

# Hospitality and its Ironic Inversion in Genesis 18 & 19: A Theological-Ethical Study

By  
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## Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any university for a degree.

Signature.....

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December 2017

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## **Dedication**

כי כבוד־יהוה

And the memory

of

Silas Sule Kassa  
Stephen OS Maikenti  
Justine Kassa James  
Lydia Molboh James

## Abstract

This dissertation is a study of hospitality and its ironic inversion in Genesis 18 and 19 towards a theological-ethical understanding of the concept in the Old Testament. Hospitality is one of the patterns of behaviour prescribed by the Old Testament towards the ‘other’ (i.e. strangers or foreigners or an alien). The Tangale people of Nigeria and many African tribes attach great importance to the care of strangers. However, in the last three decades, the traditional Tangale practice of hospitality has come under pressure due to factors such as ethnic and religious diversity, politics, economics, globalisation, as well as injustice of various forms and degrees. The concern of this dissertation is the investigation of the Old Testament stories of hospitality, guided by the Christian faith communities’ tradition to help in resisting the inhuman treatment of the ‘other’, especially within the Tangale contexts. Due to similarities in contexts, this study can also be extrapolated to some other cultures in Africa.

This research focuses on the theological-ethical understanding of hospitality in the Old Testament and how it is expressed in the narrative of Genesis 18–19. It investigates the Old Testament concept, its significance and theological-ethical implications. It is proposed that a nuanced understanding of the Old Testament concept and practice of hospitality might reveal its transformative power to the readers. The proposal also anticipated that certain theological-ethical ideals might be gleaned from the Old Testament concept. This may serve as a theological underpinning to incorporate the fundamentals of the concept in contemporary ethical reflections without necessarily generalising meaning and drawing superficial parallels between ancient and contemporary contexts.

The dissertation employs socio-rhetorical criticism of the two chapters of Genesis 18 and 19. Socio-rhetoric is a multidimensional approach to biblical text that allows for the multifaceted witnesses from the Old Testament traditions to be heard. This approach corresponds to the nature of the selected text because the rhetorical issues portrayed in hospitality and kinship are not only ideological, they are also ethical because they relate to issues of social justice as well. The approach identified irony as a rhetorical technique to understanding the selected passage. Socio-rhetoric reveals that Genesis 18 and 19 is a masterpiece of a literary art that exhibits an intricate network of texts. Different textures of the text show that the text must have been formulated during the postexilic period by a sage theologian who combined P and non-P scribal

traditions, making them into a coherent whole. The multidimensional approach identifies seemingly incongruences in the double strand of stories. The incongruences were read as an ironic ploy to critic certain traditions thereof.

The topic, *Hospitality and its Ironic Inversion in Genesis 18 and 19: A Theological-Ethical Study*, indicated the initial intention of the study. However, the ironic reading leads to a surprising realisation that hospitality is intricately linked to kinship in ancient Israel. Kinship provided the vocabulary for understanding the cultural practice of hospitality. It shows that hospitality entails individual and corporate responsibility and accountability towards Israel's Yahweh's covenant obligation of righteousness and social justice towards Yahweh.

## Opsomming

Hierdie proefskrif is 'n studie van gasvryheid en die ironiese omkering daarvan in Genesis 18 en 19 jeens 'n teologiese etiese begrip van dié konsep in die Ou Testament. Die gebruik en praktyk van gasvryheid is een van die gedragspatrone wat deur die Ou Testament voorgeskryf word teenoor die "ander" (dit wil sê vreemdes of vreemdelinge). Die Tangale-mense van Nigerië en baie Afrika-stamme heg groot waarde aan die sorg van vreemdelinge. In die afgelope drie dekades het die tradisionele Tangale-praktyk van gasvryheid egter onder druk gekom as gevolg van faktore soos etniese- en godsdienstige diversiteit, politiek, ekonomie, globalisering, asook onreg van verskillende vorme en grade.

Hierdie verhandeling is 'n ondersoek na die Ou-Testamentiese verhale van gasvryheid, gelei deur die tradisie van die Christelike geloofsgemeenskap, om te help om die onmenslike behandeling van die 'ander' te weerstaan, veral binne die Tangale-konteks. Ekstrapolasies van hierdie studie kan ook moontlik wees in ander kulture in Afrika as gevolg van die ooreenkomste in konteks.

Hierdie navorsing fokus op die teologies-etiese begrip van gasvryheid in die Ou Testament en hoe dit uitgedruk word in die verhaal van Genesis 18-19. Dit ondersoek die Ou-Testamentiese konsep, die betekenis daarvan, asook teologies-etiese implikasies. Daar word voorgehou dat 'n genuanseerde begrip van die Ou-Testamentiese konsep en praktyk van gasvryheid sy transformerende krag aan die lesers sal openbaar. Verder word daar ook verwag dat sekere teologiese etiese idees uit die Ou-Testamentiese konsep verkry kan word. Dit kan dien as 'n teologiese grondslag om die grondbeginsels van die konsep in hedendaagse etiese refleksie te inkorporeer sonder om te veralgemeen en oppervlakkige ooreenkomste tussen antieke en hedendaagse kontekste te identifiseer.

Die verhandeling gebruik sosio-retoriese kritiek op die twee hoofstukke van Genesis 18 en 19. Sosio-retoriek is 'n veelsydige benadering tot die Bybelse teks wat toelaat dat die veelvuldige getuies uit die Ou Testamentiese tradisies gehoor word. Hierdie benadering stem ooreen met die aard van die geselekteerde teks, want die retoriese kwessies wat in gasvryheid en verwantskap uitgebeeld word, is nie net ideologies nie, maar ook eties omdat dit verband hou met kwessies van sosiale geregtigheid. Die benadering wat hier gevolg word, het ironie as

retoriese tegniek geïdentifiseer om die geselekteerde gedeelte te verstaan. Sosio-retoriek onthul dat Genesis 18 en 19 'n meesterstuk is van 'n literêre kuns wat 'n ingewikkelde netwerk van tekste vertoon. Verskillende teksture van die teks toon dat die teks tydens die na-ballingskap periode geformuleer moes gewees het deur 'n sage-teoloog wat P- en nie-P-skribale tradisies gekombineer het tot 'n samehangende geheel. Die multidimensionele benadering identifiseer oënskynlike onversoenbaarheid in hoe die stories verweef is. Die onversoenbaarhede is gelees as 'n ironiese taktiek om sekere tradisies daarvan te kritiseer.

Die onderwerp, *Gasvryheid en die Ironiese Inversie daarvan in Genesis 18 en 19: 'n Teologiese-Etiese Studie*, het die aanvanklike intensie van die studie aangedui. Die ironiese lesing lei egter tot die besef dat gasvryheid nou verbind is aan verwantskap in antieke Israel. Verwantskap verskaf die woordeskat vir die begrip van die kulturele praktyk van gasvryheid. Dit toon dat gasvryheid individuele en korporatiewe verantwoordelikheid en aanspreeklikheid ten opsigte van Israel se Yahweh-verbondsverpligtinge van reg en sosiale geregtigheid teenoor Yahweh behels.



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# *Chapter 1*

## *Introduction*

### 1.1. Background to and motivation for the study

From a cursory look at the Old Testament one can identify “strangers” as a class of people—often grouped together with women, children, the poor and slaves who, as a social group, needed a voice. It, therefore, is significant that the Old Testament prescribes appropriate patterns of behaviour towards this class of people, which may be summarised as a custom of hospitality.

In African cultures, too, hospitality is not a new custom. Different African cultures and societies also emphasise taking care of strangers. The idea of a community and the concept of identity and sense of belonging described by certain African philosophies (*cf.* Mbiti, 1969:2),<sup>1</sup> are good examples of the qualities that describe African hospitality. Various African proverbs and sayings also demonstrate how hospitality is ingrained in certain African cultures. In Zulu culture, we find: “a beast that is passing finishes no grass” and “the foot has no rest” (Nyembezi, 1963:53).<sup>2</sup> Ibekwe (1998:76, 107) notes a common saying in Nigeria that “one who is good to others is best to herself”. A Kanuri proverb goes: “if a person confers a benefit upon another, that benefit is not lost” and in Uganda, there is a saying: “kindness is better than wealth”. Speaking as an insider, there is a Tangale proverb which says *rungun dukduk*, literally translated as ‘strangers are dew’ or ‘a stranger is dew’. Tadi (2013:178) explains this proverb:

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<sup>1</sup> Mbiti’s (1969:2) remark, “[t]o be human is to belong to the whole community and to do so involves participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community” describes Africans’ communal and harmonious life. Everything was done for the sustenance of the community; each person was responsible for the ‘other’s’ welfare. Every member has a moral duty to all other members of the community.

<sup>2</sup> Nyembezi (1963:53) explains these thus, first “Cattle may be driven from place to place. Whilst being driven, they may pick up some grass as they go. But because they do not stop for a long time as they are driven, the amount of grass which they consume is negligible. The same is true of strangers. A stranger is not likely to ruin anybody who treats him well. He is there only for a short while. The proverb commends the kind treatment of strangers. Strangers should be treated with kindness and consideration for one never knows where one will land one day.” Strangers should therefore be hospitably received. Hosts should not be mean as the visitors are there only for a short while. The second, he also comments that: “As one is bound to walk up and down the country, one must treat strangers with kindness, because one never knows where his feet will carry him one day”. Similar to the second Zulu proverb is the Tangale saying on kindness which says *De ma kwatthu po yogum*. Literally translated as “Do not deny it your feet”. Tadi (2013:72f) explains that this proverb articulates the importance of courtesy and hospitality as it informed people on the importance of care for the needy, “old, the poor and the sick [and strangers]” in the Tangale traditional society.

[G]uests are being metaphorically compared to dew which falls at night and disappears with the first rays of the sun. As a farming society the Tangle people are always glad when dew falls, particularly when there is no longer rainfall and certain crops are in need of moisture. Dew is thus seen as something worthwhile but short-lived.

A similar proverb found in Swahili, as identified by Knappert (1997:83), goes: “a stranger is like rain, descending and passing”. These proverbs are examples of expressions of the African cultural concept of hospitality. Not only do these proverbs express the need to care for and protect strangers, they emphasise the importance of guests. Strangers are source of happiness just like the dew and the rain is to the farmer, thus, according to Tadi (2013:178), buttressing the “issue of African hospitality where it is believed that a guest should be received well”.

Cultures, however, are not static. In African cultures, globalisation and its accompanying effects have had great influence on the concept and practice of hospitality. The traditional African practice of hospitality has come under pressure in recent times.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, the ‘other’ is often viewed negatively and with suspicion due to cultural, political, religious and socio-economic diversities. African cultural hospitality is not to be taken at face value.

The cultural and ethnic diversity in Nigeria, with over 300 different languages and ethnic groups, have become a catalyst for numerous outbreaks of ethnic and tribal unrest. The unfortunate tribal unrest of the researcher’s context is worth mentioning here. While *Boko Haram*’s insurgence, politically motivated violence, poverty and injustice were the key issues that motivated the researcher to focus on relationship, it is very unfortunate that from the inception of the study the researcher’s tribe has faced continuous attacks from the neighbouring community. One incident claimed lives including two of his colleagues, Rev Emmanuel Joshua and Pastor Agabus Abner. It is hoped that this research will contribute to the efforts of the resolution of the unrest.

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<sup>3</sup> Shorish, (1999:1f) Globalisation is viewed differently by different people. To the ardent supporters—the officials in the World Bank the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization [WTO], and the European Community, globalisation leads to democracy, better standards of living and freedom. While people from the other side especially the third world countries view globalization as another tool for re-colonisation of the world. Viewed from whatever point, “[g]lobalisation and Culture Globalisation demands some degree of structural changes in the various dimensions of a society. As can be expected, the effects of these structural changes on the normative and value systems (and their attendant institutions) of the non–Western societies are most dramatic. These "structural adjustments" have all too often created traumatic experiences for those who often find themselves helpless to prevent the erosion of their cultures and economic well–being.”

Religious plurality is another major element that poses challenge to the country. The current religious unrest instigated by *Boko Haram* is an example. This and many other cases affects human dignity and flourishing. The ‘other’ in many instances suffer dehumanisation because they are from a different faith tradition or a different ideological orientation. From the political angle, the researcher is also overwhelmed by challenge thereof. Political aspirants often use the diversity for personal and selfish reasons. A Christian candidate, for instance, appoints a running mate from the Islamic faith to gain the favour and vote of the Islam devotees (*cf.* Golwa & et al, 2003:255; Higazi & Lar, 2015:113). Socio-economic stratification<sup>4</sup> has made poverty a systemic reality. The endemic poverty in Nigeria and most African countries is not due to lack of material or natural resources. Rather, the abundant resources are often channelled to the elite minority, while the majority suffer.

The researcher’s personal experience within the African context motivated this research. By critically reconsidering the theme of “hospitality” from the selected Old Testament passages of Genesis 18 and 19, it is hoped that the Old Testament stories of hospitality, governed by the Christian faith tradition will help to reshape and inform traditional African hospitality.

The study will be done in relation to our mandate to relate to one another within a God-given and God-guided paradigm of a life of dignity, acceptance and God-centred relationships. The study presupposes that the idea of one’s duty to all humanity in the Old Testament is embedded in the notion and practice of hospitality. It also presupposes the relevance of the Old Testament as influential in the realm of theological doctrine and ethics. Therefore, the aim is that the study would lead to a theological-ethical understanding of the concept of hospitality, and of its significance in the Old Testament and the world of ancient Israel. The research presupposes that hospitality has great potential for enhancing one’s appreciation and understanding of human dignity as it provides a framework for relationships that are rooted in an understanding of the ‘other’ as having absolute worth. The effect of this is bringing about social harmony and cooperative living, justice, and fairness. A preliminary review of the literature below further provides the incentive to delve into the findings on this ancient custom.

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<sup>4</sup> By this I mean the system by which a society categorises people in a hierarchy based on one’s economic and other social status.



## 1.2. Survey of existing research

Many scholars subscribe to the fact that the practice of hospitality was taken seriously in the world of the ancient Semites. Although there is no exact equivalent for the term “hospitality” in those cultures, there nevertheless exists a tradition of caring for and protecting strangers, guests and foreigners,<sup>5</sup> which may be interpreted as hospitality (Smith, 1901:64; Pezzoli-Olgiati *et al.*, 2009:261). Among nomads, hospitality was deemed a necessity for survival in the desert. This necessity has, according to De Vaux (1961:10), in fact, changed over the course of time to a highly-esteemed virtue amongst the nomads.

Theologically speaking, the importance of the concept of hospitality cannot be overemphasised. Nouwen (1975:46) points out that “[...] if there is any concept worth restoring to its original depth and evocative potential, it is the concept of hospitality. It is one of the richest biblical terms that can deepen and broaden our insight into our relationship to our fellow human beings”. This “depth and evocative potential” of hospitality has been shown as having been a vital part of, but not limited to, the social life of a community in the ancient Semitic world. It was a religious and ethical duty that communities embraced the *gēr* because a *gēr* had no political right and lacked the protection of a kin. In fact, the “Semitic community had a principle that the *gēr* is inviolable. To harm a guest, or to refuse him hospitality, is an offence against *honour*” (Smith, 1901:75f; *cf.* Pezzoli-Olgiati *et al.*, 2009:260f. *Italics added*).

Hospitality is viewed as one of the overarching components of Old Testament ethics. This can be observed in the creation narratives in the Old Testament and other narratives that express Old Testament ethical value. One of the recent works on Old Testament ethics, Janzen’s *Old Testament Ethics: A Paradigmatic Approach* (1994) seems to endorse this claim. Janzen provides five paradigms for a comprehensive understanding of Old Testament ethics, namely familial, priestly, wisdom, royal and prophetic paradigms. He gave examples from the biblical models to explain these paradigms. These models are stories through which the ethical message of God is communicated. According to Janzen, the familial model constitutes the overarching

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<sup>5</sup> Or whatever term may be applicable. It will be noted below that one of the challenges with understanding the ancient custom is the identification of the recipient of hospitality as there are different Hebrew terms describing the ‘other’ who does not fall within one’s kinship group.

paradigm—not only in Israel but also in the ancient Near East in general.<sup>6</sup> He further notes that the preservation of life, possession of land, and *maintenance of kinship through hospitality* were set as the central ethical components of the familial paradigm. The rest of the four paradigms were subordinated to the familial paradigm.

The theological concept of ‘land as solely owned by God’ is central to conceptualising hospitality as a theme in the Old Testament. From the perspective of the creation narratives, God is the ultimate host of all humanity, and the latter are all sojourners, living on the graceful offer of God’s hospitality (Perdue, 1997:225; Dell, 2009:262).<sup>7</sup> This idea is also captured in Janzen’s (1994:42) overarching paradigm for understanding the Old Testament ethic: “In view of these perspectives on life and land in the context of the familial paradigm, the first task of right ethical living is not active self-assertion, but trusting acceptance of God’s hospitality”. From these claims, one may say that the human duty and responsibility toward others then is to offer hospitality in return for the hospitality is shown to them by God. Furthermore, a critical look at the above statements shows that hospitality is placed at the very foundation of every moral and ethical living.<sup>8</sup> These claims imply that the motivation for one’s behaviour, socially and otherwise, depends on one’s understanding and acceptance of God’s offer of hospitality, as expressed in the gift of life and land. Israel’s historical experience of their encounter with God thus informed her theological grounding for most of her legislation concerning her moral and ethical living (Perdue, 1997:233).

But what exactly is hospitality? No final and comprehensive definition will be offered here, rather, it is an effort to engage with existing scholarly researched texts to provide a point of

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<sup>6</sup> Perdue (1997:225) makes a similar argument: “The household in the Bible occupies a central place in the Old Testament theology and ethics. Much of what the Old Testament says about the character and especially the activity of God is shaped by discourse concerning the family. And much of what the Old Testament says about human morality concerns behaviour within the context of the household.”

<sup>7</sup> Koenig (1985:16) elaborates on this assertion by pointing out that, “[d]uring their wilderness years the Hebrew people came to know this pilgrim existence for themselves and thus grew unusually sensitive to the needs of aliens and strangers who later resided within their borders. Because God was Israel’s host (Ps. 39:12; Lev. 25:23), it knew that it must play host to others who were without a home of their own[...].”

<sup>8</sup> “Hospitality in the East is not merely a personal and social virtue: it is a center from which all virtues radiate, and it takes precedence of all other personal virtues. ... [I]t shows itself at its best... among the more primitive peoples of the east, not the more savage but more primitive. ... In the primitive East, hospitality is more far-reaching in its scope and more exacting in its obligations than anything which we know of under that name in the conventional West (Trumbull, 1894:73f).

departure for the research focus. As such one may define hospitality as a practice that deals with accepting and caring for a guest, stranger, and visitor. Ogletree (1985:1) describes hospitality as a metaphor for the moral life. He says “[t]he moral life is exceedingly rich and complex. It eludes our attempts to grasp its essential meaning in a single conception”. In this work, he is not suggesting that morality can be perceived in terms of a single conception “as by an overarching metaphor: to be moral is to be hospitable to the stranger”.<sup>9</sup> What this implies is that hospitality provides a lens through which moral life is perceived, that is by considering the “otherness”. Ogletree (1985:8) adds:

Identity and plurality, the familiar and the strange, seeing through one’s own eyes and seeing through the eyes of one another, being at home in the world and being a pilgrim in a strange land, negotiating a common world and honouring plurality, welcoming strangers and venturing friendship with them, living with the dialectic enjoyment and goodness—these are some of the motifs which come into play when tradition of hospitality guide our reflections on the nature of the moral life.

According to Janzen (1994:42), hospitality is the extension of life to those whose lives one is not held responsible for through kinship obligations. The ‘other’ thus becomes the focus of the practice of hospitality. Ogletree (1985:2) furthermore sees hospitality as an exploration of a new, unfamiliar and unknown world through the welcoming of a stranger. His perception highlights two dimensions of hospitality: the vulnerability of the stranger on the one hand, and the potential for a discovery that broadens the horizons of the world of the host on the other.<sup>10</sup>

From the foregoing views, one may say that the implications of hospitality are understood when the hosts themselves know the meaning of being a stranger. And specifically, from the theological conception of land, hospitality can be understood as a human, moral response to

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<sup>9</sup> A “metaphor conveys a sense of the unity of experience while dramatizing its multi-faceted character” (Ogletree, 1985:2).

<sup>10</sup> “Strangers have stories to tell which we have never heard before, stories which can direct our seeing and stimulate our imaginations. The stories invite us to view the world from a novel perspective. They display the finitude and relativity of our own orientation to meaning (Ogletree, 1985:2f). Tadi (2013:178) affirms this dimension of hospitality as he explains the Tangale proverb that “[t]he proverb is asking a person not to feel disturbed by the appearance of a guest as the guest will definitely not stay long. The guest should therefore be warmly welcomed like dew. Most often one has a pleasant time with guests, as their short-lived stay does not allow for rancour to develop. Children are also often happy when guests come to their house as it often means a change of diet for the better. ... [Also, it carries the] idea of a guest bringing news of relations and friends, hence a source of joy; bringing new things, gifts and the better food that would be cooked to welcome her/him. ”

God's offer of life and land by extending the same to the 'other' because of the 'other's need. The 'other', as understood by most scholars, refers to those who do not fall within the kinship group, thus a stranger. There is, therefore, an ongoing dialectic of host and stranger (the 'other'), which expresses a fundamental recognition of the world of plurality in the practice of hospitality (Ogletree, 1985:4). This suggests that one needs to relate one's moral world positively with the contrasting world of the others, giving birth to a new world of shared meanings. And, at the heart of the focus on the "otherness" is the quest for the dignity of one who is vulnerable to oppressive social structures.<sup>11</sup>

Even though the practice of hospitality was taken seriously in the ancient Semitic world, there are also some challenges with regards to biblical reflections on the subject. These form part of the motivation for this study and may be summarised as follow:

*Firstly*, Ogletree (1985) and Janzen (1994) observe that hospitality is one of the ethical categories that *has never been granted sufficient importance* by Western ethicists. Janzen (1994:43) claims that "[h]ospitality is an ethical component of the familial paradigm that is hard for the modern Western readers to appreciate in its full weight and significance". This assertion is evident in Hobbs' questioning of the reconstruction of the protocol of hospitality in recent studies. He criticises, as a "teleological fallacy",<sup>12</sup> many of the attempts to incorporate "the fundamental understanding of the practice of hospitality into modern Christian ethics". For Hobbs, hospitality is a 'sociological necessity', hence "there is a great danger [...] of making a virtue out of [this] sociological necessity" (Hobbs, 2001:5). He observes that meaning cannot be universal, a comparison can only be done on a general level, and moral action in a small-scale society—like the practice of hospitality in the Old Testament— is different from that in a large-scale society. For instance, Hobbs (2001:7) objects to Janzen's use of hospitality in ancient Israel as a "parallel for modern ethical concern" with problems related to welfare in general and refugees and immigrants in particular.

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<sup>11</sup> Ogletree (1985:4f) explains oppression as not only being vulnerable to those who wield power or to being homeless, but also connotes being forced to accept one's self within a context determined by the definitions, priorities and interest of the oppressor.

<sup>12</sup> By teleological fallacy he meant "the tendency to use ancient documents as 'a springboard for modern polemic'" (Hobbs, 2001:5).

The legitimacy of Hobbs's concern will be investigated in this study. However, I maintain the presupposition that the ancient custom of hospitality is relevant as a virtue in the realm of modern ethical concerns (*cf.* Arterbury, 2003:362ff; Koenig, 1985:2; 2009:262). The *challenge then is how to move in a hermeneutically responsible manner to a critical contemporary appropriation of hospitality as expressed in the Old Testament text*. In other words, how may the interpretation of the Old Testament move from the ancient context to the contemporary formulations of moral thought and experience?

*Secondly*, the issue of understanding the purpose and importance of hospitality as an ethical component in the ancient world of the Israelites should be considered. One of the questions that may be asked is, therefore: in Kantian terminology, is hospitality a means to an end or a virtue in itself? It has been pointed out before that the refusal of hospitality was viewed as an offence against one's honour in the sense of it being an insult to the host's acclaimed value within their community and therefore, a shaming experience.<sup>13</sup> If this is indeed so, one may ask, *in whose interest is hospitality rendered?* Is it purely in the interest of the receiver or, in fact of the host? According to Janzen (1994:10), the restoration of harmony (*shalom*) within the confines of a kinship group is regarded as an 'ethical good' throughout the Old Testament (*cf.* Perdue, 1997:238). Thus, ethical action is not directed toward individual good fortune, but rather toward the welfare of the community, beginning with the household and extending to the marginally poor and those who live outside the family's immediate protection.

However, the story of hospitality of Lot in Genesis 19 and a similar one in Judges 19 seem to challenge the assertion of family *shalom* (understood as community solidarity) as *the* ethical

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<sup>13</sup> Honour and shame are dynamic relational concepts. Honour deals with one's embodiment of qualities that one's group regards as valuable, thereby rendering one a valuable person. It has to do with self-respect and having the respect of others. Offence against one's honour then could mean one's self-respect is not matched by corresponding respect from others, thus a shaming experience. Shame (although it can be a positive value) then has to do with the status of someone, regarded as less valuable because of behaviour contrary to accepted group values. The positive dimension of shame deals with refusal to do that which causes disgrace to an individual or group. An Ethiopian proverb which says, "A guest casts his/her eyes on the ground but does not cast his/her ears to the ground" (Cotter, 1996:86) explains further the challenge of the honour and shame argument on hospitality in an African context. Cotter explains that "After they leave, guests talk about the treatment they received" (p.86). The implication of the saying therefore is that one must be very hospitable to guests so that they will talk of one in a good way when they leave.

good in the Old Testament.<sup>14</sup> It also raises the question of the intent of hospitality as an ethical component in ancient Israel. The question is why would the *shalom* of Lot's daughter's (Gen. 19) and the daughter of the Levite's host (Judg. 19) be sacrificed on the altar of the protection of strangers? The "conscientious host's punctilio in the law of hospitality" (Hobbs, 2001:4) invites criticism. Hobbs' (2001:7) critical remark that "hospitality as a means value is practiced in the interest of something else" is an example. He suggests that the goal of hospitality "is a custom designed to protect the household of the host and to enhance his [her] reputation and honour by being generous to traveling kin, or members of one's larger, often tribal community". This statement further motivates the research to investigate hospitality as a theological ethic that governs the relational dimension of human lives in a community.

*Thirdly*, it is the concern that deals with the subject of hospitality—specifically with regard to whom hospitality was extended? The Old Testament uses different words to describe what in English would be called a guest, stranger, a foreigner or alien: זָר, נָכְרִי, and גֵּר. These Hebrew classifications are imbedded within the differences in the treatment of these categories of persons in the community of Israel. According to Hobbs (2001:20f), one finds an assertion that hospitality in the community of Israel often was not directed toward an outsider, as it was a threat to the security of those who belonged. This classification and its implications consequently limit the scope of hospitality, leading to the argument that the ethic of Old Testament hospitality cannot be universalised.

### **1.3. Problem statement/research questions**

In view of the background study above, the focus of this research concerns the theological-ethical understanding of hospitality in the Old Testament, how it is expressed in the narrative of Genesis 18-19. The following questions guide the investigation this concern:

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<sup>14</sup> Bolin (2004:42) is of the opinion that the idea of hospitality that forms the interpretive background of the narrative in Gen. 18 and 19 revolves around the ideas of honour, shame, and reciprocity. Nouwen (1975:47) echoes the reciprocal element that "Old and New Testament stories not only show how serious our obligation is to welcome the stranger in our home, but they also tell us that guests also are carrying precious gifts with them, which they are eager to reveal to a receptive host. Reciprocity was essential to the arrangement's success. Hosts honoured guests by extending favour and protection in order to increase their own honour. Guests accepted the honour of the host and, in doing so, added to the host's honour as patron. For either party to be denied its due in the relationship created the situation of injustice. Guests deserve to be treated hospitably, and conversely gracious hosts deserve some sort of recompense from their guests."

- i. What concepts of hospitality can be found in the Old Testament?
- ii. How significant are the concept and practice of hospitality found in the Old Testament?
- iii. What are the possible theological-ethical implications that may be gleaned from the stories of hospitality and its ironic inversion in Genesis 18 and 19?

## 1.4. Hypotheses

In view of the background and the research questions above, the following hypotheses were formulated as a guide to the investigation of the problem and questions raised:

- i. That a survey of scholarly research work will provide a nuanced understanding of the concept of hospitality that may help in understanding the Old Testament concept.
- ii. That an understanding of the parallel stories of hospitality in Genesis 18 and 19 will reveal important elements of the Old Testament concept and its transformative power on the community receiving the story.<sup>15</sup>
- iii. That certain theological-ethical ideals may be gleaned from these Old Testament narratives and that these may serve as theological underpinnings for a renewed and revisioned attempt to incorporate the fundamental understanding of the concept and practice of hospitality into contemporary ethical reflections, without necessarily generalising meaning and drawing superficial parallels between ancient and contemporary contexts and practice.

## 1.5. Research design and methodology

Regard the method as understood by Babbie and Mouton (2001), this research is qualitative in nature and in terms of its design, it takes the form of a literature study. As such it includes an extended literature review which provides an overview of scholarship on the theological-ethical understanding of hospitality in the Old Testament and current theological and ethical discourse on hospitality. The research, however, also includes an exegetical component which entails critical engagement with the narratives of hospitality in Genesis 18 and 19.

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<sup>15</sup> Although the stories do not lead to moral prescription, the fact that the stories disclose reality, and their impact on the listener or reader affects their reality of what is real. The reader's or listener's experience (of the story) is intersected by the biblical story and becomes intertwined, leading to the transformation experienced in the biblical story itself (Birch, 1991: 56).

With regard to methodology—the data used and the ways it interprets the data—Old Testament texts as primary data are complex and, as such, warrant diverse methodologies for interpretation. The Old Testament is not just a book, but a large collection of ancient texts, which have been composed, compiled and probably edited over a long period of time. A comprehensive treatment of a text of this nature needs to take into consideration several issues: a literary analysis of books and of the canon, the historicity of the events and of the text, and analysis of the theology in each of these areas, which is complex in itself. Not only this, the areas are intertwined so that it is practically not possible for a reader to single out and focus on only one. For example, literary analysis involves issues like authorship, language, structure and form, sources and literary meaning. However, literary meaning necessarily includes historical meaning, because the text is a product of its own context,<sup>16</sup> as well as theological meaning because the subject matter in the text motivates such analysis. Approaching a text from any one of these dimensions is controversial because questions from other dimensions will be left unanswered. In this regard, the research concurs with Jonker's (1996:71) proposal for a multidimensional reading or approach to a biblical text. He defines a multidimensional exegetical method as:

The interrelation among exegetical methodologies in a systematic and ordered way. Every methodology is allowed to operate according to its own approach, and by means of its own method(s). However, instead of operating exclusively on its own, the exegetical process and results are being coordinated and related to those of other approaches and methods... A 'multidimensional' exegetical process does not deprive the exegete of making exegetical decisions in a more responsible way.

The research is a theological-ethical understanding of a cultural practice in the Old Testament, as such, it involves a discussion of the value system, beliefs and convictions as portrayed in the Old Testament. Obviously, an investigation of this nature requires engagement with the literary, historical and theological-ethical dimensions of the text. With regard to this emphasis in the study, the research adopts Vernon K. Robbins's well known "socio-rhetorical" approach to the biblical text. Robbins (1996:1) defines socio-rhetorical criticism as "... an approach to literature that focuses on values, convictions and beliefs both in the texts we read and in the world in which we live... socio-rhetorical criticism integrates the ways people use language

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<sup>16</sup> Context in this case includes canonical context, historical context and theological context.



with the way they live in the world”. Socio-rhetorical approach is a multidimensional exegetical approach to the Bible. According to Robbins (1996:1), “One of the most notable contributions of the socio-rhetorical criticism is to bring literary criticism ..., social-scientific criticism..., rhetorical criticism..., postmodern criticism..., and theological criticism together in an integrated approach to interpretation.”

Robbins’ method of interpretation is also concerned with the context of the interpreter. In other words, “interpreters are also asked to become aware of their own social location and personal interests as they attempt to approach the social location and personal interest the text embodies” (Robbins, 1996:2). Socio-rhetorical criticism “approaches text as though it were a thickly textured tapestry” (1996:2). Robbins (1996:4) notes that “[...] Underlying the method is a presupposition that words themselves work in complex ways to communicate meanings that we only partially understand. It also presupposes that meanings themselves have their meanings by their relations to other meanings”. This approach allows for the multifaceted witness<sup>17</sup> from the Old Testament traditions to be heard, which enhances or impact the readers’ and listeners’ multifaceted real lives.

The research concerns mainly an ethical reflection on Old Testament texts as it is found in its storytelling tradition. Unfortunately, though, “Old Testament stories are not susceptible to neat typology or glib analysis” (Birch, 1991:56). Therefore, one cannot and ought not to take the stories uncritically as a prescription for moral action. This critical exegetical examination of Genesis 18 and 19 demonstrates how to recover the moral address from these complex stories or narratives of the Old Testament. The design bridges the methodological gap that affects how to relate the Old Testament to modern ethics. Thus, it demonstrates how to move in a *hermeneutically responsible manner to a critical appropriation of the Old Testament text as a moral resource in modern ethics.*

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<sup>17</sup> The multifaceted witness refers to the different voices heard in the narrative text: the narrator’s, the community that transmitted the text, and the traditions through which the text of Old Testament stories has been retold to the present time.

## 1.6. Definition of key terms

**Hospitality:** hospitality is a practice that deals with the welcoming of a person into a family or community, one who does not belong to one's family or community, and may, therefore, be vulnerable to the dangers of lack of food shelter, safety. Hospitality is defined by Koenig (1992:299) as “[t]he practice of receiving a guest or stranger graciously”, and by Pezzoli-Olgiati (2009:260) as “[t]he customs that regulate the temporary admittance of a stranger to a particular group.

**Irony:** Incongruity between the actual result of a sequence of events and the normal or expected result. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2014b) defines irony as (1) the “expression of one’s meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect”<sup>18</sup> (2) Dissimulation, pretence; esp. ... feigned ignorance and disingenuousness [...] (3) A state of affairs or an event that seems deliberately contrary to what was or might be expected; an outcome cruelly, humorously, or strangely at odds with assumptions or expectations”. An instance of irony usually draws attention to an incongruent or irrational happening or situation. Good (1981:13ff) comments that irony is more difficult to define than to recognise. He points out that irony deals with “[clarification] with extreme sharpness the incongruity involved in a matter of great moment” (p. 24). Good tries to distinguish irony from some closely related words like sarcasm, invective, parody and satire, which he says differ in meaning in what they achieve. The aim of invective and sarcasm is to wound and destroy, of parody, it is to ridicule; although satire most often is ironic in nature, the goal is the denial of the existence of certain truth. Irony, although sometimes a bitter criticism, aims at the amendment of the incongruous reality to redeem it. Good (1981:31) proposed two guidelines for the identification of irony: Firstly, as a means of statement, described as understatement or a method of suggestion, rather than of a plain statement. It may be a simple juxtaposition of ‘is’ and ‘ought’, allowing room for the hearer’s perception of the moral ethics. Secondly, as a stance of truth from which the perception comes. This is the mark that differentiates irony from

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<sup>18</sup> The precise application of the term has varied over time and remains the subject of much discussion. Irony is first recorded as a rhetorical figure used in sentences and (later) in extended places of writing having a particular tone and intent. In the twentieth century criticism, the application of irony has expanded to encompass non-verbal expression in fields such as art and music, where it denotes a distancing from and playful engagement with what has come before (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2014b).

being sarcastic or nihilistic. The vision of truth in irony seeks to oppose and protest in favour of one thing over against another.<sup>19</sup>

**Inversion:** “A reversal of position, order, sequence relation” according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2014c). An inversion of words mostly has a rhetorical effect; in this sense, inversion is “[t]he turning of an opponent’s argument against himself” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2014c).

## 1.7. Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation is divided into seven Chapters. Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter. It provides the background and motivation of the research. It states the problem, questions and hypotheses and discusses a methodological approach to the study. Chapter 2 is a survey of scholarship. It provides various overviews of the concept of hospitality towards a critical engagement with the stories in the passage. Chapter 3 studies the inner texture of the text. It starts with an overview of scholarship which deals with the history of interpretation and then engages in the literary analysis of the text. Chapter 4 investigates the text relationship with other biblical and non-biblical texts. Intertexture is done on the levels of structure, content, context and themes. It is assumed that the production of one text influences and is being influenced by another. Chapter 5 presents the social and cultural texture of the text. Through the study of the social and cultural symbols in the text, it proposes the context of the production of the text. Chapter 6 explores how the social and cultural context influences the text production. It studies various writers’ biased views and personal interest in interpreting Israel’s history. It, thus, identify two main traditions, P and non-P, which were involved in the production of various units. This Chapter shows how a wise redactor composes the two traditions, thereby ironically challenging the biases of the P and non-P scribes and thus a theological response. Chapter 7 provides the summary and draws some conclusions on hospitality in the Old Testament. The chapter also underlines contributions to the field of Old Testament studies. Potential areas of further research are highlighted.

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<sup>19</sup> Good (1981:32) remarks that the ironists themselves depend on their hearers or readers, which present the potential for being misunderstood. Sometimes the misunderstanding lies in the readers’ recognition of irony where it is not intended.

## *Chapter 2*

### *Hospitality: Survey of Research*

This chapter aims to provide an extensive survey of different viewpoints of literature on the concept of hospitality. Different fields and disciplines, both secular and religious, are explored with the intention of providing clues to the various reception traditions or hermeneutical perspectives on the concept, necessity and significance of the practice of hospitality. This review lays the foundation for reconceptualising the idea from the theological-ethical perspective relevant to the contemporary global ethical debate.

Hospitality is generally understood as the practice of reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2014a:1) defines hospitality as “[t]he act or practice of being hospitable; the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers, with liberality and goodwill.” The meaning of a word or phrase is relative to its context and might serve different goals: ‘meaning’ evolves over time and context. This research employs this common understanding of hospitality as a point of departure from which other conceptions or perceptions are surveyed. Situating this research in the African context, the researcher evaluates his Tangale cultural and religious perspective against this definition. The question therefore is, how is this practice of the “reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers with liberality and goodwill” understood, perceived and practiced in the Tangale cultural and religious context? In a multicultural and multi-faith society, how would the Tangale practise hospitality toward the cultural and religious ‘other’? Equally important is the question, how would the Tangale practice hospitality in a violent context?

The common understanding portrays hospitality as welcoming of strangers. However, the preliminary survey in Chapter 1 shows that hospitality is much more. Chapter 2 surveys different contexts and perspectives of hospitality, unveiling the different nuances in redefining the concept. The survey begins, therefore, by evaluating the cultural and religious context of the African perspective of hospitality against the preliminary definition. The socio-anthropological perspective, which provides a bridge for understanding the biblical conception, is also surveyed. Theological dimensions are discussed and subsumed under the rubrics of ethics, dogmatic theology and practical theology viewpoints. Finally, the philosophical point of view is considered by engaging Kant and Derrida in conversation. With these nuances, the

chapter concludes with a review of the common understanding by trying to reconceptualise the concept by incorporating elements which are not explicit or completely absent.

## 2.1. Cultural and religious context of the Tangale perspective of hospitality<sup>20</sup>

In the previous chapter, it has been observed that hospitality is inextricably woven into the fabric of African cultural and religious life. The notion of the ‘other’ from the Tangale point of view contains the term *rungu*. Tadi and Zakayo (2012:98) define *rungu* as “visitor, stranger, alien.” Babayo (2007:80) concedes, although grudgingly, that *rungu* is a “stranger”, which he qualifies as “[a] person with whom one is unacquainted with; children were told never talk to a stranger”. It is not clear what he means by “unacquainted” because the term is generic and does not refer to someone who does not belong to either family, community, tribe, clan or a person without a particular group identity. In some instances, a woman who is marrying someone from another family refers to herself as a stranger. She is a stranger not in the sense that her marital home and relatives are not acquainted with her, but that there are certain limitations to what she is allowed.

As explained in the preceding chapter, *rungu* is viewed as having high importance in the Tangale culture. The saying “*rungun dukduk*” summarises the significance given a stranger. The Tangale, however, do not have a word for hospitality. The concept of hospitality is expressed by this clause: *piji rung*, literally translated as “acceptance of *rungu*.” The question is, what does *piji rung* mean in comparison to the definition of hospitality above? This section first considers the Tangale cultural and traditional religious setting in the light of the obligation of *piji rung*. It also considers these traditional obligations in the light of social changes and

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<sup>20</sup> There are many points of similarity between Tangale and many African cultures. In the interest of space and limited time and resources, I have paid more attention to the relevance of hospitality to my immediate Tangale context. In this regard, I write as an insider and of course due to limited literature covering the topic of Tangale cultural background, I employ literature from other African cultures to affirm my frame of reference. More also, limiting the scope is important for the purpose of avoiding generalisations about the African cultural practice of hospitality—similarity is not sameness.

other factors which have impacted directly or indirectly on cultural and traditional religious values.<sup>21</sup>

In Africa, there is no separation between the sacred and the physical spheres. Culture and religion are inextricably interwoven (*cf.* Kassa, 2014:101, Magesa, 1997:57f, Mbiti, 1969:2). Mbiti (1969:1) notes that “religion is the strongest element in traditional background, and exerts probably the greatest influence upon the thinking and living of the people concerned”. It is difficult to divorce the traditional African obligation of hospitality from its religious practice.<sup>22</sup> Gathogo (2008:42) is of the opinion that just as religion permeates every aspect of life in Africa, so also does hospitality. He says that “...in Africa, an ideal person is primarily hospitable. This hospitality is ideally extended to all people: friends, foes and/or strangers. It is also extended to all departments of life.”<sup>23</sup> In fact, Gathogo sees the African *Ubuntu* philosophy, which upholds personhood or humanness, and respect for human dignity, as an aspect of African hospitality. Gathogo’s stamen quoted above above is a gross generalisation because hospitality is not practised in the same way in all the African cultures. I assume that the point that he seeks to make is that hospitality is a vital concept in traditional Africa.

A Tangale saying goes, *Lau Yamba kwantaji/go amum* (literally, the son of God will not give you water). This statement is often uttered as a caution or rebuke to someone who displays unwelcoming behaviour. The action of giving water to someone is symbolic of hospitality in the Tangale culture, as water represents a vital element, symbolic of life-giving substance. Water is the first thing given to *rungu*, whoever that may be. A critical look at the expression

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<sup>21</sup> In the preceding chapter, it was observed that traditional African hospitality has come under pressure in recent times as a result of social change (Beattie, 1966:255). For example, Beattie (1966:255) notes how in a polygynous family structure, the fulfilment of the traditional obligation of hospitality, is significant. With the coming of the western mission there is a gradual decline in polygyny in many parts of Africa. “Traditional obligations of hospitality and generosity could only be met by polygynous households. Food production and beer-making were mainly women’s task, and a man with only one wife could not compete with his polygynous neighbour”.

<sup>22</sup> Magesa (1997:57) observes that moral and ethical consciousness informs the whole of African moral life; and because life (or the African perception of the world) is inextricably interwoven, “African ethical consciousness cannot but be a religious one... Consequently, African ethical consciousness must, and does answer to religious demands”. He further explains that everything is given religious flavour, adding that “[i]n no way is anything understood apart from the context of God, the ancestors, and the spirits; in no way is any thought, word or act understood except in terms of good and bad, in the sense that such an attitude or behaviour either enhances or diminishes life”

<sup>23</sup> Magesa (1997:58) understands that “‘being’ is the same as ‘doing’ and *vice versa*. Thus, ‘not until one has understood that for the African ‘the ontologically good is the ethically good’ can one appreciate and understand the moral sense of the African and direction of ethical pursuit’.”

of hospitality in the Tangale saying shows that it embodies religious flavour as it urges the listener to consider the ultimate and divine hospitality as a motivation for good moral living, rendering hospitality as the means through which life is preserved and sustained. This saying also portrays what hospitality is—a religious-ethical injunction, practiced for the sake of eternal reward.

Gathogo (2008:42) defines traditional African hospitality as:

[...] extension of generosity, giving freely without strings attached. It can also be seen as “an unconditional readiness to share.” This sharing has to be social and religious in scope. In view of this, it can be seen simply as the willingness to give, to help, to assist, to love and to carry one another’s burden without necessarily profit or rewards as the driving force.

Generally, from the traditional African point of view hospitality is inherent in being African (Gathogo 2008: 43). It hardly knows any bounds. There is a strong sense of obligation toward one another in and to the ‘other’.<sup>24</sup> Magesa (1997:60) states that

[...] the first and most important participation of the human person is in and through one’s community, the community cannot be sustained without another kind of participation [in] the economic substratum or heritage [...] Community-based common means of existence is thus included in the community based on sharing in common life.

Being African is summed up by Mbiti (1969:108)

“The individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately. He owes his existence to other people... Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his own being, his own duties, his responsibilities, towards himself and towards other people... the individual can only say I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am.

Life is seen in relation to the ‘other’. By implication, the gift of nature such as land, animals crops were practically common property (see Magesa, 1997:61). To the Tangale person, all persons are *rungun mo kobo ta koro*, literally, a passer-by stranger in the world. And as Magesa

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<sup>24</sup> Mbiti (1969:2) describes being human in Africa as “[t]o be human is to belong to the whole community [...]”

(1997:61) remarks, Africans believe that the universe has been lent by God to humanity for the promotion of life and good relationships to keep in good shape. He says:

What constitutes misuse of the universe? This question can be answered in one word: greed. In African moral outlook, greed is the antonym of hospitality and sociability or, in a word, good company. It goes beyond simply describing unsocial behaviour in the sense of being outwardly rude or unwelcoming, or unapproachable and unhelpful. It means that, but it means much more than that. Greed constitutes the most grievous wrong (Magesa, 1997:61)

Hospitality, therefore, as a vital concept in Africa, is the ethical duty of one to the 'other'. Having described life in Africa as communal, "I am because the community is", hospitality is an ethical mandate towards building community. "We cannot understand persons, indeed we cannot have personal identity without reference to the other person [...] The notion of being together is intended to emphasize that life is the actuality of living in the present together with people..." (Magesa, 1997:64).

In another dimension, good manners are desired by a typical traditional African. For example, as a matter of courtesy and kindness, the Tangale traditional ruler does not negotiate acts of hospitality. A good chief is evaluated using the measuring line of hospitality. The success of the chief and prosperity of the land is measured by the presence and number of the 'other'. Greatness and wealth are measured not in terms of material things but in terms of people who benefited from one's material wealth through acts of hospitality (*cf.* Fernandez, 1982:133). "The life of an individual [can only be] grasped as it is shared" (Magesa, 1997:65).

As beautiful as it seems, though, what is the nature of community? Who is this 'other'? What is the duty of the community to the 'other'? The concept of the 'other' is broad and ambiguous. To understand the significance of this ethical duty of a member of a community to the 'other', one needs to understand the notion of a stranger or a visitor. It is expedient, therefore, to look at the structure of the community to understand who is considered a stranger and to what extent this 'other' belongs. Does the African traditional hospitality have limitations? Due to the



intricate nature of the structure of the African community, the research takes two categorisations for the sake of understanding the concept of hospitality.<sup>25</sup>

### 2.1.1. Family and the other

Like in many traditional African communities, “[t]he family is a very important institution in the Tangle<sup>26</sup> traditional society, a society that is close-knit and which has its own values and social ethos. The extended family system was what operated in traditional Tangle with the head of the family, usually the oldest...” (Tadi, 2013:27). The Tangale do not have the typical nuclear family—defined as father, mother and child(ren). The word *togor*—relations—describes the Tangale family unit. Uncles and aunts are all referred to as fathers and mothers; siblings and cousins are all *molle*. Togetherness and solidarity, which are inherent in the meaning of *molle*, are cherished virtues among the Tangale. Tadi (2013: 27) stresses the significance of the virtue of solidarity and togetherness by citing a Tangale proverb: *molle wok lawshin* –Brotherhood is hair in the nostril.<sup>27</sup> Who then is a stranger in such an intricate web of relationships?<sup>28</sup>

From the Tangale family perspective the ‘other’ could mean:

- 1) Someone who is visiting from or to a neighbouring village;
- 2) Anyone who seeks refuge under your roof;
- 3) Your lover or your mistress when he or she is in your home;

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<sup>25</sup> The family and the tribe are taken into consideration because it is assumed to cover the major units of the community. This is expedient because the idea of a family or clan or tribe to an African is quite different to the Western anthropological categorisation. A whole village could be referred to as a family in the African community.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Tangle’ is the normal way in which the people refer to themselves and not Tangale—a distortion of the word. Tangale is the Hausa corruption though ironically the etymology is from the greeting ‘*Tangal le*’, so that the word ‘Tangale’ is closer to the root. Tangale is usually employed when speaking in English or Hausa and is used in almost all printed works (my recent MTh thesis included) (see Tadi, 2013: 8). Tadi’s (2013) *Sam Kwi Bolji* is an exception, employing the usual—and correct—way the people refer to themselves. This dissertation, however, maintains ‘Tangale’ since the same term is used in my previous MTh thesis. Secondly, Tangale is often used in English and Hausa, since it is generally acceptable. Nonetheless, I maintain the form used by authors when quoting them verbatim.

<sup>27</sup> The proverb stresses the need for an individual to respect the bond of family ties, as isolating oneself means living in pain, just as the nostril will experience severe distress if hair is wrenched from it (Tadi, 2013:28).

<sup>28</sup> There is a Tangale maxim: *kalkwi ka amdo*—unity and love. It is rich in meaning to the Tangale person. The phrase is often used by organisations who adopt it as their motto.

- 4) Anyone who needs your help (e.g. someone who wants to borrow money, or exchange goods and services);
- 5) Anyone from your village who comes to share a meal that your wife prepares;
- 6) Neighbours and friends and even close relatives (both from the nuclear and extended family) are strangers in situations where one has not been in contact with them. The day that the person happens to return, he or she is considered a stranger, although not in the sense of being a foreigner (see Bernard, 1982:5).<sup>29</sup> The Tangale gives special attention to any person fitting this category.

### 2.1.2. The tribe and the ‘other’

Although the significance of togetherness and solidarity among the Tangale tribe has been noted, there seems to be an irony when it comes to an external relationship. Tadi (2013:15) notes: “No society lives in isolation. From the history of its migrations to its final settlement Tangle people have been in contact with diverse tribes, some friendly, others hostile. This, of course, was the rhythm with the dynamics of the times.” Of special note is the relationship with the Shongom who live southeast of the Tangale land. Interestingly, this tribe Shongom is equally referred to as Tangale. The Tangale and Shongom people are close both in terms of geography and biology. They speak the same language, yet the painful irony is that despite close ties, they fight each other. There is a history of periodic communal clashes between Tangale and Shongom with the most recent major clash in 1990.<sup>30</sup> Even during this research, news reaching me is that there were sporadic attacks resulting in loss of lives and properties.

Concerning individuals or groups visiting the land in search of help such as shelter, food, or protection, Tangale people are known for being welcoming and accepting strangers even of the people with whom they periodically clashed. From the perspective of the tribal unit, *rungu* is anyone who is not a tribe member, coming either from neighbouring communities or from afar. The Tangale people attach great importance to hospitality especially to a stranger of this

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<sup>29</sup> Bouba Berna was writing from a Chamba perspective. Chamba people live in the northeastern part of Nigeria and at the border of Cameroon. Interestingly one of the Chamba neighbours, the Jukuns, are the same neighbours that border the Tangale people in the northwest (Tadi, 2013:15). The Chamba’s idea of a stranger resonates with that of the Tangale.

<sup>30</sup> The origin and reason for this clash is actually not known to the young minds, many of whom are participating in it just as a matter of solidarity with the course of the fathers.

category. Some of its proverbs express the importance of being good to a neighbour who in fact is considered a stranger by certain classification. The major expression that deals directly with a stranger has been cited and explained in Chapter 1. Others are as follows:

*Aku teme, ku teme?* Meaning: If you are today, can you be today?<sup>31</sup>

“This proverb expresses the need for people to be good to others as they do not know what may happen the next day. The rhetorical question heightens the fact that no one can live in the eternal today (p.54).” From the perspective of this expression, the Tangale treat a stranger with care. They understand that life is full of vicissitude; they may find themselves in the status of a stranger someday. This expression is like the one of the Gbaya of Cameroon which says, “one never knows” (Marcel, 1982:9). According to Marcel (1982:9), the expression summarises the guiding principle for opinions and attitudes towards strangers amongst the Gbaya tribe in Cameroon. He states that the expression suggests that “[...] everything one does for a stranger, whether good or bad, may be returned by a similar act to one’s son or grandson [and of course the daughter or granddaughter]”. To the Tangale tribe, the expression<sup>32</sup>

...conveys the people's' hatred for niggardliness, stinginess and their love for generosity. This fact is ingrained in the people’s philosophical (*sic*) belief borne out of experience, that changes occur in the fortunes of humanity and consequently those whom we help or maltreat today because of our present position of power, may be the ones to decide the tone of things in the future[...] Man has not been privileged to have a smooth life throughout his stay on earth and should therefore realise the need to help others today while he can for tomorrow he may depend on them (Tadi, 2013:55).

Apart from the hatred for “niggardliness and stinginess” and the expression of a generous attitude cherished by the Tangale people, one may observe that the question of reciprocity is explicit in this proverb. The hatred for stinginess is best captured by the next proverb:

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<sup>31</sup> All proverbs and meaning are taken from Tadi (2013: 51ff).

<sup>32</sup> For a better assimilation of the expression, Tadi explains the structure of the expression thus: “Structurally we have the repetition of the word ‘teme’ (today), which is used as a rhetorical emphatic device. Apart from its euphonic effect, the second ‘teme’ is said in a high pitch to negate the first one. While the first ‘teme’ refers to the transitional, ephemeral present, the second one refers to coming or the eternal today”. And of course, as expressed in the maxim *lau Yamba wonthoji/go amum* (page 3 above), implicit in this proverb is the religious flavour that is contained in the second *teme* as expressed in this proverb, which could refer to the life after death.

*Arein toom*: he has a hard hand.

This expression describes a parsimonious or thrifty person. Tangale condemns greed or stinginess and value kindness and generosity. Strangers are warned never to go to certain persons because they have a hard hand, meaning they are unkind, not generous, inhospitable, and heartless.

*De ma kwatthu po yogum*: do not deny it your feet.

The expression articulates the value and importance of courtesy and hospitality. The proverb is the expression of the need for conventions of generosity, favour and respect while receiving and entertaining guests or in social relations in general.

*Ka lauthu mum ka wam ta argo*: you draw a person with what is in your hand.

This saying teaches people to give freely if they want companionship or the assistance of others. It is a fact that people often go to a person who gives freely and avoid the houses of a parsimonious, wealthy men [and women]. Hospitality therefore attracts people whereas meanness sends people away (Tadi, 2013:85).

There are several proverbs and expressions which express the importance the Tangale attach to the extension of hospitality to the 'other'. The obligation to offer hospitality to strangers is both cultural and religious. In other words, to be socially human includes caring and protection of strangers. This requirement often has, as motivation, a religious flavour (factors), reciprocity, fame,<sup>33</sup> ethical virtue and serves as a means<sup>34</sup>. To the Tangale, there are usually no limits to hospitality; it is extended to all, irrespective of status or origins. No one is denied hospitality as long as a stranger comes with a good heart until they have shown their bad heart (*cf.* Fernandez, 1982:28).

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<sup>33</sup> Being a society where the culture of honour and shame exists, strangers may be given an impressive welcome because that boosts the fame of the host, for the guests will recount everything that happened to them.

<sup>34</sup> Strangers often participate in works that their host does, thus increasing the productiveness of the host's economic enterprise (see last Tangale proverb above).

Having seen this from the Tangale perspective, I will now draw on the field of social sciences, specifically social anthropology, for a general overview of the concept of hospitality from different walks of life covered by the discipline.

## 2.2. Socio-anthropological perspectives

### 2.2.1. Introduction

From the foregone discussion, we have seen that hospitality from the Tangale cultural and religious view displays what could be categorised under the social–anthropological dimension.<sup>35</sup> Some anthropologists theorise that there is a “law of hospitality”. For instance, Mauss (2002:16) views it as a propensity toward communal living and constituted evidence of a generous disposition. He incorporates hospitality under the logic of gift. The give-and-take acts of hospitality serve to maintain an already existing relationship and to establish one where none exists. Hospitality can be seen from this perspective as the moral framework through which relationships are established and sustained. Therefore, acts of hospitality either consolidate structures of relations by symbolically affirming them, or are structurally transformative (see Shryock 2008:410). The “law of hospitality” is said to be ambivalent (see Shryock 2004:36), in that there is an interplay of complex issues that characterise this normally transient relationship.<sup>36</sup> Christoph (2010:45) illustrates an aspect of this complexity in presenting how ideas about hospitality centre on notions of power and status and becomes an important expression of the implicit rules governing social discourse. Such discourse relates to the relationship between host and guest, including certain issues which are contrary to a “real”

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<sup>35</sup> This is not to say that the Tangale is a separate dimension to use in considering the concept of hospitality. The study of the Tangale culture and traditions is in itself an anthropological enquiry. The Tangale cultural perspective of the concept of hospitality is surveyed differently, not under social-anthropology, because the study seeks to apply the Hebrew biblical concept of hospitality to the Tangale context (and Africa as a whole).

<sup>36</sup> Some of these complex issues that characterise the relationship between a host and a guest involve “reciprocity, a tension between spontaneity and calculation, generosity and parasitism, friendship and enmity, improvisation and rule; ...hospitality encompasses distant agents; it embeds social transactions in materiality and raises complex questions relating to economy and time; ... hospitality provides a language in which the anthropological project itself can be cast and examined. But hospitality also goes beyond the classic ground of gift exchange, touching on several other central anthropological problematics: identity, alterity, and belonging; sovereignty, politics, and inequality; the relation between the individual and the collective; commensality, consubstantiality, and kinship. In sum, hospitality seems to bear, in one way or another, on most of the key concerns which have animated... anthropological enterprise since its inception” (Candea & Da Col, 2012:1f. *cf.* 1.1 above).

concept of hospitality. The following section surveys the anthropological perception of hospitality and the complex interplay of issues in the concept of the law of hospitality.

### 2.2.2. Anthropological hospitality<sup>37</sup>

Anthropology is a conceptual exercise that examines (*inter alia*) the paradoxes of hospitality. Many of the stories of displacement, misunderstanding, equivocation, suspicious commensality, uncanny encounters with strangers and dangerous feasting are evidence of how hospitality features in anthropology. It shows connections to some vibrant anthropological themes and concerns—ethical reasoning, materiality, temporality and affect, alterity and cosmopolitics, sovereignty and scale (Candea & Da Col, 2012:1).

Returning to the idea of the law of hospitality, it is expedient to note that this law is not rooted in divine revelation like so many codes of law but stems from sociological necessity (*cf.* Candea & Da Col, 2012:4; Pitt-Rivers, 1968:27). This law is complex and “ambivalent”. Candea & Da Col (2012:5) comment on the ambivalence of the law of hospitality:

[There is] the mutual implication of power and welcome: hospitality is ... stilted, because turn-taking, reciprocity, and the guest is necessarily at the mercy of the host, on a knife-edge between suspicion and trust. [similarly, there is] the suspension of social and political rights which comes with the guest status [...] in a way which speaks to many of the current criticisms of the use of guest-metaphors to describe relations between states and migrants (*cf.* Pitt-Rivers 1968; Rosello 2001; Shryock 2008).

In an effort to examine sincere and genuine hospitality, anthropologist Pitt-Rivers (1992:224) introduces the notion of grace, to which Candea and Da Col (2012:5) submit that it “provides the productive surplus which makes the structural account of hospitality overflow its own boundaries”. Explaining how the notion of grace might help overcome the law of hospitality’s ambivalence, Pitt-Rivers submits that “Grace then allows of no payment, no explanation, and requires no justification” (1992:231). One might say grace explains the idea of unconditional

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<sup>37</sup> Candea and Da Col lament the long period of time of the lack of devoted space for the topic of hospitality as a substantive entity in anthropology as a discipline even though it occupies a frontier area in the theoretical development of the discipline. Hospitality has always been considered an implicit and passing reference point when considering the act of gift giving and generosity. Hospitality has been the all-encompassing and ambivalent dwelling space of anthropology since its inception, the *elemental* structure of the anthropological enterprise it is an *anthropological innate* (2012:3). This section will look at some attempt to foreground hospitality as a theoretical concept.

welcome as opposed to the law of hospitality. Anthropology tries to lay bare the tensions found in the ambivalence of the law of hospitality. These tensions provide the key to understanding hospitality and its implications. Some of these tensions are discussed below.

### 2.2.3. Hospitality and status

Christoph (2010:45) describes the attribute of hospitality “as ‘a negotiated interaction between host and guest, ‘whereby the host's prestige is enhanced both by the *means* to offer comfort—material or otherwise—to a stranger as well as by the *inclination* to do so generously.’” Christoph explains that the *means* to offer comfort to the stranger is an expression of power and status of the host. Material elements used in hospitality are an important factor that the host often used to secure allies and gain favours<sup>38</sup>. Similarly, the *inclination* to offer this comfort to the stranger generously involves an honour code which motivates the host, often landed elite, into self-representation as those “given to largesse”. The “*inclination*” and “*means*” are both important and a basic assertion of selfhood.

There is also the belief that “everyone is obliged to offer spontaneous, gratis hospitality” (Christoph, 2010:46, Candea & Da Col, 2012:S8). It is viewed as an almost universal feature of human cultures that hospitality is considered praiseworthy in the estimation of other cultures (Christoph, 2010:46). In this sense, it is assumed that there is a common principle underlying hospitality.

Like the traditional African concept, the question of honour and shame is noted as one of the underlying principles of hospitality. For instance, Christoph (2010:46) asserts:

We might consider, for example, the late eleventh-century description of the Swedes by Adam of Bremen in his *Gesta Hammaburgensis*: ‘Although all the Hyperboreans are noted for their hospitality, our Swedes are so in particular. To deny wayfarers entertainment is to them the basest of all shameful deeds, so much so that there is strife and contention among them over who is worthy to receive a guest. They show him every courtesy for as many days as he wishes to stay, vying with one another to take him to their friends in their several houses’.

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. the Tangale proverb “*Ka lauthu mum ka wam ta argo*: you draw a person with what is in your hand” (cited in 2.1.2).

It is a shameful thing in Swedish culture to desist from entertaining wayfarers, hence the host's honour and prestige are at stake in the community. Shryock (2004:36) echoes this notion when he cites one of the common proverbs frequently heard in the Balga's show of hospitality: "*Lazim al-mu'azzib yikhaf min al-dhayf. Luma yijlis howa dhayf. Luma yigum howa sha'ir*". The proverb is translated as "The host must fear the guest. When he sits [and shares your food] he is a company. When he stands [and leaves your house] he is a poet." Shryock (2004:36) comments that the proverb is a concise lesson in wisdom. It "... captures perfectly the sense of 'hazard' [...] that attends the giving and receiving of hospitality among Balgawi families. *Reputations* are at stake... a poet can tarnish the name of a host who offends them" (emphasis added). So according to Shryock (2004:36), "hospitality is a field of ritualised exchange in which performance animates and responds to social critique. Acts undertaken in this field must be carefully orchestrated to protect against the 'private or open warfare' that is [...] their built-in sanction."

In a broader sense, hospitality is intrinsically tied to status. In many cultures and communities, the interpretation of hospitality could be expanded to include more than a mere moral obligation, to include providing an opportunity for the assertion of selfhood and identity. The question of generosity associated with hospitality often "becomes an expression of socioeconomic means [...] as such, serves as a sign of having achieved a high social status" (Christoph, 2010:48). In an idea of a 'captive guest'<sup>39</sup> Swancutt (2012:S107) explains how a similar motif guides the Nuosu practice of hospitality. She writes:

The ordinary Nuosu guest is offered an entertaining meal made from the host's livestock or chickens, often with the host disregarding any financial setbacks that might incur. But the would-be captive guest is offered an entertaining meal and some further connection, such as a business opportunity or mentor-student arrangement, to draw him or her into a long-term relation which is *advantageous to the host*. This proffered opportunity is not an invitation to join the lineage, but reinforces the stranger's unstable attachment to the host and captive condition (emphasis added).

Swancutt observes two main points in the apparent hospitality described in the Nuosu host-guest relationship. First, the captive guest is used as 'leverage' against a third party. Second, it is the opportunity to extract the captive's guest's resources (*cf.* Candea and Da Col, 2012:S6).

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<sup>39</sup> Read Swancutt (2012:S107) for the idea of captive guest of the Nuosu, a Tibeto-Burman people.



One can also point out that hospitality is employed in certain cultures as heuristic for the subtle resolution of a moral conundrum. For example, Shryock (2008:405) notes how in the history of the Balga Bedouin, hospitality became an intense concern because it entails matters of control over space. The Balga used hospitality to resist and refashion ideas of a centralised-government. They also employ it as a useful tool for the control of the tribal subject. Candea and Da Col (2012:S8) observe that hospitality might “reinstale an external, ticklish situation into intelligible psychological states and pre-existent world-views while shaping subjective orientation upon which to base future endeavours”, thus rendering hospitality as a complicated kind of politics (Shryock 2008:406).<sup>40</sup>

#### 2.2.4. Commensality<sup>41</sup> and value

It can be observed that whatever cultural customs are involved, the sharing of food and drink always takes place within the matrix of social relationships. Such events are important because each event bears in one way or another on the continuity of participating community. In the event of hospitality, commensality is paramount. In many instances, it takes the central place in a show of the dynamism of role (power) displayed between host and guest. Candea and Da Col (2012:S9) acknowledge that hospitable commensality is functional, yet can sometimes be an irksome obligation in a certain context. Hospitality serves as means to secure the maintenance of relationships and reinforcement of networks of mutual assistance through the mechanism of food exchange. For instance, in the Massim of Papua New Guinea, control of the social world is done through a transformational act of value creation. In this situation, hospitality encompasses the logic of sharing and exchange where it constitutes the framing device for value creation. An intersubjective space-time relationship is contracted and extended through the act of hospitality. “The act of sharing of food is the primary template of value creation which *externalizes* the self beyond the physical person, hence achieving control over spacetime” (2012:S9). In another dimension, commensality might do just the opposite, and be

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<sup>40</sup> Politics of hospitality here refer to the dynamic relationship between host and guest. Both employ hospitality as a means of control and both host and guest would give up certain claims in order to gain economic advantage and protection respectively (see Shryock 2004:36f). The complicatedness points to intricate issues entailed in the priorities given the subject. For instance, hospitality’s moral power first works like a kind of religion: a divine law which addresses issues of justice. And from the critical theory perspective, hospitality operates beyond politics or calls politics into question. It engages with critical discourses of what seems to be simple ideas, e.g. a neighbour, friendship or sovereignty—often assumed to be a political quality that deals with the distinction between enemy and friend.

<sup>41</sup> Commensality means table fellowship. The act or practice of eating together.

used as a “prime manipulative” channel to lure and establish a pivotal unevenness between hosts and guests (see 2.2.3). Candea and Da Col (2012:S10) comment that:

[O]bjects transacted in hospitality are always ‘objectiles’, object-events which threaten to collapse into their opposites. [Hence] it is scarcely surprising to find hospitality the ‘focus of parody and laughter, fantasy and fear,’ [...] being a guest or a host in a meal or banquet is a daring venture. [...] fear and suspicion are inseparable from the pleasure of hospitality.

Looking at commensality in the light of certain conventions of manners, habitual practice, and ritual customs, some fundamental elements tend to persist across a wide range of cultures, especially regarding how guests are to behave. Provision of food to the guest is a means through which the host maintains power. Guests or strangers are not to usurp the role of the host by demanding or even taking what is not offered. Also, the refusal to take what is offered is an insult. Strangers, on the other hand, exert their power by their bodily presence, which is a kind of coercion on the host to perform the duties of hospitality. In some cultures, strangers conceal their identity. This ambiguous status exerts a kind of influence. It is considered as an infringement of the law of hospitality if the host shows hostility or rivalry towards the stranger. The host must protect his guest and guard his own honour by attending to his guests, granting them due precedence, showing concern for their needs and earning the gratitude the guest ought to show.

Following Derrida’s and Kant’s<sup>42</sup> thinking, Shryock’s (2008) analysis of the Bedouin hospitality points out the dynamism and complexity of hospitality. Issues of welcome, risk, sacrifice, reciprocity and substitution pervade the concept in social anthropology. Shryock (2008:414) recognises that there are certain principles or powers which obliges one to offer hospitality to others even without compulsion from a sovereign power to practice it: “Whatever it is, food, possessions, women, children, or ritual, it retains a magical power and religious hold over the recipient. The thing given is not inert. It is alive and often personified, and strives to bring to its original clan and homeland some equivalent to take its place”. This reciprocity is never coerced, it was usually uncalculated.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> We shall return to Derrida and Kant in a section on hospitality from a philosophical perspective.

<sup>43</sup> See Shryock (2008:414) for properties of hospitality.

The Bedouin version of hospitality discussed by Shryock (2008) is a demonstration of peace, sustained by continuous processes of renegotiation in complex circumstances where there are murder, famine, theft, sexual inequality and harassment. The renegotiations are processes where individuals involved are willing to sacrifice even precious things without expectation of compensation. The story, like the biblical stories of hospitality in Genesis 19 and Judges 19 seem morally contradictory to what is acceptable by law. Shryock (2008:418) describes the host's attitude as morality beyond the law because their willingness to sacrifice a most precious thing to them goes beyond expected behaviour. However, two things stand out which define hospitality: willingness to sacrifice and the acts of forgiveness. Evidently, there is ambivalence in the notions and practice of hospitality (Shryock, 2004, 2008, 2012).

This section highlighted the ambiguity in the practice of hospitality among many cultures. The last paragraph especially related some of the stories of hospitality is similar to the biblical stories in terms of extremes which are apparently contradictory to what is morally acceptable. The following section looks at the Bible, what it says about hospitality and how readers have understood the biblical conception and practice of hospitality.

### **2.3. Biblical perspectives**

Discussion on the concept of hospitality in the Bible and the ancient Mediterranean world centres among other things on issues relating to honour, danger, and purity. The way in which the hospitality relationship is described using these concepts is not immune to the complexity and ambiguity referred to in the above discussion. Nevertheless, the Bible portrays a kind of dynamic balance in the hospitality relationship. In this section, I will endeavour to survey the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, about the concept of hospitality. This survey serves as a general overview of reception traditions or hermeneutical perspectives on biblical texts, with specific interest on how hospitality is rooted in the biblical tradition.

We recalled in Chapter 1 that the Bible hinges on the idea of hospitality as rooted in the creation narrative which portrays God as creator and, by this virtue, sole owner of the earth and everything thereon. I maintain that hospitality as a social practice and a literary construct is a vital, yet complex, concept. In the creation narrative, humankind was made by God and given responsibility to be stewards of the earth and not as absolute owners. The creation theme is

frequently echoed in the Bible as the basis for ethical demands for the people of God. From the perspective of the creation narratives, God is the ultimate host of all humanity, and the latter are all sojourners, living by the graceful offer of God's hospitality. As complex as it may be, hospitality in the Bible is fundamentally religious in nature. Apart from the creation motif, divine beings are seen to be active participants in many hospitality narratives. Other texts portray hospitality as a divine injunction.

### **2.3.1. Old Testament hospitality: an overview**

The Old Testament generally portrays hospitality as a matter of moral obligation, the violation of which invites divine displeasure and accompanying retribution in Ezekiel 16:49-50; Deuteronomy 23:3-4; 1 Samuel 25:2; 38; and Judges 8:5-17 (*cf.* Selman 1996:485). The theme of hospitality runs through the testimonies of Israel's religious, economic, social and cultural life.<sup>44</sup> Ethically and morally, the Old Testament posits that "[t]he election and obligation of the people of God by their God YHWH belong together..." (Preuss, 1996:185). "The law of the Old Testament that is consequently understood as given by God has its foundation in the relationship of God to Israel that is constituted through divine election" (Preuss, 1996:185). However, this does not suggest that Israel's ethics as a whole are laws given by God. There are ethics that are shaped partially by the wisdom tradition or what Kassa (2014) identified as natural law tradition. Saying that the testimonies, including their ethos, have their foundation in their relationship with God means that their whole life is shaped by grounding their origin and purpose of existence on God YHWH, as narrated in the creation testimony. This implies that Israel's moral life is closely connected to their religious life. The law of hospitality, for instance, can be seen as a moral and religious mandate.

The survey will consider both literary uses of the concept and social practice. The goal is to give the background for reconceptualising hospitality as an overarching Old Testament ethical category. The next chapter engages in detail, the dynamics in the text as a rhetorical device in communicating the moral and ethical tradition of the ancient cultural practice.

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<sup>44</sup> I am using the word testimony loosely to refer to the unveiling of the complex interaction in the Bible.

### **2.3.1.1. Social practices of hospitality in the Old Testament**

Although it was observed that the Old Testament does not have the equivalent of the word hospitality, several texts in the Old Testament describe situations which might be rendered hospitality in English. Abraham's hospitality became a classic model of the practice of hospitality in the Old and even in the New Testament. In close proximity to the narrative of Abraham's hospitality, Genesis 19 offers the case study of Lot's hospitality.<sup>45</sup> In both cases, the guests are identified as divine beings entertained by humans; in the case of Lot, the hospitality was disrupted by the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Another occurrence of welcoming a divine being is that of Manoah, who receives the angel of the Lord (Jdg. 13:15).

In Genesis 24, Abraham sends a servant to his relatives to fetch a wife for his son. Upon his arrival, Abraham's servant is greeted by the arrival of Rebekah, who demonstrates hospitable behaviour, as requested in the servant's prayer. Although being welcomed into Rebekah's home, we find an exceptional case in the guest's response, when the servant refuses to receive hospitality in commensality which as I have noted (2.2.3), might be construed as an insult to the host. I suggest that it might be a demonstration of power balance because no displeasure is noted from the side of the host.

A similar incident is found in Exodus 2:16–23: Moses demonstrates first that he is a harmless foreigner to the family that would become his hosts when later he is welcomed as a guest. In both instances, there is a meeting at a well. A well is a place of wellbeing and sustenance in a pastoral society (Brueggemann, 1994:703). Interestingly, though, the Midianites are Abraham's descendants through Keturah, Genesis 25 (Vanzant, 2009:79).

The Book of Judges also records several cases of hospitality; for instance, in Judges 4 Jael offers shelter to Sisera when he flees from Deborah and Barak. Sisera sought hospitality in Jael's tent where he least expected any harm "[b]ecause there were friendly relations between [the two clans]" (Jdg. 4:17). Jael offered such hospitality: "[She] went out to Sisera and said to

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<sup>45</sup> Because the focus of this section is a survey, I will leave the Abrahamic hospitality and the case study of Lot to the exegetical chapter, as the two cases are the major focus of the research. Viewed as a classical model in the Bible, the research compares the Abrahamic model to Lot's to accomplish its purpose –the significance of the theological–ethical understanding of the concept in a contemporary global ethical debate.

him ‘Come, my lord, come right in. Don’t be afraid.’ So, he entered.” The rest of the history takes a tragic turn for Sisera. Another tragic story of hospitality is given in Judges 19: the story of a Levite who was given hospitality that ended in the tragic rape of the man’s concubine, leading to her death.

The prophet Nathan employed a parable on the practice of hospitality to indict King David (2 Sam. 12), as a caution or reminder on the hospitality role of a king toward his people and the alien living amongst them. 2 Kings 4:8-37 narrates the story of Elisha and the rich Shunammite woman who provides for him; Elisha reciprocates the hospitality shown to him and his servant by blessing the woman who later bore a son. “[...] she has no son, and her husband is old.” Nehemiah 5:17-19 describes how Nehemiah shows hospitality to fellow-Jews who were involved in rebuilding the walls of the city. These are, however, not exhaustive cases of hospitality practices in the Old Testament. I will now turn to the text itself to see how hospitality is presented.

### ***2.3.1.2. Literary imagery related to hospitality in the Old Testament testimonies***

It has been shown that the Old Testament relates the concept of hospitality to the creation motif. Genesis 1:28-31 raises ideas reminiscent of the hospitality described under commensality and status. The relationship between the creator and the creation is portrayed as that of a host and guests, God as the host providing habitation to the guest (creation) He has made. Concerning hospitality relationship, the first step is welcoming the guest in the house, and then other customs and rituals follow. God welcomes the human being that He created in His image to occupy the house, the earth He has created, to fill and subdue it. The idea is that God owns the earth, and all other things He created, including a human being, are temporary owners, living on the earth through the offer of the creator’s hospitality. This temporary ownership will later serve as a reminder to man and woman to be hospitable toward those who are destitute, just like they themselves are living by God’s graceful offer of hospitality. The provision of food in hospitality is usually the climax of the display of hospitality.

Leviticus 19:2 voices the ethics of imitation of God in the command, “Say to all the congregation of the people of Israel, You shall be holy; for I the LORD your God am holy”

(RSV). Kaiser (1994:1131) describes this text as the “masthead” of the chapter. It is an all-embracing standard as the rest of the chapter provides examples in all walks of life. Leviticus 19:33-34 is the imperative to imitate God’s holiness in treating aliens.

When some stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God (Lev. 19:33–34. RSV).

The Israelites were reminded of their slavery in Egypt. He commands them not to do any harm to a stranger or a sojourner, rather they should treat a strange or sojourner as a native born. The motivation is that the Israelites were one strangers in the land of Egypt and because the Lord says, “I am the Lord your God”. This motivation is similar the motivation the Lord gave while giving the Decalogue. The motivation also occurs frequently in Leviticus 19. 3, 4, 10, 11, 14, 16. YHWH delivered these people and he is reminding them of their time of slavery, not because that is the motivation in itself, but because of the character of YHWH, who cared for them and hosted them in “a land flowing with milk and honey” (Ex. 3:8; 13:5; 33:7; Lev. 20:24; Num. 14:8; Deut. 11:9). Israel was reminded in the same Leviticus text of their temporariness on the earth. Leviticus 25:23 says, “The Land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me” (RSV). Retrospectively, the creation motive is echoed here. This imagery, therefore, characterises Israel’s lifestyle (Birch, 1991:110). Ultimately, we can see that hospitality is an ethical duty, anchored on the imitation of the character and actions of God, and Israel is to reflect on that (Birch, 1991:125).

How does the Old Testament reflect this imagery? Janzen (1994:38) explains the theme in the story—the model and counter-model of hospitality in Judges 19:

Now, the story has not only past but also a future, and we are to understand that the events described here show Israel on its way from its beginnings as a people just delivered from Egypt [without a king] to a time when a king (19:1; 21:25) would restore the shalom so flagrantly broken here.

This implies that “Israel was expected to let itself be shaped in its hospitality ideal by that origin, but failed to do so until an anticipated king would actualize this ideal in the future” (Janzen, 1994:45). We have seen how hospitality is reflected in God’s story of the narrative genre; this introduces references to other genres of the Old Testament.

In wisdom literature, Job says that he has never neglected the virtue of hospitality. Job 31:32 says “The sojourner has not lodged in the street; I have opened my doors to the wayfarer.” Hospitality is also implied in Proverbs 25:21, 24. From the poetic literature perspective, Ps. 23:5-6 that employs hospitality imagery in describing the psalmist's relationship with the Lord. For the prophetic literature, the context was one in which the prophets were serving as spiritual opposition groups who were reporting the loyalty of the people to Yahweh, especially that of the kings (Kassa 2014:77). Regarding the familial paradigm under the hospitality model, kings were indicted for being inhospitable—example, David and Uriah. Jeremiah 22:1-5 says that a lack of hospitality, as portrayed in doing violence to the alien, will lead to inhospitality, and eventually, expulsion from God’s hospitality. The third division of the book of Isaiah, discussed by Brueggemann (2007:49ff) under “A welcome for the Others” should be seen as a return to the neglected practice of hospitality (Isa. 56:3-7).

### ***2.3.1.3. Images of hospitality in the Old Testament Testimonies.***

Selman (1996:485) observes that hospitality in the Old Testament was understood as a demonstration of faithfulness to God (Job 31:32; Is. 58:7). The practice involved entertainment: YHWH was entertained (Gen. 18:1), angels were entertained and YHWH Himself offers hospitality (Ps. 23:5–6; Zeph. 1:7). Hospitality in the Old Testament was extended to all, it was a mutual obligation (Judg. 4:11–21) and reciprocated an earlier kindness (Ex. 2:20; 2 Sam. 19:32–40).

The custom of hospitality was that a stranger usually waits at the public square, city gate, or a place of well-being and sustenance, for an offer of hospitality. It may have included the washing of feet, provision of food, anointing of the head with oil, care for the guest’s animal (often the means of transportation), and accommodation (Deut. 23:4; Gen. 18, Ps. 23, 2 Kgs. 2:10). Matthews (1991:13–15) draws what he describes as protocols of hospitality from two Old Testament stories of hospitality, Genesis 18 and 24, as the proper models for the practice of hospitality. His outline is helpful in understanding the general practice in the Old Testament:

1. The sphere of hospitality comprises a zone of obligation for both the individual and the village or town within which they have the responsibility to offer hospitality to strangers. The size of the zone is, of course, smaller for the individual than for the urban centre.



2. The stranger must be transformed from being a potential threat to becoming an ally, through the offer of hospitality.
3. The invitation of hospitality can only be offered by the male head of a household or a male citizen of a town or village—although this claim is not exclusive, as Matthew notes exceptional cases: *cf.* 2 Sam. 20:16–22; 2Kgs. 11:1–3.
4. The invitation may include a timespan statement for the period of hospitality, but this can then be extended, if agreeable to both parties, on the renewed invitation of the host.
5. The stranger has the right of refusal, but this could be considered an affront to the honour of the host and could be a cause for immediate hostility or conflict. The refusal could be because of a desire to continue with a journey or the legal inappropriateness of the one making the invitation.
6. Once the invitation is accepted, the roles of the host and the guest are set by the rules of custom.
  - a. The guest must not ask for anything.
  - b. The host provides the best he has available—despite what may be modestly offered in the initial offer of hospitality.
  - c. The guest is expected to reciprocate immediately with news, predictions of good fortune, or expressions of gratitude for what he has been given, as well as praise of the host’s generosity and honour.
  - d. The host must not ask personal questions of the guest. These matters can only be volunteered by the guest.
7. Guests remain under the protection of the host until they have left the zone of the obligation of the host.

These protocols are a general summary of what Old Testament hospitality entails, but there are abundant variations and exceptions.

### **2.3.2. New Testament hospitality**

As in the Old Testament, the New Testament also considers hospitality a moral obligation, “emphasi[sing] the presence of God or Christ in ordinary exchanges between human guests and hosts. As a result, the numinous qualities of hospitality [...] take on an equal significance

alongside the moral ones” (Koenig, 1985:2). The New Testament blends the dimension of moral obligation with the spiritual, as it introduces aspects of empathy.

There are strands within the New Testament which reveal that concern for a guest-host relationship involving God, Jesus and humanity are significant. According to Matthew 10:40 and John 13:20, hospitality toward the disciples is hospitality to Jesus. Jesus' parable about the Kingdom of God in Matthew 25 makes hospitality paramount in that it is the basis on which people are judged on the day of the Lord. Hospitality toward ‘others’ becomes a way of showing love to God and Jesus.

The vision of a guest–host relationship, however, seems not to take into consideration that real-life encounter. Translating the love for God into love for a stranger is the biggest challenge, for several reasons. Koenig (1985:4f) notes some reasons:

- 1) Sin: the sin of self-centredness and greed, which shapes our culture;
- 2) The challenge of increasing numbers of strangers and the meagre resources at one's disposal to meet the challenge of the increasing population;
- 3) The challenge of insecurity and the desire to maintain control of power and secure one's territory. Koenig notes that the biblical vision of strangers through God's embrace of all nations encounters these risks inherent in hospitality. What then is this biblical vision of strangers? This is not an easy question as it seems. The New Testament vision of a stranger is fluid. The root word in Greek contains this fluidity itself. Koenig (1985:8) explains:

[T]he nouns *xenos* denotes simultaneously a guest, a host, or a stranger, while the verb *xenizein* means ‘receive as a guest’ but also ‘surprise’ and hence ‘present someone or something as strange.’ Correspondingly, *philoxenia*, the term for hospitality used in the New Testament, refers literally not to love of strangers *per se* but to a delight in the whole guest–host relationship, in the mysterious reversals and gains for all parties which may take place.

The New Testament's use of Greek terms introduces fluidity, which is anchored on the motivation that the divine plays a role in the guest–host relationship (Rom. 1:11–12; 1 Pt. 4:9). Its characteristics are that it is more like a partnership—human participation in a divine task—and it is inclusive (Koenig, 1985:8). By implication, hospitality is not conceived as a human invention but divine responsibility where both guest and host have roles to play. Paul wants to

visit the Romans, most of whom he has not met, presuming that through hospitality there would be mutual strengthening. He encourages them to practice hospitality through sharing with the saints in need (Rom. 12:13). Partnership (*koinonia*<sup>46</sup>) thus takes the centre stage of the perception and practice of hospitality in the New Testament.

From this perception of hospitality in the New Testament, Koenig (1985) explores some major New Testament figures to glean through their eyes the portrayal and the practice the concept.

### **2.3.2.1. Jesus Christ and hospitality**

Jesus's perception of hospitality is grounded on the Jewish perception and practice in the first century. Primarily, the Jewish perception and practice of hospitality are based on the Old Testament testimony as discussed above. Much of the New Testament teaching centres on the figure of Abraham. The story of Abraham's generosity toward three strangers (Gen. 18) was told often with the intention of inculcating the virtue of hospitality, as when Jesus alluded to Abraham's archetypal role of host. Other examples include Matt. 8:11—participation with Abraham at the grand feast, Luke 16:19–31—the parable of the rich and poor Lazarus with Abraham welcoming Lazarus into heaven. It is assumed that the Jews' memory of their ancestors and of their wilderness experience, shaped the practices and increased their consciousness and sensitivity to the needs of the 'others' (Deut. 25:5–11; Lev. 19:33–34). The eschatological dream and hope are to be hosted by God in an endless feast (Isa. 25:6–8).

As recorded in the gospels, Jesus's earthly ministry relates numerous encounters with the Pharisees, often centring on contradictions regarding restrictions on hospitality especially toward the inhabitants of the land. Tendencies toward exclusivity in the practice of hospitality were a bone of contention between Jesus and the religious leaders. For instance, his table associations (Mk. 2:13–14 and parallel passages; Lk. 7:36–50; 15:1–2; 19:1–10) became a

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<sup>46</sup> *Koinonia* has varied semantic potential. Louw, J.P. & Nida, E.A., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains*, 1, (1996:445, 568) define it as (1) "an association involving close mutual relations and involvement—close association, fellowship. (2) To share one's possessions, with the implication of some kind of joint participation and mutual interest—to share. (3) Willing gift, ready contribution. This partnership involves the mutual participation in an atmosphere of sharing, worship, breaking and sharing of bread (meal) and prayers, and having material things in common through sharing" (see Koenig, 1985:9). The seminal work of Koenig provides an easy understanding of the New Testament perspective on hospitality. This research uses his work as a textbook to report this.

point on which the Pharisees criticised Jesus for not observing the law. Many of Jesus' sayings about the "kingdom of heaven" are closely connected with the production of food and drink or a refuge for God's creatures (Mt. 6:25-34; Lk. 12:22-31; Mt. 13:3-9, 24-45; 25:1-30). The miracle of the feeding of the crowd (Mk. 6:30-34; Mt. 14:13-21; Lk. 9:11-17; Jn. 6:5-13) portrays commensality. The focus on food, drink and hospitality suggests the idea of a reciprocal relationship between God and the people. God provided abundantly, and the people responded in thanksgiving and acting with similar generosity toward others. Not only were they to act in a similar way, but could also expect the same treatment (Mt. 10:40; Mk. 9:37; Luke 9:16). Jesus's Ministry focuses on the restoration of individuals and communities who were isolated by societal laws and customs. Based on Jesus's teaching, hospitality becomes a normative way of showing the life in the kingdom of God.

Precisely in the midst of partnership with strangers the powers of the kingdom become evident. The table companionship practiced by Jesus 'provided an invitation, joyfully accepted, to the good life, an example of generosity from those who felt themselves well-off and, especially when the social, moral, religious or ethnic outcasts were also present, it provided powerfully effective illustration of the fact that the good things of life, the treasures of life, were equally available to all and that each was equally acceptable to all' (Koenig, 1985:36).

In retrospect, the presence of God is the underlying factor in any hospitable relationship. Many of Jesus' teachings indicate that God takes an active part in generous relationships between humans. Koenig (1985:45) explains that the emphasis on Jesus's teaching pertains to the abundance which is to be disclosed to others and when this is done, "the boundaries of space and time that obscure God's kingdom melts away". Through this true humanity emerges.

To see how the immediate followers understood Jesus' teaching about partnering with strangers, that is, hospitality as a mutual relationship, one has to look at the rest of the New Testament testimonies.

### **2.3.2.2. Early Church and hospitality**

Lukan writings portray a community of believers relating with each other harmoniously. Hospitality is implied as one of these sub themes of their interaction, about which Koenig (1985:86) comments "[...] For Luke, cooperation is the key to missionary success. To achieve

it, frequent reversals of guest and host relationship is necessary [...] Residential communities, particularly meal settings, are thought by Luke to be the primary locus for such interactions”.

