One God or one Lord?: deuteronomy and the meaning of 'monotheism'

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ABSTRACT

One God or One Lord?
Deuteronomy and the Meaning of 'Monotheism'

Nathan MacDonald

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This thesis explores the meaning of the modern category of 'monotheism', the significance of YHWH's oneness in Deuteronomy, and the relationship between the two. From its original coinage by Henry More in 1660, 'monotheism' has usually entailed a certain understanding of the deity and his relation to the world. This understanding is traced through several representative Old Testament scholars of the last one hundred and fifty years. The thesis questions whether this understanding captures Deuteronomy's distinctive ideas about YHWH and Israel.

The substance of the thesis is a detailed exegetical examination of certain important passages in Deuteronomy that are concerned with YHWH's oneness. The rich nexus of ideas that cohere around Deuteronomy's claim that for Israel 'YHWH is one' is analysed through a consideration of themes that are related to YHWH's oneness. Themes that receive particular attention are the nature of the confessions of YHWH's uniqueness, the existence of other gods, the meaning of loving YHWH, the importance of memory, the election of Israel and the prohibition of idolatry.

The thesis concludes by comparing the results of the exegetical examination of Deuteronomy with the understanding of 'monotheism' articulated by the representative Old Testament scholars that have been examined. It is argued that the term 'monotheism' does not adequately describe the beliefs and practices in Deuteronomy, instead an often quite different picture emerges. In this new picture, themes such as love towards YHWH, the demanding nature of remembering YHWH, and the problem of human propensity to idolatry can again be seen as central to the confession that 'YHWH is one'.

Declaration

This work has been submitted to the University of Durham in accordance with the regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It is the author's own work, and none of it has been previously submitted to the University of Durham or any other university for a degree.

..... .(Nathan MacDonald) 7.9.01 .....(Date)

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Submitted as a thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Theology

University of Durham

September 2001

For Claire

אַחַת הִיא יוֹנָתִי תַמָּתִי

CONTENTS

PREFACE

No activity of the academy more successfully embodies, in the public eye, the ideal of scholarly autonomy than the discipline of researching and writing a PhD. The vision of a scholar working alone at the very edges of some field of knowledge is a powerful one. But nothing deconstructs this ideal more than the reality of the exercise. The three years during which this thesis has been written, and those that preceded them, have amply demonstrated this to me. For whilst a great deal of this present work has been done alone, it is not possible to conceive of its existence without the innumerable contributions of others with whom I have been privileged to discuss it, and from whom I have learned. It would be nothing less than ingratitude not to publicly acknowledge those who have contributed to this thesis.

First, I wish to express my thanks to the staff and faculty in the Department of Theology at Durham University. Amongst these, Rev. Dr Walter Moberly, my doctoral supervisor, takes first place. In the past three years his careful thinking and deep piety have immeasurably contributed to my own reflections on the task of being a student of the Old Testament. Of him, it can truly be said that he is a teacher of the law who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven, bringing out treasures old and new. I am grateful too to Dr Colin Crowder, Dr Robert Hayward and Dr Stuart Weeks who have helped sharpen my thinking on various aspects of the thesis. I have valued the opportunity to discuss ideas at the department's graduate seminars, particularly the Old Testament seminar. However, I am grateful to members of the New Testament seminar and Systematics seminar who treated the presence and contributions of a friendly outsider with great patience. I have enjoyed extended discussions with four fellow doctoral students in the department, and I am grateful to them for their insights: Dr Simon Gathercole, Keith Grüneberg, Sue Nicholson and Michael Widmer.

My study of the Old Testament did not begin at Durham and I am grateful to those who taught me in Cambridge. During my time there I had the privilege of learning

from Rev. Dr Andrew McIntosh, Dr Graham Davies, Prof. William Horbury, Dr Geoffrey Khan and Prof. Robert Gordon. My rudimentary knowledge of Old Testament can be traced back long before then, and it is only right to express my gratitude to those who taught me at an early stage to love Scripture and to try and embody its teaching. It is with much affection that I mention Mrs Davies and Sister Pam, whose names are unknown in the world of scholarship, but are written in the book of life. My earliest teachers, who more than anyone have modelled Christian living and discipleship, and a love for Scripture, are my parents, Malcolm and Ann MacDonald. No son could have wished for better parents. Both they and my wife's parents, Stuart and Margaret Wilson, have shown support, interest and love throughout my studies.

There are many friends in Cambridge and Durham who have shown an interest in my work, and with whom I have enjoyed many conversations. At Claypath United Reformed Church I have been given the opportunity on numerous occasions to discuss my thesis, and to develop my own understanding of Scripture in sermons and study groups. I have particularly valued conversations with Rev. Dr Robert Fyall, Dr Scott Masson and George and Kirsty Carter. Two friends from Cambridge have been valued partners in the study of the Old Testament: Dr Peter Williams and James Palmer.

Devoting three years to the study of a subject is something that cannot be done without financial support. I am grateful to the Arts and Humanities Research Board for a generous grant during these three years, and during my Masters' year at Cambridge.

Finally, I owe the greatest debt to my wife Claire. It is to her that I dedicate this thesis with much love. I am grateful for her love and support during these three years, and for maintaining an interest in, what often appeared to be, the esoteric concerns of scholarship. Particularly over the past few months, when her own work has brought its own pressures, she has, without complaint, looked after many of the practical concerns of living so that more of my time could be dedicated to finishing the doctorate and writing lecture notes. It is not possible to adequately express my thanks to her.

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. D.N. Freedman; 6 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1992)
AJBI	*Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute*
ALUOS	*Annual of Leeds University Oriental Society*
AnBib	Analecta biblica
AnOr	Analecta orientalia
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ASSR	*Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions*
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATSAT	Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament
AV	Authorized Version
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BDB	*A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (F. Brown, S.R. Driver and C.A. Briggs; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907)
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BHS	*Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia*
Bib	*Biblica*
BIBAL	Berkeley Institute of Biblical Archaeology and Literature
BibB	Biblische Beiträge
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation: A Journal of Contemporary Approaches*
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZAW	Beihefte zur *ZAW*
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica, Old Testament
DDD	*Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (eds. K. van der Toorn, B. Becking and P. van der Hoorst; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2nd edn, 1999)

DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DNEB	Die Neue Echter Bibel
EdF	Erträge der Forschung
EncJud	*Encyclopaedia Judaica* (eds. C. Roth and G. Wigoder; 16 vols.; Jerusalem: Keter, 1972)
ETL	*Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses*
EvT	*Evangelische Theologie*
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GKC	*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (ed. E. Kautzsch; rev. and trans. A.E. Cowley; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910)
GTA	Göttinger theologischen Arbeiten
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HBT	*Horizons in Biblical Theology*
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
HWP	*Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (eds. J. Ritter and K. Gründer; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971-)
IB	*Interpreter's Bible* (eds. G.A. Butterick *et al.*; 10 vols.; New York: Abingdon Press, 1951-57)
ICC	International Critical Commentary
Int	*Interpretation*
ITC	International Theological Commentary
JAAR	*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBTh	Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie
JES	*Journal of Ecumenical Studies*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JM	*A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (P. Joüon; rev. and trans. T. Muraoka; Subsidia Biblica, 14; 2 vols.; Rome: Editrice Pontifico Istitutio Biblico, 1991).
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period*

JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplement Series
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KB	*Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti libros* (eds. L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1953)
KHAT	Kurzer Hand-Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KTU	*The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places (KTU: Second, Enlarged Edition)* (eds. M. Dietrich, O. Loretz and J. Sanmartín; Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syrien-Palästinas und Mesopotamiens, 8; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995)
LQ	*Lutheran Quarterly*
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NAB	New American Bible
NCB	New Century Bible
NEB	New English Bible
NIBC	New International Bible Commentary
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDOTE	*New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (ed. W.A. VanGemeren; 5 vols.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997)
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NJPS	New Jewish Publication Society of America, Translations to the Holy Scriptures
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
NZSTh	*Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie*
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
ÖBS	Österreichische biblische Studien
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology Series
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary* (ed. J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner; 20 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd edn, 1989)
OLZ	*Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	Oudtestamentische Studiën
OTWSA	*Die Ou Testamentiese Wekgemeenskap in Suid Afrika*
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*

Pesh.	Peshitta
PFES	Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society
POS	Pretoria Oriental Series
PSB	*Princeton Seminary Bulletin*
ProcSBA	*Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*
RB	*Revue biblique*
REB	Revised English Bible
Rel	*Religion*
ResQ	*Restoration Quarterly*
RevExp	*Review and Expositor*
RRT	*Reviews in Religion and Theology*
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SCS	Septuagint and Cognate Studies
ST	*Studia theologica*
TBT	*The Bible Today*
TBü	Theologische Bücherei
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (eds. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich; trans. G.W. Bromiley; 10 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-76)
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (eds. G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren; trans. J.T. Willis *et al.*; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974-).
TGUOS	*Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society*
ThWAT	*Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament* (eds. G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1970-)
TLOT	*Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (eds. E. Jenni and C. Westermann; trans. M.E. Biddle; 3 vols.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson; 1997 [1971-76])
TLZ	*Theologische Literaturzeitung*
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TP	*Theologie und Philosophie*
TQ	*Theologische Quartalschrift*
TRu	*Theologische Rundschau*
TTZ	*Trierer theologische Zeitschrift*
TTod	*Theology Today*
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
TZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*

Vg.	Vulgate
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	*Vetus Testamentum*, Supplement Series
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAH	*Zeitschrift für Althebraistik*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift für deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*
ZKT	*Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*

INTRODUCTION

> *Questions of how to understand the Bible in its own right, of how to understand the Bible in terms of contemporary categories, and of how to relate these perspectives are* the *questions of biblical interpretation*
>
> Walter Moberly

If Moberly is correct and these are indeed the salient questions of biblical interpretation then this thesis attempts to contribute to this field. The concerns of this thesis are the meaning and significance of YHWH's[1] oneness in Deuteronomy, the contemporary category of 'monotheism' and the relation between the two.

This thesis is an exercise in the interpretation of the received form of the Hebrew text of Deuteronomy, and what that text has to say about YHWH's oneness. It offers an approach to the book of Deuteronomy that may be broadly described as a 'canonical' interpretation.[2] That is, this is not a work on archaeology, the religious history of Israel, or even source, form or redaction criticism. However, at various points the works of scholars in those areas are used. This work, therefore, reflects a belief in methodological pluralism. This is not the result of a modern fad, but a theological principle: before the parousia we all see in part. As will become apparent, however, the argument that is offered in this thesis has implications for those other areas. This should not be interpreted as a form of methodological imperialism. Rather it reflects the interrelatedness of those disciplines mentioned.

The epigraph is from Moberly 2000a: 76. Moberly's emphasis.

[1] When using the tetragrammaton I will leave it unvocalized. However, where other scholars are cited their own practice is retained.

[2] What 'canonical' might mean has, of course, been answered in a number of different ways. My own use of the term here is a pragmatic one. I wish, with this scholarly shorthand, to identify myself with a diverse set of concerns that has been associated with the term 'canonical' in recent scholarship.

The first chapter places the present work in context by considering the meaning of the term 'monotheism' and the history of research upon 'monotheism' in the Old Testament.[3] My approach to those common introductory questions has a number of distinctive characteristics. The usual approach to the term 'monotheism' is to discuss the possible definitions. Having chosen the 'correct one' this is used as a yardstick for both Israel's religious history, and the work of other scholars. My suggestion is that the matter is not so simple, for the word 'monotheism' already implies a particular understanding of religious and historical description. This has implications for understanding the history of research. The question is not merely what date certain scholars have offered for the origin of 'monotheism' in ancient Israel, but what particular understanding of 'monotheism' informed their historical reconstruction. The chapter begins with the first use of the word 'monotheism' by Henry More in 1660, not because I believe that the first use of the word is in some sense determines later usage, but because this first use shares many features with later uses. After a brief sketch of developments after More, I turn to the discussion of Israelite 'monotheism'. My sketch of the history of research is representative, rather than exhaustive, and includes Kuenen, Wellhausen, Albright, Kaufmann, von Rad, Gnuse and Dietrich. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the attempts by Sawyer, Clements and Sanders to solve the *problem* of biblical monotheism in the canonical text. An analysis of their work helps to situate my own.

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[3] As is well known there is considerable controversy about the appropriate name for what is both the Jewish canon, and the first part of the Christian canon. As a member of the Christian tradition I will use the term 'Old Testament' in my discussions of these writings, or when interacting with other authors in the Christian tradition. When referring to the work of Jewish writers I will use the term 'Jewish Bible', rather than 'Miqra' or 'Tanakh', the terms preferred by Jewish writers. This reflects the fact that I approach the Jewish canon, with its tradition of interpretation, as an outsider (The increasingly popular term 'Hebrew Bible' is problematic on a number of grounds, see further Seitz 1998).

Even within the Christian tradition the term 'Old Testament' is not unproblematic. However, it appears to me that whatever the problems with the term it is better than the alternatives that have been offered, and further, indicates something of the continuities and discontinuities between the two parts of the Christian canon, which are fundamental presuppositions for Christian interpretation of the Old and New Testaments. For discussions of the issue, see Brook and Collins (eds.) 1990.

The following five chapters are concerned with examining the theme of YHWH's oneness in Deuteronomy. This examination is particularly focused on the framework to the lawcode, especially chapters 1-11. There are two reasons for this focus. First, the theme of YHWH's oneness is prominent in those chapters, and second an examination of the lawcode would entail a considerably larger thesis.

The rich interweaving of themes in Deuteronomy makes a starting point for a study of almost any theme in the book far from self-evident. Good grounds can be given for beginning a study of the 'oneness' of YHWH with the *Shema* (Deut. 6.4-9). The *Shema* also provides a useful organizing structure for the whole of the thesis and, therefore, provides the starting point for each of the exegetical chapters. Thus, the second chapter concerns the confession of YHWH's oneness. It begins with the first verse of the *Shema*, the elusive 'YHWH our God YHWH one'. The different translations of the verse are considered with the implications for its meaning and significance. This verse is then considered in comparison with other related passages in Deuteronomy: the first commandment, Deut. 4.35, 39 and 32.39. These are considered primarily with the question in mind of whether they are concerned to deny the existence of other gods.

In the third chapter the meaning and significance of the command to love YHWH is analysed. Deuteronomy uses a number of terms in conjunction with love to describe the nature of an appropriate response to YHWH, and each of these is examined. The nature of Israel's love for YHWH is particularly expressed in the *ḥērem* command. Deuteronomy 7 is examined in order to understand the manner in which the command is to be executed.

The fourth chapter begins with a consideration of the prescriptions in the *Shema* for remembering YHWH and Israel's obligation to be devoted to him (6.6-9). The instructions in the *Shema* it is argued are to be understood in concrete ways that suggest remembering the oneness of YHWH is far more taxing than is usually allowed. The importance of remembering and the constant threat of forgetfulness are examined in Deuteronomy 8 and the incident with the Golden Calf in Deuteronomy 9. Finally, the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32) is examined as a vehicle of remembering. Whatever the original role of the Song it now functions as

an integral part of the book of Deuteronomy, or more strongly, a memorable summary of its central message. My examination of the Song in chapter four and five is, implicitly, a plea for the Song's reintegration in academic discourse about the book.

The fifth chapter considers Israel as the elect people of YHWH. The nature of election is explored beginning with Deuteronomy 7 and Deuteronomy 9-10. The paradoxical logic of election described in those chapters finds dramatic expression in Deuteronomy 4 and the Song of Moses. In each passage the relationship between Israel's election and the confession of YHWH's uniqueness is explored.

The sixth chapter considers the relationship between the prohibition of idolatry and the oneness of YHWH. I argue that Deuteronomy 4 not only explains the relationship between the two, but also provides a rationale for the prohibition of idolatry. Understood in this light Deuteronomy 4 provides a fitting conclusion to the historical retrospect found in the first three chapters of Deuteronomy. The chapter concludes with an examination of Deuteronomy's account of the incident with the Golden Calf.

In the conclusion the results from the exegetical examination of Deuteronomy are applied to modern understandings of 'monotheism'. It is suggested that many of the descriptions of Israelite monotheism reflect the intellectualization implicit in the term 'monotheism' and are strongly informed by Enlightenment ideas of God. Recognition of this allows alternative understandings of God's oneness, such as those from traditional Judaism and Christianity, to help enrich our understanding of what it means to say that YHWH is 'one'. Themes such as love towards YHWH, the demanding nature of remembering YHWH, the problem of the human propensity to idolatry can again be seen as central to Deuteronomy's affirmation that YHWH is one.

Chapter 1

The Origin and Meaning of 'Monotheism'

> *Among the questions relating to Israel's religious odyssey, that of the origin of monotheism is intellectually and theologically primary*
>
> Baruch Halpern

To claim that any particular task in the area of the study of the Jewish Bible is 'intellectually and theologically primary' is a bold one. Though if the flood of books and articles on the subject is anything to go by, Halpern's judgement is less audacious than it might first appear.[1] However, I wish to pass by this well-trodden path and venture down a quiet byway and trace the origin of the word 'monotheism'. This is a journey which will take us far from Israel's religious odyssey, and yet I hope that at the end of our peregrination it will be clear that some unexpected vistas of familiar territory have been offered. That is, I hope that the origin of 'monotheism' may be seen to have something important to say about 'Israel's religious odyssey'.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'monotheism' was coined by the Cambridge Platonist, Henry More (1614-87). Unlike other related '-isms', 'atheism', 'deism' and 'polytheism', it appears to be the product of English soil, rather than a French or Latin import.[2] We will examine the first use of

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The epigraph is from Halpern 1987: 77.

