

**AN EXEGETICAL EXPLORATION OF THE
CONCEPT OF 'TRAINING' IN THE BOOK OF
PROVERBS**

BY

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Certification

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated first to the All-Powerful God, the LORD, God Almighty, whose
Mercy, Grace, Favor, and Protection has preserved me,

And

To my beloved wife, Success Eberechi Dickson, and our children: Bestman, Jessica, and
Samuel, for your unalloyed love, care, and understanding.

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Abstract

Training, a generic word for the process of perfecting a specific skill or purpose, encapsulates the rationale for parenting in the book of Proverbs 22:6. However, existing interpretations of the Hebrew *ḥānōk* (train) in the cited text limit it to the disposition, manner, morality and choice of vocation for adolescents while infant nurturing; a more foundational stage in parenting, has been ignored. Consequently, the study analysed Proverbs 22:6 to appropriately situate the necessity, meaning, timing, parental roles, and relevance of nurturing during infancy as a fundamental component of training as prescribed in the selected text.

The study adopted John Bowlby's Attachment theory which emphasises the impact of parent–infant attachment on the child's personality and character formation. The concise Proverbs 22:6 is selected because of the centrality of *ḥānōk* in the process of infant nurturing. The Historical-Grammatical Method which examines the socio-cultural and grammatical structure of a text was utilised in the exegesis of Proverbs 22:6 and its interpretation.

The use of *ḥānōk* in its imperative form in Proverbs 22:6 suggests the necessity of training in parenting which aims at averting the adverse effects of parental negligence and irresponsibility. Popular interpretations, which adopt Proverbs as a 'royal text', limit *ḥānōk* to 'initiating a cadet into the military', 'vocational training', 'preparation for royalty', 'developing a child's nature or disposition' or 'exposure to godly rules and principles for living', when linked with *lanna`ar* 'the child' and *darKô* 'his way'. However, from the covenantal viewpoint of which the family is central, *ḥānōk* is appropriately rendered as 'wholistic training' which encompasses nurturing, teaching, discipling, modeling, and disciplining the child in every aspect of life (morally, mentally, emotionally, and economically) from infancy until maturity. Etymologically, *ḥānōk* depicts a mother engaged in the nurturing of an infant by rubbing jam on his gums to stimulate desire. This has dual implications. First, it underscores the timing of 'training' (at infancy) because, when parents are addressed, the object of 'training' is predominantly the unborn or an infant, invalidating such renderings of *lanna`ar* as 'adolescent', 'squire', or 'cadet'. Second, it explicates mothers' weighty role in establishing attachment and character formation, fundamental in wholistic training. Nevertheless, wholistic training requires joint parental commitment to engage quality time, skill and means. The parallel between *lanna`ar* in Proverbs 22:6a and *zaqen* 'old age' in 22:6b accentuates the enduring nature of wholistic training because, when *zaqen* sets in, people retire from certain vocations or services, yet normal life continues. Therefore, although freedom of choice makes derailment probable, wholistic training, of which nurturing during infancy is foundational, can be remedial.

In Proverbs 22:6, *ḥānōk* is not limited to guiding adolescents, but emphasises wholistic training in all facets of life, from infancy to maturity for enduring outcomes. Therefore, nurturing during infancy is a fundamental element of training in the Book of Proverbs which should be entrenched in the proverbial parenting discourse.

Key words: Training, Infant nurturing, Parenting in biblical discourse, the book of Proverbs

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.7 Background to the Study

The need for a proper understanding of the Hebrew ׁנׁוֹכַח] (*hănōk*) ‘train’ in Proverbs 22:6 is heightened by its centrality in the proverbial parental discourse.¹ Parenting is a divine responsibility.² In ancient Israel, the Hebrews regarded the presence of a יָלֵד [; נֶאֱרָא (*na`ar*) ‘child’ in the family as mark of divine favour greatly desirable (Gen 15:2; 30:1; 1 Sam 1:11, 20; Ps 127:3; Lk 1:7, 28). According to Mike Riley,³ the Hebrews taught that nothing was more important than the rearing of a child in godliness and discipline (cf. Exod 6: 4 – 7; Prov. 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14). No reward in life was more satisfying than to have a “wise son or daughter”, and no sorrow was greater than to have reared a “foolish son or daughter” (Prov. 10:1; cf. 15:20). Therefore parents were enjoined to train their children in the ways of God (Deut. 6:4 – 9).

From the Deuteronomic period, religious training to the Jew became the synonym of education.⁴ Parenting was so much regarded that each Jewish house had on its door post the *Mesusah*⁵ which enhanced daily and momentary contact with the book of the Law.⁶ Alfred Edersheim affirms that as soon as the *na`ar* had any knowledge, the private and the united prayers of the family, and the domestic rites, whether of the weekly Sabbath or of the festive

¹T. Hilberrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 5 – 6.

²P.J. King and L.E. Stager. 2001. *Life in biblical Israel*. London: Westminster John Knox Press, 40 – 41; P. Eade. 2009. In the way they should go. *Christian Growth Network*, 1. Retrieved August 10, 2012 from <http://www.christiangrowthnetwork.org>.

³M. Riley. 2003. Train up a child. *Montana street Church of Christ*. El Paso, Texas. Retrieved August 10, 2011 from <http://montanastreetchurchofchrist.blogspot.com>.

⁴M. C. Bromiley. 1988. Ed. Education. *The international standard bible encyclopedia vol. 4*. Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. Retrieved December 2012, from Bibleworks. [c:\programfiles\bibleworks7\init\bw700.swc].

⁵The “Mesusah” was a kind of phylactery for the house, serving purpose kindred to that of the phylactery for the person, both being derived from a misunderstanding and misapplication of the Divine direction (Deut 6:9; 11:20). This scroll was fastened at the door-post of every “clean” apartment among Jewish dwellings; and it was expected that a *na`ar* knows its content and understands its requirements before participating in the domestic rites of the recurring weekly festivals.

⁶A. Edersheim. 1974. *Sketches of Jewish social life in the days of Christ*. GR, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 103-105.

seasons, would be indelibly impressed upon his or her mind. This tradition continued until the time of Christ.⁷ Hope Amolo notes that among the Jews, the mother had the responsibility to teach the *na`ar* in his or her early life, while the father had the sacred duty of teaching religious truth to his son and of giving him general education.⁸ The mother naturally displayed love and care (Gen 25:28; Prov 4:3; Isa 49:15; 66:13). As a basic unit in society, the family system constituted a strong synergy between parents and their children who were united in a bond.⁹

Nevertheless, the Hebrew text contains imageries of good and bad parenting models (Gen 18:19; 1Sam 1:22)¹⁰ which reverberates and reaffirms the indispensable role parents must play in training their children. In the light of the aforementioned, Edersheim opines that a proper study of the book of Proverbs would give us the deepest insight into the social and family life of ancient Israelite community. This is because, as an aphorism, Proverbs is full of admonitions about the upbringing of children in the effort of impacting them both affective and cognitive wise to enhance healthy home and society.¹¹ Consequently, the study examines the parental imperative in Proverbs 22:6: *hN"M<) mi rWsiy" - al {) !yqi^a z>y:÷-yKi (~G:i AK=r>d yPiä-l [; r [;N:l;â %nOæx] (Hánök lanna`ar `al-Pî darKô Gam Kî/-yazqîn lö/-yäsûr mimme^onnâ)* “Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will

⁷ A. Edersheim. 1974. *Sketches of Jewish social life in the days of Christ*. GR, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 108.

⁸ H. Amolo. 2011. Mothers' legacy to their children: A case of Timothy's mother and grandmother (2TIM 1:5). *Biblical Studies and Youth Development in Africa*. S.O. Agbogunrin. Ed. Ibadan: Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS), Biblical Studies Series 8.242: 240 – 254.

⁹ B. Kelly and E. R. Clenderen. 2003. Family. *Holman illustrated bible dictionary*. C. Brand. Ed. Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 557.

¹⁰ F.D. Nichol et al. Eds. 1978. *Seventh-day Adventist bible commentary* vol. 1. Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 456. They noted that Abraham is commended for raising his children in the Lord (Gen 18:19) while Hannah prized the early child training of Samuel above pilgrimage to Shiloh (1 Sam 1:22). On the other hand, Ogunkunle observes that Eli failed in nurturing his sons spiritually and that wrecked the future of the entire family, while Samuel's preoccupation with civic and religious matters at the expense of training his children resulted in the paradigm shift from theocracy to monarchy in ancient Israel. See C.O. Ogunkunle “Spiritual Leaders and the Neglect of the Home Front: Eli's Home in the Nigerian Context” in S.O. Agbogunrin (ed). *Studies and Youth Development in Africa*. Ibadan: Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS), Biblical Studies Series Number 8, 49 – 53 [48– 61].

¹¹ A. Edersheim. 1974. *Sketches of Jewish social life in the days of Christ*. GR, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 111 – 112.

not depart from it” (NKJ). The above text seems to summarise the entire parenting discourse in Proverbs in that the whole idea of parent-child-society chain is intertwined. However, scholars are divided concerning the meaning, scope, and timing of *Hánök*; the identity of the *na`ar*, and the actual *Derek* in which *lanna`ar* “is to go.”¹² This poses a hermeneutical problem.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Existing interpretations of *ħănōk* in Proverbs 22:6 limit it to the disposition, manner, morality and choice of vocation for adolescents thereby ignoring the vital role of nurturing during infancy, which is foundational in training within the ambit of parenting. When linked with *lanna`ar* and *`al-Pî darKô*, MacDonald,¹³ Hilderbrandt,¹⁴ Gentry,¹⁵ and Brantley¹⁶ render *ħănōk* as to ‘initiate or inaugurate’ the *na`ar*, who to them is not an infant but rather a ‘squire or cadet,’ into royal service. On the other hand, Matthew Henry argues that emphasis on *ħănōk* in relation to *na`ar* is concerned with providing direction for the teen who is already at the crises age,¹⁷ while Francis Nichol and others¹⁸ approached the text from the perspective of the movement from childhood to adulthood and how parents impose careers on their children. To Derek Kidner,¹⁹ the *na`ar* is in the formative age therefore *ħănōk* and *`al-Pî darKô* ‘in the way he should go’ should be handled to show respect for his or her disposition, individuality and vocation. Yet, few scholars who approach Proverbs 22:6 from a pedagogical viewpoint to include the importance of early childhood training

¹² While Nichol and others see *ħănōk* as ‘parental guidance’ to *na`ar* ‘adolescence’ who needs to choose a career. See on F.D. Nichol et al. Eds. 1978. *Seventh-day Adventist bible commentary* vol. 1. Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 456. Hilberrandt holds that *ħănōk* is best rendered ‘to dedicate/initiate’ since *na`ar* to him refers to a ‘cadet’ in a royal service. See on T. Hilberrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train Up a Child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 5 – 6.

¹³ A.J. MacDonald. 1976. The status and role of the *na`ar* in Israelite society. *JNES* 35.3: 147-70.

¹⁴ T. Hilderbrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 5 – 6.

¹⁵ P.J. Gentry. 2012. Equipping the generations: raising children, the Christian way. *JDFM* 2.2:96 – 109.

¹⁶ G. K. Brantley. 1995. Train up a child – what does it mean? Apologetics Press, Inc. Retrieved February 16, 2013 from <http://www.apologeticspress.org>.

¹⁷ M. Henry. 2007. Exegesis of Proverbs 22:6. Matthew Henry’s bible commentary. *BibleWorks*.

¹⁸ F.D. Nichol et al. Eds. 1978. *Seventh-day Adventist bible commentary* vol. 1. Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1020.

¹⁹ D. Kidner. 1985. *Proverbs: an introduction and commentary*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 147.

dwell so much on the contemporary context than the text itself.²⁰ The latter limits adequate understanding of the key words and interpretation of the proverbial parental imperative.

The above suppositions reveal a conspicuous limitation in scholars' attempts at analysing Proverbs 22:6. This is evident in the interpretations of *ḥănōk* which ignore the necessity, meaning, timing, parental roles and relevance of infant nurturing when it is linked with *lanna`ar* and *`al-Pî darKô*. Consequently, the study therefore begs the question: Of what necessity is *ḥănōk*? What is the meaning of *ḥănōk* in parenting discourse? Is it limited to providing the material, physical, moral and vocational needs of the *na`ar*? Or is *ḥănōk* limited to the crises (adolescent) age? If so, what is the fate of children in infancy? Is it possible that *ḥănōk* in Proverbs 22:6 excludes infant nurturing which is a fundamental component of parenting? More so, if to *ḥănōk* is to concentrate on the carrier choices of the *na`ar* moving from childhood to adulthood, who then is the *na`ar* of Proverbs 22:6? At what point does the imperative to *ḥănōk* begin? And what are the roles of parents in the training process? In what *ḥănōk* is the *na`ar* is to be trained? What is the relevance of *ḥănōk* in the overall parenting process?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The primary aim of the study was to examine the necessity and meaning of the imperative *ḥănōk* to establish the foundational nature of infant nurturing as a vital component of parenting. It further investigated the timing of *ḥănōk* in parenting and the roles of parents in the entire process. Specifically, the study examined the concept of *ḥănōk*, the identity of the *na`ar*, the meaning of *`al-Pî darKô* and *Gam Kî|-yazqîn lö|`-yäsûr mimme`nnâ* in Proverbs 22:6b to appropriately situate the necessity, meaning, timing, parental roles, and relevance of infant nurturing as a fundamental component of training in the Book of Proverbs within the ambit of parenting, and its implications for contemporary African parents.

1.4 Scope of the Study

²⁰ A. Cooper. 2010. On the social role of biblical interpretation: the case of Proverbs 22:6. *With reverence for the word: medieval scriptural exegesis in Judaism*. part 2: 1 – 12. J.D. McAuliffe et al. Eds.; H. Blake. 1995. *Child age and education*. La Grande, WA: Manna Publishing House, 59.

The book of Proverbs is full of admonitions on child upbringing. However, the concise Proverbs 22:6 is selected for two major reasons. First, although it is probably the most frequently quoted of all proverbs on 'child' training; it has been persistently misinterpreted or misapplied, especially in connection with infant nurturing. Second, whereas there are many terms such as $\text{dm} ; \text{l}'$ (*l'mad*) 'to learn' or 'teach,' [$\text{m} ; \text{v}'$] (*sh'ma±*) 'hear,' 'listen to,' 'obey,' [$\text{d} ; \text{y}''$] (*y'da±*) 'know' or 'knowledge' used to describe training in the book of Proverbs, Chapter 22:6 is selected because of the centrality of *ḥānōk* in parenting, especially in relation of infant nurturing.

1.5 Research Methodology/Theoretical Framework

The grammatical-historical method (also called the historical grammatical) which examines the socio-cultural and grammatical structure of a text was utilised in the exegesis of Proverbs 22:6 and its interpretation. The grammatical-historical method also examined issues of authorship, date of composition, historical background and language in relation to the meaning of the text.²¹ Against the historical-critical method²² which sees the Bible as a either a product of redactors who lived many years after the biblically acclaimed authors or that of oral tradition thereby denying its supernatural origin, the historical grammatical

²¹G.Hasel. 1985. *Biblical interpretation today*. Washington D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 4; J.F. Brug.2013. Why the historical-critical method of interpreting scripture is incompatible with confessional Lutheranism, 1 – 2. Retrieved August 14, 2013, from www.differencebetweenhistorical-criticalmethodandhistoricalgrammatical.com.

²²S. Koranteng-Pipim. *Receiving the word: how new approaches to the bible impact our biblical faith and lifestyle*. Berrien Springs, MI: Berean Books, 34. The historical-critical method consists of such diverse and often conflicting approaches as "historical criticism," literary-source criticism," "form criticism," "redaction criticism," "comparative-religion criticism," "structural criticism," and so on. Other 'useful' hermeneutical approaches, especially those with African and contextual import, which the nature of this study does not accommodate include: 1. Contextual biblical hermeneutical approach: A.O. Dada. 2007. An evangelical reflection on contextual biblical hermeneutics in Africa. *The African Journal of Biblical Studies*, XXIV.I : 3 – 20, and D.T. Adamo. *Explorations in African biblical studies*. This approach is such that makes African social, cultural, political, and economic context a subject of interpretation. 2. Evaluative pproach, G.O. West. 1995. *Biblical hermeneutics of liberation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, Second Revised Edition. This approach is an interpretation model that engages the Bible in course of socio-political liberation. 3. Liberation Approach: D.T. Adamo. 1989. Understanding Genesis creation account in an African background. *Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 10.2: 17-25. Comparative approach: this approach takes into cognisance a comparison of key ideas and concepts in the bible with those of African religion and culture, so as to understand the meaning and message of the Bible.

approach accepts the Hebrew Text from the perspective of its final form as handed in by the Masoretes.²³

On the other hand, the study employed John Bowlby's Attachment theory.²⁴ It is a psychological, evolutionary and ethological theory that provides a descriptive and explanatory framework for understanding interpersonal relationships between human beings. This study however focuses on the attachment theory of developmental psychology. Here, attachment theorists consider children to have a need for a secure relationship with adult caregivers, without which normal social and emotional development will not occur. Within the theory, attachment means bond or tie between an individual and an attachment figure.²⁵ Erin J. Lee²⁶ observes that the attachment begins during infancy and lasts throughout a lifetime. A newborn baby immediately needs someone to take care of them. This person may be a parent, a sibling, or a nanny, but whoever it is, there will be a bond formed between them. According to Lee, Bowlby and Ainsworth (who later expanded the theory) this primary caregiver, usually the mother, is the one that will most shape the child's personality and character.

The mother automatically has some kind of bond to the child because she carried it for 9 months, but early contact is important in forming strong bonds between them. The mother and infant have an automatic bond, but the father must establish a bond after the child is born. It is very important for the father to be involved in the delivery of the child and to be available to the infant in case the mother cannot hold the child right away due to other circumstances. Studies have shown that fathers who have early contact with their child have a stronger attachment with them in the months following the birth.²⁷ In sum, the attachment model explains infant behaviour towards their attachment figure, during separation and reunion times. It is believed that attachment behaviours formed in infancy will help shape the attachment relationships people have as adults. In this context therefore, this framework

²³ G.O. West. 1995. *Biblical hermeneutics of liberation*. Marykoll, NY: Orbis Book, no page.

²⁴ R.C. Mishra. 2009. *Developmental psychology*. New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, 19.

²⁵ R.C. Mishra. 2009. *Developmental psychology*. New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, 19 – 20.

²⁶ E.J. Lee. The attachment theory throughout the life course: review and criticisms of attachment theory. Rochester Institute of Technology. Retrieved May 29, 2012, from <http://www.rit.edu/>.

²⁷ E.J. Lee. The attachment theory throughout the life course: review and criticisms of attachment theory. Rochester Institute of Technology. Retrieved May 29, 2012, from <http://www.rit.edu/>.

served not only to investigate but also engage the interpretative gap evident in scholars' approach to Proverbs 22:6.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Popular interpretations of *ḥānōk* when linked with *lanna`ar* and *`al-Pî darKô* in Proverbs 22:6 have focused on developing the disposition, manner, morality and choice of vocation for adolescents. Such limitation has hindered sufficient insight on the foundational nature and vital role of infant nurturing in the parenting process. Since 'wholistic training,' which encapsulates the rationale for parenting in the book of Proverbs encompasses training in every aspect of human life from infancy to maturity, a detailed exegetical analysis of Proverbs 22:6 will appropriately situate the necessity, meaning, timing, parental roles, and relevance of infant nurturing as a fundamental component of training in the proverbial parenting discourse and its implications for African parents. This is important since according to Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, the book of Proverbs is the primary locus of "prudential wisdom" that is, memorable aphorisms or maxims people can use to help themselves make responsible choices in life.²⁸

²⁸G. Fee and D. Stuart. 2003. *How to read the bible for all its worth*. GR, Michigan: Zondervan, 231.

schooling, training, learning, and indoctrination.³² Such complexities necessitate some level of clarifications.

Education

There seems to be no universally acceptable definition of education. However, as Obikoya notes, educationists agree that education is the development of a person for the acquisition of all round efficiency in various aspects: intellectually, morally, culturally, economically, socially, physically, with the aim of to earn a living and to live a good and useful life.³³ Although quite comprehensive, Obikoya's submission is not without some cogent omissions. This could be drawn from the etymology of the word 'education.' Etymologically, education is rooted in two Latin words: *educere* and *educare*. While *educere* means "to lead out," *educare* means 'to train.' The former conceives of education as a process that midwives the innate potentials of the educand while the latter approaches education as a process of forming impressions on an empty or blank slate. Put together, therefore, education could be seen first, as a deliberate attempt of the learner or a teacher to control a learning situation in order to bring about the attainment of a desired learning outcome or goal. Second, it involves a process with the objective of attaining positive change. This makes it an all-inclusive term which embraces formal, informal, and non-formal education.³⁴

In relation to the three forms of education, Ogunji further clarifies that formal education is a process of teaching, which involves well-defined and systematic curriculum, instruction given by specially qualified teachers, with definite aims and principles. This form of education takes place in a school system which can be referred to as a specialised agency where formal education takes place. Therefore, it can be said that schooling is a part or vehicle of formal education. Unlike formal education, informal education is incidental and spontaneous and devoid of any conscious effort. Non-formal education is an educational activity that is structured and planned outside the realm of formal education. Nevertheless,

³² J.A. Ogunji. 2008. *Understanding philosophy of education: from a Christian Perspective*. Ilishan-Remo: Babcock University Press, 14.

³³ J.O. Obikoya. 1996. *Essentials of personnel management*. Ijebu-Ode: Pius 'Debo (Nig.) Press, 159.

³⁴ J.A. Ogunji. 2008. *Understanding philosophy of education: from a Christian perspective*. Ilishan-Remo: Babcock University Press, 14.

its aim is to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives. It is sometimes given through correspondence with certificate given after an evaluation.³⁵

Learning

Charles defines learning as a process of acquiring knowledge or skill through study, experience or teaching. This process depends on experience and leads to long-term changes in behaviour potential. This behaviour potential describes the possible behaviour of an individual in a given situation in order to achieve a goal.³⁶ Ogunji adds that unlike schooling, learning is not limited to the four walls of an institution. It is a life long process which can occur anywhere.³⁷ Although mostly informal, there could be formal phases of learning. From learning to talk, walk, run, among others to learning to write, operate a computer, drive a car, to learning to socialise, one continues in the learning process till death. Synthesis report by McIver Consulting shows that the profile of lifelong learning, which emphasises maintaining access to and participation in continuing education and training throughout life, has been raised by many national reports on learning.³⁸

Development

Development is a broader spectrum which envisages modification of behaviour and personality. It is goal oriented – enabling the employees to attain higher positions. Development is mostly future oriented, focusing on the personal growth of employees and managers alike.³⁹ A course to improve the decision making skills, interpersonal competence, and so on, fall under this category.

³⁵ J.A. Ogunji. 2008. *Understanding philosophy of education: from a Christian perspective*. Ilishan-Remo: Babcock University Press, 14.

³⁶ P. Charles. Difference between training, learning, development, and education. Retrieved June 18, 2014, from <http://www.citehr.com>.

³⁷ J.A. Ogunji. 2008. *Understanding philosophy of education: from a Christian perspective*. Ilishan-Remo: Babcock University Press, 15.

³⁸ Anon. 2004. Synthesis report/literature review on aspects of training of those at work in Ireland. *McIver Consulting*, 9. Retrieved June 18, 2014, from www.synthesisreport.org.

³⁹ H. Kerzner. 2009. *Project management: a systematic approach to planning, scheduling, and controlling*. 10th ed. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 125 – 178; P. Charles. 2014. Difference between training, learning, development, and education. Retrieved June 18, 2014, from <http://www.citehr.com>.

Training

Training increases knowledge and skill for doing a particular job. It bridges the gap between the desired and the actual knowledge, skills and behaviour required to carry out a particular job. However, training is job oriented and vocational in nature. In its job-oriented nature, training could be seen as a short term activity designed by management especially for employees or operatives.⁴⁰ Hence, training results from external motivation in which the participant(s) functions as a reactive process. Vocationally, apprenticeship is a typical example. Whether job-oriented or vocational, the object of training is to produce a definite performance, skill or operation. This accounts for why training virtually occurs in almost every sphere of human endeavours. There is military training which is scientifically and psychologically designed to tear apart the “civilian” in a recruit and build from scratch a proud, physically fit, and dedicated member of the Armed Forces;⁴¹ strength training which aims at solving the problems of muscles and bones weakened through lack of use;⁴² tent making, among others.

From the perspective of human resource development and management, Obikoya defines training as “a systematic process of altering the behaviour, knowledge, and/or motivation of employees in a direction to increase the trainees’ effectiveness and organizational goal achievement.”⁴³ On the one hand, Kerzner affirms that the biggest problem facing human resource managers is that of training their new employees.⁴⁴ On the other hand, Karla and Bhatia confirm that this training is to remedy those deficient of the skills required to meet the established standards of performance and global needs in a given organisation. This skill acquisition may be in term of relevant technology or new pre-determined behaviours. In other words, it helps in bringing about positive change in the knowledge, skills and attitudes of employees thereby bridging the gap between what the employee has and what the job demands. In most cases, therefore, training is often used to

⁴⁰ P. Charles. Difference between training, learning, development, and education. Retrieved June 18, 2014, from <http://www.citehr.com>.

⁴¹ R. Powers. 2014. How to survive military basic training. *US Military*. Retrieved June 19, 2014 from <http://www.usmilitary.about.com>.

⁴² Anon. The Kieser training therapy (MST). Retrieved June 19, 2014 from <http://www.kieser-training.com>

⁴³ J.O. Obikoya. 1996. *Essentials of personnel management*. Ijebu-Ode: Pius ‘Debo (Nig.) Press, 159.

⁴⁴ H. Kerzner. 2009. *Project management: a systematic approach to planning, scheduling, and controlling* 10th ed. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 178.

describe the methods for imparting narrow and specific job related knowledge or skill to employees.⁴⁵

Obikoya identifies two approaches to training which include the reactive and proactive approaches. According to him, the reactive training tries to identify and find solutions to current needs and problems of the organisation, while proactive training is a forward looking approach that anticipates the future needs of the organisation.⁴⁶ Whatever the case or the approach, training involves time, effort, and money which necessitates proper organisational care in designing a training program. The later is fundamental, since training plays a significant role in human resource development. Karla and Bhatia conclude that only through training and efficient employees can an organisation achieve its objectives.⁴⁷

Consequently, it is imperative to ascertain the training needs for a particular organisation at a particular time. Once this is done, the role of the training specialist is to design relevant programmes. This is usually not an easy task. Weihrich and Koontz identify three kinds of needs that must be considered before specific training and development programs are chosen. First is an organisational need – such as the objectives of the enterprise, the availability of managers, and turnover rates. Second, needs related to operations and the job itself can be determined from job descriptions and performance standards. Third, data about individual training needs can be gathered from performance appraisals, interviews with the jobholders, tests, surveys, and career plans for individuals.⁴⁸

Companies often find themselves in a position of having to provide a key initiate for multitude of people, or simply specialised training to a program team about to embark upon a new long-term effort. In such cases, specialised training is required, with targeted goals and results that are specifically planned for. The elements common to training on a key initiative or practice include:

⁴⁵ J.O. Obikoya. 1996. *Essentials of personnel management*. Ijebu-Ode: Pius 'Debo (Nig.) Press, 159. See also R. Kalra and M. Bhatia. 2008. Training – concept and methods. *Faculty Column* School of Management, Ansal Institute of Technology. Retrieved May 30, 2014 from <http://www.indianmba.com>

⁴⁶ J.O. Obikoya. 1996. *Essentials of personnel management*. Ijebu-Ode: Pius 'Debo (Nig.) Press, 159.

⁴⁷ Kalra and M. Bhatia. 2008. Training – concept and methods. *Faculty Column* School of Management, Ansal Institute of Technology. Retrieved May 30, 2014 from <http://www.indianmba.com>.

⁴⁸ H. Weihrich and H. Koontz. 2005. *Management: a global perspective*. New Delhi: Tata Mc-Graw-Hill Publishing Company Limited, 327.

- i. A front-end analysis of the program team's needs and training requirements
- ii. Involvement of the program teams in key decisions
- iii. Customised training to meet program team's specific needs
- iv. Targeted training for the implementation of specific practices, and
- v. Improved training outcomes, including better course depth, timeliness, and reach⁴⁹

Added to the foregoing, Cole outlines some important issues or concerns that should be taken into account if training is to be both relevant and effective:

1. What are we trying to achieve in this programme?
2. What do we expect participants to achieve?
3. What content is required to achieve these aims?
4. How should this content be structured?
5. What learning methods should we employ?
6. Who should conduct the training?
7. Where and when should the training take place?
8. To what extent should participants be consulted about the nature and scope of the programme?
9. How should we evaluate the success of the programme?⁵⁰

Since most individuals, companies and cooperate organisations use almost the same basic tools as part of their training methodology, what makes one company or entrepreneur different from the other is in the execution of the methodology. Suffice it to say therefore that training and education can accelerate not only the project management maturity process but also the ability to execute the methodology. On this note, one could say that training or actual learning occurs in three areas: on-the-job experience, education, and knowledge transfer.⁵¹

⁴⁹ H. Kerzner. 2009. *Project management: a systematic approach to planning, scheduling, and controlling* 10th ed. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 348.

⁵⁰ G.A. Cole. 2002. *Personnel and human resource management*, 5th ed. London: Continuum, the Tower Building, 346.

⁵¹ H. Kerzner. 2009. *Project management: a systematic approach to planning, scheduling, and controlling* 10th ed. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 348.

As noted earlier, the above conceptual clarifications reveal a level of interconnectedness which could be seen in the following. First, as Charles notes, training, development, and education are essentially the act of making learning occur. Second, education is the formal phase of learning. It is a combination of both training and development. The texts we study, the assignments are part of the formal training phase, while the changes in our attitudes, values, behaviour and culture constitute the informal developmental part. Third, although training is part and parcel of education in the sense that the scope of training in a particular field is limited by its objectives, training and education are growth oriented and complementary in nature. In contrast education lacks the specificity of training.

Fourth, development on its own involves training people to acquire new horizons, techniques or viewpoints. In this process, learning also takes place. Thus, development can be considered the forefront of what many now call the Learning Organisation. However, many organisations and managers use the term education and development interchangeably. It is important to note that training is aimed at meeting present requirements of the organisation, while education and development can be construed as relating to future requirements.

2.3 The Idea of Training in Parenting

Although the idea of training focuses on developing specific skills, the case seems different or rather complex in parenting. This is basically because parenting is a life time process of which training is central; not in one way, but rather in different ways at the various stages of human development. Miller submits that parents have the responsibility to train their children for life until they are ready for whatever duty or mission that may call. This training process is not about maintaining home rules, but training through skill impartation, participation, and their lifestyle.⁵² Understanding the enormity of the task, Dinkmeyer and McKay present key areas in which parents, who function as trainers in the training process, require training. They include the need to:

⁵² J.R. Miller. 2014. Training children: the importance of home influence. *Homemaking. Generation Cedar*. Retrieved June 18, 2014 from www.generationcedar.com.

1. Develop understanding of a practical theory of human behaviour
2. Learn new procedures for developing more effective relationships with your children
3. Improve communication between yourself and your children through developing skills for listening, resolving conflicts with children.
4. Develop skills in using encouragement, logical consequences and other active oriented procedures.
5. Develop more self confidence in your ideas about children and your abilities as a parent.⁵³

Commenting on the above points, Lehmann clarifies that emphasis on dealing with children from a basis of mutual respect is most encouraging. In developing more effective relationships with children, parents/child relationship is seen as one of equality, not in terms of knowledge or ability but in terms of human worth and dignity. Parents are to understand that effective parenting should stress the well being of both the child and the parent and the building of positive relationships. Such understanding must move from theory to practice.⁵⁴ Dinkmeyer and McKay's submission affirms the fact that those who are called to train (parents) require training, especially in the areas of human behaviour, communication skills and problem solving which includes discipline. However, their assertion does not address the moral or spiritual maturity required of parents, if training must be wholistic. Such concerns this study pursues.

Edwina Gateley argues that training in parenting requires that parents understand the commitment and necessary adjustments that parenting brings: its constant demands, unheralded sacrifices, and the ceaseless commitments and unselfish devotion for which it is called. For parents to be successful in training their children, especially those with emotional disorder, they need to fall into a deeper and more authentic understanding of their strengths, limitations, potentials, and God.⁵⁵ Gateley's contribution is germane in that it espouses parents' need to train and commit their hearts, adjust their time and schedules, and attitude for effective parenting. The absence of an intentional training in such areas might lead

⁵³ D. Dinkmeyer and G. D. McKay. 1982. *The parent's handbook: systematic training for effective parenting*. Minnesota: American Guidance Service, 1 – 8.

⁵⁴ J. Lehmann. 2000. *Book Review*. Retrieved May 30, 2014 from www.andrews.edu .

⁵⁵ E. Gateley. 2003. The gifts and challenges of parenting. *The Living Pulpit*. 38 – 39.

parents to either feel burdened or frustrated. When either of such occurs, the child bears the consequences.

Using the acronym S-M-A-R-T, Nancy Van Pelt prescribes what she calls five common core principles that parents should follow as they prepare to train their children. To become 'smart parents,' she argues that parents should 'stay open to new methods of parenting' (S). This encourages parents to be adaptive and dynamic in the use of alternative measures in the face of obstacles or failure of a particular option. Second, parents are encouraged to 'make mistakes' (M). Rather than be afraid of making mistakes, parents' concern should focus on the lessons every mistake affords. Here, mistakes are seen as stepping stones to success; and will only be unacceptable if parents stopped learning from them. Third, they are to 'act' (A). Having learned some lessons, parents are to implement the new lessons learnt. Failure to do so could be totally injurious to the entire process. Fourth, parents are to 'repeat a smarter habit for twenty-one days' (R). Following Maltz's theory, which states that – regardless of a person's age or sex – it takes twenty-one to forty-five days to change a habit, Van Pelt submits that parents can change their parental bad habits through a conscious reinforcement of the opposite and positive habit in twenty-one days. Fifth, to become a smarter parent, one should 'take time to pray daily' (T). She opines that when parents submit their plans to God regularly through prayers, it helps them stick to their objectives in raising a child for as long as it takes to achieve them. Prayer also helps parents control self-defeating habits, attitudes, and impulsive behaviours. It increases faith in one's ability to achieve the goal of becoming the firm and loving parent, while providing the strength to endure the daily frustrations of dealing with immature behaviour of a child, stress, personal failure, among others.⁵⁶

Following the above premise, she argues that parents have the responsibility of building their child's self-esteem and self-worth. Because parents' attitude could either make or mar how a child perceives him or herself, training in emotional stability is essential for all parents. The self-worth of a child can be nurtured and encouraged, as well as changed – if in the negative. This is a major strand in the parenting process since a negative or

⁵⁶ N.V. Pelt. 2011. *The smart parent: strategies for growing greater kids*. Lincolnshire: The Stanborough Press Ltd, 6 – 9.

damaged self-worth could carry grave consequences. Further, she observes that the task of character development in a child takes time and requires undivided parental commitment. This process begins at birth. And since the qualities and attributes that shape character are learned, parents and individual family shape the destiny of their offspring through the character traits passed on. Similarly, parents are to train their children in other areas such as conflict management, anger control, food choices, sibling rivalry, rudiments and importance of effective communication, devotion to God, among others.⁵⁷

Without doubt, Van Pelt's contribution reemphasises the need for parents, who are trainers in parenting, to consciously prepare themselves for the task. Using the acronym SMART, she highlighted the need for parents to be self-conscious, original, dynamic, proactive, responsive, and prayerful. Further, her emphasis on building a child's self-worth and character are timely. However, her prescription on parental role does not include the meaning of training and parental roles in infant nurturing, a task this study seeks to accomplish.

In her book, *Train Up a Child*, Van Pelt x-rays the various factors that contribute to parental frustration in child training. She observes that while today's parents need change in the lives of their children, they rely on the same methods of child training and problem solving skills used by their parents, and grandparents. Further, she argues that although behavioural sciences have collected much information about human relationships, motivation and communication, parents need help in developing workable techniques in child training and home management. Van Pelt submits that effective discipline in all facets of the child's life remains the hallmark of the joy and fulfilment that training in parenting affords. She emphasises the importance of training in the first five years of life and insists that self-respect becomes the determining factor between success and failure in life. Against the obvious view that to discipline means to punish, she clarifies that the word discipline is related to the word disciple. Therefore when parents discipline a child, they are really training him or her to be a disciple. Along with the essentials of character – building, it

⁵⁷ N.V. Pelt. 2011. *The smart parent: strategies for growing greater kids*. Lincolnshire: The Stanborough Press Ltd, 10 – 81.

teaches how to effectively communicate with and discipline children of all ages. In addition, she outlines the roles of both parents in the child training.⁵⁸

Without mincing words, Van Pelt presents a striking template for child training that is central to this study. Her ability to situate the vital role of discipline as a key component of training in parenting, especially in an era where many think otherwise, is germane. Further, emphasis on the fact that discipline and training, in general, begin at infancy is noteworthy. However, although discipline is crucial, her work seems to reduce training in parenting to discipline, a gap this study seeks to fill.

As a reaction to the vices that besiege children and parental efforts at raising their children, Jeffrey and Pattiejean Brown challenge parents to wake up to the real task of parenting. Faced with the explosion in the music industry, movie industry, and the internet which try to control the minds of our children – and are succeeding; they challenge parents to rise up and take charge of the training of their children. To accomplish this, they argue that parents must understand the characteristics of the various stages of child development, what is expected of them, and the possible external influences that work against their noble assignment. They submit that it is only as parents are fully aware of the nature of their children and are prepared to do their honest part in training and guiding the children that both parties can be free and happy. For instance, the authors identified the delicate nature of ages 0 – 6 years which they referred to as ‘winter,’ and emphasised the role of mothers in nurturing both during pregnancy and infancy.⁵⁹

Jeffrey and Pattiejean Brown share major concerns pertinent to child training. Like Van Pelt, they emphasise the need to understand the nature of the child as basis for training. They also shared Van Pelt’s view that parenting begins at infancy, but further extends it by underscoring mothers’ role in nurturing during pregnancy. Yet, the study is limited in its discourse on the various aspects of child training, with and in-depth analysis of the meaning of training in parenting, making this study relevant.

⁵⁸ N.V. Pelt. 2009. *Train up a child*. Lincolnshire: The Stranborough press Ltd, 2009, 10 – 78.

⁵⁹ J. and P. Brown. 2003. *A guide to parenting*. Lincolnshire: The Stanborough Press Ltd, 8 – 20.

David Pofi articulates the role of the man as a father. These include providing the children with the necessities of life, if he can afford. When such provisions such as food, clothing, and shelter are lacking, fathers will not only be provoking their children to anger, but also exposing them to insecurity and danger. Fathers also have the responsibility of training the children both in theory and practice. While the theoretical aspect of training involves teaching, the practical requires that parents take the first step in demonstrating or living out all they have taught. This Pofi emphasises is the crux of training and many parents have knowingly or unknowingly taught their children to do worst things such as stealing, lying, and being abusive through their actions. Fathers also take the lead in disciplining their children. Pofi affirms that children need incentives as well as discipline; since their mind is gullible, discipline checks and re-directs it. However, parents should not discipline their children for what they are equally guilty of. Lastly, as the head of the family, the father trains his children spiritually by assuming the role of the pastor or priest. He observes that many fathers have neglected their roles of providing spiritual food for their families. To succeed in this area, fathers, like the biblical Ezra, must give themselves to the study of God's word because the extent to which they succeed here depends on how much they commit themselves to this. For no one can give what he or she does not have.⁶⁰

On the other hand, Pofi opines that mothers also share in the training of their children. Until recently, the work of a woman revolves around the home. In such settings, the mother spends more time with the children with untold influence. However, her proximity to the children gives her the opportunity to influence them positively or negatively. Using the example of biblical role models such as Eunice, Timothy's grandmother, he challenged mothers to use their influences positively. Today, many wives now work and live in different cities without their spouses for economic reasons. He observes that such shift has taken a toll on the family as the training of children has been confided to nannies that in most cases impact the children negatively. Nevertheless, Pofi

⁶⁰ D. Pofi. 2005. *Fundamentals of the Christian home*. Bukuru: African Christian Textbooks (ACTS), 95 – 104.

argues that when mothers are able to balance between work and family, their influence is felt in the area of teaching, nurturing, praying, protection, providing for the family.⁶¹

Pofi's contributions on the roles of parents in child training are useful in that it puts the responsibility of training on their shoulders. Key to his contributions is the need for fathers and mothers to move from theory (teaching) to practice (doing or exemplary lifestyle). Parents are mirrors through which children see themselves and the moment what they teach contradicts what they do, the children lose confidence in them. The priestly role of fathers in the home is also germane as many fathers have abandoned this role either to their wives, or to the wind. Nevertheless, the emphasis of the study does not include detailed discussion on the meaning of training, its timing, and relevance – a gap this study seeks to fill.

Sopuru argues that the extent of child training is dependent on the nature of the parent-child relationship. To her, God has given parents the responsibility to train their children and this is most achievable through setting good examples. Parents are to inculcate God-given behaviours and attitudes. She opines that poor relationship at home accounts for the alarming rate of crises in the home, especially among adolescents. Therefore, she identifies the initial decade of a child's life as the most important years for character building and establishment of those elements that produce emotional maturity. At this stage, the child that is trained in the areas of love, integrity, responsibility, and good examples by his or her parents is rich. To achieve this, she argues that parents should have a positive attitude to life. This 'positive attitude' she summarised as to be firm, fair, and fun. Parents who are accessible, transparent, and simple; that accept their mistakes and are not high-handed will make the best and lasting impressions in the minds of their children. Understanding that the task of training, especially during the adolescent age, can be very difficult, parents should persevere in patience as they diligently and consistently admonish their children and present them to God.⁶²

⁶¹D. Pofi. 2005. *Fundamentals of the Christian home*. Bukuru: African Christian Textbooks (ACTS), 121 – 123.

⁶²P. Sopuru. 2007. *Guidelines for effective home management and family health*. Makurdi: CIM Publication, 48 – 55.

Further, Sopuru asserts that for training to be effective, parents should understand and assume their appropriate roles. She affirms that God gave the man the leadership position in the home. Yet against the idea of subjugation, vulgarity and lack of courtesy, true manhood entails discipline of character, strong determination to set a course of action, and courage to stay at a task. Men that possess these qualities inspire not only the respect of women, but also a healthy admiration among children and adolescents who hunger for heroes and role-models. Such men, she argues, are rare these days. Similarly, she notes that there is no influential or powerful role on earth as being a mother. Mother's words are never fully forgotten, her touch leaves an indelible impression, and the memory of her presence lasts a lifetime. However, she laments that today's woman is a career woman who shuttles her 24 hours between her home, husband, children, and her work.

The above situation is partly because; unlike before when women stay at home while their husbands provide for the family, today's men do not want to marry a "liability" these days. Consequently, there is an evolution of dual-worker families where women sometimes work harder than their husbands. In such situations, however, the task of child training is abandoned and the children suffer the consequences of their parents' chase for money. Yet, mothers are a major part of the answer in building children who in turn build a nation. Sopuru concludes that this is an influential and powerful role God has given to women on earth. Therefore, motherhood requires transparent tenderness, authentic spirituality, inner confidence, unselfish love, and self-control.⁶³

Without doubt, Sopuru's view of the various roles of parents on child training is crucial to understanding how they (parents) could be very useful in the entire process. Her observations on the effects of economic demands on the family and changing roles of parents are also insightful in understanding how societal changes impact child training. However, the author does not provide details on the necessity and meaning of infant nurturing; as well as a detailed explanation of the meaning of training in parenting, making this study relevant.

⁶³ P. Sopuru. 2007. *Guidelines for effective home management and family health*. Makurdi: CIM Publication, 106 – 108.

To Colson and Morse, part of parents' role in training their children is to carefully scrutinise the worldview being taught in the various public and private schools they attend. They must even examine what the churches are teaching the children to be sure all is well.⁶⁴ In other words, although the church provides an opportunity for training and most times serves as a training agency for a child, parents must not only review but enhance it.

2.4 'Training' in Proverbs 22:6

Ted Hilberrandt argues against the pedagogical interpretation of Proverbs 22:6. He submits that against the idea of training, *Hánök* is best rendered 'to dedicate/initiate' since *na`ar* to him refers to a 'cadet' in a royal service. Although he underscores the need for early childhood training, he affirms that the context of Proverbs 22:6 does not have any link with infants or preschoolers but rather young adults enlisted in a military training.⁶⁵

Hilberrandt's contribution is germane in that it provides veritable insights on the exegesis of key words of Proverbs 22:6. His emphasis on semantic bifurcation of *Hánök* and *na`ar* however plays down on their etymology which suggests nurturing of an infant. His interpretation of *Hánök* when used for animate and inanimate objects seems unclear. Although he acknowledges the vital nature of early childhood training, his rendering of *na`ar* as a 'cadet' on the bases of its context seems to ignore the eclectic nature of the book of Proverbs. Such hermeneutic challenges the study seeks to address.

Arguing from the perspective of work or choice of career, Francis D. Nichol and others assert that "in the way he should go" literally means "according to the mouth of his way", that is "according to his way." They submit that many parents have taken this verse as sanction for forcing a child to follow the profession or trade they think he ought to. Thus such parents have brought sorrow and disappointment upon themselves, for the child, on growing up, often goes an entirely different way. Nichol and others conclude that the verse (especially the second part which was their area of emphasis) rather counsels parents to

⁶⁴ C. Colson. and A. Morse. 2004. Worldview boot camp: evangelical young people need training in the truth about truth. *Christianity Today*, Cover Page.

⁶⁵ T. Hilberrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 4 – 14.

learn the way in which their particular child can be expected to be of most service to him or herself and others, and in which the individual will find most happiness.⁶⁶

The submission of Nichol and others is useful in the sense that they recognise that the overall idea of child training is not one-way traffic where parents overrule. Instead, they think the child's interest and natural inclination should be brought to bear. They also acknowledge the potentials inherent in every child which is a gift of God, and such deposits parents must endeavour to develop and nurture. Their emphasis on the child's profession seems to overlook the age of infancy and preschool but rather focuses on a child at school age – a gap this study seeks to fill.

Mfuné asserts that in relation to *na`ar* and *al-Pî darKô*, *Hánök* means to train a child according to his natural dominance. Following Moffat translation of Proverbs 22:6 which reads: "Train a child for his proper trade, and he will never leave it, even when he is old," he asserts that the emphasis of the text is on the natural bent of a child; their natural disposition, or inclination. Consequently, to know the 'natural bent,' parents should focus on understanding children's dominant way of thinking. This is accomplished by understanding whether a child is predominantly left brained or right brained. He outlines the benefits parents have by training their children according to their natural dispositions as follows: 1.) because the approach will not be going against the natural grain, training will naturally be more successful, 2.) it builds a child's self-esteem and sense of self-worth, 3.) it enhances the parent's self-esteem due to the positive results they are likely to see in their children, and 4.) it creates a positive emotional response in the child.⁶⁷

Mfuné's interpretation of *Hánök* in Proverbs 22:6 is insightful in that it provides the benefits of focusing on the 'natural bent' or disposition of the child. Nevertheless, the above submission focused more on the cognitive and perhaps the emotional development of the child at the expense of the moral and/or spiritual development. However, this study undertakes a wholistic approach to *Hánök*, making it relevant.

⁶⁶ F.D. Nichol et al. Eds. 1978. *Seventh-day Adventist bible commentary*. Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing, 1020.

⁶⁷ S. S. Mfuné. 2012. *Parenting for heaven*. Western Cape, South Africa: African Publishing Company, 45 – 52. With reference to K. Benziger and A. Sohn, authors of *The art of using your whole brain*, Mfuné listed some natural attributes or characteristics of the left and right brained child. See on Mfuné, 52.

Harold Sala posits that most times parents tremble at the emotional passage of their children from childhood to adulthood as surviving a tornado or a hurricane. To many parents and children alike, the passage is a battle. He noted that when we see a teenager who has failed we are often looking at the product of parental failure. He elucidates that a child learns half of everything he or she knows by age three and three fourths by age seven. But he laments that in far too many cases, during those important years a youngster is deprived of instruction and care and left to grow up with a television set for a tutor and a baby-sitter for a surrogate mother. He identifies parents' decision to work as a major contributor to this dangerous menace; and therefore concludes that too often, it is not until parents are confronted with disaster as a teenager hits the wall that they get serious about what is happening to their teens. Then they blame the children's friends, teachers, and the culture that surrounds them, when according to him, the real problem is parental failure.⁶⁸

Addressing Proverbs 22:6 from the context of the challenges parents encounter when their children become adolescents, Sala's viewpoint is germane in the sense that it identifies parental negligence of the child's infancy and preschool age as the major contributing factor to adolescence rebellion or crises. Such negligence he notes results from dual-worker parents leaving the child at the mercies of television and baby-sitters. But the author fails to proffer solutions for the travails of these infants since his concern was dealing with parental relationship with teens.

Derek Kidner sees Proverbs 22:6 as an emphasis on the child's formative years. He argues that the training prescribed here is literal, that is 'according to his (child's) way', which apparently imply respect for the child's individuality and vocation, though not for his or her selfwill (see verse 5, or 14:12). But the stress according to him is on parental opportunity.⁶⁹

Kidner acknowledges the fact that Proverbs 22:6 stresses parental opportunity for training children and this is vital to the overall discourse. However, his argument that the text addresses the child's formative years seems ambiguous lacking specifications. This perhaps results from the perspective that the child in question is an adolescent which on the

⁶⁸ H. Sala. 2001. *Raising godly kids*. Kaduna: Evangel Publishers Ltd., 181 – 183.

⁶⁹ D. Kidner. 1985. *Proverbs: an introduction and commentary*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 147.

other hand informs his emphasis on child's vocation, a task that seems not to feature prominently among infants or preschoolers (0 – 3 years). This study queries the place of infants and preschoolers in the text.

Harold Blake's compilation⁷⁰ of Ellen White's⁷¹ thoughts submits that Proverbs 22:6 constitute wise sayings and principles that children need to receive in the earliest years which determine their future life and destiny. He notes that the education and training of youth commences with the child in the mother's arms. At this early age the temper and the spirit of the child may be encouraged and repressed.⁷² The author asserts that it is a heartless thing for a mother, for the sake of convenience or social enjoyment, to seek to free herself from the tender office of nursing her little one. He concludes that "the mother who permits her child to be nourished by another should consider well what the result may be. To a greater or less degree the nurse imparts her own temper and temperament to the nursing child."⁷³

Blake makes an important input to the study germane to elucidate the need for child training to proceed right from the birth of the child. He also identifies the mother's role as the key player in the parental process and by extension, describes the adverse implications of mothers abandoning this role for either social demands or convenience. But the study is not detailed concerning the nature of the training. It also makes no contextual application on such issues as the wellbeing of the infant or preschooler born into dual-worker families. Such concerns constitute the gap this study seeks to fill.

Henry considers Proverbs 22:6 from two dimensions thus: 1.) Train up a child in the way he should go, and 2.) and when he is old, he will not depart from it. First, he argues that the text represents a great duty enjoined particularly to those that are the parents and instructors of children, for the propagation of wisdom that it may not die with them. To train children is expedient in that age of vanity, to keep them from the sins and snares of it, in that learning age, to prepare them for what they are designed for. Parents are therefore charged to

⁷⁰ H.Blake. 1995. *Child age and education*. La Grande, WA: Manna Publishing House, 59.

⁷¹ E.G. White is a Christian author who wrote about 2,500 articles on almost all disciplines. Most of her scientific thoughts predate certain scientific discoveries today.

⁷² H. Blake. 1995. *Child age and education*. La Grande, WA: Manna Publishing House, 59 – 60.

⁷³ H.Blake. 1995. *Child age and education*. La Grande, WA: Manna Publishing House, 62 – 63.

catechise them; initiate them; keep them under discipline. They are to train them as soldiers, who are taught to handle their arms, keep rank, and observe the word of command. This training is not in the way they would go (the bias of their corrupt hearts would draw them aside), but in the way they should go, the way in which, if you love them, you would have them go.

Second, a good reason for it, taken from the great advantage of this care and pains with children: When they grow up, when they grow old, it is to be hoped, they will not depart from it. Good impressions made upon them then will abide upon them all their days. Ordinarily the vessel retains the savor with which it was first seasoned. Although some may depart, early training may be a means of their recovering themselves, as it is supposed Solomon did. At least the parents will have the comfort of having done their duty and used the means.⁷⁴

Without doubt, Henry's contribution is timely in that it captures the essence and necessity for training and also hope of reclaiming the child should he or she depart from the way. His identity for the child in Proverbs 22:6 is ambiguous. The use of soldiers as imagery for the child suggests his interpretation of *na`ar* as an adolescence. Such issues this study seeks to address.

On the one hand, the first segment of the literature review elucidates scholars' diverse views of parenting in Proverbs 22:6. Worthy of note is the seeming less attention giving to child training at the earliest stage of child development. This is a major concern of the study. On the other hand, the second segment shows the various challenges facing contemporary parents. Some of these include economic regression which gives birth to rural-urban migration thereby producing dual-worker families, role adjustments among working parents and its challenges, the need for alternative child care providers and their impact on parents and their children, among others. It further reveals the impact of feminism on the family and societal values.

⁷⁴ M. Henry. 2007. Exegesis of Proverbs 22:6. Matthew Henry's bible commentary. Retrieved December 2012, from Bibleworks. [c:\programfiles\bibleworks7\init\bw700.swc].

Conclusion

This chapter focused on three major aspects: the concept of training, the idea of training in parenting, and training in Proverbs 22:6. First, the study established that ‘training’ is a universal term that could apply to almost, if not all aspects of human life or endeavour. It involves the process of teaching a person a particular skill or type of behaviour until success is accomplished. Most times, however, training, education, learning, schooling, and development are used interchangeably to the detriment of one or the other. Scholars like Ogunji⁷⁵ and Obikoya⁷⁶ tried to differentiate between these concepts. While they both agreed on the interrelatedness of the above terms, Ogunji affirmed that training is a subset of education, whether formal. On the other hand, the learning, education, and development all make use of elements of training, especially in organisational settings. These trainings are based established needs. For any institution to accomplishing its goals, the need for training both managers and employees cannot be overemphasised.

Second, although the idea of training focuses on developing specific skills, training in parenting seems rather complex basically because parenting is a life time process of which training is central at the various stages of human development. Dinkmeyer and McKay,⁷⁷ Gateley,⁷⁸ and Pelt⁷⁹ agree that parents require a level of training in the areas of human behaviour, communication and conflict resolution skills, among others. This will enhance a healthy relationship with their children. In explaining the various roles of parents in the training process, Pelt,⁸⁰ Pofi,⁸¹ and Spouru⁸² emphasised the need for parents to be role models to their children. Parents need to discipline their children from the earliest

⁷⁵ J.A. Ogunji. 2008. *Understanding philosophy of education: from a Christian perspective*. Ilishan-Remo: Babcock University Press, 14.

⁷⁶ Training. Cambridge dictionaries online. Retrieved May 18, 2014, from www.cambridgeonlinedictionary.com.

