



NORWEGIAN
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Deuteronomistic Monotheism

A study of the Shema and its implications in Deuteronomy
and Deutero-Isaiah

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17 כִּי־תֵאָנֶה לֹא־תִפְרָח וְאִין יְבוּל־בְּגִפְנֵים כַּחַשׁ מַעֲשֵׂה־זֹאת
וְשִׂדְמוֹת לֹא־עֲשֶׂה אֲכַל גֶּזֶר מִמְכָּלָה צֹאן וְאִין בְּקָר בְּרִפְתִּים:
18 וְאֲנִי בֵיתָנָה אֶעְלֹזָה אֲגִילָה בְּאֵלֵהִי יִשְׁעֵי:
19 יְהִנֶּה אֲדַנְּי חִילִי וַיִּשָּׂם רַגְלִי כַּאֲיֵלוֹת וְעַל בְּמוֹתַי יִדְרֹכֵנִי

(Hab 3:17-19a WTT)

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Introduction

Monotheism as a term, it is coined by Henry More in 1660, according the *Oxford English Dictionary*. It is used to category the religions that have one god belief, different from pantheism religions. Rather than just a term with “ism”, it is also indicating the essence of the religion that is monotheistic. Israel’s belief on YHWH, is known as the one of the most ancient monotheistic religions, has gained much attention on the understanding of monotheism. Being acknowledged as a monotheistic statement, Deut. 6: 4 indicates not only the monotheistic feature, but also the relationship of YHWH and Israel. This relationship is known to initiate by YHWH’s election of Israel, assured by YHWH’s love and Israel’s loyalty and obedience. However, such relationship encounters a tension in Deutero-Isaiah, particularly on the issue of idols in chapter 44. At the same time, YHWH’s saving action has been proclaimed in chapter 43, which indicates the relationship between YHWH and Israel will be restored. In chapter 45, the sovereignty of YHWH is over entire universe, and becomes the confirmation of His saving action. The question to be debated at the end of this thesis is whether YHWH’s universal sovereignty influenced or changed the understanding of monotheism and made it become universal.

This thesis is based on the received form of Hebrew text of Deut.6:4 and Isa. 43,44 and 45, to study the monotheism of Israel’ s belief on YHWH. By exegeting these texts and some relevant texts in Exodus, it is aimed to refine the importance of the Shema and the proper understanding of monotheism that is derived from it, which are the tasks of part one and two. In the third part, the Babylonian exile is introduced as an inevitable historic event due to the idolatry of Israel in the Land. And the relationship of YHWH and Israel appears to be a different dimension. Isa. 43. 44, and 45 are exegeted as the exilic texts and reflect the religious situation of exilic Israelites in Babylon, which reflects the understanding of monotheism had developed into universalism in the exile.

In the first part, the general understanding and application of the Shema are introduced. More importantly, this verse has gained unshakable position in the understanding of Monotheism. On one hand, monotheism, as a term, is known as an Enlightenment invention,¹ and been found in the context of a discussion of “pantheism”, which was coined much latter than the term “monotheism”. On the other hand, monotheism is the feature that distinguishes

¹ Cited from MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of ‘Monotheism’*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 5.

the religion of ancient Israel from others, and this tradition could be traced back to the time of the election of Israel and the Exodus, the time when the Shema had been proclaimed. Thus, the translation and interpretation of Deut.6:4 has been influenced deeply how monotheism should be understood on its own right. The first part of this thesis focuses on different translations of Deut.6:4, and the interpretation of the word “יְהוָה”.

In the second part, it goes further with the theological meaning of the Shema in the context of Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic history of Israel. The monotheism is conveyed by the Shema in Deut.6:4, which is the embodiment of the divine revelation of YHWH and its relationship to his people, Israel. In Deut.6:4, YHWH reveals himself first by calling Israel to hear/listen to him as the divine revelation. And such revelation requires obedience that is been carried out by devoted love to YHWH, as in verse 5. This relationship between YHWH and Israel, is initiated by YHWH alone, and maintained by Israel’s obedience and love, which are characteristics of the book of Deuteronomy. Deut.11, 26 and 28, indicate that obedience and love to YHWH bring blessings and disobedience and idolatry bring cursing. The relationship of YHWH and Israel is illustrated by several different secular perspectives, for example, the vassal-overlord relationship in 1Sam18:16, 2Sam19:6-7, and 2Sam 20:2; the master and slave relationship in Deut.15:16 and 4:40; the marital relationship in Hos 3:1; the father-son relationship in Deut.1:31 and 32:11-18, and the *Herem* in Deut. 6 and 7. The relationship of YHWH and Israel went through the whole patriarch time to the Kingdom of Judah, characterizing the entire Deuteronomistic history of Israel. However, the relationship between YHWH and Israel seemed collapsed by the catastrophe of the Fall of Jerusalem in 586 BCE.

Accordingly, in the third part, the understanding of monotheism is updated with the situation that the Israelites confronted in the Babylonian exile. In Deuteronomy, the relationship is excluded covenantal relationship with YHWH and Israel. Along with the Fall of Jerusalem, this relationship seems collapsed, and the covenant seems ceased. In the Babylonian exile, Israelite confronted more complicity of idolatry. Before the exile, Israelite were in the Land, where idols or foreign gods are forbidden, and their disobedience and idolatry appeared to be the worshipping to YHWH by different objects, for example, the golden calves with Jeroboam. However, in the exile, they were forced to confront varieties of idols’ worshipping. The exilic Israelites were known as to worship YHWH along with idol worshipping in Babylon. In Isa.44, it indeed reflects such situation. Thus, the tensions of this covenantal relationship between YHWH and Israel appeared to be the tensions of YHWH and idols. By

both broadening and narrowing of the understanding of YHWH and His sovereignty in Deutero-Isaiah, it fulfills the comprehensive understanding of monotheism on its own right in exilic period. The reconciliation of the relationship is introduced in Deutero-Isaiah by narrowing a much more specific divine revelation as “apart from me there is no God” and “apart from me there is no savior”, which exalt YHWH and His sovereignty to the highest degree. At the same time, the core understanding of monotheism is broadened from nationalism to universalism, by condemning the idolatry of Israel in Babylonian exile. By introducing Isa.43, 44 and 45, the last part of this thesis argues the monotheism in Deutero-Isaiah, in a way of understanding as the relationship between YHWH and Israel, has been revealed into a new stage: YHWH is going to save Israel, and Israel is the witness of His sovereignty over the entire universe.

1. The translations and interpretations of the Shema

Deut.6:4, “Listen, O Israel! YHWH-our God-YHWH-one”, is known as the Shema.²

The title Shema also refers to the Jewish liturgical confession of faith.³ It contains longer version from verse 4-9 and applied as a unit for Jewish daily prayer. In addition, the Shema owns a scale of verse 4-5, is characteristic with Christian tradition,⁴ which is cited in the Gospel of Mk. 12: 28-34. In the New Testament's context, it is known as the greatest commandment.⁵ Thus, it is considered to be one of the most well-known and significant verse in the study of both the Old Testament and the New Testament, and eventually the Hebrew Bible.

The Shema appears six times in the Book of Deuteronomy,⁶ and it is used as structural signals within each major discourse that dominate the whole book of Deuteronomy. Imperative form of שמע is followed by word “ישׂרָאֵל” in Deut.6:4, translated as “Hear, O Israel!” It opens the section of Moses’ periphrasis immediately after an account of the giving of the Ten Commandments in the previous chapter. And it is following by “יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יהוה אֶחָד”, “YHWH-our God-YHWH-one”. Those four words are been carefully examined and researched in many aspects, such as grammar analyzing, etymological and semantical researching.⁷ According to the Biblical Hebrew, יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יהוה אֶחָד can be read as one or two nominal clauses, regarding the different applications of the subject and predicate. It is possible to render each of the two phrases here either with or without the verb *is*, or indeed to provide the verb between the two clauses.⁸ In addition, the translations and interpretations of each word are complex. Hebrew word “יהוה” has a significant position in Judaism and its Holy Scriptures. Together with “אֱלֹהֵינוּ”, they have been carefully applied and observed through the whole history of Israel until today. Another problem for interpretation is about semantic

² Joseph Herman Hertz, *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs: Hebrew Text, English Translation and Commentary*, (London: The Soncino Press,1961), 770.

³ Joseph Herman Hertz, *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs, Hebrew Text English Translation and Commentary*, 769.

⁴ S. Dean McBride, JR. “The Yoke of the Kingdom, An Exposition of Deuteronomy 6:4-5”, *Interpretation (Richmond)*, 27 (3):273-306 (1973), 279.

<http://proxy.via.mf.no:2099/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&sid=c76f5041-6934-4981-a6f2-c5220893de5b%40sessionmgr4009>

⁵ Mt.22:34-40; Mk.12:28-34; Lk.10:25-28.

⁶ Deut. 4:1, 5:1, 6:4, 9:1, 20:3 and 27:9. The first two occurrences are different from the rest of them, which occurs with a statement, rather than an objection in the first two.

⁷ Vladimir Orel, The words on the doorstep, *ZAW* 109, no.4 (1997), 614-617. 614.

<http://proxy.via.mf.no:2099/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=11&sid=56891781-5ac0-431b-832b-6315b597e794%40sessionmgr4007>.

⁸ J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy, Apollos Old Testament Commentary 5*, (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 2002), 140.

understanding of “אֶחָד” (Echad). This word is translated simply as “one”, but whether it refers to the cardinal as one or adverb as alone, or the nature of the divinity, is still controversies researching. Scholar S. Dean McBride summed a classical Jewish source as

“In the first, it articulated a radical monotheism, a universal divine kingship waiting historical actualization. In the second, developed largely in response to Christian theology and persecution, it became a statement of the immutable oneness of the single divine Being.”⁹

1.1 Four versions of the translation

Current versions of translations appear as four main versions. The first version is known **YHWH is our God; YHWH is one**. This version understands the verse with two separated predicative sentences, characteristic with two parallel subjective –predicative form, יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ and יהוה אֶחָד that are formed within a neat symmetrical structure. This point of view suggests that Deut.6: 4 could be comparable to other Biblical expressions, such as “I am your God” in a form of subjective -be-verb -predicative. Therefore, translation is understood as “YHWH is our God, YHWH is one”. However, the interpretations of these two nominal sentences are different from each other according to Quell. He suggests the understanding of the first nominal sentence is the statement of Monolatry, and the second one is Monotheism.¹⁰ He understood the first nominal as a claim to worship YHWH alone, meanwhile, it is not necessary to deny the existence of other gods. The proclamation is indicated in the second nominal, which emphasized the monotheistic feature by the word “אֶחָד”. This version of translation, according to the first part of the verse identifies that YHWH is Israel’s God, and the second part defines that only YHWH is the exclusive God for Israel. Accordingly, it is not necessarily emphasize the understanding of YHWH by His nature, but only focuses on the relationship between YHWH and Israel.¹¹ Namely, YHWH is Israel’s God and YHWH is the God of Israel. According to Quell, this verse is not a strong statement of monotheism. In version of “YHWH is our God, YHWH is one”, Deut.6:4 is read as a statement emphasizing the relationship of Israel and their God, rather than God himself.

While another argument to support this translation focuses on its authoritative function, with comparison to the prologue to the Decalogue, "I am YHWH your God". However, rather than an introduction, Vervenne support this structural argument and insists that the Shema should be understood on its own right. So to speak, itself is a part of divine revelation, and it serves

⁹ S. Dean McBride, “The Yoke of the Kingdom”, *Interpretation (Richmond)*, 27 (1973), 279.

¹⁰ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of ‘Monotheism’*. 65.

¹¹ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of ‘Monotheism’*. 65.

as an authoritative introduction to the commandments rather than as an introduction of unknown deity. What Vervenne argues is the so-called *Selbstvorstellungsformel* or *Selbstaussage* in which YHWH makes mention of himself by the way of this formula.¹² Therefore, the Shema is considered to be the revelation of YHWH. In its immediate context, it is an explanation to the Decalogue, and re-expresses the theme of love towards YHWH, which is a central message in the book of Deuteronomy.

However, this version is against the rest of the appositional application of אֱלֹהֵינוּ in the book of Deuteronomy.¹³ For example, in Deut.7:9, אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה has been translated universally as YHWH, your God, instead of the YHWH is your God. In fact, to translate אֱלֹהֵינוּ as the apposition to יְהוָה is generally acknowledged by many scholars as a common application in Deuteronomy. Nevertheless, attention needs to be paid on that אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה in Deut.7: 9 and other appositional applications in Deuteronomy. They are in context of a larger sentence, and they serve syntax function in the whole sentence. For example, Deut.7: 9, has syntax function as object, while אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה in Deut.6:4 is a nominal sentence by itself. So to speak, in Deut.6:4 אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה, on other hand, has not such context, and thus, it is possible to be read as two nominal sentences, rather than the appositional usage.

The second version is translated as **“YHWH, our God, YHWH is one”**. This is devoted to the appositional application of יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ. And אֶחָד is thus understood as only one predicate in Deut.6: 4. LXX supports this one-predicate version and has its translation of Deut.6: 4 is known as “κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν κύριος εἷς ἐστίν”. However, the second יהוה is problematic because of its repetition. In the Hebrew Bible, such repetition occurs to express the emotional proclaiming to the Lord. For example, in Exod.34: 6, where the repetition of יהוה is been understood as the emphatic repetition of divine name. This argument is not well-accepted in the context of the Deut.6: 4, where it opens the second discourse right after an account of the giving of the Ten Commandments in Deut.5. Instead of an emphatic proclaiming to YHWH, the second יהוה is more reasonably to be understood as a substantive subject. To support this point of view, an argument of *casus pendens* was raised to explain the first two words,¹⁴ and the second יהוה is thus the subject in Deut.6:4. The verse might be

¹² J. van Ruiten and Marc Vervenne, *Studies in the Book of Isaiah: Festschrift Willem A.M. Beuken*, (Leuven: Leuven University Press,1997), 467-492. Marc Vervenne, “The Phraseology of ‘Knowing YHWH’ in the Hebrew Bible. A Preliminary Study of Its Syntax and Function”, 476.

¹³ Deuteronomy 1:6; 5:2; 6:20, 24, 25; 7:9.

¹⁴ J. Hoftijzer, *The Nominal Clauses Reconsidered*, *Vetus Testamentum*,23 no.4, (1973), P446-510, 484.

translated as “as for YHWH our God, YHWH is one.”¹⁵ And word אֱלֹהִים is grammatically legal predicate in this verse. An early version of Nash Papyrus that contains *Shema Yisrael* may reflect the similar reading and support this one-predicate argumentation. But this Nash Papyrus version holds an amplified version, which contains a “*ho*” at the end of the clause.