[1] As an indication of the interest in this subject, it is necessary only to note the collections of essays that have appeared since 1980: Keel (ed.) 1980; Lang (ed.) 1981; Haag (ed.) 1985; Dietrich and Klopfenstein (eds.) 1994; Shanks and Meinhardt (eds.) 1997.

[2] 'Atheism' appeared in English in 1587 and 'atheist' in 1571. Both words had already entered the scholarly vocabulary in Sir John Cheke's Latin translation of Plutarch's *On Superstition* (Buckley 1987: 9). *Déisme* and *déiste* were coined in 1660 and 1563 respectively. *Polythéisme* has its origins with Philo's πολυθεία but was taken out of long hibernation by Jean Bodin in 1580 (Schmidt 1985: 77).

'monotheism' and set it in its literary context. More's work will then be placed in the wider context of the thought and controversies of the Cambridge Platonists.

1. *The Origin of 'Monotheism'*

The first use of 'monotheism' is found in the context of a discussion of 'pantheism'[3] in Henry More's systematic presentation of the Christian gospel, *The Grand Mystery of Godliness*, published in 1660.[4] More, despite spending most of his time at Christ's College, Cambridge, was 'an active member of the seventeenth century intellectual community'.[5] In his early years he corresponded with Descartes and was one of the first to promote Cartesianism in England.[6] He was also the leading light of the 'Cambridge Platonists'.[7] This small, diverse group, mostly from Emmanuel College, Cambridge, shared many concerns and convictions, expressed primarily in their apologetic writings. They argued for the importance of reason

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The closely related 'theism' and 'theist' were also coined by Cambridge men: 'theism' by More's friend and fellow Cambridge Platonist, Ralph Cudworth; 'theist' by E. Martin, the Dean of Ely. For a long period of time, 'theism' could not only be used as a synonym of 'deism', but also as a synonym of 'monotheism' (see, for example, Hume 1993 [1757]). It could also bear the meaning it now bears, as the genus to which monotheism, polytheism, pantheism etc. belong. All three senses are found in Ralph Cudworth's *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678). He can speak of '*Pagan Theists* [who] were both *Polytheists* and *Monotheists*' (233), and of 'meer theists, or natural religionists only' (3 of Preface), whilst his only definition of a theist, as someone who asserts 'One Intellectual Principle Self-Existent from Eternity, the *Framer* and *Governor* of the Whole World', sounds like a definition of a monotheist (199).

The credit for the first use of 'monotheist' is incorrectly attributed to More in 1680 by *OED*. In fact, it can be found before that in Cudworth 1678: 233.

[3] 'Pantheism' and 'pantheist' were not coined until 1732 and 1705 respectively.

[4] More 1660.

[5] Lichtenstein 1962: 11.

[6] More particularly admired the ability of Descartes' mechanistic ideas to describe the physical world. He firmly believed, however, in the limits of Descartes' materialism, particularly its failure to incorporate the spiritual world, which More believed had some substantial existence. He also believed, unlike Descartes, that animals had souls. It was Descartes' failure to incorporate More's suggestions that led to More's growing hostility to Cartesianism. For the relationship between More and Descartes, see Hall 1990: 146-67.

[7] There are two useful anthologies of the Platonists' work: Cragg (ed.) 1968; Patrides (ed.) 1969.

against the puritans, 'enthusiasts' and the empiricists; for the spiritual world against Thomas Hobbes, Baruch Spinoza and Cartesianism; for free will against the Calvinists and Hobbes; and for toleration in the fractured English society of the Civil War and Restoration.[8] Their debt to neo-Platonism is seen particularly in their psychological dualism and their belief in innate ideas, the immortality of the soul and the ascent of the soul to a higher realm.

In its introduction More presents the *Grand Mystery* as the culmination of his scholarly work.[9] The ground had been prepared for it by More's earlier works, *An Antidote Against Atheisme* (1653), in which he had proved the existence of God, and *The Immortality of the Soul* (1659), in which he had shown that the soul was immortal.[10] Building upon these earlier foundations More sought to show in the *Grand Mystery*,

> that there is no Article of the Christian Faith, nor any particular miracle happening to or done by our Saviour or to be done by him, mentioned in the Gospels or any where else in the New Testament, but I have given so solid and rational account thereof, that I am confident that no man that has the use of his Understanding shall be able ever to pretend any Reason against Christian Religion.[11]

More's work is arranged in four parts, in which he demonstrates the obscurity, the intelligibility, the truthfulness and the usefulness of the mystery of the gospel. In his section on the gospel's intelligibility More begins by summarizing the propositions that he had already shown to be reasonable in *An Antidote Against Atheisme* and *The Immortality of the Soul*. First among these is the existence of God, whom More had shown to be an 'omnipotent, omniscient and infinitely Benign Spirit'.[12] Other matters that can be perceived by a reasonable person are the

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[8] For an introduction to the Platonists, see Patrides 1969; Cassirer 1953. For the location of the Platonists in their age, and the importance of this task, see Cassirer 1953: 42-85.

[9] This most prolific of the Platonists was, in fact, to write far more, despite his claim to be 'not onely free from, but incapable of the common disease of this Scripturient Age' (More 1660: 12).

[10] More 1660: viii.

[11] More 1660: ix.

[12] More 1660: 34.

existence of good and evil spirits, that good will eventually triumph and that the time of man will come to an end, in which men will be delivered and drawn up into the 'divine life'.[13]

The 'divine life', the life regulated by faith, is not, however, the present reality. This is a consequence of the Fall. When Adam and Eve transgressed, humankind fell into the world of sensuality, the 'animal life'.[14] Humanity became dominated by animal instincts and the senses. This obsession with the material, to the detriment of the spiritual, expressed itself in idolatry. Prior to the coming of Christ, this was the lot of humanity.

The religions of the time before Christ, and outside of the Christian world, were divided by More into five categories. First, there are those who are polytheists. Since the worship of many gods is incompatible with his definition of God as the supreme Spirit, More regarded them as equivalent to atheists. Second, there are those who claim to worship the sun alone. As the worship of something material, it betrayed its affinities with the 'animal life'. Further, Descartes had convinced More that there was more than one Sun in the universe, and thus sun-worshippers were no more than polytheists. Third, there are 'pantheists'. It is at this point that the first known use of 'monotheism' is found. More argues that,

> to make the *World* God, is to make no God at all; and therefore this kind of *Monotheisme* of the Heathen is as rank *Atheism* as their *Polytheisme* was proved to be before.[15]

The attribution of deity to the world clearly collided with More's definition of God as a Spirit. Fourth, there are those who worship an eternal, spiritual being. They worship the one God through various names and attributes, and by means of idols. In *The Divine Dialogues*, More makes Cuphophron argue similarly:

> This cannot be deny'd, Euistor, but that the barbarous Nations did religious Worship to innumerable Objects of the kind, but not as to the

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[13] These are almost identical to the notions Lord Herbert of Cherbury claimed to be reasonable and to command universal assent, see Hutton 1996: 20-23.

[14] Harrison argues that the 'animal life' is an important concept for the Cambridge Platonists which is often ignored (1990: 44).

[15] More 1660: 62.

> supreme Power of all, (which was the primary or ultimate Object of all their Adoration) but rather as to Images and Symbols of that Ultimate Object.[16]

This refined form of paganism with its worship of a spiritual God is much more acceptable, in More's eyes, than polytheism, sun worship or 'pantheism'. However, whatever its qualities it was not without its failings. It characterized very few pagans, was tainted with idolatry and was probably derived from the more enlightened Judaism. Finally, there are the Jews, whose sensual religious festivals show that they too were obsessed with the 'animal life'. Their religion had no idolatry however, and was given by God. It also had the types of Christ which were understood in a spiritual sense by Moses, although most of Israel did not understand their meaning.

'Monotheism' and the Materialism of Thomas Hobbes

The first impression made by More's work is the ambitious nature of his scholarship. He attempts to create a universal typology of religions. The limits of the scholarship of his day is clearly demonstrated, though, by an interaction with the beliefs of only the ancient Greeks and Egyptians. Despite this More is aware that there were many other religions in the world, which in his time were in the process of being discovered. Thus, he assures his reader that he could have selected examples of his types of religion from the recently accumulated evidence about religions in 'Arabia, Persia, India, China, Tartary, Germany, Scythia, Guinea, Aethiopia...Virginia, Mexico, Peru and Brasilia'.[17] As P. Harrison has shown in his *'Religion' and the Religions in the English Enlightenment* the first steps towards a science of religion occurred in the seventeenth century, rather than the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century though was to put the science of religion upon a much sounder footing for 'while much comparison of "religions" took place in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, most of it was motivated not by any deep interest in the religious faith of other peoples, but by the desire to score points from theological adversaries'.[18]

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[16] More 1668: 401.

[17] More 1660: 73.

[18] Harrison 1990: 146.

The use of other religions as a polemical foil is particularly evident in More's typology. More's classification of non-Christian religion can be reduced to just two categories. First, there are two deficient forms of 'monotheism', Judaism and enlightened paganism. This qualified acceptance provided More with a theodicy against those who regarded the divine providence, which had restricted knowledge of the Christian faith to only a small part of the human race, as arbitrary and unjust. Second, there are those who are atheists. More's argument that both polytheism and pantheism are variant forms of atheism is both interesting and unexpected. Two reasons explain this rather curious movement. First, More had already shown the fallacy of atheism in his *An Antidote Against Atheisme*. Reducing polytheism and pantheism to atheism was an effective strategy for speedy dismissal. Secondly, as More's curt disposal of them shows, his real opponent was neither polytheism nor pantheism, but atheism.

Amongst More and his contemporaries, 'there was a widespread conviction that the atheists were at the gates',[19] and that this was the greatest danger facing the Church.[20] In England, More and the other Cambridge Platonists were the chief apologists for the Christian religion and against atheism. What the Platonists and their contemporaries meant by 'atheism' was the doctrine of materialism. Thus, More's friend and fellow Platonist, Ralph Cudworth, wrote that those,

> who derive all things from *Senseless Matter*, as the First Original, and deny that there is any *Conscious Understanding* Being *Self-existent* or *Unmade*, are those that are properly called *Atheists*.[21]

In contrast the Platonists believed in the existence of a spiritual world alongside the physical. More believed in the existence of God, angels, demons, ghosts, other spiritual beings and the souls of human beings. In his world even animals had souls. Where the 'atheists' saw a purely material universe, More saw a universe overflowing with souls.[22]

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[19] Buckley 1987: 68.

[20] Patrides 1969: 25.

[21] Cudworth 1678: 195.

[22] Perhaps unsurprisingly, More was greatly interested in the supernatural. Demonstrating the existence of evil spirits, angels or ghosts would, in More's eyes,

The danger of materialism is clearly spelled out by More. In the *Grand Mystery* he writes that,

> the first and most fundamental mistake of *lapsed Mankind* [is] that they make *Body* or *Matter* the only true *Jehovah*, the only true Essence and first substance of whom all things are, and acknowledge no God but this visible or Sensible world.[23]

Interestingly, More traces this primeval error back to Eve and the birth of Cain. In his reading of Gen. 4.1, he understands the problematic את as a direct object marker, rather than as a preposition. Thus, rather than AV's 'I have gotten a man from the Lord' he translates 'I have a man, Jehovah'. Eve misunderstands the promise in Gen. 3.15 that her seed would crush the serpent's head, and mistakenly identifies her son with God.[24]

That pantheism and polytheism were mere foils for an attack on materialistic 'atheism' is clearly significant for understanding the meaning of More's 'monotheism'. Both semantically and in the immediate context of More's work it would be natural to assume that the antonym of 'monotheism' was polytheism. But, polytheism, in the sense of a belief in the existence of many gods, was not More's opponent. Nor, indeed, could it be, for neither More nor his readers would have met a polytheist, and there was not the distinct possibility that it would be considered a credible belief. The true antonym of More's 'monotheism' is 'atheism'. More's opponent was not the Greek religion the early Christian apologists faced, even less the beliefs and practices of Israel's neighbours that were perceived as a threat in the Old Testament. Instead, it was the doctrine of materialism, whose chief exponent in England at the time was the author of *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes.[25]

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have provided evidence for a spiritual world, and thus God. More became increasingly interested in these matters in his latter years, see Hall 1990: 128-45.

[23] More 1660: 57.

[24] For modern discussions of the role of את in Gen. 4.1, see Westermann 1984: 290-92.

[25] Despite the common charge of atheism, Hobbes never denied the existence of God. He did, however, assert that God was material.

'Monotheism', Reason and Innate Ideas

Not all atheists were of the same ilk, in More's opinion. Three different types could be distinguished. One kind were ignorant, another kind morally corrupt, and the third kind had been lead astray by speculative reason. It was for this latter group that More wrote, reasoning that 'not to be at least a Speculative Christian is a sign of the want of common Wit and Reason'.[26] More's approach to winning them back to the Christian faith was not by appeals to Scripture, but by use of the same reason that had been the cause of their apostasy. The full titles of his two earlier works, *An Antidote Against Atheisme, or, An Appeal to the Naturall Faculties of the Minde of Man, whether there be not a God* and *The Immortality of the Soul, So farre forth as it is demonstrable from the Knowledge of Nature and the Light of Reason* show that More would have fully agreed with Descartes' opinion, 'I have always considered that the two questions respecting God and the Soul were the chief of those that ought to be demonstrated by philosophical rather than theological arguments'.[27]

Reason, though, could show far more than the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. More believed that reason could show the existence of the spiritual world, that there was a battle between two kingdoms of good and evil, and the certainty of final judgement. More's friend, Ralph Cudworth, believed that even the Trinity was accessible to reason. The burden of his prolix *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* was 'to demonstrate that all men tend naturally to believe in one god and can, through the exercise of reason, attain even to those truths which have been argued to be the sole preserve of revealed religion'.[28]

This approach to the problem of 'atheism' is characteristic of the epistemology of the Cambridge Platonists. It was their theory of knowledge more than anything else that distinguished them from their contemporaries.[29] The Platonists believed in the

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For the criticism of Hobbes by the Platonists, see Mintz 1962.

[26] More 1660: 43.

[27] Descartes cited in Buckley 1987: 199. Buckley's work shows the fatefulness of this apologetic move by the thinkers of the early Enlightenment.

[28] Harrison 1990: 32.

[29] In the introductory essays by Craggs and Patrides it is the Platonists' understanding of the relationship between faith and reason which is the first

unity of the means of knowledge, but in this unity the role of individual reason was central. Thus More described reason as,

> a Power of Facultie of the Soul, whereby either from her Innate Ideas or Common Notions, or else from the assurance of her own Sense, or upon the Relation or Tradition of another, she unravels a further clew of Knowledge, enlarging her sphere of Intellectual light, by laying open to her self the close connexion and cohesion of the Conceptions she has of things, whereby inferring one thing from another she is able to deduce multifarious Conclusions as well for the pleasure of Speculation as the necessity of Practice.[30]

This reason was not just a human quality, but a spiritual one too.[31]

This emphasis on reason distinguished the Platonists from orthodox Reformed theology, in which nature and revelation were seen as fundamentally opposed because of the noetic effects of the fall.[32] The Platonists insisted that faith and reason belonged together. Benjamin Whichcote, the most senior of the Platonists, wrote, 'I oppose not rational to spiritual, for spiritual is most rational'.[33] The Platonists maintained, 'that the legitimate seat of authority in religion is the individual conscience, governed by reason and illuminated by a revelation which could not be inconsistent with reason itself'.[34] The emphasis on reason in the thought of the Platonists naturally raises the question of the place of Scripture. Although there are affinities with the Deist thinkers of the following generation, the Platonists never took the step of rejecting the need for revelation. For, whilst reason was 'a light flowing from the fountain and father of lights', since man's fall 'the inward virtue and vigour of reason is much abated'.[35] In More's terms, Christ's revelation helped wean men from their obsession with the material and sensual.

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distinctive characteristic of the Platonists examined (Cragg 1968; Patrides 1969). Both anthologies begin with material on revelation and reason.

The relationship between faith and reason was one of the most fundamental theological questions of the seventeenth century.

[30] More 1660: 51.

[31] See Mintz 1962: 82-83.

[32] For the Platonists and the Puritans, see Cassirer 1953: 65-85.

[33] Whichcote cited in Patrides 1969: 10.

[34] Cragg 1950: 41.

[35] Smith cited in Cragg 1950: 45.

The senses too were subject to reason, and thus the Platonists opposed the growing influence of empiricism.[36] The senses were fickle and deceptive unless disciplined by reason. In particular, they opposed the empiricists' idea that the mind was a *tabula rasa*. Instead, they held to a belief in 'common notions' or 'innate ideas'. This was closely related to the Platonic Theory of Recollection.[37] Ideas were not planted in the mind by external objects; instead, latent ideas were merely stimulated. The truth of a notion could be proved, therefore, by an appeal to common assent. A substantial part of Cudworth's *True Intellectual System*, for example, attempted to show that the belief that there existed only one God was universally attested, and thus an innate idea.