⁷⁷ D. Dinkmeyer and G. D. McKay. 1982. *The parent's handbook: systematic training for effective parenting*. Minnesota: American Guidance Service, 1 – 8.

⁷⁸ E. Gateley. 2003. The gifts and challenges of parenting. *The Living Pulpit*. 38 – 39.

⁷⁹ N.V. Pelt. 2011. *The smart parent: strategies for growing greater kids*. Lincolnshire: The Stanborough Press Ltd, 6 – 9.

⁸⁰ N.V. Pelt. 2011. *The smart parent: strategies for growing greater kids*. Lincolnshire: The Stanborough Press Ltd, 6 – 9.

⁸¹ D. Pofi. 2005. *Fundamentals of the Christian home*. Bukuru: African Christian Textbooks (ACTS), 95 – 104.

⁸² P. Sopuru. 2007. *Guidelines for effective home management and family health*. Makurdi: CIM Publication, 106 – 108.

stages, but the dare need to move from theory to practice in their personal lifestyles was identified as the strongest tool for training.

Third, scholars like Hilderbrandt,⁸³ MacDonald,⁸⁴ and Gentry⁸⁵ argue against the pedagogical interpretation of Proverbs 22:6. They submit that against the idea of training, *Hánök* is best rendered ‘to dedicate or initiate’ since *lanna`ar* to them refers to a ‘cadet or squire.’ On the other hand, Roberts, Jr.,⁸⁶ Delitzsch,⁸⁷ Morgan⁸⁸ and Nichol⁸⁹ the problem of Proverbs 22:6 is not with *Hánök* and *na`ar* but rather in understanding the real meaning of *`al-Pî darKô* “in the way he should go”. According to them, training the child should be “according to his way”, that is, according to the habit, inclination, vocation, or nature of the child to suit his age and manner. Although Delitzsch and Morgan’s description of *lanna`ar* does not necessarily exclude the imagery of an infant, Kinder,⁹⁰ Nichol,⁹¹ and Kaiser⁹² insist that Proverbs 22:6 refers to how parents should assist an adolescent or youth choose a career. On the contrary, Adeyemo,⁹³ and McKane⁹⁴ maintain that in wisdom there is one right way, the way of life, and it is to this way that the young man should be directed. Blake⁹⁵ and Sala⁹⁶ observe that parents’ neglect of the parental imperative especially at the earliest stage engenders adverse implications which manifest during adolescence.

While the universal concept of training focuses on the process of perfecting a particular skill, training in parenting is multifaceted. This is because parenting is a life time process which involves the different developmental stages. Training here is therefore

⁸³T. Hilberbrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 4 – 10.

⁸⁴A.J. MacDonald. 1976. The status and role of the *na`ar* in Israelite society. *JNES* 35.3: 147-70.

⁸⁵P.J. Gentry. 2012. Equipping the generations: raising children, the Christian way. *JDFM* 2.2:101 – 106.

⁸⁶R.L. Roberts, Jr. 1962. A note on Proverbs 22:6: train up a child. *Restoration Quarterly*, 6 no 1, January, 40 – 42.

⁸⁷C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch. 2001. *Keil and Delitzsch commentary on the old testament* vol. 6. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 324f.

⁸⁸G.C. Morgan. 1946. *Searchlights from the word*. London, 206.

⁸⁹F.D. Nichol. 1978. *Seventh-day Adventist bible commentary* vol. 1. Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1020.

⁹⁰D. Kidner. 1985. *Proverbs: an introduction and commentary*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 147.

⁹¹F.D. Nichol. 1978. *Seventh-day Adventist bible commentary* vol. 1. Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1020.

⁹²W. C. Kaiser, Jr. 1996. *Hard sayings of the bible*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 287 – 288.

⁹³T. Adeyemo. 2006. *African bible commentary*, Nairobi: WordAlive Publishers, 777.

⁹⁴M. Kane. 1970. *Proverbs: a new approach*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 18.

⁹⁵H. Blake. 1995. *Child age and education*. La Grande, WA: Manna Publishing House, 59.

⁹⁶H. Sala. 2001. *Raising godly kids*. Kaduna: Evangel Publishers Ltd., 181 – 183.

wholistic focusing on not only the child but also the trainer (parent). The next Chapter examines the biblical principles of training in parenting from the OT viewpoint.

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CHAPTER THREE

PRINCIPLES OF TRAINING IN PARENTING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

3.1 Introduction

Children were valued in the Israelite society, considered as a gift of God, and a blessing.⁹⁷ The Old Testament (OT) writers use family images in describing the love of God for his children. Little wonder why God is variously described as mother (a nursing, nurturing mother – Isa. 49:15; 66:12 – 13; Hosea 11:1 – 4) and father (Ex. 4:22 – 23; Jer. 31:9). Diana Garland⁹⁸ observes that parenting is the primary biblical metaphor for God's relationship with each of us as individuals. God is best understood as loving parent. In turn, parents are responsible for teaching and nurturing their children in the ways of God in preparation for life in a family yet to be formed, in which the child will be an adult partner, and to enhance meaningful contribution to the society (Duet 4:5, 9; 11:9). Consequently, the OT presents diverse admonitions to parents on how to train their children. These are based on certain intrinsic and extrinsic motivations or yardsticks relative to God, as the Creator and real owner of the child, the nature of the child which is bound with folly and prone to evil, and the demands of migration from childhood to adulthood and/or the demands of the society.⁹⁹ Consequently, this chapter explores the principles of training in parenting as evident in the OT with the aim of providing biblical foundation for a clearer understanding of the parental imperative in Proverbs 22:6. Prior to the aforementioned, the study takes recourse to family life and child training in the Ancient Near East (ANE) as a background for proper understanding of the subject matter.

3.2 Parenting in the Ancient Near East (ANE)

Victor Matthews affirms that while there are some who would suggest that matriarchal social structures existed or even dominated in the ANE, the weight of evidence indicates that male dominance was the rule and that patriarchal lineage and inheritance

⁹⁷ P.J. King and L.E. Stager. 2001. *Life in biblical Israel*. London: Westminster John Knox Press, 40 – 41.

⁹⁸ D.R. Garland. 2012. *Family ministry: a comprehensive guide*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 89, 175.

⁹⁹ Deuteronomy 6:4 – 9; 11: 18 – 21; 21: 18 – 21; Judges 13; 1 Samuel 1; Isaiah 54: 13; Proverbs 1:8 – 9; 13:23 – 24; 22:15; 23:13 – 14, etc.

systems were the norm in both Egypt and Mesopotamia.¹⁰⁰ The *pater familias* dominates his household and functions as the owner of his wives and children. Mendelsohn observes that in its infancy, the state fought an unceasing battle to restrict the absolute authority of the father who, within his own domain, had physical power and the legal right to treat his wives and children as he pleased and even dispose of them as he saw fit. The outcome of this struggle, he observes, depended on the respective strength of the parties involved: in a strong state (as was the case in Babylon during the periods of the Third Dynasty of Ur and the Hammurabi dynasty), the father's power was kept within limits; in a weak state (as was the case in Assyria, Syria and Palestine during the second millennium B.C.), the father's power was almost unlimited.¹⁰¹

This ancient household generally consisted of the extended family—including not only the wife/wives and children of the father, but also perhaps his unmarried sisters, his widowed mother, and minor children of his deceased father.¹⁰² K. van der Toorn asserts that the concept of corporate identity in ancient Mesopotamia is to be found in the repeated use of the phrase “flesh blood.”¹⁰³ The close quarters in which the people had to live in their small cities,¹⁰⁴ surrounded by the noise of children playing, domestic arguments brewing and merchants hawking their wares, prevented the family from isolating itself from the culture. However, these conditions also encouraged the family, the *bit abim*, to more rigidly identify with its own members so that there was a clear differentiation between “brothers” and “strangers.” In the light of this social attitude, the legal principle of *lex talionis* also could be seen as an expression of corporate identity. A man was responsible in equal measure for his actions, both civil and criminal. In addition, the punishment for injurious

¹⁰⁰ V. H. Matthews. 2003. *Marriage and family in the Ancient Near East*. Marriage and Family Book, 1; I. Mendelsohn. 1948. The family in the Ancient Near East. *The Biblical Archaeologist* vol.11. No.2, 24: 24 – 40. Retrieved December 28, 2012 from www.jstor.org.

¹⁰¹ I. Mendelsohn. 1948. The family in the Ancient Near East. *The Biblical Archaeologist*, vol.11, No.2, 24. Retrieved December 28, 2012 from www.jstor.org.

¹⁰² K. R. Nemet-Nejat. 1998. *Daily Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 127.

¹⁰³ K.V.D. Too. 1996. *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel*. Leiden: Brill, 21. See also I.J. Gelb. 1979. Household and family in early Mesopotamia. *State and Temple Economy in the Ancient Near East*. Edward Lipinski. Ed. Leuven: Peeters, 1:1-97.

¹⁰⁴ J.N. Postgate. 1992. *Early Mesopotamia. society and economy at the dawn of history*. London: Routledge, 20. Postgate estimates that these small urban centers seldom exceeded four thousand inhabitants.

actions could affect him or members of his family as the principle of reciprocity was brought into play.¹⁰⁵

The natural order of life in ancient Mesopotamia assigned particular roles to each person—whether king, priest, soldier, farmer or slave, male or female. Once a person had managed to survive childhood, the expectation was that he or she would become a contributing member of the household and the community.¹⁰⁶ Based upon a cyclical understanding of the universe, each successive generation was expected to maintain continuity with the past, upholding traditions and performing rituals designed to protect the household and effectively manage its resources. Thus, the object of marriage, beyond the economic considerations of the families who had arranged it, was to produce children who would inherit the parents' property, care for them as they aged, and continue to make the offerings necessary to the ancestor cult. There is a clear association in the ancient texts between honouring one's father and the ability to become a father.¹⁰⁷

The desire for economic and social continuity required a male heir, but the relatively high infant mortality rate, as well as the uncertainty of any child living to adulthood, made it necessary for couples to produce several children.¹⁰⁸ This also provided additional hands to work the fields or labour in a shop or home industry (weaving, carving, etc). Too many children, especially daughters, could be a financial disaster for even the wealthy family since each would expect to receive equal treatment with regard to betrothal expenses as well as a dowry. This may explain the fairly frequent mention of exposing infants, literally “casting [them] to the dog's mouth.”¹⁰⁹ Some daughters were dedicated to the goddess as *nadu*-priestesses. These “fallow” females lived a cloistered life that in most circumstances

¹⁰⁵ I. Mendelsohn. 1948. The family in the Ancient Near East. *The Biblical Archaeologist*, vol.11. No.2, 5. Retrieved December 28, 2012 from www.jstor.org.

¹⁰⁶ I. Mendelsohn. 1948. The family in the Ancient Near East. *The Biblical Archaeologist*, vol.11. No.2, 5. Retrieved December 28, 2012 from www.jstor.org.

¹⁰⁷ I. Mendelsohn. 1948. The family in the Ancient Near East. *The Biblical Archaeologist*, vol.11. No.2, 16. Retrieved December 28, 2012 from www.jstor.org.

¹⁰⁸ One might wonder at the low average family size (1.43 children/household) found in Harran census lists. However, this may simply reflect how few children lived to an age of accountability. I. Mendelsohn. 1948. The Family in the Ancient Near East. *The Biblical Archaeologist*, vol.11, No.2, 16. Retrieved December 28, 2012 from www.jstor.org.

¹⁰⁹ M. Malul.1990. Adoption of foundlings in the bible and Mesopotamian documents: a study of some legal metaphors in Ezekiel 16.1-7. *JSOT* 46: 104-106.

required them to remain childless.¹¹⁰ An initial expense, dowering them to the temple would have been required, but this arrangement usually lessened the drain on the family's property or land.¹¹¹ Despite the problems and concerns that a household full of children might present, in all circumstances, infertility or impotence would have been considered a catastrophe for the family. This was of course a more serious problem for childless couples, but a wife might even feel threatened if she was not able to continue to conceive or provide her husband with children. This could be grounds for divorce. If her problem was associated with a debilitating disease, her husband might choose to marry a second wife, but Matthews indicates that she could not be divorced for this reason, and he must continue to support her as before for the rest of her life.¹¹²

As evident in the foregoing, much of the studies on the ANE dwell on the family in general with less attention to the dynamics of training and challenges of parenting. However, Valerie French¹¹³ observes that recently few scholars are now working in this field with intentional efforts at evaluating and interpreting the distinctions among the histories of childhood, childbearing, the family, and child training in parenting. Worthy of note is French's interest in understanding and interpreting the evidence about families from the vantage points of the parents within the family – with particular reference to the history of the training of young children from infancy through ages 6 to 8 years. She, however, observed that taking the position of parents has its own complications, because of the difference in parents and parental status. For instance, in many families in the ancient Mediterranean worlds, the vantage points of mothers differed from those of fathers and from those of foster or adoptive parents. In addition, in many homes, parents were not the primary

¹¹⁰ R. Harris. 1963. The organisation and administration of the cloister in ancient Babylonia. *JESHO* 6: 121-57; S. Stone. 1982. The social role of the *Naditu* women in Old Babylonian nippur. *JESHO* 25: 50-70. Note the use of a slave woman as a surrogate mother by a *naditu*.

¹¹¹ R. Harris. 1962. Biographical notes on the *Naditu* women of Sippar. *JCS* 16: 1-12. Note the clause that states a *naditu* may benefit from a portion of the parental estate in her lifetime but that it "belongs only to her brothers."

¹¹² V. H. Matthews. 2003. *Marriage and family in the Ancient Near East*. Marriage and Family Book, 17.

¹¹³ V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of Parenting: Volume 2 Biology and Ecology of Parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 348. Given the richness of French's collection on this subject, a larger part of this segment depended on this source.

child caregivers; a variety of forms of surrogate parenthood was common.¹¹⁴ Egypt may not be exempted from the above practice because the action of Pharaoh's daughter in contracting the training of Moses to his surrogate but still biological mother (Exod 2:5 – 10), is a clear indicator. Moreover, the expectations of parents differed across socioeconomic class according to subculture. A closer look at some of the countries of the ANE sheds light on the subject matter.

3.2.1 Ancient Egypt

Of all the ancient Mediterranean civilisations, French observes that the Egyptians – pharaohs to peasants – seem to have been the most devoted parents. Throughout the nearly 2,000 years that the pharaohs ruled the Nile River valley (ca. 3000 – 1000 BCE), the pervasive social expectation was that parents would have large families, enjoy their children, and rear them with love and care. Egyptians also recognised stages of child development and had separate hieroglyphs designating infants, toddlers, and adolescents.¹¹⁵ The bulk of the evidence comes from literary and artistic representations of the pharaoh and his family, and of other nobles, giving our picture a decidedly aristocratic cast. However, French observes that archaeological evidence from workers' communities, particularly Deir el-Medina of the new Kingdom (ca. 1550 – 1069 BCE), parallels that of elite families. Tomb paintings, from Old through the New Kingdoms, presumably depicting what the honoree wanted in the afterlife, frequently show father and mother surrounded by their offspring, eating, playing, hunting, and so forth. By the conventions of Egyptian art, the child occupy as important iconographic space as do other relatives and trusted adult servants.

This interpretation of tomb paintings – that parents regarded their children as essential members of the family – is corroborated by the prominence given their children in the official art of the heretic pharaoh Akhenaten and his wife Nefetiti (ca. 1378 – 1362 BCE). King and queen have their children with them at state ceremonies, hold them on their laps, kiss and embrace them warmly. This is no mistaking the fondness of these royal

¹¹⁴ V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 348.

¹¹⁵ V. French. 2002. History of Parenting: The Ancient Mediterranean World. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 350

parents for their children – or at least part of the public message conveyed by these official representations: Conjugal and parental affection is to be emulated. Social expectations encouraged large families, with 8 – 12 children considered a satisfactory number. Childless marriages were regarded as a disaster; such marriages ended in divorce or with the adoption of children, often those of poorer relatives. Because marriage occurred early for males – in their late teens – men had ample time to sire large families; females married in their early to midteens, common in ancient societies.

Fathers were proud of and honoured for their progeny, and bureaucrats kept records of all births. Compared with other societies, habitual ancient preference for males over females was mild in Egypt. There was no evidence of female infantile and few indications of any kind of deliberate neglect or murder of newborns. Mothers took pride in their fertility. In an inscription recording the will of the woman Naunakhte from the workers' village of Deir el-Medina indicates that although custom dedicated that males headed their households, yet women suffered few legal disabilities. They could own and convey property and could sue in courts in their own right.¹¹⁶ Naunakhte's will also show the expectation of parents that their children would care for them in their old age. An adage from the late period (ca. 664 – 323 BCE) advises "Do not prefer one of your children above the others; after all, you never know which of them will be kind to you."¹¹⁷ Apparently, not all children lived up to this expectation; but most children probably did. Tyldesley opines that a New Kingdom scribe's instructions to his son counsels respect and honor for his mother: "Double the food which your mother gave you and support her as she supported you. You were a heavy burden to her but she did not abandon you. When you were born after your months, she was still tied to you as her breast was in your mouth for three years. As you grew and your excrement was disgusting, she was not disgusted."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 350; F. Macdonald. 1999. *Women in ancient Egypt*. New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 10; G. Robins. 1997. *Women in Egypt. Ancient Egypt*. D. Silverman. Ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 8: 80 – 89.

¹¹⁷V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 348; see also J. Tyldesley. 1994. *Daughters of Isis: women in ancient Egypt*. New York: Viking, 68.

¹¹⁸J. Tyldesley. 1994. *Daughters of Isis: women in ancient Egypt*. New York: Viking, 69.

Despite the clear evidence of parental love of and investment in their children, there is relatively little evidence of child training practices. Methods of training in parenting must therefore be inferred from the information derived from medical treatments, school texts, and household archaeology. The extensive medical literature reveals an astonishing variety of tests used to try to determine the potential fertility of a woman, whether she was pregnant, and the sex of the fetus; this is little about normal childbirth, except for medicaments and incantations used to induce birth.¹¹⁹ Babies and young children spent their time in the household, and their care was entrusted primarily to mothers, elder female relatives living with the family, and older siblings. Babies were laid on cushions when they were not being carried around by their mothers, who used a sling to keep their small children close to their breast until they were weaned. In wealthy families, there were additional child attendants, often slaves purchased especially for this purpose. Elite families had elaborate homes with elegant furnishings. Working-class families had much smaller but well-ventilated houses, usually with a few rooms and a walled-in courtyard, where most of the day-to-day household work took place. Thus children were nearly constantly in the presence of watchful, attentive adults who were interested in and often delighted by their activities; as they became capable, children were expected to help with daily chores. Men and women spent their leisure together, often in family activities such as picnics or walks through the countryside.¹²⁰

Children were breast-fed until approximately the age of 3 years – a comparatively late age for weaning in the ANE. However, given the contamination of the Nile River water – which the Egyptians understood as a potential source of illness – and the prevalence of barley beer as the main beverage, late weaning makes considerable sense for protecting the wellbeing of the child. However, given the Egyptians’ desire for many children and the likely suppression of ovulation associated with breastfeeding, late weaning is perhaps surprising. Working-class and peasant women nursed their own children; elite families hired wet-nurses, a profession held in high esteem among Egyptians, in contrast to other ancient societies. Otherwise, children probably shared in their parents’ diet – bread, vegetables,

¹¹⁹V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 351.

¹²⁰V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 350.

lentils, beans, fish, some fruit, and honey. For working-class families, bread was the mainstay of the diet, with other foods used sparingly and meat reserved for feast days. Parents, then, created for their children a safe and pleasurable early childhood. But by the age of 5 or 6 years, children were expected to begin preparation for their adult occupations. In all classes, girls were taught all the domestic skills they would need to manage their households. In working-class and peasant families, the vast bulk of the population, sons learned their fathers' occupations; training began with boys following the men into the fields or apprenticing in crafts. However, here too, parents took great care for their children's training for adult life. More privileged children – some girls as well as boys – attended school from the age of 4 to 14 years, where they learned reading, writing, mathematics, and singing. Sick babies and children caused their parents much anxiety because infant mortality rates were high. Nevertheless, children at least had the comfort of loving care and prayers.¹²¹

3.2.2 Ancient Mesopotamia

Without doubt, the ANE was home to a succession of kingdoms – Sumer, Akkad, Babylonia, and Assyria. French observes that in general these Mesopotamian cultures has a darker cast to them than the apparently more easy going and optimistic Egyptians due to incessant wars, litigious nature and unending struggle with comparatively unpredictable seasonal floods, and the mythologies that depicted a gloomy life and afterlife. This overall more pessimistic tone seems to have permeated family life as well. Literary or artistic representations of a happy home life symbolised by parents with their children are nearly nonexistent in Mesopotamia. It appears family life is not celebrated as children are almost absent from official and funerary art.¹²² Nevertheless, Kramer observes that there are proverbs, like the following from Sumer, which suggest that from the father's viewpoint, having a family was difficult: “Who has not supported a wife or child has not borne a

¹²¹V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 351 – 352.

¹²²V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 353.

leash!”¹²³ Yet, having children was important as a barren wife could be divorced, and a wife who refused to have children could be drowned.¹²⁴

In Babylonia, the Code of Hammurabi (ca. 1750 BCE) sets forth many provisions about how parents and the community were to train and care for children, particularly their economic upkeep, which apparently suggests the possibility of parents either neglecting or abandoning their responsibilities to their children. Laws protecting external encroachment on family even by adopted fathers upon the death of biological father were put in place. This also suggests the possible fate of children without fathers. However, fathers had the legal right to expose infants and sell their children into slavery.¹²⁵ There are also severe penalties for children who enter into conflict with their parents.¹²⁶

A picture of a desirable home life must be inferred not from literary or artistic representations of happy parents with their youngsters but from descriptions of disasters that could be imposed by the gods or underworld demons. Amidst the complicated aftermath of such experiences, that is if the word *amargi* literally “return to the mother” is understood as a child gaining freedom from not only these external forces, but also the sometime tyrant father, it could be said that in Sumerian culture, mothers as opposed to fathers were regarded as the main source of training, protection, and comfort for their children.¹²⁷

¹²³ S. N. Kramer.1963. *The Sumerians*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (np); see also V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 350.

¹²⁴ C. Eller. 2000. *The myth of matriarchal prehistory: why an invented past won't give women a future*. Boston: Beacon, (np); V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 350.

¹²⁵ V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 351 – 353.

¹²⁶ The Principle of the *lex talionis* in Hammurabi's Code governed children who were in conflict with their parents. A son who denied that he was the child of either the man or the woman who reared him was to have his tongue cut out; a son who said he hated the man or the woman who reared him and then went back to his father's house was to have his eyes plucked out; a son who struck his father was to have his fingers cut off. See V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 352.

¹²⁷ S. N. Kramer.1963. *The Sumerians*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (np); See also V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 353

The militarism of Mesopotamian cultures shows up especially in Assyria, certainly the most fearsome of these powers. Aristocratic fathers introduced their sons early, possibly when they were 3 years old, to the military life by training them to ride horses and to shoot with bow and arrow. However, the fact that in Assyria the morning greeting involved kisses exchanged among parents and children suggests some expressions of parental affection for the young. It was generally believed by the Mesopotamians that demons caused illness. One Labartu, portrayed with a pig nursing at her breast and holding a snake in each hand, was particularly dangerous to newborns. Surviving medical texts, representing both Akkadian and Assyrian medical knowledge, can tell us something about eastern Mediterranean societies' understanding of the health and diseases of young children.¹²⁸

French therefore opines that overall it seems the rather pessimistic outlook of adult society in ancient Mesopotamia may have served to promote more emotional distance between parents and children than seems to have existed in ancient Egypt. However, it appears no scholar primarily trained in the ancient Mesopotamian languages has yet investigated parenting, family life, or childrearing in these complex cultures; research by specialists may cause a revision of these conclusions.

3.3 Parenting in Ancient Israel

The archaeology of ancient Israel in the Biblical period (from the patriarchs through the Babylonian exile, ca. 2000–500 BCE) reveals that the vast bulk of the population lived in an agrarian, subsistence economy based on small family-centered households. These households had at their core a husband and wife, their children, and other kin—often older relatives—and were usually multigenerational; they probably averaged 10–15 people.¹²⁹ In the Bible, God is often described as a parent, usually as a father; most of these portrayals

¹²⁸ V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 350. The Mesopotamians seemed to have recognized such conditions as scurvy, hydrocephalus, polio, nosebleeds, meningitis, colitis, jaundice, gangrene, epilepsy, ear infections, tuberculosis, abscesses, dysentery, and poisoning from botulism. Recommended treatments included poultices, bathing, and ingestion of a range of herbs and plants such as frankincense, myrrh, and thyme. Only elite families would have been able to engage men learned in medical matters; the poor surely relied on folk remedies and prayer. How efficacious any of these treatments were remains unknown.

¹²⁹ V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 354.

show “loving ties between fathers and their children”¹³⁰ Sometimes, God is represented as both mother and father, as in the first creation account (Genesis 1:27); and at other times as a mother: screaming in childbirth (Isaiah 42:13–14); unable to forget her nursing baby (Isaiah 49:15); and comforting her children (Isaiah 66:13).

In subsistence agrarian economy, families profited from having many children to help with the intensive labour required for survival. French notes that the biblical injunctions to ‘be fruitful and multiply’ surely served the interests of Israelite villagers and of society as a whole.¹³¹ Most families probably had three to five offspring who survived into adulthood.¹³² Given infant and early childhood mortality rates, to produce that number of surviving children, women probably had twice as many pregnancies.¹³³ Despite the dangers of death in childbirth, women seem to have wanted large families. Indeed, barrenness—explained as God’s closing of the womb—is a theme and dilemma that recurs in the stories of the matriarchs, Sarah, Rachel, and Leah.¹³⁴ In the eleventh century, Hannah’s prayer of petition for a child and her prayer of thanksgiving for her first son provided models repeated in both later Jewish and Christian traditions;¹³⁵ she was rewarded with a son, the future Priest, Judge and Leader, and then with three more sons and two daughters (1 Samuel 1–2). As in other ancient societies, the Israelites explained barrenness and fertility by divine intervention and regularly prayed for divine favour and protection of the mother and small children.

¹³⁰ M. I. Gruber. 1999. Women in the ancient Levant. *Women’s Roles in Ancient Civilizations*. B. Vivante. Ed. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 142. [115–152].

¹³¹ V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 353.

¹³² M. I. Gruber. 1999. Women in the ancient Levant. *Women’s Roles in Ancient Civilizations*. B. Vivante. Ed. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 142.

¹³³ V. French. 2002. History of Parenting: The Ancient Mediterranean World. *Handbook of Parenting: Volume 2 Biology and Ecology of Parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 353.

¹³⁴ C. Exum. 1985. Mother in Israel: A familiar story reconsidered. *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*. L. Russell. Ed. Philadelphia: Westminster, 73–85.

¹³⁵ V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 355; M. I. Gruber. 1999. Women in the ancient Levant. *Women’s Roles in Ancient Civilizations*. B. Vivante Ed. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 142.

Despite the clear evidence for a strong desire for many children, there are hints about older traditions of child sacrifice (such as the story of Isaac [Gen 22], and the ruminations of Jeremiah [7:31–32; 19:5; and 32:35]), which condemn the practice. The date or extent of child sacrifice is unknown.¹³⁶ Desire for children led some Israelites to adopt orphaned children, as Mordecai adopted his uncle's daughter, Esther, in the late sixth century (Esther 2:7). Several other passages depict as *omen*, a man who provides nursing care to someone else's child (Numbers 11:12; Isaiah 49:23). General community solicitude for parentless children is reflected in biblical law's demand that orphans and widows be invited to holiday feasts.¹³⁷

The Bible, supplemented with later Talmudic literature (dating from the Israelites' return from exile in Babylonia in the mid sixth century BCE, extending into the Hellenistic and Greco–Roman periods, and lasting into the fifth century CE), provides some evidence about the beginning of human life among ancient Israelites. Pregnant women were to avoid alcohol, suggesting an understanding of the possibility of damaging a fetus *in utero*, and pregnant women were excused from fasting. Miscarriages were explained by strife and stress in the home, strong and unpleasant odours, the experience of great pain, or insufficient food. Childbirth was expected to be painful and explained by Genesis's account of God's punishment for Eve's disobedience. The death of a woman in childbirth was attributed to her violation of religious law or breaking a vow; an easy delivery was seen as a reward for righteousness.¹³⁸

Childbirth was supervised by midwives and accomplished by kneeling on bricks or stools. Midwives could exercise considerable authority to judge from the Exodus (1:15–19) account of Shipreh and Puah, who rejected pharaoh's order to kill all newborn boys at birth; their refusal saved Moses and started the Hebrew resistance that culminated in the Hebrews' escape from Egypt. The twelfth-century story (1 Samuel 4:19–22) of the wife of

¹³⁶ K. O. Connor. 1992. Jeremiah. *The Women's Bible Commentary*. C. A. Newsom and S. H. Ringe. Eds. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 169–177.

¹³⁷ M. I. Gruber. 1999. Women in the ancient Levant. *Women's Roles in Ancient Civilizations*. B. Vivante Ed. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 142.

¹³⁸ V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 355.

Phinehas giving birth during a battle against the Philistines shows midwives comforting the new mother with the news, “Do not be afraid, for you have given birth to a son,” suggesting a preference for male over female children or perhaps a need for sons to grow up to become soldiers. Preference for male children during the Biblical period, however, may be overstated by the Bible; in a labour-intensive agrarian economy in which many children are desired, females provided not just workers but crucial skilled labour. However, almost certainly a preference for males was clear by the more urban and commercial Talmudic era, when the birth of a daughter became a disappointment. Nonetheless, Jews living in the Greco–Roman world raised all children, and fathers were required to support both sons and daughters while they were minors.¹³⁹

In a metaphor describing God’s care of the New Jerusalem, Ezekiel (16:4–12) provides a good description of the treatment of neonates. The umbilical cord was cut, the infant washed first with water, then oiled and salted with soda ash, which likely served as a bacteriostatic astringent, and finally wrapped in cloth. Evidence from Talmudic sources reveals a variety of remedies for babies who did not breathe readily and for some birth defects, showing “a keen observation of congenital abnormalities and normal newborn behaviour.”¹⁴⁰ In Ezekiel’s account, God provides his infant daughter with the finest embroidered fabrics of linen and silk, sandals made of badger skin, and jewelry—bracelets, a necklace, earrings, and a tiara; this portion of the story of divine care reflects, no doubt, the practices of a few wealthy families; such luxuries were simply unavailable for the bulk of the population. However, these unusually lavish infant accoutrements probably do reflect a general social expectation for basic material investment in the care of newborns. Infants were named at birth, often for parents or grandparents. The name was usually given by both parents, but could be bestowed by the mother alone, as shown when the wife of Phinehas by herself named her newborn son Ichabod. Circumcision occurred on the eighth day and was carried out by a man, although Exodus 4:24–26 hints that women may have played a role in

¹³⁹V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 355.

¹⁴⁰V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 355 – 356.

this ritual in very early times. Mothers, together with older women and siblings, provided the bulk of the care of young children.

In biblical times, the demands for women's skilled labour in the subsistence agrarian economy— gardening, transformation of agricultural products into food, weaving and sewing, pot making and basketry—probably consumed an average of 10 hours a day.¹⁴¹ In such circumstances, mothers likely integrated childcare into their other responsibilities.¹⁴² Thus, we must picture children growing up under the watchful eyes of mothers and adults but also having considerable freedom of movement and action so long as they did not disrupt the extensive and necessary work of adults. We hear nothing about small children's toys or games or play; but some time for maternal play with small children is suggested by Isaiah's description (66:12) of a restored Jerusalem as a happy child "carried on her hip and bounced on her knees." The most frequent references to early childcare in the OT concern nursing and weaning, which probably took place around the age of 3 years.¹⁴³ The story of Hannah from the twelfth century, presents a nursing mother who is excused from making the Passover pilgrimage so she can stay home with her infant until he is weaned (1 Samuel 1–2). In biblical times, mothers very probably nursed their own babies, although a wet nurse is mentioned in 2 Samuel (4:4). In the later Talmudic period, wet-nurses were used in some elite families, as they were in wealthy Greco–Roman ones. Rabbinic opinion was divided on the practice of wet-nursing, as it was on the appropriate time for weaning; there was agreement that the minimum age should be 18 to 24 months, but recommendations for the maximum age ranged from 2 to 5 years. Nursing mothers were encouraged to suckle their children with such incentives as a reduction in other household duties, an exemption from fasts, and the right to have intercourse and use contraceptives while nursing.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ C. Meyers. 1989. Women and the domestic economy of early Israel. B.S. Lesko. Ed. *Brown Judaic Studies*. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, Vol. 166: 265–281.

¹⁴² C. Meyers. 1989. Women and the domestic economy of early Israel. B.S. Lesko. Ed. *Brown Judaic Studies*. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, Vol. 166: 265–281.

¹⁴³ C. Meyers. 1989. Women and the domestic economy of early Israel. B.S. Lesko. Ed. *Brown Judaic Studies*. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, Vol. 166: 265–281.

¹⁴⁴ V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 356.

Another common reference to young children in the OT depicts their suffering in war, and the history of the Israelites brought them much strife—both internal struggle and conflicts with their aggressive neighbours. Indeed, the suffering must often have been terrible. Writing of events in the sixth century, Jeremiah (15:9) tells how a mother, once honoured and blessed for her seven children, is cursed by losing all of them in war. And Jeremiah's prophesy (19:9) that Jerusalem will endure so horrible a famine that parents would eat their children seems fulfilled in Lamentations, in which Jeremiah says the children are desolate (1:16), nursing children and toddlers faint from hunger on the streets (2:11; 2:19), children's tongues stick to roofs of their mouths because of excessive thirst (4:4), and mothers eat their own young (2:20; 4:10). War and upheaval were regular features of Israelite history, but more peaceful images of daily family life appear as well (Ps 131:2).

Other evidences suggest sensible, healthy childrearing practices. Parents were advised to keep their youngsters out of the sun during the middle of the day. Children were to eat slowly, chew their food well, and have a good, solid breakfast. Like their parents, children probably lived on a diet in which the mainstays were bread, olives and olive oil, grapes, and dairy products; these principal foods were supplemented seasonally with other fruits, legumes, and vegetables. Meat was probably reserved for feast days. Strict dietary laws and unusual attention to sanitation in food preparation and handling may well have reduced the incidence of food-related diseases among Israelite children.¹⁴⁵

Primary care of infants and toddlers was the responsibility of the mother and older women, but the Bible clearly reflects an expectation of shared parental authority. Law required respect for and obedience to both mother and father. Besides the commandment to honour both mother and father (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16; Leviticus 19:3), Exodus demanded the death penalty for anyone who cursed or assaulted either parent (21:15–17; Leviticus 20:9). Two injunctions in Deuteronomy (21:18–21 and 22–15) required actions by both mother and father for grown children: turning over a juvenile delinquent to authorities and displaying the bloodstained marital sheet of any bride wrongly accused by her husband of not having been a virgin. Traditional wisdom expressed in Proverbs (1:8 and 6:20) shows

¹⁴⁵V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 357.

the role both parents played in educating the young: “Hear, my child, your father’s instruction, and reject not your mother’s teaching.” Parents taught children the tasks they would have to carry out as adults: fathers the heavy work of the fields, mothers the more specialised labour of tending the gardens, transforming crops into food, weaving, and sewing. Because both boys and girls spent more time during their formative years with their mothers and elder females, it seems probable that these maternal figures played the greater role in socialising the young into the values and mores of Israelite society and religion.¹⁴⁶

The authority and the power of mothers during the biblical period distinguish the Hebrews from other eastern Mediterranean cultures. Although the OT mentions women infrequently (only 9% of the named people are female)¹⁴⁷ and mainly as the mothers of important and famous sons, these women often had significant influence in starting and determining the outcome of crucial events (e.g., the matriarchs, Miriam, Bathsheba, Jezebel, Delilah). One of the most powerful women in the Bible, Deborah, was a judge who organised and helped to lead an army that freed the Israelites from Canaanite oppression, probably in the twelfth century. The name of her husband is given, but there is no specific mention of her children. Yet in her victory song, one of the oldest pieces of literature in the Bible, Deborah identified herself first as a “mother in Israel” (Judges 4–5). Inferences from her accomplishments suggest that “a mother in Israel is one who brings liberation from oppression, provides protection, and ensures the well-being and security of her people”¹⁴⁸ There is every reason to believe that within Israelite households of the biblical period, mothers exercised authority alongside fathers and served as empowering role models for their daughters. However, the legal and cultural authority granted to mothers in the biblical period was significantly circumscribed by the Talmudic era. In rabbinic literature, mothers have lost their ability to be a guardian of or agent for their minor children, and with respect

¹⁴⁶V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 357.

¹⁴⁷V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 355.

¹⁴⁸V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 355.

to “legal responsibility, women were usually bracketed with slaves, minors, deaf-mutes, and persons of double or doubtful sex.”¹⁴⁹

Many scholars believe that during much of the biblical period, ordinary Israelites had rudimentary literacy—in sharp contrast to other eastern Mediterranean cultures. Because there is no evidence of formal schools with paid instructors before the Talmudic period, it seems likely that parents, both mothers and fathers, taught their children the basic elements of reading, writing, and numeracy, as well as the fundamentals of Hebrew cultic and family law.¹⁵⁰ Law required fathers to instruct their children in Hebrew history and tradition (Exodus 10:2; Deuteronomy 32:7).

In these societies, it seems clear that the overall outlook and presuppositions of the general culture permeated to some degree attitudes about children and parenting. Although all of these civilisations recognised infancy and early childhood as distinctive stages of life and took care to safeguard young children, the experience of parenting—and of being a child—seems to have been decidedly different in each. As against the more harsh and pessimistic Mesopotamian cultures, the Israelites seem to have blended into their beliefs about child training elements of the more affectionate and optimistic outlook of the Egyptians. Nevertheless, the giving of affection was combined with the command to instruct and discipline the child as veritable means to achieving proper parenting. This is done within the ambit of the Israelites’ unique conceptualisation of their relationship with their God.

3.4 Selected Principles of Training in Parenting in the Old Testament

Without doubt, a cursory look at the overall parenting discourse in ancient Israel brings to fore some key principles worthy of note. Some of these principles are discussed under the following sub-headings.

3.4.1 Unreserved Love for God

¹⁴⁹ L. J. Archer. 1994. Notions of community and the exclusion of the female in Jewish history and historiography. *Women in Ancient Societies*. L. J. Archer, S. Fischler, and M. Wyke. Eds. New York: Routledge, 63 [53–69].

¹⁵⁰ V. French. 2002. History of parenting: the ancient Mediterranean world. *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 biology and ecology of parenting*. M.H. Bornstein. Ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 358.

Unreserved love for God on the part of parents and later children is a foundational principle of training in parenting. This is intrinsic in the *Shema* (Deut 6:4 – 9):

dx' (a, Yhw"ihy>
WnyhePl{a/ hw"ihy> lae_r"f.yI [m;Pv. 4
^βv.p.n:-lk'b.W ^ib.b'l.-
lk'B. ^yh,_l{a/ hw"ihy> taeP T'êb.h;a'äw>
5

`^d<) aom.-lk'b.W
`^b<) b'l.-l[; ~AYàh; ^±W>c;m.
ykiónOa' rv,'a] hL,ae^h' ~yrIáb'D>h;
Wyùh'w> 6

4 " Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one!

5 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

6 " And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

The *Shema*, Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is part of Moses' admonition to the Israelites in readiness to entrance into the Promised Land. Here, Israel is reminded that against the prevalence of polytheism among surrounding nations, the LORD, God of Israel is one. And as a condition for peace, security and prosperity in Canaan (Deut 6:1 – 3), they were to love the LORD with all their hearts, soul, and strength – a tradition that must be passed on to the subsequent generations. *Shema* Israel is considered the most famous Jewish creed,¹⁵¹ and the fundamental dogma of the OT.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹S. Kizhakkeyil. 2009. *The Pentateuch: an exegetical commentary*. Mumbai: The Bombay Saint Paul Society, 456 – 457.

Luke Dalach¹⁵³ affirms that the *Shema*, in Deut. 6:4-6, which is the basis of Israel's self-identity, sheds light on the role of the household in God's mission. Fundamentally, Israel's identity starts with Yahweh's identity: $\text{d}\alpha' (\alpha, \text{Yhw}''\text{i}\text{h}\text{y} >$
 $\text{Wnyhe}\text{P}\{a/ \text{hw}''\text{i}\text{h}\text{y} >$ (*šüma` yiSrä`el yhw(‘ädönäy) ‘élöhé`nû*
yhw(‘ädönäy) ‘eHäd) “The LORD our God, the LORD is one. There is one Creator of heaven and earth who rules over all and Yahweh is His name. In the light of this, Israel's response is to be one of total love and commitment. As a people set apart by God and different from the nations around them the Hebrews are to be priests of one true God to the world (Exodus 19:5-6).

Dryness identifies Deuteronomy 6:5 as the classic passage which describes the whole of human duty to God.¹⁵⁴ Key to this is human love for God. $\text{Bha} \text{ } ^{\circ}\text{h}\text{c}\text{b}$ ‘love’ occurs 220 times in the OT in 70 forms and is defined as an inner cleaving that involves the whole self in all its activity; an inner force which attaches itself to God in a personal way and which naturally issues in a life of loyalty and commitment.¹⁵⁵ To William Evans¹⁵⁶ $\text{ } ^{\circ}\text{h}\text{c}\text{b}$ is here set forth as more than a mere affection or sentiment; it is something that manifests itself, not only in obedience to known divine commands, but also in protecting and defense of them, and a seeking to know more and more of the will of God in order to express love for God in further obedience (compare Deut 10:12).¹⁵⁶ From the *Shema*, Israel's first responsibility is to keep the commands of Yahweh, which points to his character and results in true and prosperous life in Canaan. This foundational truth is repeated and elaborated by the author of Deuteronomy (11:12 – 25) as specific conditions for divine blessings. Kizhakkeyil adds that the $\text{ } ^{\circ}\text{h}\text{c}\text{b}$ demanded here is a kind of deep loyalty and affection that Israel owes to God, their liberator, from slavery in Egypt.¹⁵⁷ This loving response appears

¹⁵² H. Wolf. 1991. *An introduction to the old testament Pentateuch*. Chicago: Moody Press, 216.

¹⁵³ L. Dalach. 2007. *House to house: a case for missional attractional families*. Fuller Theological Seminary, 10 – 11.

¹⁵⁴ W. Dryness. 1977. *Themes in old testament theology*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 163.

¹⁵⁵ W. Dryness. 1977. *Themes in old testament theology*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 163.

¹⁵⁶ W. Evans. 1988. Love. *The international standard bible encyclopedia vol. 4*. M. C. Bromiley. Ed. Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. *BibleWorks*.

¹⁵⁷ S. Kizhakkeyil. 2009. *The Pentateuch: an exegetical commentary*. Mumbai: The Bombay Saint Paul Society, 458 – 459.

the only proper correlative to God's faithfulness to humanity (Deut 7:9). In the NT, Jesus affirmed the supremacy of love for God as the first and greatest commandment (Matt 22:37f; Mk 12:29 – 34). In this last passage the exhortation to supreme love to God is connected with the doctrine of the unity of God (Deut 6:4f); inasmuch as the Divine Being is one and indivisible, so must our love to Him be undivided. Our love to God is shown in the keeping of His commandments (Ex 20:6; Deut 13:34; see John 14:14; 15:14; 1 John 5:3; 2 John 1:6).¹⁵⁸

The extent at which humans are expected to manifest this love is evident in the author's combination of $\text{^d<) aom .lk' b.W ^\beta v.p.n:-lk' b.W ^\text{ib.b'l.-lk'B.}$ (*Bükol-lübäbkä übükol-napšükä übükol-mü'öde°kä*) 'with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.' bb'l e (*lëbäb*) 'heart' occurs 257 times and in 17 forms in the OT. It is rendered 'heart,' 'inner man,' 'mind,' and 'will' in relation to humans, animals, and inanimate objects, such as sea (Ezek 27:4, 25 - 27). As the central organ in the body, forming a focus for its vital action, the heart has come to stand for the center of its moral, spiritual, and intellectual life. In particular the heart is the place in which the process of self-consciousness is carried out, in which the soul is at home with itself, and is conscious of all its doing and sufferings as its own. *lëbäb* in this connection is sometimes rendered 'mind,' as in Numbers 16:28 "of mine own mind."¹⁵⁹

This love also requires the entirety of the human 'soul.' The Hebrew $\text{v\textcircled{p} , n<}$ (*nepeš*) used here occurs 760 times in 24 forms in the OT and is translated 'a soul,' 'living being,' 'life,' 'self,' 'person,' 'desire,' 'passion,' 'appetite,' and 'emotion.'¹⁶⁰ Although in most cases *nepeš* is translated 'soul', Smith and Brand submit that it primarily means "life" or 'possessing life.'" It is used of both animals (Gen 9:12; Ezek 47:9) and humans (Gen

¹⁵⁸ The same idea is expressed in the works of V.P. Hamilton. 1982. *Handbook on the Pentateuch*. GR, Michigan: Baker Book House, 408 – 409; R. N. Whybray. 1995. *Introduction to the Pentateuch*. GR, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 97 – 98.

¹⁵⁹ J.I. Marais. 1988. Heart. *The international standard bible encyclopedia*. vol. 4. M. C. Bromiley. Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. *BibleWorks*.

¹⁶⁰ Word study on $\text{V\textcircled{p} , n<}$. *BibleWorks*.

2:7). It could sometimes indicate the whole person. For instance in Gen 2:7 where God breathes ‘breath’ into the ‘dust’ and thus makes a *nepeš* ‘soul.’ The word is also used to refer to the inner life, psychological or spiritual states of the human person. For instance, in Ps 42:1 the soul longs to know God. The rest of this Psalm echoes this inner desire for God (vv.2, 4 – 6, 11). In the NT, the Greek *psyche* carries many of the same meanings as the Hebrew *nepeš*. Often the ‘soul’ is equated with the total person (Rom 13:1; Acts 2:41; 3:23).¹⁶¹

Further, love for God requires the entire human *daom . mü'öD* ‘strength.’ *daom . (mü'öD)* occurs 300 times in three forms in the OT. It is rendered ‘might,’ ‘power,’ and ‘strength’ when used substantively. Hence Moses asked Israel to love God with all their ‘strength’ or ‘might’ (Deut 6:5). The OT in most cases uses *h r ' WbG >* (*Gübûrah*) in reference to ‘strength’ of animal such as horse (Ps 147:10), and crocodile (Job 41:4). It also refers to the *h r ' WbG >* of man (Judg 8:21), of his mighty reign (1 Chron. 29:30); and strength (Ps 90:10), at the most. Also reference is made to the *h r ' WbG >* of God (Ps 21:14), and of His powerful deeds (1 Chron. 29:11; Job 26:14; Ps 20:7; 66:7; 145:11). In addition to *Gübûrah* Ps 21:14 uses *Z [Ö (öz)* ‘strength, might’ in reference to God. Judges 5:31 records the appearance of the sun in full strength (*At=r"bug>Bi*). *Gübûrah* is further rendered ‘very’ – in the highest degree as an adverb, thereby reinforcing very much indeed. In Gen 1:31, God looked at everything He has made and behold, “it was very (*mü'öD*) good.”¹⁶²

Put together, Moses in the *Shema* commands all Israel to love YHWH from their innermost being, a call that transcends outward appearance, superficial worship, or divided loyalty. In other words, loving God must ensue from the depth of one’s heart which is the wellspring of the body. The entire life or existence and activity of each person must reflect a

¹⁶¹ F. Smith and C. Brand. 2003. Soul. *Holman illustrated bible dictionary*. C. Brand et al. Eds. Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1522.

¹⁶² Word study on Deut 6: 4, 5 in *BibleWorks*.

passionate pursuit for that which pleases God and this must be done in the highest degree. Such requirements are intrinsic in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1 – 17) which Lois Fuller¹⁶³ considers the specific terms that required full and total obedience as they reflected conditions for a healthy relationship and full actualisation of Yahweh's promise of full occupation of the Promised Land and enduring peace and prosperity in it. By setting up a form of government which resembles the suzerainty (rulership) found among the Hittites between kings and the nations they conquered, Yahweh became Israel's national and personal God in concrete historical experience. This is the heart of Yahwism, the worship of YHWH, which the 'Deuteronomists' sought to emphasise.¹⁶⁴

The meaning or essence of Yahwism is rooted in an understanding of the Ten Commandments.¹⁶⁵ Fuller further notes that although the law given by God has many similarities to the law codes of the nearby cultures, law in Israel was not so much rules and regulations as revelation of God's will and nature.¹⁶⁶ Therefore, learning the law was to learn about God. This is exemplified in the first four in the Ten Commandment.¹⁶⁷ The rest

¹⁶³ L. Fuller. 2004. *The Pentateuch: foundation of God's message to the world*. Bukuru, Jos: African Christian Textbooks (ACTS), 78.

¹⁶⁴ G. O. Abe. 2004. *Yahwism tradition vis-à-vis African culture: the Nigerian milieu*. Inaugural Lecture Series 1: Faculty of Arts and Education, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, March 17, 2004,6.

¹⁶⁵ T. Dickson. 2011. Tension between Yahwism and popular Religion in incient Israel: implications for Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nigeria. *Journal of AIIAS African Theological Association*. E.A. Patrick. Ed. Philippines, vol. 2: 124.

¹⁶⁶ T. Dickson. 2011. Tension between Yahwism and popular Religion in ancient Israel: implications for Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nigeria. *Journal of AIIAS African Theological Association*. E.A. Patrick. Ed. Philippines, vol. 2: 79.

¹⁶⁷ W. Kaiser, Jr. 1991. *Toward old testament ethics*. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 85. He submits that the highest duty of humanity is given in the first commandment. He affirms that it is the foundation for all morality, when defined as our conformity to the character and will of God. The second commandment prohibits the making of any image of Yahweh, or of any other divine, human, or animal forms (Exod 20:4 – 6). This requires that the worship of Yahweh must be qualitatively different from that of the other gods. Here the mode of worship and ascribing worth to Yahweh is stated. The commandment has two parts thus: the precept (vv. 4 – 5) and the penalty (vv. 5 – 6). The prohibition Kaiser notes is aimed at idolatry which can be two-fold: spiritual and internal or material and external. The third commandment prohibits any attempt to misuse the name of Yahweh. This is an intentional progression in God's desire for absolute loyalty and sincerity of heart and purpose in all transactions. In her relationship with Yahweh, Israel must understand that reverence and the fear of God must characterize all religious or civil engagements. Empty or vain promises, vows, witnesses, or affirmations in connection with the name of God constitute irreverence. This is true because as Kaiser observes, the name of God includes 1) His nature, being, and very person (Ps. 20:1; Luke 24:47; John 1:12; cf. Rev. 3:4), 2) His teaching and doctrines (Ps. 22:22; John 17:6, 26), and 3), His ethical directions and morals (Mic. 4:5). Fountain (M. Fountain. 2003. 'YHWH.' *Holman illustrated bible dictionary*. C. Brand et al. Eds. Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers) notes that reverence for the divine name led to the practice of avoiding its use lest one runs afoul of commandments (see Exod. 20:7 or Lev. 24:16). Finally, the fourth commandment required Israel to observe the Sabbath day as the day of

of the commandments (fifth to tenth Exod. 20:12 – 17) deal with right relations with one another in the society and find their meaning in the first four. From Deuteronomic authors, love is synonymous with obedience and they insist upon having a parent-child relationship between God and Israel. This *lëbäb* Kizhakkeyil submits is the echo of God's love for his people (4:37; 7:8; 10:15) and it embraces the fear of God, the duty of service and the observance of precepts (6:13; 10:12 -13; 11:1).¹⁶⁸ King Josiah is mirrored as having met these requirements (2 Kings 23:25). Apart from Deuteronomy, Hosea and Jeremiah are full of imageries of the love of God. Before engaging in the task of parenting therefore, parents must seek to love and acknowledge God as supreme and the only One that deserves their worship. Loving God with all the *lëbäb*⊖, *nepəš*, and *Gübûrah* entails training one's entire body in the knowledge and understanding of God; and being immersed in a personal relationship with Him until doing His will becomes almost natural. It is the attainment of mental, emotional, moral, social, and spiritual maturity required to not only continue the process of procreation, but most importantly nurture and train succeeding generations to do same. Undiluted love and vertical connection with God which automatically puts the individual under obligation to reflect a mutual love for others, engenders a horizontal affection and commitment for a healthy family and society. Only from this standpoint can parents adequately communicate the will of God which is rooted in sincere love and obedience to their children. Anything short of that amounts to failure and crises because no parent can give to the next generation what he or she does not have.

3.4.2 Personal Commitment to Teaching/Training

rest. This command has moral and ceremonial dimensions. Morally, it requires of men and women a due portion of their time set aside for rest, worship, and service of God. Ceremonially, it fixed the day as the seventh day which apart from other Sabbath celebrations as evident in the Old Testament, has constituted our weekly cycle since creation. The latter captures the full reason given in Exodus 20:8 – 11 for memorializing this day: a reference to creation (v. 11) reflecting the theology of rest and second, a future reference to the new exodus and redemption, which like the previous exodus from Egypt will occur (Duet 5:15). Wade (L. Wade. 2006. *The Ten Commandments*. Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 48.) argues that intrinsic in the Sabbath command is God's way of consummating His desire for absolute loyalty and worship from Israel as seen in the first three commandments. The act of resting declares to the universe that the Sabbath is a sign of relationship with God based on faith. It aimed at not only promoting this relationship, but rather to deepen it providing assurance in God's love and peace. By this, the fourth commandment serves as a complement and guarantee of the first three which ordered Israel to worship God and give Him first place in their lives.

¹⁶⁸S. Kizhakkeyil. 2009. *The Pentateuch: an exegetical commentary*. Mumbai: The Bombay Saint Paul Society, 458 – 459.

To underscore the importance of parental unreserved love for God in the *Shema* (Deut 6:4 – 5), Moses urged the people to use ‘every means’ to entrench these commandments to the entire fabric of their children (Deut 6:7 – 9).

%r<D<êb; ^âT.k.l,b.W ^t,'ybeB.
 ^ÛT.b.viB. ~B' _ T'Ër>B;dIw> ^yn<ëb'l.
 ~T'än>N:viw 7

^ßB.k.v'b.W* ^m<)Wqb.W

^yn<)y[e !yBeî tpoßj'jol.
 Wyðh'w> ^d<+y"-l[; tAaßl. ~T'îr>v;q.W 8

^yr<(['v.biW ^t<ßyBe
 tzOðWzm.-l[; ~T'²b.t;k.W 9

7 "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

8 "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

9 "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (NKJ).

This is the thrust of parental responsibility in child training. Moses’ choice of words reflects the intentionality that parenting requires from every parent. The major point here is his use of ~T'än>N:vi (*šinnanTäm*) from !nV (*šnn*) which occurs 9 times and in 6 different forms in the OT. It is rendered ‘to whet or sharpen,’ ‘to be pierced’ and ‘to inculcate or repeat.’ First, in the Qal perfect¹⁶⁹ !nV is used in reference to ‘whet or sharpen’ objects: of a sword; To “sharpen (yṭiĀNv;) a glittering sword” (Deut.