For Koenig, the theme of welcome (hospitality) is portrayed early in the narration of the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:6–7). Jesus was “laid in the manger because there was no room for them in the inn”. Jesus will live as a stranger who experiences welcome and rejection (Lk 10:38–42; 11:37–54; 14:1–24; 19:1–10; 9:55–53; 13:31, 34–35). The Acts of the Apostles also describe a collection of guest and host stories, one of which narrates Ananias’s welcome of Saul (Acts 9:10–28). Luke portrays hospitality, in the form of partnership as a natural feature of mission. Through commensality, welcome, the new community of followers of Jesus Christ grew. The presence of God as observed earlier is seen in the person of the Holy Spirit who sustains the mutual relationship in the guest-host role reversal.

Paul’s ministry and writing portray hospitality as a mutual welcoming which to him was the formation of what humans were meant to be. Believers were to welcome one another as Christ welcome them (Rom. 15: 7). Paul warns against any act of discrimination and calls for the church to embrace one another: 1 Corinthians 11:17; Galatians 2:11–14. For Paul, meals occupy a central place in the proclamation of the gospel. Hospitality is a means of welcome of the other into a new humanity in Jesus Christ (Rom. 15:7).

From the foregone discussion, New Testament hospitality is the mutual and interaction between guest and host that translates into role reversals through the enabling presence of the divine. The expansion of the kingdom of God is seen to be possible through occasions of welcoming or mutual relationship with strangers.

## 2.4. Theological perspectives

Theological perspective focuses on the systematic study of biblical doctrines. The study intends to look at hospitality in the light of human reflections on human–divine relationship. The research limits its scope to the three areas, namely ethics, dogmatic and practical theology.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> To guard against detraction from the focus and main problem of the research, the three areas are selected to provide an overview for further reflection.

### 2.4.1. Ethics

Ethics deals with fundamental issues of moral life. Hospitality, as seen from the foregoing discourse, illustrates the complexity of the ideal of a moral life. This research is not investigating the entire field of ethics but examining ethics as part of the broad and complex human experience. As such this research is limited to Christian theological ethics.<sup>48</sup>

In the background study in Chapter 1, I briefly highlighted Ogletree's perception of hospitality, noting that he views hospitality as a metaphor for moral life. I also noted his view that hospitality provides the lens for perception. Ogletree (1977:16; 1985:35) observes: "Both in a theoretical and in a practical sense the 'other' the personal other, presents the central theme for ethical understanding." Ogletree is concerned with the social interpretation of moral experience. He draws from an influential functionalist theory which builds on a basic paradigm of interaction between two subjects, ego and alter, and observes that there are factors which limit and regulate the interaction between the two subjects. Both (ego and alter) have common controlling and conditioning factors that "are linked to cultural patterns which specify appropriate courses of action for various types of actors and which also embody more general values defining good and right action among human beings" (1977:18; cf. 1985:37). These factors, he says, belong to the structure of moral experience. In other words, "moral values [...] are ingredients in the control factors which provide order and stability to human interactions" (Ogletree, 1977:18; cf. 1985:37). However, he notes that to a certain extent morality presupposes egoism since egoism enables us to gain the separateness which is the precondition of our power to orient ourselves to others. This implies that there are tendencies for ethics to focus and view 'otherness' in relation to self. Ogletree (1977:27) suggests that when the commencement of moral consciousness is located in "a readiness to welcome the other—to show hospitality to the stranger", it might set aside the egoistic concern for self and personal fulfilment. Hence, he perceives hospitality as a metaphor for moral life. As a metaphor, it focuses on the multifaceted expressions of relationship with the 'other'.

Human relations across culture and society are simply notable instances of a dynamic which runs through all aspects of moral experience; a readiness to

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<sup>48</sup> Seminal works in this field include: Thomas W. Ogletree, 1985. *Hospitality to the stranger: Dimensions of Moral Understanding*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. Christine Pohl, 1999. *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

honor what is ‘other’ precisely in its “otherness”. *For theological ethics, the religious sense of the otherness is foundational*; the more proximate provide the material experience for apprehending the distinctive strangeness of the sacred. For moral understanding as such, relations between human strangers are in the centre of attention (Ogletree, 1985:3, emphasis added).

From a theological ethical perspective, therefore, hospitality reveals dynamics of religious perception of the other as equal, based on the common humanity in its myriad variations. This perspective shows hospitality as a spiritual obligation, a valued moral practice, an expression of kindness, mutual aid, neighbourliness and response to the life of faith (Ogletree, 1985:4). Notwithstanding, our romanticised view of the ‘other’ often gives insufficient weight concerning the real encounter which might disorient us. In many instances, the relationship seems disproportionate. Ogletree (1985:4) comments:

The equality of host and stranger finally shows itself in reciprocal acts of hospitality that reflect reversals in the relational order. My readiness to welcome the other into my world must be balanced by my readiness to enter the world of the other as enrichment for my orientation to meaning must be matched by my willingness to allow my own stories to be incorporated into the values and thought model of the other.

Hospitality is seen as a framework which provides a bridge which connects our theology with daily life concerns (Ogletree, 1985:8). Christian theological ethics understand hospitality as an ongoing dialectic between host and strangers which recognises the world of plurality, not at the expense of one’s own world, but in the sense that one learns to relate positively to the contrasting world of the other. Hospitality relates to a new world of shared meanings where both strangers and host feel at home with each other (see Ogletree, 1985:19).

#### **2.4.2. Dogmatic theology perspective**

Central to the conceptualisation of hospitality in theology is the creation account in Genesis 1–2. This theme is celebrated throughout the Bible. The creation motif is described as a theological matrix which includes various, often inseparable loci. According to Reynolds (2009:147) in the web of interrelatedness, God is revealed as “surpassing the contingent temporal and special limits as an unconditional ‘other’.” But the question raised by Reynolds is, “what kind of ‘other’ is God?” This relates to the framework of religious imagination which concerns

[...] the moral dimension of personhood and its practical ethical implications concerning the communal-historical identity of a people. God is not an abstract power of nature or principle of being, but a righteous will disclosed in the liberative transformation of an historical community, calling persons into right relationship with divinity and each other (2008:148).

God is described as a relationship establishing God. He is different to anything he has created, he is the ‘other’ that transcends the mercy of human language to name (Ex. 3:13-15), yet it is this incomprehensibility that evokes trustworthiness as God is understood in different ways through history. Viewing God as the Creator of all things implies that he can be trusted. This ‘other’ as revealed in the creation story allows for humans to recognise the world as creation and a divine gift. God’s creativity, creating what is good, reveals His loving and generous giving quality. What does this suggest in the conception of hospitality? Reynolds (2008:168) articulates:

God’s creative power is vulnerable love, a power that is not controlling but, by comparison, weak. Paradoxically, weakness is the way God is a resource for creation that utterly depends upon God. So the welcome we seek is made available in divine vulnerability; not through omnipotence and immutability but through weakness is God’s power manifest. By giving over the gift of being in a self-limiting act of love, God shows openness and reciprocity, the capacity to suffer[...] God is available, continually creating space for others, welcoming them into being.

God’s generous act of self-giving creates an awareness that all we have is a gift and so we are to invest in ‘others’ generously through love, which is the positive aim of the law. This leads to the understanding of hospitality as the moral sense of this law, “a welcoming of one’s neighbor that bears and invites him or her into a shared space of mutuality.”<sup>49</sup> Hospitality, according to Reynolds, empowers the solidarity of “others”, the household of Jesus Christ as a communion of differences. It “is an opening up of the household to provide and care for another whose place of origin is elsewhere. It is the practice of making room to include an act of sharing with and for another as oneself” (2008:241). We see that this echoes the above discussion on the concept of hospitality. Hospitality is more than a mere welcome of a neighbour, rather, it is a mutual relationship that normally characterises a typical household.

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<sup>49</sup> Reynolds’ use of “neighbor” as the object of the welcome, even though he subsequently employed a more general term, is limiting in a sense. Semantically neighbour can function broadly, but unless the sense in which it is employed is explained it becomes insufficient.



In contemplating the divine vulnerability, we become aware of our common possession, what every human share—vulnerability, and this grants us the capacity to recognise and become available to the other whom we presume is not within our category of identity. This leads us to the theological basis of hospitality. Reynolds (2008:243) defines it as: “God blesses through the stranger. How so? In hospitality, the center of gravity lies neither in the home nor in the stranger, neither in host nor guest, but in the God of both who is discovered redemptively in the meeting—indeed, in the role reversal”.

Having seen hospitality as an on-going spiritual, ethical, and moral dialectic between host and guest centred in God, we briefly consider how the roles of host and guest translate in a practical theological sense. Some of the points raised above on the relevancy of hospitality invariably relate to this.

### **2.4.3. Practical theology viewpoint**

Hospitality is considered as a new paradigm for doing theology—dealing with how religiosity can engage public life with credibility from below. Incarnation theology, for example, is viewed as a way to engage with the public life and as a positive vulnerability (Muller, 2015:1). This, as we have seen, is the affirmation of the spirituality of relationship. An example of the incarnational approach to doing theology from below is creating an avenue where two parties whose paths would not ordinarily cross come together for one common reason and purpose, human dignity. Incarnational theology creates room for mutual understanding and healing. Vulnerability emphasised in incarnation theology grants us the capacity to recognise and become available—show hospitality to the ‘other’ who we presume is not within our category of identity.

Similarly, in a paper “*Host and Guest: Hospitality as an Emerging Paradigm in Mission*”, Brandner (2013:94) argues that “hospitality has turned into a central term in missiological discussions integrating several aspects of missiological reflection.” The dialectic of host and stranger provides the lenses through which church and missionaries understand their roles thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the message and mission of the church (Brandner, 2013: 94). The practice helps those in dire need because it entails practically identifying with the circumstances of the needy, and empowers the recipient to assume the role of the ‘other’. In

this paradigm hospitality is missional in a very direct, practical and concrete sense (Brandner, 2013:100), embodying a welcome to the ‘other’ to experience the redemptive hospitality of God. There is a transformative encounter on the sides of both the host and the guest.

The discourse so far has looked at different perspectives of hospitality, most of which emphasise the relevance of the practice from one’s own particular perception. The perceptions show that hospitality is an ambivalent phenomenon: certain cultural practices viewed from the traditional, anthropological and even the theological and biblical points of view seem contradictory to the demands of human dignity. The philosophical points of view challenged us to reconsider our perceptions. For example, Immanuel Kant’s (1795) *Perpetual Peace* is a challenge to the cultural practice of hospitality found among the Bedouins, a practice that many anthropologists commended and invited others to study in its context. In a contrary, but a similar way to the anthropologist's call for a contextual understanding of hospitality practice, Derrida, deconstructs Kant’s *Perpetual Peace* in *Of Hospitality* (2000) and calls for unconditional hospitality. The following section compares these two philosophical points of views of conditional versus unconditional hospitality.

## **2.5. Conditional hospitality vs. unconditional hospitality: A philosophical point of view**

From the foregoing discussion on the concepts of hospitality, although complex, its hard to contend its moral function and relevance. The philosophical points of view acknowledges the significance of the concept and practice, then notes the ambiguity which anthropologists have pointed out. Different philosophers view these ambiguities differently. I would like to engage Kant’s (1795, *Perpetual Peace*) notion of hospitality with Derrida’s (2000, *Of Hospitality*). First, I shall discuss Kant’s vision of “perpetual peace” in which he sees hospitality as a condition for achieving it. Afterwards, I will consider the concept as it emerges from Derrida’s *Of Hospitality*, a deconstruction of Kant’s notion.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Engaging with Kant does not in any way suggest that the idea of universal hospitality originated with him. In my MTh thesis (Kassa, 2014) I observe that the historicity of natural law is an age-long history. We have seen how scholars and philosophers before Kant have engaged with the concept. Natural law as I observed emphasises the notion of shared humanity; on that notion, every human being possesses the right to be treated with dignity. Kant's universal hospitality as we shall see is anchored on this notion of shared humanity. However, Kant has been credited for the contemporary understanding of cosmopolitan hospitality and because Derrida’s critical “unconditional hospitality” stems from a deconstruction of Kant, I decided to start from Kant.

### 2.5.1. Universal hospitality

*Perpetual Peace* is an essay by Kant in which he proposes a foundation upon which permanent peace was to be built. Kant's interest was in how personal interest and international cooperation might bring an end to wars. He starts the essay by informing us that the topic arose from a “satirical inscription” found on a Dutch innkeeper’s signboard above the picture of a graveyard. He was not sure to whom it was directed, whether to the entire human race, rulers, or philosophers like him. Although the ironical reference to the fact that the only lasting peace available to humans might very well be that of death is vivid in the satire, Kant believes perpetual peace is possible, and to him, it is a cherished sweet dream (1939:1).

The essay was aimed at laying down the blueprint for achieving this “sweet dream.” He presents two-step programmes of how to achieve that perpetual peace. The first, the “preliminary articles,” are the steps that should be taken immediately and as fast as possible. The preliminary essays are in the form of a restrictive treaty outlining six restrictions as conditions that lay the foundations for possible perpetual peace.<sup>51</sup> A close look at these restrictions shows that Kant intends, first, to clear the atmosphere of any mistrust or actions that might cause suspicion between states. The environment upon which perpetual peace could arise needs to be free of any element that might precipitate another war. Kant’s six preliminary articles aim to provide a healthy, stable relationship between states.

The second section of the essay contains the “definitive articles”. This section explains war as a kind of natural state and that it needs to be substituted by establishing a state of peace. Kant says,

For, in order to be sheltered against every act of hostility it is not sufficient that none is committed; one neighbour must guarantee to another his personal

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<sup>51</sup> Since this section does not discuss or critique the Kantian notion of perpetual peace, I will not go into details of this article, but rather engage with his third definitive article for a perpetual peace among states. The six articles state: 1) No treaty of peace shall be esteemed valid, which tacitly reserves matters for future war. 2) No state, of whatever extent, shall ever pass into the dominion of another state, whether by inheritance, exchange, purchase or donation. 3) Standing armies (*mile perpetuus*) shall in time be totally abolished. 4) National debts shall not be contracted with a view to maintaining interest of the state abroad. 5) No state shall by force interfere with either the constitution or government of another state. 6) A state shall not, during war, admit hostilities of a nature that would threaten reciprocal confidence in a succeeding peace: such as employing assassins (*percussores*), poisoners (*venefici*), violation of capitulations, secret instigation of rebellion (*pseuduellio*) in the opposing state. Where the need arises, reference shall be made of the areas that relate to clarification of the third definitive article.

security which cannot take place except in a state of legislation; without which one may treat another as an enemy, after having in vain demanded this protection.

The demand for this legislation is based on the fact that human beings are reciprocative, this implies that they will reciprocate to each other security and or peace guaranteed by obedience to the legislation. Kant (1939:11) supports his argument for the need for legislation by saying that living in a natural way—state of anarchy is a threat to existence and deprivation to security. The demand for legislation, therefore, implies “I have right to compel him, either to associate with me under the dominion of common laws or to quit my neighbourhood”. Kant suggests three “definitive articles” and unlike the “preliminary article” which has negative restriction to be removed, the “definitive articles” are positive conditions which he believes can make perpetual peace a reality.<sup>52</sup> These definitive articles are:<sup>53</sup>

1. The civil constitution of every state ought to be republican.
2. The public right ought to be founded upon a federation of free states.
3. The cosmopolitical right shall be limited to conditions of universal hospitality.

This third definitive article, with the philosophical perspective on the concept of hospitality, is the major concern of this section. Here Kant considers hospitality as “the right every stranger has of not being treated as an enemy in the country in which he arrives”. Kant goes on to explain the rights of a stranger:

The question is not about the right of being received and admitted into the house of an individual: this benevolent custom of demanding particular conventions. One speaks here only of the right all men have, of demanding of others to be admitted into their society; a right founded upon that of the common possession of the surface of the earth, whose spherical form obliges them to suffer others to subsist contiguous to them, because they cannot disperse themselves to an indefinite distance, and because originally one has not a greater right to a country than another.

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<sup>52</sup> “Here is a principle then, upon which all [the definitive] articles are established: All men (*sic*) who have a mutual influence over one another, ought to have a civil constitution. Now every legitimate constitution, considered in respect of persons who are the objects of it, is (I) Either comfortable to the *civil right*, and limited to a people (*ius civilitis*). (II) Or to the *right of nations*, and regulate the relations of nation among each other (*ius gentium*). (III) Or to the *cosmopolitical right*, as far as men (*sic*) are influencing one another, in quality of constituent parts of the great state of the human race (*ius cosmopoliticum*).

<sup>53</sup> The research will not elaborate on each article, but will list them, then concentrate on the third definitive article which touches on hospitality. Explanations or comment on the first two can only be made in context where it necessary for clarity of the third.

Kant is explicit here on why hospitality is a right—by virtue of common possession of the surface of the earth. He anchors his idea of hospitality in the idea of natural law. By nature, no one country has a greater right than another. The nature of the earth makes interaction and communication inevitable. Therefore, inhospitality to Kant is “contrary to the right of nature” (1939:25).

Regarding the conditions<sup>54</sup> of hospitality, in an attempt to simplify,

- 1) Kant says one has the right to be treated with hospitality in a situation of temporary visit “so long as he does not offend anyone.”
- 2) Any one’s claim to a right of a permanent resident should be “sanctioned in the end by public laws, and thus insensibly mankind may approach towards cosmopolitical constitution” (1939:25). The question one may ask here is: how can one reconcile this limitation with the cosmopolitical right in which hospitality itself is to be the basis? Is there a contradiction?

Kant’s conditions of hospitality are posited ultimately for the sake of “perpetual peace”. This peace will not be achieved if the stranger responds to the host with violence. This is so because

- 1) Human beings are reciprocative beings. “in a state of nature, and having reciprocal physical influence upon each other, the state of war would be immediately revived, to be freed [condition and laws] is the present end in view” (1939:11).
- 2) War is the natural state, hospitality is “ordained” and contented with fixing the conditions on which relationships are formed<sup>55</sup>.
- 3) “The idea of cosmopolitical right can no longer pass for a fantastic exaggeration of right; but is the last step of perfection necessary to a tacit code of civil and public right; these systems at length conducting towards a public right of men in general, and towards a perpetual peace, but to which one cannot hope continually to advance, except by means of the conditions here indicated” (1939:27). In other words, a cosmopolitical right founded on the conditions—or law—of universal hospitality deals with mutual

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<sup>54</sup> A point upon which Derrida critiqued Kant’s concept of universal hospitality.

<sup>55</sup> Kant explains in the Supplement of the guarantee for a perpetual peace that nature is responsible in leading humankind. It is on the conditions of this law of nature that hospitality is ordained. Nature according to Kant “favours the moral view of man and guarantees the execution of the laws reason prescribes to him”.

consistency, peaceful reciprocity and civility, and is given to all human beings equally. These then lead us to Derrida's concept of hospitality which is a critique of Kant.

### 2.5.2. Unconditional hospitality

Derrida (2000:3,9) began his seminar by raising the urgency and the necessity for attention regarding foreigners—*l'étranger*: the emergence of a widespread, diverse, and multicultural debate about the question of *l'étranger* which is ultimately the question of hospitality—the debate over immigration, global inequalities, and post- or neo-colonialism.<sup>56</sup> He was obsessed with the treatment Muslim immigrants were receiving in France. That the foreigner is the one to raise the question about himself was a serious concern to him. Why should a foreigner seek to be invited to be given hospitality? Why is the foreigner treated like an enemy? Derrida was concerned about strangers who are always at risk of being defenceless before the law of the country that welcomes or expels them. The foreigner is forced to succumb to a legal document with which he or she is not familiar. “He has to ask for hospitality in a language which by definition is not his own, the one imposed on him by the master of the house, the host, the king, the lord, the authorities, the nation, the state, the father ...and that is the first act of violence” (Derrida, 2000:15). He made a vivid point that “this is where the question of hospitality begins: must we ask the foreigner to understand us, to speak our language, in all the senses of the term, in all its possible extensions, before being able and so as to be able to welcome him into our country?” (2000:15). Derrida further elaborates his concern that even in a situation where the foreigner does speak the “language of the people” does that make it possible for the status of the foreigner to change? “Could we speak of asylum or hospitality in regard to him?”

Derrida points to the problem he observes from the treaty of the hospitality and the expected reciprocity as that of the “right”. What right is granted to the foreigner? He sees a connection

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<sup>56</sup> Coincidentally, while reading and writing this, I received a text message through *WhatsApp* on the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2015, also on the 8<sup>th</sup> on Email. Notice from the Association of Nigerian Student Stellenbosch University read: “Unconfirmed report reaching us today has this message of caution and warning: ‘Massive Xenophobia attack secretly planned for this coming Wednesday, April 8th 2015 (tomorrow) by different South African communities against foreigners around Cape Town. Avoid using public transportation, trains, taxis. Stay away from isolated areas, don’t just walk carelessly around township.’ Like I said, it’s an unconfirmed report but don’t throw caution to the wind because xenophobia is not a strange occurrence in South Africa. Please, all foreigners are forewarned. This of course was true because there were indeed incidents of xenophobic attacks in some provinces of South Africa. The incidents reminded me afresh of the historical memory of Derrida’s context of *Of Hospitality*. The question of the stranger is indeed “the question of the stranger”.

to the question of the right to nationality or citizenship by birth. Hence, the reason that the foreigner remains a foreigner even when granted the right to nationality or citizenship. The right of hospitality again, Derrida observes, makes hospitality possible and at the same time limits and prohibits hospitality. “Because hospitality, in this situation, is not offered to an anonymous new arrival and someone who has neither name, nor patronym, nor family, nor social status, and who is therefore treated not as a foreigner but as another barbarian” (2000:25). Now, this absolute ‘other’ without a name prompted Derrida’s contemplation and deconstruction of the concept, especially as theorised by Kant.

Derrida proposes a concept he calls “absolute hospitality” or “unconditional hospitality”. Absolute hospitality takes away the question of “right” which limits and makes hospitality impossible. Derrida explains:

[A]bsolute hospitality requires that I open up my home and that I give not only to the foreigner (provided with a family name, with the social status of being a foreigner), but to the absolute unknown, anonymous other, and that I *give place* to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names (2000:25).

Elsewhere Derrida (1999:70) makes this very clear:

So, unconditional hospitality implies that you don’t ask the other, the newcomer, the guest, to give anything back, or even to identify himself or herself. Even if the other deprives you of your mastery of your home, you have to accept this. It is terrible to accept this, but that is the condition of unconditional hospitality: that you give up the mastery of your space, your home, your nation. It is unbearable. If, however, there is pure hospitality it should be pushed to this extreme. [...] It may be terrible because the newcomer may be a good person, or may be the devil...and if you exclude in advance this possibility—there is no hospitality.

Derrida explicates that his idea of unconditional hospitality is not a condemnation or opposition of hospitality by right. It commands a break with it and also with justice as a right. According to him, unconditional hospitality sets and maintains hospitality by right in a perpetual progressive movement.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> I will comment on this in my assessment of Derridean unconditional hospitality below.

Derrida's proposition of the concept of unconditional hospitality emanates from his treatment of the etymology of the term.<sup>58</sup> Hospitality derives from Latin *hostis* (foreigner, enemy) and the root *pet* (power, self-assertion—*cf. potere, ipso*). He gives the original distinction between guest (*hostes*) and host (*hospes*—a contraction of *hosti-pet*, 'guest-master'). From this Derrida coins the neologism 'hostpitality'. Derrida employs a paradox by seeing the necessity of ethical requirement of absolute openness toward the 'other' in conflict with the necessary exclusionary sovereignty (2000:55f). For instance, he says

[...] what constitutes a space of controlled and circumscribed property is just what opens it to intrusion. [...] in order to constitute the space of a habitable house and a home, you also need an opening, a door and windows, you have to give up a passage to the outside world [*l'étranger*].

This is a deconstruction of Kant's (1939:23) proposition in the third definitive article for perpetual peace which states that "[the] cosmopolitical right shall be limited to conditions of universal hospitality". Derrida (2000:65) describes the paradoxical effect of the law or right of hospitality as "the effacement of the limit between private and public, the secret and the phenomenal, the home (which make hospitality possible) and the violation of impossibility of home."

If "unconditional hospitality" exists, is it feasible? Is Derrida being realistic? Is unconditional hospitality not an "impossibility out of impossibility"? Derrida's fifth seminar, *Step of Hospitality / No Hospitality – Pas d'hospitalité* aims to address some of the issues arising from this question.

Derrida (2000:75) himself observes about his absolute hospitality, that "[i]t is as though we were going from one difficulty to another [...] It is as though hospitality were the impossible [...]" Surprisingly, elsewhere in a dialogue Derrida (1999:71) was explicit on this doubt when he says "[t]hose are the risks involved in pure hospitality if there is such a thing and I am not sure there is". He consents that his unconditional hospitality is in complete "insoluble antinomy, a non-dialectizable antinomy" (2000:77) to the 'law of hospitality'— "those rights

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<sup>58</sup> It is beyond the scope of this research to discuss the etymology of hospitality. However, in trying to understand Derrida's treatment of the topic I briefly state the etymology as used by Derrida to expound his idea.



and duties that are always conditioned and conditional, as they are defined by the Greco-Roman tradition and even Judeo-Christian one [...]”<sup>59</sup> Now the question is, how does Derrida solve the puzzle? To him, there shouldn’t be conditions to hospitality because they limit and consequently translate to law and duty. “And so, into the economy of a circle” (2000:135). Derrida’s unconditional hospitality means that which “dispenses with law, duty, or even politics” which is in dilemma to “hospitality circumscribed by law and duty”.

At this stage, I shall offer a brief assessment of what I understand from Derrida’s *Of Hospitality*. May I confess that the book is a difficult read. However, Derrida’s critique is vital in the sense that it calls for a deep engagement with our subject, to reconsider our basic assumptions on the matter. It also helps us to understand the complexities that are embedded in the concept. What Derrida suggests as unconditional hospitality sounds like theorising of the stories of hospitality found in the Old Testament (Gen. 19 & Judg. 19), i.e., hospitality at the risk of one’s family. If that is correct, then his critique of the Judeo-Christian ethic of hospitality holds no water. It means he is sanctioning it as ideal, a thing which this research seeks to understand and apply to the Christian community in an African context.

Some issues arise from the research done up to this point. Firstly, it seems that Derrida is saying biblical hospitality is not relevant for contemporary moral and ethical debate when he says unconditional hospitality is in complete “insoluble antinomy” to the law of hospitality as found even in the Judeo-Christian world (2000:77). Secondly, is Derrida questioning ethics? Or is ethics “straddling” unconditional hospitality and the conditional and juridico-political hospitality as he explicitly claims? Regarding ethics: what does it mean for an environment to be governed by principles of respect and donation and one governed by exchange, proportion or a norm? Derrida (1999:70) says pure hospitality “should consist in opening without horizon [...] an opening to the newcomer whoever that may be [...] but if you exclude the possibility that the newcomer is coming to destroy your house [...] there is no hospitality.” Is Derrida not

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<sup>59</sup> This is of course the very thorny issue that the research seeks to address as noted in Chapter One. However, we would like to see how Derrida argues his possibility of the ‘impossibility’ of absolute hospitality. Nevertheless, he is perhaps right that there is a non-dialectizable antinomy between his absolute hospitality and Judeo-Christian hospitality and perhaps the contemporary moral-ethical debate over immigration, global inequalities, and post- or neo-colonialism (see Derrida, 2000: 77).

indirectly propounding the same violence—in his case even an unjustifiable violence—that he desires to escape in the particularities of modern politics? (2000:77).

In one of the paragraphs above, I have pointed out how Derrida tries to explain his unconditional hospitality and noted that I would comment on it. Now according to Derrida (2000:25f):

Just hospitality breaks with hospitality by right; *not that it condemns or is opposed to it*, and it can on the contrary set and maintain it in a perpetual progressive movement; but it is as strangely heterogeneous to it as justice is heterogeneous to the law to which it is yet so close, from which in truth it is indissociable (emphasis added).

Is this statement by Derrida not an awareness of the impossibility of his absolute hospitality? Is this statement not a kind of compromise to Kantian conditional hospitality—hospitality by right—which he claims restricts hospitality? Derrida should realise that what is considered justice to an asylum seeker might be a denial of justice to someone living in abject poverty and having to share the meagre resources with that asylum seeker (*cf.* Janzen, 1994:57). This then invites conditions for hospitality. With this ambiguity inherent in idea of hospitality, I attempt to redefine the term in the next section.

## 2.6. Hospitality redefined

Different perspectives have emerged in the conceptualization of hospitality. By way of summary: hospitality is a practice of welcome which involves variable factors such as economic factors, power struggles on space, honour and shame. The concern of this section is not to discuss all these conceptualizations again, but investigating the theological-ethical understanding of the concept and its significance in the contemporary ethical debate. The conceptual survey above reveals that hospitality goes beyond reception and hosting either human–human, divine–divine, divine–human or human-divine. In the portrayal of the social practice, hospitality is a complex and ambiguous host–guest relationship. Its ambiguity reveals a number of dynamics that are still relevant in the global ethical debate. Considering the role of hospitality in relationships, the research provides the following working definition. It is believed that this working definition captures what the Old Testament theological-ethical conception is and might perhaps guide the understanding of the selected text.

The working definition to guide the continuing exploration on the theological–ethical understanding of hospitality is: *Hospitality is a complex and ongoing dialectic of a social relationship between host and stranger—the ‘other’, which involves an ethical obligation of providing care while recognising diversity and not at expense of one’s own private space, but relating in such a way that one learns positively about the contrasting world of the ‘other’.*

The complexity in this definition has to do with the dynamics in the host–guest role in hospitality. The rules that supposedly undergird the practice, further make it complex in certain contexts as we have seen in that they limit the practice as claimed by Derrida. It is a risk because it involves welcoming of a stranger, one whose identity is not revealed immediately. It entails a risk because it involves sharing of life resources. More so, as an obligation (ethical), hospitality as the task of protecting the dignity of the ‘other’ is not to be questioned. It is an intrinsic quality which everyone is to guard tenaciously on the common ground that we are all vulnerable human beings having common ownership (as sojourners) of the surface of the earth. Absolute claim to property is seen as the antithesis to this definition since it leads to a lack of compassion, which implies the inability to care for the ‘other’ who is destitute because they don’t belong (Janzen, 1994:156).

## **2.7. Conclusion**

From the foregone, hospitality is notoriously ambivalent and unpredictable. As discussed from different perspectives, the understanding hospitality shows up the necessity of an expanded network of social intercourse. The Tangale cultural perspective of hospitality is intrinsically linked to the domain of extended family. It is the means through which the family establishes social cohesion with the ‘other’. The ‘other’ in the Tangale cultural point of view is to be treated well because there is the potential for reciprocal benefit. Similarly, the social anthropological perspective of hospitality shows that there is a mutual implication of power and welcome in the law of hospitality. The survey also discusses the biblical and ancient Near Eastern concept of hospitality. It shows that hospitality is not just a social relationship, but it is a theological and ethical obligation. When the law of hospitality is violated, it invites divine displeasure and possibly divine punishment. Three dimensions of theological discipline were surveyed and in all, hospitality focuses on the dynamics of religious perception of humankind made in the image of God and therefore to be treated with dignity, respect and justice. The chapter surveyed

the philosophical view of hospitality. It notes a certain ambivalence in the concept and laws of hospitality and then proposes critical engagement when it comes to practice.

In the global world with its accompanying challenges, hospitality has a great potential as it shows itself as a shared language of human interaction. It provides the link between ‘others’ whose paths do not cross in an ordinary sense. But the question of its ambiguity remains, especially in the case of this research which is focusing on a complex text portraying ‘hospitality and inhospitality’. This invites one into a critical conversation with the text. The subsequent chapters are the critical exegetical investigation of the selected text, which as presumed provides the foundation for the theological-ethical concept of hospitality.

## *Chapter 3*

### *Intratextual Texture of Genesis 18 & 19*

#### **3.1. Introduction and background information**

This chapter is a critical exegetical investigation of the selected passage towards a theological-ethical conception of hospitality. The survey in the preceding chapter has unveiled different perspectives of the concept and practice of hospitality. It also shows that hospitality is complex. This perhaps informs the assertions of scholars like Hobbs (2001:5) who was skeptical about the incorporation of the fundamental understanding of the practice of hospitality into contemporary Christian ethics. Of course, in the light of the selected passage, one might be tempted to lean toward Hobbs' skepticism especially in the light of certain practices that at surface value contradict the essence of humanity. However, the survey shows that hospitality has great potentials because it shows the necessity of an expanded social intercourse and in that it shows itself as a shared language of human interaction. This chapter seeks to investigate the selected text of the Old Testament to understand the possible potential of the practice of hospitality in the Old Testament.

A better way to begin any approach to reading a text like the one in question is to acquaint oneself with the necessary background information. Being not the first reader, the research starts with an investigation of current existing research on the selected passage to help make an informed decision especially as it relates to such a complex text. Genesis is placed strategically as the first one in the collection of the first five books of the Bible (both in the Hebrew and the English translation). Being the first book of the Pentateuch, the survey of the existing research is done within the context of the history of Pentateuch research (Westermann, 1985:23; Arnold, 2009:1, 7).

##### **3.1.1. History of existing research on Pentateuch**

###### **3.1.1.1. *Pentateuch research***

The reading of the Pentateuch reveals certain characteristics of similarities and double accounts of stories. These doublets, however, also contain undeniable differences. It suggest that Pentateuch is polyphonic. These different voices are often regarded as elements of redaction or

editing (Ska 2006:94). The efforts of exegetes to understand the existence of these double or triple strands of stories or legislation led to many theories. The most popular and the one that has occupied the field of Pentateuch scholarship is the Documentary Hypothesis of Wellhausen.<sup>60</sup> By and large, the major challenge in the Pentateuchal study relates to this source-critical theory. The Documentary Hypothesis proposes several authors, Yahwist, Elohist, Deuteronomic and Priestly (JEDP) writers in opposition to the traditional belief in the authorship of Moses. “The Pentateuch is now seen to be the result of centuries-long process of the formation of tradition instead of a scribal composition” (Westermann, 1984:574). The Documentary Hypothesis was viewed as key to unlock the complex text of the Pentateuch (*cf.* Huddleston, 2013:197).

For more than a century, the Documentary Hypothesis dominated and provided the most compelling approach to the Pentateuch research (*cf.* Huddleston, 2013:197f for the simple summary outline of the theory). There was consensus on JEDP theory by the majority of scholars in the twentieth-century.<sup>61</sup> Dozeman and Schmid (2006:2) report that “von Rad and Noth recognized the existence of smaller, independent units of tradition in the formation of the Pentateuch, especially in light of the form-critical work of Hermann Gunkel and Hugo Gressmann” (*cf.* Westermann, 1984:577). It was observed that von Rad and Noth focus their attention on the early stages of those tradition and the unity of the material rather than the literary unity. The complexity of the early traditions was identified as a gap in methodology

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<sup>60</sup> Space does not warrant a detailed and exhaustive discourse of the history of the research to show how exegetes read the Pentateuch and try to solve the various critical problems. However, in a brief form, at some stage a single authorship, attributed to Moses was unquestionable because as Blenkinsopp (1992) and Ska (2006:96) opined, that focus was on the theological and apologetic intent of the exegetes and no attention was paid to critical problems. Questioning Moses’ authorship began somewhat in the Middle Ages by a rabbi (Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra) “who in his commentary on Deuteronomy drew attention to the fact that it is difficult to attribute certain texts to Moses”, e.g. Genesis 12:6; 22:14; Deuteronomy 1:1; 3:11, (Ska, 2006:98 *cf.* Blenkinsopp, 1992:2). With the influence of Renaissance, several scholars like Baruch Spinoza, Richard Simon, and Thomas Hobbes began the era of biblical criticism. With the inception of critical work, the most debated source-critical theory began. The history of the source-critical theory can be traced to as far back as H.B. Witter 1711, was later expounded by J. Astruc in 1753 and subsequently by J.E. Eichhorn 1781, (see Letellier 1995:1; Carr, 1996:4). “The full classical formulation of the Documentary Hypothesis (JEDP) was elaborated by K.H. Graf (1866) and especially by J. Wellhausen (1878–1879)” (Letellier 1995:1; Wenham, 2005:240; Ska, 2006:102ff). See Eckart Otto (2011) “Pentateuch”. *Religion Past and Present: Encyclopedia of Theology and Religion*. Vol IX. Pp. 682-690. For an exhaustive discussion on the history of the Historical-Critical Study of the Pentateuch.

<sup>61</sup> Works of Hermann Gunkel (Form-critical investigation), Gerhard von Rad and Martin Noth (tradition-historical criticism), James Muilenberg (literary criticism), Brevard S. Childs (canonical criticism), Gerhard von Rad (theological criticism) are examples of the product of the 20<sup>th</sup> century biblical scholarship that were influenced by the JEDP source critical theory (see Westermann, 1986:30ff).

and this raised the contention that perhaps a late redactor used innumerable smaller units of traditional material rather than four sources in the final literary development of the Pentateuch. This then introduced a new phase in the Pentateuch research (Westermann, 1984:575ff).

Dozeman and Schmid (2006:2f) and Huddleston, (2013:197f) argue that the Pentateuch had not yet received enough analysis to support the idea that these variants smaller traditions belong to a large-scale composition. This presents a challenge for the need of a revision of these independent units of traditions (Westermann, 1984:573). Attempts were made by several scholars to respond to the critical questions regarding source, dating, historicity, and principles underlying the division of the sources. Scholars' attempt for the revision of the Documentary Hypothesis include the effort to resuscitate the source critical approach with a sensitivity to the rhetorical sophistication of the text. Different strands of the argument can be classified into:

- (1) Critics of the Documentary Hypothesis who rejected the criteria for distinguishing sources and dispel it as an illusion, dating sources with precision and sceptical on historicity (Carr, 1997:23f; Huddleston, 2013:199; van Seters, 1999:59ff).<sup>62</sup>
- (2) Defenders of the traditional source critics who maintain the classic four models but reworked the scope of the materials initially assigned to a tradition (*cf.* Carr, 1997:26f).<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Prominent in this category are John Van Seters, H.H. Schmid, R. Rendtorf, Erhard Blum, and Whybray. Van Seters (*cf.* Carr, 1997; van Seters, 1999; Huddleston, 2013). On the criteria for distinguishing source, Westermann (1984:576) outlines the traditional criteria thus: (1) the use of the names of God, (2) the difference in the style of language, (3) contradictions and different points of view, (4) doublets and repetitions, (5) the composite character of individual passages (see Westermann, 1984:577–584 for detail). He confirms that these criteria are not tenable today and need revision. He suggests the need to go back to the pre-literary stage of the text.

<sup>63</sup> Levin (2007) for example, reduces the scope of text assigned to certain sources, E source is sometimes dropped or transformed as a source material that has been combined with Yahwist or non-P materials. Levin's Yahwist is a multi-layered prehistoric document. Levin (2007:209) identifies many layers and redactional supplements that were added after the postexilic period. However, he was not clear about how these multiple layers that were added could have been made in the Pentateuch. Bill T. Arnold's (2009) commentary on Genesis exemplifies the approach that seeks to resuscitate the source critical approach with sensitivity to its rhetorical sophistication. Arnold, in a similar fashion, opted for a redefinition and criteria for the model. For example, he argues for an earlier pre-exilic date for the composition of all the sources and suggested another possible source called the Holiness (H) source. This holiness source is assumed by Arnold to be responsible for the redaction and editing of the Genesis text and structured it using the *tōlēdōt* clauses to show the unity of the earlier Yahwistic and the late or recent Elohist document. According to Arnold, (2009:16), the imaging approach is that which "takes P as the overarching history of the early Israel, assuming a postexilic Priestly collector used a collection of "non-P" materials (those formerly attributed to J) to create the master narrative of the Pentateuch".

- (3) Jewish Critics who accept the basic four source division of the Documentary Hypothesis but query the dating of priestly material as late. (*cf.* Hurvitz, 1974, 1982, Haran, 1981:327-330; Friedman, 1981:47-76; Zevit, 1982; Milgrom, 1991:3-35; and Knohl, 1995).
- (4) Final-form critics who have concerns with the complex interplay of the diversity and unity in the Pentateuch as it now stands. Aware of the rhetorical subtleties of the text, the Pentateuch is now conceived as a “rolling corpus” (Huddleston, 2013:201. Final form critics like Brevard Childs (1979) concern themselves with the deep dimension of the long tradition lying behind the final form of the complex Pentateuch.

In view of the strands of arguments above, it seems there is a consensus that the Pentateuch is a composite text. Recently, scholars (*cf.* Westermann, 1984:570; Carr, 1997; van Seters, 1999:63; Otto, 2011:172; Huddleston, 2013:197ff) have observed that the classical theory of the Documentary Hypothesis seems incompatible with the materials that provide the unity of the Pentateuch due to its characteristic that supposedly is late. This necessitates the need for an approach which takes into consideration all factors related to the formation of the Pentateuch. Many of the arguments are complex and the debate is yet to arrive at a consensus. Towards the close of the twentieth century, it witnessed the emergence of new approaches which put a dichotomy between source criticism and the final form—diachronic and synchronic—reading of the text.<sup>64</sup> Also, there were concerns regarding the rhetorical sophistication of the Old Testament narratives by scholars in the last three to four decades. Akin to this, a symbiosis has evolved between the diachronic and synchronic reading of the Pentateuch (*cf.* Bosman, 2004a:1) and scholars have been calling for a balance in this symbiosis through consideration of intratextuality and intertextuality<sup>65</sup> of the ancient text. Recent researches show a gradual shift from the traditional understanding of the Documentary Hypothesis, from the idea of

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<sup>64</sup> Westermann, (1985:30ff) remarks that for a long period these approaches existed in opposition to each other and the result was three parallel paths of scholarship. But recent scholarships are becoming more aware that “their mutual relationships, their limits, and their dependence on each other become clear for the purpose of exegesis.” It is in this light also that this research employs a multidimensional approach called ‘socio-rhetorical’ approach to explore the different textures of the text.

<sup>65</sup> Intratextuality is what is termed “inner texture” in Robbins (1996). It is a close reading of the text for observable features like repetition, narration, argumentation, progression, sensory aesthetic, and opening–middle–closing. Intertexture of a text is the interaction of the language in the text with ‘outside’ material and physical ‘objects’, historical events, texts, customs, values, roles, institutions and systems” (Robbins, 1996:40)



sources such as J, E, D, and P. Focus is rather directed to a two visions perspective of Israel's traditions of the Priestly (P) and the non-Priestly ('non-P') traditions rather than sources<sup>66</sup> (Westermann, 1984:570; Carr, 1997; van Seters, 1999:63; Otto, 2011:172; Huddleston, 2013:197ff).

Another issue related to the unity of the Pentateuch is the presupposition that the complex characteristics of the Pentateuch are the evidence of different periods of composition. However, there is no certainty about the periods during which these individual texts were compiled by the different traditions identified above. What seems to be less debatable is that the Pentateuch is composite text. Again, there is yet to be a consensus whether the Pentateuch is an early collection with a later addition or late construction with early material. To be specific, the dating of the two traditions, P and non-P is still debatable. Nonetheless most scholars in current Pentateuch researches suggest that P documents must have been dated after the non-P even though there are elements of early tradition found in the P documents. However, dating the Pentateuch is not the focus of the section. I shall return to the question of dating in Chapter 5 and 6 when I discuss the possible historical context of the text. It is noteworthy to understand that two major traditions characterise the Pentateuch. The two traditions, P and non-P—or Dtr as Otto observed, have been considered as reactionary to each other (Otto, 2007:172). The question then is what are the characteristics of P and non-P? This we shall discuss later under the theology of Genesis.

This research acknowledges that the Pentateuch has a rich complex tradition. It is also aware of the methodological confusion of contemporary biblical studies. As long as the different approaches remain individualistic and in opposition to each other, it will be impossible for scholars to agree that anything reliable can be said on the Pentateuch. It, therefore, opines that interpreting any of the portions of the Pentateuch demands an approach that takes cognisance of its layers of traditions. As a long-term formation text, there are layers of voices that are similar to “intertextuality” that characterise the creative product of modern texts and also inclusions of other texts within the text that might be termed “intratextuality”. This leads us to the question: what would a reader make of these layers of voices and double strands of materials

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<sup>66</sup> These supposed sources JEDP never developed in one setting, rather they evolved from the pre-literary stage of Israel's society and have been transmitted orally over a long period of time. Now the challenge is the identification of the orality and tracing the different oral stages in the written text (see Van Seters, 1999:63).

in the Pentateuch? Of course, as discussed, these double strands of materials display features suggesting that they are distinct literary works (*cf.* Van Seters, 2013:23). The question then is why would the editor or redactor allow two strands of a similar narrative—often incongruent in the same text?<sup>67</sup>

In an attempt to answer this question and in line with the selected passage of Genesis 18 and 19, the research proposes irony as the rhetorical function and redactional synthesis of the final form of the text. Sharp (2009:9) notes, “Ironic biblical texts invite their audiences to ‘overcome a naïvely realistic reading’ of their plots and characters and rhetoric.” Under what circumstances would such a redactional synthesis occur? This question seeks for the theological and ideological intent of the extant stories in the Pentateuch? Therefore, as readers devote themselves to mining the elements of the stories’ early conception, it is also crucial to consider the later readership. As it is, the Pentateuch reflects such later readership and serves its ideological and theological purposes. So, the question is what is the motivating factor that prompted the synthesis of these two versions (P and non-P) of Israel’s traditions into one coherent whole? How did the story function especially at the period of its composition and later readership? Before proceeding, we need to narrow our scope to Genesis being the immediate context of the selected passage. We will need to look at the origin and the growth of Genesis in the Pentateuch.

### **3.1.1.2. *The origin and the growth of Genesis in the Pentateuch***

The book of Genesis in its present form is a product of different processes. The coherency found in the text is one of the characteristics of the narratives and the stories that scholars attribute to editors or redactors. Taking the structure and content, for instance, Genesis is one of the intentionally structured books of the Bible. Arnold (2009:4f) notes that different sections are linked using clause which contains the term *tôlēdôt*, meaning offspring or descendants. “The result of the combined [...] uses of the *tôlēdôt* clause is an organization of the book into ten panels of materials,” five accounts dealing with Primeval History while the other five

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<sup>67</sup> Carr (1997:24) reports Blum’s proposal that “[...] under the condition of the Persian-sponsored gathering of Judean traditions, these priestly authors were not free to replace the pre-priestly KD composition that came before them. Instead, they had to put their competing account and tradition alongside their non-Priestly counterparts in a compositional layer that linked with those counterparts even as it often contradicted them”.

dealing with ancestral narratives. At the same time, the *tôlédôt* equal division provides a certain symmetry to the whole.<sup>68</sup>

Genesis research, being part of Pentateuch research, is complex. There are several controversies, most of which focus on particular sections (see O'Connor, 2007: 540). This research discusses the history of the research on three main topics that have been the bone of contention in the Genesis research namely, the composition of the book, the historicity of patriarchal narratives, and theology of the book. It does that in the light of the history of the interpretation of the selected passage of Genesis 18 and 19.

### **3.1.1.2.1. Composition**

Following the line of argument for composite authorship of the Pentateuch, scholars like Westermann, (1984:585) believe different parts of the Genesis text must have followed different paths before the book was unified into its present form. Any reader must then look for the characteristics of the different traditions identified. This, of course, is challenging as it is difficult to distinguish clearly which text belongs to what stage. Therefore, a close reading of the texts may help one to identify the characteristics that each unit displays. But for the fact that we are looking at the composition of Genesis as a whole, we will not go into the detailed analysis of each unit, but survey the history of research for an overview of the composition.

In the primeval, Genesis 1–11, one identifies two major literary characteristics: narrative and genealogy. Taking the genealogies first, Westermann (1984:586ff) distinguishes between genealogies that belong to the P tradition and non-P tradition. He further elaborates that the non-P genealogies are those that are closer to the original form and function of the text, while that of P have been adapted to form the trust of the priestly work. By this, he suggests that non-P genealogies are the oldest as it is assumed that they originated in community life and function as history. Following this, the narrative sections of Genesis 1–11 reveal different paths of traditions. As narratives first transmitted through oral form, they must have been handed down in a number of variant forms. These forms must have resulted in parallel narratives or what

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<sup>68</sup> Arnold (2009:6) and Blenkinsopp (1992:52), suggest the probability that the fivefold division by the *tôlédôt* could be related to a palistropic or chiasmic structure known to be present elsewhere in Genesis, or to be compared to the fivefold division of the Pentateuch itself.

many scholars call doublets or triplets (*cf.* Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of Ska, 2006). These variants can also be seen as revealing different motifs. For example, two motifs are seen to run through in the parallel or doublets of the creation account: the creation motif and crime and punishment motif, both having an obvious connection to each other. The question of parallelism has broadened the scope of the investigation to include the abundance of parallel resources that exist outside the biblical text. This validates, in retrospect, the emphasis on the balance or the call for a symbiosis between the synchronic and diachronic reading of a text.<sup>69</sup>

The composition of the patriarchal narratives is presented in the form of a family history comprising three generations: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Where do the patriarchal narratives originate? It is assumed that the composition and the arrangement emanate from individual narratives that were preserved through memory and transmitted orally from one generation to the other. In this sense, collective memory transforms into history (*cf.* Assmann, 1995:126-127). Collective memory or “imaginative memory” as Brueggemann (2003:7) puts it, is the “defining enterprise of biblical formation, transmission, and interpretation”. And the “remembering part is done in the intergenerational community, as parents tell and retell to children and grandchildren what is most prized in community lore” (Westermann, 1985:29).

Following this, the patriarchal narrative in its extant form entails the work of a conscious redactor who was motivated at least to shape and preserve the identity and religion of the people who were by now more developed and civilised. Whoever this could be, only a careful exegesis will reveal the characteristics of the tradition that best fit the above description, -P or non-P. In view of Genesis 18 and 19, literary critics such as Letellier, (1995:25) consider it as “a product of highly sophisticated interweaving of different sources and traditions which leave the interpretation to the reader”. Letellier (1995:25) says that a wide consensus exists that Genesis 18 and 19 result from a purposeful or conscious author or redactor who shaped the diverse material by superimposing a structural parallelism. From the literary critical perspective, the reader plays a vital role in determining the meaning of the composition.

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<sup>69</sup> Read Westermann (1984:587ff) for more on the tradition history of Genesis 1–11.

### 3.1.1.2.2. *Historicity*

Another challenge with the book of Genesis is the attempt to find historical traces in the second ancestral narrative and its connection to the Primeval History. The materials of the Primeval History are arranged in a historical timeline using the pattern of cause and effect. This arrangement presupposes the historicity of the stories. However, recent trends have shifted from finding historical traces in ancestral narratives and have focused on the argument that

Genesis preserves traces of Israelites heritage extending back to the Bronze Age (3200–1200 BCE). Such historical traces, it is alleged, locate Israel's identity in social categories that are not uniquely Israelite, but rather are pre-Israelite in origin and attested in the ancestral traditions of Genesis" (Arnold, 2009:7, 8 *cf.* Wenham, 1994:xxi).

This assertion has been contested on the ground that the oldest extra-biblical material that made reference to Israel dates from the very end of the Bronze Age (*cf.* Westermann, 1985:23, Gerstenberger 2002; Arnold, 2009:4). This contestation, however, will not hold ground because it can hardly explain the traces of elements of the Bronze Age in Israel's heritage. The biblical narratives of the ancestors in the book tend to disappear because they are dated in the Bronze Age, during which time, going by the Iron Age dating, Israel has not yet existed. It must be noted that the nature of the unfolding of Israel's traditions is in stages: "[t]he whole arrangement shows that at the time when a people were coming into being and a state was being formed, the perspective was based on the memory of origin from families and ancestors" (Westermann, 1985:23).

Westermann (1985:26) remarks based on the nature of the final form of the patriarchal narratives, that the writers, compilers, editors or redactors "thought in specifically historical terms"<sup>70</sup>. On the historicity of the patriarchal narratives, Westermann (1985:27) continues that the arrangement of the narrative from the Patriarchal movement culminating in Egypt, the deliverances from Egypt, wilderness wanderings, the conquest of the land of Canaan, and the establishment of the monarchy could not be just a matter of prefacing the patriarchal narrative

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<sup>70</sup> There is an increasing awareness of the importance of the historical dimension in human thought and culture (Carr, 1996:4 *cf.* Wenham, 1994:xxi ff). Carr cites the example of J. Barton's (1984, *Reading the Old Testament: Methods in Biblical Study*) explanation of the importance of historical method that it carries the impression that indicators of transmission in text undergird the present diachronic studies.

to the Israel history. “[R]ather it is part of a historical vision which introduces and prepares [...] the period of the state, Judah–Israel, and with it the monarchy.” The patriarchal stories grew out of individual narratives which initially were transmitted orally from generation to generation of the descendants of these patriarchs. Thus, the narratives have been conceived as history by the people themselves. Through the stories, they derive their identity as linked to the patriarchs. The patriarchal stories have been arranged into three stages that “reveal an overall conception of extraordinary depth which not only sets side by side relationships which determine family life but also implies a history [...]” (Westermann, 1985:29). The development of the narrative in stages also has a very significant implication for the historicity of the patriarchs. Westermann (1985:30) remarks:

Taking this basic overall plan as the starting point, the question is not to be considered merely on an individual level; i.e., one does not limit oneself to asking whether Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob really existed or whether what is narrated about them really happened. The three parts are not conceived as a biography. The question must also include the form of community which is presented in its various features in each of the three parts and in the threefold gradation intended by this succession.

According to Westermann (1985:29), the structure of the patriarchal story is intended to provide remembrance as the structure bridges “the gap between generations”, thereby making the stories important as the descendants found their identity in the story. Westermann (1985:29), notes that the structure provides a pattern of human relationships at different levels in the community.<sup>71</sup> The challenge then is how do we identify or recognise evidence of the historical realities in the narrative? According to Wenham (2005:246), “[t]he accounts of the patriarchs do not reflect their own historical situation, ‘but only of the time when the stories about them arose’”.

Interpreters (e.g. Speiser, 1964:128ff; Westermann, 1985:276, 300) attribute Genesis 18 and 19 to the non-P source. There are few exceptions that are attributed to P. sources, namely,

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<sup>71</sup> We shall resume on the significance of the structuring of the patriarchal narrative under history of the demarcation. For the moment, we will follow Westermann’s (1985:29f) description of the structure as: “The Abraham narratives, in Genesis 12–25, deal mainly with parent-child relationship; the narratives in Genesis 25–36 mainly concern that of brother to brother. The single narrative of Genesis 37–50 deals with both of these [...] The Abraham narratives [...] have a strikingly elemental character in that they are concerned with life and death [...] the arrangement of the patriarchal story intends not only the succession of three generations, but also the presentation in each of them of particular features of community which color the life of the patriarchs [...]”

18:17–18; 19:29. Westermann (1985:286) suggests a much later date for 18:16–32. “The zeal for the justice of God which does not allow ‘the just to be treated like the wicked’ (vs.25b) has its setting in the great complex of proverbs which deal with the Just and the wicked.” He says the period when the concern for the fate of the just and that of the wicked was very prominent must belong to the postexilic period. “In the period from the exile on, in any case after 587 BC, the quite general question of Yahweh’s action in history, even outside Israel, is raised in a number of passages. [...] Ezek. 14:12-20[...]; Jer. 18:7-10; [...] Jonah 3-4; [...] Zeph. 2. The question could arise in Israel only after 587 BC; all texts derive from this period”. Against this presupposition, I would like to remark that the question of divine justice should not only be limited to the period of the fall of nations. They are also personal and individual’s questions who are experiencing difficulties in their own ways. In fact, it is one of the constant and recurring questions in the history of human existence. Although the question of dating the resources is not the primary scope of the dissertation, suffice it to say that dating the resources with precision is impossible. The socio-rhetorical interpretation of the selected passage will analyse the text’s features which presumably shall provide a nuanced narrated history and history of narration. And hopefully, it will help in giving a firm base to the question of the historicity of the patriarchs.

### **3.1.1.2.3. Theology**

Third, focus is also on the theology of the book of Genesis. Fretheim (1977:302) remarks that the “Pentateuch is not a theological treatise. [...] This is not to suggest that it is illegitimate to draw out of these narratives certain understandings that Israel had regarding the various aspects of her faith and then order them in some systematic fashion.” Theology is often considered against the background of the complex rhetorical and ideological text of Genesis (Hooke, 1962:189; von Rad, 1972:16ff; Fretheim 1977:306; Vawter, 1977:20; Childs, 1979:144). The theological propositions and convictions are viewed as foundational for the rest of the Bible. Within Pentateuchal studies, however, the problem or the challenge with the theology of Genesis relates to the complexity of the strands of traditions within the history of biblical communities.<sup>72</sup> The short survey here reveals that at the heydays of the JEDP source theory

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<sup>72</sup> In a recent work, Ska (2006) connects the theology of the whole of Pentateuch with literary structure of the entire Hebrew canon. He points out the unique position of the Pentateuch at a strategic point of the Bible. The

scholarship, many scholars present the theology of the book of Genesis as the theology of the individual strands of the four sources theory.<sup>73</sup> Having noted the shift in the recent scholarly discourse from the four-source theory to the development of the traditions of P and non-P, this research takes the P and non-P tradition as a point of departure to the question of theology.

Current studies show that “there have been surprisingly few full-scale theological studies of P in spite of the fact that it is the most clearly definable source” (Boorer, 2016:1).<sup>74</sup> Cross (1973:325), however, summarises the primary goal of the P redactor that: “The Priestly work had as its central goal the reconstruction of the covenant of Sinai and its associated institutions. At the same time, it was a program written in preparation for and in hope of the restoration of Israel.”<sup>75</sup> Cross’s assertion is said to reflect his position that the priestly stratum is a redaction that incorporated ‘JE’ Boorer (2016:8). Some do not see P as an independent and separate document and that it does not incorporate Sinai covenant as Cross opined, but rather uses the Abrahamic (Gen. 17) and Noahic covenants (Gen. 9) (*cf.* Boorer, 2016:8ff). Similarly, Otto (2011:688) wrote:

In contrast to Deut, P emphasizes the negative aspect of history, not as a specifically Israelites problem but as a universal human problem, and uses the story of the flood to shift it into the primordial history. [...] In defiance of all experiences of catastrophe, P insist on the reliability of the promise that the world will continue to endure (Gen. 9:8–17) and specifically for Israel on the reliability of the covenant (Gen. 17) and God’s assurance of his purpose to dwell in the midst Israel as the goal of world history (Exod. 29:42–46). Therefore, Israel can never come to naught in the course of history.

Implicit in the above assertion of Otto, is that P’s primary focus is the assurance of the promise of land and the establishment of the temple as the symbolic presence of God amongst his people

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division of the Hebrew Bible is such that, they are all subordinated to the “Law” hence the mosaic institution is central to Israel’s existence. By implication, Ska (2006:15), like Childs, considers the theology of the Pentateuch from the canonical and literary structure. Thus, the promise/covenant to the Patriarchs and related terms in Exodus/Law are key elements of the theology of the Pentateuch (also Westermann, 1985:292).

<sup>73</sup> For example, see Von Rad, 1972. Hooke, 1962. Brueggemann & Wolff, 1975. And Vawter, 1977. This is not a representative survey. It is just a random selection of few renowned scholars who made such proposition.

<sup>74</sup> References cited by Boorer (2016:1) include: “Karl Elliger, “Sinn und Ursprung der priesterlichen Geschichtserzählung,” *ZTK* 49 (1952):121–43; Norbert Lohfink, “The Priestly Narrative and History,” in *Theology of the Pentateuch: Themes of the Priestly Narrative and Deuteronomy*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 136–72 (originally published as “Die Priesterschrift und die Geschichte,” *Congress Volume: Göttingen, 1977*, VTSup 29. Leiden: Brill, 1977], 189–225).

<sup>75</sup> See Cross (1973:293-325) for thorough discussion on “The Priestly Work”.



(cf. Boorer, 2016:13; Elliger, 1952; Blum, 1992; Carr, 1996; and Brueggemann, 2009). But what was the goal of the non-P redactor?

There is a growing consciousness among scholars about the *nearness of non-P traditions to Deuteronomistic tradition*. Opinions differ on whether the non-P was before or after the Deuteronomistic tradition (Carr, 1997:28). This research, however, holds that because of the composite authorship theory of the Pentateuch that has been established, the Priestly faction who are responsible for the Deuteronomistic Deuteronomy must have influenced the agenda of the non-P tradition. Speaking of the nearness of the non-P to the Deuteronomistic tradition, Otto's (2011:172) perspective on the history of Israel suggest that non-P was greatly influenced by the Deuteronomist. Otto opines Israel's history was written down by two different Priestly factions: "the Priestly code (Genesis 1–Exodus 29 [Leviticus 9; P<sup>S</sup>]) of the Aaronides, on the one side, and Deuteronomistic Deuteronomy, on the other."

Cultic centralisation is a major concern of Deuteronomistic theology (Otto, 2011:686). While P looks at the universal covenant in Genesis 9 and 17 as the foundational to understanding Israel's history, the Dtr or non-P redactors focus on Sinai covenant.<sup>76</sup> Cultic centralisation, emphasising the covenant and proclamation is in the centre of the work. To these, "it was the king, the temple, and the worship of Yahweh alone which were of decisive importance" (Mayes 1999:68). But in the postexilic Persian period, they believe that the only way to avoid what happened in 587 BC was rather in the exclusive worship of Yahweh, focused on Jerusalem, as established in Josiah's reform.

This research presumes that the discourse above has provided a broad view of the contexts of the selected passage. In the sections below, the research narrows its focus to the selected text. We shall provide the history of its demarcation, text criticism, translation then literary analysis.

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<sup>76</sup> Otto (2011:687) describes two non-P or Dtr redactors: Horeb redactor & Moab redactor. Horeb redactors consider "the promulgation of law at Horeb (Deut. 5:1b, 2ff.), as a pledge along with the renewal of the tablets that the covenant was sealed despite the sin of the people... the Moab redactor DtrL shifted the promulgation of the Deuteronomistic law and making of the covenant to the plains of Moab" (Deut. 26:16-19)". The Moab redactors are identified with the Babylonian exiles who were concerned with the land which have been taken away in 587 BC. The non-P priestly believe in cultic reformation as the way of overcoming crisis of the past.

### 3.1.2. History of the demarcation of the text

I would like to start this section by referring to the general consensus (*cf.* Westermann, 1985; Letellier, 1995; Arnold, 2009) on the well-structured nature of the book of Genesis. It is generally agreed that Genesis contains two major parts—the Primeval History and patriarchal narratives. It is expedient to remark at the onset that biblical texts are not compiled randomly. This does not suggest that the stories are written in a chronological order, rather it implies that chronologies are not followed sometimes because the writer or compiler intends to provide links on the subject matter in the stories or that the stories are perhaps complementary. Scholars (Westermann, 1985; Letellier, 1995; Arnold, 2009) argue that the Genesis' two major divisions have been linked together to express a theological perspective. Arnold (2009:1) explains that it was intended to establish a background for reading other books of the Pentateuch—the God who is encountered in Genesis (the creation God, the God of Israel and their ancestors) is the same God of the plague in Egypt.

Ascertaining a provisional beginning and end of any given text enables the emergence of the content, substance, and theme of that given piece. Westermann (1985:29) has observed that patriarchal narrative is structured to show the pattern of community relationships on different levels. He particularly notes that it focuses on the parent-child relationship and their striking element in matters of life and death. Taking this as a point of departure, and in the light of the first division, one may ask: how does the selected passage fit within this broad category of the parent-child relationship? In other words, how do individual parts of these narratives fit together to form a coherent whole in terms of the book itself and in terms of the Abrahamic narratives?

The selected text narrates two instances of divine visitations (Arnold, 2009:178). The broad theme of family survival is demonstrated in the context of these two divine visitations. The survival of Abraham's line is here connected to the outcome of the divine visitation. Lot's survival at Sodom and Gomorrah and the annihilation of the whole nations of the plain is here also connected to divine visitation. Thus, the section seems to form a complete section meant to be read together. Westermann suggests that the section (Gen. 18–19) seems to be a compilation of different narratives that existed individually although later unified to serve the purpose of the larger theme, i.e. the motif of the promise of posterity. The section, according

to him contains several individual units: Unit A: 18:1-16a (Abraham and the three guest); Unit B: 18: 16b -33(Abraham queries the destruction of Sodom); Unit C: 19:1-29 (the destruction of Sodom and the rescue of Lot). Arnold (2009:178) says, “[a]lthough these chapters have gone through a long transmission history, they stand now as an integrated narrative, contrasting the integrity of father Abraham with the less than exemplary behavior of Lot”, a narrative which started in 13: 8–18. But the question is, does the text itself show evidence of where one is supposed to begin reading the unit? We now turn to the narratological markers to see what communicative clues the narrator uses to set off the boundaries of the supposed unit.

Genesis 18:1 introduces the narrative thus: וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה (And Yahweh appeared to him). וַיֵּרָא is a verb of movement and is introduced by a conjunction which either introduces a new narrative section or shows a progression from the previous section (*cf.* BHRG, §21.2). Based on the personal pronoun used as the object, one could say that it presupposes a coherent Abraham story which just ended in Chapter 17. The end of Chapter 17 is conclusive in itself but then the reader will have to infer that ‘him’ in 18:1 is Abraham who is later to be identified in vs. 6. The verb of the movement itself indicates a new stage in the action of Yahweh. This research now takes this opening as a point of departure. And using this verb of movement, the narrator divides the unit into further minor units: 18:16 וַיִּקְמוּ מִשָּׁם הָאֲנָשִׁים (And the men stood up), ends the first movement and start a new stage of movement. Chapter 18:33 וַיֵּלֶךְ יְהוָה (and Yahweh went) closes chapter 18 as a unit. This does not, however, suggest that Chapter 18 is independent. Some aspects of the story that started in the previous chapter might not be completed without the event of Chapter 19. For example, 18:33 is, of course, the close of the chapter, but more specifically, it closes the story which introduces Sodom. Furthermore, the movement in 18:16, having ended a section of the narrative directs the attention of the reader to what will later be found in the beginning of 19:1. Genesis 18:16 starts: וַיִּקְמוּ מִשָּׁם הָאֲנָשִׁים “the men stood up” which ended their stay, having enjoyed Abraham’s hospitality. Then what happens? וַיִּשְׁקֹפוּ עַל־פְּנֵי סְדֹם “they looked towards Sodom” sets the stage for the beginning of Chapter 19. And Abraham’s movement, וַאֲבָרָהָם הֵלְךָ עִמָּם לְשַׁלְּחָם “and Abraham was going with them to send them away” introduces the reader to the Abraham and Yahweh’s dialogue which centres on the event to be encountered in Genesis 19.

Genesis 19:1 introduces a new unit within the broader context. The men who had left Abraham in Genesis 18:16, now arrive Sodom and this begins the new account in the narrative story.

Following the movement in the story, the first section in chapter 19 ends in 19:3. A new section is introduced with the arrival of the men of the town to the house of Lot. The narrator continues the story until Lot and his family moved out of Sodom and they arrived at Zoar (19:22). With the movement of Lot out of Sodom, the narrator introduces a new section, by giving the account of the destruction of the city of Sodom and the turning of the wife of Lot into a pillar of salt. Another movement is introduced as a way of ending the unit (19:27), Abraham moves to a place where he had stood before Yahweh. The narrator provides the summary of a theological point of view of the event in 19:28-29, then ushers in another summary by narrating the story of incest between Lot and his daughters, noting the origin of two nations, Edom and Moab. Having established this preliminary demarcation of the pericope, the next section evaluates the text against other ancient translations to establish its trustworthiness and to establish a foundation for a correct translation and subsequently a relatively nuanced interpretation.

### **3.2. Text criticism of Genesis 18 & 19**

Meanings and concepts of words and phrases are unique to individual languages and they vary from culture to culture and even within the context of a culture. This research deals with an ancient text that developed over a long period of time. Thus, there is a need to translate it into the contemporary reader's language. The attempt to provide a translation is an effort to interpret words from a primary language and culture into a receptive language and culture. Therefore, in a sense, it is hard to speak of a correct and perfect translation. Noteworthy also is the fact that the available Manuscripts (*MSS*) of the Masoretic Texts (*MT*) are not the originals of the ancient text, and as such, the trustworthiness of the text in question can only be ascertained through comparison with older translations. The attempt to ascertain the original wording of a text is called textual criticism. This section, therefore, is an evaluation of the current Hebrew *MSS* of the *MT* of the selected passage against other available ancient texts witnesses, namely the Greek translation known as the Septuagint (*Gk.*), the Latin Vulgate (*Vg.*), the Samaritan Pentateuch (*SamPent.*), the Targum Onqelos (*Targ. Onq.*) and the Peshitta (*Syr*) to ascertain the original wording of a text (*cf.* Gabler, 2015:902). This comparison is done with the purpose to help the translation in the next section, to guide choices of semantic possibilities and where the Hebrew text is not clear, it will guide the translator to make an informed emendation.

Vs.1. The *Gk.* has ὁ θεὸς “the God” and Vg. *Dominus* “Lord”. Scholars are of the opinion that the heading of the narrative “And Yahweh appeared to him (Abraham)” is probably a later addition and must have been theologically motivated. The heading also reflects the narrator’s standpoint (Westermann, 1985:277; Wenham 1994:45). Westermann (1985:277) comments that “it alters the narrative profoundly. It has a strong power of suggestion so that one reads the subject of the next sentence differently.” It creates a kind of awareness and influences the reader to interpret the narrative theologically, which Westermann agrees that “[t]he subsequent theologizing has all unnoticed won the day in many interpretations.”

The object <sup>ל</sup>הֵי (him) of the verb is a pronoun, this provides a clue that the story is a progression from Chapter 17. Here one can only infer that “him” refers to Abraham with whom God had made a covenant in Chapter 17. From our previous discussion on the history of demarcation of the text, these can be taken as the narrator’s or editor’s strategy of connecting what initially existed as an independent unit to the larger context of Abrahamic narratives. The NIV and the RSV decided to use the name instead of the personal pronoun as in the Hebrew Masoretic (MS). This may be deceiving to the English reader because it may suggest separation of the narrative from the preceding chapter.

הֵי (Orks) the *Gk* and the *Syr* has singular and thus it is suggested that it should be read like the *Gk* and *Syr* as it agrees with Genesis 12:6.

Vs. 3. <sup>י</sup>הוָה is translated by most witnesses as “Lord”. For instance, *Gk.* “κύριος” and the Vg. “Domine” can all be translated as Lord. Elsewhere in vs.1 the Vg. translate הֵי as Domine. Here “Lord” does not necessarily suggest deity as some might suggest, in almost all the witnesses, the translation of <sup>י</sup>הוָה has these semantic potentials: master, sir, possessor, ruler, proprietor, owner and Lord (Louw & Nida, 1996:149). The NIV and the RSV also translate <sup>י</sup>הוָה as “Lord”. The challenge then is, Abraham seems to be addressing one person here. But from all indication, the narrator is skillfully switching to present Abraham as identifying the stranger as divine, <sup>י</sup>הוָה (singular), which agrees with the narrator’s introduction in vs. 1 and later to be identified as YHWH in vs. 13 (Westermann, 1985:278). Scholars attribute the discrepancy in the number to Masoretic pointing, which suggests evidence of ideology and theology of their day.

Vs. 6. תִּלְוֹתֵי חֲמִצָּה (fine flour) is missing in the *Gk*.

Vs. 9. The *Gk*. uses the singular verb: Εἶπε δὲ πρὸς αὐτόν “and he said to him”. Instead of the Hebrew plural “and they said to him” perhaps because of the earlier reference or in anticipation to the next verse that switches to the singular.

Vs. 10. Here, just as in verse 3, the subject also changes from plural ‘they’ in verse 9 to singular ‘he’. In vs. 9, it was ‘they’ who asked for Sarah, now ‘he’ (one person) is addressing Abraham and Sarah. There is no explanation for this. *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (2006) says “[...] Aside from the introductory statement in v. 1, the incident is narrated from Abraham’s point of view, and the suspense is built up for the reader as Abraham’s elaborate banquet preparations in the preceding verses suggest he suspects these are important guests. But not until the promise of a son later in this verse does it become clear who is speaking. In v. 13 the Hebrew text explicitly mentions the Lord.”

Vs. 12. The verb הִתְיַבֵּן in the RSV and the NIV is translated as futuristic whereas the tense in Hebrew is *qal qatal* (perfect). The prototypical semantic value of the *qatal* is past perfective, past perfect, and present perfect. It can express a state of affairs, a performative action, habitual action. Future tense in the *qatal* is rare (BHRG, §19.2). In this passage, it is not future. It should be understood that Sarah is saying I have lost sexual pleasure so as to be pregnant now with a child. Thus “have I had pleasure? Could be an appropriate translation. Sarah’s statement in the *Gk*. is stated differently: οὐπω μὲν μοι γέγονεν ἕως τοῦ νῦν, ὁ δὲ κύριός μου πρεσβύτερος. Literally *Indeed not yet has it happened to me until now, but then my lord (is) an old*. I am not sure about the basis for this. Perhaps it is referring to the promise in Genesis. 15 and 17. What was promised has not yet occurred. And Sarah and Abraham are now old.

Vs. 13. The Hebrew expression הֲרִיץ הַלֵּבָאֵץ הִיא לֵמַחֵ (What is this that Sarah laughed) has an addition ἐν ἑαυτῇ (to say in oneself, Louw and Nida, 1996:31) in the *Gk*. which most English translations add in their translation. The identity of Abraham’s guests is finally made clear here. Many commentators take it that the guests revealed themselves here. However, we can see that

the revelation of the identity of the guest is still from the point of view of the narrator not any of the characters (see Westermann 1985:281).<sup>77</sup>

Vs. 14. הֲיִפְלֵא מִיְהוָה דְבָרָה (is anything too difficult **for Yahweh?**) is translated in *Gk.* as μὴ ἀδυνατήσει **παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ** (Shall anything be impossible **with God?**).

Vs. 16. The *Gk.* added “and Γομόρρας” –Gomorrhah. This verse is assumed to be a later addition by editors to serve as a link to the Abrahamic narratives and the next part of the chapter and chapter 19 where the case of Sodom is narrated. The verse connects again to Abraham, who in the beginning, demonstrated piety in his action to host these strangers as guests. And one of the guests whom the narrator identified in vs. 13 as Yahweh, contemplates revealing part of their mission to Abraham, presumably on the basis of Abraham’s hospitality and ultimately on the basis of the earlier promise in 12:1-3 *cf.* 18:17, 18.

Vs. 17. The Hebrew verb הִמְכַסֶּה is in the participle while in the *Gk.* the future form of the verb κρύψω is used. And it also added τοῦ παιδός μου “my servant”.

Vs. 19. The clause כִּי יִדְעֶתְיוּ לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר “For I know him in order that” in *SamPent.* and *Targ Onq.* has יִדְעֶתְיוּ; in the *Gk.* ἤδεν γὰρ ὅτι “For I know that”. First, there is no pronoun to the *SamPent.* and the *Targ Onq.* Second, the preposition לְמַעַן introducing purpose clause “in order that” is removed in the *Gk.* and only the relative conjunction is translated ὅτι “that”. The Hebrew text implies that the special relationship Yahweh has with Abraham will help Abraham to teach his children “[...]in order that he will teach his children” while the *Gk.* version suggests that Yahweh knew that Abraham would teach his children.

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<sup>77</sup> Although the question of the identity of the strangers is not the focus of the dissertation, commenting on it might not be totally out of context. I will, therefore, like to comment that we can assume that the lack of response which Westermann uses as a basis for his argument might not necessarily be so. It could as well mean that the narrator’s focus is not on that response but the laughter or perhaps one could as well conjecture that the characters are already familiar with themselves that is why the revealing of the identity at this point does not invite the kind of prostration with the face to the ground. Whatever it is, this dissertation holds that the focus of the narrative is not divine anthropomorphism. Although the text carries a theophanic revelation, the focus here is in what is said (see Arnold, 2009; 180). The divine revelation described in this text should be seen from the narrator’s point of view, not Abraham’s or Sarah’s. And we can presume that the narrator’s or editor’s goal is to make clear to his reader, the identity of who Abraham and Sarah were dealing with. The question of the identity is not Abraham’s or Sarah’s but of the reader. From the editor’s point of view, Abraham seems to have perceived from the beginning the identity of his guest.

Vs. 20. Westermann (1985:284) notes that the Samaritan Pentateuch reads צעקתי as in vs. 21.

“The כִּי is striking; some assume that באה אלי has fallen out, others that כִּי is corroborative ... *Gk.* and *Vg.* pay no attention to the particle כִּי” (Westermann, 1985:285).

אֲנִי־אֲנִי The “pronoun of 3pers. plur. as a reference to the inhabitants, BrSynt §22d” (Westermann, 1985:285).

Vs. 21. The *Gk.*, the Targ. Onq. And other versions have ם as the suffix of הַקְּצִצְוּ־הֶ

Vs. 22. Westermann (1985:285) observes that “[a]ccording to *tiqqune sopheriym* [corrections or emendations of scribes] the succession of the subjects was originally reversed” “An ancient Hebrew scribal tradition reads “but the Lord remained standing before Abraham.” This reading is problematic because the phrase “standing before” typically indicates intercession, but the Lord would certainly not be interceding before Abraham” (*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*, 2006). Perhaps it was the scribal effort to avoid what may look like demeaning to Yahweh. It sounds human and perhaps culturally unacceptable for God to stand before human.

Vs. 23. The *Gk.* has somewhat variant text (Westermann, 1985: 285). και ἐγγίσας Ἀβραὰμ εἶπε· μὴ συναπολέσης δίκαιον μετὰ ἀσεβοῦς καὶ ἔσται ὁ δίκαιος ὡς ὁ ἀσεβής; “And Abraham drew near, ‘Will you destroy together, a righteous with the godless? And will the righteous be like the ungodly?’

Vs. 24. Where the Hebrew reads הֲאַתָּה תִּסְפֹּךְ אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם לְאִשְׁתֵּי־אֱלֹהִים (will you indeed sweep away, and not forgive the place...?) The *Gk.* translates it as ἀπολεῖς αὐτούς; οὐκ ἀνήσεις πάντα... (will you destroy them? will you not spare the whole place...?)

Vs. 29 and 30. אֲנִי־אֲנִי is read as אֲנִי־אֲנִי in *Gk.* and *SamPent*.

**19: 1** הַמְּלַאֲכִים (messengers/angels) appear only in this verse and verse 15; The *SamPent* has an additional mention of the messengers in verse 12, as does the *Gk.* translation also in verse 16.



Vs. 2 הִנֵּה נָא This is the only place in the Hebrew Bible where the demonstrative particle הִנֵּה *hinneh*, is spelled with *seghol*, the short -e vowel instead of its normal spelling with the long -e vowel, *tsere*, i.e., הִנֵּה. The next word נָא, “now” or “please” has been pointed with the doubling-*dagesh*, to indicate the pronunciation of these two words together.

The negative adverb לֹא has been pointed unusually with the doubling *dagesh* in the ל, perhaps to make it more emphatic (See Westermann, 1985).

Vs.3 וַיִּפְצֹץ; this verb occurs only seven times in the Hebrew Bible. Elsewhere in Genesis 19:9; 33:11; Judges 19:7; 1 Samuel 15:23; 2 Kings. 2:17; 5:16.

Vs. 4 עַל which is normally translated “upon” (BDB, 1906:748; HALOT, 1995:825) could have been used in another sense here. The question of intent is probably implied in the usage here: as in war, עַל can be translated against.

Vs. 6 הִפְתְּחָהּ is missing in *Gk.* and *Vg.* Net Bible never translated it. סָגְרוּ in the *SamPent* is in the plural סָגְרוּ. The variant reading suggests that the “men” or “angels” were the ones who closed the door and not Lot.

Vs. 8 הָאֵל is the plural masculine pronoun אלה with the definite article ה. It usually was written as הָאֵלִים (the these). The *SamPent* has הָאֵלֵה. This is a case of orthographic variation. It does not affect meaning. But there is a possibility that this can be translated as ‘the god’.

Vs. 9 the second occurrence of this verb וַיִּאֲמְרוּ is omitted by the *Gk.* translation.

Vs. 12 *SamPent* reads הַמְלַאֲכִים (the messengers or Angel) instead of הָאֲנָשִׁים (the men) as in our Hebrew text. הָתֵן (son-in-law) is assumed to be a scribal error (Westermann, 1985:296), the *Gk.* translation reads γαμβροὶ -sons-in-law. וּבָנֶיךָ (and your daughters) is spelt slightly different in the *SamPent* וּבָנֶיךָ with a doubling of the ב. This is only orthographic variation, it does not affect meaning. The *Sam Pent*, the *Gk.* translation, and the *Syr.* translation all added the definite demonstrative pronoun הַזֶּה (the this one) to מְקוֹם.

Vs. 13 The *SamPent* reads the *hiphil* infinitive of the verb, להשחיתה (to destroy it) instead of our Hebrew text's *piel* infinitive לשַׁחֲתֶהָ, with the same meaning. In the *Vg.* לְשַׁחֲתֶהָ reads לשחחם, a masculine plural suffix rather than the feminine suffix. These variants do not affect meaning significantly.

Vs.14 לְקָהָי is a *qal participle masculine plural*. This has no specific tense. The *Vg.* opts for a future tense while the LXX opts for past tense. Hebrew *qal participle* often indicates immediate future (BHRG §20.3.1).

Vs. 15 *Gk.* translation added the imperative phrase καὶ ἔξελε to פֶּן הִנְמַצְאֶתָּ (lest) is translated οὐ ἔχεις in *Gk.* and in the *Vg.* it, is translated *quas habes*.

Vs. 16 יִתְמַמְּהָּ is *Hitpalpel*, *wayyiqtol*, 3<sup>rd</sup> person ms from מָהָה (to “linger, tarry” BDB, 1906:554; HALOT, 1995:552). *Gk.* translation reads plural.

Vs. 17 וַיֵּאמֶר is singular in the Hebrew text, the *Gk.* translation, the *Syr.* Translation and *Vg.* all are in the plural.

Vs. 20 some *Gk.* mss interpolate ἐνεκεν σοῦ (because of you) at the end.

Vs. 23 יִצָּא in the Hebrew text is *qal qatal* 3ms while few mss of *SamPent* read the 3fs. May be due to the fact that the noun *shenesh* is sometimes masculine and in others feminine.

Vs. 28 The phrase כָּל־פְּגִיפֵי “all appearances,” is changed to the reverse order פְּגִיפֵי־כָל “appearances all,” by a few Hebrew manuscripts, the *SamPent*, some other *Gk.* manuscripts, the *Syr.* Translation. The editors of *Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia* suggest omitting the noun אֲרֶץ, “earth.”

Vs. 29 Where our Hebrew text reads the *piel* infinitive with a prefix, בְּשַׁחֲתָהּ, literally “in (or ‘when’) to destroy,” the *SamPent.* reads the *hiphil* infinitive, בהשחית, which has the same meaning.

Vs. 30 The *SamPent.*, the *Gk.* translation and some manuscripts of the Latin *Vg.* all add the phrase "with him" at the end of this verse to read “he and his two daughters with him”.

Vs. 32 לְךָ֙ *which is qal imperative ms* הֲלֵה in the Hebrew text is changed by the *SamPent* into *qal imperative fs.* לְכִי.

Vs. 33 Where our Hebrew text reads, הִוא “that,” the *SamPent* reads, הִהוּה, literally “the that[...]”

Vs. 34 אֶת־אָבִי (with my father) is translated του πατρὸς ἡμῶν (*lit.* ‘with the father’) in the *Gk.* translation. אַיִן־לַיְלָה (again the night), the *Gk.* translation added a demonstrative pronoun καὶ τὴν νύκτα ταύτην (and the night, this one).

Vs. 37 *Gk.* text added λέγουσα ἐκ του πατρὸς (saying out of the father of mine) to the original text הִוא אֲבִי־מוֹאָבִים (He is the father of the Moabites).

Vs. 38 וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בֶן־עַמִּי (literally “and she called his name Ben-Ammi – son of my people). The *Gk.* translation added Ammon to the original text – και εκαλεσε το ονομα Αμμων θιος γενοθς μου (literally: “and she called his name Ammon, a son of my family).

This section has provided text criticism of the selected pericope. The MT was taken as the primary text<sup>78</sup> and it has been compared with the *Gk.*, *Vg.*, *Syr.* and the Targ. Onq. Of course, this is not a thorough and in-depth criticism, however, as Wenham (1987:xxiv) suggests: “In general, then, the commentator must proceed to establish the text of Genesis eclectically, that is, by examining each particular case on its own merits.” This, of course, will help us to see and evaluate the text that we are dealing with. As Wenham (1987:xxiv) further remarks “Despite the relative lateness of the main Masoretic manuscripts, it is universally recognized that the MT of Genesis has preserved the Hebrew text with remarkable fidelity from pre-Christian times.” With this remark, the research now provides a concordant translation of the pericope. While doing a concordant translation, the comparison is made with some modern translations in English, namely the New International Version (NIV) and Revised Standard

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<sup>78</sup> Primacy in this context does not suggest superiority in terms of standard for other variant readings. The text as it is has been carefully preserved without effort by the Masoretes to amend or harmonize some of the alleged discrepant texts. However, it is primary because it is foundational text on which other scholarly practices—commentaries, lexica and grammars—have been built (Clines, 2002:82ff).

Version (RSV), with the objective of viewing the renderings of those difficult passages in the light of the suggested emendations from this section.

### 3.3. Genesis 18 & 19: A concordant translation<sup>79</sup> and literary criticism

In the table below, I have tried as much as possible to provide a concordant translation. However, in certain places where the English equivalent of the text becomes obscure, the text is translated idiomatically. Emendations, as noted above are made on the basis of a better reading rendered by the various ancient texts above.

**Table 3.1: A concordant translation of Genesis 18 & 19**

Vs	Hebrew Text <sup>80</sup>	Translation
1	מִמָּרָה <sup>82</sup> וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה בְּאֵלֵי <sup>81</sup> הָאֵלֶּיךָ הַיּוֹם: וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב בְּפֶתַח הָאֹהֶל בְּחֶם	And Yahweh appeared to him by the Oak of Mamre, and he (was) sitting (at) the door of his tent in the heat of the day.
2	וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים נֹצְבִים עָלָיו וַיִּרָא וַיָּרֶץ לְקִרְיָתָם מִפֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אֶרְצָה:	And he lifted up his eyes and he looked, behold three men were standing in front of him. When he saw, he ran from the entrance of his tent to call them and he bowed down to the ground.

<sup>79</sup> A concordant translation is one which in the word of van de Merwe is a direct and literal translation. And “a direct translation strives to interpretively resemble the source text by producing all the communicative clues of the source text *in the context envisaged for the original audience*, without making any compromises as far as the conceptual world of the target-text audience is concerned” (van de Merwe, 2012:5). In a less technical sense, a concordant translation tries to say what the source text says in the target Language. Take for example how would a Hebrew speaker, say Abraham, have said a particular statement in Tangale, an example of a contemporary reader? In instances where expressions are hardly presented in the target language, notes are provided to clarify the expression in the source context.

<sup>80</sup> All Hebrew texts are copied directly from BHS Logos edition by Anon, 2012. *The Lexham Hebrew Bible*, Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>81</sup> ו in the beginning of a section introduces a new narrative section (BHRG §21.2.2.1, also HALOT, 1994:259 BDB: 1906:252ff). The conjunction (waw con. + imperfect) sometimes introduces a progression. In this context one can argue that it is doing both.

<sup>82</sup> The LXX and the Vg. have singular instead of the plural בְּאֵלֵי in the MS.

<sup>83</sup> חֶם literally is “like heat”. However, כ preceding a noun in this use provides a temporal frame and can be translated as “about”, “at” (BDB, 1906:454; BHRG § 1999:39.10.3). Wenham (1994:36) comments that the preposition can be used to express “the occurrence of two events. ‘The Lord appeared... just as the mid-day heat did’.”