'Monotheism' as the Primeval Religion

More, like most of his contemporaries, understood the early history of religion as a story of degeneration. The primeval religion was pure and spiritual. The fall had brought an obsession with the 'animal life'. Polytheism and idolatry were the result of this degeneration. Cudworth too held that 'monotheism' was the primeval religion, but his account of the origin of polytheism differed from More's. Cudworth argued that both polytheism and 'monotheism' could be traced back to Egypt, the home of all literature and learning. Such a claim would appear to be impossible since Egypt was well known to the ancient Greeks as a nation which worshipped theriomorphic deities. Cudworth introduced an important distinction between the vulgar theology and the arcane theology. The arcane theology was the preserve of the royal and priestly caste, who recognized that there was only one true God. This arcane theology was veiled in allegory and hieroglyphs. It was into this that Moses had been initiated.[38] The general populace, uninitiated in the Egyptian mysteries, misunderstood what Cudworth believed to be the slogan of Egyptian theology, ἕν καὶ πᾶν, 'one and all'. This they took as a reference to the world, rather than to the one God, and were thus led into idolatry.

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[36] For the Platonists and empiricism, see Cassirer 1953: 42-65.

[37] See Scott 1994. A similar idea was held by Lord Herbert of Cherbury, though it is unlikely that the Platonists derived it from him (Hutton 1996).

[38] Cudworth 1678: 317.

The belief that 'monotheism' was the primitive religion was a view that was unchallenged for most of the seventeenth century. The hegemony of this view was due to two assumptions. First, 'monotheism' was natural and, second, truth is older than error. The history of religion is a history of degeneration from the pure religion of the *illud tempus*.

'Monotheism' and the Intellectualization of Religion

More's 'monotheism' is perhaps at its most familiar when he uses it as an organizing principle in the study of religion. With the binary opposites 'monotheism' – 'atheism' More was able to categorize the complex world of religions. 'Monotheism' was the criterion by which all religions, including Christianity, were judged. In More's *Grand Mystery* pantheism makes a false claim to be a true monotheism. Similarly, in *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos*, the Saracens claim to hold to 'monotheisme'. This, though is 'an ignorant pretence of *Monotheisme*, as if the Christian Religion was inconsistent with the worship of one God, whereas the more distinct knowledge of that one God does not make us less *Monotheists* than they'.[39] More's trinitarian Christianity also comes under the brilliant spotlight of this organizing principle. In *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos* polytheists charge Christians with the worship of more gods than one.[40] Elsewhere, More allows that 'there is a *latitude of sense* in the word *One* or *Unity* allowable in the Creed'.[41]

Powerful though this organizing principle undoubtedly was, it placed the accent on one particular aspect of religion. This was not something unique to More, but reflects a general trend characterizing the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As Harrison has shown, all religions, including Christianity, began to be defined by their propositional expressions in the seventeenth century:

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[39] More 1680: 83-84. Hülsewiesche mistakenly suggests this quotation is aimed at Judaism (1984: 142).

[40] More 1680: 89.

[41] More 1660: 456.

> the truth or falsity of a religion had become a function of the truth or falsity of the propositions which constituted it. True religion was not genuine piety, but a body of certain knowledge.[42]

This change is reflected in the contemporaneous shift in language, which saw an explosion of '-isms'.[43] More's 'monotheism' was only part of a wider movement. N. Lash draws attention to the significance of this change. 'It is, I think, almost impossible to overestimate the importance of the massive shift in language and imagination that took place, in Europe, in the seventeenth century; a shift for which de Certeau has two striking phrases: the "dethroning of the verb" and the "spatialisation of knowledge"'.[44]

The idea that what is truly descriptive of a religion is its propositional statements has been aptly described by Lash as 'a simple strategy for a complex world'.[45] Lash's point, of course, is that simple strategies carry with them a danger of distortion. This is particularly the case with 'polytheism' as G. Ahn has shown. First, he argues, 'polytheism' reflects a classification of religions based on a monotheistic perspective. Second, the language of 'polytheism' – 'monotheism' prioritises one particular question, that of the number of deities. This matter is rarely, if ever, a concern of polytheistic religions.[46] But, Ahn's argument may be taken further, for it is not only polytheistic religions that are distorted. It may justifiably be claimed that the so-called 'monotheistic' religions of Judaism and Christianity are distorted in identical ways. The first use of 'monotheism' as a classification to which Christianity belongs occurs in a conflict with the philosophical doctrine of 'materialism'. The terms upon which that battle was to be fought were agreed by the Cambridge Platonists and Descartes to be philosophical, rather than theological. The term 'monotheism' reflects that agreement. In other words, 'monotheism' reflects a classification of religions based, not on an inner-

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[42] Harrison 1990: 26.

[43] 'Ism' in *OED*. See also p. 17 n. 2 above.
Perhaps the most striking example of this trend was the triumph of 'polytheism', reinvented in 1580, over 'idolatry' as the most appropriate description of the antithesis of true religion (Schmidt 1985: 77-90).

[44] Lash 1996c: 168.

[45] Lash 1996b: 10.

[46] Ahn 1993.

Christian perspective, but on one derived from the early Enlightenment.[47] Second, the prioritizing of the question of the number of deities is part of the emphasis on propositional statements that begins in the seventeenth century. This is not, of course, to deny the importance of belief in one God in Christianity. However, whilst early Christianity expressed this in the confessional context of the creed, which included, of course, many other beliefs, the use of 'monotheism' reflects a shift towards what might be called propositionalism, and to one proposition in particular.

The distorting effect of this intellectualization is already observable in More's work. Judaism was criticized for its sensuous religious festivals indicative of an obsession with the 'animal life'. Given the tensions in the thinking of the Cambridge Platonists upon the spiritual and the material, the 'divine life' and the 'animal life', it is not surprising that a certain ambivalence towards the outward ceremonies of Christianity developed. More asserted that 'the onely safe Entrance into Divine Knowledge is true Holiness'.[48] Whichcote is more astonishing with his assertion that '*the State of Religion* lyes, in short, in this; *A good Mind, and a good Life*. All else is *about* Religion'.[49] In place of ceremony the Platonists emphasized ethics.[50] Although not guilty of it themselves, it is not difficult to see in the Cambridge Platonists the seeds of the anti-clericalism and anti-ceremonialism that was to characterize deist thinkers of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.

2. *The Development of 'Monotheism'*

Despite their careful scholarship and openness to modern science, More and the Cambridge Platonists were to find no intellectual heirs in the following generation. The alliance they forged between Christianity and Platonism was swept away by

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[47] Tracy notes that '"monotheism" is an Enlightenment invention (H. More, D. Hume) that bears all the marks of Enlightenment rationalism' (1995: 30).

[48] More cited in Patrides 1969: 14.

[49] Whichcote cited in Patrides 1969: 14.

[50] For the Platonist's emphasis on ethics rather than ceremony, see Cragg 1968: 19-20; Lichtenstein 1962: 23; Patrides 1969: 13-15.

the empiricism of Locke and the rationalism of the deists. The term 'monotheism' was taken up by the deists and became associated with them. Thus, for the well-known deist Viscount Bolingbroke, 'monotheism' was 'the first principle of true theism',[51] and in Nathan Bailey's *Universal Etymological English Dictionary* of 1742 'monotheism' was defined as 'the Doctrine or Principles of the Unitarians'.[52] The same is true for Cudworth's synonymous creation 'theism'.[53] This shift has been noted by C. Schwöbel who writes,

> apparently the term was first used by the Cambridge Platonist H. More in 1660...It is quite ironic that the next evidence for the programmatic use of the term comes from one of H. St. John Viscount Bolingbroke's philosophical works.[54]

Significantly, it was the use of the term by Bolingbroke and other deist thinkers that ensured the term's survival and led to its established place in philosophical and theological discourse.

The adoption of 'monotheism' by the deists shaped the meaning of the word in important ways. To trace the development of 'monotheism' through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is a task which lies well beyond my capabilities. Such an exercise would need a command of the literature and thought of Western religion and philosophy. Fortunately the recent work by J. Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism*, on the perception of Egypt in Europe from the seventeenth century onwards, intersects with my interest at a number of points. Assmann's expertise does not lie in the development of Western thought; instead, he is a noted Egyptologist. However, *Moses the Egyptian* moves beyond his usual scholarly interests in the New Kingdom and explores the

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[51] Bolingboke 1754: 231.

[52] 'Monotheism' in Bailey 1742.

[53] Hume was to use 'theism' of belief in one God in the *Natural History of Religion*, his critique of deism published in 1757.

The fluidity that existed between 'theism', 'deism' and 'monotheism' was to last into the nineteenth century. In 1816, Barclay's dictionary defined 'theism' as 'the belief that there is but one God' ('Theism', in Barclay 1816). Both Barclay's dictionary and Richardson's dictionary of 1836 defined 'deism' and 'theism' as synonyms ('Theism' in Barclay 1816; 'Theism' in Richardson 1836).

[54] Schwöbel 2001: 62.

reception of Egypt in modern Europe. As the subtitle of his work suggests, the Western perception of Egypt has been that it possessed a 'monotheistic' faith.

Assmann argues that between the two well-known periods of 'Egyptomania', the Renaissance and the Napoleonic era, there was another revival of interest in Egypt beginning in the English Enlightenment. In his book Assmann traces the course of this scholarly discourse down into the nineteenth century, and even into the twentieth century. This survey demonstrates the way that Egypt became a projection of Western 'monotheism'. Thus, through a select group of intellectuals, each with an interest in Egypt, Assmann's work traces the development of 'monotheism'. Assmann's selective survey may, with appropriate caveats, be taken to accurately represent the course of reflection on 'monotheism' in Europe.

It is not only the subject of Assmann's work that intersects with my own interest, but, fortuitously, the points at which his survey begins and ends. Assmann begins with a consideration of two of More's contemporaries at Cambridge, John Spencer and Ralph Cudworth, and ends with Sigmund Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*, a work which clearly evidences a rudimentary knowledge of Old Testament scholarship.

Assmann's survey begins with John Spencer and Ralph Cudworth, both Cambridge Hebraists.[55] Assmann attributes to Spencer initiating the rediscovery of Egypt.[56] Against the long-held Christian tradition that all other laws were diabolical imitations of biblical law, Spencer argued that the Israelite laws were derived from Egypt. In most cases the laws were subject to normative inversion, that is, whatever the Egyptians regarded as holy became an abomination to the Israelites. Spencer's research into the origins of Israelite ritual and law was complemented by Cudworth's theological interests. Cudworth, as has already been noted, saw Egypt as the origin of both true and false religion and introduced the important distinction between arcane and vulgar religion. According to Cudworth, the arcane religion

[55] Assmann 1997: 55-90.

[56] Assmann 1997: 75-76.

was the worship of one God, which was concealed in allegory and the hieroglyphs. The vulgar religion was a crude misunderstanding of the arcane religion.

John Toland, the deist-cum-pantheist, developed the ideas of Cudworth in a quite different direction. Following Strabo, he argued that the religion that Moses developed from the Egyptians was one of great simplicity, focused around the Ten Commandments. Like an ancient Spinoza, Moses believed God to be Nature. He also held to neither the soul's immortality nor future reward and punishment.[57] Such ideas, along with the priesthood, sacrifices and extravagant cult, were later developments introduced by the Jews.[58] William Warburton, the bishop of Gloucester, accepted many of Toland's arguments, but drew different conclusions in an attempt to defend the authenticity of Mosaic religion against the deists. The avoidance of secrecy and the lack of a doctrine of the soul's immortality, two characteristics of pagan religions, prove the divine origin of the law of Moses.[59]

The Kantian philosopher Karl Leonhard Reinhold wrote a book as a mason, which argued that Mosaic religion was a faithful representation of the Egyptian mysteries. Comparing Sais' statement, 'I am all that is', with the revelation of the meaning of the name YHWH to Moses, 'I am that I am', he saw Egyptian and Israelite religion to be one and the same. Both religions worshipped the one god, Nature. Whilst Egyptian religion hid the true religion under hieroglyphs, Moses initiated the whole nation of Israel into the mysteries at Sinai. However, the problems the Israelites had in accepting these beliefs led to Moses replacing the Egyptian hieroglyphs with Jewish rituals.[60] These ideas were taken and paraphrased by the poet Friedrich Schiller.[61]

Assmann's survey of the Enlightenment's understanding of the relation between Moses and Egyptian religion reveals the way in which Egypt's 'arcane theology'

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[57] Israel 2001: 611.

[58] Assmann 1997: 95.

[59] Assmann 1997: 96-100.

[60] Assmann 1997: 115-25.

[61] Assmann 1997: 126.

became nothing more than a projection of the Enlightenment's deism and pantheism. The roots of this projection lie in Cudworth's distinction between Egypt's vulgar religion and arcane religion. With this hermeneutical key the form of Egyptian religion could be cleaned away to reveal its pantheistic kernel, concealed in the hieroglyphs. However, it was not only Egyptian religion where the husk could be removed. The same could be true of the Pentateuch. The key for the religion of Moses was a single verse from Acts 7: 'Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians'. With this verse and the new understanding of Egypt, the genuine Mosaic religion could be restored from beneath the Jewish accretions in the Pentateuch. As the Moses-Egypt discourse developed, Moses was increasingly seen as an enlightened Egyptian priest who broke with the traditional social order and declared Egypt's arcane religion to the general populace, for which he was expelled from Egypt. This picture of Moses was a potent image for the deists, pantheists and free-thinkers of the Enlightenment, who were forced to meet in secret societies across Europe because of the fear that their beliefs would destablize the social order. This view of Egypt's arcane religion was to last until the decipherment of the Egyptian hieroglyphs by Champollion in 1822.

Champollion's achievement, Assmann argues, was to signal not a permanent end to this discourse on Moses and Egyptian religion, but only a hiatus. With the aid of the recent discoveries at Amarna, Freud was able to revive the discourse, not with the distinction between Egypt's arcane and vulgar religion, but between Akhenaten's monotheism and Egyptian polytheism. Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* argues that Moses was an Egyptian[62] and an Atenist, and that Jewish religion traces its ancestry back to Akhenaten's monotheism. Not many scholars have been willing to follow Freud in tracing Israelite monotheism back to Akhenaten,[63] but whether or not the religion of Moses has its origins in Akhenaten's failed reform movement is not my immediate concern here.[64] Instead, our interest is with the characteristics that Freud finds in common between Mosaic

[62] Freud actually argues that there was an Egyptian Moses and a Midianite Moses.

[63] Freud describes his work as a 'historical novel', that is, he attempts to fill in the gaps. This is, then, an exercise in probability (see Yerushalmi 1991: 16-17).

[64] Redford describes the comparison of Mosaic religion and Akhenaten's revolution as the 'classic red herring' (1992: 377-82).

monotheism and Akhenaten's monotheism. Freud finds seven characteristics of monotheism, which are found in Judaism and Akhenaten's beliefs, and stand in complete contrast to Egyptian religion. First, there is only one God. Second, that one God cannot be represented. Third, magic, ceremony and superstition are excluded. Fourth, there is no concept of an after-life.[65] Elsewhere Freud extends the list and includes: an emphasis on ethical requirements,[66] no female goddess, and God is universalistic.[67] In his analysis of Freud, Assmann lists the first five of these characteristics and notes that it is only on the idea of the after-life 'that Freud's view of Amarna religion differs from the traditional [that is, Enlightenment] view of Egyptian mystery religion'.[68] The three additional characteristics that Freud detects confirm Assmann's observation.

Freud also had to face the question that Toland had had to answer. How did Moses' pure monotheism become contaminated with other elements to form Judaism? Freud answers by positing the existence of a second Moses, a Midianite Moses. The rigours of the monotheism of the Egyptian Moses were too much for the Jewish people,[69] and they killed him. The imperfections of the Law were introduced by the Midianite Moses, who worshipped the volcanic deity, YHWH, and the pure worship of the Aten was suppressed. In Freud's hand, Jewish history becomes the story of the re-emergence of the repressed, the religion of Akhenaten and the Egyptian Moses.

But, what God had re-emerged in Freud's Jewish people? Where did this 'monotheism' come from? Assmann's comments are highly significant:

> With this sublime idea of a Supreme Being, we are back to the God of the Enlightenment. This is the God Strabo attributed to Moses, the God of Cudworth and of Schiller, of the Deists, the free-thinkers and the Freemasons...Seemingly a circle closes. Freud brings home from

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[65] Freud 1964: 18-20; Assmann 1997: 153.

[66] Freud 1964: 50, 66.

[67] Freud 1964: 87-88.

[68] Assmann 1997: 153.

[69] I am using Freud's terminology. 'Jewish' and 'Judaism' are reserved in biblical scholarship for the post-exilic period.

> his 'Egyptian dig' a god such as Schiller and Strabo claimed him to be. Freud's characterization of Akhenaten's god is strongly informed by the idea of God fostered by Spinozism, Deism, cosmotheism, and pantheism underlying the various versions of the Moses/Egypt discourse.[70]

The 'monotheism' of Freud's Moses is not the religion of Amarna.[71] Instead, this 'monotheism' is the philosophical construction of Enlightenment thinkers, opposed to the superstition and ignorance that they perceived in earlier generations and in many of their contemporaries.