¹⁶⁹ The Qal perfect stem of the Hebrew verbal form describes a simple action completed in the past.

32:41): of an arrow (Ps 45:6; Prov. 25:18; Isa 5:25), and to sharpen (Wnæn>v") a tongue like a sword (Ps 64:4; 140:4). The Hebrew also uses the Hithpa'el of the verb imperfect¹⁷⁰ to express a sharp piercing. Thus, the Psalmist exclaims: "And I was pierced (!n") ATv . a ,) within." The use of ~T ' ä n > N : v i the Pi'el perfect of ! n v in Deuteronomy 6:7, its only occurrence in the Pi'el, is rendered 'to inculcate, repeat or say anything again and again on anyone.'¹⁷¹ The latter underscores the dare need to not only teach by way of communication or inculcate the desire to love and obey God as the one and only God, but rather to do so repeatedly when they sit in the house, walk by the way, lie down, and rise up. Here is the difference between teaching and training. While the former aims at impacting a specific knowledge which could be tested through examination, the latter entails a process that continues until perfection is attained. Such continuum is further buttressed by the call for parents to wear these commandments as phylacteries and to write them on the doorposts of their house and on their gates.

Bill Warren observes that most teaching and learning in the biblical times consisted of informal training which concentrated on passing along an approach of life centred on guidance for a moral and religious lifestyle. Formal education which included the sense of reading and writing appears restricted to the elites of society (the rulers and their immediate workers) throughout most of the biblical period. This is probably due to the requirement for a more formal setting for such training – a requirement which the peasants do not need to fulfil in their everyday obligations.¹⁷² He identifies three major informal and semiformal types of learning mentioned in the OT with different emphasis for each setting thus: the home, the use of scribes by political elites, and the education of the elites. The home occupies the first and most common setting in which moral instruction; cultural patterns, historical events, and spiritual guidance were taught by parents to children on an informal level with extended family involved in the task many times as well. The above

¹⁷⁰ This verbal form expresses a reflexive action either in the past or the future. In the imperfect form, such actions predominantly express an idea in the future.

¹⁷¹ Word Study in *Bibleworks*. 2007; cf. W.H.F. Gesenius. 1979. *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee lexicon to the old testament*. GR, Michigan: Baker Books, 841; W. Holladay. 1988. *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the old testament*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 379.

¹⁷² B. Warren. 2003. Education in bible times. *Holman illustrated bible dictionary*. C. Brand et al. Eds. Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 461.

scenario adequately fits into the Mosaic requirements from parents as seen in the *Shema*. Here, training, which takes the form of normal discipleship of children by their parents, is engaged as the vehicle of choice for passing along the religious heritage of the group.¹⁷³ As expected, virtually all aspects of daily life were taught in the home.¹⁷⁴

The second type of learning related especially to the needs of the political elites for helpers such as scribes in keeping government records and promoting their image in the public domain. These needs, Warren notes are reflected in the tax lists and conquest records found in several archaeological finds from the region of the OT period. Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian remains on clay tablets attest to this type of record keeping, with increased use of scribal recording materials during the first millennium before Christ, as seen in the literary advances of this time period in both the Hebrew culture and the surrounding cultures. The training requirement for such scribal work was quite complicated, and only a small segment of the society outside of the elites (upper class) achieved a high level of literacy training. This semiformal structured educational training was somehow directly related to literacy and did not necessarily involve learning in other areas of study (probably not even the training of scribes) unless the retainers (helpers of the elites) were being trained to teach the children of the elites in a formal education setting.¹⁷⁵

In the OT context, Ezra is seen as the prime example of a religious emphasis on scribal training and activity. Ezra marks a turning point as a class of religious scribes emerges in order to copy the sacred texts and to read them to the people. Members of this scribal group often became interpreters of the text during the intertestamental and NT time periods. The emergence of the synagogue gatherings provided further settings for offering training in at least minimal levels of reading literacy as required for reading the sacred text

¹⁷³ The above scenario reflects with specification the demand of the OT for conscious effort in this endeavour with the content delineated in its broad contours from the religious standpoint. Other examples of household education include instruction in holiness codes (laws about what was clean and unclean, dietary laws, and Sabbath rules), teachings about the importance of such historical events as the Passover, and the passing along of work skills through apprenticeship in the father's trade. For further details on this, see B. Warren. 2003. Education in bible times. *Holman illustrated bible dictionary*. Brand et al. Eds., 461.; A. Edersheim. 1974. *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, GR, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 101 – 116; D. and P. Alexander further affirm that there was no 'school' for ordinary men's children. Instead, they were taught everyday skill by father and mother, who also explained the law and the religious festivals to them. See on D. and P. Alexander. 2000. *The lion handbook to the bible*. Oxford: Lion Publishing Plc., 94.

¹⁷⁴ B. Warren. 2003. Education in bible times. *Holman illustrated bible dictionary*. Brand et al. Eds., 461.

¹⁷⁵ B. Warren. 2003. Education in bible times. *Holman illustrated bible dictionary*. Brand et al. Eds., 461.

in the synagogue services. Also, spiritual instruction and moral guidance were taught to children through the synagogue organisation during the week. For the NT period this is the likely source for any educational training outside the home that Jesus and His disciples would have had.

The third setting for formal learning in biblical time period involved the education of elites themselves, those in the upper stratum of society. In these settings a more formal education system existed that included training by others outside of the family unit who were hired for that purpose (or slaves were used). Warren notes that while records of this type of training in the OT time period are limited, a general picture includes royal courts and wealthy urban elites with at least some collections of important works. In Egypt and the Babylonian, Assyrian, and Persian empires, the level of formality, breath, and sophistication of such learning were quite high.¹⁷⁶

Nevertheless, the command to $\sim T' \text{än} > N : v i$ 'inculcate' or 'repeat again and again' the love for God when you $\wedge t, 'ybeB. \wedge \ddot{U}T.b.viB. (BüšibTükä Bübête^kâ)$ 'sit in the house,' $\wedge \check{a}T.k.l, b.W \%r < D < \hat{e}b; (\hat{u}bülekTükä baDDe^rek)$ 'walk on the way' $\wedge m <) Wqb.W \wedge \beta B.k.v' b.W^*$ ($\hat{u} | büšokBükä \hat{u}büqûme^kâ$) lie down and rise up'; to $\wedge yn <) y [e ! yBe \hat{i} tpo\beta j ' j o l . W y \check{o} h ' w > \wedge d < + y " - l [; t A a \beta l .$
 $\sim T' \hat{i} r > v ; q . W (\hat{u}qüşarTäm lü'ôt `al-yäde^kâ wühäyû lü\check{o} \check{f} \check{a} p \check{o} t B \hat{e} n ` \hat{e} n \hat{E}^kâ)$ 'tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders' and to $\wedge yr < ([' v . b i W \wedge t < \beta y B e t z O \check{o} W z m . - l [;$
 $\sim T' ^2 b . t ; k . W (\hat{u}kütabTäm `al-müzûzöt Bête^kâ \hat{u}biš `är \hat{E}^kâ)$ 'write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates' reflects more of life in the home setting. A metaphorical understanding of this injunction would have been for Israel to constantly and

¹⁷⁶ B. Warren. 2003. Education in bible times. *Holman illustrated bible dictionary*. Brand et al. Eds., 462.

consistently teach their children love for God as manifested in humble obedience to His will; training them to observe all religious requirements, and to honor God in every facet of their personal and cooperative endeavours, using all available avenue and opportunities. Of course, Moses had instructed that whether at home or walking along the road, parents were to talk to their children constantly about God's requirements. This they did in the sense that as Coogan,¹⁷⁷ Kizhakkeyil,¹⁷⁸ and Wolf¹⁷⁹ observe the *Shema* in combination with Deuteronomy 11:13 – 21 and Numbers 15:37 – 41 became frequently Jewish prayers. This included a daily recitation of the words themselves and by subsequent generations. Consequently, the *Shema* became the profession of faith that accompanies Jews from their earliest years to the grave. It is the foundation of the educational activity of parents toward their children, and in every Jewish home it is recited upon retiring and at rising. They note that this prayer is the first principle of thought and the guide for the will in family life and community life. It was with *Shema* Israel on their lips that Israelite martyrs went to the stake and suffered for Israel and their God.

Eventually, however, the Jews took Deuteronomy 6:8 – 9 of the *Shema* beyond its metaphoric stance to a literal undertone, writing the passage on strips of parchment that were put into small leather boxes called phylacteries. Every morning before praying, Jewish men tied the phylacteries to their left arms and their foreheads. It also became common practice to attach small containers with the Scripture verses to the door frames of the house.¹⁸⁰ Edersheim opines that though it might be difficult to say exactly when the instruction of the Hebrew child really commenced, even before the first waking thoughts of human consciousness or before taking any of the domestic rites of the recurring weekly festival or those of the annual feasts, he or she must have been attracted by the so-called “Mesusah.” This was fastened at the door-post of every ‘clean’ apartment, and at the entrance of such

¹⁷⁷ M. Coogan. 2006. *The Old Testament: a historical and literary introduction to the Hebrew scriptures*. New York: Oxford University Press, 176.

¹⁷⁸ S. Kizhakkeyil. 2009. *The Pentateuch: an exegetical commentary*. Mumbai: The Bombay Saint Paul Society, 460.

¹⁷⁹ H. Wolf. 1991. *An introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*. Chicago: Moody Press, 216 – 217.

¹⁸⁰ H. Wolf. 1991. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*. Chicago: Moody Press, 217; see also L. Goldberg. 1986. *Deuteronomy*. Bible Study Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 66.

houses as were inhabited by Jews exclusively.¹⁸¹ The “Mesusah” was a kind of phylactery for the house, serving a purpose akin to that of phylactery for the person, both ideas being derived from a misunderstanding and misapplication of the Divine direction (Deut 6:9; 11:20), taking in the letter what was meant for the spirit. Such misconceptions may have been responsible for the endless derailment of the Israelites from their covenantal relationship with YHWH. Jeremiah’s suggestion that in the New Covenant, the Law will be written in the heart of the people and not on their doorpost, gates, among others (Jeremiah 31:31 – 34 cf. Ezekiel 36:26 – 28), may not be unconnected with the above misconceptions.

But while apparently conceding that the earlier Jewish practice was free from some of the present almost semi-heathenish customs, and further, that many houses in Palestine were without it, there can be little doubt that, even at the time of Christ, this “Mesusah” would be found wherever a family was at all pharisaically inclined. Enclosed in a shining metal case and affixed to the door-post, the child, when carried in arms, would naturally put out its hands to it; the more so, that the child would see the father and all others, on going out and coming in, reverently touch the case, and afterwards kiss the finger, speaking at the same time a benediction. From early times, the presence of the “Mesusah” was connected with the Divine protection of which Psalm 121:8 specially applied to it: “The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore”. The “Mechilta,” one of the most interesting ancient literary documents in existence, argues the efficacy of the “Mesusah” from the fact that, since the destroying angel passed over the doors of Israel which bore the covenant-mark, a much higher value must attach to the “Mesusah,” which embodied the name of the Lord no less than ten times and was to be found in the dwellings of Israel day and night through all their generations. From this to the magical mysticism of the “Kabbalah,”¹⁸² and even to such modern superstitions as that, if dust or dirt were kept within a cubit of the “Mesusah,” no less a host than three hundred and

¹⁸¹ A. Edersheim. 1974. *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 106. He further notes that the “Mesusah” was not affixed to any that not “diroth cavod” – dwellings of honour. Thus not to bath rooms, wash-houses, tanneries, dyeworks, etc. The “Mesusah” was only attached to dwelling places and not synagogues.

¹⁸² T.R. Rich. 2011. *Kabbalah and Jewish mysticism*. Retrieved June 7, 2013 from <http://www.jewfaq.org/kabbalah>. Judaism has ancient mystical teachings. Jewish Mysticism known as Kabbalah was taught only to those who had already learned Torah and Talmud. Rich however noted that Kabbalah and its teachings have been distorted by mystics and occultists.

sixty-five demons would come, there is a difference of degree rather than of kind.¹⁸³ Wolf¹⁸⁴ observes that over the years this custom deteriorated into a legalistic exercise, and by the NT times the Pharisees and teachers of the law wore their phylacteries to impress the populace (Matt. 23:5).

The various misunderstanding and misapplication of Deuteronomy 6:8 – 9 notwithstanding, one obvious thing Edersheim¹⁸⁵ notes is that as soon as the child had any knowledge, the private and the united prayers of the family and the domestic rites, whether of the weekly Sabbath or of the festive seasons, would indelibly impress themselves upon his mind. It would be difficult to say which of those feasts would have the most vivid effect upon the child's imagination. From the moment a child was capable of being instructed, especially upon taking part in the services, the impression would deepen day by day. He affirms that no one who had ever worshipped within the courts of the temple in Jerusalem could ever have forgotten the scenes he had witnessed, or the words he had heard. Every bit of the services at the temple or at home was accompanied with the historical stories of Yahweh's faithfulness and leadings in the past, from the call of Abraham, the great deliverance from Egypt and God's active leadership, protection and providence during their wilderness wandering, to the gift of a land overflowing with milk and honey.

No wonder Philo, without exaggeration, submits that the Jews "were swaddling clothes, even before being taught either the sacred laws or the unwritten customs, trained by their parents, teachers, and instructors to recognise God as Father and as the Maker of the world"; and that "having been taught the knowledge (of the laws) from earliest youth, they bore in their souls the image of the commandments."¹⁸⁶ To the same effect Josephus testifies

¹⁸³ A. Edersheim. 1974. *Sketches of Jewish social life*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 107 – 108.

¹⁸⁴ H. Wolf. 1991. *An introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*. Chicago: Moody Press, 217.

¹⁸⁵ A. Edersheim. 1974. *Sketches of Jewish social life*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 106 – 111. There was the "Chanukah," the feast of the Dedication, with its illumination of each house, when (in most cases) the first evening one candle would be lit by each member of the household, the number increasing each night, till on the eighth, it was eight times that of the first. Then there was "Purim," the feast of Esther, with the good cheer and boisterous merriment which it brought; the feast of Tabernacles, when the very youngest of the house had to live out in the booth; and, chiefest of feasts, the week of the Passover, when all leaven being carefully purged out, every morsel of food, by its difference from that ordinarily used, would show the child that the season was a special one.

¹⁸⁶ Philo, *Legat.ad Cajum*, sec. 16, 31 as quoted in H. Wolf. 1991. *An introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*. Chicago: Moody Press, 110 – 111.

that “from their earliest consciousness” they had “learned the laws, so as to have them engraved upon the soul.”¹⁸⁷ From a progressive leading of the OT, Apocrypha, and the NT through the centuries, the same carefulness in the upbringing of children seem indicative. One of the earliest narratives of Scripture records how God said to Abraham: “I know him that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of Jehovah, to do justice and judgment” (Gen 18:19).

Apart from the religious activities, the Jews also had the opportunity of vocational training. David and Pat Alexander,¹⁸⁸ Edersheim,¹⁸⁹ and King and Stager¹⁹⁰ agree that in addition to the knowledge of the law, the Jewish boy especially for the occupations of ordinary life had to learn a trade or business supposedly from the father. But this was not to divert him from study; quite the contrary. Edersheim rather opines that it was regarded as a profanation – or at least declared such – to make use of one’s learning for secular purposes, whether of gain or of honour.¹⁹¹ Frequently, the parents and children of both genders took part together in the domestic chores. David was a shepherd (1 Sam 16:11). Rachael, too, tended her father’s (Laban’s) sheep (Gen 29:9). The sons were under the tutelage of the father who apprenticed them in farming, shepherding, and non-specified crafts. Since most Israelites were farmers, it was only natural that “when the child (son of the Shunammite woman) was older, he went out one day to his father among the reapers” (2 Kings 4:18).

Accompanying the father in such activities such as warfare and hunting, the boys learned how to handle weaponry – the bow, sling, and sword. Jether, Gideon’s firstborn, was commanded by his father to kill the enemies Zebah and Zalmunna, the king of Median: “But the boy (*na`ar*) did not draw his sword, for he was afraid because he was still a boy” (Judg. 8:20). King and Stager argue that this incidence has nothing to do with childhood as such but comparative status.¹⁹² The *na`ar*, according to Mac Donald, was not of sufficient rank to

¹⁸⁷ F. Josephus. Ag. Apion, ii.18. Josephus further declared that at the age of fourteen he had been “frequently” consulted by “the high priests and principal men of the city... about the accurate understanding of points of the law.” Though this might be one of his usual boastful magniloquence, there is an indication of strong commitment given to the study of the laws of God especially among the men.

¹⁸⁸ D. and P. Alexander. 2000. *The lion handbook to the bible*. Oxford: Lion Publishing Plc., 94.

¹⁸⁹ H. Wolf. 1991. *An introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*. Chicago: Moody Press, 216.

¹⁹⁰ P.J. King and L.E. Stager. 2001. *Life in ancient Israel*. London: Westminster John Knox Press, 46.

¹⁹¹ H. Wolf. 1991. *An introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*. Chicago: Moody Press, 216.

¹⁹² P.J. King and L.E. Stager. 2001. *Life in ancient Israel*. London: Westminster John Knox Press, 46.

slay kings.¹⁹³ In another sense, this probably confirms the reality of the *na`ar* being not only young in age but also amateur in skill of which only with time he, like the three sons of Jesse who followed Saul to battle against the Philistines (1 Sam 17:13), will qualify to go to war.

Domestic life centred on the home, which was built to not only meet the demands of the climate, but also due to the limitations of the money and raw materials. Here, the mother was the daughter's primary teacher (Ezek 16:44). Besides religious duties, daughters would learn domestic chores required to run the household. Girls also shared the duties at harvest time, as when Boaz directed Ruth: "Now, listen, my daughter, do not go glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women" (Ruth 2:8). David and Pat Alexander note that during the time of Christ, a girl's education was still entirely in her mother's hand, but every boy went to the school, except for unique reasons such as in the case of Jesus Christ who was taught of his mother.¹⁹⁴

The centrality of teaching in general and child training in particular in Israel is not only evident in the different modes of instruction but also in several words associated to it. These include לָמַד ; $\text{ל}'$ *lämad* which is rendered 'learn' in the Qal perfect; 'teach' in the Pi'el perfect, and 'to be taught' in the Niphal perfect. It could also be rendered 'to exercise in,' or 'accustom.' So, the wicked will be punished for although he is shown favor, he does not 'learn (לָמַד ; אַל) righteousness' (Isa 26:10); to 'learn (יָתִידָם ; יָלַל) wisdom' (Prov 30:3; cf. Deut 17:19). Moses declares: "See, I have taught (יָתִידָם ; אַלִּי) you statutes and judgment" (Deut 4:5; cf. Job 21:22 – 22; Eccl 12:9). The Psalmist also requested of God: "Teach (יְנַדְּעֵנִי) M. ל ;) me Thy statutes" (119:64). Others include יָדָע ; יָדָע *yäda`*, a form of which is found in Ezra 7:25 and translated "know." To know, in this sense, means involvement in the life of a person; יָרָא ; יָרָא *yärâ* (Mic 3:11), which carries the idea of pointing things out, and יָדָע ; יָדָע

¹⁹³ J.M. Donald. 1976. The status and role of the *na`ar* in Israelite society. *JNES* 35:158.

¹⁹⁴ D. and P. Alexander. 2000. *The lion handbook to the bible*. Oxford: Lion Publishing Plc., 94.

zähar (cf. Exodus 18:20), which communicates the need for admonition or warning. The words for teachers or students (or disciples) were often simply forms of the verbs for teach. In fact, the Hebrew word for the Law, Torah, is a derivative of the verb *yärâ*. One purpose of education in the OT was training for a separate and holy life; this is the command of God found in Leviticus 19:2. Holiness and wisdom were not intended to be theoretical, but intensely practical.¹⁹⁵ Those who have truly learned wisdom would live ethically, loving God with their entire being. During the prophetic era, Isaiah presents teaching the children ‘in the way of the LORD’ (hw" +hy> ydEäWmlî %yIn:ßB) as basic condition for family peace and health (Isaiah 54:13). Both parents were important in the education of all their children.

3.4.3 Parental/Communal Role in Handling the Stubborn Child

One major test for the crucial nature of training in parenting is when parents have to deal with a ‘stubborn’ child. Deuteronomy 21:18 – 21 presents what looks like a blueprint in this regard thus:

WNn<åyae hr<êAmW
 rrEåAs !Be... vyai^al. hy<âh.yI-yKi (18
 [m; ðv.yI al{ïw> Atêao
 WråS.yIw> AM=ai lAqåb.W wybiða' lAqïB.
 [:meêvo
 `~h, (ylea]
 Attao WaycióAhw>
 AM=aiw> wybiäa' Abß Wfp.t'îw> 19
 `Am*qom. r[;v;î-
 la,w> Arày[i ynEïq.zI-la,

¹⁹⁵ R. Prevost. 1990. Education in the Old Testament. *Mercer dictionary of the bible*. W.E. Mills. Ed. Georgia: Mercer University Press, 234 – 235.

rrEåAs `hz< WnnEÜB.
 Ar^ay[i ynEåq.zI-la, Wrúm.a'w> 20
 `abe(sow> llePAz
 Wnle_qoB. [;mePvo WNN<iyae hr<êmoW
 tmeêw" `~ynIb'a]b'(
 ArÛy[i yve'n>a;-lK' Whmug"r>Wû 21
 `War"(yIw> W[im.v.yI
 laePr"f.yI-lk'w> ^B<+r>Qimi [r"Ph'
 T'îr>[;bi(W

18 " If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and *who*, when they have chastened him, will not heed them,

19 "then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city.

20 "And they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.'

21 "Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear.

Moses gives instruction here on how parents could deal with a wayward child. This child is identified as hr<êAmW rrEåAs (*sôrër ûmôrè*) 'stubborn' and 'rebellious' and will not [:meêvo (*šömē^a*) 'hear' or 'listen to' the voice of both his father and the mother. The Hebrew rrEåAs translated 'stubborn,' occurred 17 times and in 4 forms in the OT. One could be stubborn to not only parents, but God. Isaiah recalls that the Israelites of his days acted WdyzI÷h 'proudly,' 'presumptuously' and tr<r<êAS 'rebelliously' against the law of God (cf. Isa 30:1; Ps 66:7). Psalm 68:7

affirms God's blessing on those who are obedient, "but the rebellious ($\sim y r I^a r] \bar{A} S \div$) dwell in a dry land." The combination of the two adjectives *sôrër ûmôrè* 'stubborn' and 'rebellious' in describing the child in Deuteronomy 21 indicates an extreme situation. This is plausible because *môrè* here refers to one who is not just 'disobedient' but also 'rebellious' and behaves refractorily and obstinately against the command of his parents such that their efforts to point him to reason amounts to futility.¹⁹⁶ Nichol and others corroborate the foregoing by observing that Jewish Commentators refers *sôrër ûmôrè* 'stubborn' and 'rebellious' to sons who manifested sullen resentment toward God's requirements and refused to carry them out. They note that Jews applied such adjectives to one who did the things he was forbidden to do, particularly in relation to parents (see Ps 78:8; Jer. 5:23).¹⁹⁷

The extent of the child's stubborn and rebellious behaviour manifests in the fact that although they $W r \bar{a} S . y I W >$ (*wüyissürü*) 'disciplined' or 'chastised' him, $\sim h , (y l e a] [m ; \bar{P} v . y I a l \{ i w >$ (*wülö'yišma' 'alêhem*) 'he will not listen.'¹⁹⁸ Elizabeth Bellefontaine describes the kind of 'stubbornness and rebelliousness' displayed as one of persistent disobedience to one who, by reason of a binding relationship, has the right to demand obedience. Consequently such rebelliousness denies the authority

¹⁹⁶ W. Holladay. Ed. 2000. *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 260.

¹⁹⁷ F.D. Nichol et al. Eds. 1978. *Seventh-day Adventist bible commentary*. vol. 1. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1027.

¹⁹⁸ The word 'discipline' or 'chastise' here $W r \bar{a} S . y I W >$ from $r s ; y "$ occurs 43 times in 35 forms in the OT. It is variously rendered 'teach, admonish' in the Qal; to be 'admonished' corrected' in the niph'al; 'to take warning' – in the Hithpa'el verb form, as in Ezek 23:48 where God promised to "put an end to lewdness in the land, that all women may take warning ($W r S . W : n I$) and not imitate you, and 'discipline,' correct' 'chastise,' or 'rebuke,' in the pi'el. Its noun forms include $r \bar{A} S = y I$ 'one who reproves, a faultfinder' (Job 40:2) though taken by some scholars to be a pi'el verb form or by others to be emended to *yasur*, yield. The putative noun $r s o y "$ *yasor* 'inspector, instructor' (1 Chron 15:22), should perhaps be understood as a Qal infinitive absolute of Psalm 94:10 which queries if the God who $r s y$ 'disciplines,' does not also $x : y k i _ A y$ 'punish'? Although much of $r s y$ with its synonym $r s ; W m$ *musar* will be discussed later, suffice it to say that the disobedience of the son is described with three participles ($[: m e \hat{e} v o W N n < \hat{a} y a e h r < \hat{e} A m W r r E \hat{a} A s$) used in an attributive sense. $[m v$ as opposed to $r r s$ or $d r m$ 'to be bold and audacious in acts of rebellion or disobedience' (2 Kings 18:20; Isa. 36:5; Job 24:13; Neh 6:6, etc.), is found elsewhere in the OT – the two latter items can be synonymously employed to describe a general attitude of disobedience. See Habel, 526 in Van Gemeren, vol. 2, 480; Hagedorn notes that $r r s$ is apart from Hosea 4:16 always qal active participle [JSOT 88:104]; BDB, 597 (Strong 4775).

and rejects the relationship.¹⁹⁹ In the absence of any other substantial statement relative to the parent-child relationship, it can be concluded that the account in Deuteronomy 21:18 – 21 is related to the fifth command to honour one's father and mother in Exodus 20:12 (cf. Deut 5:16).²⁰⁰

However, arguing from the sociological background of Mediterranean culture, which he believes is akin to that of ancient Israel, Hagedorn asserts that the demand for parental honour was an imposition on the child for the protection of his or her parents' public honour in the community. He notes that cultural anthropology has long recognized honour and shame as pivotal values of Mediterranean societies.²⁰¹ Parents therefore work hard at home for the safeguard of their public honour, even to the detriment of their children. Conversely, Kaiser and others affirm that in particularising the fifth of the Ten Commandments, the case focuses on the sanctity of the family which centres at honouring one's parents, a divine order which is not measured by humanistic or societal conventions but by the counsel of God. Children were to honour their parents as God's earthly representatives. To rebel against these representatives equal rebelling against God.²⁰² But parents were never to take laws into their hands. This introduces the next concern. What justification do parents have to present their son for such capital punishment?

There are several laws in the Pentateuch that are similar in content and linguistic form to Deuteronomy 21:18-21. Exodus 21:15 and 17 recommend the death penalty for one who strikes or curses one's parents (participial form). As earlier noted, Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16 admonish one to honour one's parents, but no sanction is present. Deuteronomy 23:1 forbids a son to have sexual intercourse with his father's wife, but no

¹⁹⁹ E. Bellefontaine. 1979. Deuteronomy 21:18 – 21: reviewing the case of the rebellious son. *Journal for the Study of Old Testament [JSOT 13]*, 19: 13 – 31.

²⁰⁰ This view is shared by A.C. Hagedorn. 2000. Guarding the parents' honour – Deuteronomy 21:18 – 21. *Journal for the Study of Old Testament [JSOT 88]*, 106; E. Bellefontaine. 1979. Deuteronomy 21:18 – 21: reviewing the case of the rebellious son. *Journal for the Study of Old Testament [JSOT 13]*, 19: 13 – 31. and W.C. Kaiser Jr et. al. Eds. 1996. *Hard sayings of the bible*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 174.

²⁰¹ A.C. Hagedorn. 2000. Guarding the parents' honour – Deuteronomy 21:18 – 21. *Journal for the Study of Old Testament [JSOT 88]*, 102: 101 – 121; cf. C.M. Carmichael. 1974. *The laws of Deuteronomy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 107. He notes that the ancients were trying to define honour: thus we read in Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.5.1361b.3: 'Honor is a token of a reputation for doing good; and those who have already done good are justly and above all honored, not but that he who is capable of doing good is also honored. So, when a child behaves well, his or her parents and not the one who has obeyed are honored for producing an obedient child.

²⁰² W.C. Kaiser Jr et al. Eds. 1996. *Hard sayings of the bible*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 174.

punishment is stated. In Deuteronomy 27:16 he who despises his parents is cursed (participial form). Lev 18:7-9 forbids a son to have sexual intercourse with his mother, with the wife of his father, or with his sister, but no sanction is stated. Leviticus 20:9 recommends the death penalty for a son who curses his parents (cf. Exod 21:15, 17). Phillip Callaway²⁰³ therefore regrets the absence of a precise understanding of the key expression $\text{hr} < \hat{\text{e}} \text{AmW} \text{ rrE} \hat{\text{a}} \text{As} \text{ !Be}$ (*Bën sôrër ûmôrè*) ‘stubborn and rebellious son’ in Deuteronomy 21:18 and 20 which, according to him, cannot be gleaned from these pentateuchal laws. He rather suggests that “striking,” “cursing,” and “despising” may be understood as illustrative instances from the Pentateuch of the general category “stubborn and rebellious behaviour.” Nevertheless, he notes that another key expression, $\text{abe} (\text{sow} > \text{lle} \hat{\text{P}} \text{AZ}$ (*zôlël wüsöbë*) which is usually translated “a drunkard and a glutton,” may be understood as an explanation of the nebulous ‘stubborn and rebellious son.’ Given the above context, he concludes that the expressions *Bën sôrër ûmôrè* and *zôlël wüsöbë* ‘stubborn and rebellious son’ and “a drunkard and a glutton,” are meant to characterise the behaviour of one who is to be put to death.

Bellefontaine sees the interpretation of the terms ‘stubborn’ and ‘rebellious’ to the point of rupturing a relationship is borne out in an analogous manner elsewhere in the biblical text. The majority of texts in which they occur in some form refer to Israel’s relationship with Yahweh and its infidelity to Him. Thus, as early as the desert period, Israel showed itself a stubborn and rebellious generation (Num. 20:10; Deut. 31:27; Ezek 20:21; Psalm 106:7).²⁰⁴ In a parent-child relational context, the prophets portray the Israelites as Yahweh's disobedient children. Isaiah views them as “rebellious children” (Is. 30:1) and

²⁰³ P.R. Callaway. 1984. Deut. 21:18-21: proverbial wisdom and law. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, [JBL]103.3: 342.

²⁰⁴ Throughout its history Israel continued to be a “rebellious people.” The majority of texts in which they occur in some form refer to Israel's relationship with Yah-weh and its infidelity to him. Thus, as early as the desert period Israel showed itself a “stubborn and rebellious generation;” Ps. 78:18; cf. w. 17, 40, 56; Num. 20:10; Dt. 31:27; Ezek. 20:21; Ps. 106:17). Throughout its history it continued to be a $\text{rrE} \hat{\text{a}} \text{As} \sim [;$ “rebellious people” following its own way (Is. 65:2) and turning a $\text{tr} < \text{r} < \hat{\text{e}} \text{As} \text{ \textasciitilde} \text{@tek}$; “stubborn shoulder to Yahweh in disobedience (Neh. 9:29). The prophets proclaim that Israel's is a $\text{hr} < \hat{\text{e}} \text{AmW} \text{ rrE} \hat{\text{a}} \text{As} \text{ ble} \hat{\text{P}}$ “stubborn and rebellious heart” Jer. 5:23; cf. 6128) and its princes are all $\sim \text{yrI}^{\text{a}} \text{r} > \text{As}$ “rebels” Is. I:23; Hos. 9: 13) · Time and again his people have rebelled against the Lord (Dt. 9:7, 24; Is. 63:10; Jer. 4:17; Ezek 20:8, 21; Ps. 5:11), against his commandments (Num. 20:24; Dt. 1:26, 43; 9:23; 1 Sam. 12:15; Ezek. 5:6; cf. 1 Sam. 12:14), against his words (Num. 27:14; Lam. 1:8; Ps. 105:28). Nehemiah sums up Israel's consistent attitude towards Yahweh: “They were disobedient and rebelled against thee” (Neh. 9:26).

“children of transgression” (Is. 57:4), while Jeremiah calls them “stupid children” who do not know how to do good (Jer. 4: 22). Although chosen as the beloved son of Yahweh, Israel must be punished for its waywardness (Hos. 11:1ff.). Finally, Yahweh is driven to bring a lawsuit against his iniquitous and rebellious sons (Is. 1: 2ff.).

While these texts undoubtedly reflect covenant terminology and denounce Israel as a violator of the covenant relationship, we may also accept that the prophets and their audience would also have been aware of Israel's own legal provision for disobedient sons. He affirms that in such grave manner the son in Deuteronomy 21 has refused this basic compliance. This is the thrust of the accusation and the reason why his specific behaviour need not be mentioned. He has refused to honour his father and mother to the extent of virtually denying their authority and repudiating his relationship with them. This was his crime and for it he must die.

Although its law deals with a problem that one expects would be settled within the family, as Callaway²⁰⁵ and Hagedorn²⁰⁶ presume, it states unequivocally that the elders of the city (presumably including the father) are responsible for the execution of the death penalty. This, on the one hand, underscores the limitation of parents in administering ‘discipline’ even to their wayward son. The reason God requires that a stubborn and rebellious son be stoned is given in Deuteronomy 21:21: so that this kind of sin will be purged from Israel and all Israel will hear of it and fear the Lord. There are several instances of children rebellious attitude toward their parents which resulted in family and communal insecurity. We know of the sons of Eli (1 Sam 2 – 3), and of Samson (Judges 13 – 16). But there seems to be no record of parents who actually brought their children to be killed underscoring perhaps, the impracticable nature of the Deuteronomic law. Amidst the frustration and shame which accompany the magnitude of the child’s unruly behaviour, parents must operate within the ambit of the law.

The above parental action might be considered an extreme case, especially in contemporary contexts. Yet, Bellefontaine notes that being undisciplined and unpredictable;

²⁰⁵P.R. Callaway. 1984. Deut. 21:18-21: proverbial wisdom and law. *Journal of Biblical Literature*. [JBL]103.3, 342:347.

²⁰⁶A.C. Hagedorn. 2000. Guarding the parents’ honour – Deuteronomy 21:18 – 21. *Journal for the Study of Old Testament* [JSOT, 88: 106.

the child's unrestrained behaviour could offend others. This in turn could result in strained inter-family or inter-clan relationships risking retaliation or feud against himself, his family, and his community.²⁰⁷ Kaiser and others submit that at first glance this law and the attendant parents' action seems pitiless in its demands both of a society with incorrigibly delinquent children and of the emotionally torn parents of such ruffians. But a second glance would question if our pity is well placed. Shall we pity the criminal or his parents and the community? As evident in the study, the OT does not take side with the offender because of the intense consequences of his actions. The issue is not abstract or antiquated; instead it haunts modern society as well as Christian community.²⁰⁸ If all parents have been courageous and faithful in their duty toward God, themselves and the community where they live, many of the social vices which rid our contemporary societies of peace and stability (terrorist, kidnapping, armed robbery, militancy, rape, among others), claiming lives of innocent citizens would have been under full control.

On the other hand, the pericope underscores community involvement in family affairs, thus demonstrating its understanding of the family as a basic unit and microcosm of the larger society of which its health or hazard are consequential to its peace and stability. Bellefontaine²⁰⁹ notes that irreformable deviancy was almost always considered a crime and the criminal was put to death, thus ridding the community of evil influence. In such cases, and in others such as incest, witchcraft, and sacrilege, there was always the threat of divine vindication upon the group who failed to purge the evil-doer from its midst. The execution of the sinner/criminal purified the community and averted the threat. The biblical story of Achan and of Israel's misfortune until he had been eliminated (Jos. 7:6-26) is to be understood in this light. Further, because such crimes were seen as constituting an attack against the community itself as a whole, they were met by total community action in carrying out the execution. Such communal involvement remains a model to contemporary elders in our communities.

3.4.4 Caring for the Unborn Child

²⁰⁷ E. Bellefontaine. 1979. Deuteronomy 21:18 – 21: reviewing the case of the rebellious son. *Journal for the Study of Old Testament [JSOT 13]*, 21.

²⁰⁸ W.C. Kaiser Jr. et al. Eds. 1996. *Hard sayings of the bible*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 174.

²⁰⁹ E. Bellefontaine. 1979. Deuteronomy 21:18 – 21: reviewing the case of the rebellious son. *Journal for the Study of Old Testament [JSOT]*, 13: 21.

The principle of parental roles toward the unborn child is evident in Judges 13. The chapter begins with a painful statement of fact which is a recurring theme in the entire Book, especially during the era of the Judges: $hw''+hy> ynE\grave{a}y[eB. [r:\grave{P}h' tAfi[]l lae\hat{e}r''f.yI ynE\grave{a}B. 'Wpsi' YOW$ (*wayyösi'pû Bünê yiSrä'ël la`áSôt hära` Bü`ênê yhw('ädönäy*) “Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD.” The thirty-one years of peace and freedom between the reign of Jephthah (11:1 – 40) and that of Abdon (12:13 – 15), came to an end. Consequently, God handed them over to the Philistines for forty years (13:1). Unlike in previous cases where the author of the Book of Judges noticed Israel’s repentance and God’s willingness to send a deliverer,²¹⁰ Judges 13 introduces God’s new method of deliverance in the form of a divine visitation to the unnamed woman²¹¹ and her husband, Manoah. Manoah was a Danite of Zorah. His wife, who is not named, was barren (13:2). There is no mention of her praying for a child as in the case of Hannah (1Sam 1:8 – 18). Instead, the sovereign God stepped in, with a theophany, and addressed Manoah's wife (Judges 13:3-5), telling her that she would conceive and give birth to a son. The son would be a $\Upsilon Z \grave{I} \eta''$ (*nāzîr*) ‘Nazirite’²¹² from the womb and he would begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines.²¹³ *nāzîr* comes from the root $\Upsilon Z : \eta''$ (*nāzar*) referring to someone

²¹⁰ See on Judges 3:7 – 11; 12 – 15; 4:1 – 5; 6:1 – 27; 10:6 – 11:7.

²¹¹ Johnson observes that this is not the first time the author of Judges has left out the name of an important woman (e.g. Jephthah’s daughter, Judges 11:30 – 40). B. Johnson. 2010. What type of son is Samson? reading Judges 13 as a biblical type-scene. *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society*, 273. M. Smith further observes that although her name was not mentioned, the woman was definitely the strong and most favored character, who displayed confidence in the divine injunction as against the doubtful and weak Manoah. See M. Smith. 2005. The failure of the family in Judges, Part 2: Samson. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 162: 426 – 428.

²¹² A Nazirite (see Numbers 6:1 – 21) was someone who was dedicated to God. Consecration to God’s service required abstaining from wine and all alcoholic beverages, not using a razor to cut one’s hair at all, and avoiding all contact with dead bodies. When defilement happens unconsciously, as in the case where someone dies suddenly beside the Nazirite (Numbers 6:9), he shall shave his hair and go through reconsecration. There are two forms of Nazirite vow: the temporary one, which individuals took for various reasons (see Acts 21:23), and the perpetual one. Scripture records only three cases of people being Nazirites from birth, namely Samson, Samuel (1 Sam 1:11 – which unlike the case of Samson, was his mother’s commitment), and John the Baptist (Luke 1:15). See T. Adeyemo. 2006. *African bible commentary*, Nairobi: WordAlive Publishers, 309; M. Z. Brettler. 2002. *The Book of Judges*, New York: Routledge, 43.

²¹³ T. Adeyemo. 2006. *African bible commentary*, Nairobi: WordAlive Publishers, 309.

‘dedicated, or concentrated’, specially, to God.²¹⁴ By implication, the dedication of the unborn child begins from his conception and such consecration, the messenger said, will affect the mother’s life style. Because the boy was to be a Nazirite, a tripartite order was given which Manoah's wife must be careful to observe. First, she must not drink wine or strong drink or eat anything unclean. Second, they must not shave his hair. Third, he must not touch a dead body.

Scholars differ over Manoah’s request for a repeat of the message.²¹⁵ However, Judges 13:8 seems to underscore his curiosity in having a fuller understanding of their role toward this ‘special’ child:

Wnyleêae 'dA[an"i-aAby"
T'x.l;^av' rv<åa] ~yhiúl{a/h' vyaiä
yn"ëAda] yBiä
'dL' (WYh;
r[;N:il; hf, P[]N:-hm; (WnrE\$Ayw>

"O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born."(NKJ)

His request for ‘instruction’ or ‘to teach’ points at least to his awareness of the inestimable role of fathers in parenting.²¹⁶ Evidently, Manoah’s wife was to incubate this baby, but his

²¹⁴W.H.F. Gesenius. 1979. GR, Michigan: Baker Book House Company, 541; W. Holladay. Ed. 2000. *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 232.

²¹⁵Josephus indicated that Manoah was a very jealous man and also expressed doubt (F. Josephus. *The antiquities of the Jews*, 5.7:2-3). Smith sees Manoah’s action as apparently the pervading spiritual weakness among Israelite men which has pervaded his home. M. Smith. 2005. The failure of the family in Judges, Part 2: Samson. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 162: 426 – 428. On the other hand, Adeyemo sees Manoah as a man of God. T. Adeyemo. 2006. *African bible commentary*, Nairobi: WordAlive Publishers, 310. In B. Deffinbaugh’s view, Manoah and his wife were godly people living in an ungodly world, albeit an ungodly Israelite world. Manoah prayed that God would send the Angelic Messenger another time, so that he might hear from Him how this promised child was to be raised. I’m delighted to see that Manoah did not question God’s ability to give them a son, as did Zacharias. B. Deffinbaugh. 2009. Samson’s silver spoon (Judges 13:1 – 25). Retrieved January 27, 2013 from www.Bible.org.

²¹⁶W. Holladay. Ed. 2000. *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 3524. הַרְיָ ‘throw, instruct, teach.’ הַרְיָ occurred 80 times in 50 forms in the OT. It is rendered to ‘shoot’ or ‘throw’ in the Qal, ‘to be shot’ in the Niphal, and ‘instruction’ or ‘teach’ in the Hiphil, as in the case of Judges 13:8. In the Hiphil, the הַרְיָ may come from either God (Exod 24:12), the Priests (2 Kings 12:3), or someone else (1 Kings 8:36).

role and influence in the process cannot be underestimated. On the other hand, although the author of Judges seems to present Manoah as the chief character in the story,²¹⁷ the angel's decision to appear to his wife the second time not only reflects her role as the major character in the narrative,²¹⁸ but also as the one with the direct responsibility of nurturing the unborn child. The foregoing thus affirms the role of both parents in nurturing the unborn child. Whereas the child in the case of Samson, will have his role in the process, that will be much later.²¹⁹ But as it is, the parents must begin their work. Samson's later awareness of his status as a *nāzîr* suggests that his parents communicated to him the story, nature, and purpose of his birth, as well as God's requirements for fulfilling this task.

The unique role of mothers in caring for the unborn child is further exemplified in their daily experiences with the unborn, during pregnancy. These experiences could make them somewhat apprehensive,²²⁰ as in the case of Esau and Jacob who struggled with each other while in the womb (Gen 25:22), or joyful, as seen in the experience of Elizabeth, whose son, John, leaped upon beholding Mary (Luke 1:41). Mfuné²²¹ opines that the months that preceded the birth of Moses, and perhaps other Hebrew boys whose mothers were trapped by the decree to kill all Israelite male 0 – 2 years in Egypt, were characterised by anxiety, discreetness, and uncertainties. But the love for their children engendered dogged ruggedness in doing whatever it takes to preserve the pregnancy. Whether of joy or pain, motion by an unborn child are common and caring mothers understand a great deal of it and how best to respond. With time, some of these mothers learn to communicate with the unborn child forming healthy relationship and bonding even before birth.

²¹⁷ Apart from the fact that he was the only person named in the story while his wife's identity was concealed, his name also appeared severally in the Samson narrative more than that of his wife (see on Judges 13 – 16).

²¹⁸ M. Smith. 2005. The failure of the family in Judges, Part 2: Samson. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 162: 426 – 428.

²¹⁹ Although his entire life (Judges 14 – 15) seems to reflect a complete abandonment of the requirements set out for a *ryzîr* "Nazirite". See J.C. Exum. 1983. The theological dimension of the Samson saga. *Vestus Testamentum*, XXX111, 1[30 – 45]; M. Emmrich. 2001. *JETS* 44.1:67 – 74, and M. Smith. 2005. The failure of the family in Judges, Part 2: Samson. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 162: 429 – 436.

²²⁰ F.D. Nichol et al. Eds. 1978. *Seventh-day Adventist bible commentary* vol. 1. Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 369.

²²¹ S.S. Mfuné. 2012. *Parenting for heaven*. Western Cape, South Africa: African Publishing Company, 41.

3.4.5 Nurturing at Infancy

Imageries of infant nurturing as a vital component of child training are evident in the OT.²²² Although there might not be an express instruction on whose responsibility it was, the OT, and even the NT present insights germane to elucidate the role of parents in nurturing during infancy. First, Exodus 2 announces the birth of Moses which corresponded with pharaoh's judgment of death upon all male Hebrew newborn (Exod 1:15 – 22). Saved from instant death, probably through the ingenuity of the Hebrew midwives who feared God (Exod 1:17), Moses became a child of circumstance as he was hidden by his mother for three months (Exod 2:2). Whereas the author of Exodus identifies Moses' mother as the one who hid him, Hebrews 11:23 notes the involvement of both parents.²²³ The Jewish historian Josephus mentions a separate revelation of God to Amram concerning Moses' future greatness, but it is not necessary to accept this.²²⁴ Nevertheless, the specific mention of Jochebed demonstrates the degree of mother's love, care, concern and responsibility at infancy. Little wonder she is the chief character in the entire birth narrative (Exod. 2). The Hebrew ! p ; C ' (*cäPan*) 'to hide' occurs 34 times in 24 forms in the OT. It could be rendered 'to hide' (Exod 2:2) or 'shelter' as provided by God in times of danger (Ps 27:2), 'to store up or treasure up' (Hosea 13:12), or 'to keep something away from' somebody (Job 17:4).²²⁵ In the case of Moses, his parents, especially the mother, *cäPan* 'hide' him from the Egyptian manslaughter. Hence, we see adversity providing an opportunity for Jochebed

²²² Of Moses (Exodus 2), and of Samuel (1 Sam 1, 2).

²²³ The latter is supported by Adeyemi (T. Adeyemo. 2006. *African bible commentary*, Nairobi: WordAlive Publishers, 88) who underscores the decision of both parents (Amram and Jochebed – Exod. 6:20, Num 26:59) to defy Pharaoh's order.

²²⁴ W.H. Gispen. 1982. *Exodus*. trans. Ed van der Maas. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 39; F.B. Meyer also seems to combine the idea of an unusual beauty and a special calling when he writes, "Something in the babe's lovely countenance appeared to the mother's eye as the halo of special Divine affection. A voice whispered to her heart that her child was especially dear to God. Was not its smile the result of the Divine embrace? And did not those limpid eyes look into the face of the Angel of the Covenant? She was, therefore, encouraged to brave the royal edicts, and screen the little taper from the gale of destruction that was sweeping through the land. F. B. Meyer. 1978. *Devotional Commentary on Exodus*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 25.

²²⁵ W. Holladay. Ed. 2000. *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 7306. ! p ; C ' 'to hide, shelter, treasure up.'

to prove the worth of true motherhood.²²⁶ Determined to save the life of her son, she constructed a basket of bulrushes made of waterproof with bitumen and pitch, placed the child in the basket and the basket in the river under the watchful eyes of Miriam, Moses' elder sister.

When pharaoh's daughter came to the river for a bathe, she found the ark, opened it, and recognized the child as a Hebrew. Rather than kill the child as her father had commanded, the Egyptian princess, who many scholars agree was Hatshepsut,²²⁷ showed compassion on the child. In her attempt to find a nurse to care for the child, Moses' sister led her to a 'special' nurse. This nurse was Moses' mother. The faith and resourcefulness of a loving mother and skill of a prudent sister were crowned with success. Not only was Moses' life saved, he was as well returned to the bosom of his own mother making it possible for him to receive from her those first impressions which are so indelibly fixed upon the mind of a child. The time Moses spent with his mother was not stated. Although commentators suggest 2 or 3 years,²²⁸ White submits that he spent 12 years with the mother.²²⁹ The actual date notwithstanding, one thing that is clear according to White is that Jochebed took full advantage of the training period to imbue his mind with the fear of God and the love of truth and justice with much prayer.²³⁰ During these years of childhood the foundations of character were laid. Moses' afterlife in the palace affirms that his parents used well the years allotted them for bringing him up in the way he should go.²³¹

Second is the story of Hannah. She was one of the two wives of Elkanah, an Ephraimite who lived at Ramathaim-zophim. 1 Samuel 1:5 – 8 records that Hannah had no

²²⁶F.D. Nichol et al. Eds. 1978. *Seventh-day Adventist bible commentary* vol. 1. Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 502. The same view is shared by E. G. White. 2000. *Patriarchs and prophets*. Michigan: Remnant Publications, Inc., 243.

²²⁷Nichol and others agree Hatshepsut was the only daughter of Thutmose 1. She later got married to her half brother, Thutmose 11 but their union could not produce an heir for the throne. When Thutmose 11 died, Hatshepsut later became regent with Thutmose 111 for 22 years. However, Moses birth occurred many years before her marriage to Thutmose 11. F.D. Nichol et al. Eds. 1978. *Seventh-day Adventist bible commentary* vol. 1. Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 502.

²²⁸F.D. Nichol et al. Eds. 1978. *Seventh-day Adventist bible commentary* vol. 1. Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 502.

²²⁹E.G. White. 2000. *Patriarchs and prophets*. Michigan: Remnant Publications Inc., 177.

²³⁰E.G. White. 2000. *Patriarchs and prophets*. Michigan: Remnant Publications Inc., 177.

²³¹Building on this background, Wolf observes that Moses proceeded to the Egyptian palace where he trained in the courts of the Eighteenth Dynasty, one of the most powerful and advanced dynasties in Egyptian history. H. Wolf. 1991. *An introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*, Chicago: Moody Press, 52 – 53.

children and was taunted by her husband's other wife, Peninnah. Greatly distressed, she therefore prayed earnestly for a male child whom she promised to dedicate to the Lord from his birth. By this prayer of commitment, Hannah presents herself as a godly woman who wanted a son, not just for herself, somehow to rebuff her competitor,²³² but rather a son that will be dedicated to God as a *näzîr*. The prayer was heard, and she called her son's name Samuel "heard of God" or "God hears" – a memorial of her request to the Lord. Nichol and others note Samuel was looked upon by his mother not merely as a child but as an offering to God. Therefore, she sought to train him for God from his earliest infancy. She ministered to his physical needs with much care and prayer, directing his thoughts toward the Lord of hosts from the very earliest age.²³³ This is evident in her decision not visit Shiloh till after Samuel was weaned.

d[;ä Hv' a yail. hr"äm.a' -
yKi (ht'l' _[' al{å hN"ßx;w> WTT 1 Samuel 1:22
~v' Æ bv;y"ïw> hw"ëhy>
ynEåP.-ta, 'ha'r>nIw> wyti^aaobih]w:
'r[;N:'h; lmeÛG"yI

`~l' (A[-d[;

^{NKJ} 1 Samuel 1:22 But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, “Not until the child is weaned; then I will take him, that he may appear before the LORD and remain there forever.”

The Hebrew לָמַד (*Gämal*) which occurs ninety one times in thirty-five forms is translated ‘to give, to do, or show,’ that is, to show to anyone (good or evil): one of a person, the other as a thing. This is evident in $\text{הַבְּיָהוּ אֶת־לָמְדוֹ}$

²³² See the tension between Leah and Rachel as most evident in naming of their children (Gen 29:31 – 30:22).

²³³ F.D. Nichol et al. Eds. 1978. *Seventh-day Adventist bible commentary*. vol. 2. Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 456.

'hT' a ('aTTâ GümälTa°nî haḥḥôbâ) 'thou hast done good to me' (I Sam 24:18), or pay anyone good or evil as in the case of Joseph and his brothers (Gen 50:15 – 17, see also Deut 32:6, Psalm 13:6, 2 Chron. 20:11). It is also rendered 'to ripen fruit' such as almonds (Numbers 17:23), and to become ripe (Isa 18:5). Further, it is rendered 'to wean' an infant.²³⁴ In Isaiah 11:8 which depicts the picture of a future utopia, the qnEßAy (yônëq) 'nursing' child will play by the cobra's hole, while the lWmßG" (Gämûl) 'weaned or little' child will put its hand in the nest of a deadly snake without harm. Isaiah 11:8 differentiates between the yônëq 'suckling' and the Gämûl 'weaned.' On the other hand, Isaiah 28:9 combines synonyms in describing the weaned child and termination of breast feeding: ~yId")V'mi yqEßyTi[bl'êx'me ('yleWmG> (Gümûlé mē|Hälāb 'aTTiqê miššādā'yim) 'To children weaned from their milk, to those just taken from the breast?' Elucidating his understanding of the Gämûl 'weaned,' Brill Koninklijke²³⁵ submits that in English, the term 'weaned child' denotes that breast-feeding is completed. He argues that the completion of a child's nursing can vary from its 2nd to its 5th year; only then it gets the status of 'weaned child.'²³⁶ Clear examples are Isaac (Gen. 21: 8) and Samuel (1 Sam. 1: 22ff.); compare also Isa. 11: 8, Hos. 1: 8, and Psalm 131.

When Samuel was weaned, Hannah brought him to Shiloh for dedication to God. Understanding the role, worth, and far reaching influence of a mother in Israel, Hannah trained her son not only for the time, but for eternity. Concerning the extent at which

²³⁴ See lM;G" in W. Holladay, Ed. 1988. *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*, 1601.

²³⁵ B. Koninklijke. 2007. Short Notes: The metaphor of the so-called 'weaned child' in Psalm 131. *Vetus Testamentum* 57: 117 [114 – 123].

²³⁶ Edersheim notes a portion of the Mishnah (*Aboth*. V.21) where in listing the upbringing of children Rabbi Jehudah, the son of Tema says: "At five years of age, reading of the Bible; at ten years, learning the Mishnah; at thirteen years, bound to the commandment; at fifteen years, the study of the Talmud;" Hence the Talmud (*Cheth*. 50) says "If you set your child to regular study before it is six years old, you shall always have to run after, and yet never get hold of it." By implication, therefore, a child is only expected to commence public education at age six after he or she is weaned. Edersheim however notes that active home-teaching begins at age three, even though careful training of the memory commenced much earlier. A. Edersheim. 1974. *Sketches of Jewish social life*, GR, Michigan: WM.B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 103 – 129.