- 3           מִצְאָתִי חֵן וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי אִם-נָא  
בְּעֵינַיִךְ אֶל-נָא תַעֲבֹר מֵעַל עַבְדְּךָ:  
4           יִקַּח-נָא מֵעֵט-מַיִם וְרַחֲצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם  
תַּחַת הָעֵץ:<sup>85</sup> וְהִשְׁעֲנוּ  
5           לְבַבְכֶם וְאָקַחְהָ פַת-לֶחֶם וְסַעְדּוּ  
עַבְרַתְּם <sup>90</sup>כִּי-עַל-כֵּן <sup>89</sup>אֶתֵּר תַעֲבֹרוּ  
עַל-עַבְדְּכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֵן תַעֲשֶׂה פֶאֶשֶׁר  
דִּבַּרְתָּ:  
6           וַיְמַהֵר אַבְרָהָם הָאֵלֶּהָ אֶל-שָׂרָה  
וַיֹּאמֶר מַה־רָץ שָׁלֵשׁ סָאִים קָמַח טֹלֶת  
לֶחֶם לֹשֵׁי וְעֵשִׂי עֲגוֹת:<sup>91</sup>  
7           וְאֶל-הַבָּקָר רָץ אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח בֶּן-בָּקָר  
רָךְ וְטוֹב וַיִּתֵּן אֶל-הַנְּעָר וַיִּמְהַר  
לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתוֹ:  
8           וַיִּקַּח חֶמְצָא וְחֵלֶב וּבֶן-הַבָּקָר אֲשֶׁר  
עָשָׂה וַיִּתֵּן לְפָנֵיהֶם וְהוּא-עֹמֵד עֲלֵיהֶם  
תַּחַת הָעֵץ וַיֹּאכְלוּ:
- And he said, my Lord if now I have found favour in your eyes, please do not pass your servant by.  
Please let a little water be brought so that you may wash your feet<sup>87</sup>, and rest under the tree.  
And let me fetch a piece of bread and refresh your hearts after [which] you may pass on, for on this account you have passed before your servant. And they said thus you may do as you have spoken.  
Then Abraham hastened to the tent to Sarah and he said, quickly three seahs<sup>92</sup> of fine flour and knead and make unleavened bread.  
And to the cattle, Abraham run and took a calf, tender and good and he gave it to a young man and he said: “quickly prepare it”.  
Then he took curd and milk and the calf which had been prepared and he set before them and he was standing by them under the tree while they eat.

<sup>84</sup>BDB (1906:609) explains that the interjection נָא is an “entreaty or exhortation” and can be translated as “I (we) pray [please]”, or “now”. And the expression “אִם-נָא esp. in the phrase חֵן בְּעֵינַיִךְ חֵן בְּעֵינַיִךְ חֵן בְּעֵינַיִךְ, used by one craving a favourable hearing, and with נָא repeated in the request itself, otherwise.” In this sense, I translated both as “now” and “please” (cf. HALOT, 1995:656.)

<sup>85</sup>וְהִשְׁעֲנוּ Literally means to “lean on” (HALOT, 1999:1612) by implication, ‘to rest’ (cf. Westermann, 1985:273).

<sup>86</sup>The verb structure in the sentence is: לַקַּח *pual yiqtol* 3ms, from לָקַח. Syntactically it functions as jussive. This is followed by וְרַחֲצוּ and וְהִשְׁעֲנוּ, *qal imperative* 2mp and *nifal imperative* 2mp. The imperative after the jussive indicates purpose here (*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*, 2005).

<sup>87</sup>In the ancient Near East, where roads were dusty and sandals were the common footwear, making provision for guests or travellers to wash their feet was an act of common hospitality. The washing of feet also became part of the purification rituals required of priests prior to entering the sanctuary or approaching the altar, Genesis 19:2; 24:32; Exod. 30:19–21; 40:31 (Westermann, 1985:278; Tucker, 2000:468).

<sup>88</sup>וְסַעְדּוּ is in the imperative and it follows a cohortative וְאָקַחְהָ, it usually indicates purpose (*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*, 2005).

<sup>89</sup>עָבַר primarily means “crossover”. It occurred two times here, and I have chosen “pass on” at the first occurrence because of the idea of continuing. The second I translate as “passed before” because it carries the idea of movement via a place. In this context, not a place but Abraham’s fortunate chance of seeing the travellers passing.

<sup>90</sup>כִּי-עַל-כֵּן (same expression is found in 19:8) literally is “for therefore” i.e. for this reason (HALOT, 1995:470 BDB, 1906:475). The idea is “emphasizing the ground” for the action of the provision that Abraham was making for the guest. Abraham is telling his guest that they have come through this way for nothing, but that he (Abraham) should provide a refreshment for them so that they might regain energy and continue their journey. Westermann (1985:273) translates it as “for why else” as in “for why else has your journey brought you your servant’s way?”

<sup>91</sup>עֲגוֹת is a plat disc shape bread. Unleavened bread.

<sup>92</sup>Three seahs of fine flour is a large amount of flour, large enough to make bread for a hundred people. Three seahs “was equivalent to about twenty quarts (twenty-two liters) of flour, which would make a lot of bread.” A seah is approximately 7.33 dry litres, 3 seahs then equal 22 dry litres. (*NET Bible*, 2005. cf. with an online weight conversion at [http://www.convert-me.com/en/convert/history\\_volume/bibseah.html](http://www.convert-me.com/en/convert/history_volume/bibseah.html))

- 9 וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו אַיֵּה שָׂרָה אִשְׁתְּךָ וַיֹּאמֶר  
הִנֵּה בְּאֹהֶל:  
And they said to him where is Sarah your wife? And he said behold in the tent.
- 10 וַיֹּאמֶר שׁוֹב אֲשׁוּב אֵלֶיךָ כְּעֵת חַיִּיהָ<sup>93</sup>  
וְהִנֵּה־בֵן לְשָׂרָה אִשְׁתְּךָ וְשָׂרָה שֹׁמְעַת  
פֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל וְהוּא אַחֲרָיו:  
And he said I will certainly return to you in the spring, and behold a son (will be) to Sarah your wife. And Sarah was listening (at) the entrance of the tent which was behind him.
- 11 וְאַבְרָהָם וְשָׂרָה זָקְנִים  
בְּאַיִם בְּיָמִים חֲדָל לְהַיִּיט לְשָׂרָה אַרְח  
כַּנְּשִׁים:  
Now Abraham and Sarah were old and advancing in days<sup>94</sup>. And it has ceased to be for Sarah according to the ways of women.<sup>95</sup>
- 12 וַתִּצְחַק שָׂרָה בְּקִרְבָּהּ לֵאמֹר אַחֲרַי  
כִּלְתִּי הֲיִתְּהָ לִּי עֲדָנָה וְאֵדְנִי זָקֵן:  
And Sarah laughed in her mind saying after I am worn out, will I have pleasure? And my husband is old.
- 13 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָהָם לְמָה זֶה  
אַמְנָם<sup>96</sup> צִחַקְהָ שָׂרָה לֵאמֹר הֲאֵף  
אֵלֶּךְ וְאֲנִי זָקֵנָתִי:  
And Yahweh said to Abraham, “what is this did Sarah laugh saying is it indeed true that I will have a child when I am old?
- 14 אֲשׁוּב<sup>97</sup> הֲיִפְּלֵא מִיְהוָה דְּבַר לְמוֹעֵד  
אֵלֶיךָ כְּעֵת חַיִּיהָ וּלְשָׂרָה בֵּן:  
Is anything too difficult for Yahweh? At the appointed time, I will return to you, at spring, and to Sarah will be a son.
- 15 וַתִּכְחַשׁ שָׂרָה לֵאמֹר לֹא צִחַקְתִּי כִּי  
צִחַקְתִּי:<sup>98</sup> יֵרָאֶה וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא כִּי  
But Sarah denied saying I did not laugh, for she was afraid. And he said no, indeed you laugh.

<sup>93</sup> כְּעֵת חַיִּיהָ literally means “like the time of life”. BDB (1906:312) explains that חַיִּיהָ can also have “reviving as a semantic potential. Thus, the phrase כְּעֵת חַיִּיהָ can literally mean “reviving at the time” or when it is reviving” and idiomatically means the spring. Van der Merwe, (2004) concurred and translated the expression literally as “in the time of life” and suggested that it should be understood to mean “in the spring”. HALOT (1995:900) translates it as “in about a year’s time”.

<sup>94</sup> Advancing in days is idiomatic to mean growing old.

<sup>95</sup> Idiomatic expression to mean Sarah has reached her menopause. "And Sarah no longer experienced the cycle of women." (Westermann, 1985:273).

<sup>96</sup> הֲאֵף is difficult to translate. HALOT (1994:76f) & BDB (1906:65) describes הֲאֵף as a conjunction. ‘also’, ‘even’ yea; it is very rare in plain prose, for emphasis, enhancing, antithetic, or compound. With הֲאֵף [could mean] indeed ...? really ...?

<sup>97</sup> Preposition ל + noun masculine singular מוֹעֵד translated appointed time, place or meeting. With the prefix ל it is usually “at an or the appointed time” (HALOT, 1995:558; BDB, 1906:417).

<sup>98</sup> Prototypically, כִּי translates as “because” or “for”. The first כִּי functions as its prototypical meaning and is translated as “for”. Sometimes speakers use it to motivate argument but left untranslated because it does not entirely make sense on a grammatical level. In the present context the second כִּי can possibly be left out and still be grammatically correct, however, I suggest it should be seen as functioning as a modal word. It expresses confirmation. In these instances, it may be translated indeed, truly, surely. (BHRG § 1999:40.9.2.2.5). The RSV translates the second כִּי phrase as “Oh yes, you did laugh” and the NIV as “No but you did laugh.”

- 16 על-<sup>99</sup> וַיִּקְמוּ מִשָּׁם הַאֲנָשִׁים וַיִּשְׁקֹפוּ  
פָּנֵי סֹדֶם וְאַבְרָהָם הֵלְךָ עִמָּם לְשַׁלְּחָם:  
And the men stood up<sup>100</sup> from there and they looked  
down toward Sodom and Abraham was going with  
them to send them (away).
- 17 וַיְהִי וְאָמַר הַמַּכְסֶּה אֵלַי מֵאַבְרָהָם  
<sup>101</sup>אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה:  
And Yahweh said shall I (keep) hiding from Abraham  
(that) which I am about to do?
- 18 וְאַבְרָהָם הָיָה לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְעָצוּם  
וְנִבְרְכוּ בוֹ כָּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ:  
And Abraham shall surely be a great and mighty  
nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed  
through him.
- 19 לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יִצְוֶה אֶת-<sup>102</sup>כִּי יִדְעֹתַי  
וְאֶת-בֵּיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו וְשִׁמְרוּ<sup>103</sup> בְּנָיו  
הַדָּרֶךְ הַזֶּה לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט  
לְמַעַן הִבִּיא יְהוָה עַל-אַבְרָהָם אֶת  
אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר עִלָּיו:  
For I have chosen him in order that he will command  
his children and his household after hi to keep the way  
of Yahweh by doing righteousness and justice, so that  
Yahweh may bring to Abraham that which he  
promised him.
- 20 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה זַעֲקַת סֹדֶם וְעֹמֶרָה כִּי-  
רָבָה וְחַטָּאתָם כִּי כְבֹדָה מְאֹד:  
And Yahweh said the outcry of<sup>104</sup> Sodom and  
Gomorrah (is) great. And her sin (is) very grave.
- 21 אֲרָדָה-נָא וְאֶרְאֶה הֲכַצְעַקְתֶּם הַבָּאָה  
אֵלַי עֲשׂוּ כָלָה וְאִם-לֹא אֲדַע:  
Let me go down and I will see whether they have made  
completeness, according to the cry of it, which has  
come unto me. And if not, I will know.

<sup>99</sup> וַיִּשְׁקֹפוּ also וַיִּשְׁקֹף (in 19:28) translated to “look down”. The idea came from one who looks through a window, and from the noun שִׁקָּף – a frame, the verb develops. So that when it takes the *hifil* stem it is translated as “look down”. It carries the idea of looking down from a higher place (HALOT, 1999:1645; BDB, 1906:1054).

<sup>100</sup> “The men stood up” should be understood to mean they set out to continue their journey.

<sup>101</sup> מַכְסֶּה (*piel participle ms*) and עֹשֶׂה (*qal participle ms*) expresses habitual action and eminent action respectively. Thus, I translated מַכְסֶּה as “keep hiding” and עֹשֶׂה as “about to do”. The habitual action is to be read as what was kept from him throughout the period the guests were hosted by Abraham. It should have been revealed just like the birth confirmation but it wasn’t because it was kept from Abraham. But Yahweh thought to himself “is it proper for me to be hiding this from Abraham? After all I have chosen him”.

<sup>102</sup> יִדְעֹתַי literally means “I have known him”. The root word ידע has other semantic potential as “notice, observe, find out, recognize, perceive, care about, be concerned about, be(come) acquainted with, experienced, have intercourse with, select, choose, understand something, be able to distinguish between, have insight, judgment” (HALOT, 1995:391; BDB, 1906). *The NET Bible First Edition Notes*, 2006 notes that the verb יָדַע (*yada*) here means “to recognize and treat in a special manner, to choose” (see Amos 3:2). It indicates that Abraham stood in a special covenantal relationship with the Lord.

<sup>103</sup> בְּנָיו literally translated as sons, however the focus is not on Abraham’s immediate male sons, rather this should be understood in the context of Abraham’s becoming a paradigm or a model of pious living. Therefore, sons should be seen as the nation of Israel or even other nations who are blessed through him. Hence, children (generic term) is used in this translation (HALOT, 1994:137).

<sup>104</sup> A brief word study of the noun and verb form of the Hebrew root word זעק/צעק by van Wolde (2012:76-84) shows that both the conceptual structure of the noun and verb form of the word indicate that “The conceptualization of these [nouns and] verbs entails the notion of an individual or of a collective whose (corporate) identity is defined by need, destruction, or distress.” Therefore, most of the English translations (e.g. NIV, ESV, NJB, HCSB, RSV, NRSV, GNT, NET. got it wrong as they translate this as “outcry against”. The noun in this verse is in the construct state thus can best be translated “outcry of [...]”

- 22 וַיִּפְּנוּ מִפְּנֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיֵּלְכוּ סְדוֹמָה  
וְאַבְרָהָם עָמַד עִמָּד לְפָנָי יְהוָה:
- 23 וַיִּגַּשׁ אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲאֵפֶה תִסְפֶּה  
צְדִיק עִם־רָשָׁע:
- 24 אוּלַי יֵשׁ חֲמִשִּׁים צְדִיקִים בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר  
לְמַקֹּום<sup>105</sup> הָאֵף תִּסְפֶּה וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא  
לְמַעַן חֲמִשִּׁים הַצְדִיקִים אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבָּהּ:
- 25 לָךְ מַעֲשֵׂתוֹ בְּדַבַּר הַזֶּה<sup>106</sup> חָלְלָה  
לְהַמִּית צְדִיק עִם־רָשָׁע וְהִיָּה כַצְדִיק  
כַּרָשָׁע חָלְלָה לָךְ הַשִּׁפְטָל כָּל־הָאָרֶץ לֹא  
יַעֲשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט:
- 26 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אִם־אֶמְצָא בְּסֹדֶם חֲמִשִּׁים  
צְדִיקִים בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר וְנִשְׂאתִי לְכָל־  
הַמָּקוֹם בְּעַבְרָתָם:
- 27 וַיַּעַן אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה־נָא הוּא־לְתִי  
לְדַבַּר אֶל־אֲדֹנָי וְאֲנִכִי עֹפָר וְאֵפֶר:
- 28 אוּלַי יִחְסְרוּן חֲמִשִּׁים הַצְדִיקִים חֲמִשָּׁה  
הַתְּשִׁית בְּחַמְשָׁה אֶת־כָּל־הָעִיר  
וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אֲשַׁחֵת אִם־אֶמְצָא שָׁם  
אַרְבָּעִים וְחַמְשָׁה:
- 29 וַיִּסָּף עוֹד לְדַבַּר אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אוּלַי  
יִמְצְאוּן שָׁם אַרְבָּעִים וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא  
אֲעֲשֶׂה בְּעַבּוֹר הָאָרְבָּעִים:
- 30 וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־נְאֻ יָחַר לֵאדֹנָי וְאֵדְבָרָה  
אוּלַי יִמְצְאוּן שָׁם שְׁלֹשִׁים וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא  
אֲעֲשֶׂה אִם־אֶמְצָא שָׁם שְׁלֹשִׁים:
- 31 וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה־נָא הוּא־לְתִי לְדַבַּר אֶל־  
אֲדֹנָי אוּלַי יִמְצְאוּן שָׁם עֶשְׂרִים וַיֹּאמֶר  
לֹא אֲשַׁחֵת בְּעַבּוֹר הָעֶשְׂרִים:
- 32 וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־נְאֻ יָחַר לֵאדֹנָי וְאֵדְבָרָה  
אֶד־הַפְּעַם אוּלַי יִמְצְאוּן שָׁם עֲשָׂרָה  
וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אֲשַׁחֵת בְּעַבּוֹר הָעֲשָׂרָה:
- 33 וַיֵּלֶךְ יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר כָּלָה לְדַבַּר אֵל  
אַבְרָהָם וְאַבְרָהָם שָׁב לְמִקְמוֹ:
- And the men turn their face from there and they went to Sodom. But Abraham remained standing before Yahweh.
- Then Abraham drew near and he said will you indeed sweep away the righteous and the evil?
- Perhaps there are fifty righteous in the city, will you indeed sweep away, and not forgive the place on account of the fifty righteous who are within it?
- Far be it from you to do a thing like this by killing the righteous with the wicked. And shall be as the righteous, as the wicked? Far be it from you, will the judge of all the earth not do justice?
- And YHWH said if I find in Sodom, fifty righteous in the city, I will spare all the place for their sake.
- And Abraham answered and said, behold I have determined to speak to my Lord and I am dust and ashes.
- Perhaps fifty righteous is lacking five; will you still destroy, for the sake of five, all the city? And he said I will not destroy if I find there forty-five.
- And once again he spoke to him and he said, perhaps there shall be found forty. And he said I will not do for the sake of forty.
- And he said let not my Lord be angry. I will speak, perhaps there shall be found thirty. And he said I will not do if I find there thirty.
- And he said behold I have determined to speak to my Lord, perhaps there shall be found twenty? And he said I will not destroy for the sake of twenty.
- And he said let not my master be angry and I will speak once again. Perhaps there shall be found ten? And he said I will not destroy for the sake of ten.
- And YHWH went when he finished speaking to Abraham. And Abraham returned to his place.

<sup>105</sup> תָּשָׂא Literally is “you lift” it is *qal wayyiqtol* 2ms from *נָשָׂא* *take away* someone’s guilt (and punishment), iniquity, transgression, i.e. *forgive* (HALOT 1995:726; BDB, 1906:671).

<sup>106</sup> חָלְלָה (“substantive adjective”) is from the root word *חלל* and the verbal form is defined as profane, reprehensible thing, pollute, defile (HALOT, 1994:318; BDB, 1906:320). It is employed in the text to dissuade, hence translated as “far be it from...”



## Genesis 19

- 1                    קְדָמָה<sup>107</sup> וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׁנֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים  
בְּעָרְבַּ וְלוֹט יֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר-סְדֹם וַיֵּרֶא-  
לוֹט וַיָּקָם לְקָרְאתָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַפְּיָם  
אֶרְצָה:
- 2                    סִירוּ 112 וְנֹא-אֲדֹנָי 111 וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה  
נָא אֶל-בַּיִת עַבְדְּכֶם וְלִינֹו וְרַחֲצוּ  
113 רַגְלֵיכֶם וְהִשְׁכַּמְתֶּם וְהִלַּכְתֶּם  
114 לְדַרְכְּכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא כִי  
נָלִינוּ: 115 בְּרִחְוֹב
- And the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting<sup>108</sup> by the gate of Sodom.<sup>109</sup> When Lot saw (them) he stood up to call them and he bowed (with) his face to the ground.<sup>110</sup>
- And he said “Behold now, my lords, please turn aside to the house of your servant and spend the night, and wash your feet. And you may arise early and go your way. But they said, “no, rather, in the city square, we will lodge.”

<sup>107</sup> קְדָמָה is a common noun masculine plural, absolute from מלאך. The prototypical meaning of מלאך is “a messenger” (HALOT, 1995:586). The Greek translate it as οἱ ἀγγελοὶ which is also messengers. English translations render it as “the angels” perhaps as way of distinguishing between human messengers and divine messengers.

<sup>108</sup> The disjunctive clause, literally translated as “and Lot was sitting in the gateway of Sodom”, can be understood as temporal, it indicates an ongoing action (by the use of the participle -יֹשֵׁב) of Lot at the time of the arrival of the messengers. Thus, it can be translated “While Lot was sitting...” or “at that time Lot was sitting...”

<sup>109</sup> The gate area in the ANE serve as a civic centre. It serves as court and market during the daytime (Gen 23: 10, 18; Deut. 21: 19; 22: 15; Josh. 20: 4; Ruth, 4: 1; 2Kgs. 7: 1) (cf. von Rad, 1972: 217; & Westermann, 1985: 300f).

<sup>110</sup> Here the action of bowing is similar to that of Abraham, but the narrator added that Lot’s face was down. Hamilton (1995:32) notes that this “may indicate that Lot’s greeting of the two messengers was more pronounced ... Here Lot actually outdoes his uncle in his show of welcome to the newcomers. Lot’s actions may be dictated by more than courtesy. Perhaps the strangers appeared to Lot to be important men.”

<sup>111</sup> הִנֵּה spelt with a *seghol* does not change the text meaning. Here it is used as *Presentative*—Lot offers a place to his guests (See BHRG §40.22.4.3; HALOT, 1994:252; BDB, 1906:244). הִנֵּה-נָא in this verse literally is translated “behold now”. Alternatively, it can be translated as “here”. Elsewhere in Genesis 19, where הִנֵּה is used in the same way include 19: 8—there Lot presents his daughters for the purpose that the people of the city do as it pleases them. Also 19:20 – there Lot present a nearby place with a polite entreaty (הִנֵּה-נָא) to be permitted to run to.

<sup>112</sup> The word here is אֲדֹנָי, it is the only occurrence spelt that way, (HALOT, 1994:12) (literally “my Lords” alternatively, “Sirs”), it was pointed by the Masoretes as a plural, using ֿ (shot a), possibly to indicate that it is not YHWH who is being addressed. It is possible, of course, to change the pointing ֿ (long a), and take the noun to mean that Lot is addressing Deity “My Lord” but this is improbable.

<sup>113</sup> The constructions וְהִשְׁכַּמְתֶּם and וְהִלַּכְתֶּם are *weqatal* construction (*hifil weqatal* 2mp and a *qal weqatal* 2mp respectively). The *weqatal* is often used in dialogue and typically refers to events in the foreground. Here the chain construction may be understood as functioning as consecutive modal future, i.e. it has both a temporal and modal connotation. This may be one of the occasional case, *weqatal* in this context does not function as directive although the preceding verb is in the imperative. But the fact that the speaker is addressing someone of higher status, makes it appropriate to see it as a consecutive modal future (BHRG §21.3).

<sup>114</sup> לֹא is a strong declarative negation, the negation by לֹא is more pointed and forcible especially in answer to a question or request, to deny or decline. When followed by כִּי it has a primary function for greater emphasis (BDB, 1906:518; HALOT, 1994:48).

<sup>115</sup> This refers to a broad open place in city, usually near gate where private and public events take place. It is the most important part of the city. In my context, “market square” might be the best description of such term (BDB 1906:932; HALOT, 1996:1211).

- 3 וַיִּפְצַר-בָּם מְאֹד וַיִּסְרוּ אֵלָיו 116  
וַיָּבֹאוּ אֵל-בֵּיתוֹ וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם מִשְׁתֶּה<sup>117</sup>  
וּמִצֹּת אֶפֶה וַיֹּאכְלוּ:  
And Lot persuaded them strongly, and they turned  
aside to him and came to his house. And he made for  
them a feast with<sup>118</sup> unleavened bread, he baked and  
they ate.
- 4 טָרֵם יִשְׁכְּבוּ וְאֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר אֲנָשֵׁי סֹדֶם  
נִסְבּוּ עַל-הַבַּיִת מִנְעַר וְעַד-זֶקֶן כָּל-  
הָעָם מִקְצֵה:  
Before they lie down to sleep, the men of the city, the  
men of Sodom, surrounded against the house, from  
young to the old. All the people to the last.<sup>119</sup>
- 5 וַיִּקְרְאוּ אֶל-לוֹט וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אַיֵּה  
הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר-בָּאוּ אֵלֶיךָ הַלַּיְלָה  
אֲתָם: <sup>120</sup>הוֹצִיאֵם אֵלֵינוּ וְנֵדְעָה  
And they called to Lot and said to him, “where are the  
men who came to you in the evening? Release them to  
us so we may know them.
- 6 וַיֵּצֵא אֲלֵהֶם לוֹט הַפְתָּחָה וְהִדְלֵת סָגַר  
אֲתָרָיו:  
But Lot went out to them at the entrance, and the door,  
he closed behind him.
- 7 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם אַחֵי תָרְעוּ:  
And he said to them “do not, please my brothers, do  
evil”.
- 8 הִנֵּה-נָא לִי שְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדְעוּ  
אִישׁ אוֹצִיאָה-נָא אֶתְהוֹן אֵלַיְכֶם וַעֲשׂוּ  
רַק לְאֲנָשִׁים <sup>121</sup>לְהוֹן כְּטוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם  
הָאֵל אֶל-תַּעֲשׂוּ דָבָר כִּי-עַל-יָכֵן בָּאוּ  
בְּצֵל קַרְתִּי:  
“Behold now, to me are two daughters who do not  
know a man. Please, let me bring them out to you and  
do to them as you please. Only to these men, you must  
not do a thing. For on this account, they came in the  
shadow of my roof.

<sup>116</sup> וַיִּפְצַר is *qal wayyiqtol* 3ms from פָּצַר. Literally it means to ‘put pressure’, meaning to urge (HALOT, 1996:954). The word ironically foreshadows the hostile actions of the men of the city in v. 9. The repetition serves to ironically contrast Lot to his world.

<sup>117</sup> מִשְׁתֶּה is common noun singular, absolute. Its semantic potential include: “drinking, drink(s) and feast, banquet with wine” (HALOT, 1995:653). When its verb is עָשָׂה then מִשְׁתֶּה is translated as “prepare a feast”. Thus, it might be a careful and conscious choice to provide a summary of the elaborate banquet also prepared by Lot.

<sup>118</sup> The conjunction וְ in the expression וּמִצֹּת אֶפֶה literally “and unleavened bread” is translated as “with unleavened” because the conjunction changes so when it “Joins clauses in which the content of the clause with וְ refers to *circumstances* that prevailed at the same time as those described in the other clause” (BHRG §40.8.2.3).

<sup>119</sup> The repetition of the phrase “the men of...” stresses all kinds of men.

<sup>120</sup> This verse has been one of the crucial passages that has caused a lot of debate among interpreters. Having observed that the verb has several semantic potentials, we will like to maintain the prototypical translation “to know”. The question is whether sexual intercourse can be presupposed? The preceding verse indicates that the men of the city of Sodom and Gomorrah had a violent motive behind the request “to know” Lot’s visitors. Evidently, the question of intimate knowledge, in the sense of interrogation, as suggested by van Wolde (2012:92) is not the issue. According to HALOT (1995:739), the verb נִסְבּוּ *nifal qatal 3mp* coming before the preposition עַל has a violent motive. Therefore, we are left with the option of sexual violence (BDB, 1906:394). “For when Lot responds by offering his daughters ‘who have never known a man’ ..., it becomes clear that the issue is intercourse and not friendship. Lot would never have made such an unusual suggestion if the request was only for a handshake and moments of chitchat” (Hamilton, 1995:33f). The question whether it is a homosexual relationship is not the question here. In view of hospitality, which is the interpretive context, the question is how would Lot respond to the demand of his אַחֵי? Should Lot allow sexual violence be perpetrated against his visitors or protect them? Lot’s response, offering his daughters as substitute further clouded the intension of the narrative. Is it acceptable for one to offer his daughters or any relative (such as a concubine as in Judges 19) to be gang raped even on behalf of hospitality? This text, I would suggest, is saying more than the eye could see. Therefore we shall return to this sensitive issues in subsequent chapters.

<sup>121</sup> כְּטוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם Literally “as the good

- 9 וַיֹּאמְרוּ גַּשׁ-הֵלָאָה<sup>122</sup> וַיֹּאמְרוּ הֲאֵחָד בָּא-לְגוֹר וַיִּשְׁפֹּט שְׁפוֹט עִתָּה נָרַע לְךָ מֵהֶם וַיִּפְצְרוּ בְּאִישׁ בְּלוֹט מְאֹד וַיִּגְשׁוּ לְשַׁבֵּר הַדְּלֵת:
- 10 וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים אֶת-יָדָם וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת-לוֹט אֲלֵיהֶם הַבַּיְתָה וְאֶת-הַדְּלֵת סָגְרוּ:
- 11 וְאֵת-הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר-פָּתַח הַבַּיִת הַכֹּחַ בְּסַבְּנָרִים מִקֶּטָן וְעַד-גָּדוֹל וַיִּלְאוּ לְמַצָּא הַפֶּתַח:
- 12 וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים אֶל-לוֹט עַד מִי-לָךְ פֹּה חֵתָן וּבָנָיֶךָ וּבָנֹתֶיךָ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-לָךְ בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת מִן-הַמָּקוֹם:
- 13 כִּי-מִשְׁחַתֵּתִים אֲנַחְנוּ אֶת-הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי-גְדֹלָה צִעֲקַתְּם אֶת-פְּנֵי יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁלַחְנוּ יְהוָה לְשַׁחֲתָהּ:
- 14 וַיֵּצֵא לוֹט וַיִּדְבַּר אֶל-חֹתְנָיו לֵקְחֵי בְנֹתָיו וַיֹּאמְרוּ קוּמוּ צֵאוּ מִן-הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי-מִשְׁחַתֵּית יְהוָה אֶת-הָעִיר וַיְהִי כַמְצַחֵק בְּעֵינֵי חֹתְנָיו:
- 15 וַכְּמוֹ הַשָּׁחַר עָלָה וַיֵּאֲצִיבוּ הַמַּלְאָכִים בְּלוֹט לֵאמֹר קוּם קַח אֶת-אִשְׁתְּךָ וְאֶת-שְׁתֵּי בְנֹתֶיךָ הַנִּמְצָאֹת פֶּן-תִּסָּפֵה בְּעֵינֵי הָעִיר:
- 16 וַיִּחְזְקוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים בְּיָדוֹ וַיִּתְמַמְהָהּ<sup>129</sup> וַיִּבְדְּאוּ אֶת-לוֹט וְאֶת-בְּנֹתָיו בְּחַמְלַת
- And they said, “move away”. And they said “this one came to sojourn, and he dares to judge us<sup>123</sup>. Now we will do more injury to you than to them. And they pressed hard against the man Lot<sup>124</sup>, and they came near to break the door
- And the men stretched forth their hands, and they brought Lot to them into the house, and they shut the door.
- And the men who were at the entrance of the house, they struck with sudden blindness, both small and great<sup>125</sup>, and they toiled in vain to find the entrance.
- And the men said to Lot, "Whom else do you have here? A son-in-law,<sup>126</sup> your sons, and your daughters, and whomever you have in the city take out of the place.
- For we are destroying this place, because their outcry has become great before the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it."
- And Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, the one's taking his daughters<sup>127</sup>. He said “get up! Go out of this place for Yahweh is about to wipe out the city. And it was like play in the eyes of his sons-in-law.
- And as the dawn arise, the angels hastened Lot, saying, “arise! Take your wife and your two daughters who are with you lest you will be swept away in the punishment<sup>128</sup> of the city.
- And he lingered, and the men seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the hand of his two daughters out

<sup>122</sup> גַּשׁ-הֵלָאָה is an idiomatic expression, literally “approach thither” (BDB, 1906: 620) meaning move away, stand back, or get out of our way.

<sup>123</sup> וַיִּשְׁפֹּט שְׁפוֹט is an infinitive absolute construction. The infinitive absolute follows a finite verbal form, and the semantic pragmatic function is to strengthen a question in this context, and especially that is an impassioned and indignant question (cf. BHRG §20.2.2.2; Net Bible). Literally “and he has judged, judging”.

<sup>124</sup> Literally “against the man, against Lot”.

<sup>125</sup> The expression “both small and great” is a form of merism meaning everyone.

<sup>126</sup> Westermann (1985:303) thinks that the singular form הָחֵתָן is a scribal error. The *Gk.* translation has the plural.

<sup>127</sup> The ones taking his daughter could be interpreted as those who are going to marry Lot's daughters because it was mentioned that they never knew a man and the men are referred to as “sons-in-law”. By the social custom, formal marriage contracts were binding and husbands-to-be could already be called sons-in-law.

<sup>128</sup> בְּעֵינֵי is preposition ב + common noun singular construct עֵינַיִם which can be translated as iniquity and punishment for iniquity .

<sup>129</sup> HALOT (1995:552) described this verb as *hithpalpel wayyiqtol 3ms* from הָחֵתָן occurs only in this form translated as ‘to hesitate’, ‘to tarry’, ‘to delay’, ‘to linger’ (cf. BDB, 1906:554)

- וַיִּהְיֶה עָלָיו וַיִּצְאָהוּ וַיַּנְחֵהוּ מִחוּץ  
לְעִיר:
- 17 וַיְהִי כִּהְוִיצִיָאֵם אֹתָם הַחוּצָה וַיֹּאמֶר  
132 אֶל-תְּבִיט 131 הַמַּלְט עַל-נַפְשֶׁךָ  
אֲחִירֶיךָ וְאַל-תַּעֲמֵד בְּכָל-הַכְּפַר הַהָרָה  
הַמַּלְט פֶּן-תִּסָּפֵה:
- 18 וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹט אֲלֵהֶם אֶל-נָא אֲדֹנָי:
- 19 מֵצָא עַבְדְּךָ חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ 134 הֲנִיחֵנָּא  
וּתְגַדֵּל חֶסֶדְךָ אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ עִמָּדִי  
לְהַחְיֹת אֶת-נַפְשִׁי וְאֶנְכִי לֹא אוֹכֵל  
לְהַמְלִיט הַהָרָה פֶּן-תִּדְבַקְנִי הַרְעָה  
וּמָתִי:
- 20 הֲנִיחֵנָּא הָעִיר הַזֹּאת קְרֹבָה לָנוּס  
שְׂמָה וְהִיא מִצְעָר אִמְלִטָה נָא שְׂמָה  
הֲלֹא מִצְעָר הִוא וְתַחֲתֵי נַפְשִׁי:
- 21 גַּם 136 וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הִנֵּה נִשְׂאתִי פָנֶיךָ  
לְדַבֵּר הַזֶּה לְבִלְתִּי הַפְּכִי אֶת-הָעִיר  
אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ:
- 22 מְהֵרָה הַמַּלְט שְׂמָה כִּי לֹא אוֹכֵל לַעֲשׂוֹת  
דְּבָר עַד-בֹּאֶךָ שְׂמָה עַל-כֵּן קָרָא שֵׁם-  
הָעִיר צוּעַר:
- 23 הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ יָצָא עַל-הָאָרֶץ וְלוֹט בָּא  
צָעֲרָה:
- 24 וַיִּהְיֶה הַמָּטֵר עַל-סֹדֶם וְעַל-עֹמֶרָה  
גַּפְרִית וְאֵשׁ מֵאֵת יְהוָה מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם:
- of compassion for him<sup>130</sup>. And they brought him out and set him outside the city.
- And it happened, as they brought them outside, and one said<sup>133</sup> “escape for your life! Do not look back and do not stop in all the plain. To the mountain, flee, lest you will be swept away.
- And Lot said unto them “No, Please my Lord”
- “Behold now your servant has found favour in your eyes and you have made great your loving kindness which you have shown to me in saving my life. But I will not be able to escape to the mountain lest the calamity will overtake me and I die.”
- “Behold now<sup>135</sup> this city is near to flee there and it is small. Please let me escape there. Is it not a small (one)? And my life shall be saved.”
- And he said to him “Behold I am granting you this favour also. I will not overthrow the city which you have spoken.”
- Quickly! Flee there for I am not able to do anything until you arrive there. Therefore, the name of the city was called Zoar.
- The sun had risen upon the earth, and Lot entered.
- And Yahweh rained down upon Sodom and Gomorrah sulphur and fire from Yahweh from heaven.

<sup>130</sup> The Hebrew text literally translates “in the compassion of the Lord them”.

<sup>131</sup> וַיִּהְיֶה עָלָיו וַיִּצְאָהוּ וַיַּנְחֵהוּ מִחוּץ לְעִיר with pronoun 2ms suf. נַפְשׁ has several semantic potentials: throat, neck, breath, living being, people, personality, soul, life, desire, appetite, emotion, and person (BDB, 1906:659; HALOT, 1995:712f). The English word “life” seems to be a better choice here and even the subsequent occurrence in Genesis 19: 19, 20 because “Life” stands for the whole of the living being.

<sup>132</sup> The Hebrew verb תְּבִיט translated as “look” signifies an intense look as in “pay attention to, show regard, consider” (BDB, 1906: 613) perhaps looking with a sense of longing.

<sup>133</sup> Literally it is “and he said” but because *Gk., Syr.* Vg. read plural, to maintain the MT, the singular is assumed as one of the messengers speaking.

<sup>134</sup> הֲנִיחֵנָּא in Genesis 19: 19 is used to describe a noteworthy situation. By “noteworthy,” we mean something a speaker wants his/her addressee to take note of since it establishes a common ground of another speech act (e.g. a command, a request, an assertion, a question). Something “noteworthy,” could be “newsworthy,” but need not to be so” (BHRG §40.22.4.2). In this verse, it is a noteworthy gesture, functioning as the basis for the proposal in the next verse, 19: 20.

<sup>135</sup> Alternatively, one can read this as “here, please...”

<sup>136</sup> נִשְׂאתִי פָנֶיךָ is an idiomatic expression. Literally it is “I have lifted up your face also concerning this matter”. The expression carries the idea of showing favour as in the sense of partiality. Westermann (1985:296) translated the expression as “yes, this too I grant you”

- 25 וַיִּהְיוּ אֵת־הָעָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְאֵת כָּל־  
הַכְּפָר וְאֵת כָּל־יִשְׁבֵי הָעָרִים וְאֵת  
הָאֲדָמָה:  
And he overthrew these cities, and all the plain and all  
the ones that are dwelling in the cities and all the  
vegetation of the ground.
- 26 וַתִּבֹט אִשְׁתּוֹ מֵאַחֲרָיו וַתְּהִי נֹצֵיב  
מֶלַח:  
And his wife looked back (longingly) and she became  
a pillar of salt.
- 27 וַיִּשְׁכֶם אַבְרָהָם בַּבֹּקֶר אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם  
אֲשֶׁר־עָמַד שָׁם אֶת־פְּנֵי יְהוָה:  
And Abraham arose early in the morning, to the place  
which he stood there before Yahweh.
- 28 וַיִּשְׁקֹף עַל־פְּנֵי סוּדֹם וְעַמֹּרָה וְעַל־כָּל־  
עֵלָה<sup>137</sup> פְּנֵי אֶרֶץ הַכְּפָר וַיֵּרָא וַהֲנֵה  
קִיטָר הָאֶרֶץ קָיִטָר הַכְּבֹשָׁן:  
And he looked down on the face of Sodom and  
Gomorrah and on the face of all the land of the plain,  
and he saw and behold smoke of the land went up like  
the smoke of the furnace.
- 29 וַיְהִי בְשַׁחַת אֱלֹהִים אֶת־עָרֵי הַכְּפָר  
וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־אַבְרָהָם וַיִּשְׁלַח  
אֶת־לוֹט מִתּוֹךְ הַהִפּוֹךְ בְּהִפּוֹךְ אֶת־  
לוֹט: <sup>138</sup>הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר־יָשָׁב בָּהֶן  
And it happened when God destroyed the cities of the  
plain, and God remembered Abraham. And he sent out  
Lot from the midst of the overthrow when he  
overthrew the cities which Lot lived in them.
- 30 וַיַּעַל לוֹט מִצּוֹעַר וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּהָר וּשְׁתֵי  
בָנָתָיו עִמּוֹ כִּי יָרָא לְשֹׁבֵת בְּצוֹעַר  
וַיֵּשֶׁב בַּמְעָרָה הוּא וּשְׁתֵי בָנָתָיו:  
And Lot went up from Zoar and lived in the mountain  
and his two daughters with him, for he was afraid to  
live in Zoar. And he lived in the cave, he and the two  
of his daughters.
- 31 וַתֹּאמֶר הַבְּכִיָּרָה אֶל־הַצְּעִירָה אָבִינוּ  
זָקֵן וְאֵישׁ אֵין בְּאֶרֶץ לְבוֹא עֲלֵינוּ  
כְּדָרָה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ:  
And the firstborn said to the younger, our father is old,  
and there is no man to come to us according to the way  
of all the earth.
- 32 בִּשְׂקֵה אֶת־אָבִינוּ יַיִן וְנִשְׁכְּבֵה<sup>139</sup> לָכֶּה  
עִמּוֹ וְנִתְּנָה מֵאָבִינוּ זָרַע:  
Come, let us cause our father to drink wine and let him  
lie down with us and let us preserve from our father,  
an offspring.
- 33 וַתִּשְׁקִינָן אֶת־אָבִיהֶן יַיִן בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא  
וַתִּבֹּא הַבְּכִיָּרָה וַתִּשְׁכַּב אֶת־אָבִיהָ  
וְלֹא־יָדַע בְּשֹׁכְבָהּ וּבְקוּמָהּ:  
And they caused their father to drink wine in that  
night, and the firstborn came and she lay with her  
father and he did not know when she lay down and  
when she got up.
- 34 וַיְהִי מִמָּחָרֹת וַתֹּאמֶר הַבְּכִיָּרָה אֶל־  
שְׁכִיבָתִי אִמְשׁ אֶת־<sup>140</sup>הַצְּעִירָה הֵן  
And it happened on the following day, the firstborn  
said to the youngest, look I have slept with my father  
yesterday, let us make him drink wine also in the night

<sup>137</sup> הַנֵּה in this context describes a newsworthy situation. By “newsworthy,” we mean (1) something the addressees did not know, (2) something they were unprepared for (e.g. something surprising or different from what they expected) or (3) it may be confirming something they already know (BHRG §40.22.4.1n). Here, it is a confirmation of news that has been announced, thus is newsworthy.

<sup>138</sup> הֵן is preposition בְּ+ pronoun 3fp suffix הֵן. This not to be confused with the demonstrative particle. Especially that it goes with the prefix בְּ.

<sup>139</sup> לָכֶּה *qal imperative ms.* However, this ought to be feminine as rendered by the *SamPent* (see note on v. 32 text criticism). This agrees with the context as it was Lot’s daughters who were speaking.

<sup>140</sup> הֵן is a demonstrative particle believed to be the short form of הֵנָּה. But הֵן is less widely used than הֵנָּה and is often confined to a newsworthy situation where an action is taken or noteworthy circumstances where a conclusion is based.

- אָבִי וְנִשְׁקְנוּ יָנִין גַּם־הַלֵּילָה וּבֹאֵי שְׂכָבִי  
עִמּוֹ וְנִחְיָה מֵאַבְיָנוּ זָרַע:  
35 וַתִּשְׁקִינָם גַּם בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא אֶת־אַבְיָהֶן  
וַיִּן וַתִּקַּם הַצְעִירָה וַתִּשְׁכַּב עִמּוֹ וְלֹא־  
יָדַע בְּשֹׁכְבָהּ וּבִקְמָהּ:  
36 וַתִּהְרַגְנָן שְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת־לוֹט מֵאַבְיָהֶן:  
37 וַתֵּלֶד הַבְּכִירָה בֵן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ מוֹאָב  
הוּא אֲבִי־מוֹאָב עַד־הַיּוֹם:  
38 וְהַצְעִירָה גַּם־הוּא יָלְדָה בֵן וַתִּקְרָא  
שְׁמוֹ בֶן־עַמִּי הוּא אֲבִי בְנֵי־עַמּוֹן עַד־  
הַיּוֹם: ס
- and go and lie with him and let us preserve from our father, an offspring.
- And they also gave, in that night, their father wine. And the younger one got up and she lay with him. And he did not know when she lay down and when she got up.
- And the two daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father.
- And the firstborn gave birth to a son and she called his name Moab. He is the father of Moabites till this day.
- And the younger also, she gave birth to a son and she called his name Ben-Ammi. He is the father of the sons of Ammon till today.

### 3.4. Literary analysis: intratextual textures of Genesis 18 & 19<sup>141</sup>

Literary criticism and analysis explore the different textures of the text. In the introductory chapter, the research has identified Socio-Rhetoric as an interpretive approach to the selected pericope. The approach as previously noted will allow for the multifaceted witness i.e. different voices heard in the narrative text: the narrator's, the community that transmitted the text, and the traditions through which the texts of Old Testament stories have been retold. This will presumably enhance or have an impact on the readers' multifaceted real lives. The first point of call for this research is an understanding of the "complex and intricate knowledge of the wordings, phrasing, imagery, aesthetics and argumentative quality of the text", the inner texture (Robbins, 1996:4) or *intratextual* analysis (the terms will be used interchangeably).

The peculiarities of the stories are indications that they are individual units brought together by a certain motif. These peculiarities according to Westermann (1985:274) influence the reader's identification of the essential part of the story. Chapter 18 focuses on Abraham while Chapter 19 focuses on Lot. On the surface, it makes the connection between the two chapters obscure, but a close reading shall reveal certain elements that link the stories in various ways. Genesis 18:1–16a, for example, is assumed by some scholars as a unit whose goal was the announcement of the birth of a child, v. 10a, repeated in vv. 13–14 (Coats 1983:137;

<sup>141</sup> Literary analysis here is not to be confused with criticism surveyed above. Here, it is referring to the approaches to the study of the text coming together to give a nuanced understanding to the text's meaning.

Westermann, 1985:274; Wenham 1994:40). On the other hand, if one looks at the Abrahamic narrative, there could be a hesitation in accepting that the announcement of the birth of Isaac is the goal of the section. It is a major motif of the larger narrative, but it is used in the selected text as a connector to the Abrahamic narrative, thus it fits well with the recurrence of covenant and annunciation themes of the preceding chapters, 15, 16, and 17. The lucid and vivid description of the introduction (the visit of the three men to Abraham vv. 1 -8) suggests a kind of continuity with the Abraham–Lot narrative cycle (Gunkel, 1997:192; Skinner, 1980:298). The details of the introduction carry such a weight as to be determinative of the narrative. Westermann (1985:274) sees tension in the narrative because certain elements were obscure. His explanation of the obscurity tends towards the nexus of the narratives. He explains that some elements were obscured so that the “removal was required for continuation of [the main theme]”. Thus Chapter 18:1-16 is crucial in the formation of the narrative complex of Chapters 18 and 19. It introduces the whole unit. At this juncture, the research will begin the unravelling of the deep structure of the two chapters using the socio-rhetorical analysis as the tool.

Meanings are communicated in words. The subsections below focus on how words are used in the selected pericope. The purpose, according to Robbins (1996:7), is to “gain an intimate knowledge of words, word patterns, voices, structures, devices, and modes in the text, which are the contexts for meanings and meaning-effects that an interpreter analyses with the other readings of the text”. The analysis of the inner texture of a text involves the identification of certain characteristics of words in a text. Six of these characteristics are outlined by Robbins (1996: 7): (a) repetitive, (b) progressive, (c) narrational, (d) opening-middle-closing, (e) argumentative, (f) sensory-aesthetic texture.

Robbins (1996:7f) notes that it is important for beginners to analyse each aspect of the inner texture in the order in which they appear in the chapter. Notwithstanding, he acknowledges the difficulty of performing all the strategies in one text in a sequence. He, therefore, suggests that one should select three or four of the strategies that work readily with the text. In this regard, the research employs the first five textures of the inner texture and left out the sensory-aesthetic texture. The sensory-aesthetic texture and pattern, according to Robbins (1996:21ff), look for a “range of senses” such as “thought, emotion, sight, sound, touch, smell” in the text. This research believes that it is in the sensory-aesthetic texture that the meaning and beauty of the

narrative is contained. However, inasmuch as the text under study evokes quite a lot of these textures, I feel that they are embedded in the discussion of the other five textures. Therefore, discussing it on its own could amount to repetition. In the same vein, the discourse on narrational texture and the argumentative texture is considered to have a thin line of demarcation. Thus, this research considered it expedient to look at them together under one unit of narrational-argumentative texture.

### **3.4.1. Repetitive texture**

“Repetitive texture resides in the occurrence of words and phrases more than once in a unit [...] Multiple occurrences of many different kinds of grammatical, syntactical, verbal, or topical phenomena may produce repetitive texture” (Robbins 1996:8). Repetitions in a text is a rhetorical technique that points to the protagonists, themes, and other major emphases. They “provide an overarching view of the texture of the language that invites the interpreter to move yet closer to the details of the text” (Robbins 1996:8). This section studies and groups the repetitions in the Genesis 18 and 19 by classifying the word according to the part of speech which they belong to.

#### ***3.4.1.1. Repetitions and progression of nouns***

A study of the repetitive texture (addendum A) analyses the frequency of the characters in the narrative of Genesis 18 & 19. In the analysis, Yahweh is identified as one of the key actors in the narrative. He is identified as יהוה, אלהים, and אדני, and he is one of the three addressed in the collective common noun אנשים (men). The frequency of the occurrence of the divine indicates that he is a major character in the narrative. Also, his continued presence from the beginning of the story to the end suggests that he is one of the key players in the stories.

The messengers of Yahweh who were at first identified as “three men”, then later as two men or just men also have the identity המלאכים occurring two times. It is quite interesting the narrator focuses more on their identity as “men” occurring eight times in Genesis 18:2, 16, 22; 19: 5, 8, 10, 12, 16; (addendum A). Only in two instances are their real identity revealed as המלאכים



‘angels’ or ‘messengers’ (19:1, 15). The use of the term המלאכים, just as observed<sup>142</sup> could be for the purpose of distinguishing that the men are not just human strangers but divine beings.

The narrator’s use of the word ‘men’ for the identity of the divine visitor is perhaps a strategy. First, it serves as textual unity of the entire narrative of Genesis 18 & 19; that the reader might not assume that the messengers are entirely different people from the ones that visited Abraham. Second, to show (from the point of view of the host) that the events are the normal ordinary everyday social duty.

Another major character is Abraham. Abraham is mentioned fifteen times by name, two times as עבד ‘servant’, and once as אדני by Sarah (18:12). Abraham is prominent in Genesis 18. He appears from the beginning of the chapter to the end. His appearance in Genesis 18:1 can be inferred from the preceding Chapter 17. As the narrative progresses, one can see in 18:6 that the personal pronoun ‘him’ in 18:1 is Abraham; the narrator switches to mention him by name as the one identified both as an object, subject, and indirect object of the preceding unit of the narrative. The frequency at which the name ‘Abraham’ and other inferences (pronouns and common noun), appear in Genesis 18, also places Abraham as a major character in the narrative of Genesis 18. His role in connection to the major subject of Genesis 19, is seen in his dialogue with Yahweh. The narrator or editor made the connection lucid when he inserted a section in Genesis 19:27 and 29, mentioning Abraham as returning to the place he stood before Yahweh the previous day.

Sarah’s name is repeated about ten times from Genesis 18:6-15 (if we exclude personal pronouns referring to her). The link between Sarah and the second half of the narrative in Genesis 18 and the entire section of Genesis 19 seems very distant. However, in the overall story of hospitality tradition, the section seems to support the custom of a stranger’s reciprocation of the hospitality shown to them by Abraham. Although Sarah appears only in Genesis 18:6-15, her significance in the narrative unit probably relates to the entire Abrahamic narrative cycle where covenant relationship is in the background.

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<sup>142</sup> see literary critical note on Genesis 19:1 above.

Lot is the dominant character in the second half of the narrative unit (Gen. 19). His name occurs about fifteen times in thirteen verses. He is addressed as **אב** once, twice as **אב**, and eight times in the common noun as ‘father’ when the narrator turns to report a conversation between Lot’s two daughters. Lot is thus a dominant but ambiguous character in Genesis 19. He is a host, a resident alien, and father—also as the head of the household. Subsequent chapters will show the impact of such multiple identities in the narrative.

The men of Sodom also occupy another prominent position in the narrative. They are addressed as ‘men of the city’ once, the ‘men of Sodom’ once and ‘men at the door’ once. Interestingly, they are also addressed as ‘brothers’ once. The men of Sodom form part of the main conversation in Genesis 19. Most of the occurrences in the narrative as prenominal suffixes are translated as pronouns in the English translations. A critical look at the four different ways that the men of Sodom are addressed poses the question, why these different terms? These diverse forms of identification could not be a random selection. But what could these mean in the narrative unit? We will keep this in view, but let us turn to the repetitions and progressions of other nouns showing locations, time, food and other abstract ideas in the narrative.

The repetition and progression analysis of other nouns appearing as locatives, describing time, food and substances was conducted. These categories, as well as other features that are crucial in understanding and interpreting the selected literary unit, are also important (see Addendum ‘B’). In the analysis, I have first identified places where the history in the text happened—**באלני**—**ממרא** ‘Trees of Mamre’, **סדמ ועמרה** ‘Sodom and Gomorrah’, and **צוער** ‘Zoar’. The pattern of the progression of the names of the places is interesting. The narrative begins with a rural area—trees of Mamre, then moves to city—Sodom, then to an insignificant city—Zoar. Of course, this might not be intentional, it is perhaps just coincidental that such a pattern developed, but the pattern shows the beauty of the narrative structure.

The same pattern is also observed in the progression of the narrative from ‘under a tree’ to the ‘door of a tent’. From the ‘door of a tent’ to the ‘gate of a city’. It also shows a pattern from a ‘door of a house’ it moves ‘into the house’ and ‘in a cave’. Looking at these patterns, there is what looks like a resumptive pattern. The narrative starts from more or less a rural setting, it then progresses to a city or urban setting, it then retrogressed into an insignificant setting.

Whatever this implies, we are yet to decode, but the pattern reveals the beauty of the structure of the narrative.

The narrator mentions that the men appeared to Abraham by **בְּאֵלֵי מַמְרֵא** (by the Oaks of Mamre) in vs. 1. The Oaks of Mamre is also referred to as **מִקוֹם** in Genesis 18: 33. **הַמְּקוֹם** (the place) is mentioned in Genesis 19:27, but this is not a direct reference to the ‘the Oaks of Mamre’ although it might not be far from it because this was where Abraham had stopped as he was seeing his guests off. The welcoming and entertaining—the washing of feet, resting, and eating—all took place at **תַּחַת הָעֵץ** (‘under the tree’ mentioned twice) in vv. 4 and 8. Abraham dwells in a tent. When the strangers appeared to Abraham, he was sitting at **פֶּתַח-הָאֹהֶל** (the door of his tent) according to Genesis 18:1, 2, 6, 9 and 10.

Lot was at **בְּשַׁעַר-סְדֹם** ‘by the gate of Sodom’ when the messengers arrived in Sodom. Retrospectively, I have noted that the gate area, in the case of Abraham at the door of his tent—serve as a civic centre in the ANE. It serves as a court and market during the daytime, Genesis 23:10, 18; Deut. 21:19; 22:15; Josh 20:4; Ruth, 4:1; 2 Kgs 7:1, (von Rad, 1972:217; & Westermann, 1985:300f, Wenham, 1994:54). This suggests that the two men probably occupied prominent positions in their places of abode.

Sodom is Lot’s place of residence. Gomorrah occurs as a twin city in to Sodom when mentioned in the narrative. Sodom on its own occurs eight times, Gomorrah three times, while ‘the city or cities’ are mentioned fifteen times. Out of these fifteen references to the city, eight refer directly to Sodom. Four times, it occurs in the plural as references to all the cities that were destroyed. The literary context seems to suggest more than just Sodom and Gomorrah, especially when it mentions **בְּכָל-הַבְּקָר** (all the valley) four times in Genesis 19. **צוּר** ‘Zoar’ (occurring four times), is also called **הָעִיר** (the city) three times. These make up the fifteen references to the city or cities in the narrative.

Following these, and closely connected, are the five mentions of **מְקוֹם** (place) as references to Sodom. Also, **אָרֶץ**, occurring eight times is designated as ‘earth’—three times; ‘land’—three times, and ‘ground’—two times. The designation ‘land’ is used to refer to the plains including Sodom. Two times it is translated as ‘ground’ where it is used in the context of Abraham and Lot bowing down. Sodom and its accompanying references, ‘the city or cities’, the ‘land’, and

the ‘place’ is one of the major focuses of the narrative. It is probably used as contrast Abraham’s rural settlement in the narrative, especially as it relates to the practice of hospitality.

‘Times’ are also recorded in the narrative. The analysis of ‘times’ shows a progression similar to the patterns described above. In Genesis 18:1, כָּהֵם הַיּוֹם is translated as ‘at the heat of the day’. This is followed in sequence by ערב (evening), לילה (night), השמש יצא (sunrise), בקר (morning) and finally, מחרת (next day). Westermann (1985:277) notes, “Time of the day are rarely given in the patriarchal narratives; when they are, they have a function: it [(כהם היום)] is the time when the traveller turns aside in search of shade and rest.” Similarly, ערב was the time the two messengers arrived in Sodom. Whatever their intention, they might not be able to accomplish it at that time. Obviously, if they were proceeding, then they would have had to lodge for the night before continuing. Just as the reader already knows that their mission was for Sodom, the assumption was they might not find out anything at this time since it was already evening; therefore they would have to lodge in a house until the next day.

Regarding time again, כִּצְעַת הַיָּהּ that is mentioned two times in the text in Genesis 18:10 and 14, is translated “in the spring”. In both cases, the expression is used to confirm the time of the fulfilment of Yahweh’s promise of the birth of a son to Sarah and Abraham and the expression occurs in a direct reported speech. In the second occurrence of this expression, it is preceded by another time indicator, לְמוֹעֵד, translated as ‘at the appointed time’, which we presume shows the significance of the expression כִּצְעַת הַיָּהּ mentioned earlier in Genesis 18:10.

The last word in the set is an expression עַד-הַיּוֹם, literally translated as ‘until this day’ in Genesis 19:37 and 38. The expression in both instances occurs in a narrative discourse. This is significant for understanding the literary history. It simply shows that the time of narration is different from the narrated time.

Repetitions and progression of food and food items are analysed. Abraham’s preparation and action of welcome start with מְעִט־מַיִם (a little water) for washing of the feet, פַּת־לֶחֶם (a piece of bread) to be brought for the guests to refresh themselves. But the actual meal prepared included שְׁלֹשׁ סָאִים קֶמַח סֹלֶת (three seahs of fine flour) to make עֲגוֹת (unleavened bread). The narrator reports that Abraham went to the הַבָּקָר (the flock) and took בֶּן־בָּקָר (a young bull) which he gave

a young lad to prepare. Abraham took וְגִּי־הַבָּקָר הַמֵּאָה וְהַלֵּב (curd, and milk and the young bull which was prepared) and set it before the visitors as they ate.

Genesis 19, on the other hand, does not give such details. It summarises the hospitality meal in few words: מִשְׁתֶּה (lit. drink) and וּמִצֹּת (unleavened bread). This summary does not suggest that Lot prepared the meal poorly. Of course, as noted in the literary critical note, when the verb of the word מִשְׁתֶּה is עָשָׂה then מִשְׁתֶּה is translated as ‘prepare a feast’. The brevity of the meal description suggests that the focus of the unit of Genesis 19 is not a comparison of Lot’s hospitality with that of Abraham, rather that attention should be shifted to something else. The quantity of the food described in Abraham’s hospitality is also a pointer that this is not a comparison of the two hospitality scenes. In the next chapter, I will show that there are similarities between the elements that Abraham and Sarah prepared with Levitical sacrificial elements.

Abstract ideas are also contained in the narrative as nouns. For example, three times the word דֶּרֶךְ (way) is mentioned in the narrative of Genesis 18 and 19. Twice the word is used as an idiomatic expression to show attitude or manners. The first is דֶּרֶךְ יְהוָה (the way of Yahweh) in Genesis 18:19, which Abraham will command ‘his sons’ and ‘his household’ to keep. To keep the ‘way of Yahweh’ is to show attitude and manners in line with Yahweh’s will, which is to do צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט (righteousness and justice). The word משפט occurs two times and צדקה once in Genesis 18:19 and 25. In Genesis 18:19, the ‘children’ and ‘household’ of Abraham are to be taught to do the way of Yahweh by doing justice and righteousness, while in vs. 25, justice is the quality of Yahweh.

The second occurrence of דֶּרֶךְ is in Genesis 19:31. Here, it occurs in the context of a human-human relationship which Lot’s daughters say they lack—“and there is no man in the land to come in to us *like the way* [דֶּרֶךְ] of all the land.” A careful look at the use of the word in this verse, one sees contrast between the ‘way of יהוה’ and the ‘the way of all the land’ especially when one looks at the action of Lot’s daughters<sup>143</sup>—making their father drunk and slept with him—in the light of the prohibition of incest in Leviticus 18 and 19 (see 5.2.2).

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<sup>143</sup> The exact unconsented sexual violation for which Lot had earlier subjected them to.

תַּעֲרָת and תַּעֲרָה are two words that appear to be used interchangeably throughout the Hebrew Bible and are translated as “outcry” (Van Wolde, 2012:73, 75). The nouns are used by the collective plural subject and are not directed towards the object, Sodom. The words show a collective raising of voices by people in distress and need. In this case, it is the collective voice of Sodom against the great evil in the city (van Wolde 2012:76).

Two organs of the body are also used to communicate an abstract concept. The first is the noun עַיִן, literally ‘eye’ as an organ of the body. The word occurs five times in the passage, but only once is used as an organ of the body (18:2). The other occurrences function as idiomatic expressions: (a) To find pleasure, satisfaction, favour, Genesis 18:3 and 19:19. (b) To figuratively show mental and spiritual faculties, act as one pleases, Genesis 19:8; (3) Expresses the lack of paying attention, for example, Genesis 19:14.<sup>144</sup> Then the second, רַגְלִים is just a body part, the washing of feet as a symbolic gesture for welcome.

The analysis of repetitions and progressions of nouns have shown the major characters of the narrative. They also reveal some elements of progression and focus of the smaller units in the pericope. The main characters and the prominent places, food or items, and abstract nouns used in the passages reveal contrasts between these individual stories or traditions together. The question then is what is the purpose of the comparison? We will revisit these important observations in our subsequent discourse, but I shall continue with the analysis of the repetitions and progression in the text.

### **3.4.1.2. Repetition of verbs**

A detailed analysis of repetition and progression of verbs was conducted (see Addendum ‘C’). I have endeavoured to put the verbs in categories. The groupings of these verbs show different subject matters in the narrative:

1. The verb of ‘seeing’ in column one introduces the subject of theophany.
2. The verb of ‘dwelling’ introduces the topic of leadership of a household and participation in a central public place of decision making.
3. The verb of ‘being’ echoes the content of the Abrahamic promise and blessing.

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<sup>144</sup> Lot’s sons-in-law never paid attention to Lot’s warning because they thought he was ridiculing them. See Chapter 4 on the use of the expression “to find favour in one eyes” intertextually.

4. The verb of ‘saying’ which controls the narrative structure and progression introduces promise, welcome (קרא can mean call or meeting someone with the intention to invite him or her) and a sense of urgency in the use of the verb פצר meaning to persist or press hard or to insist.
5. The verbs of ‘doing’ introduce various actions. For instance, when we consider these verbs: רעע (to do evil), מות (to kill), ספה (to sweep away), שחת (to destroy), הפכ (overthrow), נשא (to lift, forgive), we notice there is evil, judgement (verb of perception, שפט), mercy and forgiveness.
6. Verbs of movement show actions and movements that fit most of the themes that we decoded from the repetition and progression of the verbs.

Due to space constraint, I will not be commenting on all the groups of words or single words in the text. I have selected a few words and will make general remarks on the observable patterns that the repetitions and progression display in the narrative.

The narrative starts with the verb ויִּרְא, conjunction ו + *Nifal wayyiqtol* 3mp from the root word ראה which occurs four times. Prototypically, ראה can be translated ‘to see’. Other semantic possibilities include: ‘to understand’, ‘spy’, ‘reveal’, ‘look at’, ‘examine’, ‘inspect’, ‘show’. In the *Nifal*, ראה is translated as ‘appear’ (HALOT, 1996:1157ff; BDB, 1906:907). Two other root words that are synonymous in English are also recorded in this group of words: שקפ (Gen. 18:16; 19:28) and תבט (Gen. 19:17, 26).

The first appearance of the verb ראה sets the narrative into motion describing Yahweh’s movement; the two that follow are not describing a movement, rather a seeing: Abraham perceived that there were three men standing before him, and he saw them. The fourth usage in Genesis 18:21 is connected to Yahweh’s inquest to ‘go down’ to ascertain Sodom’s wickedness which has been reported to him through the ‘outcry’ of the people. Van Wolde (2012:86) comments on the usage in the juridical context that “[...] in Israel’s courts of law the stage of (logical) certainty based on sensory experience or some other kind of evidence is the only one that can guarantee correct juridical proceeding.” Thus, one can see this usage as the writer’s art in connecting this part of the narrative to the next chapter.

In Genesis 19:1 ראה is used in the same way as the second and the third use above while in Genesis 19:28, ראה seems to support the link in the fourth usage. It appears with the near synonym of the word שקה which was used to characterise the action of the messengers as they set out for Sodom in Genesis 18:16. The narrator deftly combines both words שקה and ראה in a similar juridical context, this time, and the judge is Abraham. He stood to look down as through a frame, to ascertain the truthfulness of Yahweh's judgement of which he was had been informed the previous day.

From the perspective of the reader or listener, the narrative is a theophany, but the repetitions and progression of the narrative emphasise another thing. Immediately after the appearance of the deity, the writer introduces Abraham sitting (ישב) at the door of his tent. ישב occurs once in Genesis 18 and six times in Genesis 19. The first use in Genesis 19 appears to have a similar function as the use in Genesis 18. Both use the same form, *qal participle ms absolute*.<sup>145</sup> They function as the predicate of the verbal clause, complementing the subjects. Both Abraham and Lot are 'sitting' at the 'entrance of the tent' and the 'the gate of the city' respectively. These imply that not only were the characters inhabitants of their respective domains, the 'sitting at the door of tent and gate suggests an occupation of an active leadership role in the civic centre.

The distribution of these verbs (Addendum 'C') in clusters suggests demarcations of smaller units within the narrative. The cluster could be used as a case for redaction, that perhaps a skilful editor put together these units using some of these verbs, example אמר 'to say' (especially), and עשה (to do). These verbs are spread across the entire narrative. אמר is one of the characteristics of the Hebrew narrative. We shall describe further these characteristics of the verbs in narrational-argumentative texture below.

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<sup>145</sup> Syntactically, they function as the main predication of the verbal clause. The subject in Genesis 18: 1 is the independent personal pronoun אנה while in Genesis 19: 1, the subject is a lexicalized noun, Lot (*cf.* BHRG §20.3.2).



### 3.4.1.3. *Repetitions and progression of particles*<sup>146</sup>

A further category of repetition and progression of words in the text that I have analysed is the particles (see Addendum D). The analysis categorises the words in groups, classified as interjections, adjectives, and adverbs. The sets of words classified as interjections are communicative clues which deal with the mood of the conversation or event in the narrative. “Semantically interjections could be classified as follows: interjections that express emotion, interjections that express an attitude, interjections that express the experience of a threat, interjections related to addressing someone” (BHRG §45). The adjectives on the other “[...] describe or qualify nouns by qualifying their *state*” (BHRG, §30.1), whereas the adverb “traditionally, [...] has been accorded a very broad definition. The concept has included adverbs, modal words, negatives, questions, discourse markers and predicators of existence—which all are dealt with as distinct categories in this grammar” (BHRG, §41.1).

After a close observation of the distribution of the particle, we realise that the interjections are spread across the entire passage. But the adjectives and the adverbs reflect a sequence or progression. The distributions of the words form clusters and are found in particular sections of the text. Thus, they are indications of different subjects or themes and shifts of the focus of the literary units. The particles also serve to cement the disparate units. With this discourse of repetitive textures, the research moves to the next feature of the *intratexture* of the narrative—progressive texture. The progressive texture organises the different scenes in the narrative in accordance with the repetitive features identified. It shows the golden thread that runs through the narrative, which may be termed the central message of the text.

### 3.4.2. *Progressive texture*

Progression in narrative deals with connection and continuity in a story. Often, progression follows a pattern and sometimes words, phrases, clauses, concepts or ideas are repeated. Robbins (1996:10) says “Indeed, repetition itself is one kind of progression, since movement

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<sup>146</sup> Particles represent a class of words with diverse features. Most *traditional grammars* distinguish the following particles: prepositions, conjunctions, adverbs and interjections. Since prepositions form a clearly determined class and are considered as a distinct word class, this grammar would rather refer to ‘other word classes’ than to particles. The *other word classes* include the following: prepositions, conjunctions, adverbs, predicators of existence (existential words), interrogatives, discourse markers, interjections (BHRG §38).

from the first occurrence of a word to another occurrence is a forward movement—a progression—in the discourse”. This section focuses on the sequence of the repetitive texture discussed above. It will identify phrases and clauses which will show patterns and may perhaps be considered as scenes in the narrative. The progressive texture uses the English translation but is guided by repetitive texture in the Hebrew text.<sup>147</sup>

### **3.4.2.1. Acts and scenes based on repetitive texture.**

The repetitions in tables can be used to set the entire narrative into smaller units based on the focus of each unit as identified by the dominance of either a main character or act or what may be considered the theme of the unit. Looking at the tables, it confirms the preliminary assertion of the demarcation of the unit. The narrative unit can also be divided into two, based on the dominance of the two main characters, Abraham, and Lot. Abraham is dominant in Genesis 18 while Lot dominates Genesis 19. On this basis, the research divides the narrative into two acts which are further divided into smaller units called scenes.

#### **A. Act One: A visit to Mamre, Genesis 18**

##### ***Scene 1: The arrival of the stranger, Genesis 18:1-2***

Observable features from the repetitions and the progression in the development of the narrative can be described as follows: vv. 1 and 2 show a pattern through the repetition of the verb ראה in the Hebrew Bible. The verb is rendered as ‘appeared’, ‘looked’, and ‘saw’ in the translation. It describes different actions performed by Yahweh and Abraham. Another repetition is the narrator’s use of pronouns for Abraham and the use of certain verbs which describe Abraham’s action when Yahweh appeared to him. Abraham was ‘sitting, and when he ‘looked’, he ‘saw’, and he ‘ran’. To complete the pattern of the movement, the writer introduces the three men that Abraham saw ‘standing’ before him. Thus, the Lord appeared to Abraham when he was ‘sitting’. When he looked and he ‘saw’ three men ‘standing’ before

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<sup>147</sup> Repetition and progression mainly identifies themes and focal points of the narrative. The interpretation or understanding the significance of most the actions in the stories cannot be dealt with here. Most of the actions are culturally based and can be understood mainly from the cultural context of the narratives. Therefore, the research under repetition and progression highlights topics and themes as is identified in the text. “Intertexture” and “Socio-cultural texture” as part of the texture of the text will provide the social and cultural significance of these actions found in the text.

him, then he ‘ran’ to meet them. The verses describe the sudden and the unexpected appearance of the three strangers and Abraham took notice. He recognises their presence and runs with the purpose to invite them. Thus, one can suggest the main idea of this scene is the appearance of Yahweh. This introduction which is directly connected to the next two scenes becomes the foundation upon which the whole narrative is built.

### ***Scene 2: Offer and acceptance of hospitality, Genesis 18:3-5***

The next scene of verses 3 to 5 continues from the scene above. It describes Abraham’s willingness to accommodate the three strangers. The pattern begins with what Abraham says, introduced by the verb of saying—אמר. It ends with the visitors’ acceptance of Abraham’s offer, introduced in the same way, using אמר. In the scene, the story progresses by the repetition of the interjection נא—a polite tone, followed by the request not to pass by, but to wait to be refreshed. Evidently, the concern of this scene is a welcome speech and acceptance. אמר introduces the welcome speech: i.e. the persuasion not to ‘pass by’ in polite tone, an offer of ‘a little water’ and ‘a piece of bread’—for the purpose that the strangers who would be guests, to ‘wash feet’, ‘rest under the tree’ and ‘refresh’ the heart. The scene ends with the strangers’ brief speech of acceptance, also introduced by אמר, to grant Abraham’s wish. However, an important clue to what we later argue as the purpose of the divine visitation is Abraham’s statement to motivate his guests. He says, ‘after which you may pass on... on this account, you have passed before your servant.’ This implies that Abraham understood that the strangers are passers-by, therefore he only intends to provide for them what they needed at that moment before they will continue their journey.

### ***Scene 3: Hospitality meal, Genesis 18:6-8***

Genesis 18:6-8, “hospitality meal”, focuses on the preparation of the meal and its presentation to the guest. The first significant point in this scene is the swiftness and haste with which Abraham swings to action. A progression is displayed from ‘hasten’ to ‘quickness’ and to ‘running’. The verbs לכה (to take), and נתן (to give) also form a sequence as they alternate in the description of Abraham’s action—preparing the meal. He took (לכה) and gave (נתן) it to be prepared. Then he also took (לכה) and set (נתן) it (the prepared meal) before the guest while he stood by them as they ate.

Another significant issue relates to the elements of the meal. From all indications, this is an elaborate meal. Going by what has been noted in the literary critical note above, three seahs of fine flour is enough to make bread for a hundred people—I am not sure what measure is used for the eating capacity. Regardless, 22 dry litres as the equivalent of three seahs is a large amount of flour. In addition, isn't a young bull quite a lot for three guests? Indeed, the ancient tradition of hospitality is hard for the modern readers to appreciate in its full weight and significance (Janzen, 1994:43). And perhaps there is more to it than just a hospitality meal.

#### ***Scene 4: Announcement of the birth of a son***

The fourth scene takes a different dimension. The focal point changes from the action of meal preparation and eating to a conversation. The narrative can be regarded as a reported speech narrative. The use of the verb אָמַר, occurring eight times in this block, suggests it is a speech narrative. It is a conversation started by one of the guests of Abraham who is identified in vs. 13 as Yahweh. The conversation focuses on Sarah. The repetition and progression show that Sarah is the dominant character. The use of the particle הִנֵּה (behold) in the scene points to the main idea of the scene. First, it points to the fact that the conversation is about Sarah and, second, it is also about the noteworthy news of a child that Sarah will have. The repetition and the progression continue with Sarah's laughter and the challenge of old age.<sup>148</sup>

#### ***Transition verse Genesis 18:16***

Verse 16 can neither be grouped with vv. 9 to 15 nor with vv. 17 to 21. It falls in between, giving background information and thus serving as a transition or connection between the two sections. Verse 16, therefore, concludes verses 9 to 15 and introduces verses 17 to 22a. When the men had finished eating וַיִּקְמוּ (they set out) מִשָּׁם (from there) וַיִּשְׁקֹפוּ (and they looked) towards Sodom. And Abraham הִלְךְ (was walking) with them לְשִׁלְחָם (to send them away).

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<sup>148</sup> We will later show in the narrational-argumentative texture that the focus of the narrative in this unit is not the noteworthy news of the birth of the child but on the laughter and the challenge of old age which the news was meant to challenge its impact on the life (faith) of the aged couple.

### ***Scene 5: Yahweh's soliloquy, Genesis 18:17-22a***

Genesis 18:17 to 22a can be described as Yahweh's soliloquy, contemplating the possibility of revealing the intended mission. At this point, there is a shift of topic, the writer resumes the theme of the entire journey. The progression shows how the story unfolds as it introduces Yahweh's inner conversation with himself, starting with the question whether to continue hiding (shall I keep hiding- *הֲמִכְסֶה אֲנִי*) His initial plan. The pattern progresses with the motif of knowing as is made explicit (*כִּי יִדְעֶתִיר*) in vs 19.<sup>149</sup> In this scene, Yahweh contemplates whether he should let Abraham 'to know' his plans. The motif 'knowing' relates to Yahweh's choice of Abraham. It is the moral justification not to continue hiding from Abraham his (Yahweh's) intended action. The actual soliloquy ends with vs. 19 when the narrator switches, using the verb of 'saying' which suggests that it is no longer a contemplation, but the actual revealing of Yahweh's intention to Abraham. Yahweh reveals to Abraham a problem—the great outcry and the heavy sin of Sodom have come to Yahweh's attention. The motif of 'knowing' continues and ends the scene as Yahweh reveals their actual mission: a fact-finding mission to 'go down', 'see' and 'know' the factuality of the grave sin of Sodom. Subsequently, the pattern changes from the motif of 'knowing' with a brief movement as a bridge to connect the scenes. The men turn their faces from there and they headed for Sodom.

### ***Scene 6: Dialogue between Yahweh and Abraham***

Scene six is the last scene of the first act. The scene is a dialogue between Yahweh and Abraham. The conversation begins after Yahweh had revealed his intentions about Sodom to Abraham. The scene is staged on the way when Abraham is walking with his guests to see them off and is about to return. Abraham enters a conversation with Yahweh, who was standing before him after the other two—identified as messengers—had left. The narrator says Abraham drew near and began with a question. The first question was not pleading for mercy as some might assume, but questioning Yahweh's sense of justice; should Yahweh destroy both the wicked and the righteous. A subsequent question turns to a plea for mercy for Yahweh to spare the city on account of the few righteous that may be found in it. Six circles of dialogue ensue,

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<sup>149</sup> Although, many scholars argue that *יָדַע* alternatively can be translated as 'to choose', it is argued here that its prototypical meaning 'to know' (BDB, 1906:393) should be maintained after all "[t]his is the only place in the Hebrew Bible that the context of the Hebrew equivalent of the verb "to know" has the connotation "to choose" (Van der Merwe, 2004). The ambiguity in the use of the term was probably intentional.

all of which, except the first query, are a repetition of a plea for mercy on certain terms set by Abraham.

The narrative of the visit to Mamre is now ended with Yahweh, the last guest, leaving. We are not told where he goes, but Abraham returns to his place. The reader is now left with the question about the fate of Sodom, especially knowing that Abraham's nephew Lot and his family reside there. The narrator then turns the focus of the narrative to the two messengers who have left Yahweh and Abraham behind and headed for Sodom. Another act is about to start, the visit of the two messengers to Sodom. What would Lot and the city do? The reader was informed earlier that the visit was a fact-finding mission, the question is now, what they will discover? The narrator had already alerted the reader in the direct reported speech in the conversation between Yahweh and Abraham that not even ten-righteous people were to be found in the city. From the conversation, I guess the question is not about the number of righteous people that deserve Yahweh's salvation. I would argue latter that the dialogue aims at showing the mercy and grace of Yahweh. For now let see how the story continues at Sodom.

### ***B. Act Two: A visit to Sodom, Genesis 19***

#### ***Scene 1: Arrival, invitation, and acceptance, Genesis 19:1-3.***

Scene one in the second act focuses on the arrival of the two messengers who had left Mamre. And like in the first verse of Genesis 18, where the narrator allows the reader to know who the visitors were, here also it is the reader's privilege to know that the two visitors are messengers (angels). They arrived in Sodom in the evening. Some contrasts can be identified between the parallel stories of hospitality. For instance, the time of the arrival. At Mamre, it was in the heat of the day while at Sodom it was in the evening. The time of the day of their arrival in Sodom necessitates the need for them to be lodged. Like Abraham, Lot was also sitting at the gate of the city. When he saw the visitors, he rose and bowed down before them and he entreats them to lodge in his house. Contrary to the visitors' response at Mamre, they were hesitant at first but upon Lot's persuasion, they consent. Why they hesitated we don't know yet, perhaps the cultural texture may shed some light on that. However, this creates some anxiety in the scene which is also contrary to the serene environment during the Mamre visit. Another point is the action of the meal preparation with regards to the substance and the quantity. The details

provided in Mamre are absent in Lot's case. The narrator summarises the actions of preparation and the eating of the meal. Perhaps the details are not that necessary in the case of Lot so that attention is directed to the real intention of the story in the context. This is probably done to stir the curiosity of the reader who have been informed earlier about the mission of the strangers and is aware of the dialogue between Yahweh and Abraham.

***Scene 2: The reactions of Sodom's town's men and its consequence, Genesis 19:4-11.***

Scene 2 begins with another movement in the narrative, the arrival of the men of the city. It starts with טָרַם which can be translated as 'not yet' or 'before'. The strangers have 'not yet' gone to sleep. Put in another way, before they enjoy the hospitality of the night shelter provided to them, וְאֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר אֲנָשֵׁי סְדֹם, (the men of the city, the men of Sodom surrounded the house). The men, both young and old came with hostility against the house of Lot וַיָּבֹאוּ עַל-הַבָּיִת מִצֶּעַר וְעֵד-גִּזְוֹן. The verb form וַיָּבֹאוּ, *nifal qatal 3mp* before the preposition עַל, indicates a surrounding the house with the intention to attack or to 'come against' it (HALOT, 1995:739). The demand of these men raises many questions in the reader's mind. The guests came to the city through the gate, they were not sneaked in by Lot. Lot was sitting at the gate when he saw the men and invited them to his house. It is ironic for the men of the city to come and demand that the men be brought out so that they may "know" them. What do they mean "to know them"? Why were they coming only now, when they were aware of the arrival of the men at the gate? Their action and demand can be interpreted as a compromise of the hospitality rule, thus evil. Knowing their intention, Lot tried to intervene to protect the visitors. He addressed them as אֶחָיִם (brothers) and adjures them to refrain from such an evil thing. Lot went to the extreme of sacrificing the virginity, right and freedom of his two daughters. The men of the city turned down the offer and threatened to harm Lot. While Lot addresses them as brothers, they never saw him as one of them. They reminded Lot that he is a גֵר (sojourner) and by implication, he has no legal right to property or to host the men. He has no legal right to participate in judicial matters and to judge them. This scene ends with the angels saving Lot from the brutality of the mob and causing the men of the city, both old and young, to become blind.

***Scene 3 -Announcement of the Angels’ mission and the command for Lot and his family to escape, Genesis 19:12-16.***

The third scene is introduced with the announcement of the mission of the two messengers. Now that they have confirmed the truth of the outcry, they are going to execute the punishment for such a “great outcry”. Although the scene does not begin with a movement, the main action is made up entirely by movements. After the announcement of the mission to destroy the place, the angels ask Lot to go into the city to bring out everyone that is related to him. Lot went into the city and spoke to his sons-in-law but they found what he said to them ridiculous. The angels hastened Lot, his wife and his two daughters by grabbing their hands and pulling them out lest they would be caught in the punishment of the city. In this movement—the evacuation of Lot, his daughters and his wife out of the city, —the narrator notes that it was not something that Lot merited. It was the mercy of Yahweh (Gen. 19:16). Later, in the summary of the whole episode in verse 29, the narrator connects this act of mercy of Yahweh to the memory of his covenant promise to Abraham. The scene ends with the angels bringing Lot and his family outside the city and leaving them there.

***Scene 4 - Lot pleads, Genesis 19:17-22.***

The fourth scene continues the previous scene which ended with the movement that left Lot and his family stranded outside the city. To answer the question of what Lot and his family would do, the narrator tells the reader about the angels’ instruction to Lot to flee to the mountains so that they would not be destroyed in the disaster. This instruction sets the context of the scene, a conversation between Lot and the angel of Yahweh. Lot says he cannot run to the mountains because the disaster will catch up with him before he arrives. Instead, he requested to be allowed to go to a nearby city. “Is it not a small place?” said Lot, “and my life will live”. The angels granted this favour and added that they would not do anything until Lot and his family have entered the small city. At this point, the narrator pauses to explain the origin of the name of the city that was derived from Lot’s argument about the size of the city, for ‘Zoar’ means insignificant.



**Scene 5: The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Genesis 19:23-29**

Lot and his family arrive in Zoar at dawn. Immediately after that, Yahweh rains brimstone and fire from the heavens overthrowing the cities of the plain and all the inhabitants and vegetation. Against the angels' warning, Lot's wife turned back towards the devastation and she turns into a pillar of salt. The narrator initially reports that Yahweh did not start raining fire and brimstone until Lot arrived in Zoar. I assumed that the statement that Lot entered Zoar at dawn means that they have arrived a place of safety. Now he is reporting that Lot's wife looked back and she became a pillar of salt. How come did Lot's wife turn into a pillar of salt because she looked back? Is it possible that she was behind Lot and the daughters? What is the significance this story? These questions might not be answered directly, but they are significant for the reading of the text. Immediately after the narrator reports the calamity that befell the wife of Lot, Abraham is brought back into the picture. He comes to the same place where he stood before Yahweh the previous day. He looks down and he sees the smoke as from a smelting furnace. The narrator turns to give background information about God's covenant promise. Thereby providing a link to the 'promise' theme that Yahweh had previously referred to in his soliloquy.

**Scene 6: Lot and his two daughters after destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Genesis 19:30-38**

The last scene in Act Two gives the account of what becomes of Lot and his daughters. It is set off as a new literary unit by *qal wayyiqtol 3ms*.<sup>150</sup> The scene tells us that Lot was perhaps afraid of being a stranger staying in Zoar. So, he goes up to the mountains after all and lives in a cave with his daughters. We are not yet sure about the connection of this scene with the rest of the preceding scenes in the two acts. But we see the impact of the calamity that befell Sodom. Lot's sons-in-law were caught up in it. Now 'there is no man in all the land to come into' Lot's daughters. Again, Lot isolated his daughters by departing from Zoar to live in the cave. Next, the scene reveals how Lot's daughters contrived a plan and had sexual intercourse with their father without his knowing. Their intention was to preserve their bloodline through their father which is possibly how the story links with the entire literary unit and the larger Abrahamic

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<sup>150</sup> *Wayyiqtol* in biblical Hebrew narrative introduces "a new narrative, it is usually accompanied by an introduction of the characters of the new story and a change of location. A change in time is hardly ever involved. Verbs of motion and communication occur regularly" (BHRG, §21.2).

narrative cycle, in which the promise of progeny is one of the key motifs. The scene, however, touches on one of the sensitive issues that determine kinship relationship (see Ch.5 and 6).

The above analysis of repetitive and progressive texture displays the beauty of the narrative structure. We have seen how the textures reveal the main characters and themes in the narrative. In the section below, we engage in a discourse on some of the characteristics of the inner textures of the literary unit. We shall discuss the narrational and argumentative texture of the text. This is an effort to look closely into the narrator's strategy and what he aims to communicate.

### **3.4.3. Narrational-argumentative texture and patterns**

Two textures of Robbins (1996:15, 21) inner textures are combined in this section. The reason is not that they are similar, but because the two can hardly be separated. In a narrative text, the narrator presents his argument through narration. Therefore, as we discuss the narrational texture of the story, the argument will be dealt with concurrently. But first, what is narrational texture and what is argumentative texture?

Robbins (1996: 15) says that “[n]arrational texture resides in voices (often not identified with a specific character) through which the words in the texts speak”. The narrator often introduces characters who act or speak. The narrational texture “often moves the discourse programmatically forward. Sometimes a pattern emerges when narration and attributed speech alternate with each other [...] Narrational patterns regularly give the interpreter a closer look at the units or scenes in the discourse” (Robbins, 1996:15). The narrational texture and pattern enable the reader to see the boundaries between the units as well as the narrative coherence across the units that have presumably been reworked into one. How these boundaries or divisions of the units are identified is through the shifts that occur in one or more of the primary constituents of the scenic unity. Boundary markers within a scene are often identified by the narrative voices (narrative discourse and narrative speech)—the voices of the narrator and the characters in the narrative respectively (*cf.* Walsh, 2001:119).

The argumentative texture, on the other hand, investigates multiple kinds of inner reasoning in a discourse. Argumentative devices are used to persuade the reader to think and act in one way

rather than another (Robbins, 1996:21). Two kinds of reasoning in argumentative texture are presented—logical and qualitative. (1) Logical reasoning deals with assertions in the discourse which are supported by arguments clarified through presenting opposites and contrary argument(s). (2) Qualitative reasoning deals with the quality of the images and descriptions which the reader perceives as true and real in the text (Robbins, 1996:21). Some major features of the argumentative textures that one finds in ancient texts are: “assertions, reasons, opposites, analogies, examples, and citations” (Robbins, 1996:21). These are developed under seven argumentative topics namely (1) thesis, (2) rationales, (3) contrary to rationale, (4) restatement of the thesis with rationale, (5) analogy, (6) example and testimony of antiquity, (7) and conclusion. The boundaries between these topics can be discerned through narrational textures, but the topics are not a rigid description of the structure of a narrative or story.

Genesis 18 and 19 combines in alternation, narrational discourse with attributed speech—either direct or indirect. The narrator starts in the traditional way that Hebrew narratives begins, with a *wayyiqtol* which in this case is introducing two characters in the narrative sequence.<sup>151</sup> The locations or the settings of the scene are also introduced—‘at the oaks of Mamre’, ‘entrance of a tent’, ‘in the heat of the day’ (vs 1). In the background, the narrator merely reports the actions of the two characters, Yahweh’s appearance to Abraham, and Abraham lifting his eyes and running and bowing down to extend his greetings. Continuing with the scene, the narrator switches to attributed speech for the characters using *אמר* which is usually followed by a speech in a direct or indirect discourse (see HALOT, 1994:65). In this skilful act of narrative, the narrator establishes the narrative ethics<sup>152</sup>. The pattern of the narrative in the selected text continues to alternate between narrative discourse and speeches as stated above: through it, the arguments are presented.

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<sup>151</sup> Narrative sequence is the grammatical way in which Biblical Hebrews indicates the main line of a narrative’s action. This is often marked by verb form and word order. The skeletal structure of the Biblical Hebrew narrative is the called the *wayyiqtol* (narrative past or the narrative tense), (Walsh, 2001:9, 156).

