive uses of someone else's thought in that the speaker signals to the hearer that he has two things in mind: (1) he has in mind what someone has said, and (2) he has a certain attitude toward that thought. Echoic use "achieves relevance mainly by conveying the speaker's attitude to an attributed utterance or thought" (Wilson 2000: 432). The attitude can be manifested as approval, disapproval, rebuke, rejection, amusement, skepticism, shock or surprise, happiness, etc. (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 238; Carston 2002: 298; Noh 2000: 91-98). When the interpretive use of someone else's thought achieves relevance in such a manner it is described as an echoic use. The three broad attitudes are endorsing it, questioning it, or dissociating from it

However, at times such attitude(s) may be left implicit to be deduced from the context (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 237-242). Therefore the recovery of the intended implicature depends on three features: understanding the utterance as an echoic one, understanding the echoed thought itself, and recognizing understanding the attitude of the speaker to the echoed thought (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 240). I emphasise that the information conveyed by the speaker about his attitude to the thought echoed is crucial in

recovering the echoic utterance. The attitude conveyed in an echoic utterance is variable (Noh 2000: 92).

In summary, in the process of understanding an echoic utterance, capturing the speaker's attitude to the attributed (metarepresented) utterance is crucial and that attitude "must be treated as part of the communicative content" (Wilson 2000: 431). It is important to note that the echoic utterance might be linguistically explicit (metalinguistic) or interpretive. When the echoic utterances resemble the attributed thought metalinguistically, the form of the expressed attitude will resemble the original form of the echoed utterance. Otherwise the expressed attitude may be simply the content. In any case, some apparent attitudinal device might be employed (Wilson 2000: 432).

2.2. Conditionals and Metarepresentation

Noh argues that a metarepresentational approach accounts more comprehensively for the interpretation of conditionals than the traditional truth-functional approach (See appendix 5 about the truth-functional approach). This is because the truth-functional approach is not adequate to account for different features of the conditional expressions unless it is complemented with a pragmatic analysis (Noh 2000: 174-179). More specifically, the traditional approach does not account for the non-basic conditionals (conditionals which do not denote logical cause and consequence like 'if you do not eat you will die') (Saeed 2003: 91-94).

Noh categorizes conditional utterances as metarepresentational utterances because the antecedents (protases) are used to represent another representation which they resemble in a particular context; "that is, to metarepresent an attributed utterance or thought" (Noh 2000: 186). She further observes that in some cases both antecedents and consequents (apodoses) may be used metarepresentationally (used to represent another representation) in which case the consequent may express the speaker's attitude to what is echoed in the antecedent (see Noh 2000: 205-208).

In this regard it is worth noting that the inferential processing aspect of the communication allows one to access the assumed relevant information, including the encyclopedic information of a certain concept in a given context as well as the assumed mutually shared knowledge of the social institutions of the particular community. This

phenomenon will be shown in the following discussions on the institution of vow in Jacob's votive narrative.

Hence, our discussion of Gen. 28:10-22 in the following sections approaches the passage from the metarepresentational perspective and will show how the inferential processing allows one to access the encyclopedic entries of the cognitive environment of the hearers about vow and mutually shared knowledge of the votive institution of the vow-conscious society. In such a society, these features are assumed by the narrator that the hearers or readers of the story will imagine for themselves (Carston 2002: 349-359).

3. Reading Gen 28:10-22 as a Story of Vow Making

Although many scholars have attempted to interpret Gen. 28:10-22 from the source critical point of view and collectively attributed the story to different sources (approaching the story diachronically), my approach to the story is a synchronic one. Hence, although I intend to give a careful attention to the historical and cultural context within which the event of the original story took place, it is not my desire to discuss whether the narrator of the story in Gen. 28:10-22 is the original source or he intends to report a story which was represented to him by someone else. This is because it is difficult to prove whether the whole report of the Bethel story is descriptive or metarepresentational.

However, I have observed that the narrator has explicitly attributed a significant portion of the episode to the words and thoughts of God, which were represented to Jacob in his dream, and as Jacob' own echoic words and thoughts of the same words and thoughts of God, which we will examine in the following discussion in this chapter. Therefore it is my intention to read Gen. 28:10-22 as an episode of vow-making of Jacob and explain it from the metarepresentational perspective in the following discussion so that we can understand the informative and communicative intention of the narrator. I suggest that reading this episode from the metarepresentational perspective will help us to describe and explain the attitude of the speaker (Jacob) in his echoic utterances better.

3.1. Close Reading of the passage

3.1.1. Setting of the Story (vv 10-11)

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¹⁰ וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּאֵר שָׁבַע וַיֵּלֶךְ חָרָנָה:

¹¹ וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם וַיָּלֶן שָׁם כִּי־בָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּקַּח מֵאַבְנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיָּשֶׂם מְרַאֲשֹׁתָיו וַיִּשְׁכַּב בַּמָּקוֹם הַהוּא

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Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place (10-11).

Narrative criticism (and also discourse analysis) deal with setting under four general features: temporal setting, spatial/ locational setting, social setting (the occasion in which a story is set), and the character(s) or participants of the story. The temporal setting of the event in this passage is 'when he reached certain place'; the spatial setting is 'certain place/Bethel'; the social setting, the occasion in which the story is set, is Jacob's running away from Beersheba in order to escape the death-threat of Esau; and the main characters of the story are God and Jacob.

Regarding the setting of characters, it is worth noting that the narrator does not formally introduce the main characters or participants (God and Jacob) in the setting, because the story is continued from the preceding episode. This episode is a continuation of the Jacob story[35] which represents the contention between Jacob and Esau and their descendants, though this phenomenon is not explicitly marked in the setting by any anaphoric linguistic signal. Presumably this is because it was assumed as a mutually shared contextual assumptions or knowledge—surely it is because Jacob, the main character is already on-stage; and God is a frequent, but intermittent character in the patriarchal narratives.

Regarding the setting of the occasion in which the story is set, we are told that Jacob, instructed by his parents, Isaac and Rebekah, set off to Haran (28:1-5, 10). The narrative tells us about the main reason for the journey of Jacob to Haran. On the one hand Rebekah had two reasons for sending him off to Haran: to protect him from the revenge of his brother Esau and to get a wife for him from her brother Laban. On the

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[35] It is the story of Jacob because he is the main protagonist of the story.

other hand Isaac seems to have had only one objective: getting a wife for Jacob from his original family (Speiser 1982: 215). In this regard it is strange that he sends his son empty-handed without supplying him the engagement gifts as his father Abraham did for him (Gen. 24:10). Thus unlike Isaac's negotiator, who went with extensive gifts for his prospective wife Rebekah (Gen. 24:52-53), Jacob went empty handed to get his wife from Laban, his uncle. Leon R. Kass argues that that was because Jacob was self-reliant person, and this behavior was corrected by his dream showing that the intelligence of the human being is imperfect and one cannot be self-reliant (Kass 2003:413). But on the other hand, one may argue that probably it was not culturally appropriate for a young man to negotiate for his prospective wife. Probably that was why Isaac did not go with the servant of Abraham to negotiate for his prospective wife although he was a mature person in age; forty years old (Gen 25:20). Thus we can argue that presumably the main reason of Jacob's journey to Paddan Aram was to avoid the revenge of Esau. Surely it was because of the tension between him and his brother Esau that Jacob was forced to flee for safety.

The locational setting of the story provided in V.11 needs some explanation because of its significant relevance for the reading of the votive narrative of Jacob. The narrator tells us that Jacob reached a certain place (which was later called Bethel) and he slept there the whole night under the stars in spite of the fact that there was a possibility of being attacked by the wild animals of that region (Gen. 37:33). It is not clear what kind of protection he expected when he slept in Bethel. When we think of other biblical stories about the long distance travelers, it is strange that this verse tells us Jacob spent that particular night in the open sky rather than seeking a host. Wenham suggests three possible reasons for this: probably he was far from human habitation, or he was not comfortable to spend the night with a host because of his family estrangement, or simply the event was guided by God's providence which "overruled the traditional custom of finding lodging in someone's house" (Wenham 1994:221). Or possibly Jacob went to Bethel seeking God's guidance about his future. For example, in some cultures like my own used to do, when people are perplexed about the location of their permanent settlement they seek a divine discernment by lying down on the land which they feel will be their permanent land of inhabitation. Thus probably Jacob consciously slept in Bethel,

perceiving it as a sacred place (see the following discussion on Bethel), seeking the revelation of God in his life as this was a custom in the Ancient Near Eastern culture (Pagolu 1998: 162). However, it is difficult to be sure whether Jacob has a similar intuitive cultural experience. In any case, staying the whole night, perhaps alone, under the stars must have been an anxious experience for Jacob, who was a mild man חם (*tam*[36]) who always stayed near home (25:27).

The distance between Beersheba and Paddan Aram[37] is about 500 miles/800km (Morris 1976: 446). Consequently, Jacob's trip to Haran probably took him about two weeks or more (if he was able to make 50km a day). Bethel is about 112km from Beersheba, according to Morris (Morris 1976: 446); but 85 km according to Ferris and Butler (Ferris 1992: 107; Butler 2005: 116). Thus he must have spent one or two nights at different places before he got to Bethel and several nights before he got to Padan Aram. However, the narrator focuses on this particular night Jacob spent in Bethel because the event that happened in that night was relevant to his narrative.

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[36] The semantic sense of the lexeme *tam* could be understood as 'complete' or 'perfect', or as 'innocent and simple' (BDB 1070b). In this context the sense of innocent and simple is preferable.

[37] I use Haran and Paddan Aram interchangeably.
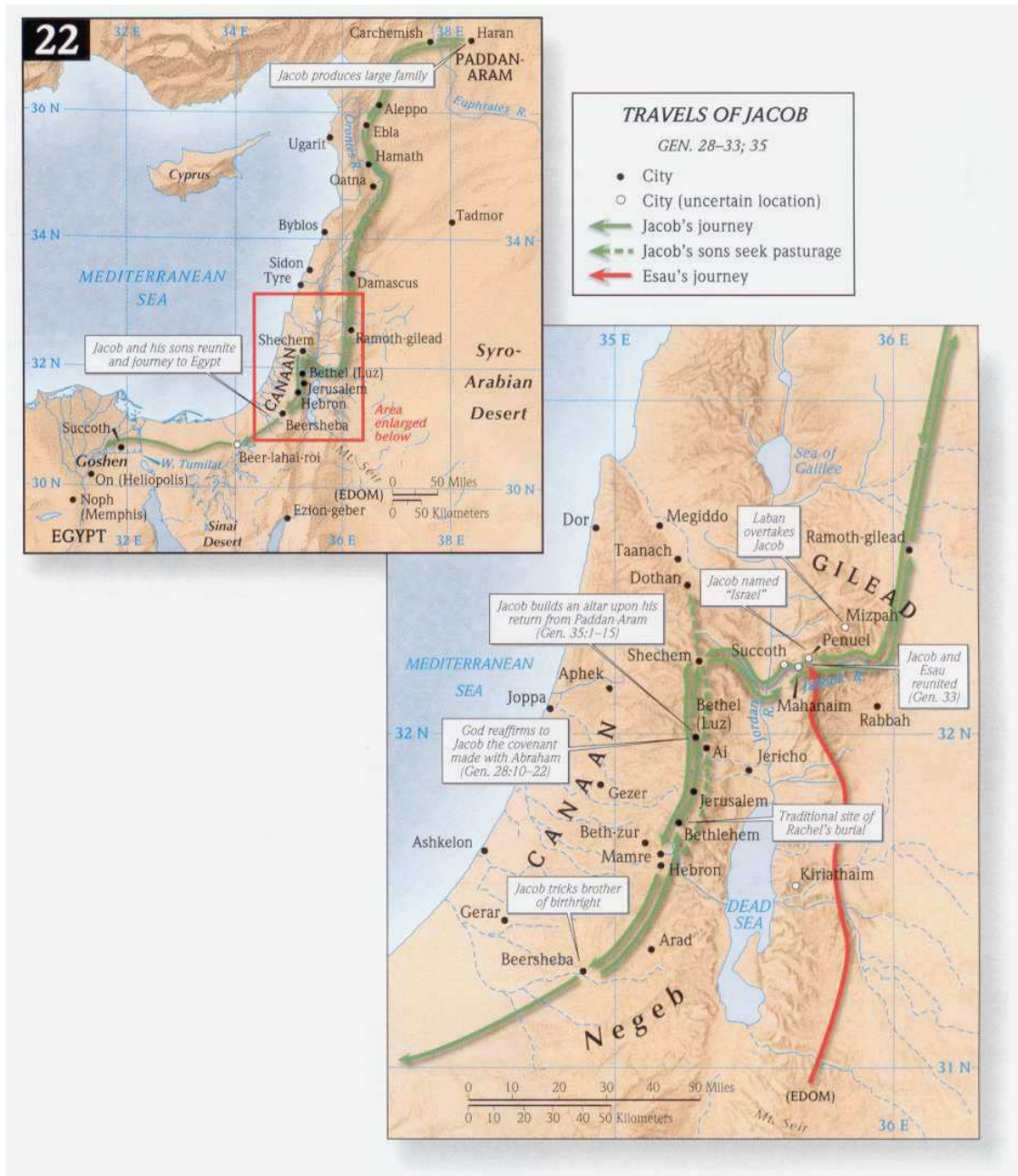
This map is taken from the Bible Atlas Access Foundation 2007 edited by Zaine Ridling. Permission requested.

The referent 'place' where the event took place is in focus in that it is mentioned three times in this verse (Wenham 1994: 221). Leslie Brisman thinks that:

> The place 'maqom' can be just an ordinary place, but it can also mean 'special place' or 'religious site' perhaps evoking specifically the place Abraham saw as the appointed one

for the 'aqeda'... The expression 'Jacob reached a certain place' has a special connotation of encounter (Brisman 1990: 73).

Pagolu argues that the narrator's focus on Bethel in Gen. 28:10-22 aims to consciously dissociate from the view that Bethel was a sacred site before this story (Pagolu 1998: 161f). His argument is based on Jacob's exclamation: אָכֵן יֵשׁ יְהוָה בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאָנֹכִי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי 'I realized that the LORD is in this place—and/but I did not know it!' (Gen. 28:16). However it is difficult to concur with Pagolu and believe that Jacob was not aware of this place where his grand-father Abraham had erected the altar (Skinner 1980: 376). The Bethel story of Gen. 28:10-22 in particular and the Genesis narrative in general artfully sets a beautiful allusion about the significance of the place which was named 'Bethel' by Jacob, according to the Bethel story of Gen 28. It was at Bethel that God confirmed to Abraham that he will give the land to his descendants, when he migrated from Mesopotamia to Canaan. There Abraham built his first altar and called upon the name of the Lord (Gen. 12:7-8; Gunkel 1997: 158). It was to Bethel[38] that Abraham returned from Egypt and built an altar (13:3-4). It was here that God made the promise of expanding the descendants of Abraham to East and West, and to North and South (13:14-17). It was in the same place now Jacob spent the night and God revealed himself to Jacob and gave him the affirmation to fulfill the Abrahamic covenant through him and his descendants (Wenham 1994: 223). It was here that Jacob made a vow to God. It was to Bethel that God instructed him to go from Shechem to fulfill his vow (35:1). It was here that Jacob built an altar to fulfill his vow and named the place 'Bethel' changing it from Luz (Gen 35:6-7, 14-15). It was here that God appeared again to Jacob and fulfilled his dream at Peniel by changing his name from Jacob to Israel, when he returned back from Aram (35:9-10) and blessed him to multiply and confirmed the Abrahamic covenant and promise to him and to his descendants (35:11-13)[39]. Bethel was possibly a most

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[38] When Absalom, son of David, planned a conspiracy to overthrow his father he lied by saying: "Please let me go to Hebron and pay the vow that I have made to the LORD. For your servant made a vow while I lived at Geshur in Aram: If the LORD will indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will worship the LORD in Hebron" (2 Sam. 15:7-8) probably he was referring to Bethel loosely because Bethel was a place of worship in Hebron.

[39] Even according to the later ancient Israelite history, it was in Bethel that the Ark of the covenant was kept during the time of judges and people inquired of the Lord seeking direction from him (Judges 20:26-

prominent cultic place of Canaanites even before the early stage of the Israelite history (Kilpatrick 1975: 41; Taylor 1995: 49). Thus, probably Jacob knew about the place but he did not expect such a vivid experience of the presence of God at that place.

We can conclude, therefore, it is apparent that Bethel was a place of worship from the time of Patriarchs to Judges until it was defiled by Jeroboam I who erected a golden calf there (1 Kings 12:29-33). Bethel was highly respected for its patriarchal connections (Dumbrell 1974-75: 65). The tombs which have been excavated in the immediate surrounding area of Bethel also show that "the site was holy ground, even in patriarchal times" (Dumbrell 1974:65). Some scholars believe that the name "Bethel" refers to a pre-Israelite deity (Dumbrell 1974: 67). However, this view is very difficult to believe, because in the Israelite context, it refers to the place of worship, not to the deity himself, as Amos clearly refers to Bethel as 'a place of worship' (Amos 3:14).

Fokkelman also observes the significance of Bethel in Jacob's journey when he says that the narrative representation of the episode of Gen. 28:10-22 shows that "only Bethel is essential" in Jacob's journey" (Fokkelman 1991: 47). Thus, presumably this votive narrative was designed to foster three things: 1. the concept of the binding nature of the vow. 2. The location of Bethel as a very significant cultic place during the time of Patriarchs chosen by God and 3. Represent Jacob as a most appropriate and important patriarch figure next to Abraham. Consequently this episode is deliberately crafted to function as a running link throughout the literary structure of the preceding and following story of Jacob, which will be shown in the following discussions in this chapter.

Finally, before we move on to investigating whether the expectation of relevance raised by the votive utterance of Jacob in Bethel was fulfilled in the following narratives, it is worth noting that we need to observe the above-mentioned repetition of some ostensive features of the Jacob story, particularly the repetition employed by using the strategy of the repetition of direct reference to Bethel.

One can observe that the referring expression to 'Bethel" was repeated six times explicitly in an extraordinary way: 1. 'he came to a certain place and he stayed there' (v. 11); 2. 'the Lord is in this place and I did not know it' (v. 16); 3. 'how awesome is this

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28; 21:1-4). It was in Bethel that Deborah and Samuel judged the people of Israel (Judges 4:5; 1 Sam. 7:16).

place (v. 17); 4. 'this is none other than the house of God' (17); 5. 'this is the gate of heaven' (v. 17); 6. 'he named that place Bethel' (v. 19). The communicative strategy of this ostensive repetition of Bethel in this episode needs some explanation. However, the function of this stylistic feature cannot be defined by purely linguistic and semantic parameters, because the expected "effects of repetition on utterance interpretation are by no means constant" (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 219). The relevance theoretic parameters explain that the repetition of an expression is employed with the assumption of achieving certain optimal relevance which the communicator has aimed at (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 220). Consequently the inferential process of the repetition differs based on the contextual assumptions of each utterance.

In this particular context the repetition of 'Bethel' in various forms is aimed at achieving the relevance of strong confirmation or the strengthening of the existing assumption about the chosen place of God, opposed to any other cultic places in general and Shechem in particular, which will be discussed in chapters five and six. It shows that in the process of his mental representation of the chosen place of God in this context the narrator was experiencing huge waves of memories in his cognitive environment about Bethel in general and about the institutions of vow fulfilling only in a chosen place of God in particular. I presume that he also has a confidence that his hearers can imagine this phenomenon for themselves because it is a mutually shared knowledge.

3.1.2. Jacob's Encounter with God in His Dream: Preamble to His Vow Making (vv 12-15)

The major part of 28:12-22 contains the narrator's metarepresented report of the utterance of God and Jacob. Hence it would be more comprehensive if these verses are read from the metarepresentational point of view. Therefore in the following discussion we will focus on what God said to Jacob in his dream and on Jacob's response to what God said to him.

3.1.2.1. The Dream (vv 12-13a)

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12וַיַּחֲלֹם וְהִנֵּה סֻלָּם מֻצָּב אַרְצָה וְרֹאשׁוֹ מַגִּיעַ הַשָּׁמָיְמָה וְהִנֵּה מַלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹהִים עֹלִים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ׃

13aהִנֵּה יְהוָה נִצָּב עָלָיו

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[12] And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it [13a] And the LORD stood beside him

We observe that in this passage (vv 12-13a) the narrator interpretively represents Jacob's verbal representation of what he saw in his dream as a free indirect quotation. If this story was not verbally represented by Jacob himself, there is no way the narrator could access Jacob's mental representation of what he saw in his dream. Hence this section is the beginning of the metarepresentation of Gen 28:10-22.

The passage states three things: 1. a ladder[40] was set on the earth whose top reaches heaven. 2. The angels of God were ascending and descending on it. 3. God was standing by him and spoke to him (Wenham 1994:221).

An interpretation problem occurs in the clause: יהוה נצב עליו 'the Lord was standing on it/beside him' in verse 13a. There are two translation problems in this phrase: 1. what does the deictic pronoun marker ו— suffixed to עלי referring to? Is it referring to the ladder or to Jacob? 2. What is the precise denotation of the preposition עליו — standing on it or standing beside him? Obviously, these are not fully separable issues. Thus, the main interpretation problem is how to interpret the expression יהיָה נצב עליו? There are two possible interpretations suggested for this expression: 1. The Lord was standing on the ladder (Wenham 1994: 222). 2. The Lord was standing beside Jacob (Westermann 1976: 455; Gunkel 1997: 310; Driver 1904: 265). Some translations like Rashi and JPS Hebrew-English TANAKH, interpret it as God standing beside Jacob while other translations like NIV and NRSV interpret it as 'God was standing on the ladder.'

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[40] This referring expression (*sulam*) 'ladder' has been interpreted in different ways (Oblath 2001: 117-125). Thus the referent of the referring expression /*sulam*/ is controversial. The four suggested possible interpretations are ramp, stairway, enclosed chamber (or tunnel), or ladder. According to the theological word book of the Old Testament (Patterson 1980: 626-627) and Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon (Brown 1979:699b-700) the root of /*sulam*/ is /*sala'l*/ which has the following derivatives: *selah*→ lift up, exalt; *solilah*→ mount; *sullam* → ladder; *m*^{e}*sillah/masulul* →highway (Patterson 19801:626). The Amharic cognate, which is one of the semitic languages of Ethiopia, is also *masalaal* 'ladder'. Therefore I suggest that in this context ladder seems the most preferable sense. This ladder was a means set by God (implied subject of נצב 'standing') to connect the heaven and earth so that the angels ascend and descend on it.

In my opinion translating this expression as 'beside him' seems preferable for the following two reasons: 1. The BDB dictionary describes that when **עליו** collocates with **עמד** and **נצב**, it means idiomatically 'stand by some one' (Gen. 18:2), or standing by a superior as a servants (**ולא־יכל יוסף להתאפק לכל הנצבים עליו** Gen. 45:1), or of persons surrounding a judge (Ex. 18:13-14). Obviously, this expression is different from the literal meaning: 'stand on/over' (Brown 1979: 756). 2. This idiomatic sense 'stand by some one' becomes more relevant when one is sitting down. For example Abraham looked up from his sitting position: **וישא עיניו וירא והנה שלשה אנשים נצבים עליו** 'he looked up and saw three men standing near him' (Gen. 18:2). Thus this sense fits the textual context because Jacob was presented in a lying position while he saw the dream (v. 1).

This phenomenon of divine presence beside Jacob has a significant contextual implication to Jacob himself in his mental representation of the event and to the later readers of Genesis. It denotes that the God of his fathers now has chosen Jacob to be the next patriarch that he is with him. We can presume that the standing of Yahweh, the God of the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac, beside Jacob while he was in such a distressing situation, brings him a very special encouragement, which was evident in the divine commissive speech act to Jacob in verses 13-15. This attitude of Jacob is reflected in his echoic vow in vv 20-22.

3.1.2.2. Metarepresentation in the Dream (vv 13b-15)

¹³... <hy÷ hw" ... וַיֹּאמַר אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיךָ וֵאלֹהֵי יִצְחָק הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ לְךָ אֶתְּנֶנָּה וּלְזַרְעֶךָ:

¹⁴ וְהָיָה זַרְעֲךָ כַּעֲפַר הָאָרֶץ וּפָרַצְתָּ יָמָּה וָקֵדְמָה וְצָפֹנָה וָנֶגְבָּה וְנִבְרֲכוּ בְךָ כָּל־מִשְׁפְּחֹת הָאֲדָמָה וּבְזַרְעֶךָ:

¹⁵ וְהִנֵּה אָנֹכִי עִמָּךְ וּשְׁמַרְתִּיךָ בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־תֵּלֵךְ וַהֲשִׁבֹתִיךָ אֶל־הָאֲדָמָה הַזֹּאת כִּי לֹא אֶעֱזָבְךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר אִם־עָשִׂיתִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר־דִּבַּרְתִּי לָךְ:

> ¹³ And the LORD... said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; ¹⁴ and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. ¹⁵ Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

In the preceding section we saw that the narrator metarepresented Jacob's verbal representation of what he saw in his dream as a free indirect quotation. In this section we observe that the narrator apparently attributes his representation to utterances of God or Jacob by marking them by the action-verb phrases like ויאמר 'he said' (vv 13, 16, 17), ויקרא את־שם המקום 'he called/named that place' (v 19) וידר יעקב נדר לאמר 'Jacob made a vow by saying' (v 20). However, it is worth noting that the linguistically marked metarepresentation (particularly direct quotes) in this passage might not necessarily be identical to the original utterance of God or Jacob, but presumably resembles the content of the original utterance or thought interpretively.

In addition, Follingstad and Sim describe the Hebrew linguistic particles והנה and כי as a linguistic device employed to mark metarepresentation (See Follingstad 2001 and Sim 2009 for a greater detail). Their work on these particles would lend further linguistic support to my thesis about the metarepresentation in this passage and their arguments provide the detailed linguistic support for how I am reading והנה here. והנה is used three times in this passage: twice in verse 12 and once in verse 13a. Follingstad shows that the pragmatic function of והנה is deictic[41] (Follingstad 2001: 510-519). Thus the first three והנה in verses 12 and 13 shift the deictic viewpoint from the narrator to Jacob and mark the metarepresentation of Jacob's visual and perceptual experience in his dream about God standing beside him, the ladder reaching to heaven, the angels descending and ascending on the ladder, thus giving climax and emphasis on Jacob's extraordinary experience of encountering God.

However the fourth והנה in verse 15 shifts the deictic viewpoint to the speaker-hearer context: God (speaker) and Jacob (hearer). Thus והנה used by the speaker (God) in order to mark that he (God) has new important pragmatic information for Jacob and intends to charge Jacob to give careful attention to the information. It signals that God intends to draw the attention and focus of Jacob so that Jacob should carefully understand what God is going to say to him and should believe it that God will be with him, will

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[41] Dictionary of linguistics and phonetics describes that 'deixis' is a term used in linguistic theory to subsume the linguistic features which refer directly to the personal (eg. He/she), temporal (eg. now/then), locational (eg. here/there), and demonstrative (eg. this/that) characteristics in a particular situation within which an utterance takes place. Thus the meaning of such words is relative to the situation of utterance. Such words are described as deictic words (Crystal 2003: 127).

protect him, and will fulfill everything he said to him[42]. Hence, there is a difficulty in explaining about the apparent metarepresentation marked by **והנה** in verse 15. Since this utterance is attributed to God, whose words or thoughts and on what occasion would God be metarepresenting? If we presume that God metarepresented Jacob's thought, then how can we prove this hypothesis?

In verses 13-15 the narrator reports what God said to Jacob in his dream and in verses 16-22 he reports Jacob's response to the spectacular experience of his dream. Thus, the major part of verses 13b-22 contains the narrator's metarepresented report of the commissive speech act of God and Jacob's response to it, which also comprises Jacob's commissive speech act to God. Jacob's votive response (commissive speech act) in 20-22 to what God promised to him in 13-15 is also represented as a metarepresentation of God's promise to him in verses 13-15, which I will show in the following discussion. That is why I suggested that it would be more appropriate and comprehensive if these verses are read from the metarepresentational perspective.

As we discussed above the initial part of Jacob's dream—vv 12-13a, does not employ an explicit linguistic marker for the metarepresentation. This shows the "variety of metarepresentational abilities" human being can deploy in linguistic communication (Wilson 2000: 411). The representation of God's words within Jacob's dream in verses 13b-15 is represented as an overt metarepresentatation in the form of a reported utterance of God. The linguistic device used to mark this matarepresentation is **ויאמר** 'and he said' (v 13). Wilson notes that if a metarepresentation is marked by a linguistic device it could be categorized as "higher-order metarepresentation" (Wilson 2000: 427). Thus God's utterance to Jacob in his dream could be categorized as a higher-order metarepresentation.

The expression: "I am the LORD God of your father Abraham and God of Isaac" (v 13) is introduced for the first time here and it is artfully designed to recapture the allusion about the promises God made to Abraham and Isaac previously (12:7; 13:14-16; 15:18; 17:8; 24:7; 26:24) and designates Jacob as the next patriarch of the people of Israel.

יהוה 'LORD'[43]: The significance of the use of this referring expression for God in this context is meant to invoke a set of assumptions about God. These assumptions were communicated by using this name in the previous narratives of Genesis particularly in the context of the covenant between God and Abraham and Isaac. It is a self introduction of God (Zimmerli 1982: 4). As Zimmerli further states, the name of Yahweh gives access to a possible set of contextual implications including: God reveals himself with a covenant and remains faithful to it, he is an actor in historical experience; the God revealed is a speaking God and his voice reshapes the world; he is an inscrutably sovereign God; the revealed God is known always as a judging and saving God; his revelation is not a matter of assumption, rather it is a matter of life and death (Zimmerli 1982: xv, 7). When the name 'Yahweh' is invoked by God himself it designates the faithfulness of God to his covenant; hence it is similar to swearing (Zimmerli 1982: 11). It usually denotes God's encounter with human to comfort and encourage with his promises in a time of frustration and discouragement, which is relevant to the situation of Jacob (Zimmerli 1982: 14). He is the one who led Abraham out of Ur (Gen.15:7); he is the God of Isaac (Gen. 26:24); now he reveals himself as the God of Jacob at Bethel. Thus, the self-introduction of God, by the name 'Yahweh", triggers this set of assumptions and consequently connects the votive narrative of Bethel to the previous narratives about Abraham and Isaac (Wenham 1994: 222-223).

Thus Jacob is presented as the next one chosen by God to fulfill his covenant to Abraham and Isaac through him and his descendants rather than his brother Esau and his descendants[44]. Thus, presumably the expression "the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac" is used to show that the same God who made a covenant with Abraham and Isaac is now confirming the covenant with Jacob, which incorporates him as the true line of the promised seed (Wenham 1994: 222). This seems to be a very important implicature of this narrative.

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[43] Although endless critical speculations about the origin and meaning of YHWH can be made, the etymology of this name is questionable and no one is sure about its original pronounciation. Therefore, in this discussion, I wish to discuss the possible contextual assumption provoked by the use of this name rather than describing its semantic sense.

[44] Gen. 35:23-29; 37:1-50:14 narrates that Jacob and his family lived in Canaan and died and was buried in Canaan on the same burial site where the ancestors were buried which also denotes the significance of inheritance while Esau and his family moved out of the Canaan which signals that Esau was excluded from the covenant promise.

The expression "the land on which you are lying" is a synecdoche used to refer the whole land of Canaan, not only the place he was lying on. Thus the message communicated to Jacob in 28:13b-14 is exactly parallel with the message previously communicated to Abraham in Gen 12:3 and 13:14-16:

> And all the clans/families of the earth shall be blessed/shall bless themselves by you and your descendants (Gen 12:3). The LORD said to Abram,… "Raise your eyes now, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth; so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted (Gen. 13:14-16).

The interpretive resemblance between the two is of such a high degree that some expressions are verbatim. Wenham demonstrates the parallelism between these two passages as follows:

> 28:14: **נברכו בך כל־משפחת האדמה ובזרעך** 'And all the clans/families of the earth shall be blessed/shall bless themselves by you and your descendants'
>
> 12:3: **ונברכו בך כל משפחת** 'And all the clans/families of the earth shall be blessed/shall bless themselves by you'

> 28:13 **הארץ אשר אתה שכב עליה לך אתננה ולזרעך** 'The land on which you are lying I shall give to you and your descendants'
>
> 13:15 **את־כל הארץ אשר אתה ראה לך אתננה ולזרעך**
>
> 'The whole land which you see I shall give to you and your descendants for ever'

> 28:14 **והיה זרעך כעפר הארץ** 'Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth'
>
> 13:16 **ושמתי את־זרעך כעפר הארץ** 'I shall make your descendants like the dust of the earth'

> 28:14 **ופרצת ימה וקדמה וצפנה ונגבה** 'You will spread westward and eastward, northward and southward'
>
> 13:14 **וראה ...צפנה ונגבה וקדמה וימה** 'Look …northward and southward, and eastward and westward' (Wenham 1994: 222-223).

Similarly the message communicated to Jacob in 28:13b-15 is parallel with the message communicated to Isaac in Gen 26:3-4 because there is a significant resemblance between them:

26:3 לך ולזרעך אתן את־כל־הארצת 'To you and to your descendants I will give all these lands'

28:13 הארץ אשר אתה שכב עליה לך אתננה ולזרעך 'The land on which you are lying I shall give to you and your descendants'

26:3 ואהיה עמך 'I will be with you'

28:15 אנכי עמך ושמרתיך בכל אשר הלך 'I am with you and will keep you wherever you go'

Gen 26:4 והרביתי ‹את־זרעך ככוכבי השמים 'I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven'

Gen 28:14 והיה זרעך כעפר הארץ 'Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth'

26:4 והתברכו בזרעך כל גויי הארץ 'All the nations of the earth shall gain blessing for themselves through your offspring'

28:14: נברכו בך כל־משפהת האדמה ובזרעך 'And all the clans/families of the earth shall be blessed/shall bless themselves by you and your descendants'

Finally, we observe that the Lord concludes his words to Jacob with a strong commissive speech act of giving him the promise of ultimate protection wherever he goes: "…I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." (V.15). This utterance is a very strong commissive speech act because God makes a binding commitment to Jacob as to a future course of action. He promises to be with him wherever he goes and protect him, and he will bring him back to the promised land. In Wenham's words "Whatever unexpected turns Jacob's career may take, the Lord will be

with him, saving him from disaster and ensuring the ultimate triumph of what he had promised" (Wenham 1994: 223).

Consequently, as I noted above, the commissive speech acts that God to Jacob in Gen. 28:13-15 shows explicit interpretive resemblance with the commissive speech act of God made to Abraham (12:1-3; 13:14-17) and to Isaac (26:3-4). Thus the optimal relevance of this utterance (implicature), as already noted above, is that it is presumably intended to explain the inauguration of Jacob as the sole line of the promised seed entitled to inherit the Abrahamic covenant of the promise, in contrast to Esau.

The communicative strategy of the repetition of the Abrahamic covenant to Jacob by allusion in this episode is expected to achieve the extra contextual effect of relevance, communicating something different than what the hearer would have thought otherwise (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 220-221). The repetition emphatically dismisses the existing assumption of the birthright of Esau to inherit the promise of covenant, and, on the contrary, emphatically introduces Jacob as a sole heir, dismissing the assumption that he cannot be, thereby adding new/further contextual implicatures. Thus, this public representation of repetition shows the speaker's or the narrator's mental representation of the Abrahamic covenant and God's intentional choice of one particular line of the descendants of Abraham and Isaac, which evidently resulted from the inferential interaction of memories in his cognitive environment. He also assumes that his audience also will imagine for themselves about the same because this contextual assumption is mutually shared knowledge.

In this regard Jacob might have entertained a series of metarepresentations of the utterances of God in his mind. Let us take one of the utterances of God—the clause 'I will bring you back to this land' to illustrate this phenomenon:

a. God said to me: "I will bring you back to this land."

b. God said that he will bring me back to this land.

c. God intends/plans to bring me back to this land.

d. God intends me to believe that he will bring me back to this land.

e. God intends me to believe that he intends me to believe that he will bring me back to this land.

3.1.2.3. Jacob's Echoic Response to His Dream (vv 16-17)

Verses 16-17 concerns Jacob's spontaneous response to the unique experience of his dream in Bethel:

¹⁶ וַיִּיקַץ יַעֲקֹב מִשְּׁנָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר* אָכֵן יֵשׁ יְהוָה בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאָנֹכִי לֹא יָדָעְתִּי:

¹⁷ וַיִּירָא וַיֹּאמַר מַה־נּוֹרָא הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם־בֵּית אֱלֹהִים וְזֶה שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמָיִם:

¹⁶ Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place-- and I did not know it!" ¹⁷ And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

The narrator explicitly attributes the utterances of verses 16 and 17 to Jacob by employing a linguistic device ויאמר 'and he said'. It seems that Jacob's first awaking from his sleep occurred because of the shock caused by the awesome nature of his dream as it was expressed by his utterance of exclamation: "Surely the LORD is in this place-- and I did not know it!" (v. 16). And he was so afraid that he said: "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God. And this is the gate of the heaven" (v.17). The context shows that Jacob was not talking to anybody in that particular situation because the text implies that there was nobody with him. Therefore, we can describe this expression as a representation of his own thoughts, perhaps uttered aloud.