Hannah's dedication to raising his child impacted him, George submits: "Evidently the loving instruction Hannah passed on to this little tike was implanted deeply enough to enable Samuel to stand strong in character even while surrounded by the ungodly influence of Eli and his two corrupt sons."²³⁷ The NT contains the deep commitment of parents such as Joseph and Mary ((Luke 2:21 – 24; compare John 19:25 - 27), Eunice and Lois (2Timothy 1:5, 2 Tim 2:15; compare 2 Tim 2:18) in child training.

In these families, the role of godly women in raising their offspring at this critical time remains outstanding demonstrating certain unique and timeless characteristics worthy of commendation and emulation. First is Jochebed's resolve to do the unthinkable just to save her son from death sentence. Second is Hannah's aptness in priority placement when she suspended pleasure and pilgrimage to adequately prepare her son for an eternal assignment. Third is Mary's commitment and unwavering role in not overlooking her son's divine origin, but rather became her first human teacher. Forth is Eunice's faith in raising Timothy – although married to an unbeliever.²³⁸

3.4.6 Essence and Mode of Child 'Discipline'

Paul Wegner²³⁹ notes that the necessity of parental discipline is a common topic in the wisdom literature: Proverbs 19:18; 23:13-14; 29:17; Sir 7:23 and 30:1-13. Several references to parent-child relations (which will be treated much later) abound in Proverbs. However, this segment considers the essence and mode of child 'discipline' as evident in Proverbs 1:8 – 9; 13:24; 22:15, and 23:13 – 14.²⁴⁰ In reality the book of Proverbs, when taken as a whole, encourages its readers to use multiple discipline ranging from pointing out improper behaviour to the use of corporal punishment. The approach here is the study of the key words for 'discipline' in the chosen texts and related synonyms in order to elucidate their essence and nature relative to child training. The word translated 'instruction' in Proverbs 1:8 – 9, 'discipline' in Proverbs 13:24, 'correction' in Proverbs 22:15, and 23:13,

²³⁷ E. George. 2001. *A woman's high calling*. Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 164.

²³⁸ T. Dickson. 2012. Contemporary challenges of the biblical role of mothers in parenting. *Women in Africa: contexts, rights, hegemonies*. M. Sotunsa and J. Yacob-Haliso. Eds. Lagos: Jedidiah Publishers, 282 – 284 [280 – 295].

²³⁹ P.D. Wegner. 2005. Discipline in the book of Proverbs: to spank or not to spank. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 48, no. 4 D: 718 – 719.

²⁴⁰ Reference will also be made to other relevant Texts.

is *mûsâr*, while the ‘instrument’ of ‘discipline’ or ‘correction’ is the ׁב, ׁע (*šēʿbeʿ*) ‘rod.’ mode

The Hebrew *mûsâr* occurs 54 times and in nine forms in the OT. It is commonly translated “discipline” in the OT and has a wide range of meanings that suggest various levels of discipline, including on one end of the spectrum “teaching or instruction” (Prov 1:2, 3, 7; 4:13), then progressing to “exhortation or warning” (Ezek 5:15; Job 20:3), and climaxing with “discipline or chastening” (Prov 13:24; 22:15; 23:13). Therefore, to draw from only a few Proverbs (e.g. Prov 13:24 or 23:13-14) would be to miss the complexity and range of discipline discussed in the book.²⁴¹ As seen earlier, *mûsâr* derives from ׁס; ׁר (*yâsar*) which also covers different aspect of discipline in the OT (cf. ׁס ׁר in Deut 21:18 – 21). At other times ׁכ; ׁר (*yâkaH*) which is variously rendered dispute, reason together, and prove in the *niphal*; argue, judge, rule, reprove, correction, and rebuke in the *hiphʿil*; and dispute (legally) in the *hithpaʿel* is used (all in the perfect form). The noun ׁכׁעׁט (*tôkêHâ*) is translated ‘rebuke, correction, and punishment’ (2 Kings 19:3; Ps 149:7; Hosea 5:9; Isa 37:3); while ׁכׁנׁעׁט (*TôkaHat*) is rendered ‘argument, reproof, rebuke, correction, and punishment’ (Prov 3:11; 6:23; 10:17; Ps 38:15; Ezek 5:15; 25:17).²⁴² The LXX translates ׁס ׁר primarily as *paideuo* which emphasises the notion of education. Further, the Ugaritic cognate *ysr* means “to chasten, instruct”. Harris submits that from the usage and parallels in the OT, it is plausible to conclude that *ysr* and *mûsâr* denote correction which results in education.²⁴³ Conversely, Van Gemeren argues that in the general semantic field of learning and instructing, the verb *ysr* specifically relates not to formal education but to instilling of values and norms of conduct by verbal (hortatory)

²⁴¹P.D. Wegner. 2005. Discipline in the book of Proverbs: to spank or not to spank. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 48, no. 4 D: 719 – 720.

²⁴²F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs. 1996. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 407.

²⁴³R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 1. Chicago: Moody Press, 386.

means²⁴⁴ or, after the fact, by rebuke or even physical chastisement. Here, the subject of the verb can be either human or divine, in ordinary life or in life before God, to whom all humankind is accountable.²⁴⁵ The words, *mûsâr* and *yâsar*, are found almost ninety times in the OT; nine in the Pentateuch, twenty-six (26) in the Prophets, and fifty times in the Hagiographa, (thirty-six of these in Proverbs).

Rendered ‘instruction,’ *mûsâr* appears at the beginning of Proverbs (1:2, 7) as a virtual synonym of חֵמָה כִּזְכָּר (Hokmâ) ‘wisdom’; חֵנֶה יְבִי (bînâ) ‘insight’; and דַּעַת (da‘at) ‘knowledge’ (cf. 23:23). It is the responsibility of parents to teach their children (1:8; 4:1; 13:1; 15:5), but Yahweh also teaches, both by wonders (Deut 11:2) and by life situations (Job 5:17). Instruction for fools (Prov 7:22) and by lifeless idols (Jer 10:8) is worthless, however. The biblical injunction is to seek instruction (Prov 23:23); in fact, one should choose it over other options (8:10; 9:20), and even love it (12:1). The wicked hate it (Ps 50:17), as do fools in general (Prov. 15:5). Those who ignore it despise themselves (15:32). But it is not enough just to seek ‘instruction,’ one must respond to its dictates if he

²⁴⁴ Used as instruction, the verb *ysr* with human subject, at its most basic level, suggests the learning of lessons important to successful living. Thus Job had schooled others in the past, but now, in his own calamity, appears closed to instruction from others (Job 4:3). Likewise, King Lemuel’s mother taught him principles of success that he transmits to others (Prov 31:1). However, it is useless to teach servants with mere words for they are unresponsive to such instruction (29:19). When use with divine subject, one Isaiah 28:26 employs *ysr* as speaking of Yahweh’s teaching in general. But even here, it is in respect to behavior and not information. Generally he instructs through Torah (Ps 94:12) or some theophanic manifestation (Deut 4:36). See Van Gemen, Vol. 2, p.479f for further details.

²⁴⁵ Similarly, Gemen observes that in the use of *ysr* with human object, there is a fine line between coercive instruction (discipline) and correction or even punishment. This ambivalence is reflected in its usage in numerous places in the OT. For example, Deut 21:18 demands that a son who is irresponsive to the *ysr* instruction (NIV discipline) of his parents must be stoned to death. It is difficult here to determine whether or not the incorrigibility consists of resistance to teaching alone, to punishment, or both. Likewise the sage exhorts parents to instruct (discipline) their sons if they have hope of delivering them from death (Prov 29:18). In fact such an approach will bring the parents great delight (29:17). On the other hand, it is fruitless to teach (NIV, correct) fools, for they will only heap abuse on the teacher (Prov 9:8). The parallel verb here *ykh* makes clear that instruction, not punishment, is in view. The verb *ysr* meaning punishment at human hands is used, however, only once (Deut 22:18). Here it consists of a fine and the requirement to take a slandered virgin as wife. A unique use of *ysr* is in the account of Rehoboam’s threat to intensify the onerous policies of his father Solomon vis-à-vis the people of Israel (1 Kings 12:11, 14 [= 2 Chron 10:11, 14]). NIV “scourge” is an attempt to translate this difficult use of *ysr*; a better rendering might be “oppress.” W.A.V. Gemen et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 2. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 480.

or she is to be obedient to God, the ultimate source of instruction, and to find satisfaction in life (8:33; 10:17; Jer 2:30; 5:3; 7:28; 17:23; 32:33; 35:13; Zeph 3:2, 7).²⁴⁶

This kind of discipline is evident in the first five of Wegner's eight level application of discipline.²⁴⁷ According to him, Proverbs' multiple levels of discipline, which overlap to some extent, generally begin with gentle instruction. The first level encourages proper behaviour. Here, a wise parent encourages a child to behave properly. This idea seems evident in Proverbs 1:8: My son, hear the instruction (*mûsâr*²⁴⁸) of your father, And do not forsake the law (טֹרָה: הַאֲמֵר, *tôrâ*) of your mother. They are considered "a graceful wreath upon your head and ornaments around your neck" (Proverbs 1:9). Keil and Delitzsch²⁴⁹ submit that the posture here is that of a friendly father and mother, beloved parents of the addressed whose virtue, benevolence, guardian and tender love is without question. The command also assumes the godly character of parents and recognises the responsibility of both parents in the training process. Children are rational creatures; therefore, *mûsâr* 'instruction,' not blind submission, must be taught. To be sure the child is not wayward, *mûsâr* must be based on the authority of the טֹרָה: הַאֲמֵר 'law.'²⁵⁰ This persuasive idea is also expressed in Proverbs 2:2 – 5. When a child can actually see the benefits of proper behaviour, it is logical that he or she would to a great extent choose this behaviour (Prov 3:13 – 15; 4:7 – 8).

The second level of instruction is to inform of improper behaviour. Generally parents are fairly good at informing a child of improper behaviour, but often it is done in anger or with a threat. Often when Proverbs addresses inappropriate behaviour, however, it appears to be before the start of that behaviour, not in the midst of it. If we educate and train our children concerning inappropriate behaviour early enough, they will begin to associate

²⁴⁶ W.A.V. Gemeren et. al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 2. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 481; see also F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs. 1996. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English lexicon*. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 416c.

²⁴⁷ P.D. Wegner. 2005. Discipline in the book of Proverbs: to Spank or not to spank. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 48 no. 4 D: 720 – 723.

²⁴⁸ J. Owens. 1991. *Analytical key the Old Testament* vol. 3. GR, Michigan: Baker Book House, 522.

²⁴⁹ C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch. 2001. *Keil and Delitzsch commentary on the Old Testament* vol. 6. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 42.

²⁵⁰ G. Santa. 1978. *A modern study in the book of Proverbs*. Milford, Michigan: Mott Media, 5.

wrong behaviour with undesirable consequences, and thus hopefully avoid the behaviour. A wise parent is proactive and addresses certain issues before the child might be confronted by them.²⁵¹

The third level of *mûsâr* ‘instruction’ encourages parents to explain the negative consequences of sin: A wise parent points out the negative consequences of sin that lie along the path of life. Since the primary purpose of the book of Proverbs is to teach wisdom to subsequent generations, Wegner suggests that parents should have a wealth of information learned from life's lessons that they can pass on to their children. This is vital because none of us wants our children to make the same mistakes that we have. Hence, a wise parent helps extend the vision of a child; helping him or her to see the long-term consequences of sinful behaviour. The book of Proverbs contains numerous references to this level of *mûsâr* ‘discipline’ since describing the negative consequences of sin unmasks its seductiveness and lets the child see it for what it really is.²⁵²

The fourth level deals with gentle exhortation. Wise parents will, on an ongoing basis, advise and exhort their children against sin that can easily become a pattern and encourage them to use wisdom. This level differs from the preceding ones in that exhortations are much more personal and solemn. As the level of discipline rises, so does the personal accountability, as the following verses indicate:²⁵³

- a. Proverbs 4:1-2: “Hear, my sons, the instruction (*mûsâr*) of a father, and give attention that you may gain understanding (חן ") יבִּי, for I give you sound teaching; do not abandon my instruction (טַר : יֵאָט).”

²⁵¹The book of Proverbs contains many examples of this level of discipline, but notice that it appears to be in a neutral context, not when the child has been caught misbehaving. See Prov. 1:7, 10-19; 3:27-35; 13:1; 22:24-25; 23:26-28.

²⁵²P.D. Wegner. 2005. Discipline in the book of Proverbs: to spank or not to spank. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 48 no. 4 D: 721 – 722. Further references occur in Proverbs. This view is also shared by M.V. Fox. 2000. *Proverbs 1-9: A new translation with introduction and commentary*. AB 18A; New York: Doubleday, 80-83; D.A. Garrett. 1993. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*. NAC 14; Nashville, TN: Broadman, 59: 67.

²⁵³P.D. Wegner. 2005. Discipline in the book of Proverbs: to spank or not to spank. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 48 no. 4 D: 721 – 722. For additional references, see Prov. 1:8; 4:1-9, 10-27; 5:1-6; 6:1-5, 20-35; 7:1-27; 23:22-23.

- b. Proverbs 4:14-16: “Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not proceed in the way of evil people. Avoid it, do not pass by it; turn away from it and pass on. For they cannot sleep unless they do evil; and they are robbed of sleep unless they make someone stumble.”

Up to this point, the various usages of *mûsâr* suggest the kind of interactions that go on between parents and their children on daily basis which do not suggest any kind of abuse or physical punishment. In other instances, however, *mûsâr* is rendered ‘discipline’ or ‘punishment.’ Its vocabulary and sentence structure seem to suggest that failure to hear and respond positively to instruction leads to discipline and/or punishment. Sinners in general can expect the latter results (Prov. 15:10; Jer 30:14), as can fools in particular (Prov. 13:18; 16:22). Discipline, however, has a beneficent, restorative end. It issues from true love (Prov. 13:14), even though the disobedient hate it (5:12). Therefore those who truly love, in this case their offspring, will not withhold it (Prov. 23:13).²⁵⁴ From the proverbial viewpoint, the disciplined life is the ideal, one that seeks after God and upholds standards of justice and fairness (1:3). Consequently, such *mûsâr* ‘discipline’ takes the form of correction (6:23), and rebuke (3:11), whether by God or other people and it may be administered through experience – the “school of hard knocks” (24:32), or by the application of the ‘rod,’ whether literal or figurative (Prov. 22:15).

The theological basis for *mûsâr* ‘discipline’ is grounded in the covenant relationship which Yahweh (the father)²⁵⁵ establishes with Israel (His children).²⁵⁶ Obviously, God’s corrective discipline seeks the reformation of the people.²⁵⁷ Consequently, the father’s

²⁵⁴ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 2. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 481.

²⁵⁵ See on Deut 32:6; cf. Deut 1:31; Isa 1:2.

²⁵⁶ Exod 4:22; Deut 1:31. The ancient treaties often refer to the suzerain king as the father and to the vassal as his son.

²⁵⁷ In Lev 26:18 – 28, *rsy* is in the formula “I will chastise,” (NASB punish) you seven times for your sins,” with a clear parallel in vs. 24, “I will punish you seven times,” using *hk'n* “to beat, strike, hit.” Harris further observes that key to an understanding of *rsy*) *Wm* is Deut 11:2ff., “Consider the discipline of the Lord your God, his greatness, ... his signs and his deeds which he did in Egypt to Pharaoh ..., and what he did to the army of Egypt ..., and what he did for you in the wilderness.” In short, the *rsy*) *Wm* of Yahweh is his mighty activity in covenant history by which he reveals himself (cf. v. 7 with 4:35f.). Nevertheless, the discipline of Yahweh is not to be taken negatively, for the hardships in the wilderness were balanced by his miraculous provisions both designed to test their willingness to obey his commandments (Deut 8:2). This *rsy*) *Wm* ‘discipline’ then might be considered education that is theocentric, indeed, theofugal; that they may

discipline gives assurance of sonship, for *mûsar* primarily points to a God-centered way of life, and only secondary to ethical behaviour. Hence the comparative expression, "...as a man chastens (*yäsar*) his son, so the LORD your God chastens (*yäsar*) you (Deut 8:5). This is not without covenantal and theological significance, an expression of interpersonal relationship of love. Therefore, Proverbs and other wisdom literature speak of discipline with emphasis on instruction. It is tempting to see that the seeming disparate notions of correction and instruction coverage beautifully only in the covenant.²⁵⁸

However, the use of *šēʾbeṭ* 'rod' as instrument for *yäsar* or *mûsar* 'discipline' (Prov 13:24; 22:15; 23:23 – 24) seems somewhat problematic and ambiguous based on the various renderings. *šēʾbeṭ* occurs 191 times and in 12 forms in the OT. It is rendered 'rod, staff, scepter, or tribe.'²⁵⁹ Van Gemeren²⁶⁰ states that both *šēʾbeṭ* and its synonym *ḥṢ, m;* 'staff, stick, shaft, branch, tribe'²⁶¹ originally referred to parts of a tree from which a staff or a weapon could be made. Leaders who effectively used these weapons came to be known as *šēʾbeṭ* (as in Num 24:17 - 19), as did the people following them. Most of the pentateuchal occurrences of *šēʾbeṭ* refer to the Israelite tribes (Genesis 49:10, 16, 28),²⁶² of which Harris submits was never used in reference to tribes of other nations.²⁶³ *šēʾbeṭ* also refers to a rod of disciplining authority (Exod 21:20) and a rod or staff used in separating sheep for the Lord's tithe (Lev 27:32).²⁶⁴ The historical books follow the Pentateuch in rendering *šēʾbeṭ* as tribe²⁶⁵. However, some exceptions occur in Judges 5:14, where the idiom *ṛpE) so ḵb, veî šēʾbeṭ SöPhçr* (literally rod of the scribe) probably refers to a commander's

understand that man does not live by bread alone but ... by every word that proceeds from the mouth of Yahweh (Deut 8:3). See on R.L.Harris et. al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* vol. 1. Chicago: Moody Press, 386.

²⁵⁸ R.L.Harris et. al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* vol. 1. Chicago: Moody Press, 387

²⁵⁹ Word study on BibleWorks cf. Harris vol.2, 897.

²⁶⁰ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 2. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 27.

²⁶¹ R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1352b.

²⁶² W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 4. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 27.

²⁶³ R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* vol. 2. Chicago: Moody Press, 897.

²⁶⁴ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 4. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 27.

²⁶⁵ Josh 1:12; 3:12; 4:2, 4, 5, 8, 12; 7:14, 16; Jgd 18:1, 19, 30; 20:2, 10, 12; 1 Sam 2:28; 9:21; 10:19, 20, 21; 2 Sam 5:1; 7:7, 14; 1Kings 11:13, 31, 32, 34, 35; 12:20, 21; 1 Chron 5:18, 23, 26; 33:7, etc.

staff.²⁶⁶ More notably, *šē^obeṭ* occurs in yet another putative passage 2 Sam 7:14. Such metaphoric usage here does not mean the ‘scepter’ of a ruler, but rather the rod of discipline on David’s offspring employed by authorities under the direction of God, ultimately the Messiah, who bore the sins of the world (2 Cor. 5:21). The occurrences of *šē^obeṭ* in 1 Sam 18:14 and 23:21 (javelin, spear) are perhaps not theologically significant. The derivative *sarbit* occurs in Esther with the meaning of scepter, the sign of authority of Xerxes.

The most common understanding of *šē^obeṭ* in the poetic literature of the OT is that of a rod of discipline by one in authority, as in the case of a father for remedial punishment on a son (Prov. 13:24; 22:15; 23:13, 14; 29:15), civil authority for penal use (10:13), or God (Job 21:9; 37:13). This is perhaps the idea of Ps 2:9 as well, where God’s Messiah wields a rod (*šē^obeṭ*) of iron over opposing nations, suggesting a metaphoric use of both authority and discipline, and not the use of physical rod. The most familiar use of *šē^obeṭ* in Psalm 23:4 (NIV your rod [*šē^obeṭ*] and your staff, they comfort me) may be understood in the sense of the comfort offered to the sheep by the presence of the shepherd.²⁶⁷ This comfort might be by the shepherd’s effort at restraining the sheep from straying toward dangerous areas, using verbal instruction and other measures. Harris argues that in Proverbs *šē^obeṭ* functions as a symbol of discipline, and failure to use the preventive discipline of verbal rebuke and the corrective measure discipline of physical punishment will end in the child’s death.²⁶⁸ In the prophetic books, the rod of God’s discipline is employed by Immanuel in Isaiah 11:4. This aspect of God’s authority is repeated elsewhere in the Prophets (Isa 10:5; Lam 3:1; Ezek 20:37). Other occurrences of *šē^obeṭ* as rod in the prophetic books symbolise the rule of other kingdoms (Assyria in Isa 14:5; Syria in Amos 1:5; Philistia in 1:8; Egypt in Zech 10:11).

The LXX translated *šē^obeṭ* in many ways, the most numerous of course being *phyle*, tribe (Gen 49:16, 28; Amos 1:5, 8). Other words employed are attempts at interpreting the

²⁶⁶ This is synonymously parallel to $\text{Q}^{\text{C}}\text{Q}^{\text{E}}\text{B}^{\text{X}}\text{O}^{\text{M}}$. , as in Genesis 49:10. Though the usage of *soper*, scribe, following *sebet* seems anomalous. Gemenem argues it may be that one who could function as a scribe in the ANE could also hold political authority. More notably, *sebet* occurs in yet another putative passage, 2 Sam 7:14. W.A.V. Gemenem et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 4. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 27.

²⁶⁷ W.A.V. Gemenem et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 4. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 28.

²⁶⁸ R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* vol. 2. Chicago: Moody Press, 897.

various nuances of *šē'beṭ* as it symbolizes authority: *archon*, ruler (Gen 49:10); *anthropos*, man (Num 24:17); *rhabdos*, rod (Judg 5:14) [Varticanus]; 2 Sam 7:14; Ps 44:7 [45:7]; *skeptron*, scepter (Judg 5:14 [Alexandrinus]; Zech 10:11); *zygon*, yoke (of oppression; Isa 14:5). The Qumran Community may have understood *šē'beṭ* to indicate the person of the Interpreter of the Law.²⁶⁹ However, Baker²⁷⁰ observes that the concept of a scribe becoming an authoritative interpreter may have played a role in this development (cf. Judg 5:14). The NT notably affirms the messianic intent of Ps 2:9 and 45:7 by applying these to Christ using *rhabdos* in Rev 2:27 (12:5, 19:15) and Heb 1:8 respectively. The idea of discipline can be seen in the verb *rhabdizo*, beat with rods, and in the related noun *rhabdoukos*, jailer.²⁷¹

Scholars hold contrasting views over the nature and instrument of *mûsâr* 'discipline' and its cognates in the book of Proverbs and particularly the chosen texts.²⁷² Paul Wegner²⁷³ notes that interestingly, the book of Proverbs is often brought into this modern debate, generally because the book contains several strong statements concerning discipline. In fact, commentators sometimes face a dilemma of integrating the biblical text with modern

²⁶⁹ This, according to Schwarz, is evident in the Zadokite Document 17:18 – 19, in 4QFlor 1:11, and possibly in 4QP Bless as well. See on D.R. Schwarz, 1981. The messianic departure from Judah (4Q patriarchal blessings). *TZ* 37: 257 – 266.

²⁷⁰ D.W. Baker. 1994. Scribes as transmitters of tradition. *Faith tradition, and history*. A.R. Millard, J. Hoffmeier, and D.W. Baker. Eds., 65 – 77.

²⁷¹ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 4. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 28.

²⁷² In fact, the debate is largely divided between fundamentalists and evangelicals (those who believe in "inerrancy") on the one side and the rest of the scholarly world on the other (cf. P. Wegner. 2005. Discipline in the book of Proverbs: to spank or not to spank? *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 48 no. 4D: 717 [715 - 732]; <http://www.religioustolerance.org/spanking.htm>). There has always been a wide variety of childrearing advice given to American parents, much of which has been contradictory. See R.E. Larzelere. 2001. Combining love and limits in authoritative parenting. *Parenthood in America: undervalued, underpaid, under siege* J.C. Westman. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 81-89. In his bestselling book on childrearing from the 1920s, John B. Watson, the founder of behaviourism, warned parents against displaying love toward their children (J.B. Watson. 1926. *Psychological care of infant and child*. New York: Norton; repr. 1972. New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 69-87. By 1948, a more balanced approach between loving and disciplining a child was promoted by Benjamin Spock in his classic book, though very little is said about spanking. (B. Spock. 1946. *Common sense book of baby and child care*. New York: Meredith) and a later revision (B. Spock and S. Parker. 1998. *Baby and child care*. New York: Dutton Books; Penguin Putnam Books, 35-37, 428-48). In the 1968 edition, Spock states: "I'm not particularly advocating spanking, but I think it is less poisonous than lengthy disapproval, because it clears the air, for a parent and child" (p. 338). However, in a later revision he writes, "The American tradition of spanking may be one reason that there is much more violence in our country than in any other comparable nation" (p. 438).

²⁷³ P. Wegner. 2005. Discipline in the book of Proverbs: to spank or not to spank? *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 48 no. 4D: 717 [715 - 732]. I am indebted to P. Wegner for the extensive insight and resources used in discussing corporal punishment in the contemporary era which is widely quoted in this work.

conceptions of child discipline. Ellen F. Davis highlights the detrimental effects of corporate punishment and attempts to integrate these findings with Proverbs 13:24. She submits that “the problem with which the proverb confronts us is how to judge between a clear biblical teaching and reliable evidence that seems to contradict it. This is a problem that the biblical wisdom literature anticipates and even highlights. Two of the most compelling witnesses to faith in Israel’s God, Job and Koheleth (Ecclesiastes), are compelling precisely because they struggle with elements of the tradition they can no longer affirm. Tradition is neither immutable nor closed. On the contrary, it *must* grow and change in order to be ‘tradition,’ literally ‘(a process of) passing on’ from mind to mind, and not merely an artifact preserved in a history book. Tradition is the shared learning of the community over time.”²⁷⁴

Davis’ argument that the consensus of the community shifts at various points, due to social and historical changes which confront a given society with instances in which the old wisdom does not work, or perhaps when social norms no longer require people to hide painful aspects of their experience, aims at limiting the timeless nature of the proverbial discipline. To him, since tradition is dynamic, it is the work of new ‘sages’ to investigate, reflect, teach, and write, and thus to foster the emergence of a new consensus and not depend on ancient tradition. Such approach, however, limits or rather ignore the various nuances of ‘discipline’ which include ‘instruction’ and ‘rebuke’ as seen in this study.

Maurer and Wallerstein take an extreme position and claim that Proverbs is not the Word of God, but merely the “word of mortal man”¹⁴ and that “the Biblical authority for whipping of youths in school and home rests solely on King Solomon's Proverbs and has no

²⁷⁴ E.F. Davis. 2000. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and The Song of Songs*. Westminster Biblical Companion; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 88. Davis so easily jettisons the biblical text or the tradition of wisdom in the biblical text based upon certain findings in contemporary psychology. However, Diana Baumrind and Elizabeth Owens’ research on parenting styles suggests little difference between children who had no corporal punishment and those who had reasonable amounts of it; the more important component was whether the punishment was given in the context of a loving, caring relationship (P. McBroom. 2001. UC Berkeley study finds no lasting harm among adolescents from moderate spanking earlier in childhood. Retrieved January 16, 2013, from www.berkeley.edu). Most people who argue for a balanced view of corporal punishment generally limit it to children between eighteen months to about age ten and moderate its use with other forms of discipline. However, more authoritarian writers believe that the biblical view of discipline relies primarily on corporal punishment and suggests its use well into the teen years.

other Biblical support.”²⁷⁵ Sometimes anti-spanking proponents even point out how corrupt Solomon's son, Rehoboam, was (1 Kgs 14:21-24), how he had to flee from those who were ready to stone him (1 Kgs 12:18), and how he split the kingdom shortly after his father's death (1 Kgs 12:1-24). Wegner²⁷⁶ notes that a recent commentary by Richard J. Clifford sidesteps the use of corporal punishment in Proverbs 13:24 thus: “Sparing the rod and hating the child are paradoxical and memorable ways of stating the effects of parental indifference to their children,” asserting that none of the proverbial texts in view support corporal punishment.²⁷⁷ Similarly, Paul E. Koptak²⁷⁸ opines that Proverbs 13:24 can never be taken as support for corporal punishment. To him, the various uses of *mûsâr* throughout Proverbs 13 and the similar sayings make it clear that the issue is one of instruction, not the means used to bring it about (cf. 17:10; 19:18). Wegner and most commentators disagree with this view.²⁷⁹ Nevertheless, there are good reasons to want to tone down or eliminate the use of corporal punishment in our society, especially with the staggering statistics on child abuse. In 2002, an estimated 896,000 children were determined to be victims of child abuse or neglect, eighty percent of which was committed by their parents. This problem is compounded when parents have a high usage of alcohol, and drugs. In that same year an estimated 1,400 children died from abuse or neglect.²⁸⁰

While Robert Gillogly agrees that essentially, the “rod (*šē^obeṭ*) of God” (Ex. 4:20; 7:9; 12:19f.) was used for disciplining people, including children (see Prov. 3:11-12; Heb. 12:5-11), he argues that such usage has left adverse implications. Without disputing the fact

²⁷⁵ A. Maurer and J.S. Wallerstein. N.d. *The bible and the rod*. Berkeley, CA: The Committee to End Violence Against the Next Generation, 1 – 2.

²⁷⁶ P.D. Wegner. 2005. Discipline in the book of Proverbs: to spank or not to spank. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 48 no. 4 D: 717.

²⁷⁷ R.J. Clifford. 1999. *Proverbs: a commentary*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 140.

²⁷⁸ P.E. Koptak. 2003. *Proverbs*. NIVAC. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 362.

²⁷⁹ P.D. Wegner. 2005. Discipline in the book of Proverbs: to spank or not to spank. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 48 no. 4 D: 718. See also D. Kidner. 1964. *The Proverbs: an introduction and commentary*. TOTC; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 50-51,105; W. McKane. 1970. *Proverbs: a new approach*. OTL, Philadelphia: Westminster, 457; R. E. Murphy. 1998. *Proverbs*. WBC 22; Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 98-99; R.E. Murphy and E. Huwiler. 1999. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*. NIBC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 66; A.P. Ross. 1991. *Proverbs*. EBC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 5.982; R.B Y. Scott. 1965. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes: introduction, translation, and notes*. AB 18; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 94; C.H. Toy. 1899. *A critical and exegetical Commentary on the book of Proverbs*. ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 278; R.R. Whybray. 1994. *Proverbs*. NCBC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 210.

²⁸⁰ P.D. Wegner. 2005. Discipline in the book of Proverbs: to spank or not to spank. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 48 no. 4 D: 718 – 719.

that the use of *šē^obeṭ* ‘rod’ seems a better means for controlling the “folly ... bound up in the heart of a child” (Prov. 22:15), and that the “rod of discipline” will drive such folly out of children and make them docile and obedient (Prov. 29:15), he asserts that the context for such Proverbs is a basic dichotomy between wisdom and ignorance, or worse, foolishness. The unfortunate fool fares rather poorly in Proverbs with the rod recommended as a ready-made instrument for keeping fools in line and correcting their errors (Prov. 26:3). Hence the saying:

“Do not withhold discipline from the child. If you beat him with a rod, he will not die. If you beat him with the rod, you will save his life from *Sheol* (Prov. 23:13-14). He posits that “some children may have been saved from *Sheol* but lost their earthly lives, literally, due to the malicious treatment process. Undoubtedly over the centuries, the cure for many children was worse than the disease. Though instructed (Prov.19:18) to “discipline your son while there is hope” (while he is still young and small, not big enough to hit back and hurt), and cautioned not to “set our hearts on his destruction” (keep cool, calm, and non-violent), it all has a terribly hollow sound, given the “whack-whack” of the “rod of discipline” on a boy's or girl's buttocks or elsewhere on the body. Irreparable physical, mental, and emotional damage can be the direct result of such rigorous advocates of the rod and defenders of this spanking regimen.”²⁸¹

Gillogly submits that contemporary parents should emulate Jesus' attitude to children in the NT. Jesus' teaching, he argues, was in diametric opposition to the corporal punishment position of Proverbs, Deuteronomy, and his contemporaries. The revolutionary social order Jesus initiated belonged to children (Luke 18:16, 17), models of humility who should be received in love and not led to sin (Matt. 18:4 – 6). Rather than concentrate on corporal punishment as prescribed in the Proverbial use of the *šē^obeṭ* ‘rod,’ *mûsâr* ‘discipline,’ in whatever form, must be seen in the context of discipleship. It is tragic, he notes, that whenever the subject of disciplining children is discussed, even in our churches,

²⁸¹ R. Gillogly. 1981. Spanking hurts everybody. *Theology Today*, 37 no. 4: 418. See also R.J. Haskett, R.J. 2001. Proverbs 23:13 – 14. *Interpretation*, 55 no 2, 181 – 184; K.J. Youngblood. 2005. Cosmic boundaries and self-control in Proverbs. *Restoration Quarterly*, 140 [139 – 150]; T. Longman 111. 2002. *How to read Proverbs*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 57; F. Delitzsch. 2001. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Songs of Solomon. *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 6. C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch. Eds. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 340 – 341.

it is all too frequently translated into a false and simplistic dichotomy between corporal punishment and permissiveness, as if there are no other alternatives. Discipline comes from the same Latin root *discere* as *discipleship*; it means, literally, “to learn.” Children will learn by imitation regardless of what they are taught or how they are disciplined. Discipleship is a matter of learning or training by imitation. So when children are spanked, they learn to spank thereby implanting “punishment” principles in them in which case some could become bullies in and outside the home or in extreme cases become terrorists in the neighborhood.²⁸²

The various usages of *mûsâr* ‘discipline’ therefore challenge parents to employ a variety of disciplinary measures suitable for each stage and depending on the outcomes. In this regard, instruction, persuasion, heartfelt discussion, timely and insightful counseling carried out in an atmosphere of love and mutual relationship should precede the use of *šē’beṯ* ‘rod.’

Conclusion

The OT is rich in principles guiding parenting. These as evident in the study cut across the various levels of child development, from the time of conception to adulthood. They are as follows:

1. Unreserved love for God – both a prerequisite for parenting on the part of parents and content or basis for parenting itself. Because the LORD of Israel is One, parents are enjoined to love Him with all their heart, soul, and strength. And such love manifests in loving obedience to God’s commandments.
2. Personal Commitment to Teaching and Education – this is a follow-up on the first. Parents are commanded to teach or inculcate this unreserved love for God to their children repeatedly when they sit down, stand up, walk on the way, or lie down. These imageries indicate the unfathomed need of child education and the unending role of parents in the entire process.

²⁸² R. Gillogly. 1981. Spanking hurts everybody. *Theology Today*, 37 no. 4: 419 – 420.

3. Parental/Communal roles in dealing with the rebellious child. Although parents should display genuine affection towards their children, a child that rebuffs parental discipline to the point of constituting family and societal insecurity should be brought to the elders for death penalty. This underscores both parents limitation in child discipline and communal involvement in parenting.
4. Care for the unborn child. The instruction given to Manoah and his wife prior to Samson's conception elucidated the critical nature of parental role toward the unborn child. This also underscores the role of both parents towards the unborn.
5. Nurturing during infancy. Parental role during infancy is intrinsic in the unique and sacrificial roles played by some biblical characters, especially mothers (such as Jochebed and Hannah cf. Mary the mother of Jesus, and Eunice). Such instances underscore the need for nurturing at the earliest stages of childhood and most importantly, mothers involvement in the entire process.
6. Nature and essence of child 'discipline'. This, as evident in the book of Proverbs, provides multiple levels of discipline ranging from intentional instruction, pointing out improper behaviour to the use of corporal punishment. The latter is used in a loving relationship not to abuse but rather to drive away foolishness or save the child from destruction.

The above template is germane for a better understanding of the parenting imperative in Proverbs 22:6.

CHAPTER FOUR

EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF PROVERBS 22:6

4.1 Introduction

Probably the most frequently quoted of all proverbs is the one found in 22:6:²⁸³

²⁸³ R.L. Roberts, Jr. 1962. Train up a child. *Restoration Quarterly*, 6 no. 1: 40 [40 – 42].

״הנחמי רשיו"אל { !yqi^a z>y:÷-yKi (~G:i
 AK=r>d: yPiä-l[; r[;N:l;â %nOæx] WTT

“Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it” (NKJ).

“Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it” (NLT). Alan Cooper observes that this text has served as a byword for Jewish educators for at least a thousand years.²⁸⁴ Nevertheless, Roberts note: “This proverb has its problems. This is, in fact, the probability that no proverb has been more persistently misapplied. The real wisdom which the passage reflects may be passed over in the haste of applying the maxim exclusively to the religious upbringing of a child.”²⁸⁵ Scholarly disagreements over the accurate rendering and meaning of not just the verse as a whole, but rather the various key words, components, and intrinsic ideas abound.²⁸⁶

Consequently, this chapter undertakes the exegetical exploration of key words in Proverbs 22:6. Prior to this, issues of authorship and structure, parental discourse of the book of Proverbs and the socio-literary context of Proverbs 22:6 are examined.

4.2 Authorship, Literary Structure and Dating of Proverbs

It is noteworthy that wisdom teachings and wise sayings are not unique to ancient Israel. Instead, Israelite wisdom tradition displays characteristics which establish their affinity with a much wider search for wisdom and understanding in the ANE.²⁸⁷ As Dryness

²⁸⁴ A. Cooper. 2010. On the social role of biblical interpretation: the case of Proverbs 22:6. *With reverence for the word: medieval scriptural exegesis in Judaism*, part 2. J.D. McAuliffe et al. Eds., 1.

²⁸⁵ R.L. Roberts, Jr. 1962. Train up a child. *Restoration Quarterly*, 6 no 1:40 [40 – 42].

²⁸⁶ T. Hildebrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9:1 [3 – 19]; W. Kaiser, Jr., et al. Eds. 1996. *Hard sayings of the bible*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 287 – 288; R.L. Roberts, Jr. 1962. Train up a child. *Restoration Quarterly*, 6 no 1: 40 [40 – 42]; A. Cooper. 2010. On the social role of biblical interpretation: the case of Proverbs 22:6. *With reverence for the word: medieval scriptural exegesis in Judaism*, part 2. J.D. McAuliffe et al. Eds., 1; D. Kidner. 1985. *Proverbs: an introduction and commentary*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 147.

²⁸⁷ Most prominently this evidenced in Egypt (with special reference to the *Teaching of Amenemope* which has not only close resemblance but also shares parallel texts the some part of Proverbs), although a substantial

observes, some have been anxious to emphasise the purely secular character of wisdom which only later gained a place of religious importance. Such understanding might fit well with the idea that Israel's religion evolved through various stages. But in Israel, wisdom is understood in the closest relation to her faith in God and her covenant obligations. This is summed up in Proverbs 2.²⁸⁸ Scholars agree that the Book of Proverbs is the primary locus for the study of OT wisdom, having a collection of wisdom teachings traceable to its ancient origins in Israel.²⁸⁹ The Book is undoubtedly the most practical book in the Old Testament (OT) which contains collections of proverbs and discourses about how to live wisely.²⁹⁰ Internal evidence suggests that the book is anthology composed of a number of texts from different authors and various time periods. Three of the authors are named: Solomon, Agur, and Lemuel. Others are mentioned collectively as "Wise men", and at least one section of the book (the last) is anonymous. Frequently, the sections are marked by captions that indicate authorship thus: Solomon (1:1; 10:1; 25:1); 'the wise' (22:17; 24:23); Agur (30:1); King Lemuel (31:1). Scholars differ regarding assigning authorship of Proverbs 1:1 – 9:18 to Solomon based on the superscript in Proverbs 1:1. While Kidner affirms its Solomonic authorship,²⁹¹ Dillard and Longman 111 assign it to a redactor.²⁹² The argument is endless.

Proverbs presents an apparently clear-cut general outline. In the first place, we observe a distinction between Proverbs 1-9 and 10 – 31. As a general characterisation, the first part contains extended wisdom discourses, while most of the latter part is composed of the short, pithy sayings we usually associate with the name of the book.²⁹³ Further analysis

body of didactic literature exists from Sumeria and Babylon, and the OT points to a tradition of wisdom among the Edomites (Obadiah 8). The idea of who borrowed from each other is a lengthy argument which this study does not intend to engage. Suffice it to say however that even if Israelite Proverbs depended on these ancient wisdom, there is a remarkable shift and creativity in ideology which distinguishes Israelite wisdom from that of its neighbours – even that of the Apocrypha. Cf. R.E. Clements. 1992. *Wisdom in theology*. GR, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 16 – 17; D. Kidner. 1964. *Proverbs : an introduction and commentary*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 16 – 27; R.E. Murphy. 1992. *The tree of life: an exploration of biblical wisdom literature*, New York: Doubleday, 23 – 24.

²⁸⁸ W. Dryness. 1977. *Themes in Old Testament theology*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 193 – 195.

²⁸⁹ R.E. Clements. 1992. *Wisdom in theology*, GR, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 17; G. Fee and D. Stuart. 2003. *How to read the bible for all its worth*, GR, Michigan: Zondervan, 231.

²⁹⁰ D.A. Dorsey. 2004. *The literary structure of the Old Testament*. GR, Michigan: Baker Academic, 187.

²⁹¹ D. Kidner. 1964. *Proverbs : An introduction and commentary*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 21.

²⁹² R.B. Dillard and T. Longman 111. *An introduction to the Old Testament*, Leicester: Apollos-Imprint of Inter-Varsity Press, 236.

²⁹³ R.B. Dillard and T. Longman 111. *An introduction to the Old Testament*, Leicester: Apollos-Imprint of Inter-Varsity Press, 237; R.E. Murphy. 1992. *The tree of life: an exploration of biblical wisdom literature*.

of these major parts is made possible by the captions and other signals at the head of each section. Consequently, the book has seven parts, six of which are introduced by titles thus:

- i. Preamble 1:1 – 7
- ii. Extended Discourses on Wisdom 1:8 – 9:18
- iii. Solomonic Proverbs 10:1 – 22:16; 25:1 – 29:27
- iv. Sayings of the Wise 22:17 – 24:34
- v. Sayings of Agur 30:1 – 33
- vi. Sayings of King Lemuel 31:1 – 9
- vii. Poem to the Virtuous Woman 31:10 – 31²⁹⁴

As an anthology, Proverbs seems to have been written over a long period of time.

This time is not clear, since there are anonymous sections as well as a mention of authors whose identity is not known outside the book. If the captions or superscripts are accepted as mark of authorship, it is plausible then to affirm the date of a Solomonic authorship (10th century B.C.), and with the redactional activity of Hezekiah's men (ca. 700 B.C.).²⁹⁵ Dillard and Longman 111 insist that it is virtually impossible to date, even relatively, the writing of the other parts of the book.²⁹⁶ Many scholars, however, ascribe the dating of the book and its final redaction to the post-exilic period. It is often argued that 1:8 – 9:18 is the latest part of the book, especially citing the more complex and longer style, the more explicit religious perspective, as well as the supposed lateness of some words.²⁹⁷ But von Rad sees the above arguments as a figment of form critic's imaginations.²⁹⁸ Dillard and Longman 111 quoting Kayatz however suggest that the differences between Proverbs 1:8 – 9:18 and the rest of the

New York: Doubleday, 19; W.P. Brown. 1996. *Character in crisis: a fresh approach to the wisdom literature of the Old Testament*. GR, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 48.

²⁹⁴ D. Kidner. 1964. *Proverbs: An introduction and commentary*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 22; Dillard and Longman 111, .238. Although Kidner's presentation seems more elaborate, in the end it shares common features with that of Dillard and Longman 111 which is presented in this study.

²⁹⁵ D.A. Dorsey. 2004. *The literary structure of the Old Testament*. GR, Michigan: Baker Academic, 95 – 187.

²⁹⁶ R.B. Dillard and T. Longman 111. *An introduction to the Old Testament*, Leicester: Apollos-Imprint of Inter-Varsity Press, 237.

²⁹⁷ C.V. Camp. 1985. Wisdom and the feminine in the book of Proverbs. *Sheffield JSOT*, 233 – 254; W. McKane. 1970. *Proverbs: a new approach*. OTL: Westminster, 384; M. Masenya. 2004. *How worthy is the woman of worth? rereading Proverbs 31:10 -31 in African-South Africa*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 70 – 71.

²⁹⁸ G.V. Rad. 1972. *Wisdom in Israel*. Abingdon, 24 – 50.

book have more to do with style than chronology.²⁹⁹ We may therefore argue that although the actual date of final compilation of the entire proverbs remains uncertain, the origin and use of a greater part of the proverbs and wise sayings in Proverbs have ancient origins in Israel, even prior to the era of Solomonic wisdom.

4.3 Socio-Literary Context of Proverbs 22:6

Proverbs 22:6 belongs to Solomonic wisdom, hence of pre-exilic date.³⁰⁰ However, no consensus has emerged concerning the original *sitz in leben* 'social setting' for wisdom instruction. Three distinct groups have been proposed as the originators and transmitters of wisdom: the family, the royal scribes and counselors, and the religious scribes who studied and meditated on the Torah.³⁰¹ Many passages in Proverbs imply that wisdom was a family matter. The book frequently addresses its reader as 'my son' and urges him to adhere to the teachings of his father and mother (see on 1:8). On the other hand, the attribution of many proverbs to Solomon and the biblical references to state scribes and counselors imply that the royal court may have been the source of at least the text of Proverbs if not much of its content (Prov. 1:1; 25:1; 2 Sam 17:1 – 14; 1 Kings 4:29 – 34). Religious "Torah" wisdom was a latter development as described below.

It is important to recognise that neither family nor royal wisdom was unique to Israel. Every culture has traditional values and teachings, and the family is always the first area in which those teachings are passed down. In the ancient Near East, moreover, especially in Egypt, the royal court wisdom was well established long before Israel came into existence. Proverbial sayings and other traditional teachings were collected and studied, and court officials presented their wisdom in polished literary works. Certainly, the family was the first locus of wisdom in Israelite culture and it continued to play an important role through Hebrew history. Conceivably, under divine guidance, a great deal of traditional family wisdom has been incorporated into the text of Proverbs. The family,

²⁹⁹ R.B. Dillard and T. Longman 111. *An introduction to the Old Testament*. Leicester: Apollos-Imprint of Inter-Varsity Press, 237.

³⁰⁰ While scholars like Camp, Masenya and others argue against the Solomonic authorship of Proverbs 1:1 – 9:18, ascribing it to a later redactor, it seems there are more or less no argument over Solomon's authorship of 10:1 – 22:16.

³⁰¹ D.A. Garrett. 1993. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* vol. 2. The New American Commentary: B&H Publishing Group, 23.

rather than the school is everywhere presented as the primary place of training. Nevertheless, as Proverbs suggests, Israelite wisdom literature appears a product of the royal court and its scribes.³⁰² Although the Israelite monarchies did not have the soothsaying counselors of the pagan nations,³⁰³ they had numerous counselors, scribes, priests, and other aristocratic groups in their courts. Apparently, they had no separate group that was simply identified as “the wise.”

OT narrative literature lists various offices that were held around the royal court, but nowhere is the title “wise man” included among them (see 2 Sam 8:16 – 18; 20:23 – 26; 1 Kings 4:2 – 6).³⁰⁴ In Proverbs, moreover, “wise men” refers to the moral estimate of a man’s character, not to his profession.³⁰⁵ Garrett therefore submits that although it is obvious that some kind of teaching went on in various circles, there is little evidence for independent, professional schools in Israel, especially during the pre-exilic era.³⁰⁶ It is particularly significant that in Proverbs, education is frequently said to be done by the parents (cf. see also Deut. 6:4 – 9). At the same time, however, one must be careful to observe that from the literary view-point of the *Sitz im leben*, Proverbs as a literary work has its origin in the court. But we should not suppose that all the proverbs originated there or that they concern life and politics in the high offices of government. In fact, Waltke observes that the majority do not.³⁰⁷ Suffice it to say therefore that though the setting of Proverbs has been debated (whether it was the royal court or the home), the data seem to indicate that the Book of Proverbs in its canonical form was an “instructional manual” designed “for use by the young men of Israel’s society who were being groomed for positions of leadership.” However, the

³⁰² D.A. Garrett. 1993. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* vol. 2, The New American Commentary: B&H Publishing Group, 24.

³⁰³ Cf. Hosea 10:6; G.E. Bryce. 1975. Omen-wisdom in Ancient Israel. *JBL* 94, 19 – 37.

³⁰⁴ R.N. Whybray. 1972. The book of Proverbs. *Cambridge bible commentary*. Cambridge: University Press, 17 – 31. The proper term for the classes of counselors who assisted the king was not ׀~ymik" x] (“wise”) but ~yr If" “princes.”

³⁰⁵ R.N. Whybray. 1972. The book of Proverbs. *Cambridge bible commentary*. Cambridge: University Press, 35 – 45.

³⁰⁶ D.A. Garrett. 1993. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* vol. 2. The New American Commentary: B&H Publishing Group, 25.

³⁰⁷ B.K. Waltke. 1979. The book of Proverbs and ancient wisdom literature. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 136, 1979: 232. Waltke notes that references to the mother as teacher in Proverbs indicate that the father-son relationship is not metaphorical for teacher and pupil but is literal. This is significant since even when cultic or synagogue teachings began much later, women were forbidden from participation, not to talk of teaching.

individual sayings (of which 22:6 is part) reflect the family (or clan) wisdom of centuries past handed down from father to son throughout the generations (cf. Prov. 4:1-4).³⁰⁸

On the one hand, Proverbs 1 – 9 contain relatively lengthy, organised sections of sustained thought or “instructions” imparted from a parent to a youth.³⁰⁹ It begins with the goal of wisdom instruction. This is evident in the overwhelming vocabulary in 1:1 – 6: learning, understanding, righteousness, discernment, knowledge, and so forth. All combine to spell out the riches of wisdom. These are not abstract or mere intellectual characteristics; instead, they are tied to the practical aspects of human conduct.³¹⁰ Proverbs 1:7, the motto of the book,³¹¹ announces the kernel of proverbial wisdom: “The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.” Murphy observes that the positioning of this verse (echoed in 9:10; 15:33; Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10) is important. To Von Rad, this verse “contains in a nutshell the whole Israelite theory of knowledge.”³¹² In other words, the crux of wisdom enterprise is total commitment to God (cf. see Deut 6:4 – 6). Subsequently, Proverbs 1:8 – 9:18, which consists of parental instructions to a ‘son’, expounds the wisdom ideology which illustrates and drives home to the child the fateful choice he must make between wisdom and folly. This section of the book leads many scholars to the conclusion that the book of Proverbs is a book of virtues, written primarily for young people.³¹³ This is quite clear in the initial nine chapters which comprise the first major unit of the book.

Whereas Proverbs 1 – 9, and perhaps 30 – 31 present a set of sustained length thoughts, the bulk of Proverbs (10 - 29) consists of thick jungles of terse, self-contained

³⁰⁸ G.W. Parsons. 1993. Guidelines for understanding and proclaiming the book of Proverbs. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 150, 154:151-70.

³⁰⁹ D.A. Dorsey. 2004. *The literary structure of the Old Testament*. GR, Michigan: Baker Academic, 187 – 188. Also affirms the straight forward nature of Proverbs 30 (the sayings of Agur) and 31 (the words of Lemuel and the Virtuous Woman narrative).

³¹⁰ R.E. Murphy. 1992. *The tree of life: an exploration of biblical wisdom literature*. New York: Doubleday, 16.

³¹¹ D. Kidner. 1964. *Proverbs: An introduction and commentary*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 22; R.E. Murphy. 1992. *The tree of life: an exploration of biblical wisdom literature*. New York: Doubleday, 23 – 24.

³¹² G.V. Rad. 1972. *Wisdom in ancient Israel*. Nashville: Abingdon, 67.

³¹³ W.P. Brown. 1996. *Character in crisis: a fresh approach to the wisdom literature of the Old Testament*. GR, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 22; M. Masenya. 2004. *How worthy is the woman of worth? rereading Proverbs 31:10 -31 in African-South Africa*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 78.

proverbs, somewhat haphazardly arranged.³¹⁴ Dorsey suggests that no scheme has been discovered in the two lengthy sections of the so-called Solomonic proverbs in 10:1 – 22:16 and 25:1 – 29:27. He notes that more likely there is no significant organisational design in either section (although a few smaller groupings of two or more proverbs can be identified). He notes that these collections of proverbs are therefore to be pondered individually, without regard to context.³¹⁵ The first cluster (10:1 – 22:16) which 22:6 belongs, contains 375 proverbs, the numeric equivalent of the proper name $\text{hmo}^{\text{a}}\text{l} \{ \text{v} \cdot$. “Solomon,”³¹⁶ without any comprehensive plan, but rather according to their more or fewer conspicuous common characteristics. Murphy favours a division of 10 – 15 (antithetical parallelism primarily) and 16:1 – 22:16 (synonymous parallelism primarily).³¹⁷ On the other hand, Keil and Delitzsch opine that these proverbs consist of distiches;³¹⁸ for each Masoretic verse falls naturally into two stichs, and nowhere (not even 19:19 which presents apparent contrast) does such a distich proverb stand in necessary connection with one that precedes or that follows. Instead, each is in itself a small perfected and finished whole. The tristich 19:7 presents an apparent exception, although Keil and Delitzsch argue that in reality, it is a distich with the disfigured remains of a distich that has been lost.³¹⁹ Like Murphy observed, not only are all these proverbs distiches, they have also, not indeed without exception, but in far greater number, a common character in that they are antithetic.³²⁰

³¹⁴ W.P. Brown. 1996. *Character in crisis: a fresh approach to the wisdom literature of the Old Testament*, GR, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 22. Brown notes that the session “The Words of the Wise” (Proverbs 22:17 – 24:22) is a possible exception, but even so, it consists essentially of some brief and not-so-brief commands. He also posits that in their final form, Proverbs 1 – 9, along with 31, provide a unifying focus for the book as a whole, a focus established by the voices of various characters and the values they impart. See also R.N. Whybray. 1972. *Wisdom in the book of Proverbs. Cambridge bible commentary*. Cambridge: University Press, 31.

³¹⁵ D.A. Dorsey. 2004. *The literary structure of the Old Testament*. GR, Michigan: Baker Academic, 187 – 188.

³¹⁶ R.E. Murphy. 1992. *The tree of life: an exploration of biblical wisdom literature*. New York: Doubleday, 21. See 1:1; 10:1.

³¹⁷ R.E. Murphy. 1992. *The tree of life: an exploration of biblical wisdom literature*. New York: Doubleday, 21.

³¹⁸ A pair of verse lines or couplet.

³¹⁹ R.B. Dillard and T. Longman 111. *An introduction to the Old Testament*. Leicester: Apollos-Imprint of Inter-Varsity Press, 12 – 13.