3. *The Origin and Meaning of 'Monotheism' in Modern Study of the Old Testament*

The discussion thus far has moved some distance from the debate about Old Testament 'monotheism', and it is now time to return to more familiar territory. In doing so, however, subject will be approached with the questions that have been raised from our engagement with the Cambridge Platonists and the Enlightenment. To what extent is the modern discussion of 'monotheism' in the Old Testament affected by the intellectualization implicit in the term? Does the characterization of Old Testament 'monotheism' reflect the self-portrayal of the Enlightenment? Our engagement with the discussion of 'monotheism' by Old Testament scholarship will not entail a detailed description of the contours of the debate. R.K. Gnuse has traced, in some detail, the debate since 1970,[72] and the wider discussion has been sketched by N. Lohfink and F. Stolz.[73] Instead, I will make broad observations on how the subject of 'monotheism' has been dealt with, and analyse the works of a few specific scholars who have sought to characterize 'monotheism'.

For the sake of our analysis three important stages in the debate about Old Testament 'monotheism' over the last one hundred and twenty years are

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[70] Assmann 1997: 157.

[71] Assmann 1997: 158.

[72] Gnuse 1997: 62-128; 1999.

[73] Lohfink 1985; Stolz 1996.

considered.[74] The first stage is associated with the names of Abraham Kuenen and Julius Wellhausen, and the second stage with William Foxwell Albright and Yehezekel Kaufmann. The most recent stage has as its point of departure the archaeological discoveries at Kuntillet 'Ajrud.

The Late Nineteenth Century: Julius Wellhausen and Abraham Kuenen

Wellhausen and Kuenen's contribution to the discussion of Old Testament 'monotheism' is closely linked to their historio-critical work on the Pentateuch, and in particular their dating of P. As is well known, prior to the work of K.H. Graf the priestly writings were considered, along with E, to form the *Grundschrift* of the Pentateuch. Graf argued that the priestly laws were the last strata of the Pentateuch, and dated them to the time of Ezra or later.[75] This theory of the Pentateuch's historical origins impressed both Wellhausen and Kuenen, and was developed in their own criticism of the Pentateuch. For both, it also enabled a new understanding of Israel's religious history.[76] Most significantly, the Pentateuchal law was no longer viewed as a given in Israel's history, but was now viewed as the result of that history. The prophets were viewed as religious innovators, and not as mere exponents and guardians of the Mosaic Law.[77] Famously, Kuenen argued that the prophets should be celebrated not as foretellers of Jesus Christ, but as the creators of 'ethical monotheism'.[78]

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[74] The survey undertaken is selective, but arguably, for the purposes of elucidating the conceptulization of 'monotheism' in Old Testament scholarship, representative. The discussion of Israelite and Babylonian monotheism in the so-called 'Babel-Bibel' controversy, for example, is not considered. In his second lecture Delitzsch critiqued Israelite monotheism for its nationalism, and in his third lecture he suggested that some Babylonian thinkers perceived a unity behind their numerous deities. For a recent sketch of the controversy, see Larsen 1995.

[75] Mulder 1993a: 4-5.

[76] For this relationship, see Mulder 1993b: 65-66. The importance of the new dating of P for the question of 'monotheism' was noted by Kuenen 1876: 333-35.

[77] Wellhausen 1885; Kuenen 1877: esp. 558-64.

[78] Kuenen 1877: esp. 1-20; 585-93.

Wellhausen and Kuenen's understanding of the development of 'monotheism', and its relationship to ethical and universal conceptions of God, are markedly similar.[79] Kuenen's account of 'monotheism' can be found in his *Religion of Israel*, *The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel* and his Hibbert lectures of 1882, *National Religions and Universal Religions*.[80] All were originally written in Dutch but were soon translated into English. Kuenen's starting point for reconstructing Israel's religious history is eighth century prophecy. Here, he argued, there was a secure historical basis from which to approach the earlier periods of Israelite history.[81] The opposition between, on the one hand, the canonical prophets and, on the other, the general populace and the false prophets provided Kuenen with a crucial key for understanding the development of Israelite religion. The false prophets were characterized by their nationalism: YHWH is the God of Israel and Israel are the people of YHWH. The canonical prophets, however, emphasized above all else the holiness of YHWH.[82] As a holy God, YHWH makes moral demands of the Israelites. Obedience brings blessing, and failure punishment. This led the canonical prophets into direct conflict with the nationalism of the false prophets. The nature of this distinction needs to be carefully stated, for both groups held that YHWH was holy and the God of Israel:

> 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...*Another*, on the contrary, took the holiness of Jahveh

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[79] For the relationship between Kuenen and Wellhausen, see Smend 1993.

[80] Kuenen 1874-75, 1877, 1882. A detailed account of Kuenen's work on 'ethical monotheism' can be found in Mulder 1993b. Mulder's analysis, however, focuses on Kuenen's version of the history of the development of 'monotheism', rather than the characteristics of Kuenen's 'monotheism'.

[81] Kuenen 1874-75.

[82] In *Prophecy and the Prophets* and *The Religion of Israel* this understanding of the prophets is central to Kuenen's argument. Kuenen argues that what was of central importance to the prophets was their conception of YHWH's nature and attributes; prophetic prediction was secondary, and derived from their understanding of YHWH (Kuenen 1874-75: vol. 1; 1877: esp. 346).

> as his starting-point, and came to the conclusion that even the chosen people should not be spared.[83]

The holiness of YHWH and his relation to Israel, affirmed in the canonical and the false prophets to different degrees, form the two central pillars of the religion. 'In Jahvism there were from the beginning, and there always continued to be, two elements intimately connected: the religious-ethical element and the national element'.[84] Both may be traced back to Moses. 'He gave the impulse to the whole subsequent development, when he bound Israel to the adoration of Jahveh, and expressed once for all the moral character of the Jahveh-worship in "the ten words"'.[85] Thus, though it is the prophets that Kuenen credits with the creation of ethical monotheism, he can assert that Mosaism, 'carried in itself from the very first the *germs* of monotheism, so that (ethical) monotheism was at once its τέλος and its motive power'.[86]

The primacy of the ethical conception of YHWH in the (canonical) prophets led to a number of developments which widened the gulf between them and their contemporaries. First, the prophets taught 'ethical monotheism'. 'The belief that Yahweh was the only God sprang out of the ethical conception of his being. *Monotheism* was the gradual, not sudden, result of this conception'.[87] The 'ethical monotheism' of the prophets was a *nascent* monotheism, a transition between the older monolatry and an absolute monotheism. In the prophets we find a 'repeated overstepping of the line between monolatry and the recognition of one only God [*sic*]'.[88] This emphasis on the ethical distinguished the prophetic deity from the

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[83] Kuenen 1877: 361. Kuenen's italics.

[84] Kuenen 1877: 583.

[85] Kuenen 1877: 562. 'The tradition which ascribes them [the Ten Words] to Moses is worthy of respect on account of its undisputed antiquity. Nevertheless, if it were contradicted by the contents and form of the "words" we should have to reject it. But this is not the case. Therefore we accept it' (Kuenen 1874-75: I, 285). Kuenen later revised his view on the Mosaic origin of the Decalogue (Rogerson 1993: 93).

[86] Kuenen 1876: 363. Kuenen's italics. Cf. 1874-75: I, 280-82.

[87] Kuenen 1882: 119. Kuenen's italics.

[88] Kuenen 1882: 319.

YHWH of popular patriotism,[89] and also from the gods of the nations. The YHWH of the prophets was superior because of his holiness. In the catastrophic events of the exile the YHWH of the popular patriotism proved to be weaker than his Babylonian rivals. The opposite occurred with the ethical conception of YHWH. The exile proved YHWH's moral government of the entire world. It was, then, in the immediate shadow of the exile, in Deuteronomy and Jeremiah, that 'monotheism' in the sense of the absolute non-existence of other gods found its first expression.[90]

The prophetic view of YHWH was, therefore, a more spiritual one than that of their predecessors or contemporaries. The 'idea that "*Jahveh is Spirit*" and as such is distinct from and exalted above all that is material – this idea was the natural fruit of meditation upon the difference between Jahveh and the other deities'.[91] Thus, there was a tendency in prophetic thought 'towards deism, towards the separation of God and nature, of God and mankind'.[92] This spiritual conception of religion touched upon their notion of what counted as appropriate worship of YHWH:

> [For Israel] he is worshipped by means of sacrifices and festivals in the temples and sanctuaries consecrated to him. The prophets however attribute little value to these solemnities and to external worship in general. On the other hand they insist on purity of conduct, on honesty, on righteousness, practised towards the poor and the weak also, on love manifested in acts. Obedience to Jahveh's will, hearkening to his instruction consists, according to them, in the performance of these virtues.[93]

This spiritual view of YHWH, however, did not fully penetrate canonical prophecy. This is particularly to be observed in the prophets' problematic account of judgement and blessing, which were conceptualized primarily in material terms, such as land, rain, harvest and offspring.[94]

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[89] The popular religion was polytheistic (Kuenen 1874-75: I, 223; 1876: 335-38).

[90] Kuenen 1876: 346; 1882: 317.

[91] Kuenen 1874-75: I, 368.

[92] Kuenen 1877: 349.

[93] Kuenen 1877: 348. Cf. 1874-75: I, 57-58.

[94] Kuenen 1877: 350-59.

Third, the ethical conception of YHWH led to a 'loosening of the band between Yahwism and patriotism',[95] for in Kuenen's view the ethical is 'the one channel that leads to true universalism. For the ethical is the universally human.'[96] Although the logical end of their ethical religion was universalism, the prophets did not sever the relationship between YHWH and people. But their ethical beliefs do 'give a certain independence to Yahwism'.[97] In Isaiah this separation between the people and Yahwism is seen in the idea of the remnant. In Jeremiah, 'individualism is...the form under which the nascent universalism reveals itself'.[98] This tendency towards individualism reflects the democratic nature of the prophetic message.[99] The highest expression of universalism is found in Second Isaiah where it reached 'embryonic form'.[100]

The lofty ideals of the prophets failed to be realized in the post-exilic period. The prophetic vision of Israel was ousted by the priestly conception of Judaism. In Judaism ethical responsibility towards God, rather than man, was emphasized. Holiness was materialized, and the spiritual emphases of the prophets were lost. Separation became increasingly important and with it nationalism was revived.[101] Judaism's degeneration underlined the prophetic movement's failure to reach a true monotheism, for, according to Kuenen, 'apostasy from monotheism to polytheism is inconceivable'.[102] The ideals of the prophets find their fulfilment, instead, in Christianity. 'The Christian religion...is the completion of Israelite religion'.[103] This is seen in the way that the New Testament appropriates the prophets' message: 'the national, particularistic, and material elements...are...thrust into the

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[95] Kuenen 1882: 118.

[96] Kuenen 1882: 50. It is universalism that confirmed the identification of the prophets' beliefs as 'monotheism' (1874-75: I, 67).

[97] Kuenen 1882: 138.

[98] Kuenen 1882: 146.

[99] Kuenen 1874-75: I, 62.

[100] Kuenen 1882: 147.

[101] Kuenen 1882: 156-68. 'The Law must be regarded as a compromise between the popular religion and the Jahvism of the prophets' (1874-75: I, 230).

[102] Kuenen 1876: 339; cf. 1877: 586-87.

[103] Kuenen 1877: 534.

background...the universalistic and spiritual side comes into the foreground'.[104] Jesus' message is universalistic,[105] anti-hierarchical and anti-sacerdotal.[106]

Wellhausen, in his essay 'Israel' for the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, traced the history of Israel from Moses to modern times. As he did so he frequently addressed the subject of 'monotheism'.[107] According to Wellhausen, the introduction of YHWH to the Israelite tribes was not the importation of a new idea of deity. 'For Moses to have given to the Israelites an "enlightened conception of God" would have been to have given a stone instead of bread'.[108] As far as YHWH's essential nature was concerned, the Israelites' thinking continued in the same way as their fathers. YHWH was the national god, and also the god of justice and war. This conception of YHWH adequately met the practical needs of the Hebrew slaves and the loose connection of families in the pre-state period. The early Israelites did not think of YHWH as the only God, but as the mightiest among the gods. His power, though, was restricted to the land of Israel.[109] Further, YHWH was not conceived of as a supernatural or spiritual being. He appeared in holy places, localised in natural objects.[110] Despite its lack of novelty, this conception of God contained within it the seeds of Israel's later monotheism:

> The so-called 'particularism' of Israel's idea of God was in fact the real strength of Israel's religion; it thus escaped from barren mythologizings, and became free to apply itself to the moral tasks which are always given, and admit of being discharged, only in defined spheres. As God of the nation, Jehovah became the God of justice and of right; as God of justice and right, He came to be thought of as the highest, and at last as the only, power in heaven and earth.[111]

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[104] Kuenen 1877: 500.

[105] Kuenen 1877: 501.

[106] Kuenen 1877: 534.

[107] Wellhausen 1881. Comparison is also made with Wellhausen 1958.

[108] Wellhausen 1881: 399; also Wellhausen 1958: 32.

[109] Wellhausen 1958: 29.

[110] Wellhausen 1958: 30.

[111] Wellhausen 1881: 399.

It was the prophets who developed this notion of YHWH as the God of justice and right, at the expense of an emphasis on YHWH's relationship with Israel. Whilst their prophetic predecessors had been loyal to the state and its projects, the new canonical prophets were not patriotic in this sense. YHWH's loyalty to Israel existed only to the extent that Israel was righteous. Thus,

> the ethical element destroyed the national character of the old religion. It still addressed itself, to be sure, more to the nation and to society at large than to the individual; it insisted less upon a pure heart than upon righteous institutions; but nevertheless the first step towards universalism had been accomplished, towards at once the general diffusion and the individualization of religion. Thus, although the prophets were far from originating a new conception of God, they none the less were the founders of what has been called 'ethical monotheism'.[112]

The prophetic idea of God found expression in the Deuteronomic legislation. 'Monotheism' justified the limitation of worship to Jerusalem,[113] and produced the 'universal moral precepts of the Decalogue' and the rest of the Deuteronomic code:[114]

> According to these, Jehovah is the only God, whose service demands the whole heart and energy; He has entered into a covenant with Israel, but upon fundamental conditions that, as contained in the Decalogue, are purely moral and of absolute universality.[115]

The individualism of Deuteronomy, expressed in whole-hearted service, rather than institutions, is paradoxically the route towards universalism. 'As the religion grew more individualistic, it also became more universal'.[116] With Second Isaiah the universalistic and monotheistic significance of the prophets' ethical faith is clearly seen,

> It is to be observed, as characteristic in this prophecy, how the idea of Jehovah as God alone and God over all – in constantly recurring lyrical parentheses He is praised as the author of the world and of all nature – is yet placed in positive relation to Israel alone, and that upon the principle that Israel is in exclusive possession of the universal truth,

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[112] Wellhausen 1881: 411.

[113] Wellhausen 1881: 416.

[114] Wellhausen 1881: 399.

[115] Wellhausen 1881: 415.

[116] Wellhausen 1881: 420.

> which cannot perish with Israel, but must, through the instrumentality of Israel, become the common possession of the whole world. 'There is no God but Jehovah, and Israel is His prophet.'[117]

In the post-exilic period, however, Judaism retained the monotheistic belief of the prophets, but combined it with a revivified particularism.

The reasons for the attractiveness of the theories of Kuenen and Wellhausen to their contemporaries and the generation that succeeded them are not difficult to discern. Their work reflected the latest literary analysis of the Old Testament texts and involved careful working of the historical data, with an awareness of the hypothetical nature of any reconstruction.[118] Perhaps most importantly, Kuenen and Wellhausen's organic view of historical development meant that as they traced the contours of Israelite history it was the biblical evidence that dictated their course more than theoretical schemas and concepts. Their success in describing Israelite religious history is seen most clearly in recent discussion of 'monotheism' where, with modifications, many scholars hold to the idea that the preliminary steps towards 'monotheism' are found in the prophets, reaching their culmination in the exilic prophets.[119] Indeed, there are some that hold to this view of the development of monotheism who, like Kuenen and Wellhausen, would be prepared to trace the initial germs to Moses.[120]

Many of the shortcomings of Kuenen and Wellhausen's work are as apparent as their merits. Negative assessments of the post-exilic period have justifiably been criticized in recent scholarship.[121] Further, it is clear that their own liberal Protestantism, with its ethical spirit, formed the lenses through which they

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[117] Wellhausen 1881: 417.

[118] On Kuenen, see Emerton 1993: 19.

[119] See Emerton 1993: 26. For the role of a prophetic 'YHWH-alone' movement in creating exclusiveness of YHWH which led to 'monotheism' see Smith 1987; Lang 1983; 1985a; 1985b; Vorländer 1981.

[120] E.g. Albertz 1994a: 61-62.

[121] Albertz's history of Israelite religion, for example, gives a far larger and more formative role to the post-exilic period in deliberate contrast to earlier histories (1994a: 1-13; 437-597). It is not clear to me that Kuenen's judgement of the post-

perceived and assessed the development of Israelite religion. This is perhaps most clearly seen in the description of prophetic religion as 'individualistic' and 'democratic', and in the sharp dichotomy drawn between cultic and ethical religion.