The first sentence in v.17 is an exclamative expression which represents his emotion and surprise when he stumbled on the fact that God was there[45]. On the other hand relevance theory claims that exclamative utterances are metarepresentational (Noh 2000: 99). However, Wilson notes that in terms of relevance theory if an exclamative expression is a non-attributive or non-echoic utterance then it has to be treated as a representation of desirable thoughts or desirable information of the speaker himself (Wilson 2000: 437). Thus, presumably Jacob's exclamative utterance in this context signals his own thought of sudden realization of the fact that Yahweh was there. Hence, Jacob's exclamative utterance in this particular context could be perceived as one showing Jacob's desirable response to the event because of God's very encouraging

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[45] In terms of speech act theory and the classification of the sentence function the term 'exclamation' is used to refer any emotional utterance (Crystal 1990: 169; Sperber 1995: 244). However, in terms of the principle of relevance, which works on the basis of inference about getting the communicator's informative intention, exclamatives should be comprehended interpretively depending on the shared contextual assumptions (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 254). Thus, in this case the first accessible assumption could be that the presence of God in Bethel was a surprise to Jacob.

promises he received in his dream while he was in such a distressing situation. Thus the adverbial expression אכן, translated as 'surely' by NRSV, marks Jacob's verbal representation of his surprise caused by his sudden consciousness of Yahweh's presence in Bethel, in a vivid way.

Wenham explains that according to the ancient thought of the Near East, heaven refers to the house/dwelling place of the divine (Wenham 1994: 223). Hence the expression 'the gate of the heaven' identifies Bethel as a place which directly leads one to the divine presence. Note that all the three sentences used by the narrator at this time are carefully crafted repetitions in order to magnify the significance of Bethel: certainly the Lord is present in this place; how fearful/awesome is this place; this is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven (Fokkelman 1991: 49). Apart from the clause 'how fearful/awesome is this place', the rest of Jacob's utterances say the same thing in different ways. This repetition achieves the relevance of strong confirmation or strengthening of the existing assumption about the chosen place of God (cognitive effect). Thus Jacob (probably the narrator too) perceives Bethel as a unique sacred/holy place because of the divine presence there. Westermann observes this phenomenon when he says: "What is described here is a phenomenon of religion as a whole" (Westermann 1976: 456). Consequently, Jacob referred the place as the house of God, which usually, in the later cultic practice of Israelites, is used to refer to the temple or sanctuary (Judges 18:31; 1Ch. 4:48; Ezra 1:4; Neh. 6:10; Ps. 42:4; Ecc. 5:1; Dan. 1:2).

3.1.3. The Vow Making of Jacob and Its Echoic Nature (vv 18-22)

The second response of Jacob to his dream is presented in 18-22 and it has two phases. The first phase is presented in verses 18-19 and is largely narrative. In v. 18 we are told that Jacob woke up and took the stone[46] which was under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on it as an expression of his reaction to the experience of his dream:

[18] וַיַּשְׁכֵּ֨ם יַעֲקֹ֜ב בַּבֹּ֗קֶר וַיִּקַּ֤ח אֶת־הָאֶ֙בֶן֙ אֲשֶׁר־שָׂ֣ם מְרַאֲשֹׁתָ֔יו וַיָּ֥שֶׂם אֹתָ֖הּ מַצֵּבָ֑ה וַיִּצֹ֥ק שֶׁ֖מֶן עַל־רֹאשָֽׁהּ׃

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[46] It is worth noting to observe that the stone which was under his head must have been a large stone because it was sufficient to be erected as an Altar (he poured oil on it which shows that probably he also intended it be an altar) or memorial.

[18] So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it.

The key question one may ask here is that: why did Jacob erect the pillar? Different answers have been proposed to this question. The practice of erecting stones as a pillar may have different functions in the ancient near east culture: as a memorial to the dead, as a witness to the solemn agreement of treaty, as a victory memorial, as a cultic action, and as a boundary stone (Westermann 1976: 223; Gunkel 1997: 311-312; Pagolu 1998: 147). In addition, Gunkel notes that the veneration of stones by anointing oil shows the belief of ancient people as "feeding the god resident in the stone" (Gunkel 1997: 312). Similarly Pagolu also observes from different ancient literatures that there was a well-accepted notion that certain stones were perceived as indwelt by deities and were therefore holy stones (Pagolu 1998: 136). However he remarks that there is no implication that Jacob believed that God actually dwelt in the stone or that he worshiped it as a deity (Pagolu 1998: 174). Moreover, anointing the stone by pouring oil implies making both the stone and the place it is erected as sacred cultic objects for God, who revealed himself to Jacob. This seems to be a stronger implication of the text than feeding the deity dwelling in that particular stone (Pagolu 1998: 162-164). The name 'Bethel' given by Jacob to this place in verse 19 also reinforces this notion (Pagolu 1998: 162):

<div dir="rtl">

[19] וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא בֵּית־אֵל וְאוּלָם לוּז שֵׁם־הָעִיר לָרִאשֹׁנָה:
</div>

[19] He called that place Bethel; but the name of the city was Luz at the first.

Wenham notes that a stone inscription discovered in that region refers to the whole place as "Bethel" which means house of gods (Wenham 200: 224). Jacob's utterance of naming also shows that he designated that particular stone as well as the place where it was erected as the dwelling place of God (Wenham 200: 224). Hence we observe that the first reference shows the inhabitants' consciousness of the presence of god(s) in that particular place while the second (Jacob's naming) shows both his consciousness of the presence of God in that particular place as well as changing its name in order to represent this phenomenon in its proper name. Consequently Jacob changes the name of the place from 'Luz' to 'Bethel' (v.19). Pagolu also notes that possibly Jacob's erecting the stone was a cultic action intended "to mark the immanence of the deity" in Bethel (Pagolu 1998: 150). Thus, there is oblique mention of two

metarepresentations here, both performative speech acts of naming. Therefore, we can conclude that presumably what Jacob intended to do by erecting the pillar in Bethel shows that he recognizes Bethel as a sanctuary of God and commits himself to worship God in Bethel (Pagolu 1998: 170).

The second part of Jacob's response metarepresents his words at that time: Jacob made a vow to God (vv 20-22). Some scholars like Westermann consider the vow of Jacob in 20-22 as a secondary element. For example Westermann considers vv. 10-12 and 16-19 as the main narrative and vv. 13-15, and 20-22 as a later expansion of the old narrative (Westermann 1976: 452-3, 458). However I suggest that this conclusion could be disputed based on two pieces of evidence: grammatical or syntactic evidence and pragmatic evidence of the contextual assumptions of vow making.

In terms of grammatical evidence we observe that the Hebrew narrative feature of vav consecutive shows the sequential order of the event. The vav consecutive (suffix ו) is used at the beginning of both juxtaposed paragraphs with the imperfect verb (*WAYYIQTOL*): it begins with **וישכם** in **וישכם יעקב** 'Jacob rose' and ends with **ויקרא** in **ויקרא** **את־שם־המקום ההוא בת־אל**, 'and he called the name of the place Bethel' in the preceding clause, (Gen. 28:19). Then next clause begins with the imperfect verb (*WAYYIQTOL*) **וידר**' in 'וידר יעקב נדר **'and Jacob made a vow', in the following clause (28:20) which shows the consecutive feature of the event line.

Regarding the role of vav consecutive in terms of the juxtaposed clause relationship in the ancient Hebrew narrative, there are two different constructions of vav consecutive which have two distinct semantic forces: relative force and coordinative or copulative force (Waltke and O'Connor 1990: 519ff; Kelley 1992: 145). When vav consecutive is employed to signal relative force, the following or second *vav* preffixed to the verb will signal that the second verb is in relative relationship with the preceding one which is also preffixed with *vav,* thus the second one could be translated as 'then…'(Waltke and O'Connor 1990: 519ff).

Similarly, in terms of the role of *vav* consecutive at the relation of the paragraph level the analysis of Roy L. Heller shows that if two paragraphs are juxtaposed in a narrative and are tied together they are marked by the *WAYYIQTOL* verb construction in most cases. He explains:

> A corresponding initial *WAYYIQTOL* clause tied to a *WAYYIQTOL* chain, therefore, usually stands at the beginning of paragraphs whose preceding paragraph is terminally explicitly marked; likewise, a terminal *WAYYIQTOL* clause tied to a preceding *WAYYIQTOL* chain, stands at the end of paragraphs whose following paragraph is initially explicitly marked…These externally marked paragraphs are bounded by the final clause of preceding paragraph or the initial clause of following paragraph. The corresponding *WAYYIQTOL* clause either begins or concludes the *WAYYIQTOL* chains which comprise the paragraph in which they are found (Heller 2004: 440).

This feature is apparent in these two juxtaposed paragraphs of this narrative: Jacob's setting out from Bersheba (28:10) (preceding paragraph) and Jacob's setting off to go to Padan Aram ׳וישָּׂא יעקב רגליו׳ 'Jacob raised his feet' (29:1) (following paragraph)[47].

Secondly, they are bound cognitively because of the contextual assumption that a vow is always made first (usually but not always in a sanctuary of the deity) and then vow-granting follows. Therefore, it follows that Jacob makes a vow at that place he designated as the house of God (v 20-22) which qualifies it as a powerfully valid binding votive utterance, and most importantly, this feature highlights that it must be here (Bethel) that he must fulfill his vow not in any other place when he returns to Canaan. And then the narrator proceeds narrating about the vow-granting according to the natural order of votive narratives beginning in this paragraph (29:1). Thus, this public representation shows that this votive utterance meets the expected contextual assumptions of vow making and vow granting which will be discussed in the following chapters. Hence these two paragraphs are bound together both grammatically and pragmatically or cognitively.

The votive utterance of Jacob functions as a framework of this narrative unit and it is crucially relevant for the interpretation of the whole narrative unit. There are four pieces of evidence for this claim: 1. This particular vow is mentioned again and again at key or strategic points of the narrative of the Jacob story (31:13; 35:1-3, 7). 2. Jacob's votive utterance in verses 20-22 is strongly echoic when compared to Yahweh's utterance to him in the dream (28:10-15):

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[47] When I say paragraph, I am talking about the physical textual break represented as in the MT. The Hebrew scripture does not make a paragraph break between the events of setting up the altar which was concluded by changing the name of the place (18-19) and making a vow (20-22). Rather it treats 28:10-22 as one unit paragraph. However, in terms of pragmatic feature of a paragraph, it has been noted that what constitutes a paragraph is a particular central content about which the paragraph talks (Waltke 1990: 633). Thus, although it is subjective, one may consider vv 18-19 and 20-22 as talking about two distinct central ideas, thus constituting two consecutive paragraphs.

- I will multiply your descendants like the dust and they shall spread to the west and to the east, and to north and to the south of Canaan

- I will give the land on which you are lying to you and to your descendants

- Your descendants will be a blessing for all the families of the earth

- I will be with you and protect you and not forsake you

- I will bring you back to this land

In responding, Jacob then says in his vow:

²⁰ וַיִּדַּ֥ר יַעֲקֹ֖ב נֶ֣דֶר לֵאמֹ֑ר אִם־יִהְיֶ֨ה אֱלֹהִ֜ים עִמָּדִ֗י וּשְׁמָרַ֙נִי֙ בַּדֶּ֤רֶךְ הַזֶּה֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר אָנֹכִ֣י הוֹלֵ֔ךְ וְנָֽתַן־לִ֥י לֶ֛חֶם לֶאֱכֹ֖ל וּבֶ֥גֶד לִלְבֹּֽשׁ:

²¹ וְשַׁבְתִּ֥י בְשָׁל֖וֹם אֶל־בֵּ֣ית אָבִ֑י וְהָיָ֧ה יְהוָ֛ה לִ֖י לֵאלֹהִֽים:

²² וְהָאֶ֣בֶן הַזֹּ֗את אֲשֶׁר־שַׂ֙מְתִּי֙ מַצֵּבָ֔ה יִהְיֶ֖ה בֵּ֣ית אֱלֹהִ֑ים וְכֹל֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר תִּתֶּן־לִ֔י עַשֵּׂ֖ר אֲעַשְּׂרֶ֥נּוּ לָֽךְ:

²⁰ Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, ²¹ so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, ²² and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that you give me I will surely give one tenth to you."

The second phase of Jacob's response to his dream (his votive utterance) is marked by metalinguistic device **וידר יעקב נדר לאמר** 'he made a vow by saying' in order to show the narrator's metarepresentation of Jacob's utterance. Similarly his votive utterance in vv. 20-22 manifests an echoic feature to the utterance of God in his dream in that it resembles God's attributed utterance or thought significantly. Thus, the narrator's representation of the vow of Jacob resembles his representation of the utterance of God to Jacob in his dream as we will see in the following discussion. Consequently the conditionals of Jacob's vow are not descriptive utterances. Rather, they are metarepresentations (Noh 2000: 205-208).

The vow can be broken into the following constituent parts:

Protases (conditions):

אם 'If'[48]

- You will be with me and protect me in this journey

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[48] We observe that the Hebrew conditional marker אם occurs only with the first condition אִם־יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי וּשְׁמָרַנִי בַּדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ. However, we should note that it is intended to cover all the three conditions because the following two conditions are connected to the first condition by ו (vav consequtive)—thus one initial אם covers three conditional protases.

- You give me food to eat and clothes to wear
- I return back to my father's house in peace

Apodoses (commitments)[49]:

Then

- You shall be my God
- This stone which I set as a pillar shall be the house of God
- I shall give you a tenth of all you will give me

First of all, it is worth noting that the conditional statement marker אם 'if' in a votive narrative does not denote doubt; rather it is a natural form of making a vow. In addition, in the votive utterance of Jacob, the conditional clauses do not encode a causal-consequential link between the antecedent and consequent because the truth value of the antecedent is not a sufficient condition for the truth value of the consequent. The truth value of this conditional expression is open. Consequently, the truth value of the conditional expression of granting Jacob's votive plea shows a commitment of the vow maker and not a strict logic. This is because the vow making, in every vow-practicing society, is based on a social institution, not on logic. If the vow is fulfilled it is over. But if it is not fulfilled it will raise further expectations.

Therefore in order to comprehend this utterance a truth-functional analysis must be complemented by a pragmatic approach[50]. We agree that there is a general implication of condition and consequence, but it cannot be explained by the truth-functional analysis. Hence, a metarepresentational approach (which is based on inferences of interpretive resemblance) accounts more comprehensively for the analysis of the conditionals in Jacob's vow because Jacob's vow has varied deeper implications which are left to the hearer to infer due to language indeterminacy. Those contextual implications are

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[49] The end of the protases (conditions) as a semantic unit and the beginning of the apodoses is marked by the disjunctive accent marker *atnah (Ã)* which is deployed under בתי־אבי in v 21 (Scott 1995: 25f, 27).

[50] According to the truth-functional description of the conditionals, if God does not grant Jacob's plea then Jacob is not obliged to fulfill his vow. But if God grants Jacob's plea and then Jacob fails to fulfill his promise to God then Jacob's claim is false; that is all according to logic. Thus the truth-functional analysis cannot adequately account for the institutional contextual implications of the serious consequence of the conditionals of Gen. 28:20-22 because these utterances are based on mutually shared knowledge of the votive institution of the community than truth-functional semantics of cause and consequent

mutually shared knowledge that the writer assumes the readers can imagine for themselves.

When we say that Jacob's vow is 'echoic' we mean Jacob first interpreted the utterance of God in his dream so that when he made this utterance God's utterance was in his mind and he had an attitude about it. The Relevance theoretic explanation of echoic utterances broadly notes that an echoic utterance either endorses the original, or dissociates from it, or questions it (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 238-243). The attitude of Jacob toward the utterance of God cannot be doubt/questioning or dissociating because the conditional clause of the votive utterance does not mark a doubt or dissociation (see my discussion in chapter 3 section 3.2.4). Hence, Jacob's attitude in this context was presumably of approving or endorsing, as this phenomenon is manifested in the vow granting of God, which will be discussed in chapter five. Thus, Jacob's votive response signals his encouragement by what God has said to him in his dream, because a votive utterance is a binding commitment of thanksgiving to a deity on condition of the granted vow, as we discussed in chapter three. This feature of Jacob's votive utterance makes it crucially relevant for the interpretation of the following episodes of Jacob's votive narrative. Cartledge also observes the echoic nature of Jacob's vow when he says that Jacob made the vow to God in order to bind Yahweh to his commissive utterance for him. But he also suggests that this is because Jacob distrusted God and so he wanted to intensify it in a vow (Cartledge 1992: 169). However Cartledge's discussion falls short in terms of developing this view further within the framework of the votive narrative and institution of the vow. In addition, in the ancient Israelite context, a vow is made in the context of distress, usually in the sanctuary, and it must be fulfilled in the sanctuary, if a deity answers his plea (Wenham 1994: 224).

All these criteria of vow making were met in the vow making of Jacob: he was in distress because Esau threatened to kill him and he was fleeing from home, not sure what his future fate would be. It was in such a distressing context that he received a surprising commitment from God: promise of protection, promise of blessings, and promise of bringing him back to Canaan, the promised land. Besides he was there right in the house of God (Bethel), which makes the context exactly appropriate for making a vow, solemnly promising to fulfill it in Bethel, if God grants his plea.

Thus, this votive utterance in Gen. 28:10-22 is absolutely relevant to this narrative unit of the Jacob story as well as to the general framework of the Jacob story (Wenham 1994: 224). As I have noted elsewhere above, the story shows that this vow is connected to the preceding and following story. It is interconnected with the preceding story because of its allusion and echoic feature to the preceding stories. It is interconnected with the following story because of the literary nature of the votive narrative and assumed institutional nature of the vow. Cartledge, though he did not explain it in terms of this framework, observes this feature when he says "Gen. 28:10-22 serves multiple functions, one of which is to integrate the components of the Jacob/Esau and Jacob/Laban cycle" (Cartledge 1992: 166). I have already remarked that one of the key features of this votive utterance, which plays a very important role in the process of interpreting the Jacob narrative, is that it raises a strong expectation of relevance in terms of its fulfillment, which we will examine in the following chapter(s). Before we embark on that discussion let us examine the content of Jacob's vow.

3.1.3.1. Protasis

Usually the conditional expressions (protases) are marked by אִם 'if'. However, it is worth noting that in Jacob's votive utterances אִם occurs only with the first protasis אִם־יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי וּשְׁמָרַנִי בַּדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי ה וֹלֵךְ 'if God will be with me and protect me in this journey' and the rest of the conditionals are marked by *vav* consecutive in order to indicate that technically each of them are marked by the same אִם. Therefore, in the following discussion I will assume that אִם marks each conditional expression implicitly.

3.1.3.1.1. אִם־יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי וּשְׁמָרַנִי בַּדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ 'If God will be with me and will keep/protect me in this way/journey that I go'

As we discussed previously, in chapter three about the concept of vow, the expression "if God will be with me and protect me in this journey" is part of the protases which expresses Jacob's distress and his plea to God for his intervention. This plea is apparently a metarepresentation of God's commissive speech act or utterance to protect him as represented in verse 15.

In this regard one may observe that, on the one hand, when God promised his protection to Jacob there was no indication that his protection was limited only to Jacob's journey to Haran. Because God declared: "…I am with you and protect you wherever you go and I will bring you back to this land because I shall not forsake/leave you until I have done what I said to you" (v. 15). On the other hand it appears that Jacob's echoic plea for protection was limited to that particular context of his distressing situation—protection in his journey to Haran. However it is worth noting that his plea for protection was not limited only to his journey to Padan-Aram (see the apparent implication in verse 21). Rather it includes the whole time span, beginning from his journey to Padan-Aram to his returning back to the land of his fathers in peace (v. 21). Thus the utterances in the protasis: "if you will be with me and protect me in this journey" (v. 20) and "if I return back to my fathers house in peace" (v. 21) are interrelated utterances and are included in the votive plea for protection.

3.1.3.1.2. וְנָתַן־לִי לֶחֶם לֶאֱכֹל וּבֶגֶד לִלְבֹּשׁ 'If he will give me food to eat and clothing to wear'

This condition of Jacob's votive utterance is a very interpretive echoic utterance of God's utterance in vv. 13b-14. Although it is vague in terms of linguistic expression it is apparent that God's commitment of promise to Jacob comprises the prosperity of material wealth and blessings of many descendants.

One may think that according to this utterance Jacob asks God only for the provision of food and clothing "just enough to subsist on" (Cartledge 1992: 170). However, Cartledge remarks that "it could just as likely be understood as a hendiadys for 'all that I need' (Cartledge 1992: 170). Thus, the context of the vow granting in the subsequent chapters of the votive narrative shows that this expression requires interpretive use of the linguistic representation rather than a metalinguistic use. It does not seem natural to understand the utterance of Jacob: 'if you give me food to eat and clothes to wear' literally, as if Jacob asked God to give him only something to eat and wear nothing less and nothing more.

The linguistic feature of not making his request explicit about things which this expression includes, something more than food and clothing could be explained as loose

talk, which is common in human communication (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 233-237; Carston 2005: 157-159). Sperber and Wilson explain loose talk as follows:

> An utterance, in its role as an interpretive expression of a speaker's thought, is strictly literal if it has the same propositional form as that thought. To say that an utterance is less than strictly literal is to say that its propositional form shares some, but not all, of its logical properties with the propositional form of the thought it is being used to interpret. From the start point of relevance theory, there is no reason to think that the optimally relevant interpretive expression of a thought is always the most literal one. The speaker is presumed to aim at optimal relevance not at literal truth (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 233).

For example if I say 'I do not have shoes for the wedding' that does not necessarily mean I do not have shoes at all. Rather it could mean I do not have the appropriate shoes. Assuming that I have shoes and my audience also knows that I have shoes, what I said does not resemble literally my thought, rather it resembles it by logical interpretation. Thus, loose use of language in communication is indeterminate in the propositional sense, but its contextual implications are mutually manifest for both the speaker and hearer. In this regard I presume that there is a logical resemblance between Jacob's representation (if you give me bread to eat and clothes to wear) and what it represents (a plea for the blessing of prosperity), that is they resemble one another interpretively because they share logical and contextual implications in that particular context. Thus, as I noted above, Jacob might have thought of something more than food and clothing.

The implication of this utterance becomes more apparent in his votive utterance in the apodosis, committing himself to give a tithe to God out of everything God will give him: "I shall give a tenth out of all you will give me" (v. 22). This aspect of the utterance becomes more obvious when we discuss the concept of tithing in the ancient Israelite context below in section 3.1.3.1.3. If Jacob does not request God for the blessing of prosperity then why does he make a votive promise to give tithe from everything God will give him? My argument is that since his request for 'bread to eat and clothes to wear' was connected to his promise 'to give tithe from everything that God will give him' therefore the expression should be understood as a loose talk rather than literal. Thus, Jacob's request is more than food and clothing—it is a request for prosperity which also includes wives, children, shelter, water, and all other blessings.

Thus, probably Jacob selected this expression because it expresses his distress and shows that he was in a desperate situation, being empty-handed in his forties (Gen.

26:34). Now he runs away from his father's house for his life, not knowing whether there is any possibility that he will come back and share the inheritance of his father.

3.1.3.1.3. וְשַׁבְתִּי בְשָׁלוֹם אֶל־בֵּית אָבִי וְהָיָה יְהוָה לִי לֵאלֹהִים 'If I return back to my father's house in peace'

This expression is echoic to the utterance of God which says:

> The land on which you are lying I shall give it to you and to your descendants… Behold I am with you and protect you wherever you go and I will bring you back to this land because I shall not forsake/leave you until I have done what I said to you (vv 13, 15).

When we compare Jacob's utterance "If I return back to my father's house in peace" and God's utterance of promise to Jacob in his dream: "Behold I am with you and will protect you wherever you go and I will bring you back to this land" it shows that they are in apparent interpretive resemblance, which proves that the utterance of Jacob is an echoic metarepresentation of the thought or utterance of God. It is echoic because it implies that Jacob has an endorsing attitude to the utterance of God to protect him and to bring him back to the land of his fathers. We can work out the explicatures and implicatures of both utterances, and compare them so that we can see the interpretive resemblance between them better. The explicatures of God's utterance have the following main points:

1. God will be with Jacob wherever he goes and will protect him—Jacob may go to different places including even going out of the promised land; in fact Jacob was on his way out of the promised land at that particular time.

2. God will bring him back to the promised land—Jacob's coming back to the promised land is fully dependant on God's act of bringing him back. It is God who will bring him back but nobody else.

3. God shall not forsake him until he has fulfilled what he has promised to Jacob—it is guaranteed that God will fulfill what he has promised to Jacob.

4. God will give the promised land to Jacob and his descendants to inherit—Jacob and his descendants are now chosen by God as the heirs of the Abrahamic covenant. God will do all the above and everything necessary for Jacob so that Jacob and his descendants inherit the promised land.

Jacob's utterance: "If I return back to my father's house in peace" is metarepresented echoically to the utterance of God in 2: "I will bring you back to this land". However

Jacob did not include in his echoic utterance the rest of God's utterances listed above which are in fact an integral part of God's commitment to bring him back to the promised land. For example Jacob's utterance did not explicitly include his desire of inheriting the land when he returns back to the promised land. However, we can assume that he presumed that his audience can draw this information by inference because that was why God will bring him back to Canaan anyway. Hence, the rest of the above list of God's utterances are implicatures of Jacob's utterance which can be reconstructed inferentially. In this way Jacob's utterance is optimally relevant, avoiding unnecessary processing effort in effect. Therefore there is no need for Jacob to say 'If you will be with me wherever I go and protect me and bring me back to this land in peace so that I inherit this land, and if you shall not forsake me until you fulfill what you have promised me."

In summary, this votive utterance of Jacob is again loose talk. I assume that what Jacob said and what he actually thought is connected logically, by inference, not in the linguistic form. I do not think that Jacob was only interested in coming back to the promised land in peace but not interested in inheriting it. In fact, probably inheriting the promise land was the ultimate goal of his desire to return to the land of his fathers, to which the narrator intended to allude. Thus apparently this utterance is also echoic to what God promised to him in his dream, except that he chose this expression because it is optimally relevant to express his emotional feeling of distress and his desperate need of divine protection and the placing of his hope in God for help. Hence, there is an apparent interpretive resemblance between the utterance of God and Jacob in this regard and Jacob's metarepresented utterance is an echoic one because he has an attitude of endorsing God's utterance.

3.1.3.2. Apodosis

3.1.3.2.1. וְהָיָה יְהוָה לִי לֵאלֹהִים 'he will be my God'

Noh's analysis of the metarepresentational use of conditionals shows that some conditionals may have both metarepresentational antecedents (protases) and metarepresentational consequents (apodosis) (Noh 2000: 205-208). Thus, I argue that Jacob's utterance: "you will be my God", which is an apodosis (consequent), is echoic depending upon God's utterance "I am the LORD God of your father Abraham and God

of Isaac." This metarepresentation is relevant in this context on the basis of contextual implication. The expression "I am the LORD God of your father Abraham and God of Isaac" implies that he is their protector, provider, and one who has made a covenantal relationship with them. Reciprocally they committed themselves faithfully to worship him. Thus the votive utterance of Jacob: "you shall be my God" is an echoic expression of God's utterance: "I am the LORD God of your father Abraham and God of Isaac", in verse 13, which has different contextual implications, in terms of what God did and will do for Abraham, Isaac and their descendants and how they should worship him. Hence, in short, what Jacob says is presumably: "God, you said that you are the God of Abraham and Isaac. If you will be with me and protect me in this journey, give me food to eat and clothes to wear, return me back to my fathers house in peace, then you will also be my God." Thus Jacob achieves the relevance of up-fronting his plea to God by metarepresenting God's utterance of promise to him in his dream.

3.1.3.2.2. וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר־שַׂמְתִּי מַצֵּבָה יְהְיֶה בֵּית אֱלֹהִים 'This stone which I set as a pillar shall be the house of God'

We have already discussed above that Jacob's votive utterance at Bethel denotes that he designated a particular stone he erected and the place where it was erected as a dwelling place of God[51] (Wenham 200: 224). Thus Jacob recognizes Bethel as a sanctuary of God. The contextual implication of this utterance is that no other place is compatible to Bethel unless Yahweh himself shows that he chose some other place. Hence, as Yahweh himself requires, the tithe should be returned in Bethel and votive promises must be fulfilled only in Bethel as we discussed in chapter three. Thus Jacob ostensively commits himself to fulfill his vow in Bethel if God grants his plea and brings him back to Canaan safely from Padan Aram.

3.1.3.2.3. וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר תִּתֶּן־לִי עַשֵּׂר אֲעַשְּׂרֶנּוּ לָךְ 'I shall give you a tenth out of all you will give me'

One of the apodoses of the votive utterances of Jacob commits to give tenth of everything God will give him. One may argue that there is no clear metarepresentation in the

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[51] We have already discussed that possibly Jacob's erecting the pillar in Bethel was intended to signal the conviction of Jacob about the presence of Yahweh in Bethel, as his behavior of changing the name of the place from 'Luz' to 'Bethel' signifies (v.19).

utterance of Jacob to the utterance and thought of God because there is no interpretive resemblance between the utterances of God and Jacob. However, I suggest that the clause "out of all you will give me" shows that Jacob has an inferential reference to the utterance or thought of God which is apparently God's commitment to bless Jacob with prosperity as the clause "out of all you will give me" shows. If that was not the case, then we might ask "Where did he get the thought of the expression 'out of all you will give me?'" Thus the votive utterance of the tithe shows that the narrator has recovered the implied information of 'if you give me bread to eat and cloth to wear' as it was intended to include the blessing of prosperity as well, as we discussed above. This phenomenon is clearer when we understand the institution of tithing (See Appendix 3).

In summary, presumably the connection of Jacob's votive plea for 'food to eat and clothes to wear' with his votive utterance 'to give a tenth of everything God will give him' implies that Jacob made a votive plea to God to bless him with prosperity as well, thus echoically metarepresenting God's thought to bless him with prosperity.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter we attempted to read Gen 28:10-22 from the metarepresentational perspective. The degree of metarepresentational dependence of vv 16-22 upon vv 10-15 supports the internal unity of Gen 28:10-22 and beyond, contrary to the views that have been sometimes proposed by some critics.

Our discussion in this chapter shows that Jacob's votive utterance is echoic; it is linked to Yahweh's earlier commissive speech act to which it has apparent interpretive resemblance. Thus it shows that Jacob had a particular attitude toward God's commissive speech act. Jacob's attitude towards God's commissive utterance for him cannot be a 'doubt' because the condition in a votive utterance never marks doubt; rather it marks the petitioner's emotional state or condition caused by the distressing situation, his trust in the deity for relief, his plea to the deity for help, and his commitment to respond to the deity in thanksgiving in a specific way, if the deity grants his plea. The use of אם 'if' in the votive narrative leaves the response of the deity open, thus allowing for both possibilities of granting the votive plea or not. It does not implicate any sense of divine obligation.

Finally, based on the above discussion I would again emphasize that the votive utterance of Jacob has raised a strong expectation of relevance: Will God grant Jacob's votive plea? If God grants it, then will Jacob fulfill his vow to God? These questions will be answered in the following chapter when we investigate the following narrative episodes.

CHAPTER FIVE

VOW GRANTING AND VOW FULFILLING

1. Introduction

In chapter four I have proposed that Jacob's votive utterance at Bethel (Gen. 28:10-22) functions as a framework for the interpretation of the following Jacob story (Gen. 29:1-35:15). This is because his vow has raised expectations of relevance as I discussed in chapter four. The reader of the Jacob story is now entertaining the following: Will God grant his votive plea? Will Jacob fulfill his vow? In this chapter I wish to explain that the narrator's public representation of the following narrative episodes (29:1-35:15) shows that the narrator aimed to answer these questions.

The story of Jacob in Gen. 29:1-35:15 may be read from different points of view depending on the readers' assumptions. However, in this chapter, I argue that it should be read from the narrator's point of view as it is ostensively signaled in narrator's public representation of the story. As I remarked elsewhere, Cartledge, though he failed to read Gen. 29:1-35:15 within the framework of a votive narrative, correctly observes that the vow of Jacob in Bethel was presented within a large narrative unit and it functions as an integrating phenomenon of the narrative components of the Jacob/Esau and Jacob/Laban story (Cartledge 1992: 166). Concurring with this view, I have already noted in chapter two that according to the narrator's point of view, Gen. 28:10-22 was employed as a staging or abstract of the whole narrative/discourse unit of Gen. 28:10-35:15 in order to influence the interpretation of everything that follows in the story.

Brown and Yule have observed that providing such an abstract of a narrative discourse right at the beginning of the story is a common feature of most narratives (Brown and Yule 1983: 133). Accordingly, in my close reading of Gen. 28:10-22 in chapter four, I argued that the vow of Jacob, which includes the commissive speech act, raised an expectation of relevance of the granting of the vow by God and of the fulfilling of the vow by Jacob in the contemporary audience, which gears them to search for it in the following story. Thus, there are two different types of expectations of relevance: 1. First, the vow making raises mainly three types of expectation of relevance: **a**. that the

votive plea may be granted. **b**. That if granted then the votive promise should be fulfilled. **c**. That failure to fulfill leads to the risk of further adverse consequences. 2. In communication, the audience has an expectation of relevance. More specifically, the audience has an expectation of relevance assuming that the details being narrated within the framework of the votive narrative will have further cognitive effects for the audience.

Jacob's votive utterance contains:

> If you will be with me and protect me in this journey, if you give me bread to eat and clothes to wear, if I return back to my father's house in peace, then, you shall be my God, this stone which I set as a pillar shall be the house of God, I shall give tenth out of all you will give me.

I have already argued in chapter four that according to the contemporary social and cultural context of Jacob story, this votive utterance automatically raises expectations of relevance in the audience in two ways: 1. Did God grant answer to Jacob's votive plea? 2. If that is the case, then did Jacob fulfill his vow to Yahweh? Thus, examining whether each condition of the vow of Jacob is granted and whether Jacob fulfilled his votive commitment will be the organizing theme of this chapter.

Hence, in this discussion, I intend to argue that the public representation of the narrative is ostensively organized to lead readers to an evaluation of this phenomenon. Thus, Jacob's votive narrative is evaluative in that the narrator reflects his point of view in the story about whether God granted an answer to Jacob's votive plea and whether Jacob fulfilled his votive promise to God. Further, if Jacob should fail to fulfill his votive promise, then the expectation of relevance about the inevitable adverse consequences for the failed votive promise must have been raised in the audience, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

Therefore, I strongly argue that understanding the evaluative nature of this narrative, as ostensively represented by the narrator, is crucial for the task of its interpretation and translation. In the course of this discussion I will point out all the ostensive signals in the narrative in order to explain the evaluative nature of the votive narrative of Jacob.

However, it is worth noting that the ostensive signals employed by the communicator of the story about the evaluative feature are linguistically underdetermined. This is because it is not relevant to express what is mutually manifest

in the cognitive environment of both speaker and audience, and such communicative behavior is explained by relevance theory. Ronald Sim remarks this phenomenon nicely as follows:

> Ostensive stimuli draw on parts of the cognitive environment that speaker and hearer mutually share, in order to make the speaker's informative intention(s) manifest to the hearer. The presumption of relevance leads the audience to make sense of what is said, by supplying additional information where necessary, and deriving cognitive benefits that are adequate for the processing effort. This quest for optimal relevance makes it possible to communicate unexpressed as well as expressed information (Sim 2006: 47).

For instance, the communicator of the Jacob narrative in Genesis does not state explicitly something like "God granted answers to Jacob's votive plea", or "Jacob fulfilled his votive promise to God", or "Jacob failed to fulfill his votive promise to God so that he suffered adverse consequences". Presumably, on the contrary he assumes that since his audience mutually shares the cognitive environment about the Hebrew concept of נדר 'vow' and the nature of the social institution of vowing, simply presents the votive narrative, assuming that they will imagine these features for themselves inferentially from the story. Though we do not know exactly what he assumed, we can suggest that the narrator mutually shares a cognitive environment with his audience about the votive institution, and that it is not surprising that he leaves fulfillments to be inferred as the cognitive effects, thus fulfilling their expectations of relevance. Therefore reading this story from the relevance theoretic perspective will significantly help us to understand this inferential and evaluative aspect of the story more comprehensively.

2. Definition of the Evaluative Narrative

William Labove notes that a narrator may have so many ways to tell the same story, or to make different points of the same story significant, or even "to make no point at all" (Labove 1999: 231). What makes a narrative 'a good narrative' is its being evaluated by the narrator. Such a narrative answers questions like what was this all about (abstract)? Who did it? When? What? Where? (Labove describes these as orientation of the narrative). Then what happened? (which is the narrative feature of complicating action).