This one-predicate version is challenged as well. Francis Andersen argues that it is a verb-less clause. His argument of verb-less clause claims that the independent declarative clauses with order subject-predicate where the predicate is numeral.¹⁶ And his examples, which he took from the Hebrew Bible, show that predicative in the independent declarative clauses are numeral, such as “all the persons of Jacob’s family who came to Egypt are seventy.” And there are more examples in the Book of Numbers. However, whether אֱלֹהִים alone can be considered as a predicate, or it is necessary to have a “*ho*” to be a predicate, is problematic. Except this syntax disagreement, the interpreting of word “ אֱלֹהִים ” signifies in the understanding of the whole verse. Scholar J. Gerald Janzen in his article “The most important word” emphasizes that “ אֱלֹהִים ” contains the meaning of oneness, and “ אֱלֹהִים ” is the embodiment of the identity and character of the God for Israel, he argues that it is an affirmation of YHWH’s fidelity and integrity.¹⁷ A similar interpretation addressed to oneness as a part of the nature of YHWH by McConville.¹⁸ These two interpretations are concerned with the nature of YHWH. On the other hand, the concerning of number, the mono-Yahwistic interpretation goes for the YHWH’s singularity in contrast to other gods has been raised as well.¹⁹ The nature of YHWH is oneness is not necessarily against the mono-Yahwism, McConville argues that the unity or the integrity of YHWH as the nature one and the cardinal one at the same time, intended to prohibit the worship of YHWH in a variety of manifestations.²⁰

“YHWH, our God, is one YHWH” is the third version. This version reads by translating “YHWH, our God” as the subject and the “one YHWH” as the predicative. It is favored by

<http://proxy.via.mf.no:2087/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=8c9fedbf-451a-4cfe-b365-140c08d829fd%40sessionmgr103>.

¹⁵ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of ‘Monotheism’*. 66.

¹⁶ Francis I. Andersen, *The Hebrew Verbless Clause in the Pentateuch*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), 56-57. #45, #52, #54, #58.

¹⁷ J. Gerald Janzen, “On the most important words in the Shema”. *Vetus Testamentum*, XXXVII, 3 (1987), 280-300. 282. <http://proxy.via.mf.no:2099/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=12&sid=6285cb08-f9b7-4ba9-ad13-c9faa1291532%40sessionmgr4007>.

¹⁸ J. G. McConville, *Apollos Old Testament Commentary 5, Deuteronomy*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002), 141.

¹⁹ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of ‘Monotheism’*. 66, Note, 48.

²⁰ McConville, *Apollos Old Testament Commentary 5, Deuteronomy*, 141.

Weinfeld in comparing with other translations. He claims the connotation of “אֶחָד” is not only the unity, but also aloneness.²¹ In order to support his argument, he took another verse in the Old Testament as an example. In 1 Chronicles 29:1 בָּנֵי אֶחָד בְּתָר־כּוֹ אֱלֹהִים, the term אֶחָד emphasized the exclusiveness of the chosen of Solomon. The same indication of elusiveness can be envisioned in Deut.6: 4. But, this argument causes another problem of translating the word “אֶחָד”. Whether the exclusiveness could be represented here by translating the word אֶחָד as “alone” is problematic. Because it is the word לְבַדּוֹ that carries the meaning “aloneness” in Hebrew. And this word is only used in singular, means in a state of separation, alone or by itself.

Despite the disputation of the understanding of “אֶחָד” with “aloneness” or “one”, the reading this version causes disagreement easily. It is not enough an explicit notion of monotheism. To read “YHWH, our God, is one YHWH” leads to the mono-Yahwism: “there is only one YHWH who reveals himself solely at the central sanctuary in Jerusalem”.²² On the other hand, it might imply poly- Yahwism worship in ancient Israel, for instance, YHWH of Samaria.²³ However, it was the local manifestations of the same deity.²⁴ It only reflects the political situation in the north Kingdom of Israel. In fact, the message of Deuteronomy prohibits the cult out of the Temple in Jerusalem. In addition, it focuses on the loyalty to YHWH as only one God and one cult has been emphasized in the Shema and through the book of Deuteronomy. This version causes many directions to understand YHWH and it drives the recognition of monotheism based on Deut.6:4 with a unilateral point of view. Many scholars argue that in the context of the Deuteronomistic history, together with the proclamation in Deutero-Isaiah and other Deuteronomistic literature, the conception of monotheism to understand YHWH as one has formed much latter than Deut.6:4 had proclaimed.²⁵

This version of translation of Deut.6:4 carried another weakness. It leads to inappropriate understanding יהוה יהוה. As the divine revelation, יהוה יהוה is been acknowledged as the name of YHWH, Israel’s God. This term is carefully applied along through the whole history of Israel

²¹ Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary Vol.5*, (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 337-338.

²² MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of ‘Monotheism’*. 71.

²³ According to the Bible, the worship of YHWH in Samaria is due to the division of the Kingdom.

²⁴ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of ‘Monotheism’*. 71.

²⁵ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary Vol.5*, 349. This is not the statement that the Monotheism is created in the Exile period, but came into the full expression.

until today. If “יהוה אֶחָד” is translated as “(is) one YHWH”, which is been criticized that it has deduced the exclusiveness of this name and translated יהוה as count noun instead of the divine name.²⁶ Scholars who support this translation explain this problem in a perspective of mono-Yahwism, which could be a solution with the respect to the proper understanding and application of YHWH. It explains that “(is) one YHWH” is an embodiment of one form of YHWH worship and one only was to be practiced.²⁷ However, mono-Yahwism cannot avoid the thinking of monolatry or inclusive monotheism, which means the existence and value of other gods are recognized, but their veneration for the members and the community under consideration is dissuaded.²⁸ So, “יהוה אֶחָד” translated as “one YHWH” can be considered to emphasize the only one worship form of YHWH, to against the multiplicity of sanctuaries for worshipping YHWH. This version of translation focuses on a single YHWH to be worshiped at a single sanctuary²⁹.

The last well-known version is “**YHWH is our God, YHWH alone**”, rendering the first two words as a nominal clause: YHWH is our God. Word “אֶחָד”, together with the second “יהוה” understood as adjectives. This application can be found supported by another Biblical verse from Zechariah 14: 9. “YHWH alone and his name alone” is adjective to “YHWH will became the king over all earth”, which is a subject- predicate nominal sentence as “YHWH is our God”. An alternative translation as “Our God is YHWH, YHWH alone” has thus been acknowledged. Again, as the former versions, this version has its own problems. First of all, the word יהוה and אֶלֹהֵינוּ are understood to be in apposition in Deuteronomy, and thus this first nominal is problematic. Moreover, there are some Samaritan inscriptions from the Christian era that appended adverb לְבַדּוֹ to Deut.6:4. It implicated אֶחָד was not understood to the function adjectively.³⁰ Rather than a monotheistic statement, this version emphasizes the relationship of God and his folk Israel, its allegiance to YHWH. In the context of Deuteronomistic history and the command to love YHWH, this argument fits immediately in the verse and book of Deuteronomy.³¹

²⁶ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of 'Monotheism'*. 67.

²⁷ Edward Robertson, “Temple and Torah: Suggesting an alternative to the Graf-Wellhausen Hypothesis” Retrieved 6th January, 2017. <https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/api/datastream?publicationPid=uk-ac-man-scw:1m1498&datastreamId=POST-PEER-REVIEW-PUBLISHERS-DOCUMENT.PDF>

²⁸ Anne-Maire Korte, *The boundaries of Israelite monotheism, Interdisciplinary Explorations into the foundation of western monotheism*. (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 13.

²⁹ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of 'Monotheism'*. 67.

³⁰ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of 'Monotheism'*. 68.

³¹ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of 'Monotheism'*. 68.

So far, four main versions of the translation Deut.6:4 have been examined. There is not a translation that bares none defect and meanwhile fits the context perfectly. However, there are still common argumentations that are well accepted. First, it is the grammatical usage of the first two words “יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ” as apposition. The translation of these two words as a nominal sentence attached with a verb “is” is not fitting into the rest of the applications of apposition in the Deuteronomy. Therefore, the translation of “YHWH our God” and “אֱלֹהֵינוּ” stands in apposition to “יהוה” has been acknowledged. Furthermore, the attention need to be paid to word “אֱלֹהֵינוּ” that should be rendered as “God” when use of YHWH, and as “god” when used of deities of other nations.³² But, it doesn’t necessarily say that YHWH is one of gods. It only implies that the cults worship is common in the Deuteronomistic history and YHWH needs to be distinct from other deities. Thus, the first part of the Shema of Deut. 6:4 is translated as “Listen, O Israel! YHWH our God...”

Secondly, when it comes to the rest of two words, “יהוה אֱחָד”, concerning the translation of “YHWH our God” that could be considered as the *casus pendes*, and thus, the translation of this four words appears to be “as for YHWH our God, YHWH is one” with the understanding of “יהוה” as the emphatic repetition of divine name. Accordingly, the word “אֱחָד”, with the discussion of its syntax function of predicate in this verse, has drawn great attention on its proper understanding of the verse and the monotheism that might be generated from.³³

1.2 The meaning of “אֱחָד”

According to the article “On the most important word” written by J. Gerald Jansen, it suggests that word אֱחָד may carry at least four possible alternative meanings, including the cardinal one, emphatically, “alone” and as a name.³⁴ Needless to say, the first meaning, its cardinal meaning as one is certainly without any dispute.³⁵ And the second emphatic meaning of אֱחָד is favored by some scholars as well, known as the only one, unique. And Jansen conclude these two as the same catalogue that describe Israel’s God *in se*; while he sums up other two possible meaning of אֱחָד as the claim of this God upon Israel, understood as “alone”.³⁶

³² MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of ‘Monotheism’*. 69.

³³ There is still controversy over the discussion that whether monotheism is found in Deuteronomy, or is been formed in Deutero-Isaiah. As MacDonald has placed that Braulik, Birth, and Rechenmacher argue that the breakthrough to the “monotheism” is found in Deuteronomy, while others like Vorländer insists this occurred with Deutero-Isaiah. See p59, note 1.

³⁴ A description of word אֱחָד by Janzen in his article “On the most important word”.

³⁵ BDB, 25-26.

³⁶ Janzen, “On the most important words in the Shema”. 280.

Although, the third meaning of יְהוָה as “alone”, as has been discussed above, contradicts the usage of the word לְבַד , and it is even not grammatical right with the *casus pendens* “As for YHWH our God”. The meaning of alone, which יְהוָה carries, cannot be ignored and refuted. And the last meaning as name, comes with an extreme example of prioritizing grammatically correct, could be contributed by Andersen’s formula, “Our one god is Yahweh, Yahweh”.³⁷ But as him-self noticed already, this grammatically acceptable answer leads to an implied question: “Who is our god?” And it may lead to another issue of the name theology. When it comes to the name theory that is raised by Gordon, it is known as to understand the one as the name of YHWH.³⁸ His argument focuses on the cultural influence in Near East and the cultural concept³⁹. However, what it means to call YHWH “one”, again leads back to the understanding of יְהוָה .

As a result, the word יְהוָה could be understood as the meaning “alone” signifying the understanding of Israel’s God and their relationship. In the Hebrew Bible, there are a few examples that have been suggesting that word יְהוָה carries the sense “alone”. In an addition to the instance in 1 Chronicles 29:1 that supports “alone”-translation, Isaiah 51:2, Ezekiel 33:24; 37:22; Zechariah 14:9 are other examples that can be translated as “alone”. Such examples of translating the word יְהוָה as “alone”, are not all identical though. In Isaiah 51:2 and Ezekiel 33:24, “alone” is translated to make the contrast between Abraham as one person and the multitude of his descendent. The same numerical contrast is also with the rest of the examples, such as Solomon, “my son is but one man, YHWH has chosen him”, which are emphasized the numerical contrast “one” in comparing with the rest of others. In fact, those examples do not require the translation “alone”, but to make the contrast.⁴⁰ Those examples indeed emphasize numerical contrast, and at the same time, they provide an excellent sense in the context of Deuteronomy. YHWH, the God of Israel, is alone, is the one contrasts to others, and it makes YHWH as numerical contrast to other gods in relation to Israel. The contrast between YHWH and the “gods” is not relative in either a qualitative or quantitative sense; it is quite simple, absolute.⁴¹

³⁷ Francis I. Andersen, *The Hebrew Verbless Clause in the Pentateuch*, *Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series XIV*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), 47.

³⁸ Cyrus H. Gordon, His name in “one”, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, vol. 29 no. 3, 1970. 198.

³⁹ Gordon, His name in “one”, 199.

⁴⁰ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of ‘Monotheism’*. 70.

⁴¹ S. Dean MacBride, JR, “The York of the Kingdom, An exposition of Deuteronomy 6:4-5”, *Interpretation*, 1973, Vol.27(3), pp.273-306. 294.

Summary:

Word יְהוָה is not only saying YHWH is one in number, but also reflects character of this cardinal one. It is the one that is alone. Such exclusiveness is also confirmed by other text in the book of Deuteronomy and eventually the Hebrew Bible as a whole. The Deuteronomic theology considered YHWH as the God *par excellence*, the solo creator and sustainer of the cosmos (4:32,35,39; 10:14; 32:8,39).⁴² The first part of this essay goes through the analysis of each word of the Shema, and find out that it indicates not only the cardinal one of the understanding of Israel's God, but also the exclusiveness of this God. To say YHWH is one, is not only to say a cardinal one, it is a compelling of an exclusiveness, that is been presented and formulated by the exclusive relationship between YHWH and His folk Israel. What the Shema conveys here is the divine revelation of how and who YHWH is, the relationship between Him and his people, Israel.

⁴² MacBride, "The York of the Kingdom", 293.

2. Monotheism and Deuteronomy

Monotheism, it is the term coined by Henry More in 1660, in the context of discussion of the issues regarding to the terms “pantheism” and “pantheist”, which were raised latter in beginning of 18th century.⁴³ Thereafter, the researching in this category has been developed into a philosophical emphasis. Along with the rising of Biblical historical criticism in nineteen centuries, the researching of monotheism has been related closely with the Old Testament, especially with the Pentateuch and the Prophets.