<sup>152</sup> By narrative ethics I mean the moral values of stories and the telling of the stories. Barton (1998:20ff) comments on Old Testament narrative ethics that “[a]bout half of the Old Testament [...] consist not of overt moral teachings but of narrative: histories, legends, stories, whatever we want to call it. And narrative is necessarily particular, concerned with connected chains of actions and events which always befall particular people. What is more, Old Testament narrative like Aesop’s fables; usually the stories it tells resist reduction to a simple moral or ‘point’. They are not the kind of stories which we can throw away once we have extracted the meaning. They invite reading and re-reading, pondering over and revisiting.”

### 3.4.3.1. *Narrative discourse, speeches and narrative argument in Genesis 18 & 19*

Narrative discourse is used ten times in alternation with the direct speeches in Genesis 18. They are contained in verses 1-2, 6a, 7a, 8, 10b-12a, 15a<sub>1</sub>, 16, 22-23a, 29a<sub>1</sub> and 33. Similarly, in Genesis 19 the discourse occurs ten times in verses 1, 3-5a<sub>1</sub>, 6, 9b<sub>2</sub>-11, 14a<sub>1</sub>, 14b<sub>2</sub>-15a, 16-17a<sub>1</sub>, 22b-30, 33, 35-38. The beginning of the narratives in both chapters presents the thesis of the narrative: they begin with the unannounced visit of men who, according to the narrator, are divine beings. In-between these narrations, the narrator inserts narrative speeches marked by a verb of saying (אמר). Noteworthy also is an important aspect of the narrative discourse, where the narrator seems to be addressing the reader or listeners. This usually goes out of the flow of the narrative. For example, in Genesis 19:22b, עַל־יָגוֹן קָרָא שְׁמֵהָעִיר צוֹעַר (Therefore, the name of the city was called Zoar). The narrator seems to be commenting on the narrative rather than reporting. עַל־יָגוֹן in biblical Hebrew introduces facts or a statement of grounds. In Genesis 19:22b, the narrator now seems to break the narrative frame to comment to his readers the grounds for the name Zoar. Genesis 19:29, 37b and 38b seem to be doing a similar thing, except that the conjunction is not used, but rather an independent personal pronoun. The narrator is commenting on the grounds of the origins of the Moabites and the Ammonites.

The crux of the story is essentially represented in the opening of the story in Genesis 18 where three strangers have appeared to Abraham.<sup>153</sup> The narrative discourse often provides the clue to understanding the argument of the narrative. Genesis 18:1-2 provide us with a clue to the basic argument of the unit. It is the voice of the narrator providing something like an introduction to the reader about what the reader will be encountering in the narrative. Genesis 19:1 is also a clue to what governs the story in the second half of the unit, namely the continued visit of the men who appeared to Abraham in 18:1-2. Looking at the two introductions one can see a parallel. Thus, this dissertation considers hospitality as the golden thread linking the units.

How does the narrator develop the story and the argument? We have seen after the introduction of the narrative in Genesis 18:1-2, that the narrator goes on to narrate in an elaborate manner

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<sup>153</sup> Although the writer has prepared the listener or reader beforehand that it was the Lord that appeared. From Abraham's point of view, it was three men. Notwithstanding, the listener or reader is left to ask the same question. What happened or how did Abraham respond to this appearance?

the story of the hospitable welcome of the three men. This takes centre stage in the first eight verses, thereby suggesting that the writer's goal was to argue for the value and importance of hospitality. The narrative speech that comes after the narrative discourse in 18:1-2, reports some details of the preparation. The voice of the narrator in vv. 6a and 7a do not change the topic or character, but introduces other characters—Sarah and the young lad—and describes the nature of Abraham's action. However, the narrative voice in 7b changes the topic, the focus shifts to the new character that the narrator introduces. The change of the topic is not entirely shifted from the scene created, but part of the scene. In vs. 7b the narrator says Abraham serves his guests with the meal and stands by them as they eat. The circumference of one of the narrative elements—the plot,<sup>154</sup> “is established in the exposition from which it develops a point of tension (‘the subject of the plot), the plot itself follows the line of tension to its resolution” (Letellier, 1995: 77). The argumentative texture of the narrative is built upon this plot's tension as it is missing in the first unit (18:1-8). While they are eating, the guests ask אֵיךָ שָׂרָה אִשְׁתְּךָ (where is Sarah your wife?) According to Letellier (1995: 78), “[t]his tension is sustained in the ensuing dialogue as Abraham replies and is immediately told that his wife will bear a son (18: 10a)”<sup>155</sup>.

Next, there is what seems to be a break in the frame of the narrative. The narrator provides background information for understanding the couple's response to the announcement of the future birth of a son. The narrative says “Now Abraham and Sarah were old and advancing in days. And it has ceased to be for Sarah according to the ways of women” (Gen. 18:11). The narrator then returns to the flow of the narrative in vs. 12 that Sarah laughed at the announcement. The narrative switches to the character's voice to provide the reason for the

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<sup>154</sup> Narrative elements consist of the plot, space, character and the time.

<sup>155</sup> One may question whether the information received from Yahweh is a reward of the hospitality or a gift. This research would hesitate to affirm this, rather, akin to the discourse on the ancient practices of hospitality, it may not be out of place to say that vv. 9-15 are part of the tradition of the practices of hospitality where the guest who “comes from another world and has a message from it” (Westermann, 1985:277), tells his/her story as the host provides the meal. Also, contrary to the opinion that the announcement of the birth of a child is the motif of the narrative, and base on the fact that the promise of a son is not developed further until later in Chapter 21, this research opines that the announcement of the birth of a child is not the motif of the units. It should be recalled that the announcement of the birth was issued earlier (15:1-7; repeated in 17:15-21, then 18:9-15). The text suggests that Hebron (Abraham's place, Oaks of Mamre) was not the initial destination of this strangers. They are “passing on/by” and Abraham's abode was but a transit camp which the narrator uses to teach the ethic of hospitality. What about the announcement; what was its role? The announcement of the birth of the child is not a new story to this old couple. Therefore, it can never be a reward or gift here, rather the narrator seems to employ it here as a way to “preserve the real experience that lies behind [... a typical] narrative in which an event is set in motion by one coming from a far” (Westermann: 1985: 277).

laughter in the mind of Sarah. Sarah said to herself: shall I have pleasure after I am worn-out and my husband is old (18:12)? This seems like a detour from the main argument but I presume that the narrator's quick shift to Sarah's laughter and reference to their old age is an indicator of the intent of the announcement of the birth. Maybe the old couple had given up on God's promise, and the strangers' hospitality speech serves to refresh their hope and faith in God's promise of a child.

There is a major shift in the next narrative discourse of vs. 16—the hospitality scene seems to come to an end as the men stand up to leave. The narrator deftly introduces the next topic of the story line: the men look toward Sodom and as part of what might be a tradition, Abraham goes with them to see them off. Following this, in what seems to be a 'prick of conscience', the narrator takes the reader or listener into the inner world of Yahweh. But from a hospitality perspective, not only do guests or strangers tell popular stories, they sometimes tell stories of the deep secret about their own world which was not known to the host. In this sense, it is the world of inner intent and the initial divine mission against the city of Sodom and its inhabitants. Because of the intimacy between Yahweh and Abraham, Yahweh reveals the mission of the journey—that the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave. Then the narrative moves on to the conversation between Yahweh and Abraham.

All these stories are directly linked to the hospitality story. The hospitality Abraham offered rendered him and his wife the opportunity to receive an assurance of the promised child. Abraham was accorded the privilege that God shared with him his inner council in which Abraham also participates through challenging God's sense of justice and intercession for the Sodomites.

Genesis 19:1-3 starts in the same way as Genesis 18:1-8. It tells the story of the arrival, welcome and preparation of a hospitality meal. Because of the time of the day that the guests arrived, Lot's hospitality includes providing a lodging for the guests. Unlike the Genesis 18:1-8 account, the story of the welcome and the preparation of the meal was brief. This does not in any way suggest that Lot's hospitality was less than that of Abraham. The noun used in the description of the meal prepared (מִשְׁתֶּה) suggests an elaborate feast. However, the brevity of the hospitality story can be attributed to a possible focus of the story. The narrative discourse in 19:4 gives the background information of what happened after the meal. The narrator says

before the guests could begin enjoying the lodging provided by Lot, the men of Sodom surrounded the house with evil intention (Gen. 19:4). The narrator then goes on to report in a direct speech the conversation between Lot and the men of the city. They request Lot to bring out the visitors that arrived at his house in the night. Lot pleads, and in his plea, he mentions that what they were about to do ‘was evil’ and they should not do it. In the quest to protect the visitors, he offers his two daughters as substitutes. Lot’s justifies the giving of his daughter as substitutes that, because the visitors were under the protection of his roof. The men of Sodom are bent on doing evil, they threaten to do more harm to Lot than they would to the guests. The guests intervenes to protect their host and of course, by implication, themselves too.

The inversion of this hospitality confirms the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah. The story serves as the counter-rationale of the ethos of hospitality that was presented as the thesis of the argument. The inversion of hospitality was not the sole reason for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, but it was enough confirmation of the evil of the cities. The lack of hospitality is enough of a yardstick to measure the moral and ethical standard of the whole community.

After the brief description of the welcome and hospitality meal (Gen, 19:1-3), the narrative voice quickly introduces the main argument of the unit. In argumentative texture parlance, it is the counter-rationale of the thesis. All that transpired in the unit was done in the context of the hospitality that Lot offered the two messengers. The narrator reports that before the strangers go to bed, the men of the city approach in hostility. Lot’s intercession is in vain, it only leads to the revoking of the citizenship he initially had (Gen. 19: 9). The narrative seems to end with the break out of the frame of the narrative flow in Genesis 19:29-30. But then Genesis 19:31-38 continues the story. The question is: does it fit the narrative frame? This dissertation understands Genesis 19:31-38 as the effects of the undignified treatment that Lot subjected his daughters at Sodom. At the onset, Lot seems to have been different from the men of the city when he offers hospitality. However, his attitude towards his daughters is contrary to what may be called hospitality. The narrator now counters that perception by reproducing the same act of unconsented sexual violation that Lot had earlier subjected his daughters to.

To conclude, I will like to give a summary of what may possibly be deduced as the basic argument of the narrative. From the narrational-argumentative texture, one may conjecture the thesis and the rationale and counter-rationale of the thesis as follows:

**Thesis:** hospitality is an ethical mandate which has a mutual benefit for both the host and the stranger or guest.

**Rationale:** Abraham welcomes the three strangers and provides an elaborate meal to refresh them. They, in turn, share their story, the story of Yahweh's covenant faithfulness as a way of encouraging the aged couple who seem to have given up the hope of childbearing. They also share the story of the mission of Yahweh against the city of Sodom and its people, giving Abraham the privilege to intercede on their behalf. Although Abraham's measure of justice fails to meet up Yahweh's standard, the dialogue provides him with the opportunity to understand God's mercy and grace through the soon to be born son, Isaac, and the salvation of his nephew Lot (Gen. 19: 29).

**Counter rationale:** The counter-rationale of the argument would be the resultant effect of hospitality inverted in Lot's story in Genesis 19. Lot was a resident alien, but he was the one giving hospitality instead of the citizens.<sup>156</sup> The men of the city question the right of Lot for giving hospitality to the strangers. The inversion of the hospitality was enough evidence for Yahweh to rest his case against Sodom. It confirms the fact of the 'outcry' of the city. Although it was not the only sin of Sodom, it serves as evidence of their grave sin.

#### 3.4.4. Opening-middle-closing

According to Robbin, (1996: 19), the "opening-middle-closing texture resides in the nature of the beginning, body and conclusion of a section of a discourse". From the foregone discourse, we have seen how repetition, progression and narrational-argumentative textures have set off sections or scenes in the text. The following section provides a brief discussion of the opening-middle-closing features in the text, using the above markers.

Previously, in the history of demarcation of the text, I have set up a preliminary beginning and conclusion of the selected passage of Genesis 18 and 19. Based on this preliminary

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<sup>156</sup> Lot's hospitality was as good as Abraham's except that his good intention of protecting his guests is dulled by the violation of the dignity of his daughters.



demarcation, and taking into consideration the above discourse on repetition, progression and narrational-argumentative textures, this section considers 18:1-2—the appearance of Yahweh to Abraham—as opening for the first section, as well as the whole narrative unit. Genesis 18:33—the departure of Yahweh from Abraham—closes chapter 18. Chapter 18:3-32 is now the middle of the first section. However, there are several openings, middles and closings within the narrative middle. One may question this choice of the opening in view of the hospitality motif of the larger unit which this research presupposes. It can be recalled that the appearance of Yahweh marks off the two divisions of the selected passage. This appearance sets the actions in the narrative in motion. The sudden appearance of Yahweh to Abraham while he was sitting at the door of his tent should be taken as the narrator’s effort to inform the reader, right from the onset, of Abraham’s real encounter. The narrator introduces certain details that serve as the props of the narrative, the details of the setting which commentators describe as an everyday nomad setting. When Abraham looked up and ‘behold, three men standing [...]’, attention shifts from Yahweh’s appearance to the newsworthy appearance of the three men: *וַהֲבִיחַ שְׁלֹשָׁה אָשִׁים נֹצְבִים עָלָיו וַיֵּרָא*. The shifting of the focus is also emphasised as the narrator reports Abraham’s rapid action when he saw the three men. Therefore, in terms of the opening-middle-closing of the narrative, I opine that the opening records the appearance of Yahweh as part of the group of three strangers, the middle expands and records the details of what Abraham did for the three men and the closing records the departure.

The middle (Gen 18:3-33) comprises a section which also has its own opening-middle-closing. The opening (18:3-8.) begins with a direct speech—introduced by *וַיֹּאמֶר*—which appears throughout the narrative and serves as the signpost for structuring the text linguistically. The opening is a welcome speech is delivered by Abraham and the invitation is accepted. Following this, is a detailed description of the meal preparation and concludes with the setting of the meal before the guests, while Abraham stands by and watches. A new beginning of another section of the middle is then opened by the introductory verb *וַיֹּאמְרוּ* (vs. 9), introducing a conversation—interspersed with background information—between the visitors, Abraham and Sarah. The background information provides explanations for Sarah’s inner laughter. The section is closed with the conclusion of the conversation and the men standing up to leave (vs.16). It then starts another session (vv.17-19) and then continues to vv. 20-22. Verses 17 through 19 deal with Yahweh’s inner contemplation whether to share his intentions with

Abraham, or keep it from him. He resolves to tell Abraham the details which the narrator reports in vv. 20-22.

The closing deals with a dialogue between Abraham and Yahweh (vv. 23-33). The opening starts with two of the visitors' departure into the direction of Sodom while Yahweh remains before Abraham. The middle narrates Abraham's drawing close to Yahweh and enters into a conversation; he questions Yahweh about his intention and then pleads for the city and people of Sodom. The closing records the end of the dialogue as Abraham stopped asking because there are no righteous people (at least enough) to warrant saving the city from Yahweh's punishment.

A new opening, chapter 19: 1, begins the second section. The two messengers that have left Abraham now appear at their destination. The story of what transpires during the visit continues. Unlike the previous section which spoke about the departure of the visitors as the closing of the section, this section closes with the aftermath of what takes place as the result of the arrival of the visitors. It ends with the story of the incest between Lot and his daughters. For the sake of space and to avoid repetition, I refer to the scene developed in the discussion of the progression.

### **3.4.5. Summary observation on intratexture of Genesis 18 & 19**

This section explored five features of intratexture: the repetitive, progressive, narrational, opening-middle-closing, and argumentative texture of Genesis 18 and 19. The texture examines the narrative which reveals that, although the configuration of the unit is complex, there are several concepts and ideas that form the nexus of various units of the text. A summary of the discussion follows:

***Repetitive texture:*** This texture reveals clusters of words in different portions of the narrative. This shows how these different portions focus on different themes. The repetitions show how certain words like the protagonists—major characteristic of narrative—and other word class like verbs—e.g. verb of saying אמר—run through the entire unit. Their frequency and appearance in the entire narrative unit are the main determinants of the nexus of the narrative.

***Progressive texture:*** Progression shows connection and continuity in the story. Building upon the repetitive texture, progression identifies phrases and clauses which show a pattern of development of the story as told by the narrator displaying the complexity of the story. Through progression the narrative is categorised into scenes, displaying the development of the story revealing where there are tensions and how these tensions are resolved.

***Narrational-argumentative texture:*** Narrational-argumentative texture closely examines the units or scenes in the discourse. It identified the voice of the narrator as a major connection to the different and distinct portions of the narrative. The texture studies how the narrator employs a narrative discourse and speech pattern to show the connection and development of the stories. This helps in the disclosure of the inner reasoning of the narrative discourse. Narrational-argumentative texture describes how the theme of hospitality became the golden thread that runs through the different story units.

***Opening-middle-closing:*** The opening-middle-closing texture identifies chapter 18 as a unit in the larger unit of the text. Although Genesis 18 and 19 are supposedly meant to be read together, yet there appears to be a demarcation in the unit. Genesis 18:1-2, supposedly introduces the entire passage. Nevertheless, there seems to be a conclusion to Chapter 18 at the departure of the guests who appeared in vv. 1 and 2. The middle, introduces Sodom, serving as the nexus to the next chapter. Chapter 19 also has the opening as 19:1-3, the middle from 19:4-22 and what appears to be a double closing in 19:23-29 and 19:30-38).

### **3.5. Conclusion**

This chapter analysed the intratextual texture of the selected text. It began with revisiting the current issues in the history of the studies of the Pentateuch where it outlined the challenges that resulted in a lack of consensus among scholars. The dissertation does not by any means propose to solve these problems, but it is contributing to the Pentateuch discourse from a multidimensional approach. The chapter provided a brief history of the demarcation of the text. A preliminary conclusion is drawn from this history of demarcation that the text stands as a unit which also fits in the broader unit of the Abrahamic narrative. The study of intratexture, through its various continuums—repetitive, progressive, national, argumentative and opening-

middle-closing has confirmed these preliminary demarcations because the two chapters form a narrative nexus through its various themes and characters.

Taking the hospitality theme, both chapters give an account of hospitality, a theme that this dissertation proposes as the controlling theme of the narrative unit. In the first account, an elaborate account of hospitality introduces the narrative. Other stories were included which, I assumed, draw from the culture and tradition of hospitality. Similarly, Genesis 19 starts with a hospitality account, albeit brief. Then it proceeds to what I call an inversion of this hospitality. The question in the first place is why is there a second account of story including the ambiguities there of? This question invites the reader, in the words of Sharp (2009: 9), to “overcome a naïvely realistic reading” of the plots, characters and rhetoric of the narrative. And as a text with theology is often considered against its background, one could suggest it has theological and ideological intents.

With these characteristics, it is obvious that the pericope does not exist in isolation; it probably draws heavily on other texts or traditions. Therefore, we need to understand the context from which those texts and traditions originate, to be able to make meaning out of the text at hand. We also need to know the historical period from which the text was completed to be able to understand the possible theological and ideological intent of the pericope. The next chapter studies the possible intertextual link between the text and other biblical texts and extra-biblical literature. It also studies socio-cultural and theological ideological texture to be able to understand the possible intention of the composer, editor or redactor of the text.

## *Chapter 4*

### *Intertextual Texture of Genesis 18 & 19*

#### **4.1. Introduction**

In the previous chapter, the *Intratexture* analysis has identified subunits within the pericope which, presumably, are discrete stories that initially existed on their own but were brought together by the composer of the text to support his goal at the time of the writing. A hospitality code was identified as the motif that provides the basic nexus of the narrative units in the pericope. According to Allen (2011:1), “Works of literature, after all, are built from systems, codes and traditions established by previous works of literature. The systems, codes and traditions of other art forms and of culture, in general, are also crucial to the meaning of a work of literature.” This necessitates the need for understanding the system, code and traditions which an existing literary work must have drawn from while being composed. In other words, the research poses the question: what are the possible texts, traditions—both social and cultural—and ideologies which the narrator must have evoked in this narrative? Further questions are: why would the writer invoke certain texts or traditions in the composition? To what extent should the reader activate the invoked text or tradition in interpreting or getting the meaning of the text at hand?

This chapter focuses on the study of textual links which exist within and outside the text. It studies the various phenomena in the pericope to identify the possible texts and traditions which the narrator must have evoked in the narrative of Genesis 18–19. This might help the reader to understand the narrator’s social and cultural world and the ideology which must have influenced the composition of the story. This proposed approach is supported by Allen (2011:1):

The act of reading, theorists claim, plunges us into a network of textual relations. To interpret a text, to discover its meaning, or meanings, is to trace those relations. Reading thus becomes a process of moving between texts. Meaning becomes something which exists between a text and all the other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the independent text into a network of textual relations. The text becomes the intertext.

It is a common phenomenon that the words which we use have been used before and no one has a monopoly of their contexts and connotation. Also, to achieve their goal of getting across a message to their readers, authors have often evoked, paraphrased and even employed the writing of predecessors or contemporaries, or a common tradition (Sommer, 1998:6; Hinds, 1998:xi). This creates a kind of textual relations and results in “[...] a text with a rich configuration of texts, cultures, and social and historical phenomena” (Robbins, 1996:40). This chapter investigates the interaction of texts within the selected passage and beyond, including ancient Near Eastern literature and traditions.

## 4.2. Understanding intertextuality<sup>157</sup>

This research employs the term ‘intertextuality’ to describe the study of the textual links. Cherney (2014:14) observes that the use of the term ‘intertextuality’ is “imprecise” and this is presumably due to the complex nature of the text’s relationship. According to Seri (2014:90), “[...] intertextuality as conceived by Kristeva<sup>158</sup> and by other scholars entails a much more complex and manifold understanding of literary practices” (*cf.* Sommer, 1998:8). Seri (2014:89) further remarks that since the first time Julia Kristeva coined and explained the concept, “intertextuality has experienced multiple redefinitions to the point of becoming an elusive category” (*cf.* Alfaro, 1996:268).<sup>159</sup> It has fluctuated between a general and relative understanding—as an interplay between texts—to a more restrictive view—as a relation of co-presence between texts (Seri, 2014:89).

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<sup>157</sup> The study uses two authors, Robbins and Sommer, on the question of textual links. The two authors seem to differ in their classification of the types of textual links. The research dialogues with the two to clarify and determine the extent to which biblical study employs and benefits from this literary theory.

<sup>158</sup> Julia Kristeva was the first to coin the term intertextuality in 1965 in her effort to interpret Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism where she saw it as quintessentially dynamic and revolutionary. In this concept of dialogism, a text is situated within history and society which the writer reads and inserts him/herself by rewriting the text. Building on Bakhtin’s dialogism, Kristeva introduces the concept known ‘translinguistics’ which deals with literary work on the formal and the social levels simultaneously. Kristeva transforms Bakhtin’s concepts as it was “read in conjunction with ideas about textuality that were emerging in France in the mid-sixties” (Alfaro, 1996:276f)

<sup>159</sup> Similarly, Allen (2011:2) says that “[i]ntertextuality is one of the most commonly used and misused terms in contemporary critical vocabulary... The term is defined so variously that it is, currently, akin to such terms as ‘the Imagination’, ‘history’, or ‘Postmodernism’: terms which are... underdetermined in meaning and overdetermined in figuration. Intertextuality, one of the central ideas in contemporary literary theory, is not a transparent term and so, despite its confident utilization by many theorists and critics, cannot be evoked in an uncomplicated manner.”

There are different dimensions of textual links. Sommer (1998:6) distinguishes two broad categories of approaches to the relationships among texts within the plethora of approaches that have developed in the past twenty-five years: “One approach is oriented towards ‘influence’ and ‘allusion’ the other toward ‘intertextuality’.”<sup>160</sup> Sommer (1998:207 note 7) remarks that there is a confusion regarding the distinction, but he thinks “it worthwhile to underscore the different aims, methods, and implications of the intertextual study, on the one hand, and the investigation of allusion and influence, on the other”. For Sommer (1998:8), “intertextuality is concerned with the reader or with the text or as a thing independent of its author while influence and allusion are concerned with the author as well as the text and the reader”. Intertextuality is said to be synchronic in its approach, meaning that attention is focused on the role of the reader in the approach to the text phenomenon, as well as the process of the text production rather than influence. Influence and allusion, on the other hand, are diachronic (Sommer, 1998:6f; Hinds, 1998:48).

This research applies ‘intertextuality’ as an umbrella term for the wide range of correspondence and complex interactions that exist between texts (*cf.* Robbins, 1996; Allen, 2011; and Seri, 2014). Robbins (1996) subsumes “influence and allusion” under intertextuality. Seri (2014:90f) agrees with Robbins and goes further, saying that “Intertextuality then includes not only allusions, parodies, or pastiches, but also forms of reminiscences and rewritings between the text and the language in which it is written.” He argues that the process of composing a new text involves redistribution, deconstruction and dissemination of the earlier text.

Robbins and other scholars that see intertextuality as an umbrella term are not completely neglecting the distinction between the two categorisations as given by Sommer. Rather, they seem to look beyond what literary theorists viewed as a limitation of intertextuality (i.e. reader and text oriented approach) and consider the possibility of admitting diachronic study. Therefore, intertextuality is not only a reader and text oriented approach; some authorial subjectivity can be admitted. In interpreting a narrative, the reader must construct its meaning by attempting to construct from the text and for the text an intention-bearing authorial voice.

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<sup>160</sup> Moyise. 2002:419 - 428 outlines five different dimensions of intertextuality. (1) Intertextual echo, (2) Narrative intertextuality, (3) Exegetical intertextuality, (4) Dialogical intertextuality, (5) Postmodern intertextuality.

This sounds like a perfect synthesis between synchronic and diachronic exercise (Hinds, 1998:49)<sup>161</sup>. Although intertextuality is complex, it is significant in literary study. Allen (2011:6) remarks: “However it is used, the term intertextuality promotes a new vision of meaning, and thus of authorship and reading: a vision resistant to ingrained notions of originality, uniqueness, singularity and autonomy.” But first, the question to address is, what is intertextuality?

The notion of intertextuality as envisaged by Kristeva emanates from the idea that a text “does not function as a closed system [...A text is] shaped by the repetition and transformation of other textual structures” (Alfaro, 1996:268). The assertion about multi-levelled layers of meanings fuelled the quest for the theory of intertextuality. Related to this is the idea of influence. This questions the idea of originality of authors on the premise that an author’s work always carries the marks of those that preceded it. It, therefore, implies that a search for the meaning of a text must begin from those that preceded it and must also consider how authors change the meaning or apply the work of their predecessors in a new context. What the theory of intertextuality seeks to undermine is the claim that a work can be viewed as a self-sufficient whole or a complete system based on a determined structure. Intertextuality views literary works as crowded with multiple layers of images, reflections and unexpected relationships (Alfaro, 1996:270f). It is an approach to reading a text that “expands criticism beyond the individual work in order to consider it in relation to the whole literary system as well as to culture, history and society[...]” (Alfaro, 1996:271).

According to Robbins’ (1996:40)

Intertextual texture is a text’s representation of, reference to, and use of phenomena in the world outside the text being interpreted. In other words, the intertexture of a text is the interaction of the language in the text with ‘outside’ material and physical ‘objects’, historical events, texts, customs, values, roles institutions, and systems.

Sommer (1998:7) concurs that intertextuality “encompasses manifold connections between a text being studied and another text, or between a text being studied and commonplace phrases

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<sup>161</sup> Hinds (1998:49) remarks that this kind of construction is generally hoped or believed (often partly misguided) to be a reconstruction. “[T]he author thus (re)constructed is one who writes towards and implied reader who will attempt such (re)construction.”



or figures from linguistic or cultural system in which the text exist.” The connection, Sommer (1998:7) continues, might not be an

Intentional and signaled use of an earlier text, such as citation... The connections may result from the way the expressions in the text reflect linguistic, aesthetic, cultural, or ideological contexts of the text at hand; other texts may share those contexts, and hence links among many texts may be noticed, whether the authors of the texts knew each other or not.

According to Robbins (1996:40), intertextuality aims “to ascertain the nature and result of process of configuration and reconfiguration of phenomena in the world outside the text”. Reading a text, therefore, requires the reader to identify ways—let us call them conversation markers—in which the text is linked to phenomena outside the world of the text. Through these conversation markers, one can identify the multiple layers of meaning which authors evoke in their compositions. According to Robbins (1996), ways to identify these conversation markers include ‘oral-scribal intertexture’, ‘cultural intertexture’, ‘social intertexture’, and ‘historical intertexture’. Robbins (1996:3) notes that cultural intertexture and social intertexture are closely connected to the third texture of his ‘five textures of text’—the ‘Social and Cultural Texture’. He warns that they should not be confused with each other. However, because of the similarities and complex nature of some of the intertextual studies, I have decided to restructure Robbins’ outline and will not discuss intertextuality under the topics as given by Robbins. Cultural and social topics will be discussed in the next chapter. Meanwhile, two continuums of Robbins’ intertexture, namely the oral-scribal and historical, are explained below in conversation with Sommer to provide a useful model for the study of the text’s links that are configured and reconfigured in Genesis 18–19.

### **4.3. Towards an understanding of a useful model of intertextuality for the study of Genesis 18 & 19**

The goal is to provide a useful model for the selected passage. The section begins with the question what is oral-scribal intertexture and how useful is this element of intertexture to the study of Genesis 18 and 19?

### 4.3.1. What is oral-scribal intertexture?

Oral-scribal intertexture is the way in which a text uses other texts outside itself. Texts are often organised using language that is similar to other texts by means of recitation, recontextualization, reconfiguration, a narrative amplification or thematic elaboration (Robbins, 1996:40f). The nature of texts' relationships in oral-scribal intertexture is synchronic. It focuses on the text as the reader finds it. According to Sommer (1998:7), it "relies heavily on structural linguistics and its postmodern heirs in seeing all signs, including those in a literary text, as meaningful only insofar as they stand in relation and opposition to other signs" (Sommer, 1998:7). The following is a brief explanation of the elements of oral-scribal intertexture as given by Robbins (1996:40f):

- a) **Recitation** involves the transmission of either the written or oral text in the exact or different words in which they were given.<sup>162</sup>
- b) **Recontextualization** is the presentation of words from the biblical text without an explicit statement or implication that the words stand written elsewhere. Recontextualization can happen in attributed speech or in narration.
- c) **Reconfiguration** is the recounting of a situation in a manner that makes the later event 'new' in relation to the previous event. Because the new event replaces or outshines the previous event, making the previous event a 'foreshadowing' of the more recent one.
- d) **Narrative amplification** is a composition which contains all the above elements of *oral-scribal* intertexture.
- e) **Thematic Elaboration** is an alternative to narrative amplification. In elaboration, "a theme or issue emerges in the form of a thesis or chreia near the beginning of a unit, and meanings and meaning-effects of this theme or issue unfold through argumentation as the unit progresses" (Robbins, 1996:52).

Elements of oral-scribal intertexture in Genesis 18–19 can only be assumed rather than stated. This, as Sommer (1998:8) observes, is because the text itself is ancient and only few works of

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<sup>162</sup> This includes: (i) Replication of exact words of another written text, (ii) Replication of exact words with one or more differences, (iii) Omission of words in such a manner that the word-string has the force of a proverb, maxim or authoritative judgment, (iv) Recitation of a saying using words different from the authoritative source, (v) Recitation that uses some of the narrative words in the biblical text plus a saying from the text, (vi) Recitation of narrative in substantially one's own words, (vii) Recitation that summarises a span of text that include various episodes

literature of the ancient Israelites exist to help in such an exercise. In this regard also, using only the model of oral-scribal intertexture, as described by Robbins, to locate intertextual links, will probably pose more difficulty than understanding (Sommer, 1998:8). It seems obvious that the best route to go is to identify the commonplace relationship between texts, specifically due to the difficulty of identifying explicit markers in the text. But with the realisation of the existence of parallels<sup>163</sup> more issues tend to pop up. For example, questions of the dating of the text are necessitated. Arguments for dating are revisited, although it is speculative, a justifiable result may be possible (Sommer, 1998:10).

The study approaches intertextuality in Genesis 18 & 19 using the rubric of ‘allusion’, ‘reference’, ‘echo’, and ‘influence’. We shall, therefore, delineate Genesis 18–19 under these rubrics while noting the elements of the oral and scribal patterns in it. We shall also study how the text links to concepts, patterns and configurations, values, scripts, codes, systems and myths within the Hebrew Bible and other ancient literature. We shall concurrently take into consideration visible behaviour and material objects common to people in that context. These include ‘social role’, ‘social institution’, ‘social code’, and ‘social relationship’.<sup>164</sup> The approach to this exercise will be an inductive one. We will begin with the passage itself, being an amalgamation of several discrete traditions, to investigate whether and how the narrator uses the two hospitality stories intertextually. And like a ripple effect, the hospitality stories in the selected text are considered within the scope of the entire book of Genesis, the Pentateuch, Deuteronomistic history, Wisdom and Poetic books and then Prophetic books. However, before we proceed, there is a need to explain ‘allusion’, ‘reference’, ‘echo’, and ‘influence’.

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<sup>163</sup> The dissertation will like to give credit to Wenham for the identification of text’s relationships through parallels and palistrophic means.

<sup>164</sup> According to Robbins (1996:62) Social roles relate to the duties of a person or group of persons (slave, head of family, wife, and priest). Social identity could relate to one’s sense of belonging like nationality (which may include tribe or clan) and or even status as in class. Social institution deals with structures of society like kingdom, priesthood, and household/family. Social code relates to societal values like respect, honour, shame, and hospitality. And Social relationship deals with spheres of interaction like a stranger, friend, enemy, kin.

### 4.3.2. Allusion, reference, echo, and influence as rubrics of intertextuality

#### A. Allusion

Sommer (1998:208 footnote 16) describes allusion as a “[...] deliberate incorporation of identifiable elements from other sources preceding or contemporaneous, textual or extratextual”.<sup>165</sup> Sometimes certain aspects of allusion overlap with those of reference and citation, especially when sources are explicitly mentioned in allusion (Sommer, 1998:208 footnote 16). In his doctoral research, Cherney (2014) studied allusion as a translation problem. In his study, he proffered a working definition which seems to place the emphasis on the impact of allusion, rather than its meaning. Cherney (2014:37) defines allusion as the use of language similar to the language found in a prior text. Allusion impacts the meaning of the new text when the new reader or listener recalls the prior text and tries to imagine or construct the authors’ context and intentions. The following are steps for the analysis of the act of interpreting allusion: (1) identification of the marker, (2) identification of the evoked text, (3) the modification of the interpretation of the signs in the alluding text, (4) the reader activates the evoked text as a whole to form connections between it and the alluding text which are not based on the markers and the marked items (Sommer, 1998:11).<sup>166</sup>

#### A. Reference

“A reference is a word or phrase that points to a personage or tradition known to people on the basis of tradition” (Robbins, 1996:58). Reference, in many cases, are implicit (*cf.* Sommer, 1998:21). According to Robbins (1996:58), reference is closely connected to allusion. Both reference and allusion do not recite. The difference is that references simply point to a personage or concept while allusions interact with them.

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<sup>165</sup> Robbins (1996:59) explains that allusion is common in a rhetorical culture where oral speech and written texts continually exist. The selected passage emanates from that kind of culture. Thus, the preference to deal with allusion, reference, echo and influence rather than oral-scribal intertext.

<sup>166</sup> Sommer adopted these steps from Ben-Porats’ (1976) “The Poetic of Literary Allusion” *PTL: A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature*. 1(1). Pp. 105-128. The latter article was not available to this researcher.

## A. *Echo*

According to Robbins (1996:60), “An echo is a word or phrase that evokes, or potentially evokes, a concept from cultural tradition. In other words, echo does not contain either a word or phrase that is indisputably from only one cultural tradition.” Echoes often alter nothing in the interpretation. While both reference and allusion interact with texts’ phrases, concepts, and traditions as ‘cultural’ possessions that anyone who knows a particular culture may use, echo is subtle and indirect (Robbins, 1996:60).

One person may hear it while another does not, and the speaker may or may not have directly intended the echo to be there. The result is that interpreters regularly will debate the presence or absence of a particular echo in the text under consideration” (Robbins 1996:60 *cf.* Sommer, 1998:16).

The presence of a familiar phrase does not alter meaning as in allusion, it only makes the text more interesting.<sup>167</sup> Notwithstanding, there is only a thin line between echo and allusion. “[B]oth borrow vocabulary, images or other elements from older texts, and many of the purposes or reasons for allusion apply equally to echo [... However, t]he non interpretive borrowing of older vocabulary remains significant” (Sommer, 1998:31) to the exercise of interpretation.

## B. *Influence*

Influence is not among the elements mentioned by Robbins’s intertexture. But Sommer categorises it as a close ally of allusion. Sommer (1998:14) describes influence as “the practice of tracing a text’s generic and thematic lineage [...]”. The study of influence is concerned with how a text under investigation comprises a revision or updating of their text’s antecedent. Writers usually adopt themes, topics or styles from their predecessors and these often show the relationship of the texts with others. The difference between influence and allusion is that while allusion focuses on the relations between two specific texts, influence is concerned with the relations between authors’ whole work or even traditions associated with it. “Elements which

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<sup>167</sup>In a text characterised by multiple compositional layers and of a unifying framework, often both characteristics are important but structural unity of the final literary form has conceptual priority. In an echo, the interpretation of the sign is not important but it contributes in the relative synchronisation of synchronic and diachronic approaches to a text.

fall under the rubric ‘influence’ need not confine themselves to particular words or even images or tropes” (Sommers, 1998:14).<sup>168</sup>

#### **4.4. Intertextuality in Genesis 18 & 19**

Genesis 18 and 19, as already noted, are an amalgamation of several discrete stories. Therefore, it is possible that the text contains several elements or markers of its links with other texts. This section discusses intertextuality of Genesis 18 and 19 in an inductive manner. It begins with an analysis of the textual design of the passage.

##### **4.4.1. The textual design of Genesis 18 & 19**

The selected text and of course the whole Pentateuch, has been characterised as a composite text which means, there are multiple layers in the text. These layers are cemented by a certain framework of echoes, allusions, and references from prior smaller units. This section, in conversation with Chapter 3 and commentaries of Westermann (1985), Wenham (1994) and Arnold (2009), studies the layout of the two chapters to investigate how the smaller units of the multiple layers are related.

Genesis 18 and 19 are unified through their structure and by certain identifiable themes, characters and places. Wenham (1994:40) believes the two chapters have been skilfully organised concentrically with the destruction of Sodom in the centre. He notes that the storyline of Genesis 19:1–29 is closely parallel to that of Genesis 18:1–30. The parallel relationship observed by Wenham (1994) is taken as a point of departure.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> This research presumes that the dimension of influence is relevant for the study of the selected pericope because it is dealing with a tradition that might have been common in other non-biblical peoples. Thus, the analysis of the text is not so much on the relation of the texts only but also on traditions and ideologies of other non-biblical worlds (*cf.* Sommer, 1998:15).

<sup>169</sup> However, space could not allow us to duplicate Wenham’s table of parallels (*cf.* Wenham 1994:43f).

## 4.4.2. Intertextuality of Genesis 18 & 19 within Genesis

### 4.4.2.1. Understanding the relationship between Genesis 18 & 19

Using the parallel relationship between the two passages as a point of departure, I would like to begin by identifying the nature of the relationship whether allusion, echo, or reference. Most, if not all, of the parallels can be described as echoes. The narrative presents two strands of hospitality stories in Genesis 18:1–8 and 19:1–3 (*cf.* Westermann, 1985:299; Wenham, 1994:44), but there is no clear evidence that the second story in Genesis 19 is reciting or alluding to Genesis 18. Nevertheless, other forms of intertextual relationships exist.

When examining Genesis 19 against Genesis 18, we notice that Genesis 19:1 begins with a reference to 18:16, 22. Genesis 19:1 links the identity of the messengers that arrived in Sodom to those that departed from Abraham at Mamre.<sup>170</sup> There is also a reference to the status and spheres of influence of Abraham in the parallel story. (*cf.* von Rad, 1972:217; & Westermann, 1985:300f, Wenham, 1994:54). This intertextual link is probably based on the common tradition, but as employed here there is the probability of reference to the status quo of the first character.

Genesis 19:4, 7, 13 allude to the outcry and grave sin of Sodom mentioned in 18:22–33. The writer reports in 19:4 that “Before they lie down to sleep, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded against the house, from young to the old. *All the people to the last.*” In Genesis 19:7, Lot says to the people “do not, please my brothers, do evil”. And in Genesis 19:13 it says, “For we are destroying this place, because their outcry has become great before the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it”. But one may perhaps ask why are there similarities, parallels, echoes, reference and allusions in the two chapters? Beginning with the double strands of hospitality stories in the same narrative unit, I would like to point out that the double strand could serve as a rhetorical strategy and redactional synthesis of the final form of the text. The doublets imply complex levels of meaning or hidden intentions. This informs the dissertation’s engendered ironic reading of the text. The rest of the thesis will elaborate on this, but let us continue the discourse on intertextuality below.

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<sup>170</sup> The question of distance between Mamre and Sodom precludes the presupposition that the men walked to Sodom after the leisurely lunch with Abraham (Wenham 1994:54).

#### **4.4.2.2. Genesis 18 & 19 within Abraham–Lot narrative nexus (Genesis 12–25)**

This section discusses the relationship of the selected passage within the broader context of the book of Genesis. It starts by investigating the intertextual relationship of the passage within Abrahamic narrative, followed by the entire book. In the previous chapter, it was highlighted that there are certain themes within the story which serve as connecting ligaments and that those themes or motifs can be traced to the larger unit of the Abraham-Lot narrative. The Abraham-Lot narrative is described by Westermann (1985:123) as “a chain of stories about Abraham and Lot”. Westermann continues with the argument that Genesis 12:1-8; 13; 18:1–16; 19:1–28; and 19:3-38 belong together. “The proof that they belong together is that 12:1–8 requires a continuation in Ch. 13, and Ch. 13 its continuation in Ch. 19; Genesis 18:1–16a and Ch. 19 take up the thread left hanging in Ch.13” (Westermann, 1985:123). These units were initially assumed to be independent and to form a single chain. Other stories were added later and some aspects were also elaborated. This assertion provides clues to the textual link within previously discrete traditions in the narrative unit. Therefore, we shall explore how “[...] The Sodom-Lot story has been inserted into the Abraham-Lot story”. I shall explore these links to enrich our understanding of the meaning of the text.

##### **4.4.2.2.1. Reference to promise motif**

Genesis 18:1–16a, contains references and allusions to one of the main themes of the Abrahamic story. The motif of promise and covenant are the basic elements of the patriarchal stories. The promise of posterity in Genesis 12:1–6 is alluded to in the announcement of the birth of a child in Genesis 18:10a, repeated in vv. 13–14. Many scholars (*cf.* Coats 1983:137; Westermann, 1985:274; Wenham 1994:40) contend that the announcement of the birth of a child is the main purpose of the story of Genesis 18:1–16a. On the one hand, if we take the broad theme of the Abrahamic narrative (which is covenant and promise) as the overarching theme, this assertion is right. However, a close reading of the Abrahamic narrative, specifically taking cognisance of the form thereof,<sup>171</sup> will show that the announcement of the birth of Isaac

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<sup>171</sup> Westermann (1985:125) affirms this approach when he proposes that “[t]he point of departure must be the text as a whole as it has been handed down to us. Behind it is the plan of a redactor who constructed the final synthesis. It presupposes the literary works (J and P in any case, perhaps also E), but is something of its own over against them. It presupposes beyond these the independent Abraham traditions out of which the literary works were



is not necessarily the goal of the section. It is a major motif of the larger narrative, but it is used in this particular unit as a connector to the Abrahamic narrative, fitting well within the recurrence of covenant and annunciation themes of the preceding Chapters, 15, 16 and 17.<sup>172</sup>

Westermann (1985:125) rightly links the whole Abraham-Lot narrative to a statement found in one of the genealogies in the primeval history. Genesis 11:30 remarks that “But Sarah was barren; she had no children”. This statement provides the background for the promise motif. Following the final arrangement of the narrative, the redactor immediately—after two verses—introduces the promise motif in Genesis 12:1–3, “where it has a deliberately programmatic character”. In this programmatic text, the whole history of Israel is hinted at. Genesis 18:9–15 alludes to this text, beginning from the statement in the genealogy which mentioned Sarah’s barrenness (Gen. 11:30). When the visitors ask for Sarah (Gen. 18:9), it is evident that the redactor is interacting with Genesis 11:30 because this question was immediately followed by the announcement of the birth of a son. As a result, the reader connects this announcement with the programmatic introduction which contains the promise of land and posterity. But the question is, should the reader invoke the whole meaning of the alluded text? Again, looking at the structure of the Abraham-Lot narrative, one will be hesitant because the redactor inserted several other texts in between.

The first instance of the allusion to the land and posterity motif is in Genesis 15 (following a complaint of Abraham about being childless), in a covenant context where Yahweh has promised to Abraham progeny and land (Gen. 15:1–21). The second instance of the posterity motif is in Genesis 16, where the redactor alluded to Sarah’s barrenness (Gen. 16:1) and the possibility of a progeny through a maid, Hagar. Through this alternative Yahweh confirmed his promise of posterity to Abraham through his son by the maid (16:10). The third occurrence or reference to the posterity motive is in the narrative of Genesis 17. Genesis 18:1 echoes the beginning of Genesis 17. Genesis 18:1 starts in the exact way that Genesis 17 begins. Here the concern is the allusion to the progeny motif. Genesis 17 is explicit about the purpose of the narrative. The writer is narrating the account of the covenant renewal or confirmation of the

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composed. The compositional plan of the redactor is clearly aimed at forming a self-contained Abraham story which is independent of the continuation in Chs. 25–50.”

<sup>172</sup> Taking the text as point of departure, the announcement of the birth of a child cannot be the central message of the two chapters. The birth announcement serves another purpose in the final form of the text.

covenant (17:1–2). Abraham is given the condition to walk before the Lord and be blameless, and Yahweh will fulfil all that he has promised. After giving the sign of the covenant through circumcision, Yahweh promises a child through Sarah (Gen. 17:15–17). The announcement of the birth of a child in Genesis 18:10, 13–14, is a direct reference to this promise. What is the intention of the redactor? The promise was made clear in Genesis 17, why is it repeated here?

As pointed out earlier, the reference to the covenant promise of Genesis 17 serves as a rhetorical function and redactional synthesis of the entire Abraham-Lot narrative. Secondly, I am of the opinion that the announcement of the birth of the child is not the main purpose of the selected text. However, within the framework of the section (i.e. Genesis 12–25), which is concerned with the ‘continuation of the generations’, the lifestyle of Abraham is a critical constituent to the realisation of the promise and covenant of Yahweh. One may contend that this assertion, by implication, makes the announcement of the child contingent to Abraham’s lifestyle. This is not necessarily so. Genesis 18:18 gives the reason of Yahweh confiding to Abraham his intent of going to Sodom: **וְעַצֹּם וְנִבְרָכָה הָיָה יְהוָה לְגוֹי גָדוֹל וְאַבְרָהָם** translated by the NIV as: “And *Abraham* shall surely be a *great* and mighty nation, and *all the nations of the earth shall be blessed through him*.” This verse is a direct reference to or even a recitation of Genesis 12:1–3.<sup>173</sup> The revelation here was not due to Abraham’s hospitality. God’s covenant was the basis that God is revealing his plan to Abraham. This is made clear in Yahweh’s contemplation in Genesis 18:19, also a reference to the condition of the covenant in Genesis 17:1–2.

In the two verses, the marker and the marked texts are: ‘*keep the way of Yahweh by doing righteousness and justice*’ (18:19), a direct reference to ‘*walk before me and be blameless*’ (17:1). To ‘walk before the Lord’ is an idiom which has a great variety of applications either literally or figuratively. Here it should be understood figuratively as a reference to a manner of life, ‘to behave self’ by following a pattern approved by Yahweh (‘keep the way of Yahweh’ = ‘walk before me’). And ‘so that Yahweh may bring to Abraham that which he promised him’

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<sup>173</sup> The words in italics are lifted from Genesis 12:1–3. Except that **וְעַצֹּם וְנִבְרָכָה** are not the Hebrew words used in verse three. The Hebrew words used in Genesis 12:3 that are translated “nations of the earth” are **מִשְׁפָּחַת** and **הָאֲדָמָה** are used synonymously in the Hebrew Bible. The word **מִשְׁפָּחַת** primarily means “a *family*, that is, circle of relatives; figuratively a *class* (of persons), a *species* (of animals) or *sort* (of things); by extension a *tribe* or *people*: —family, kind” or nation. While **הָאֲדָמָה** literally means *soil* (from its general *redness*): —country, earth, ground, husband [-man] (-ry), land”.

(18:19) is a reference to the promise: ‘I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers’ (17:2). This relationship, in my opinion, states the purpose of the redactor. It confirms the presupposition that hospitality (18:1–8), which introduces the entire section and is repeated in 19:1–3, is the central theme. Viewed in relation to Yahweh’s covenant promise and obligation, it demonstrates Abraham’s ‘walk in the way of Yahweh’. The story of the announcement of the birth of a child is used as a point of departure for a different tales of hospitality (*cf.* van Seters, 1992:258).

#### 4.4.2.2. Reference to time of birth

Within the Abraham-Lot narrative unit there is another reference which raises a critical question of the time interval between the events in Chapter 17 and Chapter 18. There is a reference to a time in Genesis 18:10 which corresponds to a time mentioned in Genesis 17:21.

In Genesis 17:2b<sub>2</sub>, לְמוֹעֵד הַזֶּה בְּשָׁנָה הָאַחֶרֶת (at this appointed time next year) announces the time that Genesis 18:10 referred to. In the invoked text (Gen. 17:21), the redactor mentions the time of the birth of the promised son Isaac in a general sense. However, in invoking the text, the writer was specific, בְּעֵת הַיָּרֵךְ (in the spring). By analogy, when the two verses are compared, they seem to be referring to the same period. The word הַזֶּה introduces the time. It is a demonstrative pronoun, showing the special relationship between the speaker and the noun לְמוֹעֵד (at the appointed time). בְּשָׁנָה הָאַחֶרֶת: הַזֶּה (at this appointed time next year) should be understood as the “the spring” in 18:10, because the ‘this’ in 17:21 shows the time of the speaker. Consequently, one could be right to say that the time interval between the visit in Genesis 17 and expected date of delivery of the son is one year (Westermann, 1985:270). Now the critical question is whether the story of the visit in Genesis 18 is one and same story of the visit in Genesis 17 (*cf.* Alter, 1986:30f).<sup>174</sup> One can only infer (*cf.* Alter, 1986:31). Westermann

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<sup>174</sup> Alter (1986:31 *cf.* Carr, 2011:257 note 11) presents a similar opinion but added a different line of argument which this research intentionally avoids for the obvious reason that it is not the focus of the dissertation. He observes that “Documentary critics have been quick to identify these two sequenced stories as a duplication from two different sources, P and then J. Whether in fact scholarly analysis has succeeded in ‘unscrambling the omelette’ here, to borrow a telling phrase from Sir Edmund Leach, is something I shall not presume to judge. More essential to our purpose is that the writer wants a double version of the promise of progeny, partly for the sheer effect of grand emphasis, but also because he needs first a patriarchal version and then a matriarchal one.” Specifically, the last reason for the doubling that the writer needs “a patriarchal version and then a matriarchal one” is problematic. One is not sure if equal representation of patriarchy and matriarchy should be viewed here. It can only be argued from silence. However, looking at the text itself, there are good reasons to support the

(1985: 280) offers a convincing suggestion about the detail of the time of the birth. His suggestion demands that we explore similar mentions of time elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible and this is the subject of the next section. Notwithstanding, I would time in the two texts affect the interpretation of the text? For the fact that the time suggests nearness—if not same event—in the two texts, invites us to avoid a naïve reading of the narrative.

#### 4.4.2.2.3. *Allusion to laughter*

Another instance of relationship within Abraham-Lot narrative unit is that of the allusion to the laughter in Genesis 17:17. The narrator had recorded in Genesis 17:17 that Abraham fell face down and laughed in his heart when God announced the promise of a child by Sarah. Similarly, Genesis 18:12 narrates another instance of laughter on a similar incident: when Yahweh announces the birth of a child to Abraham and Sarah. In this instance, it was Sarah who is said to have laughed. In both instances, the laughter seems to be an idiomatic expression for doubt. The alluding text states that וַתִּצְחַק עָרָה בְּקִרְבָּהּ (and Sarah *laughed in her mind*), while the alluded text states: וַיִּפֹּל אַבְרָהָם עַל-פָּנָיו וַיִּצְחַק (and Abraham fell face down and *laughed*, saying *in his heart* [...]). In this instance, the narrator seems to be inviting the reader to invoke the meaning and the context of the alluded text. In all instances, the reasons for the laughter are same: doubt of the possibility of the fulfilment of the promise due to old age and its accompanying effects on the couple (*cf.* Westermann, 1985:280f).

#### 4.4.2.2.4. *Allusion to the Oaks of Mamre*

The localisation of the narrative (Westermann, 1985:277) is another marker in the text. בְּאֵלֶּיךָ מִמְּרֵא (by the oaks of Mamre) is where the first incident of the hospitality story took place. Why was the writer so interested in the place that he specifically mentioned it here (Gen. 18:1, the “tree” repeated in verse 4)? Could this be a conscious effort by the narrator to connect this narrative to other instances where that place is mentioned? If so, could it be a matter of just reference, or are there interactions with the context’s topic and ideas? Further details might surface if invoking those contexts can help in unravelling the redactor’s intentions.

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argument that the two versions of the story are employed by the writer for his ironic intent of presenting the contrast between righteousness and evil.

The first instance of the mention of the place *בְּאֵלֵי מַמְרֵי* is in Genesis 13:18. I suggest that ‘the Oaks of Mamre’ should be considered an allusion to Genesis 13. There the “Oaks of Mamre” are mentioned in the context of the quarrel and separation between Abraham and Lot.<sup>175</sup> The narrative in Genesis 13 starts by introducing Abraham’s movement from Egypt, and that he went as far as Bethel, where he had earlier pitched his tent (Gen. 12:8). What catches the attention of the reader in connection to the textual link that we are looking for, is the reference to the altar which Abraham had built there (Gen. 13:3–4). Does the altar have any significance so that it had to be mentioned in a detailed description of where Abraham went? Supposing the writer stops at verse 4? Will the description still be adequate? The answer will probably be in the affirmative. What this implies is that there could be an agenda that will be accomplished by adding the reference to the altar.

The supposed allusion can be traced through the way the narrator punctuated the story by the remark that it happened before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and stated that the men of Sodom were extremely wicked (Gen. 13:10; 13). Secondly, immediately after Abraham and Lot parted ways, the narrator concluded the section by returning to the subject of the ‘altar’ by connecting it to the new destination of the patriarch. Abraham is said to have ‘pitched his tent and he went and lived by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to Yahweh’.<sup>176</sup> In Chapter 18, there is no mention of this altar. However, the vivid description of the hospitality meal in Genesis 18:6–8 seems like a foreshadow of what is later to be found in Levitical sacrifices. Other mentions of Mamre are found in Genesis 14:13; and 35:27.<sup>177</sup>

Further relationships within the Abraham-Lot narrative seem to go beyond the themes found in the unit. For example, the appearance of Yahweh in Genesis 18:1 seems to find immediate context in Genesis 17:1. This is said to be a characteristic of theophany and according to Letellier (1995:80), this topic covers a wide area of the Hebrew Bible. Again, Sodom, which is a primary nexus within the Abraham-Lot narrative unit, is considered by Alter (1986:31) as

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<sup>175</sup> Further topics alluded to in this text will be discussed below. Here, the focus is on the place, Oaks of Mamre.

<sup>176</sup> The description of the place of Abraham’s abode and its association with altar and worship can be contrasted with Lot’s setting. In Lot’s case, we are informed that he was at the city of Sodom. Nevertheless, we will return to this contrast later in Chapter 6 to see significance in terms of the rhetoric implied by the redactor.

<sup>177</sup> In Gen 14:13, Mamre is connected to the incident of rescuing of Lot. In 35:27 Jacob returns to the place where his grandfather (Abraham) and father (Isaac) lived. Thus, one can suggest that the localisation of the narrative serves as one of the narrative nexus of Abraham-Lot narrative.

one of the “larger thematic design of Genesis and subsequent books” in the Hebrew Bible. In this respect, the discourse of intertextuality in the next section will focus on the intertextuality in the book of Genesis.

#### **4.4.2.3. Genesis 18 & 19 within the narrative nexus of Genesis**

##### **4.4.2.3.1. Reference to theophany**

Genesis 18:1-2 focuses on the arrival of the strangers. The scene is initiated using the verb ראה. Letellier (1995:80) observes that the “usage of the verb [ראה] in the Hexateuch is overwhelmingly associated with the theophany”. Genesis 18:1, ‘Now Yahweh appeared to him’ opens the narrative. This resulted in the theologizing of the expression in many interpretations (*cf.* Westermann, 1985:277; Letellier, 1995:88–93; Gunkel 1997; Von Rad, 1972).

With the help of Logos software, a search for exact clause וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה (the Lord appeared to him), with and without the same object –אָלָיו, in the entire *Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. The clause appears in the following texts: Genesis 12:7; 17:1; 18:1; 26:2, 24; Deuteronomy 31:15; 1 Sam 3:21. Other occurrences of Yahweh’s appearances include Genesis 15:1ff; 35:9; 48:3; Exodus 3:2; Judges 13:3; and 2 Chronicles 1:7. Considering these other appearances it is obvious that theologizing Genesis 18:1 would be considered appropriate. Despite this, a careful look at the examples of Yahweh’s appearances shows that Genesis 18:1 is different because the appearance is not immediately followed by Yahweh’s statement or description of the character or purpose; rather, there is a “surprising switch to what actually Abraham sees” (Arnold, 2009:179). Letellier’s (1995:88–93) discussion on theophany sheds light on the elements of theophany in the text, yet as he rightly says, there are limitations on the element and features that point to the extraordinary nature of the occasion. To this, the research holds that the switch from focusing on the identity or mission of the visitors is a strong pointer to the writer’s purpose of the compilation of the stories. Thus, וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה (and Yahweh appeared), though a fixed narrative form and presumably a formula for a theophany, is not a recitation and the usage in these chapters does not show that the writer employs it for that reason.

וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה at the beginning of the narrative is an example of dramatic irony because only the narrator and the reader know that one is dealing with a theophany here. But considered from

the perspective of the main character Abraham, he only realised that he was dealing with divine at a later stage when the visitors made some declaration of promise and mission. “Recognition of the visitors, like the identity YHWH shares with his *mal’ākîm*, is full of nuance and implication and never definitely or definitively acknowledge” (Letellier, 1995:93). Thus, the hospitality of Abraham, rather than theophany, takes the centre of the narrative.

#### **4.4.2.3.2. Allusions to crime and punishment, destruction and rescue.**

We have earlier noted Wenham’s (1994:40f) observation that the writer of the stories we are studying intends to compare the narrative with the account of the flood narrative. There are quite a few verbal and thematic echoes and similarities. Space will not allow us to analyse the individual verbal echoes; therefore, a selection will be made and be compared to some of the thematic parallels of crime and punishment, destruction and rescue to study how they contribute to the interpretation of the text.

##### **A. Allusion to ‘finding favour in the eyes Yahweh’**

A comparison of the story of the destruction of Sodom and the great deluge reveals several similarities. Wenham (1994:43) remarks that

By themselves, some of the resemblance between the two stories might be coincidental, but their number suggest that the parallels between the flood and the [two chapters ...] are being deliberately exploited by the author of Genesis. And this observation must inform both the interpretation of the narrative and discussion of its unity.

This research selects from these parallels elements that suggests a deeper interaction between the marker and the marked texts. We will begin this with the idiom of ‘finding favour in the eyes’ (Gen. 18:3; 19:19; 6: 8). This idiom first occurs in the alluding text at the time that Abraham lifts his eyes and sees the three men standing before him. He runs to them, bows down and invited them. Abraham uses the expression: אָמַרְתִּי כִּי אֶמְצָא חַן בְּעֵינֶיךָ (now if I find favour in your eyes). This expression echoes the basis of Noah’s salvation from the great deluge וַיִּצְאָה נֹחַ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר בַּתְּיָבָה וְכָל הַחַיָּוִּי אֲשֶׁר בָּרֵאשִׁית יְהוָה (Gen. 6:8). In the previous chapter, we have observed that the expression is often idiomatic. It deals with a situation whereby a thing or a person is made or

appears worthy of regard.<sup>178</sup> The expression in the alluded text (Gen. 6:8) is the first occurrence in the Hebrew Bible. The idea of finding favour in the eyes of Yahweh in this first occurrence relates to a positive relationship of openness and receptivity of Noah by Yahweh and is closely related to Yahweh's רַחֵם (loving kindness) in Genesis 39:21 and Exodus 33:12-13.

The expression is also found in the parallel story of hospitality in the selected text, Genesis 19:19. Its usage also relates to Yahweh's רַחֵם. In Genesis 19:19, the expression provides the topic for Yahweh's act of saving Lot. Because of his inability to escape to the mountains as the messengers instructed, Lot pleads with them to allow him to go to an insignificant city. He says 'Behold now your servant has found favour in your eyes and you have made great your loving kindness which you have shown to me in saving my life[...].' Lot's salvation from Sodom just like that of Noah from the universal deluge, is because of Yahweh's רַחֵם.

The attitudes of the sons-in-law of Lot and the men of Sodom inverts or ridicules the concept of 'favour in the eyes of the Lord', making them unworthy of the salvation of Yahweh. Firstly, when Lot speaks to his sons-in-law, about the pending disaster on the city, they do not believe him. וַיִּהְיֶה כְּמִצְחָק בְּעֵינֵי הַתְּנָיִם "it was like jest in the eyes of the sons-in-law". The use of the expression בְּעֵינֵי "in the eyes" should be seen as a deliberate attempt by the narrator to present how the offer of "favour in the eyes of Yahweh" is ridiculed— כְּמִצְחָק בְּעֵינֵי הַתְּנָיִם "like jest in the eyes of the sons-in-laws". Secondly, this same expression 'in the eyes' is used in 19:8 to invert Yahweh's granting of Abraham's and Lot's wish. While the desire of Abraham and Lot is to do good by hosting strangers which seems right in the eyes of Yahweh, inversely, wickedness (Gen. 19:7) is what seems right 'in the eyes' of the men of Sodom. It is also possible that juxtaposition of Lot and Abraham, is ironically intended, especially when we consider the ambiguous characterization of Lot. Abraham will teach his sons 'the way of Yahweh' while

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<sup>178</sup> Letellier (1995:84) is of the opinion that הָאֵל in Genesis 18:3 "is an indicator of divine power at work...This impression of unconscious intimation of something extraordinary affecting everyday life is reinforced by the clause 'do not pass by your servant'. The verb 'br 'to pass by' is frequently used in connection with the appearance of YHWH and a special manifestation of grace..." Letellier's opinion is probably influenced by the introductory statement "And Yahweh appeared to him". Contrary to Letellier, הָאֵל in Genesis 18:3 is not used in the context of Yahweh's revelation of his glory and the bestowal of divine qualities of goodness and mercy. This is based on the fact that at the time that Abraham pleaded for the favour of hosting the strangers, there was no evidence that he was aware of their identity. Hence, "[i]n the passage the expression aims at giving the one invited the ground for accepting the invitation..." (Westermann, 1985:278). Acceptance of the hospitality being offered is termed by Abraham as bestowal of favour. The usage of the expression הָאֵל in description of human-human relationship finds support in the following texts (Gen 32:6; 33:8, 10; 39:4; 47:25, 29; 50:4; Ex. 3:21).



Lot subjects his daughters to what seems ‘right in the eyes of men of the city’, and this challenges or critiques the kinship roles and values.

### **B. Allusion to the great deluge**

Allusion to the narrative of the universal destruction by a flood appears to be central in revealing the central theological message of the redactor. This assumption is supported by the fact that about 75% of the content of the two chapters deal with the story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. A stronger argument for this assertion is based on the message of one of the central theological passages in Genesis 18:19.<sup>179</sup> In this verse the narrator reveals Yahweh’s reason to announce to Abraham his divine plan. The reason is that God intends to tell Abraham whom he has chosen <sup>180</sup>וְיִצְחָק, ‘in order that he will command his children and his household after him to keep the way of Yahweh by doing *righteousness* and *justice*, so that Yahweh may bring to Abraham that which he promised him’. According to von Rad (1972:210), this verse presupposes that “the event at Sodom will contain a special admonitory significance” and it is the responsibility of Abraham to do that. In the same context, the event of Sodom is to be used as contrast to the way of Yahweh which Abraham is to teach. The creation of a just society<sup>181</sup> in the literary context becomes the point of departure to the annunciation of the destruction of Sodom (*cf.* Alter, 1986:32) and consequently the lack of it becomes the main thesis of the story of the destruction in Genesis 19. Perhaps one may ask how and why was the destruction of Sodom paralleled to the flood? I shall endeavour to answer this question by discussing two themes—righteousness and evil—that are parallel to the narratives.

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<sup>179</sup> *Cf.* von Rad (1972:209). The theological passage we are talking about falls between sections of the major traditions of the “Abraham-Mamre and the Lot-Sodom sagas”. Von Rad (1972:209) comments that it is in these sections that “we find our narrator’s thoughts much more explicitly than in the large narratives where he was bound more or less to the wording of the tradition”.

<sup>180</sup> Or rather whom I have entered into a special covenantal relationship with (see text critical note on 18:19, Ch. 3).

<sup>181</sup> Alter (1986:32) explains how the idea of righteousness and justice runs through the passage. He says Abraham, aghast at the possibility that the righteous might be wiped out with the wicked, tosses back the very phrase God has just used about human ethical obligations: “Will the judge of all the earth not do justice?” (18:25). The echo of *shofet*, judge, and *mishpat*, justice, will then sound loudly in a jibe about Lot made by the citizens of Sodom, whom he has implored to desist from their violent intentions: “This fellow came to sojourn, and now he presumes to judge, yes, to judge” (19:9). The verb *shofet* also means “to rule,” which may be its primary sense here, but the play with “doing justice” of the previous chapter is quite pointed: Sodom is a society without judge or justice, and a latecomer resident alien will hardly be allowed to act as *shofet* in any sense of the word.”

In the announcement, וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה וַעֲקַת סֹדֹם וְעִמֹרָה כִּי־רַבָּה וַחֲטָאתָם כִּי כָבְדָה מְאֹד (Gen. 18:20), we notice the ‘outcry’ of Sodom and Gomorrah and her ‘grave sin’ are the reason for the mission of the deity. The descriptions of the condition of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 13:13 compare to 19:4, 13; Jeremiah 23:14 and Ezekiel 16:46 which confirm this ‘outcry’ (Westermann, 1985:290). The description of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah literarily and thematically alludes to the condition of the earth before the great flood. First, the outcry of Sodom corresponds to the outcry of the blood of Abel in Genesis 4:10. Second, the wickedness (Gen. 13:13; 19:7) and grave sin of Sodom (Gen. 18:20-21) correspond to Genesis 6:5 which says וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה כִּי רַבָּה רָעַת הָאָדָם בְּאָרֶץ וְכָל־יִצְרָר מִחֲשֹׁבֶת לִבּוֹ רָע כָּל־הַיּוֹם (And Yahweh saw that the wickedness of humankind was great, and every inclination of the thought of his heart are only evil all the times). The common theme that links the two narratives Sodom and pre-flood period is the depravity of humanity (see Wenham, 1994:40).

The nature of this human depravity has been a bone of contention in the history of interpretation of these passages. From the perspective of intertextuality, Genesis 6:1–4 describes sexual sin.<sup>182</sup> This problem of sexual sin is alluded to in the text, although it is debatable. It all depends on the translation of the ambiguous Hebrew word יָדַע (to know). This ambiguity is probably intentional with the purpose that different meanings could be attributed to it. Having suggested that the text invites the reader to avoid a naïve reading of the story, the research assumes that the ambiguity has an ironic intention. In search of this ironic intention, we will ask the question: what does the writer intend to achieve with this ambiguity especially in the larger context of the Abraham-Lot narrative? In the context of the Abraham-Lot narrative, where covenant promise motifs are central, is there any clue related to sexuality? We have noted before that at the background of the promise of the progeny is the unique reference to Sarah’s barrenness within the genealogy section. Considering the writer’s structuring of the narrative, Alter (1986:31) argues and this research concurs that “[...] it is [Sarah’s] biology-the twice stated fact of her post-menopausal condition-that is at issue. [...] for in what follows [the birth

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<sup>182</sup> Wenham (1994:65) comments, “In the ancient world, stories were often told of sexual intercourse between the gods and human beings; and the semi-divine offspring of such unions were held to have abnormal energy and other powers. In Mesopotamia and Canaan, divine-human marriage was celebrated in the sacred marriage rites that took place in the temples. These rites were supposed to ensure the fertility of the soil and ordinary marriages. They involved fathers dedicating their unmarried daughters for service in the temple. In practice, these girls served as sacred prostitutes giving pleasure to priests and wealthy worshippers.”

announcement], women and sexuality, women and propagation, will be central.” In this case, it will not be out of context to deduct that the allusion to sexual sin in this context probably has something to do with critique of sexuality and propagation.<sup>183</sup> The diversion from hospitality to the birth announcement as well as the appended story of incest at the end of the Sodom narrative, all point toward the question of sexuality and the propagation motif especially in the context where family posterity is paramount. The implication of this assertion on the interpretation of the text is that the ‘heavy or grave sin’, the ‘evil or wickedness’ include but are not limited to the inhospitality and violent rape. Anything that stands in the way of family posterity is equally sinful.

The nature of punishment in both instances of the alluding and the alluded texts are similar. We identify the similarities as verbal echoes. In the selected text, there are five different verbs that are used to describe the actions of the destruction. Three of these verbs were used in flood narrative as shown in the table below:

verb	Genesis 18 & 19	Parallel Pairs of passages in Genesis 6-9
ספה	18:23, 24; 19:15, 17	
מות	18:25; 19:19	Gen. 7:22; 9:29
שחת	18:28, 31, 32; 19:13, 14, 29	6:11, 12, 13, 17; 9:11, 15
מטר	19:24	7:4
הפך	19:21, 25, 29	

The allusion to the world before the flood and the punishment of total destruction invites the reader to invoke the whole context of the world before the flood in understanding the graveness of the sin of Sodom who experience same fate as the generation that experience the flood. In the flood narrative, Yahweh was grieved that he has made humankind because he ‘saw that their wickedness was great and every inclination of the thoughts of [the human] hearts are only evil all the times’. In describing the sin of Sodom as ‘heavy’ it suggests a situation which

<sup>183</sup> Although it is too early to make a conclusion to this, Alter’s (1986:33) statement agrees with such a proposal: “The narrator offers no comment on the homosexuality aspect of the threatened act of violence, though it is safe to assume he expects us to consider that too abhorrent, but in regard to this episode’s place in the larger story of progeny for Abraham, it is surely important that homosexuality is a necessarily sterile form of sexual intercourse, as though the proclivities of the Sodomites answered biologically to their utter indifference to the moral prerequisites for survival.”

grieved the heart of Yahweh just like at the time of Noah. Perhaps one could say that Sodom has reached a point of no return. One can equally borrow words the narrator used in describing Noah's generation for Sodom, that 'every inclination of the thought of [their] hearts are only evil all the times' (Gen 6:5).

We have observed in the first paragraph of this section that the creation of a just society is at the background of Yahweh's contemplation to share with Abraham his divine intention. Clearly, in Yahweh's contemplation and conversation with Abraham (Gen. 18:17–33), the question of righteousness and evil are two basic themes of the divine self-reflection and the conversation. However, like the pre-flood condition of the earth, none was righteous (Gen 18:23-32 *cf.* 6:5). But just like Noah also, Lot receive favour in the eyes of the Lord, him and his family were save from catasclismic destruction (Gen 19:18-19 *cf.* 6:8). In the aftermath of destruction, the narrator also alluded to flood narrative when he says, 'and God remembered Abraham' (Gen 19:29). 'Remembered Abraham alludes to the aftermath of the flood where the narrator say 'God remember Noah' (Gen 8:1).

Having looked at the textual link within the broader unit of the Abraham-Lot narrative, and the book of Genesis as a whole, we will now proceed to see the relationship of the text to the entire Old Testament.

#### **4.4.3. Genesis 18 & 19 within the Old Testament**

##### ***4.4.3.1. Parallels within Pentateuch***

This research believes that understanding intertextuality within the Pentateuch can be best carried out through the study of the social dynamics within the text, because the stories we are dealing with focuses on patterns of social life. We will use the lenses of 'social intertexture' to study the textual link within the Pentateuch. According to Robbins (1996:62) 'social intertexture' deals with common social knowledge held by all persons irrespective of their part cultural location. According to Robbins (1996:62) "[...] social knowledge is readily accessible to all people through general interaction". It is obtained through observation of the behaviour and public material objects produced by other people. The following are social theories that may reveal the dynamics of social life, namely: 'social role', 'social institution', 'social code', and 'social relationship'. Understanding these dimensions in the text might help us to locate

text's relationship with and context in the *Torah*. It might reveal to us how the ethos of hospitality was intended to be applied as instruction, direction or law for living within the Israelite community.

Although some of these social theories emerged out of a specific context, their value in the study of literary material cannot be overemphasised.<sup>184</sup> In this section, I shall use these theories to investigate how Genesis 18 and 19 is linked to the broader literary context of the *torah*. In other words how does the narrative function as a *torah*.

**Social roles:** - According to Robbins (1996:62), social roles relate to the duties of a person or group of persons (slave, head of family, wife, priest). Dulin (2007:104) asserts that “it is a theory that focuses on interactions between and among individuals, groups, societies, and economic systems as developed by social systems in which people live.” Although social role theory developed as a gender related theory (Dulin, 2007:104), its application and relevance is not limited to that theory. Closely connected to the theory of ‘social role’ is **Social Relationship**. Social relationship deals with spheres of interaction with a stranger, friend, enemy, kin (Robbins, 1996:62). While social roles deal with duties of a person, social relationship is the sphere through which the duties are carried out.

**Social Institution:-** Social institution deals with structures of society like kingdom, priesthood, and household/family.

**Social Code:-** Social code relates to societal values like respect, honour, shame, and hospitality.

Looking at our text on the thematic level, the narrative of Genesis 18–19 is formulated with the overall theme of the *Torah*. *Torah* means instruction, direction and law (HALOT, 1999:1710; cf. Clines, 1997:108). *Torah* primarily concerns Yahweh's divine ways. Thus, “the way of Yahweh” which Abraham is to teach his children and the generations after him, should be seen by the hearers as theological-ethical obligation to God and humanity and not God's demand. In other words, “the way of Yahweh” is the embodiment of the social dynamics which every Israelite is to keep as an accepted social relationship. The term ‘the way of Yahweh’ or its equivalent, ‘walk in the way of Yahweh’ summarises the human responsibility in maintaining

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<sup>184</sup> See Gottwald (1992b:79–89) for the role or impact of social science theories and insights on scholarly understanding of historical phenomena.

the covenant relationship—which is one of the central themes of the Pentateuch (*cf.* Clines, 1997:29f, 38).

Going back to the programmatic introduction of the patriarchal narrative in Genesis 12:1–3, we have seen three dimensions of the promise in the form of land, posterity and covenant relationship (Clines, 1997:30; Wenham, 2000:37).<sup>185</sup> The patriarchal narrative, Genesis 12–50 deals mostly with the posterity element while the rest of the Pentateuch focuses on the divine-human relationship—in Exodus to Leviticus, and land—in Numbers to Deuteronomy (Clines, 1997:30). However, one cannot say that the promises are fulfilled in the Pentateuch (*cf.* Wenham, 2000:22). The Pentateuch ends with the anticipation of the fulfilment of the promises of land, and the aspect of divine-human relationship. Being a blessing in the programmatic introduction of Israel’s history is alluded to in Genesis 18:19. The program of righteousness and justice becomes a means of blessing to other nations. It is this marker that connects the text to the entire Pentateuch (*cf.* Wenham, 2000:23). We shall survey the Pentateuch through verbal echoes to see how this theme reference to the concept is sustained. Thereafter, we will consider other features of the story, specifically how they bear explicit or implicit similarity to certain parts of the Pentateuch. Injunctions in the *Torah* to the Hebrew people to love and protect the stranger (Lev 19:33-34; Deut. 10:18-19) will also be mentioned.

#### **4.4.3.1.1. Some echoes to the ‘the way of Yahweh’ (Gen. 18:19) in the Pentateuch**

The way of Yahweh and its equivalent ‘to walk before the Lord’ is a metaphor for the course of conduct, meaning to live or act in specific manner, custom or behaviour and to behave in accordance with what is required by the standard of Yahweh (BDB 1906:202, 229; HALOT, 1994:232). Abraham was chosen to be a blessing to other nations and his vocation was that he would teach his children and the descendants after him *לְעֵשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט* (the way of Yahweh by doing righteousness and justice). Israel was to adhere to what was required according to standard, to engage in actions that embodied adherence to ethical principles and

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<sup>185</sup> Wenham went further and added that being a source of blessing is an important aspect to the programmatic introduction. And rightly so because being a source of “blessing to other nations” is a dimension of the covenant obligation that Yahweh requires because of Gen 18:19 which talks about “keep the way of Yahweh” as motivation for the statement in Gen 18:18, that Abraham will become a great nation and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him.

the will of Yahweh. They were to be involved in the determination of rights e.g. to be free from favouritism, self-interest, bias or deception, especially conforming to established standards or rules. Based on this understanding, there are several parallel passages in the Pentateuch that echo this requirement:

1. Genesis 6:12; 24:48; 30:33.
2. Exodus 16:4; 18:20; 23:6; 32:8; 33:13.
3. Leviticus 18:3–5; 19:16; 20:23; 26:3, 21, 23–24, 27–28, 40–41; 26:42.
4. Numbers 22: 32.
5. Deuteronomy 4:3; 5:33; 6:14, 25; 8:6; 9:12, 16; 10:12, 18; 11:22, 28; 13:2, 4, 6; 16:19; 17:3; 19:9, 19; 24:13, 17; 26:17; 27:19; 28:9, 14; 29:18-19, 26; 30:16; 31:29; 32:4.

These passages express the following:

1. Desires: Moses prayed ‘Let me know *thy ways*’ (Exodus 33:13)
2. Summary of what God requires of humanity: “And now, Israel, what *is* Yahweh your God requiring from you, except to revere Yahweh your God, *walk in all his ways* and to love him and to serve Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deuteronomy 10:12),
3. Humanity’s ways in contrast to Yahweh’s: “And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had *corrupted its way upon the earth*” (Gen. 6:12), “And the angel of the LORD said to him, “Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to oppose you because *your way is perverse before me*” (Num. 22:32).
4. Injunctions to walk in accordance with the way of Yahweh which are resonating with Yahweh’s qualities of justice and faithfulness: “The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are just; he is a faithful God, and without injustice; righteous and upright is he” (Deut. 32:4 cf. Gen. 24:48). Correspondingly, some of the injunctions concerning behaviour in accordance with Yahweh’s quality or standard, are on hospitality to the stranger (Ex. 23:9; Lev. 19:33–34; Deut. 10:19; 24:17ff). Those who care for strangers and the poor will be blessed. Lack of care for the alien is termed injustice (Deut. 27:19) and it invites curse.

These passages are clear evidence of how the story of hospitality fits into the overall composition of the Pentateuch. The frequency of the occurrence of the metaphor is indicative of the research’s presupposition of the central theological message of the story—the creation of a just and righteous society. With this we can say that one of the main reasons of the literary

tradition of the Pentateuch is concerned with how Israel will bless other nations by doing righteousness and justice. This can be taken as a partial fulfilment of the covenant promise in Genesis 12:1–3 which is alluded to in Genesis 18:19. The covenant relationship leads us to another aspect of the textual link between the pericope and the entire Pentateuch. This focuses on the divine-human relationship and we are placing emphasis on the elements of the hospitality meal and its parallel in the priestly sacrificial elements.

#### **4.4.3.1.2. Echoes of the priestly sacrificial elements**

There is something unique about the substance and quantity of the elaborate meal that Abraham provides for his three visitors. A close reading in the previous chapter reveals that the quantity of the meal is not related to the number of the guests. Twenty-two (22) dry litres of flour and a young bull for three visitors is beyond a normal elaborate meal for three people.<sup>186</sup> What we find in this meal, the flour used in the making of the bread itself, the bread, and the bull prepared for meat are similar to what we later find as sacrificial elements.

**The flour** (הַלֶּחֶם הַרֵגֵל): the two words translated as fine flour are two distinct words that are translated flour in the Hebrew Bible. הַרֵגֵל is wheat or barley flour, material for unleavened cakes (BDB, 1906:887; HALOT, 1996:1108). הַלֶּחֶם is finely milled flour used in a king's household. It is a luxurious food used for honoured guests, (BDB, 1906: 701; HALOT, 1995:785; NET Bible, 2006). הַרֵגֵל appears fourteen times in fourteen verses of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>187</sup> Two passages out of these eleven use הַרֵגֵל in the context of worship sacrifice (Num. 5:15; 1 Sam. 1:24).<sup>188</sup> הַלֶּחֶם on the other hand occurs about fifty-three times in fifty-two verses of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>189</sup> The greatest number of frequency of the occurrence of הַלֶּחֶם is in the Pentateuch. More specifically, the highest concentration is in Leviticus and Numbers. Thus

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<sup>186</sup> Just imagining the effort needed for one person to knead this much flour to bake bread. Taking into consideration the age of Sarah, how much energy has Sarah to knead this much flour, in the given time? Also, a young bull to be prepared by a young man for an immediate meal? All these point to the previous assertion that the narrative invites us to avoid a naïve reading of the narrative.

<sup>187</sup> Gen 18:6; Num. 5:15; Judg. 6:19; 1 Sam. 1:24; 28:24; 2 Sam. 17:28; 1 Kgs. 5:2; 17:12, 14, 16; 2 Kgs. 4:41; Isa. 47:2; Hos. 8:7; 1 Chron. 12:41.

<sup>188</sup> Judg. 6:19 echoes our text in terms of the action of the entertainment. Gideon entertains Angels and the description of the meal echoes context of worship.

<sup>189</sup> Gen 18:6; Ex. 29:2, 40; Lev. 2:1, 2, 4, 5, 7; 5:11; 6:8, 13; 7:12; 14:10, 21; 23:13, 17; 24:5; Num. 6:15; 17:13, 19, 25, 31, 37, 43, 49, 55, 61, 73, 79; 8:8; 15:4, 6, 9; 28:5, 9, 12, 13, 20, 28; 29:3, 9, 14; 1 Kgs. 5:2; 2 Kgs. 7:1, 16, 18; Ez. 16:13, 19; 46:14; 1 Chron. 9:29; 23:29.



Wenham (1994:47) is right when he says “[e]lsewhere in the Pentateuch, סֶלֶת ‘best wheat flour’ [...] is only used in cereal offerings and for making the bread of the Presence” (Lev 24:5).

**The Bread** (עֲגוּת): The word used for bread depicts a specific kind of bread: a round flat loaf, made from קֶמַח or סֶלֶת, usually baked in ashes or on hot stones. It is an unleavened bread (BDB, 1906:728; HALOT, 1995: 784). עֲגוּת is also found in the the following texts (Ex. 12:39; Num. 11:8; 1 Kgs. 17:13; 19:6, Hosea 7:8; Ez. 4:12). The NIV translates it as ‘cake’. עֲגוּת is similar to מִצָּה (HALOT, 1995:620). Although none of the occurrences of עֲגוּת in the Hebrew Bible is directly linked to a sacrificial context as in the case of מִצָּה, both עֲגוּת and מִצָּה are distinguished from לֶשֶׁן (Num. 11:8) which is described as a “juicy or dainty bit” similar to the taste of manna, i.e. a dainty bread prepared with oil (BDB, 1906:545). Most translations do not differentiate between the two words (עֲגוּת and מִצָּה). Perhaps the NIV and the RSV are correct in their rendering of עֲגוּת as cake. Also, because BDB and HALOT describe both as unleavened bread, this suggests that עֲגוּת is a special cake that is similar, but not the same as מִצָּה. This research suggests a possibility of an echo of Israel’s sacrifices and feasts especially when one considers the context in which עֲגוּת is used in Exodus 12:39. The writer or redactor uses עֲגוּת as well as מִצָּה to describe the bread that the Israelites baked after they left Egypt in haste.

**The Bull** (בֶּן־בָּקָר): The regulations about animal sacrifices in the Hebrew Bible constantly insist on the necessity of offering only top-quality animals (Lev. 1:3). A בֶּן־בָּקָר (literally ‘a son of cattle or ‘a calf’) is used thirty-three times in thirty-two verses in the Hebrew Bible. In all the occurrences except for the Genesis 18:7, בֶּן־בָּקָר appears as requirement for offerings of various kinds.<sup>190</sup> The use of בֶּן־בָּקָר in Genesis 18:7 fits the requirement of the animal sacrifice. Leviticus 23:18 and Numbers 15:8, 9 are both worth noting because they present a close verbal echo to Genesis 18:7 in terms of content and context. In terms of content, bread—although baked with yeast in this instance—is made from fine flour סֶלֶת, as well as the young bull. In terms of the context, it is in the context of the feast of weeks—which follows immediately after the Passover—and the feast of unleavened bread. The feast of weeks included a regulation for the care of the needy. In verse 22 of Leviticus 23, “It reminded Israel that in the midst of their festivity and feasting they were not to neglect the needy in the community at harvest time. The

<sup>190</sup> These references present verbal echo of the use of בֶּן־בָּקָר in the Pentateuch and elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. Ex. 29:1; Lev. 1:15; 4:3, 14; 9:2; 16:3; 23:18. בֶּן־בָּקָר in Num. 7 appears twelve times, as well as in Num. 8:8; 15:8, 9, 24; 29:2, 8; Ez. 43:19, 23, 25; 45:8; 46:6 and 2 Chron. 13:9.

grain and fellowship offerings provided food for the priests. Gleaning rights helped provide food for the poor” (Wright, C.J.H., 1994:151).

In view of the above, the question here is: why did the writer paint a picture of Israel’s cultic practices, sacrifices and feasts in a historical templeless context? This study suggests that we look beyond what is stated to see how deftly the narrator cuts through the surface meaning to the possibilities of another dimension of understanding the narrative? This research opines that it is probable that the writer of Genesis 18–19 was purposely making a connection with Israelite cultic practices. These questions lead us to speculations about the historical context, specifically the history of the text. Knowing the history of the text might help make a nuanced reflection about the possible intention of the compiler or redactor.

#### **4.4.3.2. Parallels in historical books**

##### **4.4.3.2.1. Some verbal echoes and leitmotif parallels in historical books**

There are several parallels to the story of Genesis 18–19 in the historical section of the Old Testament. For example, Genesis 18:9-16 is a section that focuses on Sarah<sup>191</sup>. Westermann (1985:279) suggests that “[t]here is an older form behind vv. 9–16a in which the promise was addressed to Sarah. This is the case in which the majority of narratives of the promise of a child by a messenger of God (e.g., Judg. 13).” Other parallel texts where the promise of a child is the subject are 1 Sam. 1:17; 2 Kgs 4:8–17.

Westermann (1985:280) remarks that the verbal similarity “is a certain sign that there was a fixed narrative form.” And even though the meaning of the phrase (הַבְּעֵת הַהִיא) has been contested, a comparison with the Akkadian equivalent *ana balat* and the Hittite rendering *a-na-ba-la-at* (see Westermann, 1985: 280 and all resources cited), corresponds to the Hebrew הַבְּעֵת הַהִיא (next year). The phrase only occurs in Genesis 18:10, 14 and 2 Kgs 2:16. There is also an altered form of it in Genesis 17:21 which has same context as Genesis 18:10, 14 (Westermann, 1985:280).

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<sup>191</sup> see the frequency and the progression of the story in addendum A

Several parallels to the stories hospitality also exist in the historical books. For instance, while discussing the echoes of the priestly sacrificial element, an example was cited (footnote 188) of how Gideon entertained an angel of Yahweh who brought him good tidings of deliverance of the Israelites from the hands of the Midianites (Judg. 6), thus corresponding to the hospitality given to the divine strangers in our pericope. Following this, is another example of the denial of hospitality in Judges 8:4–17. In this passage, the men of Succoth and Peniel refused to provide hospitality to Gideon and his men. Ironically, the name ‘Succoth’ means ‘thicket, covert or lair’ (BDB, 1906:697). Yet, when Gideon and his warriors were in search of a temporary shelter, they were denied it. Similarly, the men of Peniel (literally, face of God) also denied Gideon and his warriors hospitality. In both instances, Gideon was furious and promised not to spare them when he returned in victory. The story of the denial parallels Genesis 19:1–4 in the sense that the hospitality ought to have been given by the men of Sodom, but they denied it. In a similar way, Succoth, with a name that is symbolic of a shelter for warriors in the wilderness denied hospitality. Also, Gideon’s anger parallels the reaction of the angels at Sodom when they poured down the wrath of God on the cities, resulting in a total destruction of the cities and vegetation of the plains.