So what (evaluation)? And what happened finally (coda[52] or result)? The evaluative nature of a narrative is one of its most important features. It is a linguistic or public representation of the narrator's cognitive point of view about what he is getting at and why he is telling the story. Thus, the narrator's point of view in a discourse is intended to play a very important role in the real social life of his prospective readers. Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen observe this feature when they claim that texts are produced by the producers in order to play a very real role in social life:

> [L]iterary and artistic texts as much as mass-media texts, are produced in the context of real social institutions, in order to play a very real role in social life—in order to do certain things to or for their readers, and in order to communicate attitudes towards aspects of social life and towards people who participate in them… (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1999: 378-9).

Wenham also observes this feature of the biblical narratives when he says "Old Testament narrative books do have didactic purpose, that is, they are trying to instill both theological truth and ethical ideal into the readers" (Wenham 2000: 3). Such feature of a narrative can be reflected as the abstract of the story, right at the beginning of the narrative.

Labove lists some of the characteristics of a fully developed narrative: abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, result or resolution and coda (Labove 1999: 227) and he explains them as follows. 'Abstract' is the narrator's summary of the whole story at the beginning of his narrative. What Labove calls 'abstract' is similar to what Brown and Yule describe as 'staging.' Orientation refers to the narrator's effort to identify time, place, person(s) and their activity or situation and it can occur at any necessary place of the narrative. The complicating actions and the termination or resolution of that action in a particular story may be presented in a complex chaining and embedding. Such strategy of narrative representation is employed by a narrator because of the communicative assumption that how a narrative is told affects us. Bader elaborates this feature in her words as follows:

> The sense of the movement of a story from its beginning through its resolution is controlled by the narrator…The narrator or story-teller tells the story in a particular

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[52] Coda is "one of the many options open to the narrator for signaling that the narrative is finished." For example: Since that time he never comes to disturb me, you know. I do my work quietly and peacefully. No more fight (Labove 1999: 227-34).

manner, carefully choosing words to guide the reader. Additionally, the narrator makes decisions about what information to include and what to leave out. That person chose whether to show or tell the readers about characters, events, and the various ways in which different characters reacted to or evaluated the events…How the story was told affects us (Bader 2006: 81-82).

Brown and Yule also note that narrative presentation has a natural order both in terms of the narrator's cognitive organization as well as his linguistic or public presentation of the story, in which the narrator begins from the starting point and proceeds to the narrative progression up until the conclusion. Naturally the process of arranging a discourse may follow a cultural stereotype which is shared by the narrator's audience (Brown 1983: 145). However Brown and Yule remark that such formal arranging is influenced/dictated by the narrator's point of view (Brown 1983: 144-148) and consequently he "manipulates the knowledge which the reader needs" (Brown 1983: 147). Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland also concur with this view when they say:

> [N]arratives are not at all objective or impartial ways of representing events…[E]ven 'factual' narratives are intimately tied to the narrator's point of view, and the events reconstructed in a narrative are his/her (re)constructions rather than some kind of objective mirror-image of reality… [T]he meaning of the narrative is jointly constructed by the selectively filtering actions of both speaker and listener" (Jaworski and Coupland 1999: 32).

Thus the narrator's point of view may direct him to choose a particular linguistic form and organization. I have adapted one example here with its accompanying explanation from Brown and Yule in order to illustrate this point:

   a. Mary, Queen of Scots, was executed by the English Queen
   b. Mary, Queen of Scots, was assassinated by the English Queen
   c. Mary, Queen of Scott, was murdered by her cousin, Elizabeth.

In each case of the above examples the agent who caused the patient to die and the patient who suffered the death are the same—Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary respectively. However the point of view the narrator represented by each sentence is distinct as summarized as follows: in 'a' the action is represented as a legal process sanctioned by the constitutional monarch (the English Queen). In 'b' the action is represented as an illegal, politically motivated act of assassination authorized by the constitutional monarch (the English Queen). In 'c' the action is represented as an illegal, criminal act of murder carried out by her cousin Elizabeth.

Thus, Brown and Yule note that in each case "the writer reveals a different assessment of the character and motivation of the act" which lead him to choose different lexical forms which will make his point of view salient for his readers. Thus it is a fact that the narrators imagine the knowledge of others (metarepresent) as well as their point of view and then strategically organize what will be said in order to influence their readers (Brown 1983: 147-8; Wenham 2000: 6).

Similarly Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin and Meir Sternberg describe the narrator's point of view, which comprises both cognitive organization and linguistic or public presentation of the narrative as an 'evaluative narrative.' In their work, they explain the evaluative narrative as the narrator's cognitive organization of the story which is represented by the linguistic organization in order to reflect his/her point of view about the participants or characters of the biblical stories so that the readers can identify with them and have the narrator's intended view/feeling about them. The linguistic organization of the narratives is strategically and artistically represented in order to influence and appeal to the readers (Marguerat and Yvan 1999: 66-67; Sternberg 1985: 129-131). In Marguerat and Bourquin words:

> [T]he narrator tries to influence for his own ends this interaction which will not fail to take place between the reader and the network of characters. To this end the narrator counts on a permanent mechanism of reading which is partly unconscious: the evaluation of the characters (Marguerat and Bourquin 1999: 67-68).

Thus, every bit of the biblical narrative is fashioned by the narrator's particular point of view employed in linguistic organization in order to influence his prospective readers (Marguerat and Bourquin 1999: 68; Sternberg 1985: 130). Hence, Marguerat and Bourquin conclude, that every aspect of the biblical narratives is saturated by the value system and worldview of the narrator (Marguerat and Bourquin 1999: 68). Similarly, the medieval Jewish biblical scholar Rabbi Moses ben Nahman, who wrote a commentary on Genesis observes the literary feature of the Bible as an:

> [I]nter-relationship between the point of view of narrator, character, and reader, artistic use of sound and imagery, tone of dialogue, plot sequence, strategies of characterization, as well as the effects of gaps, repetition, irony, and suspense in biblical narratives (Levine 2005: 306).

Therefore, as Bader remarks, the readers of a story should allow the intention of a story guide them in a certain direction intended by the narrator (Bader 2006: 82). This is

because the cognitive point of view of a narrator about the story he intended to represent to his audience and his communicative intention he wanted to achieve through the same is usually strategically manifest by his public representation (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 54-64).

In summary, the term "evaluative" in this discussion depicts the narrator's point of view to the narrative, which he or she is intends to communicate and it denotes his cognitive analysis of the situation of the narrative, characters of the story, and events he has undertaken to narrate and his artistic tactics of strategically organizing his linguistic representation in order to influence his prospective reader(s) to his point of view. Hence, in narrative representations "the narrator's point of view controls the discourse and gives the narrative cohesion and unity" (Bader 2006: 82). Pagolu observes this phenomenon of narratives when he says that it is safer to read and interpret a story from the narrator's point of view rather than "to read the text from a hypothetical reconstruction of the story" (Pagolu 1998: 158). Therefore, our question regarding Gen. 28:10-35:15 will be: "What is the narrator's point of view of the story? We will answer this question from the close reading of the text in our following discussions.

3. God grants Jacob's Votive Pleas

In the preceding chapter I have argued that the votive utterance of Jacob has raised two major expectations of relevance for which a prospective audience is geared to search in the following stories of Genesis chapters 29:1-35:15 whether God would grant Jacob's pleas; and 2. whether Jacob would fulfill his votive promise to Yahweh. In this regard it is worth noting that there is a natural order for seeking the fulfillment of the votive utterance. This is because, according to the institution of vow, the fulfillment of the apodosis is totally dependent on the fulfillment of the protasis. The petitioner is obliged to fulfill his vow only if God grants his votive plea. Therefore, first, our discussion will focus on whether the narrator ostensively showed that God granted Jacob's votive plea. And then we will investigate whether Jacob fulfilled his vow to God.

This nature of the votive narrative can be observed in other similar narratives in the Hebrew Scriptures. For example, the two clear examples, the votive narrative of Hannah (1:11-28) and the votive narrative of Jephthah (Judges 11:30-39), present both votive

utterance and the fulfillment of the vow: vow making, vow granting, and vow fulfilment. If a votive narrative simply stops at the stage of votive utterance (vow making) without reporting whether the deity has granted and whether the petitioner has fulfilled his vow, then it is illusive, leaving the audience in suspense. Therefore I argue that the narrator of Gen. 28:10-35:15 presents vow making, vow granting, and vow fulfillment.

Accordingly, we can describe the narrative elements in 28:10-20 as an orientation or background to Jacob's vow-making: orientation about the place, about the major participants (God and Jacob), about the situation (encounter of Jacob with God who established a covenant with him which is full of promises for him and his descendants), and about Jacob's response or reaction to the event. Then the narrator strategically presented the votive utterance of Jacob in vv. 20-22 which functions as the thesis or abstract/staging of the whole narrative unit which will continue through 29:1- 35:15. Thus the narrative element in vv. 20-22 creates a beautiful framework of coherence for the story.

As noted above, the three main votive pleas and the votive commitments of Jacob represented to God in his votive utterance are (Gen 28:20-22):

- אִם־יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי וּשְׁמָרַנִי בַּדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ   'If God will be with me and will protect me in this way I go'

- וְנָתַן־לִי לֶחֶם לֶאֱכֹל וּבֶגֶד לִלְבֹּשׁ:   'and will gives me bread to eat and cloth to wear'

- וְשַׁבְתִּי בְשָׁלוֹם אֶל־בֵּית אָבִי   'and I return back to my father's house in peace'

Then

- וְהָיָה יְהוָה לִי לֵאלֹהִים: 'the LORD shall be my God'

- וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר־שַׂמְתִּי מַצֵּבָה יִהְיֶה בֵּית אֱלֹהִים   'and this stone which I set as a pillar shall be the house of God'

- וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר תִּתֶּן־לִי עַשֵּׂר אֲעַשְּׂרֶנּוּ לָךְ:   'and of all that you will give me I shall give you tenth.'

The rest of the story talks about this theme or abstract. Therefore, I will be looking for verbal correspondence and perhaps overt evidence of metarepresentation about these utterances in 29:1- 35:15.

Cartledge argues on the one hand that there is no clear indication for God's granting the votive plea of Jacob immediately following the vow in Gen. 28:10-22. He further adds that the vow "clearly relates back to the dream; but since it is unfulfilled, the story is incomplete and cannot be regarded as a self-contained narrative" (Cartledge 1992: 173). On the other hand he observes that Jacob's safe arrival at Laban's house and direct reference to God's granting the votive plea appears in chapter 31. He notes some of the explicit references refer back to the vow of Bethel in this chapter as follows: God's instruction to Jacob to return to his father's land, the allusion to the vow as denoted by God's utterance: "I will be with you" (31:3); the allusion denoted in Jacob's utterance: "but the God of my fathers has been with me" (31:5); the allusion in the utterance of Jacob: "God has taken away the cattle of your father and given them to me" (31:9); and God's reminder to Jacob about his vow at Bethel saying: "I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go forth from this land, and return to the land of your birth" (31:13). Then he says: "The intended implication is that God has now granted all of Jacob's requests except the safe return to Canaan, and this is now at hand." His final observation is that Gen. 35:1-7 is the final fulfillment of Jacob's vow and it contains some verbal relations to Jacob's vow. He further observes that the passage of chapter 31 is "interconnected to what is past and what is to come" while 35:1-7 is interconnected with 28:10-22 which shows a "conscious formulation of the author" (Cartledge 1992: 173-174).

Similarly other scholars such as Pagulo, Wenham, Gunkel, and Westermann also observe that the narrator has represented the partial fulfillment of the vow of Jacob (Westermann 1985: 553; Wenham 1994: 323; Gunkel 1997:335; Pagolu 1998: 158). However, they all fail to read the subsequent story from the perspective of a votive narrative. Consequently they do not follow through the granting of the votive plea and fulfilling of the votive pledge in all the details in such a way that all the textual data of the story could be explained in that framework. As a result they fail to explain why the Dinah story is presented between Jacob's safe arrival in his father's land (Gen. 33:17-18) and Jacob's eventual act of fulfilling his votive promise to God in 35:1-15, which is the phenomenon I wish to discuss and explain in the following chapter.

In the following discussion I will attempt to show how Jacob's votive plea was granted to Jacob (section 3:1) and evaluate whether Jacob fulfilled his votive pledge, as particularly presented in 33:17-20 (section 4). In chapter four, I argued that Jacob's votive utterance in 28:20-22 was a metarepresentation of God's promise to him in his dream in Gen. 28:13-15 which comprises the following features:

- הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ לְךָ אֶתְּנֶנָּה וּלְזַרְעֶךָ 'The land on which you lie, I will give to you and to your descendants.'

- וְהָיָה זַרְעֲךָ כַּעֲפַר הָאָרֶץ וּפָרַצְתָּ יָמָּה וָקֵדְמָה וְצָפֹנָה וָנֶגְבָּה 'And your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east, and to north and to the south'

- וְנִבְרְכוּ בְךָ כָּל־מִשְׁפְּחֹת הָאֲדָמָה וּבְזַרְעֶךָ 'All the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring.'

- וְהִנֵּה אָנֹכִי עִמָּךְ וּשְׁמַרְתִּיךָ ... כִּי לֹא אֶעֱזָבְךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר אִם־עָשִׂיתִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר־דִּבַּרְתִּי לָךְ בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־תֵּלֵךְ 'I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and I will bring you back to this land;… I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.'

- וַהֲשִׁבֹתִיךָ אֶל־הָאֲדָמָה הַזֹּאת 'I will bring you back to this land'

Consequently in some cases it is difficult to differentiate between God's answer to Jacob's votive plea and the fulfillment of God's promise to Jacob in his dream. However, since Jacob's vow is a metarepresentation of God's words, there may be no need to distinguish the two. Yet it is worth noting that the vow, though it was a metarepresention of the promise of God, supersedes the promise of God in the sense that Jacob takes God up on his promise in the condition of the vow, and adds his own votive commitment should the promise be fulfilled.

Thus, the most important feature of this story one may observe is that the narrator was careful to indicate specifically the connection between the following story (29:1-35:15) and Jacob's votive utterance (28:20-22), rather than between the following story (29:1-35:15) and God's promise in his dream (28:13-15). For example he refers back to the utterance of vow: "I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a

vow to me" in Gen. 31:13; 35:1. Hence, the narrator has provided sufficient linguistic evidence that his main point of view in this story was evaluative of both God and Jacob in relation to Jacob's votive utterance. My close reading of the episodes of this story will show that the narrator beautifully organized his linguistic representation of the event-line of the story to show how God granted Jacob's votive plea before he eventually tells us whether Jacob fulfilled his votive pledge to God. In fact, interestingly enough, the event-line of the story was organized according to the chronological order of Jacob's votive plea, except for the protection which manifests in different parts of the story. Accordingly, the representation of the story is organized first showing how God protected Jacob in his journey to Laban, second, how God blessed Jacob with prosperity, and third how God brought Jacob back to his father's house in peace, just as he requested in his vow. In the following discussion we will investigate God's granting Jacob's votive plea in this order by close reading of every relevant part of the story.

3.1. God Grants Protection (Gen. 29:1-14; 31:1-55; 32:1-33:20)

The root of the Hebrew verb employed to express Jacob's votive plea was שׁמר 'keep, watch, preserve, protect' (28:20). Cartledge notes that the Hebrew verb שׁמר has the connotation of protection and provision (Cartledge 1992: 170). A close reading of the narrative shows that in fact Jacob enjoyed the protection and provision of God in every situation both in Padan Aram and in Canaan. However the narrator presents particularly three situations as a clear evidence of God's answer to his votive plea to Yahweh for protection as follows.

3.1.1. God's Protection during Jacob's Journey to Laban (29:1-14)

This discussion considers chapter 29 as a continuation of the Bethel story. Allen Ross observes that the literary structure and the content of the story in Gen. 29 show that it is a continuation of the Bethel experience of Jacob (Ross 1985: 75). Wenham, however interprets the narrative in Gen. 29-31 as a distinct story of the "accounts of Jacob's relationship with Laban" which is organized palistrophically (Wenham 1994: 228). Nevertheless, he also remarks that this story is connected to both the preceding and

following story (Wenham 1994: 228). Though both Ross and Wenham observe the continuation of the story, they stop short of reading it in the framework of the votive narrative.

The expression וישָׂא יעקב רגליו 'Jacob lifted his feet', in 29:1, significantly marks that the following story is a continuation of the Bethel event. It shows that Jacob left Bethel with refreshed faith in Yahweh and a cheerful expectation about the answer of his vow and the fulfillment of his promise in his dream. It is most probable that Jacob had a cheerful attitude relieved from such a distressing situation believing that he will be granted his votive pleas because God has renewed the Abrahamic covenant with him. The Broadman Bible Commentary describes the expression as "a vivid picture of his eagerness after his experience at Bethel" (Francisco 1969: 212). Wenham concurs with this understanding when he explains that the expression "suggests referring back to Jacob's experience at Bethel, so that he now goes on his way cheerfully" (Wenham 1994: 229). Thus I argue that the narrator's intention of representing the following story was to indicate that the following events are grants to Jacob's votive plea.

Therefore, I consider the narrative element of 29:1-14 as an episode of the same votive narrative unit begun in Gen 28:10-22. In Gen 29:1-14 the narrator tells us that Jacob's journey to Laban was instantaneously complete safely by the protection and guidance of God. Jacob reaches to Harran (v 4) and by God's providence he meets with the shepherds who eventually helped him to meet Rachel, his future bride. The representation of the story shows that Rachel came to the well at that particular time by God's providence (v 6) and Jacob meets Rachel and then after introducing himself he kisses her in greeting (v 11-12). Eventually Rachel helps him to meet his uncle Laban whom Jacob desperately needed to meet, which also should be understood to be a divine providence (Gen 29:11-14; Wenham 1994: 229; Gunkel 1997: 317). The story also implies that the initial situation providentially facilitated for Jacob an opportunity to introduce himself as a strong good desirable workman, particularly as a shepherd, for Laban (Gen. 29:9-12; Gunkel 1997: 318), through which he will eventually acquire the blessing of wives, children, and material prosperity. Although the text does not claim these phenomena explicitly, these are the contextual implications which were part of the

presumption of the reporter and left for the readers to derive from the text based on the contextual assumption of the votive narrative.

The narrator presents Jacob's external expression of kissing his cousin Rachel, weeping, and telling her who he was as Jacob's relief from his distress after his journey (11-12). When Laban met him and took him to his home Jacob told about himself and what brought him to him so that Laban was convinced that Jacob was his nephew. Laban provided shelter for one month and then Jacob worked for wages. Thus, God brought about that Laban was willing to give him protection and let him to live with him (29:13-14).

Hence, we observe that one of the most important features of this episode, which the audience can infer for themselves, is that God protected Jacob on his way to Laban and that he arrived at Padan Aram safely, which is part of the grant of his votive plea: 'If you will be with me and protect me in this journey.'

3.1.2. God's Protection from the Threat of Laban (31:1-55)

It is preferable to decide episode boundaries for the organization of episodes. 31:1-55 seems intended to resolve the threat of Laban when Jacob was on his way to return home peacefully and 32:1 narrates that Jacob resumes his journey to his father's home after the conflict was resolved. However, commentators differ whether the episode about the conflict between Jacob and Laban ends on 31:54 or 32:1 (Wenham 1994: 266). The Masoretic Text inserts the chapter break in 31:54 while Septuagint translates 32:1 as part of the episode of 31:1-54. Other translations like NRSV and NIV make the chapter break at 31:55 rather than 54[53]. Thus, though it is not easy to decide where the preceding episode ends, I concur with Wenham that 31:55 or 31:1-32:1 is more appropriate because the return of Laban to his home in 32:1 concludes the episode (Wenham 1994: 266). Thus, since we established Jacob as the thematic character or the major participant of the narrative in chapter four, removing Laban after a satisfactory resolution of the narrative tension in 31:1-55 closes one episode, and then picks up the thread in a new development by returning to Jacob as a participant in the following episode in Gen. 32:2-33:17.

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[53] Chapter breaks themselves are not reliable guides to the narrative structure because they are very late additions.

However, the important point to be noted in this regard is that the Jacob-Laban episode is an integral part of the preceding story of Jacob as well as the following story of Jacob and Esau, and the Dinah story. The narrative elements in the following cross-references (28:10-22; 31:3, 13; 33:18; 35:1, 3, 6-7, 6-15; Wenham 1994: 267-8) show this congruency by the anaphoric reference (metarepresentation) back to the vow of Bethel in 28:10-22 (Wenham 1994: 267-8) which will be discussed in the following section of this chapter and chapter six.

My argument concerning this episode is that the narrator is showing that the story is an answer to the votive plea of Jacob at Bethel for divine protection. The main theme of the episode as the protection of God is presented as follows: אָמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־יַעֲקֹב שׁוּב אֶל־אֶרֶץ אֲבוֹתֶיךָ וּלְמוֹלַדְתֶּךָ וְאֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ 'Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your ancestors and to your kindred, and I will be with you"' (31:3). We observe that **"ואלהי אבי היה עמדי"** 'God has been with me' is a distinguishing feature of this episode (vv 3, 5, 24, 29, 42) which is apparently attributed to the promise of God to Jacob in 28:15 and to the metarepresented votive utterance of Jacob in 28:20 (Wenham 1994: 268), as the following comparison between them shows:

- Gen 28:15 אָנֹכִי עִמָּךְ וּשְׁמַרְתִּיךָ 'I will be with you'
- 28:20 **אִם־יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי וּשְׁמָרַנִי** 'if God be with me and protect me'

- 31:3 וְאֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ 'I will be with you'
- 31:5 וֵאלֹהֵי אָבִי הָיָה עִמָּדִי 'God has been with me.'

Thus, this story is the continuation of the Bethel event in particular and the Patriarchal story of Genesis in general as I have already argued in chapter four (see the close reading of 28:10-22).

Accordingly, the narrator apparently indicates in the story "the Yahweh-centered" motive of Jacob's flight back to Canaan (31:3, 5; Gunkel 1997: 331). Gunkel's suggestion concerning Jacob's flight to Canaan (on the one hand he describes it as a flight of a pious person instructed by God, and on the other hand he describes it as a flight of deceiving/cunning person who tried to avoid Laban's hatred) seems contradictory (Gunkel 1997: 331). However, the narrator's representation shows that

Jacob suffered a distressing situation because of the hatred of Laban and his children and that he tried to escape the danger (31:1). Laban's attitude toward Jacob was changed into hatred, which Jacob perceived as a threat to his life. But God intervened in this situation and instructed him to go back to Canaan and confirmed his promise at Bethel to protect him (vv. 3, 5). So one can observe that on God's level, YHWH instructs Jacob to return to his father's house; and on a human level, tension occurs between Laban and Jacob, which also creates a tension for Jacob to get away from Laban, so that he attempts to run away from him in secret.

The narrator explains why Jacob attempted to escape from Laban in secret. He represents Laban as trickster, who values wealth more than his children, his grandchildren and his son-in-law; "a man governed by avarice" (Wenham 1994: 268, 269). Wenham comments that Laban even "looked on Jacob more as a slave than as a son-in-law" (Wenham 1994: 254). He sold his children when he demanded Jacob to work 14 years to marry his daughters (31:15), he cheated Jacob by refusing to pay his wage which Rachel and Leah describe as "he ate all our money" (30:25-26; 31:7, 15; Wenham 1994: 273). Jacob's speech to Laban also shows his frustration and disappointment because Laban refused to pay his wage. The expression "Send me away, that I may go to my own home and country; give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know the service which I have given you" (Gen. 30:25-26) demonstrates clearly that Jacob was angry with his uncle because he exploited him. The narrator implies that presumably Jacob knew that Laban will not allow him to take his property, his wives, and his children with him to Canaan, so that he took action to escape with all his belongings (v. 31). Hence, he presents the main reason for his escape and then concludes: therefore, Jacob had to flee in secret (Gen. 31:17-21).

Thus, the narrator represents that these circumstances on the human level triggered a life-threatening narrative complication Jacob, which in fact created a suitable context for God to grant Jacob's votive plea for protection. He represents that Jacob and Rachel cheated Laban by not telling that Jacob wanted to go back to Canaan (31:20) and by stealing her father's household gods (31:19) respectively. This behavior provoked Laban to take vengeance on Jacob and he set off in hot pursuit after Jacob (vv 22-23). Laban's pursuit for revenge threatens Jacob's safety and his successful departure to

Canaan instructed by God. Laban's vengeful intention was very dangerous for Jacob as the narrator retells us by an embedded metarepresentation: "It is in my power to do you harm; but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying: 'Take heed that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad'" (Gen. 31:29). Consequently, the narrator tells us by metarepresenting the utterance of Jacob, that God now limits Laban's threat as follows,:

31:42 לוּלֵי אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם וּפַחַד יִצְחָק הָיָה לִי כִּי עַתָּה רֵיקָם שִׁלַּחְתָּנִי אֶת־עָנְיִי וְאֶת־יְגִיעַ* כַּפַּי רָאָה אֱלֹהִים וַיּוֹכַח אָמֶשׁ:

> *If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been on my side, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God saw my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night (Gen. 31:42).*

Thus, in the end it all works out to Jacob's good by God's grant of his vow. The circumstance on the human level worked out to create an appropriate situation which exhibits God's grant of Jacob's votive plea for protection in Bethel.

      Once again this textual evidence shows that the narrator organized this episode as a continuation of the patriarchal story in general and of the Bethel experience of Jacob in particular, specifically as an answer to the votive plea of Jacob in Bethel. Hence, in this regard I argue that the narrator employs significant anaphoric expressions to the Bethel experience as exemplified above. He highlights the intervention and protection of God for Jacob and his family, which is inferentially attributed to the answer to his votive plea. Therefore, God's intervention was the termination or resolution of the narrative tension. Accordingly 31:45-55 could be described as a narrative signal employed by the narrator to show that the Jacob-Laban episode has ended.

3.1.3. God's Protection from the Threat of Esau (Gen. 32:2-33:17)

The second evidence which the narrator employed to show that God answered Jacob's votive plea for his protection in 28:20-22 concerns the story of God's protection of Jacob from the anger and threat of Esau. Esau determined to kill Jacob in order to revenge him for deceiving him and taking his birthright as well as the blessing of his father. Cartledge makes a very important observation regarding this matter when he says that when Jacob pleaded with God to bring him back to Beersheba in peace he meant "without fear of Esau, from whom he is fleeing" (Cartledge 1992: 170). The episodes of this story are:

1. Jacob encounters the angels of God as an assurance of his protection from Esau (32:1).

2. Yet Jacob is so gripped with fear of Esau that he prays to God earnestly (Gen 32:9-12). In fact his prayer metarepresents the promise God made to him in Bethel (Gen 28:14) as the following synopsis shows:

God's promise:

- וְהָיָה זַרְעֲךָ כַּעֲפַר הָאָרֶץ וּפָרַצְתָּ יָמָּה וָקֵדְמָה וְצָפֹנָה וָנֶגְבָּה> 'and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south' (28:14).

Jacob's prayer:

- וְאַתָּה אָמַרְתָּ הֵיטֵב אֵיטִיב עִמָּךְ וְשַׂמְתִּי אֶת־זַרְעֲךָ כְּחוֹל הַיָּם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִסָּפֵר מֵרֹב 'you have said, 'I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted because of their number' (32:13 MT, 12 NRSV)

3. And he also attempts to pacify the anger of Esau (32:2-21).

4. God gives another assurance of his protection to Jacob through his experience in Penuel (32:22-32).

5. Finally, Jacob meets Esau peacefully (33:1-17).

These episodes are aimed to show that if it were not for God's protection, Jacob could by no means defend himself from the vengeance of his brother Esau. Rather, Esau, who was accompanied by four hundred men, would have easily destroyed the vulnerable Jacob and his family (32:6-7). In this regard it is worthwhile to refresh our memory that the narrative tension which was introduced between Esau and Jacob in 27:1-28:5 when Esau decided to kill Jacob has not been resolved by the flight of Jacob to Padan Aram (28:10-22). Rather, the narrator presents the resolution in Gen. 32:2-33:17 when Esau accepts Jacob without any violence because of God's providence and protection for Jacob. Thus the main coherence between the Jacob-Laban episode and this episode is that both stories narrate how God protected Jacob from Laban and Esau during a difficult life-threatening situation. Therefore, the nature of the story significantly shows the point of connection between the preceding and the following episodes.

3.1.3.1. Assurance of God's Protection in the midst of Fear (32:1-32)

Gunkel suggests that the passage in 32:2 about the appearing of the angels is incoherent (Gunkel 1997: 342). He further claims that "the text does not support the usual explanation that the angelic revelation is supposed to assure Jacob of God's protective presence" (Gunkel 1997: 343). However, we must understand that the general motif of the episode is primed or geared to show the fulfillment of the vow in 28:10-22 as it is explicitly stated in 31:3, 13:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־יַעֲקֹב שׁוּב אֶל־אֶרֶץ אֲבוֹתֶיךָ וּלְמוֹלַדְתֶּךָ וְאֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ:
אָנֹכִי הָאֵל בֵּית־אֵל אֲשֶׁר מָשַׁחְתָּ שָּׁם מַצֵּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָדַרְתָּ לִּי שָׁם נֶדֶר עַתָּה קוּם צֵא מִן־הָאָרֶץ
הַזֹּאת וְשׁוּב אֶל־אֶרֶץ מוֹלַדְתֶּךָ:

> *Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your ancestors and to your kindred, and I will be with you... I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and return to the land of your birth.*

Thus, the appearing of the angels clearly shows the presence of God with Jacob in order to protect him from Laban, as we are told in the preceding story, and reassures him that he will also continue to be with him and protect him from the threat of Esau as the following story shows. Thus the story is not a fragment as it has been thought to be.

The narrative complication or tension of the episode occurs in Mahanaim and Penuel. The narrator makes a significant comment about the events in Mahanaim and Penuel because they intensify the presence of Yahweh with Jacob in order to protect him from Esau as he promised in Gen. 31:3: "Return to the land of your ancestors and to your kindred, and I will be with you."

Now Jacob is on his way back to Canaan as God instructed him. However he was in great fear and distress remembering Esau's threat to kill him about twenty years ago previously. Probably these places were not too far from where Esau lived because the narrator tells us that he came to meet Jacob (32:6). However, we do not know how far or how close they were. Mahanaim was the place where the angels of the Lord appeared to Jacob while Penu'el was where Jacob wrestled with a strange person throughout the night (22-32; Gunkel 1997: 343-4).

3.1.3.1.1. In Mahanaim

The root of the term 'Mahanayim' is מחנה *camp, army* which is suffixed with '-ayim[54]' which is a plural marker and it has been suggested as a plural of locative rather than number (Edelman 1992: 472). However 'Mahanaim' may imply more than one camp, probably associated with the camp of the army of the angels of God as well as Jacob's camping at that place dividing his possession into two groups/camps (32:7-8, 21) because of his fear of Esau (Edelman 1992: 472). Jacob behaves like a woman in a labor pain because of his fear of Esau that he prays to God earnestly and appeals to his promise:

10 וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי אַבְרָהָם וֵאלֹהֵי אָבִי יִצְחָק יְהוָה הָאֹמֵר אֵלַי שׁוּב לְאַרְצְךָ וּלְמוֹלַדְתְּךָ וְאֵיטִיבָה עִמָּךְ:

11 קָטֹנְתִּי מִכֹּל הַחֲסָדִים וּמִכָּל־הָאֱמֶת אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־עַבְדֶּךָ כִּי בְמַקְלִי עָבַרְתִּי אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה וְעַתָּה הָיִיתִי לִשְׁנֵי מַחֲנוֹת:

12 הַצִּילֵנִי נָא מִיַּד אָחִי מִיַּד עֵשָׂו כִּי־יָרֵא אָנֹכִי אֹתוֹ פֶּן־יָבוֹא וְהִכַּנִי אֵם עַל־בָּנִים:

> *O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O LORD who said to me, `Return to your country and to your kindred, and I will do you good,…Deliver me, pleas, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I am afraid of him; he may come and kill us all, the mothers with the children (32:9, 11).*

However his fear seems more intensified even after he prayed to Yahweh. He prepares a huge gift to Esau in order to calm down or appease his anger. But he was so uncertain about what would happen that he was in deep anxiety and depression and he could not even sleep. He even does things which do not make sense. Why did he cross the river at night? Why did he take his wives and children to the other side of the river during the night (Wenham 1994: 292). Thus Jacob felt so helpless in that night. He was in a life and death struggle (Wenham 1994: 294). In that difficult night Jacob remained alone, probably to pray, and he encountered an attacker (from his point of view) whom he fought for his life (Wenham 1994: 295).

The main focus of this episode is to show that God actively worked to protect Jacob and bring a resolution to the contention of Jacob and his brother Esau, which was started 20 years previosly, in favor of Jacob. Thus the narrator labors to represent this

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[54] The suffix to Mahsnayim looks like that of the dual plurals which comprises accented patah, plus yod, plus hireq, and plus final mem. However, it is different because it is suffixed by accented qames, plus yod, plus hireq, and plus final mem.

phenomenon in a vivid and dramatic manner. The representation of the events show that God was with Jacob and he was actively working for him, not only to protect him but also to make a turning point in his life as well as in his descendants' life by making them the blessed descendants of Abraham, as the changing of his name shows:

וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא יַעֲקֹב יֵאָמֵר עוֹד שִׁמְךָ כִּי אִם־יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי־שָׂרִיתָ עִם־אֱלֹהִים וְעִם־אֲנָשִׁים

'You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and וַתּוּכָל:

with humans, and have prevailed' (32:29, English 32:28; Gunkel 1997: 350; Wenham 1994: 294).

3.1.3.1.2. In Penu'el

As I have mentioned above, the narrator tells us that Jacob struggled in Penu'el for his life with a stranger who was disguised as a man[55] but who actually was God who was working to make a turning point in Jacob's life (Wenham 1994: 295; Pagolu 1998: 168). The new naming of Jacob by the stranger (God) captures this feature beautifully. The previous name 'Yacob' and his act of struggling for his life with God are structured in a beautiful form of rhyming assonance, which is clearly a word play on Yabbok and Yacob (Wenham 1994: 295). The expression ויאבק ... יעקב 'Jacob was struggling', triggers the inferential and referential connection with Gen. 25:26. According to the story in Gen. 25:26 there is a rhyming assonance between בעקב 'his hand was in the heel of his brother' and יעקב which was a proper name of the child associated with his act of holding his brother's heel. The name יעקב is taken from the root עקב and it has the following nuances: 1. As a noun it could mean heel, hoof, rear of a troop, footstep. 2. It could also mean over-reacher, deceitful, deceitfulness as a denominative adjective (Payne 1980: 691). 3. It could also be used as a denominative verb which could mean 'take by the heel, supplant, to cause one to fall, to cause a downfall, to supersede, substitute or replace someone else' (Payne1980: 691). The narrator shows that in this narrative עקב is used as a denominative verb יעקב as the sense/nuance of 3. Esau affirms this use when he says: "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For, he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright; and behold, now he has taken away my blessing." (Gen. 27:36).

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[55] The book of Hosea describes the unknown person who struggled with Jacob as God; Hos. 12:4.

Thus the narrator in this episode indicates that when God changed the name of Jacob to Israel he actually affirmed that Jacob has succeeded in his supplanting behavior: "Your name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed" (Gen. 32:28). Thus this story recapitulates the early stage of the narrative tension between Esau and Jacob in order to show that this story is apparently a coherent part of the larger narrative unit (25:19-37:1).

The story also tells us that God changed the name יעקב *Yacob* to ישראל *Israel*[56] (Gen. MT 32:29; RSV 32:28). It seems that the narrator employed a word play here as well. The new name 'Israel', now given to Jacob, is taken from the root שָׂרָה *sarah* (Payne 1980: 883). The term sarah has three nuances: 1 When it is construed as a nominative form it could mean 'princess, noble lady. 2. When שָׂרָה is construed as a verb it could mean to persist, exert oneself, contend, persevere, and have a power. 3. It could also mean the proper name of Sarah the wife of Abraham the patriarch, which yields or leads to the sense of 'mother of the nations and kings' (Gen. 17:15). When שָׂרָה is juxtaposed or combined with אל 'god' and when the relation between the two words is copulative then it could mean 'God is prince or God rules.' But when it is construed as a genitive construction it could mean 'prince of God' (Slayton 1992: 223). However, when it is construed as a verb (which seems the case in this context because it is prefixed by the imperfect marker י which shows that it is a normal perfect of the verb שָׂרָה) juxtaposed with אל then it could mean 'God struggles, persists, perseveres, contends, or one who struggles with God (Wenham 1994: 296-7). However, the sense of the root sarah does not imply a physical confrontation and strength of Jacob in his struggle with his contenders because there is no such evidence in the story. Rather it signifies Jacob's trust in Yahweh and the promise of Yahweh for Jacob to protect him in his struggle with his contenders. Thus Israel, the new name of Jacob, denotes the interwoven nature of the relationship

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[56] It is also worth noting that the process of changing Jacob's name to 'Israel' is apparently connected to the process of changing the name of Abraham's wife from שרי *Sarai* which is 'princess, noble lady' into שָׂרָה *Sarah* which mean 'the mother of the nations and kings' (Gen. 17:15). However, in the case of ישראל *Israel* שָׂרָה is taken as a denominative verb and combined with אל *God* as a coinage signifying new meaning of contention of Jacob and his descendants with their opponents including Esau. Thus, שָׂרָה *sarah* was the very word employed in Gen. 25:23-26 in order to depict the contention between Jacob and Esau which is now going to be resolved by the victory of ישראל (the new name of Jacob) which will be achieved by the help of Yahweh as the following story narrates.

between Jacob and God in his success and victory against his contenders and adversaries. Accordingly the name 'Israel' presumably depicts that Jacob has succeeded and also will succeed in his struggle with Esau and other contenders and adversaries and eventually will rule over them by the help of God to whom he pleaded. God himself promised to be with him on his way back to Canaan in order to protect him and give him relief from his distress.