2.1 Monotheism as a “-ism”

Contemporary understanding of monotheism in the Old Testament is based on the researching of the Pentateuch/Torah. According to the church traditions, it is considered to have been promulgated by Moses, dominated the whole history of Israel thereafter.⁴⁴ Accordingly, one of the contemporary understandings of monotheism is been payed attention through this tradition. It is so-called “Mosaic monotheism”, mainly argued by scholar Gerhard von Rad. The religion of ancient Israel is thus considered as the heritage of the mosaic law that based on the first commandment. This religion is estimated either monotheistic or polytheistic, but a tradition that is featured with the exclusiveness of YHWH and the election of Israel.⁴⁵ For the ancient Israelites, the understanding of YHWH had been characteristic with YHWH’s exclusiveness by denial the existence of other gods. Meanwhile, it also demands the devoted love of Israel to YHWH. That is to say, a confession emphasized relationship is envisioned in the ancient Israelite’s religion, which is known as the mosaic monotheism. In Deut.26: 5-10, the history is traced to the patriarch’s time that indicates the understanding of YHWH has been traced back to the ancestors. Together with the election of Israel, YHWH’s exclusiveness and sovereignty have been characterized in their religion. Thus, mosaic monotheism is distinguished itself from other arguments by placing the accent of the biblical account of “monotheism” on confession and it is envisioned into the history of Israel in the very beginning of the election of ancestors, especially in contrast to an emphasis on

⁴³ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of ‘Monotheism’*. 7. Note 6: Henry More, *An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness*, (London, 1660).

⁴⁴ The majority of Biblical scholars believe that the written books were a product of the Babylonian exile, or even latter, which is based on earlier written and oral tradition. For example, Gerhard von Rad believes that the early historical traditions of the Old Testament began with sort of confessional credo and then regularly modified, expanded, and reiterated in new circumstances. And Julius Wellhausen’s “Documentary Hypothesis” is the most well-known hypothesis that that is to attest and understand the complex traditioning process evident in the texts itself.

⁴⁵ Gerhard von Rad, *God at work in Israel*, translated by John H. Marks, (Nashville: Abingdon,1980), 128-138.

“monotheism” as a stage of knowledge reached.⁴⁶ Instead of a cultural product, the mosaic monotheism assessed the pre-monarchical period in the history of Israel and had been formed through that period.⁴⁷

Another understanding of monotheism is ethical emphasized. It is featured with its moral emphasis, gives a high position of the prophets who formed the understanding of monotheism in the period of exile.⁴⁸ As for the understanding of mosaic tradition, the prophets are not the revolutionary innovators, but the re-interpreters of the traditions they received.⁴⁹

Ethical monotheism is treated as the cultural production through the history of Israel, instead of the Mosaic law.⁵⁰ Such argument that focuses on the monotheism is the result of the development of the ethical and universal conception of God.⁵¹ A similar consideration can be found with the emphasizing on the holiness of YHWH and it becomes the core understanding of ethical monotheism. Through the researching of prophet and their prophecies in the eighth century, a theory of nationalism has been raised and different from the so-called false prophet’s claim: YHWH is the God of Israel and Israel is the people of YHWH, which stresses the adherence of Israel to YHWH. Such claim emphasized the nationalism prophecies superior to the holiness as the nature of YHWH.⁵² Opposite to such false prophecy, the true prophet’s claim that YHWH is holy, YHWH makes moral demands of Israelites: obedience brings blessing and disobedience brings punishment. Kuenen make a distinction of this argument of the false prophecy carefully as:

“All the prophets, without distinction, believed both in the election of Israel by Jahveh and in the holiness and righteousness of Jahveh; but, very naturally, the relation between these two convictions was not exactly the same with the one as with the other. One placed the election in the foreground, and made the revelation of Jahveh’s righteousness subordinate to it.....on the contrary, took the holiness

⁴⁶ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of ‘Monotheism’*. 42.

⁴⁷ Gerhard von Rad, *God at work in Israel*, 128-138.

⁴⁸ Kuenen, Kuenen, Abraham, *The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel, An History and critical enquiry*, London: Longmans Green and Co. 1887. 583.

<https://ia601407.us.archive.org/33/items/prophetsprophecy00kuen/prophetsprophecy00kuen.pdf>

⁴⁹ Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology, volume, two*. (Norwich: Fletcher & Son Ltd, 1975), 3-4. See MacDonald’s comments on it in *Deuteronomy and the meaning of ‘Monotheism’*. 41.

⁵⁰ Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, translation J. S. Black and A. Menzies, (Edinburgh, Kessinger Legacy Publishing: 2010). 558-564

⁵¹ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*. 558-564

⁵² Abraham Kuenen, *The religion of Israel to the Fall of Jewish State, Voll*, (London: Williams and Norgate, 1874), 346. Open library, accessed 03.03.2017

<https://ia601407.us.archive.org/33/items/prophetsprophecy00kuen/prophetsprophecy00kuen.pdf>

of Jahveh as his starting –point, and came to the conclusion that even the chosen people should not be spared.”⁵³

Kuenen highly valued the holiness as one of YHWH’s characters, and the relationship of YHWH and Israel is characteristic with the holiness.⁵⁴ That is to say, nationalism prophecies are subordinated to YHWH’s holiness, when it discusses the understanding of ethical monotheism.

Accordingly, the Babylonian exile can be considered as the embodiment of YHWH’s holiness because of Israelites’ idolatry in the land. Holiness, as one of aspects of the nature of YHWH, requires the ethical faithfulness of Israel. In fact, the whole Deuteronomistic history of Israel does reflect such relationship between YHWH and Israel. In Deut.8, there is a contrast of being obedient and disobedient, verse 6 to 10 indicating the blessings of being obedient; later in verse 19, there is a warning of being disobedient, “If you ever forget the Lord your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed”. In the rest of Deuteronomy, 10:13, 11, 26 and 28 proclaim that whenever Israelites obeyed commandments of YHWH, there are blessings and peace; and there were curses and wars when Israelites disobeyed and committed themselves to idolatry. The holiness revealed from the Deuteronomistic history enable the post-exilic prophets to understand YHWH ethically. Another exilic text reveals the same understanding of YHWH’s holiness. In the book of Ezekiel, the prophet highlighted this character by condemning the abomination of Jerusalem in Ezek.16. And later in Ezek.23, the alliance with foreign political power instead of YHWH Himself, is also considered as idolatry. Finally, Israel’s idolatry lead to the punishment, YHWH brings Babylonians to punish Israel (Ezek. 23:22-27).

On the other hand, the Babylonian exile indicated the universalism of YHWH simultaneously. Israelites were forced to abandon their land exiled in to a foreign country, which proved YHWH’s moral government of the entire world since other nations were the means of punishing Israel.⁵⁵ Immediately, the monotheism in the sense of the absolute non-existence of other gods found its first expression, where is reflected in the rest of the Bible, such as Isaiah 43:11; 44:6 and Zechariah 14:9 and so on.

⁵³ Kuenen, *The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel, An History and critical enquiry*, 361.

⁵⁴ The nature of YHWH is accepted in this paper as oneness, holiness is one of his characters among others, such as righteousness, fidelity and so forth. See Norman H. Snaith, *The Distinctive ideas of the Old Testament*. (London: the Epworth Press, 1954).

⁵⁵ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of ‘Monotheism’*. 24.

Summary:

When monotheism is considered as a “-ism”, it is describing the monotheistic religion of ancient Israel. Ethical monotheism has focused on the moral understanding of YHWH, while the understanding of Mosaic monotheism emphasizes on the confession that accessed the patriarch’s time. Both reflect some aspects of Israel’s religion through the different period of history. However, the understanding of YHWH related to Israel is not only a religion, but also a relationship of election that dominated the whole Deuteronomistic history of Israel. It reflects Israel’s understanding of YHWH, which is characteristic with exclusiveness of YHWH. Together with by denying other gods, ancient Israelites attributed all that occurred to YHWH alone. Such tradition influences the later history, both pre-exilic and exilic period, which means the understanding of YHWH is somehow related to the historical events and how they should be interpreted.

2.2 Monotheism in the Shema and some key texts in Exodus

When it comes to the origin of the monotheism, not as a term, but as the methodology to understand God, it is natural to investigate the starting point of it. However, it is impossible to access the origin of the “monotheism”.⁵⁶ Because even located the origin of “monotheism” in the canonical book of Deuteronomy, it leads to another question about the redaction history of the book.⁵⁷ Synchronic approach to the question of “monotheism” seems to be a mission-impossible. Thus, an alternative method to research the question of monotheism is been raised and put the focusing on the comprehension of monotheism in the context the book of Deuteronomy.⁵⁸ It challenged to the modern researching of monotheism as a theory is that ‘monotheistic’ texts should be read in the light of ‘henotheistic’ texts as much as *vice versa*.⁵⁹ So to speak, the researching on monotheism need to be examined in the context of the monotheistic text, namely, it has to be examined based on the calls to the wholehearted devotion in the first commandment and the Shema have a significant role in the Deuteronomy, and in the Old Testament as a whole.⁶⁰ In fact, it is generally acknowledged that Deuteronomy’s right in the discussion of “monotheism” is beyond dispute and among numbers of texts that the Shema carries the issue of “monotheism”. The Shema and the Decalogue carried out the monotheism statement, in particular the Prologue and the first two commandments, as the most important co-text for the interpretation of the Shema. Patrick claims that “the Shema is a mirror image of the first part of the Decalogue.”⁶¹ What’s more, Janzen claims that this argument could lead to the proper interpretation the word יְהוָה in the Shema to understand the monotheism. That is to say, the divine revelation in the Shema gains the same weight as it is in the Decalogue that is featured by the exclusiveness of YHWH. Namely, the identity and the character of YHWH in the Shema has been clearly fall on the word “ יְהוָה ”.⁶²

As Janzen has observed, “The word says something about Israel’s God *in se* (Yahweh is ‘one, unique,’ or like); or it says something about the claim of God on Israel (‘Yahweh is our God,

⁵⁶ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of ‘Monotheism’*.52-55.

⁵⁷ By carefully examined the headings of Deuteronomy, it suggests that the final form of the book was understood and presented as a collection of speeches made by Moses before his death. MacDonald. 53.

⁵⁸ His argument is based on the *mutatis mutandis*, Macdonald. 55.

⁵⁹ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of ‘Monotheism’*.58.

⁶⁰ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of ‘Monotheism’*.58.

⁶¹ Patrick D. Miller, “The Most Important Word: The Yoke of the Kingdom”, *Illiff Review* 41, no.3, (1984), pp. 17-29. <http://proxy.via.mf.no:2087/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=5&sid=0279ec03-0350-41fe-829a-ab6230a2dac0%40sessionmgr120>

⁶² Janzen, “On the most important words in the Shema”. 282

Yahweh alone' or the like)."⁶³ The attention is paid on the divine revelation of the word יְהוָה , understood as "oneness" as the nature of YHWH. YHWH is the divine unity of fidelity and integrity.⁶⁴ These two characters haven been connected closely to the activities of YHWH in the history of Israel. The fidelity of YHWH has actually been embodied in exodus from Egypt, as it is the promise that YHWH had made to the Israel's ancestors; the integrity of YHWH is insurance of the relationship between YHWH himself and His people through the covenant on Sinai. The nature of YHWH has been revealed though such historical events, which is indicated through the divine revelation in the Shema. Word " יְהוָה " in the Shema is not only a word, but a series of historical events that reveals this oneness nature of YHWH. His fidelity and integrity are envisioned into the word " יְהוָה ".

The Fidelity of YHWH is represented by the events of the Redemption from Egypt and the Sinai covenant. In Exod. 19:4, on the mountain of Sinai, YHWH said to Moses, "You yourself have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. (NIV)" and 20:2 "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery", it declares clearly that the covenant at Sinai is grounded in the Redemption from the Egypt.⁶⁵ And the Redemption, Janzen argues that it is grounded the in the identity of YHWH. YHWH's nature of fidelity is grounded in His identity, which are been disclosed in two-fold manner.⁶⁶ The fidelity has been revealed by given the divine name in Exodus 3:14 "God said to Moses, 'I am who I am....I am has sent me to you.'" And immediately in the next verse, the divine self-manifestation is been made by the "the God of your fathers-the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob- has sent me to you". Directly, the fidelity is traced back to the promise to the Abraham, which is now been proclaimed by YHWH to Moses at Sinai. The fidelity as the nature of YHWH is been represented by the saving act that indicated in verse 8, "So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land...", which is motivated by the remembrance of the covenant and promise to the ancestors. Again, His fidelity is the origin and driven power of the Redemption from the Egypt, and eventually all the events that had happened in the history of Israel.

⁶³ Janzen, "On the most important words in the Shema". 280.

⁶⁴ Janzen, "On the most important words in the Shema". 282.

⁶⁵ Janzen, "On the most important words in the Shema". 282.

⁶⁶ Janzen, "On the most important words in the Shema". 282.

And the integrity of YHWH is then reflected by the special event that exposes the un-loyalty of Israel, namely, the crisis of the golden calf. This crisis begins with the manufacture of the golden calf and it leads to the wrath of God to Israel. The issue of integrity of the covenant partners seems to be in a crisis for both sides. On one hand, it exposed the un-loyalty of Israel with the manufacturing of golden calf, and on the other hand, the crisis emerges on the side of YHWH in terms of His integrity when He says to Moses:

“Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. . . . Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.” (Exodus 32:7/10, NIV)

From the texts above, the crisis of manufacture the golden calf seems to place the integrity of YHWH in question as the same time as it exposes the un-loyalty of Israel. Instead of the people had been brought up out of Egypt, who are the descents of Abraham, YHWH will make Moses into a great nation instead of Abraham, which reminds the covenant between YHWH and Abraham may be collapsed. It is contrary to the integrity of YHWH. In the following texts from verse 11 to 13, Moses’s intercessory response has well-presented such contradiction. And this intercessory response has three aspects that encounters the integrity of YHWH.⁶⁷ First of all, the focus has been paid on the phrase “your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt” in verse 7 and 11. In the context of reading the Prologue “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt” as the divine revelation of YHWH, “then in YHWH’s words to Moses that identification has been cancelled, as if to assert that God’s identity could be maintained totally apart from the past divine redemption relation to the people.”⁶⁸ There is a rift between the covenant partners, Israel’s un-loyalty had broken the covenant and thus YHWH will cancel it. However, the Redemption out of Egypt is considered to be both the covenanting actions in the remembering of the oath and promise made with the ancestor Abraham, and the divine revelation to the people of Israel that it is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of their ancestors. Because of the crisis of manufacture of golden calf, this continuing is about to abolished and chosen people is about to be disgusted. Furthermore, such rift is not only between the YHWH and the people of Israel, but also in the divine revelation itself, which distinguishes the divine revelation by its own redemptive actions and the crisis of the manufacture of the golden calf.

⁶⁷ Janzen, “On the most important words in the Shema”. 282.

⁶⁸ Janzen, “On the most important words in the Shema”. 283.

And on the second hand, in the next verse, Moses's intercessory response has been proclaimed from the opponent's perspective. Namely, divine wrath will enable Egyptians to re-construe YHWH's original redemptive acts are not compassionate, but evil in its intent, as it indicates in the Exod.32:12. Accordingly, it leads to the inconsistency of YHWH or the deceptiveness of YHWH, either of each case is a double-dealing case and thus, it involves the issue of moral doubleness.⁶⁹ This argument may cause the misunderstanding of YHWH's sovereignty and place YHWH under the moral manipulation.