Another parallel story of hospitality, showing both the importance and the effect of giving and denial respectively, is the story of David and Nabal in 1 Samuel 25. The narrative shows how Nabal nearly started a war because of his refusal to show hospitality to David and his men. However, the war was averted because Abigail, Nabal’s wife, intervened by providing the hospitality denied by her husband. Genesis 19:1–4 starts with hospitality being offered to strangers followed by inversion of it. 1 Samuel 25 starts by a refusal of hospitality followed by a reversal. The characters of Lot and the men of Sodom are also paralleled by Abigail and Nabal respectively. Lot was a resident alien, but ironically, he was the one who performed the duty that the men of the city ought to have done. The men never performed their civic duty, instead they violated the custom by exhibiting hostility against the strangers hosted by Lot, an alien. Similarly, Nabal who was the head of his family, and by implication responsible for hosting, failed in his duty. His wife Abigail was the one who stepped in, thereby rescuing Nabal and his household from calamity. And perhaps we can also draw a comparison between Nabal and Lot’s sons-in-law.

#### 4.4.3.2.2. *Parallel story of hospitality in Judges 19*

Judges 19 presents a close parallel to the narrative of Genesis 18-19. The similarities in these stories are too numerous for a reader to ignore and to assume they are coincidental (*cf.* addendum E). There are different dimensions of parallels that exist in the two texts, ranging from verbal echoes, in the form of sentence construction and word usage<sup>192</sup>, to thematic relationships and structural similarities (Westermann, 1985:297 & Wenham, 1994:41). Block (1999:520) identifies the following areas as representing the most obvious links. In this case, we will glean for clues that might point to the intention of the writer or redactor.

1. A small group of travellers arrives in the city in the evening.
2. A person who is himself an alien observes the presence of this company.
3. The travellers have a mind to spend the night in the open square (*rāhōb*).
4. At the insistence of the host, the travellers agree to spend the night in his house.
5. The host washes the guests' feet (implied in Genesis 19:3 after the offer of v.2).
6. The host and guests share a meal.
7. Depraved men of the city surround the house.
8. The demand that the host deliver his male guests to them so they may know them.
9. The host protests this display of wickedness.
10. When the protest proves futile, substitute females are offered.

**Structurally:** Westermann (1985:297) and Wenham, (1994:41) both agree on the existence of structural parallels between Genesis 19 and Judges 19. Westermann's work present a detailed analysis of this comparison and we will provide a summary here. We will also provide more evidences of structural similarity where Westermann did not point out.

Westermann begins with the comparison of Genesis 19:1–11 with Judges 19:15–25. The sections are similar, but in terms of the motifs of crime and punishment, destruction and rescue, the narratives “show signs of their own independent life”. Westermann did not include the beginning of the narrative units in his structural intertext. However, I would argue Genesis

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<sup>192</sup> Some common Hebrew vocabularies common to both texts include: לַיַּל to spend the night (19:2) it appears eleven times in Judg. 19. Block (1999:520) opines that it is “functioning as leitmotif that ties vv. 1–9 to the event that transpire in Gibeah. סור (Gen 19:2 *cf.* Judg. 19:11–12, 15), וְהִשְׁכַּמְתֶּם וְהִלַּכְתֶּם לְדִרְכָּם (Gen 19:2 *cf.* Judg. 19:9), וְרָחֲצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם (Gen 19: 2 *cf.* Judg 19: 21), וַיֹּאכְלוּ (Gen 19: 3 *cf.* Judg. 19: 21), וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם מִשְׁתֶּה (Gen 19: 3 *cf.* וַיֹּאכְלוּ Judg. 19: 21), וַיִּתְּמַהְקֶהָ (Gen 19: 16 *cf.* Judg. 19 8).

18:1-16 is parallel to Judges 19:1-14 in the actual practice of hospitality. In other words, Judges 19:1–14 present a similar code of hospitality as Genesis 18:1–16 (*cf.* addendum ‘E’ table 2).

**Thematic level:** In terms of the code of hospitality, Judges 19–21 begins with a code of hospitality where a Levite travelled to Bethlehem to his woman who has left him and returned to her father’s house. Judges 19: 3 says: “[The Levite] went to her to persuade her to return... She took him to her parent’s home, and when her father saw him, he gladly welcomed him.” Both Genesis 19 and Judges 19 show how resident alien, who presumably had no legal right to do so provide hospitality to the visitors (Matthews, 1992:1). The structural similarity is shaped by certain themes that run through the narrative: hospitality, crime, and judgement. However, there are differences in terms of the motifs that shape each narrative. Genesis 19 is shaped by the motifs of crime/punishment and destruction/rescue simultaneously. The account of Judges 19–21 is shaped by the motif of crime and punishment however the motif of rescue is not mentioned (Westermann, 1985: 297f).

**Verbal echoes:** - a close reading of Genesis 18–19 in comparison with Judges 19–21 shows incredible verbal echoes in terms of sentence construction and word usage. For example, the similarity between Genesis 19:1 and Judg. 19:14 lies in the circumstances in which the strangers in both narratives found themselves. The angels came to Sodom in the evening while the Levite, his servant and concubine arrived in Gibeah as the sun was setting. A close reading of the two passages yielded several verbal echoes.<sup>193</sup>

Apart from the verbal links between the two passages, there exist some structural and thematic relationships between the two passages. It is interesting how the two narratives in Genesis and Judges are almost the same in every aspect. However, some of the verbal echoes in the two narratives serve to contrast each other. For example, the hesitation of the angels to accept the invitation of Lot—which is interpreted by some scholars (e.g. Matthews, 1992) as the exercise of the guest right of acceptance—is duplicated in another way in Judges 19:19 when the Levite tries to dictate the rule of the welcome, denying the host the right to provide for them. Again, the Levite’s action to some extent parallels the action of the angels, when he sends out his concubine to be gang raped. The similarity should not be pushed so far as to include every bit

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<sup>193</sup>See Addendum ‘E’ table 1 for details.

of the actions there. However, like the angels who intervened in protecting the family of Lot from the mob, the Levite's actions should also be seen from that perspective. Additionally, his initial statement to the old man: "There is both straw and fodder for our donkeys, and also bread and wine for me, for your servant, and for the young man who is with your servant; there is no lack of anything" (19:19), implies that their visit will not inconvenience the old man and his household. Perhaps, the reason he intervened by sending his concubine is that he and the household of the old man are protected from the mob.

An important parallel which is not conspicuously marked out between the stories is worth noting here. Judges 19 starts by describing the period "In those days, when there was no king in Israel" (19:1 RSV). Although it is a frequent phrase in the whole book, this research assumes that its mentioning in this story is paralleled to the historical setting of the story in the Genesis 18–19. Both narratives have a similar setting. Consider how the narrator pictures the patriarch in a rural setting. Westermann (1985:276) remarks "We are a long way from the later life of the royal court with its justice at the gate and the temple." However, it is not the same situation at Sodom. Earlier on in Genesis 14, Sodom and its neighbouring cities seem to have a developed social structure. Genesis 14: 2 lists their kings as "Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboyim, and the king of Bela (Zoar)." Ironically, nothing was said about these kings when the two angels visited Sodom in Genesis 19. The picture painted in Genesis 19, although referring to a city, seems to exhibit the same system in operation as in the case of the Patriarch Abraham. Whatever must have happened to the kings, is not mentioned here. The narrator seems to paint a picture like the 'days when there was no king in Sodom'.

Firstly, Lot was sitting at the gate assuming a leadership position<sup>194</sup>. Secondly, it was the men of the city, not 'elders', who came to Lot's house. And thirdly, there was no mention that the men of the city were acting on the directives of their king, neither was there a mention of rebuke from the king to the men of the city to desist from their attitude against the strangers. Instead, Lot was the one acting as an elder of the city and as a judge. We therefore assume that the writer of Judges was probably alluding to the situation as described in the text. No king was

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<sup>194</sup>*cf.* text critical note and literary critical note in Chapter 3.

mentioned, therefore, all the men of the city, young and old did what was right in their own eyes. This parallel, although not conspicuous, will play a vital role in determining the possible literary history of the text.<sup>195</sup> However, one important point to mark is the dialectic established between the time in the text and the time of the text. We will later explain Lot's story as the ironic depiction of the time of the text.

What can we make of these parallels between Genesis 19 and Judges 19-21? As noted, the similarity could not be a coincidence. This research believes that reading Genesis 18-19 with Judges 19-21 will be helpful to the contemporary reader. The question concerning whether Judges was influenced by Genesis or vice versa is an important question, but it is beyond the scope of this research. However, based on the history in the text, I submit that the history in the Genesis text influences the composers of both Genesis and Judges. Thus, understanding what is in Judges 19–21, might be helpful in understanding the narrative of Genesis 18-19.

An example of how the reading of Judges has influenced the reading of the Genesis story is the controversial Hebrew word  $\text{עָדָה}$ . The word  $\text{עָדָה}$  (to know) in the context of Judges 19 seems at ease with sexual connotation. The question as to what extent a reader can invoke the meaning of a parallel text depends on the level of the similarity. In the context of the two texts, we can see that both contexts are similar. Should we invoke the context of the Judges in interpreting  $\text{עָדָה}$  in Genesis? The fact that there was an actual rape that took place in the Judges narrative, suggests that the word  $\text{עָדָה}$  in Genesis 19 carries the same sexual connotation.

Also, in view of the initial question raised in my text critical note on Genesis 19:5 concerning the verb  $\text{עָדָה}$ , I would argue that there is a clear evidence of a critique of sexual violence. Viewed from the perspective of posterity motif within Abraham narrative, I would also argue that sexuality and propagation can be a possible issue under critique as we will later find in the actions of Lot's daughters. On the question of homosexuality, I would cautiously refer to Alter's (1986: 33) proposal that:

The narrator offers no comment on the homosexuality aspect of the threatened act of violence, though it is safe to assume he expects us to consider that, too,

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<sup>195</sup> We will later discuss under *ideological and theological texture* that the text must have been composed in the period in Israel when the monarchy was not yet established, or a period when they lost the monarchy due to exile.

abhorrent, but in regard to this episode's place in the larger story of progeny for Abraham, it is surely important that homosexuality is a necessarily sterile form of sexual intercourse, as though the proclivities of the Sodomites answered biologically to their utter indifference to the moral prerequisites for survival.

Homosexuality is a modern concept which entails sexual orientation and one has to be cautious not to fall into the danger of an anachronistic reading of the Old Testament text. Therefore, I would be hesitant to accept Alter's assumption that the writer of the narrative "expects us to consider that, too abhorrent". It is safer and more honouring to the text not to build an argument of homosexuality from silence.

Overall, Westermann (1985: 298) offers a helpful remark on the impact of the number of parallels between Genesis 18–19 and Judges 19–21: Firstly, there is "a large circle of narratives outside Israel which follow the structure of Genesis 19: crime – divine judgment – preservation of an individual". Secondly, from all the events in Genesis, the one of Genesis 19 is the most cited.<sup>196</sup> Due to these facts, it is presumed that there is a common tradition that is independent of Genesis 19 which all the narratives that have the structure and features of Genesis 19 rely on. Furthermore, the citing of the Sodom event,—which is built on the code of hospitality—is suggestive of the importance and necessity of the tradition and custom of hospitality in the ancient world.

It may not be out of context to say inhospitality is not as simple as a denial of food and shelter. It is the violation of the strangers' right of protection. Denying a stranger food and shelter is an indication of gross depravity and wickedness in the heart. The violation of the right to protection is a serious crime against not only the guest, but also in a sense the whole of humanity, because it threatens the flourishing of the whole of the *human community*. In a context where the promise of posterity is the overarching theme, any practice that affects the survival of an individual can be understood as standing in the way of fulfilment of the posterity motif. Such practices include not just inhospitality, but the gross injustice, violence, corruption and oppression. This is seen in the evidence connected to the use of the Sodom theme outside

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<sup>196</sup> This leads us to one of the crucial issues which are also related to the narrative nexus: we have earlier noted that Sodom is one of the important nexuses within the Abraham-Lot narrative unit and it is considered as one of the "larger thematic design of Genesis and subsequent books" (Alter, 1986:31). Therefore, we will survey the references to the event of Sodom as intertextuality within the Old Testament.



of Genesis. Although this is not clearly stated by the narrator, it is in line with the nature and style of the narratives which often leave the reader to draw implications from the conversations and events in the stories.

#### **4.4.3.3. *Parallels within the Psalms and Wisdom Literature***

In this section, I shall explore hospitality within the Psalms and Proverbs. Attention will not be given to other parallels that exist between Genesis 18-19 with Psalms and wisdom literature. Those other parallels are discussed in the broader unit of the Old Testament. Although we will refer to certain themes such as righteousness and justice, it should not be taken as repetition because they seem to form the basic fabric of the code of hospitality. How do the writers of the Psalms and wisdom literature deal with questions of righteousness and justice? Is there any connection with the idea of hospitality?

##### **4.4.3.3.1. *The book of Job***

One of the main themes identified in Genesis 18:16–32 raises the concern for the zeal for the justice of God. Abraham's conversation with Yahweh challenges Yahweh's justice (Gen. 18:25b). The zeal for the justice of God seems the most dominant theme in the book of Job. The narrative section of the book paints one of the key characters—Job—as a righteous and blameless person, and also as someone who went through untold trauma of suffering and pain for no reason known to him. The theme of the unjust suffering of the righteous raised by Abraham is paralleled in Job's text. But this is not the main concern that I am addressing in this section; rather, we are interested in the virtues used to describe the person of Job, "There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. That man was blameless and upright and God-fearing and turning away from evil" (Job 1:1). The prologue continues with details of what may be described as the meaning of these virtues. He constantly checks that his children are in good relationship with God. He acts as a priest, offering sacrifices to appease God in case his children have accidentally said or done anything wrong. The writer of the book of Job paints the picture of a man who, as the head of his household, maintains domestic harmony and tranquillity. What Job does daily resonates with Yahweh's covenant demand when he says Abraham was chosen in order that he might teach his children the way of Yahweh to do

righteousness and justice. Take for instance Job 31, the 'way of Yahweh' is invoked when Job says (31:4–7 LEB):

Does he not see *my ways* and count all *my steps*? *If I have walked* with falseness, and my foot has *hastened* to deceit, let him weigh me in *the balance of justice*, and let God know my blamelessness. *If my steps have turned aside from the way*, and my heart *has walked* after my eyes, and my hand has clung to a spot.

Socially, Job's walking in the way of Yahweh involve, but is not limited to maintaining harmony with his neighbour; he never committed adultery (Job 31:9–12), he treated his servants with dignity (Job 31: 13 - 15) and he identified with the poor, fatherless, and widows (Job 31: 16–23). From the theological perspective, he did not idolise his wealth or worship the sun god, the moon god or any secret object (Job 31: 24–30). Job 31: 31–32 is parallel to the code of hospitality which is at the backdrop of our investigation. He claims innocence because he has kept the custom of hospitality. Elsewhere in 29:12–16, he explains how the underprivileged were helped by him.

#### **4.4.3.3.2. The Psalms**

The writers of the Psalms have employed images that are parallel to the ancient custom of hospitality in both their expression of gratitude and also the need of God's protection. This section is not meant to discuss hospitality in the Psalms, but its intent is to see parallels between our text and the Psalms. Owing to what has been discussed before, it is obvious that a single section like this is not enough to discuss these parallels. However, for the fact that hospitality is at the backdrop of the hermeneutical lens in interpreting the selected text I will take two imageries from the hospitality code to see how the psalmists invoke the ancient custom of hospitality. The two parallel imageries we want to look at are 'host' and 'guest'.

Psalm 23:5–6<sup>197</sup> presents the metaphor of God as host. Arterbury and Bellinger Jr. (2005:391) notes that:

Ps 23:5-6 drew upon the common Israelite custom of hospitality. The metaphor of God as host would have likely evoked a picture of this custom in the minds

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<sup>197</sup> This section on Psalm 23:5–6 depended heavily on the work of Arterbury and Bellinger, Jr (2005), “‘Returning’ to the Hospitality of the Lord: A Reconsideration of Psalm 23:5-6”.

of the hearers [...] In fact, each line of Ps 23:5-6 correlates with standard Israelite hospitality and can therefore be understood without first theorizing about an original, historical or liturgical life setting for the psalm.

The Psalm echoes the vulnerable situation in which travellers often found themselves in the ancient world, similar to the vulnerable position of the messengers of Yahweh at Sodom in (Gen. 19:4). Arterbury and Bellinger, Jr. (2005:392) remark that “regardless of whether Ps 23 is a psalm of trust or thanksgiving, any ancient Israelite who could either anticipate or recall a traveller’s vulnerable position could have claimed these words.” The metaphor of God as a host echoes Abraham’s hospitality to the three strangers. The Psalm presents a hopeful or thankful guest who is reflecting upon the upright hospitality of a God who feeds and protects his guest from danger. Hospitality in Psalm 23 is portrayed as a tool for creating and sustaining a harmonious relationship. Once a host shows hospitality as the custom demands, a relationship is established so that the guest would long to return to their host’s house anytime they find themselves in the region. This explains why the psalmist says he will surely return to the house of his host—the Lord— continually.

Psalm 27:1–4 presents a similar metaphor; firstly, a situation is outlined where there is a call for help in Psalm 27:2–3. Next, in Psalm 27:4, the writer expresses a lack of fear and shows confidence because Yahweh is his host. And, just as Psalm 23 ends, the psalmist desires to dwell in the house of the Lord. The psalmist’s confidence and lack of fear is due to the hospitality he enjoys in the house of the Lord. The image of the house of connotes a hospitable situation. The writer of says “One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple” (NIV). The literary context of this expands the important image of the Lord as a host.

#### **4.4.3.3.3. Proverbs**

Proverbs are instructions in form of wisdom. First, in the personification of wisdom in Pr. 8, we find a thematic parallel to the major theological issue raised in our text. Wisdom was speaking in vs. 8 that “I walk in the *way of righteousness*, along the *paths of justice*”. With this parallel we see the probability that the composer of the text could be one of the sages of Israel who intended to impart wisdom to his listeners through storytelling. And according to the sage

“the fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom”. Space will not permit me to argue how the fear of the Lord resonates or is synonymous to “the way of Yahweh”. However, a few texts comparisons suffice. In the context of Proverb 8:13, wisdom itself describes the fear of the Lord thus: “The fear of Yahweh *is* hatred of evil, pride, and arrogance and *an evil way*. And I hate a mouth of perversity” (LEB, emphasis added). “[...] an evil way” here contrasts the 'way of Yahweh' which is characterized by doing righteousness and justice (*cf.* Pr. 9:6; 10:27; Ps. 34:12 (34:11 Eng.); 111:10).

The book of proverbs echoes Genesis 18 & 19 in its overarching teaching on righteousness and justice. Proverbs 31 is a good example to show living a righteous and just life. The sayings are attributed to the mother of King Lemuel. She advises her son not to forget his royal obligation to the oppressed. His role as a king was to be a voice for the voiceless and protect the right of the needy. Proverbs 31:8:9 says “Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all the needy. Open your mouth, judge righteousness, and defend *the* poor and needy.”

Apart from the parallel on righteousness and justice, there are proverbs that echo the context of the hospitality meal. However, most of these statements come in form of caution to the host as well as the guest. For example, in Proverbs 23:1–3, 6–8, hospitality appears to be at the background of the text, but then the sage cautions the host and the guest not to be uncritical or take the practice for granted. The writer is saying that the practice of hospitality can be abused by host and guest alike. The writer seems to suggest that there is a hidden moral danger in what is taken for granted as normal custom that every Israelite practices. In this text, there is no clear link between the book of proverbs and Genesis 18 and 19. However, the content of the teaching begs the researcher to reiterate the question raised in Chapter 3, where it asks why the narrator gave two narratives of hospitality in the same unit. Hospitality in Genesis 18 is presented as something wonderful and to be desired and practiced by all. Genesis 19 seems to be doing what the sage is doing in Proverbs 23:1–3, 6–8, inviting the reader to rethink. Circumstances and relationships that seem right to us can contain hidden dangers.

#### 4.4.3.4. *Sodom as larger thematic design: an intertextuality between Genesis 18 & 19 and the Old Testament*

Sodom is one of the features that serve as the narrative nexus of the text and vital theme employed by many writers of the Old Testament and even New Testament<sup>198</sup> books. In the Abraham narrative cycle where posterity is a major theme, Sodom appears as detour to the flow of the narrative of the birth of a son. Looking at the pattern of annunciation motifs, unlike any other annunciation story, the birth of a son to the couple was supposed to be followed immediately, but it did not happen until Genesis 21. The Sodom motif was used to interrupt the flow of the narrative. It started with the announcement of the intention to destroy Sodom which resulted in a dialogue between Abraham and Yahweh (Gen. 18:22–33). In the first half of Genesis 19, the narrator tells the story of the visit of the messengers of Yahweh to confirm the *justice of Yahweh* that was challenged by Abraham in Genesis, 18:22-32. The visit resulted in the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, thus making the narrative etiological in nature. However, because it is a narrative, the transmission of the experience is open to a profusion of possibilities that shape the story (Westermann, 1985:297; Alter, 1986:32). We shall take themes related to the Sodom theme:

**Theme of a Righteous and Just Society:** We will recall that the interruption of the narrative in our text began with the announcement to Abraham and the announcement itself was appended to the promise motif. By implication the Sodom theme has a link (direct or indirect) to the promise motif. The programmatic introduction of the narratives lays the foundation for understanding the Sodom theme: righteousness and justice are the necessary human response that will bring about the fulfilment of the promise of land, posterity, divine relationship. Lack of righteousness and justice invites God’s heinous punishment. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which is paralleled to the destruction by the flood, illustrates the consequence of the lack of righteousness and justice. Simply put, righteousness and justice are a necessary requirement for the “survival” (for lack of a better word) of every human society. The hospitality scene in Genesis 19 is used to show the lack of righteousness and justice in the city. When the men of Sodom came against the house and demanded for the men to be handed over, Lot implored them to desist from such an *evil* act. He pleaded that the men came under the

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<sup>198</sup> The scope of the research is Old Testament. It is even difficult to exhaust all that pertains to the theme. We will, therefore, limit our survey of the theme of Sodom as intertextuality within the Old Testament.

shadow of his roof as protection against evil. The men of Sodom were furious with Lot and questioned him for playing a *judge*. Their accusation against Lot for playing a judge shows a play of word between the justice that Lot was pursuing for the guest and his quality of life—the ability to judge the actions of the men as evil. In contrast, the action of the men of Sodom shows the lack justice and righteousness.

This argument is supported in a number of Old Testament passages that allude to this Sodom theme in almost the same context, namely God’s judgement: “Deut. 29:23; Is. 1:9f; 13:19; Jer. 49:18; 50:40; Ezek. 16:46, 50, 53-55; Amos 4:11; Zeph. 2:9; Lam. 4:6; Ps. 11:6. In the New Testament, Mt. 10:15; 11:23f; Lk. 10:12; 17:29; Rom. 9:29; 2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 7; and Rev. 11:8” (Westermann, 1985:298).

**The theme for zeal for the Justice of God:** The dialogue between Abraham and Yahweh is a conversation where by Abraham questions Yahweh’s justice. In our *Intratextual Texture* (3.4.2.1) we have identified six circles of conversation with two major questions bordering on individual and collective responsibility (Gen. 18:23), and on the justice of Yahweh (Gen. 18:25). The two questions are echoed in Jeremiah 31:29-34 and Ezekiel 18. Apparently, the audience are people who had experienced the great tragedy (exile) and were attributing it as the consequence of the sinful actions of their ancestors.

**The theme of Measure for Measure:** To explain this, a comparison with the story of Rahab is necessary. A close reading of the narrative reveals verbal and thematic similarities between the stories of hospitality in our text and Rahab as a host. The verbal similarity is, in particular, between the story of Lot as a host and Rehab. On the thematic level, the principle of “measure for measure” connects the two stories of hospitality in our text with the narrative of Rahab hosting the two spies.<sup>199</sup> Peleg made an important remark based on the source from which he adopted the table that “It is clear, moreover, that whoever added the verses on Rahab to Joshua 6 (verses 17b, 22-23, 25) was aware of the connections to Genesis 19, and assimilated this addition in the spirit of Genesis 19”. For lack of space we shall concentrate on the discourse of the theme. The verbal similarities are also based of the themes.

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<sup>199</sup> For verbal similarities see addendum ‘F’, a table lifted from Peleg (2012:136-138) that charted the verbal similarities between the stories.

The story of Rahab hosting the two spies parallels the two stories of hospitality in the selected text from the perspective of rewards for action. Peleg (2012:130 note 4) makes a distinction between host and prostitute and remarks that “Yet even if we accept the distinction between host and prostitute, we cannot help but compare Rahab and [Abraham and] Lot as host.” The comparison with Rahab support the principle of ‘measure-for-measure’. At least if not for anything, Sodom was destroyed for its evil (*cf.* “Allusion to crime and Punishment” above). Westermann (1985:298) remarks that “[t]he name [Sodom], therefore, points to the well-known proverbial judgement of God in the distance past.” And although God’s grace and mercy are displayed in his covenant relationship with Abraham (Lot affected through Abraham), Abraham models the appropriate covenant response of righteousness and justice (*cf.* Peleg 2012).

Several other indictments in Old Testament passages compare the sin of the people to that of Sodom and Gomorrah. The table below presents few of such comparisons from some passages in the Old Testament. For instance:

- (1) Deuteronomy 29:22 (23) - Covenant unfaithfulness.
- (2) Isaiah 1:9b; 1:10; 3:9 - Punishment for social injustice e.g. corruption violence and oppression of the poor and, theological e.g. rebellion against Yahweh.
- (3) Isaiah 13:19 - Irreversible punishment for evil and wickedness: being pompous, arrogant and ruthless.
- (4) Jeremiah 23:14 - Prophets of God commit adultery, walk in lies, support evildoers.
- (5) Ezekiel 16:46b-50 - Pride, Arrogance, doing evil, gluttony, abandoning the poor and needy.

#### **4.4.4. Genesis 18 & 19 in the ancient Near Eastern context**

Similarities in texts could possibly be attributed to the fact that the similar texts have the same source on the bases of common traditions. Being part of the Mesopotamian region, it is possible that Israel tradition and cultural practices have some similarities with the ancient Near Eastern customs. This then informs the motivation to see the various themes in the context of the ancient Near East, which possibly contributes towards the understanding and interpretation of the text (Westermann, 1985:276).

Starting with theme of divine appearance either of God or his messenger, there are some elements of its existence of the older form of the narrative. The motif of a promise of child particularly in a distressing situation belongs to a group of narratives about a divine messenger. In such a situation the appearance of the messenger of God in an utterly secular life never goes without notice of an element of theophany. However, Westermann (1985: 275) observes that the passage under study is not about the appearance of Yahweh. Nevertheless, it is possible that in the course of transmission, the motif of birth of a child “as a deliverance from distress was joined with a narrative variant in which this same promise was a gift of those whom the childless couple had received as guest” (*cf.* 2 Kgs 4:11–17).

As a clear example of such a narrative, von Rad (1972:205) cites: “Aye, and the god in the guise of strangers from afar put on all manner of shapes, and visit the cities, beholding the violence and righteousness of men.” Von Rad (1972:205) narrates an example of such a story in “the Greek saga about the visit of the three gods, Zeus, Poseidon, and Hermes, to the childless Hyrieus in Boetia” as a parallel to the text.<sup>200</sup> Although quite similar to the Genesis 18:1-16 story, Westermann (1985:276) observes that there is a problem in accepting Gunkel and von Rad’s interpretation of the three visitors as “Yahweh appear[ing] in all three” (*cf.* von Rad 1972:204). Westermann’s (1985:276) explanation is that the biblical version is said to have originated with the Yahwists and is independent of the Greek story. Also, the Greek is said to be of a later date which raises the question of ancient Near Eastern prehistory. To this one must look to Mesopotamian texts which contain some parallels about the visit of god to a city to judge and bless the people and their land and cattle. And to the appearance of God and promise of son which runs as a leitmotif through the Abraham cycle (Gen. 18:10,13,14), Westermann (1985:280) observes that it has parallels in the Ugaritic myths, epics and legends specifically in the “text of Keret and Aquat”.

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<sup>200</sup> Von Rad, (1972: 205) further referred to Gunkel for more example of such sagas. He further adds the context of this kind of narrative that “[t]hose times when hospitality was the only real virtue were the ones primarily concerned with such narratives.” Citing Gunkel, he notes, “The right of a guest in the field in which the Oriental’s religion speaks about love, not only for one’s tribe, family, or fellow soldier, but also for one’s neighbour. Hospitality is therefore the display and preservation before men of one’s piety, simply of one’s piety’ (Fr., II, 97).”



#### 4.4.4.1. *The legend of King Keret.*<sup>201</sup>

KRT B (ii) (CTA 15) begins with a note on some missing lines in the column and that the remainder of the lines are defective. It is assumed that the missing lines relates to how Keret fulfilled the vows of KRT A, (CTA 14) and how he made new ones in KRT B (iii) (CTA 15). Then the defective lines tell of a planned visit of the gods to Keret. The text shows how Keret was given a promise of a son by the gods (See Addendum ‘G’).

Some lines were recorded missing but the subsequent line recorded how Keret was blessed with children by the gods when they visited him. This is parallel to the narrative of the visit of the Yahweh and his messengers in Genesis 18. Just like Abraham’s entertained of Yahweh and the messengers, Line (16) and (17) suggest a meal was offered to the gods by Keret. The text also describes how Keret instructed his wife to prepare a meal and she obeyed. El (“Ilu” as translated by Hallo and Younger Jr., 1997:333) picks a “cup” in his hand and a “flagon” in his right hand and blesses Keret. Although several sons and daughters were given to Keret, “Yassubu” seems a special child as Isaac was to Abraham.

#### 4.4.4.2. *The tale of Aquat.*<sup>202</sup>

The epic of Daniil (which is invariably about Aquat) samples human dealings with the deity in the form of dreams and vision. But above all, the Daniil text shows that both gods and human make a personal appearance on the same scene. I suppose this epic serves as a motivation for

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<sup>201</sup> Pritchard (1955: 142 *cf.* Hallo & Younger Jr. (eds.) 1997: 333): “In the campaigns of 1930 and 1931 the French excavators of ancient Ugaritic recovered fragment to three clay tablets of an epic of a king designated by a name whose consonants are *k-r-t* and whose vowel are unknown; it is conventionally transcribed Keret.” Hallo & Younger Jr. (1997: 333) vocalise the *k-r-t* as *Kirta*. The tablets are said to contain three columns on each side of the three tablets. And they were published as IK, IIK, and IIIK. However, Pritchard organises the text according to its organic sequence KRT A = IK, KRT B = IIIK, and KRT C = IIK. The classification of the table is done differently by Hallo & Younger Jr. they are classified as CTA 14, CTA 15, and CTA 16. (See Pritchard 1955: 142 and Hallo & Younger Jr., 1997: 333) for more on the background of the text.

<sup>202</sup> The tablet was discovered together with that of the king Keret. The Tale of Aquat is found in the possible fragment of a “fourth tablet belonging to an epic about a youth whose name was spelt *a-q-h-t* and conventionally vocalised *Aquat* (“*aquatu*” in Hallo and Younger Jr., 1997:333). The text was at first called the epic of Daniel, or Danel, for Aquat’s father; but on the one tablet of which the first line, containing the title of the composition to which the tablet belongs, is preserved, it reads ‘Pertaining to “Aquat,” and closer study reveals that the text really tells about Daniel only what concerns Aquat. According to the order in which they were originally published, which is the descending order of magnitude, the three tablets are referred to as I D, II D, and III D (D=Daniel.) or ... but in accordance with their organic sequence they will be designated here inas AQHT A (=II D) AQHT B (=III D), and AQHT C (=I D)”. (Pritchard, 1955: 149, *cf.* Hallo & Younger Jr. 1997: 344; Bernhardt (1978: 225ff).

the parallel Old Testament texts which deal with the personal appearance of the deity in a specific situation. In the epic, “the action begins with a promise of a son to Daniil” (Bernhardt, 1978: 225). Bernhardt observes that “[c]omparisons may be made with OT texts containing a similar promise: the testimony to the promise of descendant and in the patriarchal traditions, and also in royal oracles (cf. e.g. Gen. 12.1ff; 18:10ff; 22; 25ff. or II Sam. 7, especially 11ff.)”

The fragment begins with a picture of the god being provided with “Oblation” for six days. Then, on the seventh day, Ba’lu approached, having had mercy on Dānī’lu because he had no child, pleaded with his father Bull ’Ilu to bless Dānī’lu. And ’Ilu pronounces a blessing. This promise was eventually recounted to Dānī’lu and the writer recorded how Dānī’lu’s face lifted with joy because of the prospect of having a son. Dānī’lu went home and fed Kōtarātu (the goddesses of conception), slaughtered a bull for the goddesses and drink for six days and on the seventh day the goddesses left and Dānī’lu sat down “to count for month” (most probably the month of gestation of the child ’Aqitu).

#### 4.4.4.3. *The epic of Atrahasis*

Several parallel texts exist in the Akkadian Myths and Epics which serve as motivation for biblical texts that deal with man’s sin and consequent punishment. “Atrahasis (Old Babylonia Atramhasis)” (Pritchard, 1955:104), is an example which contain a large epic cycle that is parallel to the flood narrative in the Hebrew Bible. By extension, we could even say it is parallel to the Sodom narrative in the sense of the overarching theme of sin and its consequences. In Pritchard (1955:104ff) and Hallo & Younger Jr. (1997:450ff) several fragments of these epic have been compiled from different sources and one of it, fragment (D) (Pritchard, 1955:104) <sup>203</sup> contains issues that are parallel to Genesis 18-19. In line 27 of (D) column (i), it states “The People *became hostile* in their [...]” The text continues to describe the unfriendly atmosphere; it talks about limited space and distrust among the people. The evil

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<sup>203</sup>We selected Pritchard for the classification which makes it easy to reference. Fragment (D) was taken from L. W. King, *CT*, xv (1902), 49. Recent translations: Clay, *op. cit.*, 58ff.; Ebeling *AOT*, 200 ff.; A. Boissier, *op. cit.*; Heidel, *GE*, 105ff (Pritchard, 1955:104). The material presented in all the sections A, B, C, D, and X. is a small fraction of the original total. Fragment X is placed immediately after B because X is identified as an old Babylonian flood text, therefore, it is placed with the Old Babylonian recensions A & B. The underlying relationship of all the pieces is said to give evidence of phraseology, subject matter and the principal characters. Sections C & D are said to be the Assyrian version and date from the time of Ashurbanipal. In fragment (D) which we are considering as bearing parallels to the Genesis 18 and 19 narrative, column (vi) has been removed and placed at the end of creation of man by the Mother Goddess.

character of the people reaches its peak when they even practice cannibalism. In the following lines, it says: (taken from Pritchard, 1955:105)

“When the sixth year arrived, (35)  
 They prepared [the daughter] for a meal,  
 The child they prepared for food.  
 Filled were [...]  
 One house de[voured] the other.”

The situation among the people was a hostile one. Column (ii) records the resultant effect which was a flood and poor crop yield. The people became sick and their women became barren. Column (iii) contains several links to Genesis 18 and 19. Line (1) of column (iii) has been destroyed but from line two it continues the theme which was identified in columns (i) and (ii).

[Because of] their clamor he is disturb[ed], (2)  
 [Because of] their uproar [sleep] cannot seize him.  
 [En]lil set up [his] Assembly,  
 [Say]ing to the gods, his sons:  
 “Oppressive has become the clamor of mankind.  
 [Because of their] clamor I am disturbed,  
 [Because of th]eir [up]roar sleep cannot seize me.  
 [...] let there be chills.  
 The pestilence shall[prompt]ly put an end to their clamor! (10)  
 [like] a storm it shall blow upon them” (Pritchard, 1955: 106).

Line (12) – (16) continues the description of the punishment in the same way, repeating most of the things mentioned in the lines above. However, from line 17 the text changes to conversation form. The writer notes that Atrahasis, endowed with wisdom and being alert in his mind to ‘Ea’ his Lord, enters into a conversation:

“O lord, mankind cries out. (23)  
 You’re [*an*]ger consumes the Land.  
 [E]a, O lord, mankind cries out  
 [The *anger*] of the gods consumes the Land.  
 [...] ye have created us.  
 [Let there c]ease the aches, the dizziness, the chills, the fever!”  
 [Ea opened his mouth to s]peak, addressing Atrahasis:  
 “[...] let there appear in the land.  
 [...] pray to your goddess.” (31)

(32–36) was mutilated. But the subsequent line records how Enlil set up his assembly and spoke to the gods, his sons. One of the lines which is reminiscent of the destruction of Sodom is the curse upon the land in line (48) when it says “Let the broad plains bring forth salt crystals,”

(Pritchard, 1955: 106). ‘Broad plains’ is parallel to the plains destroyed in Genesis 19. “Bringing forth salt” sounds like the effect of the fire and brimstone rain which destroyed the plains. What is left is just salt crystals, just like Lot’s wife who was caught up in the destruction.

#### **4.4.4.4. The Egyptian Proverbs<sup>204</sup>**

The twenty-eighth chapter of Amen-em-opet contains instructions on caring for the needy (widow, stranger, and the poor). The text as recorded by Pritchard (1955:424) is as follows:

Do not *recognize* a widow if thou catchest her in the field,  
Nor fail to be *indulgent* to her reply.  
Do not neglect a stranger (with) thy oil-jar,  
That it be doubled before thy brethren.  
God desires respect for the poor  
More than the honoring of the exalted.

Although, the style is parallel to the proverbs in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), the instruction concerning hospitality provides an important textual link to Genesis 18 and 19. And although it is a narrative, it has a didactic function to the listener/reader. Thus, this serves to support the argument for the importance of the custom of hospitality as the narrative shows. Many more parallels exist in the Mediterranean world, but due to space and time, the research limits it to these few hoping that it has provided at least some glimpse into the context of the text and that it helps in providing a broader perspective of the overarching motif of hospitality in the text.

## **4.5. Conclusion**

This section started with a brief introduction, recapping the previous chapter (Ch. 3) which deals with *Intratextuality*, and introducing the program of chapter 4, *Intertextuality*. We understand that the term intertextuality is not an easy term to use, but it generally recognises that there is a wide range of correspondence and complex interactions between texts. As such one has to define it to suit the purpose for which one employs the term. This research, in line with several scholars takes intertextuality as an umbrella term for textual links (*cf.* Robbins, 1996; Allen, 2011; and Seri 2014). By this, it recognises the fact that intertextuality is mostly

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<sup>204</sup> Pritchard (1955:421) notes the general common parallelism that exist between the Egyptian and Hebrew literature. “The Instruction of Amen-em-opet” has a very close relation to the book of proverbs.

concerned with the reader and the text (synchronic approach) and therefore provides a perfect synthesis between synchronic and diachronic exercises. This synthesis occurs when a reader constructs the meaning of a narrative *from* the text (synchronic) and *for* the text—through an intention-bearing authorial voice (diachronic).

The notion of intertextuality emanates from the idea that a text does not function as a closed system. The assumption about the multiple layers of a text fuels the quest for intertextuality. Based on this the research considers *intertextuality as an approach to biblical texts which studies the interaction of the language in the text with ‘outside’ material and physical ‘objects’, historical events, texts, customs, values, roles, institutions, and systems.*

Having established the fact that no text is a closed system, it implies that preceding texts or traditions had some level of influence in understanding the meaning of the text. The research employs the terms ‘allusion’, ‘reference’, ‘influence’ and ‘echo’ as useful models to understand the influence of the style, language, object, customs and historical events of outside material on the text being interpreted. Using this model in the study of Genesis 18–19 reveals that Genesis 18–19 has woven in so many cultures and traditions and they are vital in understanding the meaning of the text.

Using the code of hospitality which has been identified as the golden thread which binds the narrative, together, intertextuality has revealed so many themes which are woven together within the larger Abraham cycle such as righteousness and justice, sin and its consequences, mercy and grace of God, covenant obligation, promise of posterity, sexuality and propagation. The study has revealed an intense cluster of linkages (through these themes) with the text and extending across the Old Testament and some ancient Near Eastern literature/cultures and traditions. The linkages play an important role in the narrative coordination. Apart from providing the narrative nexus, the study of intertextuality, through the parallels and resonances, invites the reader to avoid “a naïve reading” of the text. We have observed that some of the parallels couldn’t have been consciously intended by the redactor/narrator. However, several aspects of the links which are categorised as allusion points to a much deeper intent of the narrator. Thus, I propose an ironic reading which dives into the world of the narrator/redactor to see what possibly lies beneath the surface of the fine narrative.

The chapter concludes with the question of the significance of this intertextuality in understanding the rhetoric of Genesis 18 & 19. We have assumed that the textual relationship has significant clues to the literary history of the text. As a composite text, it suggests that a lot more than the preservation of the memories of older traditions happens in the process of the compilation into a coherent whole. The context of the compiler and the assumed audience of the written text must have altered the older traditions (Levin, 2001; Schmid, 2012:23). The discourses above and the ones in the previous chapter (Ch.3) provide the tools for evaluating the complex nature of the traditions that are woven into a single narrative unit. This serves as a foundation for the investigation in the next chapter. We shall endeavour to investigate these traditions under the general classification as ‘P’ and ‘non-P’ source to be able to understand the literary history. To avoid a gross generalisation, I shall converse with this study of intertextuality to analyse the social and cultural texture of Genesis 18 and 19 to enable me to situate the text in a historical period.

## *Chapter 5*

### *Social and Cultural Texture of Genesis 18 – 19*

#### **5.1. Introduction**

The preceding chapters (Ch. 3 & 4) result in a surprising realisation that the text under study is a masterpiece of literary art that exhibits an intricate network of texts' relations through certain themes and characters<sup>205</sup>. This chapter studies the implications of these relationships in terms of the contexts that shaped the text, to construct<sup>206</sup> some of the contexts of the world of ancient Israel (nature, context, and social/cultural locations and orientation towards other cultures in the text).<sup>207</sup>

The construction of the world of a text is carried through the study of its social and cultural textures. The presupposition is that social and cultural phenomena are integral to historical events. They do not deal with the history or historicity<sup>208</sup> of the event in the text, but are

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<sup>205</sup> The Old Testament itself explicate this when it attests to the fact that there are other documents which contain more information about Israel's history that are not mentioned in the Old Testament. For example, the Old Testament alludes to (1) The book of the wars of Yahweh, Numbers 21:14; (2) the book of the upright, Joshua 10:13; 2 Samuel 1:18; (3) The book of the song 1 Kings 8:53a; (4) The book of the act of Solomon, 1Kings 11:41; (5) the book of the annals of the kings of Israel 1 Kings 14:19; (6) The book of the annals of the kings of Judah 1 Kgs 14:29 (Schmid, 2012:14).

<sup>206</sup> The choice of the word 'construct' is a deliberate choice as opposed to reconstruct or even reimagine. See Lombaard (2014a:3) for the choice of the word reimagination as the currently popular and intellectually more honest language from the humanities in describing a historical quest. This research contests further that neither reconstruction nor reimagination provide a better description of the historical quest. The idea of the prefix 're' to both words presupposes awareness or familiarity or knowledge of what has been. The primary meaning of the prefix is "[w]ith the general sense of 'back' or 'again' (OED, 2016): (1) Indicating return to a previous condition. Or (2) Indicating repetition of an action. Hardly can anyone who is not a witness or part of a historical event reconstruct or reimagine it. In a historical quest, we strongly rely on testimonies of historical characters or eye witnesses. Our action on those testimonies are only a construction of our imagination of the history based on the available data.

<sup>207</sup> We will recall that in (Ch.3), we have observed that there is a growing consensus among Pentateuch scholars about the nearness in context (i.e. similarities in the nature and characteristics of the society and culture or customs) of non-P materials in the Pentateuch to that of Deuteronomistic tradition and era. We have also noted that this nearness confirms the composite nature of the Pentateuch. Perhaps the composition of the Pentateuch began earlier before the Deuteronomistic period and extends near the beginning of it or beyond and that the 'P' document must have been dated after non-P. The passage we are dealing with is characterised as non-P, although there is a little evidence of a P redactor in it (Speiser 1964: 128ff; Westermann, 1985:276, 300).

<sup>208</sup> In the previous chapter (Ch. 3), we have observed that the historicity of the narrative has been greatly contested by commentators. However, from the text itself, it is obvious that the thoughts in the text are specifically structured in historical terms. The arrangement of the narrative, beginning from the patriarchal narrative to the establishment of the monarchy, makes it very difficult to just dismiss it as a mere way of prefacing the history of Israel with the patriarchal stories. The process of the transmission of the stories was significant to the people of Israel because to them, it is a history. Through the stories, the Israelites linked their origin to the patriarchs.

concerned with “the social and cultural location of the language and the type of social and cultural world the language evokes or creates” (Robbins, 1996:71). According to Robbins (1996:71) social and cultural texture of a text emerges in three different ways:

- (1) *Specific social topics*—reveal the nature of the world in its discourse. What kind of a world do the narrators or characters of the text reveal? And what are the ways to live (to maintain or change) in that world?
- (2) *Common social and cultural topics*—deal with what the reader *perceives* from the text of the context and the world the people lived in.
- (3) *Final cultural categories*—reveal priorities among topics in the text’s discourse. And because people in different contexts negotiate these topics differently, the analysis and interpretation of the topics might reveal the cultural location and orientation of people the in the discourse towards other cultures.

It is the goal of this chapter to look at the narrative of the different socio-literary streams within the text because they show the social realities of the text’s history. But before we go on to the close examination of the pericope for its nature, context and social/cultural location and orientation, we will give an overview of the social history of ancient Israel which helps us to see the development of the society and its social and cultural phenomena. Through that we will be able to identify the characteristics of the socio-literary stream. The brief discussion of the social history is followed by an overview of the possible pre-literary history of the pericope to serve as a point of departure to the close examination of the pericope for its social and cultural texture.

## **5.2. Overview of social history of ancient Israel**

Gerstenberger (2002) outlines five different stages of Israel’s social history: the family and clan, village and small town, tribal alliances, the monarchy and, confessional and parochial community. In all the stages, he argues, there are different sociological orientations and that the different social contexts are characterised by their unique ideas of God and other theological configurations, which has different consequences for social ethics (Gerstenberger, 2002:19 *cf.* Otto, 2010:370).



### 5.2.1. The family & clan

The biblical <sup>209</sup>בית־אב means “father’s house (*cf.* HALOT, 1994:125; Jenni, 1997b:235; Wilson, 1997:656; BDB, 1906:110). The term is used to describe an extended family or the smallest and most intimate and distinctive structure of the family in Israel’s community (*cf.* Bendor 1996:1; Gravett & et al, 2008:98).<sup>210</sup> Gravett & et al (2008:98ff) explains that the word בית literally means “house”, however, בית “refers not just to a specific structure in which people live, but also encompasses everything associated with that structure, whether lands, animals, goods, or people”. On the other hand, the word אב literally translated “father”, “highlights both the centrality and the authority of the male head of the household” (Gravett & et al. 2008:102). Closely related to בית־אב is the word משפחה, literally translated “clan”. It carries the idea of extended family, i.e. a group in which there is a felt blood-relationship (Deut. 29:17). It is a subdivision of שבט/מטה ‘tribe’ (1 Sam 9:21; Numbers 36: 6), of עם ‘people’ (Num. 11:10).

In the “family and clan” (בית־אב/משפחה) social context, people live in small groups and “they keep in contact in a kinship horde [...] they must have been characterised by economic, legal and religious autonomy” (Gerstenberger, 2002:19 *cf.* Bendor, 1996:1; Faust, 2000:19; Kessler, 2008:54). The people “did not live in a hierarchical society with superiors and subordinates, but in a more or less egalitarian relationship” (Kessler, 2008:54). The head of the family or clan (the one in whom the family is always defined in reference to, i.e. the אב) is the one who is shouldered with the responsibility of maintenance of the ethics of the family or clan (Gerstenberger, 2002:19; Kessler, 2008:59, Gravett & et al, 2008:102). The extent or limit of his authority, however is unclear. As an autonomous society, it means the אב was responsible for the control of the economic, legal, and religious affairs of the בית־אב or the משפחה. Typical biblical examples of such male figures are Abraham and Job. However, Kessler (2008:54) observes that “people dwelling in such settlements—especially the somewhat larger ones—belonged to several different clans. In those cases, both kinship and neighbourhood played a role in identity and social relationship.” The fundamental economic unit in the “family and clan” period is the בית־אב (see, Faust, 2000:20).

<sup>209</sup> Most of the authors consulted used the transliteration of the term בית אב, “*beit ’ab*” or “*bet av*” . Except in a direct quotation, the research prefers to use the Hebrew form(s) in its discussion.

<sup>210</sup> See Faust (2000:29ff) for a discussion on the terms used to describe the structure of the family). He remarks that “[m]ost scholars agree that this term designates the extended family.” Examples of scholars are listed by Faust in the text.

God and religion in the family milieu shows that different households have different concepts and images of deity. They do not have a centralised monotheistic religion of Yahweh which came only later with the establishment of the national state under the monarchy. In the family milieu, individual families possibly have a particular family deity, “the god of the fathers”. Religious and cultic activities, rituals and sacrifices were carried out by the head of the household (*cf.* Gerstenberger, 2002:19–92). “The relationship to God within the family alliance is marked out by its personal character” (Gerstenberger, 2002:88).

It’s remarkable that “the narratives of the patriarchs as presented in the book of Genesis abound in references to the *beit ’ab*” (Bendor, 1996:46). The significance of the בית־אב can be seen in different spheres of Israel’s life in biblical times: for instance, in rituals (Deut. 14:22–26; 15:19–20) and everyday life (Isa 3:6; Judg. 11:2–11 and 1 Sam 2:27–33). “History, the people of Israel (Gen. 12:1; 20:13; 24:7), and even survival of the human species in the story of the Flood (Gen. 6:18; 7:1, 7) are conceived in terms of *beit ’ab* and *mišpāhā*” (Bendor, 1996:46). Notwithstanding, at different stages, the composition of the unit changes, often resulting in the changes of the structure of the unit.

### 5.2.2. Village or small towns

After family & clan, the village and small towns are the next phase of the growth of Israel’s community (Gerstenberger, 2002:20).<sup>211</sup> The social structure of the community in the village period still maintains the kinship horde. The family size in the village or rural setting is an extended family just like in the “family & clan” period. The restriction for sexual relationships in Leviticus 18 give a broad view of extended family as those whom one should not have sexual intercourse with.<sup>212</sup> The prohibitions “underline a basic sociological unit”, the בית־אב

<sup>211</sup> The idea of “small towns” may be problematic especially when we consider the argument Faust (2007:3) rendered, explaining that “Almost all that famous settlement sites in the highlands ceased to exist by the end of the Iron Age I”. He continues that “Some Iron I sites continue to exist in the Iron II, but those were, during at least most of the period, towns...” What this suggests is that there is a distinction between village and town, no matter how big a village or how small a town may be. In this regard, we will maintain the use of village as a better description of this phase of development in ancient Israel.

<sup>212</sup> The Hebrew Bible has no single word to describe these prohibitions. The English word for these prohibitions is incest (see Wulf, 2000:635; Klingbeil, 2008:40). The Bible and other ancient law codes contain (e.g. Code of Hamurabi and Hittite laws with some exception like Egypt) legislations against sexual relations with close relations (Matthews, 2003:298; Klingbeil, 2008:40). However, not only does the Old Testament have no single word for ‘incest’, its description of the incestuous relationship is less comprehensive and ambiguous (Wulf,

(Klingbeil: 2008:40). The description includes even ones' in-laws and neighbours with no blood proximity involved, Leviticus 18:20 (see Klingbeil, 2008:40). In accordance with Bendor's (1996:59) groupings of the categories of the relationship, the extended family with whom one is not to have asexual relationship "relate to three or four generations, which could be contemporaneous considering the early age of marriage". Klingbeil (2008:40) asserts this when commenting on the description of the basic sociological unit that the extent of the prohibition "could unite three to five generations and involve 50 - 100 people living in close proximity".<sup>213</sup> However, it is very difficult for one to estimate the number of those who belong to a *בית-אב*. An example can be seen in Genesis 14:14, Abraham had three hundred and eighteen (318) *trained men born in his house hold*. This is not the total number, the three hundred and eighteen are the ones trained as military. Archaeological excavation of the settlement at this period reveals an extended family kind of settlement. Although Faust (2000:19) explains that

Based on the size of the dwellings in the rural settlement, it seems quite probable that the large structures housed extended families. A family of this type could include father, mother, married sons and their children, unmarried daughters, unmarried aunts, additional relatives who for various reasons remain to dwell in the structure or moved into it, and possibly also servants, slaves and additional affiliated individuals (along with animals).

Albertz & Schmitt (2012:33ff) observe that the styles of the housing discovered at the excavated sites reveal a four-room or a three-room house. This size cannot accommodate the

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2000:635; Matthews, 2003:298; Klingbeil, 2008:40). For instance, the Old Testament contain narratives involving incestuous relationships some of which were condemned (Reuben and Bilhah Gen 35:22; Amnon and Tamar 2 Samuel 13; Absalom and his father's concubine, 2 Samuel 16:22), some had positive results (e.g. Judah and Tamar, Genesis 38:15), while others remained undefined (e.g. Lot and daughters Genesis 19:30–38). Also, ancestral narratives record marriages between close relatives (e.g. Abraham Genesis 20:2, 12; Jacob Genesis 29:23–29) and there is no reference to incestuous marriage in the Levitical material. To compound the problem, the list of the prohibition in the Leviticus (18 & 20) material contains no reference to father/daughter incest. Although scholars have different explanations for such omission (see Bendor, 1996:58; Matthews, 2003:298), the fact is that incest is complicated in the Old Testament, especially when narrators decide to remain silent when it comes to judging the act.

<sup>213</sup> Comparing the restrictions in Leviticus 18 with 20, Bendor (1996:58), observes that "[t]he justification of the prohibitions has no theological grounds (except for the introductory Leviticus 18:6); nor is there any legal punishment, a conspicuous omission when compared to the prohibitions in Leviticus. 20. The justification is social, human, and it is reasonable to assume that the set of prohibitions developed out of the needs of the kinship group crystalized overtime, and was not a premeditated composition." What this implies is that, since it is not theologically motivated, it will reach a certain context in which the need of the kinship group might require a broadening or limiting of the set of prohibitions. Wulf (2000:635) remarks that "[v]ariety in the length and focus of the biblical list suggest development in Israel's thinking about acceptable sexual conduct". For example, we have just seen how demographic changes affect the sphere of the influence of the *בית אב* between the family and clan setting and the village setting.

ideal biblical extended family (e.g. Gen. 14:14; 46:26; Ex 1:5). To provide a solution to this discrepancy between the archaeological evidence and the Biblical ideal, Albertz & Schmitt (2012:34) propose three approaches:

*The Archaeological approach:* - this strategy proposes that extended family does not necessarily mean they live in same structure, but that the nuclear families must have lived in clusters of dwellings, or compounds implying that several neighbouring houses constitutes a single joint family household. This strategy was presumed by many archaeologists (see Albertz & Schmitt 2012:34). However, Albertz & Schmitt (2012:36) note that there is no concrete archaeological support for the hypothesis apart from organizations of *Randana*, *Ai*, and *Meshash*. Even with that, the evidences presented are few and “fail to support an argument for communality... Thus, the condition under which a number of neighbouring house could constitute a single joint family household [...] remain unsolved.”

*Demographic approach:* - this strategy suggests that the size of a nuclear family is relatively small which implies that the extended family is also small. The question of growth in demography which must have influence the size of the extended family, is answered by the fact that growth is not in a unilateral trajectory. For instance, the death of the head of an extended family household would mean the family would likely disintegrate again to form nuclear families. Albertz & Schmitt (2012:38) mention the idea of constant rearrangement of the living space because of the disintegration which is supported by archaeological evidence.

*The geographical approach:* - explains that dwelling houses in village areas in southern Levant were relatively larger than those in the cities. Also, there was strong evidence of interrelations within towns (village). Villages, therefore, are considered as cooperated units. The third strategy explains the argument that the family structure in urban areas was often disrupted. So, if the villages were much larger, it proves the point that the basic structural unit in the village/rural settlement was the extended family.

Notwithstanding, growth inevitably necessitates changes in the jurisprudence, religion and cult. “In religion and the cult, common obligations towards the higher powers were reorganised [...] A larger group of people requires more social investment and *internal scrutiny*” (Gerstenberger, 2002:20f emphasis added). Family heads played significant roles in making

necessary negotiations in matters demanding necessary cooperation between groups (Deut. 21:1–9; Judg. 8:4–17; Ru 4:1–12). In matters that transcend the family, local authorities (a non-formal group of elders, often family representatives and men of the city) were responsible. In such a situations, matters were usually discussed informally at the gate or the open air by the men or at the well by women. Their duty was to provide the right solution to any matter for the common interest for the village (Gerstenberger, 2002:20f; Kessler, 2008:60). Therefore, there was a very significant change in the process of decision making. More people were involved because there was no central figure who decides as in the case of family and clan. Where men of the city were involved, often the outcome of the decision or judgment seems unfavourable. In our discussion of intertexture, we have identified the example of Judges 8: 4–17 as a parallel text to the denial of hospitality. Coincidentally, the text is an example of a period where the elders and men of the city make decisions in matters such as presented. Unfortunately, the men of the city (the men of Succoth and Penuel) both fail to take the right decision regarding justice.

### **5.2.3. The tribal alliance**

Tribal alliance is said to be complex;<sup>214</sup> it had developed among nomads, and it was grounded in blood kinship but aliens were also incorporated. Cross (1998:11) describes the tribal alliance “as fragile social entity, dependant on the so-called sodalities, that is, kinship, religious, and military associations... coming into being when tribal societies are threatened by external and internal pressure that threatened their security and peace.” Maintenance of security (protection of the individual and the entire community) in a tribal alliance was a mutual responsibility. “The tribe is predominantly a grouping which presents itself to the outside world, leaving the families and clans quite untouched” (Gerstenberger, 2002:22).

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<sup>214</sup> The complexity of the tribal alliance period is indicative of the significance of the period. Gerstenberger (2002:111) remarks: “Old testament scholars have attached great importance to the specific characteristics of the tribal alliance in Israel and the distinctive, indeed unique characteristics associated with it – this is a time – conditioned theological perspective which even today has some slight influence.” Kessler (2008:54) observes that the tribal alliance is complex and that “[t]he existence of tribes cannot be established from archaeology. It is difficult to define a tribe ethnologically.” Because of this Kessler says “I have avoided describing pre-state Israel as a “tribal society”. This research identifies this complex phase as the transition period from the village and the tribal alliance phase to the development into urban or city settings (Faust, 2000:20). This assertion can be discerned from the archaeological discoveries with almost a lack of continuity from the Iron I period type of settlement at the end of the period (Iron I). Settlements were almost nonexistent, and those that continued, had completely changed into towns, which is perhaps the reason for Kessler’s remark that it is complex (*cf.* Faust, 2007).

Leadership in tribal alliance was not clearly defined. Kessler (2008:60) is not sure whether there was a form of traditional authority in the tribal setting. That the Old Testament is silent about that, and that the silence in the text is rather eloquent. Although, there were figure heads called the Judges, their tasks were immediate situation and “their exercise of authority is very limited” (Kessler, 2008:61). The lack of clearly defined leadership in the period of the coalition resulted to what the writer(s) of the book of Judges summarised, that everyone did what was right in their own eyes. This is a kind of situation that Genesis 19 is describing. “There was no public central authority with the power to impose sanctions” (Kessler, 2008:60). The setting of Sodom (a league, comprising all the men of the city, young and old), fits the tribal alliance.

It is very important to note that the formation of tribal alliance “consist in the first place in mutual obligation for protection and vengeance, and perhaps also—as in local community—in religious ties” (Gerstenberger, 2002:21). This has a direct implication on how the deity is conceived at this period. Likewise, religious activity at the tribal alliance takes shape from the motivation that brought about the alliance. Gerstenberger (2002:130) says that one can infer from this motivation that “the essential cultic activities of the tribes of Israel [is] in the sphere of waging war.” There could be several reasons that caused armed conflict but it is beyond the scope of this research to deal with them. Suffice it to say as Gerstenberger (2002:131) puts, “accepted signals and rites with religious basis were needed to set the tribal apparatus of war in motion”. First of this apparatus often is the appointment or the choice of who to lead and some of the criteria have marked religious features to legitimise the appointment.

The nature of the alliances suggests that the tribes were certainly independent in religion because as Gerstenberger (2002:136) says “the tribal organization in Israel [...] was a loose, higher form of society which developed its religious rituals beyond the personal level on the basis of a fictitious kinship (a shared ancestor)”. “As social units become larger, kinship ties become increasingly dysfunctional as the basis for the larger group” Cross (1998:7). The god(s) of the tribal alliance function in accordance with demand for protection of the tribal members from external evaders. The attribute of Yahweh as a warrior god (יהוה צבאות) in the Hebrew Bible directly connects with the intent of the formation of the tribal alliance.

### 5.2.4. The monarchy

The rise of the monarchy in Israel runs parallel to the urban development. Increase in the demographic composition presents different needs and challenges, among others, the potential for strife (*cf.* Gravett & et al, 2008:100). “Many settlements became cities of various sorts, a considerable number of which were administrative centers” (Faust, 2000:21 & references cited). Thus, it affects the mode of settlement, production and social interaction. With an increase in population density and its accompanying changes, kinship base structure gave way to class division.<sup>215</sup> The structure of the family changes from the extended family to a smaller size, akin to what the Western world would call the nuclear family. “The large number of inhabitants would have required more options for the separation, segregation, and privacy, especially between the different nuclear family” (Faust 2000:20). The nuclear family then became the basic social and economic unit in the city. Cross (1998:7) reports that

‘No one is likely to deny the constant importance of real kinship in ancient Near East cultures. ... Nevertheless, the function of real kinship ties in society is so limited that something larger is needed, particularly as population density increases and social conflicts become more complex’.

Returning to the class system just mentioned, Master (2001:123) explains that

These class divisions could not be sustained on their own without some force to keep the exploited class in line, and so the dominant class developed state structures to enforce its own ideology, to maintain its status as the economic elite. Reflecting new class-based realities, those in power replaced previous kin-based divisions with territorial groupings.

The rise of the monarchy raises the urgent need for a central cult system for the kingdom to legitimize the power (Gerstenberger, 2002:23). In Joshua 24, all the families and clans and tribes of Israel gathered and renewed a covenant allegiance to a more centralised cult of Yahweh at Shechem.

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<sup>215</sup> Development of a state or city is tied to a theory of a stratified society. (See Master, 2001:124 and references cited). It is based on the fact that “In an earlier egalitarian society, very few mechanisms, apart from natural genetic ties were necessary to maintain the social structure. The rise of one kin group over the others and the transition from communal to private property, however, require structures to maintain the division of power and property... Kinship structures were not powerful enough to maintain the stratified society, the stratified society almost inevitably formed state structures of authority”

The Bible's description of the process of how Israel got a king has an ambivalent expression of acceptance and rejection. With the establishment of the covenant relationship at Sinai through Moses, it is assumed that Israel does not need a human king. However, the Old Testament in Genesis 17:16, 49:10 and Deuteronomy 17:14–20 anticipated the need/demand for one in the future, so in the book of Deuteronomy, Moses commanded the Israelites to appoint one, giving them the criteria for doing so and exhorting them to follow God. At the time of the establishment of the monarchy, the Bible portrays the people as being tired of the loose and more chaotic system of the village and the tribal alliance led by elders, judges and prophets. They needed a more centralised authority. They approached Samuel, and the narratives record that Samuel was not happy with their request; he views their request as sin (1 Sam 12:17-20). Samuel consulted God and God expresses disappointment on the people's lack of faith and interpreted their request as rejection of the covenant (1 Sam 8:7; 10:19; 12:12). God instructed Samuel to give them a king. After warning the people, Samuel gave in to their request. Saul's kingship was established and afterwards, there were subsequent dynasties in Israel.

The establishment of the monarchy resulted in the breakdown of the kinship based structure (Bendor, 1996:207; Cross, 1998:7), authority shifted to the king who became the central administrator of the political, judicial and social affairs of the community, while the priests oversaw the religious affairs of the centralised cult of Yahweh. Put differently, the territorial grouping that Master (2001) mentions (cited above) is the polarisation of the minority of rich folks versus the majority of poor, often dispossessed farmers. The question of identity also changes from one's *בית־אב* to a locality thus undermining the *בית־אב* (*cf.* Bendor, 1996:208–215; Cross, 1998:7). The undermining of the *בית־אב* can be seen in the internal dynamic emanating from the pressure of the socio-economic differentiation among the *בית־אב*. Against such a struggle, the problem of the fatherless, the widow, and the stranger can be understood. The family unit now is small, the passing away of the head of the family means that there would be no one to stand for their course. And in most situations, they were exploited (Isa 5:8; Mic. 6:16). And a stranger in this kind of setting is left out because his or her sense of identity is not connected to any of the unit; he/she is the 'other' (Bendor, 1996:222).



### 5.2.5. Confessional and parochial community

The last epoch of the biblical historical frame are the confessional and parochial communities. This age refers to the period when the monarchy and the temple ceased to exist in Israel due to exile in 722 BCE in the Northern Kingdom, and 587 BCE in the Southern Kingdom. The biblical account in Kings and Jeremiah narrate the calamities that befell Judah, the southern Kingdom. It records the end of the monarchical rule and the destruction of the temple. Many of the temple officials, the military officials and other administrators and noble-men were executed by the Babylonians who laid siege to the city. Some of the young people and the nobles and priests who survived the massacre were exiled to Babylon, leaving behind the old, the weak and the poor as survivors and mainly to serve as vine dressers (2 Kgs 25:7–26; Jer. 39:1–10; 40:1–44:30; 52:1–16).

The end of the monarchy through the exile experience affected the lives of the survivors and the exiled both during and after the exile. It is not easy to assess the level of the impact that the change must have had on both the remnant and the deportees. Noteworthy are the reflections by many scholars about the intensive religious and literary activities of the exiles (McNutt, 1999:186ff). It is believed that the Babylonian settlement policy of the deportees did not so much affect the identity of the exiled. Gottwald (1992a:45) asserts that “[...] the Neo-Babylonians appear to have kept the Judahite political prisoners in homogeneous communities which were granted some measure of self-government”. The exiled were conscious and concerned about their sense of group identity, something that the remnant were less concerned about. “The importance of maintaining a separate identity while living among the Babylonians may have contributed to the priestly emphasis in the biblical traditions on markers of social identity such as circumcision, Sabbath observance, and dietary laws” (McNutt, 1999:187).

The epoch deals with the nature of the community after the Babylonian exile. A different form of organisation emerged that “naturally took over traditions related to families, clans and tribes” (Gerstenberger, 2002:23). The question of maintenance of identity coupled with the occupation of the land by the remnant in Judah must have been the cause of conflict when the returnees arrived back in Judah. The structure and the institution that legitimised the central administration during the monarchy was no longer intact at the return of the exiles. The monarchy was not reinstated and although the Bible records that the leader of the first group

of returnees and the one who championed the rebuilding of the temple (Sheshbazzar and/or Zerubbabel<sup>216</sup>) came from the Davidic dynasty, the monarchy was not re-established (Matthews 2002). The Temple and priesthood had to be rebuilt, but even after the rebuilding of the temple, it was “by itself incapable of securing the cohesion and future of the postexilic Israel in the precarious political situation after the failure to restore the national state” (Alberty, 1994b:464). It is highly possible that the question of the everlasting covenant made with the dynasty of David was paramount. Were there efforts to re-institutionalise the dynasty? What about the cult institution? Now that the temple and the priestly guild are not prominent, how was religious affairs conducted? What about the judicial system? What was the social structure of the community? In other words, one could say that there is a new struggle of reestablishment or reconstruction of a Jewish community.

The biblical accounts of the events of the restoration in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah give clues to the political, economic, social and religious ordeals of both the returnees and the survivors. Both Ezra and Nehemiah describe the one time urban and city state of Judah as lying in ruins (Ez. 9:9; Neh. 2:3, 17).<sup>217</sup> They were returning to the land to rebuild. The rebuilding is not only the reconstruction of the physical structures; it includes the reestablishment of the local religion and political institutions and this presupposes the pushing of ideologies and theologies that might legitimise any action of the returnees’ national reconstruction (see Alberty, 1994b:465).<sup>218</sup> The struggle and difficulties for the national reconstruction is what characterises the period.<sup>219</sup> There were internal conflicts between the returnees and the native

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<sup>216</sup> Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel are probably one and the same person. He was the son and/or the grandson of Jehoiachin, the last King who was deported to Babylon. In Ezra 1:8, he is the prince of Judah who received articles that were taken out of the temple at Jerusalem, while in Ezra 5:14, he was made governor of Judah who came and laid the foundation of the temple.

<sup>217</sup> Contrary to this biblical view are some archaeological discoveries that suggest that the remnant had some glimpses of prosperity (McNutt, 1999:186).

<sup>218</sup> McNutt (1999:191), reporting on a model associated with institution building in empires, says that “humans tend to use ideology, power and material resources in constructing the boundaries of social systems...regulative mechanisms such as bureaucracies, laws, and rituals are also necessary. Such constructed social boundaries are reinforced by institutions, which in turn are dependent on the level and distribution of resources. In their struggle for control of resources, society’s elites, using ideology and rhetoric, are able to exercise control through institutions as well as by coercion. The resulting inequality in access to resources on the part of elites to maintain control and enforce the boundaries they have constructed.”

<sup>219</sup> However, the struggle for reinstatement of the statehood of Israel seems not to agree with the unilateral trajectory of the theory of state establishment, from kin-based to tribe to state. In certain contexts, there is a kind of forward and backward movement where groups of people move from tribe to state to tribe again with surprising frequency. Master (2001) suggests another approach for understanding such a phenomenon in state formation (the

inhabitants. It is highly speculated that a lot of editing of the Jewish scriptures must have taken place to address this internal strife between the native inhabitants and the immigrants. Albertz (1994b:466) submits that “the course adopted in the early postexilic period was the canonization of the Pentateuch.” Reading the book of Ezra and Nehemiah reveals that the conflict is not only between the returnees and the remnant, there are also traces of serious conflict on the real identity of the returnees, who is a real Jew.<sup>220</sup>

In terms of population and settlement patterns, Judah and Jerusalem at this period can be described as periphery or semi periphery of the Persian colony. McNutt (1999:192 *cf.* Kessler, 2008:155) describes Judah as a secondary state, being re-urbanized and with a reintroduction of urban elites. This brings about significant changes in Judah’s social, political, and cultural character and was often in favour of those who had experienced the Babylonian and Persian exile. In terms of settlement patterns, it is highly speculated that the Persian policy encouraged “ruralisation” which served as a means of creating tax (McNutt, 1999:195). Reciprocity was a possible system of market exchange at that period. Local markets however, were prevented from being incorporated into long distance trade works for the sake of economic security (*cf.*

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Weberian Patrimonial Model). The theory focuses “on how individual societies view the nature of law, authority, and legitimacy.” The theory is not concerned about size, economic advancement, material distribution. To the proponents of this theory, “society can fluctuate between sedentary and pastoralist with little change in the way that relationship between ruler and ruled is conceived” (Master, 2001:128). The collapse of a state like society, based on this model does not necessarily entail major systemic collapse. A society may attain a different status in terms of growth in population for some period without necessarily changing the kin-based or tribal based authority structure. Master (2001:127) explains that “the pattern in Middle East was for a group of tribes to conquer quickly, to establish a dynasty and, within four generations, to be overcome by a new group of tribes, returning the original tribes to their former status. But in addition, once the jump to statehood has been made, even in the presence of large empires or of modern state structures, tribal ties are still active throughout society.”

<sup>220</sup> McNutt (1999:189 *cf.* Albertz, 1994b:466, 494) observes, “The impact of the Persian rule on Judean society and religion appears to have been stronger during Darius’s reign. He is believed, for example, to have sponsored the publication of laws through the empire and, therefore, possibly to have supported the codification of the Jewish law...Darius’s policies also allowed for the Jerusalem temple to be rebuilt. According to the biblical traditions, he sent Zerubbabel to Judah to act as governor of Jerusalem, accompanied by Joshua, who had been appointed high priest, (520 B.C.E.)” He observes that the social inequalities that exist in establishment of institution in an empire result in a social complexity which further leads to a high degree of stratification. It leads to the establishment of a class of imperial political elites. “The growth of such an elite’s class eventually results in a clearly delineated center and periphery and the development of multiple autonomous centers. Normally the cities of the empires form the area in which the elite and their new power bases are concentrated, and traditional authority continues to operate in the more rural agricultural areas. Peripheral colonies, according to some models, often consist of rudimentary states that lack sufficient authority of imperial center. Peripheral colonies nevertheless maintain some local control, although the authority of their leaders is based ... symbolic forms of legitimation such as religion” (McNutt, 1999:191).

Bendor, 1996:213). Control and ownership of land was the most desirable commodity for ancient elites.

On land ownership and redistribution of wealth in Judah, there were a lot of conflicts on land between the returnees and the natives. The primary social unit at this period is assumed to be much larger than the *בית-אב*, perhaps several households came together to form the basic primary social unit known as the *בית-אבות* or perhaps say *משפחה*. McNutt (1999:197, 198) remarks that “towns were the center of economic activity, and together the temple and the town formed a loose horizontal network of the interacting and counterbalancing institution” But before the rebuilding of the temple, it is possible that the *בית-אבות* or the *משפחה* were responsible for all political, economic, and religious matters. Simply said, the structure of the social organization is a complex one. There are elements of continuity with the sphere of authority in the hands of the elders and the size of the primary unit changes to much bigger size, the *בית* *משפחה* or *אבות*.

Having surveyed the social history of ancient Israel, we shall turn to the history of the development of the text. In which period can we locate the traditions that are found in the text? Knight (2006:57) says “It is not enough to execute solely the literary–critical analysis of all text. The pre-history of the content must of necessity also be investigated.” It has been observed that most of the composition of the Old Testament narratives, particularly Genesis, took place at the pre-literary stage.<sup>221</sup> This is based on the assumption that traditionists in the early “*Sitz im Leben*” were capable of carrying out the artistic work of gathering originally individual and independent units which have the same characters, similar themes, and similar historical occurrences into small cycles (Knight, 2006:65).<sup>222</sup> The research, therefore, briefly surveys the history of the pre-literary stage of the biblical text to serve as a point of departure for the discourse of literary history.

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<sup>221</sup> By pre-literary, it means the period of oral tradition. History and religious text were communicated orally.

<sup>222</sup> It is believed that oral tradition: (1) Played an important role in the formative and early transmittal stages of the Old Testament literature (2) Served religious, practical, recreational, explanatory purposes in Israel. (3) Valuable source of historical, ethnological, and cultic information. (4) Was the creative stage of much of the literature, and traditions could still be united into circle or small compositions still at the oral level.

### 5.3. Possible pre-literary periods

We have noted in our previous chapter that the identification of subunits and the textual links with other ancient literature suggests independent stages of development of the composition. In this section, we have grouped the narratives based on their types and discuss their possible pre-literary historical characteristics.

Westermann (1980:57ff; *cf.* Boorer, 1992:59ff) is of the opinion that the formative period of the ‘promise’ narrative was early in the pre-literary period. Commenting on the motifs that occupy the promise tradition, he says: “Undoubtedly the dominance of these motifs—birth and death, children and parents—*suggests an important cycle of narratives whose origin go back to the earliest days of the Israelite people*” (emphasis added). Akin to this, Westermann (1980:58–64) identifies in our text echoes of earlier forms of the narratives in some of the units:

1. Genesis 18:1–16; 19:30–38 in their pre-literary stage is identified as a category of family stories. Westermann (1980:60) note that even though these units in their current form have been substantially altered, their ancient pre-literary form can be recognised. In view of the intertextuality in Chapter 4, the promise of a child for example, portrays the characteristics of an ancient stage of the family story that describes a distress situation and its alleviation through God’s intervention. It is assumed that the story must have existed independently in the Mediterranean/Near East where offering plays an important role in terms of the relationship between the gods and the people (see Bolin, 2004:38ff). Gen. 18:1–16 and 19:30–38, therefore, can be located in a context of a small group of nomadic herdsmen, with familial structure, before their transition to a settled agriculture (see Gerstenberger, 2002:19; Berlejung, 2012:99f). Gertz (2012:253) opines that (since the text has been ascribed to the Yahwist) the Yahwist documents have often been brought into connection with the Solomonic Empire in the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Therefore, “Dating the Yahwistic document in the Solomonic period thus implies that the actual formation of Pentateuch traditions [and invariably our narrative units] happened in the pre-monarchic period” (Gertz, 2012:253).
2. Genesis 18:17–33 is another unit which records a divine conversation. In this section, there exists what Westermann (1985:286) identifies as a “theological enquiry” into the justice of

God. He identified three points of reference: (a) The zeal for the justice of God is a dominant theme in proverbs and belongs to the postexilic period. (b) The concern about the doubt cast on the justice of God also has a clear background in the book of Job. (c) Similar questions about Yahweh's actions in history are found in several other passages in the Old Testament, Ezekiel 14:12–20; Jeremiah 18:7–10; Jonah 3–4. Intertextual links (Chapter 4) are suggestive of its pre-literary stage. However, this research is not oblivious of the fact that, contrary to what Westermann says, these theological concerns should not be limited to the experience of the fall of nations alone. The questions are constantly recurring questions in the history of human existence, in personal as well as national situations.

3. Genesis 18:1–29 contains pre-literary elements in its link to the flood narrative in Genesis 6-9 and Near Eastern texts like *Atrahasis*. Westermann (1985:299) remarks that “[t]he structure of Gen. 19 shows that it has arisen out of motif of different origin”. Thus, we might say the stories probably belong to the same milieu as those parallel biblical texts and ancient Near Eastern texts.

The discussion in this section provides clues to the history of the development of the text. The different socio-literary streams within the text serve as pointers to the emerging social realities of the text's history. Being aware that we are dealing with the text in a canon, the possible pre-literary study opens a broad spectrum for dating the texts and to possibly locate certain ideological and theological intent which will be the subject of the next chapter. In this regard we ask, how do these traditions fit together in this single narrative? How are they functioning now that they are set in a different context? In other words,

Can the diverse episodes that make up the sequence of events effectively contribute to the sustaining of a narrative? How effectively are the components part interwoven? Is the resultant story successful in narrative terms? How do the structure, language and symbolism operate in achieving the integrated end product?” (Letellier, 1995:27).

To this, I shall dialogue with *Intratexture* and *Intertexture* in the analysis of the social and cultural texture to understand features of the traditions maintained and changed in the text.

## 5.4. Social and cultural texture of Genesis 18 & 19

A text, either oral or written, is not a neutral medium of communication. A text is part of a society and culture<sup>223</sup> and *the* investigation of its social and cultural texture, as Robbins (1996:71) observes, “includes exploring the social and cultural ‘location’ of the language and the type of social and cultural world the language evokes”. In this section, we are focusing on the previous textures studied in Chapters 3 and 4, to examine the similarities and differences in the parallel texts to help us in the analysis of the possible social and cultural context of the text. In the categories of intertexture in Chapter 4, we have classified the text’s relationships as reference, echo, allusion, and influence. We shall be reviewing the passage through the lenses of social and cultural textures as categorised by Robbins (1996) as - specific social topics—revealing the religious nature and the world from which the text emanates; - common social and cultural topics—revealing the context of the composer or redactor; and - final cultural categories—understanding the priorities in the text’s discourse of topics. Through the revelation of these priorities, we shall investigate the theologies and ethics that the writer or narrator addresses. How does the writer negotiate these priorities? What are the similarities and differences and why?

In retrospect, we started with recognising the consensus on the well-structured nature of the book of Genesis in Chapter 3. Also, by way of establishing a starting point to the socio-rhetorical interpretation, we have observed the need for a provisional beginning and ending of the selected text where we observed that most scholarly voices agree on the unity of the two chapters. We have also established a preliminary demarcation of the two chapters as a literary unity. In Chapter 4, we have briefly looked at the literary characteristic of the text and have noted that on the storyline of the selected passage, there are similarities and parallels that exist between the two major divisions of the text in terms of content and structure (*cf.* Westermann, 1985:299; Wenham, 1994:40).

This research, however, takes this comparison further to closely examine the similarities of the details to see the classification of the relationship in terms of social and cultural texture. The

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<sup>223</sup> For the sake of cohesion and flow of thought, we will not define culture here. We will do that where it is more appropriate.

research is of the opinion that these similarities and differences thereof cannot be taken for granted as scribal choices, but that they are indicative of the social or cultural context of the specific units of the text.<sup>224</sup> We will also look at the implications of the intertextuality with other biblical texts and the ancient Near East, to see the extent to which we can evoke the social and cultural context in the parallel text.

Most of the authors (Wenham, 1994; Letellier, 1995) who presented the parallel outline between the two chapters did so either to show the organisational structure of the units (so Wenham, 1994:44) or as an argument for the internal unity of the passage (so Letellier, 1995:39). Using this as a point of departure, this research contends that the style which Wenham calls “two parallel panels”, may be a clue to understanding the social and cultural textures in the text. They reveal the ‘specific social topic’, ‘common social and cultural categories’ and, ‘final cultural categories’. But before we do this, it is appropriate to define culture so that one is able to distinguish the aspects of it in the discourse.

#### 5.4.1. What is culture?

Clifford Geertz, an anthropologist, defines culture from a dimension of religious analysis. Geertz (1973:89) lamented on “a certain aura of ill repute” which the term ‘culture’ has acquired in social anthropological circles. This, he says, was due to the multiplicity of its referents and the vagueness with which it has too often been evoked. Geertz (1973:89) proffered a less ambiguous concept in which he says culture “[...] denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.”<sup>225</sup> The major terms—meaning, symbols and

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<sup>224</sup> To avoid repetition of the story and duplication of the content of the intratexture and intertexture, we will only take those areas of concern to discuss the relevant observations.

<sup>225</sup> Geertz (1973:89) continued that “[o]f course, terms such as ‘meanings,’ ‘symbol,’ and ‘conception’ cry out for explanation. But that is precisely where the widening, the broadening, and the expanding come in.” He then goes on to elaborate on “meaning” which he says is a philosophical concept of our time and “sign, symbol, denotation, signification, communication... are our ...intellectual... stock in trade”. Talking about meaning, Geertz (1973:89) says “sacred symbols function to synthesize a people’s ethos”, meaning that they serve as vehicle for comprehension. The Old Testament itself is such a kind of symbol. We have mentioned repeatedly, that one of the vehicles for understanding the selected text is by looking at it from the canonical perspective (see Dearman, 1992:2).



conceptions—contained in the definition are pointers to what readers should look for in this discourse of social and cultural textures of the Genesis 18 and 19. This implies that we are looking for material objects such as altars and divine images, and ritual activities such as prayer and sacrifices. “Human communication clothes itself in symbolic action. [...] and culture is the social context in which human activity communicates meaning (Dearman, 1992:2).<sup>226</sup> This now leads us to the question of the significance of these symbolic actions. To use the words of Geertz (1973:10), “what it is: ridicule or challenge, irony or anger, snobbery or pride that, in their occurrence and through their agency, is getting said”. These are agencies that are employed as a means through which personal attitudes are cast into public form. We will later discuss these as agencies or literary devices which ideology draws upon.

I would like to approach hospitality as being the focal point and the interpretive background of the research as that aspect of culture (symbolic action) employed by the narrator for an understanding of life in postexilic Israel. We have seen how Genesis 18 & 19 are intricately woven around two stories of hospitality with parallels in terms of structure, themes and characters. We begin the probe by asking how these double strands of hospitality stories accomplish the intentions suggested by the literary devices mentioned?

The study of the social and cultural texture below ascertains the validity of the inferences that this research draws from the double strands of the hospitality stories. In the detailed analysis of both intratexture and intertexture the similarities and the differences point to a hidden intention. This hidden intent reveals the major significance of the narrative. The study suggests an ironic intention behind the parallel stories in Genesis 18 and 19. In the next chapter, we will revisit our definition of irony in Chapter 1, to elaborate and to see how hospitality as symbolic action accomplishes that. But first, the analysis of the social and cultural textures.

#### **5.4.2. Specific social topic**

Specific social topic in a text concerns the text’s religious way of portraying its world. “The topics of interest and concern in any one religious text may establish a relation to the world significantly different from another text” (Robbins, 1996:72). Specific social topics are

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<sup>226</sup> In the definition of culture by Geertz above lies the seed of ideology. For Geertz (1973:193–233), ideology is a cultural system.

religious responses to its world. These responses are different perspectives on the meaning of life or as Geertz (1973:242) explains, the responses try to answer the question, what system of meaningful symbols are to be employed to add value and significance to activities of state's life to give "meanings, values, traditions, convictions, rituals, beliefs and convictions to people (cf. Robbins, 1996:72). Seven broad basic approaches of organizing data from a wide variety of religious groups have been adopted by Robbins (1996:72–74) in the discussion of *specific social topics*. Robbins applies the taxonomy in the studies of the New Testament literature and it "reveals the kinds of cultures earliest Christianity nurtured and maintained in the first-century Mediterranean world." We will apply the same taxonomy to the text of ancient Israel to be able to understand its culture. The seven taxonomies of organizing data are as follows: 'conversionist', 'revolutionist', 'introversionist', 'gnostic-manipulationist', 'thaumaturgical', 'reformist', and 'utopian'<sup>227</sup>. Not all are applicable in every situation; therefore, this research analyses the text to identify which specific social responses are contained in it.

#### **5.4.2.1. The utopian social response to the social and cultural setting.**

Genesis 18:1 and 19:1 presents a *cultural echo* in connection to the "sitting" at the entrance of the tent or gate. Most scholars have focused attention on the similarity and the cultural

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<sup>227</sup> **Conversionist:** views the world as corrupt because people are corrupt. The world can be changed only when people are changed. By change it means having a new subjective orientation to the world because of the effect of a profound and supernatural transformation of the human self.

**Revolutionist:** a response that suggests that only the destruction of the natural world and the social order or the recreation of it through a supernatural power can save people from the corrupt world. God's people often view themselves as God's instruments in overturning the world through words of testimony of their faith.

**Introversionist:** they view the world as irredeemably evil and therefore need to withdraw (either individually or as a social movement) from it to clean itself of its corruption to establish a separate holy community.

**Gnostic-Manipulationist:** is a kind of social response that seeks a transformed method of coping with evil by *learning* the right means and improved techniques to deal with their problems.

**Thaumaturgical:** is an individual social response that concerns a request for a relief from the present and specific ills through a special dispensation. The application of salvation is for a specific case and its likes and usually deals with healing, assuagement of grief, restoration after loss, reassurance, foresight and avoidance of calamity and the guarantee of continuity of life after death.

**Reformist:** is a response that views the world as corrupt because the social structures are corrupt. Salvation according to this social response is the effort to change the structures so that the behaviour and practices they sanction are also changed. The divine is to give the insight in the investigation of how these social organizations will be corrected. People with open minds and hearts towards supernatural influence are given the insight of the knowhow of the alterations to be made on the social structure.

**Utopian:** is a response that "seeks to reconstruct the entire social world according to divinely given principles, rather than simply to amend it from a reformist position." The *utopian* social response seeks to establish new social organisation that will eliminate evil. The focus is on the people to recreate the world.

implication of sitting at the entrance of the tent or gate of the city.<sup>228</sup> But there is a significant contrast which went unnoticed in their analysis of the parallel panel in these two verses. Genesis 18:1 says *וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּפֶתַח הַתְּהֹמָה* “and he [Abraham] (was) sitting (at) the *door of his tent*” while Genesis 19:1 says *וַיֵּשֶׁב לֹט בְּפֶתַח סְדֹם* “and Lot was sitting by the *gate of Sodom*.” Two settings are being contrasted here, the setting at Mamre is rural and quite different from the setting at Sodom which is a city. This contrast can be viewed as *social and cultural allusion or reference* to the social-cultural setting of the ancient jurisprudence (*cf.* Leuchter, 2005:94). The description of Mamre is that of an ancient nomad/rural setting. Westermann (1985:276) spotted the difference; for Mamre, he says: “We look into the unhurried, intimate, simple life of a small community: the tent, the tree, the old man, the old woman, the strangers. We are a long way here from the later life of the royal court with its justice at the gate and the temple.” While for Sodom he remarks: “Mention of the gate, the place where court hearings and trade and traffic take place, shows the difference from the scene in Ch. 18” (1985:300f), Sodom was a city (see Gen. 18:22–32). Also, Letellier (1995:60), says “[t]he details of the place where Abraham and Lot are respectively sitting, the invitation is either to rest under a tree or to enter a house to spend the night, the different meals provided by both hosts, emphasize that Abraham is a nomad resting with his animals, while Lot is a city-dweller.”

