

Family Values in the Book of Tobit

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Introduction

Today more than ever before the family is at the crisis point. The available statistics are alarming. The *Instrumentum Laboris*, paragraph 15 for the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on Family (2014) clearly tabulates the modern challenges the families have to face with regard to staying together and following the teachings of the Church: “the pervasive and invasive new technologies, the influence of mass media, the hedonistic culture, relative materialism, individualism, the growing secularism, the prevalence of ideas that leads to an excessive, selfish liberalization of morals, the fragility of interpersonal relationships, a culture which rejects making permanent choices, because it is conditioned by uncertainty, a veritable ‘liquid society’ with ‘throw away mentality,’ and one seeking immediate gratification and finally values reinforced by the so called ‘culture of waste,’ and the ‘culture of the moment’” (all known expressions of the Pope Francis).

The final document of the Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on *Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelization* rightly recalls that the family is truly the ‘school of humanity.’¹ Such an

approach towards modern family is what much needed today. True, the world has become a global village and communication a basic right; yet the family as an institution in various areas especially the desire to marry and to form a family remains vibrant and serves as the basis of the Church's need to proclaim the Gospel unceasingly. According to the final statement, the family is uniquely important to the Church in these times, when all believers are invited to think of others rather than themselves and, the family needs to be rediscovered as the essential agent in the work of evangelization.²

In this article we turn to the book of Tobit to identify family values that the book would propose for us today. The article contains three sections. The first section deals briefly with 'Family in the Bible and the second section delves on the book of Tobit itself explaining the context and the setting and the final section analyzes the book of Tobit from the perspectives of family values.

1. Family in the Bible

Family life occupies the central place in the OT Theology and ethics. There are two important and major social institutions that shaped the theological reflection and discussions in the OT that governed the Israelite society: one family and the other is monarchy. Many of the ideas expressed about the Biblical God are related to family. Much of the human morality that Bible proposes emerges from the context of family. Israel's major understanding of God, the creation, the nation, the nations and morality were forged in large part by the social character and experience of the family household.

The Bible presents both blessed and wonderful as well as cursed and bemoaned families: the first family is a model family of the human community. The family life of Abraham is a model for love and concern between the couples. Even after so much of wicked acts, Joseph forgives his brothers and treats them lovingly by providing shelter and food in his kingdom. In the same place, we encounter brother killing his own brother out of jealousy (Gen 4) and father abandoning his son through the slave mother for who needs mercy and compassion (Gen 21) and brothers joining together to plot against their own brother.

2. Context of the Book of Tobit

The Jews and the Protestants regard the book of Tobit as non-canonical or apocryphal where as some Eastern Churches and Catholics view it as Deutero-canonical (since the Council of Trent, 1546). The book is understood well as fiction or as a historical romance centering on a successful quest.³ It may be a fiction but not without a theological message. The author is keen on driving home the basic message that God cares for his faithful people. The book might have been written originally in Aramaic but later translated into Greek in the early second century BCE. As the book did not find a place in the Hebrew Bible, copying ceased and the Aramaic original was lost.⁴

The sufferings and misfortunes experienced by the characters of the book of Tobit are 'acute manifestation' of the exile.⁵ The book emphatically states that acts of charity, endogamous marriages and observing dietary laws are means of divine grace. These pious activities assure the stability of the community in the midst of the chaotic-Diaspora situations.⁶ The book of Tobit could be placed

alongside the book of Judith for comparison. They both, stand in stark contrast. The book of Tobit revolves around two grief-stricken Jewish families in the exile. On the contrary the book of Judith looks to the fate of the Jewish nation. In Tobit, two families are put together for peace and prosperity in a brave effort to avoid further tragedy whereas the book of Judith invites to take up arms to ward off the national danger. In Tobit, the plot revolves around the journey of the son, Tobias, while Judith focuses on the military expertise of a female warrior.⁷