Problems are also apparent in the way that the consequences of the prophets' ethical beliefs are conceptualized. In Kuenen, for example, two logical results of ethical monotheism are the spirituality of YHWH and universalism. However, neither proves satisfactory as a description of any prophet's belief, even that of Second Isaiah. Blessings are expressed in material terms, and the bond between YHWH and his people is never undone. It is evident that Kuenen was aware that prophetic religion did not reap the harvest of their ethical beliefs and we must credit him with not forcing the biblical evidence into his schema, but it must be questioned whether the categories that Kuenen used uncovered the internal logic of prophetic belief. Further, it is clear that it was the way in which Kuenen conceptualized 'ethical monotheism' and the consequences which naturally flowed from it that led to his negative assessment of the post-exilic period.

The Mid Twentieth Century: William Foxwell Albright and Yehezekel Kaufmann

In their literary critical scholarship and reconstruction of Israelite history Wellhausen, Kuenen and other scholars at the end of the nineteenth century 'laid the basis of modern biblical scholarship'.[122] Their understanding provided the starting point from which new research was conducted. This hegemony lasted until around the Second World War when two scholars in North America and Israel sought to destroy what they saw as the 'Wellhausen hypothesis'. These two scholars were William Foxwell Albright and Yehezekel Kaufmann.

In the English-speaking discussion of 'monotheism' the publication of Albright's *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historic Process* in 1940 (a year after Freud published his work on Moses) marks a milestone.[123] His account

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exilic period is much more positive than Wellhausen's, *contra* Rofé (1993: 105-107).

[122] Dirksen and Kooij (ed.) 1993: vii.

[123] The German translation of Albright's work appeared in 1949. However, whilst Gnuse's sketch of the debate about monotheism takes Albright as a starting point

of 'monotheism' was influential particularly among the group of scholars he taught, the 'Baltimore school',[124] but also amongst others.[125] Albright saw himself as the initiator of a new stage in biblical research, the 'archaeological phase', which was replacing the older 'philological phase'. The chief exponent of this older stage was Wellhausen who was thus Albright's arch-antagonist.[126] In Albright's eyes the scholarship associated with Wellhausen was hampered by two interrelated problems: data and methodology. No account had been taken of the recent archaeological finds, and the Biblical texts were interpreted using a subjective, 'Hegelian' schema of evolutionary development.[127] In its place, Albright offered an 'organismic' philosophy of historical development with archaeology providing the objective, scientific data.[128] It is clear though that what underpinned Albright's work, and also what distinguished him from Wellhausen and his followers, was a belief 'that the Bible was true, not only in terms of precepts and concepts properly articulated and formulated, but in a historical sense as well'.[129] Such a belief affected Albright's view of what archaeology would prove. At the end of a chapter describing the advances made in archaeological research, Albright concluded, 'as critical study of the Bible is more and more influenced by the rich new material from the ancient Near East we shall see a steady rise in respect for the historical significance of now neglected or despised passages and details in the Old and New Testaments'.[130]

(1997; 1999), Lohfink makes no mention of him (1985). Indeed, rather surprisingly the book in which Lohfink's essay appears has a bibliography which does not include Albright's work, despite having Meek's extended review (Meek 1942) of it (Haag 1985: 184-92; also see Stolz 1996: 209-238)!

[124] E.g. Bright 1972: 153-56; Wright 1950: 28-41.

[125] E.g. Jacob 1958: 66 n. 1.

[126] Long 1997: 35-38.

[127] Albright's charge that Wellhausen was Hegelian was mistaken. Albertz notes that Wellhausen took Vatke's Hegelian account of Israelite history and 'stripped it of its philosophical structure' (1994a: 4-5).

[128] Albright 1957: 82-126.

[129] Freedman 1989: 37.

[130] Albright 1957: 81.

One of Wellhausen's conclusions that particularly disturbed Albright was the claim that 'monotheism' was a late development in Israelite history.[131] In many of his works, but particularly in *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, Albright argued that 'monotheism' was the creation of Moses.[132] As the title of that work indicates, Albright attempted a survey of human civilization until Jesus Christ. The first two chapters are an extended introduction to the book. In the first chapter Albright sketched the developments in ancient Near Eastern archaeology that shed light on the history of civilization. In the second chapter he set forth his philosophy of history. Against unilinear and deterministic philosophies of history he offered his 'organismic' philosophy of history. Human history may be classified in two ways. The first way takes place on the macro-level and Albright identifies six stages, which are differentiated on the basis of whether a culture is 'undifferentiated, differentiated or integrated'.[133] The period from 400 BC to 700 AD is classified as a 'partially integrated culture' and represents a culmination of human evolution:

> It was in the fifth century B.C. that we find the greatest single burst of intellectual and aesthetic activity that the world has ever known, with results unparalleled before or after, from the standpoint of man as intellectual, aesthetic, and physical animal...It was, moreover, about the same time that the religion of Israel reached its climactic expression in Deutero-Isaiah and Job, who represented a height beyond which pure ethical monotheism has never risen. The history of Israelite and Jewish religion from Moses to Jesus thus appears to stand on the pinnacle of biological evolution as represented in Homo sapiens, and recent progress in discovery and invention really reflects a cultural lag of over two millenia, a lag which is, to be sure, very small when compared to the hundreds of thousands of years during which man has been toiling up the steep slopes of evolution.[134]

On the micro-level Albright sharply distinguished between societies. Societies may experience little change for centuries and then experience a rapid mutation. The nature of this evolutionary development creates the rigid distinctions between societies that Albright detected in human history.[135] Such a view of history, he argued, avoids the extremes of atomism and monism.

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[131] Long 1997: 38; Albright 1932: 163.

[132] Albright 1932: 163-67; 1940; 1957; 1968.

[133] Albright 1957: 121.

[134] Albright 1957: 121-22.

[135] Albright 1957: 122-23.

Albright's final four chapters trace human history and the development of 'monotheism'. The third chapter examines the history and religious beliefs of the ancient Near East prior to 1600 BC. The fourth chapter presents the beginnings of Israel against the background of the religious beliefs of 1600-1200 BC. During this period, Albright argued, there was a growing internationalism, alongside which a number of 'monotheistic' tendencies developed. These included the universalizing of the high god, and the inclusion of various deities into one single deity. These steps were partial or ineffective, but in Egypt the first true monotheism was born with Akhenaten. However, this 'monotheism' was weak: it had no appeal for the populace, was materialistic and had no emphasis on social justice. Given the 'monotheistic tendencies' of this period, Albright argues that it is more than reasonable to see Moses as a 'monotheist'.[136] This argument requires a nuanced definition of 'monotheism':

> Was Moses a true monotheist? If by 'monotheist' is meant a thinker with views specifically like those of Philo Judaeus or Rabbi Aqiba, of St. Paul or St. Augustine, of Mohammed or Maimonides, of St. Thomas or Calvin, of Mordecai Kaplan or H.N. Wieman, Moses was not one. If, on the other hand, the term 'monotheist' means one who teaches the existence of only one God, the creator of everything, the source of justice, who is equally powerful in Egypt, in the desert, and in Palestine, who has no sexuality and no mythology, who is human in form but cannot be see by human eye and cannot be represented in any form – then the founder of Yahwism was certainly a monotheist.[137]

This characterization of Mosaic religion could, in Albright's opinion, be shown from the Pentateuch.[138] The fifth chapter traces Israel's history in the land. The prophets are to be seen not as creators of 'ethical monotheism', but as those who expounded the message of Moses. They should be credited, however, with discovering the full implications of monotheism. The absolute denial of the existence of other gods in Deutero-Isaiah represents not a theological change, but reflects a move from empirical logic towards systematic philosophical reasoning.[139] The sixth, and final, chapter describes the meeting of the philosophical genius of

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[136] Similar arguments have been put forward more recently (de Moor 1997; Millard 1993).

[137] Albright 1957: 271-72; cf. 1940: 112; 1942: 116.

[138] Albright 1957: 257-71.

[139] Albright 1957: 328.

Greece and the religious genius of Judaism. At this moment, 'in the fulness of time',[140] Jesus Christ appeared enriching this meeting with his ethical gospel and full trinitarian monotheism.

Many comments could be made about Albright's work, his assumptions and methodology but these have been considered by others elsewhere and will be passed over.[141] Instead, I wish to examine his definition of 'monotheism'. Albright sought to show that the characteristics of 'monotheism', which he described, could be found in the traditions that are securely attributed to Moses. However, at many points, Albright's argument appears tendentious. Thus, for example, Albright's claim that Moses' YHWH was the creator of everything relied on the argument that the name YHWH, which Moses introduced to the Israelites, is part of a longer form: '*Yahweh asher yihweh* (later *yihyeh*), "He Causes to be what Comes into Existence"'.[142] At best such an argument is speculative.[143] Again, YHWH's equal power everywhere involves reinterpreting the traditions that associate YHWH with particular mountains. Most significantly, at no point does Albright show that Moses taught 'the existence of only one God'. It may be that he saw this as a corollary of YHWH's creation of everything, though it would be difficult to justify such a definition of deity in the context of ancient Near Eastern religion. On the other hand, this may be a sleight of hand or, more generously, it might be suggested that for Albright, if all the other elements of 'monotheism' were present, there could be no doubt that the final element should be too.

What is most striking about this definition, however, is its similarity to Freud's characterization of 'monotheism'. It was this definition of 'monotheism' that provoked considerable debate in reviews of Albright's work, and in subsequent works on 'monotheism'.[144] Two scholars in particular addressed Albright's

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[140] The title of Albright's chapter.

[141] Favourably (Van Beek 1989) and unfavourably (Long 1997).

[142] Albright 1957: 261.

[143] Barr 1957-58: 55-56; von Rad 1962: 11. Similar problems exist with F.M. Cross' suggestion that YHWH was originally part of *il du yahwi sabaot* 'El who creates the host' (see Day 2000: 14).

[144] In addition to Meek and Rowley, see Robinson 1941; Burrows 1942: 475-77.

definition, and put forward their own understanding of how 'monotheism' developed in Israel: T.J. Meek and H.H. Rowley.[145] Against Albright's definition of 'monotheism', Meek argued that 'a monotheist is one who believes that there is only one God (with a capital *g*) and definitely does not believe in the existence of any others'.[146] In particular, Meek wanted to exclude what he saw as Albright's widening of 'monotheism' to cover Christian trinitarianism.[147] 'Tradition has only one kind of monotheism'.[148] The most that one could claim for Moses was monolatry. In place of Albright's sketch of the rise of monotheism, Meek offered an account of exactly the type that Albright saw himself opposing. From the earliest religious expressions of naturism developed animism and then polytheism. 'There has always been a tendency toward monotheism, ever growing a bit stronger than the movement toward polytheism'.[149] In Israel this developed fully. Mosaic religion, however, was henotheistic. That Israelite religion was not monotheistic is indicated by her religious and political particularism. 'But monotheism to be monotheism must transcend national limitations; it must be supernational and universal'.[150] Though found implicitly in Amos and Isaiah, it is only in Jeremiah and Second Isaiah that 'monotheism' reaches full expression. 'With them monolatry blossomed into monotheism, nationalism into universalism, and religion

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[145] Long notes that 'Albright's book occasioned much heated debate on the question of monotheism' (1997: 43 n. 79). From Long's work and Meek's review of Albright's book (1942:23) it is clear that the discussion of the definition of 'monotheism' between Albright, Rowley and Meek also continued in private correspondence.

[146] Meek 1942: 22.

[147] Meek 1942: 22-24. The strength of Meek's feelings were matched, in the opposite direction, by Albright's (see Long 1997: 43 n. 79).

[148] Meek 1942: 24. The weakness of Meek's argument at this point is reflected in his vague appeal to 'tradition', especially in light of the fact that on this point, as we have seen, he was wrong. Later Meek was to appeal to dictionary definitions, rather than tradition (Meek 1950: 207). Both Rowley (1949: 335) and Burrows (1942: 475-77) criticized Meek's argument that there was only one kind of 'monotheism'.

[149] Meek 1950: 184.

[150] Meek 1950: 214-15.

became a matter of the heart and of righteous living rather than mere ritualistic practice'.[151]

Whilst Meek restated Wellhausen and Kuenen's version of the development of 'monotheism', H.H. Rowley sought a mediating position. Rowley, like Meek, criticized Albright's definition of 'monotheism'. The essential element of 'monotheism' is the belief in only one God, and this is found nowhere in the Pentateuch, except Deut. 4.35, 39 and 32.39, which do not derive from Moses.[152] However, Rowley was not satisfied with labelling Moses' belief as 'henotheism'. For, if Moses is less than a 'monotheist', he is more than a 'henotheist'. What distinguished Moses from other 'henotheists' was 'not so much the teaching that Yahweh was to be the only God for Israel as the proclamation that Yahweh was unique'.[153] In common with Meek, Rowley did not see explicit monotheism in Israel until Deutero-Isaiah;[154] but, unlike Meek, and with Albright, he rejected a linear development of religion towards 'monotheism'.[155] For Rowley, a true characteristic of 'monotheism' was universalism,[156] by which he meant an understanding that the one God should be worshipped and acknowledged by all, with mission as a corollary of such a belief.[157] Universalism is not found in this sense until Deutero-Isaiah,[158] but Moses did believe that YHWH could act in a foreign land, that is, in Egypt.[159] Such a belief Rowley labels as 'incipient universalism'. Further, Mosaic religion demonstrates a new ethical spirit of gratitude, in contrast to fear and anger. This too is a step towards 'monotheism'. Thus, Rowley can describe Moses' beliefs about YHWH as 'incipient monotheism'. In a similar way to Kuenen and Wellhausen, Rowley sees the seeds of Deutero-

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[151] Meek 1950: 228.

[152] Rowley 1963: 42.

[153] Rowley 1963: 45.

[154] Rowley 1963: 63.

[155] Rowley 1963: 35-40.

[156] Rowley 1963: 47.

[157] Rowley 1944; 1950: 45-68.

[158] Rowley 1956: 71-73.

[159] Rowley 1963: 60-61.

Isaiah's monotheism and universalism in Mosaic religion: 'when full monotheism was achieved in Israel it came not by natural evolution out of something fundamentally different, but by the development of its own particular character'.[160]

Before we turn to the work of Yehezkel Kaufmann it is useful to consider the contribution of Albright, Meek and Rowley to the discussion of 'monotheism'. We should notice, first, that the primary issue for all three interpreters is diachronic: 'when did monotheism first emerge in Israel?'. The question of the meaning of 'monotheism' arose out of this discussion, but is ultimately subservient to it. Within this context Albright's work makes an important contribution in its rejection of unilinear theories of religious development,[161] which, as Meek's work shows, could still be articulated with no sense of discomfort.[162]

Despite the concerns of all three interpreters with the question of historical development, Albright's work did, second, initiate a discussion about the meaning of 'monotheism'. It is unlikely that Albright intended to initiate such a discussion, but it brought to light an issue that discussions of Israelite 'monotheism' since cannot ignore.[163] The novelty of this problem is nowhere more clearly seen than in Meek's appeal to a vague 'tradition'. The nature of the disagreement between Albright, and Meek and Rowley appears to be fairly simple. Albright offered a fuller definition of 'monotheism', whilst Meek and Rowley argued for a narrow definition. However, if we take into account Albright's failure to show that Moses believed in only one God, the difference may be differently construed. Albright's argument appears to work on the (unstated) assumption that if all the elements apart from belief in one God are present then the final element must be present too. For Meek and Rowley, if belief in only one God is not explicit, there is no claim to

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[160] Rowley 1963: 61.

[161] Albright's contribution was not new, see, e.g., Wardle 1925

[162] Note also Pfeiffer 1927: 193; Oesterley and Robinson 1930. Wardle writes, 'it may still be regarded as the prevailing critical view that Israel's religion passed gradually from an elementary stage of animism, totemism, fetichism, through the stage of the tribal deity, to the stage represented by the religion of the prophets, and this stage was reached only under their influence' (1925: 195).

[163] Note the discussions of terminology in Rose (1975: 9-13), Petersen (1988: 97-98), Stolz (1996: 4-6), Pakkala (1999: 15-19).

the title 'monotheist'. Significantly, at no point do Meek and Rowley argue that the other elements of Albright's description of a 'monotheist' are not corollaries of belief in only one God. Indeed, both have corollaries of 'monotheism' without which there is, in their opinion, no true 'monotheism': universalism and ethics. However, such corollaries *and* the belief in only one God must be explicitly stated.

Yehezkel Kaufmann's influence has been felt largely amongst Jewish scholars.[164] His eight-volume history of Israelite religion published between 1937 and 1956 was abridged and translated into English in 1960 by Moshe Greenberg. This abridgement only used material from the first seven volumes; the final volume had to wait until 1977 to be translated by C.W. Efroymson.[165] Kaufmann offers a fundamental reassessment of the history of Israelite religion, which in its originality and scope would be impossible to reproduce here, but the main thrust of the work is a rejection of the low assessment and late dating of the Torah in Protestant biblical studies. To accomplish this Kaufmann attempts, among other things, a completely different understanding of the nature and development of 'monotheism'.[166]

'The distinguishing mark of pagan thought', according to Kaufmann, '[is] the idea that there exists a realm of being prior to the gods and above them, upon which the gods depend, and whose decrees they must obey'.[167] 'The fundamental idea of paganism found poetic expression in myth [and] it found practical expression in magic'.[168] In complete contrast to pagan religion stood Israelite religion.