Accordingly, the new name 'Penuel', given to that particular place where Jacob struggled with God, shows that Jacob succeeded by the protection and providence of God, not by his own strength. The term 'Penuel' was the combination of pen 'face' and el 'God' which could mean 'the face of God' implying that Jacob the 'supplanter' has found favor before God. It is in Penuel that he received the blessing from God which his father Isaac bestowed on him (Gen. 32:29). Thus the events which occurred in Mahanaim and Penuel are apparently coherent with the promise God made to be with Jacob and protect him when he commanded him to go back to Canaan (Gn. 31:3, 13). Similarly they are also coherent with the promise which God made to Jacob in Bethel when Jacob made the votive plea (28:10-22).

Once again, there is no indication in the story that Jacob was strong and clever enough to defeat Laban and Esau. If it were not because of God's intervention and protection he would have lost everything by the revenge of Laban. Now if the same God will not intervene and rescue him and his family from the hands of Esau his future is hopeless (Parry 2004: 134). Thus the author shows that Jacob's wisdom in such a difficult time was that he clung to God and he pleaded with him so that he won his favor. Hence, God's protection to Jacob was the main focus of this episode.

My claim is that the narrator of the story has provided sufficient ostensive linguistic signals to constrain the inferential process of interpreting each element of the episode within the framework of the votive utterance of Jacob in Bethel. There are seven main ostensive signals employed in this narrative in order to guide the interpretation of the story, specifically pressing the votive conditions of the narrative:

1. The strategic representation of the promise of God to Jacob in his dream in Bethel and Jacob's metarepresented vow of pleading to Yahweh in Bethel to relieve him from his distress (28:10-22). Representing these narrative elements, right at the beginning

of the story, functions as a frame work for the interpretation of the subsequent episodes of the story.

2. The narrator tells us about the trip of Jacob to Paddan Aram after making the vow (29:1) which shows that the trip was made in the context of the Bethel experience in the votive conditions with a refreshed faith and expectation of Yahweh's granting of the votive plea.

3. The narrator's representation of the story is in a very strictly Yahweh-focused context, apparently highlighting him, to whom Jacob made his vow in Bethel, as a main hero of the story in every aspect of Jacob's life (Gen 31:13). For example, even Laban was blessed because of Jacob's relation with Yahweh (Gen 30:30). This shows that the narrator intended to show that Yahweh has really granted Jacob's votive plea.

4. The narrator explicitly and emphatically tells us that the God of his fathers, to whom he made the vow, was with him throughout his life in Paddan Aram and it is the same God who instructed him to go back to the land of his fathers, promising to be with him in order to protect and provide (Gen 31:3-5). Thus, granting his votive plea is represented by implicature.

5. There is explicit anaphoric expression to the votive conditions of the Bethel incident in the story which clearly states that it is the God of Bethel, to whom he made a vow, who blessed him with the wealth (which we will discuss in section 3.2) and instructed him to go back to Canaan (31:11-13).

6. The narrator also evidently tells us that it is the same God of Jacob's fathers who protected Jacob from the attack of Laban,[57] apparently as a grant of his votive plea "If you will be with me and protect me" (31:3, 24, 29, 42).

7. Jacob was presented as a weak and vulnerable person before both Laban and Esau and that he was in serious fear, distress, and depression 32:7. Thus there is no way that Jacob could confront Esau by his own strength. So he pleads with God earnestly to help him and to rescue him from the revenge of Esau, which clearly implies that Jacob was appealing to the commissive speech act of God in Bethel which was also metarepresented in his votive plea:

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[57] Laban's god(s) vanish(es) from the narrative while Jacob's God is presented as one who controls every aspect of life, even including Laban's. It was not Labans god's who warned him not to harm Jacob; Laban made the covenant in the name of Yahweh, not in the name of his gods (31:48-53).

> And Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O LORD who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your kindred, and I will do you good,' I am not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan; and now I have become two companies. Deliver me, please, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I am afraid of him; he may come and kill us all, the mothers with the children. Yet you have said, 'I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted because of their number.'" (32:9-12).

This prayer of Jacob can be described as a metarepresentation of his vow in Bethel for the following reasons.

1. There is an appeal to the God of his ancestors Abraham and Isaac (v 9 NRV, v 10 MT) which is a metarepresentation of God's words in Gen 31:13 which further reflects 28:13, 22.

2. There is an appeal to God's instruction to Jacob to return to Canaan (31:3) which further reflects God's promise in Bethel (28:15) to bring him back, which is also metarepresented in Jacob's vow in 28:21.

3. There is an appeal to God's blessing of prosperity which is a metarepresentaion of God's promise in 28:15 to bless him and to multiply his descendants which also farther reflects Jacob's votive plea for prosperity in 28:22.

It is in this context that the narrator tells us that Jacob struggled with God and refused to let him go unless he blesses him. It is in the same context that God changed his name saying: "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed" (32:28). I believe this utterance of God must have given Jacob new hope and encouragement that he will also overcome the threat of Esau.

3.1.3.2. Jacob Meets Esau Safely

As I noted above when Jacob was prepared to meet Esau he was gripped by the fear of Esau. He was very apprehensive about what would happen when Esau met him. This was because he knew that he would not be able to defend himself and his family if Esau wanted to attack him. No doubt that he must have told his family what he did to Esau 20 years ago and that he ran away from his brother for fear of his life. Now he was coming to meet him, but he was not sure whether Esau still wanted to take revenge. Therefore he

warns all his family members to be nice and humble when they met Esau in order to pacify his anger and in order to avoid anything which may trigger his anger. He told them to bow down humbly to Esau when they meet him. He divided his children among three groups: the maidservants and their children, Leah and her children, and Rachel and Joseph, thinking that if Esau attacked the front group the next group would escape; if he attacked both the front and the next groups, Rachel and Joseph might escape. He put the children of the maidservants in the front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph at the rear because he loves Rachel so much. And then he himself went ahead of them bowing to the ground seven times even before he approached Esau in order to appease him from the revenge. The rest of his family also bowed to him. However he saw that Esau's reaction to Jacob was some thing which he never expected. Esau runs to Jacob and embraces him and kisses him rather than attaking him (Gen. 33:4). Thus Jacob meets Esau peacefully, in spite of his fear.

In summary the narrator's public representation of the story depicts that the conflict between Jacob and Esau was resolved smoothly in an amazing way, which must have brought great relief to Jacob. The narrator does not tell us explicitly what made Esau behave so nicely with Jacob. However he leaves it for the readers to imagine for themselves. The narrator represents the events of the story as the work of God in favor of Jacob. The intended implicature is that God influenced Esau to accept Jacob in love rather than attaking him. Thus, in a miraculous way, Esau greets him and welcomes him with warm love, contrary to Jacob's expectation. Hence, once again the narrator of this episode shows that God answered Jacob's votive plea for protection (Gen 31:3).

3.2. God Grants Prosperity (29:14b-32:10)

In our exegetical discussion on 28:20 I argued that the expression ונתן־לי לחם לאכל ובגד ללבש "and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear" should be understood comprehensively. Thus, Jacob actually appealed to God to grant him the blessing of wealth (כבד Gen 31:1; 30:43) as this was implied and perceived from his votive promise: "and of all that you give me I will surely give one tenth to you." (Gen. 28:22). In this episode we observe that the narrator shows that God has granted this request. The

blessing has two themes or aspects: the blessing of wives and children and the blessing of wealth.

3.2.1. The Blessing of Wives and Children

In 29:14b-30:24, the story tells us how God's providence worked out for Jacob to bless him by the gift of two wives and many children, who will eventually become the twelve patriarchs. Though Laban gave Leah his daughter to Jacob as a wife by tricking him (29:23-25), though there was strife between Rachel and Leah, and though Jacob did not love Leah (29:31) God blessed him with two wives, and with many children through them. The story tells us that most of the patriarchs were born of Leah. He explicitly tells that it is God who blessed him with eight children from Leah: six from Leah herself (29:31-35; 30:16-20) and the other two through her maid Zilpah as a surrogate mother (30:9-13). The other four children were born of Rachel: two from Rachel herself (30:20-24; 35:16-19) and the other two through her maid Bilhah as a surrogate mother (30:1-8) (29:31-30:22; 35:16-19). The only daughter mentioned in this episode as born of Leah to Jacob is Dinah (30:21). The narrator's intention of mentioning Dinah in this context is strategically aimed to anticipating the events of chapter 34.

As I noted above the narrator's representation of the story about the blessing of God to Jacob by giving him the wives and the children shows the providential work of Yahweh. This blessing is part of the fulfillment of the promise of God (to multiply his descendants like the dust of the earth and spread to the east and to the west and to the south and to the north, Gen 28:14) in general and grant to his votive plea in particular. Thus the representation of the story about Jacob's receiving of the blessing of children through Rachel and Leah was employed in order to show that it was the fulfillment of God's promise and grant to his votive plea not simply to narrate a mere coincidence of marrying Rachel and Leah (Wenham 1994: 239). For example the narrator ostensively signals this phenomenon when he tells us that the mother's joy at giving birth of each child is asserted to God (29:32, 33, 35; 30:6, 11, 18, 20, 23, 26). Also Leah's and Rachel's initial pregnancies are ascribed to God (29:31; 30:22-24). Besides, 29:31-30:24 is full of overt mentions of God's blessings of wives and children including the naming of the children. In fact this view was correctly perceived by the later generations of Israel, so that they say "Like Rachel and Leah who built up the house of Israel" (Ruth. 4:11-12).

Thus this blessing of the patriarchs to Jacob was directly connected to the Bethel experience. It is also a partial fulfillment of God's promise to Jacob in particular and to the promise of God to Abraham in general:

> [A]nd your descendants shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and by you and your descendants shall all the families of the earth bless themselves (Gen. 13:14-16; 28:14; Wenham 1994: 238, 250).

I argue that this episode is part of God's grant of the votive plea of Jacob for two reasons. First, in my close reading of 28:10-22, I have argued that Jacob's votive plea was a metarepresentation of God's utterance of promise in his dream. Thus it is very difficult to dichotomize between the fulfillment of God's promise to Jacob in his dream and God's grant of Jacob's votive plea, except that the grant of the votive plea has a short term time span while God's promise to bless Jacob does not have a specific time limit. Hence, there is no need to distinguish the two, since the latter is an echoic use of the former.

Secondly, it seems that according to the ancient Israelites' worldview the blessing of children (mainly sons), and wealth are essentially perceived as a blessing from Yahweh. This worldview implies that one is incomplete without the other because the 'strength' and 'honor' of the house is measured by the number of its sons (de Vaux 1973: 41). Thus Jacob's votive plea for the blessing of the wealth was intrinsically inclusive of the blessing of the children. Thus this episode could be perceived as part of the grant of Jacob's votive plea and is clearly a coherent part of the narrative unit. In fact when Jacob crossed the river Jordan with his big family and wealth on his way back to Canaan he remembered his journey to Padan Aram and his Bethel experience and acknowledged this fact (Gen. 32:10 NRSV/32:11 MT), which we will discuss in the following section.

3.2.2. The Blessing of the Material Prosperity

The story in the next episode, Gen 30:25-43, represents in a significant way that God blessed Jacob with wealth as a grant of his votive plea in Bethel. Before we proceed with our discussion in this regard it is worth noting that scholars differ as to where the episode ends: 30:43 or 31:1-2 (Wenham 1994: 252). According to my point of view, the story apparently continues from the preceding episode except that 31:1-2 introduces a

complication or conflict into the narrative which functions as a staging or background for the following episode and this will continue intensifying the narrative tension which eventually will lead to the conflict resolution by God as a main agent. Thus I do not think it matters where the preceding story ends.

The narrator emphatically states that Jacob did not become rich because he was a clever or hard working man; rather he remarks that it was because Yahweh blessed him. However, as the following reading shows, the narrator does not comment upon divine blessing to Jacob, rather, he puts the claim of God's blessing of prosperity into Jacob's mouth, by an echoic metarepresentation:

קָטֹנְתִּי מִכֹּל הַחֲסָדִים וּמִכָּל־הָאֱמֶת אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־עַבְדֶּךָ כִּי בְמַקְלִי עָבַרְתִּי אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה וְעַתָּה הָיִיתִי לִשְׁנֵי מַחֲנֹות
(Gen 32:11)

I am not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan; and now I have become two companies (Gen 32:10).

Thus, the narrator claims that it is God who made Jacob prosper as Jacob himself has acknowledged that it is God who made him prosper exceedingly. This metarepresentation is possibly echoic because the narrator has an endorsing attitude claiming that truly God has granted Jacob's votive plea for prosperity as Jacob himself made it clear. This feature also makes the metarepresentation emphatic.

Accordingly, the story tells us that Jacob stayed with Laban for 20 years (31:38): he served Laban for 14 years as a dowry for Leah and Rachel; and then he worked only for six years for the spotted flocks as his wage (v. 41). And he became exceedingly rich (30:43) within those six years despite the fact that Laban was so hard on him and cheated him (31:7). How did he get such a huge wealth within the six years? The narrator has an answer:

> … yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times, but God did not permit him to harm me. If he said, "he speckled shall be your wages," then all the flock bore speckled; and if he said, "The striped shall be your wages," then all the flock bore striped. Thus God has taken away the livestock of your father, and given them to me (31:7-9).

More specifically, the narrator also tells us in a particular way that Jacob acquired this wealth because God granted his votive plea as it was revealed in his dream:

> During the mating of the flock I once had a dream in which I looked up and saw that the male goats that leaped upon the flock were striped, speckled, and mottled. Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, "Jacob," and I said, "Here I am!" And he said, 'Look up and see that all the goats that leap on the flock are striped, speckled, and mottled; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. **I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me"** (Gen. 31:10-13; emphasis mine).

Led by this dream Jacob proposes a very modest or humble suggestion to Laban to have only multicolored goats and sheep as his wage (30:31-36; Wenham 1994: 255). This suggestion was very attractive to Laban (Wenham 1994: 255; Gunkel 1997: 330). What is more striking is that Jacob invites Laban to separate all the multicolored animals from the flock as his own so that he may have the newborn multicolored animals from that time onward in order to prove that he was an honest man (30:34). Thus from Laban's point of view Jacob was asking something very insignificant or he is asking for nothing (Wenham 1994: 255). So Laban removes all the colored animals and takes them away about three days walking distance from where Jacob tends the flock in order to make sure that the spotted animals will never breed with the flock under Jacob's care.

However, prompted by the dream, Jacob applies a device which he thought will influence the flock to bear only colored young goats and sheep. Probably this practice was based on the belief that if a pregnant animal or woman regularly sees a particular beautiful or ugly thing attentively it can have an influence on the physical appearance of the young or baby they will bear[58]. Thus, Jacob peels the tree branches to make strips and puts them in the watering troughs so that the animals may see them when they mate in order to influence the physical appearance of the young which the animals will bear. He does this only when the strong female animals were in heat, not the weak ones. Consequently all the strong animals bear colored young which belong to Jacob while the few remaining weak single colored animals are left for Laban. Thus Jacob accumulated a lot of wealth and he became 'exceedingly prosperous'. But the narrator tells us that his wealth was not based on only on the flocks, but that he owns maid servants, men servants, camels, and donkeys (Gen. 30:41).

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[58] For example such belief is common in my community, such that the pregnant women are usually encouraged to look at a beautiful color and beautiful or handsome people rather than some ugly looking things or people.

However the narrator does not imply that his wealth was acquired by the magic of striped branches. Rather, he connects both the choice of having colored animals as his wage and employing the device of striped branches to what God has told Jacob in his dream (31:10-12). The story clearly shows that Jacob himself acknowledged that his "impressive flocks are the result of divine blessing" (Gen. 31:7-13; Cartledge 1992: 172). Thus, from the narrator's point of view Jacob's acquiring such wealth is Yahweh's grant of his votive plea in Bethel: "Lift up your eyes and see, all the goats that leap upon the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. **I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me"** (Gen. 31:10-13a).

As I already mentioned above even Laban learned by *divination* נחשתי and acknowledged that his wealth came from Yahweh because of Jacob's presence in his house (30:27). Thus his wealth was attributed to the blessing of the patriarch by Yahweh: "the nations of the world will be blessed by you." Hence, even those who associate with the patriarchs will be blessed (Gen 12:3; 14:1920; 21:22-23; 22:18; 26:12-16, 28-29; 28:14; 39:5; 23; Wenham 1994: 255; Gunkel 1997: 329). Hence no wonder that Jacob buries the Teraphim, which was the Aramean god believed to "help the votary in his house and home, blessing his family and his flock", under the tree in Shechem (Gunkel 1997: 334), when God confirmed with him that he was the one who blesses him, protects him, and brought him back to Canaan granting his votive plea. Therefore Jacob did not want to associate with any other gods except with Yahweh. The narrator even dissociates Jacob from Laban and his religious practices when he says "Laban the Aramean" (Gen 31:24) probably for the same reason, in order to distance himself from any religious association of Aramean culture from that time onward. Definitely, this story has a moral implication regarding the expected behavior of descendants of Jacob.

In summary the public representation of the narrator's point of view of the story clearly depicts that the blessing of wives, children, and wealth to Jacob was Yahweh's grant of answer to Jacob's votive plea in Bethel.

3.3. God Grants Return to Canaan Safely (Gen. 31:3; 33:17-18)

In Gen. 31:3 the narrator tells us that God commanded Jacob to return to Canaan, the land of his fathers and he promised to protect him as already discussed above. In 31:17-18 he

tells us that Jacob obeyed God that he set on his way to Canaan. As he promised, God protected Jacob so that he arrives in Canaan safely. Thus the narrator's main focus in 33:18 is on Jacob's return to Canaan safely which is a conclusion of the episode began in 31:3 in particular and the fulfillment of the long awaited promise of Yahweh and his grant answer to Jacob's votive plea in 28:10-22 in general: "And Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, on his way from Padan Aram; and he camped before the city" (33:18). This expression is loaded with information, and it is very emphatic and vivid. The narrator says that Jacob made it to Canaan at last as God promised him 26 years ago! Indeed, God answered his votive plea in Bethel and he brought him to Canaan so that he will possess it that Jacob built a house on it, as a sign of claiming it as his permanent home (33:17). Thus it alludes to the promise of God in 28:15: "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you are lying I will give to you and to your descendants". Wenham, Pagolu and other scholars correctly observe that Jacob's coming back to Canaan in peace was God's answer to Jacob's votive plea in Bethel (Wenham 1994: 287; Pagolu 1998: 168).

In summary the close reading of the story in the context of the votive institution shows that the narrator publicly represents his mental representation about the fulfillment of Jacob's vow, in a remarkable way. He briefly but vividly narrates in this passage that God granted Jacob's votive plea to return home so that he arrives in Canaan safely because God brought him safely, and he builds a house for himself as a partial fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, Isaac and to Jacob himself in Bethel (Gen 13:14-17; 26:3-4; 28:10-22). The granting is recognized in the way various tensions are resolved by God, which also significantly highlights God's granting of Jacob's plea for his protection. This feature of the narrative is overlooked by scholars.

Thus the narrator assumes that he has achieved his communicative and informative intention of the story in terms of providing ostensive signals about Jacob's vow in Bethel and God's granting of the same, constraining his audience who must have been geared to the expectation of relevance about whether God granted Jacob's votive plea. He is affirming that 'yes God did grant an answer to Jacob's votive plea.'

4. Jacob Fails to Fulfill his Votive Pledge

In the above discussion I argued that the narrative representation of the story shows that the expectation of relevance regarding God's grant of Jacob's votive plea was achieved, because God has granted all his requests. The next expectation of relevance which the reader is geared to search for in the following narrative must be 'since God has granted his votive plea, then Jacob will go straight to Bethel in order to fulfill his votive pledge.' Similarly, in normal circumstances, any one who reads this narrative unit within the framework of a votive narrative and in the context of the institution of the vow deliberately expects that Jacob shall fulfill his vow to Yahweh in Bethel right away. Thus, since my reading of this story is within the context of this framework, my main argument is that the optimal expectation of relevance at this point requires that Jacob should fulfill his votive promise to Yahweh at Bethel promptly, as expected in the votive institution (see chapter 3 section 3.2.7)[59].

Though it seems improbable, the Testament of Levi suggests that it was about ten years since Jacob returned to Canaan safely up until this incident of the Dinah story (Baarda 1992: 13-14). Under normal circumstances, this is an undesirable delay for fulfilling one's votive pledge. In these terms the narrative shows that Jacob failed to fulfill his votive pledge to God in Bethel as follows:

19 וַיִּקֶן אֶת־חֶלְקַת הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר נָטָה־שָׁם אָהֳלוֹ מִיַּד בְּנֵי־חֲמוֹר אֲבִי שְׁכֶם בְּמֵאָה קְשִׂיטָה:

20 וַיַּצֶּב־שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ וַיִּקְרָא־לוֹ אֵל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

And from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, he bought for one hundred pieces of money the plot of land on which he had pitched his tent. There he erected an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel (Gen. 33:19-20).

אֵל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל 'El-elohe-Israel' means El, the Supreme God is the God of Israel (his new name). The way in which Jacob lays claim to God in this utterance is apparently connected to his votive pledge to God in Bethel: והיה יהוה לי לאלהימ 'The LORD shall be my God' (28:21; Wenham 1994: 301). Thus, the strongest implicature of the expression "There he erected an altar and called it El-elohe-Israel" seems that the action of Jacob is

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[59] But the sacred donations that are due from you, and your votive gifts, you shall bring to the place that the LORD will choose (Deut. 12:26).

intended to fulfill his votive pledge made at Bethel in Shechem[60]. And so the narrator implies that Jacob failed to fulfill his votive pledge to Yahweh in Bethel. Unfortunately, this point of view of the narrator is overlooked by all the scholars again as far as I know from my readings so far.

There are two possible ways in which Jacob failed to fulfill his vow to Yahweh. First, the significant element in 33:17-20 is that Jacob makes a transaction to purchase a piece of land from the sons of Hamor. The narrator presumably attempts to represent his cognitive point of view, in his linguistic representation regarding Jacob's action of setting an altar to Yahweh on that piece of land in Shechem: "There he erected an altar and called it El-elohe-Israel" (33:20). Thus the narrative represents details which convey the implicature that Jacob actually attempted to fulfill his vow of Bethel by erecting the altar in Shechem (Wenham 1994: 301). The expression "There he erected an altar…" connotes that Jacob was expected to erect it in Bethel, not in Shechem (28:22; 35:1), because all the votive promises must be fulfilled in a place chosen by God as we observed in chapter three[61].

Parry observes that the mention of Bethel and Shechem in the story has an intentional literary significance and a deliberate allusion about these places (Parry 2004: 134). Parry's observation concurs with Waltar Brueggemann's observation. Brueggemann notes that according to the archaeological remains "Shechem was a major

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[60] The place Jacob settled when he returned from Padan Aram is referred as Succoth in verse 17 and Shechem in verse 18. Gunkel argues that both Shechem and Succuth refer the same place (Gunkel 1997: 356). However, some scholars argue that the place Jacob returned was called 'Salem' (Pink 1922: 300; Wenham 1994: 300). Their argument was based on the sentence 'ויבא יעקב שלם עיר שכם אשר בארץ כנען (Gen. 33:18). Thus they perceive שלם as a reference to a place while many scholars perceive it as a denominative adverb which is used to qualify the verb ויבא 'he came' thus "he came in peace" (Pelikan 1970: 182-183; Speiser 1982: 259; Gunkel 1997: 356; Hartley 2000: 292; Mathews 2005: 573). I concur with the second interpretation and interpret it as 'safe and sound', "happy to have escaped the danger" from Esau and Laban, because this interpretation fits the context of granting Jacob's votive plea by God to return to his father's house in peace. Hence, according to the votive narrative framework this interpretation strengthened a reflection of 28:21 "to my father's house in peace.' Based on the commissive speech act of God to him in Bethel and his votive plea to Yahweh, Jacob, after fleeing from family conflict, hoped to return in peace. The narrator also tells us that Jacob declined to follow Esau in Seir as he promised to and he went to Succoth instead. The probable but possible implication would be that Jacob did not want to go out of Canaan any more. Besides, although now at peace with Esau, he prefers not to depend on him too closely.

[61] "But the sacred donations that are due from you, and your votive gifts, you shall bring to the place that the LORD will choose" (Deut. 12:26).

shrine before the appearance of Israel". Thus Jacob's building an altar at Shechem (30:20) was probably intended to claim that older cult place for the Israelite use of worshiping Yahweh (Brueggemann 1982: 275). Noth also observes that Jacob stayed in Shechem and Bethel because they were associated with the sanctuaries built in these places (Pagolu 1998: 158). The Hebrew Bible and Talmud also imply this phenomenon, but entail that God chose Bethel than Shechem, when it says that Shechem was the place where Abraham passed through in his first arrival to Canaan up to Bethel where there was a great tree of Moreh, and where God appeared to him (Gen. 12:6; Epstein 1936: 158, 165).

Adam Zertal observes that even before the Israelites came to Canaan, Shechem was a cultic place. There was a stronghold or tower known as 'beth-el-berith' which is probably a cultic place outside of the city of Shechem. There were about four fortified temples unearthed by the archaeologists during the 1913-1927 excavations (Pagolu 1998: 72). There were also statues of gods, and there was a particular temple with altars put in the courtyard in front of the temple. This temple was used for 400 years (Zertal 1992: 1186-1187). Thus probably Jacob went to Shechem to worship the Lord by building an altar there in order to fulfill his vow, thinking that Shechem was compatible with Bethel. Hence he made a grave mistake and incurred guilt by breaking his votive promise to worship the Lord in Bethel. A Jewish Rabbi Tanna shows his negative attitude toward Shechem by the following words: "[It was] a place predestined for evil; in Shechem Dinah was ravished; in Shechem his brethren sold Joseph; and in Shechem the kingdom of the House of David was divided" (Epstein 1935: 692).

Secondly, another possible way would be that Jacob ignored or forgot to fulfill his vow in Bethel. However, the second reason is unlikely because the votive institution of ancient Israel was so strong. Besides, all the stressful experiences which Jacob went through because of Laban and Esau, must have prompted his memory about his vow and his obligation to fulfill it at Bethel. In both cases Jacob incurred guilt before God which resulted in breaching God's protection for him and his family as we observe in chapter 34.

Finally, the narrator employs the representation of 33:18-20 as a summary of the narrative:

> And Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, on his way from Paddan-aram; and he camped before the city. And from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, he bought for a hundred pieces of money the piece of land on which he had pitched his tent. There he erected an altar and called it Elelohe-Israel.

so that it functions as a conclusion of the evaluative narrative and as a connector of the whole story back to 28:10-22 and simultaneously connecting it to the following story (chapter 34). By the same expression, he triggers the expectation of the shared contextual assumptions of the adverse consequence of the unfulfilled votive promise.

Hence, this passage raises the expectation of relevance in the readers' mind so that the reader can perceive the story of chapter 34 as an adverse consequence of the unfulfilled or failed votive promise[62]. Thus, the story of this passage was aimed to highlight or remark the cause of the tragedy in chapter 34 to the reader showing that it happened because Jacob failed to fulfill his vow in Bethel. Wenham observes this phenomenon when he notes that the usual style of the Genesis narratives of closing an episode or a narrative unit by providing a preview for the next chapter was exhibited in 33:18-20, which functions as a trailer for chapter 34. In his words:

> [I]t is customary in Genesis for the end of one episode to include a trailer for the next one. This is exactly what is found here. 33:18-19 records Jacob's arrival at Salem, the city of Shechem, and his purchase of land from the sons of Hamor. This sets the scene for the events of chap. 34 (Wenham 1994: 309).

5. Conclusion

It is generally accepted that the longer and more complex a narrative is the more difficult it is to claim one or another suggestion as the narrator's point of view. However, I have shown that Jacob's vow at Bethel has very strong and specific implications as a social institution which comprises vow making, vow granting, and vow fulfilling. And this has implications, in particular whether the expectations raised by the conditional pleas may be granted, and the expectation in such case that the commitments made will place the vow maker under an inescapable obligation to make good his commitment. Furthermore, there is also further expectation, if the fulfillment is ignored or unnecessarily delayed, that the vow maker risks further adverse consequences.

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[62] Wenham notes that the nature of this passage seems aetiological in that presumably the narrator was attempting to explain "the origin of the name Succoth and to note its connection with the patriarch" (Wenham 2000: 300).

Hence, in the above discussion I have argued that the linguistic or public representation of the cognitive organization of the narrative of Gen. 29:1-33:20 is an evaluative one. It is evaluative in that the narrator linguistically represents his point of view about God and Jacob regarding the fulfillment of the votive utterance of Jacob in Bethel (Gen. 28:10-22). I argue that this was the narrator's point of view and an intended contextual implication of the story.

It seems to be correct that granting the vow is never explicitly referred to, but is repeatedly a contextual implication, which is derived by inference. Thus, the story shows that:

1. God grants Jacob's appeal for protection
2. God grants Jacob's appeal for prosperity and provision
3. God grants Jacob's appeal to return to his homeland in peace
4. Jacob failed to fulfill his votive pledge to God

On the one hand the narrator presents God as a divine power who faithfully granted Jacob's votive plea, as his caring and loving patron. On the other hand he represents Jacob as God's chosen patriarch but as one who failed or delayed to fulfill his votive promise to his patron God. From time to time each of these is a strong inference, within the institution of vow, throughout chapters 29-35. Often the granting of the vow is not straightforward, but is recognized in the way that various tensions are resolved, which also dismisses Jacob's role in resolving them and highlights God's granting. Clearly a number of scholars have also observed God's granting of Jacob's vow, but they failed to read the whole narrative within the framework of votive narrative. Consequently, no scholar has read 33:17-20 as indicating that Jacob failed to fulfill his votive commitment.

Thus, since the story is presented within the framework of the social institution of vow and in the context of the votive narrative a narrator would be entitled to presume that his audience can imagine for themselves the imminent adverse consequence of the failed votive promise of Jacob. This would be so if the narrator and readers of the story have the same mutually shared knowledge or cognitive environment about the unfulfilled נדר 'vow' that he moves straight to represent the subsequent story in chapter 34. The narrator manifestly intends that the readers of the story will draw a conclusion from what he said, but not any conclusion, rather a conclusion constrained by his optimally relevant

ostensive stimulus of the narrative as well as mutually shared knowledge about the utterance of נדר in Gen. 28:10-22 and the institution of vow.

Thus we can describe 28:10-22 as the actual votive utterance in context and 29:1-35:15 as the granting of Yahweh to Jacob's votive pleas and Jacob's failed fulfillment of his votive pledge to Yahweh. The expectation of fulfilling the votive promise also comprises an imminent adverse consequence if Jacob fails to fulfill his votive promise, which we are going to discuss in chapter six.

CHAPTER SIX

DINAH STORY AS AN ADVERSE CONSEQUENCE OF THE UNFULFILLED VOW

1. Introduction

In chapter five I have argued that the narrator intends to explain that God granted all of Jacob's votive pleas but Jacob failed to fulfill his vow in Bethel. Certainly, Jacob attempted to fulfill it in Shechem, probably thinking that Shechem was compatible with Bethel. However, the narrative represents that the action of Jacob is the same as not fulfilling his vow because Shechem was not a chosen place by God. This behavior of Jacob will immediately trigger another expectation in the mind of vow-oriented society: he must have suffered an adverse consequence for the unfulfilled vow. In this chapter I wish to show that the narrator intended to show that the crisis of Genesis 34 was the adverse consequence of Jacob's unfulfilled vow.

As I have read the votive narrative of Jacob in the light of the Hadiyya institution of the vow I also wish to employ a similar new reading to the Dinah story: I wish to read it in the light of the Hadiyya marriage institution. I would like to remark that my aim of close reading of the Dinah story is to show that it is an integral/congruent part of the Jacob narrative represented as an adverse consequence of the unfulfilled vow. In this regard, before I embark on the actual discourse analysis of the Dinah episode, there are three points which I want to investigate from the narrator's point of view of this story:

1. I have observed that almost all biblical scholars read the Dinah story as if it were an independent story. Consequently they treat vv 30-31 of the chapter as if it were the resolution of the narrative tension which was created in vv 34:1-4. On the contrary, as I have already remarked throughout the previous discussions, I argue that Dinah story is an integral part of the preceding story; and it is strategically put there by the narrator to show that the crisis of Gen. 34 happened to Jacob because he failed to fulfill his votive promise to Yahweh. Thus I claim that the episode of Genesis 34 continues up to 35:15. Consequently I treat vv 30-31 as a further intensification of the narrative tension, not a resolution. I will argue that 35:1-7 is the resolution of the story and I will attempt to establish this claim by substantiating ostensive textual evidence.

2. Almost all the biblical scholars approach this episode from the perspective of the character evaluation of the story. However I argue that my close reading of this episode shows that the narrator intends to explain why such a terrible crisis, which threatened the very existence of the chosen people of God, happened to Jacob and his family. I also intend to substantiate this argument by elucidating the narrator's ostensive linguistic signals.

3. Though it is not the aim of this research, I will also make a passing comment regarding whether Shechem raped Dinah or he attempted an abductive marriage. Most scholars describe the sexual violence which Shechem committed to Dinah as 'rape'. However, my reading of the story, which is informed by my own social community's practice of abductive marriage, shows that Shechem attempted abductive marriage rather than rape[63]. This phenomenon has been already observed by some biblical scholars such as Fleshman (Fleshman 2000: 112). I want to enhance and substantiate this view by investigating the narrator's point of view. Does the narrator provide ostensive linguistic signals about these view?

2. Review of Other Works on the Dinah Story

I have observed that Dinah story has been read from different perspectives. I categorize them into three groups: ethical and moral outcome reading, source criticism reading, and social scientific reading. Each of these readings is mainly based on the starting assumptions one may have which influence the character evaluation of the participants of the episode. In this section I wish to review each of them in order to see their perspective of interpreting the Dinah episode.

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[63] These terms are culturally defined. In English abductive marriage may constitute rape and honourable intentions of marriage do not override this. But in Hadiyya (and Hebrew?) culture, an abductive marriage is not categorised that same way as a rape without any honourable intentions. Hence to impose Western categories on an Eastern text is inappropriate.

2.1. Reading the Dinah Story from the Perspective of Character Evaluation

Close investigation of the history of the interpretation of Genesis 34 shows that most scholars have focused on evaluating the characters of the story, and almost all of the historical interpretations are geared to draw out moral and ethical teaching of the story rather than describing its relevance to the Jacob narrative. The following are some of the interpretations on this passage. Since Robin Parry has done an excellent review of the previous works on Genesis 34, I rely heavily on his work and intend to summarize the main points of the same in this discussion.

2.1.1. Ethical and Moral Outcome Readings

2.1.1.1. Talmud and Other Jewish Literatures

The Talmudic reading of Genesis 34 proceeds from assumptions of the status of the women in the Israelite society and their relationship with the Gentiles. The episode was perceived as a punishment by God for undesirable behavior of Dinah and the undesirable relationship of Jacob with the Gentiles. The Talmud blames Dinah's whorish behavior (which she may have imitated from her mother Leah Gen. 30:16) and makes Dinah responsible for going out for the terrible consequence in her life. Rabbi Huniah describes that by having sexual relations with a Gentile, Dinah became a Canaanite, and then claims that later her brother married her as a Canaanite woman and had a child from her (Gen. 46:10; Parry 2004: 99).

The Talmud also interprets the episode as a punishment to Jacob because he failed to give Dinah in marriage to a circumcised man, so that God allowed her to have a sexual relation with an uncircumcised Gentile; thus "Jacob's pride was punished by his daughter's rape" (Parry 2004: 97). However Rabbi Berekhiah holds Dinah responsible for the result, because she exposed herself to the danger and justifies Jacob's silence as prudent and defends the action of Levi and Simeon as right because the Hivites were planning evil against the Israelites (Gen. 34:23; Parry 2004: 98). Thus Talmud describes the circumcision of Shechem as "circumcised from an unworthy motive" (Epstein 1936: 112).