In comparison with the first two arguments, the third one in verse 13 traced back to the Covenant with the ancestors based on the divine oath and promise. In the context of the covenant with Abraham, YHWH's fidelity through the divine revelation is been mentioned and emphasized. It is the fidelity of YHWH that determined the redemptive action, and as Janzen has commented that "One who forgets such promise will be untrustworthy, so lacking integrity as to leave any promise Moses worthless."⁷⁰ Therefore, the integrity of YHWH signifies, not only for this crisis, but also for the fidelity character of YHWH, the nature of the divine revelation. Again, it is not a moral manipulation that forced YHWH to be integrity because of His fidelity, but the divine revelation, namely, YHWH Himself and His characters that disclosed through the divine revelation to ancestors and eventually to Moses. In Exod.33:19 and 34:5-6, YHWH's forgiveness has been revealed through divine name, which is characteristic with mercy and gracious, and it is an enactment of YHWH's faithfulness or integral consistency.⁷¹ In both instances, the Redemption from Egypt and the crisis of manufacture golden calf, action of YHWH discloses His faithfulness. And to that extent, the integrity of YHWH is elaborated.

These two characters, fidelity and integrity, are united and embodied in the oneness nature of YHWH, which is been given by the word אֱלֹהִים in Deut.6:4. On the one hand, it is the divine revelation of YHWH, He is one who is alone; and at the same time, it reminds Israel that How YHWH is through the history, especially with the events of Redemption from Egypt and the crisis of manufacture golden calf. In such context, the assurance of personal, communal and national worth is required and became obligatory. The acknowledgement of YHWH's suzerainty demands a reciprocal commitment. McBride understands Deut.6:4 as "The verse is

⁶⁹ Janzen, "On the most important words in the Shema". 283.

⁷⁰ Janzen, "On the most important words in the Shema". 283.

⁷¹ Janzen, "On the most important words in the Shema". 284.

solemn reminder of a commitment once made but forgotten, a yoke once received but broken.”⁷² The yoke, for rabbis, is to express both necessary dimensions as confessed in the Shema. McBride claims that “The recitation of Deut. 6:4(-9), ‘the yoke of the kingdom of the Heaven,’ is followed by the biblical verses which represent ‘the yoke of the commandments.’”⁷³ Thus, Deut.6:4, the Shema is been encapsulated with covenantal allegiance. Such allegiance or the covenantal identity once reaffirmed, then the instruction, statute, and decree are appropriate. “The stipulations of the covenant, the irreducible demands which God makes upon his subjects are summarized in the single exhortation ‘love YHWH your God...’”⁷⁴ McBride analyzes that such love is not only be determined by emotion or felling which the faithful should strive to attain, but it is a “lofty spiritual idea or mystical exercise in piety.”⁷⁵ Thus, this love is considered to be a duty, an obligatory piety exercises to YHWH.

⁷² S. Dean McBride, “The Yoke of the Kingdom”, 297.

⁷³ S. Dean McBride, “The Yoke of the Kingdom”, 297.

⁷⁴ S. Dean McBride, “The Yoke of the Kingdom”, 298.

⁷⁵ S. Dean McBride, “The Yoke of the Kingdom”, 298.

2.3 Monotheism is the relationship

The covenantal relationship of love between YHWH and Israel finds its legislation in Deut.6:5, right after the Shema in verse 4. In Deut.6: 4, the Shema begins with the address to the particular people, Israel. It is common to understand it with an attention that paid to the relationship between the proclaimer and the listeners. As the proclaimer, YHWH reveals Himself as the God of Israel, the one and the only one; and Israel, in response, is to love YHWH.⁷⁶ So to speak, the Shema in Deut.6: 4 declares YHWH is one, YHWH is the initiator of this exclusive relationship, which require the personal and relational imports, as it just been observed above: love YHWH your God. This emphatic call requires Israel's wholehearted, devoted and exclusive love to YHWH, which is been declared in the later part of verse 5. The NRSV version of verse 5 is translated as "you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might". According to the research of biblical Hebrew, "אֱלֹהִים" in verse 4 is in imperative form, it is usually to be followed by a perfect with waw-consecutive in the beginning of verse 5. This is a common feature of Deuteronomy, which indicates the command of love in verse 5 in the consequence of the one who was been called to hear in verse 4. All though there is a discussion of the pronoun distinction of "our God" and "your God", Weinfeld argues for this phenomenon that "'YHWH your God' belongs to the credal-liturgical part of the sentence, the confirmation of faith by the believers; hence, it is styled in the first person plural."⁷⁷ MacDonald supported this argument and thereafter he concludes that "the use of second person in verse 5 on the other hand, reflects Deuteronomy's consistent practice for the commandments".⁷⁸

2.3.1 Monotheism is the relationship of covenantal love

In the Book of Deuteronomy, the covenantal love between YHWH and Israel is the main plot that goes through the whole book.⁷⁹ YHWH initiates the relationship and He commanded the devoted love of Israel. Such emphatic statement indicates that of all possible terms "love" most adequately reflects the sorts of response and attitude that is to be shown towards YHWH. The nature of such love had been paid great attention to explore a proper understanding. And at the same time, the exhortation to love "with all your heart, and with your soul, and with all your might" is not only limited in the psychological aspect as well. For

⁷⁶ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of 'Monotheism'*. 151.

⁷⁷ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy, 1-11*. 331.

⁷⁸ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of Monotheism*. Note 1. 98.

⁷⁹ Deut. 6:5; 7:9; 10:12; 11:13; 13:3; 19:9; 23:5; 30:6.

example, the word “לֵב” “heart” in Biblical Hebrew is the seat of a persons’ mind and his will,⁸⁰ rather than a physical organ. And the word “נֶפֶשׁ” “soul” is the source of human emotions and desires.⁸¹ The understanding of “heart” and “soul” may overlap some parts of the connections, but the phrase “בְּכָל-לֵבְךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשֶׁךָ” “with all your heart, and with your soul” appears in Deuteronomy and the rest of the Old Testament many times. It emphasizes the degree of such love, and the phrase is known as a common Deuteronomy idiom to express such love in the Book of Deuteronomy.⁸² Thus, the application of these two words together is considered to emphasize the full devotion to YHWH. Word “מְאֹד” is translated as strength as a substantive enumerated the first two words. It is a gathering of terms to indicate the totality of a person’s commitment of self in the purest and noblest intentions of trust and obedience toward God.⁸³ In addition, the use of “כָּל” “whole”, underscores the singularity and the exclusive relationship of YHWH and his People. To sum up, each word in verse 5 is been coined the full devoted love toward YHWH.

When the word “אָהַב” “love” is viewed in the context of covenantal setting in Deuteronomy, the nature of this love is been characterized with two features of Deuteronomic theology.⁸⁴ First of all, love in Deuteronomy is a mutual love: YHWH’s love for Israel, and imperative necessity of Israel’s love for YHWH in return. Traditionally, loving YHWH within the biblical context is been considered as the mutual obligation to react the precedent of God’s prior love, as shown in the specific events of the Exodus and Conquest, and, a larger context, in God’s very choice of this people from the time of Abraham.⁸⁵ YHWH “loved” ancestors of Israel and because of this, He “chose” their descendants as His people, and eventually brought them up out of Egypt. So to speak, the promise that YHWH made to the ancestors issued in His love for the descendants, as it indicates in Deut.7:8. Thus, the love of YHWH to Israel is synonymous with the acts of gracious election upon which the covenant is grounded.⁸⁶ It is this love, which is also manifested as blessings, prosperity, as long as Israelites love YHWH in return, manifested in obeying the Law and be loyalty to YHWH. And in return, the love of Israel toward YHWH is defined by loyalty and obedience to YHWH, which should be carried out with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

⁸⁰ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy, 1-11*.339.

⁸¹ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of Monotheism*

⁸² MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of 'Monotheism'*.98

⁸³ Frank E. Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary with the New International Version of the Holy Bible. Vol. 3.* (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992). 64.

⁸⁴ S. Dean McBride, “The Yoke of the Kingdom”, 299.

⁸⁵ Duane L. Christensen, *Word Biblical Commentary, Vol 6A*, (Dallas: Word Books, 1991),144.

⁸⁶ S. Dean McBride, “The Yoke of the Kingdom”, 300.

Secondly, love in Deuteronomy is the love that can be commanded. It is including the intimate fearfulness and reverence to YHWH. On the contrary, the Israelites are forbidden to fear other gods.⁸⁷ In Deuteronomy, the “fear” is used for YHWH and “fear of YHWH” is understood as obedience to YHWH and commandments. Israel’s love toward YHWH must be carried out in the form of loyalty, in service and obedience.⁸⁸ In the context of the Book of Deuteronomy, to love YHWH is an action, rather than just emotion.⁸⁹ For instance, to love YHWH is to answer the unique claim (6:4), to be loyal to him (11:1/22; 30:20), to walk in his ways (10:12; 11:22; 19: 9; 30:16), to keep his commandments (10:12; 11:1/22; 19:9), to do them (11: 22; 19: 9), to heed them or his voice (11: 13; 30: 16), to serve him (10,12; 11:1/13). It is, in brief, a love defined by and pledged in the covenant—a covenantal love.⁹⁰ It is the love that should be carried out in loyalty and in observance of the Law, which is the central preoccupation of the Book of Deuteronomy.

2.3.2. Reflections of covenantal love

This covenantal love is a well acknowledged and approbated conception for the Israelites in the ancient times. One practical aspect of expressing this covenantal love is political one. For many scholars, the parallel between the Old Testament and the forms and vocabulary of ancient treaties are well acknowledged.⁹¹ The covenant love in Deuteronomy is thus benefited from the researching of ancient political treaties back to the 18th and 7th centuries BC, in which the term love used to describe the loyalty and friendship joining independent kings, sovereign and vassal, kings and subject.⁹² It is a normal and formal political relationship between two kings or regimes in ancient Near Eastern, which is characteristic with loyalty. Weinfeld has commented that the covenantal love in Deuteronomy in terms of the vassal-overlord relationship with focusing on the loyalty. He argues the book of Deuteronomy was been influenced by such treaty/covenant model particularly.⁹³ And William L. Moran demonstrated that love was used in diplomatic terminology for the loyalty to be shown by a

⁸⁷ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of 'Monotheism'*. 105.

⁸⁸ William L. Moran, “The Ancient Near Eastern of the love of God in Deuteronomy”, *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 1 January 1963, Vol.25(1), pp.77-87.

⁸⁹ William L. Moran, “The Ancient Near Eastern of the love of God in Deuteronomy”, 78.

⁹⁰ William L. Moran, “The Ancient Near Eastern of the love of God in Deuteronomy”, 78.

⁹¹ See Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic School*. Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament*. Ernest Nicholson, *God and His People: Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament*.

⁹² William L. Moran, “The Ancient Near Eastern of the love of God in Deuteronomy”, 78.

⁹³ Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic School*, 59-157.

vassal to his overlord.⁹⁴ An ancient source has showed evidence of this relationship between the Pharaoh and his vassal as “My lord, just as I love the king my lord, so (do) the king of Nuhasse, the king of Ni’i ... — all these kings are servants of my lord.”⁹⁵ Moran has commented that the vassal must love the Pharaoh, and to love the Pharaoh is to serve him and to remain the faithful to the status of vassal. In the Old Testament, such love with focusing on the loyalty is been indicated in 1Sam18: 16, and 2Sam19:6-7, and it was expressed in the 2Sam 20:2. The men of Juda stayed with their king all the way and it indicated their political loyalty to David the King, their overlord. “Stayed with” is the same word can be found in Deut.11:22 and 30: 20. It indicated Israel’s loyalty to YHWH in the same way. “Hold fast to” occurs together with the word love, is the expression in Deuteronomy, to describe the loyalty of Israel in order to love YHWH. Moran concludes, from both biblical evidence and extra-biblical evidence, “the existence of a conception of a profane love analogous to the love of God in Deuteronomy.”⁹⁶ The love in Deuteronomy contains the loyalty of vassal to the overlord, as to Israel to his lord, YHWH.

The same loyalty relationship of love to YHWH can be found in the model of master and slave relationship in Deuteronomy, but with a perspective of the goodness of the master at the same time. In Deut.15:16, the slave’s motive of staying with his master or hold fast to his master, is identified as the one of love for his master. And this love of the slave results from the master’ goodness, which is confirmed by the master by “taking an awl and push it through his earlobe into the door”, and the slave becomes the eternal slave for his master. It reflects a close connection to the treaty relationship. Again, the relationship of YHWH and Israel in Deuteronomy is indicated in the similar way.⁹⁷ However, it is a treaty relationship promise of future wellbeing if Israel obeys YHWH’s commandments, rather than as a description of past wellbeing as is in the case with the Israel slaves.⁹⁸ In Deut.4:40, where YHWH promises the Israel for long living in the land that was been given to Israel. The goodness and the gracious actions are done within the treaty relationship, as the slave, Israel should love YHWH and carry out the duty of loving YHWH and be eternal slave. Such relationship is an embodiment

⁹⁴ William L. Moran, “Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy”, 78-80.

⁹⁵ See the note 17, *EA* 121:61; 123:23, 158:6; 53: 40-44 in Moran’s article “Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy”, 79.

⁹⁶ William L. Moran, “Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy”, 81.

⁹⁷ Deut.4:40, 5:16/29/33, 6:3/18/24, 10:13, 12:25/28, 19:13, 22:7. MacDonald claims these verses reflect the “the love that Israel is to show YHWH, then, is similar to that which the grateful slave shows his master.” See MacDonald, 103.

⁹⁸ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of ‘Monotheism’*, 103.

of political treaties and indicates the loyalty, which is an expression of the covenantal love in Deuteronomy.

Compared with the first two discussions of using the word “אהב”, it is much easier to understand the word “אהב” with a marital relationship. In the book of Hosea, YHWH is portrayed to love Israel as the husband loves his wife. In Hos 3:1, word “אהב” is used to express the love of YHWH to his people Israel. The relationship between YHWH and Israel is described as a marriage. However, instead of claiming the devoted love of Israel to YHWH, Moran argues that it indicates him YHWH’s action toward Israel.⁹⁹ The significance of YHWH’s love, thus, is the requiring of Israel to turn back and seek YHWH. But, it does not necessarily indicate the love of Israel to YHWH. MacDonald argues that “in the view of Israel’s rebellious wandering after other gods this entirely appropriate and need not exclude love as a necessary component or consequence of such turning.”¹⁰⁰ In 2king 23:25, King Josiah’s actions are considered as the action to react to God with “turn back” by word “שוב”, and to seek the Lord with all his heart, soul and strength. The word “שוב” is applied here, rather the word “אהב”, which indicates the identical comprehension with the Shema. The Josiah’s reformation is considered to be the proper reaction to turn back to YHWH and worship him alone. When it comes to the love as marital imagery is describing YHWH’s love to his people Israel, Israel to love YHWH is not a necessary consequence in Hosea. However, turning back and seek YHWH rather than others indeed emphasized, as it is with Josiah. The word “שוב” “turning back” is the consequence of YHWH’s love and turning back to YHWH excludes other gods. The marital relationship, characteristic with the love of YHWH, is emphasized by the response of Israel to seek the exclusiveness relationship with YHWH.