> The basic idea of Israelite religion is that God is supreme over all. There is no realm above him or beside him to limit his absolute sovereignty. He is utterly distinct from, and other than, the world; he is

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[164] For a recent defence of Kaufmann's understanding of 'monotheism', see Zeitlin 1984. B. Uffenheimer frequently takes Kaufmann as his point of departure. His ideas about monotheism differ considerably from Kaufmann. He traces monotheism back to the Patriarchs, and argues for the existence of 'monotheistic myth' in the Jewish Bible (1973; 1982; 1999: 89-126).

[165] Kaufmann 1960; 1977.

[166] Kaufmann 1960: 1-4.

[167] Kaufmann 1960: 21.

[168] Kaufmann 1960: 23.

> subject to no laws, no compulsions, or powers that transcend him. He is, in short, non-mythological'.[169]

The central mark of 'monotheism', in contrast to 'polytheism', for Kaufmann, is sovereignty rather than arithmetical oneness. It is clear, though, that the former implies the later. If YHWH is utterly sovereign, he alone must be God.

Crucial to Kaufmann's understanding of 'monotheism' – 'polytheism' is the way in which they find literary expression. 'Polytheism' uses mythology, which Kaufmann defines narrowly as stories about gods,[170] whilst 'monotheism' does not. The Jewish Bible, a product of Israelite 'monotheism', contains no myths. Such a suggestion would seem to run counter to what we know about the biblical text, for the majority of interpreters would recognize that some of the material contained in the Bible is similar and, in many cases, is probably dependent on myths that we know about in other neighbouring cultures. Surprisingly Kaufmann does not disagree. 'The edifice of biblical religion does, therefore, contain an occasional mythological fragment preserved from the debris of the ancient faith'.[171] However, Kaufmann offers a quite different understanding of this material than other scholars.

The key to Kaufmann's interpretation of Israelite religion, in the question of mythology and other areas related to 'monotheism', is found in a few important lines:

> The basic idea of Israelite religion is that God is supreme over all...This idea was not a product of intellectual speculation, or of mystical meditation, in the Greek or Indian manner. It first appeared as an insight, an original intuition. The Bible, while stressing the oneness of God and his supremacy, never articulates the contrast between its new concept and the mythological essence of paganism...Working intuitively, it radically transformed the ancient mythological conceptions of Israel. But precisely because it never received a dogmatic formulation which could serve as a standard for the

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[169] Kaufmann 1960: 60.

[170] Uffenheimer 1982: 8-9.

[171] Kaufmann 1960: 60.

> systematic reformation of the old religion, it was unable entirely to eradicate all traces of the pagan heritage.[172]

Kaufmann thus creates an important distinction between the form of the biblical text and the reality that underlies it. The mythical fragments found in Israelite religion are mere shells that can be discarded by an interpreter who is able to articulate the distinction between Israelite and pagan religion in a 'dogmatic formulation'. Kaufmann, who is such an interpreter, recognizes, for example, that the Jewish Bible has no mythical theogony. Instead, where we find poetic descriptions of YHWH's struggle with primeval monsters, we find no struggle for supreme power, but YHWH defeating *creatures* in rebellion.[173] The reality is that YHWH is sovereign, the sole creator; the form in which the biblical text expresses this uses mythical elements.

Kaufmann uses this distinction between form and reality to powerful effect in his analysis of the biblical text showing that, despite appearances to the contrary, the entire Jewish Bible, and Israelite religion too, were thoroughly monotheistic. The conceptualization of 'monotheism' that Kaufmann works with is a familiar one. It concerns a particular view of mythology, divine beings, the relation between divine and natural world, magic, the cult and universalism.[174] Kaufmann analyses each of these in detail arguing that the biblical text does not belie the claim that Israelite religion is 'monotheistic'. We have seen how Kaufmann achieved this with mythology, and we shall look at some other areas.

The stance of the modern interpreter on magic is clear. If a systematic 'repudiation of the reality of pagan gods' had been undertaken in Israel (as, of course, the modern interpreter is capable of doing), 'then the reality of practices which were linked with belief in those gods would likewise have been denied'.[175] A philosophically worked-out monotheism leads to the removal of magic. 'Yet the

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[172] Kaufmann 1960: 60.

[173] Kaufmann 1960: 60-62. For a careful critique and restatement of Kaufmann's 'basic idea of Hebrew religion' see Levenson 1994.

[174] Kaufmann 1960: 60-131

[175] Kaufmann 1960: 79.

Bible believes in magic'.[176] This does not imply that Israel was not 'monotheistic'. Instead, it is another indication that Israel's belief was a popular monotheism, guided not by speculation and systematic formulation, but by instinct and intuition. In the non-mythological atmosphere of Israel, magic was a mere shell, for the essential connection to deities had been severed. This is evidenced in the way that the Bible portrays pagan magicians, who are described as 'wise', that is, possessing a human skill. Consequently they are condemned for their self-sufficient reliance on human ability.

The use of signs and wonders by the biblical prophet poses a different problem to that posed by pagan magicians. Surely prophetic miracles prove that Israel was pagan? Again, the stance of the modern interpreter is clear: 'the magical strand of biblical thought is a legacy of paganism'. However, they become the vehicle of non-mythological thought. The magical realm is not an autonomous realm above, or besides, YHWH. YHWH, then, does not utilize magic, instead as the sovereign God, he uses his servants as vehicles for manifesting his will.[177]

Perhaps Kaufmann's most unique argument is found in his assessment of Israelite idolatry. Here he makes two moves. First, the biblical historians' portrayals exaggerate the extent to which idolatry was present in Israel. A close analysis of the text reveals that it was restricted to a few and is only found in specific periods of Israelite history. The use of images was not, *per se*, excluded by Israel's monotheistic idea and thus the use of imagery before the time of Josiah is not evidence against monotheism. Second, the Israelite conception of idolatry reveals a complete misunderstanding of the nature of idols in pagan religion. It represents pagan idolatry as fetishism. This underlines Kaufmann's argument that Israel's monotheism is totally different from pagan religion, for the monotheistic Israelites failed to comprehend the worship of idols.[178] Again, only the shell of paganism remains.

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[176] Kaufmann 1960: 79.

[177] Kaufmann 1960: 78-87.

[178] An interesting comparison can be made with Schleiermacher who argued that Israel's nationalism and fall into idolatry indicated that it had not reached true monotheism (1928: 37).

In his reflections on universalism, Kaufmann does not utilize the distinction between form and reality. Instead, he critiques the failure to distinguish between different meanings of universalism. 'Universalism in religion may mean either that the dominion and power of the deity are world wide, or that his favor and self-revelation are world wide'.[179] The former idea is found throughout the Jewish Bible, but the latter idea was an eschatological vision of the prophets.[180]

In Kaufmann's opinion the difference between pagan religion and Israelite 'monotheism' cannot be explained by an evolutionary hypothesis. The biblical material from the time of the Conquest indicates that paganism had already been vanquished by that point. Thus, Kaufmann finds in Moses the 'creative spirit' who first formulated Israel's 'monotheism'. The battle with paganism leaves no mark on the biblical texts and must, therefore, have been quickly won. 'Doubtless it was at Sinai that pagan beliefs were dealt their final blow and belief in YHWH was confirmed in the hearts of the people forever'.[181]

Our short description of Kaufmann's thought on Israelite 'monotheism' falls far short of a comprehensive consideration of his work, but, at very least, it indicates something of the general direction of his ideas. With Albright he shared a belief in 'monotheism' as a Mosaic creation and a distrust of what they both saw as simple evolutionary schemes. In important ways, he added a Jewish voice to the discussion. His assessment of the Torah and the post-exilic period is noticeably different from that of others. Further, Kaufmann indicates that there exist ways of understanding the Bible's universalism other than with a concept of a universal religion. We should also notice, however, that Kaufmann's characterization of 'monotheism' shares similar elements to those already noticed with Freud and Albright: non-mythological, universalistic, transcendent deity, anti-magical; though Kaufmann construes them in his own particular way. In analyzing Kaufmann the problematic nature of this 'monotheism' is felt particularly strongly. The elements

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[179] Kaufmann 1960: 127.

[180] Kaufmann 1960: 122-31.

[181] Kaufmann 1960: 225.

of pagan thought in the biblical text need to be viewed as packaging which, when stripped away by the critical scholar, reveal the monotheistic kernel.

Gerhard von Rad

Before leaving the mid-twentieth century, I wish briefly to examine the observations of Gerhard von Rad on the subject of 'monotheism'. There are a number of reasons for this. First, von Rad was one of the most able Old Testament theologians and exegetes of the biblical text. With this he combined an awareness of the Old Testament's place in the life of the Christian church, and of the way the Bible differed from modern ideas. Second, von Rad demonstrates the way in which the results of nineteenth century Old Testament scholarship could be expressed in new and theologically attractive ways. Third, in my opinion, von Rad's comments on 'monotheism' represent some of the most useful reflections on the subject and some of his observations will find an echo in our examination of 'monotheism' and Deuteronomy.

Von Rad's ideas on Old Testament 'monotheism' are found not only in his two volume *Old Testament Theology* but also in a radio lecture given in Berlin in 1961. This lecture was transcribed, and later translated into English by J.H. Marks. The title, 'The Origin of Mosaic Monotheism', was chosen by the radio station's editorial staff, and not by von Rad himself.[182] This fact is not insignificant for von Rad contends that 'monotheism', as such, was not a particular concern of Israel. Instead, the related, but somewhat independent, first commandment was her touchstone and the means by which she measured herself.[183]

In both his *Old Testament Theology* and his radio lecture von Rad's account of 'monotheism' is chronological. Although, as we have seen, this is characteristic of the way 'monotheism' is tackled, it reflects von Rad's own tradition history approach. Israel's earliest religion is neither monotheistic or polytheistic. Instead, it has the first commandment, which presupposes polytheism, but, uniquely in the

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[182] Von Rad 1980b: 128.

[183] Von Rad 1962: 210-11. In his *Old Testament Theology* the discussion of 'monotheism' occurs in the section entitled 'The First Commandment and Jahweh's Holy Zeal' (1962: 212-19).

ancient Near East, claims exclusiveness.[184] YHWH demands Israel's devotion alone. The claim of the first commandment, then, 'was something incomparably more demanding than what we understand by monotheism, because it presses its demand for a decision much more firmly on a man's conscience'.[185] The gods of the nations were recognized as real, but this recognition was 'broken and relative'. The root of this was a different understanding of divine revelation in Israel and in other nations. This is closely linked to alternative accounts of creation and history. Other nations saw the creation as a curtain through which the divine world can appear. Israel, however, encountered YHWH in the words in which she was addressed, words which were manifest in history. Such encounters reveal YHWH as 'much more hidden from and at the same time much nearer to man'.[186]

Israel's earliest understanding of YHWH and other gods, according to von Rad, was not far from an actual denial of the existence of other gods. The crucial event was Israel's encounter with the Canaanites and their god Baal. Was it YHWH or Baal who provided the land's fertility? It was Israel's answer to this question that decided the 'question of monotheism'.[187] Israel now attributed everything that occurred in her life to YHWH alone. A further impetus towards 'monotheism' was Israel's confrontation with Assyria. In this event Israel had to confront the question of whether YHWH was 'Lord of history'. In Isaiah we find 'implicit monotheism', and in Second Isaiah, in the face of another world power, 'explicit monotheism'.[188] At this stage it is linked with a notion of YHWH as the transcendent Creator.

Von Rad's account of 'monotheism', then, does not discount the results of historical criticism. Like Kuenen and Wellhausen, the earliest seeds of 'monotheism' can be seen in the earliest movements of Yahwism, and the final breakthrough to 'monotheism' is achieved by the prophetic movement around the

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[184] Von Rad 1980b: 129-30. 'Jahwism without the first commandment is positively inconceivable' (1962: 26).

[185] Von Rad 1980b: 131.

[186] Von Rad 1980b: 132.

[187] Von Rad 1980b: 133.

[188] Von Rad 1980b: 135-38.

time of the exile. However, von Rad differs from them in his high assessment of the pre-monarchy period in Israel's history. This meant a different estimation of the prophets, whom von Rad considers to be reinterpreters of the traditions they received, rather than revolutionary innovators.[189]

Beside the historical dimension of von Rad's account, his radio message also contains a clear distinction between the Israelite conception of 'monotheism' and a particular modern conception. Von Rad suggests that the understanding of 'monotheism' that most of his listeners will hold is a modern creation. 'This conception of monotheism as a more or less general human stage of knowledge reached by Judaism, secured and propagated by Christianity, from which one can no longer politely retreat, first arose in the period of the Enlightenment and haunts many heads today'.[190] Israel's monotheism, however, is not the fruit of abstract, rational discussion: a piece of knowledge that one obtains. Instead, it is the confession of trust and dependence on YHWH, the Lord of history. It is not, therefore, a stage that is reached, but something that constantly needs addressing.

> Monotheism [in a purely philosophical sense] could be a truth, which, once perceived, is settled for all time. The confession to God that says, 'besides Thee there is no savior,' this confession of great trust is never settled forever, but must be ventured again and again.[191]

Thus, even the 'explicit monotheism' of Second Isaiah lies far closer to the demand for exclusive allegiance found in the first commandment than to the notion of 'monotheism' introduced by the Enlightenment.

The contrast that von Rad draws is of significance in a number of ways. First, it indicates that some aspects of the assessment of 'monotheism' found in this thesis have been attested elsewhere. Second, von Rad does not deny a metaphysical content to Israel's monotheism. In other words, a dubious dichotomy between practical and theoretical 'monotheism' is not introduced.[192] Third, von Rad places

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[189] Von Rad 1965: 3-4.

[190] Von Rad 1980b: 128.

[191] Von Rad 1980b: 138.

[192] Cf. Eichrodt 1961: 227.

the accent of the biblical account of 'monotheism' on confession, in contrast to an emphasis on a stage of knowledge reached. Fourth, von Rad's account allows the Old Testament text new and important application to the church. Thus, in another essay, von Rad writes, 'a Christian is constantly in danger of believing in myths and serving idols'.[193] The 'monotheism' of the Enlightenment must reject the reality of such temptation. Indeed, it is clear that von Rad intends his radio lecture to do more than impart information; it is also intended to awaken his listeners (predominantly Christian presumably) to the need for vigilant obedience of the first commandment.

The Late Twentieth Century: Kuntillet 'Ajrud and the Resulting Discussion

In the last twenty years 'monotheism' has been an area of enormous scholarly activity. The immediate impulse for this explosion of books and articles was the discovery of inscriptions at Khirbet el-Qom and Kuntillet 'Ajrud which mention 'YHWH and his asherah'.[194] However, the discussions have been propelled by the numerous paradigm shifts that have occurred in the different areas that constitute and impinge upon the study of the Old Testament. In contrast to the positive picture painted by Albright and the Baltimore school, recent historians and archaeologists have viewed the biblical account of Israel's pre-exilic history with greater scepticism.[195] The primary generative period in Israelite history has been moved from the time of the pre-monarchy tribal alliance to the time of the exilic and post-exilic communities.[196] The tendency to date biblical texts later is closely related to this development. Recent historical work has focused on the general population, rather than the literate elite, and scholarship has sought to pay as much attention to

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[193] Von Rad 1980c: 125.

[194] For a recent discussion of these inscriptions, see Hadley 2000: 84-155.

[195] Van Seters (1975) and T.L. Thompson (1974) produced strong arguments against a high assessment of the narrative accounts of the patriarchal age. Recent theories of the Israelite settlement have rejected the biblical account of a rapid conquest from outside, instead 'new models emphasize Israelite settlement as peaceful and internal in origin' (Gnuse 1997: 58). For an account of recent work, see Gnuse 1997: 23-61. The idea of a 'Solomonic enlightenment' has come under increasing attack in recent scholarship. For the period, see the essays in Handy (ed.) 1997.

[196] See, e.g., Albertz 1994.

iconographical evidence as inscriptions.[197] The established historical-critical methods of biblical texts have been challenged by newer ways of reading texts. These new methods, frequently representing interdisciplinary approaches, have brought new questions to the biblical text about 'monotheism'.[198] Of particular significance in this respect are feminist voices.

The impact of the ferment within the discipline of Old Testament upon recent work on 'monotheism' makes it difficult to make generalizations. Some might, perhaps, be made without appearing injudicious. First, most recent work on 'monotheism' has had as its *raison d'être* reconstruction of Israelite religious history. It is possibly too early to speak of a consensus, but there is a tendency to see pre-exilic Israel as, at best, henotheistic (and possibly even polytheistic), whilst true 'monotheism' is the result of the exile.[199] Second, it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to identify the significant voice, or voices, in the present discussion. In part, at least, this reflects the chronological nearness of the present debate, and the lack of certainty about its outcome. However, it is also a consequence of the disagreement about how the biblical text could be, or should be, approached. Wellhausen, Albright and von Rad were the best exponents of approaches that won the support of a considerable body of scholars at a particular time. Third, scholars have become more reluctant to make generalized statements about the meaning and implications of 'monotheism' as we have seen were made, for example, by Albright.

Taken together the last two factors make it difficult to ascertain how 'monotheism' is characterized in the modern discussion. Two scholars have, however, indicated what they see as the significance of Old Testament 'monotheism': Robert Gnuse and Walter Dietrich.

Gnuse's *No Other Gods: Emergent Monotheism in Israel* was published in 1997 and has begun to receive scholarly appraisal.[200] Gnuse's work explores a number of

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[197] E.g., Keel and Uehlinger 1998.

[198] For some of these, see Petersen 1988.

[199] See, e.g., Weippert 1990.