2.1. Setting

The author of the book of Tobit addresses his story to the early second century audience. At this time Israel was under the control of the Seleucid kings of Syria. The author sets his second century story in an earlier time that paralleled the eighth-seventh centuries BCE. The major political power of that period was Assyria. In 722 BCE Sargon II, the king of Assyria, defeated the land of the northern tribes and deported many of its citizens. Tobit is presented as one of the deportees. The author underlines the idea that faithful people can be law abiding and obedient to live a life of covenant community even outside the land of Israel. Tobit who lives outside of the land of Israel was faithful and righteous before God. He was doubly blessed by God. In the same way, the chosen people may experience the providential care of the Lord wherever they may be living, even if it is outside Israel, but if only they observe the Laws of God.

The twin characters in the book of Tobit namely Tobit and Sara are not merely two characters, but they are Israel personified. They represent the desired response to God's

word. They are models for Jewish behaviour. In a way with their pious attitude, they compel the Jewish audience to adopt their courageous example and to transform their lives. The book of Tobit is not yet another simple, pious Jewish story. It is an object lesson in the manner of preserving Israelite faith.⁸

God's name in the book of Tobit matches the reality. Tobias means 'goodness of Yahweh'. All through the book, each character becomes a witness to the goodness of Yahweh. Tobias asks for God's mercy upon him and his newly married wife (Tob 8:7). In v.16, Raguel (which means 'God is a friend') duly recognizes that he has been favoured by God and he is the proof of his divine friendship. Tobit's grand father's name Ananiel (Tob 1:1) means 'God is merciful' and Raphael's father's name, Ananias (Tob 5:12) means 'Yahweh is merciful'. In the theology of Tobit, for God to bear a name is to be that name.⁹

2.2. Literary Genre

Today scholars tend to understand the Book of Tobit as a Hebrew romance.¹⁰ Equally the book contains other literary forms such as poetic prayers (Tob 3:1-6, 11-15; 8:5-8, 15-17; 11:14-15; 13:1-18)¹¹ and wisdom speeches (Tob 4:3-21; 12:6-10; 14:3-11). According to I. Nowell, there can be more than one source for the development of the plot in the book of Tobit. The travelogue (Chaps 5-12) has many similar elements with that of the folktales 'Grateful Dead' and 'Monster in the Bridal Chamber.'¹² So also the life of Tobit has many parallels with the story of Ahiqar, whose name itself appears four times in the narrative (Tob 1:21-22; 2:10; 11:18; 14:10). All these are well known stories of the Ancient Near East. However, these stories were

modified and altered to accommodate the intended theological elements in the narrative. Within the Bible, the story of Joseph (Gen 37; 39-50) has shared much in common with the story of Tobit. Zimmermann remarks: "The woof comes from the folklore of a particular society, and the warp and the pattern, the vitality and the color, come from the religious experience of the Jewish people."¹³

3. Family Values in the Book of Tobit

3.1. *Ends of Marriage*

There are three married couples who interact with one other and love becomes the basis of all three couples' interaction. Tobit and Annah interact with each other in a loving way though there are moments of positive and negative life situations. The relationship between Raguel and Edna is less obvious. However it shows a mutual interdependence and support. Tobiah and Sarah are keen on obeying the plan of God and firmly trust in God. Raguel, Edna and Tobit all express the hope that marriage will bring joy, and they regard children as blessing. They explicitly acknowledge marriage as a bond not only between two people, but also between families.