In addition, John William McKay argues that the Deuteronomist’s love as “to him (the Deuteronomist) Israel is the son/pupil of Yahweh, the father/teacher, and the only proper attitude that can be adopted by Israel in this relationship is that of filial obedience, reverential love, or *pietas*.”¹⁰¹ The filial obedience as the imagery of proper love of Israel to YHWH occurs several times in Deuteronomy.¹⁰² And YHWH’s parental imagery is expressed mainly in two aspects, the tender care and the strict discipline. In 1:31, YHWH is been described to

⁹⁹ Moran, “Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy”, 77.

¹⁰⁰ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of ‘Monotheism’*, 101.

¹⁰¹ John William McKay, “Man’s love for God in Deuteronomy and the father/teacher—son/pupil relationship”, *Vetus Testamentum*, 22, no.4 (1972), 426-435. Words in parentheses are added.

<http://proxy.via.mf.no:2141/content/journals/15685330>. Accessed 4th april, 2017.

¹⁰² Deuteronomy 1:31, 8:5, 11:1-2, 13:4, 14:1, 32:10-18.

carry his people through the desert as a father carries his own child; in the Song of Moses, special in Deut.32: 11-18, Israelites are described as the children/sons of YHWH. In those verses, the tender care of YHWH to his people is expressed. On the other hand, YHWH is also been described to discipline Israel like a father to discipline a child, for example in 8:2-5. In 14:1, the son-ship to YHWH is emphasized by separating themselves from Canaanites' practice of mourning for the dead.¹⁰³ In 32:11-18, it also reflects YHWH's discipline to Israel. However, it is not detached from YHWH's tender care for Israel, but indicates the father-son relationship.¹⁰⁴

McKay's understanding of father-son relationship in Deuteronomy as the proper attitude of love devoted to YHWH is enriched by the consideration of Deuteronomy as a wisdom literature. Comparing Deuteronomy with wisdom literatures in ancient Near East, he argues that there is an overlap of thought, form and languages, which also reflected specially in Deut.6: 4-9, which thus contains wisdom motifs.¹⁰⁵ Thus, he added a teacher-pupil understanding into a current father-son relationship of YHWH and Israel. The imagery of YHWH as the teacher/father, and the Israel as the pupil/son, which explains the love to YHWH here is not a sentiment of the emotion, but *pietas*, the filial love and the obedience that the son offers to the *pater familias*, and this is something which can be commanded.¹⁰⁶ The language of son-ship highlights the father-son relationship between YHWH and his people and wisdom understanding of Deut.6:4-9 enables the love commandment understandable from an anthropological perspective. Therefore, the love of Israel toward YHWH as filial imagery is characterized with obedience, as a son obeys to his father, and as a pupil obeys to his teacher.

2.3.3. The issue of Herem

When it comes to the obedience to YHWH, it cannot be avoided to discuss the issue of “*Herem*”. Right after the Shema and the commandment to “love YHWH, God of Israel, with all your heart, and with your soul, and with all your might,” the most striking and disturbing texts of the nature of this love, is been found in Deut.7. Comparing with latter part of chapter

¹⁰³ Gaebelien, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*.100.

¹⁰⁴ Proverbs 3:12.

¹⁰⁵ John William McKay, “Man's love for God in Deuteronomy and the father/teacher—son/pupil relationship”, 428.

¹⁰⁶ John William McKay, “Man's love for God in Deuteronomy and the father/teacher—son/pupil relationship”, 432.

6, MacDonald argues that Deut.7 is the explanation and another expressing of the commandment to love YHWH in the Shema when he analyzed the structure and content of Deut.6:10-25 and chapter 7.¹⁰⁷ Because both sections begin with the “When the Lord your God brings you into the land” in 6:10a and 7:1a, which lead to the consideration of the “*Herem*”.

World “הָרַם” occurs in the Deut.7:2, and it is understood as “devote” or “destroy”.¹⁰⁸ Here in verse 2, it is generally considered to express the meaning of “destroy” in NIV, NRSV, KJV, which is “to destroy” the seven nations are mentioned in the same verse, while there are still controversies to the proper translation and interpretation of the world “הָרַם”.¹⁰⁹ Traditionally, the argument to interpret *Herem* as “totally destroyed”, from both liberal theologians and the Mosaic point of view, does not solve the problem of its legislation. The controversy is mainly focusing on the execution of the ban is considered to be as the expression of love for YHWH and, thus, it strikes a discordant note with the “humanitarian” concerns of Deuteronomy.¹¹⁰ MacDonald in his book has applied a metaphorical methodology to interpret the term, which understand Deut.7 in Deuteronomy is the metaphor of devotion to YHWH, and it must be based on the exegetical observation of the texts in Deut.7.

The argument for the legislation of *Herem* is a combination of two different directions to comprehend the Biblical texts. On one hand, from a rational point of view, he analyzes the texts in relation to the Deut.6 and 8, eventually to the relevant text from Exodus. From the examination of Deut.6 and 8, MacDonald argues that the duration of elimination is limited.¹¹¹ Since the temporal clause that opens the whole chapter indicates that Israelites are to “הָרַם” the Canaanites after YHWH had driven them out and allowed Israel to defeat them. So to speak, the execution took place in the land, not when they entered the land, which makes this command suitable to the context of chapter 6 and 8, which are all about the proper lives styles in the land, namely, love YHWH and to be loyal to Him, and prohibit idolatry. And the

¹⁰⁷ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of 'Monotheism'*. 108.

¹⁰⁸ J.P.U. Lilley, “Understanding the *Herem*”, *Tyndale Bulletin* 44.1 (1993) 169-177. Accessed 07.11.2017. http://98.131.162.170//tynbul/library/TynBull_1993_44_1_11_Lilley_Herem.pdf.

¹⁰⁹ With its meaning “destruction”, it is usually contrary to understand the word as harmless or total destruction. For example, S.R. Driver understands it as “a mode of secluding, and rendering harmless, anything imperiling the religious life of the nation,” while J. Soggin argues that “the total destruction of the enemy and his goods at the conclusion of a campaign.”. See S.R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*. 2ed. (T&T Clark: 1896), 98. J. Alberto Soggin, *Joshua: A Commentary*, (London: SCM Press, 1972), 97.

¹¹⁰ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of 'Monotheism'*. 109-110.

¹¹¹ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of 'Monotheism'*. 111.

seven nations that are mentioned here, they are not the historical descriptions of the ethnic composition of Canaan, but the metaphor to indicate the size and power in contrast to Israel, as the seven nations occur many times in the Pentateuch.¹¹² What's more, the prohibition of inter-marriage indicated the *Herem* is not to be understood as the execution all the Canaanites.¹¹³

On the other hand, from a radical point of view, the absolutely obedience toward YHWH is determined by His sovereignty and His Nature. Firstly, to understand *Herem* in Deut. 7 as metaphor of love towards YHWH, which is to be obeyed in the land after YHWH's expulsion of the previous occupants, reduces the tension between Deuteronomy and the parallel material in Exod.23 and 34.¹¹⁴ In these parallel texts, it is YHWH who will destroy and drive out the Canaanites. And Israel, in response, is required to love and to be loyalty to YHWH in the form of destruction the cultic objects. So to speak, the humanitarian concerns is been transferred to YHWH, who is a jealousy God and righteousness.¹¹⁵ Secondly, the *Herem* indicates the devotion to YHWH is an act of radical obedience that may act against nature impulses, material disadvantages, and eventually the humanitarian concern. The command to destroy Canaanites and their properties in the land, do not spare or pity them, evocates the radical aspect of *Herem* as the metaphor for love toward YHWH. This radical obedience is found elsewhere both in Deuteronomy and in the Old Testament. Example in 1Sam. 15 has illustrated well such obedience when Saul is failed to obey YHWH's command to destroy the animals and the king. Thirdly, the radical obedience can be considered as a rational action. In Deut.9: 5, it obviously declares the reason, "It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations."

Thus, *Herem* in Deut. 7 should be understood as the devoted love to YHWH. MacDonald concludes that "portray of *Herem* in Deut. 7 and the rest of the book gives substance to the metaphor and, thus, to Deuteronomy's requirement that love be shown towards YHWH."¹¹⁶ The realizations of the metaphor of *Herem* as prohibition of intermarriage and destruction of

¹¹² The seven nations are the stereotype to express the hostility of the chosen people in Deut. 9:4.

¹¹³ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of 'Monotheism'*. 112.

¹¹⁴ Deuteronomy is been considered to be directly influenced by Exodus, particularly from a literary critic point of view. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary Vol.5*, 379-380.

¹¹⁵ This will lead the problem to another discussion of YHWH's nature, which is been understand as kindness, righteousness and sovereignty traditionally.

¹¹⁶ MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the meaning of 'Monotheism'*. 113.

religious paraphernalia are not simply to cut off the any relationships between Israel and the Canaanites, *Herem* is aimed to prohibit idolatry. However, Israel was not able to obey the commandment to love YHWH with all your heart, and with your soul, and with all your might. And the un-loyalty of Israel destroyed the relationship between them and YHWH. The covenant seems to be collapsed by the Babylonian exile.

Summary:

The Shema in Deut.6:4 is commonly understood as the declaration of Monotheism, not only because it declares that there is only one God and no other gods exists, but also it implies the oneness nature of YHWH, which requires the devoted love of Israel who is chosen by YHWH. Thus, the understanding of monotheism in Deuteronomy is not only a *-ism*, but also the relationship between YHWH and Israel with such love that is both mutual and can be commanded. This love is mutual: the love of YHWH toward Israel is grounded in His oneness nature of fidelity and integrity; the love of Israel toward YHWH is commanded and it features with loyalty and obedience. In observing different forms of human relationship, it describes the relationship of YHWH and Israel: the covenantal love is analogous to the love that between the vassal-overlord with emphasis on the loyalty of the vassal; the covenantal love is analogous to the love that between the slave and master relationship by focusing on the kindness of the master and the loyalty of the slave; the covenantal love is also analogous to the love of marriage, which calls Israel to turn back to YHWH in an exclusives love relationship with YHWH; the covenantal love is analogous to the love that show the obedience of teacher/pupil, father /son relationship. The most striking form is to be obedience the *Herem* as the metaphor for love toward YHWH, which requires absolute obedience, total loyalty and devoted love. In brief, the Deuteronomic theology of love toward YHWH is to love him with all your heart, and with your soul, and with all your might. It is the call of the Shema.

3. Monotheism in Deutero-Isaiah

In Deuteronomy, the understanding of monotheism is rooted deeply in YHWH's relationship with Israel, which is generated by His oneness nature. The relationship between Israel and YHWH is thus characterized with this nature and it is determined maintaining by the so called covenantal love that is featured with loyalty and obedience. Obey the command to love YHWH in loyalty is the way of life in the land, which brings benefits to their own lives on both material and spiritual lives. Unfortunately, Israel failed to obey the call of the Shema. Their disobedience turns out to be idolatry, especially in worshiping to other gods or cultic objects. In fact, through the entire Deuteronomistic history, it is obviously to observe this failure, namely, the failure to worship and love the true God, who is YHWH, the God of their ancestors. This problem of idolatry seems to be the issue that never been solved. In the later time of the monarchy, King Josiah's reform, the prohibition of offering sacrifice outside of the Temple did have a great effect in the Kingdom of Judah, but it cannot turn away the YHWH's anger that burned against what Manasseh had done. And finally, it draws to the wrath of YHWH. By the fall of Jerusalem, most of the Israelites were exiled to Babylon, which is known as the Babylonian exile. It is generally considered to be the punishment of disobedience and the idolatry of Israel. Thus, the exile is acknowledged as the great catastrophe in the Deuteronomistic history.

The Deuteronomistic history of Israel ended with Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Jerusalem in the year 586BC. Almost the whole nation was exiled to Babylon right after¹¹⁷, left only the poor in the land¹¹⁸. Israelites came into a foreign land, which was a great challenge for their faith of YHWH. The relationship between Israel and YHWH already seemed to be collapsed by the catastrophe, and it encountered a dilemma in the exile. For Israelites, to worship YHWH in the Temple, is the most important religious activity for loving and being obedient toward YHWH during the monarchy period. But it became impossible in the exile. Although there is an evidence that shows Israelites may live in a kind of settlement, it cannot be exposed to the Babylonian deities. Nevertheless, scholar P. Machinist's case study of Israel's religion shows that the exiles were exposed to a variety social, economic, politic and cultural

¹¹⁷ According to the biblical record, there are three deportations to Babylon by king Nebuchadnezzar, 598/7, 587/86 and 582 B. C. E.

¹¹⁸ Debra Moody Bass, *God Comforts Israel, The Audience and Message of Isaiah 40-55*, (Oxford: University Press of America, 2006), 14. There is no further detail of who are the poor in the land, see 2 kings 25 and Jeremiah 52.

situation in Babylon.¹¹⁹ There were various ethnic minority groups, which were free to live their lives and worship their gods. That is to say, a process of acculturation is unavoidable. For some Israel exiles, they seem to worship Babylonian deities as well as continuing worship YHWH.¹²⁰ Thus, the religious identity of Israel exiles is complicated and has drawn great interests for modern scholars. Bass in her book *God Comforts Israel* claimed that worship and religious practice during the exile are limited because of the wide acceptance of Josiah's reform.¹²¹ However, the lack of the Temple makes worship to YHWH by sacrifices offering no longer possible. Such communal worship was forced to adjust into personal and individual religious activities. For being the main form of religious activity, personal prayer was encouraged and characteristic with personal fellowship with YHWH. Whitely even states that the religion of Israel was to survive, it could only do so through individual exiles.¹²²

Under such circumstances, the message of Deutero-Isaiah is significant. In fact, concerning the study of monotheism, the importance of Deutero-Isaiah is generally acknowledged and well-accepted, because it serves a breakthrough for the understanding of monotheism from a national perspective of YHWH into a universal understanding of YHWH, namely, YHWH is not only the national God of Israel, but also the only true God of the entire universe. Accordingly, it expands the monotheism from nationalism to universalism. The understanding of monotheism in Deutero-Isaiah is also based on the relationship of YHWH and Israel. But it encounters a tension between the true God and other gods, regarding the issue of idolatry, particularly prominent in chapter 44.¹²³ At the same time, a comfort message is proclaimed to Israel in chapter 43 that indicates the relationship between YHWH and Israel will be restored by the sovereignty of YHWH, which is been proclaimed in chapter 45.