[200] Significantly for our work there is little expression of any unease with Gnuse's description of the implications of a monotheistic worldview (Ackerman 2000;

different areas, but the main thrust of his book is to argue that the evolutionary model of 'punctuated equilibria' is a useful pedagogical tool in the study of the Old Testament. 'Punctuated equilibria' is a model proposed recently within the biological sciences:

> A new theory, called 'Punctuated Equilibria' or 'Punctuated Equilibrium', has been proposed by a number of scientists, including Niles Eldredge, Stephen Jay Gould, Steven Stanley, Elisabeth Vrba and others. They propose that evolution does not result from the build-up of small genetic changes, gradually over long periods of time. Rather, there are long periods of stasis in the life of a species, within which there may be some genetic drift, but essentially no change of significant magnitude to create the existence of a new species. These periods of stasis are punctuated by short periods of rapid evolutionary development in which a new species arises and displaces the ancestral species.[201]

This evolutionary model in the biological sciences can be applied to the social sciences as, for example, in Thomas Kuhn's theory of 'paradigm shifts' in scientific progress.[202] 'Punctuated equilibria', Gnuse argues, offers a useful heuristic model for understanding recent theories on the development of 'monotheism' in Israel. Scholarship at the end of the nineteenth century offered a gradual development of 'monotheism', whilst Albright and other scholars in the mid-twentieth century spoke of a 'revolution'. 'Punctuated equilibria' combines insights from both of these earlier models. 'Both Israelite identity and religious belief may be seen to evolve, but they do so in quantum leaps in response to social or religious crises'.[203]

Craghan 1998; Hendel 2000; Whitelam 1998). Albertz notes Gnuse's failure to show the connection between 'monotheism' and the consequences of a monotheistic worldview that he sketches. He further questions whether 'monotheism' had the central significance in the biblical texts that Gnuse gives it (1998: 294). Smith does question Gnuse's insistence on the social conscience of Israel's monotheism 'from below': 'Here modern concerns (monotheistic faith and social conscience) seem to drive the reading of the historical record' (1999: 146).

[201] Gnuse 1997: 325-26.

[202] Kuhn 1962.

[203] Gnuse 1997: 336-37.

'Punctuated equilibria', according to Gnuse, describes the theories of recent scholars who see 'monotheism' developing through a series of struggles in the pre-exilic period and finally emerging in the exile.

> [These scholars] sense an evolutionary process which moves through various stages of monolatrous or henotheistic intensity in the pre-exilic era to a form of pure monotheism, which arises in the exilic era. Though they describe the process in stages of development, they often stress the revolutionary nature of this trajectory. They see monotheism emerge in a series of conflicts or crises, when significant spokespersons articulate insights of undertake actions which advance the movement.[204]

'Punctuated equilibria', therefore, can describe the stages of evolution in Israelite religion. Crises such as the ninth century BC conflict with Jezebel's Baal, the rise of Assyria and the exile led to significant advances. On a larger scale the model can be applied to the developments in human thought and religion. Gnuse divides human history into four stages: Primitive or cylical (c. pre-3000 BC); developed ancient cultures – post-cyclial or post-mythic (c. 3000-400 BC), pre-modern cultures – pre-linear or pre-historical (c. 800 BC-1800 AD); modern cultures – linear or historical (c. 1450 AD-present).[205] Israel's development of 'monotheism' is part of a movement from post-cyclical thought to pre-linear thought which took place in the 'Axial Age' (800-400 BC).[206]

The primary focus of Gnuse's work is finding a suitable model for describing Israel's religious development. However, he is also interested in using this model as an aid to describing 'the worldview of emergent monotheism among the Jews'. Gnuse takes the formulations of an earlier generation of scholars, those associated with the Biblical Theology Movement, as his point of departure. These scholars, who Gnuse calls '*Heilsgeschichte* theologians', drew a sharp contrast between Israelite religion and the religious beliefs of the ancient Near East. This contrast

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[204] Gnuse 1999: 325. Gnuse aligns himself with this view of Israel's historical development, which he sees as the new consensus. He distances himself from the minimalist scholarship associated with N.P. Lemche, T.L. Thompson, G. Garbini, H. Niehr and P.R. Davies. In his opinion they too quickly reject the biblical texts as historical sources, and will not prove a lasting force in Old Testament studies (Gnuse 1997: 109-15; 1999: 325-28).

[205] Gnuse 1997: 233-35.

[206] Gnuse 1997: 214-26, 233-36.

helped in formulating a number of distinctive characteristics of Israel. Thus, for example, Israel's view of history was linear, whilst her neighbours' views were cyclical. These ideas came under intense criticism in the 1960s and 70s. Gnuse, however, suggests that, in a nuanced form, they may be resurrected. This involves recognizing that the contrast between cyclical thought and linear thought is overdrawn and the comparison between Israel and the ancient Near East somewhat unfair. Israel's canonical literature belongs to the third stage of human development, the post-cyclical stage, whilst most ancient Near Eastern literature is firmly located in the second stage, the pre-linear stage. Thus, there is a strong contrast between them, but this is better expressed as a contrast between post-cyclical thought and pre-linear thought.[207] Notwithstanding this contrast we should recognize the continuity between Israelite thought and what preceded it:

> Israel and the later Jews did not invent a worldview in contrast to ancient Near Eastern thought, but drew upon existing ideas and reconfigured them to make a great Axial Age breakthrough. Old ideas, perhaps recessive in the social and intellectual matrix of the ancient world, were turned into dominant themes and core assumptions of the biblical worldview.[208]

What, then, were the characteristics of this biblical, 'monotheistic' worldview? Gnuse produces six.[209] First, the Bible had a more developed portrayal of God's activity in history. We are aware, now, that there were historical modes of perception in the ancient Near East. However, 'the biblical view would declare Yahweh to be totally a god of historical and social action, and the nature imagery would fall into oblivion'.[210] This also sees the death of the older mythical views. Second, whilst the ancient Near Eastern gods were never cut free from nature, YHWH was. 'Yahweh's character thus developed more in biblical literature'.[211] Divine manifestations no longer take place in the sphere of nature, but in the social sphere. Other deities are removed from nature, and ultimately depersonalized and reduced to the rank of angels and demons. Third, in ancient Near Eastern culture

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[207] Gnuse 1997: 229-40.

[208] Gnuse 1997: 272-73.

[209] Gnuse 1997: 241-63.

[210] Gnuse 1997: 241.

[211] Gnuse 1997: 243.

ethics was a minor factor, but in Judaism it became a dominant force. This grows out of Israel's monotheism for there is one divine will and one ethical imperative. This sense of address brings notions of guilt and forgiveness, rather than impurity and purification. Further, the 'word' conveys the deity's transcendence.

> A great abyss opens between God and people, nature, or the world below. Revelation cannot be found in nature, but only in the spoken word in the arena of history. 'Word' thus replaces 'image' and the imperative is now more clear and it directs people more to social behaviour than to cultic activity.[212]

Fourth, human freedom is stressed in Israel to a greater degree. Related to this is the lessening, and final disappearance, of divination and magic.

> One may find evidence of magic and divinatory concepts in the biblical text, which certainly reflects the popular piety of Israelites in the pre-exilic period...By the exile and post-exilic period Jews rather consciously condemned divination because of its attempts to manipulate Yahweh. Israelite and later Jews had begun the process of breaking out of the 'tight ring of magic'. The ultimate result was a view of the world in which people no longer feared the forces of nature or the unknown future. The world became rationalized.[213]

Fifth, social justice and egalitarianism became more than rhetorical propaganda of the ruler. Prophetic protest led to social reform in Josiah's day. Israelite culture was the first to give social justice a central role in their sacred texts. As Gnuse notes in another essay, 'concomitant with the belief in one universal deity is a stress on human rights and dignity in some egalitarian world view'.[214] Sixth, whilst there was a concept of universalism in the ancient world this was 'nationalistic, militaristic, and hence, limited, vision of universal rule by one god'.[215] This is universalism 'from above'. In Israel we find a quite different universalism, one 'from below'. 'This universalism of Yahweh, predicated upon the proclamation of justice and salvation, instead affirms peace and ultimately a universal brotherhood and sisterhood. This universalism leads eventually to the Christian mission'.[216] 'The

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[212] Gnuse 1997: 251-52.

[213] Gnuse 1997: 254.

[214] Gnuse 1999: 315. This essay is a rewriting of the second chapter of *No Other Gods*.

[215] Gnuse 1997: 260.

[216] Gnuse 1997: 261.

lands outside of Palestine all belong to Yahweh, they are no longer unclean, their people belong to Yahweh, and the Jews must bear witness to them'.[217]

Gnuse's account of 'monotheism' shows a striking breadth of vision. His work includes a comprehensive analysis of recent work on 'monotheism', moves from ancient China to ancient Greece in presenting the world in which 'monotheism' emerged and engages with recent work on process theology and evolutionary theory. Ironically in painting on such a huge canvas his work resembles that of Albright, his chief antagonist. Indeed, the comparison goes far deeper than that, for despite Gnuse's insistence on portraying Albright as an exponent of a revolutionary theory of the origins of 'monotheism' Albright's *evolutionary* account closely resembles his. Like Albright, Gnuse describes his theory of evolution as 'organismic', and while Albright prefers the categories of 'challenge and response' and 'withdrawal and return' to Gnuse's punctuated equilibria they are, in practice, not so very different. Indeed, both see human intellectual history developing in distinct stages, and both see 'monotheism' as a revolutionary moment in history whose far reaching consequences take time to be fully realized. The significant difference between the two lies only in when to locate the decisive break, and how sharply to conceive it.

Gnuse's work proceeds from description of the historical origins of 'monotheism' to the worldview of 'monotheism'. This order is not accidental, nor insignificant. It reflects, in many respects, the belief that a historical account must be given, before the meaning is deduced. However, if, as we have argued, 'monotheism' is a notion coined and conceptualized in the early Enlightenment then to make such a move, without discussing the meaning of 'monotheism', appears dangerous.

Finally, we should note that Gnuse's characterization of 'monotheism' is not unfamiliar. Despite his nuancing there remains much that is questionable. Do terms such as 'rationalized', 'human rights', 'egalitarian', 'universal brotherhood and sisterhood', 'universalism from below' appropriately capture either the biblical text or Israelite religion? If a ritual-ethical dichotomy is to be maintained, in any form,

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[217] Gnuse 1997: 261.

what are we to make of the 'monotheism' of the priestly writings, and their ideas of impurity and purification?[218] One may wonder whether Gnuse's classification of the post-axial age as pre-linear and the modern world as linear betrays more than Gnuse would wish it to, in a similar way to Albright's characterization of the modern period as an 'evolutionary lag'.[219] Further, we may note that this classification of human intellectual history and the use of 'punctuated equilibria' as a description of human evolution implies a particular notion of 'monotheism' which we have already noted elsewhere. Once true 'monotheism' has been reached a return to 'polytheism' cannot be envisaged, for a revolutionary change has moved us onto a new level that now evolves slowly until another dramatic change takes us onto the next level of human development.

Walter Dietrich has touched upon the subject of 'monotheism' in a number of places,[220] but of particular interest to us is his introduction to the collection of essays *Ein Gott allein?*: 'Über Werden und Wesen des biblischen Monotheismus: Religionsgeschichtliche und theologische Perspektiven'.[221] As the title indicates this essay has two parts. The first part sets the stage for the essays which deal with the religious history of 'monotheism.[222] Dietrich argues for the middle way between two extreme views of Israel's history. One sees pre-exilic Israelite religion as polytheistic, the other asserts the historicity of the biblical account. Both, Dietrich concludes, can claim historical support, and thus it is better to suggest that from its very beginnings Israelite religion possessed elements that distinguished it from other ancient Near Eastern religions. A mediating solution is also evoked for the

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[218] A suspicious reading of Gnuse would surely argue that such a manifestly Christian reading belies any positive noises about post-exilic religion.

[219] Albright and Gnuse's historical schemas show some rather interesting similarities with the schemas of the *philosophes*: 'The *philosophes* themselves subscribed to a fourfold division of history: first were the civilizations of the ancient Near East; then Greece and Rome; followed by the Christian millennium; and finally commencing with the Renaissance, was the modern era. The first and third epochs were regarded as ages of myth and superstition, whilst the second and fourth were periods in which reason and science flourished' (Harrison 1990: 14).

[220] Dietrich 1994a; 1996: 273-79; 1999: 47-52.

[221] Dietrich 1994b.

[222] Dietrich 1994b: 14-20.

question of how the demand for exclusive worship of YHWH, and ultimately the denial of other gods existence, arose. Factors should be sought both inside and outside Israel. The emergence of 'monotheism' does not signal the end of religious development. Instead, Israelite religion continued to develop in the exilic and post-exilic period, most notably producing a number of quasi-divine beings between God and humanity.

In the second section Dietrich explores the implications of 'monotheism': 'statt vieler einer – cui bono?'.[223] Dietrich has no doubts about the significance of the breakthrough to 'monotheism':

> Israels Entscheidung für den Einen anstelle der Vielen war eine Grundentscheidung für drei Weltreligionen und dadurch von kaum zu ermessender Bedeutung nicht nur für die Religions-, sondern für die Geschichte der Menschheit überhaupt. Unzweifelhaft hat es weitreichende Folgen für das Selbst-, Welt- und Gottesverständnis von Menschen, Gruppen, Gesellschaften, Völkern, ob sie eine Mehrzahl von Göttinnen und Göttern verehren oder nur Einen Einzigen.[224]

Like other ancient near Eastern nations, Israel restricted YHWH to its national boundaries. With the prophets YHWH's sphere of influence developed until he was envisaged steering world history in Deutero-Isaiah. In the natural world, similarly, YHWH's domain extended to include the entire world. This was a decisive break with the polytheistic myths of ancient Orient. 'Alles, aber auch alles außer JHWH ist Kreatur; es gibt an der Welt nichts Göttliches, es gibt schon gar keine Götterwelt; es gibt nur JHWH und seine Schöpfung'.[225] Closely related to the first two implications was the removal of magic. The divine powers were expunged and man now stands and answers for himself. In the full course of time this will develop into the Enlightenment notion of autonomy and a utilitarian view of the world. However, Dietrich argues that this is not a logical necessity. Instead, the Bible presents the whole of creation as present before God.

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[223] Dietrich 1994b: 20-30.

[224] Dietrich 1994b: 20-21.

[225] Dietrich 1994b: 21.

The concentration of divine functions in the natural world to YHWH raises the question of the extent to which YHWH's character is inclusive or exclusive. The Bible seems to present both aspects.[226] On the one hand, we see YHWH taking various spheres into himself, and, on the other, we have Israel's election and the sharp distinction of YHWH from Baal, Asherah, Milkom and Chemosh. One of the significant characteristics of Israelite religion is its emphasis on freedom. This provides it with a critique of any form of dominance. Here, Dietrich shows his interest in the socio-political expression of 'monotheism' which he also demonstrates elsewhere.[227] The lack of a divine hierarchy is paralleled in human society. God has made all equal in rank. In fact, we can speak of the 'demokratische Grundimpuls des JHWH-Glaubens'.[228] Dietrich raises the problem of 'monotheism' being channelled into intolerance, fanaticism and fundamentalism. Such moves can be seen in the Bible, for example, in Deut. 7.1-6, but they reflect political powerlessness, rather than a dangerous accumulation of power. It is possible to envisage an inclusive, pluralistic monotheism, and there is no evidence that ancient polytheism was any more tolerant than Yahwism.[229] A final area that Dietrich considers is the problem of patriarchy in 'monotheism'. Against the simple suggestion that 'monotheism' is restrictive for women, Dietrich argues that the biblical portrayal of humanity also gives women a positive role. Metaphorical expressions of femininity are also used in describing YHWH. The problem is identical to the question of how the disparities of human experience, such as good and evil, life and death can be comprehended in the Bible's 'monotheism'.[230] The answer to the problem may lie beyond human articulation for the biblical God is always beyond full comprehension.

Dietrich's account of 'monotheism' possesses a number of attractive features. He shows a clear awareness of the recent advances in archaeological and historical

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[226] The inclusive and exclusive nature of Israel's conception of YHWH has received much attention in the recent discussion (e.g. Smith 1990; Stolz 1997; Day 2000).

[227] Dietrich 1994a; see also 1996: 276.

[228] Dietrich 1994b: 25.

[229] Dietrich 1994b: 27.

[230] Dietrich 1994b: 28-29.

work on ancient Israel, and the various ways in which these are interpreted. His own approach is irenic, offering a middle way between different extreme views. Dietrich's eye, however, moves not only over historical aspects of the debate, but also focuses on the significance of recent research for current theological concerns. He raises questions of ecology, fundamentalism, social criticism and feminism. However, a number of criticisms and questions may also be raised against Dietrich's account. With Gnuse he shares the same approach of moving from the religious historical questions to the normative theological questions. Again, the two sections are sharply distinct. Second, the shadow of the Enlightenment clearly falls over Dietrich's approach to the normative value of 'monotheism'. He himself is aware of this in his careful treatment of autonomy. However, the danger of projection is present, for example, in seeing Israel's world as expunged of gods and magic, or in the mention of 'die "demokratische" Tendenz im Jahwismus'.[231]

The Use of 'Monotheism' in Modern Study of the Old Testament

Our all-too-brief survey of the origin and meaning of 'monotheism' in modern study of the Old Testament has involved an encounter with the works of six scholars of the Old Testament/Jewish Bible.[232] Three pairs of scholars, each pair reflects (often initiating) a different stage in the discussion of 'monotheism' in ancient Israel. The questions which we raised before this survey may now be addressed. The intellectualization implicit in the term 'monotheism' is frequently evidenced in descriptions of Israelite religion as ethical and anti-ceremonial. Further, the characterization of 'monotheism' which can be found in Freud and has been traced, by Assmann, to the avant-garde of the Enlightenment appears in different forms, and with various nuances, in each of these scholars. The description of the time of the Israelite prophets as pre-linear, or the modern period as an 'evolutionary lag' say much for how the relationship between ancient Israel's monotheism and modern thought is conceived. Further, this 'monotheism', ostensibly found in the biblical text, does not accurately describe the biblical texts and therefore various strategies have to be created to account for this problem. One strategy is to construct a developmental scheme. Biblical material that does not

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[231] Dietrich 1994b: 28.