There are three female characters within this narrative romance. The way they are characterized speaks of their importance in the plot. Sara is depicted with double adjective 'sensible and beautiful' (Tob 6:12). She is the silent and passive character in the story. Yet she is strong in self-knowledge and capable of deliberation. Edna and Anna cooperate well with their husbands in discerning and executing the plan of God. They actively take part in the

events of their family. "Women are regarded as competent persons, capable of relating to God through prayer and obedience to the Law, Capable of providing help and support to their husbands, capable of instructing and guiding their children. They do not, however, have public responsibilities in either the economic or the religious sphere. They are seen primarily in relationship to their families."¹⁴

3.2. *Almsgiving*

According to P.J. Griffin, the word *eleēmosynē* appears more often in the book of Tobit than in any other OT book: 22 times compared to 13 times in Sirach, 7 times in Proverbs, 4 times in Isaiah, 3 times in Psalms, twice each in Deuteronomy, the Song of Songs, Baruch and Daniel and once in Genesis. *Eleēmosynē* is often translated as 'almsgiving', 'charity' or 'mercy.' The Semantic development of this term is one of the major contributions of the book of Tobit to the OT theology. P. Deselaers defines *eleēmosynē* as community building activity (*solidarische handeln*).¹⁵ In the late Greek, LXX translates *dāqāh* as *eleēmosynē* meaning a benevolent activity (Dan 4:24). The Greek speaking Jews understand *dikaïosynē* also in this sense.¹⁶ The word *eleēmosynē* is unknown in classical Greek. The Greeks and Romans had no term for the 'gift to the poor' although the giving of alms was in practice; however it was not considered meritorious. The restriction of the meaning of *eleos*, *eleēmosynē* to 'pity,' to 'have mercy toward the poor,' or 'gift to the poor,' or 'alms' occur first in the LXX (Prov 21:26; Dan 4:27).

This virtue, *eleēmosynē* appears in the outer frame of the book (Tob 1:3; 14:9) forming an *inclusio*. God rewards the just. How can one be just? The book beautifully

enumerates that love for the poor and concern for the needy are part of the virtuous and righteous life. Tob 1:3 speaks of the person of Tobit in three characters: (i) truth (*aletheia*) (ii) righteousness (*dikaiosynē*) and (iii) charity (*eleēmosynē*). Thus according to the book, charity is an inevitable virtue of a righteous person. The book speaks of charity or almsgiving as the chief element of Tobit's righteousness. The acts of mercy assure one a perfect happy life. In fact, Anna challenges Tobit when she asks 'what good his righteous deeds have done him' (Tob 2:14). God's apparent silence towards Tobit's faithfulness to charitable acts may be the reason why he was desperate in his prayers. Tobit who after the sublime works of justice and mercy was tried with the loss of his eyes but he patiently endures his blindness. He was duly rewarded by God for his acts of mercy.¹⁷

Almsgiving (*eleēmosynē*) could be understood in four ways along the narrative of the book: It means (i) charitable deed (Tob 1:16; 14:10), (ii) monetary help and almsgiving (Tob 4:86, 16-17; 12:8), (iii) characteristic of a person, specifically Tobit (Tob 7:7 cf 9:6; 14:11) and (iv) characteristic of God (Tob 3:2; 13:6).¹⁸ The book explains the term *eleēmosynē* mainly in terms of charitable deed and monetary help or almsgiving. The book implicitly defines what it means to perform charitable deeds: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and burying the dead (Tob 1:1-17). Alms are to be given willingly (Tob 4:8; 16) and in proportion to one's income (Tob 4:8, 16). In terms of defining and explaining the semantics of *eleēmosynē*, Tobit and the book of Ben-Sirah share some common view points. Giving alms delivers one from sin (Sir 3:30-31; Tob 12:9-10) and it is a worthy

offering before God (Sir 35:2; cf. 34:18; Tob 4:11). Almsgiving saves one from premature death and destruction (Sir 29:10-13, 40:17; Tob 4:10; 12:9; 14:10). God's response to Tobiah will mirror Tobiah's response to the poor (Tob 4:7).