³²⁰ R.B. Dillard and T. Longman 111. *An introduction to the Old Testament*, Leicester: Apollos-Imprint of Inter-Varsity Press, 13. Further he observed that distiches of predominating antithetic character stand here together. Along with these all other schemes are, it is true, represented: the synonymous, 11:7, 25, 30; 12:14, 28; 14:19, etc.; the integral, or of one thought, 14:7; 15:3, etc., particularly in proverbs with the comparative

4.4 Parental Discourse in Proverbs

Parental exhortation consists of a lengthy discourse in which a parent exhorts a child to gain wisdom, to avoid prostitutes or criminal associations, or to maintain a life of virtue.³²¹ These exhortations will generally include various proverbs, admonitions, and better sayings. They open with a parental appeal, in which the parent directly addresses the child (“my son(s)”) and urges him or her to heed the parent’s words. The vocative “my son(s)” can also mark off subdivisions within an exhortation (e.g., Prov1:10; 3:11).³²² The first dense cluster of virtues is found in the father’s instruction in Proverbs 2 and spreads throughout.³²³ As the parent describes it, the wise person is a desiring subject—one who longs for the right object: wisdom. The parent urges the *bēn* ‘son’ repeatedly to “seek” wisdom (1:28; 2:4; 7:15; 8:17), to cry out for it (2:3; cf. 1:28), to search for it as for hidden treasures (2:4), and to watch and wait daily at personified wisdom’s door (8:34). Moreover, even when the ‘son’ finds wisdom (e.g., 2:5; 3:13), even when he “acquires” her (3:13; 4:5, 7), his pursuit of wisdom continues.

The book’s prologue, for example, beckons the discerning to learn more (1:5-6), the wise are to be ardently receptive to instruction (e.g., listening, watching, inclining their hearts), and personified wisdom’s invitation to her house and the feast that she prepares is a string of imperatives; it is perpetual and immediate (9:4-5). Paradoxically, one can never wholly possess wisdom; there is no arrival at or achievement of intellectual or contemplative purity.³²⁴ Instead, the predominant metaphor for life in Proverbs 1-9—a path or way—indicates that the wise (and foolish) are on a journey, while active verbs convey movement toward the good.³²⁵ Assumed is a lifelong yearning for and pursuit of wisdom. Compare wisdom’s self-revelation in Sir 24:21: “Those who eat of me will hunger for more, and those

! mi ‘from’, 12:9; 15:16, 17; 16:8, 19; 17:10; 21:19; 21:1, and with the ascending -yKi @a; ‘much more’, 11:31; 15:11; 17:7; 19:7, 10; 21:27; the synthetic, 10:18; 11:29; 14:17; 19:13; parabolic, the most feebly represented, for the only specimens of it are 10:26; 11:22.

³²¹ See on chapters 1:8 – 19; see also 2:1 – 22; 3:1 – 35; 31:1 – 9.

³²² D.A. Garrett. 1993. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* vol. 2, The New American Commentary: B&H Publishing Group, 31.

³²³ Proverbial Parental Discourse finds its root in 1 – 9. However, the rest of the Book contains a variety of admonitions which more or less consist of explanations to, aspects and/or summary of the chapters 1 – 9.

³²⁴ C. Yoder. 2010. Shaping desire: a parent’s attempt, Proverbs 1 – 9. *Journal for Preachers*, 56.

³²⁵ C. Yoder. 2010. Shaping desire: a parent’s attempt, Proverbs 1 – 9. *Journal for Preachers*, 56.

Note the use of the verbs "walk," "run," "stumble," "enter," "avoid," "go," "turn away," and "pass by" in Prov. 4:12-19 alone.

who drink of me will thirst for more.” Desire for wisdom is intrinsic to the virtuous life. And because that desire is never sated, the wise never cease reaching for the good. This underscores the very nature and essence of training which assumes a variety of methods in producing a child that does not just have knowledge, but rather perfection in all his or ways.

The parent’s emphasis on desire locates what is good for the human *outside of the self*. Inherent is an understanding of the human as limited and in need of knowledge from beyond oneself for wholeness. Conversely, wisdom is pictured as independent, not simply part of its pursuer. The parent underscores wisdom’s independence variously: calling wisdom a divine gift (2:5-6), personifying wisdom as a woman who takes her stand in the city (1:20-21 ; 8:2-3), extolling wisdom’s preeminent and mysterious relationship with God (8:22-31), celebrating wisdom as the means by which God formed the world (3:19-20), and with only one exception (5:1), never referring to wisdom as belonging to a person—that is, with a possessive suffix. Furthermore, by designating God as the source of wisdom (2:5-6), the parent couples desire for wisdom with desire for God, so waiting and longing for wisdom become acts of reverence. The parent thus portrays the wise as incomplete in and of themselves, and wisdom, the good they seek, as mysterious, holy, and elusive “other.”³²⁶

Outside Proverbs 1 – 9, one parental theme that runs through the book is that of ‘discipline.’ Discipline seems to confirm the urgent need for wisdom: hence, if wisdom is life itself (8:35, 36), a hard way to it is better than a soft way to death (23:14 cf. 19:18). The way has to be hard, for two reasons. First, ‘foolishness is bound up in the heart of the child’; it will take more than words to dislodge it (22:15). Secondly, character (in which wisdom embodies itself) is a plant that grows more sturdily for some cutting back (15:32, 33; 5:11, 12; cf. Heb. 12:11). And this from early days (13:24b: ‘betimes’; cf. 22:6). This is expedient since in a child left to himself the only predictable product is shame (29:15).³²⁷ But as evident in the discourse on the principles of parenting, ‘discipline’ in Proverbs could assume a variety of approaches.

On the other hand, Proverbs seems to remind its readers training rooted in the fear of God is the key to wisdom. Although fools may neglect it, parents are enjoined to persist

³²⁶ C. Yoder. 2010. Shaping desire: a parent’s attempt, Proverbs 1 – 9. *Journal for Preachers*, 56.

³²⁷ D. Kidner. 1964. *Proverbs: an introduction and commentary*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 51.

because training through instruction and discipline can drive away folly. Nevertheless, Proverbs is not ignorant of the fact that some children will reject wisdom by abandoning their training.³²⁸ For instance, a 'son' may be too opinionated to learn (13:1; cf. 17:21). A good home may produce an idler (10:5) or a profligate (29:3): he may be a rebel enough to despise (15:20), mock (30:7) or curse (30:11; 20:20) his parents; heartless enough to run through their money (28:24), and even to turn a widowed mother out of doors (19:26).³²⁹

4.5 Immediate Context of Proverbs 22:6

Given the differences in style between Proverbs 1 – 9 and 10:1 – 22:16, one basic question is, who is the immediate audience of Proverbs 22:6? To who was this imperative addressed? A son growing into leadership and how he should raise his own children much later, or parents engaged in the task of parenting? With the nature of Proverbs 1 – 9 where a 'father' exhorts his 'son' on a variety of issues and the ultimate need for him to choose wisdom instead of folly, it seems plausible that the father was also talking to a son getting ready to engage the larger society. One must however be reminded of the nature of Proverbs 10:1 – 22:16, which has no specific reference to a context.³³⁰ Such understanding renders the task of assigning an immediate context to Proverbs 22:6 obviously difficult. But a closer look at some parental exhortations in the Solomonic Proverbs³³¹ suggests a direct address to parents and not young adults.³³² As earlier observed, it will also be wrong to think all the proverbs were a product of a cultic setting. Instead, wisdom tradition gives credence to the fact that proverbs and wise sayings form integral part of ancient Israel even before the Solomonic era.

Furthermore, to limit the Solomonic proverbs in Proverbs to a father-son setting will constitute a stereotype especially with the understanding that Solomon in his wisdom addressed a variety of people and issues.³³³ We can therefore infer that as an individual

³²⁸ See 2:1ff

³²⁹ D. Kidner. 1964. *Proverbs: an introduction and commentary*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 51.

³³⁰ W.P. Brown. 1996. *Character in crisis: a fresh approach to the wisdom literature of the Old Testament*. GR, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 22; R.N. Whybray. 1972. *The book of Proverbs. Cambridge bible commentary*. Cambridge: University Press, 31.

³³¹ Proverbs 10:1 – 22:16 and 25:1 – 29:27.

³³² Proverbs 13:23; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13 – 14; 29:15, 17.

³³³ See on 1 Kings 3:16 – 28; 10:1 – 13.

saying, Proverbs 22:6 is an exhortation given to parents concerning the proper upbringing of their 'son.' It should be noted that the use of 'son' does not necessarily exclude the female child. Instead, it was used in a general term to include both male and female children. The latter is characteristic of several references to and renderings of the Hebrew !Be (*bën*) 'son' which is basically, but not exclusively, a reference to the male offspring of human parents. It is also used idiomatically for children generally of whom its various usages in Proverbs³³⁴ are suggestive. Its plural absolute ~yn I\beta B'' (*bänîm*) 'sons,' and the plural construct ynEB. (*bünê*) 'sons of' are severally rendered 'children'³³⁵ to include the daughters.

Setel sees the above tradition which submerged the female identity in a masculine noun as an extension of the patriarchal hegemony. This, according to him, relegated or downplayed the female personage.³³⁶ Nevertheless, suffice it to say that the use of 'child' by many translators instead of 'boy' in reference to the *na`ar* of Proverbs 22:6 suggests the same idea that this parenting imperative is for both male and female children. This inclusive understanding is pursued in this study.

³³⁴ See Proverbs 3:1, 21; 4:1, 10, 20; 5:1, 7, etc.

³³⁵ See Genesis 3:15; 18:19; 21:7; Deut. 32:20; Judges 1:34; 2:4, etc. One characteristic formula with the term !Be especially in its plural form is "sons of Israel," a phrase that occurs 630 times and is rendered as "children of Israel" by ASV and as "people of Israel" or "Israelites" by RSV and NIV. It is comparable in idiom to "sons of Ammon," that is, Ammonites.

³³⁶ T. D. Setel. 1985. Prophets and pornography: female sexual imagery in Hosea. *Feminist interpretation of the bible*. Letty M. Russell ed. Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 86 – 95.

4.6 Analysis of Key Words in Proverbs 22:6

This segment undertakes the exegetical exploration of key words and basic ideologies in Proverbs 22:6.

4.6.1 ׁנֹאֵךְ] ׀] (Hánök)

The Hebrew ׁנֹאֵךְ] (Hánök) is an initial verbal imperative form which occurs only five times in the OT. It is translated ‘train,’ ‘dedicate,’ ‘inaugurate’ or ‘initiate.’³³⁷ Four of the five occurrences are with the object house, either private (Deut. 20:5) or religious (1 Kings 8:63; 2 Chron. 7:5). In its first occurrence (Deut 20:5), the verb ׁנֹאֵךְ] (Hänak) is used in two different forms in describing the understanding that anyone (in this case military officers) who built a new house, and has not dedicated it (Ākêñ] ׀], should return to his house and not go to war lest he dies in the battle, and another man dedicates (Wnk, (n>x .) it. The concern here is that anyone listed for war who has undedicated buildings should stay behind. By implication, house dedication is presented as an important ritual worthy of excusing men from war. In 1 Kings 8:63, ׁWkn>x .Y : (yaHnikû) Qal imperfect, third person masculine singular (3mp) occurs during the dedication of the house of God built by Solomon. The same story is repeated in 2 Chron 7:5 with Wkn>x .Y : also used in the Qal imperfect.³³⁸ So far, the above occurrences of ׁנֹאֵךְ] are in the imperfect with reference to inanimate objects. However, in Proverbs 22:6 it occurs as an imperative *Hánök* (Qal masculine singular) with animate object *na`ar* ‘child’ and has been rendered ‘train up’ (KJV, NAS, NIV, NKJ) and ‘direct’ (NLT) with reference to a child.

³³⁷ F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs. 1996. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English lexicon*. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 335; R.L.Harris et. al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 301; T. Hilberandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 6 – 8.

³³⁸ W. Holladay. Ed. 2000. *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 110.

Apart from its verbal usage, the noun $\text{טק; äñÛ}]$ (*HánuKKat*) occurs 10 times in Hebrew and two (2) times in each of the Aramaic portions of Ezra and Daniel.³³⁹ It refers to the ‘initial use of’ a religious structure. The completion of a project was observed with an inauguration of the structure, an event appropriately accompanied by sacrifice and joy. In Num 7:11, 84, 88 the noun refers to the dedication ($\text{טק; äñÛ}]$) of the altar of the desert sanctuary. Nehemiah 12:27 recounts the ‘dedication’ of the rebuilt walls of Jerusalem. Elsewhere, with the use of other terms, greater emphasis is given to the ‘consecration’ to God. Dan 3:2 (Aram) describes the dedication ($\text{טק; äñÛ}]$) or better put, ‘consecration’ of a divine image. The ceremony includes the presence of numerous invited guests, the playing of various musical instruments, and prostration in worship. The LXX translation *evgkaini, zw*, carries the idea of newness and initial use, as well as dedication. This cultic initiation/dedication use is affirmed through the eight uses of *HánuKKat* which occur exclusively in cult object dedication celebrations (Num 7: 10, 11, 84, 88; 2 Chr 7:9; Neh 12:27; Ps 30: 1 [title]).³⁴⁰

In the intertestamental era, *HánuKKat* refers to the Feast of Hanukka, which commemorates the reestablishment of worship in the temple after the excesses of Antiochus Epiphanes (1 Macc. 4:36 – 59; 2 Macc. 10:1 – 8). This Feast is also mentioned in the NT (John 10:22).³⁴¹ It is interesting that the word for the feast of Hanukkah is derived from the same root *HnK*. Harris and Hilderbrandt suggest that here *HánuKKat* focuses on the Maccabean celebration of the initial use/rededication of the second temple after its being profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes.³⁴² However, such idea of ‘initial use’ here is apparently overbearing since the building was already in existence. Instead, we see a case of rededication for sacred use. Whereas the ten noun usages also occur with inanimate objects (house) and are rendered either to initiate or dedicate, the noun $\text{°yn Ì} \text{X}''$ (*Hánîk*), a

³³⁹ R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, (693b) 301; The two occurrences in the LXX include Hebrews 9:18 and 10:20.

³⁴⁰ R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, (693b) 301; T. Hilberbrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train Up a Child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 7.

³⁴¹ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* vol. 2. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 201.

³⁴² R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament vol. 1*. Chicago: Moody Press, 963b; T. Hilderbrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train Up a Child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 7.

*hapax legomena*³⁴³ in Gen 14:14 refers to trained servants/trained men as followers of Abraham. It is now translated as “armed retainer” used by Palestinian chieftains as mentioned in the Egyptian Execration Texts.³⁴⁴ This is suggestive of the fact that there seems to be a switch in meaning when *Hānak* is used for animate and inanimate objects.

Evidently, four of the five occurrences of *Hānak* in the OT are used with reference to the dedication of house. This idea and that of ‘rededication’ are also evident in *HānuKKat*, its noun usage. The only exception is *Hānîk* (the *hapax legomena* in Gen 14:14) which refers to ‘trained’ servants/trained men. Such rendering seems to suggest the idea of training as a process and continuum and not dedication when the root *HnK* is used with human objects, as evident in Proverbs 22:6. Nevertheless, understanding the scope and actual rendering of its singular occurrence in Proverbs 22:6, has been a serious debate among scholars. We will return to these debates in the next chapter after the key words in Proverbs 22:6 have been explored.

4.6.2 ר [; נ : (na`ar)

The Hebrew ר [; נ : (na`ar) occurs 256 times in 24 different forms in the OT. It covers a wide range of usage and is variously rendered ‘child’, ‘lad’, ‘youth’, ‘young man’ ‘man-servant’, ‘attendant’, among others.³⁴⁵ About a third (86) of these are found in Samuel (1 Sam – 60x; 2 Sam – 26x), followed by Kings with 35 (1 Kings – 11x, 2 Kings – 24x), Genesis (27x), Judges (23x), Isaiah (11x), Job (10x), Nehemiah and Proverbs (7x each), and others. Attempts have been made to understand this word by appealing to etymology. Among more frequent suggestions are that *na`ar* is related to ר [נ 1.) ‘growl,’ that is, a

³⁴³ Referring to a word with single occurrence in the entire OT or NT. See P.H. Kelly. 1992. *Biblical Hebrew: an introductory grammar*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 432.

³⁴⁴ Harris observes that this is mentioned in the nineteenth-eighteenth centuries B.C and in a fifteenth century B.C. cuneiform inscription from Taanach, Israel. It is of textual significance that this *hapax* has good second millennium parallels. No point is to be made of the number of armed retainers born in Abraham’s house (318). Nor is it accurately to be compared to the Scarab of Amenophis 111 which records that the princess Gilukhipla arrived from Naharaim (Haran) with 317 women of the harem. See R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 301.

³⁴⁵ W. Holladay. Ed. 2000. *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 260; W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 2. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 125.

reference to voice breaking at puberty; 2.) ‘shake,’ that is, a reference to a child leaving its mother’s womb.³⁴⁶ While the appeal to etymology may not provide the appropriate answer to the wide range of rendering, which Van Gemeren suggests should be left with context,³⁴⁷ it does provide useful insights germane especially in a parental discourse.

That *na`ar* affords a wide range of usage is evident in the fact that it is used of different levels of infancy: four times in reference to a child yet unborn (Judg 13:5-12); one just born (Judg 13:24; 1 Sam 4:21; 2 Sam 12:16); an infant still unweaned (1 Sam 1:22); or a three month old baby (Exod 2:6). However, Joseph at 17--already a man in that culture--is also called a *na`ar* (Gen 37:2). When he is 30 years old surely beyond childhood--he is still called a *na`ar* (Gen 41:12, 46). The mature Absalom is called *na`ar* by his father (2 Sam 14:21; 18:5).³⁴⁸ Further, the *na`ar* is frequently active in strictly adult activities (war [1 Sam 17:33, 42; Judg 6:12, 8:20]; cultic priestly functions [Judg 18:3-6, 20]; special spy missions [Josh 6:22]; personal attendance on a patriarch, prophet, priest, king or son of a king [Gen 18:7; 2 Kgs 5:1-27; 1 Sam 1:22, 24-25; 2 Sam 9:9; 2 Sam 13:17]; or supervision of the whole Solomonic labor force [1 Kgs 11:28]). The term *na`ar* is often applied to one who is designated as a man $\dot{\text{v}}\dot{\text{y}}\dot{\text{a}}\dot{\text{a}}$ (2 Sam 1:5, 10, 13).

The feminine $\text{h}r' [\]n:$ (*na`arâ*) also refers to a wide range of usage which includes a little or young girl (2 Kings 5:2), a marriageable but unmarried girl, emphasizing her youthfulness (Gen 24:14, 16, 28, 55, 57; 24:57, 61; 34:3, 12; Exod 2:5), and virginity (Deut 22:23, 28; Judg 21:12) or virgins (Est 2:3, 4, 7, 8), and betrothal (Deut 22:25, 27). The young widow Ruth is so designated (Ruth 2:6; 4:12) as is the Levite concubine (Jud

³⁴⁶ See R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* vol. 2. Chicago: Moody Press, 1389 for a detailed discussion.

³⁴⁷ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 3. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 125.

³⁴⁸ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 3. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 220; Van Gemeren, 125; R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* vol. 2. Chicago: Moody Press, 586; T. Hilberrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: Train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1, 10.

19:3ff.).³⁴⁹ Parallel to the masculine ‘servant’ we find ‘maid’ (female attendant) in Gen 24:61; Exod 2:5, among others, and “gleaners” in Ruth 2:5.

Suffice it to say that the use of *na`ar* covers a wide range of meaning or renderings – ranging from the unborn child to adulthood. Consequently, one needs to depend on the context to determine the particular classification under consideration in a given occurrence or a text.

4.6.3 \aleph [; (*`al-Pî*)

The Hebrew \aleph [; (*`al*), a particle preposition, occurs 5669 times in 32 forms in the OT. It is variously rendered ‘on, over’ according to, or against. As a particle, majority of its occurrences are in the construct³⁵⁰ – making reference to something or somebody. This preposition answers to both Hebrew *`al* and \aleph א , (*'el*). Aramaic does not have *'el* “to, unto, beside, against, in reference to”. This circumstance possibly contributes to occasional confusion in the Hebrew texts between *`al* and *'el*. This interchange in Hebrew may be scribal or intrinsic in the language itself. The use of Hebrew *`al* “to,” may be influenced by the Aramaic verb $\text{h} \aleph$ ' [" (*'äl â*) “to go in.”³⁵¹

`al combines with other particles, nouns or verbs to express a variety of other ideas. For instance, it is used when expressing the idea of something or somebody ‘higher than’ as in $\text{At} \aleph$ 'mi - \aleph [; bkeûvo - aWh) w> (*wühû/’-šökëb `al-mi††ätô*) “he was lying on his bed” (2 Sam 4:7). Second, it could be rendered ‘in front of’,

³⁴⁹ R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* vol. 2. Chicago: Moody Press, (1389d), 301.

³⁵⁰ The book of Genesis alone contains about 100 occurrences thus: 1:2, 11, 15, 17, 20, 26, 28ff; 2:5, 16, 21; 3:14; 6:1, 7, 12, 17; 7:3f, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 17ff, 21, 23f; 8:1, 11, 13, 17, 19; 9:2, 14, 16f, 23; 11:4, 8f, 28; 12:17;14:6, 15; 15:11f; 16:5, 7, 12; 17:3, 17; 18: 5, 8, 16, 19; 19:4, 23f, 28; 20:3, 9, 11, 18; 21:11f, 14, 25; 22:2, 6, 9, 17; 23:19; 24:9, 13, 15, 18, 22, 30, 45, 61; 25:6, 9, 18; 26:7, 32; 27:12f, 16; 28:6, 9, 18; 30:3, 28, 33, 37, 40; 31:10, 12, 17, 20, 46, 50; 32:12, 22, 32f; 33:1, 4, 13; 34:3, 12, 25, 27, 30; 35:5, 20; 37: 34; 38:12, 21, 28, 30; 39:4; 40:2, 11, 13, 16, 21; 41:1, 3, 10, 13, 17, 33f, 40ff, 45, 56; 42:6, 21, 26, 36f; 43:7, 16, 18f; 44:1, 4, 13; 45: 14, 20f; 46:4, 29; 47:6, 26, 31; 48:2, 14, 17f, 22; 49:13, 17, 22, 30; 50:1, 13, 21, 23

³⁵¹ R.L.Harris et al.Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, (2980) 301; see F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs. 1996. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English lexicon*. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 757.

that is, if one person is standing and the other is sitting: $\sim h, ^2 y l e [] d m e o [o$
 ($\dot{o}m\ddot{e}d \dot{a}l\dot{e}hem$) ‘stood by them’ (Gen 18:8), or $w y l ' (['' (\dot{a}l\ddot{a}yw)$ ‘garment on –
 someone’ (Gen 37:23). Third, it could be ‘upon’ or better put ‘because of’ when an action is
 contingent upon an antecedent: $\sim t ' _ [' r '' - l K ' l [; (\dot{a}l K o l - r \ddot{a} \dot{a} t \ddot{a} m)$
 ‘because of all their evil’ (Jer. 1:16); $h L ' \hat{U} W a G > h ; - l [; (\dot{a}l - h a G G \ddot{u} \dot{u} l \dot{a})$
 ‘with regard to’, ‘concerning’ redemption (Ruth 4:7), or $! K E \dot{a} - l [; (\dot{a}l - K \ddot{e} n)$
 ‘therefore’. Fourth, there is $y ; n '' \textcircled{c}) P ' - l [; (\dot{a}l - P \ddot{a} n \ddot{a} \textcircled{y} a)$ ‘before or over against
 me’ or in defiance of me (Exodus 20:3); and also $y t i \dot{a} r '' b . D I \div - l [; (\dot{a}l -$
Dibrätî) ‘according to the manner or order of’ (Ps 110:4),³⁵² among others.

The Hebrew $y P i \ddot{a} (P\hat{i})$ ‘mouth of’ from the root $H p , (p\hat{e}h)$, occurs 580
 times and in 14 forms in the OT. $H p ,$ is rendered ‘mouth’, either of man (Exod. 4:16), of
 animal (an ass Num22:28, or beak of bird Gen 8:11) or of YHWH in many contexts thus:
 $w y p i \hat{e} B . r B < \dot{a} D I r v , a] (\dot{a} \dot{s} e r D i B B e r B \ddot{u} p \hat{i} w)$ ‘who spoke with His
 mouth’ (1 Kings 8:15) or $w y P i \div \dot{a} x : W r i b . W (\hat{u} b \ddot{u} r \hat{a} \textcircled{H} P \hat{i} w)$ ‘and by the
 breath of His mouth’ (Ps.33:6); or $b r < x ' _ - y p i (p\hat{i} - H \ddot{a} \textcircled{r} e b)$ ‘edge of sword’ (Gen
 34:26). Further, it functions as metaphor of opening such as $r a E) B . h ; y P i (P\hat{i}$
haBBü’ër) ‘mouth of well’ (Gen 29:2), $\dot{A} T * x . T ; m . a ; y p i (p\hat{i} \textcircled{a} m T a H T \hat{o})$
 ‘mouth of sack’ (Gen 42:27), or $h r '' _ [' M . h ; y P i (P\hat{i} h a m m \ddot{u} \textcircled{a} r \hat{a})$ ‘mouth of
 cave’ (Josh. 10:18). It could also occur as a phrase with other words in describing a variety
 of ideas such as $d x ' (a , h P , P (P\hat{e} \textcircled{e} H \ddot{a} d)$ ‘unanimously’ (Joshua 9:2),
 $h P , \acute{u} - l a , h P , (P\hat{e} \textcircled{e} l - P\hat{e})$ ‘mouth to mouth’ or appropriately ‘face to face’

³⁵² W. Holladay. Ed. 2000. *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, (6292) 110.

(Num. 12:8), $\text{hP, } \bar{\text{P}}\text{-l a, } \text{hP, } \hat{\text{i}}\text{m}\hat{\text{i}}$ (*miPPè 'el-Pè*) ‘from one end to the other’ – literally ‘from mouth to mouth’ (Ezra 9:11), and $\text{hP, } _ \text{-l k' B.}$ (*Bükol-Pè*) ‘with open mouth’ (Isa. 9:11).³⁵³

peh could further be rendered ‘mouth’ in terms of ‘statement, decision, or command’ such as $\hat{\text{y}}\text{P}\hat{\text{i}}\bar{\text{P}}\text{-l } [;$ (*al-Pî^okä*) ‘according to your word’ with reference to YHWH (Gen. 41:40), or $\sim\text{y}\text{d}\hat{\text{I}}\hat{\text{e}} [\text{e } \text{y}\text{p}\hat{\text{i}}\hat{\text{ä}}$ (*pî 'ëdîm*) ‘mouth (appropriately statement or testimony) of witnesses’ (Num. 35:30). When hP, occurs with preposition, it is rendered ‘according to’ or ‘as much as’ in the following instances: $\text{y}\text{p}\hat{\text{i}}\hat{\text{ä}}\text{K.}$ (*Küpî*) ‘according to,’ ‘accordingly,’ or ‘inasmuch as’ (Lev 25:52, Mal. 2:9); $\hat{\text{y}}\text{p}\hat{\text{i}}\hat{\text{ä}}\text{k.}$ (*küpî^okä*) ‘according to you’ or better put, ‘as much as you’ (Job 33:6). However, hP, seems to follow a consistent usage (according to) when it occurs with the preposition $\text{l } [;$ as evident in the following instances: $\text{y}\text{P}\hat{\text{i}}\bar{\text{P}}\text{-l } [;$ (*al-Pî*) ‘according to’ (Gen 43:7); $\text{y}\text{P}\hat{\text{i}}^{\text{a}}\text{-l } [;$ ‘according to’ (Lev 27:8).³⁵⁴ The latter suggests the idea of being consistent with a decision, promise, an antecedent or a pattern. This idea is apparent in its usage in Proverbs 22:6: $\text{y}\text{P}\hat{\text{i}}\hat{\text{ä}}\text{-l } [;$ ‘according to’.

Put together, al-Pî could literally mean ‘according to the mouth of’. The combination of $\text{l } [;$ which in some contexts is rendered ‘according to’ and $\text{y}\text{P}\hat{\text{i}}$ ‘mouth of’ or beginning of something’, the construct of hP, , appears significant in the following senses. First, its metaphoric usage suggests the idea of a particular or specific beginning or starting point as evident in $\text{r a E) B. h ; } \text{y}\text{P}\hat{\text{i}}$ ‘mouth of well’ (Gen

³⁵³ W. Holladay. Ed. 2000. *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 289.

³⁵⁴ W. Holladay. Ed. 2000. *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 671.

29:2), אֶת־אֶתְּמֹאֶת; יְפִי ‘mouth of sack’ (Gen 42:27), הַרְחֵל־מִהָיָה; יֶפֶת ‘mouth of cave’ (Josh. 10:18). Second, יְפִי־לְיָד; could be rendered ‘according to the beginning or inception of’ something or somebody. This beginning is seen as a decision predetermined, known and established, making compliance inevitable. Third, the fact that this metaphor of ‘opening’ could also mean a ‘statement’ ‘decision’ or ‘command’, especially when combined with יֶפֶת־יָדָיו (Gen 41:40) is germane to understanding its usage with the imperative *Hánök* in Proverbs 22:6. In other words, a reverberation of the emphasis on parental responsibilities to train the *na'ar*, from the very beginning, is conceivable.

4.6.4 AK=r>d: (*darKô*)

The Hebrew AK=r>d: (*darKô*) is the third person masculine singular construct of דָרַךְ, דָרַךְ, (*Derek*). דָרַךְ, דָרַךְ, occurs 775 times in 64 forms in the OT. It is variously rendered ‘way’, ‘road’ with reference to a path worn by constant walking: ‘path or way (to) the tree of life (Gen 3:24). Hagar was דָרַךְ־שׁוּר (Büde^orek šûr) ‘on the way (road) to Shur’ (Gen 16:7), when an angel met her. Sometimes דָרַךְ, דָרַךְ, can refer to a major highway or stretch of road such as דָרַךְ־מִלְּמֶלֶךְ־דָרַךְ־לְמֶלֶךְ (De^orek hamme^olek) ‘the king’s highway’ running north to south in Transjordan (Num 20:17; 21:22). There is also the דָרַךְ־יָם; דָרַךְ־יָם ‘way of the sea’ (Isa 9:1; [Heb 8:23]) known later as the *Via Maris*, which extended from Gaza to Damascus.³⁵⁵ דָרַךְ־יָם could also mean ‘journey’ usually one of several days’ duration. So, Joseph prepared supplies

³⁵⁵ R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* vol. 1. Chicago: Moody Press, 196; W. Holladay. Ed. 2000. *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 3668; O.P. Robertson. 1996. *Understanding the land of the bible*. New Jersey: P & R Publishing, 11, 36.

%r<D" (l; wybiĔa' l. (*lü'äbîw laDDä°rek*) 'for his father's journey' to Egypt (Gen 45:23); the Gibeonites tricked Joshua by claiming to have completed a dao)m. %r<D<Ĕh; broime (*mërob haDDe°rek mü'öd*) 'very long journey' (Joshua 9:13). Elijah mocked the prophets of Baal as he suggested their god might be %r<d<ä-yki (w> (*wüki/-de°rek*) 'on a journey' (1 Kings 18:27). On the other hand, this %r<d<ä 'journey' could mean an 'undertaking' – such as an errand, or a 'business': wyk' Ĕr" d>W (*ûdüräkäyw*) 'and his ways', with reference to Abijah's reign (2 Chron. 13:22), and of Abraham's servant whether the LORD had made AKĔr>D: (*DarKô*) 'his journey' or undertaking successful (Gen 24:21).

Further, %r<d<ä refers to 'manner', 'custom', or 'conduct': #r<a' (h' -lk' %r<d<ĔK. (*Küde°rek Kol-hä'ä°rec*) 'as in the custom of the whole world' (Gen 19:31); of Rachael's excuse to the father: yli_ ~yviĔn" %r<d<î-yki (*Kî-de°rek nâšîm li*) 'for the way of women is upon me (menstrual period) (Gen 31:35); and ~ ['äb. r" y" %r<D<' -lk" (*kol-De°rek yorob`äm*) "'of Jeroboam's 'way' or 'conduct'" (1 Kings 16:26). The latter is conspicuous in the prophet's complaint over Israel's conduct: the '~Alv' %r<D<Û (*De°rek šälôm*) 'way of peace', they do not know (Isa 59:8). There is also the place of theology in reference to God's jP' _v.mi wyk' Ĕr" D> (*Düräkäyw mišPäť*) 'way of behaviour' – His justice (Deut 32:4), and AK+r>D: (*DarKô*) 'His activity' (Prov. 8:22). God demands certain behaviour from us: Abraham is chosen by God because of the assurance that he will direct his family to keep the hw"ëhy> %r<D<ä (*De°rek*

yhwh(*'ädönäy*) 'way of the LORD' (Gen. 18:19); it is to *wyk' r" d>Bi tk, l, Ūl"* (*läle'ket Bidräkäyw*) 'walk in his (the LORD's) way (1 Kings 2:3).³⁵⁶

More of the occurrences of *De'rek* is found in its metaphoric usage. Here it often refers to the actions and behaviour of men, who either follow the 'way of the righteous or the way of the wicked (Ps 1:6).³⁵⁷ Van Gemeren affirms that fundamental to the metaphorical meaning of *De'rek* is its covenant overtone. He notes that one's path in life, that is, spiritual journey, finds its source and orientation in reference to one's relationship with Yahweh, the God of the covenant. The OT univocally attests to the fact that all humanity, righteous and wicked alike, are in pilgrimage along a 'way' that leads either to life or death. The difference of outcome lies basically in how the individual identifies him or herself with Yahweh, in relation with the covenant stipulations (Ex 18:20; Deut 28). The same emphasis on walking on God-ordained manner appears in the psalms (Ps 32:8; 143:8) and prophets (Isa 48:17; Jer 42:3). In the above texts, we find a teaching synonymous with "the way to live." Within the covenantal context, therefore, *De'rek* 'way' means the whole course of life lived in conformity to covenant obligation. Faithful continuation of the covenant relationship demands that Yahweh's people follow the *Derek* he has commanded them to take.³⁵⁸ It follows that to hold fast to the *Derek* is to assure life (Deut 5:33). But such obedience rises not just as response to some inner instinct. Instead, it is an act of the will, a compliance with divine commandment (Deut 9:12, 16; 11:28; 13:5; 31:29).³⁵⁹

More practical applications of the imagery occur at both personal subjective uses and those that refer to other persons more objectively. In the former case there is the observation, especially in the Wisdom Literature, that one's life consists of a 'pathway' to which he or she commits him or herself because it always seems intuitively right. Thus, *vya i â-*

³⁵⁶ W. Holladay. Ed. 2000. *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 1904.

³⁵⁷ R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* vol. 1. Chicago: Moody Press, 197.

³⁵⁸ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 1. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 989 – 990. Deuteronomy is particularly rich in the imagery of the journey as a metaphor for covenant obedience.

³⁵⁹ Jeremiah places the promise that "I will be your God and you will be my people" in juxtaposition to walk in the way God has commanded (Jer 7:23). In other words, to keep the commandments is, at the same time, to walk in his ways (Deut 8:6; 19:9; 26:17; 28:8; 30:16; 1 Kings 2:3; Ps 119:2, 3; 128:1; Isa 42:24; Mic 4:2).

רָדַדְתָּ לְכָל־אִישׁ (Kä/l-Derek- 'iš) “all a man’s ways” seems right to him (Prov 21:2).

But even if there is רָדַדְתָּ אֶת־דֶּרֶךְ־יָשָׁר׃ (De°rek yäsär) ‘a way that seems right’ to a man, that *Derek* ‘way’ inevitably leads to death (Prov 14:12 cf. 16:25). The problem, then, is precisely this, that such *Derek* finds its source and impetus from one’s own heart (Isa 52:17). Van Gemeren observes that what is needed is the disclosure of *Derek* ‘a way’ from without, from the God who knows the end from the beginning. When one finds his or her רָדַדְתָּ through a covenant relationship with the living God, he can say with Job:

אֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי אֶת־דְּרֹכַי׃ כִּי־יָנִיחַ אֱלֹהִים בְּיָדֵי מִלְּאֲכָדִים׃ (Kî/-yäda` De°rek `immädî BüHäna°nî Kazzähäb `ëcë) “But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold” (Job 23:10). From a more detached objective standpoint, the biblical prophets and sages reflect on the pilgrimage of life in terms of alternative ‘pathway’. It is therefore said: For the LORD watches over רָדַדְתָּ צְדִיקִים׃ (De°rek caDDîqîm) ‘the way of the righteous, but רָדַדְתָּ רְשָׁעִים׃ (wüde°rek rüsä`îm) ‘the way of the wicked’ will perish (Ps 1:6).³⁶⁰

רָדַדְתָּ in Proverbs

Of the 775 occurrences of *dereK* in the OT, 77 occur in Proverbs,³⁶¹ majority of which occur within the ambit of its metaphoric usage. Like the rest of the Wisdom Literature, it distinguishes between the ‘way’ of the righteous and the wicked, and describes

³⁶⁰ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 1. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 990.

³⁶¹ Word Search on רָדַדְתָּ in *BibleWorks*.

the ultimate reward of choosing either of the two. One is to avoid the $\sim y [i\ddot{a}v' r >$ $\%r < d <$ ‘way of the wicked’ or the $vQE+ [i (\dot{i}qq\ddot{e}s)$ ‘perverse’ (Prov 1:15; 4:14; 22:5), who will eat of the fruit of their way (Prov 1:31; 10:9; 10:29; 11:5; 12:26; 13:15). The LORD guards the $jP' _v.mi \ tAx\ddot{a}r > a''$ (*wüde°rek (Hásîdô) [Hásîdäyw]*) ‘path of the just’ and preserves the $\%r < d < P$ of His saints (2:8). Here, $\%r < d <$ combines with its synonym $xr; aO$ (*öraH*) ‘stretch (of path)’, ‘ground’, ‘way or behavior in which one must go’ (Ps 119:9), sometimes $\%r < D <$ ‘way’ as set forth by YHWH (Ps 44:19) in describing God’s intervention or involvement in the life of those who follow covenantal stipulations. Therefore, in the way of righteousness there is life and safety, $tw < m'') - la; \ hb' äytin > \ \%r < d < Pw >$ (*wüde°rek nüütîbâ 'al-mä°wet*) ‘and in its pathway there is no death’ (Prov 12:28; 13:6; 16:17). Similarly, God will deliver the righteous from $\sim y [i\ddot{a}v' r > \ \%r < d <$ ‘the way of the wicked’ (Prov 2:12, 13), so that they may walk $\sim ybi _Aj \ \%r < d < äB .$ (*Büde°rek fôbîm*) ‘in the way of goodness’ (2:20). But whoever leads the righteous $[r'' \ \%r < d < îB .$ (*Büde°rek rä*) ‘in an evil path’ will fall into his trap (28:10).

Within the parental discourse, the ‘son’ (3:1) is instructed to acknowledge YHWH $\wedge yk, \ îr'' D > -lk' B .$ (*Bükol-DüräkÊ°kä*) ‘in all your (his or her) ways’, so that He (YHWH) will direct his or her path (3:6). Similarly, ‘Happy is the man who finds wisdom’ (3:13) because $\` \sim Al) v' \ h' yt, \ äAbytiPn > -lk' w >) \ \sim [; nO = -yker > d: \ h' yk, \ îr'' D$ (*DüräkÊ°hä darkê-nö°am wü/kol-nüütî°bôtÊ°hä šälôm*) ‘her ways are pleasant and all her paths are peace’ (3:17). A child that imbibes $hM' (zIm.W \ hY'' \textcircled{v} iTu \div$ (*Tüşiyâyâ ûmüzimmâ*) ‘sound wisdom and discretion’ (3:21) will $\wedge K < +r > D: \ xj; b, \ äl' \ \%lE\ddot{a}Te$ (*Têlêk*

läbe^oʃaH DarKe^okä) ‘walk securely in your (his or her) way.’ His or her feet will not stumble, but will be blessed (3:23; 8:32). Here, *hM'* (*zIm.W hY"©v iTu*) ‘sound wisdom and discretion’ are set forth as benchmark for safety in life. The ‘way of the wicked is like darkness’ and full of confusion (4:19; 14:14; 15:9; 21:8), but he or she who watches or ponders his or her path by being upright, all his or her ways will be established’ (4:26; 14:2, 8, 12; 16:7; 21:29; 28:18). It therefore follows that an unjust man is an abomination to the righteous, and *‰r<D"* (*-rV; Ÿ>* (*yüšar-Dä^orek*) ‘the upright in the way’ is an abomination to the wicked (29:27). The latter underscores the tension that exists wherever light and darkness, truth and falsehood meets. Nevertheless, gray hair is a crown of glory if it is found or attained *hQ' a d" c . ÷ ‰r<d<îB;* (*Büde^orek cüdäqâ*) ‘in the way of righteousness’ (16:31).

In pondering his path, a young man is warned to stay away from the harlot and never go near the door of her house (5:8) because, although she calls (9:15), she is dangerous (30:20), and her *Derek* leads to *lAaäv . (še'ól)* ‘death’ (7:8, 19, 25, 27; 8:2). Not only the harlot, a violent man also entices his neighbor and leads him *bAǰ) -a l { ‰r<d<äB . (Büde^orek lö'-fôb)* ‘in the path that is not good’ (16:29). Consequently, he is to forsake foolishness and go in the *hn") yBi ‰r<d<äB . (Büde^orek Bînâ)* ‘way of understanding’ (9:6) because the foolishness of a man *AK=r>D: @LEås ; T . (Tüsallöp DarKô)* ‘twists his way’ and his heart rages against the LORD (19:3). Without doubt, one who *wyk' är"d> hzEßAB (BôzË düräkäyw)* ‘despises his way’ by living carelessly shall die (19:16). This does not suggest his or her profession or skill but rather the entire course of life, especially in relation to his or her God because the *vyai _-yker>D; (Darkê-'iš)* ‘ways of man’ are before the eyes of the LORD (5:21). The lazy person, who is known for raising false alarm as an excuse for work (26:13) is to go to the ant and learn from *~k' (x]w: h'yk, är"d>*

(*düräkÊ°hä waHäkäm*) ‘her ways and be wise’ (6:6), since the $\%r<D<\ddot{a}$ of the lazy man or woman is like a hedge of thorns, but the $\times r : a\textcirc$ ‘way’ of the upright *is* a highway (15:19).

A ‘son’ is encouraged to keep the father’s $tw : \acute{a}c . m\grave{i}$ (*micwat*) ‘commands’ and not to forsake the $tr : \hat{i}AT$ (*Tôrat*) ‘law’ of his mother (6:20), because the $tw : \acute{a}c . m\grave{i}$ is a lamp, and the $tr : \hat{i}AT$ a light; and the reproofs for *mûsâr* ‘discipline’ are $\sim yYI\textcircled{x} ; \div \%r<d<\hat{i}$ (*wüde°rek Hayyîm*) ‘the way of life’ (6:23). The ‘son’ will be wise, if he keeps his heart $\%r<D<\ddot{a}B ; rVE\beta a ;$ (*aššër BaDDe°rek*) ‘on the right way’ (23:19). It is no doubt therefore that the fear of the LORD is to hate evil and the $[r" \hat{a} \%r<d<\ddot{a}$ ‘evil way’ (8:13); YHWH possessed personified $hm' \hat{i}k . \times "$ ‘wisdom’ (8:1) at the ‘beginning of his way’ (8:22). The LORD detests men of perverse heart but he delights in those whose $\%r<d" (ymeymi\grave{a}T .$ (*Tümi°mê dâ°rek*) ‘ways are blameless’ (11:20). The $lywIa / \hat{a} \%r<D<\ddot{a}$ (*De°rek éwîl*) ‘way of a fool’ *is* right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel *is* wise (12:15). Little wonder a father entreats his ‘son’ to give him his heart (23:26). The essence of this imperative is that the father may instruct, nurture, and mold his son’s heart to the point of taking $hn" c , r>Ti \grave{y}k ; \hat{i}r" D>$ (*Düräkay (Tircenâ) [Ticcö°rnâ]*) ‘delight in my (his) ways.’ The father’s desire to pattern his son’s heart after his $\%r<d<\ddot{a}$ suggests he lives an exemplary life because no one can give what he or she does not have.

Although a man’s heart $AK=r>D : bVe\grave{a}x ; y>$ (*yüHaššëb DarKô*) ‘plans his ways’ (16:9; 30:19) and all his ways are clean in his own sight (16:2), it is the LORD who ordains it (20:24), weighs his motives (5:21; 21:2), and directs his steps. This is

significant because he cannot even understand his way apart from God – evidence to the fact that man is responsible to God whose *Derek* is the ultimate. Consequently, a man who wanders לְכֵּף הַיָּם; ׀רֹדֶק (miDDe^orek haSKël) ‘from ‘the way of understanding’ will rest in the assembly of the dead (21:16; 30:3). It is better to be poor and walk in integrity, than he that is ׀יִלְכֹּד; ׀רֹדֶק (׀iqqēš Düräka^oyim) ‘perverse in his ways,’ though he be rich (28:6).³⁶²

Evidently, majority of the usages of *Derek* in the book of Proverbs are within the ambit of moral life and are covenantal in nature. Consequently, in a number of its usages in Proverbs, *Derek* appears with a qualifier (or qualifiers/modifiers, as the case may be) thus: the ׀יִלְכֹּד; ׀רֹדֶק ‘way of the wicked’ is like darkness’ and full of confusion (4:19; 14:14; 15:9; 21:8); vyaï _-yker>D; ‘ways of man’ are before the eyes of the LORD (5:21); ׀יִלְכֹּד; ׀רֹדֶק ‘the way of life’ (6:23); the [r"â ׀רֹדֶק ‘evil way’ (8:13); the hn") yBi ׀רֹדֶק ‘way of understanding’ (9:6), among others. There is a significant emphasis on what ought to be as found in YHWH’s covenantal relationship with Israel. Hence, both the expectations on how to live in conformity with divine instructions and the attendant consequences are prescribed.

Nevertheless, some of the usages lay credence to the fact that although somewhat difficult to totally comprehend, the use of *Derek* in Proverbs goes beyond issues of morality to include normal daily life – education (in search of wisdom and understanding, 3:13, 17, 21; 9:6), vocation and work ethics (in the case of the sluggard who dodges work, 6:6; 26:13), family (to obey and cooperate with one’s parents, 6:20), personal relationships (to stay away from the harlot, 5:8; or a violent man, 16:29) , and so on. However, it seems whatever rights and privileges a man or woman may have must find its meaning in what God has permitted or allowed. The latter raises the question: What is the understanding of

³⁶² This entire sub-section is a Lexicographic analysis of the various occurrences of ׀רֹדֶק in the Book of Proverbs enabled by *BibleWorks*.

AK=r>D : ‘his way’ in Proverbs itself? And what insight can we glean from its various usages?

Various Usages of AK=r>D : ‘his way’ in Proverbs

Generally, the Hebrew *darKô* ‘his way’, the third person masculine singular form of *Derek* occurs 36 times in the OT. Nine (9) of this form are found in Proverbs and are used in describing both the ‘way’ of God and humans. In Proverbs 8:22, the author describes God as having possessed him at the beginning of *darKô* ‘his way’. The beginning of God’s way here might refer to either the foundations of the earth when God, who is all-knowing, created the universe. Or at the very point when one is formed. Both views are evident in divine and human declarations of God’s creative power and fore-knowledge in not only the creation and procreation of humans, but also in determining what we will ultimately become (Psalm 139:13 – 14 cf. Jer 1:4 – 5).

The $\tau\eta:\acute{a}d>c\acute{i}$ (*cidqat*) ‘righteousness’ of the $\sim ym\acute{i}T' \hat{a}$ (*Tämîm*) ‘blameless’ in Proverbs 11:5 will direct *darKô*. Here, $\tau\eta:\acute{a}d>c\acute{i}$ ‘righteousness’ and $\sim ym\acute{i}T' \hat{a}$ ‘blameless’ are moral attributes used in describing the possible outcome of the choice of a man or woman. Notice that the blameless has a ‘way’ which could refer to his or her life, that is, the entirety of one’s daily activities which covers the family, education, vocation, social and moral domain. Without these qualifiers or moral attributes, the individual certainly has a life to live. This privilege of living and the activities that go with it, taking cognisance of the challenges intrinsic in the various spheres of human endeavour and the daily choices, could be referred to as *darKô*. This proposition is buttressed by the antithesis (Prov 11:5b) which provides the attendant negative outcome when an individual chooses the part of $[\vee' (\text{r}'' (\text{r}\acute{a}\acute{s}\acute{a}))$ ‘wickedness.’

In essence, it is generally conceivable that *darKô* suggests that everyone has a life to live, but the outcome is dependent on the choices one makes. This is where the moral outlook of Proverbs comes in. Although humans as free moral beings have a life to live,

covenantal stipulations require that because God is the owner, giver and sustainer of this life, a man or woman is under obligation to conduct *darKô* (his or her way) in conformity with divine principles without which there is no assurance of safety and blessings. The same principle is evident in Proverbs 14:8 where the wisdom of the prudent is to understand *darKô*, but the folly of fools is deceit. The ~W𐤀 [𐤀] (*`ârûm*) ‘prudent’ here refers to one who is sensible and clever. This is not natural or intrinsic with anyone, but rather the outcome of one’s decision to align the entirety of his or her live according to that which pleases God, and is morally acceptable in the society. The latter is intrinsically significant and expedient because *`ârûm* could also mean to be ‘shrewd’ or ‘crafty’ – having negative connotations.

Proverbs 16:9 conspicuously affirms the proposition that humans are at liberty to plan or choose the course of their lives. The absence of a qualifier alongside *darKô* suggests the bone of contention here is the totality of an individual’s life, not just the moral. As evident in Chapter 3 of this study, *lëb* ‘heart’ also refers to ‘inner man,’ ‘mind,’ and ‘will’.³⁶³ It is the central organ in the body, which forms a focus for vital actions making it the center of all moral, spiritual, and intellectual life. This is in congruence with God’s design in making humans in His image, as moral, relational and intellectual beings (Gen 1:26 – 27; 2:15 - 25). Insofar as a man (or woman) is free to choose how to live, God directs Ad* [] 𐤀 ; ; (*ca`ádô*) ‘his steps.’ The Hebrew 𐤀 [; 𐤀 ;] (*ca`ád*) ‘step’ which is also rendered ‘pace’, or ‘marching’ (hd' [' 𐤀 . (*cü`ädâ*), 2Sam 5:24; 1 Chron 14:15) could mean walking in cadence (2Sam 6:13). It describes the manner in which one is brought before the king (Job 18:14); and pictures how one methodologically takes the path to the house of the harlot, fully conscious of his direction but totally ignorant of its consequence, which is death (Prov 7:8; cf. Prov 5:5).

Similarly, but from a broader perspective, the teacher instructs his or her student in the ‘way’ of wisdom in order that his or her *ca`ád* pattern of living (steps) will not bring

³⁶³ J.I. Marais. 2007. ‘Heart,’ in International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. *BibleWorks*.

him or her hardship and sorrow (Prov 4:10).³⁶⁴ The latter sheds light on the scope of *ca`ad* to include one's pattern of living, covering his or her actions and inactions in all ramifications of human life, and endeavours. Therefore, it is plausible to submit that Proverbs 16:9 carefully balances the interplay between God and man in directing a person's full course of life or destiny thus: Humans have the liberty to initiate course of action, but must depend and rely on God for the positive outcomes or consequences of such actions. The above terms are only possible within the covenantal framework. If a man or woman chooses to do otherwise, God neither forces him or her, nor bears the full consequences of the negative outcomes of such choices as Harris assumed.³⁶⁵

Of course, biblical history right from creation is rich with the daring consequences of human actions both at personal (Gen 3:16 – 19; 4:11 – 12; Joshua 7:1 5, 20 - 28) and cooperate (Gen 6:7; Num 14, 16; Joshua 7:1 – 5) levels. Consequently, Proverbs 16:17 exhorts: “The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; *for* he who keeps *darKô* (his [or her] way) preserves his (her) soul.” Put differently, the only way to be at peace with God and oneself is to depart from evil. The opposite therefore will read: If you do not want peace with God and yourself, walk in the part of wickedness. It is overly clear here that the outcome of one's life or state of being is dependent upon the consequences of his or her actions and/or inactions. This concern is not limited to one or two aspects of one's life, but the full course of it, whether the family, education, vocation, moral, social or intellectual domain.

Nevertheless, Proverbs 19:3 notes that the foolishness of a man (or woman) twists *darKô*. Yet, his (or her) heart rages against the LORD. In Proverbs, $\text{t} \perp , \text{W} < \text{â} \text{a} \text{i}$ (*'iwwe'let*) ‘foolishness’ and $\text{h} \text{m} \text{k} . \text{x} ' (Hokmâ)$ ‘wisdom’ are two adjectives used to delineate between the $\text{l} \text{y} \text{w} \text{I} \text{a} / (üwîl)$ ‘fool’ and the $\sim \text{k} ' \text{x} '' (Häkäm)$ ‘wise.’ Wisdom is said to originate or be rooted in the fear of God, while foolishness, which is having little or no regard for God and His words (1:7; 9:10), is the opposite. To

³⁶⁴ R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* vol. 2. Chicago: Moody Press, (1943a) 301.

³⁶⁵ R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* vol. 2. Chicago: Moody Press, (1943a) 301.

imperfect, third person masculine singular form of !ybi (*bîn*) $\dot{\text{!}}$. In the *qal* (simple active form), !ybi it is mostly rendered ‘to discern’, and ‘understand’ in the *hiphil*. Taking cognizance of its derivatives which include $\text{hn}''\text{yBi}$ (*bînâ*) ‘understand’, the substantive $\text{!yIb}''$ (*bäyin*), from which comes the preposition !ybe (*bên*) ‘between,’ *bîn* is best rendered ‘discern’. Such includes a sense of discernment and an ability to distinguish between good and evil (Psalm 73:17). As Harris observes, *bîn* is a power of judgment and perceptive insight which is demonstrated in the use of knowledge.³⁶⁷ This among others is a gift of God (Dan 2:21). Since its usage here is in the *qal* imperfect, the question could be rephrased thus: How then can a man (or) woman discern *darKô* (his [or her] way)?

First, it is important to note that *bîn* ‘discernment,’ ‘insight or moral understanding’ is a gift from God and not a fruit of empiricism. Second, since it includes the ability to distinguish between good and evil, this discernment is therefore ethical. Having its source outside of us (God), one therefore needs to pray for it (Psalm 119:34) because God can choose to either reveal or conceal it (Isa 29:14). The seat of insight is the heart which discerns (or fails to discern) the work of the Lord (Psalm 28:9), the fear of the Lord (Prov. 2:5), righteousness and justice (Prov. 2:9), and his will as his word is obeyed (Psalm 111:10). Harris affirms that while understanding is a gift of God, it does not come automatically. The possession of it requires a persistent diligence. This is where discernment comes in. This discernment is more than intelligence quotient (IQ); it connotes character. One is at fault if he or she does not have it and in fact, not desiring it incurs God's punishment (Prov. 2:1ff; Ruth 1:21ff) When one acts on the objective presentations of God's revelation, he or she will attain the ideal of the significance of understanding.³⁶⁸ Anything to the contrary results in chasing the wind, which otherwise is vanity (Ecclesiastes 4:16). It seems this is what Jesus meant when he counselled his audience to abide in him and He in them; for without him, they can do nothing (John 15:5). Again, humans are left to choose.