Those three chapters are located in a relevant discrete unit of Isa. 40-55, which is known as the Second Isaiah or the Deutero-Isaiah within the Book of Isaiah over a century.¹²⁴ The name was given to this unit as Deutero-Isaiah by Bernhard Duhm. Although it still carries

¹¹⁹ Peter Machinist, "Mesopotamian Imperialism and Israelite Religion: A case study from the Second Isaiah", in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palestina, ect.* ed. W.G. Dever and S. Gitin, (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 256. <http://proxy.via.mf.no:2087/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/bmx1YmtfXzQ0NjA1MF9fQU41?sid=807d31c2-05c1-4667-b405-5340c5c469e1@sessionmgr102&vid=0&format=EB&rid=1>

¹²⁰ Ernest W. Nicholson, *Deuteronomy and the Judaeon Diaspora*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2014).45.

¹²¹ Debra Moody Bass, *God Comforts Israel, The Audience and Message of Isaiah 40-55*,23.

¹²² Charles Francis Whitely, *The Exilic Age*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957),81.

¹²³ Isaiah 40:19-20, 41:6-7, 44:9-20, 46:6-7, are considered as the so-called idol-fabrication passages. See Knut Holter, *Second Isaiah's Idol-fabrication passages*. 35.

¹²⁴ John Goldingay, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on 40-55*, (UK: T&T Clark International, 2006), 1-16.

controversies¹²⁵, such as the authorship, the time and place of writing and so forth, the messages of Deutero-Isaiah are well-accepted by scholars, which are focusing on relationship between YHWH and Israel in positive perspective.¹²⁶ More important, the texts and prophecy in Deutero-Isaiah has been considered as the texts that reflect the Israel's religiosity in the Babylonian exile.¹²⁷

3.1 The issue of idols

During the exilic period, the nation of Israel became a nation without territory and religious activities associated with the Temple, their relationship to YHWH appears to be affected by the competition between YHWH and idols in Babylon. The most significant texts of idols in Deutero-Isaiah is chapter 44, known as idols—fabricating passage.¹²⁸

3.1.1 The interpretation of Isa.44:6b, with key words “ראשון”, “אחרון” and “ומבלי עמי”

In Isa.44:6b, the first temporal emphasis falls on “אני ראשון ואני אחרון”, “I am the first and I am the last”, which reminds the same grammatical construction as Deut.6:4. The focusing is been put on the word “ראשון” and “אחרון”, the “first” and the “last”. It also appears again later in Isa.48:12. A similar occurrence in 41:4 as “I am the Lord, who was first and will be with the last as well.” Both Isa.44:6b and Isa. 41:4 focus on the timeline lasting, which could be understood in a perspective of “I am, was and will be always present.”¹²⁹ Another similar comprehension is been located in the perspective of the beginning and the end of time in the context of 41:1-5, as *He* was there at the beginning and will be so at the end.¹³⁰ In Deutero-Isaiah, the prophet proclaimed YHWH's exclusiveness by applying the word “ראשון” and “אחרון” in order to indicate the ground which makes the possible an activity of His that

¹²⁵ Hans M. Barstad, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Book of Isaiah, “Exilic” Judah and the Provenance of Isaiah 40-55*. (Oslo: Novus forlag: 1997), 35-52.

¹²⁶ John Goldingay, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on 40-55*, 49-57.

¹²⁷ Hans M. Barstad, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Book of Isaiah, “Exilic” Judah and the Provenance of Isaiah 40-55*. 37. Scholars, such as Wette, and Knokle, would like to place Deutero-Isaiah during the period of Babylonian exile, or at least it reflects the exilic character.

¹²⁸ Knut Holter, *Second Isaiah's Idol-fabrication Passages*. (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1995), 138. Mainly refers to Isa.44:9-22.

¹²⁹ Shalom M. Paul, *Isaiah 40-66, Translation and Commentary*, (Cambridge, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 229. He understood “first” and “last” in a perspective of “I am, was and will be always present.”

¹³⁰ Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66, A Commentary*, (London: SCM Press LTD, 1969), 65. He understood these two words in the context of 41:1-5 as *He* was there at the beginning and will be so at the end.

embrace the totality of universal history.¹³¹ Thus, the understanding of monotheism in Deutero- Isaiah is characterized with the dimension of universe. And YHWH of the entire universe, certainly has the ability to prophesy and to control the history, both in the very beginning and in the future that about to come.

Furthermore, within the current paragraph, verse 6b is in the introducing part of the entire chapter 44. Before the prophet condemned the fabricating of idols, he introduced the YHWH who is the God of entire universe by claiming in verse 7, “Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come—yes, let them foretell what will come (NIV).” The prophet proclaimed that only the God who himself is “the first and the last”, is able to do such thing. This understanding of “ראשון” and “אחרון” is in fact in the context of the verse in Isa.8:23(9:1).¹³² Williamsons’ interpretation of “ראשון” and “אחרון” is related to the Proto- Isaiah. He argues that “ראשון” and “אחרון” in Deutero- Isaiah could “refer to contrasting periods of time, one characterized by ‘contempt’ and the other by ‘glory.’” The “ראשון” and “אחרון” can be considered as one of the divine titles that the prophet uses, thus, it signifies YHWH who is the First, brought the land into contempt and “the Last” would eventually glorify it again.¹³³ In chapter 44:6b, this point of view gives the understanding of monotheism in Deutero- Isaiah a eschatological comprehension within the timeline of universalism.

The prophet in Deutero- Isaiah encounters the problem of understanding the God of Israel, YHWH who is one, according to the Deuteronomic tradition through the history. However, such understanding of YHWH has been challenged in the Exile. The monotheism before Babylonian exile appears to be different understanding of the same God, who is YHWH. For example, the event of manufacturing of golden calf is considered as the idolatry of images or objects. In Exod. 32:4, Aron said “These are your gods (*or god*), Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.” And it reoccurs in verse 8 in the same chapter, YHWH said to Moses, “...have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf... ‘These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.’” In Babylonian exile, the understanding of monotheism turns to be another perspective. For the exilic Israelites, the monotheism appeared to be the different understandings of different gods. In this way, YHWH’s uniqueness and exclusiveness were

¹³¹ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66, A Commentary*, 65.

¹³² Hugh G. M. Williamson, “First and last in Isaiah”, in *Of Prophets’ visions and the Wisdom of Sages, Essays in Honor of R. Norman Whybray on his Seventieth Birthday*, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 99.

¹³³ Williamson, “First and last in Isaiah”, 98.

deduced in the exile. The prophet proclaimed the universalism of understanding of YHWH through the divine revelation that YHWH's sovereignty is over entire universe. So to speak, YHWH in Deutero-Isaiah is the God of Israel, one the only one, the true God. At the same time, YHWH is the only true one God of the entire universe, including the whole history of time, the area of Babylon.

The exclusiveness of YHWH is also emphasized by the word “וּמִבְּלַעַי”¹³⁴, translated as “apart from me” or “beside me”. This world is identified again in verse 8 in the same chapter. It also occurs in the previous chapter 43:11.¹³⁴ The self-declaration in the start of verse 6b has reaffirmed the singularity of YHWH applies to all time, first and last.¹³⁵ In comparing with the Shema in the book of Deuteronomy, it makes the understanding of monotheism with the dimension of entire universe. Thus, Isa. 44:6b appears to be double emphasis on the exclusives of YHWH, both temporally and territorially.¹³⁶

On one hand, it underlines the only one true God, on the other hand, it draws attention to be paid on the competition of YHWH and other gods later in the same chapter, together with 41:22-24, where they are even addressed with the words, “Tell us, you idols, what is going to happen...But you are less than nothing and your works are utterly worthless...”. Westermann has made an obscure comment on this God and gods competition. What he argues is that it is assumed gods existed and thus, he understood the claim in verse 6b as a “an act or event involving two parties”, instead of “a statement of fact”.¹³⁷ In this way, verse 7b is interpreted as a claim that made by God, the issue is whether or not he is the one God as evidenced by his lordship of history in which his word is fulfilled. On the contrary, the inability of the gods of the nations to produce such evidence demonstrates the nothingness of their claim to lordship. Thus, this claim stands or falls that gods' real existence stands or falls.¹³⁸ The prophet of Deutero-Isaiah declared the existence of the only one true God, and then lead the issue of gods of nations in to the shade of idols.

¹³⁴ See also 45:6, 14, 18, 21, and 46:9.

¹³⁵ John D.W. Watts, *Word Biblical Commentary vol. 25, Isaiah 34-66*, (Texas: Word Books Publisher, 1987), 145.

¹³⁶ Here it refers to the timeline of the entire universe or the creation of the world, from eternity to eternity. (Isaiah 40:28), and territorial concern is not only the geographic area out of the Land, but also the heaven and the earth. Sees Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah: a commentary on Isaiah 40-55*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 39-41. Here in this paper it mainly refers to Babylon.

¹³⁷ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66, A Commentary*, 140.

¹³⁸ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66, A Commentary*, 141. Italic is added.

3.1.2 Idols-fabricating passage: Isa. 44:9-22

And the issue of idols then comes to the next stage: the tension mainly falls on YHWH and the fabricated idols. The prophet of Deutero-Isaiah boldly claimed that YHWH is the only true God of the entire universe, and the other so-called gods are just the figments of human imagination. In 44: 6b, “I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God (Isa. 44:6 NIV)”, is a recognized as the monotheistic declaration.¹³⁹ The entire verse is thus read in the sense of “alone”, which reflects the call of Shema in Deut.6:4. It emphasized the exclusiveness of YHWH and there are no gods in the same sense as YHWH is God. The prophet of Deutero-Isaiah made an ironic comparison of YHWH and idols in the later section of chapter 44: 9-20. YHWH is who “פָּרָא” “create” the heaven and the earth, and idols whom are “יָצַר” “form” by human beings according to 44:9-20. Scholar Knut Holter has commented on this paragraph as a distinguished passage, which is different from other idol fabrication passages in Deutero-Isaiah. For instance, 40: 19-20, 41:6-7, and 46:6-7 are considered as the *describing* passages of idol-fabrications, while 44:9 -20, prophet *actually criticizes* them explicitly and idol-fabricators are condemned.¹⁴⁰

In Isa.44: 9-20, it opens by “יֹצְרֵי-פֶסֶל” , translated as nominal phrase “all who make idols”, it depicts a notorious problem in the history of Israel, as well as in the Babylonian exile. Word “פֶסֶל”, translated as “idol” or “image”, is a typical term in text dealing with idolatry in Deutero-Isaiah, it repeated in 42:17, 45:20 and 48:5. Word “יָצַר” has connotation of human craftsmanship and skill. It is attested twice in Deutero-Isaiah as a technical term relating to idol-fabrication in 44:9 and 43:10. In total, it occurs twenty-two times in the application with YHWH as its subject and Israel as its object.¹⁴¹ The accent falls on being formed or made. Such application of this term has been considered as a metaphor may derive from the concrete use of the term as the major *terminus technicus* for the work of the potter.¹⁴² In this way, the potter is sovereign vis-à-vis the clay, so is YHWH vis-à-vis Israel. Thus, this well-known scene from everyday life of the potter at work is been used to illustrate the relationship between YHWH and Israel. So to speak, YHWH is been presented as the one who “יָצַר” (formed) Israel, as it is in 43:1, “ And now, so says YHWH, he who has created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel”. It is a typical pattern can be seen in 44:2/24, 45:11 and 49:5.

¹³⁹ John Goldingay, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on 40-55*, 338.

¹⁴⁰ Holter, *Second Isaiah's Idol-fabrication Passages*.138.

¹⁴¹ Carroll Stuhlmueller, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah*, (Rome: Biblical institute Press, 1970), 213-216.

¹⁴² Holter, *Second Isaiah's Idol-fabrication passages*. 140

YHWH's self- presentation as the one who has "formed" Israel emphasizes the domination and eventually the election of Israel.¹⁴³

Deutero-Isaiah's application of "יצר" can be reflected in other examples to illustrate YHWH's domination, besides Israel. In 45:7, where YHWH is the one who "formed the light"; and in 45:18, YHWH "formed the earth", and so on. The application of the term "יצר" in Deutero-Isaiah depict YHWH is the one who forms the world and history. Holter concluded that "the wide use of 'יצר' in Deutero-Isaiah, denoting different aspects of YHWH's creation.¹⁴⁴This idea of YHWH 'forming' Israel seems, however, to dominate. So, when *Deutero-Isaiah* uses to 'יצר' contrast the idol-fabricator with YHWH, the contrast could hardly have been greater." This ironic passage continues and reach the summit by verse 16 and 17. These two verses are in a neat parallel structure:

<p>V16. Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill. He also warms himself and says, "Ah! I am warm; I see the fire."</p>	<p>V17. From the rest he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says, "Save me! You are my god!"¹⁴⁵</p>
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Leading by the verse 15 as the introduction, an obvious contrast is made by verse 16 and 17. A same tree can be used for two entirely different purposes, either for making a fire or a god. The word "הַצֵּי" "half" is used in verse 16 and repeated explicitly, emphasizing the same tree that is been used. In verse 17, word "וְשְׁאֲרֵיתוֹ", "the rest of it" confirms the same reference as the same tree as the suffix "הַצֵּי" in verse 16. In addition, the use of word "שארית", is striking because it is almost always used to express a particular "rest" of human being elsewhere in the Old Testament.¹⁴⁶ It is used as to the people, to denote the rest of Israel especially, rather than a dead object like a part of a tree. Out of a total 65 occurrences of "שארית" in the Old Testament, only two are used to express a non-personal "rest", which including 44:17. The other occurrences of "שארית" within Deutero-Isaiah fits into the usage of "שארית" for addressing Israel as "שְׁאֲרֵית בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל", "the remnant of the house of Israel", known as "rest - theology".¹⁴⁷ It is dealing with Israel, out of the dispersed people of Israel, and YHWH will make a new and redeemed people, still being under his care, expressed in 46:3-4.

¹⁴³ Holter, *Second Isaiah's Idol-fabrication passages*. 141

¹⁴⁴ Holter, *Second Isaiah's Idol-fabrication passages*. 142. Note 34, W.H. Schmidt , "יצר", *THAT 1*, (1984) 764.

¹⁴⁵ Holter, *Second Isaiah's Idol-fabrication passages*. 142.