In the Old Testament, almsgiving was thought to result in the forgiveness of sins (Prov 11:4; Dan 4:24). It was regarded as a condition for salvation (Isa 58:6-12) and it is equated with sacrifice (Tob 4:11). "One who shows mercy to his fellow person is shown mercy from heaven."¹⁹ Equally important in the book is the idea of hospitality. Raguel is a character designed after the inspiration of Abraham who is also very hospitable. The hospitality of Tobit is well seen in his greeting to Raphael (Tob 5:1), in his joyous welcome that he accords to his daughter-in-law Sarah (Tob 11:17). He hosts feasts willingly and treats people generously (Tob 2:2; 11:17-18). Tobiah follows his father's example in inviting Gabael to join the wedding feast in Ecbatana (Tob 9:2, 5-6). However, we may notice one striking point that these acts of charity and hospitality are restricted to one's own kindred and people (Tob 1:3, 8, 16-18; 2:2-3; 4:17). This has to be understood against the background of Diaspora situations. Almsgiving and hospitality would nurture their social cohesion and community bond. Further such virtuous life of charity and mercy will assure mutual aid and brotherly and sisterly solidarity within the covenantal community. Their exclusivist attitude is not as severe as one notices in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah and of Maccabees. Exclusivist attitude of the community is marked mainly for the reason that the members might not be led astray or contaminated by non-believers. However the characters of the book of Tobit do not show any contempt for other people.²⁰

According to St Cyprian, the angel Raphael teaches Tobit about almsgiving. He shows that our prayers and fasting are of less avail “unless they are aided by almsgiving; that entreaties alone are of little force to obtain what they seek unless they be made sufficient by the addition of deeds and good works.”²¹ Tobit in turn teaches his son: “Be such a father to your children as was... (Tobit) Command your children what he also commanded his son....”²²

3.3. Prayer in the Book of Tobit

A habit of prayer that commences with thanksgiving is a key to happiness. For in thanking the Lord we acknowledge our inability and insufficiency and the need for God’s grace in our lives. The various prayers that the vital characters make in this book bear witness to it. In the book of Tobit, prayer is not just an action but a habit and it is the most pervasive expression of inner devotion to God. So only the book is called as a school of prayer. There are six beautiful and moving prayers in the book, prayed at important moments of the narrative. According to Daniel J. Harrington, those prayers are not only integral part of the narrative but also they function as the interpretive key to understand the book.²³

The narrative categorically underlines the fact that God answers the prayers of the just. Each character of the narrative turns to God in prayer. Thus the author drives home the idea that the principal actor of the book is God himself. According to A. A. Di Lella, the virtuous life learned through prayer and the law is modelled on God, who is righteous, merciful and truthful.²⁴

Concerning the prayers as such, they are typically Jewish prayers addressed to God and contain invocation,

benediction, confession or petition and an 'Amen.' These prayers, in a way summarize what has gone before and express what is to come in the future. Tobit, though virtuous both in the land of Israel and in the land exile, was to face bitter moments of his life. He was to suffer exile, confiscation of his property in Nineveh, blindness after burying a corpse and a bitter rebuke from his wife. Hence he agonizingly prays unto God for death "... it is better for me to die than to see so much distress in my life and to listen to insults." Just like Jeremiah (Jer 20:18) and Elijah (1 Kings 19:4) in the midst of his suffering, he wrestles with God. This way, one may say that prayer itself is a struggle; it is wrestling with God in the midst of the dark nights of the soul with a hope that he would lead us to see the dawn.

Just like Tobit, Sarah turns to God in prayer. She is righteous, yet suffers the death of her seven husbands because of the demon, Asmodeus. She is badly insulted by her maid and she asks God in prayer 'Why should I live?' and yet expresses her complete trust in God (Tob 3:12). It is only in prayer that both stories of Tobit and Sarah are enjoined. Prayer is the linking bond of these two stories. God answers their prayers through Raphael and Tobiah.

Apart from the above mentioned prayers of supplications, there are four prayers of benediction, rich in theology. They are Tobiah's wedding benediction (Tob 8:5-8); Raguel's benediction (Tob 8:15-17); Tobit's benediction on seeing his son (Tob 11:14-15); and Tobit's final benediction (Tob 13:1-17).