³⁶⁷ R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* vol. 2. Chicago: Moody Press, 301.

³⁶⁸ R.L.Harris et al. Eds.1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* vol. 2. Chicago: Moody Press, 301.

Proverbs 21:29 opines that the wicked man or woman will choose to harden his or her face in disobedience and perversion against God the source of life, safety, and discernment. On the contrary, the upright establishes *darKô* by complying with covenantal stipulations and relying on God, the true source of wisdom to direct every facets of life. In Proverbs 22:6, parents are admonished: “Train up a child in the way he (or she) should go, and when he (or she) is old he (or she) will not depart from it.” A literal or precise reading of the verse will be: “Train up a child according to his (or her) way; and when he (or she) is old, he (or she) will not depart from it”. The crucial question is: In what particular way are parents to train a child? According to the way he or she desires to go? According to his or her disposition (manner) or conduct? Or according to what? This is the problematic text.

While attempt at these questions will be made in the next Chapter, suffice it to say that evidences from the lexicographic and exegetical analysis of *dereK* in general and the various usages of *darKô* in particular, seem convincing to submit that much of the occurrence of the use of *dereK*, especially in Proverbs are either moral (expressing covenantal undertone) or metaphorical (covering the totality one’s life). Within the ambit of covenantal stipulations, there are only two ways that lead to two destinations: the way of the righteous which leads to success or life (both present and eternal); and the way of the wicked which leads to destruction or ultimately death. Metaphorically, the proverbial usage of *dereK* and *darKô* covers the entirety of human life and endeavours – family, education, vocation, and work ethics; social, relational, intellectual and so on.

In some metaphoric usages, as seen above, qualifiers with moral undertone are used either to describe the blessings or consequences of following a particular way. In this sense, such qualifier(s) limits the noun usage in the given context. Apart from that, it appears no specific reference is made concerning one’s vocation in the various usages of either *dereK* or *darKô* in Proverbs. Instead, apart from Proverbs 8:22 where *darKô* is used in reference to God, other usages in Proverbs refer to humans. They conceivably suggest that as moral human beings made in the image of God, everyone has not just a life to live but also the liberty to plan or choose the course of their lives. However, covenantal stipulations require that because God is the owner, giver and sustainer of this life, a man or woman is under obligation to conduct *darKô* in conformity with divine principles without which there is no

assurance of safety and blessings. Proverbs 16:9 carefully balances the interplay between God and man in directing a person's full course of life or destiny thus: Humans have the liberty to initiate course of action, but must depend and rely on God for the positive outcomes or consequences of such actions. Anything to the contrary will result in crises; since God alone ordains, directs, and evaluates *darKô* 'his (or her) way.'

4.6.5 !qez" (zäqën)

The Hebrew !qez" (zäqën) occurs 226 times in 28 forms in the OT. It is rendered 'elder,' 'become older' and 'old age.' The root has related forms with similar meanings in Aramaic, Samaritan Pentateuch (*zaqanna*), and postbiblical Hebrew. It is related to Arabian *dīqn* 'old man,' its cognate with Akkadian *ziqnu*, 'bearded'. It is not certain whether *zäqën* is a derivative of !q'z" (*zäqän*), a masculine noun which is rendered 'beard', vice versa.³⁶⁹ Other derivatives include !q, zö (zöqën) 'old person', which occurs only in Gen 48:10 where 'age' is the reason why Jacob can no longer see. Here, old age is synonymous with a time when body parts wear out and begin to fail. It has close affinity with Ht' _n"q. z I (*ziqnätäh*) 'old age' which refers to a person who is past prime time but still able to do certain things - of Sarah (Gen 24:36), Solomon (1 Kings 11:4), and Asa (1 Kings 15:23). Similarly, ~yn I quz > (*zäqünîm*) 'old age' appears in the plural form (wyn") quz >), as an abstract nominative emphasising the conditions or qualities of the word. It is most closely related in meaning to hn"q. z I and occurs in the OT (Gen 21:2, 7; 37:3; 44:20) in reference to the age past when it is normal to bear children. So, Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in wyn" + quz > l i "his old

³⁶⁹ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 1. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1134; R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* vol. 1. Chicago: Moody Press, 249.

age” (Gen 21:2).³⁷⁰ In post biblical Hebrew, ! q, zO ‘old man’ means ‘ancestors.’ The LXX translates it as *gerous*, ‘age.’ The words *gerao* ‘to become old’ and *geras*, ‘old age,’ are used in the LXX to translate hn"q. zI ‘old age.’ Translators of the LXX consistently rendered ~ ynIquz > with *geras*, as ‘old age.’³⁷¹

zäqën ‘elder,’ ‘become older’ and ‘old age’ is used in two specific ways: (a) it is used to connote ‘old age’ (Gen 18:12; 19:31; 25:8; 35:29; 44:20, etc.), frequently in contrast to young men (Gen 19:14; Josh 6:21; etc.), and implies being past one’s prime; or (b) it is a technical term referring to an ‘elder’ or ‘leader’ of a community (Gen 19:4; Lev 19:32; 1 Sam 28:14; Isaiah 9:15 [14]; 47:6; etc.). Gemeren observes that the second usage is clearly related to the first, since in ANE culture older men were given authority and leadership because of their accumulated wisdom and experience. They were to be honoured (Lev 19:32); and young men were to show deference by waiting until the ~ ynIqez >) ‘older person’ had spoken (Job 32:4). The biblical text also mentions ynEiq. zI (*ziqnê*) ‘elders’, the adjectival usage of *zäqën* (in its construct) among the Egyptians (Gen 50:7; Ps 105:22), Moabites and Medianites (Num 22:4, 7), Gibeonites (Josh 9:11), and Israelites (Exod 3:16).³⁷² Although the latter also carries the idea of age relative to the number of years one has attained, it seems to dwell more on status. But such status is not meant for young men. Harris notes that age sixty seems to separate the mature from the *zäqën* ‘aged’ (Lev 27:1 – 8), although evidently the Levites retired at fifty (Num 4:3, 23, 30). The Psalmist suggests seventy years as a normal life span and eighty as unusual (Ps 90:10). In the period of the Kings, a man at eighty is accounted as of daoêm .

! qEâz " (*Gädôl mü ’öd*) ‘very great age’ (2 Sam 19:32).³⁷³

³⁷⁰ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 1. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1135, 1136.

³⁷¹ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 1. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1135 – 1136.

³⁷² W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 1. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1136.

³⁷³ R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* vol.1: Chicago: Moody Press, 249.

In its Qal perfect stem, *zäqën* as a stative verb denotes the state of being or condition which follows being young (Ps 37:25). We meet the phrase $\sim \underline{y}m\dot{i} \underline{y}''B ; aB' \underline{P} !q\hat{e}\hat{e}z''$ (*zäqën Bâ' Bayyämîm*) 'old and advanced in age' (Gen 24:1; Josh 13:1; cf. 1 Sam 17:2) or 'old and full of days' (1 Chron 23:1). As seen earlier, this condition refers to both men and women. During this period of life, prospects of marriage (Ruth 1:12) and childbearing (Gen 18:12 – 13; 1 Kings 1:14) cease, while grey hair appears (1 Sam 12:2). There is the falling of sight (Gen 27:1; cf. 1 Sam 3:2; 4:15), metabolism and mobility (1 Kings 1:1, 15), and the danger of falling (1 Sam 4:18). A description of the onset of age in poetic symbols is found in Eccl 12:1 – 5. Here, $\hat{y}t, \underline{r}oWxB. \underline{y}m\hat{e}\underline{P}yB\dot{i}$ (*Bîmê BüHûrötÊ'kä*) 'in the days youth' is contrasted with $\underline{y}m\hat{e}\underline{ä}y > Wabo' \underline{y}'' - a\dot{l} \{ (l\hat{o}'-y\hat{ä}b\hat{o}'\hat{u} \underline{y}ümê)$ 'the trouble or old days.' Literally, it refers to 'days when one is brought in,' that is, stricken with age to the point of having need for assistance; when one loses pleasure in everything. At this point, death is an imminent prospect (Gen 19:31; 24:1; 27:1 – 2; Josh 23:1 – 2). Leadership is apparently relinquished (Josh Josh 13:1; 1 Sam 8:1, 5; 1 Chron 23:1). Yet one in this state is not only to be respected as seen earlier (Lev 19:32), but also not despised (Prov 23:22).

The Hiphil of the verb $!yq\dot{I} \hat{a}z > y :$ occurs only twice in the OT. The Hiphil stem emphasises the reflexive of the stative *zäqën* denoting the aging of both persons (Prov 22:6) and of a tree root (Job 14:8).³⁷⁴ In Job 14:8 – 10, $!yq\dot{I} \hat{a}z > y :$ (*yazqîn*), the Hiphil imperfect 3ms refers to Job's assurance and hope that if a tree is cut down, it will sprout again and that its tender shoots will not cease. Though its root may grow old in the earth and its stump may die in the ground, at the scent of water it will bud and bring forth branches like a plant.

From the various usages and renderings of *zäqën*, three recurring themes are noteworthy: a symbol of maturity when contrasted with youthfulness, old age – when one is

³⁷⁴ R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* vol.1: Chicago: Moody Press, 249.

retires from active service, and finally the condition of being stricken in age, when one is very old and in a helpless condition. In Proverbs 22:6, ! yqî^a z>y: ÷ ‘he becomes old’ is contrasted with the *na`ar* in describing the stages of human life. Here, the *dereK* ‘way’ of life, behaviour, and the fate of the *na`ar* ‘child’ in *zäqën* ‘old age’ seems contingent upon his or her parental *Hänök* ‘training’ at the early stage.

4.6.6 rWsiy"-aOl (lö/-yäsûr)

The Hebrew verb rWsiy" (yäsûr) is the Qal imperfect, 3ms from rWS (sûr). rWS ‘turn aside’, or ‘defection’ occurs 302 times in 74 forms in the OT. Its cognate occurs in the Phoenician ‘alienate’; OSA *swr* ‘separate,’ and Akkadian *saru*, ‘dance.’³⁷⁵ A common meaning of rWS, which in many cases is a simple verb of motion,³⁷⁶ is to ‘turn aside’ physically from what one is doing (Exod 3:4), or from the road one is travelling (Judges 18:3, 15). *sûr* is employed for someone or something departing. For instance rs'...!n"© ['h, w> (*wühe`änän sär*) ‘and the (glory) cloud departed’ (Num 12:10), jealousy (Ezek 16:42), or a perverse heart (Ps 101:4). The *Hiphil* perfect hN"r<) ysiy> (*yüsîre`nnâ*) ‘to take away, remove’ is found many times with in conjunction with the rituals of sacrifice (Lev 3:4, 10, 15; 4:9; 7:4).³⁷⁷ The noun feminine singular hr's' (sârâ) also shares the same meaning: ‘a turning aside, defection, apostasy, withdrawal.’³⁷⁸ For the most part, *sûr* deals with the moral/spiritual direction someone is taking. Persons turn from the right *dereK*, as evident in the story of Adam and Eve in the garden (Gen 3). After a new beginning at the Exodus, Israel was

³⁷⁵ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 3. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 238; R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* vol.2: Chicago: Moody Press, 621.

³⁷⁶ R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* vol.2: Chicago: Moody Press, 621.

³⁷⁷ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 3. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 238.

³⁷⁸ F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs. 1996. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English lexicon*. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 694; W. Holladay. Ed. 2000. *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 110.

ׁר<D<'h; -!mi rhe^am; Wrs"å (sä^orû mahër min-haDDe^orek)
 “quick to turn aside from the way” which God commanded them (Exod 32:8), by making
 the golden calf to be god. In Canaan, they also ׁר<D<øh; -!mi rhe^am;
 Wrs"å ‘turned aside quickly from the way’ the ancestors had walked (Judges 2:17), and
 from God’s ordinances (Mal 3:7). By extension, given an already sinful direction, as in
 Jeroboam’s example, succeeding kings hn"M<)mi rs"β-aol (lö^o-sär
 mimme^onnâ) “departed not from,” that is, continued in the evil way;’ such as Jehoram (2
 Kings 3:3), and Jehu (10:29; 13:11).³⁷⁹

A frequent exhortation by pious leaders, prophets, and wisdom teachers is not to *sûr*
 “turn aside” from the good and right *Derek* (Deut 17:20; Josh 23:6; 1 Sam12:20, 21). To
 turn from the way God commanded is to invite a curse (Deut 11:28), and worse (Jer 17:13).
 To those travelling the road of wickedness, the admonitions are to leave that *Derek* and take
 the path of righteousness (Prov 3:7). Warnings are issued to keep one’s distance from evil
 and wickedness (Num 16:26; Prov 3:7; Isa 52:11) and to Wrsiøh" (häsi^orû) ‘remove’
 (hiphil imperative) strange gods (Gen 35:2; Josh 24:14; 1 Sam 7:3), false worship (Amos
 5:21, 23), lying (Ps 119:21), perversity (Prov 4:24), or evil generally (Isa 1:16). To
 hn") yBi [r"äme rWsbw> (wüsûr mërä` Bînâ) ‘depart from [*Derek*
 ‘way of’] evil is understanding” (Job 28:28 cf. 1:8; Prov 14:16), but fools detest doing that
 (Prov 13:19). By the fear of the Lord one [r" (me rWsb (sûr mërä`) ‘turns aside
 from evil’ or avoids evil (Prov 16:6).³⁸⁰

There are instances of persons keeping a straight and steady course by following
 after God: Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:6), Josiah (2 Kings 22:2), and the psalmist (Ps 105:102).
 To stay on course is to turn neither to the right nor to the left (Deut 2:27; 5:32[29]); Josh 1:7;

³⁷⁹ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis*
 vol. 3. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 238; R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook*
 of the Old Testament vol. 2. Chicago: Moody Press, 621.

³⁸⁰ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis*
 vol. 3. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 238; R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook*
 of the Old Testament vol. 2. Chicago: Moody Press, 621.

2 Kings 22:2. Certain kings (such as Asa) יָסָרוּ (yāsār) ‘removed’ (*hiphil*) ancestral idols (2 Chron 14:2 – 3). Israel on occasion וָסָרוּ (yāsārū) ‘removed’ (*hiphil*) the offensive Baals and served the Lord (Judg 10:16; 1 Sam 7:4). The alienation factor may be observed as twofold. The wicked ones call on God to ‘depart from’ them (Job 21:14; 22:17). God in turn demands that the wicked depart from Him (Ps 119:115; 139:19). In another sense, God is the subject of *sūr*. He ‘removed’ Isaiah’s iniquity (Isa 6:7; cf. Joshua’s sin in Zech 3:4). For an obedient people he will remove illness (Deut 7:15). It is God who removes the stony heart; and in a work to transplant, provides a heart of flesh (Ezek 36:26).³⁸¹

On the other hand, the Hebrew אַל (*lōʿ*) ‘not’ is a negative particle which occurs 5189 times in six (6) forms in the OT. Its function as the primary Hebrew for factual negation distinguishes it from לֹא (*ʾal*) ‘not, no, nor, neither’ which ordinarily describes potential negation. אַל has both major syntactical functions and some theological significance. From the syntactic viewpoint, it negates factual statements in all time frameworks. These include ordinary or general statements: אֲשֶׁר לֹא הָלַךְ בַּעֲצַת הַיְגֵי אֲשֶׁר לֹא הָלַךְ בַּעֲצַת הַיְגֵי (ʾāšer lōʿ hālak Baʿacat rūšāʾim) ‘Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly...’ (Psalm 1:1). It negates past statements: וְיִתְקַלְבֵּן אֲבֹתַי וְיִתְקַלְבֵּן אֲבֹתַי (lōʿ-qārāʾōt bünōt) ‘I did not call, my son’ (1 Sam 3:6), the present statements: אֲנִי לֹא נָבִיא (ʾānōkī lōʿ-ṇābīʾ) ‘I am not a prophet,’ (Amos 7:14), and future statements when used with the imperfect: וְלֹא תִהְיֶה אִתָּם בִּיקְבֻרָתָם (lōʿ-ṭēhād ittam Biqbûrâ) ‘You will never be united with them in burial’ (Isa 14:20). It also negates

³⁸¹ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 3. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 238.

adjectival attributes such as $\sim k'êx'$ $al\{\grave{a} \ '!be-aWh$ (*hû'-bën lö' Hâkâm*) “a son, not wise” (Hosea 13:13).³⁸²

$l\acute{o}'$ may further be used unconditionally to express an emphatic negative command: $\`xc"β†r>Ti$ $al\{\grave{ö}β(l\acute{o}' TircäH)$ “You shall not kill” (Exodus 20:13). For a milder negative, $la;$ (*'al*) with the jussive is used, as in $e \ ^yn<ëybeW ynIâyBe \ 'hb'yrim. yhiût. an"''-la;$ (*'al-nä' tühî müribâ Bêni ûbênÊ°kä*) ‘let there be no strife between you and me,’ (Gen 13:8). The Hebrew imperative is never used with a negative. Instead, $l\acute{o}'$ is used in negative final clauses as in Exodus 28:43, “So that they not (i.e. “lest they”) bring guilt.” This idea is also evident in Proverbs 22:6 “When he is old, he will not depart from it.” In expressing impossibilities or abominations, $l\acute{o}'$ is followed by $l.$ (*lü*) with an infinitive thus: $vyrIAhl. al\{ (l\acute{o}' lühörîš)$ “He could not drive out,” Judges 1:19, and $ryKiβz>h;l. al\{i (l\acute{o}' lühazKîr)$ “We must not mention,” (Amos 6:10). As a negative adverb, it may indicate denial or refusal (Judges 12:5). Like English “not” it may indicate a question: “And should I not pity...?” (Jonah 4:11). There is the possibility of double negation as evident in Zeph. 2:2.

Further, $l\acute{o}'\{$ could negate a noun or adjective into the opposite: $hr"îhoj.$ $al\{\grave{a} (l\acute{o}' fûh\acute{o}râ)$ ‘unclean’ (Gen 7:2). It could also function as a noun: $\hat{I}Al+Ð ;al\{\grave{A} \sim t, yyIâh/ hT' [;â-yKi (Kî/-`aTTâ héyi°tem (l\acute{o}') [l\acute{o}])$ “For now you are nothing” (Job 6:21). aOl is used in several negative compounds: $al\{\beta-\sim aiw>$ (*wü'im-lö'*) ‘if not’ (Gen 18:21), $aOlw"$ (*wälö'*) ‘and if not’ (2 Sam 13:26), $aOl.$ ‘without’ (Psalm 59:4), $aAlB.$ (*Bülö'*) ‘without’ (Isaiah 55:1), among others. These compound particles could combine with nouns to express a variety of

³⁸² R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* vol. 2. Chicago: Moody Press, 640.

ideas such as: $\text{y}[\text{i}\bar{\text{p}}\text{v}.\text{p}\bar{\text{i}}-\text{aO}\bar{\text{l}}] . (\text{l}\bar{\text{o}}'\text{-p}\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\text{s}}'\bar{\text{i}})$ “without guilt on my part” (Psalm 59:4), and $\text{@S, k, }^2-\text{aAlB} . (\text{B}\bar{\text{u}}\bar{\text{l}}\bar{\text{o}}'\text{-ke}^{\text{o}}\text{sep})$ ‘without money’ (Isaiah 55:1).³⁸³

Some of the theological significance of negations are intrinsic in the language of negation in describing the transcendent attributes of God. Biblical negations using $\text{l}\bar{\text{o}}'$ frequently describe God. God transcends humanistic models: $\text{l}\bar{\text{a}}\bar{\text{e}}\text{ }^{\text{v}}\text{y}\bar{\text{a}}\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\text{i}}$ $\text{a}\bar{\text{l}}\{\bar{\text{a}}(\text{l}\bar{\text{o}}'\text{ }^{\text{i}}\bar{\text{s}}'\text{ }^{\text{e}}\bar{\text{l}})\}$ “God is not a man” (Num 23:19). God so transcends human capacities, especially man's moral capacities, that men $\text{y}\bar{\text{n}}\bar{\text{I}}\bar{\text{a}}:\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\text{r}}>\text{y}\bar{\text{I}}-\text{aO}\bar{\text{l}}$ ($\text{l}\bar{\text{o}}/\text{'-y}\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\text{r}}'\text{a}^{\text{o}}\bar{\text{n}}\bar{\text{i}}$) “cannot see” God and live (Exodus 33:20). God is immutable; so He declares $\text{y}\bar{\text{t}}\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\text{y}}\bar{\text{n}}\bar{\text{I}}+\text{v}'\text{ } \text{a}\bar{\text{l}}\{\bar{\text{a}}\text{ } \text{h}\bar{\text{w}}''\bar{\text{b}}\bar{\text{h}}\bar{\text{y}}>\text{ } \text{y}\bar{\text{n}}\bar{\text{I}}\bar{\text{a}}\}$ ($\text{'}\bar{\text{a}}\bar{\text{n}}\bar{\text{i}}\text{ } \text{y}\bar{\text{h}}\bar{\text{w}}\bar{\text{h}}(\text{'}\bar{\text{a}}\bar{\text{d}}\bar{\text{o}}\bar{\text{n}}\bar{\text{ä}}\bar{\text{y}})\text{ } \text{l}\bar{\text{o}}'\text{ } \bar{\text{s}}\bar{\text{ä}}\bar{\text{n}}\bar{\text{i}}^{\text{o}}\bar{\text{t}}\bar{\text{i}}$) “I am God, I do change” (Mal 3:6). God's unchanging faithfulness is spoken of, most particularly in regard to his covenants (Psalm 89:33 – 34). God's nearness (“not a God afar off,” Jer 23:23) implies his omnipresence. God is not confined by finite (or infinite) space (1 Kings 8:27). Nor is God bound by time (Psalm 102:27)). God's holiness is shown in that evil cannot exist in his presence (Psalm 5:4 – 5). Other negations worthy of notice include several descriptions of the powerlessness of idols: they are impotent (i.e. “They are not able”) in the time of captivity (Isa 46:2); they cannot move from their place, do not answer, and cannot save (Isa 46:7). Finally, in the Davidic covenant, the Hebrews will someday be settled in the land not to be disturbed or afflicted again (2 Sam Sam 7:10). Neither shall God's covenant faithfulness turn from the Davidic dynasty (2 Sam 7:15).

The use of $\text{l}\bar{\text{o}}'$ ‘not’ with $\text{r}\bar{\text{W}}\bar{\text{S}}\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\text{y}}''\text{ } \text{y}\bar{\text{ä}}\bar{\text{s}}\bar{\text{u}}\bar{\text{r}}$, ‘turn aside, depart, or defect’ ($\text{r}\bar{\text{W}}\bar{\text{S}}\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\text{y}}''-\text{aO}\bar{\text{l}}$ ‘he will not depart, turn aside’) and not $\text{l}\bar{\text{a}};$ ‘al’ ‘not’ suggests the parental imperative was neither suggestive nor conditional. Instead, it unfolds not just the enormity of the command and expected commitment on the part of parents, but also the

³⁸³ R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* vol. 2. Chicago: Moody Press, 640; W. Holladay. Ed. 2000. *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 170.

enduring nature of the potential outcomes of this training which is capable of guiding or directing the child until and through his or her old age.

Conclusion

Proverbs 22:6 belongs to Solomonic wisdom, hence of pre-exilic date.³⁸⁴ However, no consensus has emerged concerning the original *sitz in leben* 'social setting' for wisdom instruction. Three distinct groups have been proposed as the originators and transmitters of wisdom: the family, the royal scribes and counsellors, and the religious scribes who studied and meditated on the Torah.³⁸⁵ The book frequently addresses its reader as 'my son' and urges him to adhere to the teachings of his father and mother (see on 1:8). On the other hand, the attribution of many proverbs to Solomon and the biblical references to state scribes and counsellors imply that the royal court may have been the source of a least the text of Proverbs if not much of its content (Prov. 1:1; 25:1; 2 Sam 17:1 – 14; 1 Kings 4:29 – 34).

Neither family nor royal wisdom was unique to Israel because every culture has traditional values and teachings, and the family is always the first area in which those teachings are passed down. Conceivably, under divine guidance, a great deal of traditional family wisdom has been incorporated into the text of Proverbs. The family, rather than the school is everywhere presented as the primary place of training. Nevertheless, as Proverbs suggests, Israelite wisdom literature appears a product of the royal court and its scribes.³⁸⁶ Though the setting of Proverbs has been debated, the data seem to indicate that the Book of Proverbs in its canonical form was an "instructional manual" designed "for use by the young men of Israel's society who were being groomed for positions of leadership." However, the individual sayings (of which 22:6 is part) reflect the

³⁸⁴ While scholars like Camp, Masenya and others argue against the Solomonic authorship of Proverbs 1:1 – 9:18, ascribing it to a later redactor, it seems there are more or less no argument over Solomon's authorship of 10:1 – 22:16.

³⁸⁵ D.A. Garrett. 1993. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* vol. 2. The New American Commentary: B&H Publishing Group, 23.

³⁸⁶ D.A. Garrett. 1993. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* vol. 2. The New American Commentary: B&H Publishing Group, 24.

family (or clan) wisdom of centuries past handed down from father to son throughout the generations (cf. Prov, 4:1-4).³⁸⁷

Parental exhortation consists of a lengthy discourse in which a parent exhorts a child to gain wisdom, to avoid prostitutes or criminal associations, or to maintain a life of virtue.³⁸⁸ These exhortations will generally include various proverbs, admonitions, and better sayings. They open with a parental appeal, in which the parent directly addresses the child (“my son(s)”) and urges him or her to heed the parent’s words. The book’s prologue, for example, beckons the discerning to learn more (1:5-6), the wise are to be ardently receptive to instruction (e.g., listening, watching, inclining their hearts), and personified wisdom’s invitation to her house and the feast that she prepares is a string of imperatives; it is perpetual and immediate (9:4-5). Outside Proverbs 1 – 9, one parental theme that runs through the book is that of ‘discipline’. Discipline seems to confirm the urgent need for wisdom: hence, if wisdom is life itself (8:35, 36), a hard way to it is better than a soft way to death (23:14 cf. 19:18).

Four of the five occurrences of *Hānak* in the OT are used with reference to the dedication of house. This idea and that of ‘rededication’ are also evident in *HānuKKat*, its noun usage. The only exception is *Hānîk* (the *hapax legomena* in Gen 14:14) which refers to ‘trained’ servants/trained men. Such rendering suggests the idea of training as a process and continuum and not dedication when the root *HnK* is used with human objects, as evident in Proverbs 22:6. Nevertheless, understanding the scope and actual rendering of *Hānök*, its singular occurrence in Proverbs 22:6, has been a serious debate among scholars.

The use of *na`ar* covers a wide range of meaning or renderings – ranging from the unborn child to adulthood. Consequently, one needs to depend on the context to determine the particular classification under consideration in a given occurrence or a text. On the other hand, evidences from the lexicographic and exegetical analysis of *Derek* ‘way’ in general and the various usages of *darKô* ‘his (or her) way’ in particular, seem convincing to submit that much of the occurrence of the use of *Derek* ‘way,’ especially in Proverbs are either

³⁸⁷ G.W. Parsons. 1993. Guidelines for understanding and proclaiming the book of Proverbs. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 150: 154 [151-70].

³⁸⁸ See on chapters 1:8 – 19; see also 2:1 – 22; 3:1 – 35; 31:1 – 9.

moral expressing covenantal undertone or metaphorical covering the totality one's life. Within the ambit of covenantal stipulations, there are only two ways that lead to two destinations: the way of the righteous which leads to success or life; and the way of the wicked which leads to destruction or ultimately death. Metaphorically, the proverbial usage of *Derek* 'way' and *darKô* 'his (or her) way' seem to cover the entirety of human life and endeavours – family, education, vocation, social, relational, intellectual and so on. This idea is conceivable in Proverbs 22:6.

In some metaphoric usages, as seen above, qualifiers with moral undertone are used either to describe the blessings or consequences of following a particular way. In this sense such qualifier(s) limits the noun usage in the given context. Apart from that, it appears no specific reference is made concerning one's vocation in the various usages of either *Derek* 'way' or *darKô* 'his (or her) way' in Proverbs. Instead, apart from Proverbs 8:22 where *darKô* 'his (or her) way' is used in reference to God, other usages in Proverbs refer to humans. They conceivably suggest that as moral human beings made in the image of God, everyone has not just a life to live but also the liberty to plan or choose the course of their lives. However, covenantal stipulations require that because God is the owner, giver and sustainer of this life, a man or woman is under obligation to conduct *darKô* 'his (or her) way' in conformity with divine principles, without which there is no assurance of safety and blessings. Proverbs 16:9 carefully balances the interplay between God and man in directing a person's full course of life or destiny thus: Humans have the liberty to initiate course of action, but must depend and rely on God for the positive outcomes or consequences of such actions. Anything to the contrary will result in crises; since God alone ordains, directs, and evaluates *darKô* 'his (or her) way.'

From the various usages and renderings of *zäqën*, three recurring themes are noteworthy: a symbol of maturity when contrasted with youthfulness, old age – when one is retires from active service, and finally the condition of being stricken in age, when one is very old and in a helpless condition. In Proverbs 22:6, *yazqîn* 'he becomes old' is contrasted with the $\text{𐤅} \text{ [; } \text{ 𐤍 :}$ in describing the stages of human life. Here, the *Derek* 'way' of life, behaviour, and the fate of the *na`ar* 'child' in *zäqën* 'old age' seems contingent upon his or

her parental *Hánök* ‘training’ at the early stage. The use of *lö’* ‘not’ with *rWsiy''* *yäsûr*, ‘turn aside, depart, or defect’ (*rWsiy''-aOl lö’-yäsûr* ‘he will not depart, turn aside’) and not *la;* ‘al’ ‘not’ reveals that the parental imperative was neither suggestive nor conditional. Instead, it unfolds not just the enormity of the command and expected commitment on the part of parents, but also the enduring nature of the potential outcomes of this training which is capable of guiding or directing the child until and through his or her old age.

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CHAPTER FIVE

INTERPRETATION OF EXEGETICAL DATA ON PROVERBS 22:6

5.1 Introduction

To properly situate the meaning of ḥānök] (Hánök) when linked with ṛ [; N : l ; (lanna`ar) and AK=ṛ>d : (darKô) in a parenting discourse, this chapter undertakes a textual interpretation of the exegetical data vis-à-vis the views of others on training in parenting. Given the independency, interrelatedness, and complex nature of major key words and phrases of the concise Proverbs 22:6, the study attempts a wholistic approach to the interpretation of not only Hánök, but rather all the components of the selected text. This aims at establishing the necessity, meaning, parental roles, and relevance of infant nurturing as a vital component of training in the Proverbial parenting discourse and the African context.

5.2 Understanding ḥān : x ' in the Parenting Discourse of Proverbs 22:6

To Dedicate/Initiate?

As earlier noted, four of the five occurrence of ḥān : x " (Hānak) (the verb root of ḥānōæx]) in the OT are in the context of dedicating or initiating the use of buildings.³⁸⁹ This dedication or initiation is usually accompanied by great celebration. Van Gemeren and others³⁹⁰ submit that although usually rendered 'dedicate,' a more accurate translation is 'begin,' 'initiate,' or 'inaugurate.' They argue that the verb does not contain the notion that the dedication is to someone or to something, which is present in the synonyms. According to Deuteronomy 20:5, whoever has built a new house and has not yet Akên " x] 'dedicated it', is exempt from military service. In this case, the verb does not denote an

³⁸⁹ See Deut. 20:5 (x2); 1 Kings 8:63, and 2 Chron. 7:5.

³⁹⁰ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 2. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 220.

actual dedication but probably the act of coming to enjoy a newly acquired property.³⁹¹ Hildebrandt, quoting Reif and Rankin, opines that אֶהֱנֶה (Hänäkô) in Deuteronomy 20:5 should be understood as the “initial use of” rather than a formal dedication. He defined dedication as the moving of an object from the realm of the profane to the realm of the sacred.³⁹² One however wonders the nature of the ‘inauguration’ of the house that will cause a trained soldier to be excused from war. Such ‘inauguration’ seems to be priced above concern for one’s family, if Uriah’s refusal of King David’s order to go to his house and lay with his wife should be taken seriously (2 Sam 11:11).

Reif carefully discerns the cultic use of וָהֵנִיחַ (wa/yyaHnükâ) ‘and they dedicated’ in 1 Kings 8:63 (2 Chron 7:5). Here the cultic setting causes a coalescing of the idea of dedicating the sacred building with that of its initial use. He argues that while וָקָדַשׁ (qädaš) “make holy” and וָמָשַׁח (mäšaH) “anoint” may be more frequently and exclusively used in dedication contexts, they may be sequentially related to the meaning of וָהֵנִיחַ (cf. 1 Kgs 8:63 and 8:64 where the inner court must be וָקָדַשׁ before it can be Hänak). In the case of religious structures, the verb denotes a community action of inauguration.³⁹³ The Hänak ‘putting into use,’ or ‘dedication’ of Solomon’s temple as well as the temple in Ezra’s time was marked by numerous sacrifices and celebrations (1 Kings 8:63; 2 Chron 7:5). Harris and others therefore argue that Hänak is best understood as ‘inaugurate,’ but that there is not in the term itself the notion that Hänak ‘dedication’ is to someone or to something, though that concept is present in the synonyms. With one exception (Proverbs 22:6, where the meaning is “start”; cf. NEB), Hänak and its derivatives refer to an action in connection with structures such as a building (1 Kings 8:63), wall (Neh. 12:27), an altar (Num 7:10), or an image (Dan 3:2). The ceremony of הַחֲנֻכָּה hanukkah ‘dedication’ or ‘consecration’ for Solomon’s altar extended over seven days (2

³⁹¹R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 301.

³⁹²T. Hilbrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 7 – 8; see also S.C. Reif. 1972. Dedicated to jnH. *VT* 22, 495 – 501; O.S. Rankin. 1930. *The origins of the festival of hanukkah: the Jewish new-age festival*. 27-45, and S.C. Reif, S.C. 1935. *The festival of hanukkah. The Labyrinth*. S.H. Hooke. Ed. London, 159 – 209.

³⁹³S.C. Reif. 1972. Dedicated to jnH. *VT* 22: 97.

Chron. 7:9). Judging from Israelite practice, the *Hänak* ‘initial use of’ a religious structure was given special significance. The completion of a project was observed with an inauguration of the structure, an event appropriately accompanied by sacrifice and joy. Rites of inauguration also have their place.³⁹⁴

Again in Numbers 7, Reif carefully distinguishes that the $\text{XV} ; \text{M}''$ “anointing” and $\text{Vd} ; \text{Q}''$ “consecrating/dedicating” come before the *Hänak* “initial use” of the Mosaic altar (cf. Num 7:1,10-11, 84, 88).³⁹⁵ Similarly, Psalm 30:1 is a song that celebrates the *Hänak* ‘initial use of’ the temple rather than focusing on the dedication of the structure itself.³⁹⁶ However, such distinction by Reif and Hildebrandt seem arbitrary because both the $\text{XV} ; \text{M}''$ “anointing” and $\text{Vd} ; \text{Q}''$ “consecrating/dedicating” are part of or processes involved in the *Hänak* ‘dedication’ instead of stages or phases as Reif suggested. And if *Hänak* means ‘to dedicate’ which is to ‘set aside for holy use’, $\text{XV} ; \text{M}''$ “anointing” and $\text{Vd} ; \text{Q}''$ “consecrating/dedicating” should then be seen as elements engaged in the process and not different ceremonies.³⁹⁷ Yet, the above propositions do not answer the question of the appropriate rendering of *Hänök* in relation to animate object (as evident in Proverbs 22:6).

To Stimulate Desire?

Since most of the occurrences of *Hänak* in the OT relate to cultic usages and inanimate objects, attention has been moved to its etymology in a bid to understanding its singular reference to an animate object in Proverbs 22:6. Etymologically, the verb *Hänak* derives from $\text{Ṣ} \text{N} \text{X}$ (*Hnk*) which is the assumed root of the following: 1.) $\text{Ḥ} \text{X} \text{E}$ *Hëk* ‘palate, ‘mouth’ – similar in ASV and RSV, although RSV twice renders “speech” for ASV

³⁹⁴ R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 301; W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 2. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 201.

³⁹⁵ S.C. Reif. 1972. Dedicated to jnH. *VT* 22: 497ff.

³⁹⁶ T. Hilbrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 7.

³⁹⁷ See on Num 7:1,10-11, 84, 88.

“mouth” (Prov 5:3; Song 5:16). Half of the occurrences of *Hnk* are in Job where (rendered often as “mouth”) it is set in the context of taste or speech. 2.) *Hänak* ‘dedicate, inaugurate.’³⁹⁸ In the ANE, the Arabian cognate *hanaka* ‘desire’ refers to rubbing the gums of a newborn child with the juice of dates or oil, with the idea of to ‘initiate.’³⁹⁹ It also carries the idea of ‘to make experienced,’ ‘submissive’ – as one does to a horse by a rope in its mouth. Or to rub the palate of a child with chewed dates before it begins to suck.⁴⁰⁰ The later is basically to stimulate desire. This idea has been stimulated by the recent psychological concentration on needs,⁴⁰¹ where the act of rubbing jams on the gums of a newborn baby enhances the infant’s appetite for the ability to digest succulent condiments.⁴⁰² It also carries the idea of nurturing with tender care.

However, Hildebrandt argues that to suggest that the assumed etymological root *Hnk* determines or shades the meaning of *Hänök* in Proverbs 22:6 is like saying that when one uses the word “cute” it is shaded by its early Elizabethan root meaning of “bow legged.” He debunked any attempt at assuming that etymology determines current meaning/usage.⁴⁰³ While etymology may not always present the appropriate modern meaning of every word, Hildebrandt seems to downplay its usefulness in textual and contextual studies. For instance, Gesenius links the ‘jaws,’ and ‘palate’ (which are cognate meanings of the root *Hnk*) with ‘to put something into the mouth,’ ‘to give to be tasted,’ and ‘to properly imbue.’ This is evident in the metaphor אֵלֶּכֶת אֶת־לֶחְמִי וְאֶת־לֶחְמִי אֶת־לֶחְמִי (hálö’-’özen millîn TibHän wüHëk ’ö’kel yif’am-lô) “Does not the ear test words And the mouth taste its food? – see

³⁹⁸ R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 301.

³⁹⁹ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 2. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 220.

⁴⁰⁰ F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs. 1996. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English lexicon*. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 335.

⁴⁰¹ D. Keller. 1970. Child discipline: a scriptural view. *The King’s Business*, 49.

⁴⁰² T. Hilbrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 4.

⁴⁰³ T. Hilbrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 4.

Job 12:11. Here, taste is applied to understanding. Hence the idea of ‘to imbue’ someone with anything ensues.⁴⁰⁴

Gesenius’ connection between *Hnk*, in this sense, to imbue and stimulate desire in an infant thereby impacting understanding seems insightful in unravelling the actual meaning of נָחַם in Proverbs 22:6 and parenting discourse in general. The Hebrew אָמַן (*ʾā`am*) is rendered ‘taste,’ ‘eat,’ or ‘perceive.’ Harris asserts that the primary meaning of *ʾā`am* is “to try, or to evaluate, with the tongue, normally with a view to consumption if the flavour is suitable.” Akkadian *ʾēmu* has a similar semantic range. The root is employed in three basic situations. First, it is used for the act of eating food, an act which also incorporates the normal process of “tasting” the flavour (1 Sam 14:24, 29, 43). Close to this first usage is the second, the concept of “tasting” to ascertain flavour (2 Sam 19:35). At this stage, one’s sense of judgment is trained or tested as reflected in the outcome of the “tasting.” Nevertheless, such “tasting” might be either literal or figurative. The latter sense is employed in comparison with the function of the ear testing words (Job 12:11; 34:3). The third meaning of the verb develops from the second – carrying the idea of evaluation and decision, that is, perception. Intrinsic in the latter is the word “discernment.” He concludes that though the derivative noun is employed to convey the more basic idea of “flavour” (Exo 16:31; Num 11:8), its predominant usage is to denote “discretion” and “discernment.”⁴⁰⁵

The link between the etymology of *Hänök*, the action of the mother who rubs jam on the gum of an infant, and the significance of her action is significant in the following ways. First, it suggests that although *Hänak* can be rendered “to dedicate, or initiate” in reference to house dedication, the case is different with humans. Evidence from the etymology indicates that training in parenting, which begins with infant nurturing is plausible. Second, the action of the parent (conceivably the mother) in rubbing jam on the gum of the infant captures the love, tenderness, intentionality, and commitment involved in training parenting

⁴⁰⁴ H.W.F. Gesenius. 1979. *Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee lexicon to the Old Testament*. GR, Michigan: Baker Books, 292. נָחַם is also rendered ‘to train’ (a child) or ‘to dedicate’ (a house) in W. Holladay. Ed. 2000. *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 110. See also on J.J. Owens. 2000. *Analytical key to the Old Testament* vol. 3. GR, Michigan: Baker Books, 580.

⁴⁰⁵ R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 815.

– a reflection of the bonding process that begins at infancy. Further, the imagery of a mother underscores not just the most important figure in infant infancy, but also her exceptional role in the entire training process. Third, the significance of the parental action at such early stage is noteworthy. On the one hand, it underscores the fact that her intention was to not only stimulate desire, but also imbue understanding, discernment, and to foster decision making from the earliest stages of the child’s life. By extension, the mother’s action engenders discipline and self awareness on the child. On the other hand, rubbing jam on the gum of an infant is an act that is conceivably done with much care and commitment. To feed an infant could be sometimes difficult and therefore requires some skills. For instance, if the infant has grown teeth, he or she can occasionally bite the mother’s finger – just as they bite the nipple during breastfeeding. Therefore, the process and rigors of nurturing also stretches the mother’s love, patience, and care toward a healthier parenting lifestyle.

To Train Up?

Hilderbrandt,⁴⁰⁶ MacDonald,⁴⁰⁷ and Gentry⁴⁰⁸ make a strong case against the pedagogical rendering of *Hánök* as ‘to train’. Particularly, Hilderbrandt and Gentry accuse most commentators for accepting, without discussion, the translation of “train up” as the meaning of the word *Hánök* in Proverbs 22:6.⁴⁰⁹ By “train up” is meant the careful nurturing, instructing and disciplining of the child in an attempt to inculcate a wise and moral character. Such training is frequently mentioned in Proverbs (Prov 13:24; 19:18;

⁴⁰⁶T. Hilberbrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 4– 14.

⁴⁰⁷A.J. MacDonald. 1976. The status and role of the na'ar in Israelite society. *JNES* 35.3: 147-70.

⁴⁰⁸P.J. Gentry. 2012. Equipping the generations: raising children, the Christian way. *JDFM* 2.2:101 – 106.

⁴⁰⁹T. Hilberbrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: Train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 6 – 7. cf. D. Toy, *Proverbs*. ICC, 415; M. Kane. 1970. *Proverbs: a new approach*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 564; Whybray. 1972. *The Book of Proverbs*, in the Cambridge Bible Commentary. Cambridge: University Press, 124; C. Fritsch. 1955. Proverbs. *Interpreter's Bible*. NY: Abingdon, 907; W. G. Plaut.1961. *Book of Proverbs*. NY: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 227-28; E. Jones. 1961. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. *Torch Bible Commentaries*. London: SCM, 183-84; J. Greenstone. 1950. *Proverbs with Commentary*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Pub. Soc. of America, 234-35; T. T. Perowne. 1916. *The Proverbs*. Cambridge: University Press, 142; and O. Zockler. 1904. *The Proverbs of Solomon. Lange's Commentary*. NY: Charles Scribner and Son, 192. Zockler illustrates the point with several proverbs ("What little Johnnie does not learn, John learns never" and "Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined"). Similarly, modern experiments of Piaget (J. Piaget. 1967. The mental development of the child. *Six Psychological Studies by Piaget*. O. Elkind. Ed. New York: Random), categories of Erikson (N. Erikson. *Childhood and society*. New York: W. W. Norton, 247-74), and the work of others highlight the importance of early childhood training. Many affirm that 85% of the child's personality is formed by the time he is 6 years of age. Such findings, chaining early childhood to later life, are held to be supported by this biblical proverb (see e.g., P. Meier. 1977. *Christian child-rearing and personality development*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15, 17; cf. Heb 12:5f.). Consequently, this proverb is cited in support of a plethora of educational and developmental child-rearing philosophies, paradigms and programs. Modern Hebrew uses synonyms like לָמַד ; לֵךְ " or English glosses like "education" and "apprentice/pupil".⁴¹⁰ In Modern Hebrew, חִינוּךְ *Hînûk* means "education."⁴¹¹ Hilderbrandt wonders if such later developments are based on an assumed interpretation of this verse, which has therefore affected the consequent use of *Hânök* in modern times. He submits that this verb and its noun forms do not occur elsewhere in Scripture with this discipline/instruction meaning. Moreover, if instruction was the point, why were the more instructional and frequently-used wisdom verbs not employed (לָמַד ; לֵךְ "learn, teach," רָשָׁם "deliver up, offer," שָׁמַע ; שָׁמַע "hear, listen to, obey," יָדָע "to know" [Hi])? Or why were there not more generic verbs used (נָתַן "give" קָח ; לָמַד "take, learn, lay hold of (seize), acquire") with the usual wisdom nouns attached (e.g., righteousness, wisdom, knowledge, discernment)?

Without doubt, *Hânök* in Proverbs 22:6 is problematic since it is the only occurrence with animate objects. At the same time, one should note that some Hebrew words even appear as *hapax legomena*,⁴¹² yet sometimes with clues for proper interpretation. The critical question here is: what does *Hänak* mean when applied to people? Jastrow provides several examples in postbiblical Aramaic where the term is used of the high priest, who is inaugurated, and Isaac, who was initiated (*Hänak*) into the covenant on the eighth day.⁴¹³ Genesis 14:14 uses וַיִּקְרָא ' וַיִּנְיָח] (*Hänîkäyw*) 'trained men,' the plural construct of *Hänak* in describing Abraham's 318 men who were sent to rescue Lot. *Hänîkäyw* is rendered 'trained, tried, and experienced.'⁴¹⁴ Apparently, these men were not novices.

⁴¹⁰ R. Sivan and E. A. Levenston. 1977. *The new Bantam-Megiddo Hebrew and English dictionary*. NY: Schoken, 91.

⁴¹¹ S.C. Reif. 1972. Dedicated to שָׁנָה . VT 22: 501. Cf. R. Sivan and E. A. Levenston. 1977. *The new Bantam-Megiddo Hebrew and English dictionary*. NY: Schoken, 118.

⁴¹² Words or forms that occur only once in the Hebrew. Such as in Genesis 14:14.

⁴¹³ M. Jastrow. 1950. *A dictionary of the Targumim*. New York: Pardis Publishing House, 483f.

⁴¹⁴ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis*

Rather, they seem to be sent out as men who were strong, experienced, and already trained in military affairs. Hilderbrandt suggests that the Arabic root proposed under “desire” also may be read “make experienced” in the context of Genesis 14:14.⁴¹⁵ But such inference will amount to a contradiction, since these men are viewed as having being trained. In the Taanach letters (Akkadian documents dating from just before the Amarna age [15th century BC]), Albright has found a complaint from Amenophis of Egypt that Rewassa of Taanach, in the context of mustering troops for war, had not sent his “retainers” (*ha-na-ku-u-ka*) to greet Amenophis. Thus, both in Genesis and in the Akkadian Taanach letters the root *Hnk*, when applied to people refers to one who is initiated and experienced, having duties commensurate with his status as a military cadet who has completed his training. What makes this example even more inviting is that later (in Genesis 14 passage) these same military cadets (retainers/squires) are called ~yrIê ['N> (*nü`ärîm*) ‘young men’(14:24).⁴¹⁶

According to Hilderbrandt, the connection of *Hänak* with *nü`ärîm* ‘young men’ is significant because these are the same word roots used in Proverbs 22:6 which are usually translated “train up” and “child.” Thus, while the term later acquired the meaning “to train” in a didactic sense (similar to *dm; l*"), it is better to see this word as having specific reference to the inauguration process with the bestowal of status and responsibility as a consequence of having completed an initiation process. He concludes that the word *Hänök* focuses not so much on the process of training as on the resultant responsibility and status of the one initiated. This meaning of *Hänök* in Proverbs 22:6 moves away from a strictly parental admonition for providing the child with good instruction. The Aramaic, in its lone use of *Hänök*, however suggests the discipline/instruction view concerning training for fasting on the Day of Atonement.⁴¹⁷

vol. 2. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 27; R. Kittel. 1997. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.

⁴¹⁵T. Hilderbrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 9. cf. R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 201; BDB, 335.

⁴¹⁶W. Albright. 1944. A prince of taanach in the fifteenth century B.C. *BASOR* 94: 24-25.

⁴¹⁷M. Jastrow. 1950. *A dictionary of the Targumim*. New York: Pardis Publishing House, 483; cf. T. Hilderbrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 6.

While Hilderbrandt's work is germane in understanding the real meaning of *Hánök* in Proverbs 22:6, it is not without some contradictions. First, having debunked the use of Arabian etymology of *Hánök* as a clue for understanding its meaning, making latter inference to it in support of Abraham's *Hánîkäyw* 'trained men' seems self-contradictory. Second, his link between *Hánök* (Prov 22:6) and *Hánîkäyw* (Gen 14:14) as referring to trained and experienced men is an imposition of meaning on the proverbial usage of *Hánök* because of his interpretation of the identity of *lanna`ar* 'the child,' who is the object of *Hánök*, as a cadet, and an amateur who should be enlisted for training. Abraham must have trained his 318 men before sending them to war as no general will make the mistake of sending amateur soldiers to war.

Nevertheless, the fact that *Hánök* (Prov 22:6) and *Hánîkäyw* (Gen 14:14), which is the only reference to animate objects are both derived from the same root *Hnk* suggests the idea of training and not dedication or initiation is intended. These men would have been trained in the arts and science of military expertise. As soldiers, they would have been trained to handle their arms, keep rank, observe the word of command through unalloyed discipline, and to endure the hurdles that come with military life. It is, however, unacceptable to assume that *Hánök* in Proverbs 22:6 is limited to military training. Such interpretation basically results from Hilderbrandt, Gentry, and others' perception of the book of Proverbs as having a cultic background with the singular purpose of preparing young men for military and royal service. As earlier noted, however, Proverbs 22:6 belongs to the circle of proverbs which originated from the family. These independent aphorisms predate the Solomonic era.

From a covenantal viewpoint, of which the family is central, *Hánök* will invariably mean more than military training or preparation for royalty. This is because the divine imperative to train children is not in one specific area or aspect but rather in all ramifications of human existence and endeavour for personal, divine and communal purposes. In the context of parental discourse, therefore, the proverbial *Hánök* is best fitted with the Arabian etymology which pictures a parent engaged in the nurturing and training of an infant, amateur. The latter is significant for two reasons. First, the Arabian root *Hnk* captures the tenderness and commitment involved in parenting through the stimulation of desire which

consequently imbues discernment by rubbing the gums. This is the beginning of a training process that will affect every faculty and being of the child. Second, the imagery of a mother underscores the most important figure in parenting at infancy.

On the other hand, the idea of dedication/initiation in the use of *Hánök* on inanimate objects is not exclusive. Instead, it also occurs within the realm of animate objects in the practice of child dedication either before birth (Judges 13; 1 Sam 2), or after birth (1 Sam 2; Luke 2:22; Mark 10:16). While the dedication, which carries the idea of 'to set apart' is conducted once but with eternal consequences, the process of child training is a continuum until maturity or adulthood is accomplished. No wonder Harris asserts that *Hánök* in Proverbs 22:6 denotes the continual training of the immature (a child) in the proper way of life.⁴¹⁸ Put together, *Hánök* in Proverbs 22:6 is appropriately rendered "to train" – in a holistic manner from infancy.

With the above understanding, the crucial question arises: What does it actually mean to train up a child? Train is defined as "to teach (a person or animal) a skill or type of behaviour through regular practice," to "make or become physically fit through a course of exercise and diet," to "train train something on point or aim something at," and to "cause (a plant) to grow in a particular direction or into a required shape."⁴¹⁹ The above definitions suggest that *Hánök* involves teaching, directing, modelling, discipline, discipling, among others. The need to have adequate understanding of the meaning of *Hánök* is fundamental since parenting is a divine responsibility with enduring consequences. When parents understand what God expects from them in child training, the potentiality of positive results heightens.

In his analysis of Proverbs 22:6, Jim Laws presents veritable insights germane for this understanding. According to him, "it is important to know what is meant by training children. If one were to train the growth of a young sapling, one would string out line to encourage the young tree to grow in a certain direction, straight and tall. To train an athlete means that one will provide the necessary regimen for that individual to become fit and become a winner. To train an animal is to cause it to accomplish a certain function like run a

⁴¹⁸ R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 301.

⁴¹⁹ Train. Concise Oxford English Dictionary (Eleventh Edition).

race, work, or perform a task. To train someone to perform a skill is to teach and guide the progress of that individual so as to become proficient in that skill. To train a child is the process of parenting that will cause that child to reach the desired objectives which we as parents want them to attain.⁴²⁰

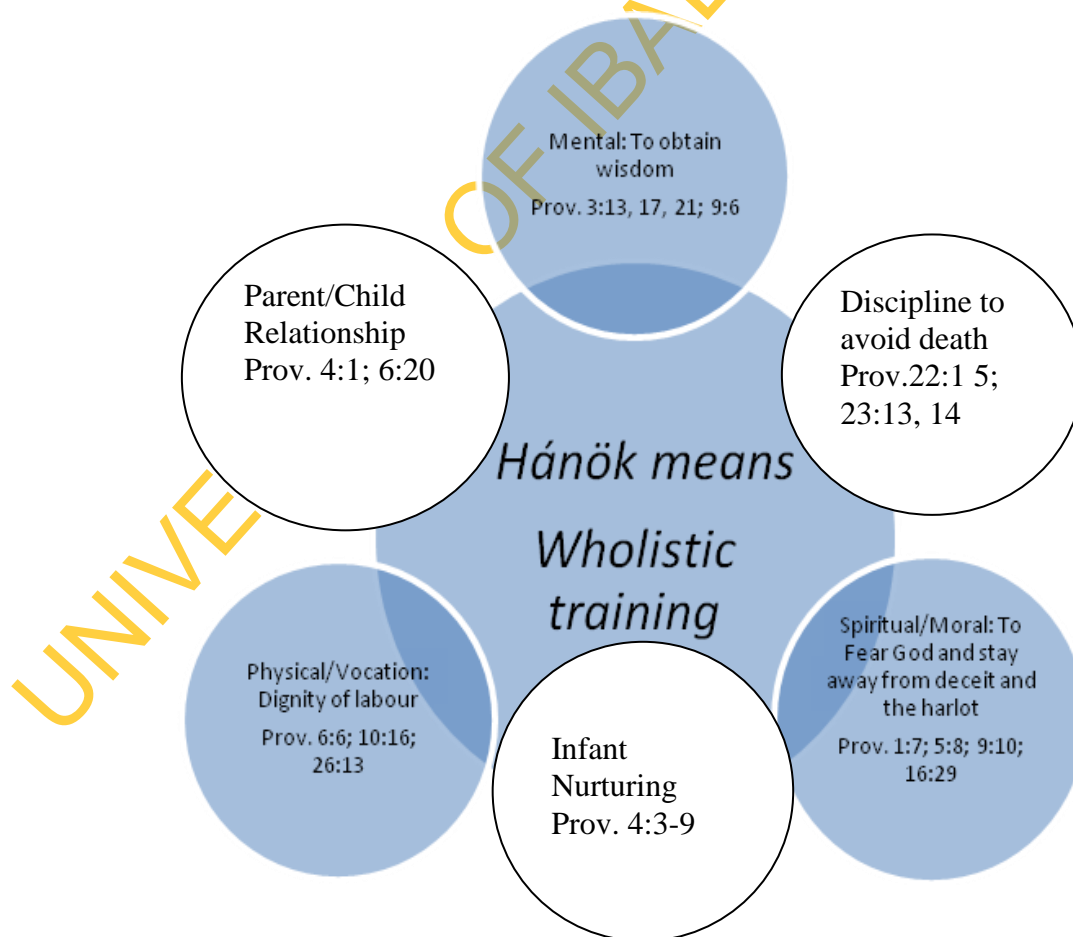
In each of these matters, *Hánök* is not complete until the subject actually attains the intended purpose of the process. Therefore, Laws prescribes five critical elements parents must consider as critical in their understanding and pursuit of training. First, training is not a one-time exposure to godly rules or principles for living but a continuous process until the intended purposes are accomplished. If the trainee cannot do the job, training must continue until the desired skills are achieved. The same is true with training our children in living godly lives. Second, the above instances suggest that telling your children what you expect of them is not training. It is only when the child actually arrive at the point of functioning on his or her own in conformity to what has been taught that parents can consider him or her to have arrived in the training process. Intrinsic in this element is the idea that teaching is not the same as training. Teaching, an exposure to truth, or basic knowledge about something is to be distinguished from training, which involves the process of development.