This contrast invites the readers at the time of the formulation of this text, who is probably experiencing changes in the socio-historical setting, to evaluate the two settings presented in the two stories and to make decisions based on what may be applicable in their context. In terms of the juridical and social order, the administration and dispensing of justice from the family setting is simple. The head of the family, in this case Abraham, was in charge. While in the second story, it was advanced and complex. It was a city setting reminiscent to a royal court and with it a justice system at the city gates and temple. With this, it is obvious that the double strand of the stories of hospitality, especially the inversion of it, could be a rhetorical strategy. We assume that the audience were experiencing some kind of transition and that the writer, by

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<sup>228</sup> City gates in the Old Testament time have several functions. The primary function is to control access to the city for security and defence. Other purposes include: site for justice, place of assembly (regular gathering for commerce and social interaction (2 Kgs 7:1), and place for some cultic activity. Prophets call for justice and deliver their oracles at the gate (1Kgs 22:10; Am 5:15; Jer. 17:19; Neh. 8:1). The idea of sitting at the gate by elders or prominent figures is often connected to the process of dispensing of justice (Deut. 21:9; 22:15, 24) and legal transactions (Gen 23; Ru 4:1–14) (Drinkard Jr, 2007:522–534).

presenting these two stories was possibly challenging them to think as they communicated, perpetuated, and developed their knowledge and attitudes toward life in the new setting. In terms of the administration and dispensing of justice, what is the writer saying? This research proposes a *utopian social response*, and before we discuss what it is, we need to understand the ancient Near Eastern juridical system.<sup>229</sup>

In most ancient Near Eastern societies (like Egypt, Mesopotamia, Assyria and Hittite), the king is the embodiment of the law. However, in Judah and Greece, legal systems developed independently of kings. Laws in the Old Testament only “became *Torah* of God after a long process of theologization” (Otto, 2010:370). As to the origin of the laws in the Old Testament, Otto (2010:370) remarks that it remains disputed. However, it is believed that the two distinct forms of law (casuistic and apodictic) are rooted in judicial procedures in settling family conflicts at a local court. But before the establishment of the court system, how did Israel carry out their judicial processes? We have seen in an overview of the social history of ancient Israel how maintenance of the social order from the family setting changes as the nature of the community also changes from one state of the development, say from small to large units and into a complex setting and sometimes back to the simple family unit. This narrative suggests that the audience were experiencing similar changes in the administration and maintenance of order in their social setting. By juxtaposing the presumably model story of hospitality in Genesis 18 with the ironically inverted story in Genesis 19, the narrator portrays two distinct cultures and how each impacted the community. Having proposed a utopian social response as one of the goals of the contrast, the characteristics of the two settings according to this social response are as follows:

Genesis 18:1-15 presents a model of a social order, a system characterised by a family setting where social balance and cohesion, especially in terms of protection from external threat (from

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<sup>229</sup> Generally, in the history of religion, law is often understood as a codified rule of life and coexistence. The codified rule can refer to principles of nature (natural law) or norms of action (commandment). Both natural law and commandment are believed to have been given by God through his messengers or founders of religion (see Kassa 2014). From a philosophical point of view, the justification of law and legislation places more emphasis on the nature of the human being, reason and/or social consensus (Michaels, 2010:368f). In the Old Testament Jurisprudence, law is the instrument of cohesion; it functions in settling conflicts so that coercion and violence are minimized. It also functions in stabilising behaviour in a socially acceptable action through sanctioning norms. The Old Testament contains examples of codified laws which have received the status of religious laws and rituals and are to be obeyed. These religious laws and rituals developed in accordance to the stages of the development of the religion of the *Yehud*.

human foes), is maintained through a central figure (Abraham). Abraham “will command his children and his household after him and to keep the way of Yahweh by doing righteousness and justice” (18:19). In contrast, the writer presents another setting that ironically inverts this family setting (Gen. 19:1–9). The story is set in a family setting at first, but then the influence of a new system impacts the family setting. The writer reports that while the messengers were enjoying the hospitality of Lot’s family, the “men of the city” came to the house in tumult requesting Lot to bring out the men that came to him. This demand violates the social order (*cf.* Letellier, 1995:147). Lot’s action is understood by many commentators (e.g. Westermann, 1985:301; Wenham, 1994:56) as a desperate effort to protect his guests, however, he went to the extreme. Beyond this and from the *utopian* social response, the fact that Lot is neither commended nor condemned in the narrative and editorial comment (Wenham, 1994:60), suggests a portrayal of the entire context of Sodom as evil (Gen. 13:13; 18:20–32).

For example, the narrator ironically employed the verb  $\text{יָדַע}$  (Gen. 19:4) to depict the negative impact of the mob justice system. The same word was used in Genesis 18:19 to show Abraham’s special covenantal relationship with the Lord. Considering the parallel story in Judges 19 and when the verb  $\text{יָדַע}$  is viewed in relation to Lot’s reaction to the guests’ intent to lodge in the open square, suggests the dark side of the meaning of the verb (Letellier, 1995:146). The challenge to the sense of justice of both Lot and the people of Sodom is plain in Lot’s plea (offering them his daughters) and the response of the ‘men of the city’ (Gen. 19:5–9). Lot’s plea indicates his position of legal equality, being a brother (Von Rad, 1972:219; Westermann, 1985:301; Letellier, 1995:149). The request is reproved by the “men of the city”. They resent his status and challenge his legal and moral superiority. The use of the verb  $\text{פָּסַח}$  (Gen. 19:9) in their conversation is pertinent in the implication of the dramatic context. The rural setting of the story of Genesis 18:1–16 can be seen as a critique of the setting of the parallel story in Chapter 19. It presents a cultural presupposition of family values as embodied in Abraham’s household (*cf.* Letellier, 1995:61).

#### **5.4.2.2. Revolutionist social response to socio-cultural system**

Another dimension this research employed in understanding the doublet is the *revolutionist response*. The *revolutionist* view holds that supernatural powers carry out judgement to destroy the natural world and the social order then recreates it because humans lack the powers to do

that. In Genesis 18:22–32, the dialogue between Yahweh and Abraham, Yahweh is presented as the supreme judge who presides over the affairs of all the earth and Abraham challenges God’s justice<sup>230</sup> (Gen. 18:25). In a personal self-reflection, Yahweh contemplates why he should keep hiding from Abraham what he is about to do to Sodom. Although there is no explicit statement of Yahweh’s intended action, after revealing that the “outcry” and “grave sin” of Sodom is heavy and he was on a mission to ‘see’, the reader infers that Yahweh is visiting Sodom with Judgement in mind—a total revolution.

This research understands the challenge to the justice of God as Abraham’s presentation of an alternative way of saving the city. This is implied in a statement that Yahweh should not do such a thing as to kill the righteous and the wicked. Abraham seems to be saying, ‘shouldn’t you consider using the human agency to change the social order? If there are righteous people, would it be fair to destroy the righteous with the wicked? Should you not give them a chance by sparing the city? Six times Abraham asks Yahweh to spare the city for the sake of certain numbers of righteous people and six times Yahweh agrees if those numbers are found; but sadly, there were none. The research is not sure of the significance of these numbers, perhaps it confirms the *utopian* social response that if peradventure a certain number is found, let’s say fifty righteous people, then there is the possibility that the social system can be reconstructed. Unfortunately, because the outcry and the sin of Sodom is great, the only remedy was destruction (Gen. 19:13, 23–26).

#### **5.4.2.3. The introversionist response? (Gen. 19:12, 14–17, 30–38)**

The introversionist view deals with a possible withdrawal from an irredeemably evil society as a way of salvation. Robbins’ examples of an introversionist response from the Bible are Mark 1:3–5, 12–13, 45; 6:31–32, 35. The passages are all about Jesus isolating himself from the crowd to find solitude or just rest from exhaustion and due to darkness. However, they do not necessarily mean that their context was irredeemably evil. Genesis 19:12, 14–17 describes the gracious redemption of Lot and his family members. This was not the response of Lot himself, neither was it a response of a social movement to establish a separate community. It was a

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<sup>230</sup> I will discuss the challenge under role of exchange in 5.4.2.2 below.

divine response to insulate Lot and his family from the impact of the depravity of the city of Sodom. Genesis 19:29<sup>231</sup> says: “And it happened when God destroyed the cities of the plain, and ***God remembered Abraham***. And he sent out Lot from the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities which Lot lived in them.” The statement changes the focus of the narrative, bringing into focus the relationship of Abraham and Yahweh. The established covenant relationship is evoked here. Regarding an introversionist social response, covenant response serves as purpose for the withdrawal of Lot and his family to start a new community who will continue to participate in the covenant relationship established with Abraham especially Genesis 12:1-3 where the blessing of all people is brought into the relationship.

Genesis 19:30<sup>232</sup> tells us of another withdrawal, this time it is the personal individual choice. To the amazement of the reader, Lot and his two daughters left Zoar to settle in the mountains because he was afraid to stay in Zoar. Earlier on, in 19:17, one of the messengers had asked Lot and his family not to stay in the plains but to run to the mountains, but Lot objected and pleaded to stay in Zoar for he thought his life would be spared there. The messenger granted that favour and Lot and his daughters went to Zoar. Ironically, Lot is now afraid of the place he initially thought was a safe haven for him and his family. Wenham (1994:60) senses incongruity in Lot’s action and comment that his action “shows that he does not trust the implied divine guarantee that he would be safe in Zoar (vs 21). Lot is portrayed as “faint-hearted and vacillating and reduced to living in a cave (Wenham, 1994:70).”<sup>233</sup> On a different note, though, this research would like to probe the cause of this fear. Is it actually lack of trust in the implied divine guarantee of safety or was the fear due to the realisation that something was not right in Zoar?

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<sup>231</sup> Many scholars (Westermann, 1985:308 for instance) hold that this verse is a P perspective of the destruction of the cities and the rescue of Lot. In retrospect, our intertextual analysis links this passage to the great deluge, where this specific statement of remembrance is viewed as an allusion to Genesis 8:1 “then God remembered Noah”. Wenham (1994:59) remarks that “a more exact parallel to 8:1 would have been ‘God remembered Lot’ for Noah and Lot are the men saved from disaster. The substitution of Abraham for Lot in this sentence makes an important theological point” which I shall return to in the next chapter.

<sup>232</sup> Westermann (1985:313) comments that vv.30 and 36-38 are report which forms the framework. Vs. 30 is characteristic of the itinerary, a continuation of 13: 11–12 and followed by vs.13 (introducing the destruction). The reason for moving now connects the itinerary with the destruction of Sodom.

<sup>233</sup> “Caves in the OT are used either as graves (25:9) or by refugees (Josh 10:16; 1 Sam 13:6). Lot, the rich rancher who had so many flocks and herds that he had to separate from Abraham (13: 8–11), chose to live in the fertile Dead Sea valley, which has been destroyed and with it all his other relations and property. He and all he has can be accommodated in a cave” (Wenham 1994: 60).

The research assumes that, based on the first preference by the messengers when they directed Lot to the hills, indicates that there must something questionable pertaining Zoar and therefore Lot and his family should not be there. Now that Lot opted for that place just like his earlier choice (Gen. 13:11–12), perhaps the fear comes from the realisation that Zoar is not a place to be just like Sodom, thus, a withdrawal was the best response to save himself and his family. Arnold (2009:186) shares this opinion, he says “[...] After the annihilation of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot discovered that Zoar did not prove to be what he had expected. Whatever the nature or source of his fear, Lot is driven to leave Zoar and settle—ironically enough—in the hills, living in a cave with his two daughters [...]” This research holds that the permission by the messengers should not be taken as a guarantee for safety, but rather as an exercise of what is called in dogmatic theology, “free will”.

### 5.4.3. Common social and cultural topics

*Common social and cultural topics* are clues to understanding the rhetorical strategy in a text where one looks for topics that point to common social and cultural values that emanates from the world in and of the text as they provide insights into the social and cultural systems of exchange and benefit. Understanding *common social and cultural topics* in relation to *specific social topic*, Robbins (1996:75) declares “[c]ommom social and cultural topics are the overall environment for the specific social topic in a text”.<sup>234</sup> A careful reading of the text reveals the following elements of common social and cultural codes:

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<sup>234</sup> Robbins (1996: 76–86) outlines eight topics that represents the social and cultural arena about systems of exchange and benefits as follows:

***Honour, guilt, and right culture:*** This concerns one’s social standing as perceived in a society. Honour deals with one’s sphere of power, sexual status, and position in a social ladder. “Honour is a claim to worth and the social acknowledgment of worth” (Robbins, 1996:76). There are two types of honour: *ascribed honour* and *acquired honour*. Ascribed honour is one due a person passively through birth, family connections, or endowment by notable persons of power. Acquired honour is honour that is “actively sought and garnered most often at the expense of one’s equals in the social contest of challenge and response” (Robbins, 1996:76). Honour has two components: “honour” and “shame”. Honour is from the male perspective, shame from the female perspective. Shame refers to a person’s sensitivity about what others think, say and do in respect to their honour.

***Dyadic and individualist personalities:*** individuals with this kind of personality are those who constantly depend on what others say about them to know who they really are. Their self-perception and self-image is formed in terms of what others perceive and feed back to them.

***Dyadic and legal contracts and agreements:*** this is a form of social interaction that is based on the principle of reciprocity. the principle of reciprocity is unenforceable by any authority apart from one’s sense of honour and shame. This form of social interaction can happen at different levels: it can take place between people of equal status or take the form of a patron-client relationship. This kind of social interaction is initiated by means positive



### 5.4.3.1. *The significance of social and cultural value of hospitality.*

Temporal and special indications in the parallel stories of hospitality in the p seem to point to the significance of the social and cultural value of the hospitality. The strangers appeared to Abraham in the heat of the day (afternoon) and they arrived in Sodom in the evening. Westermann (1985:300) rightly remarks that the appearance at Sodom in the night “is the first of the details of the temporal sequence which run through the narrative (vv. 15a, 23a). They have purely a narrative function.” To this we might say it serves to contrast the nature of the two worlds of Mamre and Sodom,<sup>235</sup> but far more than this, the place and temporal indication explicates *the significance of the social and cultural value of hospitality.*

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challenge and it serves as a glue that hold individuals together and enables necessary social interdependence for life.

**Challenge-response (riposte):** challenge and riposte is a kind of social communication where the challenger of the source of the message transfers the message either by word or action or both and the receiver of the message reacts. Challenge and riposte is often done in public. It publicly always guarantees the reaction of the receiver of the message. Challenge and riposte often has three phases: the challenge, the perception of the challenge by both the public and the one that the challenge was directed to, and the reaction of the receiver of the message. The message can be either positive or negative. The receiver often responds with the intention to protect his/her self-esteem; the public now are the ones who pass the verdict; honouring the challenger or the receiver of the challenge. A challenge-riposte form of interaction can take place in the form of “gift-giving, invitation to dinner, debates over issues of law, buying and selling, arranging of marriages, arranging what we might call cooperative ventures for farming, business, fishing, mutual help and the like” (Robbins, 1996:81).

**Agriculturally based industrial, and technological economic exchange system:** this deals with the model of exchange of goods and services. The system of distribution in an agrarian society is mostly based on *reciprocity* (a clan-based system) and *central storehouse economy* (characteristic of a stable and centralised community usually organised around a shrine or temple where the priests have the authority the community).

**Peasants, labourers, craftspeople, and entrepreneurs:** this also describes another system of exchange which came into existence after the growth of the preindustrial city. It is a system in which the peasant had to exchange what they produce with manufactured goods that they could not make themselves. The peasant had to grow enough food to sustain them throughout the year. He also had to grow enough to contribute to the local festival and to give loans to his neighbour that later guaranteed him the reciprocal right. The peasant also had to produce enough to pay for rent and tax.

**Limited, insufficient, and overabundant goods:** is the notion which emerged from the peasantry; “the idea was that all good things—food, land, honour, standing—were fixed quantities and short supply. Because their quantities could not be increased, if one peasant gained a greater share of any of them than heretofore, he was thought to have done so at the cost of all his fellows” (Robbins, 1996: 84). The result was unrelenting struggle and suspicion in the peasant communities. It also resulted in a leaderless and resourceless community living at the mercy of outsiders.

**Purity codes:** deals with the general cultural map of social time and space. It is about the boundaries separating the inside from the outside. Certain things and people are termed unclean or impure because they do not fit the acceptable social map of the space they are occupying.

<sup>235</sup> Firstly, the temporal sequence creates a link between the distinct stories to make it look like one and the same story. In the same manner, temporal sequence provides a temporary division of the chapters: Genesis 18 describes a diurnal event at Mamre, Genesis 19 describes a nocturnal happening at Sodom. Regarding the question of the time interval, from the literary perspective, it is very easy for one to assume that the stories happened on one and the same day. The connection that the narrator made suggests a “continuation of 18: 22a (33a) where the detail

Setting the event at Sodom in the night as a rhetorical strategy plays a very important role as it shows an inversion of the event at Mamre which occurs in the afternoon. Genesis 19 contains sequences of contrastive temporal markers: night, darkness, early morning, dawn and sunrise (19:2, 15, 23, 27, 33–35). The event leading to the destruction is connected to this temporal emphasis of the evening which anticipates the approaching night and darkness. Out of necessity, the messengers will have to lodge in the city because of the approaching darkness of the night. To the reader or listener, who is aware of the conversation between Abraham and Yahweh, where Yahweh says the outcry of Sodom has come before him and her sins are very grave, the arrival in the evening is a kind of a foreshadowing of the evil to be found in the narrative as night and darkness are usually associated with terror. The approaching darkness of Sodom thus creates anxiety and fear in the minds of the reader or listener. “The imminent night will be a time of danger” (Letellier, 1995:59). The anticipated darkness, therefore, intensifies the graveness of the sin and evil nature of Sodom. Genesis 19:4–8 confirms this when out of the darkness comes a wicked mob demanding Lot to release the strangers who, by virtue of their arrival in the evening, possess the right to hospitality. For the men of Sodom to come at night to demand to know the strangers that Lot has hosted in his house signifies the lack of concern and moral status of Sodom. Thus, “[t]he night has become an objective correlative of the sinfulness of Sodom” (Letellier, 1995:60).

Again, in the parallel stories, there is another similarity worth considering. In presenting his invitation, Abraham uses an expression that paints hospitality as inevitable. After politely requesting the strangers not to “pass by” but to stop and get refreshed by washing of their feet, resting under a tree and eating a piece of bread; Abraham says, *כִּי־עַל־כֵּן עָבַרְתֶּם עַל־עַבְדְּכֶם* “for on this account you have passed before your servant”. The expression *כִּי־עַל־כֵּן* conveys the idea of

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about the goal of the men ‘in the direction of Sodom’ (*cf.* 18:16a) serves to link 18 & 19” (Westermann, 1985:300). The portrayal of the distance between Mamre and Sodom preclude the presupposition that the men walked to Sodom after the leisurely lunch with Abraham (Wenham 1994:54), except if one argues that the strangers are divine beings and could travel to Sodom within the shortest possible time by divine means (so did Von Rad, 1972:217). The actual location of Sodom is not determined, but according to Westermann (1985:300) “the distance from Hebron to the southern end of the Dead Sea is about 70km (some two days’ journey) and that there is a difference in the elevation of about 1300. This shows that the narrative of chs. 18 and 19 do not belong together”. But the question is why would the narrator not hint the listener on how this long distance was covered? If the narratives do not belong together, were the listeners familiar with the stories in their initial pre-literary state? What could have been their understanding of the intention of the narrator for bringing these stories that are a distant apart?

causality.<sup>236</sup> Here our attention is focused on the reason why the narrator highlights in the text: the washing of feet, rest under the tree, and refreshing of the heart with piece of bread, “for on this account you have passed before your servant” (18:5). In this expression, hospitality is portrayed as the logical outcome of passing by Abraham’s tent. In other words, one could say their passing was not by chance but divinely planned so that they can get refreshed and continue their journey. Wenham (1994:46) explains the causative expression that it “stresses Abraham’s pleasure at being able to entertain. It is as if he said, ‘It is my pleasure you have come; you have made my day.’” In the parallel story, the causality expression in Lot’s story hangs on security and safety concerns. When the mob came to Lot’s house demanding for the strangers, Lot pleaded for them and instead offered his daughters as substitute. He says, “Only to these men you must not do a thing”, he then introduces the causality clause thus: *כִּי־עַל־כֵּן בָּאוּ בַצֵּל קַרְתִּי* “for on this account they came in the shadow of my roof”.<sup>237</sup> The need of the hour implied in the offer of hospitality is security and safety.

#### **5.4.3.2. Honour and shame, dyadic and legal contract and agreement, and challenge-response**

In some sections, the text reveals certain actions which help us to understand “honour and shame”, “dyadic and legal contract and agreement” and “challenge-riposte” as a social and cultural system of exchange and benefit. The parallel story of the invitation and the response to the invitation, and the dialogue between Yahweh and Abraham can be understood from the perspectives of social interaction. The discussion in this section will follow the scenes in the text. The approach is informed by the fact that most of this arena of social interaction overlaps. Rather than approaching the discussion through the common social and cultural topic, I will

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<sup>236</sup> Letellier (1995:86) thinks the expression is “prophetically ironic” because the purpose of the visit goes beyond refreshment. He says, “God has come to visit his servant to bless him”. Letellier justifies his assertion by arguing that the language in the text points to this prophetic irony. That the first polite request “now if find favour in your eyes” and the clause “do not pass by your servant” (18:3) indicate divine power at work and special manifestation of grace (1995:84).

<sup>237</sup> Wenham (1994:56) comments that the expression *כִּי־עַל־כֵּן* “serves here to underline how committed Lot is to protect his guests. Putting their welfare above his daughters may have been questionable, but it shows how committed he was in being a good host.” And rightly so, this research contends against such an interpretation and holds that Lot’s action expresses the nature of the social context of the world of Sodom rather than underlining his commitment to protect his guests. Lot’s action ironically inverts his chances of “showing his oneness with God”. From an honour and shame culture, it seems Lot was more concerned on protecting his honour than the practice of “righteousness and justice” in providing safety for the strangers.

discuss the text while locating what kind of topic can be identified: honour and shame, or challenge and response or dyadic and legal contract and agreement.

#### **5.4.3.2.1. Offer and acceptance of hospitality (Gen. 18:2–5//19:1–3)**

The motivation behind offering hospitality to a stranger lay in the increased honor one had in assimilating a potential threat into the community by asserting one's superiority over the newcomer. Guests played their role in this arrangement by acceptance of the offered hospitality. The practical benefit of this arrangement was that it defused a confrontational moment with the potential for violence [...] Reciprocity was essential to the arrangement's success ... Guests deserve to be treated hospitably, and conversely gracious hosts deserve some sort of recompense from their guests (Bolin, 2004:45).

The offer and acceptance of hospitality shows the ancient cultural practice which can best be understood when set against the role of exchange. 'Challenge-response' context can take the form of gift-giving, invitation to dinner or mutual help. It can also be understood in the context of honour and shame. In Genesis 18:2–4, Abraham saw three men standing before him, ran from the door of his tent and invited them to be refreshed. In verse 5, the three men accepted his invitation. Similarly, Lot, while sitting at the gate of the city of Sodom, saw two men who had arrived in the evening, invited them to lodge in his house. But on the contrary, while these same men did not hesitate to accept Abraham's invitation at Mamre, in Genesis 19:2, they now declined with a strong negative Hebrew word: *סָר* (see 3.4 literary critical note). One wonders why they first declined the invitation bearing in mind that they are in a situation of possible danger. Letellier (1995:142) remarks that the response in Genesis 19:2 "is part of the dramatic irony which, as with YHWH and Abraham, will give Lot opportunity of showing his oneness with God."<sup>238</sup>

Considering the parallel with Judges 19, in verse 5 we learn that the host kept demanding that his guest (the Levite and his servant) extend their stay. The Levite continued to stay as against their wish to return. This happened probably because refusal of such an offer in that culture could have been termed rude and insulting to the host (Matthews, 1991:2). Having observed

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<sup>238</sup> Wenham (1994:53-54) acknowledges the warmth in Lot's offer of hospitality. However, his assertion about Lot's motive that he offered hospitality because he was afraid of what may happen to him if the angels did not stay, cannot be proven from the text. What we see in the warm welcome and offer of hospitality is a general cultural category that both Abraham and Lot share having come from the same family.

that honour and shame is a common social and cultural topic, which also underlies the practice of hospitality, the rejection of Lot's offer of hospitality creates tension. In a culture of *honour and shame*, refusal of hospitality can be a *challenge* to the honour of the host. Von Rad (1972:217) interpreted the messengers' refusal of Lot's invitation that "the men are proud and terse", although he tries to excuse their refusal that "of course, they had not come to visit Lot (in contrast to their visit in Hebron with Abraham), but regarding another matter." Hence Lot pressured the guests (understood as a response) there by claiming his honour that has been challenged.

Again, with the uneasiness which the narrator has created about the grave sin of the city (Gen 18:22–32), refusing Lot's hospitality appears to be a sarcastic challenge, to shaming the city. To the reader who knows what transpired between Yahweh and Abraham, the refusal to accept Lot's invitation by the messengers is a challenge so that the people of Sodom might prove their honour, that what Yahweh said about the outcry and grave sin of Sodom is not true. The listener or reader becomes the public who judges the contest of challenge-response, there by ascribing honour to the one who is right. And in this case, the men of the city fail the challenge.

#### **5.4.3.2.2. *The hospitality meal and aftermath (Gen 18:6–15; 19:2–17)***

In the study of intertextuality, I have identified the visit of Yahweh and his messengers as parallel to Ugaritic myths, epics and legends. We have also seen parallels and/or similarities between the hospitality meal and elements of Levitical priestly sacrificial elements. From the perspective of the role of exchange in ancient religion, this parallel text is set to the background of offerings and sacrifices. According to Bolin (2004:39), offering and sacrifice in the religious system function "to maintain and appease the divine world. At work in this religious system was the notion of reciprocity [...] In exchange for favor and protection from the gods, humanity would offer service and devotion". This system of exchange is identical to the patron-client relationship that characterises the political and social relationship in the ancient Mediterranean world.

In the selected passage, the visit of Yahweh and his messengers to Abraham and Lot when read in relation to the parallel stories, myths, epics and legends of the ancient world of Mesopotamia, one finds elements of a *dyadic and legal contracts and agreements* as a form of social

interaction. In defining this, we have seen that it is based on the principle of reciprocity. Undergirding this principle is the presupposition that the parties involved, at least from the human point of view, enter this relationship based on the analysis of its cost and benefit. The juxtaposition of the double story of hospitality forces one to apply the principle of reciprocity in their interpretation. In Genesis 18:1–8, Abraham welcomes Yahweh and his emissaries. He provides food for them. In a reciprocal relationship between humans and the gods, humans offer sacrifices and devotion because they expect the favour and protection of the gods (Bolin, 2004:39).

The language of the hospitality scene in Genesis 18:1–8 evokes this idea of a human - divine reciprocal relationship. Previously, I have observed that the composer possibly fashions the story to evoke the older form of the divine messenger. The promise of a child to Abraham and Sarah after hosting the three divine visitor as well as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah concurs with the reciprocity principle. Set against this background, it emphasises the significance of the cultural practice of hospitality, where a *נָכַר* or a *נָכְרִי* is transformed to a guest.

Does this imply that Lot was spared because of his hospitable act? The response to this question might not be a simple denial. Bolin (2004:49) acknowledges the difficulty also. He says

Into this tidy picture intrudes an apparent anomaly in the Genesis 19 that merit further examination, namely, the ambiguous characterization of Lot, the putative representation of virtue in the story [...] Lot the good host is contrasted with the wicked men of Sodom. However, unlike Abraham, Lot is slow to comply with the commands of the angels... More significant among Lot's failings is the offer of his daughter to the men of Sodom in order to spare his guests (v.8).<sup>239</sup>

When one looks at the narrative from the perspective of the principle of reciprocity, it is obvious that the narrator intended to communicate that principle on to his audience. But in the context of the entire narrative, Lot's escape can be understood as a disruption of the notion of proportionality in the principle of reciprocity. Again, when one examines the parallel that exists

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<sup>239</sup> I would rather argue that Lot's action against his daughters is part of the ambiguity that should be considered as a rhetoric ploy. From a modern point of view, Lot's action may be considered a failure of hospitality, nevertheless let us maintain the ambiguity until later (see 6.5.1.3.2), where I shall investigate such ambiguity in the context of the narration.

between Genesis 19 and Judges 19, the ambiguity of Lot's character becomes more pronounced.<sup>240</sup>

In a divine-human relationship, “[s]uch breakdowns [disruption] were often attributed to the fact that the gods were much more powerful than their human counterparts, and in their role as patrons could renege on the obligations to their clients” (Bolin, 2004:40). The freedom of God in responding to his obligation to his client raises the question on why God’s actions sometimes are not consistent with the notion of reciprocity and proportionality. In the case of Lot, one can see that there is inconsistency of this principle, because Genesis 19:29 looks at the salvation of Lot and his family as purely an act of mercy. This now leaves us with more questions: what does the narrator intend to achieve? In the overall assessment of the promise of a son and the destruction of Sodom, we have seen that none of the actions of the hospitable Abraham and Lot, nor the inhospitality of the people of Sodom were enough justification for the reward or the punishment in the narrative. Rather, the hospitality stories are set as symbolic (religious) acts which portray the human obligation in terms of “keeping the way of Yahweh”.

#### **5.4.3.2.3. Dialogue between Yahweh and Abraham (Gen 18:20–32)**

At the heart of the two stories of the divine visit is the notion of divine justice, although this idea, as explicated in the above discussion, can be disrupted. The dialogue between Yahweh and Abraham concerns this question of divine justice of God. However, the negative and ambiguous characterisation of Lot, coupled with the fact that the narrator explains Lot’s salvation as a pure act of God’s mercy (Gen. 19:29), leads us to the question of the disruption of the principle of reciprocity and proportionality in the divine-human relationship through the introduction of mercy (*cf.* Bolin, 2004:51).

The dialogue between Yahweh and Abraham is anchored on the fact that Yahweh initiated a special relationship between him and Abraham. Such a privilege and special relationship

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<sup>240</sup> In Genesis 19:7, Lot came out to the crowd who surrounded his house demanding Lot to handover the guest. Having perceived their intention Lot pleaded, addressing the men as “my brothers”, urging them not to do such a wicked thing. Lot went further in his plea (vs.8) by offering his daughters as substitute for the men to do whatever seemed right in their eyes. Although the messengers stepped in to protect Lot and his household, Lot’s action against his daughters’ is contrary to human dignity. Judges 19 contains a parallel between Lot’s action against his daughters with the Levite’s action against his concubine who was raped to death by the men of Gibeah. In both cases “the women are expendable” (Letellier, 1996:150).

accorded Abraham the honour of receiving Yahweh's blueprint. This kind of privilege is confirmed by prophet Amos: "Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). Yahweh declared the purpose of the intimate relationship, namely, that Abraham will command his children after him to keep the way of Yahweh by doing righteousness and justice. Abraham is now described as the father of righteousness and justice because he is going to teach his children and the generation after him the way of Yahweh *by doing righteousness and justice*. Having said this as the basis of revealing his intention, the dialogue was opened as Yahweh went on to reveal the intention in 18:20-21<sup>241</sup>.

The narrative turns to Abraham as he assumes the role of the teacher of Justice (*cf.* Ben Zvi, 1992:40) just as verse 19 declares. This research proposes a *challenge-response* as a lens to understand the communication in this dialogue. *Placed in a dyadic and legal contract and agreement*, the *challenge-response* contestation is the type that happens in the context of patron-client relationship (Robbins, 1996:79f), which best describes the special relationship between Yahweh and Abraham (Miller, 2012:32).<sup>242</sup> Abraham's question is then viewed as a challenge to the justice of Yahweh.

The dialogue, as Miller (2012:32) says "raises the questions of incongruity of justice and mercy and the juxtaposition of the group from the individual." The passage is said to portray the traditional Middle Eastern economic form of exchange where the buyer bargains. However, the response of Yahweh does not seem to indicate that there is any bargaining, because he seems to agree with the terms of the buyer. "In actuality, what occurs in this scenario is that Abraham proposes a figure and Yahweh acquiesces" (Miller, 2012:33). This research agrees with Westermann (1985:291) that "[intercession] cannot be the meaning because Abraham, for

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<sup>241</sup> Yahweh has not explicitly said he was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, but his self-reflexion brings to memory the flood event where Yahweh declared a similar concern about the great wickedness and evil thought of all humans. There, God's judgment was total destruction by flood. The outcry and great sin of Sodom invites God's judgement. The going down to find out does not necessarily suggest ignorance. Obviously, "Yahweh's intention to investigate Sodom and Gomorrah should be thought of as an implied statement that Yahweh intends to destroy the cities. This is proved by the subsequent narrative: Abraham's requests in vv.23-32; and the angel's message to Lot in 19:13 that Sodom will be destroyed" (Bridge, 2016:288).

<sup>242</sup> Miller (2012:29ff) observes that the text we are dealing with is an intriguing one which is described differently by scholars. Pelton (2003:744) for example describes the passage as "one of the most incredible verbal exchanges between God and man concerning justice in all of the Bible".



all his questioning, is aware from the start that God will go through with his decision to punish Sodom”. However, from the *challenge-response* point of view, and from the perspective of patron-client relationship, what happens in this challenge is that Abraham, being the client and who is already aware that Yahweh’s declaration is conclusive (Sodom deserves destruction, vs.23), he still pulled through with his challenge, thus pointing to another possible dimension of understanding the dialogue.

This research concurs with Bolin (2004:52) that “[t]he dialogue next explores the relationship of divine justice and mercy [...]” The question that Abraham seems to battle with, which prompted the challenge, connects to the idea of group and individual responsibility, how would Yahweh administer “justice” and “mercy” to a heterogeneous group of wicked and righteous? (Miller, 2012:34). This question can best be answered when one considers the narrative as it unfolds in the next chapter. In this regard, this research agrees with Westermann’s (1985:292) assertion that the narrator who composed this passage—Genesis 18:17–32,

Had before him the old narrative in which God had decided to destroy Sodom, then carried out his decision, but saved Lot. He is bound to the tradition and knows that his listeners or readers know it [...] His purpose was to show indisputably that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was a just action.

The questions that the narrator sought to address probably are: why would Yahweh collectively destroy the whole city when there are obviously as it would seem to be, a few righteous people in it? Shouldn’t a righteous God be just in giving different lots to the pious and the impious? (Westermann, 1985:291). Looking at the questions, “[...] will you indeed sweep away the righteous and the evil? [...] will you indeed sweep away, and not forgive the place on account of the fifty righteous who are in the city? [...] will the judge of all the earth not do justice?” (Gen. 18:23, 25), shows they are all probing issues that pertain to Yahweh’s mercy and justice. Bolin (2004:52) thinks that the questions can be reduced to one single overarching question should God treat the good and evil alike?” He proposes two answers to the questions: First, that it can be “answered negatively in reference to the possibility that Yahweh might treat the good as if they were evil by destroying everyone indiscriminately; to do so would be unjust.”

The second answer can be in the affirmative but it is also unjust because it averts deserved yet undesired consequences. According to Bolin (2004:53), Abraham’s subsequent questions after

Yahweh acquiesces is “no longer appealing to Yahweh’s justice, but rather to his mercy.” Contrary to Bolin, Miller (2012:35) thinks, and this research concurs, that “[...] a simple reduction of these questions into one would be misleading, as the rhetorical structure of Abraham’s questions elicit varying responses relative to mercy and justice”. Similarly, Westermann (1985:292) does not think there is “so much as hints that Abraham was imploring God’s mercy to avert a disaster from the people [...]” The structure of the rhetoric of Abraham’s questions seeks to discern the nature of the relationship between God’s action toward an individual (pious and impious) and his action in history towards the whole (Westermann, 1985:293).

In the dialogue, Abraham was assured that Yahweh does not destroy the righteous and the wicked. The narrator organises this narrative to demonstrate this relationship, which is determined by righteousness and justice. In the text, the narrator connects the act of righteousness and justice back to Abraham. It was given as the condition for God to fulfil his covenant. Then the question is, why was it necessary for the narrator to argue the question of the righteousness of Yahweh? This research agrees with Miller (2012:37) that “the dialogue is nonetheless a theologically potent passage which creates an emphasis on Yahweh’s merciful actions towards Lot and his family, as well as on the divine justice which ensures that the wicked receive their deserved fate in Genesis 19”.

This section has shown that the rhetoric of the dialogue shows that the justice of God will never be a problem to an individual either pious or impious. However, it may be a problem to a collective whole who might be thinking that they are suffering unjustly for sin they have not committed (*cf.* Jeremiah 31.29 and Ezekiel. 18:2; Westermann, 1985:293; Bolin, 2004:43; Miller, 2012:34ff).

Akin to the rhetoric of this dialogue, this section argues that the question of divine justice is at the heart of the tales of divine visitor. And the stories could be employed at any time by anyone to address a similar situation just as the Old Testament itself is permeated with evidences of such (*cf.* Miller, 2012:37). From the *dyadic and legal contract and agreement*, the language of Abraham, although seen as a challenge to Yahweh’s justice, is never intended to call Yahweh to account over the accepted standard of justice. Similarly, the dialogue was not an intercession for Yahweh to have mercy on the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Nevertheless, the

narrator employs all this intriguing dialogue, "... a theologically potent passage which creates an emphasis on Yahweh's merciful actions towards Lot and his family, as well as on the divine justice which ensures that the wicked receive their deserved fate in Genesis 19 [cf. Gen. 19:29]" (Miller, 2012:37).

#### 5.4.4. Final cultural category

Final cultural category deals with topics that "most decisively identify one's cultural location. Cultural location in contrast to social location, concerns the manner in which people present their propositions, reasons, and arguments both to themselves and to other people" (Robbins, 1996:86). The topics categorises people based on different kinds of culture rhetoric and these include: 'dominant culture rhetoric', 'subculture rhetoric', 'counterculture rhetoric', 'contraculture rhetoric', and 'liminal culture rhetoric'.<sup>243</sup>

Doublets or even triple strands of stories were identified as a common characteristic of Pentateuch literature. This characteristic was viewed as evidence of the polyphonic nature of the Pentateuch. The survey of the history of research shows that the different voices in a story

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<sup>243</sup> Robbins (1996:86) defines *dominant culture rhetoric* as "a system of attitudes, values, dispositions, and norms that the speaker either presupposes or asserts are supported by social structures vested with power to impose its goals on people in a significantly broad region". *Subculture rhetoric* "imitates attitudes, values, dispositions, and norms of dominant culture rhetoric, and it claims to enact them better". There is a category of the subculture rhetoric known as the "ethnic subculture rhetoric" which seeks to preserve the "old system" in the dominant culture in which it exists. This usually arises because of the feeling that a new cultural system is imposing itself on the people from the particular ethnic culture. Ethnic subculture rhetoric usually focuses its attack on specific elements of the society. It helps in maintaining ethnic boundaries and identities. *Counterculture rhetoric* or *alternative culture rhetoric*, as the name implies, is a kind of response to dominant culture rhetoric and subculture rhetoric whereby it rejects the "explicit" and "mutable" characteristics of the dominant or subculture rhetoric. Counterculture rhetoric is also known as intracultural phenomena; "counterculture rhetoric is a culturally heretical rhetoric that evokes 'a new future,' not an alien rhetoric that evokes the preservation of an 'old culture...'" (Robbins, 1996:87). At the heart of this rhetoric is the creation of a better society through creation of an unconventional mini culture that will accommodate everyone in the community irrespective of age, gender and status. Robbins (1996:87) explains that "... 'social reform is not a preoccupation' of counterculture rhetoric". However, counterculture rhetoric evokes willingness to live one's own life and let the members of the dominant society go on with their "madness." Yet an underlying theme is the *hope* of voluntary reform by the dominant society in accord with a different model of "the good life." Hence, one would expect fully developed counterculture rhetoric to express a *constructive* image of an alternative, better way of life. It provides a relatively self-sufficient system of action by grounding its views in a well-developed, supporting ideology. *Contraculture or oppositional culture rhetoric* is another culture rhetoric which is described as a "'short-lived, counter-dependent cultural deviance' of dominant culture, subculture, or counterculture rhetoric" (Robbins, 1996:87). As it is described, this rhetoric does not last for long period. It is basically a negative reaction to the value system of any of the three explained above. And *liminal culture rhetoric* is a culture rhetoric that is said to be at the "outer edge of identity... It exists only in the language it has for the moment" (Robbins, 1996:88). Liminal culture rhetoric appears in circumstances of transition from an established social and cultural identity (group or individual) to another (cf. Roberts, 1978).

often are elements of redaction or editing. We have also suggested irony as a rhetorical function and redactional synthesis of the polyphonic text. Double strands of hospitality stories in the text suggest that the message is polyphonic. “A reading that would attempt to eliminate the different voices in order to defend the unity of the composition would not only risk abolishing certain facts in the texts but also leaving an important part of the message out” (Ska, 2006:65, *cf.* p. 75). In our discourse above, the double strands of hospitality were compared. The similarities and differences were identified as specific responses and dispositions.

The discourses above have shown that the community from which this text was composed was in a transition from a rural setting to a semi-urban or urban setting. The discourses also show the significance of the social and cultural value of hospitality in the new setting. Now the question is, what kind of culture rhetoric does the narrative portray? Obviously, the emphasis on the significance of the social and cultural value of hospitality can function as dominant culture rhetoric. In the analysis of the parallel stories, we have seen that there is no difference in the way the two hosts carried out the practice. But going beyond the host’s action to the surrounding events in the two stories, one could assume that one of the stories functions as a subculture, the other as a contrary or oppositional culture rhetoric.

Having defined subculture rhetoric above, the hospitality story in Genesis 18:1–8 is possibly employed as a subculture rhetoric to critique the same claim of the practice of the dominant culture that is threatened by a different setting—namely the urban setting of Sodom (Gen. 19:1–9). It is probable that the narrator is responding to certain anomalies in the attitude of his readers or listeners towards the ‘other’ which can possibly be related to a critical circumstance and experience they may have encountered at a time in their history. The interference with the hospitality norms by the men of Sodom and Lot’s extreme in giving his virgin daughters (Gen. 19:4–9), leads to irregularities that do not fit the main theological and ethical intent (righteousness and justice) of the cultural practice of hospitality. Because if family shalom is a major concern of kinship group, then that principle is violated as far as Lot’s daughters’ shalom is concern. These two issues (the interference with the norm of hospitality and Lot’s actions against his daughters) lead us to another culture rhetoric that a reader can identify.

The actions of the men of Sodom could be described as contraculture or oppositional culture rhetoric. By demanding that Lot should release the visitors to them, even if one explains the

violent intention away, is against the norm of hospitality. In Genesis 19:7, 8, Lot came out of his house to plead with the men of the city,

And he said to them ‘do not, please my brothers, do evil’. Behold now, to me are two daughters who do not know a man. Please, let me bring them out to you and do to them as you please. Only to these men you must not do a thing. For on this account, they came in the shadow of my roof.

First, Lot addresses these men as his brothers. This is a pointer that Lot has attained a status in the community that warrants him the legal right to host these men. Secondly, Lot describes the intended action of the men as evil. We could say that the statement covers even their questioning of Lot’s legal right to host the visitors. It can also mean that their violent intention in coming against the house of Lot is also evil. Lot implores the men to take his two daughters and do what they want with them, but not to do anything against the men because their safety was the sole reason for them being under his roof. So, whatever the intention of the men of Sodom, their action is contrary to the culture of hospitality. Regarding Lot’s action, giving out his daughters for the sake of the protection of the men, is also contraculture. Although neither the protagonist of the story nor the narrator offer any condemnation of Lot’s action, this study has shown that, the parallel story in Judges 19 explicates the nature of the gruesome act that Lot had subjected his daughters. It is possible that the fate of Lot’s daughters could have been like the fate of the concubine in Judges 19, only because Yahweh had intervened in their case. So, Lot’s action is contrary to the rule that governs righteousness and justice. It is contrary to the norm of hospitality, which has concern for the need of the ‘other’ at its background, and a violation of kinship responsibility.

Similarly, Gen. 19:30–38, viewed in the context of the covenant promise to Abraham, can be seen as contraculture rhetoric. The narrator decided to remain silent on the moral acceptability of the action of Lot’s daughters. The narrator assumed that his audience were familiar with the acceptable norm probably aware of the prohibition against incest (Lev. 18 and 20). The listeners or readers are the ones to judge the action. However, in the selected text, the dominant

culture rhetoric regarding the posterity of families is seen in the announcement of the birth of a son to the aged couple.<sup>244</sup>

In Genesis 19:9, Lot is placed in the position of a liminal culture. He is one with the men of Sodom and that is why he addressed them as his brothers. However, they reminded him that בָּאֵלֶיךָ לְגֵרִי “he has come as sojourner” and by implication he had no right to roperty. This reminder also challenges Lot’s status, being someone who sits at the gate with them, i.e as one who has attained a position of legal equality with the men.

From this discourse on final cultural categories, we can see, in the two stories of hospitality, the attitudes, values, dispositions, and norms of the narrative in terms of the culture of hospitality, honour and shame, religious practice and the societal ethics and the justice system. How were these preferences understood by the listeners or readers of this narrative? These calls for the understanding of the ideologies and theologies of the social location of the text.

#### **5.4.5. The implications for dating of the text**

The analysis of this passage so far has revealed that different scenes in the narrative are stories which must have existed independently for some time. It also shows that a certain group of people, which current Pentateuch research prefers to identify as non-priestly editors, must have brought together these stories into one coherent unit. This section is concerned with the question at what stage did the compiler bring these stories together?<sup>245</sup> The most common approach to the discussion of dating has been the use of common themes found in the text, which is then traced to certain periods in history where such a theme was the most dominant. Another approach is the use of the text’s relationship with other texts—biblical and extra-biblical—as pointers to the period of the text’s composition. Lombaard’s (2014a) work and

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<sup>244</sup> I have observed above that the treatment of an incestuous relationship is ambiguous in the Old Testament. The research here pointed to a possibility that the narrator perhaps leaves the listener or reader to judge Lot and his daughter. However, it is also possible, if one considers the ironic intention of the narrator, that the ambiguity was intentional, as we will later see.

<sup>245</sup> The question also begs for another: the question of purpose. It suggests that there are some internationalities which must have necessitated the current shape of the text. However, this question will not be asked in this section, as it will be the subject of Chapter 6.

several of his articles employed this approach.<sup>246</sup> Similarly, Spronk, (2010:16f) following the polyphonic nature of the Old Testament, supports a new proposal by “Graeme Auld’s theory about the ‘book of two houses’ as ‘the root that supports the whole tree of Genesis–Kings.’” The theory assumes that the narratives from Genesis–Kings must have been composed to support establishment of “the house of David and the house of God”. It is assumed that the narratives from Genesis–Kings were written to legitimise the centralisation of the political structure and cult of the Yahweh institution in Israel. Spronk remarks that the ideas about the two houses must have been introduced in the stories about Samuel, and afterwards, by the stories of Moses. Judges would have been added in anticipation of the two houses. This theory, like the two approaches of following common themes and intertextual relationship) follows the interrelationship or the connection of one book to the other. Spronk (2010:17) uses the

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<sup>246</sup> See Lombaard (2013) “Three old men? The patriarchs in the prophets (or: what do patriarchs look like, and where do we find them?” and (2014b) “Jacob come lately? Hosea 12 and the problem of dating the patriarchs of ancient Israel”. Lombaard (2014a:1f) laments that it is strange that Old Testament scholarship still holds to the chronological frame within the Old Testament text to date the patriarchal figures. Lombaard (2014a) looks at the possibility of envisioning an alternative framework differently, namely of viewing the relationship between the patriarchal figures and patriarchal texts. The different possibility that Lombaard considered, which he himself acknowledged is intensely contested, is dating the patriarchal figures and the texts within post-exilic Judea. And rightly so, as this research has also observed the difficulty and the near impossibility of dating the Old Testament texts with precision. It therefore remains highly sceptical about Lombaard’s (2014a) adventure into the web of dating the patriarchal figures. (see the article page 227 for the argument). The reason for this scepticism is simple, this research questions the criteria evaluating the reliability of the patriarchal narratives. First, this research agrees with Lombaard that a distant text should not be expected to answer modern critical questions. Therefore, Lombaard has missed the mark when he evaluates the texts from the modern critical worldview (see Janzen 1993:43). Second, Lombaard’s (2014a:3) statements: “the questioning of this own historical framework of the Old Testament has taken place in various ways (e.g. by the long-established realisation that the *prophetic literature* largely predates Pentateuch, and in recent decades by the so-called minimalists)” (emphasis added) sounds contradictory—Lombaard employs resources (prophetic literature) whose dating is also problematic as the basis for challenging the historical framework of the Pentateuch. Lombaard’s (2014a:3; 2013:226f) argument against the historicity of the patriarchal figures is extreme. The lack of material evidence to support the historicity of the patriarchs is also self-defeating. No evidence outside the Pentateuch or the Old Testament denies their existence. Carr (2007:202) offered a helpful insight on whether the exiles made up these stories about the patriarchs. His answer was both “no” and “yes”: he says the answer is “no because ancient peoples, including ancient Israel, almost always built new stories out of older ones. Especially with respect to stories about people (rather than gods), ancient authors almost always started with traditions—whether oral or written—about a given person and then built on that tradition.” It is not possible that these traditions are entirely made up. It is true that ancient authors do make up certain things. They were free to embellish, modify and extend the traditions given to them in the light of their experience.

It is very important to know that that the Old Testament is the only testimony that a modern reader relies upon, and it is the only primary text of the Israelites that responds to the questions of identity, religion and historical interest. Questioning its validity must require strong evidence from within and from without. The fact that there is a lack of evidence for many of the Old Testament testimonies does not suggest it is unreliable except otherwise proven with concrete facts. Lombaard’s use of extra-Pentateuchal references and I may add, extra-biblical literature as an accepted historical framework can be used to trace text history but hardly the history of the patriarchal figures. Lombaard himself agrees that we cannot reconstruct Israel’s history, but we can reimagine it (see footnote 2 above).

connection between the book of Judges and Joshua as an example that “the combinations of correspondences to and differences” between the two books can be explained from the perspective of the ‘two houses’ theory. He also employs the same query to interpret the correspondence and differences between the books of Judges, Samuel and Kings to argue that the book of Judges must have been composed at later stage.

In the conclusion of the previous chapter, this research points to certain difficulties associated with the approach. The study of intertextuality has shown that a text like Genesis 18 and 19 has intricate intertextual links. It reveals the possibility of dating some of the stories as far back as early middle Bronze Age. Obviously, the only convincing explanation for the characteristic of such a text would be that the stories originated among the people and circulated independently for some time. This section utilises the prior discussion of the rhetoric of the social and cultural world as well as the social history frame, to reflect on a possible period for the final form of the text and to help us answer the question of the intention of the writer in the next chapter.

The cultural rhetoric of the text clearly portrays the people’s heritage as one firmly rooted in an agro-pastoral society transiting to an urban or semi urban society. I would remark that it should be pointed out that historical phenomena in the text did not develop in a unilateral trajectory form from one to another. Therefore, the narrative could be situated within any period of transition in the history of Israel’s developmental. In this respect I shall investigate two possible periods which can be described as a transition period in Israel’s history, namely: (1) the period between the reign of the judges and the establishment of the monarchy and (2) the postexilic period between the resettlement of the exile and the reurbanisation of *Yehud*. The delination of this period does not in anyway suggest that there was a time (say monarchical period) that village life was completely transformed to city, as a matter of fact, it is possible that most people would have lived in rural areas away from cities and kings. What then does this transition imply? I shall argue below (see 6.5 especially) that the transition possibly has to do with centralization of the kingship and cultic ideologies.



#### 5.4.5.1. *Transition(s) in the pre-exilic period.*

Israel's social history reveals that the Hebrews were essentially a nomadic people until the period in which they conquered and settled in Canaan. They existed as small kinship based communities. The period of the conquest and Judges, portray the kind of struggles that existed during this transition period.<sup>247</sup> One significant changes was the centralization of the cult of Yahweh at Shechem (Josh. 24:1, 25). The establishment of the cult of Yahweh by design is the confirmation of the priestly institution that unites the confederate nation during that period through the establishment of a centralised administration led by Saul, followed by David, Solomon and subsequent kings of Israel and Judah. In trying to understand this process this research finds McNutt's (1999:191) report on a model associated with institution building in empires very insightful:

Humans tend to use ideology, power and material resources in constructing the boundaries of social systems [...] regulative mechanisms such as bureaucracies, laws, and rituals are also necessary. Such constructed social boundaries are reinforced by institutions, which in turn are dependent on the level and distribution of resources. In their struggle for control of resources, society's elites, using ideology and rhetoric, are able to exercise control through institutions as well as by coercion. The resulting inequality in access to resources results in heterogeneity and conflict, which then require further measures on the part of elites to maintain control and enforce the boundaries they have constructed.

Retrospectively, we have seen how the social and cultural texture of the text portrays an utopian social response, a revolutionist social response, and as an introversionist social response. The texture also describes the significance of the social and cultural value of hospitality. Therefore, based on this, the text appears as a 'subculture rhetoric', proffering a model of what hospitality is and is perhaps employed by the narrator to critique certain kinship values and attitudes of his readers or listeners towards strangers. Again, this narrative could be understood as originating

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<sup>247</sup> Archaeological research has confirmed this assertion as it shows evidences of changes in settlement patterns in the period of the establishment of the monarchy/state in Israel. Faust, (2007:5) remarks that "Archaeology clearly reveals a break in the rural sector during the transition from Iron Age I to Iron Age II." The time range referred to here is the 10<sup>th</sup> century (Faust, 2007:3). The break in the rural sector (settlement abandonment) is attributed to the formation of larger settlements, usually called cities. Faust (2007:6) support this observation that "[...] in the Early Bronze Age 'efforts were expended in settling various, and sometimes rival, groups within the area of a single city,' as part of a *synoikismos* process (a process in which populations from more than one settlement gather together to form a polis or city'." (cf. Master, 2001:121ff).

in time period of transition to a city/urban, offering a critique of city with its centralisation kingship and cultic agenda.

We are assuming that the text is situated within the period of transition from a kinship based social structure into a more centralised system as proposed by Bendor (1996:46). The question that one might ask is, who were being addressed i.e the ‘others’ in need of hospitality? With this question, we briefly describe the terms used for the ‘other’ in the Hebrew culture (גֵּר, זָר, and נִכְרִי) to see which was applicable. How do the cultural rhetorics in our text describe the attitude needed towards these ‘others’?

1. גֵּר: “Is a man who (alone or with his family) leaves village and tribe because of war [2Sam 4:3; Isa 16:4], famine [Ruth 1:1], epidemic, blood guilt and seeks shelter and residence at another place, where his right of landed property, marriage and taking part in jurisdiction, cult and war has been curtailed” (HALOT, 1994:201, with all ref. cited). In a further description, HALOT (1994:201) says גֵּר is sometimes identical to נִכְרִי, and תּוֹשָׁב and they can be described as “protected citizen, stranger” (*cf.* BDB, 1906:158 -a sojourner). Bendor (1996:228) compares the status of a sojourner with that of a slave. Where the sojourner is an Israelite, probably ejected from his/her בְּיַתְיָאָב and has no protector, they live at the mercy of the one in charge of the family. Such persons are often hire out or are forced into debt slavery (Ex. 21:2-11; Lev. 25:39; Deut. 15:12–18).
2. זָר: HALOT (1994:279) defines זָר as (1) an enemy, or (God) as a stranger, an enemy. (2) a strange, different, heterogeneous, illicit, unauthorised person (Sir. 45:18), not an Aaronite (Lev. 22:10, 12f; Num. 3:10, 38; 18:4, 7), one who is not a member of a community (Ex. 30:33), a non-Israelite, stranger, a strange or prohibited thing (Lev. 10:1; Num. 3:4), an illegitimate person (Ex. 30:9; Jer. 2:25; 3:13; Hos. 5:7). Simply, זָר means strange, foreign, completely different, and unlawful. More appropriately זָר means one who or that which does not belong.
3. נִכְרִי: prototypically means “foreign, strange” (HALOT, 1994: 700). In a substantive mode, it means a foreigner, a non-Israelite. The one who does not belong to in the community of Israel. נִכְרִי is 3 times parallel to זָר (HALOT, 1994: 700).

The narrative Genesis 18 and 19 employs the term גֵּר in Genesis 19:9 as a description of the Lot by the men of Sodom. I shall later elaborate on this designation but apart from this usage

of usage none of the term is used. However, the brief discussion, viewed in relation to Israel's social history will help us to identify the category of the 'other' in need of hospitality. The question is, was Lot a גֵר? The circumstances of his migration to Sodom was as a result of a perennial feud between his herdsmen and Abraham's. In our previous discussion of the social history of Israel, we learned that the structure of the kinship unit is disrupted as the community develop from one stage of the social structure to another. The disruption usually affects the composition of and size of the בֵּית-אָב from the traditionally extended family into smaller size akin to the modern Western nuclear family. In such a situation, where there is any form of adversity affecting the family, e.g. natural disaster, epidemic, or feud, usually the affected family migrates to another village as גֵר. However, when we consider the status of Lot from this point of view, we notice that Lot did not go to his kinship or tribal group. He migrated to entirely strange people. Therefore, based on the description of גֵר above, I suppose that גֵר couldn't have been an appropriate description of Lot by the men of Sodom.

In another dimension, the disruption of the family unit is cause by inability of a בֵּית-אָב to sustain itself due to heavy debt that is not paid. In such situation, to survive, often the head of the בֵּית-אָב would sell himself or his son or daughter as a slave, hence loses some of his rights and is often equated to a גֵר (*cf.* Bendor, 1996:228). In this sense, גֵר could be a protected citizen stranger (*cf.* Ex. 21:2-11; Lev. 25:39; Deut. 15:12-18) and it is probable that Lot was described as a גֵר from this perspective.

From this perspective also, the גֵר could also mean the Canaanites who have been in the land.<sup>248</sup> Is hospitality as described in the selected passage meant to be given to such a conquered people

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<sup>248</sup> Although the biblical narrative gives account of series of ethnic cleansing (Num. 21:21-35; Deut. 2:24-3:17; Josh. 1-19, 21-22), there is hardly any archaeological evidence of such a destruction as narrated in the biblical account. It is highly probable that the story of the conquest was intended to show the unification of tribes towards a monarchical rule, in particular of the house of David, rather than tribal warfare. The relationship between the story of the conquest with Genesis can be seen in Genesis 9:25-27—the curse of Canaan who was the descendant of Ham and Genesis 13:15—God's promise of the land of Canaan to Abraham. The suspicion is that why was Canaan cursed instead of Ham who committed the offense. Could be an ideology in the service of the house of David to legitimize their sovereignty over the all the inhabitant of the land of Canaan especially those that does not belong to the house hold of the community of Israel with Davidic dynasty as the head of the בֵּית-אָב. A careful observation reveals that most of the conquest is limited to the territory of Benjamin, immediately north of Davidic Jerusalem (Josh. 2-9). Three of the Benjaminite localities play an important role in the rise of the house of David and its claim to monarchic sovereignty over Israel. These include Gilgal (1 Sam. 13:8-14), Ai near Bethel (*cf.* Josh. 12:9; Bethel, 1 Kgs. 12:25-13:3; 2 Kgs. 23:15-20), and Gibeon (2 Sam. 2:12-3:1; 21:1-14). And we know that Saul came from the tribe of Benjamin. Therefore, it is possible that the narrative of conquest reflects the

in the Land? The concept and the practice of hospitality as given in the narrative suggests a process where by an “unknown person (who may pose a threat)”, possibly the  $\text{זָר}$  or the  $\text{נִכְרִי}$ , is transformed into a guest, say a sojourner (Martin, 2014:2). In the Old Testament, there are stipulations regarding how Israel should treat a  $\text{זָר}$  (cf. Lev. 25:25, 35, 39; Deut. 14:28–29; 16:11, 14; 24:19–21; 26:12-13). It therefore implies that the  $\text{זָר}$  is not the primary recipient of hospitality as shown in the passage. Hence, I would opine that the Canaanite are not the ones in question here. More also they are not potential enemies as in the case of a  $\text{זָר}$  or a  $\text{נִכְרִי}$ . After the conquest, the Canaanites were given the status of slave which are closely related to that of a  $\text{זָר}$  (cf. Josh. 9; Gen. 9:25–27; Lev. 19:9–10, 33-34; 23:22). Of course, it is possible that these Canaanites along with other Israelites could have been facing one form of injustice or the other because injustice was not only peculiar to the transition period or even the monarchy. The problem of injustice e.g. socio-economic differences has been in existence in different times and places (Gen. 36:31; 1Sam 18:23; 22:2; Judg. 9:4; Bendor, 1996:222). These then suggests that we should consider another possible period of the composition of the text and the identity of the ‘other’ at the period.

Considering the motif of the conquest in Genesis 9:25-27 and 13:15, one would speculate that Genesis was composed after the monarchical period, most likely at the exile or after the exile and not at the conquest (Spronk, 2010:16f). The question then is, is it possible that the centralisation agenda that accompanies the inauguration of monarchical period is the context of the text composition? let us then have a brief look at the period of the restoration.

#### **5.4.5.2. Restoration of the exile and the reurbanisation of Yehud**

The restoration of Judah in 538 BCE by the Persian government marks the beginning of another struggle for the Israelites. Once again, they were back in a transition experience. During the time of the captivity, their properties were occupied by the native Jews who remained in the land after the deportation, and by foreigners who were brought in by the Assyrians. With the decree of Cyrus, Judah was again being repopulated by diaspora Jews. The Old Testament text shows that there were conflicts during the period of the restoration, but the nature and extent

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interests of the house of David late in their rule over Judah to legitimize their claim to rightful ownership of the Northern Kingdom after the Assyrian deportation, and that the text was probably composed or compiled at that time.

of the conflict are difficult to ascertain (McNutt, 1999:200; Schmid, 2008:149). McNutt (1999:200) observes that certain approaches employed to reconstruct the nature and source of conflict in the postexilic period. These will be evaluated in the light of the text's culture rhetoric.

***The rise of competitive powers:*** the most influential group among the returnees is the party of the ruling priest. It is assumed that this group was supported by Persian authority to return and rebuild the temple. It is therefore highly possible that in the local struggle for power at this period, the ruling priests gained advantage. We have noted above that the Persian policy of resettling the exiles was geared towards the creation and improvement of the output of its taxes throughout the empire. It is believed that the ruling priests were more concerned with the affairs of the ruling power. Although they purported to promote the reconstruction of the religious and cultural heritage of the *Yehud*, their major concern was secular in the form collecting taxes for the Persian government and establishing their own power. Biblical stories and prophecies about this period shift their attention from the Davidic royal house to the Persian ruler—Cyrus who was described as God's anointed (Isa. 44:28; 45:1). Schniedewind (2004:165) says "the Davidic kings vanish from the scene and the leadership of the Jewish community in Jerusalem passes to the priests." The Davidic royal house became only patrons of the temple, priests and its services. In another angle, the existence of an opposing force that promoted the egalitarian ideals was presupposed. This opposition was probably from the prophetic guild who challenged the authority of these ruling priests in order to gain control over the community.

***Group crisis model and the role of ritual behaviour:*** this theory is viewed from the perspective of the effort to maintain social boundaries. Certain purity legislations were instituted during this period as a means of protecting and maintaining social boundaries amongst the colonised people. The problem is represented very clearly in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah concerning the proposal for dissolution of mixed marriages. Supporting this group crisis model is the fact that the Babylonian policy of settling the deportees in their own separate communities did not affect the group's identity (McNutt, 1999:187). Rather, this policy facilitated the maintenance of their group identity. There was a strong emphasis on their identity that was distinctive from those who had remained in the land and had not shared in their exile experience. This conflict subsequently led to different social configurations and delimiting of the identification markers such as remnant, holy seed and sons of exile (McNutt, 1999:201).

***Studying the nature of kinship and marriage:*** During the postexilic period, conflict arose from the call for individuals to trace their lineage to the Israel's בית־אב or even בית־אבות, because of the social structural changes. Failure to do so resulted in expulsion, exposing one to the position of a גֵּר. Therefore, the inability of those who could not trace their lineage to the Israel's אָב בית as contained in the אָבוֹת בית constituted one of the major conflicts amongst the returnees themselves (McNutt, 1999:187).

To understand the nature of the conflict that these theories proposed, it is very important for us to reflect on the nature of life in Judah before the exile. Firstly, we will recall that the Temple was the essential and central institution in Judah before the exile. The social structure of the community was unified based on the centralised cult of Yahweh, with its temple priests as the religious authority. During the postexilic period, there was no temple and because the primary kinship group was the אָבוֹת בית, there was a move to continue with the initial structure of authority of the אָבוֹת/בית־אב. Master (2001:128) remarks that “the forces of tradition and personal association, natural forces apparent in the ancient household, appear to have shaped the concept of authority. To the extent that dependents of the household had piety toward tradition and piety toward the master...” By implication, most *Yehud* communities must have shown preference to the egalitarian ideals of the אָבוֹת/בית־אב (cf. Kessler, 2008:54). Thus, leadership of the community became highly contested between the priestly family and the collective אָבוֹת בית. In such a situation, ideologies and theologies are often employed (McNutt,1999:191) to construct the boundaries of social systems and regulating other mechanisms such as bureaucracies, laws and rituals.

Having seen the social responses through the cultural rhetoric of the text above, this research agrees with the proposal that the final compilation of the pericope in its current coherent structure must have taken place during the early part of the postexilic period. Retrospectively, the discourse of intertextuality has revealed that the text is a masterpiece of literary art with an intricate network of texts. The hospitality story of Genesis 18:1–16 is said to be rooted in a period of incipient settlement that is heavily characterised by family life. The story of the incest (Gen. 19:30–38) as a family story also contains Lot's itinerary and genealogy which provide a

contrast to Abraham's narrative, and is also traced back to the patriarchal period.<sup>249</sup> In light of the social responses that the socio-literary stream reveals, this research proposes that reading the stories in the early post exilic period makes sense, especially when one consider that the structure of the *בְּיַתְּאָב* has been disrupted.

Secondly, the divine-human conversation is very crucial in dating the narrative. Although we have argued above that the main thrust of the dialogue is one of the constant and recurring questions in the history of human existence, it implies that it cannot be taken as a main pointer to the time of the composition of the text. Nevertheless, the discourse has proven that the divine-human conversation was constructed to amalgamate the double strands of the hospitality stories in the text. Thus, the dialogue included significant theological concerns of the community which possibly reflected the compositional level of the text (Ben Zvi, 1992:30).

Looking at the survey of the social history of ancient Israel, we would like to ask the question that if the dialogue is positioned in the postexilic period, who could be raising such a significant theological concern? And what could possibly be the crisis that prompted such a concern? We depart from the premise that there is probably an effort from the side of the narrator to persuade the readers or listeners about certain theological propositions as presented in the dialogue. The discourse above has shown that at the heart of the conversation is the relationship between divine justice and mercy.

Firstly, the text portrays *Yahweh as the giver of the moral standard (the way of Yahweh)* people should live by. Yahweh chose Abraham as one to teach his children and his *בְּיַתְּאָב* to keep the 'way of Yahweh' to do righteousness and justice. In the light of the stated theological proposition and based on the theory of the rise of competitive powers, Ben Zvi (1992:39 note 2) says that for the ruling party "to exercise power it is essential that it be recognized as legitimate and that it enjoy an authority that brings about the consent of those who are subject to it." It seems that the priests as a group were "claiming that its own values, ideational horizon and symbol system are integral part of the universal cosmic order, and inculcating this claim to its members and others within its sphere of influence" (Ben Zvi, 1992: 39f). But the narrator

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<sup>249</sup> We will argue below that, in the light of the tension about the identity of a true Israelite, that although the Israelites might define their identity through their link to a *בְּיַתְּאָב*, the *עַמֵּי הַקְּאָרְיָן* who are probably the Moabites and the Ammonites who are people whose ancestors were also part of Abraham's *בְּיַתְּאָב* through Lot, Deuteronomy 2:9, 19; 23:3; Ps 83:9 (Sarna, 1989:139) thus, suggesting a critique of the kinship structure.

seems to be challenging this through the divine origin of the universal order through Abraham, *הָאֵבֶר בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל*. Thus, the *בֵּית אַבְרָם* by implication, were also trying to claim and legitimise the role and authority of the *בֵּית אַבְרָם/בֵּית אַבְרָם* with their egalitarian ideals as opposed to the oppressive priestly guild who served the interests of the Persian government. The writer, through the hospitality of Abraham as a point of reference of an ideal observance of the moral law, claims that society will not survive, as in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, if they do not keep the way of Yahweh.

Secondly, through the analysis of the text through the lens of the ancient social and cultural system of exchange, the text evinces another theological proposition. Throughout, in what seems to be a bargain between Abraham and Yahweh, we noted that the conversation did not actually reveal that a bargain is taking place because in all the proposals or challenges that Abraham presents, Yahweh acquiesces. Using the example of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which is parallel to the great deluge, it seems therefore that the community at the time of the composition of the text has reached the conclusion that if God's divine means of punishment is a general or massive catastrophe, then it implies that the righteous and the wicked face the same fate. This is a theological claim that this narrative reject based on the outcome of the destruction of Sodom. Sodom's destruction was justified because there was no righteous person in the city. The significance of this theological concern can also be seen in the portrayal of Yahweh's willingness to show mercy to Lot and his family.

Regarding the ruling party and the commoners as the two audiences at the time of the composition, the dialogue could be seen as the ironic response to the theological proposition of returnees who might be questioning the justice of God in displacing them—the holy seed—in favour of the *עַם־הָאֲרָץ*. This claim was refuted as the author employs a familiar story for the audience to judge for themselves. In fact, the claim of being the 'holy seed' in the question of who is a true Israelite which arises in the theory of the group crisis model and role of ritual behaviour, is challenged through the significance of the theology of the mercy of God. The story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah reveals that Lot and his family were saved by God's mercy and the extension of his covenant with Abraham. Moreover, who is Lot? The conclusion of the narrative (Gen 19:30–38) ends by telling us that Lot is the ancestor of Moab and Ammon. That is to say, those who the "holy seed" could be considering as foreigners who does not have part in the covenant promise, (probably the *עַם־הָאֲרָץ* or the returnees who were



not able to trace their genealogy to Israel's *בְּיַת אֲבוֹת* have common ancestor with them in Abraham. This calls for a redefinition of the kinship structure.

Now having established all this evidences about the text situated in the post exilic *Yehud*. Lombaard's (2014a: 6) remark is noteworthy: "internal tensions were not limited to the well-known conflict between the returnees from exile and the *am ha-aretz* [...] The internal streams of theological, historical and socio-political identity formation, all interwoven." Thus, it suggests the possibility of ideologies from different trajectories who probably tried to interpret their suffering.<sup>250</sup> Different classes of people held different views on their history, especially the captivity. Certain conflicts like the contestation of power for dominance, also characterised the postexilic *Yehud*. Canonization of the *torah* was a response that shows some level of compromise based on the ideological and theological convictions of the day (cf. Albertz, 1994b:438, 466). The selected text, therefore, a product of that period, must have been edited to its current shape as a response to the diversity of theological and ideological streams. Its final form was coherently brought together not on social agreement but theological concord (see Middlemas, 2007:138). Schniedewind (2004:167) affirms this when he remarks that "Jewish nationalists were creating an identity and a connection with the land through literary invention."<sup>251</sup>

## 5.5. Conclusion

The social and cultural texture of the text has been analysed in this chapter. It identifies the social and cultural location of the world of the text which unveils the socio-literary reality of the text's history. The study started with a survey of the social history of ancient Israel. The survey helped in the construction of the world of the text, identifying its social and cultural phenomena. It showed different stages of Israel's development. The *בְּיַת אֲבוֹת* was identified as the as the basic social unit in all the stages of social history. Throughout the period of the development, the structure of the community has been constantly disrupted. In a situation where the demography of the community increases and the community metamorphoses to an

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<sup>250</sup> See Lombaard (2014a:6) for an outline of possible trajectories.

<sup>251</sup> Citing Schniedewind is strictly to support the idea that mostly Jewish literature developed at the postexilic period. His use of "literary invension" is problematic to me in the sence that I have argue for the historicity of the stories. My interpretation of his literary invention strictly has to do with the compilation of Israel's testimonies, and not just creation of stories as myth for the sake of their identity.

urban settlement, the basic social units are also disrupted—usually from an extended kinship group into a smaller family, akin to the contemporary nuclear family. Also, certain situations like the death of the head of the *בֵּית־אָבוֹת*, the extended family structure usually collapsed into small families and each individual unit developed again into a new extended family. The social history has also shown that the different stages of transition entail changes in the communities' economic, political and religious conditions.

The survey was followed with a brief history of the possible pre-literary stages of the text. This helped in delineating the variant characters of the units of the text because the research is dealing with the text in its final form. The research employed Robbins' (1996) outline of the social and cultural texture to explore the social and cultural location of the text. Throughout the study, the research identified what kind of a world the writer was painting, what responses were needed and what possible culture the narrator was proposing for the listeners or readers. These social and cultural locations, identified through the culture rhetoric, were evaluated in the light of the possible social history which the text seems to invoke. The study concludes that different units in their various individual traditions must have been composed in a pre-exilic or early exilic period. The tensions that were observed in the text in its final form reveal certain streams of theological, historical and socio-political identity formation crises which are assumed to be the theology and ideology that the text endeavours to resolve. A resolution was achieved at the postexilic period through a sage theologian. The sage scribal theologians reached this resolution through the canonization process with a strong emphasis on theological concord and not social agreement.

Having seen that the text in its final form is a product of contexts that were characterised by power struggles, and because the text itself is a cultural tool that provides certain nuances to its audience, we assume that some ideologies must have been employed in the construction. The chapter notes that the present trajectories reveal some of the ideological conflict. The chapter concludes by observing that it is possible that the symbolic representation of the context in the cultural rhetoric possibly tells more than what is visible on the surface of the narrative. Those responses were discussed in the 'specific social topic', the representation of values in the 'common social and cultural topic'; and the preferences proposed in 'final cultural categories' call for a deeper understanding of the text. The analysis of hospitality as a cultural symbol shows that the two strands are incongruent. For example, reading the Lot story might prompt

one to ask, 'what is the limit of hospitality?' or 'what are the conditions of hospitality?' But having seen the different responses, it can be suggested that the incongruity in the text could be ironically intended. Additionally, the incongruent stories challenge Israel's identity and kinship structures. In the next chapter, the ideologies and theologies, how it functions as literature, will be investigated. I shall endeavour to find out how the narrator confronted the dominant theologies and ideologies of the time?

## *Chapter 6*

### *Ideological and Theological Textures of Genesis 18 & 19*<sup>252</sup>

#### **6.1. Introduction**

The study so far has revealed that the text is a composite text and its development entails the conglomeration of several factors, namely literary, theological, political, sociological, ideological and ethical factors. For instance, the study of intratexture in Chapter 3 indicates that the different scenes identified in the narrative were supposedly individual stories which must have existed in either oral or written form. They were brought together at a particular point in the history of ancient Israel. We do not take it for granted that the compiler selected these stories at random. The factors named above must have guided the selection so that a relevant message was communicated to the listeners and readers of that time.

Chapter 5 proposes the early postexilic period as the time of the text's composition. Some characteristics of certain trajectories, which reveal the theological, historical and socio-political crises that characterise the context of the narrator, were noted. It is assumed that the individual stories with their variant characteristics presuppose different ideological and theological propositions. Perhaps the goal of the writer was the resolution of these divergent worldviews of the postexilic *Yehud*. This chapter explores the supposed intentionality of the writer of the text. Under the guide of Robbins' "ideological" and "sacred" textures that I have put together and subsequently will refer to as "ideological and theological textures",<sup>253</sup> I shall explore the possible ideologies and theologies that informs the composer's selection of the stories. Robbins (1996:106) observes that "[e]ach intellectual mode of interaction and exchange has a relation to an ideological field in the modern/postmodern world in which we live." We therefore assume that theology, as a mode of intellectual interaction, could be a form of ideology depending on whether one's approach to the biblical text is descriptive or normative. Mayes (1999:73) clarifies this that "a clear distinction between ideology and theology can scarcely be established: one may speak of a more or less adequate ideology, or of a more or less adequate

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<sup>252</sup> "Ideological and Theological Textures" combines two different textures in Robbins' (1996) *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide Socio-rhetorical Interpretation*: Chapter 4 (Ideological Texture: Sharing Interest in commentary and Text), and Chapter 5 (Sacred Texture: Seeking the Divine in a Text) .

<sup>253</sup> This research discusses Robbins' 'ideological and sacred' textures together because there is an interactive interface between ideology and theology.

theology, but both connote a systematic expression of ideas, the articulation of a world view in opposition to others” (*cf.* Barr, 2000:118)

## **6.2. Understanding ideological and theological texture**

I have noted above that it is difficult to establish a clear distinction between ideology and theology. This does not in any way suggest that ideology and theology are one and the same. This section provides an understanding of ideology and theology which will serve as the point of departure for analysing the ideological and theological textures of Genesis 18 and 19.

### **6.2.1. Ideological texture**

#### **6.2.1.1. What is ideology**

According to Mayes (1999:58), “no human thought is immune to the ideologizing influences of its social context”. These influences are ordered symbolically in the human mind and consequently create biases, opinions, preferences, values, and stereotypes (*cf.* Yi, 2002:119f). Ideology is said to be used in a variety of ways and it is difficult for one to know what it means (Barr, 2000:103ff). However the question is, is there a common meaning from various usages? Robbins (1996:95) defines ideology as “an integrated system of beliefs, assumptions, and values that reflects the needs and interests of a group or class at a particular time in history” (*cf.* Barr, 2000:106; Yi, 2002:120). Similarly, Mayes (1999:61) concurred and simplified it thus: “In general, ideology is representation of reality, that through which reality is experienced, expressed and meditated”. This research will not discourse all the usages, but will remark that what is essential in these definitions is the reflection on class interest. Thus, ideology can simply be defined as the deployment of meaning in the service of power (Aichele et al. 1995:274; Thompson, 1990:7, 20; Eagleton, 1991:5; Barr, 2000:95).

Geertz (1973:193-233) takes this further to explain that ideology is a cultural system, not an entity on its own. He defines ideology as “an ordered system of cultural symbols” (Geertz, 1973:196). Geertz observes that ideology has been wrongly conceptualised in theoretical interpretations as a “dirty river” in contrast to a “pure stream”—objectivity as undistorted (*cf.*

Yi, 2002:118).<sup>254</sup> In his observations on the role of ideology, Geertz (1973:203) recognises the ambiguity inherent in the conceptualisation of ideology. He notes the contrasting roles that ideology plays. For instance, ideology functions in “defining (or obscuring) social categories, stabilizing (or upsetting) social expectations, maintaining (or undermining) social norms, strengthening (or weakening) social consensus, relieving (or exacerbating) social tensions” (Geertz, 1973:203). Evidently, the contrasting roles of ideology point to the possibility that ideology could be neutral or even positively admirable. But the question is, akin to this ambiguity in understanding ideology, how should the term be used, especially in theological and biblical studies? The conceptual apparatus of the term in the field of biblical and theological studies has been problematic (Barr, 2000:108).

The way people began to use ideology as a central concept in theological and biblical discourse<sup>255</sup> provides an understanding of how certain biblical interpretations are termed as ideological. In other words, those biblical interpretations are considered ideological because “meaning” is deployed for the service of the interest of such proponents. It is observed by scholars (Mead, 2007:119; Fowl, 1995:15) that the driving force of certain modern and postmodern theologies (for example Feminist Theology, Marxist Theology, Liberation Theology, Postcolonial Theology, Black Theology, African Theology) comes down to a question about power. The question then is “Who has the power to interpret or tell stories and to whom do the stories/text belong? Who controls their meaning? Who decides what texts we

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<sup>254</sup> Mayes (1999:58; and Barr, 2000:105; *cf.* Yi, 2002:120) note that ideology can carry a pejorative sense. It can be employed to achieve a reversal. The role of ideology, Mayes (1999:64) observes, “belongs in a context of opposition to other ideologies and thus has a legitimating function.”

<sup>255</sup> Barr (2000:109ff) traces three paths that explain how people began to use the term ‘ideology’ as a central concept in theological and biblical discourse. First, theological discourse in the twentieth century identified some kind of common tendency between theology and environing world-views. For example, the heated debate between Karl Barth and Emile Brunner, better known as dialectical theology (*cf.* Kassa, 2014:10, 40ff), shows the uniqueness of theology but at the same time presenting world-views as systems that are comparable to theology. Secondly, it started from the debate between biblical scholars about biblical theology. “The systematic nature of traditional theology made it difficult to fit it within the Bible [...] Decisions about the theology implied by biblical texts seemed to many biblical scholars to be difficult to take, on the basis on which they normally worked” (Barr, 2000:110). ‘Ideology’ became a suitable term to express those systems or patterns of biblical thinking because they do not belong to the tradition of theology and lacked the authoritarian aspect that commonly belonged to theology. Third, this came as the result of the increasing influence of sociological thought and methods upon biblical scholarship. Because theology was not a familiar and attractive term, they use ideology. As attention focussed on social aspects of biblical religion, “In particular, sociological studies suggested that behind Bible there were competing groups and strata of society, and that where cohesive expressions of viewpoints appeared they represented the competing interests of these groups and strata: in other words, they were the ideologies of these social entities” (Barr, 2000:111).

choose? Against whom are these stories or interpretations aimed? What is their ethical effect? Who has power to access data?” (Mead, 2007:119). Having explored the meaning of ideology, I shall investigate how to identify and clarify the elements of ideology within a text.<sup>256</sup>

### **6.2.1.2. Identifying ideology within a text**

Ideology, Aichele et al (1995:274) observe, “resides in the link that society forges between discourse and power that empowers signification (e.g., in the reading and writing of literary text) at its most basic level.” Because of the nexus between discourse and power, Aichele et al (1995:274) remark that “ideological criticism has come to be closely identified with the politics of reading”. They continued that there is a special role that a text has in these power relations, namely the creation and maintenance of social power. They say that “[i]n the same way that people are implicated in the working of social order, literature plays an important role in the ideological operations of culture, whether it be for just or unjust (or some combination of both) reasons” (Aichele et al, 1995:274 *cf.* Gottwald, 1992a:45).

On the relationship between a text and a society’s ideology, Aichele et al (1995:275) notes that text should not be thought of as the production of ideology, but that:

Texts are implicated in both the representation and production of ideology... the ideology of a text is tied structurally to the ethical push and pull of interpretation. Ideological criticism, we might conclude, at root has to do with the ethical character of and response to the text and to those lived relations that are represented and reproduced in the act of reading.

Similarly, Fowl (1995:17) believes that to speak of a text as having an ideology is a problem of conceptualisation and uncritical thinking of the history of Bible interpretation. He says:

The claim that a biblical text has an ideology is rarely the initial claim made by a scholar. Rather, it usually stems from the scholarly observation that those who produced the biblical texts shaped them in the light of their own economic, ethnic, social or gender based interests. It is then not uncommon for it to be said that the racism, androcentrism or elitism of the people who produced the text is a property of it. Hence, the text has an ideology.

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<sup>256</sup> For more on the understanding of the term ideology and ideological criticism, see Thompson, 1990; Eagleton, 1991; Briggs, 1992; Aichele et al. 1995; Taylor, 2007.

Fowl (1995:17) agrees that “the production and interpretation of texts are part of the means by which various individuals and groups can further their social, political and theological agendas” but he is of the opinion that “[t]hese ideologies (not all of which are compatible) are not things they [individuals or groups] uncovered in the text” (Fowl, 1995:31). Fowl (1995:32) then suggests that:

We can pay closer, clearer attention to the relationships between ideology, textual production/interpretation and the practices such interpretations underwrite by examining specific phases in the interpretive life of particular texts. For professional biblical scholars, the most important phases are those initial phases associated with the production and first reception of biblical texts.

Aichele et al (1995:275) also submit that “[w]hen it comes to reading the biblical texts in particular and making sense of the ideological discourse, struggles and conflicts of the Bible, the reader is faced with the challenge of and responsibility for ethical questioning and action.”

The search for the ideological texture of a text, according to Robbins (1996: 95), concerns “the social, cultural and individual location and perspective of writers and readers.” The characteristics of the analysis of ideological texture concern the agreement of individuals who are involved in the common context, in this case the text. What this implies is that, according to Robbins (1996:95), ideological analysis and interpretation is an interpretive conversation which begins first with the writer and the reader; second, others’ interpretation of the text and ends with, third, the text that is the guest in the interpretive conversation. It focuses on the relation of individuals to groups, implying that ideology concerns an individual’s “conscious or unconscious enactment of presuppositions, dispositions, and values held in common with other people [...]” (Robbins, 1996:95). This kind of engagement opens the various layers of the text which stand as the guest in the conversation. Aichele et al (1995: 273) concur thus:

For its part, ideological criticism exposes three dimensions of meaning of the struggle present in the production of meaning: it reveals the tense relation between the production of meaning and language; it highlights the multiple discourses operating within the text; and it lays bare the complete nature of power relations that produce text, construct the institutional contexts of texts and their particular social location.

Robbins (1996:96) also agrees that the starting point for ideological analysis is with people. In this regard, the conversation begins with the ‘individual location’. This research employs the



taxonomies of a ‘specific social topic and a ‘final cultural location’ of the ‘Social and Cultural Texture’ discussed in the previous chapter to analyse the social location. One’s location, having gone through different experiences of multiple social and cultural contexts in search for meaning in life, influences the way one interprets a text. Massey (1994:150) rightly observes: “[t]o a more than considerable extent, our thinking has been influenced by elements of rationalism, or by some kind of brand of nationalism, or perhaps by narrow individualism, but always by some communal identity.” As such, a statement that concerns my own social location is also necessary and will be done below.

The second area to consider in the analysis of one’s ideology is “relation to group” or the relationship of the interpreter to groups. The guide to understanding one’s relationship to group include: clique, gang, action set, faction, corporate group, historic tradition, and multiple historic traditions throughout the world (Robbins, 1996:100–101). One’s relation to a group, just as his or her individual location, affects how and what one includes in her or his interpretation.

The third area is “modes of intellectual discourse”. These modes of intellectual discourse are different ways that people have coordinated themselves, although not in an organisational manner with a structure, but through diverse approaches in text interpretation. “Each intellectual mode of interaction and exchange has a relation to an ideological field in the modern/postmodern world in which we live” (Robbins, 1996:106). Modes of intellectual discourse are not quite distinct from one’s relation to a group, only that they specifically deal with others’ interpretations. People align themselves, consciously or unconsciously to a particular mode of interaction and exchange which is often related to an ideological field. In my previous discourse in Chapter 3, I provided a history of existing research on the text. This survey provides a general overview in the mode of intellectual discourse of the two chapters. However, in my discourse of ideological elements in the text, I will sample commentaries to reflect the multiple historic traditions in the world.

The fourth area that Robbins suggests for the analysis of ideological texture, is the “spheres of ideology”. Robbins (1996:111) suggests three ways for the analysis of the spheres of ideology. “Three of these ways are: analyzing the social and cultural location of the implied author of the text; analyzing the ideology of power in the discourse of the text; and analyzing the ideology

in the mode of intellectual discourse both in the text and in the interpretation of the text.” These three ways are used as the structural framework for the discourse of the ideological texture of the text and a brief explanation is provided in that section. The questions raised will be, what type of power relation is found in the text, to what extent is power claimed and for what or whose benefit?

### **6.2.2. Theological texture**

Theological texture is the characteristic of the text which expresses the relationship between the human life and the divine. It is concerned with the way in which the text speaks about God or gods, or talks about religious life. Categories that guide the search of this texture of the text include a search for a deity, holy persons, a spirit being, divine history, human redemption, human commitment, religious community, and ethics (Robbins, 1996:120ff).

Theology, as observed above, can be the “systemic expression of ideas, the articulation of a worldview in opposition to others” (Mayes, 1999:73). This definition relates to the legitimising role of ideology and some aspects of the function of Old Testament theology in that capacity. However, there is a distinction between theology and ideology. Mayes (1999:73) briefly looked at the nature of this distinction based on some renowned Old Testament scholars’ (Miller and Brueggemann) perspectives in which they observe that several of the Old Testament texts do not function to legitimise, but rather that they are non-ideological. The argument was that those non-legitimising theologies are open to new possibilities of speaking of Yahweh. Theology must not control the nature and activity of God; once it does that, it has become ideology (*cf.* Schmid, 2008:153).

Also, it was argued that Old Testament theology shares some common, conventional theology of its time. The shared conventional theology concerns order in creation, and “it is a theology which serves the interest of the ruling class which leads back the current social structure to its origins in order in creation” (Mayes, 1999:74). However, this is not always the case. For example, Israel’s relationship in this conventional theology is expressed in contractual terms. Conversely, this relationship is not always confined to the closed theological categories, see Hosea 11:1–7 for example. What this suggests is that there is “an ongoing tension, unresolved and unresolvable, which must be maintained in all fruitful biblical theology” (Mayes, 1999:75).

From this discourse, it can be said that *theology is an ongoing discourse, a non-legitimising systemic expression of ideas which are open to new possibilities of speaking about the deity, holy persons, a spirit being, divine history, human redemption, human commitment, religious community, and ethics.*

Mayes (1999:74) questions whether the distinction between ideology and theology is at all tenable. He argues: “[t]hat theology or faith can somehow be non-ideological presupposes that ideology is simply a direct reflection of material circumstances on the part of the privileged, while faith or theology is the protest against, and the rejection of, the oppression which ideology thus involves.” Mayes notes the polemic function of ideology and argues that the break from the conventional theology noted above can be understood as a new ideology that arose because of the dysfunction of the conventional theology. Mayes is not alone on this observation. Barr (2000:114, 115 citing Christiaan Beker)<sup>257</sup> opines:

[...]that biblical theology itself can easily relapse into ideology. It formulates itself in such terms as ‘kerygma’, ‘eschatology’, ‘the word’, and so on, which ‘concepts are abstract and remote from experience’ ... biblical theology itself is in danger of becoming ideology: ‘One inescapably develops a conceptual system which is unresponsive to new experiences. Ideology becomes the standard of truth to which experience must conform’.