Tobiah's wedding benediction celebrates the very dignity of marriage. The benediction begins with invoking

God, God's name and God's works. The prayer rightly recognizes God as the God of the ancestors and God of both past and future. During the benediction, Tobiah acknowledges his marriage as the plan of God after the model of Adam and Eve and makes a beautiful petition: "Grant that she and I may find mercy and that we may grow old together" (Tob 8:7). Even the benediction of Raguel praises God for his mercy shown in a very concrete way. "Blessed are you because you have made me glad. It has not turned out as I expected, but you have dealt with us according to your great mercy" (Tob 8:16). Raguel rightly celebrates the surprising and surpassing graciousness of God. The wondrous past of Tobiah and Sarah would turn out to be a future assurance, hence Raguel invokes God to continue to bless them and keep them safe; "O! master, keep them safe; bring their lives to fulfilment in happiness and mercy" (Tob 8:17).

Tobit's benediction (Tob 11:14-15) explicates his joy, for he is doubly blessed. He has regained his sight and has also seen his son again. Tobit expresses his mind in his benediction declaring that God was behind both his affliction and his restoration. Though the affliction of Tobit may be counted as a punishment for his sins, the vindication of God's justice and mercy is seen in his restoration. In his son and daughter-in-law, Tobit experiences the mercifulness of God and he publically acknowledges it before everybody (Tob 11:17). Here the prayer of Tobit comes as an ecstatic outburst of his joy.²⁵

The final benediction of Tobit in 13:1-17 celebrates God's kingly rule and power over life and death. It enumerates that the exile is just the punishment of God,

inflicted upon the people of Israel. It assures that God will gather them from exile, if only Israel is willing to turn to Yahweh. As highlighted in Deuteronomy, the final benediction expresses the theology of sin, repentance, exile and return.²⁶

St Cyprian is right in saying that Tobit's life demonstrates that prayer without good works is not enough: "Those who pray should not come to God with fruitless or naked prayers. The one who will give us on the Day of Judgment a reward for our labours and alms is even in this life a merciful bearer of one who comes to him in prayer."²⁷

3.4. Respect for Parents and Elders

The book of Tobit is a literary gem. Like a polished diamond, it glitters from whichever dimension that we look at it. It is the source of wisdom concerning respect for parents and elders and it further highlights the importance of parents instructing their children. The Decalogue recommends, "Honour your Father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord Your God is giving you" (Ex 20:12). The command to honour father and mother is given emphasis with a motive clause: "...that your days may be long in the land" (see also Deut 5:16). Following Decalogue and Deuteronomic Code, the book of Tobit insists upon the duty of children towards their parents. Tobit instructs his son Tobiah in the following words: "... Honour your mother and do not abandon her all the days of her life. Do whatever pleases her, and do not grieve her in anything" (Tob 4:3). While honouring their parents, the children should keep in mind the innumerable trials that the parents have undergone for their sake (Tob 4:4). Duty

towards the parents is a humble act of gratitude. Caring Tobiah and loving Sarah are the best models for this. The book pictures the pitiable condition of Tobit; his health has worsened; he is disturbed internally and externally (Tob 11:10) and manifests signs of depression. He is grief stricken and anguished, weeps and prays for his ill future in his old age (Tob 3:16). In the same way Raguel and Edna, parents of Sarah were much perplexed with the future of their beloved daughter. With much anxiety and anguish Raguel digs a grave for his eighth bridegroom, Tobit, mainly to escape from the scorn and contempt of his kindred and neighbours. In the same way, Edna, as a loving mother is much worried when she prepares the room for the newlywed couples, Tobiah and Sarah. Edna weeps for her daughter helplessly and bestows a blessing upon her: "Take courage, my daughter, the Lord of heaven grant you joy in place of your sorrow" (Tob 7:16).²⁸ But Tobiah and Sarah become the antidote for their suffering.