Third, the exposure of a good home life is not training, even though this is very important. Simply because we raise them in a moral environment is no guarantee that a child will accept the standard for living as his or her own. The Bible⁴²¹ and history are full of examples of moral parents who raised immoral children. Fourth, simply exposing our children to Bible class, as important as that is, is not training. We must not depend solely upon the Bible class or the Christian college to train our children. He argues that in Proverbs 22:6, *Hánök* is the kind of personal training that can only come from parents for their children. Fifth, raising a child, as important as that is, is not training. When we raise something, we grow it. Raising a child would certainly include feeding, clothing, and protecting them from danger until they reach physical maturity. However, training involves the development of the soul as God intended.

⁴²⁰ J. Laws. 1988. Child obey your parents – remember creator in youth. *Truth in love lectureship*. Pulaski: Sain Publications, 211 – 215 [205 – 220].

⁴²¹ Aaron, Eli, and Samuel all shared in these painful experiences.

Without doubt, Laws description of the meaning of *Hánök* is germane. His approach of delineating what training is not is also insightful. First, training is not a hit-and-run adventure and is not done by proxy. To *Hánök* is not to provide a conducive environment, raising of children or teaching good morals, even though they are part of the process. Instead, it is to train the child in every aspect of life until he or she matures. This is evident in the various instructions, admonitions and warnings given to both parents and children on how to live a meaningful life (which is called wisdom) and the consequences of disobedience (otherwise known as foolishness). Therefore, *Hánök* is that process which cuts across every aspect of human development toward the perfecting of the mental, physical, emotional, psychological, vocational and spiritual faculties and being of an individual. It is parenting in action for a harmonious development of a total person for the present and eternal gains. The centrality of *Hánök* in the proverbial parenting discourse and its emphasis on wholistic development is evident in the proverbial instructions as seen below.



The imperative nature of *Hánök* emphasises that training is a great duty, particularly to those who are the parents of children. To this end, Laws affirms that it is necessary for the propagating of wisdom that it may not die with them. Therefore, parents are to train children during those early formative years (Prov. 4:3, 4), to keep them from sin, to prepare them for what they are to face.⁴²² Train them up, not in the way they would go, but in the way they should go, the way in which, if you love them, you would have them go. Train up a child according as he is capable (as some take it), with a gentle hand, as nurses feed children (Deut. 6:7) so that when they grow up, when they grow old, it is to be hoped they will not depart from it.

5.3 Situating the *ר [; n :* of Proverbs 22:6 in the proper context of Parenting

To facilitate proper understanding of the identity of the *na`ar* in Proverbs, Hilderbrandt, depending so much on MacDonald⁴²³ presents three major classifications of the *na`ar* and his role in the ancient Israelite society thus: 1.) Status, 2.) Personal Attendant 3.) Military Cadet.⁴²⁴ These are considered in a reverse order with the aim of providing insight germane for unravelling the identity of the *na`ar* in Proverbs 22:6, in relation to *Hánök* and the *Derek* in which he should go.

ר [; n : Personal Attendant/Military Cadet?

There is much evidence that *na`ar* refers not only to “youngsters” but to a servant or employee who served under the authority of a superior. Samuel and Kings abound with references where this interpretation fits.⁴²⁵ MacDonald develops two realms in which the status of the *na`ar* may be seen: (1) in the domestic realm; and (2) in military contexts. The *na`ar* was frequently a special personal attendant of a person of status. Thus not only was

⁴²² J. Laws. 1988. Child obey your parents – remember creator in youth. *Truth in love lectureship*. Pulaski: Sain Publications, 211 – 212.

⁴²³ A.J. MacDonald. 1976. The status and role of the *na`ar* in Israelite society. *JNES* 35.3, 147-70.

⁴²⁴ T. Hilberandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 10 – 12.

⁴²⁵ See 1 Sam 9:3 – 27; 10:4; 14:1, 6; 17:58; 21:3; 25:5 – 27; 2 Sam 1:5 – 15; 2:14, 21 – 22; 13:17, 28, 29,32; 1 Kings 20:14 – 15; 2 Kings 5, 6, etc.

Abraham's *na`ar* called on to prepare the special meal for the three heavenly visitors (Gen 18:7-8), but later Abraham's trusted *ni`arîm* 'servants' accompanied him to mount Moriah for the sacrificing of Isaac (Gen 22:3).⁴²⁶ In Genesis 22 Abraham uses the absolute form when referring to Isaac (22:5) as does the angel (v.12), portraying the picture of a "young person". But Abraham uses the construct form (with pronominal suffixes) when referring to his companions (vv. 3, 5, 19), which presents the imagery of the less personal "servants."⁴²⁷

Similarly, Joseph was a *na`ar* over Potiphar's household and later came (as a *na`ar*) into unique headship over Pharaoh's kingdom (Gen 41:12). Joshua, as the personal attendant of Moses, was called a *na`ar* (Exod 33:11). When Saul was searching for his father's donkeys, he was accompanied by, and listened to the advice of his *na`ar* (1 Sam 9:22; cf. also 1 Kgs 11:20-28; 18.41-44, 19.3, Judg 17.7, 10, 1 Sam 2.17, Ruth 2.5, 21). Hilderbrandt submits that the point of the above list is to demonstrate that the role of a *na`ar* was a personal attendant of a person of status.⁴²⁸ This presents the idea of not just a servant in the sense of a slave, but rather, a junior officer or an apprentice. It could also exist in a mentor-disciple relationship. MacDonald distinguishes between the upwardly mobile status of the *na`ar* and the more menial *db , [, ('ebed)* 'servant'; the *na`ar* could be put in charge over the *~ydib" [} ('übe`dîm)* 'servants.'⁴²⁹

The frequent occurrence of *na`ar* in military contexts is also significant. Here, Hilderbrandt observes that the *na`ar* is one step above the regular troops, but not yet a mighty warrior in the calibre of Joab or Abner. When Joshua had to send out spies to run reconnaissance on Jericho, he selected two skilled *ni`arîm* 'servants' (Josh 6:22). Such an important mission would not have been left in the hands of novices. Gideon, the fearful "mighty man of valour" (Judg 6: 12) is told to take his trusted *na`ar* and go down to scout out the Midianite camp (Judg 7:10-11). Thus the seasoned warrior, Gideon, is accompanied by a squire, who, judging from the importance of the mission is extremely skilful and

⁴²⁶ A.J. MacDonald. 1976. The status and role of the *na`ar* in Israelite society. *JNES* 35.3: 151, 156.

⁴²⁷ W.A.V. Gemeren et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 2. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 125.

⁴²⁸ T.Hilberrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 11.

⁴²⁹ A.J. MacDonald. 1976. The status and role of the *na`ar* in Israelite society. *JNES* 35.3: 149.

trustworthy. Jonathan, climbing the cliffs of Wadi Suwenit, took a trusted *na`ar* to face the formidable Philistine host. He and his armour-bearer fought and slew 20 men (1 Sam 14:14). He affirms that the armour-bearer was himself a warrior, though of inferior status to Jonathan. David, as he faced Goliath, was also designated as a *na`ar* - hence the impropriety of his fighting the Philistine champion from Gath (1 Sam 17:31ff.).⁴³⁰

However, Judges 8:20 presents the picture of an amateur who although an armour bearer, was completely inexperienced, afraid and unqualified by standard. Whereas a *na`ar* could be an experienced soldier with the capacity to take risks and engage in major military expeditions, he could also be an amateur, too young to make a military impact. Consequently, the *na`ar* is best seen as a personal attendant either to a master, as in the case of Abraham, or a military cadet under a superior military officer. Unlike Hilderbrandt who argues that the status of the *na`ar* is also seen in his personal attendance on a person of status, the idea of the *na`ar* in the foregoing is not more of status than it is with their role as service providers, sometimes in their amateur stage.

r [; n : *Status or Age Span?*

Looking at the contexts in which *na`ar* is employed, three things (age span, activity of the *na`ar*, and terms for age in the OT) immediately present themselves. First, reference to its usage in describing infancy, as seen earlier, is seen in a child yet unborn (Judg .13:5-12); one just born (1 Sam 4:21); an infant still unweaned (1 Sam 1:22); or a three month old baby (Exod 2:6), and Bathsheba's baby (2 Sam 12:16). However, Joseph at 17--already a man in that culture--is also called a *na`ar* (Gen 37:2). When he is 30 years old, surely beyond childhood, he is still called a *na`ar* (Gen 41:12, 46). The mature Absalom is called *na`ar* by his father (2 Sam 14:21; 18:5).⁴³¹ Hence, Hilderbrandt argues that the age span of the *na`ar* is so diverse that age cannot be its primary focus – which further affirms MacDonald's view that the renderings “child, lad, young man, and servant” are “inadequate

⁴³⁰ T. Hilberrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 12.

⁴³¹ W.A.V. Gemenen et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 3. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 125; R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 586; T. Hilberrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 10.

and produce a totally false impression of the person involved.”⁴³² Second, the *na`ar* is frequently active in strictly adult activities (war [1 Sam 17:33, 42; Judg 6:12, 8:20]; cultic priestly functions [Judg 18:3-6, 20]; special spy missions [Josh 6:22]; personal attendance on a patriarch, prophet, priest, king or son of a king [Gen 18:7; 2 Kgs 5:1-27; 1 Sam 1:22, 24-25; 2 Sam 9:9; 2 Sam 13:17]; or supervision of the whole Solomonic labor force [1 Kgs 11:28]). The term *na`ar* is often applied to one who is designated as an *vya`i š* (man) (2 Sam 1:5, 10, 13). While he may be a young male, Hilderbrandt argues that the point is not his age but his societal status and resulting responsibility.

Third, there are numerous terms that focus on the age of a young male when age is the point (*vdl*, *y<*, *!B,e ~l*, *[, llewO*, *qnewOy*, *@j ;*).⁴³³ It is not merely with these terms that *na`ar* finds its semantic field. Rather, it is equally at home with terms like *db*, *[, `ebeD* ‘servant’ or *Derek* ‘elder.’ An upper-class role and societal status are consistently ascribed to the *na`ar*. MacDonald claims that in the historical books there are no examples of a *na`ar* of lowly birth.⁴³⁴ Thus, whether the *na`ar* is just an infant (like Moses [Exod 2:6], Samuel [1 Sam 1:22, 24-25], or Samson [Judg 13:5]) or an adolescent (like Jacob/Esau [Gen 25:27], Joseph [Gen 37:2], or Solomon [1 Kgs 3:7]), high status is the point—not merely age. Similarly, the feminine *na`ar* also means a high-born young female, as can be seen by its usage in reference to Rebekah (Gen 24:16), Dinah (Gen 34:3), Pharaoh's daughter (Exod 2:5), and Queen Esther (Esth 2:4).

On the contrary, Gemenen observes that there seems to be no case where a *na`ar* was married, which suggests that one meaning of *na`ar* is that it refers to any young person from infancy to just before marriage.⁴³⁵ If this view is accepted, it means Hilderbrandt and MacDonald’s insistence that status and not age is the primary concern of the *na`ar* is faulty. On the other hand, if young servants and personal attendants are also addressed as *na`ar*,

⁴³² T. Hilberbrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 10. cf. A.J. MacDonald. 1976. The status and role of the *na`ar* in Israelite society. *JNES* 35.3:147.

⁴³³ T. Hilberbrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 10 – 11; A.J. MacDonald. 1976. The status and role of the *na`ar* in Israelite society. *JNES* 35.3:150.

⁴³⁴ A.J. MacDonald. 1976. The status and role of the *na`ar* in Israelite society. *JNES* 35.3: 149.

⁴³⁵ W.A.V. Gemenen et al. Eds. 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 3. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 125.

age of a young male appears inconclusive. Of a truth, the Hebrew uses a variety of terms in describing the various developmental stages of child-life.⁴³⁶ In trying to justify such classification, Alfred Edersheim presents eight stages of the Hebrew child-life. Stage one designates the babe as the דָּלַיִל (ye'led) or הַדָּלִיִּל: 'newly-born' as in Exodus 2:3, 6, 8. Stage two refers to the יוֹנֵאֵי (yônëq) 'suckling child' (1 Sam 15:3; Isa 11:8; Ps 8:2). The third stage is akin to the latter. However לָלַיִל (läl) is used in reference to a suckling who, however, is no longer satisfied with only this nourishment and is 'asking bread' (Lam 4:4 cf. Ps. 8:3). Stage four designates the child as the גַּמְּוּל (gämùl) or 'weaned child' (Ps. 131:2; Isa 11:8b; 28:9) which according to the Hebrew is after two or at most three years and was celebrated with a feast (Gen 21:8). The fifth designation is אֶפְסָר (ëpësar) 'little child' who now clings to the mother under the watchful eyes of his or her parents (Jer 40:7; Ezek. 9:6). The sixth stage is marked by the word עֹלֵם (e'lem) which denotes becoming firm and strong (1 Sam 20:22) or the feminine אֵלְמָה (almâ) which refers to a virgin mother, who is either ripe sexually or newly married (Isa 7:14). The seventh stage is marked by the נַעַר (na'ar) 'youth', literally, he who shakes off or shakes himself free.⁴³⁷ The final stage designates the child as בְּהוּר (BëHûr) or the 'ripened one' a young man, vigorous, but yet unmarried.⁴³⁸

As comprehensive as the above categorisation might appear, the use of these terms do not follow a particular mould or restriction in reference to age and child life in the OT. For instance, while עֹלֵם (e'lem) refers specifically to a 'young man' (1 Sam 16:12;

⁴³⁶ Anon. The center for online Judaic studies [COJS] Retrieved March 2, 2013, from www.cojs.org.

⁴³⁷ This understanding stems from the etymological understanding where עָרַע (ë'arë) is said to have been derived from an Arabic cognate which covers the range, "grunt, cry, scream, roar, bellow," plus more active connotations. See R.L.Harris et al. Eds. 1980. *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1387.

⁴³⁸ A. Edersheim. 1974. *Sketches of Jewish social life in the days of Christ*. GR, Michigan: WB. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 103 – 105. There is a passage in the Mishnah (Aboth. V. 21) which quaintly maps out and, as it were, labels the different periods of life according to their characteristics.

17:42, and 20:22),⁴³⁹ *ʿe^olem* which Edersheim listed as the first stage of child-life, could be variously rendered ‘child’, (so the *ye^oled* (child) grew up and was weaned [Gen 21:8]),⁴⁴⁰ ‘son’ (as in the case of Ishmael who was about sixteen years old [Gen 21:14]), and ‘little children’ (*~h, a ydEl . y :*) in Job 21:11. *ye^oled* could also be rendered descendants (Isa 29:23), and youth (Gen 4:23; 1 Kings 12:8, 10, 14).⁴⁴¹ Further, Gemenen notes an interesting shift between *ye^oled* and *na`ar* in describing Ishmael. The narrator calls him *ye^oled* (Gen 21:8, 14), as does Hagar. But God/the angel calls him a *na`ar* (Gen 21:12, 17, 18). The narrator also calls Ishmael a *na`ar* (v.20), when speaking of his relationship with God. In this case, *ye^oled* seems to speak of a biological relationship, while *na`ar* speaks of care and concern.⁴⁴² Hence, rather than follow a specified classification, *na`ar* and most of its synonyms are used interchangeably – not necessarily on the basis of status, but rather depending on the context and the particular idea being pursued.

ר [; נ ; in Proverbs 22:6: A Child or a Youth?

Given the various archaeological finds in the last 100 years, MacDonald⁴⁴³ and Hilderbrandt⁴⁴⁴ appeal to the status of the cultures of the ancient Near East (Sumer, Mesopotamia, Ugarit, Egypt) for a possible conclusion on the nature and status of the proverbial *na`ar*. Hilderbrandt notes that in each of these cultures, wisdom literature was associated with, written for, and promulgated by the king⁴⁴⁵ and his administrators—particularly the scribes.⁴⁴⁶ He posits that the situation in Israel was the same, for King

⁴³⁹ F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs. 1996. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English lexicon*. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 761; Strong, 5958.

⁴⁴⁰ Isaac was probably three years old when he was weaned.

⁴⁴¹ F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs. 1996. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English lexicon*. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 409.

⁴⁴² W.A.V. Gemenen et. al. (eds). 1997. *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* vol. 3. GR, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 125.

⁴⁴³ A.J. MacDonald. 1976. The status and role of the *na`ar* in Israelite society. *JNES* 35.3, 152.

⁴⁴⁴ T. Hilberandt, Ted. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 12.

⁴⁴⁵ T. Hilberandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: Train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 12 cf. L. Kalugila. 1969. *The wise king*. N.W. Porteous. 1969. Royal wisdom. *VTSup* 3, 247-61; also J. Humphrey Ed. 1978. The motif of the wise courtier in the book of Proverbs. *Israelite wisdom: theological and literary essays in Honour of Samuel Terrien*. Missoula: Scholars Press, 177-90.

⁴⁴⁶ T. Hilberandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 12. cf. L. Oppenheim. 1965. A note on the scribes in Mesopotamia. *Assyriological Studies* 16, 253-56; and R.J. Williams. 1972. Scribal training in ancient Egypt. *JAOS* 92, 214-21.

Solomon (1 Kgs 4:31-32; Prov 1:1; 10:1) and King Hezekiah (Prov 25: 1) are explicitly associated with the Israelite wisdom tradition. In this royal setting, terms of status such as *na`ar* are to be expected. The proverbs helped prepare young squires for capable service at the head of the Israelite societal structure. Thus, the suggestion that *na`ar* was a term of status, rather than merely of youthfulness, fits well with the original setting of proverbial wisdom literature not only in Israel, but also throughout the ANE. More to the point, however, is how the term *na`ar* is actually used in Proverbs and whether its usage there is consistent with how it is used in other literary genres.⁴⁴⁷

A major problem with the above view as noted earlier is scholars' stereotype approach to and conclusions when dealing with the Book of Proverbs. First, the assumption that wisdom literature was associated with, written for, and promulgated by the king and his administrators-particularly the scribes, seems overbearing ignoring the fact that even in those nations and in ancient Israel, proverbial wisdom constituted an integral part of the human society, prior to the Monarchy. From a universal viewpoint, proverbs are a mark of wisdom and elders in the villages are well respected for their ability to coin and use proverbs. Whereas Solomon is said to have written several proverbs (1 Kgs 4:31-32) including a larger part of Proverbs itself (Prov 1:1; 10:1; 25: 1), that does not suggest that proverbial wisdom was his brain child. One must therefore differentiate between the origin of proverbial wisdom and when they attained literary status.

Second, there is a perceived ignorance concerning the nature of Proverbs especially 10:1 – 22:16, which has no specific reference to a context.⁴⁴⁸ Third, because Proverbs begins with a parental address to a 'son,' there is a quick conclusion that Proverbs is an address to young men in a cultic setting. But internal evidences testify not only to the fact that Proverbs consists of thick jungles of terse, self-contained proverbs, somewhat haphazardly arranged,⁴⁴⁹ but also a constant switch from the 'son' to his 'parent(s)'. Most of the

⁴⁴⁷ T. Hilberrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 12.

⁴⁴⁸ W.P. Brown. 1996. *Character in crisis: a fresh approach to the wisdom literature of the Old Testament*. GR, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 22; R.N. Whybray. 1972. *Wisdom in the book of Proverbs*. *Cambridge bible commentary*. Cambridge: University Press, 31.

⁴⁴⁹ W.P. Brown. 1996. *Character in crisis: a fresh approach to the wisdom literature of the Old Testament*. GR, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 22. Brown notes that the session "The Words of the Wise" (Proverbs 22:17 – 24:22) is a possible exception, but even so, it consists essentially of some brief

occurrences of *na`ar* in Proverbs follow the latter order. This order is attested to in the introduction to Proverbs where as against the stereotype view that Proverbs is addressed to the youth, the ‘wise’, and a ‘man’ are listed among its beneficiaries.

ר [; n ; in Proverbs

The Hebrew *na`ar* occurs seven times in Proverbs (1:4; 7:7; 20:11; 22:6, 15; 23:13; 29:15). In Proverbs 1:4-5 the ר [; n ; is listed alongside the ~yIãat 'p . i (*Pütä`yim*) ‘simple,’ ~k ' x " (*Häkäm*) the ‘wise,’ and the !Ab^a n "w>÷ (*wünäbôn*) man of “understanding or discernment,” as the major audience to whom the book of Proverbs is addressed. The above listing covers a wide range of audience which includes parents (who are involved in training children of different ages), and the youth (male and female). In Proverbs 7:7 the ~yIãat 'p . i ‘simple’ and the *na`ar* are again paralleled. Here, the *na`ar* is described as one lacking judgment, probably an amateur or one who lacks proper child training due to parental negligence or improper parental upbringing. It is not out of place to suggest that the identity of this *na`ar* extends to that of a toddler or preschooler who is still ignorant or limited in his or her knowledge of the law. Proverbs 20:11 affirms that the *na`ar* will be known by his behaviour which ultimately reveals the condition of his or her heart. The emphasis here is on the moral conduct of the child which is dependent on not his or her professional training *per se*, but rather the extent at which he or she is given to virtue.

Proverbs 22:15 speaks of applying the rod of discipline on the *na`ar* to drive out folly. This is the first switch in the parental discourse. It is obvious the one being addressed is not the *na`ar* but rather his or her parent(s). The point is that in spite of his or her naive bent for folly, the *na`ar* can be moulded and instructed. One might be tempted to ask: What is the age or status of this *na`ar* to whom the ‘rod of discipline’ should be applied?

and not-so-brief commands. He also posits that in their final form, Proverbs 1 – 9, along with 31, provide a unifying focus for the book as a whole, a focus established by the voices of various characters and the values they impart. See also R.N. Whybray. 1972. *Wisdom in the book of Proverbs. Cambridge bible commentary.* Cambridge: University Press, 3131. For a discussion of the open genre of the proverb, see J.L. Crenshaw. *Old Testament wisdom*, 66 – 67.

Edersheim elucidates the fact that the use of rod as a means of child discipline is limited to a particular age-range.⁴⁵⁰ Finally, Proverbs 29:15 introduces the rod and rebuke as elements or tools for entrenching wisdom in the *na`ar*. Failure to do so will bring disgrace, an adverse effect, to his mother. Again, there is a switch in the parental discourse where the object of the instruction is the parent(s), not the *na`ar*.

With special reference to the message of Proverbs 1-9 (especially chs. 5 and 7), Hilderbrandt argues that it is obvious the *na`ar* in Proverbs was not a child. He asserts that the very content of the proverbial material (sexual advice [Prov 5:1-6, 15-21; 31:10-31]; economic counsel [10:5; 11:1]; political instruction [25:6-7; 29:12]; social graces [23:2]; and military advice [24:6]) indicates that the *na`ar* was a late adolescent or young adult.⁴⁵¹ While acknowledging the vast rendering of *na`ar* in the OT, which includes that of a servant, personal attendant and military cadet, suffice it to say that its usage in Proverbs, especially within the parental discourse is unique. This uniqueness hinges on the interplay between the speaker (parent) and the receiver (child). While the identity of the *na`ar* when he or she is being addressed suggests that of a young man/woman, or an amateur, though not limited to that, the identity of the *na`ar* when the parents are addressed is predominantly that of an unborn child (Judg 13), infant, or one just weaned (1 Sam 2).

Hilderbrandt and MacDonald's submission that the *na`ar* of Proverbs 22:6 is a squire with social status faces self contradictions in their attempt to synthesise the nexus between *na`ar* and *zāqēn*. On the one hand, Hilderbrandt notes that the *na`ar* in 22:6a is paralleled via grammatical transformation (noun/ verb) with $\text{! } \bar{y} \bar{q} \bar{i}^a \text{ } z > \bar{y} : \div$ (*yazqîn*) 'growing old' in 22:b. He observes that although MacDonald argues that when the *na`ar* and *zāqēn* (elder) are paralleled they are both terms of societal status, his case is disrupted by his own examples (Ps 37:25 [cf. also Deut 28:50]; 148:11-13; Jer 6:11). According to him, while status difference between the *na`ar* and the *zāqēn* may be the point in some cases, it seems that the age component is sometimes more prominent than MacDonald would accept. Furthermore, because of the verbal nature of *zāqēn* in Proverbs 26:6b, the aging process,

⁴⁵⁰ For further details see A. Edersheim. 1974. *Sketches of Jewish social life*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 106.

⁴⁵¹ T. Hilberbrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 13.

rather than rank, seems to be in view. The latter is evident in the exegetical exploration of *zäqën* where *yazqîn* ‘he becomes old’ is contrasted with the *na`ar* in describing the stages of human life.

The above contradictions expose Hilderbrandt and MacDonald’s stereotype approaches or rather misunderstanding of the nature of the *na`ar* within a parental discourse. While Hilderbrandt’s work focuses on Proverbs 22:6a, MacDonald considered the status of the *na`ar* in the Israelite society. Their failure to properly analyze the entire passage especially the nexus between Proverbs 22:6a and 6b is evident in their late submissions. A closer look at the grammatical parallel between Proverbs 22:6a and 22:6 presents the following nexus.

A¹ Train up a child

A² According to his way

B¹ When he becomes old

B² He will not turn aside from it

The above chiasmic structure reveals a synchrony between the *na`ar* in A¹ and *yazqîn* in B¹. While A¹ indicates the command to *Hánök* the *na`ar*, who obviously needed it because he or she is invariably young and untrained, B¹ underscores both the essence of the training and scope of its relevance which spans up to maturity or old age.

Without doubt, there is a clear difference between the *na`ar* who attends to a superior or master and one who is being attended to by his or her parents. This demarcation is seen in the fact that although the books of Samuel and Kings contain a vast description of the *na`ar* as a young man or an adolescent whose role is that of a personal attendant or military cadet, its occurrence in a parental discourse where attention is shifted from addressing the *na`ar* to the parent is that of a babe or a weaned *na`ar* in need of nurture, stimulation, care, and direction.⁴⁵² As earlier noted, such parental responsibility is obvious in the etymological insight provided by *Hánök* where a mother robs jam on the gum of her new

⁴⁵² See 1 Sam 2 cf. Exodus 2; Judges 13.

born. Such imagery reinforces on the one hand, the bonding that exists between a *na`ar* and his or her caregiver, who is the mother. On the other hand, it reverberate the love, commitment, care, nurture, and tenderness that parents must put into the training process, if significant achievements must be made. Suffice it to say that the identity of the *na`ar* ‘child’ when parents are addressed (as is the case in Proverbs 22:6) is predominantly that of the unborn child (Judg 13) or infant (1 Sam 2), invalidating attempts to render it ‘adolescent’ ‘squire,’ or ‘cadet.’

5.4 The nexus between the $r [; n :$ and $AK=r>d :$ ‘his Way’ in Proverbs 22:6

Given the above textual analysis, the next question is: How then should $AK=r>d : yPiä-l [; (\hat{a}l-Pî darKô)$ ‘according to his way’ in Proverbs 22: 6 be read or understood? In what way is this *na`ar* ‘child’ whose *Hánök* begins from infancy to adulthood go? Several commentators have tried to proffer solution on the actual rendering of this phrase.⁴⁵³ Hilderbrandt⁴⁵⁴ presents five different possibilities.

The Status View

This viewpoint is the brainchild of Hilderbrandt. Using Delitzsch’s submission that the meaning of *darKô* “his way” must be determined by the noun, that is, the antecedent of the 3ms suffix $\bar{A} (\delta)$ ‘his,’⁴⁵⁵ he affirms that if the *na`ar* of Proverbs 22:6 is understood as ‘a high-born squire’, then it may be suggested that $\hat{a}l-Pî darKô$ “according to his way” means according to the office that he will occupy. Accordingly, he is to be “broken-in” (*Hánök*) as a *na`ar*. Thus, “his way” should be the way befitting the dignity of a *na`ar*. *darKô* “his way” should also reflect an awareness of his developmental limitations and need

⁴⁵³ T. Hilberrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 14 – 16; C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch. 2001. *Keil and Delitzsch commentary on the Old Testament* vol. 6. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 324; R.L. Roberts, Jr. 1962. A note on Proverbs 22:6: train up a child. *Restoration Quarterly*, 6 no. 4: 40 – 42; W.C. Kaiser, Jr. 1996. *Hard sayings of the bible*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 287 – 288; T. Adeyemo. 2006. *African bible commentary*, Nairobi: WordAlive Publishers, 777.

⁴⁵⁴ T. Hilberrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 15 – 16.

⁴⁵⁵ Pronominal suffix on singular nouns – third person masculine singular (3ms), translated ‘his.’

for instruction. He concludes that this solution fits the Proverbial ethos and is consistent with the above-stated view of who the *na`ar* was in the structure of Israelite society.⁴⁵⁶

A major shortfall in this view is Hilderbrandt's interpretation of the *na`ar* and his supposed role in the structure of Israelite society.⁴⁵⁷ As this study reveals, however, the *na`ar* of Proverbs 22:6 is not a 'squire,' 'cadet,' or 'personal attendant,' but conceivably an infant. The latter idea occurs mostly in parental discourse (Exod 2; 1 Sam 2) where focus shifts from the *na`ar* to the parent(s). This understanding is plausible in the compact but comprehensive parenting imperative of Proverbs 22:6, where the command to *Hánök* includes imageries of parents nurturing the *na`ar* at home from infancy.

The Personal Demands View

According to Hilderbrandt a small minority of writers have taken "according to his way" in an ironic sense. To them, if you rear a child by acquiescing to his desires and demands, when he is old you will never break him of it. Thus the child, left to him or herself will become irretrievably recalcitrant--spoiled, continually demanding his own way.⁴⁵⁸ But such a giving up on the *na`ar* is opposed to the optimistic outlook that Proverbs has on the teachability of the *na`ar* (Prov 1:4). To the ruggedly individualistic and developmentally sensitive modern mind,⁴⁵⁹ the personal aptitude and personal demands views surely are attractive. However, they do not reflect the intent of this ancient proverbial.

The parental imperative of Proverbs 22:6 is a command that requires parental commitment to the training, nurturing, and education of their children. A serious consideration of Proverbs 22:6b, especially the combination of $\text{!yqî}^{\text{a}} \text{z>y:} \div - \text{yKî} (\sim \text{G:} \ddot{\text{i}} (\text{Gam Kî/-yazqîn})$ "and when he is old" and $\text{rWsiy}'' - \text{aOl}$ ($\text{lô/} \text{-yäsûr mimme}^{\text{o}} \text{nnâ}$) 'he will not depart, turn aside' suggests the parental imperative was neither suggestive nor conditional on the part of parents. Instead, as earlier observed, it

⁴⁵⁶ T. Hilberandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 15.

⁴⁵⁷ Such view heavily depends on MacDonald's work on the Status of the $\text{Ⲛ} [\text{; } \text{Ⲛ} \text{;}]$ in the structure of the Israelite Society.

⁴⁵⁸ T. Hilberandt. 1988 Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 15.

⁴⁵⁹ E. H. Erikson. 1963. *Childhood and society*. NY: Norton, 247-77.

unfolds not just the enormity of the expected commitment on the part of parents, but also the enduring nature of the potential outcomes capable of guiding or directing the child until and through his or her old age. Such divine imperative can in no way be treated with levity or be associated with granting the personal view of the child as such could culminate in the parental failure of which the outcome might be detrimental to the child, parents, and the society.

The Personal Aptitude View

Personal aptitude view has received the endorsement of many scholars.⁴⁶⁰ Its proponents argue that parent must understand and have full knowledge of the child's developing capacities, interests, and inclinations which now constitutes the basis for training. Here, the training process aims at helping the child develop these unique abilities and not to alter it. In relation to, Mfuné argues that *al-Pî darKô* means to train a child according to his natural dominance or natural bent. This natural bent Roberts affirm include his natural disposition, or inclination.⁴⁶¹ He suggests that to know the 'natural bent,' parents should focus on understanding children's dominant way of thinking, which to him will make the training process easier with positive results.⁴⁶² To Toy and Oesterley, there is more of an element of fate or destiny and the child should be trained according to the manner of life for which he is destined.⁴⁶³ To buttress this aptitude or personal disposition view, Delitzsch argues that "the way of the Egyptians" is the manner of acting which was characteristic of the Egyptians (Isa 10:24). To him, the *na`ar* should be trained in the manner of *darKô*. Using the "way of the eagle" (Prov 30:19) as the manner of movement characteristic to the eagle, Hilderbrandt affirms Delitzsch's view in using *na`ar* to specify more clearly what is meant by *Derek*. By implication, the *Derek* of the *na`ar* is to be read "according to the manner of his way," that is, the way characteristic of him. Nevertheless, he disagrees with

⁴⁶⁰ D. Kidner. 1964. *Proverbs: an introduction and commentary*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 147; C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch. 2001. *Keil and Delitzsch commentary on the Old Testament* vol. 6. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 86; Oesterley, *The book of Proverbs*. London: Methuen, 185.

⁴⁶¹ R.L. Roberts, Jr. 1962. A Note on Proverbs 22:6: train up a child. *Restoration Quarterly*, 6 no.4: 40 – 42.

⁴⁶² S. S. Mfuné. 2012. *Parenting for heaven*. Western Cape, South Africa: African Publishing Company, 45 – 52. With reference to Katherine Benziger and Anne Sohn, authors of *The art of using your whole brain*, Mfuné listed some natural attributes or characteristics of the left and right brained child. See on Mfuné, 52

⁴⁶³ Oesterley. *The book of Proverbs with introduction and notes*, 185; and Toy. *Proverbs.*, 415-16 as quoted in T. Hilberbrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 15.

the conclusion drawn from that data because *na`ar* is read as “child.” It is concluded that “his way” means the unique way for that child.⁴⁶⁴

On the one hand, limiting *Derek* to the way characteristic of the *na`ar* is inconsistent with the nature and purpose of parenting, the general outlook and purpose of Proverbs which emphasise that although it is in the hands of men and women to plan, only the counsel of God will prevail. Again, the above submission focused more on the cognitive and perhaps the emotional development of the child, at the expense of the vocational, moral and/or spiritual development. Whereas the disposition of the child and parental awareness of the various developmental stages in life are vital elements in the training process, an appropriate understanding of the wholistic nature of *Hánök*, which covers the mental, physical, vocational, emotional, social, moral, spiritual aspects of human existence, will suffice. The covenantal nature of parental responsibility is a constant reminder of the fact that the way that seems right to a man only leads to destruction.

Tokunbo Adeyemo refers to Proverbs 22:6 as a popular topic in the pulpit. He clarifies that interpreting ‘the way he should go’ as referring to a child’s unique character and gifts, so that one should respect each child’s individuality when training them, is faulty. While this principle is true, it is probably not the point here. In the Book of Proverbs, there are only two “ways” a child can go, the way of the wise and the righteous or the way of the fool and the wicked. Adeyemo recalls Kidner’s remind that we are to have respect for each child’s individuality but not for their self-will.⁴⁶⁵

The Vocational View

This view suggests that the training and the *Derek*, being described are vocationally oriented.⁴⁶⁶ Those who hold to the view refer to the *na`ar* as an adolescent. Consequently, Kinder,⁴⁶⁷ Nichol,⁴⁶⁸ and Kaiser⁴⁶⁹ insist that Proverbs 22:6 refers to how parents should

⁴⁶⁴ C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch. 2001. *Keil and Delitzsch commentary on the Old Testament* vol. 6. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 86f.

⁴⁶⁵ T. Adeyemo. 2006. *African bible commentary*, Nairobi: WordAlive Publishers, 777.

⁴⁶⁶ T. Hilberrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 14.

⁴⁶⁷ D. Kidner. 1985. *Proverbs: An introduction and commentary*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 147.

⁴⁶⁸ F.D. Nichol et al. Eds. 1978. *Seventh-day Adventist bible commentary* vol. 1. Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1020.

assist an adolescent or youth choose a career. However, *Derek* is not usually found in a vocational setting. Indeed, the modern anxiety over vocational selection and training was not of great concern in the ANE, in that the son often was trained in the same craft as the father.⁴⁷⁰ Furthermore, vocational selection is not really an issue in Proverbs. Rather, diligence, righteousness, uprightness, and shrewdness are encouraged regardless of vocation.

Hilderbrandt is right in his assertion that vocational selection is not an issue in Proverbs. But, his list of moral values as core issues relative to *Derek* in Proverbs contradicts his rendering of *darKô* which is ‘according to his manners’.

The Moral View

Dryness observes that Proverbs presents two distinct ways: the way of wisdom and the way of foolishness. These two ways also have two destinations: the way of wisdom leads to life, while the way of the fool leads to death.⁴⁷¹ The Book of Proverbs is full of different adjectives used to qualify *Derek*. McKane holds what Hilderbrandt calls the narrow “Moral View.” He maintains that in wisdom, there is one right way which is the way of life, and it is to this way that the young man is directed. It is this *Derek* ‘way’ upon which he should go. The juxtaposing of *Derek* with a moral qualifier, whether positive – way of ~yYI©x ; ÷ (life) [6:23]; hn") yB ï (understanding) [9:6]; bÄ j (good) [2:20]; hq ' d ' c . (righteousness) [16:31] – or negative-way of [r ; (evil) [2:12]; [v ' r " (wicked) [4:19] – is quite common in Proverbs, as McKane observes. Hilderbrandt agrees that in these cases *Derek* is explicitly accompanied by a character qualifier, but that the qualifier given in Proverbs 22:6 is not a moralistic one.

On the one hand, such argument is stereotype in itself because it undermines the overall intent and context of Proverbs 22:6, especially when we consider 22:6b which not only compliments but also clarifies the scope and meaning of *Hánök* in 22:6a as a lifetime experience. On the other hand, the absence of a moral modifier does not necessarily suggest

⁴⁶⁹ W.C. Kaiser, Jr. 1996. *Hard sayings of the Bible*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 287 – 288.

⁴⁷⁰ W.C. Kaiser, Jr. 1996. *Hard sayings of the Bible*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 15.

⁴⁷¹ W. Dryness. 1977. *Themes in Old Testament theology*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 195 – 197.

the absence of it but rather an indicator of something more comprehensive. In other words, the absence of a moral modifier with *darKô* suggests that something more than a moral emphasis is conceivable. This implies that the scope of *Hánök* here goes beyond the moral aspect of a child's life. Hence, concluding that *darKô* is limited to the moral life of the *na`ar* amounts to another stereotype. On the contrary, a holistic view, which considers the full course of life – nature, vocation, and moral, is plausible.

The Holistic View

This view is similar to the latter (moral view), although broader in understanding. It posits that *Derek* refers to the broad parental training of the *na`ar*, meaning the general direction of righteousness, wisdom, psychology, vocation, and life – upon which that *na`ar* should travel as he or she grows older.⁴⁷² Yet, Hilderbrandt believes the absence of moral or wisdom qualifiers (wise, righteous, upright, foolish wicked, etc.) leaves this approach without decisive support.⁴⁷³

Against several attempts to delineate the meaning of *darKô* “his way” in Proverbs 22:6 to the disposition, manner, status, vocation, or even morality of the *na`ar*, its proper rendering in Proverbs and specifically in parenting discourse is conceivably emphasis on every aspect of human endeavour. This is further substantiated by the absence of qualifiers alongside *darKô* such as $\sim yYI\textcircled{x}; \div \textcircled{r} < d < \hat{i}$ ‘the way of life or $\sim y [i\ddot{a}v' r > \textcircled{r} < d <$ ‘the way of the wicked. Such understanding finds meaning in the fact that parenting in ancient Israel is a task that involved every faculty: the nature of the child (Judg 13), choice of trade or vocation (1 Sam 2), wife or husband (Gen 24), and how to live generally (Prov 1:8). Parents are bonded by a covenant to train their children not in one way or the other, but rather in every aspect of their lives to love and honour God – using a variety of methods, and wherever the opportunity calls (Deut 6:7 – 9).

⁴⁷² T. Hilberrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 6 – 8.

⁴⁷³ T. Hilberrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 6 – 8.

The various occurrences of *Derek* in Proverbs follow the metaphoric expression which makes reference to the objective and subjective choices in life. It presents two personages: the righteous (who is also referred to as the upright) and the wicked (who is perverse). The *Derek* 'way' of the righteous represents a life lived in conformity to YHWH's covenantal stipulations which ultimately leads to peace, security, blessings, and abundant life. This is the *Derek* 'way' of $\text{h}\text{m}'\hat{\text{i}}\text{k}\cdot\text{x}'$ 'wisdom' and those who tread such path are said to be $\sim\text{k}'\text{x}''$ 'wise'. On the contrary, the *Derek* 'way' of the wicked is characterised by perverse lifestyle which runs contrary to YHWH's covenant stipulations. Such a *Derek* 'way' leads to pain, loss, confusion, and ultimately death. And those who tread such path are said to be $\sim\text{y}\text{l}\hat{\text{i}}\hat{\text{i}}\text{y}\text{w}\text{I}\text{a}/$ 'fools.'

Within the context of parental discourse, parents are under obligation to ensure that their children follow $\sim\text{y}\text{Y}\text{I}\text{C}\text{x};\div\text{\%}\text{r}\text{<d}\text{<}\hat{\text{i}}$ 'the way of life. The various counsels on avoiding generally $\sim\text{y}[\hat{\text{i}}\hat{\text{a}}\text{v}'\text{r}>\text{\%}\text{r}\text{<d}\text{<}$ 'the way of the wicked' and specifically of the harlot, lazy, fool, and perverse suggest emphasis not on a particular aspect of life, but rather the entire course of human life.

5.5 Contesting $\text{h}\text{N}'\text{M}\text{<})\text{mi}\text{ r}\text{W}\text{s}\hat{\text{i}}\text{y}''\text{-al}\{\}$ $\text{!yqi}^{\text{a}}\text{z}>\text{y}:\div\text{-yKi}$ (Proverbs 22:6b): A Proverb or a Promise?

A major contention has been on whether the parental imperative of Proverbs 22:6 is to be taken as a proverb or a promise. Peter Gentry,⁴⁷⁴ W. Mouser,⁴⁷⁵ N. Barley,⁴⁷⁶ Roberts, Jr.,⁴⁷⁷ submit that this proverbial maxim is a proverb, not a promise. For instance Gentry argues that a proverb is a brief, lively and pithy statement which seeks to encapsulate and portray an aspect of reality. It has the purpose of sharpening in the hearer sense of what is

⁴⁷⁴ P.J. Gentry. 2012. Equipping the generations: raising children, the Christian way. *JDFM* 2.2: 104 [96 – 109].

⁴⁷⁵ W. Mouser. 1983. *Walking in wisdom*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 13 – 14.

⁴⁷⁶ N. Barley. 1972. A structural approach to the proverb and maxim with special reference to the Anglo-Saxon corpus. *Proverbium* 20: 735 – 50.

⁴⁷⁷ R.L. Roberts, Jr. 1962. A note on Proverbs 22:6: train up a child. *Restoration Quarterly*, 6 no. 4: 40 – 42.

real as distinct from what is illusory. It aims is to expel misconceptions and to compel the reader to form a judgment on his or her conduct, character and situation. He concludes that a proverb is not an iron clad rule like the laws of the Medes and Persians; and does not describe all contingencies, exceptions, or nuances possible.⁴⁷⁸

Several definitions of proverbs are possible. Kidner suggests the word means “comparison,” though “it came to stand for any kind of sage pronouncement, from a maxim or observation ... to a sermon (as evident in chapter 5), and from a wisecrack (Ezek 18:2) to a doctrinal revelation.”⁴⁷⁹ To Roberts Jr., the real wisdom which the passage reflects may be passed over in the haste of applying the maxim exclusively to the religious upbringing of a child which suggests that if a child is taught the Bible and given the proper religious training, he or she will be faithful during the remaining years of his or her life. This rule, he observes, is often contradicted in the recurring departure of both the young and old from the religious and moral training of their childhood. When such a departure occurs, someone is quick to contend that the training was neglected or inadequate or the outcome would have been different. Roberts submits that such conclusion concerning the teaching of the passage is heavily dependent on the interpretation given the first clause of the proverbs.⁴⁸⁰

Further, Brantley submits that this is a proverbial statement, and must be interpreted in light of its literary characteristics. He regrets that frequently, Bible students approach the proverbs as direct commands that carry secure promises. Such a strict reading of this proverb has haunted parents whose children have abandoned the Christian values that they so prayerfully attempted to instil in them. Brantley concludes that biblical proverbs are neither commands nor promises. Instead, they are brief, particular expressions of general truth with the inherent possibility of exceptions. To use Proverbs 22:6, therefore, as a litmus test for one’s parental success abuses its nature, and frequently causes unwarranted guilt.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁸ P.J. Gentry. 2012. Equipping the generations: raising children, the Christian way. *JDFM* 2.2: 104

⁴⁷⁹ D. Kidner. 1964. *Proverbs: An introduction and commentary*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 58. P.R. House. 1998. *Old Testament theology*. Downers Grove 11: Inter Varsity Press, 442.

⁴⁸⁰ R.L. Roberts, Jr. 1962. A note on Proverbs 22:6: train up a child. *Restoration Quarterly*, 6 no. 4: 40 – 42.

⁴⁸¹ G.K. Brantley. 1995. *Train up a child – what does it mean?* Apologetics Press, Inc. Retrieved October 13, 2013, from <http://www.apologeticspress.org>.

The above arguments represent scholars' view on whether Proverbs 22:6b is a proverb or promise. However, while it is important to distinguish between a proverb and a promise, one needs to pay attention, as Brantley opines, to the literary characteristics of the proverb in question. In this regard, what come to mind are the literary properties of the verb *Hānak*. In Proverbs 22:6, *Hānak* occurs in its imperative form (*Hānök*). The imperative is a shortened form of the imperfect, which occurs only in the second person masculine and feminine. By its nature, the first person gives an order to the second person, which the third person has to obey. Grammatically, the primary function of the imperative is to express a command.⁴⁸² If the latter is to be taken seriously, it is obvious that *Hānök* in Proverbs 22:6 is obligatory and not suggestive. With the above understanding in mind, the question comes: if parents are under obligation to give a child wholistic training, why is the outcome or reward of their efforts suggestive? The parallel between Proverbs 22:6a and 22:6b suggests that an enduring outcome of wholistic training was anticipated. Therefore, although a proverb, which suggests the potentiality of shades of meaning beyond the immediate expression, it will be out of place to deny the literary and grammatical function of the verbal form.

Nevertheless, Laws observes that the passage does not intend to say that such is a type of “sure fire guarantee” that children will never fall away. He opines that wholistic training and faithful parenting does not remove the free will of the child and that he will always be faithful. Many indeed have departed from the good way in which they were trained up. But early training may be a means of their recovering themselves. The teaching they have received will go with them and urge them conscientiously to do what is right. At least the parents will have the comfort of having done their duty.⁴⁸³

The major challenge with this passage is not with whether it is a proverb or a promise as it is with the reality of freedom of choice. God made humans in His image (Genesis 1:26 – 27). As moral being, each one is imbued with the freedom to choose between what is good or evil. However, it is clear that whatever choices one makes carries attendant consequences (Genesis 2:16 – 17; Duet 28). The reality of the experiences of many parents who hoped to have godly children but have seen their children derail should not

⁴⁸² M. Futato. 2013. *Futato basic Hebrew tutorial*. Mark D. Futato, 2013. *BibleWorks*.

⁴⁸³ J. Laws. 1988. Child obey your parents – remember creator in youth. *Truth in love lectureship*. Pulaski: Sain Publications, 211[205 – 220].

necessitate a denial of the characteristics of *Hánök* and its enduring benefits. As a command given within covenantal purview, parents are under obligation to train their children in all spheres of life with the hope that they (the children) will not turn aside from it. This training begins from infancy until maturity. Nevertheless, although freedom of choice makes derailment probable, wholistic training could be remedial much later.

5.6 Situating Infant Nurturing in the Proverbial Parenting Discourse

Given the outcome of the interpretation of the exegetical data of Proverbs 22:6, the question is: What is the significance of infant nurturing in the proverbial parenting discourse? An attempt to answer the above question, will take cognisance of the necessity, meaning, timing, parental role, and relevance of infant nurturing in wholistic training in parenting.

The Necessity of Infant Nurturing

The necessity of infant nurturing is intrinsic in the use of the imperative *Hánök* in the proverbial parenting discourse of Proverbs 22:6. As earlier noted, the primary function of the imperative is to express a command.⁴⁸⁴ By implication, therefore, this command is obligatory and not suggestive. This command underscores the urgency and importance attached to training in parenting. But the question remains: why a command and not a suggestion? The Book of Proverbs provides the answer to the question thus. Proverbs 22:15 states: “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him.” Proverbs 23: 13 – 14 asserts: “Do not withhold discipline from the child. If you beat him with a rod, he will not die. If you beat him with the rod, you will save his life from Sheol.” Again, Proverbs 29:15 affirms: “The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.” From the above examples, it is obvious that the proverbial outlook perceives children as vulnerable to sinful allurements and waywardness. If left to themselves, they will certainly bring shame not only to their parents, but to

⁴⁸⁴ M. Futato. 2003. *Futato basic Hebrew tutorial*. Mark D. Futato. *BibleWorks*.

themselves. The idea of saving them from *Sheol* suggests the grave consequences of permissive parenting, parental negligence and irresponsibility.⁴⁸⁵

The use of *Hánök* in the imperative presupposes that the trainer (parent) or trainers is experienced in the training process and knows what to do. For one reason or the other, however, the OT contains several adverse implications of parental negligence. Eli and Samuel's homes represent the dire consequences of parental negligence during child training. On Eli's home, Udofia submits that Eli was aware of his children's evil behaviour but did little to correct or stop them. By ignoring their evil actions, he ruined his life, the life of his sons, and those of others.⁴⁸⁶ Commenting on Samuel's home, Ige asserts that occupied by priestly and civil responsibilities which saw him covering from Ramah to Mizpha through Bethel to Shiloh down to Gilgal and back to Ramah, Samuel did not have enough time for his children.⁴⁸⁷ The consequence of such negligence is evident in the fact that his children's waywardness led Israel to pass a vote-of-no-confidence on them. The end result was the shift from Theocracy to Monarchy as Israel requested for a human king (1 Sam 8:1 – 5).

King David's laxity in disciplining Amnon who raped his sister Tamar resulted in a great tragedy in his kingdom. First, Absalom killed Amnon after two years of nursing revenge (1 Sam 13:23 – 29). Second, rather than kill Absalom for murder, as prescribed by the law, David chose to banish him, only to bring him back after some years. Hence, he displayed a lack-lustre attitude characteristic of permissive parenting. This almost cost him his life and kingdom – when Absalom revolted. Although David regained his throne after running for his life, he lost his son Absalom. Many Israelite soldiers also lost their lives as a

⁴⁸⁵ N.V. Pelt. 2009. *Train up a child*. Lincolnshire: The Stanborough Press Ltd, 87 – 88.

⁴⁸⁶ S.D. Udofia. 2011. Spiritual leaders and the neglect of the home front: Eli's home as an example in the African context. *Biblical Studies and Youth Development in Africa*. S.O. Agbogunrin. Ed. Ibadan: Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS), Biblical Studies Series Number 8: 76 [71 – 82].

⁴⁸⁷ S.A. Ige. 2011. Leaders and the Neglect of the Home Front: Examples of Samuel's Home and its Implications in the African Context. *Biblical Studies and Youth Development in Africa*. S.O. Agbogunrin. Ed. Ibadan: Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS), Biblical Studies Series Number 8: 91 [83 – 94].

result of the battle. Commenting on this, Wood opines that David loved his family dearly, notable quality, but he allowed this to stand in the way of proper discipline.⁴⁸⁸

To avert such calamities, parents are under obligation to train them in every facet of life. Gillogly agrees that the context for such Proverbs is a basic dichotomy between wisdom and ignorance, or, worse, foolishness. The unfortunate fool fares rather poorly in Proverbs with the rod recommended as a ready-made instrument for keeping fools in line and correcting their errors (Prov. 26:3).⁴⁸⁹ On the other hand, Laws asserts that the emphasis of the imperative is that training is a great duty, particularly to those who are the parents of children. It is necessary for the propagating of wisdom that it may not die with them (parents).⁴⁹⁰

The Meaning of Infant Nurturing

Infant nurturing deals with the act of providing an intentional and balanced parental care which focuses on the wholistic development of the entire faculties for healthy attachment and character formation. Critical to infant nurturing is the need for attachment. This is also called attachment parenting. Attachment Parenting connotes a healthy attachment from a consistent primary caregiver, usually the mother, for balanced cognitive and emotional development. Psychologists differentiate between infancy and early childhood. Infancy is tied to 0 – 3 years, while early childhood or what others refer to as pre-school age falls between 3 – 5 or 6 years.⁴⁹¹ Infant nurturing therefore focuses on the critical period of infancy to early toddlerhood (0 – 3 years). The focus of nurturing at this stage is the formation of a healthy attachment between the mother and the child. Benoit therefore defines attachment as the part of the child-giver relationship that makes the child feel safe, secure, and protected. This is substantially more than provision of food and other child needs. In other words, while caregivers are also responsible for playing, feeding, limit-setting, or teaching, attachment is where the child used the primary caregiver as a secure

⁴⁸⁸ L. Wood. 1979. *Israel's united monarchy*. Michigan: Baker Book House, 176.

⁴⁸⁹ R. Gillogly. 1981. Spanking hurts everybody. *Theology Today*, 37 no. 4.418.

⁴⁹⁰ J. Laws. 1988. Child obey your parents – remember creator in youth. *Truth in love lectureship*. Pulaski: Sain Publications, 211 [205 – 220].