The Book of Jubilees treats the Dinah story as relevant to the Genesis story in general and to the Jacob story in particular because it sets a model of prohibition of marriage relations between Israel and Gentiles. According to the Book of Jubilees the crime in the Dinah story is not rape, "but sex and marriage with a Gentile" (Charles 2001: 153-154; Parry 2004: 88).

Another non-canonical text, the 'Testament of Levi', presents a different perspective. In this testament the author retells the story of Genesis 34. The intention of the narrator or the aim of the author seems to clear Levi from any blame of massacring Shechemites. One can imagine why he is doing that. The narrator was aware that one of the mutually shared relevant accessible contextual assumptions of his readers about Levi is that he was the father of all the priests of the Israelites who were chosen by God. Logically, if God chose Levites for his service then their father Levi must be guiltless and right in his action and behavior. Therefore he should be cleared from the blame of killing the Shechemites.

Thus the Testament of Levi claims that it was Levi who initiated the idea of revenging for Dinah and he received the command of revenge from God in a vision. By doing this, in fact, God aimed to appoint and inaugurate Levi and his descendants as priests (Baarda 1992:20-73). The Testament of Levi implies that the "execution of vengeance upon Israel's enemies is likewise connected with the priesthood of Levi and his descendants" (Baarda 1992: 25). Thus God was directly involved in the vengeance, and therefore Levi is not to blame because he obeyed God.

The Testament of Levi also interprets the relevance of the Dinah story in terms of God's punishment against the Shechemites for their long recorded abuse against strangers, which also shows that God will eventually dispossess the Canaanites and will give the Land to Israelites (Parry 2004: 89).

Similarly Theodotus, a Hellenistic Jewish[64] author also attempts to clear Levi from the blame of massacre. He believes that it was Simeon who decided to kill Hamor and Shechem because Shechem refused to accept the crime of rape he committed against his sister, and then later he involved Levi. Thus it was Simeon who took the initiative of killing, and then he convinced Levi to be involved in the action (Baarda 1992: 18).

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[64] Whether he was a Jew or Samaritan is debated (Holladay 1989: 57ff)

The book of Judith interprets the deceit and revenge of the Levi and Simeon as justified action by God for the defense of Israel (Parry 2004: 90). Josephus interprets the tragedy to the Shechemites as an action inspired by God to prohibit the marriage relationship between the Israelites and Gentiles (Parry 2004: 91; Antiquity 1.21.1-2). Josephus also observes that the initiative taken by God to remind Jacob to fulfill his votive plea which he made in Bethel was connected to the tragedy of Dinah, but he failed to explain how the story was relevant to Jacob's narrative in general and to the votive narrative of Bethel in particular because he failed to read the Dinah story from the votive narrative point of view (Whiston 1998: 60; Parry 2004: 91).

Parry remarks that Philo the Jewish philosopher interprets the Dinah story allegorically as an individual's inner person: Virgin Dinah represents the soul of a person which in turn is incorruptible judgment and justice on its journey to God; Shechem, the son of Hamor, represents folly and irrationality; defiling the virgin Dinah represents those passion-loving fools who do not give rational attention to soul (virgin) because soul never intends doing wrong. Levi and Simon represent the vindicators of the suffering soul who will eradicate the folly and irrationality of the persons from the world so that the soul may be in her very virgin self (Parry 2004: 92-93). Thus he claims that Dinah (soul) was never defiled, rather it was the suffering of the unwilling of the soul to be influenced to do wrong by the attempt of the unsound sense of a person (Parry 2004: 93). Philo's interpretation was based on ethnocentrism in that he stereotypes, by implication, the Hivites as bad people while stereotyping the Israelites as good people. Apart from this allegorical interpretation Philo does not give an explanation about the relevance of the Dinah story to the Jacob Narrative.

2.1.1.2. Early Church Fathers

According to Parry the early church fathers (100 CE-1000 CE) did not make extensive use of this story except for drawing some specific ethical lessons out of the story. For example Tertullian interprets the zealous Levi and Simeon, who massacred the innocent Shechemites, as the prefiguring representatives of zealous Jews who killed Jesus (Parry 2004: 95). Ambrose condemns the massacre by Simeon and Levi and admires Jacob's prudence, temperance, and sound reasoning (Parry 2004: 95-96). Jerome warns parents to

keep their daughters at home or keep them from bad friends and company in order to avoid similar consequences (Parry 2004: 96). St. Gregory allegorically interprets Dinah as representing a person who is trapped by sin. Shechem represents the devil who, "after uniting himself with the sinning soul, deceives it so that it loses its sorrow and penitence", because a sinner who lost the sense of sorrow for the committed sin cannot repent (Parry 2004: 96).

2.1.1.3. *Mediaeval and Reformation Readings*
Mediaeval interpreters (1000 CE-1300 CE) and Reformers (1500 CE-1600 CE) approach Gen. 34 from the objective of unveiling the "inner life of the biblical characters" (Levine Autumn 2005: 334). Thus, in the artistic literary device of the Genesis 34, they search for the meaning of keeping one's self away from anything which may cause an evil desire and pride which will lead one into temptation and sin. Thus mediaeval and reformation interpreters focus on the evaluation of the behavior of the characters of the story rather than explaining the relevance of the Dinah story to the Jacob narrative. Mediaevals blame Dinah for being a cause of leading Shechem into sin and to the eventual consequence of the Shechem crisis. Accordingly they used her as an example and warning for women who knowingly or unknowingly provoke men for sexual temptation as Dinah did, which resulted in trouble to herself, her family and even her enemy Shechemites (Parry 2004: 99-102).

Martin Luther and Calvin blame Dinah for being a cause of the tragedy. Luther notes that Dinah's sin is her curiosity which led her to go around without her parents' permission eventually leading Shechem into temptation. Shechem's sin was that he was a spoiled son of a rich man who thinks that everything is permitted and who lost his conscience for honorable behavior. Thus he defiled the daughter of a noble man, Jacob. According to Luther, the worst thing about Shechem was that he did not repent of his sin, so he deserves punishment. Shechem's father Hamor, too, deserves the punishment because first, he did not bring up his son in a godly manner; secondly he did not correct and rebuke his son for his sin; thirdly, he did not apologize to the Israelites, mainly because he was proud; fourthly, he lied to his people to convince them to agree with the

crime such that they eventually agreed and they too punished with him and his son (Parry 2004: 104-5).

Luther evaluates Jacob as a model for faithful saints because of his patience, godliness, and trust in the Lord despite the heartbreaking circumstances he experienced. Reformers, including Luther, observe that Jacob's silence when he heard the bad news of Dina's tragedy was: 1. because he was obsessed with deep sorrow; 2. He was wondering what happened to the promise of God to protect him (Pelikan 1970: 187-220; Calvin 218-229; Parry 2004: 104).

Luther comments that Levi and Simeon are justified for their revenge against the Shechemites because they did what God wanted them to do with the Shechemites for their sin. However he makes them responsible for committing such a cruel execution of vengeance (Pelikan 1970: 210). He notes that Jacob was angry with Simeon and Levi for the same reason, because they did beyond what they should have done; thus they acted unjustly (Pelikan 1970: 211).

Luther believes that this tragedy was allowed to happen by God, because believes that nothing would happen to Jacob without God's permission. In this particular case God did not want to protect Jacob from the tragedy because he allowed this trial happen to Jacob in order to use it as a means to punish the Shechemites because they refused to repent (Pelikan 1970: 211-214).

Calvin also has a similar understanding about this story. He gives more focus to evaluating the behavior of Simeon and Levi than to the other characters of the story. Except for Jacob, he evaluates all of them as accountable for the tragedy. He makes Dinah responsible for moving around without her parents' permission, which led Shechem into temptation (Parry 2004: 106-107). On the other hand he perceives Shechem as one who had a sincere love and attraction to Dinah but he holds him responsible for his lack of self control (Parry 2004: 107). However, he commends Shechem for coming to his senses and making an effort to redeem the situation; yet he condemns the evil motive behind the decision to accept the circumcision rite of the Israelites (Parry 2004: 107-108). He also condemns the cruelty and massacre by Simeon and Levi against their hospitable friends in a peaceful time. Due to their anger, they lost any sense of concern about the danger of imminent revenge of the Canaanites against

their family (Parry 2004: 108). In this regard he observes that the narrative representation was organized in such a way as to influence the readers to have sympathy for the Shechemites and dislike to the behavior of Simeon and Levi (Parry 2004: 107-8).

Just like their predecessor, post-reformation commentators (1600-1800 and beyond) also focus on evaluating the characters of the narrative rather than explaining the relevance of the Dinah story to the Jacob narrative. On the one hand Bishop Babington holds Dinah and Shechem responsible for the tragedy. He concludes that both Dinah and Shechem rightly suffered the consequence of their sins, because no one will go without being punished for the sins they commit. However he disapproves of the irrational cruelty of the children of Jacob. On the other hand, Mathew Henry strongly condemns the cruel massacre by Simeon and Levi, and holds Dinah responsible for being a cause for the temptation of Shechem and for exposing herself to the tragedy (Parry 2004: 109-10).

2.1.1.4. Literary Readings

The above discussion shows that there are different possible interpretations depending on the assumptions one may bring to a character evaluation of the story. However there are some biblical scholars who attempted to explain the relevance of the Dinah story to Jacob narrative, but they have different views. We will look at only a few examples in this discussion.

Walter Brueggemann argues that Genesis 33:18-34:31 has "no relationship with anything before or after" (Brueggemann 1982: 274). On the contrary, Brisman perceives the Dinah story as connected to the Jacob story because it turns "from the story of Jacob in his own generation to those of Dinah and Joseph, Jacob's children" (Brisman 1990: 92). Consequently he describes the Dinah story as a strong nationalistic reaction of Jacob's children to their father's dangerous compromising behavior to the Shechemites' deceitful conduct. They reacted to his compromising behavior because the Shechemites' strategy of making ethnic relationship by marriage would have resulted in the assimilation of the chosen people of God, which would eventually lead to their possible extinction (Brisman 1990: 92-98). In Brisman's words "To a nationalistic ear, this cry of 'peace!' is no peace but the threat of assimilation" (Brisman 1990: 94).

Wenham remarks that it is difficult to describe the relevance of the Dinah story to Jacob story, nor is it easy to pinpoint the point of view of the narrator about the event (Wenham 1994: 308; Wenham 2000: 110). However, Wenham argues that the Dinah story is relevant to Jacob narrative and attempts to substantiate this view by supplying some textual evidence from the Jacob narrative. For example, he notes that Jacob, after he enjoyed "God's protection in Mesopotamia, gained descendants, and bought land in Canaan, but has not quite reached his destination in Bethel", where he will fulfill his vow as mentioned in 35:1-15. Jacob was still on the move to his prospective destination, Bethel, when he was interrupted and threatened to be destroyed because of the Dinah tragedy (Wenham 1994: 300). Thus he observes that the rape of Dinah and the revenge of her brothers was not the end of the story; rather they are the cause of a dangerous situation for Jacob and his family which eventually forced him to proceed to Bethel though he admits that it is difficult to pin down the specific relation of the Dinah story to the theme of Genesis in general and to the Jacob story in particular. He lists some of the intratextual evidences of Genesis which show its relevance:

1. The story occurred in Canaan which shows Jacob's return to Canaan.
2. It is connected to the story of marriage relationship of Jacob and Leah who bore him six sons and one daughter.
3. It signifies the issue that Jacob was not fond of Leah and her children and that he was less concern about their humiliation. Probably this caused the emotional reaction of Simeon and Levi against the Shechemites.
4. Dinah's mention in 30:21 anticipates the story of 34.
5. The necessity of circumcision of Shechemites was connected to the command of circumcision in Gen. 17.
6. The usual style of the Genesis narrative of closing an episode or a narrative unit by providing a preview for the next chapter was exhibited in 33:18-20 which is a functional trailer for chapter 34.
7. Gen 35:1-5 presupposes the preceding story presented in chapter 34 about the possible revenge of the enraged Canaanites for the murder of the Shechemites (Wenham 1994: 308-309; Parry 2004: 130).

Then he draws the moral teaching of the story as one intended to ban the intermarriage relationship between the people of Yahweh and pagans (Wenham 1994: 319; Wenham 2000: 117, 118).

Meir Sternberg in his literary analysis proposes that the author of the Dinah episode evaluated the action and the actors of the episode by the standards of legislation about the Israelites' social relation to others which strictly prohibits any exogamous marriage relation. He believes that the Biblical narrators in their representation interact with inter-textual contexts and other social and institutional contexts of ther audience in order to influence/persuade them to their point of view (Sternberg 1985: 444-445; Sternberg 1992: 483). For example, he suggests that presumably the narrator of the Dinah story represented this episode in the context of Deuteronomy 7:1-4 which commands the Israelites not to make any covenant with Canaanites, not to show any mercy to them, and not to make marriage with them when they enter into Canaan (Sternberg 1992: 483). How did Simeon and Levi know about the doctrine of Deuteronomy? Sternberg suggests that probably such tradition was going on about such prohibition prior to legislating it in Deuteronomy (Sternberg 1992: 483ff). So Sternberg proposes that the narrator was sympathetic with Simeon and Levi and he considers them as heroes for defending this religious legislation, at every cost no matter what (Sternberg 1985: 455, 472, 474-475). He further remarks that Simeon and Levi received the divine protection (which is represented in chapter 35:5) for "doing right in keeping the prohibition" of exogamous marriage (Sternberg 1992: 483). But he fails to explain the relevance of God's utterance: "God said to Jacob, 'Arise, go up to Bethel, and settle there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau'" which in fact the narrator strategically represented in 35:1 between the crisis and the resuming of God's protection.

Sternberg argues that the narrator denounced Jacob as an 'indifferent parent' and a coward who failed to fight against the exogamous marriage attempt (Sternberg 1985: 474), Shechem as 'rapist criminal', and again Shechem and his father Hamor as suitors who approached Dinah's marriage affair as a business and commercial transaction (but it was ruled out by the Dinah's family) (Sternberg 1985: 456). However, he admits that the narrator never make such judgment explicitly in his own words: "The dilemma raised by

the story is so complex and each choice so problematic that he cannot fully identify with any of the positions taken" (Sternberg 1985: 475).

A recent thorough and inspiring work on the Dinah story is Parry's monograph. Parry summarizes different interpretations of the Dinah story, which are based on character evaluation, before he gives his own view. He observes that on the one hand many scholars read it in the favor of Simeon and Levi. They suspect the genuineness of Shechem and his father Hamor when they approached Jacob and his children to negotiate for the marriage of Dinah. They blame Shechem for the action of rape before the negotiation. They also suspect the dubious intention of Hamor and Shechem in their speech to the Hivites (Gen 34:20-24) which would encourage them to claim the possession of the Israelites if they were not destroyed by the Israelites (Parry 2004: 117). Thus they justify the crime of Levi and Simeon as if they were forced by the Shechemites to commit such a horrendous crime which was even condemned by their own father Jacob (Gen. 49:6-7. Many scholars also condemn Jacob for not being sympathetic to his daughter (Parry 2004: 118). They perceive him as a unsympathetic father who does not care for his humiliated daughter (Parry 2004: 118).

On the other hand many scholars observe that the narrator is positive toward Shechem. He shows that Dinah's father Jacob showed favor to Shechem out of a sense of responsibility for his family and their safety (Parry 2004: 118). The narrator also portrays Dinah as wronged by Shechem but as persuaded and eventually convinced by him, and as sseing marriage as the only way forward (Parry 2004: 118). Generally, Shechem, Hamor, and the people of Shechem were portrayed as innocent people who were sincere in their marriage negotiation but who were deceived by the children of Jacob. The narrator presents the sons of Jacob as angry savage figures who killed the innocent Hivites and plundered their property and who took Dinah from Shechem's house against her will (Parry 2004: 118). He does not present them as acting wisely, rather he portrays them as complicating matters for Jacob and his family, which might have led to the complete destruction of the promised seed by the imminent revenge of Canaanites. They made Jacob miserable.

After summarizing other literary readings of the Dinah story Parry gives his own view about the relevance of the Dinah story to Jacob narrative. He comments that as

Abraham moved from Shechem to Bethel, Jacob was also to move from Shechem to Bethel as presented in chapter 35, but this was interrupted by the Dinah tragedy. In his words "Chapter 34 is a rude and dramatic interruption in this predictable ending. The divine promise is suddenly thrown into jeopardy yet again" (Parry 2004: 135). Though he falls short of reading the Dinah story from the votive narrative perspective, he believes that Dinah story is an integral and congruent part of the Jacob story, but he holds that it is incorporated in Jacob narrative to show the issue of "exogamy and its implications for the divine promise of descendants and land inheritance" (Parry 2004: 136).

As we discussed above many scholars consider that the tragic confrontation between the Shechemites and Israelites was the result of rejecting assimilation with pagans (Brisman 1990: 94; Wenham 1994: 319; 2000: 118; Parry 2004: 136). However, some biblical scholars such as Candlish, Strahan, and Pink observe a literary connection between Gen chapters 33 and 34. Accordingly they perceive the event of chapter 34 as a tragedy which happened to Jacob because God's protection for Jacob was breached at that time as a punishment of God. Consequently Jacob suffered divine retribution, which ruined his only daughter Dinah and which also further escalated to a threat of revenge by the Canaanites. They believe that Jacob incurred this adverse consequence because of three possible reasons:

1. Because of Jacob's unbelief and disobedience (because he did not believe God's promise to give him the land, he bought piece of it from the children of Hamor in Shechem) (Pink 1922: 300). In addition Pink observes that probably God was not pleased with Jacob when he built the altar in Shechem, as his utterance in 35:1: "Go to Bethel and build an altar for me…" indicates. Thus, Pink, though he does not explain why the crisis of Gen 34 happened, correctly observes that this utterance of God has a very significant contextual implication: God was not happy with the altar Jacob built in Shechem rather than building it in Bethel (Pink 1922: 301).

2. Robert S. Candlish presumes that the adverse consequence of the Dinah story of Gen 34 to Jacob resulted from his heart not being quite right with God. This behavior of Jacob manifested when he stopped in Shechem at the border of Canaan (Gen 33:17-20) rather than proceeding to Bethel to fulfill his vow

according to the preface of God's word in 31:13. Thus he neglected or delayed to pay his vow in Bethel and he built the altar in Shechem rather than building it in Bethel. It was in Bethel where the "hallowed stone of which he had vowed that it was to be 'God's house" was not in Shechem (Candlish 1979: 563-565). He further notes that Jacob's naming God as "God of Israel" rather than "God of Bethel" also shows that Jacob's personal religious faithfulness to God was not right at that particular time (Candlish 1979: 565-566). Hence, since his faith to God was falling away he was not able to discipline his family well, so that Dinah went out to see the daughters of the land rather than staying at home as a "discrete and chaste" girl, consequently exposing herself to the temptation (Candlish 1979: 566-567).

3. The tragedy of the Dinah story happened to Jacob because he was associated with pagans (Strahan 1982: 263).

We will investigate the content of these three claims further from the votive narrative perspective and from the institution of vow in my close reading of the Dinah story in section 3 of this chapter.

2.2. Source Criticism Readings

Most of the 19th-20th century scholars approach the reading of the Dinah story mainly from the perspective of identifying different sources and interpreting it accordingly. Consequently they propose source A (Shechem variant) which was ascribed to J; source B (Hamor variant) which is ascribed to E; and the final redaction to combine them (Alders 1981: 153-154; Gunkel 1997: 362). According to source A, which is held to be much older than source B, Shechem abducted Dinah then fell in love with her. He reassured Dinah that he loves her and then he takes the initiative of negotiation with her family. But according to source B, Shechem raped her but did not abduct her and take her to his house. Otherwise why did the brothers say "we will take our daughter and move away?" (v.17). Then he loved her and he pleaded with his father to negotiate for him to marry Dinah.

The Hamor variant approves the punishment for the crime of rape (Parry 2004: 114). On the contrary the Shechem variant opposes the crime of massacre and predicts

the imminent future punishment of the two tribes of Simeon and Levi (Gunkel 1997: 361; Parry 2004: 114; Gen 49:5-7). The redactor combined these two variants in order to fit his ideological agenda and produced the final story (Skinner 1980: 417-422; Westermann 1985: 544; Gunkel 1997: 358-362; Parry 2004: 110-115). Unlike other Patriarchal and Israelite stories, the Shechemites' innocence was positively evaluated in this story (Gunkel 1997: 361) while the deceitful and treacherous behavior of Dinah's brothers was criticized.

It is not my interest to pursue further on the source criticism approach in this discussion, because, as Parry remarks, it contradicts with the assumption of considering the text as a coherent narrative unit and it will make the text unstable data (Parry 2004: 115-116). Besides, the source criticism does not prove the existence of its hypothetical source documents. Therefore I continue with my synchronic approach without being distracted by the diachronic approach and focus on analyzing the final form of the text as it is presented in the Hebrew Scripture.

2.3. Social Scientific Readings

1.3.1. Feminist Readings

Feminist interpretation approaches the Dinah story from a particular ideological perspective. Feminist hermeneutics can be described as cultural hermeneutics which evaluates and describes life-affirming (not harmful) and life-denying (harmful) cultural practice to women in order to absorb the life-affirming practice and challenge the life-denying practice. Thus, feminists read the biblical stories with suspicion and examine them to detect and expose whether they are oppressive and damaging to the women in terms of depriving them of comprehensive human rights (Blyth 2008: 26). Hence feminist hermeneutics of suspicion challenges the view of the normative value of every scriptural text associating it with patriarchal culture (Leeb 2008: 115; Blyth 2008: 8). Consequently, it reads the Bible through the eyes of the ancient Hebrew culture and sees the ancient Hebrew culture through the eyes of the Bible. Accordingly, it claims that, as it is depicted through several biblical narratives, including Dinah's story, biblical culture is a male dominant androcentric culture (Blyth 2008: 3ff). In Parry's words the feminists

"consider the text of the Bible to be both patriarchal and androcentric and thus potentially harmful to women" (Parry 2004: 218). Therefore the Bible needs to be liberated both from the patriarchal prejudice of reflecting male dominance and from the existing biblical interpretation regarding women (Parry 2004: 220).

Feminist interpretation of the Dinah story shows that ideology plays a critical role in biblical interpretation. Feminist theology argues that the marriage negotiation of the Dinah story shows that the ancient Israelite culture was patriarchal and androcentric because Dinah was treated as an object. She was the voiceless victim because the discussion took place between the males to exchange the object-female (Dinah) for the objects of economics to give her to the subject-male (Shechem). Her consent was never considered. That was a disgrace for women (Parry 2004: 227)

Danna Nolan Fewell and David Gunn reject the argument of Meir Sternberg (see section 2.1.1.4) from the feminist point of view (Fewell & Gunn 1991: 194-211). As I already summarized above, Sternberg, based on the narrative analysis, suggests that the narrator of Dinah episode evaluates both the action of Shechem and the action of Simeon and Levi in the light of the later books of law. He believes that the narrator is sympathetic with Simeon and Levi and so he attempts to justify their action and considers them as heroes (Sternberg 1985: 446, 472) while denouncing Shechem and Hamor as criminals, and criticizing Jacob as an indifferent parent and coward.

On the contrary Fewell and Gunn blame both Shechem and Dinah's brothers, Simeon and Levi. However they are sympathetic with Shechem arguing that though he was a criminal for raping Dinah, he took steps to marry her as restitution, and Dinah agreed. Sternberg describes the character of Dinah as a helpless victim who needed to be rescued by her brothers. However Fewell and Gunn argue that "she could have made her own choice" but her voice was denied by the dominant males (Fewell and Gunn 1991: 211). Unlike Sternberg, they are also sympathetic with Jacob and Hamor because they tried to make "the best of the flawed world" in order to resolve the matter peacefully. They note that it is dangerous to advocate a woman to marry her rapist, but that was the best choice for her in that particular cultural context; Shechem's house is the best place for her to stay (Fewell 1991: 210, 221). However, they argue that the brothers never express the interest of their sister, but only their own interest. When Shechem took her it

was against her will, and now when her brothers took her, again it was against her will. She has no voice in both cases because the dominant men did not allow her to have a voice in her own case (Fewell 1991: 211). Her brothers were so much more concerned about their honor than Dinah that they killed her reformed fiancée and took her away against her will. They did not see her choice because of male superiority; they consider her as a helpless and powerless weak person who needed to be rescued (Parry 2004: 225).

Sternberg viciously responds to Fewell and Gunn's criticism of his interpretation in his 1992 article (Sternberg 1992: 463-488) in which he reaffirms his previous interpretation by elaborating the deuteronomic doctrinal context of the narrator's point of view. He asserts that the biblical narrators' presentations have a bearing of their view of moral value of their audience. He argues that there is no androcentric ideological interest manifested in the narrative representation of Dinah episode. The reason why the narrator did not include Dinah's voice in his representation is because "it would disturb the tale's focus of interest" (Sternberg 1992: 480). Thus Sternberg explains Dinah's voicelessness in the episode from the perspective of narrator's mental and linguistic representation of the discourse, the socio-cultural code of antiquity, and the strict doctrinal objection of the Scriptural legislation to exogamous marriage (Sternberg 1992: 481). He remarks that the scriptural reason "pushes to the limit of absolute veto regarding" the marriage relationship with the Canaanites. Thus Dinah's voice or voicelessness in the episode does not affect the uncompromising doctrinal judgment against the proposed marriage relation between Hivites and Israelites. Therefore, including Dinah's voice in the episode is irrelevant for the narrator (Sternberg 1992: 481).

Some feminists reject this sympathetic sentiment of Fewel and Gunn for Shechem (Parry 2004: 226) arguing the story should be read from the perspective of the victim (Dinah), not from the perspective of the powerful (Shechem). They does not recognize the view that the narrator had a neutral position in that though he makes Shechem responsible for the rape he consolidates him by presenting him as one working for restitution. They allege that this view supports the sentiment that "love can make rape" and it is "not so bad" (Parry 2004: 225). They interpret the narrator's presentation in verse 3: "And his soul was drawn to Dinah daughter of Jacob; he loved the girl, and

spoke tenderly to her" (Gen. 34:3) as an attempt to calm Dinah because she refused to consent, not a genuine love (Parry 2004: 226).

In conclusion the feminist interpretation of the Dinah story reads the narrative from the feminist ideological perspective and challenges interpretations which make Dinah responsible for the massacre or tragedy by attributing to her the cause of the problem because she took the liberty of moving around in such a dangerous place. The purpose of the feminist hermeneutical approach to Gen. 34 is to make the lost voice of Dinah heard in order to restore her honor, thus making the story gynocentric (Blyth 2008: 9, 14). But surely all readings, including feminist readings of the Bible, should be submissive to the narrator's point of view and listen to it carefully.

2.3.2. Social Anthropological Readings

Social anthropology reads the Dinah story from the perspective of endogamy and exogamy as well as shame and honor in social groups. It assumes that originally Israelites were exogamous people. When they were Bedouins/nomads the Israelite women were given to foreigners. Even in some cases when the Israelites seek refuge with a sedentary people who are usually politically more powerful, they used to give their women to their host as well as to more powerful neighboring people as part of sexual hospitality (Parry 2004: 119-120). Social anthropology perceives the crisis of the Dinah story as part of the shift of the Israelites' marriage custom from exogamous practice to endogamous marriage practice when they started becoming sedentary from nomadic life. The Dinah story happened in the endogamous context. Israelites considered Dinah's marriage to Shechem as one which will destroy "lineage solidarity and deprive a member of the Terahite line of a potential wife" (Steinberg 1993: 110). Steinberg remarks that since Jacob consented to exogamous marriage during the negotiation he is responsible for bringing strife to the family (Steinberg 1993: 110). However she observes that Jacob's children objected to the matter for "reasons relating to family honor; family honor appears linked to control of the sexuality of women" (Steinberg 1993: 110). Thus when Shechem dishonored Dinah, he actually dishonored the entire family. Hence, particularly the honor of the men, whose honor and power is related to the control of the sexuality of their community's women, was threatened (Steinberg 1993: 111; of Bechtel 1994: 33).

She notes that anthropological study shows that men who cannot control and defend the sexuality of their community's women "are also thought to be unable to defend themselves against attacks from outsiders" (Steinberg 1993: 111). Thus Shechem's sexual violation of Dinah was a shameful act against the children of Jacob. Levi and Simeon took the action of revenge in order to restore their honor by proving that they have power to defend themselves and to protect the sexuality of their women (Steinberg 1993: 111). Bechtel puts it nicely:

> The reaction people had to being shamed was to take revenge or save face. This need for revenge suggests that their pride had been violated by their shaming. Revenge would restore pride by reversing the position of those of involved (Bechtel 1991: 76).

Thus, Bechtel in her anthropological reading of Gen. 34 argues that the Dinah story must be read from a group-oriented society[65] perspective. Based on this assumption she claims that "Dinah was not actually raped but consented to Shechem's sexual advance" (Bechtel 1994: 19-31). She objects that most interpretations of this narrative are based on grid/individual-orientation. Bechtel suggests that Dinah should be understood as a member of a group-oriented society, who behaved like an individual-oriented person when she transgressed the community's boundary by going against the community's custom/norm of sanction about shame when she had sex with Shechem who was outside of her group. Dinah lost her sexual power, which keeps the existence of her community, to an uncircumcised outsider. Thus she brought shame on her community (Bechtel 1994: 32).

Bechtel evaluates Jacob, Shechem, Dinah, and Hamor as good models who were open and willing to negotiate and compromise their group values in order to create a bonding and peace between the two ethnic groups. She argues that the story presents Jacob and Hamor as the heros of the story because they are models for tolerance and flexibility in order to create peace between the two groups. She argues that, on the contrary, the story presents Simeon and Levi as those who negatively stereotype the

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[65] Grid-orientation claims that the main source of identity of the people "comes from within the individual's self". Thus individuality is greatly valued. Such society internalizes the grid in the conscience of the people in order to control the behavior of the people. On the contrary, in the group-oriented society, the main source of identity of the people comes from the consciousness of belonging to the strongly bonded group. In such a society the use of sanction of shame to control the behavior of the people is common. However Bechtel suggests that there is no society that is purely grid-oriented or purely group-oriented (Bechtel 1991: 51-52).

outsiders. They have a militant attitude toward the outside groups, so that they were threatened by the outsiders through what happened to Dinah. Thus they decided to take revenge on all the Shechemites, because they perceived it as a group crime, in order to restore their own group's honor. But they acted foolishly because they did it independently without involving their father and that they failed to see the danger which their action would bring against the whole community. Based on this argument Bechtel argues that this story was intended to challenge their militant attitude, which is the moral lesson of the story (Parry 2004: 121).

Similarly Pieter M. Venter (Venter 2009) employs a triadic construct method, using inter-related concepts: progeny or heirship, marriage, and ownership of land in Genesis 34; and law, identity, and marriage in Jubilee 30 in order to explain the ethical message of the Dinah story. He compares the narrative presentation of the story of both Genesis and Jubilee and then he draws a conclusion that the intended moral impact which was propagated by the Jubilee was maintaining the purified ethnic identity of the contemporary Jews. Hence he uses the triads in negative term such as avoiding intermarriage with any outsiders (Venter : 6). Thus he argues that the identity of Israel was expressed by a triad of interrelated concepts (Venter : 20) and therefore the Dinah story deals with the identity of Israel.

2.4. Summary

The review above shows that on the one hand different readings of the Dinah story are mainly aimed to draw a moral lesson of the story by evaluating the characters of the story and their behavior. The conclusion of the evaluation of the characters' behavior differs depending on the starting assumptions one may have. Some scholars hold a character responsible for the crisis while other scholars view the same character as innocent. For example some scholars perceive Dinah as a cause of the crisis while some scholars perceive her as an innocent victim. Some scholars perceive Shechem as an innocent young man who wanted to redeem his mistake by paying Dinah's family abundant dowry and by marrying Dinah while others perceive him as undisciplined wild young man. Some evaluate Jacob as a wise character who gave priority to peace, while others evaluate him as unsympathetic father who failed to care for his own daughter and for the

family honor. Some evaluate Hamor, the father of Shechem, as an innocent man who negotiated for peace and for the bonding of two groups while others evaluate him as a selfish deceiver who wanted to manipulate negotiation for material gain. Some evaluate Simeon and Levi as foolish, brutal, militant persons of the family while others evaluate them as heroes who fought for innocent Dinah, to protect the blood of the chosen line of Israel from contamination and possible assimilation and to restore the honor of the family (see Parry 2004: 122).

On the other hand many scholars have observed that the story of Dinah does not intend to blame Shechem, or Dinah, or Jacob, or Simeon and Levi, or Hamor. In Bechtel's words the "story contains contradictions, ironies, paradoxes and ambiguities that they raise a question: Does the story really intend to indicate that Dinah is raped?" (Bechtel 1994: 20). Parry correctly observes that reading the Dinah story from the perspective of character evaluation in order to draw a moral lesson has an apparent problem because every reading varies depending on the assumptions one may have (Parry 2004: 122). Therefore we should question whether the narrator intended to evaluate the characters of the narrative of Gen 34? Since such a claim has not been established by strong ostensive textual evidence so far I will endeavor to investigate the Dinah story further in the following discussion in order to explain and establish the narrator's point of view by substantiating it with the ostensive textual evidence provided within the story.

3. Close Reading of the Dinah Story (Gen. 34:1-35:15)

3.1. Examining the Hadiyya Marriage Institution for the Reading of the Dinah story

As the above review shows the Dinah story of Genesis 34 can be read from different perspectives some of which are not directly relevant to my discussion in this dissertation. My specific interest regarding the Dinah story concerns describing its relevance to the Jacob narrative as the thesis of this dissertation claims. Therefore my argument in this chapter will focus mainly on explaining the relevance of the Dinah story to the Jacob narrative. However, I also intend to discuss on the issue of whether Dinah was raped very briefly.

I would like to remark from the outset that my reading of the Dinah's story in the light of the Hadiyya culture shows that what happened to Dinah was an abductive marriage, not rape, as many scholars have thought. Thus, this reading prompted me to employ a new approach to the reading of the Dinah story. That is, before the actual analysis of the Dinah story, I thought it would be informative to do a brief research of the Hadiyya community marriage customs in order to gather empirical data. Then I read the Dinah story to some of the community members in order to observe empirically, whether they would think that Shechem raped Dinah or attempted to marry her by abduction. I believe the results of this research will throw some light on the reading of Genesis 34 (but not to influence it) because of the Hadiyya people's diverse ways of fulfilling the marriage institution. Thus, this empirical research will be relevant to the later discussion in this chapter.

Besides proposing this new reading to the Dinah story, particularly regarding the sexual violence she experienced, I also wish to show how Shechem's attempted abductive marriage turned into a threat to the very existence of the chosen line of God's people because of the adverse consequence of Jacob's unfulfilled vow of Bethel, thus proving that Dinah story is a congruent part of Jacob's votive narrative.

3.1.1. Marriage and Rape among the Hadiyya People

There are six ways of fulfilling the marriage institution among the Hadiyya people and most of these types of marriage practice are widespread among African cultures.

3.1.1.1. *Marriage by Wedding* ladiisimma[66]

According to the Hadiyya marriage institution, marriage by wedding is the default, desirable, and honorable for both the couple and the family. According to the Hadiyya tradition, a young man used to take an initiative of marrying a girl whom he never met. In such case the young man and one of his best friends will come to the girl's house in order to see her beauty and her general demeanor. However if he already knows the girl this

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[66] The term *ladiisimma*, literally 'putting a skirt on a lady', denotes the action of giving a girl away for marriage. When they talk about a man marrying a women they say *meento eebaako* which means 'he has brought women'. This is because in Hadiyya marriage tradition women leave their family and join their husband's family.

procedure is not needed. If the boy is happy with the girl then he will ask his father to go and negotiate for him to marry the girl because the consent of the boy and his family, and the consent of the girl and her family before the marriage is very essential. Once all the concerned parties are agreed, the boy's family will give gifts to the girl and her family and then the boy's family will make a request to set the date of the wedding. The wedding day will be proposed usually by the family of the boy on which the marriage ceremony will be accomplished. Since all the traditional formal marriage procedures are fulfilled in marriage by wedding, it is considered as a default, desirable, and honorable for the nuclear family as well as for the extended family.

3.1.1.2. *Levirate Marriage* **lago gassimma**

This type of marriage usually occurs between brother-in-law and sister-in-law. This happens when a woman's husband dies and the family of the deceased wants to keep the widow within the family. Thus the family will force the brother-in-law to marry her. It also depends whether the woman is willing to accept her brother-in-law as a husband or not.