The book beautifully presents how a son or daughter should treat his or her parents. Tobiah and Sarah, both of them treat their respective parents with great esteem and honour. Tobiah supports the family in its financial crisis by going for the money that his father deposited with a distant relative in a far off place. As an obedient son, he takes a wife from his own kindred (Tob 7:9-13). He acts so wisely as to bring healing for his father (Tob 11:11-13). So also Sarah is always concerned about her father's wellbeing. Being caught by the crisis she wants to commit suicide, but abandons the idea because it would ruin his father's reputation (Tob 3:10). She heartily obliges her parents with regard to her marriage (Tob 7:16-17). Thus both Tobiah and

Sarah pay respects and honour and act with love and reverence towards their parents.²⁹

Further, from the interactions between the parents and children in the book, we understand that instructing the children is one of the important duties of parents. As a responsible father, Tobit instructs his son to be faithful to the sexual demands of marriage and to avoid fornication. Then he teaches his son the proper way to find a good wife fitting to his social situation (Tob 4:12-13). It is true that parents must instruct their children; it is a vital duty and it should not be neglected. Deborah, grandmother of Tobit instructed him in good faith (Tob 1:8). In the same way, Tobit instructs his son Tobiah on good life and good living. It is this responsibility of the parents towards their children that makes the family a school of humanity.³⁰

Conclusion

On considering the chronological and socio-cultural distance of the book of Tobit from that of ours, one may be discouraged and tend to underestimate the relevance of the values that the book would propose for us today. True, the socio-cultural realm of the book of Tobit is not an industrialized, globalized, pluralistic and science-dominated society like ours, nevertheless the socio-cultural realms of book has a lot more things in common that we could imagine with our families and societies of today. The problems of the migrants, fear of assimilation, troubled relationship between politics and religion and questions about the identity and role of women, respect for parents and elders are common to both. These issues that echo in the book have their resonance in our modern societies too.³¹

As we have enumerated above, the book is not grappled with the major theological treaty of the Old Testament, but very much concerned about everyday practical, moral and sapiential aspects of being and doing good.³² Contrary to the traditional perspectives, the book of Tobit defines true religion as a matter of heart and home. What is all the more important is the day-to-day faith and pious living, fitting to the values that emerge from the pages of the Law. Thus, the book of Tobit is an applied science – the Law lived out in the midst of Hellenistic situation in which feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, giving the condemned a decent burial, strong sense of prayer, preserving the dignity of marriage and promoting dutiful and loving relationship between parents and children are the primary values. They are not merely the ideals of a healthy, God fearing community of those bygone years but they have a great relevance even for us today.

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Endnotes

¹ *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 52.

² The final document of the Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on *Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelization*, no. 2.

³ See "Introduction to the Book of Tobit" in *NIV Study Bible*, p. 1357.

⁴ Irene Nowell, "Tobit" in *International Bible Commentary: An Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. William R. Farmer, Bangalore: Theological Publication in India, 2004, pp. 740-748, here 740.

⁵ Will Soll, "Misfortune and Exile in Tobit: The Juncture of a Fairy Tale Source and Deuteronomistic Theology" *CBQ* 51(1989) 209-231.