¹⁴⁶ Holter, *Second Isaiah's Idol-fabrication passages*. 177.

¹⁴⁷ Holter, *Second Isaiah's Idol-fabrication passages*. 178. Note 122. See H. Wildberger, "שאר", *THAT 2* (1984),

Another ironic example in verse 17 is about the fix expressions of Israel’s prayer. “הַצִּילֵנִי” “save me”. It is a typical appealing to YHWH in the book of Psalm. For example, Psalm 31:3/16, 39:9, 51:16 and 59:2/3. In contrast, idol-fabricators are begging a part of tree which himself made to save him. “כִּי אֱלֹהֵי אֶתְּ” “you are my God” is a confession that can be found in Psalm, and “אֵל” also a typical example of Deutero-Isaiah’s terminology to make contrast to YHWH and other pagan gods.¹⁴⁸ Such contrast is made in 45:20-21, “אֵל לֹא יוֹשִׁיעַ” “a god that cannot save” is contrast to “אֱלֹהֵי צְדִיק וּמֹשִׁיעַ” “a righteous God and Savior”. Holter has commented it is probably the same ironic function in verse 17, and eventually in verse 16 as well. In verse 16, the word “אֵשׁ” “fire/light” plus the word “רָאִיתִי” is elsewhere in the Old Testament applied only to mean “seeing light”, and this is the metaphor generally acknowledged as experiencing the deliverance through YHWH, such as it is in Isa.9:1 and 53:11. However, here it is been applied by idol-fabricator to say “see the fire” that comes from tree, which he made a god for himself later in verse 17.

Summary:

From the analysis above, it is obviously to figure out that the prophet of Deutero-Isaiah makes deliberately ironic contrast in 44:9-20, in order to express that how ridiculous for those idol-fabricators who form idols by a tree. In fact, the word “תֹּהוּ” “noting/emptiness” in verse 9 is applied to introduce this idol-fabrication passage. The occurrence of word “תֹּהוּ” in Deutero-Isaiah is almost one third of its total occurrences in the Old Testament. Especially in 45:18, “תֹּהוּ” is applied in relation to YHWH’s creation of the earth, which was not created to be empty, to make the contrast. What’s more, an even sharper contrast is made by the application the same word in 40: 17, where the nations are considered as “תֹּהוּ”. Idol-fabricators make a fire with a tree and with the same tree they make a god, which is actually “תֹּהוּ”. Such ironic passage contrasts YHWH’s self-revelation in the same chapter verse 6, where YHWH declares “I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God”, dose differentiate YHWH from other gods that are fabricated. Divine revelation revealed that YHWH is the God that beyond the time and boarder. Temporally, YHWH is the first and the last; and territorially, YHWH is also the God of Israel in the exile. The entire chapter is considered as

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¹⁴⁸ Knut Holter, “The wordplay on ‘אֵל’ (‘God’) in Isaiah 45, 20-21”, *JSTOR* 7(1993), 88-89.
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09018329308585008>

the monotheistic declaration, and it is characterized with universalism perspective, by criticizing other gods as emptiness.

3.2 On the way to universalism

The understanding of monotheism in Deutero-Isaiah has gained a feature with universalism in chapter 44. It reflects the relationship between YHWH and nations, namely, there is almost no connection with YHWH and the nations when it comes to the salvation/deliverance. It seems that the nations are been excluded out the relationship between YHWH and Israel.

Meanwhile, in chapter 43, YHWH's relationship with Israel turns into a new stage under the exile. Namely, YHWH determined to restore it, after the relationship was broken by Israel's unloyalty and idolatry. In chapter 43:10-13, this saving action had been declared and it shall be restored. In addition, Israel is not only the chosen one, but also the chosen servant who shall be the witness of YHWH in front of the nations and His sovereignty universally.

Isa.43:10-13 demonstrated YHWH's special relationship between YHWH and Israel, which contains a two-fold comprehension. Firstly, YHWH chose Israel and Israel as his witnesses and his servant(s).¹⁴⁹ And secondly, this relationship will be restored by YHWH's sovereignty. In the context of these verses from 43:8-15 it is considered as the trail speech, as the same literary category as 41:1-5 and 41:21-19. Verse 10 to13 is the verdict section in this trail speech of YHWH. In this short passage, YHWH declared his special election of Israel and accordingly, His salvation/deliverance to this nation.

3.2.1 The identify and the function of the witness

Verse 10 begins with the issue of witness. The trail speech has started by gathering all the nations and in addition to Israel as His witness together, YHWH claimed Israel a His witness “עֵדִי” and servant “עַבְדִּי” (verse 10a). Although some comments have showed that the repetition of Israel's identify as witnesses and servant in the same verse is odd, both syntactically and difficult in content.¹⁵⁰ Other versions, such as LXX takes them as two noun that binds with “and”, while Targum translated second noun as a sentence, “you are my witnesses and so is my servant.”

In case of the second noun can be considered unparalleled to the first one, the word “servant” is then not the second predicative that has the parallel function with “witnesses”, but the

¹⁴⁹ עֵדִי (witnesses) is plural, and עַבְדִּי is singular, but some scholar prefers to translate servant into servants. See note 136. Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 165. And to understand עַבְדִּי as collective noun, see M. Shalom, *Isaiah 40-66*, 211.

¹⁵⁰ Goldingay, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on 40-55*, 286.

function to explain the first one. What's more, the conjunction "and" serves this explicative meaning to explain "witnesses".¹⁵¹ So to speak, "servant" as a singular noun, is the identity of Israel whom has been chosen by YHWH to witness Him, as the only one true God. The servant is the identity of Israel, and the witness is the function of this identity of servant. Word "servant" here is then understood as a collective noun to describe Israel as a nation of witnesses to other nations.

In the relevant contexts of Isa.43, the servant has been identified by Isa. 41:8-13 and Isa.44:1-2. Israel/Jacob is generally accepted as the servant of YHWH according to the Jewish tradition, and this tradition could be traced back to the patriarchs' time.¹⁵² YHWH for Israel, is the God of patriarchs, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The relationship of YHWH and Israel started with the choose/election of the patriarchs, which is been understood as the relationship of love, the love that is covenantal and mutual. It has been reflected by many different perspectives, as it has been discussed in the second part of this essay. For instance, in the book of Deuteronomy, the relationship has been embodied in a servant/vassal- lord relationship that is one of the reflections to the mutual love of YHWH and Israel. This reflection is coined with the typical politic feature in ancient Near East, it is familiar with the nations and landlords at that time. Servant/vassal- lord relationship requires duty of both sides. Since Israel's disobedience and unloyalty, it has been broken and Israel seems to be punished and abandoned, especially by the Fall of Jerusalem. Until the Deutero-Isaiah, such relationship had turned into a new stage and it is been promised to be restored by YHWH's saving action. And the servant Of YHWH became one of the most important theological relationship in Deutero-Isaiah. On the other hand, in this short passage Isa.43:10-13, the saving action of YHWH had been declared and YHWH's saving willing is determined and revealed in the word "מֹשִׁיעַ", translated as savior or deliverer. It occurs in verse 11 and 12 continuously and refers to the protection and rescue which Persian forces and administration can provide against whatever enemies there may be.¹⁵³

In this short passage from verse 10 to 13, the monotheism of understanding YHWH in Deutero- Isaiah 43 is maintaining universalism, by exalting YHWH to the highest degree, as the same time emphasizing Israel as witness to other nations in verse 10 and 12; and

¹⁵¹ Goldingay, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on 40-55*, 286.

¹⁵² Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 117

¹⁵³ Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 134.

meanwhile, in verse 13, YHWH's relationship with Israel is been highlighted by YHWH's determination to deliver Israel from the exilic oppression. So to speak, the election of Israel preordains the action of deliverance. The election, is the chosen of Israel as the servant of YHWH that appears elsewhere in the Old Testament. In Deutero-Isaiah, Watts has observed that the phrase "servant of YHWH" is used with the same concentrated emphasis within each one of the occurrences, as same as the it is in the 43:10-13. In its larger context of chapter 40:1- 49:4, Israel is called "the servant of YHWH".¹⁵⁴ Scholar Bernhardt Duhm even distinguished four passages from other verses in Deutero-Isaiah, which are 42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:4-9 and 52:13-53:12 that sharing the same topic of "servant songs". Those verses are focusing on the servant identity of Israel in relation to YHWH.

There are also other "servants" who appeared in the Deutero-Isaiah. In chapter 44:28, this servant is identified as Persians emperors, Cyrus. He is the conqueror whom YHWH has called from the east to accomplish His will. According to watts, Cyrus first appears in 42:1, and later in chapter 44 he was titled as "shepherd" and in 45:1 as "anoointed".¹⁵⁵ And his successors Darius and Artaxerxes are identified as the servant of YHWH in 49:5-6, 52:13 and 53:11. Theirs roles are in the same function, namely, to serve YHWH and accomplish His will. Watts also observed the third identify as the servant, whom are the believing and obedient worshippers. They delight in YHWH's new city that was built by Persians for Jews and their God.¹⁵⁶ Those three different identities are been observed by Watts as the servant of YHWH, they are different, even in different nations, but with the same function, to be the witness of YHWH and His acts.

It is obvious that the function of the servant in Deutero-Isaiah is to witness YHWH's sovereignty in front of all nations. There is a subtle shift between YHWH and other deities in Deutero-Isaiah when the texts are carefully examined. In the idol-fabricating passages in Isa.44, it has been discussed that foreign gods are nothing but emptiness, they are known as the material objects that made of wood and metal. In this sense, the competition of YHWH and other god has been made and indicated in Isa.44:8, and the same competitive verse is Isa.43:13. On the other hand, Isa.43:10-13 has emphasized YHWH's exclusiveness, it exalts YHWH to the highest degree by exposing "before me no god was formed, nor shall there be

¹⁵⁴ Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 117.

¹⁵⁵ Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 117.

¹⁵⁶ Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 117.

any after me” in verse 11. Meanwhile, universalism of understanding YHWH as the only one true God is underlined by the saving action to Israel in verse 13, which emphasized the saving action cannot be hindered from others. Accordingly, in the following verse the sovereignty of YHWH is indicated and going to be confirmed by the true historic event, the fall of the city and the consequent collapse of the Babylonian Empire. More importantly, it is going to take place for the sake of Israel, “לְמַעַן יִשְׂרָאֵל” (Isa.43:14). The accent falls on YHWH’s sovereignty that is universal, and the redeemer of Israel is the sovereign of all nations.

3.2.2 The continuity of the divine identity

In verse 10b, divine identity is revealed by the declaration of YHWH, “That I am He”, “אֲנִי-הוּא”,¹⁵⁷ is an emphatic formula stressing God’s uniqueness. Word “הוא” refers to the Deity Himself. It is not an alternative of the name of YHWH, nor the substitution of “יְהוָה”. Scholar Catrin H. Williams has commented this word in her doctor thesis as “pronouncement of ‘אֲנִי הוא’ serves as a succinct self-declaration of his unmatched and uncontested divinity in order to assure the exiles that it is he who will secure their deliverance.”¹⁵⁸ As one of the expressions of divine revelation, Goldingay even has adopted the word “one” in his commentary to release the similar understanding.¹⁵⁹

YHWH’s sole being is not underlined by denial existences of other gods, but by differentiating Him from other gods in chapter 43:10bff. The prophet applied polytheism argument suddenly in this paganism context under the exilic influences. In ancient Near East myths, gods are often made and formed. In the previous section, Holter’s analysis of idols fabricating has already introduced. Here in verse 10b, “before me no god was formed”, makes the contrast of YHWH and god ironically again. On one hand, YHWH is the first and the last. Before Him, there is nothing in fact. On the other hand, the word “נוֹצֵר”, is in Niphal form, of word “יָצַר”, translated as “is made/ formed”, especially in the sense of making /forming by human being.

¹⁵⁷ Uniqueness texts: Isa.41:4, 43:13, 46:4, 48:12, 52:6, and Deut.32:39.

¹⁵⁸ Catrin H. Williams, *I am He. The Interpretation of 'An i H û ' in Jewish and Early Christian Literature.* (Tübingen : Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 41.

¹⁵⁹ Goldingay, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on 40-55*, 286.

In verse 11, divine revelation occurs again. It starts and dominates by “אֲנֹכִי” with emphatic repetition, in the so-called the formula of revelation, “אֲנֹכִי אֲנֹכִי, יְהוָה”, “I, I am YHWH”.¹⁶⁰ It is functioned as the call of YHWH that to pay attention to YHWH in contrast to other gods.¹⁶¹ The “formula of revelation” of the Name of YHWH is focusing on two aspects: it stands for the Gods’ words and Gods deeds. In fact, Watts has observed that there is a construction of 10b-12 and verse 13, declaration of divine being follows by a divine action. So, the Name that revealed from divine revelation guarantees the saving action to Israel. Furtherly, YHWH alone is Israel’s savior/deliver is confirmed by “bedsides me there is no savior” in verse 11b. This verse indicates the central prophecy of Deutero- Isaiah, which is about how YHWH is and what YHWH do.¹⁶² Both in 44:6 and here verse 11 in chapter 43, the uniqueness of YHWH is underlined and His sovereignty to redeem Israel is coined in his Name. As it is declared in the Decalogue, “I am the Lord/YHWH your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” Again, the saving action of YHWH is uncontested and irrefutable as it is in the past.

This indication continues in verse 12 that is dealing with YHWH’s speech. YHWH’s eternity is the main plot through this short passage, namely, “I am God from old, and today I am the same”, for His chose people in the form of continuity between His word and action.¹⁶³ From the first divine revelation of His name, “I am YHWH”, the covenant is made by this revelation. And it continued through the history, overcame the crisis of unloyalty and disobedience, and finally been revealed to the prophet of Deutero-Isaiah, YHWH is God from old, today, and His is the same. Because of this continuity, YHWH declared there was no strange among you as well. He saved, He proclaimed, and He is going to save. Thus, the deliverance of Israel is assured.

In verse 13, the formula of revelation occurs the third time by “הוּא אֲנִי” within this short passage. Westermann adopted the alternative translation as “I am God from old, and today I am the same”. It indicates the fact that God remains, and remains the same, through all time. In relation to Israel, this character of YHWH reveals him as the same God to the patriarchs as to them, his chosen people. Thus, Westermann interpreted as

¹⁶⁰ A typical expression of Deutero-Isaiah: 43:25, 48:15 and 51:12.

¹⁶¹ Jan L. Kollé, *Isaiah, Part 3, Volume 1: Isaiah 40-48*. (Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1997), 311.

¹⁶² God’s uniqueness, 44:6, 44:8, 45:6, 45:21; and God’s uncontested and irrefutable ability to redeem His nation, 45:15 and 49:26.