3.1.1.3. *Sororate Marriage (not lexicalized)*

Sororate marriage concerns the provision of a dead wife's sister or very close relative as a new wife for a surviving husband**.** Sororate marriage in the Hadiyya community is not a required norm, but it is commonly practiced marriage if it is consented by both the family of the diceased women and the family of the widower, by the sororate woman, and by the widower. The substitute woman must be a sister of the deceased women or her close relative. The main reason of providing a substitute is to take care of the children of the deceased woman. But sometimes a substitute woman is given even to a widower who did not have a child from his deceased wife, in order to maintain the family relationship.

3.1.1.4. Cohabitation[67]

Such marriage occurs between a widow and a man, usually one who has another wife. In the Hadiyya marriage tradition, usually, the woman leaves her family or her home and goes to the home or family of her husband in marriage. But in this particular case the man comes to the home of the widowed women when she consents to welcome him and starts living with her. Usually this kind of marriage is done without any formal family or community approval, thus it is not binding. Therefore if the woman is not happy with the man she may send him out of her house without any formal family or community approval or if the man is not happy with the woman he may leave her house and go without any formal family or community approval.

3.1.1.5. Marriage by Eloping **heerancha**

According to this tradition a boy and a girl who love one another make arrangement secretly and the girl will disappear with her lover. Thus, elopement is strictly consensual, and even an engaged girl can elope. Once the girl has eloped a messenger will then be sent to the girl's family to inform them that the girl is with them (with the family of the man) that they should not look for her (in some Hadiyya dialects, they say metaphorically "the heifer is with us; so do not look for it!"). Formal negotiation will follow then in order to give gifts to the parents of the girl so that they will endorse the marriage. The process may take a shorter or longer time depending on different reasons. Though this type of marriage is not considered as honorable, it is a well-accepted way of marriage among the Hadiyya people.

3.1.1.6. Marriage by Abduction **'gosimma'**

Abductive marriage is widely practiced among the Hadiyya people. The particular nature of this practice is that it is violent, so that some girls may even lose their lives in an attempt to refuse, and it may spark a fight between different groups because the Hadiyya people are a shame/honor conscious community. Thus, since the Hadiyya people are

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[67] Not lexicalized, rather it is described by a pragmatic clause …aagaako 'he has entered in to…', which manifests a man's coming to live with a widow for a marriage relationship.

exogamous community, shaming and restoring the threatened group honor is very serious matter, because abductive marriage is very humiliating for the girl and her family.

According to this tradition the man who intends to marry a girl by abduction first spies out the scene and then kidnaps and abducts the girl with the help of his friends for the purpose of marriage. He then takes her to a hiding place (usually with another family), and has a sexual intercourse with her by force right away, and makes sure that her family will not find the place where he hides her at least for one week to a month, depending on the seriousness of the reaction of the girl's family. In the mean time the man does his best to convince the girl to consent to marry him. And then the family of the man will plead with the family of the girl so that they will let their son marry their daughter.

Abductive marriage can sometimes be aborted in several cases. However it will be endorsed in most cases, depending on different reasons. Sometimes it may provoke a serious fight between the two families, especially if the girl's family is very proud of their status in the community, which will make them very aggressive to restore their threatened honor. In such case the family of the girl will feel humiliated and dishonored so that they will do whatever they can in order to abort the marriage and bring the girl back home (see Appendix 6 for some real-life examples of abductive marriage among the Hadiyya people).

3.1.1.7. Rape

Though rape apparently occurs among the Hadiyya people this behavior is not lexicalized so far, and it is always concealed. A rapist always attempts to maintain anonymity. Rape is perceived as a sexual attack on women by men, only to satisfy their sexual appetite. Usually rape is committed by individuals—group rape is not known among the Hadiyya people. The attacker never keeps the woman with him in his house or in any other place. If he does and if the victim is a girl then it is perceived as an abductive marriage *gosimma*; never as a rape.

3.1.2. Interview with the Hadiyya Community Members

The research method I employed in order to explore this matter was simple: first I summarized the Dinah story (see appendix 4) and then I read the summary to the Hadiyya audience and ask them what has happened to Dinah according to the story: whether she was raped or it was an abductive marriage.

All participants unanimously said *"ooki gosimma"*, which mean 'that is an abductive marriage.' I asked them "Why?" They responded by saying it is evident that he took the girl and kept her with him and he is negotiating with the girl's family for marriage. Probably the boy abducted the girl because he knew that they will not let him marry her or she refused to marry him. So first he had to marry the girl by abduction and then negotiate.

Regarding my question why it is not a rape, all participants unanimously responded that it is not a rape, because if it were a rape then he wouldn't keep the girl with him or initiate the negotiation for marriage. Rather he would do it in secret and then disappear. He wouldn't behave like this. This answer was not a surprise to me because I already expected that the Hadiyya people, with their practical knowledge about different types of fulfilling the marriage institution of the community, will think that what Shechem did to Dinah was an abductive marriage and not a rape.

This response clearly shows that there is more possibility of interpreting the Dinah story in terms of the abductive marriage than rape as it has been usually interpreted. Now informed by the evidence of this empirical data let us move on to investigating the episode itself from the narrator's point of view in order to prove the above two hypotheses: 1) Shechem attempted abductive marriage to Dinah; 2) the episode is represented as the adverse consequence of the unfulfilled vow of Jacob.

3.2. Reading the Dinah Story in the Light of the Hadiyya Culture

Now let us turn to the reading and analyzing the Dinah story in the light of the above brief description of the diverse Hadiyya ways of fulfilling the marriage institution. I suggest that reading the Dinah story with the Hadiyya contextual assumption about the diverse ways of fulfilling the marriage institution in mind will throw some light for a better understanding of the story.

3.2.1. Narrative Structure and Interpretation of Gen. 34:1-35:15

3.2.1.1. Setting (34:1-2a)

וַתֵּצֵא דִינָה בַּת־לֵאָה אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה לְיַעֲקֹב לִרְאוֹת בִּבְנוֹת הָאָרֶץ: וַיַּרְא אֹתָהּ שְׁכֶם בֶּן־חֲמוֹר הַחִוִּי נְשִׂיא הָאָרֶץ

> *Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to visit the women of the region. And Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the region, saw her (Gen 34:1-2a).*

This section of the text could be understood as the setting of the narrative. The narrator introduces the situation, the participants—daughters of the land, Dinah and Shechem, and the geographical location where the narrative event-line takes place. Both Dinah and Shechem are formally introduced to the narrative. At this juncture it is worth noting that Jacob who is the thematic participant of the votive narrative (28:10-35:15) is included in the participant introduction as Dinah's father in both mentions of Dinah and Shechem (1-3a).

Parry suggests that the expression about Dinah's going out to see the daughters of the land (Gen 34:1 וַתֵּצֵא דִינָה בַּת־לֵאָה אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה לְיַעֲקֹב לִרְאוֹת בִּבְנוֹת הָאָרֶץ:) has the implication of drawing our attention "to the issue of exogamy" (Parry 2004: 136). However, I see it simply as part of the setting which introduces the situation of the event (Blyth 2008: 189) because it need have no implicatures beyond those implied for friendship and association of Dinah among the local girls. This situation is relevant to what the narrator is going to tell us in 2b-3: Shechem taking her by force violently. Dinah's going out to see the daughters of the land, away from her family, created a suitable situation for Shechem to abduct her.

The introduction of the two major participants: Dinah and Shechem need a brief comment. Wenham's and Parry's comments indicate that introducing Dinah as a 'daughter of Leah' has a communicative significance for the later interpretation of the narrative because it implies that Dinah is a daughter of Jacob's unloved wife. According to them the expression denotes that this was why Jacob did not respond as a responsible father to defend his daughter Dinah (v 5; Wenham 1994: 310; Parry 2004: 136). However, I consider that this expression is anaphoric to Gen 30:21. Dinah is introduced in 30.21: וְאַחַר יָלְדָה בַּת וַתִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמָהּ דִּינָה 'afterwards she bore a daughter, and named

her Dinah' cataphorically with Ch.34 in view. Consequently the referring expression in

chapter 34: 1 בּ דִּינָה בַת־לֵאָה אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה לְיַעֲקֹב 'Dinah, the daughter whom Leah had born

to Jacob' should be read as anaphoric participant introduction of the episode employed in

order to recapture the same Dinah of 30:21. Thus it denotes the relevance (why she was

introduced previously) of introducing her in chapter 30:21.

The referential introduction of Shechem as "son of Hamor the Hivite, chief of the

country/land" provides a relevant contextual assumption for the interpretation of

attempted abductive marriage. This referring expression suggests (as an implicature) that

Shechem has the upper hand in terms of social and political power to abduct Dinah

compared to the social status of the Jacob and his family, who were recent incomers to

the land. Abductive marriage requires physical power to resist possible confrontation by

the girl's family and clan, and political and social superiority in order to influence the

girl's family to accept the marriage negotiation. A person attempting abductive marriage

always tries to exploit any weak side of the girl's family. This is because when a girl is

abducted for marriage the girl's family feels that their honor is violated. Consequently

they may react to abort the abductive marriage in order to restore their honor. If the girl's

family and clan manage to abort the abductive marriage of their daughter and bring the

girl back home it is also terribly humiliating for the man, his family, and his whole clan.

Thus, besides aborting the abductive marriage they use it as a revenge.

3.2.1.2. Narrative Tension: The Abduction and the Failed Marriage Negotiation (34:2b-12)

[68]וַיִּקַּח אֹתָהּ וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֹתָהּ וַיְעַנֶּהָ

'He seized her and lay with her and humbled/humiliated her' (34:2b)[69].

I have already noted above that almost all scholars claim that Dinah was raped (Sternberg

1985: 446; Wenham 1994: 311; Gunkel 1997: 358; Fields 1997; Miller 2000: 50; Parry

2004: 137;: 120; Yamada 2008; Blyth 2008: 36). However, very few scholars believe that

Shechem married Dinah by abduction (Fleshman 2000: 112). Although they do not see

the sexual relation between Dinah and Shechem as abductive marriage, Bechtel and

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[68] The vayiqtol and polysydeton construction in this sentence signify the emphasis on each elemt of the list.
[69] My translation.

Wolde also take the position that the story does not denote rape (Bechtel 1994: 27ff; Wolde 2002: 542-543).

Was Dinah really raped? The narrator tells us that וַיִּקַּח אֹתָהּ 'Shechem took her' (34:2); וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֹתָהּ 'he had sexual intercourse with her', וַיְעַנֶּהָ 'and he humiliated her'. Gunkel translates the phrase וַיִּקַּח אֹתָהּ 'he took her' as he kidnapped her, abducted her' (Gunkel 1997: 358). This expression in this particular context of sexual violence (which will be discussed below) denotes that Shechem seized or snatched Dinah by force and took her before he actually had violent sexual intercourse with her (Blyth 2008: 48ff). Jubilee says that "they carried off Dinah" which denotes that probably a group of people took or carried her for Shechem which is a common characteristic of abductive marriage (Charles 2001: 153). If this is the case, then presumably the expression 'Shechem took her' is synecdoche because probably others took Dinah by force and they did it by Shechem's will. Thus, Shechem's action of taking Dinah in this context implies that Dinah was taken aggressively and violently to a particular location which is convenient for Shechem. Probably he took her to his house (Parry 2004: 137), because this accords with the above-mentioned participant introduction (son of the ruler). Thus, he would not have been afraid of Dinah's family attempting to confront him in order to take her back. Such behavior in abductive marriage is very shaming to the family of the girl if the society is a shame/honor oriented society, which may provoke them to a potential revenge in order to restore their honor[70].

Second, the narrator tells us that Shechem וישכב אתה 'laid her' (literally) ויענה 'and he humiliated/humbled her' (Gen. 34:2) which (the combination of both וישכב אתה and ויענה) implies that he had sexual intercourse by force without her consent and before any appropriate marriage approval of Dinah's family (Gen. 34:2; Bechtel 1994: 23-26; Blyth 2008: 44ff; 54ff). Parry also observes that שכב with direct object אתה marks the narrator's negative evaluation of the Shechem's coercive sexual behavior (Parry 2004: 138-139). However, the Hebrew phrase 'וישכב אתה' does not help us in terms of describing Shechem's sexual behavior with Dinah as rape because it seems that 'rape' is not

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[70] Israelites are described as "heavily group-oriented, and shame relied predominantly on external group pressure, while being reinforced by the internal pressure of fear of shaming…[that they] take revenge" (Bechtel February 1991: 76).

lexicalized in Hebrew. For example a clear sexual activity which should be translated into English as 'rape' was mentioned as וישכב עמה 'lay or have a sexual intercourse with her' in Deut. 22:25.

Van Wolde attempts to make a distinction between physical sexual violence against Dinah and her social debasement effected by the same in that she interprets ויענה, in this context, "as a debasement of Dinah from a social-juridical point of view" opposed to physical sexual violence (van Wolde 2002: 543-544). Nevertheless, I argue that pragmatically the two cannot be separated both from the point of view of Dinah's experience as well as from the mental representation of the event by the narrator and his public representation of the same in that particular social context[71].

וַתִּדְבַּ֧ק נַפְשׁ֛וֹ בְּדִינָ֖ה בַּֽת־יַעֲקֹ֑ב וַיֶּֽאֱהַב֙ אֶת־הַֽנַּעֲרָ֔ וַיְדַבֵּ֖ר עַל־לֵ֥ב הַֽנַּעֲרָ

And his soul was drawn to Dinah daughter of Jacob; he loved the girl, and spoke tenderly to her. (34:3)

In vv 3-4, the narrator tells us that Shechem loved Dinah very much that he moved swiftly to settle the matter by marriage negotiation. The expression **ותדבק נפש בדינה בת־ייעקב ויאהב את־הנער וידבר על־לב הנער** 'His soul was bonded with Dinah the daughter of Jacob and he loved the girl and he spoke to her heart' denotes Shechem's deep emotional expression of love which can be explained better in the context of abductive marriage than in the context of rape as Blyth and other scholars attempt to explain (Blyth 2008: 138ff). In terms of the abductive marriage, first of all, the abductor abducts a girl because he loves her. He does this because he believes that he does not have any other way of making her his own. Then the abductor does his best to win the consent of the abducted girl. This is because it is also common that in the course of marriage negotiation, the girl's family may ask whether the girl consents to marry the abductor before they proceed with any further formal negotiations. If that is not the case there is no need for the negotiation because there is no guarantee that she will stay with him in the marriage relationship. The girl may run away any time when she finds an opportunity to escape, no matter what. Thus the expression "he spoke to the heart of the girl" implies that Shechem

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[71] In this context **ויענה** could mean loss of soundness, purity, and integrity of her virginity and consequently making her defective or deteriorating her moral value of virginity in the society.

was keen in this regard, and his affectionate behavior and his verbal expression of love was aimed to attracted Dinah's heart so that she should consent to marry him if her family also consents to let him marry her. It is interesting that the narrator included even this feature of the event in his narration. Whether the expression "he spoke to her heart" implies that Dinah eventually consented to marry Shechem is controversial as the discussions of Sternberg and Leeb, among others, show and I do not intend to address it here (Sternberg 1992: 475-479; Leeb 2008: 116). But we know that at least he tried to engage her heart though we do not know whether he was successful.

Did Shechem suddenly fall in love with Dinah after having sexual intercourse with her by raping or did he love her even before having sexual intercourse with her? Bechtel remarks that "sociological studies reveal that rapists feel hostility and hatred toward their victims, not love" (Bechtel 1994: 29). On the contrary, the story tells us that Shechem loves Dinah, his heart was bonded to her, and he immediately seeks to engage her heart and then proceeds for marriage negotiation. This feature of the episode will make better sense if it is interpreted in the context of abductive marriage. Shechem must have fallen in love with Dinah, not after his sexual intercourse with her, but before, and that is why he abducted her for marriage. Thus the relationship between Shecheme's love for Dinah and his violent sexual intercourse with Dinah will make sense when it is interpreted in the context of the abductive marriage. Otherwise it is less plausible to hold that he raped her only to satisfy his selfish sexual desire, after which he unexpectedly fell in love with her (Sternberg 1992: 474). Hence, although I sympathize with Dinah's point of view about what happened to her, according to my reading of the story Shechem's violent sexual behavior with Dinah and his excited move to settle the matter by marriage negotiation is better understood as an abductive marriage attempt rather than as rape.

This is exactly what happens with the abductive marriage practice as the Hadiyya practice of abductive marriage shows: first, the man who intends to marry a girl by abduction spies the scene, when he finds an opportunity he comes with a few other strong men, snatches the girl while she is trying to scream and call for help, he has sexual intercourse with her by force, and then he takes her to a place which he and his friends believe is a convenient place to hide her from her relatives in order to avoid any possible

confrontation of the girl's family to abort the abductive marriage in order to restore their honor (34:7).

As I mentioned above, the next essential action of the abductor is having sexual intercourse with the girl as immediately as possible. The act of sexual intercourse is violent or forceful because the abducted girl never consents about such sexual intercourse[72]. Full intercourse is necessary for the following reasons. First, usually it is assumed that the abducted girl is a virgin. Therefore, the abductors believe that once an abductor has a sexual intercourse with the virgin girl she will eventually consent to marry him. My own experience also shows that most girls prefer to marry their abductor rather than being taken back home because of its negative implications in the society for getting another husband. Thus, abductors assume that the girl's parents and relatives also might be willing to consent that the same abductor should marry the girl for the same reason.

Thus, though the physical behavior of the sexual intercourse of both rape and abductive marriage is evidently violent and humiliating to the girl, there is a clear difference between rape and abductive marriage in terms of the intention and motivation behind them. The sexual action of a rape is motivated to satisfy one's sexual appetite and then abandon the victim. In addition a rapist attempts to maintain the secrecy of his rape. Consequently he does not take steps to make himself known to the public in association with the rape. On the contrary the motivation of sexual act of abductive marriage is intended as a means of securing the consent of the victim and her family for marriage. That is why the abductor keeps the victim with him and takes steps to make himself known to the public as an abductor, sincerely interested to marry the girl, just as Shechem did. Thus there is an apparent difference between the sexual violence of rape and abductive marriage.

Thus Dinah's case is better explained as an abductive marriage, because Shechem's behavior of abducting the girl, having sex with her in a violent manner, keeping her with him, and then initiating marriage negotiation with her parents and

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[72] I can still recall, once when I was very small boy, I observed personally such violent sexual intercourse of abductive marriage. On one occasion a group of strong young men abducted a girl for the purpose of marriage to their friend. First they spied to locate the girl. Then they snatched her by force and took her to a far off village to someone's house. When they got to the house they put the girl in a quiet corner and let the man have sexual intercourse with the girl immediately. But the girl refused to consent until two young men helped him by holding the girl's legs and arms so that he could have successful sexual intercourse.

family seeking their consent, evidently exhibits the nature of abductive marriage. Therefore, reading this story as an abductive marriage is more plausible than reading as a rape. [73]

As I mentioned above, another essential step of the abductive marriage is initiating marriage negotiation by sending messengers to the family of the girl after abducting her. The messengers will inform to the family that the girl is with them and they are ready to do anything they demand of them, as a restitution and as a marriage dowry. The negotiation may take some time because in some cases the parents may not be willing to accept the deal easily. This is what Shechem and Hamor did. In verse 4 the narrator tells us that Shechem asked his father Hamor to go and initiate negotiation with the family of Dinah:

וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁכֶם אֶל־חֲמוֹר אָבִיו לֵאמֹר קַח־לִי אֶת־הַיַּלְדָּה הַזֹּאת לְאִשָּׁה:

So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this girl to be my wife (34:4).

In verse 6 we are told that Shechem went to Jacob for the negotiation. In verse 7 the story tells us that Jacob's children came from the field probably called by their father about this matter. In verses 8-12 the narrator tells us that Hamor spoke to the family of Dinah politely and persuasively. He pleaded with them saying: "Let me find favor with you, and whatever you say to me I will give. Put the marriage present and gift as high as you like, and I will give whatever you ask me; only give me the girl to be my wife" (vv 11b-12).

It is natural for the family of a girl to consult one another and make a decision before they respond to the negotiators just as Jacob and his children did (vv 5, 7). It is also reasonable for Jacob, as the head of the family, to seek to resolve this matter by consenting for marriage because in his situation that seems the best option for Dinah, for Jacob and his family, and for Shechem and Hamor as the whole narrative representation of vv 4-12 shows. Hence at this stage Jacob's silence of verse 5 was likely from a prudence thinking that it is good to discuss with his children what to do.

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[73] Even the story of the Israelites in Judges which allowed the Benjaminite men to marry other Israelite women by abduction, (Judges 21:19-24) shows that probably the behavior of abductive marriage is not totally foreign to the Ancient Near Eastern culture after all.

3.2.1.3. Narrative Tension Intensifies (13-31)

However the narrator tells us that things got out of Jacob's hand for the worse when his children במרמה 'tricked' Shechem and Hamor (34:13-17) and eventually massacred them (34:25-29). The revenge was not directed only against Shechem and Hamor but against the whole Shechemites because a conflict of abductive marriage in a group oriented society is an issue of honoring and shaming the whole clan, not only the abductor and his immediate family. They killed all the Shechemites presumably in order to avoid any possible retaliation if they revenge against Shechem and Hamor only. Unfortunately Jacob's children were ignorant about the Shechemites' connection to the Canaanites and Perezzites about which Jacob was very well aware of (34:30).

The most important feature in this episode is that the narrator develops his point of view that Jacob was in a difficult situation in both cases.

1. Even if Jacob and his family agree to resolve this crisis by consenting with the marriage of Dinah and Shechem, the Shechemites' motive was opportunistic, because ultimately they may suppress Israel and grab all their property for themselves (34:23). This proposal was treacherous because the Israelites, the minority ethnic group (only one family at that time), would eventually be absorbed by the Shechemites, which would lead to a subsequent extinction of the chosen people of God from existing as a distinct social and ethnic group of Yahweh. Social scientists have observed that any powerful dominant social group who works to build a homogeneous cultural nation creates a strategy to assimilate a minority group (Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 12-13).

2. The revenge of Levi and Simeon which resulted in killing all the Shechemites and plundering their property, their wives, and their children risked the worst and most dangerous revenge of the Canaanites and Perezzites against the Israelites[74] (Bechtel 1994: 34). Thus the Israelites' very existence was in danger of extermination by the imminent revenge of Canaanites and Perizzites. Consequently, the narrator tells us that the revenge of Levi and Simeon did not resolve the crisis; rather it triggered another danger for Jacob; thus complicating the situation further (34:30-31). Hence, the narrator shows that in both cases Jacob was in a very difficult situation because the very existence of the chosen people of God was threatened with extermination.

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[74] See Appendix 1 about Israel

The narrator also shows that Levi and Simeon behaved strangely to their father (v 31) that Jacob was angry with them and he never affirmed the action of Levi and Simeon even until his death (Gen 34:30; 49:5-7). Jacob was angry at what Simeon and Levi did because of two reasons:

1. They have killed all the Shechemites unjustly when there was no declared war between them (49:5-7).

2. Jacob foresees that the aftermath of their killing may trigger revenge against his family which will put the whole family in danger (Gen 34:30; 49:5-7; Parry 2004: 104). However Simeon and Levi are still exaggerating the problem ignoring the aftermath. Their response to Jacob is quite interesting and it could be interpreted in the context of abductive marriage: הַכְזוֹנָה יַעֲשֶׂה אֶת־אֲחוֹתֵנוּ: "Should our sister be treated like a whore?" (Gen. 34:31). This kind of exaggerated response, from the family of the abducted girl, who were already boiling with anger because their honor has been threatened by abducting their daughter, is expected and it is made to make the abductor responsible for his action. Thus what Simeon and Levi are saying to Jacob is that if Shechem was sincerely interested in marrying Dinah and has a sense of respect and honor for her family he would have come and asked their permission to marry her rather than taking her by force and have a sexual intercourse with her and then ask for their permission for marriage. For a shame-and-honor oriented society this is a grave matter (Blyth 2008: 115). The narrator's public representation remarks this point when he says: "When they heard of it, the men were indignant and very angry, because he had committed an outrage in Israel[75] by lying with Jacob's daughter, for such a thing ought not to be done" (34:7). One can imagine how they must have felt, which eventually led them to revenge her.

It is worth noting that according to the narrator the crisis of the Dinah story was not ended by the massacre of the Shechemites which only made the situation worse for Jacob and his family. Therefore, the response of Simeon and Levi to their father is not the end of the story, rather it remarks a further narrative tension. As the narrative shows the complication was intensified by the fear of revenge (34:30-31). Hence I argue that the aftermath of the killing was in focus in this story. The narrator did not intend to conclude

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[75] See Appendix 1

the story in 34:30-31, rather he presents a further intensified narrative tension which will be resolved only by Jacob's fulfilling his vow as Gen 35:1-15 shows. I believe that the mistake which the readers of the Dinah story make is that they stop reading the story at 34:31, yet the narrative is continuing. Thus, my reading of the Dinah story shows that Dinah is quite incidental to the story—she drops out of the story and is not mentioned again, probably not because of the androcentric intention of the narrator (Blyth 2008: 3, 76ff) but because of the narrative motif of the story.

Therefore, I argue that this crisis is congruent to the votive narrative of Jacob and it happened to him as a consequence of his unfulfilled vow and serves to remind him to fulfill it. In order to show this point of view the narrator tells us that Jacob was in difficult situation in both options; and the situation was going from bad to worse until he fulfills his vow and restores his breached relationship with Yahweh, his protector and provider.

One may ask that why Dinah and the Shechemites suffer for the wrong Jacob did. Our reading of the Dinah episode shows that the narrator was not approving what Shechem did to Dinah. Nor is he approving what Simeon and Levi did to the Shechemites. What he is telling us is that Jacob's failure to fulfill his vow in Bethel breached his relationship with God, his protector and provider. Consequently God withdrew his protection which resulted in bad relation within his family and with his good neighbors. The story in 34:30-31 implies that Jacob must have been wondering why God allowed such a terrible thing to happen, which really became a threat for the existence of the promised seed. I believe he must have been contemplating and asking himself, why did Yahweh allow these things happen to him? This view will be elaborated a little further in the next section.

3.2.1.4. Narrative Resolution

We can observe once again that Jacob manifests as a main character/participant of the Dinah story—no mention of Dinah after 34:5; no mention of Shechem, Hamor, and Shechemites after 34:29; and no mention of Jacob's children either after 34:31. Thus, all of them vanish from the episode and there is no mention of them again after 34:31. When the minor participants of the story vanish after a satisfactory resolution of the episode which closes with them in 34:31, the narrator picks of Jacob again in 35:1 and proceeds

with the narrative-resolution. The resolution comes at the climax of the crisis: a dangerous threat of revenge of Canaanites and Perezites against Jacob and his family. The threat was resolved only by God's intervention when Jacob responded to God's reminder to fulfill his vow in Bethel (35:1-15).

35:1 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־יַעֲקֹב קוּם עֲלֵה בֵית־אֵל וְשֶׁב־שָׁם וַעֲשֵׂה־שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לָאֵל הַנִּרְאֶה אֵלֶיךָ בְּבָרְחֲךָ מִפְּנֵי עֵשָׂו אָחִיךָ:

God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel, and settle there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau" (Gen 35:1).

One can observe that this utterance of God is echoic of the event of Bethel. It is directly connected to the Bethel-event in general and to the votive utterance of Jacob in particular. This was exactly what Jacob promised to God in Bethel if God would grant his votive plea (28:18-22).

We also observe that, as I mentioned above, the narrative representation shows that God spoke to Jacob when he was confused and perplexed by the imminent threat of the Canaanites' and Perezzites' revenge, presumably wondering why God let this terrible crisis happen to the Chosen line. What happened to the promise of God made in Bethel to protect him? (28:13-15). Thus the narrator shows that Jacob was not prompted by the adverse consequence of the unfulfilled vow probably because he thought that he has fulfilled his vow in Shechem, the place he considered as compatible with Bethel. Therefore, the narrator tells us that, God had to remind him verbally to go to Bethel and fulfill his vow there. This implies that God was reminding Jacob that if he still refuses to fulfill his vow in Bethel, then he is responsible for the yet to come worse consequences; and he can't blame God for that. At that moment Jacob's memory was prompted because of the contextual assumptions of vow and about the adverse consequence of the unfulfilled votive promise which he had in his cognitive environment and he immediately sets off on his way to Bethel:

35:2 וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ וְאֶל כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עִמּוֹ הָסִרוּ אֶת־אֱלֹהֵי הַנֵּכָר אֲשֶׁר בְּתֹכְכֶם וְהִטַּהֲרוּ וְהַחֲלִיפוּ שִׂמְלֹתֵיכֶם:

³⁵:³ וְנָק֣וּמָה וְנַעֲלֶ֖ה בֵּֽית־אֵ֑ל וְאֶֽעֱשֶׂה־שָּׁ֣ם מִזְבֵּ֗חַ לָאֵ֞ל הָעֹנֶ֤ה אֹתִי֙ בְּי֣וֹם צָֽרָתִ֔י וַיְהִי֙ עִמָּדִ֔י בַּדֶּ֖רֶךְ אֲשֶׁ֥ר הָלָֽכְתִּי׃

> *So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your clothes; and let us rise and let us go up to Bethel, that I may make an altar there to the God who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone (35:2-3).*

This textual evidence shows that Jacob responded promptly. Hence, when Jacob responded positively to fulfill his vow in Bethel God's protection resumed: "As they journeyed, a terror from God fell upon the cities all around them, so that no one pursued them." Thus surely the narrator's representation of the resolution for the narrative tension clearly shows that the crises of the Dinah story occurred as an adverse consequence because Jacob failed to fulfill his vow. Therefore, I see 35:1-7 as a resolution of the narrative tension of the Dinah story of Genesis 34.

Once again, almost all readers of the Dinah story miss this communicative intention of the narrator, (probably because they did not read the story from the perspective of votive narrative). However, it is apparent that the narrator has clearly signaled that this crisis happened to Jacob because he failed to fulfill his vow in Bethel. Consequently the promise of God to Jacob to protect him and to provide for him was breached and his property was threatened to be dispossessed by the Shechemites and his family safety was at stake. Unless Jacob promptly takes action to fulfill his vow in Bethel in order to restore his breached relationship with Yahweh worse was about to happen, not only losing their possessions, even their own very existence will be threatened. The narrative organization and representation of the Dinah story shows that this is the narrator's point of view.

The expression וְנָק֣וּמָה וְנַעֲלֶ֖ה בֵּֽית־אֵ֑ל וְאֶֽעֱשֶׂה־שָּׁ֣ם מִזְבֵּ֗חַ 'Arise, …go to Bethel and build an altar there' in Gen. 35:1 is contrasted to the altar Jacob built in Shechem (Gen. 33:20). Some scholars confuse the narrative connection between the reference of Shechem and Bethel in Gen 33 and in Gen 35, and perceive it as intended to show a progression of the sanctuary from Shechem to Gilgal, from Gilgal to Bethel, from Bethel to Shiloh, and from Shiloh to Jerusalem (Dumbrell 1974-75: 69). However, though he failed to read the Dinah story in the framework of the votive narrative and within the

context of the social institution of vow, Dumbrell rightly observes that the immediate context of Genesis 35 is Gen. 34, which "provides the rationale for the move from Shechem to Bethel" (Dumbrell 1974-75: 68). He observes that Jacob's movement from Shechem to Bethel is occasioned by the incident of Genesis 34 in that "Genesis 35 presents us with the account of the movement from Shechem to Bethel, occasioned, we are to understand, by the incident of Gen. 34" (Dumbrell 1974-75: 68).

What is the narrative connection between these two places? Apparently it is something to do with the building of an altar. Jacob pledged to build an altar in Bethel in his return to Canaan as a fulfillment of his vow to God. But he built it in Shechem which was unacceptable to God because Shechem is not the chosen place of God. So the tragedy happens to him and God reminds him to go to Bethel and fulfill his vow. Accordingly, at last, Jacob fulfils his vow in Bethel:

וַיָּבֹא יַעֲקֹב לוּזָה אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן הוּא בֵּית־אֵל הוּא וְכָל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־עִמּוֹ:
וַיִּבֶן שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ וַיִּקְרָא לַמָּקוֹם אֵל בֵּית־אֵל כִּי שָׁם נִגְלוּ אֵלָיו הָאֱלֹהִים בְּבָרְחוֹ מִפְּנֵי אָחִיו:

Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him, and there he built an altar and called the place El-bethel, because it was there that God had revealed himself to him when he fled from his brother (35:6-7).

This text shows an apparent narrative connection between Shechem (33:18-20) and Bethel (35:1-15). Dumbrell observes that "there is no other Biblical context which links Bethel and Shechem" except this story (Dumbrell 1974-75: 69).

Finally we observe that the narrator artistically provides a key narrative component in Gen 35:1-7 in order to accomplish three things regarding the coherence of Jacob's votive narrative:

1. It connects the entire votive narrative unite back to Gen 28:10-22; we see that 35: 1, 7 brings us back to 28:10-22.

2. It connects the episode of Gen. 34 to the immediate preceding story of Gen. 33.

3. It provides a clearly stated resolution (final cognitive effects) of the narrative tension or complication of Genesis 34 because it is when Jacob sets out to Bethel to fulfill his vow that God's protection for Jacob resumed as the

narrator says: "As they journeyed, a terror from God fell upon the cities all around them, so that no one pursued them" (Gen 35:5).

Hence, in the light of my close reading of the Dinah story, the episodes of the story could be set out as follows:

- 34:1-2a: setting
- 34:2b-3: Narrative tension or incitement: abduction for marriage
- 34:4-10: Negotiation for abductive marriage
- 34:11-17: The negotiation fails: The sons of Jacob plan to trick Shechem and Hamor
- 34:18-24: Shechem and Hamor naively/innocently accept the deceptive offer of abductive marriage negotiation and get circumcised.
- 34:25-29: Massacre of Shechemites, by Simeon and Levi
- 34:30-31: Narrative tension intensifies further, threatening the very existence of Israelites
- 35:1-7: Resolution of the narrative tension: Jacob's going to Bethel and building an altar in Bethel in order to fulfill his vow
- 35:8-15: Post peak or post resolution: the narrator tells us what happened after the resolution

4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated that a) the narrative scope of the Dinah story covers 34:1-35:15; b) the Dinah story is missread because it has not been read in the framework of the votive narrative; c) Shechem did not rape Dinah, rather he attempted to marry her by abduction; d) Shechem's attempt for abductive marriage triggered a terrible catastrophe because God's protection for Jacob was breached as an adverse consequence of Jacob's unfulfilled vow; e) the structure of the narrative representation and the resolution of the narrative tension (35:1-7) is a textual evidence for reading the Dinah story as an integral part of Jacob's votive narrative; f) further textual evidence in the post-peak of the narrative tension of the Dinah story shows that the tragedy of the Dinah story is intended to represent the adverse consequence of Jacob's unfulfilled vow.

The narrator's strategic design of the linguistic organization of the public representation of the Dinah story does not "allow his readers to give unqualified approval or disapproval to any of the characters in the story" (Parry 2004: xix). This suggests that his intention rested on something else other than the characters of the story. The artistic tactic of his narrative representation aims to influence his readers to his point of view: the crisis of Genesis 34 happened to Jacob because he failed to fulfill his vow in Bethel. The peaceful relation between Jacob and the Shechemites was destroyed because God's protection to Jacob was breached because of this offence. For Jacob, going to Bethel in order to fulfill his vow to God was part of worshiping Yahweh as his patron deity. To fail to do so implies that he had become unfaithful to him.

Therefore I argue that Genesis 28:10-35:15 is a coherent and cogent votive narrative unit which deals with Jacob's vow making, vow granting, unfulfilled vow, and the adverse consequence of the unfulfilled vow. Thus the narrator used the scheme of the vow of Bethel as a structural framework for the narrative unit. By the adverse consequences of the unfulfilled vow (crisis of Genesis 34) Jacob was reminded to fulfill his vow. Jacob, who was shocked by the consequences, fulfills his vow swiftly and then God's protection and patron relationship resumes immediately. To miss this narrator's point of view in reading the Dinah story would destroy the entire discourse structure of this narrative unit as Bar-Efrat says:

> An isolated incident receives its significance from its position and role in the system as a whole. The incidents are like building blocks, each one contributing its part to the entire edifice, and hence their importance. In the building which is the plot there are no excess or meaningless blocks. The removal of any one may cause the entire structure to collapse or at least damage its functional and aesthetic perfection (Bar-Efrat 1992: 93).

Hence, in order to avoid such a tragic effect to this narrative unit, the Dinah story must be read within the context of the social institution of the vow of the ancient Israel and within the framework of the vow of Bethel which comprise Genesis 28:10-35:15 as a votive narrative.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION WITH REMARKS ON IMPLICATIONS FOR TRANSLATION

1. Conclusion

This research has demonstrated that understanding a communicative intention of the utterance or a text within its primary contextual framework is a crucial step for Bible translation and interpretation task. Hence, since an utterance or discourse is totally dependent on the context, access to the contextual assumptions of an utterance of the biblical texts is a key factor in understanding the communicative intention of the narrator before we translate them. In this dissertation we have seen that the context of the biblical discourses comprises both textual and para-textual context which are actually in the cognitive environment of the primary audience. I have also shown that Gen 25:19-37:1 is a coherent narrative unit within which the votive narrative of Jacob (Gen 28:10-35:15) is embedded.