- ⁶ See Beate Ego, "The Book of Tobit and the Diaspora", in *The Book of Tobit: Text, Tradition, Theology*, ed., Géza G. Xeravits and Joséf Zsengeller, JSJsup 98, Leiden: Brill, 2005, pp. 41-54.
- ⁷ John Craghan, *Esther, Judith, Tobit, Jonab, Ruth*, Old Testament Message, Wilmington: Michael Glazier, Inc, 1982, p. 129.
- ⁸ John Craghan, *Esther, Judith, Tobit, Jonab, Ruth*, p. 130
- ⁹ John Craghan, *Esther, Judith, Tobit, Jonab, Ruth*, p. 150.
- ¹⁰ I. Nowell, "Tobit" *NIB*, vol. 3, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999, p. 978.
- ¹¹ P.J. Griffin, 'The Theology and Function of Prayer in the Book of Tobit,' Ph. D. diss. The Catholic University of America, 1984.
- ¹² These two Folktales are very popular folk stories in the Ancient Near East even before the time of the composition of the book of Tobit. The story of the 'Grateful Dead,' deals with the grateful actions of a dead person who was given a decent burial by the Hero of the story. In the same way the story of the 'Monster in the Bridal Chamber' deal with the story of the bride tormented by a monster who kills the bridegrooms on the day of the marriage. Through the heroic intervention of the hero the monster is defeated and chased off from the bride. See I. Nowell, "Tobit" *NIB*, vol. 3, pp. 978-979.
- ¹³ F. Zimmermann, *The Book of Tobit: An English Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Dropsie College Edition, JAL, New York: Harper and Bros, 1958, p. 12.
- ¹⁴ See I. Nowell, "Tobit" *NIB*, Vol. 3 p. 986 also see B. Bow and G.W.E. Nickelsburg, "Patriarchy with a Twist," in *Men and Women in the Greco-Roman World*, ed., Amy Jill Levine, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991, pp. 127-143.
- ¹⁵ See P. Deselaers, *Das Buch Tobit: Studies Zu seiner Entstehung composition und theologie*, OBO 43 Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1982, pp. 348-58. P.J. Giriffin, "A Study of *eleēmosynē* in the Bible with Emphasis upon its Meaning and usage in the theology of Tobit and Ben Sira," MA Thesis, The Catholic University of America, 1982.
- ¹⁶ Bultmann, "*eleēmosynē*," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964, pp. 485-486.
- ¹⁷ St Cyprian, *De bono patientiae*, 18, as cited by Irene Nowell, "Tobit," *International Bible Commentary*, p. 742.
- ¹⁸ P.J. Griffin, "A Study of *eleēmosynē*" in the Bible," p. 2-5.
- ¹⁹ See b. Sabb 151b. Also see F. Stawdinger, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 1, ed. Holst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd., 1990, pp. 428-429.
- ²⁰ See I Nowell, "Tobit" *NIB*, vol. 3, p. 987.²¹ St Cyprian, *De Opere et eleemosynis*, 5 as cited by Irene Nowell, "Tobit," *International Bible Commentary*, p. 742.
- ²² St Cyprian, *De Opere et eleemosynis*, 20 as cited by Irene Nowell, "Tobit," *International Bible Commentary*, p. 742.

- ²³ See D.J. Harrington, "Prayers in Tobit: A Key to the Book," *The Bible Today* 37/2 (1999) 86-95, here 86.
- ²⁴ A.A. Di Lella, "The Deuteronomic Background of the Farewell Discourse in Tobit 14:3-11," *CBQ* 41 (1979) 386-387.
- ²⁵ P.J. Griffin, *The Theology and Function of Prayer on the Book of Tobit*, pp. 206-223.
- ²⁶ See D.J. Harrington, "Prayer in Tobit," p. 89.
- ²⁷ St Cyprian, *De dominica Oratione*, 32 as cited by Irene Nowell, "Tobit," *International Bible Commentary*, p. 742.
- ²⁸ See I. Nowell, "Aging in the book of Tobit," *The Bible Today* 37/2 (1999) 4-79, here p. 78.
- ²⁹ See I. Nowell, "Aging in the Book of Tobit," p. 79.
- ³⁰ See George Mademana, "The spirituality of the Family of Tobit," *Bible Bhashyam* 17/3 (1991) 161-180 also see I. Nowell, "Tobit", *NIB*, vol. 3, pp. 1014-1015.
- ³¹ See Any-Jill Levine, "Tobit: Teaching Jews How to Live in the Diaspora," *RBib* 8 (1992) 42-51, here p. 50 also see C.A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 40A, New York: Double day, 1996, p. 27.
- ³² John C. Dancy, Wesley J. Fuerst and Raymond J. Hammer, *The Shorter Books of the Apocrypha*, CBC, eds. Peter R. Ackroyd, et al, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972, p. 9.