Mayes might be right to a certain extent, but this research would like to contend that Miller’s and Brueggemann’s distinction is very crucial. If as Yi (2002:133) and Beker (as cited by Barr above) observe, ideology is a closed mind-set that refuses alternative views, then we can conclude that the open-ended nature of theological discourse (the unresolved and unresolvable tension) makes theology, to a certain extent, non-ideological. Brueggemann (1997:178) remarks that “Old Testament theology, when it pays attention to Israel’s venturesome rhetoric, refuses any reductionism to a single or simple articulation; it offers a witness that is enormously open, inviting, and suggestive, rather than one that yields settlement, closure, or precision.” Thus, one could say that the distinction between ideology and theology is tenable.

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<sup>257</sup>Primary source not available to the researcher.

The analysis of ideology and theology requires the reader to employ a particular tool. Due to the characteristics of this text, I propose an ironic reading and will elaborate on the previous discourse of Chapter 1.

### **6.2.3. Irony in the Hebrew Bible**

In my hypothesis, I proposed that an understanding of the ironic juxtaposition of the stories of hospitality in Genesis 18 and 19 reveals important elements of the Old Testament concept of hospitality and its transformative power on the community receiving the story. In Chapter 5, I observed that culture is a symbolic action. Sometimes the literal meaning seems unintelligible or rather incongruent. As such a reader needs to look beyond the literal meaning and engage with what is assumed to be the writer's motif.

One of the characteristics of Pentateuch narratives is the double strands of the stories that are often juxtaposed by the narrator. The reader often identifies conflicting elements between the doublets and this can cause disparity between the reader's response to the narrative and the reality of the narrative. This characteristic resonates with Good's (1981:14) assertion that irony "begins in conflict, a conflict marked by the perception of the distance between pretence and reality".

Often, incongruities in a narrative text is an active and conscious skill of the narrator designed to make the listener or reader question what he or she encounters on the surface of the narrative. The design becomes effective because the writer, the reader, and the characters in the narrative have a common understanding of how the "world spins" (Good, 1981:20). In this regard, this research holds that the often-contradictory account of the narratives recorded must have been the design of a skilled writer (a sage theologian) who desired to represent both accounts yet with an intention of providing a different point of view. Sharp (2009:241) notes the possibility of critics to question the presence of irony in the Hebrew Bible. She remarks: "Perhaps these stories simply mean what they seem to say on the surface. Perhaps juxtaposition of intersecting themes or ideas simply resulted from the carelessness of scribal technique, lengths of scrolls, or other priorities that are now lost to us." She continues that "[v]arious reconstructions of

intersecting aspects of historical and cultural context will yield varying results” (2009:241).<sup>258</sup>. Nevertheless, given the divergent of the “literary, social, theological and political contexts within which the Hebrew Bible was produced” it is not just possible to deny that the irony exists in the Bible (Sharp, 2009: 241). One cannot deny the possibility of errors during the transmission of biblical text by scribes, but that is not the case because scribes had more liberties and autonomy in the transmission of texts.<sup>259</sup>

Due to the liberty and autonomy of scribes in the transmission of a text, it is highly possible that they preserved some works as they were, expanded others, filled in some gaps they might have noticed and articulated some new theological opinions or combined similar texts. Variations and incongruities in biblical texts are evidence that scribes, editors and copyists were not bound to the idea of the word-for-word transmission. For the fact that scribes had some liberties to alter the text but decided to keep them with their discrepancies is suggestive of the hidden intention of the compiler.

According to Calmus and Caillies (2014:46), “most theories of irony comprehension converge around the broad notion of contrast, or incongruity, between the ironic assertion and the reality of the situation, generally named the context”. Incongruity might not be accidental inconsistency, especially when we consider the kind of freedom scribes had. Incongruity may be conceptualised by situating irony as the intermediate step between texts. In a context where similar stories are juxtaposed, it is assumed that they must be congruent. When they are not, one wonders whether that could be premeditated.

We have noted that a symbolic ordering of ideas was not just a straightforward arrangement of information or stories as if they occurred in a linear trajectory. Sharp (2009:7) observes that “[l]anguage can represent naïvely and pragmatically, can describe clearly, can make points directly. But language can also obfuscate, misname, and subvert what it seems to be saying”.

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<sup>258</sup> Scribes in ancient Israel were a small group but highly educated custodians of high culture and traditions, which formed the intellectual class that transmitted the oral traditions into writing (see von Rad, 1972:15ff; Schniedewind, 2004:52–60). The scribes were also the ones who intentionally collected, edited and preserved the independent stories into books, thereby creating new compositions known as the holy scriptures of ancient Israel. Concerning the period of the existence of the scribal school, scholars still have a divided opinion. According to Schniedewind (2004:116ff) the activities of the scribes were more obvious in the late Persian period.

<sup>259</sup> See the discussion below (6.3.2) on scribal influence.

The Hebrew Bible contains multiple styles and was written and compiled by several people in different historical and cultural settings. It contains different epistemological and theological perspectives as such, “[c]rucial components of their understandings and practices are lost to us or remain poorly understood” (Sharp, 2009:7).

Part of what complicates the process of interpretation is what Sharp (2009:7) refers to as the “power of the unspoken” in the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew Bible has left much to the reader’s informed constructive imagination. Irony provides hints on the incongruity of the realities, but it does not orientate the reader. My study—to borrow the words of Sharp (2009:8)—has shown that:

‘Texts are no longer bare runes to be puzzled over. They are at once an intricate braid of latent and the manifest, of form and function, of intimation and opacity, of word and image, of grapheme and difference.’ Ironic texts are constituted precisely by that braid of latent and the manifest, by the interplay between intimation and opacity.

Such multiple characteristics of a text often result in a plurality of interpretations (*cf.* Mead, 2007:118). The multiple characteristics of the Old Testament make provision for its own critique. Thus, I suggest that ideas expressed by either the writer or reader in such a complex manner are not to be taken at face value. Such a symbolic representation of complex, ambiguous, incongruent and polyphonic text needs to be interpreted ironically (Barr, 2000:39).

“Irony is a cultural phenomenon whose very possibility blurs the lines among the multitudinous possibilities for how to speak, how to hear, and how to understand” (Sharp, 2009:7). In my previous discussion of irony, I cited Good (1981:24) that irony “clarifies with extreme sharpness the incongruity involved in a matter of great moment”. Sharp (2009:13f) agrees with Good (1981:24) that irony has some theological importance, especially as it is often an implicit or explicit criticism. She explains that irony is considered as a strategy used by the Old Testament writers to draw their audience through their implicit criticism into a renewed

commitment to the covenant relationship with Yahweh. Therefore, irony in the Old Testament reveals the writer's theological intent.<sup>260</sup>

Now the question is, how do we determine that a text is ironic? Do we assume that every incongruent or ambiguous passage is ironic? Sharp (2009:14) says that irony usually creates a double audience, the one takes every word at face value and the second sees the deeper meaning and the incomprehension of the first. This double audience explicates the daunting task of understanding and interpreting the markers of irony in a text. In the introductory chapter, I outlined a few suggestions by Good on how to identify irony. Similarly, Sharp (2009:15) notes some characteristics as follows:

1. Tacit in its affirmation of any topic.
2. It allows latitude in the degree to which readers will reject the unacceptable meaning.
3. Ironic statements may be more effective rhetorically than a strongly formulated positive statement which some readers might be hesitant to agree with.
4. Irony does coerce, but more lightly than dogmatic assertion does.
5. Irony's goal is the building of amiable communities against the exclusion of the naïve victims in ironic texts.

These markers, however, do not apply to all cases, as detecting irony depends on one's perspective. Incongruity, ambiguity or complexity of a text may not fairly appeal as markers of irony because the texts are other people's product. However, it is said that determining irony is a complex task that lies "both within and beyond the hermeneutical endeavor proper [...] Reader response plays an inevitable role in constructing and perceiving ironies" (Sharp, 2009:7).

At a glance, one may assume there is no difference between ideology and irony, as both rely on or employ rhetorical figure of *inversio*. However, there are distinct characteristics that distinguish each word from the other. Carter (1998:13, 15) tersely summarises the

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<sup>260</sup> This is not implying that every irony in Hebrew Bible leads to covenant imperative (see Sharp, 2009: 14). However, to be specific on the text at hand, I have argued in the history of demarcation, that although the text is a unit of its own and can be read as it is, it nevertheless has a broader unit and falls within the Abraham narrative cycle. The Abraham narrative unit is introduced with a programmatic covenant promise of land, progeny, and blessing. The covenant which the narrative alluded to (Genesis 18:19) is that Yahweh will fulfil all that he has promised when Abraham keeps and teaches the way of Yahweh to his children and the generations after him.

distinguishing characteristic between the two: “irony exists in antithetical relationship of resistance and negation to the ideological process”. When we take ideology as the deployment of meaning in the service of power, in one sense one is saying that ideology stitches together meaning. However, irony with a rhetorical basis in antiphrasis shreds this meaning by saying the opposite of what is meant on the surface. Irony unmasks ideology in a text. The mask that ideology wears in service of power is worn grinningly by irony in order to expose it as a mask. Sharp (2007:23) remarks:

When irony negates meaning, it does so by creating its own precise and sharp contextualization in a particular landscape that is shown to be deceitful and illusory. Yet the contours of that landscape, in a negative, remain the only visible landmarks that guide the interpreter in the negotiation of new meaning to which the irony points.

In the sections below I will re-evaluate the narrative to understand the possible rhetorical function thereof. Having located the possible social and cultural context of the narrative, I will continue by applying the tool of analysing ideologies. Does the rhetoric of the narrative unit reflect possible ideologies and theologies of the social and cultural context identified? What are these possible ideologies? Also, in the light of the incongruent nature of the stories which invites us to read them ironically, I will attempt to negotiate which new nuances could be possible. And could the new understanding be relevant to an audience in the proposed social and cultural context?

### **6.3. Analysis of ideological factors of a text**

It has already been established that ideological analysis and interpretation is an interpretive conversation which begins with the writer and the reader of a text. It is followed by other interpretation of the text and, ends with the text that is the guest in the interpretive conversation. I will focus on the social location of the writer and on other elements which must have influenced the text production. My own social and cultural context is briefly stated.<sup>261</sup>.

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<sup>261</sup> Earlier in Chapter 2, I have briefly discourse the Cultural/Religious Context of Tangale Perspective of Hospitality. By implication, my social location begins with the influence of my cultural and religious views of the concept of hospitality. And while growing, I became affiliated to an Evangelical Church that further shaped my beliefs. From my cultural background, the pericope appeals to me because there is a strong emphasis on hospitality as a virtue, to be practiced by all in my culture. Coupled with a staunch evangelical upbringing, I easily identify



### 6.3.1. The social and cultural location of the writer of the text

My previous discourse of intertexture has helped to locate the possible social context in terms of literary development of the narrative. Again, socio-cultural textures produce clues to the contextual elements of the history of the final form of the text. This section leads to further reflection of these previous discourses, describing the social location of the writer so that it will aid in the understanding of the nature of power relations in the context and to be able to identify those elements in the social strata in the narrative. Having suggested the postexilic period as the possible time for compilation, I will briefly survey the nature of social existence in the postexilic *Yehud*.

*Yehud* in the late Persian period was in a state of different kinds of crises, namely: economic, social, religious and political crisis. Jonker (2016:65) observes that there is a “multi-levelled socio-historic existence in the province of *Yehud* in the late Persian period”. Referring to the complexity of the province of *Yehud*, Jonker (2016: 72) distinguishes four interwoven modes of socio-historic existence:

Firstly, *Yehud* formed part of the Persian imperial context as a presumably independent province. Secondly, *Yehud* stood in close relation to the province of Samaria to the north... as well as to other surrounding provinces. Thirdly, *Yehud* more or less comprised the former tribal areas of Judah and Benjamin, and the relationship between these areas contributed to the social dynamics of the time. Fourthly, the cultic community in *Yehud*'s centre, Jerusalem, was made up of clergy from different origins and of varying affiliations, including those who had previously been exiled and had returned, as well as those who remained in the land.

The different socio-historic modes of existence characterise different kinds of power relations in the postexilic *Yehud*. Generally, events in the region of *Yehud* and the Neo-Babylonian Empire took a new shape when the Persians took over and became the new imperial power.

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with the text as it presents a model of what it means to be hospitable to a stranger. My affiliation with the evangelical tradition refers to my ideological location as someone who is committed to the Scripture as divine revelation and to the truth and power of the Christian gospel. Having stated this, I want to also mention that my ideological stance does go without critical engagement. My MTh thesis is evidence of my critical engagement with theological issues as they touch on the delicate issue of natural law, a topic which has been consciously avoided by the evangelical guild. The multidimensional approach to the biblical text that this dissertation employs is also evidence of my critical engagement and openness to conversation with diverse biblical scholarship for the purpose of inclusion.

Their policy of “tolerance”<sup>262</sup>—building upon the precedent that the previous empires had established and their support for the local elites to rebuild their cult system—consolidated their powers in their empire—Ezra 7; 1 Esd. 5:47-7:9; Haggai 1:1–2:9; Zech. 4:1-10 (*cf.* Carr, 2007:212-215; 2011: 205; Knight, 2011: 102f).<sup>263</sup> This policy motivated many of the former Judean community to journey back to the now Persian province of *Yehud*. However, these returnees were not coming to an empty land. To use the words of Knight (2011:103):

[...] they discovered not the idyllic land their parents had described, but a harsh, deurbanized, largely rural environment inhabited by descendants of those who had been the compatriots of their parents, albeit largely of much lower. Tensions and outright hostilities between those who had returned from exile arose and persisted well into the fifth century BCE as described in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah regarding the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple and fortification wall.

Different kinds of power relations developed in the new Persian region of *Yehud*. For instance, there was “fear among the rural population that the cities, the ‘power containers’ would again become established and would seek to extract from the villagers their labour and their meagre produce” (Knight, 2011:103).

Middlemas (2005:2) reports that the elites have manoeuvred their way and have been appointed by the Persian administrators to be the leaders of the region of *Yehud*. This and several other factors present some challenges that needed to be resolved. I will discuss these issues as evidences of ideologies that were promoted by these ruling parties. However, having argued that the period under query is considered the formative period of the collection of Jewish scriptures, the assertion begs for the question of the identity of these writers or editors. How

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<sup>262</sup> This policy of tolerance does not suggest that the Persians were not stern in their administration. The archaeological discovery of Behistun inscription of Darius I and his inscription on his royal tomb at the cliffs at Naqš-i Rostam show that their policy was a mixture of sternness, skilful organisation, and conciliatory administration (*cf.* Ackroyd, 1970:162ff; Wiesehöfer, 2013: 41ff). Thus, what is described here as tolerance might not be a correct description of the policy. In fact, Jonker (2016:80) is of the opinion that it will be anachronistic and inaccurate to describe such policy as tolerance in the modern sense of the word. Nonetheless, there was certainly a greater openness in religious/cultic matters in the Persian Empire. Jonker (2016: 90) rightly observes that, “[h]owever, one should remember that this religious policy had political function”.

<sup>263</sup> In the case of the Israelites, part of the rebuilding of the cult system is the compilation and enforcement of the *Torah*. Schniedewind (2004: 167) remarks: “Jewish nationalists were creating an identity and a connection with the land through literary invention.”

has the socio historic existence influenced their project? In this regard, I will briefly examine the impact of the scribes in ancient Israel particularly at this period.

### **6.3.2. Scribal influence**

Scribes in the ancient Near East are individuals or groups of individuals who are skilled in the transmission of texts. The ancient concept of the term includes the copying and creation of a text. Crenshaw (1998:112) and Schniedewind (2004:117) observe that there were evidences that schools were established in ancient Israel in about the eighth century. They were probably under the control of both government and family heads. “A few scribal guilds existed from early times and were conscripted, probably at their own initiative, by some monarchs to assist in propaganda, record keeping, and administrative activity” (Crenshaw, 1998:112; also, see Schniedewind, 2004:40; Tov, 2004:8).

Scribes in ancient Israel were involved in a wide variety of activities, which included copying, composition, secretarial work, and public administration. They were at liberty in their active involvement in the transmission and shaping of the final form of the biblical texts. Notwithstanding, “the essence of scribal activity is to transmit as precisely as possible the content of the copyist’s text” (Tov, 2004:9). Commenting on approaches of scribes in approximately the fifth century BCE, Tov (2004:23) says:

The earlier scribes were involved not only in the copying of texts, but to a limited extent also in the creative shaping of the last stage of their content. Expressed differently, at one time scribes often took the liberty of changing the content, adding and omitting elements, sometimes on a small scale, but often substantially [...] The nature of this creative scribal activity requires us to conceive of the persons involved as scribes-editors, who were not only active in the transmission of texts, but also in the final stage of their creative edition.

Incongruences and other characteristics, parallels and doublets, of biblical texts have been understood as elements of “differing scribal-editorial treatment of the text” (Tov, 2004:25). In this respect, Carr (2007; 2011) notes the different characteristics of biblical texts datable to the postexilic period as bearing both Priestly and non-Priestly themes. Certain materials which scholars refer to as Holiness (‘H’) material are also an example of the multiple characteristics of different scribal treatment of the biblical text.

Carr (2007:188ff) categorises the scribes into two broad groups: Lay (L) scribes and Priestly scribes.<sup>264</sup> The grouping of scribes into P and non-P scribes presupposes that P and non-P sought different points of orientation to Israel's early history. For instance, discussing the non-P story of Abraham (Gen. 12–16; 18–22), Carr (2007: 191) it is observed that the theme of promise is the major uniting factor to all the non-P sources. The challenge, as Carr (2007: 195) observes, is that the non-P source did not speak favourably of the priests. A non-P source “depicts the founding of the Levitical priesthood as a sad compromise” as can be seen in Exodus 19:6; 24:5 (Carr, 2007: 195).<sup>265</sup> This negative or unfavourable portrayal of the priests probably necessitated the priestly scribes to formulate their own version of the history of Israel as a replacement of the existing non-P materials. The characteristics of the priestly materials in the Persian period show that they were shaped by scribes with “pro-Persian sympathy” or perhaps a pro-Persian agenda, (Ezra 4:7-6:18; Neh. 1:1-7:4; Hag–Zech. 1-8; Isa. 45:1-7; 56:1-8; 62:12; Ps. 107:2,3), (Carr, 2011: 206, 213).

According to Carr (2011: 216, 217):

Our present Pentateuch is, in large part, product of a priestly expansions of various non-P texts...in the intervening books, there is plenty of evidence for both types of Priestly intervention, whether through reconstructing non-P texts within a Priestly framework ...or expanding non-P text through P-like element... Thus, I suggest that the P and P-like elements found both across Hexateuch...are the finger prints of the Zadokite-dominated scribal apparatus housed in the Persian-period Second temple.

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<sup>264</sup> Carr (2007: 188ff) prefers the use “Lay” to refer to those who composed the non-Priestly material. The group comprises of elders as the main leadership group, members of royal leadership who are out of power, and other non-Priestly elites’ scholars who drew on their knowledge of older compositions to write a new overall story of their people’s life before they possessed the land. Carr’s (2007: 189) reason for using the designation “L” is that the “non-P” is cumbersome. However, the idea of “lay” in the researcher’s context carries a connotation that does not fit the description of the group of people described. It is therefore expedient that the research maintains the designation “non-P”.

<sup>265</sup> Carr (2011) made a crucial observation on the text of the Persian period. He notes that aside from the rebuilding of the Ezra narrative, the texts lack strong reflection of the broader Pentateuch we now have. Certain texts, he said, draw on the exegetical version of the Deuteronomistic law (e.g., Neh 1: 8-9 see Deut. 30: 1-5; Neh 13: 23-27; see Deut. 7: 3), and earlier legal regulations (e.g., Neh 13: 15-22; see Exod 23: 12; Deut. 5: 12-15//Exod 20: 8-11). There is no clear reflection of the priestly traditions of the Pentateuch. What this suggests is that the Persian texts show a different point of orientation to Israel’s early history (Carr, 2011: 213). “For example, the Rebuilding-Ezra Narrative present Ezra as engaging in a ‘second Exodus’ along the lines both of Priestly Pentateuchal traditions and exhortation to such a second exodus that are found in later portions of Isaiah (especially Isa 52: 11)” (Carr, 2011: 213 *cf.* Kratz, 2008: 163).

How do we end up with a Pentateuch that portrays both non-Priestly and Priestly material as a single document? According to our discussion so far, we have noted the probability that the Pentateuch was sponsored by the Persians because of their policy of tolerance. Based on the nature of the political and social structure of the Israelite community, it was difficult for the scribes to change what was already in existence. Therefore, the task of these scribes was to produce a single *Torah* that the Persians might endorse.

Otto (2007:172) observes that “the rivalling conceptions of Israel’s origins were written down by two different Priestly factions: the Priestly code [...] of the Aaronides, on the one side, and Deuteronomistic Deuteronomy [D], on the other.”<sup>266</sup> He describes the different literary conceptions of the history of Israel by the different scribal schools as “a critical reaction” to each other. The P material, which according to him (2007:172 note 4) begins from Genesis and ends with the Sinai pericope, is a “subversive reception of Deuteronomistic theology” portrayed in the material that begins with the Horeb motif. Otto observes that because of the reuniting of the priestly factions and for theological reasons, it was necessary to conflate the two-rivalling conception of Israel’s origins and identity. For example, the idea of monotheism that was prominent during the exilic and postexilic period necessitated the “theological need to unify the two conceptions of P and D<sup>267</sup> because, if there was only one God, there could only be one history of God with Israel” (Otto, 2007:172f). It was in this regard that Otto (2007:172) posits that the formation of the Pentateuch must go “beyond the ‘compromise hypothesis’ of an imperial authorisation of the *Torah* by the Persian government”.

In Otto’s opinion, the two Priestly factions must have used sources made up of separate blocks of texts during the exilic period to create their conflicting narratives of Israel’s origins and identity. The creation of the Pentateuch as a single document was not just a compromise that

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<sup>266</sup> Similarly, Carr (2011:219 *cf.* 2007:217; 1997:24) explains that “these returnees produced a P/non-P work that...represented a single composition that could receive Persian sponsorship and stand as a central focus for the diverse groups in Palestine claiming links to ancient ‘Israel’”. This process means that old traditions has had to be synthesised, and this process involved significant *reconceptualisation* of the ancient material. The actual task of the returnees was not the formulation of a new document out of nowhere, otherwise the Pentateuch could have been written in Aramaic which was the imperial language. But because it was the tradition which was adapted for a new context, the composition was in Hebrew.

<sup>267</sup> Otto chooses to use P and D to designate the two major divisions of the Pentateuch sources. However, this study has adopted P and non-P for the source. Therefore, the use of P and non-P will be employed, except where a direct quotation is used.

connects P and non-P, i.e. creating a narrative that begins with the creation of the world and ends with the death of Moses. Otto (2007:173) suggests that there must have been a third group, the postexilic redactor(s), who reconceptualised the P and the non-P materials, giving it a new perspective of Israel's history and theology.

Otto's proposal sounds plausible and this research submits that doublets are evidence for different scribal groups. The final form of the text is the work of a third redactor who is wise and tries not only to resolve the contradictions through theological concord, but through his wisdom challenges the world view of the listeners who must have held tenaciously to certain ideologies. Another question is: what elements of power-relations (ideologies) were promoted by individuals or groups of individuals? And most importantly, how has the final redactor responded to these challenges of power relations in the final form of the stories in the extant Pentateuch?

The proposal that a third wise redactor must have been responsible for the final form of the text finds support in a group of essays: *Scribes, Sages, and Seers: The Sage in the Eastern Mediterranean World* edited by Leo G. Perdue. In the introduction, Perdue (2008:1) explains that the driving force for the volume was the assumption that the understanding of the larger social history of the cultures and social location to which sages developed and took their shape is key in the understanding of the wisdom traditions. Perdue (2008:3) was more specific in his summary statement of studies of wisdom literature from the early Bronze Age to the early centuries of the Roman Empire. He says that the sages were those who helped in crafting and transmission of the literary traditions and arts of civilisation. This, he says, includes language, religious institutions, sciences and the arts. Perdue (2008: 3) speaks of the Israelites context that "Scribes (ספר) and sages (חכם) of Israel and Judah comprised a professional social class of intellectuals, composers, officials and clerks from their origins in the monarchic period."

Sages were the primary shapers of biblical texts. They used various literary sources that emerged in different backgrounds. Their intellectual discussion covers areas such as "justice as cosmic and social order, retribution, theodicy, the suffering of the righteous, the nature and character of God, and moral behaviour" (Perdue, 2008:3). As writers, it is believed that they composed a number of texts that have survived as canonical and deuterocanonical literature. Sages participated in the administration of courts and temples and were central to the socio-

religious lives of ancient Israel and early Judah. The evidences of the impact of sages and scribes are also found in other non-canonical texts that were found at the Qumran.

Sapiential discourse in the Hebrew Bible is termed as evidence that the sages were responsible for the editing of the Bible and most likely stored them as scrolls in libraries (*cf.* for example the Elephantine Papyri). “It is clear that sages and scribes in Israel also interacted with major empires” (Perdue, 2008:4). In the second temple period, sages and scribes shifted their primary social location from the court to the temple and they must have served under the hierarchy of priesthood, the Zadokite (see Carr, 2011:216, 217) in Jerusalem. Their professional role during the postexilic period includes the formation and interpretation of the *Torah*, prophets and writings. Returning to the question of the characteristics of the Pentateuch (the seemingly contradictory P and non-P materials), we assume that the said sages, in their wisdom employed irony as a rhetorical tool in this incredible masterpiece of literary art. As to the question of who is being addressed by the sage redactor, that depends on the understanding of the interest of the P and the non-P. We shall return to it as the layers of ideologies and theologies are discussed in the text.

In the above discourse of the social location and elements of new socio-historic mode of existence of the proposed time of formulation of the text, I have shown different levels of power relations according to Jonker (2016:73) namely:

- 1) The imperial level where the Persian agenda as the imperial power is seen.
- 2) The regional level dealing with issues that specifically affect *Yehud* as a Persian administrative region of Israel. The ideologies on the regional level were mostly nationalistic agenda.
- 3) The tribal level often dealing with issues of contest over hegemonic control.
- 4) The cultic level which portrays a community that consists of people of different origins and of varying affiliations, i.e. those who had previously been exiled and had returned as well as those who had remained in the land. The most daring issue between the people relates to religious piety. In other words, what do they consider as undivided piety to Yahweh?

## 6.4. Ideological trajectories in postexilic *Yehud*

This section examines the different nature of power relations in postexilic *Yehud*. It also investigates how these power relations influence textual production, interpretation and practices. The aim is to be able to understand the rhetorical function of the dual stories of hospitality and its inversion in the narrative. The period ushered in by the ascension of Cyrus as the Persian King is one of the most significant epochs of the history of Israel. It is an epoch during which great thinkers and theologians grappled with reformulating the concepts of Yahwistic community, faith, and politics. Politically, Israel and Judah never became an independent nation. The Davidic dynasty, which was to be an everlasting dynasty, was no more. The impact on the religious dimension was that monotheistic worship of Yahweh began to dominate. Cult leadership, operation and regulation changed shape (Middlemas, 2005:2).

The ascension of Cyrus as the Persian King ushered in a new chapter in the history Israel. Persia adopted a philosophy of tolerance in its administration which gave it the firm grip it had on all the regions under its political domain. Its policies on the region of Judah has to do with the relevance of the region for its (Persian) imperial policy. The strategic position of Palestine as a major land-bridge and route network, contributed to the demographic and economic growth of the empire. This had a direct or indirect impact on the cultural, religious, social, economic and political reconstruction of *Yehud*. What this means is that certain elements that favoured the Persian Empire agenda were incorporated in the literary document which the exiles produced to describe their identity. Below are some of these issues:

### 6.4.1. Royal ideology

Before the establishment of the state in Israel, there was no provision for a permanent political rule in the religion of Yahweh and it was opposed to domination. Israel lived as a confederate nation bound by the sinaitic covenant. The establishment and legitimisation of a monarchical rule was new in Yahweh religion. It lead to the development of kingship theology<sup>268</sup> which

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<sup>268</sup> Kingship theology developed from the ancient Near East religion. “In antiquity, monarchy meant sacral monarchy, with often massive theological and cultic implications. In the Near East the king was regarded in one way or another as more or less directly God’s representative on earth: as God’s creation, the son of God, the image of God or even God himself, who imposed divine rule outside the state and established divine order within thus guaranteeing the existence of the state” (Albertz, 1994a:116).



came around to legitimise the Davidic royal house (Albertz, 1994a:115f)<sup>269</sup>. The kingship theology became a justification of the monarchy, viewed as a rule designated by Yahweh over Israel (1 Kgs 14:7; 1 Sam 10:1; 2 Sam 5:2). The establishment of the monarchy became a key in the centralisation of the Yahweh's cult (2 Sam 2:6; 8:17–18). These developments later transformed to what scholars refer to as Zion theology.<sup>270</sup> Zion theology, as Middlemas (2005:1f) describes, can be seen as “the predominant ideology of pre-exilic Jerusalem temple cult which rested on the dual foundation of the inviolability of the city and the eternal covenant with David”<sup>271</sup>. The Babylonian invasion of Judah in 587 BC forcibly called Zion theology into question (Middlemas, 2005:1). Jerusalem, which according to “the Jerusalem temple theology”, was viewed as “the city of God” (Albertz, 1994a:134f), a symbol of God's presence. The temple was destroyed and there was no more ruler in Judah in the line of David.

The Persian policy brought a completely new dimension to the sociological and political structure of the Israelites. The policy of “tolerance” encouraged the respect for cultural and religious identity (*cf.* Jonker, 2016: 89). But with regard to Israel's restoration to its pre-exilic national state, that was not realised. As such the norms that was canonised focused more on the traditional pre-state social, political and religious setting. The question in the mind of some, was perhaps the question of God's faithfulness in keeping his covenant to the house of David

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<sup>269</sup> The establishment of the monarchy in ancient Israel with its strong religious colouring of the ancient Near East presents some theological issues. For example, kingship was seen as something contrary to the will of Yahweh, yet it was permitted. Saul's kingship was seen along the line of charismatic leadership of the army in a war of liberation. David's dynasty, on the other hand could be seen as waging wars of Yahweh (1 Sam 18:17; 25:28). His latter wars could hardly be seen as battles of liberation. “Under him [David] war became a means of royal power politics; but that made it impossible to see him still as bringing about saving action of Yahweh for Israel” (Albertz, 1994a:115f).

<sup>270</sup> See Albertz 1994a:105–242, “The History of Israelite Religion during the Monarchy” for an extensive discussion of the development of Zion theology. Cross, 1973, Chapter 9: “*The Ideologies of Kingship in the Era of the Empire: Conditional Covenant and Eternal Decree*. 219–273.

<sup>271</sup> There seems to be a conflict between Covenant theology and Zion theology. Israel's covenant with Yahweh at Sinai was a conditional covenant; Israel were to observe the law of Yahweh. Any violation of the law would be punished by being uprooted and taken out of the Promised Land. The covenant with David, which is centred in the temple and palace complex on Mount Zion, by contrast was unconditional. The promise to David was granted as a reward for his faithfulness and loyalty to Yahweh. Contrary to Sinaitic Covenant theology, the royal ideology or Zion theology fostered belief in the inviolability and indestructibility of the house of David, his dynasty, the city and the mountain of the Lord (Zion). However, the biblical history shows that the Davidic covenant was later made contingent to the observance of God's *Torah*.

and the city, Jerusalem. Should they accept the new beginning which the Persian Empire and their imperial policy offered?<sup>272</sup>

The answer to this question, as Albertz (1994b:444) notes, is that it is “probable that for most people a positive answer was by no means obvious”. However, the situation was not as if the inhabitants of *Yehud* unanimously accepted the legitimisation of the Persian Empire without contest. There are different voices that considered such a legitimisation as dubious in nature and as a very high price to pay. The *אַרְבָּנֵי הָאָרֶץ* (people of the land), for instance, were definitely opposed to such a claim (*cf.* Ezra and Nehemiah for such oppositions). Carroll (1992:88) is probably right when he says “[m]uch of what is contained in the Hebrew Bible is the production of that group's ideological holdings, and constitutes the myth of the ‘exile’ (as well as the myth of the empty land).” Biblical literature connected to this period was polyphonic and it reveals different kinds of responses to different factors. Carr (2011:209) cites Haggai and Zechariah as examples of voices who seem to resist at first the Persian control. These prophets depict the glory for Joshua and Zerubbabel as the messianic glory for the Davidide Zerubbabel (Hag 2:20-23; Zech. 3:8; 4:14). The oracle reflects the hopes of the returnees for a replacement of the Persian rule by the Davidic dynasty, perhaps Zerubbabel. But this hope, according to Carr (2011: 209f), was short-lived “and there may even be indicators already in the present form of the prophecy of Zechariah of a shift in expectations. The prophecy of the coronation of ‘the branch’ in Zech. 6:9-14 probably originally referred to the coronation of Zerubbabel as a separate ‘branch’”. The latter part of Deuteronomistic writing (Joshua–Kings) deals extensively with the monarchy. Specifically, Chronistic history gave an important place to the Davidic kingship.

#### 6.4.2. Economic and political ideology

Part of what I describe as policy of tolerance, for lack of a better word, is the incorporation of local administration in the ruling. Most of the issues pertaining to the economic and political

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<sup>272</sup> Persian policy permits freedom and allows local identities, but at the same time the rejection of the “Persian national identity” was regarded as rebellion. The idea of “Persian national identity” is the description of the royal ideology of Persia. It is imposed on both the Persians and the subjugated people under its empire. The policy integrates elites from various regions of the empire into the ruling class of the empire. “[S]ubjugated people were integrated into sort of imperial symbolic universe” (Jonker, 2016: 81, see pages 78-83 for an extended discussion of the Persian royal ideology and its influence on the region of *Yehud*).

ideology, especially at the tribal level, deal with issues of contest over hegemonic control. In Judah, three different rival schemes fought for influence in reshaping the community of the Persian period *Yehud*. These include the Deuteronomistic theology, priestly theology and exilic prophecy<sup>273</sup>. These schemes came from different institutions and social strata. The institutions include a Council of Elders and a Priestly School while the social strata refers to aristocracy, small farmers, and the landless populace. “[T]he leadership of Judah, or *Yehud* as it was to be called, fell to the priesthood and those repatriated through the policy of the Persians” (Middlemas, 2005:5). Schniedewind (2004:165 *cf.* Carr, 2011:206) observes that the narrative that emerges from that period never focuses on the Davidic royal house. Cyrus, however, took a prominent position in the narrative. He is depicted as God’s anointed (Isa. 44:28; 45:1). The ideological tenets of Persian imperial rule seem to be the focus of Jerusalemite literati (Jonker, 2016:81). We find in the biblical narratives that all claims to the rebuilding of the temple, building the city and formation of the *Torah* were attributed to Cyrus and his successors (Ezra 5-6; Carroll, 1992:88; Carr, 2011:210).

The social dynamics in the new mode of socio-historic existence is the realignment of the power relations and the rise of the new elites among the people of *Yehud*. The economic, political, and social structure of power in the agrarian community of Judah before the Babylonian captivity resulted in a glaring disparity between the ruling party and the vast majority who were poor. There was a pronounced social inequality in power, privileges, and honour. The centralised state under the monarchy functioned as the immediate source of the disparity. The state was like a personal property to the rulers and alongside the monarchs were a small number of the elite who exercised political and economic power. These included: “high state officials, chief military officers, large landowners, wealthy merchants, priestly leaders and others to whom the monarch grants land, offices, or special rights” (Knight, 2011: 64).

In the early postexilic period, the nature of the power relations changed because “power has shifted into the imperial center, leaving an uncertain situation among the indigenous residents

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<sup>273</sup> In retrospect, I have identified the goal of the Deuteronomist (non-Priestly) and the Priestly redactors in Chapter 3 as (1) P: focus on the memory of the reliability of the covenant promise (Gen. 17) and Yahweh’s assurance of his purpose to dwell in the midst of Israel, his people. (2) The non-P (Deuteronomistic) agenda was cultic centralisation emphasising the covenant proclamation at Sinai in the centre of the work. It talks about the failure of the people in keeping its obligation which led to exile. Hence, the non-P agenda emphasises the worship of only Yahweh and covenant obedience in order for them to live in the land that Yahweh had promised them.

and the returnees in *Yehud*' (Knight, 2011:104). The ruling party among the returnees (mostly the priests) made moves to legitimise their authority by claiming the positions held by their ancestors, but that was not an easy thing to do. The region was not completely deserted. There were, supposedly, those that dominated the region while Jerusalem was in ruin. Hence, there was tension about who controlled the region between these people and the returnees and between the institution of the elders or Priestly institution and the aristocrats.

Carr (2011:204) remarks that "the Persians appear to have taken active interest in administrating what would become the Persian province of *Yehud* apparently involving some Judeans in that task". They provided materials and supported the diaspora Jews in the rebuilding project, namely: rebuilding the cult, collecting of the Mosaic *Torah*, rebuilding the temple, and reinstatement of its priesthood (Carr, 2011: 205f, Knight, 2011). This action was a major move for the Persians to consolidate their administration of the region.<sup>274</sup> They built a very effective administrative network using the local elite and local institutions as instruments for fiscal administration. Reading Neh. 9:36 confirms this, that although Israel was restored, the restoration was just a change of strategy of ruling by the Persians; the people were crying out to their God because of exploitation:

But see, we are slaves today, slaves in the land you gave our forefathers so that they could eat its fruit and the other good things it produces. Because of our sins, its abundant harvest goes to the kings you have placed over us. They rule over our bodies and our cattle as they please. We are in great distress. (Neh 9:36-37 NIV).

### **6.4.3. Nationalistic agenda (ideology).**

At the time of the formulation of the text, *Yehud* was a Persian administrative region. On this level of relationship, or rather the nature of socio-historic mode existence at this level, concerns nationalistic ideologies. I shall therefore, discuss two issues that directly relate to nationalistic

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<sup>274</sup> Jonker (2016:87) reports a summary of administration of Judah at the period thus: "Apart from the 'governors of *Yehud*' and the '(High) Priest' in Jerusalem, we know of at least two other high civil officials of the province, a 'prefect, (*sgn*) and a 'judge' (*dyn*). ...The *segans* are mostly thought of as the highest-ranking officials under the governor in charge of the economic administration of the province and superior to the 'treasurers' (*gnzbr*'), who were possibly collecting taxes in coins/metals, and the 'tax collectors' (*GBY*'), who were perhaps collecting taxes in kind."

agenda: land and identity negotiation, and social reforms which reflect most of the ideologies that connect to the nationalistic ideology.

#### **6.4.3.1. Land and identity negotiation**

The deportation of the Israelites and Judeans in 722 BCE and 587 BCE respectively, resulted in diverse ethnic group(s) in the regions. The biblical account in the book of Kings says that the Assyrians carried the Israelites away and brought many new settlers to occupy the land. In the case of the south, it was not so. Although biblical accounts (2 Kgs 24–25; 2 Chron 36; Jer. 39–40, 52) represent the land as being stripped of its inhabitants and taken into captivity to Babylon, the remnants fled to Egypt, consequently leaving an empty land. The interpretation of the Babylonian deportation as a complete destruction leaving an empty land, is probably exacerbated and ideological<sup>275</sup> (Middlemas, 2005:7). *Yehud* was depopulated in the postexilic period because of the impact of Babylonian invasion.

The notion of the empty land forestalls the tension between the returnees and *עַם הָאָרֶץ*.<sup>276</sup> The book of Ezra narrates the establishment of the hegemony of the deportees over *עַם הָאָרֶץ*. Carroll (1992:81) comments on the unknown identity of the *עַם הָאָרֶץ* that they were viewed as the ‘other’ in respect to those who came from Babylon and in relation to the cults of Yahweh. The remnant, *עַם הָאָרֶץ* were termed bad people in Jeremiah 24–25. The good people were the deportees whom Yahweh had promised to bring back in the land (Jer. 24:6) and the bad people would be driven out (Jeremiah 24:9–10; Albertz, 1994b:546). Carroll (1992:82) understood the claim to the rightful ownership of the land as the agenda of a fraction of the deportees. He says:

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<sup>275</sup> This could be termed ideological (Middlemas, 2005:7), because as Kessler (2008:135) notes, the captivity opens the door for the impoverished people to take possession of the exiles’ landed property which the banished upper class had not surrendered to claim. The ideological interpretation of the Babylonian deportation is probably a move to get rid of the impoverished Judahites who were left in the land. By implication, the destruction was not as total as assumed. There were remnants who were left in the land but these were old and poor people. The land was not totally empty as the accounts says. Because the remnants were impoverished it suggests that the returnees found the land economically less productive because there were too few people to work it, but never an empty land. (see Schniedewind, 2004: 167ff for more on the historical context of *Yehud* during the early postexilic period).

<sup>276</sup> See Jonker’s (2016: 101ff) discussion “Brothers of Old: Judah and Benjamin” for further discourse about the land dispute and Judahite hegemony as reflected in many biblical data on Benjamin.

The pure community in the Jeremiah texts is not all of those who were deported by the Babylonians, but only those who belong to the deportation of Jeconiah. To have been deported in 587 with Zedekiah (*cf.* Jeremiah 39-40; 52) would have disqualified people to the positive plans of Yahweh's restoration of the community to its homeland.<sup>277</sup>

Cyrus's decree for the Judeans to return therefore portended a conflicting situation (*cf.* Middlemas, 2005:6). Jonker (2016:108) explains that sociological analysis reveals that different factions within *Yehud* community competed to attain dominance. "The forces and relations of material production [...] formed a tributary mode of production in which a strong centralised state dominated an agrarian economy, siphoning off surplus of productive populace by means of state taxation and privately controlled rent and debt" (Gottwald, 1992a:43; *cf.* Kessler, 2008:135; Jonker, 2016:109).

The notion of the empty land is a symbolic representation that *עַם הָאָרֶץ* who must have occupied the land during the exile, "do not count and are therefore politically inert, lacking all symbolic value" (Carroll, 1992:83). The returnees wanted to legitimise themselves as the true *עַם הָאָרֶץ*, hence, the true Israelite. Jonker, (2016:110) notes that the tension between the returnees and the *עַם הָאָרֶץ* is not about property and economic rights only, "but also on account who was truly representing the people of Israel, thus an Issue of identity negotiation."

#### **6.4.3.2. Social reforms**

Several social reforms took place in the region of Judea during the Persian period. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah record these reforms. The prohibition of mixed marriage, for example, shows traces of the ideology of the postexilic period *Yehud*. Ezra challenges the problem of mixed marriage through the reading of the *תּוֹרָה*. According to the account of Ezra 9:11–12 and Deuteronomy 7:3, intermarriage was forbidden. The entire vision of the Pentateuch laid emphasis on the separateness and holiness of the Israelites, pointing to the unholiness of other nations. The law was given to Israel to help them maintain their uniqueness and to be holy.

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<sup>277</sup>Robert P. Carroll (1992) reads the narrative of the denudation of Judea of its people (2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, and Jeremiah) leaving an empty land as an ideological story for controlling membership in the new community. He suggests that the story needs to be read in conjunction with the story of the land polluted by the Canaanites inhabitant that the Israelite had to get rid of when they came out of Egypt. Getting rid the Canaanite was understood as cleansing the land of the pollutant and should be understood as parallel to the Babylonian invasion. The article provides a helpful reflective reading of text for understanding the possible ideological trajectories of the post-exilic period.

Now that a new community of Israel, coming out from Babylon, was emerging, Ezra needed to consolidate the identity of the people around the *Torah*. As overseers of the religious life of the Jews, Ezra and the priests needed strong adherence to a strict lifestyle of socio-religious separateness. Thus, he appealed to the *Torah* which in this context has taken a form of law, to protect and to secure the religious and ethnic boundaries of the new people.

Separateness could be seen as an ideology through which people groups create and maintain their identity, especially in a situation of struggle against foreign interference. Ezra defines mixed marriages as an extreme violation of Yahweh's commands. Interestingly, he appealed to the *Torah* to get rid of foreigners who were amongst them by virtue of exogamy. He ordered men to divorce their foreign wives and send them away with their offspring (Ezra 10:11).

I consider Ezra's actions as an ideological strategy to maintain identity. In Malachi 2:16, the prophet seems to respond to this ideology, that is contrary to the plan of Yahweh, when he declares that כִּי־שִׂנְאָה שְׁלֵחַ אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (For I hate divorce<sup>278</sup> says Yahweh, the God of Israel). Perhaps this explains why Nehemiah's approach to the challenge was different to that of Ezra (13:25). Ezra seems to have exceeded the bound of godly ethics—he neglected the exceptional rule to the law governing exogamy (Deut. 21:10-14).

#### 6.4.4. Religious ideology

“Biblical scholars often refer to the Persian period, introduced by Cyrus the Great, as a time of religious diversity and tolerance” (Jonker, 2016:89; cf. Middlemas, 2005:2). The problem of syncretic piety to Yahweh, which was supposedly the theological reason for the exile (Ezek. 33:23ff; Isa. 57:1–10; 65:1–12), and exclusive devotion to Yahweh was continued in exile and after (Jer. 44.15ff; Ezek. 14:1ff; Zach. 10:2; 13:2). Archaeological documents found in Babylonia, the *Murashu* documents, show that worshipers of Yahweh were syncretic. In Egypt, also, the Elephantine papyri associated with ostraca show elements of this syncretism through Anath and Bethel in the temple of Yahweh (cf. Smith, 1987:67).

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<sup>278</sup> The Hebrew word translated “divorce” is שְׁלֵחַ literally “sending away”.

Members of the syncretic worshipers as well as those of exclusive Yahweh piety were supposedly part of the people that were taken to captivity. However, Smith (1987:62, 75) is probably right in his assertion that the majority of the leaders carried to captivity were of the faction that held onto the exclusive piety of Yahweh worship and they seem to have secured a strong and wealthy following among the exiles. Most of its members occupied high positions in the Persian court and, with the support of the Persian authority they gained control of the region of Judea and won over the populace. Smith (1987:62) adds that the group was probably the “largest and politically the most important group in the cult of Yahweh. Its pre-eminence was enhanced by the success of the literature which it produced or edited”. The question is who were these people? Akin to the characteristics of several texts<sup>279</sup> located in the Persian period that are knit together by a common link, to specifically Priestly themes, I presume that the largest and politically most important group referred to are the priestly guild. Schmid (2008:151) affirms this assertion when he says “The Book of Job presents a critical evaluation of the theocratic order of the *Priestly Code* which must be considered one of the fundamental theological tenets of the priestly thinking.”

These factions between the syncretic and exclusive piety to Yahweh can be understood from the point of view of the effect of the cultic level of power relations described above. The effect was the emergence of religious ideology. Mayes (1999: 62) observes that:

Religion as ideology is a function of social relations. It performs first an integrating function that is both the logical and the temporal basis for its other functions, which follow from that primary function but also reflect social and economic changes in the community—the emergence of a distinction between a ruling group and the remainder of the community, a ruling group whose role had to be justified and legitimated.

It is probable that there must have been at least three parties in Jerusalem after the decree of King Cyrus (Smith, 1987:81f). From the perspective of power relations, these groups of leaders of different origins and different orientations could be seen in a power tussle: the local party (the group of religious leaders who had remained in the land after captivity), and most likely two groups or parties of religious leaders from the returnees. The vision of the good and bad figs shown to Jeremiah (Jer. 24:1; 29:1–2) after the deportation, during Jeconiah’s reign,

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<sup>279</sup> Ezra 4:7-6:18; Neh. 1:1-7:4; Hag–Zech. 1-8; Isa. 45:1-7; 56:1-8; 62:12; Ps. 107:2,3, already referenced above.



possibly exhibits the kind of worldview that the returnees had of the “local party”. The vision refers to the remnant who did not go into captivity as the bad figs. The term  $\text{עַם הַאֲרָרִיץ}$  used to distinguish the remnant from the exiles ( $\text{בְּנֵי הַגּוֹלָה}$  Ezra 4:1) acquired a new distinctive religious element. When used in texts such as Nehemiah 10:32; 13:15 and Ezra 4:4; 6:21, their syncretic nature is referred to, implying that they were unfaithful followers of Yahweh, perhaps even foreigners (Jonker, 2016:110).

The second and the third religious group of leaders are the ones that returned from exiles with the  $\text{בְּנֵי הַגּוֹלָה}$ . Keeping in mind that the priestly guild was one of the most influential groups and leaders of the returnees, these religious leaders could have been priests with economic interests on the one hand and on the other hand were probably priests who were of the pure Yahweh alone party.<sup>280</sup> The individual groups’ claims to authority (specifically religious authority), aggravated the conflict, and consequently the ideological claims. Not only this, Persia is also known for its strong belief in a local deity, “*Bel*” (*Marduk*) or “*Ahuramazda*” who is claimed to be the god that gave the victory to the Persian rulers (Jonker, 2016:89ff). The implication of this is that it is doubtful if Persian local representatives were not required to be in the temple of these gods as way of showing their allegiance and closeness to the king. If this is so, then the Priest who was appointed as the Persian official in their region, must have been “in an in-between situation in the way they have been part of Yahwistic community serving in the restored [local cult] in Jerusalem, but simultaneously would also have to show their allegiance to the empire by honouring *Ahuramazda* [and *Bel*]” (Jonker, 2016:93). Albertz (1994b:497) comments that the group of lay leaders and priests “found itself in a conflict of interests between its public duty [...] and its private economic interests; moreover, it found itself in crisis of loyalty: was it to give priority to confidential collaboration with the Persian authorities or to the wellbeing of the community of Judah?” It is believed that there were some who shrewdly used these reforms to their advantage. Especially, as the Persians were instrumental in their cultic, political and cultural reforms, it is possible that a number of the ruling class were representing the interest of the Persians. However, as Albertz (1994b: 499) remarks:

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<sup>280</sup> The third group might not necessarily be priests alone, it also comprises other non-priestly leaders who belong to the pure Yahweh alone party. Similarly, the designation of the  $\text{עַם הַאֲרָרִיץ}$  referring to the syncretic nature of the remnants, should be understood as a generalisation and not true of the total population of the remnants. There is a high possibility that there were remnants who were strong adherents to the exclusive devotion to Yahweh ( cf. Ezra 6:21).

For the members of the pious upper class who felt completely committed to the ethic of solidarity in the Pentateuch, the cool calculation and lack of concern which had been shown up among other of its members could only be regarded as a departure from the religious consensus of Yahweh religion which they therefore had to censure vigorously.

The cultic level of the dynamic of power relations, just like the economic factor, directly or indirectly related to some sort of claim to land (Ezek. 11:15-17). Perhaps the priestly traditional legal material (Lev. 25) a stipulations to regulate monopoly and absolute claim to land. The claim that the land belongs to Yahweh and all other owners are but tenants, should be seen as response in terms of the returnees' refusal to accept the  $\text{עַם הָאֲרָץ}$  as belonging to the land.

Most of the biblical texts recording events of the Persian era (Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai and Zechariah) are all reminiscent of Deuteronomy i.e. pro-Yahweh alone texts. This suggests that Zerubbabel who was the leader of the returnees, and who was presented favourably by the prophetic texts as messiah (Hag. 2:23; Zech. 6:9f), was the leader of the Yahweh alone party.<sup>281</sup> He led the returnees and was against the  $\text{עַם הָאֲרָץ}$  (Ezra 2:2; 3:2; 4:2,4) who were termed syncretistic (Neh. 6: 14; Zech. 13:2).

Related to this cultic level of the dynamic of power relations is the role of Priests and Levites. First, leadership structure and strategies for operation took on a different dimension. The priest engaged in a public reading of scripture at the “square before the Watergate”. A public reading and the actions of the people signify a shift away from the temple practice (Nehemiah 8:4; Albertz, 1994b:466). Second, it is suspected that apart from the cultic function of the Priests and the Levites that they existed to fulfil the local and the imperial economic agenda. Jonker (2016:1108) remarks that this is not easy to understand because the discussion on the nature of the factions in the Jerusalem priesthood is complicated. One thing that remains clear is the existence of these factions and that most of it has a cultic undertone: e.g. between the Levite and Zadokite Priestly lines in the templeless period (Jonker, 2016:110-113).

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<sup>281</sup> Zech. 6:9–15 is ambiguous. Perhaps it was intentionally made so. Nevertheless, the text shows a compromise between the Yahweh alone party and the priestly party,  $\text{שְׁלוֹם תִּהְיֶה בֵּינָם שְׁנֵיהֶם}$ : “there shall be peace between the two of them”. This compromise was necessary if the returnees would gain the favour of the Persian Empire for any help for rebuilding the altar, temple and the walls of Jerusalem. See Smith's (1989: 82ff) discussion on the nature of the conflict between the Yahweh alone party, the priestly party, and the syncretistic followers of the cult of Yahweh.

## 6.5. Ideological and theological layers in Genesis 18 & 19

Multiple historic traditions or modes of intellectual discourse is one of the three ways of analysing the ideological and (we may include) the theological textures of a text that Robbins (1996:111) has suggested. Multiple historic traditions or modes of intellectual discourse concerns the expression and or criticism of ideologies and theologies in others' interpretation of the text. Robbins (1996:105ff) suggests five modes of intellectual discourse: historical critical discourse, social scientific criticism, history of religions discourse, new historical discourse, and postmodernism. Different interpretations reflect different ideologies and theologies of the historic group to which an interpreter belongs. This assertion is right especially when one considers the theory of the "reader respond".

According to Lawrie (2005:109), "[a]lthough interpretation requires much effort and skills, it does not *create* meaning." There is no fixed formula to follow for one to arrive at the same meaning and this is seen in the lack of consensus among interpreters in the long history of interpretation. Certain approaches, for instance historical critical studies, were assumed to be based on facts as such assumed to be objective approach. Yet, history itself is an interpretation and historians have different opinions on events. The challenge, then, is understanding the context of the writer and the one to whom the text was written.

The theory of a reader response is based on the fact that there is no passive reader. "The reader does not merely discover meaning, but plays an active part in the creation of meaning [...] Meaning arises in the interaction between texts and the reader who deal creatively with the texts" (Lawrie, 2005:110; *cf.* Clines, 2015:153). It is also based on the fact that readers do not read a text as isolated individuals. There is a social dimension to reading. "Many aspects of the reader's context play a role: cultural and religious values and beliefs, social conventions and customs, the reader's experience of interaction with other people and so on" (Lawrie, 2005:111). The fact that 'meaning' is "defined more broadly to include the emotional and volitional (of the will) aspect", it confirms that readers play active role in creation of meaning. Clines (2015:153) avows that "reader-response criticism regards meaning as coming into being at a meeting point of text and reader -or, in a more extreme form, as being created by readers in the act of reading."

Reader response theory arises in the quest to reproduce meaning of a text without distortion, an exercise which is realistically not possible. The theory is based on the fact that *polysemy* is inherent in language, and sign systems function in limited ways. A sign system is not like “a jigsaw puzzle, cut from one block, back into place to ‘restore’ the original. The reader who wants to gain a complete picture from reading a text can manage this only by fabricating some of the missing pieces herself” (Lawrie, 2005:113f). The challenge to this then is what the role of the reader entails as it is complex and often problematic.<sup>282</sup> There is not yet an acceptable theory with well-defined questions. Thus, it is expedient to specify what it means in this research. Here, it is an exploration of how the text has been interpreted.

The forgone chapters, have explored different modes of discourse. In this section, therefore, attention is focused on the close examination of the text to analyse realms of discourses, dialogues and imaginations that characterise the world in which the text evolved. This exercise is referred to as “rhetorical criticism” (Howard Jr., 1994:90).<sup>283</sup> In the words of David J.A. Clines (2015:152):

Rhetorical criticism, often operating under the banner of ‘final form of the text’, concerns itself with the way the language of text is deployed to convey meaning. Its interests are in the devices of writing, in metaphor and parallelism, in narrative and poetic structures, in stylistic figures. In New Testament studies it had regard to the ancient rhetorical situation of the composition, and in respect has had historical interest. But, in the absence of source material from the ancient Near East about the practice of rhetoric, in Hebrew Bible studies rhetorical criticism has necessarily focussed upon the texts and their own internal articulation.

At this juncture, a close examination of the narrative will be employed, in conversation with previous chapters, to examine the rhetorical function of the parallel stories of hospitality from the perspective of the history *in* the text on the one hand, and on the other, history *of* the text.

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<sup>282</sup> See Lawrie, 2005: 114ff for the outline and explanation of the reader’s role.

<sup>283</sup> Howard (1994:89, 90) explains that “[t]he primary interest of Old Testament rhetorical criticism has been in the patterns at the synchronic level of a text—its surface structure[...] This concern with structures of texts is not the “structural analysis” practiced by French structuralists, however. ...the structural concern of Old Testament rhetorical criticism is more strictly a literary concern with surface structures. It is closer to aspects of the Prague School structuralism than it is to French structuralism. Among other things, the Prague School was particularly concerned with surface structures and their functions, and thus it had a more purely literary interest than structuralism of the French variety”.

Also, being not the first reader, I shall engage some commentaries<sup>284</sup> as a point of departure for the rhetorical analysis of the stories of hospitality in the text. I shall try to examine the way in which the writer engages with various theological textures in response to his contemporary political, religious and economic challenges. Having previously said that “irony exists in antithetical relationship of resistance and negation to the ideological process”, I shall focus on the role of irony as a rhetorical strategy which I have identified as the intermediate step between texts. My close reading will show that irony is a rhetorical strategy that the writer employed in the formulation of the narrative of Genesis 18 and 19.

### 6.5.1. Covenant-promise ideology and theology

Retrospectively, I have observed in my previous discourse that the literary context of the text under study, is the Abrahamic narrative cycle which is guided by the programmatic covenant promise of Genesis 12:1-3. Therefore, understanding the theological development of the covenant in ancient Israel is important if one will understand how the postexilic editor of the Pentateuch alluded to the Abrahamic covenant promise in the ironic presentation of the stories of hospitality. This section, therefore, focuses on three main areas, namely: 1) To investigate

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<sup>284</sup> These commentaries also show the use of various modes of intellectual discourse and a demonstration of multiple historic traditions. Westermann’s (1985) exegetical commentary combines a form-critical, tradition-historical, and theological approaches with modern phenomenological studies in search for the meaning and messages of texts within a historical and sociological setting. Sarna’s *Commentary* is a *Jewish Publication Society Series* seeks to explore the biblical text in the light of current revival of Jewish biblical scholarship in different fields, namely archaeology, biblical history, Semitic languages and religion of Israel to serve as a contemporary addition to the classic commentaries. The series maintains the great tradition of the Jews which is “a profound sense of the sanctity of the biblical text and understanding of the awe and love that our people has accorded its Bible” (Sarna, 1989:preface). The *Women’s Bible Commentary* is a selective commentary on passages that they judged to be of particular relevance to women. This commentary concerns reading the bible as a woman. Newsom and Ringe (1992:xiii) say women have distinct questions about the Bible and distinct insight, but more importantly because the Bible has been used to define a woman’s place in the society. The *Word Biblical Commentary* to which Gordon J. Wenham’s volume belongs is a product of an attempt to bring together rich diverse denominational allegiance. The broad stance of the contributors is evangelical, “understood in its positive, historic sense of commitment to Scripture as divine and the truth and power of the Christian gospel”. The Volume by Victor P. Hamilton in the *New International Commentary on the Old Testament*. It is an evangelical view of Scripture as the Word of God, and it concern for the life of faith today. The series draws freely from contemporary relevant methodologies and interpretive insights from useful sources into the interpretation of biblical books. And Lastly, *New Cambridge Bible Commentary* to which Arnold’s volume belongs “aims to elucidate the Hebrew and Christian scriptures for a wide range of intellectually curious individuals. The Series “[u]tilizing recent gains in rhetorical criticism, social scientific study of the scriptures, narrative criticism and other developing disciplines, this series intends to provide a fresh look at biblical texts, taking advantage of the growing edges in Biblical Studies” (Dunn & et al, 2009:np).

the context of covenant in ancient Israel. 2) To examine the theological development of covenant. 3) It will show the impact on ironic understanding of hospitality in the text.

### **6.5.1.1. Family as the context of the covenant promise**

The family (kinship group) is the basic unit of understanding in the society of ancient Israel (Kessler, 2008:57, 78). It is the most important economic, political social and religious structure in the community. Even during subsequent developmental stages, various structures of the society operate under kinship horde with the system of protection under the גאל (kinsman redeemer). It is the responsibility of the גאל, who is the head of the בית־אב or the בית־אבות and משפחה, to manage the household in the economic, political, religious and social spheres of life.<sup>285</sup>

According to Cross (1998:3), “The relationship between the language of kinship in west Semitic tribal society and the language of covenant in such groups has been little studied in recent years and is poorly understood”. The implication of this lack of study, Hahn (2009:37) remarks, “is a diminished sense of the important link between kinship and covenant in the social order Israel presented in the Old Testament”.<sup>286</sup> Cross (1998:3) notes that “Kinship relations defined the rights and obligations, the duties, status, and privileges of tribal members,

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<sup>285</sup> In the Abraham-Lot cycle, the narrator pictures Abraham as a גאל. One incident that stands out clearly is the event of the rescue of Lot when he was captured as prisoner of war (Gen. 14). The narrator reports that “When Abram heard that his *blood relative* [אַחֵי] was taken captive [...]” Abraham, knowing that he was the Kinsman, went after the people to rescue his relative, his nephew Lot. The word blood relative which KJV and ESV took literal “brother”, and Net Bible translates as “nephew” prototypically is brother but has other pragmatic potentials such as (1) brother - the same father and mother (Gen. 4:8); (2) half-brother, different mothers (Gen 37:4); (3) blood relative (Gen 9:25), (4) fellow - without blood relationship (2 Samuel 1:26); (5) tribesman (Gen 31:32); and (6) countryman Exodus 2:11.

In the kinship horde, there was no organised form of authority and consequently, no institution to impose laws. Communities were guided by the general ethos of the kinship group and in this setting (ethos of the kinship), individual responsibility was the key to the maintenance of harmony in the kinship horde. What this means was that each member of kinship horde had equal rights and equal duties because there were no social strata. Individuals belonging to a particular family are protected by a common sense of duty. Although there was no form of organised authority, the life and ethics of the kinship association and clan has helped to produce some prohibitions, the type which is characterised as apodictic law in the Old Testament. Most of these rules were directives that come from the heads or elders of the household, and usually they also received these rules from the “god of the father” (in the case of Israel’s cultic context Yahweh is this “God of the Fathers”). In an unfortunate situation where one happens to lose the right of belonging to a kinship, (e.g. the widow, the resident alien (גר), and the orphan), the kinship groups had prohibitions also protecting these people because Israel is aware that anyone can easily find him/herself in such situation (see Von Waldo, 1970).

<sup>286</sup> See also A. Van Seters, “God and Family: From Sociology to Covenant Theology”. *Themelios* 5. (1980:4–7); W. Brueggemann, “Covenanting as Human Vocation.” *Int* 33 (1979:115–129); W. Brueggemann, “the Covenanted Family.” *JCSI* 14 (1977:18–23).

and kinship terminology provided the only language for expressing legal, political, and religious institutions” (italics added).

From the religious sphere, which characterises Israel’s social structure, Yahweh who is the “God of the Fathers” is described as the “Divine Kinsman” in terms of his relationship with the kinship association (Hahn, 2009:42). Cross (1998:7) understands (and rightly so) the covenant promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:1–3) as typical attribution of the role of the Divine Kinsman. “He blesses those who bless his kindred, curses those who curse his kindred”. He continues that: “The family of the deity rallies to his call to holy war, ‘the wars of Yahweh,’ keeps his cultus, obeys his patriarchal commands, maintains familial loyalty (*hesed*), loves him with all their soul, calls on his name” (Cross, 1998:7). Although the structure of the society is disrupted by various forms of movement—shifts from kinship-based/clan social structure, to tribal league, and to state and sometimes vice versa. These movements did not change the covenant language in the different stages of the shift (Kessler, 2008:78ff). Cross (1998:19) remarks that “Covenant language is at home, living and immediate.” What Cross meant by this is that the socio-religious language in ancient Israel originated from the home i.e. kinship terminologies became more used to express the new bonds formed from the new social structure.<sup>287</sup> Noteworthy is the fact that, it is not only the language that is used for expression of the new social structures. Hahn (2009:38) points out that there is a close link between family and covenant.

Covenant is seen as the underlying principle of family solidarity. Hahn (2009:38) says the family is “*the primary unit which shapes and defines reality*”. He continues that “the family is first of all a covenant-making, covenant-keeping, covenant-breaking, and covenant-renewing... This family worldview is often associated with common discourse surrounding human relations”. Kinship terminologies are expressions that designate appropriate kinship relationships. Kinship and covenant perform a heuristic function in the study of the Old

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<sup>287</sup> For example, the language of love “*ahābāh* is a kinship language... *Hesed* (‘loyalty’) too, I should argue, originally was a term designating that loyal and loving behavior appropriate to a kinship relationship” (Cross, 1998:5). The language about the idea of a Divine Kinsman as one “who adopted...the patriarch, the lineage, or tribe”, reflects the language of the home, e.g. “god of the fathers”. The notion is deeply rooted idea of the relationship of the family and the god(s). “Their god was the Divine Kinsman” (Cross, 1998:6, 20).

Testament. I shall elaborate below how memory of old traditions, especially ancestral memory, is synonymous to allusion or reference to Abrahamic covenant relationship (Hahn (2009: 42).

### **6.5.1.2. *Theological development of covenant in the Old Testament***

This is not an exhaustive and detailed discussion on this fundamental theological topic of the Bible. I only provide a survey, limiting my attention to the nature of covenant in three main structures of ancient Israel's community: the family (which is the context of covenant in the ancient Semitic cultures), tribal alliance, and the monarchy. These latter two show the dynamic interaction between the interfaces of the understanding covenant.

#### **6.5.1.2.1. *Kinship and covenant***

Cross (1998:4) rightly observes that “[r]ooted in the kinship was the obligation to protect one’s kindred”. It has been noted above that there is no organised form of authority in kinship group. Nevertheless, every member of a kinship group was obligated to keep the wellbeing of the group. The language of the kinship group is “the bond that holds together those in intimate relationship, the relationship of the family and kindred” (Cross, 1998:5). Harmonious living in the kinship communities, families and clans is possible because of the common ties of blood and because their living together was determined by the order of the families, clans and tribes (Hahn, 2009:38; von Waldow, 1970:185).

The pattern of life in ancient Semitic tribes before settling and establishing as a nation state or city state were primarily nomads or semi-nomads. “Accordingly, many elements of the culture of OT Israel must be understood against the background of nomadic culture” (von Waldow, 1970:185). By implication, the nature of the apodictic law in the Old Testament is believed to have originated from the prohibitions that were found in the ethos of kinship set in a cultic context of Israel before Israel became a state (von Waldow, 1970:182). The sense of social responsibility in ancient Israel was guided by these cultic prohibitions or laws contained in the Old Testament (Ex 20, 22-23, 33; Deut. 12–26; Lev 17-26). The examination of the forms of those laws shows that most of them are simple command in the second person singular. In modern theological parlance, this is called the “apodictic” law (von Waldow, 1970:182; Alt, 1966:103). This form of law is said to be the oldest ordinances in the Old Testament and the



intention was the protection of the poor and the underprivileged (von Waldow 1970:183; Cross, 1998: 20).

#### **6.5.1.2.2. Tribal alliance and covenant**

I have observed that communities tribal alliances due to demographic changes in the community. Cross (1998:7) remarks on this changes that:

[...] kinship bonds that give unity and cohesion to the lineage and family in tribal society become attenuated as tribal societies become more complex, as we move to the level of the tribe or confederation of tribes. ...the function of real kinship ties in society is so limited that something larger is needed, particularly as population density increases and social conflict become more complex. And again “As social units become larger, kinship ties become increasingly dysfunctional as the bases of the larger group”.

Tribal alliance, just like kinship group, developed among nomads and is grounded in blood kinship but aliens were also incorporated (*cf.* Cross, 1998:7ff; Gerstenberger, 2002:21; Kessler, 2008:55ff). Cross (1998:7ff) describes certain ways by which outsiders, non-kin, might be incorporated in a kinship group: 1). The legal compact of marriage. 2) Adoption of sons or daughters. 3) Oath and covenant. Oath and covenant was basically a covenant of alliance for protection and is often a religious act where the deity was summoned as a witness before the alliance was sealed. Exodus 24 is an example of this kind of covenant of alliance. Individuals or group may make covenant or covenant oaths (*cf.* Cross, 1998:11). Tribes in Israel must have been formed through this covenant bound and oath. Thus, it “must be designated a tribal league or confederation” (Cross, 1998:11).

Tribal alliance is said to be “dependent on so-called sodality, that is, kinship, religious and military association, to give it stability and unity.” These alliances of tribes were for protection against an internal and external threat to its security and unity. “External threat in the chaotic age in which the Israelite league came into being included the armies of a highly organised city states as well as opposing tribal leagues of the southeast” (Cross, 1998:11 *cf.* Gerstenberger, 2002:156).

From kinship organisations “covenant families and tribes are organized by the creation of a common ancestor related by segmented genealogies” (Cross, 1998:12). This could either be kinship-in-law or real kinship.

From the religious angle, the league is the organisation of priestly families, those who were set aside to conduct rituals and sacrifices and to preserve the religious lore. According to Cross (1998:12), it is the religious league that was called עַם יְהוָה (the people of Yahweh). However, he notes that the three organisations of the league overlap and the designation can apply to all and consequently the whole Israelite league can be referred to as the עַם יְהוָה

From the military point of view, “[o]ne development can already be recognised from the Old Testament: the practice of Extermination in tribal feuds led to a holy war ideology” (Gerstenberger, 2002:156). Because Israel was initially in the minority, and had to fight against a far superior city state, they depended on the enabling of their tribal god(s) or goddess to secure their survival. In this case the ideas of Yahweh were elaborated (for example, from the personal family god of the fathers who is the guarantor of fertility, personal good fortune and health) to include the title as יהוה צבאות “Yahweh of Hosts” a title which goes back to the earlier tradition of battle. Now the tribal god is a god of war, fighting for his people to protect them against powerful city states (Kessler, 2008:57; Gerstenberger, 2002:150). In the ideology of the holy war, the tribal god, Yahweh, summons the “host” through priestly oracles or judges who are the *temporary leaders* to lead them to battle under sanctions of *covenant oaths or curses* (Cross, 1998:12).

#### **6.5.1.2.3. Kingship and covenant**

The biblical accounts show that the monarchy came into existence in Israel as a result of dissatisfaction with the tribal alliances’ loose and unstable leadership. Saul became the first king that was appointed. However, there is a kind of continuity between the covenant of the tribal league and the nature of the leadership provided by Saul (Alt 1966; Cross, 1973:219). Cross (1973:220) observes that Saul’s kingship was based on “a covenant in the archaic shrine in Gilgal”. He is pictured as a military leader, guaranteed and controlled by Yahweh. Like the tribal leaders, Saul’s kingship was also conditioned on the continuing presence of the “Spirit

of God” upon him and, as long he did not violate the traditions or constitutions of the league (1 Sam. 11:6-11; 13:5-14; 15:1-31; *cf.* Judg. 19:29-20:3).

The conditional kingship of Saul and the role that Samuel played (a prophetic role serving as a spiritual opposition over and against the king) became the pattern and characteristic of the covenant relationship that we perceive of the later Northern Kingdom of Israel in the ninth century. It emphasised individual covenant responsibility. Prophetic oracles to the royal houses placed obedience to Yahweh as a condition for the preservation and continuity of a dynasty. Jeroboam, the first king of the Northern tribes was promised an enduring dynasty on the condition of obedience to Yahweh (1Kgs 11:29-39; *cf.* 1Kgs 14:7-11). Subsequent dynasties in the Northern Kingdom are portrayed in the same way. Thus, we conclude that kingship covenant of the Northern tribes was conditional, emphasising individual responsibility to covenant obedience and covenant punishment.

Contrary to the conditional covenant of the royal ideology of the Northern tribes, David received a covenant that is eternal and unconditional<sup>288</sup>. David was able to draw to himself and to Jerusalem the cultic traditions of the league. He established the city as a central sanctuary of the league and state through his effort of bringing the ark of the covenant, the symbol of the tribal covenant. The establishment of David’s dynasty over Israel resulted in the development of Zion theology (see Ideological trajectories above).

We have noted that the prophetic institution came into existence as a spiritual opposition group. Nevertheless, the nature of the covenant relationship with the Davidic royal house brought about a unique oracle that emphasised both individual and collective responsibility (1Sam 7:13b-16). Cross (1973:227) explains:

Nathan in the time of David played a similar role to that of the northern prophets to follow. He prophesied against the breach of league of tradition in the matter of building a temple. ... To Nathan also is attributed a royal oracle promising to David’s house eternal, unconditional kingship.

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<sup>288</sup> Of course, there are speculations that the portrayal of the house of David was a Judean royal ideology as a polemic against the house of Saul and the Northern Kingdom. Nevertheless, this is not a place to discuss that. My concern is to understand how that ideology influenced social, political and religious relationship in the postexilic *Yehud*.

When David violated the law against adultery, murder and the tenets of Israel's volunteer militia by conducting a census, he was rebuked and was to be punished for that. However, 2 Samuel 7:13b–16 reveals that David's throne will be established forever (*cf.* Isa 9:1-7; Jer. 23:1–6; 33:19–22; Isa 11:1–9). In terms of the kingship covenant, David's covenant was unconditional while that of Saul and the Northern Kingdom was conditional. However, the effect of Zion theology is seen in the introduction of the new cultus especially during Solomon's reign. The new cultus shifted attention to the celebration of the election of David's kingship and the temple in Jerusalem and considered them as eternal recipient of Yahweh's grace and promise (Cross, 1973: 238)<sup>289</sup>. David's dynasty and the temple were given a fixed status in the "order of creation". Conditional covenant gave way to the eternal form in the royal temple cult. The new context of the royal temple cult transformed the covenant of the league, viz the Sinaitic covenant into an eternal decree.

The incident that took place in the sixth century, the invasion and destruction of Judea and Jerusalem, and the capture and deportation of the King of Judah and the people to Babylon as slaves, raises question about the *covenant faithfulness of Yahweh in terms of the Zion theology* and the physical absence of the temple as symbolic tabernacling presence of Yahweh. Covenant faithfulness of Yahweh seems to be the concern of the exiles in Babylon (for example, the oracle of Jeremiah 30:29–34 and Ezekiel 18; see intertextuality in Chapter 4. Congruently, it is possible that it was the question of the remnants and returnees of the Persian-period Israel as well. If this assertion is correct, we now know one of the major theological issues that the scribes had to wrestle with as they collected, composed and edited the *Torah*.

### **6.5.1.3. Individual vs corporate responsibility**

Albertz (1994b: 400) has argued that personal piety "provided quite vital stimuli for support and rescue of Yahweh religion under attack." The narrative under study demonstrates that the *בֵּית־אָב* seems to be the most effective vehicle for personal piety. This study has shown that the *בֵּית־אָב* was the vital social unit of the entire life of ancient Israel, although in different phases of development there are shifts and changes in the structure of the basic social unit (Kessler,

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<sup>289</sup> Some passages paraded in support of this assertion include: "Ps 132, esp. vv. 13f., 17; Ps 78: 68 -72; 1Kgs 11: 13, 32, 36; 14: 2, 15: 4 on David's election, *cf.* 2 Sam. 6: 21; 1Kings 8: 16; Ps. 89: 25, 29, 34; Isa. 55: 5; 2Chro. 13: 5." (Cross, 1973: 238 note 85).

2008:78). The following statistics on the use of בֵּית־אָב and plural form בְּיַתְּאֹבֹת and related terms, namely: משפחה “clan” and שבט “tribe” will be used as a point of departure for understanding the writer’s ironic rhetorical strategy in the text.

A careful study of Hebrew vocabularies or terms on the distribution of information (see addendum ‘H’) show dynamics of the social structure of ancient Israel. It shows the significance of the institution of the family (בֵּית־אָב) from the time of the settlement to the end of the monarchy. Consequently, it is presumably the most important unit of the social structure that the postexilic redactor employed in unifying Israel during the Persian-period *Yehud* that is characterised by a multi-layered quest for identity.

In retrospect, the overview of the social history of ancient Israel in Chapter 5, reveals that בֵּית־אָב and משפחה can be grouped together. This is because in certain periods of growth and development, in terms of demography and also the political and economic dimension, people belong to several different clans. However, the fundamental basic unit of the structure that controls the social and economic relationship is the בֵּית־אָב. A careful observation of the distribution of the two terms in the Hebrew Bible (addendum ‘H’), shows that both have a high number of usage in the *Torah* and the Former Prophets. Changes in the demography and political atmosphere however, did not change the significant role of the בֵּית־אָב as evidenced in their distribution spread across the *Torah* and the Former Prophet. The frequency of משפחה shows that it was prominent during Israel’s wilderness journey, which describes their settlement pattern in the book of Numbers.

Beyond the understanding of the narrated history, a brief discussion on background information on the history of the text will perhaps give a better reason why the term appears a lot in Numbers.<sup>290</sup> It is interesting that out of 159 occurrences of the term משפחה, only one occurs in the non-P portion (Num. 11:10). Based on the history of research in Chapter 3, I assume that the priestly material is late (although still debatable). If this is the case, then it implies that the use of משפחה by the priestly redactors confirms the presupposition that the social, political and

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<sup>290</sup> For lack of space I will refer the reader to the article by Baruch A. Levine “Numbers” in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*. 2009:283–294. Levine (2009:284) identifies the non-P material in Numbers to be Numbers 10:29–12:15. He identified “a third archive source from the Transjordan (T) Numbers 21, 22–24. Apart from these, Numbers is termed a priestly material.

economic structure at the time of narration resonates with the argument that it was written at a transition period. This question of the transition period will be revisited below, where the characteristics of transition in relation to the multidimensional description of the setting of hospitality will be considered.

Again, the concentration of בית־אבות in the same book of Numbers—thirty-seven times out of sixty-six occurrences,—followed by 1 and 2 Chronicles—with twenty-three occurrences—supports the argument of the narrated time where “elders” must have played prominent roles in the historical time suggested.<sup>291</sup> According to Jonker (2016:72), “*Yehud* more or less comprised the former tribal areas of Judah and Benjamin, and the relationship between these areas contributed to the social dynamics of the time.” The dynamic of the power relations created a community where “there was no public central authority with the power to impose sanctions” (Kessler, 2008:60). How do these dynamics of power relations impact our reading of the narrative?

The two stories of are probably meant to provide contrast. I will, therefore, have a close examination of the contrasts.<sup>292</sup> Amidst the far-reaching dissolutions of social, political, and religious structures of the community of Israel, the story of Abraham’s hospitality shows the significance of the ideals of a kinship relationship where individual responsibility (personal piety) forms the bedrock of the life of a community. In view of the context of the narration, characterised as a transition period, and having said that the transition relates more to the changes in the political, economic and cultic structures of the Persian period *Yehud*, I will focus on the impact of these changes as contained in the text. Here, I shall compare the setting of the two stories and then examine the possible meaning.

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<sup>291</sup> I have argued in Chapter 5 that with growth and changes in the demographic composition of the ancient Israel community, certain changes in the political structure and social roles or obligations occurred. I noticed the sudden introduction of “elders” as representatives of בית־אבות (head of households) who presides at the gates over judiciary matters in terms of ethics and civic responsibility (also *cf.* Bendor, 1996:46).

<sup>292</sup> See the table in addendum ‘L’ for the similarities and differences in the setting, the description of the nature of the shelter in each setting, and how the status and identity of the host is perceived by the strangers.

### 6.5.1.3.1. *Setting of the stories*<sup>293</sup>

In the description of the location of the two stories, עַר (city) or מְקוֹם (place) are used and this is significant in the understanding of the redactors' rhetoric. מְקוֹם is a very broad word that is used to describe location, place, site, room, locality or sacred site (Hoses 5:15; HALOT, 1995:626f; Martens, 1997:903)—by implication מְקוֹם is a sacred term (Murray, 1990:299f; Martens, 1997:904; VanDerhooft, 1999:629f; Leuchter 2005:93ff). Leuchter (2005:93) says that “[t]he term מְקוֹם enjoyed a special place in the sacral consciousness of Israel...qualifying the sacred precinct of both cultic and juridical locales”. In his study, Leuchter (2005:93) shows that מְקוֹם possessed a special significance pertaining exclusively to Jerusalem and its temple (cf. VanDerhooft, 1999:626ff). Leuchter (2005:93) continues that the term functions “as central to national covenantal ideology” employed as a polemic by one tradition circle against another. When viewed from the root<sup>294</sup>, it sheds light at least as to how מְקוֹם became a sacral term. Martens (1997:904) outlines the following broad nuances of the term מְקוֹם: (a) Instruction about offerings in Lev and Num. are laced with *māqôm*, place (Lev 6:26[19]; 14:13. The land of Palestine as “this place” (Jer. 7:3, 7) is closely tied with God’s promises and punishments (Jer. 19:3). (b) Theophanies mark a “place” as unique; one’s behaviour must conform to divine instructions (Ex 3: 5; Josh 5:15). Setting up markers memorialises the place (Gen 28:16). (c) Tabernacle and temple specified as most holy place, most directly, of god’s dwelling (Ex 25:22; 26:33-34; 1Kgs 8:6-7). Prayer is made toward “this Place” (1Kgs 8:30). Martens’ (1997:904) explanation on the uses of the term מְקוֹם connects to the complex context of the dynamic of power relations which this research has explained. He says:

The term *māqôm*, place, has been crucial in a controversy about centralizing worship (Deut. 12, *māqôm* 9x). Sacrifices are to be offered at specified place where God’s name has been put (Deut. 12:5; cf. 14:23-25; 15:20; 16:2). Some

<sup>293</sup> Previously I have discussed Abraham’s setting as an allusion to some events connected to the separation of Abraham and Lot, but specifically to the establishment of the altar for sacrifices. Although, the altar is not mentioned in the text, the description of the hospitality meal was seen as a foreshadowing of later Levitical sacrifices. Also, in Chapter 5, the discussion points to the contrast in the setting that the description at Mamre is that of an ancient nomad or rural setting (Westermann, 1985:276). The setting in Sodom is described as עַר “city” or מְקוֹם “place”.

<sup>294</sup> The verb form of the word קוֹם has several usages in the Old Testament (see Martens, 1997:903-904 for an elaborate discussion on this). A technical usage of the verb form relates to “establishing” of oath and covenant (Jer. 11: 5; Gen 6: 18; 17: 1, 19; Exod. 6: 4 cf. Lev 26: 9; Ezek. 16: 62). It also refers to God’s words (Isa 40: 8; Ps 119: 106; Jer. 29: 10 cf. Num. 23: 19; 1Kgs 8:20).

[<sup>295</sup>]...hold that this “place” in Deut. 12:5 and elsewhere is Jerusalem. Another view is that the “place” where God causes his name to dwell need not be single place but could be multiple places that other worship centers were not precluded.

In the light of the sacral sense which מקום has acquired from centralisation agenda that was informed by the transformation of the Davidic the covenant into Zion theology, it is possible that the postexilic scribe sage(s) evoke(s) this sacral sense of מקום in his/their recombinant hermeneutics during the Persian period. Thus it is ironically employed as a polemic against the common sacral tradition underlying the partisan rhetoric.<sup>296, 297</sup> Before we proceed with the possible ironic understanding of the pericope we will briefly look at the syntactic and pragmatic function of מקום how it evokes the sacral sense and agreeing with the cultic setting of Persian-period *Yehud*.

מקום occurs seven times in this text: Genesis 18:24, 26, 33; 19:12, 13, 14 & 27. In the first instance, the discourse active topic is Sodom and Gomorrah (18:20). Here Yahweh had just revealed his mission, what he was about to do to Sodom and Gomorrah. In Genesis 18:24a, the narrator started with a nominal clause אולי יש חמשים צדיקים בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר (Perhaps there are fifty righteous in the city) as the focus of the utterance (BHRG §47.1). The referent to the discourse active topic in that same nominal clause is הָעִיר (‘city’). הָעִיר is a common, singular, absolute noun. However, if we look at the discourse active topic, two places (Sodom and Gomorrah) are mentioned. The question is why is הָעִיר singular? Again, going further in the second clause (Gen. 18: 24b), the discourse active topic is resumed as מקום in a dislocated construction to *reactivate the identified referent* (see BHRG §46.1). In Genesis 18:26, מקום is used in a dislocated construction as a referent to Sodom. In Genesis 19:12, מקום is used as a referent to הָעִיר, also 19:13. However, in 19:14, מקום becomes the discourse active topic, it is the object of

<sup>295</sup> The “some” that Martens refers to are: S. R. Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 1901:140; M. Noth, *OTS* 8, 1950:46.

<sup>296</sup> For the fact that the Persian province of Yehud was describe as a secondary state McNutt (1999: 192 *cf.* Kessler, 2008:155), suggests that urbanization has not fully taken place. Carr (2011:204) submits, “[t]o be sure, the area surrounding Jerusalem was significantly depopulated in comparison to the pre-exilic period from Neo-Babylonian period into the mid-fifth century.” More so it is assumed that Persian policy encourages “ruralisation” which served as a means of creating tax (McNutt, 1999:195).

<sup>297</sup> We have already established thematic parallels between Genesis 18:22–32 and Jeremiah 30:29–34; Ezekiel 18. Two major issues, which were the major questions of the postexilic *Yehud*, were identified: individual vs corporate responsibility and the question of the justice of Yahweh. This thematic parallel shows the affinity or perhaps confirms the research’s reflections on the cultural context from which our pericope emanates. We are aware that in both the P and the non-P views the covenant promise is central to their survival as a people. Although both traditions have different scopes of the covenant, they all converged on its culmination on the centrality of Jerusalem and the temple as the dwelling place of Yahweh’s name.



the preposition מן and syntactically functioning as the complement of the imperative verbs קוּמוּ וְצֵאוּ. Thus, העיר becomes the resumptive referent to the discourse active topic מקום, indicating that the העיר that is about to be destroyed is the same מקום which the speaker entreat the listener to “get up and move out”. In Genesis 18:33, מקום occurs as referent to Abraham’s place of abode (Mamre) while in 19:27, is employed as a referent to the site where Abraham stood - פְּנֵי יְהוָה.

Having seen Mamre as an allusion to a place of worship in our previous discourse and the technical sense or sacral sense of the word מקום, it is highly probable that two contexts of worship are being contrasted here, after all hospitality is worship (see monotheistic religion of Yahweh below). Going back to the question above, why did the narrator use “city” in the singular as referent to the dual discourse active topic? To add, why did he use מקום as resumptive referent to the discourse active topic? This research has no grammatical explanation for this kind of construction. However, it is obvious that the complexity and ambiguity of the construction is not coincidental. We have argued that usually such a situation is indicative that there is more to what meets the eye on the surface.

In view of the above, we posit that מקום evokes a sacral *characteristic/quality* of Mamre as a place of worship and attributes the sacral sense of the word to Sodom being symbolic of the centralised cultic and juridical locales. The one context (of Mamre) describes the traditional kinship-base worship and justice system where the head of the בית־אב or בית־אבות or the משפחה coordinates the cultic, economic and social affairs of the family or the clan. The other setting is reminiscent of a city, where cultic, economic, social and political affairs have been centralised. In such a setting in Israel Jerusalem and the temple are viewed as the sole מקום for covenant sustenance which provides the sacred parameters for national existence. Hence, worship and social justice as provided in the cultic and legal provisions in the covenant materials are viewed as a communal responsibility.

#### **6.5.1.3.2. Possible ironic understanding of hospitality**

We are not quite sure which unit of the narrative was composed first. However, due to the characteristics of the different traditions, Genesis 18:1–16 is probably later than 18:17–19:38. Our reason is based on the nearness of the individualistic responsibility, purported in 18:1–16

to the agenda of the Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic literature, emphasising conditional covenant and individual responsibility, while 18:17–19:38 resonates with the ideologies of Zion theology with its nationalistic agenda which emphasises corporate responsibility. In this section, we will focus on the interaction of the characters noting the contrast thereof to be able to understand the theological point of view of the narrative which we have opined is communicated in an ironic fashion.<sup>298</sup> I will accentuate some portions of the grammar as I examine the patterns it follows. This might perhaps help in identifying the theological-ethical crux of the narrative.

**Genesis 18:1–15:** - In our discussion the narrator acquaints the listeners/readers that what was actually taking place was theophany. But he immediately turns to the point of view of the host to show that the divine visitation is viewed as an ordinary human-human relationship, thus leaving the reader/listener to ponder on *the nature of the divine human relationship*. This art of reticence is further heightened when the narrator builds the narrative tension through the guests' question 'where is Sarah your wife'? Letellier (1995:93) understands the questions as a "structural device, an ironic ploy of divine pretence that creates tension." The narrator again invites the reader's imaginative skill to fill in the gap, why Yahweh, being all knowing, would have to ask. We shall later expatiate how this structural device provides a theological understanding of the divine promise and the human response.