Inaccessibility to the original contextual assumptions of the vow and the votive narrative of Jacob story created a serious problem for the interpreters and translators that they misunderstood the coherence of the narrative and treated the episodes of the narrative as isolated episodes. This is because the interpreters and translators, who are the secondary communicators of the biblical texts, are not privileged to have access to the full contextual assumptions of the primary communication. We have seen that as a result the translation of the votive narrative of Jacob in general and the Dinah story in particular has been mistranslated for several centuries. Therefore, in my discussion, throughout this dissertation, I have attempted to bring out the correct interpretation of the narrative unit so that it should be translated correctly.

In order to achieve this goal, first I did some empirical research on the Hadiyya culture about vow and marriage institutions involving a significant number of the Hadiyya community members in order to receive some insight about the same. Although I myself am a Hadiyya, doing the research was necessary so that I should not rely on my private opinion but use the community's collective opinion about the Hadiyya concept of

vow and abductive marriage. Then I examined the Ancient Near Eastern cultural context and other related areas' cultural context about the vow. Accordingly, in this research, I have shown that the Hadiyya concept of vow and the ANE concept of vow force us to reconsider our understanding about the Old Testament concept of vow.

Therefore, I explored and defined the ancient Hebrew concept נדר 'vow' as it was perceived and used in Ancient Near Eastern cultural context, other related areas' cultural context, and other literature of ancient Israel in the light of Hadiyya culture. My cross examination of the concept of vow in these cultures shows that their practice of vow is similar to the Hebrew counterpart. In all these cultures vow making is conditional, it is/was taken in the context of prayer because of distress, the motivation of the vow-making is/was to seek relief from a distress, the content of votive prayers is/was the promise of public praises in a particular manner, the vow is/was binding—it must be fulfilled, and the fulfillment of the vow should be in the place where the deity resides (Oppenbeim 1964: 242). And all unfulfilled vows in all these cultures, have adverse consequence.

In the light of this examination, I described the essence of the biblical vow as a human commissive speech act of solemn commitment directed only to God in the context of distress seeking to get relief from God, which will be fulfilled only if God honors the petitioner by granting his votive plea. It is a conditional solemn promise to God by humans. The commitment is given to respond to the deity in a specified way. Thus, the Hebrew vow is a conventionalized utterance, operating within a social institution and gives rise to conventional contextual assumptions and the potential expectation of the grant of a desirable outcome from God with an obligation to fulfill the votive commitment made to God. A further expectation of adverse consequences is raised if the votive commitment remains unfulfilled by the petitioner. This nature of the biblical vow sets it off in contrast from oath, covenant, and other similar concepts and commissive speech acts. And thus we have established that נדר is a strictly binding social institution which involves a conditional commissive speech act that has adverse consequences for all unfulfilled vows.

I also showed that the concept נדר comprises distinct encyclopedic information in the cognitive environment of the contemporary audience of the communicator with which the

audience interacts in the course of their inferential processing of the votive utterance. Thus, the contextual assumptions and contextual implications of the votive utterance of Jacob come out of the cognitive principle of relevance theory.

The metarepresentational reading of Gen 28:10-22 shows that Jacob made an echoic votive utterance to the commissive speech act of God in his dream (28:13b-15) with an endorsing attitude. Thus, Jacob's votive utterance has apparent interpretive resemblance with the utterance of God. Jacob made a votive commitment to respond to God in thanksgiving if God grants his plea. Consequently, he puts himself under inescapable obligation. Thus, his votive utterance raises an expectation of relevance and, hence, Jacob's vow at Bethel functions as a cohesive theme of Gen 28:10-35:15. I have shown that the vow-granting, vow-fulfilling, and adverse consequence of the unfulfilled vow of this utterance was represented in Genesis 29:1-35:15:

- God grants Jacob's votive plea for protection (31:1-55; 32:2-33:17).
- God grants Jacob's plea for prosperity and provision (29:14b-32:10).
- God grants Jacob's plea to return to his father's house in peace (31:3; 33:17-18).
- Jacob's laxity in fulfilling his votive commitment to God in Bethel (33:18-20) and the adverse consequence of his laxity (Gen 34:1-35:15).

Therefore, I have described Genesis 28:10-35:15 as a votive-narrative of Jacob. I have also argued in this dissertation that the linguistic or public representation of the cognitive organization of the narrative of Gen. 29:1-33:15 is an evaluative one. It is evaluative in that the narrator linguistically represents his point of view about God and Jacob regarding the fulfillment of the votive utterance of Jacob in Bethel (Gen. 28:10-22). On the one hand, the narrator represents God as a divine power who faithfully granted answer to Jacob's votive plea, as his caring and loving patron. On the other hand, he represents Jacob as a God's chosen patriarch but as one who neglected to fulfill his votive promise to his patron God. I have shown that from time to time each of these is a strong inference within the institution of vow, throughout chapters 29-35:15. Often the granting of the vow is not straightforward, but is recognized in the way that various tensions are resolved, which also dismisses Jacob's role in resolving them and highlights God's granting. This was the narrator's point of view and an intended contextual implication of the story.

I have also noted that the narrator would be entitled to presume that his audience can imagine for themselves the imminent adverse consequences of the failed votive promise to Jacob because the story is presented within the framework of the social institution of vow and in the context of the votive narrative. This would be so, since the narrator and readers of the primary communication have the same mutually shared knowledge or cognitive environment about the unfulfilled נדר 'vow' that the narrator moves straight to chapter 34 to represent the subsequent story about the adverse consequence without any further explanation about Jacob's laxity in fulfilling his vow. The narrator manifestly intends that the readers of the story will draw the intended contextual implication from what he said, constrained by his optimally relevant ostensive stimulus of the narrative as well as mutually shared knowledge about the utterance of נדר in Gen. 28:10-22.

Thus, I challenged the interpreters and translators of the story that the whole narrative unit must be read within the context of the institution of the ancient Israelites' vow and within the framework of the votive narrative which comprises vow making, vow granting and vow fulfilling. Such reading of this narrative unit is crucially important for the task of translating the same.

When I show that Genesis 34 represents the adverse consequences of Jacob's unfulfilled vow I have also argued that Shechem meant to achieve abductive marriage when he took Dinah by force and had sexual intercourse with her, not rape. I attempted to prove this view in the light of Hadiyya culture, particularly the social institution of marriage, which practices diverse marriage institution in the society including abductive marriage. In the light of this practice describing the narrated sexual relationship between Dinah and Shechem as abductive marriage is more plausible than describing it as rape.

I have also suggested that the attempted abductive marriage of Shechem turned into a dangerous scenario or incident because of Jacob's laxity in fulfilling his vow in Bethel which eventually became a threat for the very existence of the chosen line of God's people. But when Jacob fulfilled his vow in Bethel, reminded by this adverse consequence, his relationship with God was re-established that God's protection for him and his family was resumed.

Accordingly, I have shown that from the narrator's point of view, the Dianah episode was not intended for character evaluation of the participants of the story. So if we attempt to read it from the perspective of character evaluation we would be puzzled. Therefore, I argued that the narrative representation of the story shows that the narrator intended to explain that the catastrophe happened to Jacob because of his laxity in fulfilling his vow. This was my major hypothesis and I have shown it throughout of this dissertation. I have also demonstrated that the structure of the narrative representation in general and the Dinah story in particular (34:1-35:15), as specifically manifested in its narrative resolution of the narrative tension (35:1-7), are the textual evidences for this claim. These textual evidences clearly show that the Dinah story is an integral part of the votive narrative.

To sum up my conclusion, the evidences deduced from the votive narrative informed by relevance theory and the Hadiyya culture shows that Dinah story was clearly relevant to the Jacob story in the context of the Bethel story. The expectations of relevance raised by the vow made by Jacob in Bethel (Gen 28:10-22) and the anaphoric expressions employed by the narrator to 28:10-22 in Gen 31:3, 13; 33:18; 35:1-15, which also includes Jacob's vow fulfilling as a narrative resolution, evidently show that the crisis of Genesis 34 was included in the Jacob story, deliberately putting it in that particular location, in order to explain that this crisis happened to Jacob because he failed to fulfill his vow to God in Bethel. So, I strongly argue that the communicative intention toward this cognitive effect (conclusion), which will be drawn by inference, is sufficiently provided in the text by the ostensive communicative signals. Hence, although other readings are possible from the readers' point of view, this is the main communicative intention which was clearly communicated from the narrator's point of view. Therefore, the translators must aim to communicate this interpretation clearly in their translation task.

However, the un avoidable challenge the translators may face in this regard will be how to provide the needed adequate contextual assumptions of the primary communication of this story for the target readers of the translated text so that they may reconstruct the story in order to have similar interpretive resemblance to the original story. Though it is a difficult task, it is possible and must be done. Access to this

phenomenon is necessary for the target readers so that they would be able to raise similar expectations of relevance of the votive narrative as the original readers did and make appropriate premises and conclusion(s) before they draw the intended cognitive effects as exactly intended by the original narrator. In this regard I wish to make the following brief remarks about how to translate this story at the risk of beng simplicitic.

2. Remarks on Implications for Translation

The task of translation concerns mainly conveying the communicative intention of an utterance or text by making the interpretive resemblance as close as possible to the primary communication[76]. This could be achieved either by direct translation or by retelling it as a story.

I presume that a translator of Jacob's votive narrative may face so many translation-related problems in the course of translating it, which could be linguistic, contextual, or otherwise that scope of this work does not allow me to discuss them all. However, I want to make a few remarks regarding providing the necessary contextual assumptions which the primary audience had about the concept נדר 'vow' and the votive narrative of Jacob for the target audience. This should be done in order to bring out the relevant contextual assumptions of Jacob's votive utterance in the translation.

As I noted above, we have thoroughly discussed in this work the institutional nature of the Hebrew concept נדר and its encyclopedic information in the cognitive environment of the primary audience, which also comprises vow making, vow granting, and vow fulfilling. This institutional character is pertinent both in the actual practice of vowing and in the mental representation of the Hebrew concept נדר 'vow' and votive narratives. It is a mutually shared contextual assumption (cognitive environment) which

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[76] While I was attempting to suggest how to translate both the concept of נדר and the votive narrative of Jacob I made a brief review on other up-to-date Bible translations of the votive narrative of Jacob in order to see if there is any translation which translated the story from the votive narrative perspective. The overview of the sample versions shows that none of them treated the story as a votive narrative; rather they treated the coherent episodes of the votive narrative as isolated episodes. To my surprise, even the Amharic translation of the same story shows that, though the target audience is a vow conscious society, the translation was treated just like the English versions (See Appendix 4). Thus, the translators failed to reconstruct this votive narrative, interpret it, and translate it within the context of the institution of vow and within the framework of the votive narrative of Jacob in Bethel. This calls for a suggestion of the better way of representing of this story into the target audiences in the translation task.

was manifest to the communicator and his primary audience. The question is then how we can make the cognitive environment of the secondary audience resemble the cognitive environment of the primary audience regarding the institution of vow. This task is very crucial for drawing the relevant and intended cognitive effects from the translation of the votive narrative of Jacob.

In this regard, it is worth noting that unless the reading of the translation of the Jacob-narrative is inferentially combined with the presumed contextual assumptions of the ancient Israelites' institution of the vow, the intended communication of this votive narrative will not be effective. Therefore, it is necessary to make a contextual adjustment in the translation task of the Hebrew concept נדר and Jacob's votive narrative.

If I were engaged in the real life of translating this narrative, the interpretation of this dissertation (which is my mental representation of the story) must have been naturally followed by the translation (public representation) of the same immediately because, as I noted above, translation and interpretation cannot be separated in the task of translation. Thus my mental representation of the story would be manifested by the linguistic organization of the translation into the target language. Hence, resolving all the relevant translation problems in order to construct an appropriate mental representation of the story and then making this manifest by the public representation of the target language is done at the same time by translators.

However, since I am not intending to do the actual translation of this narrative unit, I wish to remark strongly that all the necessary contextual assumptions which were left to be imagined by the primary audience of this narrative must be made accessible to the secondary audience, which do not have the same institution of vow. Thus, the votive nature of this discourse must be brought out in the translation process. In this regard, the secondary communicators (translators) have a responsibility to help their target audience by facilitating the accessibility of the relevant contextual assumptions.

But, as I mentioned above, how to make them available can be a challenge for Bible translators because of different practical reasons. Therefore, I wish to suggest two possible ways of translating the votive narrative of Jacob into the target languages: firstly, I will propose how to translate the Hebrew concept נדר and then, secondly I will propose how to translate the whole votive narrative of Jacob.

2.1. Translating the Hebrew Concept 'נדר'

We have discussed the Hebrew concept נדר in chapter three where we listed the possible encyclopedic information of נדר. We need to access certain key contextual assumptions of this encyclopedic information in order to interpret and translate the votive narrative of Jacob. Now I would like to remark that it is equally essential to closely investigate the encyclopedic information of the concept of 'vow', if there is any, in the receptor language before we attempt to do a contextual adjustment between them. Therefore, translators should explore the existing social institution and other similar comissive speech acts of the target community and compare it with the נדר in order to identify any closest concept in the target language. This will help translators to compare and evaluate whether the contextual assumptions of the concept vow is shared between the source and target languages[77]. If it is believed to be shared it is still better to check what areas of the Hebrew concept נדר are captured and what areas are not captured. For example, as my close investigation in chapter three shows the contextual assumptions of נדר is shared in both Hebrew and Hadiyya. But still I compared and contrasted the Hebrew concept נדר and the Hadiyya concept of vow which is lexicalized as *silet* in the current Hadiyya community. The comparison helped me to see that the two communities have similar concept of 'vow' and they have a similar institutional value of the concept, but the Hebrew concept of vow is legislated while the Hadiyya concept of vow is not. For example, in ancient Hebrew a husband can make his wife's vow void while Hadiyya does not have such legislation. Hence, I believe that the translators of the Bible into the Hadiyya language can make correct decision, where it is needed, in terms of contextual adjustment based on the comparison.

In addition, note that in my comparison of the Hadiyya concept of vow *silet* and the Hebrew concept of נדר 'vow', in chapter three, the list of the encyclopedic information of the Hebrew concept of נדר 'vow' was longer than the Hadiyya concept of vow *silet*. This is because the concept was legislated in Hebrew; which also shows that

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[77] Harriet Hill (2003) categorizes the nature of shared contextual assumption between source and target languages into four: shared and believed to be shared, shared but not believed to be shared, not shared but believed to be shared, and not shared but believed to be shared, (see Appendix 4).

the practice of the vow and its institutional value in ancient Israel was accompanied by the legislation in order to prevent misuse, abuse, and mischief of this institution and clarify some unclear cases of the vow institution which would result in adverse consequence otherwise. This is not the case in Hadiyya. Thus, it is probable that the Hadiyya concept of vow *silet* needs to be complemented in order to capture every feature of the ancient Hebrew concept of נדר 'vow' in translation.

Therefore, it is imperative to help the target readers access the comprehensive contextual assumption of נדר by supplying the presupposed encyclopedic information or contextual assumptions, possibly "by spelling out the contextual implications" (Gutt 2000: 79; Sim : 6ff) somewhere in the translation. This access will prompt the new readers to broaden or narrow down the chosen target concept of vow in each context according to the ad hoc principle of relevance-driven processing of lexicalized concepts in communication (Carston 2002, 349-359; See my note on ad hoc in chapter one 1.5). Thus, this will help the reader to understand and interpret the discourse in which the concept נדר occurs in a significant way.

In this regard, particular effort should be made if the target language does not have similar encyclopedic information and institutional value at all like the Hebrew נדר. In such circumstances the translators must help the target audience to access and grasp the ancient Hebrew worldview about the vow and votive narrative. Otherwise the translation of נדר will not be faithful to the original. The translators need to ask, "What is the best possible strategy of making the key encyclopedic information of the concept נדר accessible to the cross-cultural translation readers?" One may choose different strategies. But I propose that if there is no similar institution in the target language, then the translators should flesh out the original concept by employing weak comissive expressions and see how to make them strong comissive speech act like the Hebrew נדר. I suggest that this should be done both in the text and outside of the text (Hill 2006: 72-90).

By 'in the text and outside the text' we mean the use of a very strong comissive speech act expression in the text and then providing contextual adjustment outside of the text: in the footnote or glossary or introduction page or background-booklet. We may use more than one or all of them. Thus, 'outside of the text' refers to providing the encyclopedic information outside of the text. When these two strategies are combined

with the teaching, the target audience will be able to grasp the concept of the source language, and then eventually will interpret the discourse in which it occurs correctly.

2.2. Translating Jacob's Votive Narrative

This dissertation has discussed how the correct mental representation of Jacob's votive narrative, from the narrator's point of view, could be achieved. Now I intend to provide the sketch of a suggestion regarding how to translate this narrative unit into other languages. When translators are engaged in translating this votive narrative they have to ask the following questions: To what extent are the readers able to see as God granting Jacob's votive plea? Do they understand that Jacob made inadequate fulfillment of his vow in Shechem? To what extend can they understand that Genesis 34 is an adverse consequence of the unfulfilled vow? To what extent has Jacob's dilemma of being trapped in the crisis been brought out? If these features of Jacob's votive narrative are brought out clearly in the translation then the secondary communication is successful. I have shown that adequate access to the institutions of vow and abductive marriage will help the interpreters and translators to reconstruct the intended contextual implications of the story. Therefore, translators need to be aware of them and find a way of providing them for the target readers.

However, the Bible translators may have very limited freedom to incorporate all the contextual assumptions of the votive institution and the abductive marriage custom within the main text of the translation. Nevertheless, translators can employ some other techniques in order to guide the readers of their translation to the correct framework of the votive narrative so that they can process every episode of the narrative within that framework. One of the ways could be to provide relevant section headings referring to vow making, vow granting, vow fulfillment, the adverse consequences of the unfulfilled vow, and Shechem's attempted abductive marriage of Dinah. For example one can provide the general section heading in Genesis 28:10 as "The votive narrative of Jacob" which is followed by different sub-section headings:

1. 28:10-22—Jacob makes a vow to God: The contextual assumptions of the Hebrew concept vow and its votive institution must be made accessible here in

order to help the reader reconstruct appropriate contextual assumptions about the following chapters and draw correct contextual implication.

2. 29:1-33:17—God grants Jacob's votive plea: The implications of Jacob's vow in 28:10-22, as discussed in chapter five of this dissertation, must be brought out here.

3. 33:18-20—Jacob fails to fulfill his vow at the chosen place of God (Bethel): The implication of Jacob's laxity in fulfilling his vow in Bethel must be represented clearly in the translation.

4. 34:1-31—Jacob suffers the adverse consequence of the unfulfilled vow: Marriage and marriage institutions (marriage by wedding, levirate marriage, abductive marriage and concubine) of ancient Israel and the attempted abductive marriage of Shechem must be made accessible here. Further subsections may be added here such as 'Shechem's attempted abductive marriage of Dinah' if it is needed.

5. 35:1-15—Jacob goes to Bethel to fulfill his vow and God's protection resumes.

It is worth noting that what I have suggested about how to translate Jacob's votive narrative is just a sketch. I wish to remark again that the main goal of the translators in this regard should be to help the target readers of their translations access the contextual assumptions about the institution of ancient Hebrew vow and the votive narrative framework of the same. In this way the readers of the secondary communication will be able to interpret Jacob's votive narrative from the narrator's point of view.

In addition, the translation also should be organized in such a way that the contextual implications (ethical and moral implications) of this narrative should be drawn by the target readers. One can observe that this story has a theological implication: one should faithfully fulfill his/her votive promises and all other binding utterances to God as well as to others. Besides, we can deduce from the discourse that God is represented as always faithful to his promises. However when humans fail to keep their vows and other binding commitments to God then they breach their relationship with God, which will result in terrible adverse consequences like suffering and shame in different ways.

The translation also may show that the narrator presumably intended to foster the institution of the God-chosen place of worship, whatever that God-chosen place might be. Therefore, the contextual assumptions about the importance of the institution of the place chosen by God as it is communicated by the narrative should be brought out in the contextual adjustment of the translation. As the story shows, the crisis of Genesis 34 resulted because Jacob failed to fulfill his vow in Bethel, which was the place chosen by God; and this was intended to strengthen the already existing contextual assumptions about the vow and the chosen place. Probably, this was one of the main cognitive effects of the narrative.

Finally I also suggest that this work will provide an opportunity for the OT readers and translators so that they can reevaluate their reading and their translation of the votive narrative of Jacob in the light of this discussion. Hence, they can see for themselves whether the concept of the Hebrew vow and the votive narrative of Jacob have been perceived and read from the narrator's point of view and accordingly conveyed adequately into target languages in translation.

APPENDIX 1

Hebrew, Israel, and Jew

One of the challenges in biblical interpretation and translation is making distinction among the referring expressions in the Bible so that a right referent should be denoted. Such problem can be observed when the referent is referred by two or more referring expressions. One of such problems occurring in Genesis is the use of Hebrew, Israelite, and Jew, to refer the same nation or individuals associated to this nation. What do their semantic senses mean in the original context?" I will attempt to answer this question in brief by explaining the semantic relationship and distinction among them. I acknowledge that my discussion on this issue is heavily based on Harvey's (1996) discussion on the same.

1. Hebrew

The following semantic nuances could be deduced from the biblical us of the referring expression 'Hebrew' (See Young 1936: 473):

A. Patronymic of Abraham and his offspring

1. Signifies one's belonging to a particular ethnic group. Examples: **i.** Abraham the Hebrew (Gen. 14:13). **ii**. Joseph was referred to as a Hebrew (Gen. 39:14). **iii.** Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews (Gen. 43:32).

2. In the NT and OT the people of Hebrews refer themselves as Hebrews, strongly and confidently. Examples: **i.** "If a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman be sold…" (Deut. 15:12). **ii.** "He said unto them 'I am a Hebrew' (Jonah 1:9). **iii.** Apostle Paul referred to himself as a Hebrew of Hebrews (Phil 3:5).

3. Outsiders referred them as Hebrews 1 Sam. 4:6

4. Some times this term might have been used derogatively by the outsiders. Ex. "The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to insult me." (Genesis 39:17).

B. The language spoken or written in Hebrews is known as Hebrew. Example: "He spoke unto them in the Hebrew tongue" (Act. 21:40). It was written in Hebrew… (John 19:20).

The above brief exploration shows that although the phrase 'Hebrew' was used in the Bible in different circumstances the co-text of the passages indicate that noticeably it was used in the historical, social, cultural, and religious context of the people of Israel.

1.1. Etymology of the Concept 'Hebrew'

According to the Even-Shoshan concordance the term עבר 'Hebrew' occurs in the Bible about 34 times; and mainly it is used to refer the people of Israel and its members with an ethnic significance. The same term is also used to denote the language and grammar of the same ethnic group. Botterweck explains the term 'Hebrew', translated as Εβραιοσ *Ebraios* into the Septuagint, as follows:

> (1) racially, one descended from Abraham (PH 3.5); (2) nationally, a Jew in contrast to a Gentile (2 Cor 11.22); (3) linguistically, a native Palestinian Jew who spoke Hebrew (possibly Aramaic) as a mother tongue in contrast to a Greek-speaking Jew who was probably an immigrant to Palestine (Botterweck 1999: 428-432).

On the other hand, it is worth noting that this term is used mainly in the narrative texts both in singular and plural form. The word עברי 'Hebrew' appeared for the first time in the Bible in Genesis 14:13 as "Abraham the Hebrew" (לאברם העברי .).

The referent(s) of this expression is highly debated. Some Biblical scholars argue that the Hebrews were one offshoot of Ha-Bi-Ru, a social class or an ethnic group in ancient Near East (Westminster Theological Seminary 1958: 46-47). All arguments around this term can be summarized into four major etymological and philological explanations:

1. Some scholars such as Botterweck, among many others, argue that etymologically the expression Hebrew is related to עבר (*abar*), implying to a territory beyond or on the other side of a river, which is Euphrates river where Abraham came from (Botterweck 1999: 432). It is also described based on the term עברי *ebri which* could be understood as derived from the Hebrew root עבר— 'to pass, to cross, to go beyond'. Consequently, the translators of the Septuagint interpreted the term עבר as "one from the other side", i.e., beyond the Jordan. Therefore, in Genesis

14:13 they translated as "Αβραμ τω περατη|" 'Abram who crossed over' i. e., who become immigrant. (Haldar 1962: 66).

2. Some scholars such as Wright among others also argue that it is related to *apiru/hapiru* which "refers to a certain social stratum common throughout the ancient Near East: landless people, political refugee, displaced people, outlaws" (Wright 2004: 158). Wenham suggests that, "Apiru/hapiru is usually on the periphery of society- foreign slaves, mercenaries, or even marauders" (Wenham 1987: 313), which is used to refer to Abraham, describing him as a fighter; as it is demonstrated by Abraham's fighting to rescue his nephew Lot.

3. However this suggestion is rejected by Hamilton because of historical and philological discrepancy (Hamilton 1995: 404-405). Botterweck, disagreeing with the suggestion of Apiru, argues:

> But this proposal [Apiru/hapiru] strains the etymological and philological evidence and ignores the extant witness. We conclude from this that the two terms [hapiru/apiru and ibri] are not related. The term ibri is an ethnic term for proto-Israelites, descendants of Eber, and a gentilic term deriving from eber, "territory beyond," i.e., Mesopotamia, Abraham's original land (Botterweck 1999: 444).

The referring expression 'Hebrew' is related to Eber—the grand son of Shem, as a progenitor of the Hebrews. In this regard, the discourse structure of Genesis Gen 10:21 struck my understanding. In this story Eber was introduced in a focused way as if the whole genealogy was organized around him. In Gen11:16 he was referred again until his lineage came down to Terah, and then to Abraham. Thus the narrator puts Eber as a significant ancestor of Abraham.

4. Others argue that probably the 'Hebrews' are a separate ethnic group in Canaan, though closely related to the Israelites." (Haldar 1962: 552).

After evaluating the above alternative interpretations, I suggest that option 3 is more plausible and convincing because it fits the Ancient Near East cultural and social context where many ethnic groups were called after one of their significant ancestors like Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites and etc. Thus, we can argue that probably, the term 'Hebrews' was an ethnic name of the current Jews, related to their ancestor Eber. Yoshitaka Kobayashi observes this when he says "Terah and his family genealogically

belonged to the Hebrews (or perhaps Apiru), who are the descendants of Eber in Gen 10:21, 25" (Kobayashi 1992: 58).

1.2. The term Hebrew and Its Derogative Use

Based on Potiphar's wife's referring to Joseph as "this Hebrew" (Gen. 39:14) some scholars tend to conclude that originally this term was used by the outsiders to refer to the Hebrews derogatively, although, later on, the Hebrews themselves adapted it as their ethnic name. For example Von Rad interprets that originally it was used as "descriptive of a juridic-social position…Habiru originally described the legal position of servitude, or slavery, as opposed to the free person. Gradually, first by outsiders and then by Israelites themselves the word was used as a gentilicium" (Haldar 1962: 66). However, the "Egyptians use of the name [Hebrew] does not prove that it is a derogatory appellative" because it could also mean normal ethnic referring expression (Harvey 1996: 118).

On the otherhand, it is clear that the Israelites referred themselves as Hebrews right from the beginning (Gen. 40:15; 43:32; Ex. 1:15; 2:11, 13; 1 Sam. 13:3) "to distinguish [themselves] from a foreigner" (Hamilton 1995: 405) which shows that this term is not used only by the outsiders derogatively. For example Jonah introduced himself to the captain as a Hebrew confidently (Jonah 1:9).

1.3. The Use of Hebrews, Jews, and Israelites as Synonym Terms

In the later generation, the Israelites apparently referred to themselves as Hebrews, Jews or Israelites. As the historical records of the Bible show the referring expressions 'Israel' and 'Jews', were used after Jacob, who was the significant progenitor of this ethnic group.

The term 'Israel' was introduced after Jacob while the term 'Jews' was introduced after Judah who was one of the sons of Jacob. "Israel" is "the name of honor given to Jacob after his mysterious struggle with the angel…When the immediate descendants of Jacob…grew into a people they were called 'Israel' for what is now known as the Jewish people" (Rabinowitz 1971: 106). After the division of the kingdom, the southern

kingdom consisting the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, took the name Judah while the remaining ten tribes of the north were called Israel (Rabinowitz 1971: 106).

Thus, the terms Jews and Israelites, when the refer to the nation of Israel, denote political and religious significance of the Hebrews. Thus, Jews and Israelites are the later religio-political ethnic names of the Hebrews. Consequently, in the later context of the Israelites the terms Hebrews, Jews, and Israelites would be used interchangeably (Haldar 1962: 552). But one should be careful to apply these names to the appropriate context of this ethnic group's development in order to avoid anachronism (Harvey 1996: 109). Although we could describe these later referring expressions as synonyms to Hebrew, the most antiquity one is Hebrew because it is "applied to some of the most important people and to some of the earliest generations in the story of Israel: the name associated with antiquity, origins and people of central importance" (Harvey 1996: 110).

1.4. Hebrew and Patriarchs

Abraham is one of the best-known figures in the Bible. He is a key figure in the history of both the Jewish and Arab people. He was a descendant of Eber and the grand father of Jacob whose descendants became known as Israel, and great-grandfather of Judah, whose descendants became known as the Jews. He was also the father of Ishmael, from whom many of the Arab people are descended (Gen. 21:9-13). Abraham was a *Hebrew*. But although he was the ancestor of *both* Jews and Arabs, Abraham himself was neither Jew nor Arab because they did not exist in the time of Abraham. Logically all the descendants of Abraham, both Arabs and Jews could keep the Ethnic name Hebrew, but they did not have too, because they could prefer to maintain new ethnic name beginning from their immediate ancestor, a descendant of Abraham, rather than preserving Hebrew.

According to the genealogical record, as presented in the book of Genesis, some of the most well-known terms relating to Israelite people, the *Semitic* genealogy, originated from Noah's son *Shem* while *Hebrew* is derived from *Eber*, the descendant of Shem and the ancestor of Abraham.

Abraham was a grand father of Jacob and great grand father of Judah. From these two patriarchal figures, Jacob and Judah came as two other very well-known identity marking names: *Israelites* and *Jews*. Israelites are the descendants of Isaac's son Jacob,

whom God renamed *Israel*, and from Jacob's son *Judah,* the terms *Jew* and *Jewish* were introduced as a new coinage of the ethnic group Israel.

1.5. The Terms Hebrew, Jew, and Israel, and the people Involved as Referents

The next question one could ask is that how do all of the three designations relate to the people involved? According to the narrative story of Genesis 10:21-31, the ethnic name Shemite is derived from Noah's son Shem and conversely the ethnic term 'Hebrew' is derived from Shem's descendant Eber. Eber could be described as a Shemite, and the first Hebrew, but not an Israelite or a Jew because neither existed yet. Abraham was Eber's descendant and consequently he was a Shemite and a Hebrew, but not an Israelite or a Jew because neither existed yet. Isaac was Abraham's son and he was a Shemite and a Hebrew, but not an Israelite or a Jew because neither existed yet. Jacob, whom God renamed Israel, was Isaac's son and he was a Shemite and a Hebrew, but not a Jew because Jews were originated with his son Judah. The first Israelites were the children of Jacob. Judah was one of Jacob's twelve sons and he was a Shemite, a Hebrew, and an Israelite. Thus, the first Jews were the children of Judah. The descendants of the other eleven of Jacob's sons were not Jews, but were themselves named accordingly e.g. from Levi came the Levites, from Benjamin came the Benjamites and so on. Yet the current ethnic term Jew(s) may refer to any Israelite without any discrimination. Probably this is because of the significant political and social changes which affected the social structure of the community and the life of every member of the group descended from Jacob.

2. Conclusion

In conclusion, the term Hebrew is an ethnic name while Israel and Jews are originally politico-religious names, particularly when it is used to refer the people of Israel. The ethnic concept "Jew" was developed later from the tribe of Judah in the southern kingdom and Davidic dynasty. The southern Kingdom comprises both Judah and

Benjamites who feel as creams of the Israelites in terms of religious, political, and ethnical value or quality of the nation.

APPENDIX 2

Translation of Genesis 28:10-22

‎¹⁰וַיֵּצֵ֥א יַעֲקֹ֖ב מִבְּאֵ֣ר שָׁ֑בַע וַיֵּ֖לֶךְ חָרָֽנָה׃

‎¹¹וַיִּפְגַּ֨ע בַּמָּק֜וֹם וַיָּ֤לֶן שָׁם֙ כִּי־בָ֣א הַשֶּׁ֔מֶשׁ וַיִּקַּח֙ מֵאַבְנֵ֣י הַמָּק֔וֹם וַיָּ֖שֶׂם מְרַאֲשֹׁתָ֑יו וַיִּשְׁכַּ֖ב בַּמָּק֥וֹם הַהֽוּא׃

‎¹²וַֽיַּחֲלֹ֗ם וְהִנֵּ֤ה סֻלָּם֙ מֻצָּ֣ב אַ֔רְצָה וְרֹאשׁ֖וֹ מַגִּ֣יעַ הַשָּׁמָ֑יְמָה וְהִנֵּה֙ מַלְאֲכֵ֣י אֱלֹהִ֔ים עֹלִ֥ים וְיֹרְדִ֖ים בּֽוֹ׃

‎¹³וְהִנֵּ֨ה יְהוָ֜ה נִצָּ֣ב עָלָיו֮ וַיֹּאמַר֒ אֲנִ֣י יְהוָ֗ה אֱלֹהֵי֙ אַבְרָהָ֣ם אָבִ֔יךָ וֵאלֹהֵ֖י יִצְחָ֑ק הָאָ֗רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֤ר אַתָּה֙ שֹׁכֵ֣ב עָלֶ֔יהָ לְךָ֥ אֶתְּנֶ֖נָּה וּלְזַרְעֶֽךָ׃

‎¹⁴וְהָיָ֤ה זַרְעֲךָ֙ כַּעֲפַ֣ר הָאָ֔רֶץ וּפָרַצְתָּ֛ יָ֥מָּה וָקֵ֖דְמָה וְצָפֹ֣נָה וָנֶ֑גְבָּה וְנִבְרֲכ֥וּ בְךָ֛ כָּל־מִשְׁפְּחֹ֥ת הָאֲדָמָ֖ה וּבְזַרְעֶֽךָ׃

‎¹⁵וְהִנֵּ֨ה אָנֹכִ֜י עִמָּ֗ךְ וּשְׁמַרְתִּ֙יךָ֙ בְּכֹ֣ל אֲשֶׁר־תֵּלֵ֔ךְ וַהֲשִׁ֣בֹתִ֔יךָ אֶל־הָאֲדָמָ֖ה הַזֹּ֑את כִּ֚י לֹ֣א אֶֽעֱזָבְךָ֔ עַ֚ד אֲשֶׁ֣ר אִם־עָשִׂ֔יתִי אֵ֥ת אֲשֶׁר־דִּבַּ֖רְתִּי לָֽךְ׃

‎¹⁶וַיִּיקַ֣ץ יַעֲקֹב֮ מִשְּׁנָתוֹ֒ וַיֹּ֕אמֶר* אָכֵן֙ יֵ֣שׁ יְהוָ֔ה בַּמָּק֖וֹם הַזֶּ֑ה וְאָנֹכִ֖י לֹ֥א יָדָֽעְתִּי׃

‎¹⁷וַיִּירָא֙ וַיֹּאמַ֔ר מַה־נּוֹרָ֖א הַמָּק֣וֹם הַזֶּ֑ה אֵ֣ין זֶ֗ה כִּ֚י אִם־בֵּ֣ית אֱלֹהִ֔ים וְזֶ֖ה שַׁ֥עַר הַשָּׁמָֽיִם׃

‎¹⁸וַיַּשְׁכֵּ֨ם יַעֲקֹ֜ב בַּבֹּ֗קֶר וַיִּקַּ֤ח אֶת־הָאֶ֙בֶן֙ אֲשֶׁר־שָׂ֣ם מְרַאֲשֹׁתָ֔יו וַיָּ֥שֶׂם אֹתָ֖הּ מַצֵּבָ֑ה וַיִּצֹ֥ק שֶׁ֖מֶן עַל־רֹאשָֽׁהּ׃

‎¹⁹וַיִּקְרָ֛א אֶת־שֵֽׁם־הַמָּק֥וֹם הַה֖וּא בֵּֽית־אֵ֑ל וְאוּלָ֛ם ל֥וּז שֵׁם־הָעִ֖יר לָרִאשֹׁנָֽה׃

‎²⁰וַיִּדַּ֥ר יַעֲקֹ֖ב נֶ֣דֶר לֵאמֹ֑ר אִם־יִהְיֶ֨ה אֱלֹהִ֜ים עִמָּדִ֗י וּשְׁמָרַ֙נִי֙ בַּדֶּ֤רֶךְ הַזֶּה֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר אָנֹכִ֣י הוֹלֵ֔ךְ וְנָֽתַן־לִ֥י לֶ֛חֶם לֶאֱכֹ֖ל וּבֶ֥גֶד לִלְבֹּֽשׁ׃

‎²¹וְשַׁבְתִּ֥י בְשָׁל֖וֹם אֶל־בֵּ֣ית אָבִ֑י וְהָיָ֧ה יְהוָ֛ה לִ֖י לֵאלֹהִֽים׃

‎²²וְהָאֶ֣בֶן הַזֹּ֗את אֲשֶׁר־שַׂ֙מְתִּי֙ מַצֵּבָ֔ה יִהְיֶ֖ה בֵּ֣ית אֱלֹהִ֑ים וְכֹל֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר תִּתֶּן־לִ֔י עַשֵּׂ֖ר אֲעַשְּׂרֶ֥נּוּ לָֽךְ׃

10. Jacob set out from Beer Shebah and went to Haran. 11. He reached a certain place and he spent the night there because the sun was set and he took from the stones of that place put under his head and he slept at that place. 12. He had a dream and in his dream he saw a ladder set on the earth and its top reached to the heaven and he saw the angels of God were going up and down on it/ascending and descending on it. 13. And he saw the LORD standing by him and

he said: "I am the LORD God of your fathers Abraham and God of Isaac. The land on which you are lying I shall give it to you and to your descendant. 14. Your descendant shall be like the dust of the earth and you shall spread to the west and to the east, and to the north and to the south. And all the clans/families of the earth shall be blessed/shall bless themselves by you and your descendants. 15. Behold I am with you and protect you wherever you go and I will bring you back to this land because I shall not forsake/leave you until I have done what I said to you."