⁴⁹¹ D.E. Papalia, S.W. Olds, and R.D. Feldman. 2002. *A child's world: infancy through adolescence*. 9th ed. New York: Mc Graw Hill, 10.

base from which to explore and, when necessary, as a haven of safety and a source of comfort.⁴⁹² Suffice it to say that infant nurturing refers to the art and science of providing a newborn with a physically present and consistent, loving, and responsive caregiver, ideally a parent.⁴⁹³ The quality of attachment that an infant forms is largely determined by how the adult responds when the child's attachment system is activated, for example, when the child is frightened, hurt, or ill. Depending on the nature of this attachment, infants feel secure enough to venture forth and explore their world, or they may be fearful and insecure about how their initiatives with people, actions, and objects will increase.

Post and others identify four patterns that result from the nature of these interactions:

- *Secure* attachment results when the caregiver consistently responds to the infant's distress in sensitive and loving ways, such as picking up and comforting a crying infant. Secure infants seek proximity and maintain contact with the caregiver until they feel safe again.
- *Avoidant* attachment results when the caregiver consistently responds to the infant's distress in insensitive or rejecting ways, such as ignoring, ridiculing, or becoming annoyed. This type of attachment is considered *insecure*. Avoidant infants learn to ignore the caregiver in times of need and often develop adjustment problems later in life.
- *Resistant* attachment results when the caregiver responds to the infant in inconsistent ways. Sometimes the caregiver ignores the infant, and other times the caregiver gets involved but perhaps in a negative way, such as expecting the infant to worry about the caregiver's own needs or adding to the infant's distress (e.g., making a loud, scary noise even louder). Resistant infants display extreme negative emotion, perhaps hoping the caregiver cannot possibly ignore them. However, they also run the risk of a negative response. This type of attachment is also said to be *insecure* and places infants at risk for social and emotional maladjustment.

⁴⁹² D. Benoit. 2004. Infant-parent attachment: definition, types, antecedents, measurement, and outcome. *Pediatric Child Health*, 9: 541 – 545.

⁴⁹³ Anon. 1994. Attachment parenting international (API). Retrieved October 17, 2013, from <http://www.attachmentparenting.org>.

- *Disorganised* attachment occur when caregivers display disordered or atypical behaviour, such as physical aggression or sexual abuse toward the infant. The aberrant behaviour is not limited to times when the infant is distressed. Such caregivers are often the product of childhood trauma themselves, and infants reared in these circumstances are at very high risk for developing severe behavioural problems.⁴⁹⁴

Pre-attachment typically occurs from birth to 6 weeks when the child familiarises with his or attachment figure. From 6 weeks to 6 – 8 months, attachment is built as the child responds more strongly to caregiver than to a stranger. The child also learns mother's behaviour will elicit a response. However, clear-cut attachment occurs from 6 – 8 months to 18 months – 2 years. Here, child prefers caregiver to others and uses her as a secure base from which to explore. From this point, reciprocal relationship which is on ongoing process is formed. Ultimately, the child and the adult act more like partners as certain decisions are made not out of compulsion, but through negotiation. Children use secure attachments they form with their primary caregiver at home as the basis for forming attachments with other significant adults in their extended family, child care, school, church, and larger society setting. The creation and development of these out-of-home relationships is facilitated when children have a designated primary caregiver they can relate to in the out-of-home setting. Continuity of care in child care programs is thus a critical factor in helping them adjust to the separation from parents and being able to thrive in their group-care arrangements.⁴⁹⁵

Healthy Attachment is not an end in itself. Instead, it sets the stage for parents to impress the minds of their children with indelible values that will live with them throughout their life time. Infant nurturing is not done by proxy. Van Pelt notes that the early years of life, character development is most rapid and inherently most susceptible to guidance. She therefore affirms that every Christian father and mother should realize that when their child is three years old they will ever do for his character.⁴⁹⁶ Studies indicate the first five or six

⁴⁹⁴ J. Post, M. Hohmann, and A.S. Epstein. 2014. *Nurturing attachment in infant and toddlers*. High Scope Extensions Curriculum Newsletter, vol. 25, No. 4: 2.

⁴⁹⁵ J. Post, M. Hohmann, and A.S. Epstein. 2014. *Nurturing attachment in infant and toddlers*. High Scope Extensions Curriculum Newsletter, vol. 25, No. 4: 3

⁴⁹⁶ N.V. Pelt. 2009. *Train up a child*. Lincolnshire: The Stanborough Press Ltd, 104.

years are the most formative period. Sometimes parents interpret that statement as meaning that they should force intellectual development on a child. Many parents who wish their child to shine before others for their own personal benefit attempt to stimulate the child's brain in a variety of ways. They might attempt to teach him or her to read by the time he or she is two, master typing by the third year, and speak a foreign language by the age of four. Stimulation of particular interests may be in order, but at a machine-gun pace such forced performance may trigger frustration rather than nurturing a genuine training environment.⁴⁹⁷

Nevertheless, every parent can rest assured that the beginnings of character development are being laid and that a multitude of influences are already at work during infancy. Van Pelt further posits that a mother falls into the trap of thinking that her child does not need her at this stage. This mother might assume the child does not know her from the babysitter. But this is deceptive and could also be injurious to both the child and the mother in later years.⁴⁹⁸ Mothers and fathers alike must therefore understand the crucial nature of this earliest stage and give their undivided attention to it. This idea is not entirely new because biblical mothers such as Jochebed, Deborah, and Hannah understood and imbibed this crucial task with eternal consequences. These mothers priced their infants above other personal gains. With a secure foundation based on healthy attachment, infants can use their expanding cognitive, emotional, and social capacities to explore the world around them, interact with others, and form close bonds with other adults and peers.

The timing of Infant Nurturing

Biblical and psychological evidences attest to the fact that the crucial task of infant nurturing begins even before birth. Jeffery and Patiejean Brown argue that mother's role in infant nurturing is so vital that God sent an angel to the mother-to-be of Samson to instruct her on the dos and don'ts toward a healthy child training (Judges 13:7). They state that pregnant women whose diets do not provide adequate nutrients have more premature deliveries, more infants with low birth weights, more complications such as anaemia and toxemia, and more prolonged labour. This is common in developing countries such as Nigeria, where poverty is a major issue. Some of these mothers scarcely find a single square

⁴⁹⁷ N.V. Pelt. 2009. *Train up a child*. Lincolnshire: The Stanborough Press Ltd, 104.

⁴⁹⁸ N.V. Pelt. 2009. *Train up a child*. Lincolnshire: The Stanborough Press Ltd, 104.

meal in a day. This to an extent accounts for the high rate of child mortality in Nigeria and Africa in general. Adequate protein has also been shown to be very important for the development of the infant's nervous system.⁴⁹⁹

Many pregnant women take harmful drugs, smoke, and drink alcohol and engage in some unwholesome activities without thinking about the possible effects. Beyond the physical effects, the Browns observe that the environment surrounding the birth of a child is undoubtedly communicating to the infant through the emotional disposition of the mother. When the mother is under stress an increase in gland secretions can adversely affect the foetus. An emotionally distraught mother may have irregular contractions leading to irritability in the baby.⁵⁰⁰ In other words, a child will know if he or she is loved or wanted.

As evident in the exegetical interpretation of *Hánök*, the etymological insight of the mother's role in not only stimulating desire or appetite, but also imbuing understanding and discernment underscores the timing of infant nurturing. Consequently, Laws notes that parents should train children during those early formative years, to keep them from sin, and to prepare them for what they are to face.⁵⁰¹ The need to train the child at the formative years lies in a clear understanding of the critical nature of this developmental stage. Raul and Julian Melgosa submit that physically, the child doubles its birth weight at the first five months. At one year of age he or she would have tripled its birth weight and only 12 months later, when the child reaches two years of age, the age would have multiplied by four. The baby's height also changes considerably. The child grows at least 25 centimetres during his or her first year and will grow to 90 centimetres at two years old. They note that the first tooth does not appear until 6 – 8 months of age. However, by two and half years of age, the child has 20 teeth. Evidently, the development of body mass is very rapid and in all the extra uterine life span, this is the time of greatest growth.⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁹ J. and P. Brown. 2003. *A guide to parenting*. Lincolnson: The Stanborough Press, 19 – 20.

⁵⁰⁰ J. and P. Brown. 2003. *A guide to parenting*. Lincolnson: The Stanborough Press, 19 – 20.

⁵⁰¹ J. Laws. 1988. Child obey your parents – remember creator in youth. *Truth in love lectureship*. Pulaski: Sain Publications, 211 – 217.

⁵⁰² R.P. and J. Melgosa. 2009. *For raising your child*. Maldrid: Editorial Safeliz, 34 – 37.

This quantitative growth is also accompanied by strong qualitative development such as dexterity and other abilities. During the first two years, neurological developments and consequently, intellectual and motor development is enormous. Between 7 and 9 months of age, the cerebellum becomes noticeably active. Nerve endings connect with the cortex or brain mantle, the top part of the nervous system. The cerebellum plays an important role in the more specialised functions of the intellect, such as learning, memory, thinking, and language. In this way, a series of human abilities appears and soon reaches a high developmental level. At the end of the first year, the cerebral cortex plays a predominant role in the child's behaviour, and by the end of the second year, it is fully developed except for some areas that will continue to mature until adolescence. It is therefore obvious that almost all the encephalic growth (the cerebellum and cranium) occurs during the prenatal and infancy stages. This early growth allows it to control other essential bodily functions. Significantly, these changes show that the first two years of life are crucial for human physical, intellectual, and emotional growth.⁵⁰³

By the time a child is three the brain has formed about 1000 trillion connections, more than it will ever need. Many more communication tracks are laid down than can be used. So a weeding-out process occurs. Careful pruning is done, similar to the way that plants are pruned. By pinching back some things, others are allowed and even encouraged to grow in even richer proportions. The parts of the brain that are stimulated and used will develop and those that are not used will be lost. It's the baby's early experiences that determine which connections are kept and which don't survive. It is theorised that when a connection is used it becomes permanent, but when it is not used it is unlikely to survive.⁵⁰⁴

Parental Roles in Infant Nurturing

Another significance of the role of a mother is not only stimulating desire or appetite, but also imbuing understanding and discernment underscores the timing of infant nurturing as evident in the etymology of *Hánök* is the vital role of parents at this stage. Van Pelt asserts that between one and seven years of age, an infant is most susceptible to

⁵⁰³ R.P. and J. Melgosa. 2009. *For raising your child*. Maldrid: Editorial Safeliz, 34 – 37.

⁵⁰⁴ A. Gurian and R. F. Goodman. How important are the first three years of a baby's life? *NYU child study centre*. Retrieved June 10, 2013, from <http://www.aboutourkids.org/family>.

religious training. The sense of right and wrong is formed during this time, and his or her ideas of God are shaped. Parents have the responsibility to seize the opportunity of infancy to train the child when he or she is ready and not when they (parents) are ready.⁵⁰⁵ Infancy is a time parents show how much they really loved their children. From the natural and psychological viewpoint, the most important figure and ‘environmental factor’ in the baby’s life is the mother. She holds a more decisive on the child’s experience than that of any other person or circumstance. As Blake observes, the education and training of youth commences with the child in the mother’s arms. At this early age the temper and the spirit of the child may be encouraged and repressed.⁵⁰⁶ He asserts that it is a heartless thing for a mother, for the sake of convenience or social enjoyment, to seek to free herself from the tender office of nursing her little one. Thus, “the mother who permits her child to be nourished by another should consider well what the result may be. To a greater or less degree the nurse imparts her own temper and temperament to the nursing child.”⁵⁰⁷

Active language directed at the child is essential not only for his linguistic development, but also for his intellectual and social growth. The family context is the most relevant educational framework and the best parents are those who provide an environment rich in experiences for their children, permit their children to ‘interrupt’ them for short periods, but also exercise firm and consistent discipline while also showing great affection for their children.⁵⁰⁸ Although mothers are the most important figure in the life of every child during infancy, fathers should endeavour to cease every available opportunity to bond themselves with their infants.

In their classic *Family Interaction: A Multigenerational Developmental Perspective*, Anderson and Sabatelli⁵⁰⁹ assert that the social environment confronted by those who become parents is decidedly different today than it some decades ago. They affirm that social attitudes toward marriage and parenthood have markedly changed. Further, the many social changes that now define contemporary life have also dramatically influenced the

⁵⁰⁵ N.V. Pelt. 2009. *Train up a child*. Lincolnshire: The Stanborough Press Ltd, 137.

⁵⁰⁶ H. Blake. 1995. *Child age and education*. La Grande, WA: Manna Publishing House, 59 – 60.

⁵⁰⁷ H. Blake. 1995. *Child age and education*. La Grande, WA: Manna Publishing House, 62 – 63.

⁵⁰⁸ R.P. and J. Melgosa. 2009. *For raising your child*. Maldrid: Editorial Safeliz, 42.

⁵⁰⁹ S.A. Anderson and R. M. Sabatelli. 1999. *Family interaction: a multigenerational developmental perspective*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 193 – 196.

course of family development even in those families headed by two parents (the latter being the focus of this study). For instance, many couples delay parenting often because of a desire to complete their education and establish a career before raising a family. In addition, the traditional roles of the husband as the breadwinner and wife as homemaker and mother have been replaced by a host of possible role arrangements, all with their own set of potential satisfactions, stresses, and demands. They note that many women are now engaged in paid employment outside the home, which requires them to negotiate a delicate balance among the demands of work, marriage, homemaking, and parenthood. These changes they conclude, have also impressed on some men the need to rethink and renegotiate their own roles as husband and father.

Although many mothers would prefer to cut back on their commitment to work outside the home, report from the four last decades shows a dramatic increase in the number of mothers working outside the home. The U.S. Bureau of Census reports that in 1960 only 28 percent of mothers with minor children (Children under the age of 16) were employed. In 1995, that figure rose to 67 percent. Most notably, there has been an increase in the number of employed mothers of infants and preschoolers; most mothers (over 50%) are participating in the work force before their children reach school age.⁵¹⁰ There is no doubt the above percentages have appreciated 16 years later.

Further, when mothers continue to work outside the home, they usually bear primary responsibility for providing child care when at home or arranging for child care when they are away. This high level of demands confronted by working parents, especially working mothers, increases the potential for role conflict between spouses. Couples may fight, for example, about who should clean the house, make dinner, and mow the lawn more than before now that parenting tasks need to be executed as well. Balancing the demands of work and marriage they conclude can produce role overload, role strain, and role conflict leading to senses of guilt, anxiety, among others. To them balancing work and family will involve some trial and error. One possible option deals with “the law of husband cooperation”. This requires that the husband provides spousal support and understanding which includes

⁵¹⁰S.A. Anderson and R.M. Sabatelli. 1999. *Family interaction: A multigenerational developmental perspective*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 201.

positive attitudes toward maternal employment and cooperation with household and childcare tasks.⁵¹¹

As Gloria Steinem puts it, the roles defined by nature for men and women had become clouded in feminists minds and has led to all kinds of confusion, suspicion, and distrust between the sexes. At the long run, women were liberated from the home, from their husbands, from their children – from having to bear children at all. Fathers were liberated from their authority. Most of all, children were liberated from limits, from rules, even their parents. And the entire population was liberated from moral and ethical standards. Yet it turns out that those things were precisely what held society together. Family values have been so scorned that we are left with neither families nor values. Instead, we have rampant illegitimacy and sexual disease, widespread divorce, and a generation of unloved, undisciplined, and uncared-for kids.⁵¹² Steinem elucidates the adverse effects of feminism on family values which held the society together. This is germane to the study since it provides insight to understanding a major source of some of the vices prevalent in the society today especially among couples and young people.

Lisa Belkin's *The Opt-Out Revolution*⁵¹³ caused a paradigm shift in the US when she submitted that amidst the supposed triumph of feminism, post-feminist era confirms that there is a significant trend of women choosing to become stay-at-home mothers. This sudden reverse results from the fact that as more women engage in the quest for equality with men and the need for self-actualisation in the society, men and marriage are seen as hindrances they need to walk away from if that is what it takes to be free. Such trend has destroyed family values and also made their children victims of a variety of social vices. She argues that women are biologically conditioned to play a nurturing and child-rearing role and such realisation is being reawakened.

Belkin's work captures certain tensions confronting the post-feminist era. This is useful to the study in that it chronicles the adverse effects of the feminist movement on the

⁵¹¹ S.A. Anderson and R. M. Sabatelli. 1999. *Family interaction: A multigenerational developmental perspective*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 200 – 202.

⁵¹² G. Steinem. 2009. *The impact of feminism on the family*. Vic Bilson. Retrieved June 17, 2012.

⁵¹³ L. Belkin. 2003. The opt-out revolution. *The New York Times*. Retrieved June 17, 2012, from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

role of mothers as primary care givers in the home and how abandoning such key role has rendered children victims of a variety of social vices. Her advocacy for stay-at-home mothers during the early stages of child development is worthy of mention. However, Belkin did not bring to fore other parental challenges that determine the fate of the contemporary child making the need for the study relevant.

Relevance of Infant Nurturing

The relevance of infant nurturing is intrinsic in the overall benefits of wholistic training. Blake observes that the first three years is the time to bend the tiny twig. It is the time when the foundation of a new life and future is laid.⁵¹⁴ Irrespective of how 'magnificent' a building appear, if its foundation is faulty, it will never stand the test of time (Matt 7:24 – 27). The same is with parenting. When parents take time to nurture their children from infancy in the areas of trust, obedience, discipline, love for God and others, vocational skills, and so on, they are better prepared to face adolescence and adulthood. Your child's first three years are a window of opportunity for you to make sure he has the strongest possible foundation for success.

A child's early experience of being nurtured and developing a bond with a caring adult affects all aspects of behaviour and development. When parents and children have strong, warm feelings for one another, children develop trust that their parents will provide what they need to thrive, including love, acceptance, positive guidance, and protection. Research shows that babies who receive affection and nurturing from their parents have the best chance of healthy development. A child's relationship with a consistent, caring adult in the early years is associated later in life with better academic grades, healthier behaviours, more positive peer interactions, and an increased ability to cope with stress.⁵¹⁵

5.7 Infant Nurturing in the African Context: Issues and Prospects

In the African system, parenting takes a lot of forms aimed at training a child to become a responsible adult. Irrespective of the various parenting styles that might exist,

⁵¹⁴ H. Blake. 1995. *Child age and education*. La Grande, WA: Manna Publishing House, 56.

⁵¹⁵ Anon. Nurturing and attachment. Retrieved April 17, 2012, from <http://www.childwelfare.gov>.

African parents basically trained their children to imbibe the cultural values of the land and also to become responsible. These are achieved through story telling (folktales), the extended family, traditional rites, and the mother's care, attention and love.⁵¹⁶ Essentially, child training in Africa is community-based. This is in line with the traditional education system which aims at meeting the existential needs of the community.⁵¹⁷ Although the detail and approaches to training and traditional education in Africa may vary from tribe to tribe, and from one nation to the other, Udofia observes that the core content is basically the same. The major thrust is to prepare a child to be useful and responsible not only to his or her immediate family, but to the community at large. Consequently, child training in Africa is conceivably functional, existential, pragmatic, and apprenticeship oriented.⁵¹⁸ Central to this training is the necessity for good morals, norms, and custom of the land. Like in ancient Israel, this training begins with the family unit with the parents being the first teachers, and then extends to the grandparents, uncles, cousins, aunts, and so on. The age group, community religious groups, and even the church all share in this task. As expected, this training begins the moment the child is born. At this crucial stage, mothers play significant roles in nurturing the infant: they breastfeed, care, protect, and relate with him or her.

Grandparents, uncles, aunts, and older siblings all participate in ensuring that the new baby is raised in an appropriate manner to conform to the societal demands. Africans believe so much in the role of the extended family in child training. In Ghana, Liberia, and Nigeria, to mention a few, the extended family is believed to serve as a strong tool in developing a strong sense of social responsibility in the child from the early years. During this process,

⁵¹⁶ P.O. Amos. 2013. Parenting and culture – evidence from some African communities. *Parenting in South American and African contexts*. Winneba: Creative Commons Attribution License, 65. Retrieved June 30, 2014, from <http://creativecommons.org>.

⁵¹⁷ S.D. Udofia. Spiritual leadership and the neglect of the home front: Eli's home as an example in the context of Africa. *Biblical Studies and Youth Development in Africa*. S.O. Agbogunrin. Ed. Ibadan: Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS), Biblical Studies Series Number 8: 74

⁵¹⁸ S.D. Udofia. Spiritual leadership and the neglect of the home front: Eli's home as an example in the context of Africa. *Biblical Studies and Youth Development in Africa*. S.O. Agbogunrin. Ed. Ibadan: Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS), Biblical Studies Series Number 8: 74.

the child learns to be respectful, responsible, and supportive member of the extended family and the society.⁵¹⁹

In the late 1960s, LeVine and Brazelton studied how African mothers operating on their own without pediatric or institutional support developed time-tested ways of nurturing infants at risk.⁵²⁰ In 1974, Brazelton and Tronick conducted what is now called the Gusii infant study among Zambian mothers. The result showed impressive performance of urban Zambian mothers with their small neonates within the first two weeks of birth. The Zambian mothers demonstrated remarkable confidence in their knowledge on how to deal with small and dehydrated newborn.⁵²¹ In the true spirit of African hospitality and compassion, Gusii mothers and families demonstrated extraordinary commitment to the survival of their children, even the disabled individuals. This is in contrast to those who practice infanticide or the neglect of disabled children. The Gusii infant study further revealed strategies women used to ensure the survival, health, and growth of their infants. As with many African communities, they bore many children between marriage and menopause. Even at that, they believed in and practiced a conventional every-two-years child spacing. Consequently, a birth interval of as short as 18 months would arouse the criticism of neighbours, while one as long as 30 months would arouse the mother's anxiety about her continued ability to reproduce. In Gusii, average birth interval was 21 months. This was associated with 21 months of breastfeeding – reduced two months from the 19 months from the 19 months mean of the 1950s, and sleeping at the mother's breast at night. In Gusii and in many African communities, maintaining the period of lactation was regarded as necessary protection for the infant before the mother became pregnant again. During the first 6 months, Gusii mothers took care of their babies without the help of others. This provided an opportunity for bonding and adequate nurturing. Thereafter, older sisters assisted in the

⁵¹⁹ P.O. Amos. 2013. Parenting and culture – evidence from some African communities. *Parenting in South American and African contexts*. Winneba: Creative Commons Attribution License, 69. Retrieved June 30, 2014, from <http://creativecommons.org>.

⁵²⁰ R.A. LeVine. 2010. Protective environments in Africa and elsewhere. *Nurturing children and families: building on the legacy of T. Berry Brazelton*. B. M. Lester and J.D. Sparrow. Eds. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Retrieved August 28, 2014, from www.Amazon.com.

⁵²¹ R.A. LeVine. 2010. Protective environments in Africa and elsewhere. *Nurturing children and families: building on the legacy of T. Berry Brazelton*. B. M. Lester and J.D. Sparrow. Eds. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Retrieved August 28, 2014, from www.Amazon.com.

process. The mother's job included protection, monitoring the child's growth, physical development and activities, signs of illness, and seeking medical assistance, when needed.⁵²²

Child training is highly valued in Africa. Due to its existential and pragmatic nature which makes apprenticeship a basic hallmark, the idea of learning by example during work and play is crucial. For example, the Cameroonians attribute the importance to observational learning by teaching their children to observe and imitate tasks performed by adults. Here, the family system patrilineal, extended and or joint family systems promote interdependence and communal living orientation. Among the Nso people who live in the Anglophone sector of Cameroon, good parenting consists of taking the lead in monitoring, instructing, training, directing and controlling infants. These parenting processes, Akinsola observes, reflect a collectivistic society with an authoritarian parenting style.⁵²³

Although LeVine reported that previous studies on child rearing in Nigeria and Kenya showed little or no knowledge and attention to early infancy,⁵²⁴ internal evidence and experience show that in Nigeria, parents – especially mothers, are actively involved in the nurturing of their infants.⁵²⁵ Among the Igbos child training occurs everywhere – in the home, on the farm, or at market places. From infancy, mothers train their young not to bite the nipple during breastfeeding. These mothers understand and cherish the importance of bonding to the point that they did most of the activities with the infants on their back. At the farm, infants are kept under the watchful eyes of older siblings or house helps in a local 'tents.' These 'body guards' alert the mother of any approaching danger. Even with such provisions, the watchful eyes of the mother never depart from the infant. The mother will interrupt and abandon whatever tasks she had been performing in order to attend to the needs of her infant. These practices, along with responsive breastfeeding, co-sleeping, and

⁵²² R.A. LeVine. 2010. Protective environments in Africa and elsewhere. *Nurturing children and families: building on the legacy of T. Berry Brazelton*. B. M. Lester and J.D. Sparrow. Eds. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Retrieved August 28, 2014, from www.Amazon.com.

⁵²³ E.F. Akinsola. 2013. Cultural variations in parenting styles in the majority world evidences from Nigeria and Cameroon. *Parenting in South American and African contexts*. Winneba: Creative Commons Attribution License, 81 – 82. Retrieved June 30, 2014, from <http://creativecommons.org>.

⁵²⁴ R.A. LeVine. 2010. Protective environments in Africa and elsewhere. *Nurturing children and families: building on the legacy of T. Berry Brazelton*. B. M. Lester and J.D. Sparrow. Eds. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Retrieved August 28, 2014, from www.Amazon.com.

⁵²⁵ O.C. Odejobi. 2012. Community parenting and the concept of child abuse in Yoruba Culture. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, vol.3. 2:130 [309 – 316].

supplementary feeding, constituted the kernel of protective maternal care designed to reduce risk and nurture health and growth during the birth interval. The emphasis on protection, physical nurturance, and soothing (with much less crying than American children) can be interpreted as a strategy for infant survival that produces a healthy, compliant toddler ready to become a respectful and obedient member of the domestic work team while gaining other social skills through interaction with older siblings.⁵²⁶

Fathers also establish bonding with infants by playing with them, calling them fond names and occasionally throwing them up. This aims at driving away fear and encouraging boldness. The moment a child is able to speak, he or she is taught respect for elders as a child is required to greet everyone older person. According to Odejobi, Yoruba tradition stresses that parents are the first teachers of their children, instructing them in the proper way of relating with the elders and people of the same age group. Such moral and civic responsibilities are taught as early as a child could speak. Consequently, a young child is expected to obey the orders of their elders as soon as he or she is past the infant stage.⁵²⁷

Mothers teach their daughters how to prepare the different local dishes, and other domestic chores, and the arts and science of farming. On the other hand, fathers train the boys on the rudiments of farming, bush cutting, yam cultivation, staking, and harvesting, among others. From the apprentice viewpoint, which predominantly characterizes father-child relationship, children learn the occupation of their fathers from the earliest stage. Little wonder why certain families are known for their expertise in certain vocations such as tent making, mason, bicycle repairing, blacksmith, carpentry, among others. These children grow up to take over from their parents. Significantly, such opportunities afford parents the opportunity to imbibe rich morals to their children and the discipline they require to grow in life.

However, Jane B. Brooks notes the various changes that occur in family life in a changing society. Comparing life in families in the past with contemporary families, she

⁵²⁶ R.A. LeVine. 2010. Protective environments in Africa and elsewhere. *Nurturing children and families: building on the legacy of T. Berry Brazelton*. B. M. Lester and J.D. Sparrow. Eds. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Retrieved August 28, 2014, from www.Amazon.com.

⁵²⁷ O.C. Odejobi. 2012. Community parenting and the concept of child abuse in Yoruba culture. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 3.2: 310.

submits that in the past the family mostly agrarian worked together as a unit with parents, children, and extended family members, but with the industrial revolution and subsequent economic regression of the World War 11, families gradually moved to urban settings and fathers and later mothers increasingly worked outside the home. She noted that in the 1950s gender-roles were somewhat fixed where mothers were the heart of the family, maintaining the home, nourishing the children, and supporting their husbands who were employed in a booming economy. The economic prosperity continued until 1960s, but in that turbulent decade, social changes disrupted this view of the family. And today, in the majority of families, both parents have paid employment. Sometimes, parents may work split shifts so children are always in the care of a parent, but these families rarely are together as a unit, and parents see little of each other. While some children are cared for by relatives living in extended families, other children are in some form of day care, or left under the care of house helps thereby expanding their contacts with people outside the family. She identified employment, divorce, ethnic diversity, poverty, violence, and substance abuse as social factors influencing contemporary family life.⁵²⁸

In their classic *Family Interaction: A Multigenerational Developmental Perspective*, Stephen Anderson and Ronald Sabatelli⁵²⁹ affirm that social attitudes toward marriage and parenthood have markedly changed. Josh McDowell and Bob Hostetler⁵³⁰ submit that today, parents tend to neglect their children if they are preoccupied with anything, especially social engagements. Parents vying for advancements stand the risk of losing grip on their children. We live in an era of selfishness where the society urges men and women to “have it all” and to “have it your way”. So, parents, especially mothers earn a three-figure income, send their kids to private schools, work out every day, go on vacation, and that is a happy family. Unfortunately, parents with this “have-it-all” mentality will typically neglect their children’s emotional needs, choosing (consciously or unconsciously) to place their ‘needs’ ahead of their children’s needs.

⁵²⁸ Jane B. Brooks, 1998, *Parenting*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, pp.2 - 11

⁵²⁹ Stephen A. Anderson and Ronald M. Sabatelli, 1999. *Family interaction: A multigenerational developmental perspective*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, pp. 193 - 196

⁵³⁰ Josh McDowell and Bob Hostetler, 2004, *Handbook on counselling youth*. Lagos: Bible for All Ltd, 179 – 180.

Africa is not exempted from this menace. Amos observes that in many African communities today, mothers are not often seen in the house as they used to due to economic reasons. She emphasised that the involvement of more mothers in the modern labour force deprives the children as well as the whole family of the daily love and care, which are vital ingredients for proper child training and development.⁵³¹ Isiugo-Abanihe opines that the Structural Adjustment Programme of 1986 which led to major economic adjustments in Nigerian families accounts for not only role changes among parents, but also caused movements and migration to urban cities especially by men in search of survival while women assumed household headship. He notes that because of closures, unemployment and retrenchment occasioned by economic adjustment, some affected men leave their families and move elsewhere in search of jobs, others return to their rural origin, leaving their wives and children behind, yet others through job transfer move to other cities where they are not able or willing to go with their families. These among others have the tendency of reducing emotional attachment between spouses and commitment to marital vows. He concludes that unfavourable economic fortunes may lead to long separation and even desertion, during which time the woman willy-nilly assumes the responsibility of household headship. Such wholesale abdication of leadership roles by men (physical and emotional) has rendered many families matrifocal.⁵³²

It has been observed that with the search for better economic opportunities, there is an increasing rural-urban migration into major Nigerian cities. Such cities are experiencing rapid urbanization.⁵³³ As a result of this urban influx, many of the migrating families find themselves living under difficult economic conditions. Under these conditions women are affected to a greater degree as many of them work to supplement the family income.⁵³⁴ On

⁵³¹ P.O. Amos. 2013. Parenting and culture – evidence from some African communities. *Parenting in South American and African contexts*. Winneba: Creative Commons Attribution License, 65. Retrieved June 30, 2014, from <http://creativecommons.org>.

⁵³² U. Isiugo-Abanihe. 1997. Impact of economic adjustment on the family. *Women and economic reforms in Nigeria*. P. K. Garba et al. Eds. Ibadan: Women's Research and Communication Centre, 192 – 197.

⁵³³ Anon. Child-friendly cities initiative-project Port Harcourt. *International child friendly cities secretariat UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre*. Florence – Italy. Retrieved August 14, 2012, from <http://www.childfriendlycities.org>.

⁵³⁴ U. Isiugo-Abanihe. U. Isiugo-Abanihe. 1997. Impact of economic adjustment on the family. *Women and economic reforms in Nigeria*. P. K. Garba et al. Eds. Ibadan: Women's Research and Communication Centre, 192 – 197.

the other hand, the quest for women liberation⁵³⁵ and self-actualisation⁵³⁶ constitute major challenges facing contemporary parents. These result in dual-worker families. Agboluaje Timothy observes that “Today, some parents have abandoned their duty of providing guidance to their children in the pursuit of wealth which cannot be a substitute for moral teaching.”⁵³⁷

As both parents steadily move away from home in pursuit of wealth and survival, and as African families assume the independent and individualistic lifestyle predominantly western in nature, family values have been so scorned that we are left with neither families nor values. Instead, we have rampant illegitimacy and sexual disease, widespread divorce, and a generation of unloved, undisciplined, and uncared-for kids.⁵³⁸ Amos painfully observes that during infancy, the child, who breastfed for a longer time in the traditional African system now gets much less in the modern African system due to work pressure.⁵³⁹ As the gap between mothers and their infants widen, the mother-child bonding which forms the basis for balanced physical, mental, emotional, and moral development is not only compromised but sometimes truncated.

While the efforts of contemporary African parents in contending with economic regression are appreciated for the sake of survival and self-actualisation, a gap is created in the family as some children now begin schooling as early as two months of age denying them the natural touch of the mother and exposing them to “strange companions” at the day care or with surrogate mothers.⁵⁴⁰ This threatens early childhood training which is considered the “most important phase of life that determines the quality of health, well-

R. H. Lauer and J. C. Lauer. 1997. *Marriage and family: the quest for intimacy*. London: Brown and Benchmark Publishers, 275.

⁵³⁵ M. Sotunsa. 2008. *Feminism and gender discourse: the African experience*. Sagamu, Nigeria: Ojoko-Biri-Kale Press, 44.

⁵³⁶ J. McDowell and B. Hostetler. 2004. *Handbook on counselling youth*. Lagos: Bible for All Ltd, 179 – 180.

⁵³⁷ A. Timothy. 2012. Parental negligence as a major for moral decadence in ministers’ home: an appraisal of Eli’s home in African context. *Biblical Studies and Youth Development in Africa*. S.O. Agbogunrin. Ed. Ibadan: Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS), Biblical Studies Series Number 8: 68 [62 – 70].

⁵³⁸ G. Steinem. 2009. *The impact of feminism on the family*. Vic Bilson (1996 – 2009). Retrieved June 17, 2012, from www.impactoffeminismtoday.com.

⁵³⁹ P.O. Amos. 2013. Parenting and culture – evidence from some African communities. *Parenting in South American and African contexts*. Winneba: Creative Commons Attribution License, 65. Retrieved June 30, 2014, from <http://creativecommons.org>.

⁵⁴⁰ Anon. Crèche/Preschools. Retrieved April 20, 2012, from <http://portharcourtbizonline.com>.

being, learning and behaviour across the lifespan.”⁵⁴¹ Many day care and nursery primary outfits in different parts of Nigeria admit infants from three months.⁵⁴² In fact, some centers like Auntie Titi’s Place admit one week old and pride their ability to care for the baby until three years or even up to adolescence.⁵⁴³ Responding to the challenge of moral decadence among youths in Port Harcourt and Rivers State at large, Governor Chibuike Amaechi affirmed that parents, especially mothers, owed the state a duty to instil discipline and good moral upbringing in the younger generation.⁵⁴⁴ Since the importance of early child training cannot be over-emphasised, particularly given the destructiveness of the absent/preoccupied-parent syndrome that plagues contemporary home life,⁵⁴⁵ the study advocates that contemporary African parents, especially mothers, should as a matter of urgency, understand and subsequently return to their God-given responsibility of nurturing their offspring at least until they are weaned. This is crucial because, during these years of childhood, the foundations of character are laid. If nurturing is neglected at this stage, it could not be made up for later. In order to contribute to the economic wellbeing of their families, these mothers could engage in business ventures that could run from home until the child is weaned. This is crucial because it is only as contemporary African parents align their desires with God’s wisdom as evident in the proverbial parenting imperative and traditional African heritage, will they save the future of their infants and families from the evasive effects and not modern western lifestyle. This is crucial because, unconsciously but insidiously, the continuous absence of parents pave way for breakdown in family ties, less communication, loss of affection and interaction at deeper levels – paving way for parental negligence and irresponsibility toward their infants.

⁵⁴¹ R. Mordi. 2012. Any hope for the Nigerian child? *Tell* June 4, 52.

⁵⁴² Some of these centers in Port Harcourt include: Dayton Model Schools. Crèche, Nursery and Basic (admits from 3 months to 2 years only), El-Soteria Nisi International School (admits infants from 3 months), Angel Vee Montessori International Schools (admits infants from 3 months), STATUS Day Care (admits from 3 months to 2 years only).

⁵⁴³ Anon. Crèche/Preschools. Retrieved April 20, 2012, from <http://portharcourtbizonline.com>.

⁵⁴⁴ Amaechi Advises Parents on Youths. *Saturday Punch*. June 21, 2008. Retrieved August 14, 2012, from www.punchontheweb.com.

⁵⁴⁵ T. Hilberrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 5 – 6.

Conclusion

The concise but loaded nature of the parental imperative of Proverbs 22:6 no doubt lends itself to a variety of interpretations. While some of these interpretations have been homiletic in nature, others have been pedagogical, without in-depth textual analysis. There are also sociological and psychological attempts at the text. These take the text at face value and draw topical conclusions based on previously established notions. A few that focus on real exegetical explorations, such as MacDonald⁵⁴⁶ and Hilderbrandt⁵⁴⁷ seem to take a superimposed approach without serious consideration of the text, especially within the purview of parental discourse. In an attempt at appropriately situating the meaning of *Hánök* in Proverbs 22:6, the following issues are significant. First, *Hánök* in Proverbs 22:6 is problematic since of its five verbal occurrences in the OT, it is the only occurrence with animate objects. Its meaning, especially in a parental discourse is not ‘dedication’ or ‘to initiate’ but rather ‘to train,’ ‘nurture,’ and ‘instruct.’

On the one hand, the idea of training when referring to animate objects is evident in the *hapax legomena* $\text{w}y\text{k} \text{ ' } \emptyset \text{y}n \text{ l}x \text{]}$ which refers to Abraham’s trained men (Gen 14:14). On the other hand, the Arabian etymology *HnK* which pictures a parent engaged in the nurturing of an infant sheds significant light in understanding the necessity, meaning, timing, parental role, and relevance of wholiatic training which begins at infancy. The latter is significant for three reasons: 1.) the Arabian root *HnK* captures the love, tenderness, and commitment involved in parenting through the stimulation of desire by rubbing the gums – a reflection of the bonding process and the act of imbuing understanding and discretion; 2.) the imagery of a mother underscores not just the most important figure in parenting at infancy but also her exceptional role in the entire process, and 3.) it underscores the OT view that *Hánök* in parenting actually begins at infancy (Judg 13; 1 Sam 2).

Second, the OT presents various usage of *na`ar* which ranges from the unborn, one at infancy, the weaned, personal attendant or a servant. However, its usage within a parental discourse within and outside Proverbs is unique. This uniqueness hinges on the interplay between the speaker (parent) or and the receiver (child). While the identity of the *na`ar*

⁵⁴⁶ A.J. MacDonald. 1976. The status and role of the *na`ar* in Israelite society. *JNES* 35.3, 147-70.

⁵⁴⁷ T. Hilberbrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 6 – 8.

when he or she is being addressed suggests that of a young man, or an amateur, though not limited to that, the identity of the *na`ar* when the parents are addressed suggests a wide coverage from pregnancy, infancy, weaned age, to late adolescence. The latter captures the identity of the *na`ar* of Proverbs 22:6 whose parents must *Hánök* right from conception to adolescent age in every facet of life according to covenantal stipulations. Further, the Hebrew uses a variety of terms in describing the various developmental stages of child-life. Nevertheless, rather than follow a specified classification, *na`ar* and most of its synonyms (דל, ילד, בן, עבד, נער, חנן, חנוך, חנוכה, חנוכה, חנוכה, חנוכה) are used interchangeably not necessarily on the basis of status or age range – although these ideas are not left out, but rather depending on the context and the particular idea being pursued.

Recent views as held by some scholars that the *na`ar* of Proverbs 22:6 is a squire with social status faces self contradictions in their attempt to synthesize the nexus between *na`ar* and *zäqën*. First, the *na`ar* in 22:6a is paralleled via grammatical transformation (noun/ verb) with *zäqën* ‘growing old’. While status difference between the *na`ar* and the *zäqën* may be the point in some cases, emphasis on the age is evidently predominant. Furthermore, because of the verbal nature of *zäqën* in Proverbs 26:6b, the aging process, rather than rank, is tenable. The latter is evident in the exegetical exploration of *zäqën* where the impact of wholistic training from infancy parallels assurance of security during maturity and old age.

Fourth, without doubt therefore, *`al-Pî darKô* does not limit itself to taking cognizance of the nature of the *na`ar* or initiating him or her into any cultic or royal assignment, but rather nurturing and affecting the *na`ar* in the full course of life, irrespective of his or her chosen field, to fear and honour God, which Proverbs says is the beginning of ‘wisdom’ (1:7;). This submission is reaffirmed by the use of *Gam Kî/-yazqîn* ‘when he is old’ in Proverbs 22:6b. When old age set in, people retire from certain services: Samuel of priesthood; David of war and kingship but a full view of their life remains on course. This holistic view of the *Derek* ‘way’ of the *na`ar* ‘child’ is what parents must pursue.

Infant nurturing deals with the act of providing an intentional and balanced parental care which focuses on the wholistic development of the entire faculties for healthy

attachment and character formation. Critical to infant nurturing is the need for attachment. Attachment Parenting connotes a healthy attachment from a consistent primary caregiver, usually the mother, for balanced cognitive and emotional development from the earliest years 0 – 3 years. Nevertheless, fathers must endeavour to assert their place and play their role in nurturing their offspring at this crucial stage when a major part emotional stability and of character formation takes place.

Like ancient Israel, Africa is blessed with rich parenting values. African parents basically trained their children to imbibe the cultural values of the land and also to become responsible. These are achieved through story telling (folktales), the extended family, traditional rites, and the mother's care, attention and love. Essentially, child training in Africa is community-based. This is in line with the traditional education system which aims at meeting the existential needs of the community. Mothers proudly engage in the nurturing of infants as well as other domestic chores. However, infant nurturing in contemporary Africa is challenged with economic regression and the quest for survival, with more mothers engaged in public labour force. This has left a wide gulf in the family as infants are either enrolled in the Day care as early as two months old or left with house helps or surrogate mothers. Since the importance of early child training cannot be over-emphasised, particularly given the destructiveness of the absent/preoccupied-parent syndrome that plagues contemporary home life,⁵⁴⁸ the study advocates that contemporary African parents, especially mothers, should as a matter of urgency, understand and subsequently return to their God-given responsibility of nurturing their offspring at least until they are weaned. This is crucial because, during these years of childhood, the foundations of character are laid. If nurturing is neglected at this stage, it could not be made up for later.

⁵⁴⁸T. Hilberrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 5 – 6.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

The study analysed the key words of Proverbs 22:6 to appropriately situate the necessity, meaning, timing, parental roles, and relevance of infant nurturing as a fundamental component of training in the Book of Proverbs within the ambit of parenting. Given the ‘prominence’ of existing interpretations of the selected text and *Hánök* in particular, an exegetical analysis and interpretation of *Hánök*, other key words, and components of the selected text was explored. Critical to this was a succinct interpretation of *Hánök* when linked with *lanna`ar* and *`al-Pî darKô* in the quest for the place and relevance of infant nurturing in the proverbial parenting discourse.

In an attempt at the above task, Chapter 2 reviewed relevant literature on the concept of training. First, it appraised the concept of training as a universal process. Second, it examined the concept of training in parenting with special emphasis on the challenges infant nurturing. Third, it reviewed scholars views and interpretation of *Hánök* ‘train’ when linked with *lanna`ar* ‘the child’ and *darKô* ‘his way’ in Proverbs 22:6. The study established that ‘training’ is a universal term that could apply to almost, if not all aspects of human life or endeavour. It involves the process of teaching a person a particular skill or type of behaviour until success is accomplished. Most times, however, training, education, learning, schooling, and development are used interchangeably. Second, although the idea of training focuses on developing specific skills, training in parenting seems rather complex in parenting basically because parenting is a life time process of which training is central in at the various stages of human development. Both parents and their children are involved in this training. Finally, scholars are divided over the actual interpretation of the concept of training in parenting in Proverbs 22:6. While scholars like Hilderbrandt,⁵⁴⁹ MacDonald,⁵⁵⁰ and Gentry⁵⁵¹ argue *Hánök* is best rendered ‘to dedicate or initiate’ the *na`ar* who they identify as a ‘cadet or

⁵⁴⁹ T. Hilberrandt. 1988. Proverbs 22:6a: train up a child? *Grace Theological Journal* 9.1: 4 – 10.

⁵⁵⁰ A.J. MacDonald. 1976. The status and role of the *na'ar* in Israelite society. *JNES* 35.3: 147-70.

⁵⁵¹ P.J. Gentry. 2012. Equipping the generations: raising children, the Christian way. *JDFM* 2.2:101 – 106.

squire,' into the military or royal service, Roberts, Jr.,⁵⁵² Delitzsch,⁵⁵³ Morgan⁵⁵⁴ and Nichol⁵⁵⁵ submit that the *na`ar* should be trained according to his or her habit, inclination, vocation, or disposition. Yet, others like Adeyemo,⁵⁵⁶ and McKane⁵⁵⁷ present a moral interpretation of the passage. These endless arguments necessitate the need for a thorough exegesis of Proverbs 22:6, especially given that scholars have paid no attention to infant nurturing, which is a vital component of training in their interpretation of *Hänök* and its components.

Sequel to the need for a biblical basis and springboard for understanding the meaning, nature and scope of Proverbs 22:6, Chapter 3 examined principles of parenting in the OT. Here, six basic principles for parenting were underscored thus: 1.) Unreserved love for God – both a prerequisite for parenting on the part of parents and content or basis for parenting itself. 2.) Personal Commitment to Teaching and Education – this is a follow-up on the first. 3.) Parental/Communal roles in dealing with the rebellious child. 4.) Care for the unborn child. 5.) Nurturing during infancy. 6.) Nature and essence of child 'discipline'.

Exegetical analysis of Proverbs 22:6 was the task of Chapter four. Prior to the exegesis, issues of authorship, structure and dating, and the socio-literary structure of the Proverbs and the text in particular were examined. Thereafter, the textual analysis and lexicographic study of key words in the selected text were explored to properly unveil their independent meanings. In Chapter five, the exegetical data were interpreted. The chapter specifically examined the meaning of *Hänak* when used with animate objects as a springboard for unravelling the identity of the *na`ar* and *darKô* 'his (or her) way,' in the quest for establishing the necessity, meaning, timing, parental roles, and relevance of infant nurturing, with special reference to the African context.

⁵⁵² R.L. Roberts, Jr. 1962. A note on Proverbs 22:6: train up a child. *Restoration Quarterly*, 6 no. 40 – 42.

⁵⁵³ C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch. 2001. *Keil and Delitzsch commentary on the Old Testament* vol. 6. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 32486f.

⁵⁵⁴ D. Morgan, as quoted in R.L. Roberts, Jr. 1962. A note on Proverbs 22:6: train up a child. *Restoration Quarterly*, 6 no. 1: 40 – 42.

⁵⁵⁵ F.D. Nichol et al. Eds. 1978. *Seventh-day Adventist bible commentary* vol. 1. Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1020.

⁵⁵⁶ T. Adeyemo. 2006. *African bible commentary*, Nairobi: WordAlive Publishers, 777.

⁵⁵⁷ McKane. 1970. *Proverbs: a new approach*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 18.

6.2 Conclusion

The parental imperative in Proverbs 22:6 has been interpreted and used in a variety of ways. This resulted from its concise but loaded nature. While some of these interpretations have been homiletic in nature, others have been pedagogical, without in-depth textual and contextual analysis. There are also sociological and psychological attempts at the text. These take the text at face value and draw topical conclusions based on previously established notions. A few that focus on real textual and contextual explorations, such as MacDonald and Hilderbrandt seem to take a superimposed approach without serious consideration of the text especially within the purview of parental discourse. In an attempt at properly situating the text, the following issues are significant. First, although the setting of Proverbs has been debated (whether it was the royal court or the home), the data seem to indicate that the Book of Proverbs in its canonical form was an “instructional manual” designed “for use by the young men of Israel’s society who were being groomed for positions of leadership.” However, the individual sayings (of which 22:6 is part) reflect the family (or clan) wisdom of centuries past handed down from father to son throughout the generations (cf. Prov, 4:1-4).⁵⁵⁸ Therefore, against the popular ‘cultic status’ which scholars confer on it, this study adopted Proverbs 22:6 from the covenantal viewpoint of which the family is central.

Second, *Hánök* in Proverbs 22:6 is problematic since of its five verbal occurrences in the OT, it is the only occurrence with animate objects. Its meaning, especially in a parental discourse is not ‘dedication’ or ‘to initiate’ but rather wholistic training which encompasses ‘to train,’ ‘nurture,’ and ‘instruct.’ On the one hand, the idea of training when referring to animate objects is evident in the *hapax legomena* $w\ddot{y}k' \emptyset y n \text{ } \text{I} \times]$ which refers to Abraham’s trained men (Gen 14:14). On the other hand, the Arabian etymology *HnK* which pictures a parent engaged in the nurturing of an infant sheds significant light in understanding the necessity, meaning, timing, parental role, and relevance of wholistic training which begins at infancy. The latter is significant for three reasons: 1.) the Arabian root *HnK* captures the love, tenderness, and commitment involved in parenting through the

⁵⁵⁸ G.W. Parsons. 1993. Guidelines for understanding and proclaiming the book of Proverbs. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 150, 154:151-70

Fourth, without doubt therefore, *`al-Pî darKô* does not limit itself to taking cognisance of the nature of the *na`ar* or initiating him or her into any cultic or royal assignment, but rather nurturing and affecting the *na`ar* in the full course of life, irrespective of his or her chosen field, to fear and honor God, which Proverbs says is the beginning of ‘wisdom’(1:7;). This submission is reaffirmed by the use of *Gam Kî/-yazqîn* ‘when he is old’ in Proverbs 22:6b. When old age sets in, people retire from certain services: Samuel of priesthood (1 Sam 12); David of war (2 Sam 21:15 – 17) and kingship (1 Kings 1:1 – 4) but a full view of their life remains on course. This holistic view of the *Derek* ‘way’ of the *na`ar* ‘child’ is what parents must pursue. To capture the real nature and real essence of this parental imperative, a more holistic translation of the text is given thus: *Train up a child (presently in his or her infancy) in the full course of his life; so that when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

Consequently, the necessity of infant nurturing in the Book of Proverbs is intrinsic in the use of the imperative *Hánök* in the proverbial parenting discourse of Proverbs 22:6. The primary function of the imperative is to express a command.⁵⁵⁹ By implication, therefore, this command is obligatory and not suggestive. Parents are to nurture their children from prenatal stages, infancy until maturity as a basis for enduring outcomes. There are biblical and psychological evidences that parental attitude toward both the unborn and infants. Psychological evidences affirm the massive physical and mental developments that characterise the first three years of a child. Almost all the encephalic growth (the cerebellum and cranium) occurs during the prenatal and infancy stages. This early growth allows it to control other essential bodily functions. Significantly, these changes show that the first two years of life are crucial for human physical, intellectual, and emotional growth.⁵⁶⁰ And parents will do well to develop healthy attachment with infants for emotional, psychological, physical, moral, and spiritual development. This must be done intentionally.

When parents, especially mothers, take time to nurture their offspring from the earliest stages, they avert the adverse effects of adolescence crises, stubbornness, and rebellious acts that could be detrimental to the child, his or her parents, and the society. To

⁵⁵⁹ M. Futato. 2003. *Futato basic Hebrew tutorial*. Mark D. Futato. *BibleWorks*.

⁵⁶⁰ R.P. and J. Melgosa. 2009. *For raising your child*. Maldrid: Editorial Safeliz, 34 – 37.

avert such calamities, parents are under obligation to train them in every facet of life. A child's relationship with a consistent, caring adult in the early years is associated later in life with better academic grades, healthier behaviours, more positive peer interactions, and an increased ability to cope with stress.⁵⁶¹ This foundation is possible through a wholistic training that begins at infancy.

The use of *Hánök* in the imperative presupposes that the trainer (parent) or trainers is experienced in the training process and knows what to do. For one reason or the other, however, the OT contains several adverse implications of parental negligence. Therefore, parents who engage in the training of children must endeavour to train themselves in the art and science of parenting. They must love God and learn his ways (Duet 6:4 – 7). They should also take time to understand the behavioural patterns of their children. The emphasis of the imperative is that training is a great duty, particularly to those who are the parents of children. It is necessary for the propagating of wisdom that it may not die with them (parents).⁵⁶² Therefore, although freedom of choice makes derailment probable, wholistic training, of which nurturing during infancy is foundational, can be remedial.

Like ancient Israel, Africa is blessed with rich parenting values. African parents basically trained their children to imbibe the cultural values of the land and also to become responsible. These are achieved through story telling (folktales), the extended family, traditional rites, and the mother's care, attention and love. Essentially, child training in Africa is community-based. This is in line with the traditional education system which aims at meeting the existential needs of the community. Mothers proudly engage in the nurturing of infants as well as other domestic chores. However, infant nurturing in contemporary Africa is challenged with economic regression and the quest for survival, with more mothers engaged in public labour force. This has left a wide gulf in the family as infants are either enrolled in the Day care as early as two months old or left with house helps or surrogate mothers. Since the importance of early child training cannot be over-emphasised, particularly given the destructiveness of the absent/preoccupied-parent syndrome that

⁵⁶¹ Anon. Nurturing and attachment. Retrieved October 17, 2013, from <http://www.childwelfare.gov>.

⁵⁶² Laws, J. 1988. Child obey your parents – remember creator in youth. *Truth in love lectureship*. Pulaski: Sain Publications, 211 – 217.

plagues contemporary home life,⁵⁶³ the study advocates that contemporary African parents, especially mothers, should as a matter of urgency, understand and subsequently return to their God-given responsibility of nurturing their offspring at least until they are weaned. This is crucial because, during these years of childhood, the foundations of character are laid. If nurturing is neglected at this stage, it could not be made up for later.

6.3 Recommendations

Given the centrality of *Hánök* in determining the *Derek* of the *lanna`ar*,

1. Scholars should entrench infant nurturing as a vital component of the proverbial parenting discourse.
2. Infancy is a crucial stage in child development because of the potentiality of physical, emotional, mental, and moral developments. Therefore, parents should take advantage of this opportunity to nurture their offspring for enduring outcomes.
3. Although mothers are primary caregivers during infancy, the crucial task of infant nurturing should be the concern and burden of both parents.
4. The need for wholistic training from infancy until maturity rests on the fact that a child left to him or herself will be destroyed. Therefore, parents, especially contemporary Africans, should see training in parenting as a divine responsibility bequeathed to them, which must not be sacrificed at the altar of worldly pursuits, most especially during infancy.
5. While the effort of contemporary agencies of training and socialization during infancy are appreciated (at least for filling the gap created by parental absence and busyness), modern African parents should, as a matter of urgency, return to the biblical and traditional communal parenting system for wholistic training and character development.

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