**Genesis 18:16–33:** - The focus of the conversation in this unit concerns Sodom and Gomorrah. In the dialogue between Abraham and Yahweh, the justice of Yahweh is a major theological concern.<sup>299</sup> The narrator through Abraham paints the popular belief about God as judge, who,

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<sup>298</sup> According to Alter (1981: 22), the depth of biblical theology is often conveyed in narrative. The ambiguities, complexities, and incongruences examined in and through the characters are often the channels through which one will see the depth of the theological presupposition of the narrator. Having observed that the text in its extant form is a product of a postexilic Sage(s) editor(s) who combines the conflicting views of P and non-P historical interpretations of Israel's old traditions, it then implies that we are dealing with different perspectives or theological points of view. The narrative, however, is silent on the points of view of the P and non-P scribal editors. Understanding the theological points of view of the P and the non-P scribal editors is left to the informed constructive imagination of the reader.

<sup>299</sup> Under *Social and Cultural Texture of Genesis 18 and 19*, we have argued in line with Westermann (1985:292) that this is exactly what the listeners seem to make out of the story and the narrator "is bound to the tradition and knows that his listeners or readers know it... His purpose was to show indisputably that the destruction of [העיר] was just action".

taking cue from the thematic parallel with Jeremiah 30:29–34 and Ezekiel 18, is being accused of being unfair and perhaps unmerciful to a few righteous who have been punished for the sin of others. However, on the contrary, Yahweh is not really the judge in the dialogue. Abraham sets the standard, and throughout the six circles of dialogue, it shows Yahweh as merciful because he will forgive the מקום for the sake of 50, 45, [...] and 10 righteous people.

**Genesis 19:1-29:** - This research understands the story of Lot's hospitality structural device for ironic critique of hospitality, kinship,<sup>300</sup> and ethics of responsibility. A detailed discussion of the story was done in previous chapters, here we only amplify areas that concern the query. The story starts with the arrival of the strangers while Lot was sitting at the gate of the city. It continues that Lot saw<sup>301</sup> them and persuaded them to spend the night in his house. After the lavish entertainment that Lot had prepared, the narrator reports that before they went to bed, a mob came up against the house demanding that Lot should bring out the guests so that they might "know" them. In response, Lot begged them not to do such an evil thing. In his speech, he addresses the men as אָחִי "my brothers". We recall that in Genesis 13:13, the narrator had already hinted the reader that the people of Sodom were very evil. And for Lot to address them as אָחִי is incongruent with what the reader knows about the people and one wonders why. I now we turn my search lenses on this conversation especially the use of אָחִי by Lot. How does the Old Testament describe or use the term אָחִי?

אָחִי in the Hebrew Bible and tradition of ancient Israel is a kinship language. Its use in this context is a strong allusion to a kinship-based social relationship. The language has some strong ethical imperatives to provide special care for and to protect one from harm either within the narrow or broad and metaphoric sense. Jenni (1997a: 73) describes אָחִי in the literal sense as brothers<sup>302</sup>. אָחִי occurs 629 times in the Hebrew Bible, 178 in Genesis and 48 times in Deuteronomy. The term has the following connotations as used in the Hebrew Bible: (a) narrow

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<sup>300</sup> The ironic reading of the pericope leads to the surprising realisation that hospitality (which the research set out to investigate) is intricately linked to kinship.

<sup>301</sup> "Seeing" is an important a significant constituent of the practice of hospitality. In both cases the hosts sprang into action because they "saw" the strangers. Sutherland (2006:78) observes the significance of seeing in motivating the will for the practice of hospitality. He says that "in regard to hospitality the will to serve only comes after one is conditioned to seeing."

<sup>302</sup> The feminine form is אָחִי "sister" and it occurs 114 times (Jenni, 1997a: 73). However, use of the work in terms of the social responsibility should be understood as "kin" and not necessarily a male person.

sense - biological relationship, (b) broader sense – near relative, tribe member, compatriot, colleague, friend and “the other” as in reciprocal relationship (one another). (c) metaphorical usage - often employed among persons of equal rank in messenger speech (Num. 20:14; 1 Sam 25:6) in courtly correspondence style, and in diplomatic communication. Solidarity and similarity are described by אָח in Job 30:29. (d) usage as pronoun can refer to a person or a thing as in “each other” (Ex 25:20; 37:9), (Jenni, 1997a:76ff).

Jenni, (1997a:76) explains that אָח is used more in the general and the metaphorical sense. The term receives its theological colouring in the earliest usage in Deuteronomy and in the command to love one’s neighbour in the Holiness code (Lev 19:17-8; 25:35f, 39, 46–48). Ethically, brotherhood within the Bible and without, accentuates *brotherly affection, dependability, and willingness to help*. Almost all its usage in the Deuteronomistic code (Deut. 12–26) involve specific family law except Deuteronomy 13:7 and 25:5–9. The general trend in Deuteronomy develops within the Deuteronomistic concept of the people of God. “Deuteronomy seeks the unity of the people of God as the basis for conclusions regarding the social life of human beings” (Schmidt, 1984:134; also, Jenni, 1997a:77; Bosman, 2004b:242). The frequency of the term in Genesis echoes the Deuteronomistic tone.

Akin to this, I assume that even though the term is used once in the pericope, its occurrence could not be a coincidence. If our presupposition is correct that the use of the term in this place echoes its use in Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic concept, then what we see in the passage is an interplay of complex issues that characterises this normally transient relationship (Candea & Da Col, 2012:1f). The Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic concept of the unity or the interrelatedness of persons is alluded in use of the term and by implication, it presupposes the existence of mutual obligation and sharing of certain privileges. Jenni (1997a:77) articulates this thus, “brothers stand on the same level, they have the same rights and duties and are responsible to one another”. By implication, *kinship rights and duties are also collective rights and duties*. Thus, hospitality becomes the mutual rights and duties of the kinship horde to provide and care for the ‘other’.

The story of Lot’s hospitality shows tensions generated due to these common kinship privileges and obligations. Contrasting the parallel stories, Abraham’s hospitality presents what we may describe as the normal and noble practice of hospitality. However, Lot’s hospitality is

inconsistent and ambiguous. This research considers it as a caricature<sup>303</sup> of hospitality. First, as we have observed, Lot's use of the term *אֲנָחִי* to address the men of Sodom evokes the kinship motif. Reading Lot's hospitality with the parallel story of hospitality in Judges 19,<sup>304</sup> we realise that the kinship motif that Lot alludes to, evokes kinship ideals, ethical obligation and theology.

In view of our discourse of the theology of P and non-P in Chapter 3, it is not a coincidence that the selected passage follows the universal covenant with Abraham in Genesis 17. In the context of the history of the text, the P universalistic theology with its emphasis on kinship/personal responsibility (Gerstenberger, 2002:61f) becomes significant in complementing the Deuteronomistic cultic centralisation which focuses on Israel's corporate responsibility. Gerstenberger (2002:58,61f) notes that "we would discover that strong theological influences from the small group [(kinship alliance)] have survived and found their way above all into the exilic and postexilic formation of communal belief in God" (*cf.* Kessler, 2008:79). In the postexilic period of the time of the text's composition, there was no temple yet. The narrator alluded to the time of Abraham, focusing on the significance of kinship ideals where the head of the *בית-אב* was the head and mediator (priest) between his *בית-אב* and the family deity (Gerstenberger, 2002:50ff).

When we said that it was not a coincidence that the selected passage was structured the way it is, coming after the universal covenant embellishment identified in the P text, we intend to lay bare the ironic rhetorical strategy of the wise theologian who deftly dovetailed the two seemingly contradictory traditions together. Even though cultic centralisation informed by Zion theology was the main agenda of both P and non-P redactors in the postexilic period, the stories of hospitality show the survival of the insights from ancient Israel kinship theology and ethos as fundamental and very important aspects of Israel's faith which should not be forgotten. Family theology did not die out or "become superfluous, but maintained itself despite all

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<sup>303</sup> Caricature is "a representation, especially pictorial or literary, in which the subject's distinctive features or peculiarities are deliberately exaggerated to produce a comic or grotesque effect" (OED).

<sup>304</sup> The Levite refuses to go to the city Jebus because the inhabitants were not from the sons of Israel (kinsfolks). They are described as *נְכָרִי* (foreigners by extension potential enemies) and were never expected to be hospitable. The Levite and his concubine and servant opted for *בְּאַתֶּר הַמְּקוֹמוֹת* "one of the places" (see discussion on *מקום* above). They went to Gibeah where one of *שְׂבָעֵי יְשֻׁרָאֵל* are living who presumably are hospitable. Unfortunately, "and there was no man to receive them into the house for the night" Judges 19:15.

restructuring of society” (Gerstenberger, 2002:81f; Kessler, 2008:79). The text, therefore, can be understood as an ironic theological response to the calls for monotheistic worship of Yahweh in a templeless period. The tension with the passage demonstrates this ironic intension.

The selected passage shows tension between individual and corporate responsibility. First the narrative implies the notion of corporate responsibility in two ways. (1) Abraham’s question: “will you indeed sweep away the righteous and the evil” presupposes that Yahweh is destroying Sodom due to the sin of some of the inhabitants which has contaminated the city making it fit for destruction. (2) Abraham in his bargain gradually reduces the number to ten which suggests a communal merit as against the communal responsibility assumed. The story in Genesis 19, however, creates an ambiguity as it shows Lot acting contrary to the group’s (men of Sodom) wickedness. It also creates more questions when the messengers ask Lot “Whom else do you have here? A son-in-law, your sons, and your daughters, and whomever you have in the city take out of the place”. The question presupposes the possibility of a handful of a few righteous people in the city perhaps fewer or even more than ten. The point we are making is that there is no explicit indication in the narrative that *all the inhabitants* of Sodom are wicked, although the text says all the men of the city, great and small. But the fact that Lot’s sons-in-law were not in the house with Lot and the strangers, creates more questions. Were they among the wicked mob? Why did the angels ask Lot to go and get them out? This could either mean they did not participate in the group uprising or their rescue suggests Yahweh’s willingness to forgive the wicked for the sake of the righteous. But another question is what about children? The uncertainty in the story suggests that the situation is not an “either/or” case of individual versus corporate responsibility, but “both/and”. Thus, the sage redactor who brought these conflicting traditions together, challenges his Israel to think about the significance of both traditions, especially as they relates to future survival as a nation coming back from captivity.

Narrowing our magnifying lens to Lot’s family, we find out that it is objectionable for Lot to act as he did in respect to his daughters. Contrasting Lot with the men of Sodom, Lot is apparently a model host. However, his sense of ethical duty to protect strangers is incongruent to what hospitality really is. In view of a similar practice in the parallel text in Judges 19, it seems that Lot’s action and that of the Levite was culturally acceptable which fits Derrida’s

(2000:25) understanding of absolute or unconditional hospitality to a stranger.<sup>305</sup> Lot's effort to protect his guests at any cost is in the real sense absurd. The scenario is even more ambiguous when the narrator, through Lot, judges the lack of hospitality of the men of Sodom as evil but never says anything about Lot's action against his daughters. This inconsistency, I would argue is an ironic ploy to challenge Israel's understanding of kinship's role and the practice of hospitality.

The story presents a tension between individual and corporate responsibility. We have already noted that members of a kinship group are responsible for one another. The safety and security of individual members of the kinship alliance is the responsibility of each member. According to Janzen (1994:10), the restoration of harmony (*shalom*) within the confines of a kinship group is regarded as an 'ethical good' throughout the Old Testament (*cf.* Perdue, 1997:238). However, Lot's action raises a problem. Lot's action of giving his daughters as substitute might be culturally acceptable. However, viewed in this narrative, as I argued above, the narrator seems to critique such a cultural practice as evil. The aftermath of the parallel story in Judges 19 shows that this cultural practice was abhorrent to the people of Israel (*cf. Judg 20:10-14*). Lot's action as an individual, towards the representation of the kinship's mutual obligation to the 'other' disrupts the kinship *shalom*. It disrupts the idea of community solidarity, hence raising the question, what is an ideal and acceptable hospitality and what is its purpose?

In view of the above discourse, the engendered ironic reading of these parallel stories of hospitality provides an understanding for the seeming incongruities. In the sections below, we will proceed with the investigation of the ideological layers and theological propositions in the pericope. The sections discuss the use of the memory of old traditions as ideological and a theological response to the conflicting views and other contextual challenges. We will also look at the command to love your neighbour as yourself as a call towards an understanding of the hermeneutic of hospitality as a theological response to conditional and absolute hospitality.

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<sup>305</sup> "Absolute hospitality requires that I open up my home and that I give not only to the foreigner (provided with a family name, with the social status of being a foreigner), but to the absolute unknown, anonymous other, and that I *give place* to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names ( Derrida, 2000: 25 cited in Ch. 2).

#### 6.5.1.4. *Abraham and the covenant promise*

Memory of early tradition of Israel's history was a significant ideological and theological move in the Persian-period *Yehud*. Carr (2011:252) observes that memory of early tradition “became increasingly important as a basis for hope amidst exile who doubted Yhwh's intent to resettle them in the land and restore them as a people”. Almost all the parties involved in the movement created during their resettlement in Land of Israel, employed the memory of their great ancestors Abraham and Sarah as basis for legitimizing their various claims.<sup>306</sup>

According to the biblical tradition, Abraham and Sarah are Israel's first ancestors.<sup>307</sup> The Bible (Gen. 16; 21; 25:1ff) also provides link(s) between Abraham and Arab tribes through Ishmael and other children born by Keturah (Blum 2007:11). The biblical accounts of the patriarch Abraham appears directly or indirectly in connection to the motif of the promise in Genesis 12:1–3 which is considered programmatic. Most of the narratives including the Primeval History are believed to have been structured in relation to the programmatic development of the promise motif. In the programmatic promise text, Abraham is portrayed as the receptacle for divine blessing and the transmitter of this divine blessing to the nations, יג (Gen. 12:2) and כָּל מִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאָדָמָה ‘all the tribes of the earth’ (Gen. 12:3). The gradual development and expansion of the Abraham story, with its focus on the promise, leading to covenant (Gen. 15:8–18; 17:1–14) places the patriarch/matriarch as theologically significant in the Bible (Spieckermann & Carr 2009:152).

Taking previous interpreters, (Westermann, 1985:293; Sarna, 1989:132; Wenham, 1994:62) as point of departure, and considering the frequency of the name of Abraham in the selected passage (see addendum A<sup>308</sup>), we will make an informed assertion that it is possible that one of the intentions of the redactor(s) was to point to the theological significance of the ancestor(s).

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<sup>306</sup> We have noted earlier that the existence of the patriarchal figures has been a matter of scholarly debate. Some scholars have criticised the historicity of the patriarchal figures as a later development (see 5.4.1.1 note 50; Thompson, 1974 and Van Seters, 1975). However, the name אַבְרָהָם ‘Abraham’ and its earlier form אַבְרָם ‘Abram’ are assumed to be West-Semitic in origin. The name is a compound name meaning “the (clan) father/ancestor is exalted/eminent... The etymology suggests the existence of the same ancestor cult in early Israel that was widespread through the ancient Near East” (Spieckermann & Carr 2009: 149; cf. Blum, 2007: 11).

<sup>307</sup> See Blum (2007:11 – 12) for a concise summary on the historical background and approaches to the narrative material of the patriarchal period.

<sup>308</sup> Suggesting that Abraham forms an important literary motif in the unit.



Sarna (1989:128), contrasting the two stories of hospitality, he says, “The first carries the message of life and posterity, the second of death and everlasting destruction. Both reveal the nobility of Abraham’s character, and both disclose the working of divine Providence”. Abraham is interpreted as the symbol of the future of Jewish nation, whose sphere of involvement extends to the fortunes of humanity. Abraham is understood as a repository of the eternal values of righteousness and justice, which is the way of Yahweh. Juxtaposed against the event of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the sphere of moral realm, Abraham’s character is seen as an example of the principles of justice and righteousness, both divine and human. Generally, Abraham is considered a channel of blessing and a paradigm of blessing. God’s covenant promises to Abraham are taken as model for similar other promises. Abraham’s promises modelled similar royal promises in Ps. 72:17. The promises “give support and hope to the exiles and later Jewish audience after the loss of their national identity” (Spieckermann & Carr 2009:152). Blum (2007:13) added that “postexilic extrapolations elevate the promises to divine oaths as in Genesis 15”.<sup>309</sup>

Understanding the context of the covenant as explained above helps one to understand why the narrator could evoke the memory of old tradition in his context. The dynamics of power relations in the context of the time of the narration is so complex that some of these memories were ideologically interpreted. For instance, the adoption of kinship terminologies to express new bonds of relationship in a tribal or monarchical or confederated social alliance might be a positive or negative development. We have seen the negative impact of complete replacement of the kinship based roles on the cultic and juridical spheres, demonstrated by the story of Lot’s

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<sup>309</sup> The fulfilment or partial fulfilment of the promise to Abraham is the drama that has been recorded beginning with attempt of its hindrance in Gen 12:10–20. Gen 13 narrates how the land promised to Abraham is endangered and that the promise has to be renewed (Gen 13:14–17). The event of the rescue of Lot serves to establish Israel’s Abrahamic beginning of the city of Jerusalem. Another issue which literally endangered the promise of the posterity is pointed out by Abraham: his wife is barren. Abraham is given the promise of posterity; he trusted and it was accredited to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6 *cf.* Rom. 4; Gal 3:3–9). Here Abraham is presented as foreshadowing faith and obedience as would be expected by the *Torah*. As to the promise of the land, although the process was sobering, God confirmed that the promise has not diminished (Gen 15:7–21). A partial fulfilment of the promise of posterity was accounted by the birth of Ismael (Gen 16:10; 13:16; 15:5; 17:2, 20). Two parallel narrative of the promise of a child is given (Gen 17 & Gen 18:9–15) after the birth of Ismael because Ismael is not the promised child. The narrative of Genesis records the account of the change of the names of the ancestors as a theological evidence of the fulfilment of the posterity promise and the confirmation of the promise of progeny. The changes are also evidence that the nations of the world form a large and all-embracing Abrahamic unity (Spieckermann & Carr 2009:154).

hospitality. The Memory of Abraham in the story, therefore, seems to evoke the significance of the role of the kinship horde.

The centrality of the covenant in all the partisan rhetoric is another important topic that characterises the context of the narration. Abraham's hospitality reactivated the covenant promise (Gen.18: 18). This reminds the listeners that the family is the context of the covenant which all the parties appeal to, and also defines the scope of that covenant in terms of Israel's relationship with other nations (we shall discuss this below). Genesis 18:19 is theologically profound, stating two purposes:

For I have chosen him in order that *he will command his children and his household* [יִצְוֶה אֶת-בְּנָיו וְאֶת-בֵּיתוֹ] after him and to keep the way of Yahweh by doing righteousness and justice, so that Yahweh may bring to Abraham that which he promised him.

The verse reveals Yahweh's goal of making a covenant with Abraham. In this purposive statement, all the individuals in the entire family are implicated. Abraham was chosen to teach everyone to keep the way of Yahweh by doing righteousness and justice. Another purposive statement is also made, so that Yahweh will fulfil his promises which he has made to Abraham. In this profound theological statement, there is a mutual relationship between the divine promise and the human response. Also, in this statement, we find individual and corporate responsibility as mutually set. We infer from the statement יִצְוֶה אֶת-בְּנָיו וְאֶת-בֵּיתוֹ literally "command his sons and his house" to mean individual and corporate.

#### **6.5.1.5. גוי *in the covenant promise evoked in Genesis 18: 18***

Having seen the significance of the figure of Abraham and family as the context of the covenant, we now examine the scope of the promise as evoked in the text, noticing the choice of the word [גוי] to describe Yahweh's scope of the covenant. We will briefly define the word, paying attention to its semantic potential and its usage in the Hebrew Bible. Also, we will consider specifically the significance of the use of the Hebrew term as employed by the redactor to convey the scope of the covenant promise and blessings to Abraham.

Genesis 18:18 echoes the programmatic covenant promise in Genesis 12. Two different words are used to describe the scope of Abraham's blessing in Genesis 12:2-3: "And I will make you

into a great *nation* [לְגוֹי] and I will bless you. I will make your name great and I will bless you. I will bless those who bless you. and those who curse you, I will curse. And I will bless in you/through you all the *tribes* [מִשְׁפָּחֹת] of the earth.”

HALOT (1994: 182f) and BDB (1906: 152) describe גוי as (a) a nation. (b) that the word is often used for pagan nations in distinction and contrast to Israel (Ex. 34:24; Ez. 5:6, 8). And משפחה prototypically is “clan”, i.e. an extended family group in which there is a felt blood-relationship, Deuteronomy 29:17 (HALOT, 1995: 651). In our text, only גוי is used. “And Abraham will surely be a great and mighty *nation* [לְגוֹי]. And I will bless in him/through him all the *nations* [לְגוֹיִם] of the earth” (Gen. 18:18). Could this be intentional rhetorical strategy? If yes, what was it intended for? This complex situation makes the understanding of the statement “all the nations of the earth” in the promise difficult. Does גוי refer to Abraham’s descendant because God will make him into “a great and mighty nation (גוי) and who are Abraham’s descendant? Does the word refer to Israel? If Israel, then which Israel? Israel and Judah or Judah alone? Also, does the term refer to non-Hebrews as oppose to Israel as עַם הַיְהוּדָה?

At this juncture, we will engage Jonker as a conversation partner. His work, *Defining All-Israel in Chronicles: A Multi-Levelled Identity Negotiation in Late Persian-Period Yehud*, provides through the heuristic lens of “Identity” a more nuanced analysis of the socio-historical context of the late Persian-period biblical literature. His identification of the four levels of socio-historical existence (cited above) provides a helpful clue to understanding power relations and their relevance for understanding ideologies and theologies.

#### **6.5.1.5.1. Understanding גוי from the universalistic frame**

Two distinctions have been made on the two uses of גוי and this presents a possibility of a broader understanding of the term from the primary boundary of the locus of the covenant promise. The covenant promise gave Israel a unique relationship with Yahweh—Israel become עַם־יְהוָה. The ambiguity of the word גוי in “all the nations of the earth” (Gen. 18:18), could mean that Yahweh’s promise to Abraham is universal and inclusive. Understanding גוי from the universalist framework is “a subtle polemic” against “Yahweh alone party” which is exclusive (cf. Jonker 2016: 119, 120). Evoking the covenant promise gives assurance to the audience of Yahweh’s unconditional care and Israel are a witness (Jonker (2016:117).

#### 6.5.1.5.2. *All nations [גוים] of the earth: a call to redefine Abraham's descendants*

The socio historic existence in the Persian-period *Yehud* as we have observed above calls for a redefinition of the identity of Israel. We will pre-empt the discourse, that גוים is possibly employed by the postexilic sage redactor(s) to challenge the ideology that delimits identification markers to terms such as remnant, holy seed, and sons of exile. The ideological claim limiting Israel as those related by blood from the perspective of the returnees is not a fair description of Abraham's descendants. Looking at it from the covenant perspective the answer may be partially right that Abraham's descendants by blood are the twelve tribes. But even with that, when one considers the term used in describing a family in ancient Israel, we will see the complexity of the problem. A family [בית-אב] comprises all that belong to that house, people and property inclusive. In terms of people, a slave that was bought is also a member of a household.

Talking about Abraham's biological children, we have Ismael, Isaac and children of Ketura, (see 1 Chron 1, and cf. Jonker, 2016:152). And from the descendants of Isaac, one finds the line of Esau. In the Abrahamic narrative, Lot was part of the Abraham's household, he was Abraham's nephew. When the Lord had called Abraham (then Abram) to leave his country and his father's household Abraham took along with him Lot as a member of his household (Gen. 11:27–28; 12:1–4). Throughout the narrative, the redactor(s) try to maintain the fact that Lot was a member of Abraham's household. Although at some point Lot was independent, the Abraham-Lot narrative points to the fact that they are close relatives (Gen. 13:8).

The inclusion of the pericope which tells the story of Lot and his daughters in the cave after the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:30–38) adds to ambiguity of Lot's character. Why was this etiological narrative of the two neighbours of Israel—the Moabites and the Ammonites added? Some interpreters<sup>310</sup> understand the unit as a “narrative derived from Israel's polemic or from hate and contempt for the neighboring Moabites and Ammonites” (Westermann, 1985: 312). Contrary to this, Westermann (1985: 312) believes that the unit “fits more precisely into the conclusion of what is narrated about Lot, as the patriarchal

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<sup>310</sup> E.g. A Dillmann; H. Holzinger and others see Westermann, (1985: 312).

stories were coming together, and in particular the Abraham-Lot cycle.” Similarly, Sarna (1989:139) seems to agree with Westermann when he says, “Since throughout most of their common history relations between Israel and these peoples were generally unfriendly, it is unlikely that a tradition about their kinship to Israel would be invented. By the same token, their connection with the clan of Lot, Abraham’s nephew, must be genuine.” This research concurs with Westermann and Sarna and precisely as Westermann (1985:312) says that the narrative arose out of a “political polemic”. The polemic is directed against ideologies that set an edge around the identity of Israel using delimitation markers such as the ideas of faithful remnant, holy seed, sons of exile. Jonker’s (2016:152) Chapter 5 of his book titled “Not Alone in this Provincial World”, confirms the assertion that “all the *nations* [גוי] of the earth” in Genesis 18:18 is a political polemic directed against exclusive ideologies. Now the question is, to what extent should Israel welcome the ‘other’ and be hospitable to them? In other words, how should the traditional practice of hospitality be employed in a centralised cultic and juridical context?

#### **6.5.1.6. Loving one’s neighbour as oneself**

A lot has been said on the organisation of the Ancient Israelite society—having the בית-אב as the primary and most important unit of the structure, clustered around the kinship horde with egalitarian ideals (Kessler, 2008:54). Within the framework of the egalitarian society, there were several promulgations in the Old Testament which focused on the care and protection of the underprivileged in a household (Ex 20,22-33; Deut. 12-26; Lev. 17–26). But what about the total ‘other’ (א זר or א נכרי)? And what about situations where welcoming strangers invades the rights and dignity of the host or member of the household of the host?

Evidently, Leviticus shows how the centralisation agenda of the P redactors incarnated cultic concerns into matters of social order; the section of the Holiness code deals specifically with this social order. Significant to the understanding the traditional practice of hospitality is the command to love the foreigner as one self. In Leviticus 19:18, 34 are the commands to love neighbour and foreigners. Leviticus 19:18 uses רע to describe the other. רע can refer to a close kin, neighbour, a friend or a loved one. However, רע does not include the גר. And it is this term גר that is used in the command in 19:34. To let the גר to live like a native born (כְּאֶזְרָחַ) and love the גר as yourself. What does love the גר as yourself mean? This is not a place for us to

exegete Leviticus 19:34. However, we engage Richard Kearney's (2015) theory of hermeneutic approach to understand the command to love the foreigner as oneself.

Kearney's hermeneutic approach to understanding hospitality sprang from the concern of how to avoid the perils of extremism in obedience to such a command and practice. Responding to Derrida's deconstruction of hospitality, Kearney (2015:174) remarks that "if pure hospitality is indeed 'impossible', Derrida seems to suggest at times that it might serve as a regulatory ideal, unachievable but desirable... It is hard to keep the ethical at bay, in spite of Derrida's demurrals and deferrals." Because pure hospitality as deconstructed by Derrida is truly impossible, Kearney fears that the relativism will virtually control human everyday agency, and this, he says, is a severe compromise.

Kearney (2015:175) suggests a hermeneutic approach which calls for discernment in the obedience to the laws governing hospitality.

Here we are dealing with conditional rather than unconditional hospitality, with discerning between what is possible and impossible [...] We need [...] a capacity for practical judgement—*phronesis*—in order to avoid the hyperbole that bypasses or suspends differences between hostile and hospitable others." (Kearney, 2015: 175).

Kearney (2015:175) expatiates on the hermeneutics approach that

An ethics of everyday existence requires hermeneutic mediations between self and stranger, where the risk of translation becomes a wager of 'linguistic hospitality'... Between the place of self (*lieu*) and the no-place of other (*non-lieu*) there is the *mi-lieu* of translation... This task of translating the stranger is indeed an '*épreuvé*', understood as 'experience', 'trial', 'test', 'ordeal'.

This hermeneutic paradigm as Kearney (2015:176) explains, provides a bridge between identity and otherness. It invites host and strangers into a critical conversation that is mutually enhancing. The command to love the strangers "as yourself" viewed as that bridge, involves an "equal reciprocal relationship demanding trust, a laying down of one's weapons, a conversion of hostility into hospitality" (Kearney, 2015:179).

### 6.5.2. Monotheistic religion of Yahweh

One of the main theologies addressed in this text is the monotheistic worship of Yahweh. The repetitive and progressive analysis reveals that יהוה occurs seventeen (17x) times in the text, two (2x) times as אל and eight (8x) times as אדני. First, on the use of the name יהוה and אלהים, the research agrees with Otto's (2007:173 note 8) explanation that the change of divine names is not actually a criterion for source division. He argues that

The authors of Pentateuch differentiated very precisely between their 'time of narration,' that is, the postexilic period; and the 'narrated time,' that is the fictitious time of Moses. In the time of narration, the reader of Pentateuch was of course aware from the very beginning that YHWH is the God of Israel, but on the level of the narrated time, the divine name was not revealed before the encounter portrayed in Exodus 3.

Taking Eckart Otto's explanation as a point of departure, the use of the divine names יהוה and אלהים in the narrative unit are significant in our effort to unravel the writer's motif. Taking into consideration "the success of the idea of Monotheism in the exilic and postexilic period [and] ... the theological need to unify the two conceptions of P and D" (Otto, 2007: 173), one can see the skilful rhetorical strategy of the scribal sage to challenge some of the exclusive ideological tendencies of the Israelites during the Persian-period. Consider the way the writer uses the two divine names: the first occurrences of יהוה are in Genesis 18:1–19:27, then two occurrences of אלהים in Genesis 19:29, after which the divine names are never used again in the ptext. The question then is why the sudden change of the divine name especially in one of the significant portions of the text—a place where an important theological statement is made? (Wenham (1994:59).

To understand the significance of the theological statement, we employ the theory of "reversal ending" suggested by Amit (2004). The theory of reversal ending is "of especial significance to the understanding of the work as a whole, because they cast it in a new or different light" (Amit, 2004:217)<sup>311</sup>. The beginnings and endings of stories are significant because every skilful

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<sup>311</sup> Amit (2004: 213) continues that "There is no doubt that in every text the beginning and the end are painstakingly worked and given special prominence. While the opening introduces the reader to the world of the work, presents its background and directs the attention to particular features, the ending represents a finality,

story-teller makes a pause after telling one story, giving the imagination time to recover, allowing the hearer to reflect quietly on what he has heard (Amit, 2004:215).<sup>312</sup> One important element of how stories end in the Hebrew Bible is the provision of an interesting phenomenon such as an explanation of certain feature(s) in the narrative. “The decision to place such an explanation at the end of a story may be due to the desire ‘to create a link between the world of the narrative and that of the reader’” (Amit, (2004: 216). A particular kind of ending that is of interest to Amit and which this research employs in the reading of the ending of the catastrophic destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is the “reversal ending”. This is significant in understanding the pericope within the larger context of the Abrahamic narrative and time of the narration.

Peleg (2012) employed this theory of reversal ending in understanding this statement of Genesis 19:29). And his conclusions which this research agrees with is remarkable: Genesis 19:29 draws the attention of the readers in the time of the composition to consider Lot’s salvation within the larger corpus of God’s covenant relationship expressed in the Abrahamic narrative. The reversal ending emphasises the mercy of God (Gen. 19:6). Westermann’s (1985:308) comment on Genesis 19:29 concurs with this understanding. He submits that “This verse is a highly significant example of adaptation of the old traditions under the changed attitudes of a later era.” For instance, in view of the incongruity in the narrative flow and the theory of the reversal ending of Genesis 19:29, I opine that it is possible that the redactor intends to link the readers in the time of narration with the narrated world. Now let us examine the incongruities, dramatic irony, narrative ending, I mean the complex narrative as found in the Persian-period Israelites.

Based on our research indications, the monotheistic agenda of the postexilic redactors of the Pentateuch is probably what the writer intended to communicate and at the same time, in an ironic fashion, challenged the readers’ attitude towards the idea of monotheism. The recognition of the identity of יהוה and his מלכים by the reader at the postexilic period is full of nuance and implications. Interpreters (Westermann, 1985:277; Wenham, 1994:45; and Arnold,

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directing the reader to consider the sequence of the text in light of the concluding information and to evaluate the work as a whole.

<sup>312</sup> Read Amit (2004: 216) for a few examples of ways some biblical stories end in the Hebrew Bible.



2009:195) believe that the theophanic statement וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה is a later editorial comment.<sup>313</sup> In our case, the narrator switches the attention of the reader to the reality of the narrated time. Notice the writer's skilful use of the verb ראה to indicate what was significant at the narrated time, by implication, perhaps equally so of the time of narration. ראה occurs six times in the pericope (see Addendum 'B'). The first occurrence in Genesis 18:1 is in the causative-reflexive term (for become visible), *nifal wayyiqtol 3ms* translated "to appear". The remaining five occurrences 18:2, 21; 19:1, 28, are all in *qal wayyiqtol* and prototypically, translated as "to see". The chain of the verbs used in the expression וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים נֹצְבִים עָלָיו וַיִּרְא "And he lifted up his eyes and he saw, behold three men standing in front of him. And he saw and he ran..." The pair of the verb "lifted up and see" points to the significance of what Abraham sees. Elsewhere in the Old Testament, Genesis 22:4; 24:63; Numbers 24:2; Judges 19:17; Joshua 5:13; the use of the pair of the verb indicates the significant of the object of the verb.

In the context of the pursuit of the monotheistic religion of Yahweh, it was the responsibility of the postexilic redactor to ensure that the preexilic monotheistic ideals, which are ideologically traced to the Israelites ancestors, were maintained. The narrative show that יהוה and his מלכים were Abraham's divine visitors. However, the focus was not on the identity but the dignity of the visitors. The narrator focuses on the need of the time, which is righteousness and justice to the 'other'. Therefore, a true monotheistic religion of Yahweh is righteousness and justice to the 'other' who is created by God in the image of God. Sarna (1989: 128; 135) says: "Unlike the previous theophanies, this one is not accompanied by an act of worship or the building of an altar; in actual fact, the hospitality to strangers becomes an act of worship."

## 6.6. Conclusion

The chapter provided an analysis of the ideological and theological textures of the pericope. The research has identified the pericope as a product of the postexilic Persian-period.

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<sup>313</sup> Westermann (1085: 277) and Arnold (2009: 195), both agree that the statement is an important theophanic revelation. The statement, to use the words of Westermann "alters the narrative profoundly. It has a strong power of suggestion so that one reads the subject of the next sentence differently". And that is exactly the point that this research is driving at. According to Arnold (2009: 179), in most examples of divine appearances, they are usually followed immediately by the substance of the revelation which is often the content of the speech of the divine visitor: usually a promise (Gen 12: 7), or self-revelation (Gen 17: 1).

According to Jonker (2016:65), “texts cannot be realised in a contextual vacuum. Texts speak to audiences who exist in concrete, dynamic circumstances, and wants to persuade them in those circumstances towards adopting a particular point of view” (cf. Fowl, 1995:17). The production and interpretation of texts reflect different coping strategies to the different religious, political, social and economic climate of the time of narration. This chapter also investigated various points of view that characterise the context of the narration.

The study has observed that ideology is difficult to define, but generally ideologies are different biases, opinions, preferences and stereotypes which are created in the human mind due to the influences of social contexts. The basic idea underlying ideology relates to the interest(s) of the individual or group of individuals concerning important matter that affect them directly or indirectly. Different interests determine how one interprets a matter, thus ideology is viewed as deployment of meaning for the service of power (interest). In another development, the study describes theological texture as that characteristic of a text which expresses relationship between human and divine. We also realised that any systematic expression of such human-divine relationship that does not contain new possibilities of speaking about God becomes ideological for theology does not control the nature and activity of God.

The chapter describes ideological analysis of a text as an interpretive conversation that involve writer and reader, others’ interpretations, and the text itself. A brief statement of the researcher’s cultural and religious context was made. Coming from a staunch evangelical tradition and a cultural context which resonates with the biblical tradition, they inform my critical engagement and commitment to the scripture as divine revelation. In regards to the writer’s context, the postexilic Persian-period was identified as the social and cultural context that influenced the writer. Four levels of socio-historical existence were identified which provide an understanding of the nature of power relations during the postexilic Persian-period. *Yehud* at the period of compilation was an important Persian province and, as a province, it stands in relation to the older surrounding provinces like Samaria. From within the region, the initial relationships between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin coupled with various relationship within the cultic community show another level of social dynamics in the land. Rivalry, contestation, and religious reforms crop up from these levels of socio-historic existence lead to the formation of ideologies.

The chapter also found out that, being the formative period of Israel's religious literature, scribal factions were also identified. Different scribes interpreted the old traditions to suit the interests of the group. Incongruences and other characteristics of biblical text were understood as effect of differing scribal-editorial treatment of the old tradition. Literature which developed at this period is said to "exhibits great creativity and religious imagination" (Middlemas, 2007:138). Disparate traditions from the realm of myths and history were welded together to describe the depth of what was lost and to urge its renewal or revival. This literature is what the research analysed to understand the different possible ideologies and theologies and to know why they were welded together.

Four possible ideological trajectories were identified and discussed. These include royal ideology, economic and political ideology, nationalistic agenda and cultic or religious ideology. From the royal ideological point of view, the question of God's covenant to the royal house was made redundant and Israel had to start anew with Persian imperial royal ideologies. Persian policy which can be equated to the modern idea of tolerance set up traditional or local administration which serve their political and economic interests.

Through a close reading of the pericope, the chapter identified and discussed two main ideological and theological layers in the text, namely the covenant and monotheistic cultic ideology and theology of Yahweh. The discussion of these two layers of ideology revealed how Israel perceived and interpreted its history from the old traditions. Linking their origin to Abraham as their ancestor, the Israelites claimed a special relationship with Yahweh. Through the ironic reading of the pericope, the study shows how some of the interpretation of Israel's old traditions in terms of their relationship with Yahweh and their covenant duty during the Persian-period was biased and thus ideological. The reading also reveals that the parallel stories of hospitality are viewed as a theological critique of Israel's interpretations and application of their cultic and social order.

The close reading of the text shows how prophetic wisdom traditions adapted (through updating and editing) the disparate traditions and opened new possibilities of understanding the word and power of Yahweh over time and in different circumstances. It is in this limelight that the research understands the selected text as a composite text which drew from an ancient tale of hospitality, parallel to stories of the visits of the gods, recasting it in a new context to teach

righteousness and justice as renewed covenant relationship with Yahweh. The stories challenged Israel's attitude and response to the transformation of the kinship-based cultic and social order. The chapter realises that hospitality is intricately connected to kinship and that the critique of kinship provides a nuanced understanding of the ethic of responsibility and accountability. The stories also challenge Israel's traditional understanding and practice of hospitality as covenant response to Yahweh's demand of righteousness and justice. This shows that Yahweh's covenant promise and blessing and Israel's obedience are mutually set. The theological reading opens new possibilities of speaking of God and a renewed understanding of his covenant promise and human response.

## *Chapter 7*

### *Summary, Conclusion, Recommendations*

#### **7.1. Introduction**

This research is a theological-ethical investigation of the concept of hospitality in the Old Testament. The dissertation investigates the significance of theological-ethical understanding of hospitality in ancient Israel, how it is expressed or not in Genesis 18 and 19. We have shown that hospitality is not a new custom in Africa; it is in fact ingrained in most African cultures. Studies have shown that there is a strong sense of identification with the Old Testament (Jenkins, 2006: 68; Michael, 2015: 1). Describing the issues that shape the reading of the Bible in what he describes as the global South, in contrast to the Northern world, Jenkins (2006: 68) says: “Global South Christians, in contrast, do not live in an age of doubt but must instead deal with competing claims to faith. Their views are shaped by interaction with their different neighbors”. Amidst religious plurality, the global South Christian is challenged to respond to poverty and social injustice, to political violence, corruption, the meltdown of law and order and to Christianity’s witness. Because of in Africa’s cultural affinities with the Old Testament, most readers accept its worldviews as relevant for daily conduct.<sup>314</sup>

In its investigation of the theological ethical significance of hospitality, the dissertation employed Robbins’ (1996) *Exploring the Texture of the Text: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* as an approach to understanding the different textures of the stories and for the rhetorical function and significance of the narrative in context. Robbin’s socio-rhetorical approach to the study of the Bible is an appropriate approach to a complex text like Genesis 18-19, as the history of its interpretation shows a lack of consensus among scholars. The multidimensional nature of a socio-rhetorical approach provides for the uniqueness of different

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<sup>314</sup> Jenkins (2006: 69) quoted Andrew Walls saying that “You do not have to interpret Old Testament Christianity to Africans; they live in an Old Testament world.” (This particular work is not traceable through the source which it was quoted from). Works of some Old Testament scholars in Africa underscores the close affinity between African cultures and the Old Testament world. For example, some of the titles of Adamo’s publications (see Adamo, 2015: 48ff) speak volumes in that respect: “The African Wife of Moses: An Examination of Numbers 12:1-9” (1989), “Ethiopia in the Bible” (1992), *Africa and Africans in the Old Testament* (1998), “In Search of Africanness in the Bible” (2000), “Images of Cush in the Old Testament” (2001), *Africa and Africans in the New Testament* (2006), “The African Wife of Abraham” (2005). Masenya (2001: 145) thinks that there must be something wrong with an African who does not recognise a kinship affinity with the Old Testament. Other works include but are not limited to Kanyaro (1999); Mbiti, (2004), Mojola (2014), Mugambi (2001).

entities of exegetical-hermeneutical approaches, which enables a comprehensive study of the ancient text. The strength of a socio-rhetoric approach is in the possibility of employing methodologies that are apparently incompatible in a study of text (Botha, 1998:51-63). Akin to the close cultural affinity between Africa and the world of the Old Testament, the research hypothesises that through such critical multidimensional engagement, certain theological-ethical ideals may be gleaned. Such ideals may serve as a theological underpinning for renewed and revisioned attempt to incorporate the fundamental understanding of the Old Testament narrative into contemporary modern ethical reflections without generalising and drawing superficial parallels.

In this chapter, I provide the summary of the research, giving an overview of each chapter. The chapter also draws certain conclusions based on the research findings as queried in the research questions and the hypotheses stated in Chapter 1. The contributions of the dissertation will also be highlighted as conclusions that are made from the findings. The chapter concludes with an outline of recommendations or suggestions for further research.

## **7.2. Summary of the research**

Chapter 1 is the general introduction to the dissertation. It describes the motivation in which globalisation and its accompanying effect poses a threat to the harmonious peaceful coexistence of global communities. Numerous outbreaks of ethnic, tribal, religious and politically motivated unrest became a major challenge to human dignity and are flourishing in the researcher's personal context. Cultural, political, religious and socio-economic diversity creates a suspiciousness, the 'other' is discriminated against because he or she does not belong, thereby posing a challenge to the African cultural practice of hospitality, consequently affecting harmonious living. The personal experience of the researcher, coming from a community that experiences constant communal conflict and war and threatened by onslaught of "Boko Haram", motivated him to consider the theme of hospitality from the selected Old Testament passages in Genesis 18-19, hoping that a theological-ethical understanding of the concept and practice, governed by faith tradition, will help rekindle a culture of welcoming the 'other', thereby restoring human dignity and ultimately creating a peaceful coexistence in a world of diversity. In this regard, the chapter posed three research questions and three marching hypotheses which guided the discourse of the chapters that followed.

Chapter 2 surveys various scholarly researched literatures on the concepts of hospitality. The survey reveals various hermeneutical perspectives on the concept, necessity and significance of hospitality. The various reception traditions were intended to lay the foundation for a nuanced theological-ethical concept in the Old Testament, which the research holds as relevant for the Tangale cultural and multi-faith society, to provide a point of orientation on how the Tangale would practice hospitality to the religious and ethnic or tribal ‘other’, especially in a chaotic context.

The chapter further surveys the cultural and religious context of the Tangale perspective of hospitality, the social-anthropological perspective, the world of the ancient Mediterranean and biblical perspectives (both Old and New Testament), as well as the philosophical perspectives. The discussion shows that hospitality is complex but a significant constituent of social life. The philosophical perspectives, rather than describing hospitality, proposes and critiques the law of hospitality. Two philosophers were discussed. Kant proposes three arguments which he believes would make a perpetual peace. One of these was conditions for universal hospitality. This proposal was deconstructed by Derrida who was obsessed with the treatment that immigrants were subjected to in France. That a stranger was subjected to so many unfavourable conditions is an act of violence according to Derrida (2000: 15). In this regard, Derrida proposes absolute or unconditional hospitality which is condition that takes away the question of rights which limit hospitality and can even make it impossible. Derrida’s deconstruction and proposal of unconditional hospitality, however, was seen as a clarion call for one to reconsider his or her basic assumptions on the matter. The survey ends with a redefinition of hospitality, which serves as a working definition to guide continuing exploration of the subject matter.

Chapter 3 provides a survey of scholarship of existing research on the literary unit of Genesis 18 and 19) and scholarly interpretations of the passages. The survey of the existing scholarly research serve as point of departure to subsequent research reflections. Areas covered in the survey include an overview of source criticism, origin and growth of Genesis in the Pentateuch (composition, historicity, and theology) and the history of the demarcation of the text. Text criticism is also done to ascertain its trustworthiness. The text criticism serves as point of departure for the “Concordant Translation and the Literary Criticism” done by the researcher.

The Chapter continues with the literary analysis of Robbins' first texture of his five textures of the text: *Intratextual Texture*. The analysis focuses on the inner characteristics of the text. It deals with how words are used in the selected passage. The exercise provides "an intimate knowledge of words, word patterns, voices, structures, devices, and modes in the text, which are the contexts for meanings and meaning-effects that an interpreter analyses with the other readings of the text" (Robbins, 1996: 7). The analysis shows how the narrative progresses and how characters interact. It also shows the narrator's interaction with the protagonist and antagonist of the stories, thus, revealing the argument, the reasoning behind it and the resultant effect of the contrary reasoning of the argument. The analysis of the inner texture of the passage shows that hospitality is an ethical mandate which has a mutual benefit for both the host and the stranger or guest. The rationale is that Abraham and Lot welcome unknown strangers, who in turn share their stories, the story of Yahweh's covenant faithfulness and promise and their mission against Sodom and Gomorrah. Yahweh confirms his promise and saves Lot from the catastrophe that befalls Sodom. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is seen as the resultant effect of the counter rationale of the argument, which was Sodom's denial of hospitality and was portrayed as evidence of the sin and wickedness of the city.

In like manner, Chapter 4 shows the text's relationship with other biblical and non-biblical literature. It generally recognises that there is a wide range of correspondence and complex interactions that exists between the texts. The discussion serves as a bridge to a diachronic approach to the text. The Chapter studies the interaction of the language in the text with 'outside' material and physical 'objects', historical events, texts, customs values, roles institutions, and systems. The study shows that Genesis 18–19 has weaved in so many cultures and traditions that are vital in understanding the meaning of the passage. The analysis identifies hospitality as a golden thread that has bound the narrative. Several parallels, allusions and references were identified as important linkages in the narrative coordination. These links help the readers to see and appreciate the intricate web of ideas and thoughts that have been coordinated as a single document. A plethora of possibilities that has the potential to form the narrative was identified such as sin and judgement, worship, visit of deity with resultant effect of blessing or curse, social justice, righteousness, unjust punishment, covenant faithfulness. The profusion of these possibilities must have had transformative power on the community receiving the stories. This therefore, cautions against a naïve reading of the text.



The intertextual reading of the text provides for many possibilities of conceiving the parallel stories. It also give clues for understanding the possible history of the time of composition because of disparate materials, as a lot more than the preservation of the memories of older traditions happens in the process of the compilation into a coherent whole. The passage's relationship with other texts is seen as the writer's effort to communicate to his context. He employed those traditions, altering some aspects to suit his context.

Chapter 5 discusses the social and cultural texture which is concerned with the social and cultural location of the language and the world that is evoked in the text. The chapter begins with an overview of the social history of Israel. An understanding of the social history provides the background for understanding the different socio-literary streams within the passage. The study of the social history of Israel reveals five different stages of Israel's development. The family or clan, the village and small town, tribal alliance, the monarchy and the confessional and parochial community (Gerstenberger, 2002). These different stages of development indicate how the social structure of Israel's community changed from time to time. However, the study shows that the history and life of the community of Israel are conceived in the terms *בית-אב* and *משפחה* (cf. Bendor, 1996: 46). The confessional and parochial period, which marks the last epoch of biblical ancient Israel, is seen as the formative period of Israel's history and literary formation. The mission of national reconstruction of *Yehud* by the returnees which characterises the time of the text shows various levels of socio-historical existence with its adverse effect on the familial paradigm. The query and attack against Lot is used to show the historical reality of the time of the text. And it is used to show how the important component of the kinship unit is obstructed.

Different modes of socio-historic existence describe the complex nature of the postexilic *Yehud*. It resulted in conflicts of different nature and gravity. It also brought about formulations of ideologies and 'theologies' from different groups to legitimise claims to power and properties. The major agenda at this period was the centralisation of the social, religious, political and economic structures under the leadership of a few local authorities that were appointed by the Persian imperial authorities.

Possible pre-literary states of the narrative were analysed, because it is assumed that most compositions of Old Testament narratives, particularly Genesis, took place at the pre-literary

stage (Knight, 2006: 65). As such the discourse is significant in laying the foundation of the literary development of the Old Testament. The analyses through the intertextuality suggest possible independent stages of the development of the passage. The discourse considers the pre-literary stage of family stories, divine conversation, and the destruction of cities. The discourse unveils the possible different socio-literary streams within the passage, hence suggesting the realities of the text's history. It opens the broad spectrum of dating the texts and provides clues to identifying possible ideologies of the traditions.

Social and cultural texture emerges in 'specific social topic', 'common social and cultural topics', and 'final cultural categories'. The analysis of the 'specific social topics' helps in the reconstruction of the world of the narrator and the dynamics of relationships. The common social and cultural topics deals with the perceptions of the reader about the possible context and the world which the listeners or recipient lived in. And final cultural category reveals the priorities in the topics of the discourse.

The discourse of the social and cultural texture of Genesis 18–19 employs hospitality as the interpretive background for the symbolic actions therein to understand the life of the Israelite community at the time of writing. By symbolic action, certain inferences were drawn from the parallel strands of the hospitality stories in the passage.

From the 'specific social topic', the hospitality stories show how Israel's religion responded to its world. The analysis of the passage revealed the stories as 'utopian social response' to the justice system: seeking to reconstruct the entire social world of the narrator through divinely given principles. It also understood the stories as a revolutionist social response to the justice system and social order: saving the corrupt world of the narrator through destruction of the natural world by divine power. And lastly, as an introversionist social response: through isolation of individuals from the corrupt world.

Some social and cultural values emanate from the world in and of the text which highlights some cultural codes: honour, guilt, and right culture; dyadic and individualist personalities; challenge-response; an agriculturally based industrial, and technological economic exchange system; peasants, labourers, craftspeople, and entrepreneurs; limited, insufficient, and overabundant goods; purity codes. All these give a insight to the social cultural system of

exchange and benefit. This aids in understanding the doublet as a symbolic cultural exchange system. The study of a specific social topic, common social and cultural topic identified different strands of voices. These multiple voices are what ‘final cultural category’ analysed as culture rhetoric. From the topics identified, the significance of hospitality is seen as the dominant culture rhetoric. The story of Abraham’s hospitality subsequently became the subculture rhetoric which was used as a critique of contraculture rhetoric, i.e. the abnormal representation of the tradition of hospitality by the men of Sodom and by Lot in the way he treated his daughters.

These analyses then lead to the question of the intention of the redactor in employing these rhetorical strategies. Of course, the question was begging for the identity of the writer and the recipient. To this the research analyses two possible periods that such rhetoric presumably employed. Using different theories and models, the postexilic Persian period was identified as having the highest possible probability as a time of formulation. This conclusion prompted the question of ideologies and theologies of the time. The fact that the text in its final form was considered as a response to the crises of the period poses the question, what were the ideological and theological presuppositions which the text presumably addresses? This became the task of Chapter 6.

Chapter 6 is an ideological theological texture of Genesis 18 and 19. Under the premise that the production and interpretation of the text is not done in a vacuum, it reflects the concrete and dynamic circumstances of the audience. The Chapter conducts a close reading of the passage to unearth the possible context and dynamics of the power relations in the time of writing. After defining ideology and theology, different levels of power relation are analysed, leading to clues of possible biased interpretations of Israel’s history by different groups with differing worldviews. The ideological trajectories identified at that period include: royal ideology, economic and political ideology, nationalistic ideology and cultic or religious ideology. These served as lenses through which the close reading of the text was conducted to identify the ideological layers within. Two main ideological layers was identified and discussed: covenant theology and monotheistic worship of Yahweh.

The ideological-theological texture, engendered an ironic reading of the text, an approach which points to the complex nature of the text which refers to incongruences, doublets, parallels

and similarities that are all contained in a narrative. The ironic reading of the text aids in unlocking the seemingly incongruent stories of hospitality, thereby providing a robust understanding of the dynamics of social relations. In the next section, I will highlight some of the theological-ethical reflections from the passage in the light of my research questions and validity of my hypotheses.

### **7.3. Concluding reflections and contributions of the research**

In the introductory chapter, I have stated that the main concern of the study is “the theological-ethical understanding of hospitality in the Old Testament, how it is expressed in the narrative of Genesis 18–19”. Three research questions and corresponding working hypotheses were formulated to guide the investigation. The first question was, what concepts of hospitality can be found in the Old Testament? Responding to this question, the research postulates that a survey of scholarly research will provide a nuanced understanding of hospitality that may help in understanding the concept in the Old Testament. Through the survey, this research realises that hospitality is a significant constituent of social life in the ancient world of Israel. It also realises that hospitality is not just a one-way act of providing a meal for a stranger as in the case of a modern day tourist (Janzen, 1994: 43). It is a complex mutual system of a relationship between the host and the ‘other’. The survey proposes a working definition to guide the investigation of the Old Testament concept and practice.

Second, having surveyed the various perspectives as a point of departure for an understanding of the Old Testament concept of hospitality, I also ask an important question: how significant are the concepts and practices of hospitality found in the Old Testament? The socio-rhetorical analysis of Genesis 18–19 reveals that hospitality is a familial ethical point of orientation which provides juridical and social obligation for kinship or tribal groups to provide care and protection for the total ‘other’. Janzen (1994: 43) claims, “Hospitality is the extension of life to those for whose lives one is not held responsible through kinship obligations.” The mandate is toward the “total other” because kinship or tribal groups are a protective organisation to those within the horde. Janzen (1994: 43, 44) further explains that “the Old Testament’s familial ideal provides a counterweight to the tendency of close-knit kinship groups to accent responsibilities toward members of one’s own group and reject the claims and needs of outsiders [...] Hospitality, however transcends the bounds of kinship group.”

Hospitality, as presented in this passage, shows that there is a mutual benefit. In what may be described as the principle of “measure for measure” in intertextual analysis in Chapter 4, the confirmation of the promise of the birth of a son, the salvation of Lot and the punishment of Sodom were all made to look like a reward of hospitality. Nonetheless, my analysis of the passage shows that Yahweh’s promise of a son to Abraham and Sarah was a pure act of grace, likewise Lot’s salvation from the catastrophe that wiped Sodom was pure mercy. However, based on Yahweh’s remark in Genesis 18:19 —Yahweh’s fulfilment of promise was contingent on Abraham’s fulfilment of Yahweh’s covenant responsibility. This therefore makes Yahweh’s blessings and humans’ obedience to covenant stipulations as mutually set. By extension, hospitality and reciprocity are also mutually set. Kearney (2015: 176) concurs that critical conversation in the hospitality discourse is mutually enhancing. The significance of the practice is revealed in how the catastrophic destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah is connected to the practice. In what seems to be reward for hospitality, Abraham and Sarah received an assurance of fulfilment to the promise of the birth of a son. Abraham’s hospitality granted him access to Yahweh’s divine council where he was told of the divine intension to destroy the city of Sodom. In contrast, denial of hospitality was used to confirm the heavy and grievous wickedness of Sodom that made it ripe for destruction.

The third question posed was, what are possible theological–ethical implications to be gleaned in the passage? On this question, the research hypothesises that certain theological–ethical ideals may be gleaned from these Old Testament narratives. It also anticipates that these ideals may serve as theological underpinnings for a renewed and revisioned attempt to incorporate the fundamental understanding of the concept and practice of hospitality into contemporary ethical reflections, without necessarily generalising meaning and drawing superficial parallels between ancient and contemporary contexts and practice. The socio-rhetorical analysis of the passage investigates different textures of the text. The research realises that the passage is contained within the broader literary context of Abrahamic narrative. This narrative cycle is one in which the covenant promise is an intrinsic and integral part. It understands Israel’s traditional biblical history as a theological history of covenant relationship with Yahweh. In other words, the stories in the narrative circle are part of the old traditions that shaped all of Israel’s dimensions of their social life. Covenant relationships, on the other hand, are intricately woven around kinship language. Kinship ideals and practices shape the understanding of the

covenant relationship in the Old Testament. Hospitality then as the interpretive context of the text is rooted within Israel's kinship experience and theology.

Locating the text in the postexilic templeless period, the study understands the double stories of hospitality as an ironic ploy that challenges, first, the utopian Deuteronomic theology which emphasises monotheistic worship of Yahweh and cultic centralisation. Cultic centralisation is non-realistic because the cultic centre (the temple) was non-existent at the time of text formulation. Secondly, the postexilic redactor equally critiqued certain kinship ideals which have survived until the time of the formulation of the text.

Through the story of Lot, the wisdom scribal editor shows certain tensions about individual responsibility that are emphasised in the kinship unit and in the corporate responsibility which is a characteristic of the national or state community. From the point of view of the narrated history, the writer uses Lot's story to show how his practice of hospitality as the head of the family goes against the family shalom. Also, the inversion of the hospitality by the men of the city demonstrates the breaking of the law of hospitality. At the time of the formulation of the text, Lot's story demonstrates the chaotic situation which lacks a public central authority with the power to impose sanctions. Consequently, there was no accountability in both the kinship and on the national level. The writer uses Abraham's story as an ideal point of orientation to kinship practices and even on national level in a context where the temple does not exist.

The research argues that Old Testament theology, as described by Brueggemann (1997: 80), "is an attempt to engage this life-in-rhetoric, which has no logical beginning or end and no rational shape judged by more discursive rhetorics". By "life-in-rhetoric" Brueggemann is describing the imbedded nature of the biblical text with the "realm of discourse, dialogue and imagination that provides a world to live" (Brueggemann, 1997:78). The formation of the biblical text, as we have seen was a process of conversations that stretched over generations through intertextuality<sup>315</sup> and readers engaged in this conversation as ongoing and urgent as contemporary. Biblical theology is a process of understanding the lived reality in the biblical text. It is not rigid to the "grammar, dialect, or cadence as though it remains completely

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<sup>315</sup> "Intertextuality is a process of conversation by which the entire past and memory of the textual community is kept available and present in concrete and detailed ways" (Brueggemann, 1997: 79).

unchanging” (Brueggemann, 1997:79). Engaging with “life-in-rhetoric” as the goal of biblical theology is an ongoing conversation with the lived life of the texted community that lived through time by its intentional, long-established utterance. “We who would belatedly enter into that discourse must marvel at the glad saturation in the text undertaken by its members, and must see to our own attentiveness to that same saturation” (Brueggemann, 1997:80). The ideological and theological discourse identifies the distinctive characteristic of Old Testament theology as an open-ended dialectic which must be maintained in all fruitful biblical theology. Brueggemann (1997:80, 83) articulates this very well when he says, “theological interpretation is a modest enterprise that always, inevitably, must leave much unsaid and perhaps even unnoticed... *the Old Testament in its theological articulation is characteristically dialectical and dialogical, and not transcendentalist*” (italics is from the source).

The research generated an ironic reading of the text as a way of engaging with the writer’s rhetorical portrayal of life in Israel. The socio-rhetorical reading of the text juxtaposes these seemingly incongruent stories of hospitality on the premise that such inconsistencies were not coincidental. Rather, the complex text invites the reader to avoid a naïve reading of the biblical text so that it tries to overcome these incongruences. The ironic reading helps us to realise the intricate relationship between hospitality and kinship. This helped the researcher to understand and reflect on the tension between individual and collective responsibility. The following summary of the theological-ethical understanding of the narrative is gleaned through the ironic reading:

- The narrative reveals that hospitality to the stranger is worship. In the context of divine visitation, or theophany, the study realises that God comes as a stranger. Therefore, welcoming the stranger and providing care and protection become appropriate worship. As worship, it implies that hospitality does not only relate to social justice. It is also theological in the sense that it is a fulfilment of Yahweh’s covenantal relationship (Gen. 18:19). In other words ethics is intrinsically theological.
- The stories also show that hospitality is a model of the theology and ethics of responsibility. Within the programmatic covenant context, the study shows how Abraham’s hospitality models the covenant response of righteousness and justice which was Yahweh’s demand for Abraham for maintaining the special covenantal relationship with Yahweh. The ironic

reading reveals a bilateral kind of relationship in both a human-human and divine-human relationship.

- Hospitality as portrayed in the passage is the familial ethical frame of reference that portrays ancient Israel's societal norms and ethical obligation. It explicates Israel's covenant response of obedience to the way of Yahweh—"to do righteousness and justice".
- Israel's understanding of self as a special people of God, was redefined in terms of Yahweh's revelatory mission as not an exclusive privilege. In tracing their genealogy to Abraham, emphasis is placed on Abraham's sphere of involvement that extends to the whole of humanity. Therefore, Abraham's offspring are to understand their identity in connection to the ancestor's divine mandate—a witness to all nations. Also, adopting the kinship terminology to describe human relations is a subtle polemic towards inclusivity of Yahweh's universal programme to all human kind.
- The ironic reading of the text reveals the complex nature of human relationships. As such, a hermeneutic of hospitality is called upon as it provides a bridge between identity and 'otherness'. For example, it helps in the reconceptualisation of kinship to broadly include near relatives, a tribe's member, compatriot, friend and even a 'total other'. Reconstituting kinship this way implicates the understanding of Yahweh's covenant from a universalistic frame, thus, challenging Israel's understanding of its covenant relationship to Yahweh and derivatively its obligation to "all the nations of the earth". The ironic reading shows how hermeneutic of hospitality will enhance mutual relationship.

The socio-rhetorical interpretation of Genesis 18 and 19 reveals that hospitality has potentials that a contemporary reader may appeal to in contemporary ethical discourse. For example, biblical theology as an ongoing conversation opens great potential for participation. It invites the Tangale community, from which the researcher comes, to participate in a critical and responsible manner such that the whole of reality of this rhetorical activity is received and appropriated differently. The stories of hospitality provide points of reference and orientation for theology and ethics—righteousness and justice (*cf.* Birch, 1991:55–65; Janzen, 1994:56; Cosgrove, 2002:154ff). A socio-rhetorical reading of the stories of Genesis 18 and 19 reveals the following:



1. From the rhetorical point of view, hospitality is nuanced in two theological-ethical appropriations. The two stories of hospitality are understood thus: Lot's story in Genesis 19 presents the common beliefs and practices of the postexilic *Yehud*. Most of the beliefs and practices were reminiscent of the Deuteronomic programme of cultic and juridical centralisation, with an emphasis on corporate responsibility. However, the time of the composition of the text was a templeless period. It was not possible to conduct the religious rituals associated with the temple. As such, the sage redactor appealed to the priestly universalistic covenant perspective by incorporating the Abrahamic story, which serves as a model. Thus, the Abrahamic story is understood as the critique of the common beliefs and practices of its period. It causes the reader to rethink those beliefs and practices which were not realistic at the time, suggesting that Abraham's example can be a wise alternative. And off course models did not suggest replacement.

The stories show that both individual and corporate responsibilities are mutuality set. Although there were several stages of social structural changes in Israel's historical development, those changes did not suggest complete replacement of the previous structural values. But the values were wisely readjusted to suit the new developments of the time. Considering this statement, the reinterpretation of the hospitality stories in the passage through irony suggest that the pursuit of covenantal relationship and social justice requires hermeneutic mediations between self and 'otherness'. The hermeneutic mediation promotes critical conversation that is mutually enhancing. The engendered ironic criticism of the passage does not allow for superficial theological-ethical recipes, it argues rather for wise discernment.

2. From the social dimension, and beyond what the research initially anticipated, the research realises that kinship performs a heuristic function in the study of the Old Testament. Understanding kinship in the Old Testament enhances the reader's perception of the dynamic of relations. This further helps the reader to understand and/or decode the writer's possible intension. In this case, the kinship motif in the hospitality stories shows the need for the ethics of solidarity. The metaphorical and general understanding of the kinship motif in the stories provide a new lens to view every human being as brother and sisters. All are to be united as kinsfolks for the course of righteousness and social justice.

3. It did not fall into the scope of this research to draw in-depth implications and applications of the ethical paradigm in the Tangale context of the researcher. Nevertheless, the realisation of the possibility of incorporating this ethical paradigm demonstrates how African readers will avoid the danger of a superficial comparison of the Old Testament to contemporary African life. Socio-rhetorical approach shows how the African reader will engage in critical study to avoid uncritical application of the stories as an authoritative source and as a guide for daily living (Birch, 1991: 52f; Jenkins, 2006: 69f).

#### **7.4. The Contribution of the research in Old Testament studies**

This research has added to the statistic of scholarly research that interprets the Old Testament text from a multidimensional approach that draws from diverse critical approaches by allowing multifaceted witnesses from the Old Testament to be heard. The approach is a critical exegetical process which allows the exegete to make exegetical decisions in a more responsible way. The research contributes to the field of Old Testament studies by critically engaging with the theological ethical understanding of hospitality. Specifically, approaching the two chapters, Genesis 18–19, through a hospitality lens is a major contribution in the history of its interpretation. Most of the scholarly investigations on the passage are either limited in the scope of their pericope or a different lens is used.<sup>316</sup> The tradition of socio-rhetoric has helped this research to critically engage with the text, thereby unlocking the potential towards the social dimensions of human life.

The passage is one of the texts in the Old Testament that has attracted many debates about its meaning. There is still a lack of consensus among scholars about its interpretation. It has been interpreted variously by different modes of intellectual discourse. This dissertation adds to these myriad of approaches. It also shows a great potential for a better understanding, because of the holistic and multidimensional treatment of the passage as a literary unity.

Irony is one of the neglected aspects of the rhetorical approach to Old Testament studies. The dissertation dialogued with Good (1981) and Sharp (2009), who dealt extensively on irony in the Old Testament. Good provided the starting point for engaging with irony by stating the

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<sup>316</sup> Letellier, R.I. 1995, *Day in Mamre, Night in Sodom: Abraham and Lot in Genesis 18 and 19*, Leiden: E J Brill.

underlying issue in biblical irony. He states that “irony clarifies with extreme sharpness the incongruities in matters of the moment”. He identifies the theological significance of explicit or implicit criticism contained in biblical irony. Good sees these theological criticisms as grounded in the biblical writer’s stance in truth. To him, irony in the Old Testament is part of the author’s rhetorical strategy to communicate to his audience, the nature of their covenant relationship with Yahweh (Good, 1981:241-248).

Sharp went beyond Good to consider the way in which irony interacts with some contemporary literary theories, her concern being the possibilities of misunderstanding that are presented by the presence of irony. She remarks that “[n]egotiation of meaning and authority in Scripture are rendered almost indefinitely complicated by the presence of irony. Irony complicates narratological constructions of the relationship between God and Israel and the representation of outsiders as foils and mediators for that relationship” (Sharp, 2009:8). She addresses two areas, namely rhetoric and theological hermeneutics, which she thinks have significance in the act of reading textual irony. She battles with the questions of how an “unspoken ironic word manages deftly to undercut its stated position and opens up possibilities for new understanding that enjoys relatively greater freedom from the threat of critique” (Sharp, 2009:9). On the theological hermeneutical aspect, Sharp engages on the discourse on the authorial intention and reader’s response theory.

This dissertation engages Sharp’s insights on the rhetorical and theological hermeneutic to investigate how Old Testament interpretation can benefit from interpretive techniques in rhetorical analysis. Employing irony as a literary technique to the study of Genesis 18 and 19 shows discrepancies or incongruities in a literary piece. As a hermeneutical key, irony helped to unlock the meaning of this complex text thereby serving as a major contribution to the study of the text, and by and large, to Old Testament studies. In the example of Lot’s hospitality, the writer employed what I regard as caricature of the practice of hospitality in order to show the polemic intent of irony against the disrupted familial ethical obligation.

Again, having said that irony is a dialectic in between text (6.5), the study has shown great contrasts between the time of the text and the time in the text. In Chapter 4, I studied the parallel between the selected texts and Judges 19. There I noted the similarities between the history in the two parallel texts in terms of its setting. These similarities were taken as an ironic strategy

to critique the historical reality of postexilic Israel. For example, at the time of the text, I have shown that most of the beliefs and practices were reminiscent of the Deuteronomic programme of cultic and juridical centralisation with emphasis on corporate responsibility. The writer therefore employs Lot's story ironically to critique the chaotic historical reality of the time.

The theological ethical understanding of hospitality in this passage serves as a contribution to Old Testament studies, especially to Old Testament ethics. In the beginning, I noted Hobbs' (2001) critique of Janzen (1994) for equating the Old Testament concept of hospitality as a "parallel for modern ethical concern" with problems related to refugees and immigrants, and welfare in general. Hobbs (2001) thinks such an approach is a teleological fallacy. However, the socio-rhetorical approach to the theological-ethical understanding has revealed hospitality as a significant constituent of social life. Although there is what appears to be a great disparity in Lot's hospitality, such a disparity should not serve as the basis to discard the practice. The ironic reading that is generated, provides a nuanced understanding as it looks at such disparities as polemic against extreme practice. Thus, this research envisages the possibility to incorporate the fundamental understanding of the practice of hospitality as an ongoing resource for reflection and discernment for modern ethical polemic. However, an uncritical incorporation of such an ancient practice is probably a potential recipe for disaster, because we cannot draw a direct parallel link between modern ethical concerns such as refugee movements, immigration and general welfare with the ancient practice. Therefore, this dissertation adds further to Janzen's proposal to say that an ethics of everyday existence in this world requires hermeneutic mediations. It calls for discernment and wisdom in the application of the principles and practices of hospitality without disrupting others' shalom.

## **7.5. Suggestions for further research**

This study has not exhausted all the theological-ethical potentials contained in this passage. Just as Brueggemann (1997:80) rightly says, "theological interpretation is a modest enterprise that always, inevitably, must leave much unsaid and perhaps even unnoticed". The theological-ethical understanding of hospitality shows great potential for a critical conversation that is mutually enriching, thereby providing tools which might be used in addressing contemporary ethical challenges.

1. The research identified hospitality as ethical category that deals with issues reminiscent of the contemporary socio-cultural issues such as laws governing migration, refugee and asylum. The research recommends that future studies focus in detail on the significance of hospitality on these global phenomena in terms of the interpreter's socio-cultural location.
2. It was hoped that the theological–ethical understanding of the concept and practice of hospitality governed by faith tradition will help rekindle a culture of welcome of the ‘other’ in the Tangale context of the researcher thereby restoring dignity and ultimately peaceful coexistence in a world of diversity. However, the study only scratched the surface of the cultural traditional and religious understanding of hospitality in the Tangale culture. It notes that the Tangale people are currently experiencing issues of social insecurity and ethnic conflict due to boundary problems and other social issues. I therefore recommend that an in-depth study of the problem be done in relation to the potentials of hospitality towards fostering an enduring a peaceful coexistence.
3. The research identified that hospitality is entrenched in many passages of the Bible and recommends that an investigation of hospitality in the Old Testament will enrich both scholarly and lay reading of the Old Testament.
4. The study also anticipates that the reference or allusion to covenant theology (with its seemingly contradictory dimensions of conditionality and unconditionality that underlie individual and collective responsibility) in the passage opens up another possibility of understanding an inscrutable mystery of an intimate, intense relationship that seemingly defies all efforts to dissect.

Finally, this dissertation has shown that *Hospitality is a complex and ongoing dialectic of a social relationship between host and stranger—the ‘other’, which involves an ethical obligation of providing care while recognising diversity and not at expense of one’s own private space, but relating in such a way that one learns positively the contrasting world of the ‘other’.* Hospitality emphasises dialoguing with the ‘other’ more than kinsfolk. Relating hospitality and kinship has shown that hospitality has great potential to bring about a peaceful coexistence in a world of diversity. In terms of ethics of responsibility, the theological-ethical

understanding of the concept and practice of hospitality collapses the dichotomy between individual and collective responsibility and accountability. It shows that hospitality is both an individual and collective responsibility. Kinship provides an alternative to the almost Deuteronomistic utopian ideals in which the temple does not exist. Kinship ideals provide the language of expression of hospitality that emphasises care, love and protection of the OTHER.

## Addenda

### Addendum 'A'

#### *Summary of repetition and progression of people in the narrative<sup>317</sup>*

1.	Yahweh	יהוה = 17x אלהים (God) =2x	אדני (Lord) <sup>318</sup> =5x	אנשים (men) =3x	27x
2.	Messengers	מלכים =2x	אדני =1x	אנשים (men) =8x	11x
3.	Abraham	אברהם =15x	אדני (lord) =1x עבד (servant)=2x		18x
4.	Sarah	שרה =10x		אשה (wife)= 2x	12x
5.	Lot	לוט = 15x	עבד = 2x גר (alien) =1x אב (father)= 8x	איש (man) = 1x	27x
6.	Wife of Lot			אשה (wife)= 3x	3x
7.	Daughters of Lot			בנת (daughter) = 8x בכירה (first born)= 4x צכירה (younger) = 3x	15x
8.	Men of Sodom			אנשים (men) = 3x אחי (brothers)= 1x	4x
9.	Lot's Sons-in-law	חתן = 3x			3x
10.	Abraham and Sarah's Offspring	בן (a son) = 2x בנו (sons <sup>319</sup> ) = 1x			3x

<sup>317</sup> For lack of space we did not include pronouns for each of the character in the narrative. However, a few independent personal pronouns are identified, refer to Addendum "A" for details of the repetition and progression of the people in the narrative.

<sup>318</sup> Note that אדני is singular in the Hebrew text, see text critical note of verse 3 in (3.3).

<sup>319</sup> Children, or descendants of generation

*Summary repetition and progression of locations, time, food and other abstract ideas*

<b>Addendum 'B'</b>					
1	Locative	<p>מגורא = 1x (trees of Mamre)                      גומורא/גמורא = 9x (Sodom &amp; Gomorrah)                      צוער = 4x ('Zoar insignificant')</p>	<p>תחת העץ = 2x (under a tree)                      פתח־דואהל = 5x (door of a tent)                      בישע־סדום = 1x (gate of Sodom)                      פתח־דבית = 2x (door of the house)                      אל־בית = 4x (in the house)                      במערה = 1x (In a cave)</p>	<p>ארץ = 8x (Earth, ground, land)                      עיר = 5x (city)</p>	<p>מקום = 7x (Place)                      הככר = 4x (Planes)</p>
2	time	<p>יום = 1x (heat of the day)                      בערב = 1x (in the evening)                      לילה = 4x (Night)                      השמש יצא = 1x (sun rise)                      בקר = 1x (morning)                      מהרת = 1x (next day)</p>	<p>עת היום = 2x (this time next year)                      למועד = 1x (appointed time)</p>	<p>עד־היום = 2x (Until this day)</p>	
5	food	<p>שולש טאים קמח סלק = 1x (3 Seahs of fine flour)                      בור־בקר = 2x (Young bull)                      הבקר = 1x (herd of cattle)</p>	<p>מעט־מים = 1x (A little water)</p>	<p>לחם־פר־לחם = 1x (little bread)                      עגה = 1x (bread cake)                      מצה = 1x (unleavened bread)</p>	<p>חמאה = 1x (curd)                      חלב = 1x (milk)                      משתה = 1x (feast)                      יין = 4x (wine)</p>
4	Abstract ideas	<p>דרך = 1x (road) and 2x (manner)</p>	<p>משפט = 2x (Justice)                      צדקה = 1x (righteousness)                      חמלה = 1x (mercy/forgiveness)</p>	<p>תקע = 1x (cry for help)                      צעקה = 2x (cry of distress)</p>	<p>חטאת = 1x (sin)</p>
5	Body parts	<p>עין = 1x (eyes)                      בעי = 4x (as one sees fit)</p>	<p>רגל = 2x (feet)</p>	<p>פנה = 8x (surface, presence of)</p>	



*Summary repetition and progression of verbs*

Verb of seeing	Verb of Dwelling	Verb of Being	Verb of Saying	Verb of Doing	Verb of Movement	Verb of Perception
<b>ראה</b> = 4x (to see)	<b>ישב</b> =7x (sitting, inhabit,	<b>היה</b> =14x (be, become, let live)	<b>אמר</b> = 40x (say, said)	<b>נשא</b> =4x (to lift, forgive) <b>רחץ</b> =2x (to wash) <b>שער</b> = 1x (to rest)	<b>רוץ</b> =2x (run) <b>עבר</b> =3x (cross over, move on)	<b>ידע</b> = 6x (to know)
<b>שקף</b> =2x (look down)	live, dwell, stay)	<b>ילד</b> = 3x (bear a child)	<b>ידבר</b> =10x (say, promise, speak)	<b>נוח</b> = 2x (to kill) <b>אכל</b> = 2x (to eat) <b>סור</b> = 2x (to turn aside) <b>לין</b> =2x (to lodge)	<b>מהר</b> =4x (swift, quick) <b>עמד</b> =4x (stand before, take a stand)	<b>שפט</b> =3x (to judge)
<b>נבט</b> =2x (look at)		<b>זקן</b> =2x (grow old)	<b>צחק</b> =5x (to laugh)	<b>נמצא</b> =11x (to find, to stay) <b>לקח</b> = 6x (to take, to bring) <b>עשה</b> =16x (to make, to do) <b>שלח</b> = 4x (to send) <b>ספה</b> = 4x (to sweep away) <b>שחית</b> = 8x (to destroy)	<b>בוא</b> = 4x ( return) <b>בוא</b> = 14x (come, go) <b>חזרה</b> =2x ( bow down) <b>הלך</b> = 5x ( go) <b>קומ</b> = 7x (stand, get up, arise)	
		<b>גדל</b> = 2x (to become great)	<b>קרא</b> = 6x (to meet, to call)	<b>יבא</b> =9x (to bring, to go out) <b>רעע</b> = 2x (to do evil) <b>סגר</b> = 2x (to close) <b>הפכ</b> = 3x (overthrow ) <b>שקף</b> =4x (to drink)	<b>שכח</b> = 2x ( arise early in the morning) <b>נגש</b> = 3x ( come near) <b>שכב</b> =7x (lie down) <b>עלה</b> =3x (go up) <b>מלט</b> = 5x (flee)	
		<b>יכל</b> = 2x (to be able)	<b>פער</b> =2x (to urge)			

**Addendum 'C'**

**Addendum 'D'*****Summary of progression of interjections, particles and other communicative clues in Genesis 18 & 19***

Interjections	<b>הנה</b> = 12x (Behold!)	<b>נא</b> =17x (please, now)	<b>אף</b> =3x (indeed, also)	<b>הֲלִיף</b> = 2x (far be it from)
Adjectives	<b>טוב</b> = 2x (good)	<b>זקן</b> = 2x (old)	<b>צדיק</b> = 7x (righteous)	<b>רשע</b> = 3x (evil, bad)
Adverbs	<b>אמנם</b> = 1x (truth)	<b>שם</b> =13x (there)	<b>אולי</b> = 6x (perhaps)	<b>גם</b> = 4x

## Addendum 'E'

Table 1: Verbal echoes between Genesis 18 - 19 and Judges. 19 - 21<sup>320</sup>

Genesis 18 – 19	Judges 19 - 21
“When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them ...” (18: 2)	And when the girl’s father saw him, he came with joy to meet him (19:3)
“And he said, ‘My lord, if I have found favor in your eyes do not pass by your servant...’” (18: 3)	His father-in-law, the young woman’s father, urged him to stay with him three days (19: 4)
“And let me bring a piece of bread, then refresh yourselves. Afterward you can pass on...” (18: 5).	Refresh yourself with a bit of food, and afterward you may go. (19: 5)
“Then he took curds and milk, and the calf which he prepared, and set <i>it</i> before them...and they ate...” (18: 8)	“...and they ate and drank...” (19: 4)
“Then the men set out from there...” (18: 16)	“And the man got up to go...” (19: 9)
“And the men turned from there and went” (18: 22)	“So they crossed over and went their way...” (19: 14)
“And the two angels came to Sodom in the evening ...” (19: 1)	“...and the sun went down on them beside Gibeah...” (19: 14)
Then Lot saw <i>them</i> and stood up to meet them (19: 1)	And the old man raised his eyes and saw the traveller in the open square of the city, (19: 17)
“...please turn aside into the house of your servant and spend the night and wash your feet” (19: 2)	“And they turned aside there to enter <i>and</i> to spend the night at Gibeah” (19:14)
“And they said, ‘No, but we will spend the night in the square...’” (19: 2)	“And they went and sat in the open square of the city, but no one <i>took them in to spend the night</i> ” (19: 14)
“Before they laid down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people <i>to the last man</i> , surrounded the house. And they called to Lot and said to him, ‘Where <i>are</i> the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we may know them’” (19: 4 - 5)	While <i>they were enjoying themselves</i> , behold, the men of the city, <i>the perverse lot</i> , surrounded the house, pounding on the door. And they said to the old man, the owner of the house, “Bring out the man who came to your house so that we may [know him] <sup>321</sup> ” (19: 5)
“But Lot went out to them at the entrance, and he shut the door behind him. And he said, “No, my brothers, please do not do <i>such a wrong thing</i> . Behold, I have two daughters who have not known a man. Please, let me bring them out to you; then do to them as <i>it seems good</i> in your eyes. Only to these men do not do <i>this thing</i> , since they came under <i>my roof</i> for protection.” (19: 6)	“So the man, the owner of the house, went out to them and said to them, ‘No, my brothers, do not act wickedly; since this man has come into my house, do not do this disgraceful thing. Here is my virgin daughter and his concubine. Please, let me bring them out; do violence to them, and do to them <i>whatever you please</i> . Do not do this disgraceful thing to this man” (19: 23 -24)
“ ‘This fellow came to dwell as a foreigner and he acts as a judge’” (19:9)	“...man <i>was</i> from the hill country of Ephraim, and he <i>was dwelling</i> as a foreigner...” (19:16)

<sup>320</sup> Texts are lifted from the Lexham English Bible, 2012. The Lexham English Bible contains a translation of the original languages into smooth, readable English. It also contains copious footnotes which address translation issues, ...and various textual – critical issues. This translation indicates also the use of idioms in the Greek and Hebrew texts. In cases where literal rendering of Greek or Hebrew would prevent a smooth English translation, footnotes indicate the literal translation, accompanied by explanatory note as necessary Harris, et al (2012)

<sup>321</sup> LEB uses the idiomatic meaning of the Hebrew word (שָׂרֵף) instead of the literal (see 3.4, footnote on 18:19; 19: 5). I prefer the literal meaning for the sake of comparison, we will make remark in text on how far we can invoke the meaning of the parallel text in interpreting the periscope.

**Table 2. Structural similarity between Genesis 19 and Judges 19.**

Similarity	Genesis	Judges
First Arrival and reception	18: 1-16	19:1-14
Arrival and reception	19: 1 – 3	19:15 – 21
Attack, and repulse of attack	19: 4 – 11	19: 22 – 25
Attack, demand to hand over	19: 4 – 5	19: 22
Offer by householder	19: 6 – 8	19: 23 – 24
Rejection and threat	19: 9	19: 25a
Repulse of attack by guests	19: 10 – 11	19: 25b
Judgement on the cities	19: 12 – 29	19: 29 -30; chs. 20 - 21

*This table is adapted from Westermann (1985:297) with few additions by me.*

## Addendum 'F'

A Comparison of Lot and Rahab as Hosts,  
Based upon the 'Measure-for Measure Principle

Similarities	Genesis 19	Joshua 2(+6: 17, 22 – 23)
The two visitors are called "people"/ "men" and "angels"	"Where are <i>the men</i> [האנשים] who came to you tonight?" (v.5); "The two <i>angels</i> [שני המלאכים] arrived in Sodom in the evening" (v. 1).	" <i>Some men</i> [אנשים] have come here" (v. 2); "For she had hidden the messengers [את-המלאכים] that Joshua sent to spy out Jericho" (6: 25).
The visitors are on a mission; use of verb "to send," שלח	Visitors to Lot: "The LORD <i>has sent us</i> [וישלחנו] to destroy it" (v. 13).	Joshua the son of Nun secretly <i>sent</i> [וישלח] spies" (v. 1).
Time of the visitors' arrival in the city	The two angels arrived in Sodom <i>in the evening</i> [בערב] (v. 1).	The king of Jericho was told, "Some men have come here <i>tonight</i> " [הלילה] (v. 2).
Did the visitors come to the host's house or to him	" <i>entered his house</i> [ויבאו אל-ביתו]" (v. 3) Where are the men <i>who came to you</i> [אשר-בא אליך] tonight?" (v. 5).	" <i>and they came to the house</i> of a harlot [ויבאו בית-אשר זונה] named Rahab" (v. 1); "Produce the men <i>who came to you</i> [הבאים אליך]" (v. 3).
The men of the city demand that the guests be brought out of the host's house	"bring them out [הוציאם] to us" (v. 5).	"Bring forth [הוציא] the men who came to you" (v. 3).
Closing the door/gate	"shut <i>the door</i> behind him" (v. 6); "and shut the door" (v. 10).	"when <i>the gate</i> was about to be closed" (v. 5); "then <i>the gate</i> was shut behind them" (v. 7).
The host endangers himself in order to protect his guests	"Look I have two daughters who have not known man. Let me bring them out to you ... but do nothing to these men, since they have come under the shelter of my roof" (v. 8).	The liar: "The woman, however, had taken the two men..." (vv. 4-5).
Those who are saved escape/flee to a mountainside/the hills	"flee <i>to the hills</i> [ההרה], lest you be swept away" (v. 17); "I cannot flee <i>to the hills</i> [ההרה]" (v. 19).	Rahab to the king's ( <i>sic</i> ) men: "Make <i>for the hills</i> [ההרה] so that the pursuers may not come upon you" (v.16).

*Literary Parallel between the story of Lot and Rahab (Lifted from Peleg 2012: 136 -138). The similarities are charted by Zakovitch (Readings, 83).*

**Addendum ‘G’*****KRT B (ii) (CTA 15) Parallel to Genesis 18: 1 - 16***

Noble Kirta prepared a banquet in his house  
 [Thereafter] the assembly of the gods arrived. (11)

Mighty Ba‘lu spoke:

Must you not depart, Gracious One, kindly [god],  
     must you not (go to) bless noble [Kirta],  
     must you not pronounce a benediction upon the goodly [lad] of ‘Ilu?

[‘Ilu] took a cup [in] (his) hand,  
     a goblet in (his) right hand,

He did indeed bless [his servant,]

    ‘Ilu blessed [noble] Kirta,

    [pronounced a benediction] upon the goodly lad of ‘Ilu:

The woman you take, Kirta,

    the woman you take into your house,

    the girl who enters your courts,

She shall bear seven sons,

    even eight shall she produce for you.

She shall bear the lad Yassubu,

    who will drink the milk of ‘Aṭiratu,

shall suckle at the breast of Girl [‘Anatu]...

## Addendum 'H'

Detailed distribution information of the Hebrew Word/Terms :בית־אב; בית־אבות; משפחה; and שבט

Entry	בית אב	בית אבות	משפחה	שבט
Gloss	Family	Families	Clan	Tribe
Total	87	66	303	144
Torah	30	39	185	28
Former Prophets	37	1	64	77
Later Prophets	5	-	25	16
Poetry	1	-	5	7
Writings	14	27	24	16
Gen	18	-	12	2
Ex	-	2	7	3
Lev	1	-	6	-
Num	9	37	159	5
Deut	2	-	1	18
Josh	4	1	47	33
Judg	12	-	8	16
1Sam	14	-	7	8
2Sam	5	-	2	7
1Kings	2	-	-	11
2Kings	-	-	-	2
Isaiah	4	-	-	3
Jeremiah	1	-	9	-
Ezekiel	-	-	1	11
Hosea	-	-	-	1
Joel	-	-	-	-
Amos	-	-	2	-
Obadiah	-	-	-	-
Jonah	-	-	-	-
Micah	-	-	1	-
Nahum	-	-	1	-
Habakkuk	-	-	-	-
Zephaniah	-	-	-	-
Haggai	-	-	-	-
Zachariah	-	-	11	1
Malchi	-	-	-	-
Psalms	1	-	3	6
Job	-	-	2	1
Proverbs	-	-	-	-
Ruth	-	-	2	-
Songs	-	-	-	-
Qohelet	-	-	-	-
Lamentation	-	-	-	-
Esther	1	-	2	-
Daniel	-	-	-	-
Ezra	-	2	-	1
Nehemiah	3	2	1	-
1Chron	8	17	19	11
2Chron	2	6	-	4

Detailed distribution information of some Hebrew Words/Terms This table is partly adapted from Andersen & Forbes 1992. *The Vocabulary of the Old Testament*. 368 on משפחה, 429 on שבט. Logos Bible Software is used for the statistic on the Hebrew terms בית אב and בית אבות.

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