16. Jacob awoke from his sleep and said "Surely/I realized that the Lord is present in this place but I did not know." 17. And he was afraid that he said: "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God. And this is the gate of the heaven." 18. Jacob woke up in the morning and he took the stone, which was under his head, and he set it as a pillar and he poured oil on its top.19. And Jacob called the name of that place Bethel. But previously the name of that city was Luz.

20 And then Jacob made a *vow* saying "If God will be with me; and keep/protect me in this journey I am engaged on or undertaking; and give me food to eat and clothes to wear; 21 and I return back to my father's house in peace; then the LORD shall be my God, 22 and this stone which I set as a pillar shall be the house of God and I shall give tenth out of all you will give me.

APPENDIX 3

Institution of Tithing

Evidences about the practice of tithing in Ancient Near East shows that it is a popular custom. Tithe was not practiced only by the Israelites, as it is attested in the most cultural world of the Mesopotamia, Egypt, South Arabia, and Ugarit. It has been observed that the practice of tithing in these cultures comprises both tax given to the government and an offering given to the deity (Harris 1980: 702-704; Pagolu 1998: 171-191).

The concept of the 'מעשר' 'tithe' in its derivative form as a verb is narrowed down specifically to the cultic practice of offering tithe to God or broadened to include even the sense of giving tax to kings. Examples:

Gen. 28:22: עשר אעשרנו :עַשֵּׂר 'giving the tenth' (Piel infinitive) אעשרנו 'I will give the tenth' (Piel-imperfect/future)➔I will surely give you the tenth

Deu 14:22: עשר תעשר :עשר 'tithing you' (Piel infinitive); תעשר 'I shall tithe' (Peil imperfect/future)➔you shall truly tithe

1 Sam. 8:15, 17: יעשר Kal-imperfect (future) 'the king will take tithe.'[78]

In the Hebrew scripture the practice of tithe-offering is mentioned only twice in the narrative of the patriarchal religion (Gen. 14:18-20; 28:22). But most of the evidences of the Hebrew scripture about the concept of tithe imply that it is part of the thanksgiving to God for the blessing of abundance that the people of God receive from God. Tithing is not a one-time act, rather it is a continual act of his people as long as God's blessing continues. The following are the summary of some of the main features of the tithe in the ancient Israelite cultural context, which also indicate the aspect of the offering of the tithe:

1. It was perceived as given to God, to show the reverence and fear of him (Deut. 14:23). In addition, in terms of Lev. 27:30-34 and Num. 18:21-31 it is presented as part of the religious worship.

2. Tithe was taken as an expression of thanksgiving to God for his provision and care. Thus it was expected to be accompanied with rejoicing (Deut. 14:24-26).

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[78] One can observe from the above construction that according to the religious legislation of the cultic use of the tithe in the ancient Israelites, the intensive verbal form of the Hebrew verb is employed for tithing (Piel or Hiphil) while Kal (Qal?) imperfect is used for giving tax to the kings

For example, Jacob made it as part of his vow to offer to God a tenth of all what God will bless him with, as a thanksgiving, if God answers his plea (Gen. 28:22). The connection of giving tithe as a thanksgiving for receiving a blessing from God was well reflected in the book of the prophet Malachi:

> Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. I will rebuke the locust for you, so that it will not destroy the produce of your soil; and your vine in the field shall not be barren, says the LORD of hosts. Then all nations will count you happy, for you will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts (Malachi 3:10-12).

Consequently, the giving of tithe was accompanied with a sacred meal which was eaten with praises and rejoicing, remembering the wonderful blessings of God (Lev. 12:7; 14:23).

3. God allocated tithe offering to be given to his servants—priests and Levites. Consequently the tithe was legislated in the Israelite's law and it was dedicated to support the Levites and the priests (Deut. 14:27, Numb. 18:20-22; Deut. 26:12; Neh. 10:37/38). Likewise, the tithe of every third year was allocated for the care of Levites, orphans, widows, and foreigners (Deut. 14:28-29).

4. The tithe of the agricultural produce was allowed for the family celebration in order to rejoice for the agricultural provision of God (Deut. 14:22-27).

5. The tithe should be given at the place which God chooses in one of the twelve tribes (Lev. 12:6, 14).

6. Tithing is not a one-time action rather it is a continuous practice as long as the blessing of God continuous.

The legislation given in Deuteronomy 14:22-29[79] shows that the main religious concept of the tithe in the ancient Israelite cultural context was rejoicing for the blessings they have received from God.

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[79] Set apart a tithe of all the yield of your seed that is brought in yearly from the field. In the presence of the LORD your God, in the place that he will choose as a dwelling for his name, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, your wine, and your oil, as well as the firstlings of your herd and flock, so that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. But if, when the LORD your God has blessed you, the distance is so great that you are unable to transport it, because the place where the LORD your God will choose to set his name is too far away from you, then you may turn it into money. With the money secure in hand, go to the place that the LORD your God will choose; spend the money for whatever you wish-- oxen, sheep, wine, strong drink, or whatever you desire. And you shall eat there in the presence of the LORD your God, you and your

This scriptural evidences strengthens my conclusion that presumably the connection of Jacob's votive plea for 'food to eat and clothes to wear' with his votive utterance to give tenth out of everything God will give him implies that he requested God for the blessing of prosperity, thus metarpresenting God's thought to bless him.

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household rejoicing together. As for the Levites resident in your towns, do not neglect them, because they have no allotment or inheritance with you. Every third year you shall bring out the full tithe of your produce for that year, and store it within your towns; the Levites, because they have no allotment or inheritance with you, as well as the resident aliens, the orphans, and the widows in your towns, may come and eat their fill so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work that you undertake.

APPENDIX 4

Interviews about the Vow and 'Rape' of Dinah

This interview aims to discover two things:

1. To discover the Hadiyya and other related community's encyclopedic information about the concept of vow

2. To discover whether the Hadiyya people perceive what Shechem did to Dinah as rape or as another way of marriage.

The major interview task was conducted in July 14-August 12 in Ethiopia and it involved 60 interviewees who comprise young, old, men, and women. Ten of them are unmarried young people: four girls and six men. The rest of the participants are all married: 30 men and 20 women. The interviewees are from different geographical locations of Ethiopia which include: Hadiyya, Addis Ababa, Central Shoa, Gondor, Gojam, Sidamo, Kambatta, Wollo, and Harar. I have also interviewed two Eritreans—one man and one woman. The majority of the participants are from the Hadiyya people—40 interviewees, and the rest are from the above mentioned places. The interviewe sessions were conducted in group context in different ocassions and places; and I represent the summary of their responses here.

I thought it is appropriate to involve the majority of the participants from Hadiyya because the Hadiyya people are my focus group for the purpose of this research. Therefore, although I consider the contribution of the responses of the other interviewees, my conclusion of the empirical data is mainly based on the responses of the Hadiyya participants.

1. Interview about the Concept of Vow in Hadiyya

Note: A vow could be made to deities like God, angel Gebre'el, angel Michael, family spirits, Spirits which work through witchdoctors, and etc.

Why do you make a vow? Except two interviewees, all the interviewees unanimously said that it is not intended to influence God rather it is caused by the distress of the person. It is a reflection of the emotion of the petitioner.

Note: In only one interview occasion only two scholars, one from Ethiopia and the other from Eritrea, responded that it was intended to influence God.

1. **Is it not possible to pray to God without making a vow?** Yes it is possible. Vow is a kind of commitment to express one's thanks and appreciation for what the deity has done. They indicated that it is intrinsic to bring such gifts to God as a thanks giving because he helped you to get out of your distress

2. **To whom does one make a vow?** It is always made by the humans to the deity

3. **When or in what circumstances do you make a vow?** When we are distressed

4. **Where do you make a vow?:** We can make vow anywhere

5. **When do you fulfill a vow?** If only when God answers our plea or petition

6. **Does God make a vow to humans?** Never; we humans make a vow to God

7. **Does one make a vow to another fellow man?** Never; we make vow only to God. We do not make vow to humans.

8. **How do you make a vow?** Several of them gave illustration from their own experience. I have incorporated one example here. An elderly man told his own experience as follows:

> Once I bought a goat and the goat fall sick. So I made a vow to God saying: 'God if you heal this goat and if it produces many youngs then I will give you one out of them as a thanks giving.' God healed the goat and eventually it produced so many of them. But I failed to fulfill my vow. Consequently, all the goats were hit by plague and all of them died. Thus I learned a lesson. It is not an obligation to make a vow but once it is made it is seriously abiding."

9. **Can anybody make a vow?** Yes; even a thief can make a vow saying "God, if you give me success in this steeling I will do …"

10. **What will happen if one fails to fulfill his vow?** It is not good to fail to fulfill one's vow. Terrible thing will happen.

11. **Can you change a vow?** Never; you cannot change your vow

12. **Are there some things which are not supposed to be offered as a vow offering?** No, you can offer anything. I was told that some people even offer lice, rat, walking to the sanctuary barefoot, standing naked etc.

13. **Can one annul a vow?** Never; once it is made it is abiding. But we are obliged to fulfill if and only if the deity answers one's plea.

2. Interview about whether Dinah was Raped

Research method: Read the narrative summary of the Dinah story to the audience and ask them what has happened to Dinah.

Summary of the story:

There is a story in Gen. 34 which tells us that a man called Jacob had a girl called Dinah. One day Dinah went out to visit with the girls of the land. While she was visiting with them a man called Shechem saw her, and he took her and he slept with her. Shechem loved the girl very much that he spoke to her in nice words and he told her that he loves her. Shechem was a son of Hamor who was the ruler of a city.

Shechem told his father Hamor that he loves Dinah very much. So he asked his father to go and negotiate with Dinah's family so that they can allow him to marry her. Therefore, his father went to Dinah's family and pleaded with them so that they should give their daughter to his son so that he can marry her. He told them that he can give them whatever they ask as a dowry. Both Shechem and his father pleaded with Jacob and with her brothers. Hamor spoke with them, saying "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter; I pray you, give her to him in marriage. Make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves. You shall dwell with us; and the land shall be open to you; dwell and trade in it, and get property in it." Shechem also said to her father and to her brothers. Let me find favor in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I will give. Ask of me so much as marriage present and gift, and I will give you accordingly as you say to me; only give me the maiden to be my wife" (Gen. 34:8-12). Then I asked the interviewees:

According to this story, what happened to Dinah? Response: All participants said "*ooki gosimma*", which means 'that was an abduction marriage'. **Why?** Because it is evident that he kept the girl with him and he is negotiating with the girl's family for marriage. Probably the man abducted the girl because he new that they will not let him marry her. So first he had to take the girl and then negotiate.

Is it not rape? It is not, because if he intended to rape her he wouldn't keep the girl with him and he wouldn't go to negotiate for marriage.

APPENDIX 5

Conditionals and Metarepresentation

The truth functional approach to the propositional calculus and the semantic analysis of the conditional cluses linked by the connective 'if' describes the conditionals (clauses connected by 'if') as material implication or material conditionals. John I. Saeed calls the protasis of such expression 'antecedent' and the apodosis 'consequent'. I wish to summarize Saeed's explanation of such connections of the two clauses in the truth table as follows (Saeed 2003: 91):

p	q	p→q
T	T	T
T	F	F
F	T	T
F	F	T

Saeed further explains the table by providing the following example:

  If it rains then I'll go to the movies

According to this table this conditional sentence can be false only if it rains and the person who commits himself to go does not go to the movies: **p= T, q=F**. If it doesn't rain **(p=F),** then the conditional claim, whether he goes to the movie **(q=T)** or not **(q=F),** cannot be invalidated. Thus Saeed explains such kind of relation of p is a sufficient condition for q (rain causes him to go to the movies) but not a necessary condition, because other things might cause him go.

  However Saeed admits that the conditional clauses in the actual language often have other features than the truth-conditional relation claims, because the truth-conditional description does not account for the human intuition about the other features of the conditional clauses. For example, the truth-functional description implies that there is always causal and consequent connection between protasis (antecedent or the *if*-clause) and apodosis (consequent or *then*-clause). This relation implies that if p= F then q=F; i. e, according to the above illustration, if it does not rain (p=F) then he will not go to the

movies (q=F). However the above truth-table claims p=F q=T, which will imply that even if it does not rain (p=F), still he will go (q=T) which will naturally invalidate the truth-functional claim. Saeed also further admits that the truth-functional approach does not account for the counterfactual conditionals like:

If I were an ostrich, then I would be a bird.

There is one other conditional which the truth-functional approach describes as "biconditionals". The biconditional clauses in English are connected by "if and only if". The relation between such clauses is symbolized by $\equiv$ or by $\leftrightarrow$. According to the truth functional approach the statement $p \equiv q$ is true only when p and q are true. In such construction p is a necessary condition for q. (See Saeed 1997, 2003: 91-94).

However, Noh argues that the truth-functional approach is not adequate to account for different features of the conditional expressions unless it is complemented with a pragmatic analysis (Noh 2000: 174-179). This is because the traditional approach does not account for the non-basic conditionals (conditionals which do not denote cause and consequence like a votive atterance of Jacoob). If God does not grant his plea, which could be described as F, and Jacob fulfils his vow any way it is not a vow at all, because it does not fulfil the contextual assumption ot the vow institution: vow making, vow granting and vow fulfilling (see my discussion in chapters 4, 5 and 6).

Besides, it is worth noting that Noh categorizes the conditional utterances as a metarepresentational utterances because the antecedents (protasis) are used to represent another representation. The metarepresentational utterances resemble the attributed utterance or thought in a particular context (Noh 2000: 186). She further observes that in some cases both antecedents (protasis) and consequents (apodosis) may be used metarepresentationaly (used to represent another representation) in which case consequent (apodosis) may express the speaker's attitude to what is echoed in the antecedent (Noh 2000: 205-208). Thus I consider that both the traditional and pragmatic approaches to the explaination of conditionals complement each other because pragmatics complement the semantic (truth functional) approach by explaining the attitude and intention of the speaker for using the conditionals, in a particular context, by accessing the relevant contextual assumption by inferencing, being trigerred by the logical expresion. Besides, only the inferential processing aspect of the communication

allows one to access the assumed relevant information, including the relevant encyclopedic information, of the relevant concept in a given context. For example, the binding feature of the vow institution and the adverse consequence of Jacob's laxity to fulfill his vow (which we discussed in this dissertation), which is some of the encyclopedic entries of the concept of vow and votive narrative in the cognitive environment of the hearers, cannot be explained by the truth conditional approach, because it is not explicitly stated by the conditional utterance. Rather, it was assumed that the hearers will imagine for themselves (Carston 2002: 349-359). For example, the adverse consequence of the unfulfilled vow of Jacob, which was discussed in the dissertation, is beyond the propositional calculus and the semantic analysis of the conditional cluses of Jacob's votive utterances.

APPENDIX 6

Some Real-Life Stories of Abductive Marriage among the Hadiyya People

The following examples of the abductive marriage are only a few of the many true stories of this practice. Each incident of these examples represents different features of the abductive marriage which would happen during the attempt. The main nature of the abductive marriage is that it is sexually violent and confrontational because it provokes the conscience of honor and shame of the involved social groups of the community.

Note: The names of the women involved are withheld in order to protect their identity.

Story of the woman A: A young girl came to visit her sister who was married in another village about two hours walk from their parent's home. A young man saw the girl and fall in love with her that he consulted with his friends how to get her for marriage. Meanwhile the girl went back to her parents' home. However, one of his friends decided to go and persuade her sister so that she would arrange for the abductive marriage. Eventually the woman was persuaded that she agreed to work a conspiracy with the men. After all it is good for her because her sister will be closer to her.

The woman plotted the way as follows. She agreed to request her parents so that they send some wheat by her sister to the market and she will get it from there because she needed it badly. When her sister brings the wheat for her the young men will abduct her for the marriage. Thus she worked with the young man and his friends how to make the abductive marriage aattempt successful. The prospective husband bought dresses for the girl as a gift without the girl's knowledge. Then the men ambushed to abduct the girl. Eventually the innocent girl brought the wheat to the market for her sister only to find that she was betrayed by her sister. The men took the girl by force while she was screaming, and hid her in a place they felt was secure. The man had sexual intercourse with her.

Then the father of the boy was informed that his son has abducted the girl for the marriage. So he went to the parents of the girl with special gift in order to negotiate for the marriage. Eventually both the girl and her parents consented for the marriage that

they legalized it. The couple organized a post marriage wedding celebration. The couples are enjoying a happy marriage until today and they have several children.

Story of the woman B: According to the Hadiyya tradition young men used to go to a girl in order to explore and see whether the girl is desirable for marriage. Accordingly, two different young men who were interested to marry the girl came at the same time to see her for marriage. Both boys became highly interested in the girl that the girl's parents did not know which one two choose. So the parents went to a witchdoctor to consult about the matter. The witchdoctor told them which one to choose, and they did as he said. Eventually the girl was legally betrothed to the young man. However, the other young man was jealous and that he decided to marry the girl by abduction which he did. He took the girl and hid her in a secret place. This behavior made the clan of the fiancé of the girl furious because they felt that the clan of the abductor brought shame to the family and the whole clan of the fiancé. Therefore, they decided to hunt for the abducted girl and bring her for a wife for the fiancé in order to restored their honor, and revenge and humiliate the abductor, his family, and his clan. They found the girl after one week of searching and brought her with a great confrontation, enchantment, and dance to show that they are more powerful than the clan of the abductor; have restored their honor, and have reversed the shame on their opponent, his family, and his clan. Thus the abductive marriage was aborted after one week and she married her first fiancé. The couples have several children and they still live united in a good marriage relationship.

Story of the woman C: Woman C was approached by a young man for a marriage when she was a girl and they were in love. The man gave the girl some gifts and he was planning to give dowry to legalize the agreement. However, the girl changed her mind and told him that she does not want to marry him. This behavior of the girl offended the man that he decided to marry the girl by abduction. Supported by his friends, he ambushed and abducted the girl when she was coming from the school and hid her in a particular place. When the parents of the girl heard that, they raised an alarm to their clan because they felt that this behavior of the boy was an offence to them and the whole clan. Thus, they were very angry because they felt that he threatened their honor. Therefore,

they searched for the girl immediately in order to abort the abductive marriage and found her on the second day. They brought the girl home with a great enchantment and dance to show that they have restored their honor and reversed the shame to the abductor, his family, and his clan. They physically humiliated them. The clan of the abductor apologized for the attempted abdactive marriage and pleaded with the clan and family of the girl so that they should give the girl in marriage. After a serious negotiation the family of the girl agreed to give the girl for marriage to the same man and asked the girl whether she was willing to marry him. The girl was also consented to marry him and she married him by a wedding ceremony. The couples are enjoying a happy marriage until today.

Story of the woman D: Woman D's sister was married in a village, very far from her parent's home. It was about two days walking distance. One day women D, when she was a girl, went to visit with her sister. While she was with her sister a young man sow her and loved her that he abducted her for marriage. This behavior of the boy offended the girl's family that they decided to abort the marriage by confrontation. They searched for the girl for several days and eventually they found her where the boy hid here. They attempted to take the girl home by force but the boy's side overpowered the girl's family that they retained the girl. Thus the girl's family went home humiliated once more. However, the girl tricked the boy. She disguised that she loved him. One day, after three weeks, in the early evening, the girl told to her sister-in-law that she wanted to relief her self outside and then she will come back home. So nobody followed her because they did not suspect her. The girl escaped. Immediately, the family of the abductor raised an alarm that they started hunting for the girl. When the girl realized that people are following after her, she begged one man to hide her in his house. The man hid her in his house and when they asked him whether he has seen a girl he told them that a girl has just passed running. They did not suspect him that they continued running to catch her. Early in the morning, the man accompanied the girl until she reached to a safe place. Thus the girl escaped and reached her parents' home on the third day. Her parents took her to the Hospital for treatment. Then she resumed her high school study and eventually she did her college study after finishing her high school.

APPENDIX 7

Excursus on Translating Gen 28:10-35:15

1. What is Translation?

The current common term used as a title for the discipline of interpreting and translating a message from one language to another language is known as "Translation Studies" (Shuttleworth 1997: 188). During the early 1970 some scholars used the term "Translatology" as a title for the same discipline. The Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics explains that in applied linguistics the term 'Translatology' subsumes both the process of interpretation and translation of oral and written texts. Thus Translatology describes the process of interpreting and translating both written texts and oral message, of the cuff (right "at the moment of utterance"), as "simultaneous interpretation" and "simultaneous translation" from one language to another language. It also describes the oral translation of a written text or a written translation of an oral message into another language as "sight translation" (Crystal 1990: 472). However the term "Translatology" has not been accepted by the English speaking scholars because they consider it as a neologism (Shuttleworth 1997: 188).

Shuttleworth summarizes that some scholars attempted to describe what translation is and made some kind of distinction between different types of translation which he lists them as: overt vs. covert translation or domesticating vs. foreignizing Translation, diagrammatic translation, inter-semiotic translation, paraphrase and pseudo-translation, the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL), "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language" or inter-lingual translation, replacement of message in one language in other languages, or the conveying of meaning from one set of language signs to another set of language signs, a translation aimed in maintaining the effect of the original message in the translation which becomes a secondary communication both in terms of meaning and style (see Shuttleworth 1997: 181).

Some scholars categorize translation into three areas: "intralingual translation" which denotes paraphrasing or of signs of one language with another signs of the same language; "interlingual translation" which denotes interpretation and translation of sings

in one language with signs of another language; "intersemiotic translation" which denotes the process of conveying a signs in one language into non-verbal sign of another language like from language signs into music and art signs (Gentzler 2001: 1). Similarly Gentzler categorizes the translation theories which were introduced since mid-sixteenth century into five: (1) "[T]he North American translation workshop; (2) the 'science' of translation; (3) early translation studies; (4) polysystem theory; (5) deconstruction"(Gentzler 2001: 2).

Shuttleworth observes that most of these descriptions are normative in a sense that they tend to give guidance about what translation is supposed to be rather than simply describing what translation is (they are prescriptive not descriptive) (Shuttleworth 1997: 182; Hickey 1998: 2). This distinction between prescriptive and descriptive definition of the translation is based on what one intends to define: "Translation" as the process or as the final product of the process. For example on the one hand some scholars base their definition on the final product of the translation process that they avoid the prescriptive feature in their description (Shuttleworth 1997: 182). On the other hand some scholars propose a more comprehensive prescriptive definition of the current translation process based on the final product which varies according to the particular response to the needs it intends to address by the transition (Shuttleworth 1997: 182; Hickey 1998: 2).

However, each of the above mentioned categorization is based on the analogy of capturing particular feature of the translation task. Hence, they are not comprehensive in terms of conceptualizing multi-facet task of translation process (Shuttleworth 1997: 181). Consequently it has been proved that it is a challenge to establish a translation theory which comprises the sub-theory of translation: translation as a process, translation as a product, translation as a function oriented target text (skopos theory), and translation didactics or instructions about how and what to do in translation (Shuttleworth 1997: 187). In terms of applied translation it is impossible to exclude the above translation features one from the other (Gentzler 2001: 1).

Multidisciplinary approach describes translation as an interdisciplinary task which involves cultural anthropology, different types of linguistic studies including socio and psycholinguistics, literature studies, different types of translation including machine translation, history, and etc. (Shuttleworth 1997: 184; Gentzler 2001: 1, 108, 203). Gutt

(Gutt 2000), approaches translation studies from the relevance theoretic perspective and describes it as an inferential communication, hence there is no need for a comprehensive translation theory. The debate continues between those who argue that translation is simply a practical application which cannot be described as a theory and those who contend that a descriptive theory of the translation can be established (Hickey 1998: 2; Gentzler 2001: 76-79, 82).

In addition, there is a debate between accurate translatability and untranslatability of texts (Hickey 1998: 2). However, though it is an indisputable fact that languages are different in grammatical configuration and by the performance of public representation of some conceptual perception of some things/affairs it is evident that ostensive translation between languages takes place effectively (Hickey 1998: 1-2; Shuttleworth 1997: 180). Conceptual incompatibility across languages which might have been caused by cultural difference or non existence of things in both language communities can not be a hindrance for the functional dynamic equivalence translation because such incompatibility can be compensated by different translation techniques once the translator understood the problem (see Shuttleworth 1997: 180-181; Nida and Taber 1969: 2, 98).

A translator must be conversant with the source text side, the target text side, and social, cultural, and political differences between the two which must have influenced the mental and public representation of the texts (Wendland 1973; Wendland 2008; Wilt & Wendland 2008). Translation is a negotiation between in the areas of the source text as understood by the translator, its connection to other source literatures, language, and culture as implicated in the source text and in the areas of the cultural, social, and political situation, concepts of translation, previous translation of the same, other texts, and etc of the receptor language (Gentzler 2001:4). In the process of all the translation tasks the translator's mental representation of the source text is supreme dominant because translators always aim to translate a text from the author's point of view of the source text (Gentzler 2001: 9, 13-14; Shuttleworth 1997: 178). Of course getting at the meaning of the source text is decisively inferential. In other words one important feature regarding interpreting the source text is that it is inferential because naturally we do not limit our analysis on what is explicitly said, but "also what it does not say or says only by implication" (Gentzler 2001: 3). However, the process of inferencing is decisively

constrained by the public representation of the author of the source text and his/her point of view about the narrative texts. Therefore it is crucial for the translators to continue searching to access the cultural, social, political, institutional, experiential, and etc. phenomenon which influenced the public representation of the source text. Richards observes this feature of the translation task when he claims that "translators, with proper education and practice, can come to know the proper methodology to achieve the correct understanding of the primary text" (Hickey 1998: 6; Gentzler 2001: 14). Some of the relevant questions a translator should ask regarding the source text are what is that the source texts and its translation intend to achieve "and how they attempt to achieve it" and how both the writers of the source text and translated texts organize their public representation in terms of "cooperating with their readers, being polite and relevant, or how inter-cultural difference may be treated" (Hickey 1998: 5). Thus, the final product of the translation reflects the translator's conclusion achieved by his choice and decision after exhausting all the possible resources in order to understand the source text correctly (Shuttleworth 1997: 178). Thus, it is possible that a well equipped translator can make correct mental representation and public representation of the source text; hence creating an interpretive resemblance between both source and receptor texts (Hickey 1998: 6, Gutt 2000: 105)

Regarding translating the Bible, the source text which is culturally, temporally, geographically, and historically remote to us, it is very important and necessary to have some translations of contemporary cultural institutions, political and social situation, geographical and environmental phenomenon, and etc. of the biblical texts in order to guide the translators to present a transparent target text which helps the recipients of the Target text familiar with the cultural constraints of the source language.

In addition, experience shows that the translation process which will lead to the final production of a target text, acceptable by all concerned parties, requires a collaborative or joint action of all concerned parties in the process of translation. In such situation a translator should be ready and open to cooperate with all the concerned parties and other translation experts.

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2. Sample Review of the Translated Versions of the Bible

As a background for my suggestion about how to translate the Hebrew concept of נדר and the votive narrative of Jacob I would like to do a brief review on other up-to-date Bible translations of the votive narrative of Jacob in order to see if there is any translation which translated the story from the votive narrative perspective. In this brief review I wish to consider only the translated versions which employ section-headings which is usually aimed to guide the readers.

2.1. New Revised Standard Version (1989)

This version divided Genesis 28:10-35:15 into 14 different sections:

1. 28:10-22: Jacob's dream at Bethel
2. 29:1-14: Jacob Meets Rachel
3. 29:15-30:24: Jacob Marries Laban's Daughters
4. 30:25-43: Jacob Prospers at Laban's Expense
5. 31:1-21 Jacob Flees with Family and Flocks
6. 31:22-42: Laban Overtakes Jacob
7. 31:43-32:2: Laban and Jacob Make a Covenant
8. 32:3-21: Jacob Sends Presents to Appease Esau
9. 32:22-32: Jacob Wrestles at Peniel
10. 33:1-17: Jacob and Esau Meat
11. 33:18-20: Jacob Reaches Shechem
12. 34:1-24: The Rape of Dinah
13. 34:25-31: Dinah's Brothers Avenge their Sister
14. 35!-15: Jacob Returns to Bethel

2.2. New Revised Standard Version in Amharic (1992)

1. 28:10-22: The Dream Jacob Sow in Bethel
2. 29:1-14: Jacob Arrived to the House of Laban
3. 29:15-30: Jacob Service to Laban for Rachel and Leaha
4. 29:31-30:24: Children Born to Jacob

5. 30:25-43: Jacob complained with Labab about his Wage
6. 31:1-21: Jacob Flees from Laban secretly
7. 31:22-42: Laban pursues Jacob
8. 31:43-55: An Agreement Made between Laban and Jacob
9. 32:1-21: Jacob's Preparation to meet Esau
10. 32:22-32: Jacob Wrestles with God
11. 33:1-20: Jacob Meets Esau
12. 34:1-31: The Rape of Jacob's Daughter Dinah
13: 35:1-15: God Blessed Jacob in Bethel

2.3. The New American Bible (1979)

1. 28:10-22: Jacob's Dream at Bethel

2. 29:1-14a: Arrival in Haran

3. 29:14b-30: Marriage to Leah and Rachel

4. 29:31-30:24: Jacob's Children

5. 30:25-43 Jacob outwits Laban

6. 31:1-24: Flight from Laban

7. 31:25-32:3: Jacob and Laban in Gilead

8. 32:4-22: Embassy to Esau

9. 32:23-33: Struggle with the Angel

10. 33:1-20: Jacob and Esau Meet

11. 34:1:12: The Rape of Dinah

12. 34:13-31: Revenge of Jacob's Sons

13. 35:1-16: Bethel Revisited

2.4. New International Version 2005

1. 28:10-22: Jacob's Dream at Bethel

2. 29:1-30: Jacob Arrives in Padan Aram

3. 29:31-30:24: Jacob's Children

4. 30:25-43: Jacob's Flocks Increase

5. 31:1-21: Jacob Flees from Laban

6. 31:22-55: Laban Pursues Jacob

7. 32:1-21: Jacob Prepares to meet Esau

8. 32:22-32: Jacob Wrestles with God

9. 33:1-20: Jacob Meets Esau

10. 34:1-31: Dinah and the Shechemites

11. 35:1-15: Jacob Returns to Bethel

2.5. NIV Amharic Version 2001

1. 27:41-28:9: Jacob runs to Laban

2. 28:10-22: Jacob's dream at Bethel

3. 29:1-30:24:Jacob arrives in Mesopotamia

4. 30:25-43: Jacob's flocks increase

5. 31:1-21: Jacob flees from Laban

6. 31:22-55: Laban pursues Jacob

7. 32:1-31: Jacob prepares to meet Esau his brother

8. 33:1-20: Jacob meets Esau

9. 34:1-31: Jacob's daughter raped

10. 35:1-15: Jacob returns to Bethel

We can observe from the section-heading organizations of above sample versions that none of them treated the story as a votive narrative. Rather they treated the coherent episodes of the votive narrative as isolated episodes. To my surprise, even the Amharic translation of the story shows that, though the target audience is a vow conscious society, the translation was treated just like the English versions. Thus, the translators failed to reconstruct this votive narrative, interpret it, and translate it within the context of the institution of vow and within the framework of the votive narrative of Jacob in Bethel.

One may wonder "what was the reason?" The answer to this question, in terms of non-vow-conscious target readers, is that they cannot access to the primary audience's contextual assumption which the narrator assumed that they will naturally infer. Unless those assumptions are made accessible there is not way that they can process this narrative in the same way as the assumed primary audience did. Therefore, they need to be helped in this regard. Secondly, to answer in terms of the target audience who has

similar practice of the institution of vow such as Amharic, probably they failed to reconstruct the story according to the votive narrative due to different reasons:

1. Probably they were influenced by other translations or translation aids and commentaries.

2. They failed to employ their assumptions of the institution of vow to reconstruct Jacob's votive narrative because of other different reasons which needs further investigation.

This calls for a suggestion of the better way of representation of this story into the target audiences in translation task. First of all it is worth noting that, though translation is different from the primary communication, it is also a communication by the virtue of its communicative nature because understanding the translated message also involves inferential processing as the primary communication does, not decoding what has been encoded in the linguistic expression of the translation (Gutt 2000: 22, 24ff; 76; Sim 2006: 34ff; 82,148). Translation scholars noted that getting at the intended message "crucially involves the use of context" (Nida & Taber 1969: 107; Gutt 2000: 26; Sim 2006: 48, 57ff; Wendland 2008). According to the relevance theory, "[a] context is a psychological construct, a subset of the hearers' assumptions about the world" and will affect the interpretation of an utterance as well as any other communication stimulus, including translation (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 15). For example the encyclopedic information about the institutional nature of the Hebrew concept 'vow' comprises vow making, vow granting, and vow fulfilling. This nature is pertinent both in the actual practice of vow and in the mental representation of the concept vow and votive narratives. This nature is a mutually shared contextual assumption which was manifest to the primary audience which Relevance theory describes as a 'cognitive environment' (Sperber 1995: 39). The question is then how can we help the target readers of the secondary communication (translation) to reconstruct these contextual assumptions about the vow so that they can create mutually shared cognitive environment like the primary audience about the same so that the contextual assumption of vow can manifest in their cognitive environment when they read this narrative unit? In other words how can we make the cognitive environment of the secondary audience resemble with the cognitive environment of the primary audience regarding the institution of vow? This task is very crucial for drawing

relevant cognitive effect from the translation of the votive narrative of Jacob. Unless the reading of the translation of Jacob narrative is inferentially combined with the presumed contextual assumption of the ancient Israelites' institution of vow the intended communication of this votive narrative will not be effective (Gutt 2000: 76; Sim 2006: 35, 111). In fact, as the above sample translation versions show, they will employ other unintended contextual assumption instead (searching for the relevance) if they are not able to access the intended contextual assumption of the primary audience (Sim 2006: 146).

I believe it is possible to help our secondary audience in this matter because we assume that every normally thinking human being is capable of reconstructing such institutional contextual assumptions of other cultures in their cognitive environment, as long as they are helped sufficiently to access to it (Hill 2003: 100). In this regard, several translation scholars have described the nature of contextual assumptions and suggested different ways of making such contextual assumption accessible to the target audience from different perspectives (Gutt 2000; Hill 2006; Pattemore; Sim 2006: 38ff). Particularly Hill describes and categorizes the contextual assumption which needs adjustment in the translation task into four types (Hill 2003: 450-454):

1. Shared and believed to be shared with the communicator which does not need contextual adjustment.
2. Shared, but not believed to be shared which should be encouraged to be used
3. Not shared, but thought to be shared which should be corrected and
4. Not shared and not believed to be shared that they are not engaged and are unable to draw meaning. In this case the secondary audience must be taught about the need of reconstructing the contextual assumption they needed because, both they do not know it and do not know its relevance them.

Hill also suggests some strategies of supplying the necessary contextual adjustment. She describes them like supplying in the text, in the footnote, in the Bible background booklets, films, teaching, and etc; and she remarks that such contextual adjustment has proven helpful. Therefore, I intend to propose how to make a contextual adjustment in translating task of the Hebrew concept נדר and Jacob's votive narrative of Gen 28:10-35:15.

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