¹⁶³ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66, A Commentary*, 124.

“with the first revelation of his name, the first ‘I am YHWH’, a promise had been united; and from then on there had been a continuous, unbroken series of words of his down to the one now being spoken to the remnant by the prophet Deutero-Isaiah, the world which could make Israel certain of her future.”¹⁶⁴

To Israel, it is the saving action of YHWH that who is going to deliver them from the exile, the political powers at present dominant cannot break the bond between Israel and YHWH. Their covenantal relationship was terminated and aborted, but it is going to restore and maintain by YHWH and his saving action. What’s more, in verse 13b, YHWH declared His saving action cannot be hindered. Israelites in the exile, were not been hindered form YHWH’s sovereignty. As the chosen servant, their relationship with YHWH cannot be obstructed by the political power, as long YHWH determined to save them.

Summary:

Divine identity of YHWH has become much clearer than before and the universalism in Deutero-Isaiah is thus well acknowledged. In comparison with the understanding of the monotheism in Deuteronomy, monotheism in Deutero-Isaiah appears to be a universal expression. This development has been started from by the election of Israel in the Deuteronomy, and in Deutero-Isaiah, the chosen people has become the chosen the servant to be the witness of YHWH. By this change, it is not difficult to figure out that the divine revelation of YHWH is revealed step by step, while His divine identity has maintained the same. The monotheism, has gained its’ own feature in different historic period of Israel, and it has appeared to be different understanding of monotheism in Deuteronomy and in Deutero-Isaiah, from a perspective of the God of one nation to the entire universe.

¹⁶⁴ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66, A Commentary*, 124.

3.3 Universal sovereignty leads to universal conversion?

From above, the divine revelation in Deutero-Isaiah seems to break the exclusive relationship of Israel and YHWH, which makes it into the universal understanding of YHWH. In Isa.45, it has elaborated YHWH's universal sovereignty on its own right, and reached the peak in Deutero-Isaiah, on the perspective of creation of the word (45:7/12), the election of Israel (45:3-4), His sovereignty is over the political powers on earth (45: 1/13-14/23), and also the natural items (45:12), including the entire universe. Within this chapter, the prophet of Deutero-Isaiah proclaimed the universal reign of YHWH that will lead all nations to turn to YHWH and to acknowledge His sovereignty. YHWH, the God of Israel, His universal sovereignty comes to full fruition.¹⁶⁵ In such context, the interpretation of universalism in this chapter and eventually in the Deutero-Isaiah has been disputed. Blenkinsopp argues that confession of YHWH as the only God, carrying a description of a conversion to YHWH.¹⁶⁶ And Childs has claims that "God expands his mission to include the nations."¹⁶⁷ An argument is thus raised to interpret Deutero-Isaiah in a perspective of a universal missionary to all nations.¹⁶⁸ However, at the same time, both of them prioritized to the restoration of Israel than the salvation of all nations.¹⁶⁹ On the contrary, Kaminsky claims that there is not enough evidence and it is not necessary for nations to convert to YHWH to react this missionary interpretation. With a similar understanding, Watts mainly interpreted Isa. 45 into a political understanding, which focuses on the YHWH's right and saving acts toward Israel and Jerusalem are simultaneously legitimacy and salvation through Cyrus the Persian, whom is anointed by YHWH.

The disputation mainly falls on the interpretation of the second part of Isa.45:14, "Surely God is with you, and there is no other; there is no other god", and Isa. 45:22 "Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other". This proclamation occurs also in the previous chapters Isa.43 and Isa.44. The prophet proclaimed and repeated this central message: there is no other god, but YHWH. By introducing the foreign powers, it indicates the sovereignty of YHWH over the nations. In Isa.45:13-14, Cyrus who has been raised by YHWH, will build the (my) city, let the exiles go free unconditionally. What's

¹⁶⁵ Kaminsky, "God of all the world", 152.

¹⁶⁶ Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55: a new translation with introduction and commentary*, (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 262.

¹⁶⁷ Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah, A Commentary*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 385.

¹⁶⁸ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55: a new translation with introduction and commentary*, 258.

¹⁶⁹ Terms of salvation, confession, worship, mission sometimes share the interchanged meaning that is focusing on the relationship of nations with YHWH.

more, YHWH will bring the products from Egypt, the merchandise from Cush and the Sabians. They are the different foreign powers from other occurrences in Isa.43 and Isa.44, who are Babylonians and Chaldeans. Those different foreign political powers in the different historic periods are indicated to be under the sovereignty of YHWH. Rather than convert to YHWH, the confessions of other nations in Isa. 45: 14 are mainly focused on the sovereignty of YHWH and recognize YHWH as God. In the book of Ezekiel, a similar message about the nations is proclaimed again and again, for instance, “they (the nations) shall know that I am the Lord” (Ezek. 25:5, 7, 11, 14, 17; 26:6; 28:22-23; 29:6, 9, 16, 21; 30:8, 19, 25-26; 32:15).

In Isa.45, the references to the nations primarily serve a function to exalt the sovereignty of Israel's God. To other nations, Israel is still the elected one whom seems to be superior to them, and at the same time, Israel is obligatory to be the witness to other nation. More importantly, the direct relationship between YHWH and other nations is not been established yet. In Isa.45: 14, other nations recognized the sovereignty of YHWH through Israel, they were not directly called by YHWH, just as Israel was called and elected.¹⁷⁰ Even the Persian emperors were chosen because of the sake of Israel. They are called to be YHWH's servant to accomplish His will by redemption of Israel, and thus witness His sovereignty over other political powers. In Isa.45:14b, foreign nations are never called up on the divine name, which suggests that they do not profess adherence to YHWH.¹⁷¹ In this way, their recognition of YHWH who is the sovereign God, is maintained the point of YHWH will redeem the people of Israel (45:17). And thus, their acknowledgment of YHWH need to go no further than to recognize YHWH as the God of Israel, whose sovereign over entire universe.

On the other hand, the disputation also falls on Isa.45:22, where the central message is emphasized again. What matters here is the interpretation of Isa.45:22a, “turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth”. Phrase “turn to me and be saved” has been constituted the strongest indication of the universal conversion of the nations.¹⁷² The proper interpretation of

¹⁷⁰ Kaminsky also supported this argument, he observed the differences of divine revelation to Israel and foreign nations in 45:14d, אֵלֹהִים אֶחָד וְאֵין עִוד אֲחֵרִים, "Surely God (EI) is with you [alone], and there is no other; there is no [other] god (élôhîm)". See Kaminsky, “God of all the world”, 153, note 52.

<http://proxy.via.mf.no:2087/ehost/detail/detail?vid=2&sid=268a244e-346f-4a04-b4f7-c747e02cc4bd%40sessionmgr120&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWZWhvc3QtbGI2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=ATLA0001525359&db=rft>

¹⁷¹ Kaminsky, “God of all the world”, 153.

¹⁷² Kaminsky, “God of all the world”, 153.

“turn to me and be saved” depends on the proper understanding of who are the people of “all you ends of the earth”.

When it talks about the “ends of earth”, it can refer to the physical confines of the earth, as a liturgical composition speak of the realm or kingdom under the jurisdiction of God of Israel that extends to the ends of the earth.¹⁷³ Cyrus the Persian, whom is anointed and raised by YHWH, he and his empire is a part of YHWH’s realm. Thus, “all you ends of the earth” in its larger context, could refer to the people who had been involved into the political power of the Persian Empire.¹⁷⁴ In the context of Isa.45: 22, a group of people is mentioned in Isa.45:20, “fugitives of nations”. Hollenberg interprets “fugitives of nations” as the Israel in exile.¹⁷⁵ His argument focuses on the word “פְּלִיטִים”, which the root as a verb is carrying the meaning of flee and get away. In the book of Job, it is used to describe a cow give birth to a calf in piel causative form (21:10), which understand as the cow causes the calf to get out. As in the book of Isaiah, it described a lion carrying off its prey into a safe place in a hiphil form (5:9). Therefore, Hollenberg concluded that word “פְּלִיטִים” in verse 20 contains the same importance of fleeing and getting away from a certain thing. The phrase might be translated as “survivors among the nations”. Or eventually it could refer to “the crypto-Israelites who have fled away into the nations and escaped the crisis which befell Israel (Ezek. 6:8)”.¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, “survivors” were identified as Israelites, instead of the survivors of the nations, is also because of the imperative address implies it (exile) already took place. Namely, “all you ends of the earth” in Isa. 45:22 understood thus as the crypto-Israelites, refers to the Jacob’s descendants in Isa.45:19. Isa.45:22 is an appeal of YHWH to Israel, rather than the people of foreign nations.

Since the “all you ends of earth” in verse 22 is related to the “fugitives of nation” in verse 20, which is identified as the Israelites in the exile, so, the Jacob’s descendants in Isa. 45:19 draws the attention to relocated who they are within a more specific reference, especially when “descendants of Israel” occurs in verse 25 in the same chapter. The interpretations of “Jacob’s descendants” and “descendants of Israel” are different from each other.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 262.

¹⁷⁴ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 261.

¹⁷⁵ D.E. Hollenberg, “Nationalism and ‘the Nations’ in Isaiah XI-LV”, *Vetus, Testamentum*, 1969, Vol 19(1), pp.23-36. 31. <http://proxy.via.mf.no:2087/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&sid=8b52bd62-2cad-45eb-9cf2-d6575032c094%40pdc-v-sessmgr01>

¹⁷⁶ Hollenberg, “Nationalism and ‘the Nations’”, 31.

¹⁷⁷ See note 59, Beuken affirms "The confession of God's power is the last word of all mankind How that

Comparing with examples of “אֲרָרְךָ-וְאֶפְתָּח” in book of Psalm 2:8, 22:28, 59:13 and 72:8, Beuken distinguished these two phrases, “all those who confess the faith of YHWH are the descendants of Israel, regardless the nationality; while Jacob’s descendants mainly refer to the Israelites.”¹⁷⁸ Later in verse 25, Jacob’s descendants become the descendants of Israel, has indicated that those Israelites who confess the faith to YHWH will find deliverance in YHWH and will make their boast in Him; and those who against him will be put to shame. And thus, Jacob’s descendants who confess faith to YHWH and became the descendants of Israel will recognize and acknowledge YHWH and His sovereignty through His deliverance. The prophet proclaimed the universal understanding of YHWH’s sovereignty in Isa.45, but its universal conversion implications remains undeveloped.¹⁷⁹ YHWH remains the God of Israel as the only one true God, whose sovereignty over all the creation. It is not yet the universal conversion to YHWH, but to recognize Him as YHWH with His righteous action and strength. YHWH, remains Israel’s national God with His universal sovereignty that recognized by the nations.

After identifying who are the people of “ends of earth”, eventually the similar applications in the relevant texts in Isa.45: 19, 20,22 and 25, it is time to turn back to Isa. 45:22a, “Turn to me and be saved”. In Isa. 45:22a, “be saved” is thus to be understood as the saving action of YHWH toward His people Israel. “Turn to me” is the appeal of YHWH. Israel had lost their political security because their unloyalty and disobedience. YHWH’s judgment was carried out the Babylonians, and His righteousness has been demonstrated. And here, YHWH appealed to Israel, “turn to me”, so that you will be saved. YHWH’s righteousness is going to be shown again in His saving action through Cyrus the Persian.

A poetic conclusion of Isa.45: 23-25 comes to the praising to YHWH. In Isa.45:23, “before me, every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear” literally evokes again the understanding of universal conversion. The meaning of word “כָּל-” is “all, every or the whole”. Here in Isa.45: 23, it is translated here as “every”. It is easily to understand the “every knee and every tongue” that includes every knee and tongue universally. However, “before me, every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear” in Isa. 45:23 is understood as the

confession is intended to be salvific but can turn out to be punitive, constitutes a secondary objective of the prophet in this particular context. Kaminsky, “God of all the world”, 154.

¹⁷⁸ Beuken, "The Confession of God's Exclusivity of All Mankind: A Reappraisal of Is 45, 18-25," 342. This argument is not well-acknowledged and bares its own weakness.

¹⁷⁹ Hollenberg, “Nationalism and ‘the Nations’”, 29.

declaration of YHWH. And in Isa. 45: 19, YHWH had declared at first, and it is to the Jacob's descendants. Here in Isa.45:23a, it can be considered as a confirmation of Isa.45:19, and simultaneously, it is the assurance of his declaration again, namely, to the same audiences: before me, every knee of Jacob's descendants will bow; by me every tongue will swear. Furthermore, the declaration of "before me, every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear" is promoting the previous proclamations of YHWH and the relationship with Israel, which is considered as an act of obeisance and submission that affirms YHWH's sovereignty and the election of Israel.¹⁸⁰ Furtherly, attention need to be paid on Isa.45: 24a, where the two characters of YHWH are introduced, "יְצַדֵּקוֹת וְיָזֵז", the righteousness/deliverance (NIV) and strength of Him. Word "יְצַדֵּקוֹת" is translated as righteousness. According to BDB, it also refers to the righteous acts, which alludes to the righteous action of YHWH, namely, the saving action or the deliverance. Israel has been elected to experience the deliverance and the strength of YHWH. YHWH has sworn (Isa.45:23a) that Israel will be restored (Isa. 45:22a), and thus, every knee will bow, and every tongue will swear (Isa.45: 23b) and will say "In YHWH alone are the deliverance and strength" (Isa.45:24a).

Isa.45:24b-25 is the last unit to understand the deliverance of YHWH. As it is mention above, Jacob's descendants become the descendants of Israel who confessed their faith, they will find the deliverance in YHWH and will make their boast in Him (Isa.45:25); and those who do not confess the faith and have raged against Him, will come to Him and be put to shame (Isa.45:24a).

In Isa. 45, Israel turns to YHWH to wait for deliverance, while the nations also turn to YHWH in recognition of his reign and sovereignty. The nations' movement towards Israel's God, however, does not necessarily imply, as many commentators presume, that they will join in Israel's redemption. The salvation/saving action is maintaining politically in Isa.45, and as the same time, it is predicted as the salvation in the future, which is about all nations. Deutero-Isaiah does envision a universal recognition of YHWH, but it is not equals to universal conversion to YHWH. Proclaiming God's sovereignty to the highest degree, the prophet of Deutero-Isaiah envisions all nations acknowledging the legitimacy of Israel's God. The references to the nations primarily serve the function to exalt the sovereignty of Israel's God. In Isa. 45, the understanding of universalism focuses on the exaltation the sovereignty of

¹⁸⁰ Kaminsky, "God of all the world", 154.

YHWH. By exalting it to the highest degree it has drawn attention to be paid on the status of the deities worshipped by other nations. In fact, there are no gods in the same sense as YHWH is God.

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