[232] I am for the moment excluding von Rad.

conform to the monotheistic yardstick represents an earlier stage. But even here problems arise: for Wellhausen and, most strikingly, in Kuenen a true, spiritual and universalistic monotheism is never reached. A second strategy is found in Albright and Kaufmann. This has two different parts. First, the definition of 'monotheism' is altered, and, second, texts that contradict this definition are re-interpreted. Neither aspect of this second strategy has proved convincing to modern scholarship. But, does the first strategy provide a better approach to the biblical texts? In other words, does 'monotheism' adequately capture what the Old Testament says about YHWH? The origin of the concept of 'monotheism' in the early English Enlightenment and the distinctly *modern* ideas to which it is connected may explain, I suggest, why a yawning gap exists between 'monotheism' and the Old Testament.

4. *A 'Canonical' Approach to the Problem of 'Monotheism'*

In his *Moses the Egyptian*, after tracing the Moses-Egypt discourse Assmann concludes with a couple of chapters, one entitled, 'Conceiving the One in Ancient Egyptian Traditions'. None of the scholars who contributed to the Moses-Egypt discourse, he argues, had first-hand knowledge of the Egyptian sources, either because they had not been deciphered, or, in Freud's case, because he relied on the scholarship of others. Therefore, among the tasks remaining for the Egyptologist is to 'complement Freud's passing and superficial remarks on Akhenaten's religious revolution with a close reading of at least the most important text'.[233] The task for the Old Testament scholar, I would suggest, should not be significantly different. It is a comparable task that I wish to attempt by a close examination of an important biblical text on 'monotheism', the canonical book of Deuteronomy.

It is natural that a familiar objection be raised at this point. The book of Deuteronomy, like all biblical material, reflects a long process of textual activity, unlike the 'Great Hymn' from Amarna that Assmann examines. The approach appropriate to one is not necessarily appropriate to the other. Material discovered by archaeologists does not have the complex redactional history of an Old Testament book, for which an analysis of sources and editors are essential. A

[233] Assmann 1997: 169.

number of responses may be made. First, the 'Great Hymn' itself has precursors, and the history of such a well-crafted piece is likely to be complex.[234] The difference from Deuteronomy is thus one of order rather than one of kind. Second, the careful redactional system of headings suggests that the final form of the book was understood and presented as a coherent collection of speeches made by Moses before his death.[235] Third, I wish to ask whether it might not be possible to examine what Deuteronomy (and, by implication, what the Old Testament) says about 'monotheism' from a synchronic perspective.

Our survey has shown that from its conception 'monotheism' has been tied to questions of origin. Indeed, it is these questions, more than any others, that have dominated the discussion of 'monotheism'. This is illustrated by the course of the debate about 'monotheism', which has seen a regular fluctuation between theories of *Urmonotheismus* and theories of evolutionary development.[236] The introduction in the nineteenth century of new vocabulary, 'monolatry'[237] and 'henotheism',[238] to

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[234] Assmann 1995 analyses the solar hymns of Egypt's New Kingdom.

[235] For the headings in Deuteronomy, see Seitz 1971: 23-44.

[236] See Lohfink 1985.

[237] The first use of 'monolatry' is probably found in Schleiermacher's *The Christian Faith*. Mankind develops from fetishism into polytheism, and finally monotheism:

> As such subordinate stages, we set down, generally speaking, Idol-worship proper (also called Fetishism) and Polytheism; of which again, the first stands far lower than the second. The idol worshipper may quite well have only one idol, but this does not give such Monolatry any resemblance to Monotheism, for it ascribes to the idol an influence over a limited field of objects of processes, beyond which its own interest and sympathy do not extend (1928: 34).

In modern discussions 'monolatry' is used of an intermediate stage between polytheism and monotheism, and has the sense of devotion to one god without denying the existence of others (Petersen 1988: 98). 'Monolatry' has no independent place in Schleiermacher's scheme of fetishism-polytheism-monotheism. It is merely a variant form of fetishism, and precedes polytheism.

[238] 'Henotheism' similarly had a different meaning from the one with which it has become associated. The origin of the word is attributed to F.M. Müller in 1860 in a review of E. Renan's *Histories Générale et Système Comparé des Langues Sémitiques*. Müller understands 'monotheism' to be the belief that there is one God alone. As such it is a negation of the belief in many gods and must presuppose 'polytheism'. This idea had been firmly established by Hume, Schleiermacher and

provide further clarity in the description of Israelite religion, has also served to create a semantic field with a notable bias towards diachronic analysis. This has been particularly true of the study of 'monotheism' in the Old Testament.[239] James Barr's recent remarks on 'monotheism' are revealing. He suggests that

> for some sorts of enquiry, such as the Hebrew idea of humanity or of body and soul, the question of historical difference might prove to be unimportant...while for others, such as the idea of monotheism, a historical framework with dating of different sources would very likely prove necessary.[240]

What is striking is Barr's choice of 'monotheism' as the example that makes no further argument necessary for his readers. *Quod erat demonstrandum!*

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others. Müller's important contribution comes at this point. Polytheism, the belief in many gods, presupposes the idea of a god. The plural presupposes the singular. For this primeval sense that there is a superior being, a 'god', Müller coined the word 'henotheism' (1860: 14 April, 6). The distinction between 'monotheism' and 'henotheism' is stated by Müller:

> If therefore, an expression had been given to that primitive intuition of the Deity which is the mainspring of all later religion, it would have been – 'There is a god', but not yet 'There is but "One God"'. The latter form of faith, the belief in One God, is properly called Monotheism, whereas the term of Henotheism would best express the faith in a single god (1860: 14 April, 6).

In Müller's judgement 'henotheism' is a natural, unreflective, but legitimate, expression of monotheism.

As with 'monolatry' the term is now used of an intermediate stage between 'polytheism' and 'monotheism'. Frequently 'monolatry and 'henotheism' are used as synonyms (Petersen 1988: 97-98; Gnuse 1997: 132). Attempts have been made to differentiate the terms. Meek understood monolatry as devotion to one god in which other deities were excluded, and henotheism as devotion to one god in which other deities were absorbed (1950: 206). M. Rose sees 'henotheism' as a temporary devotion to one god, 'monolatry' as the close relationship between a community and a god. He notes, however, that some regard 'monolatry' as an enduring devotion to one god (1975: 9-11; cf. Vorländer 1981: 93). A definition of 'henotheism' as a temporary devotion to one god finds a basis in Müller who saw henotheism as a religious stage in which temporarily one god was adored and the plurality of gods disappeared from view (1878: 285).

[239] A casual browsing of the standard volumes on Old Testament Theology will reveal this. It is worthy of note that works devoted to the explication of the *theology* of the Old Testament often do little more than describe the contours of the debate about the historical origins of 'monotheism'.

[240] Barr 1999: 61.

Whilst in other areas of Old Testament study synchronic approaches have been taken to the text 'monotheism' has remained largely immune. I do not, however, wish to flatten the contours of the biblical text, but there may be ways of expressing those contours without using a developmental schema. Whether a synchronic approach is a success, that is, whether it provides a good reading of the text, and, preferably, better than alternative readings, can only be judged at the end of the exercise, not at the stage of setting out methodology.

In order to situate more precisely the approach I wish to take to the book of Deuteronomy three canonical solutions to the problem of the Old Testament's 'monotheism' will be examined. My suggestion is that, *mutatis mutandis*, similar approaches could be taken to Deuteronomy. The three scholars examined are J. Sawyer, R.E. Clements and J.A. Sanders.

In his 'Biblical Alternatives to Monotheism' J. Sawyer begins with the problematic nature of the Biblical text: 'it is...widely assumed that the Bible contains very few explicitly monotheistic statements and a good many passages in which the existence and authority of other gods are manifestly assumed by the writers'.[241] The biblical texts, he argues, may be placed in three broad groups. First, there are explicitly monotheistic texts. There are, however, only twenty-five of these and they date from the sixth century BC on. Second, there are texts which though not originally monotheistic, have been interpreted in this way under the influence of the monotheistic texts. These include the statements of incomparability, the first commandment and the *Shema*. Finally, there are texts that 'are explicitly and embarrassingly polytheistic'.[242] These include Judg. 11.24, texts which mention the heavenly court or YHWH's battle with mythical beasts, and texts in Proverbs in which the figure of Wisdom features. Given the nature of the biblical evidence Sawyer wants to suggest that, 'since monotheism clearly does not play a major role there, perhaps it need not figure so prominently in Christian doctrine'.[243] He then

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[241] Sawyer 1984: 172.

[242] Sawyer 1984: 176.

[243] Sawyer 1984: 173.

concludes by indicating four implications of his thesis for Christian thought and practice.

Sawyer's essay commendably attempts to grapple with the problem of the content of the canonical text. However, Sawyer works with a flawed account of how a biblical theology should operate. In his opinion, texts are to be weighed arithmetically, and since the monotheistic material weighs in rather lightly (only twenty-five occurrences!) it should not have a major place in Christian theology. It is in this sense that Sawyer argues that monotheistic texts do not play a 'major role'. The actual *role* of the texts in the Old Testament is not touched upon, rather Sawyer concerns himself with the number of texts and their date.

In his response to Sawyer R.E. Clements offers a different understanding of the canonical text. Clements agrees with Sawyer's description of the biblical texts. There are indeed only a few passages where 'monotheism' is firmly adopted. However, Clements argues, like Sawyer himself had in an earlier essay,[244] that the canon places the non-monotheistic texts in a monotheistic framework.

> When viewed and read as a connected series of sacred texts which have been given canonical status, there can be no doubt at all that the Bible presents, or perhaps we should say more guardedly is assumed to present, a revelation of the one true God, who is the source and ground of all that is. In other words, although it appears that the denial that other gods have any substantial existence besides Yahweh emerged at a relatively late point in the growth of the biblical tradition, once it had appeared it coloured and dominated the entire biblical doctrine of God.[245]

Further, Clements argues that it is the belief in one God that gave the stimulus to forming the canon. 'One God demands one revelation, and conversely, one revelation demands one God'.[246] Nevertheless the problem of the rarity of monotheistic statements in the Old Testament remains. Clements suggests that there may be theological reasons for this, including the Old Testament's openness to the inclusion of other deities as manifestations of the one true God.

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[244] Sawyer 1977: 23-31.

[245] Clements 1984: 337-38.

[246] Clements 1984: 338.

Clements' argument about the relation between one revelation and one God may be passed over quickly. It is not clear that the collection of the revelation of *Israel's* god need necessarily imply the non-existence of other deities. His account of 'monotheism' in the Old Testament canon, however, is considerably more sophisticated than Sawyer's. With Sawyer, Clements agrees that examined diachronically 'monotheism' is a late element in Israelite religion. However, 'monotheism' has leavened the entire Old Testament.[247] Is it possible, however, that the final canon is far more complex than such an idea allows? Does the redactional shaping work in the way that Clements suggests?

Unlike Sawyer and Clements, J.A. Sanders is concerned not so much with the canonical text, as with the processes that lead to canonization within different communities.[248] Sanders suggests that the same hermeneutics that were operational, for example, in the biblical texts' reception of ancient Near Eastern stories and wisdom, and in assessing true and false prophecy,[249] were also operational in the canonical process. That is, 'the Bible is monotheizing literature'.[250] The Bible is characterized by its tendency, in a polytheistic world, to monotheize, or, in other words, 'to pursue the Integrity of Reality'.[251] This is not achieved to the same degree by every part of the canon, but taken as a whole 'nothing that ends up in the Jewish and Christian canons can escape a rereading by a monotheizing hermeneutic'.[252] This central hermeneutic creates a disparate collection, a limited pluralism. Understood in this way the Bible does not offer a 'box of jewels', but a 'paradigm' for our monotheizing.

Sanders' concern for the place of scripture in the life of the Christian church is commendable as is his sense that 'monotheism' is not a point that is arrived at, but

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[247] This approach is not dissimilar to that of G. Braulik's work on 'monotheism' in Deuteronomy. Braulik traces the various layers in Deuteronomy and argues that the whole book is to be read in the light of the final monotheistic framework (1994c).

[248] Sanders 1984; 1991a; 1991b.

[249] Sanders 1977.

[250] Sanders 1984: 51.

[251] Sanders 1984: 52.

[252] Sanders 1991b: 166.

rather an ongoing challenge. However, I have a number of concerns about his approach. First, given that, in Sanders' words, 'some of the literature within some of the canons...does not seem to monotheize very well at all'[253] it must be asked whether this really is the factor that gives the canon integrity. Though the whole may be more than the sum of the parts, there are many parts for which 'a tendency to monotheize' does not capture their message. Second, though accounting for the rise of the canon is an interesting, and appropriate, task for scholarship, it is a task which is not, in itself, particularly interested in the content of the texts. Sanders' canonical criticism is concerned with the 'unrecorded hermeneutics which lie between the lines of its literature'.[254] Third, Sanders' interest in hermeneutics, 'monotheizing' and 'the integrity of reality' give an account of the canon which is strongly intellectualistic.

Sawyer, Clements and Sanders, each in their own particular way, attempt to solve the problem of 'monotheism' in the Old Testament. Their canonical strategies again emphasize the gap between 'monotheism' and what is found in the Old Testament. My own particular approach to the problem differs from each of theirs in different ways. With Sawyer all the actual texts, however disconcerting, need to be taken into account. However, they cannot simply be weighed. Instead, the role that they have in the text and are intended to have on the text's readers need to be examined. The calls to wholehearted devotion in the first commandment and the *Shema* have a significant role in Deuteronomy, and in the Old Testament as a whole. Clements is aware of the importance of this. However, against Clements, I want to propose a canonical reading of the text which pays attention to *its* 'intentionality' (if we may speak in this way),[255] rather than that of the final redactor. That is, I wish to read and interpret the biblical texts on their own terms, in the forms in which we have them, rather than as an exercise in historical criticism one step beyond redaction criticism. Reading texts in the light of other texts has long been recognized as a good procedure for reading scripture but this

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[253] Sanders 1991a: 92.

[254] Sanders 1984: 46.

[255] As, for example, does Childs 1979, *passim*. For a critique of this way of speaking see Fowl 1998.

may work in both directions. That is, to use the usual scholarly vocabulary, 'monotheistic' texts should be read in the light of 'henotheistic' texts as much as *vice versa*. Against Sanders, I am interested in what the texts themselves say, rather than reading between the lines. Further, the effects of the text must be considered in more than just their intellectual aspects.

Chapter 2

YHWH, OUR GOD, YHWH IS ONE: CONFESSING 'MONOTHEISM'

> εἰσιν θεοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ κύριοι πολλοὶ, ἀλλ' ἡμῖν εἷς θεὸς...καὶ εἷς κύριος
>
> 1 Corinthians 8.5-6

Deuteronomy's right to a place in the discussion of 'monotheism' is beyond dispute, even if its exact role is controversial.[1] It contains a number of texts which bear upon the issue of 'monotheism'. Some of the most pertinent read, according to the NRSV, as follows:

> The LORD is God; there is no other besides him (4.35).
> The LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other (4.39).
> You shall have no other gods before me (5.7).
> Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone (6.4).
> The LORD your God is God (7.9).
> The LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome (10.17).
> See now that I, even I, am he; there is no god besides me (32.39).
> There is none like God, O Jeshurun (33.26).

Each of these texts belongs within a particular context and in connection with a number of other subjects. Taken together these form a rich nexus of beliefs and practices which give content to Deuteronomy's affirmations about YHWH. The interweaving of these subjects in Deuteronomy, at least in part a result of the parenetic style of the book, makes an analysis of Deuteronomy's statements about YHWH's oneness a far from straightforward task. Faced with such a Gordian knot the interpreter is, perhaps, faced with no other option than to cut, and then trace the individual threads. If the interpreter must boldly cut no better place could be chosen than the *Shema*, Deut. 6.4-9.

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[1] Braulik (1994c) and Rechenmacher (1997: 195-204) argue that the breakthrough to 'monotheism' is found in Deuteronomy. Vorländer, on the other hand, argues that this occurred with Deutero-Isaiah (1981: 93-97).

1. *The* Shema

The *Shema*[2] has played, and continues to play, an important, even central, role within the Jewish and Christian traditions. In Judaism it is a confession of faith and is the prayer recited at the beginning and end of every day, and the first and last prayer recited in life.[3] In Christianity it has been received as the 'greatest commandment'.[4] In historical-critical study of the Old Testament it has also played an important role, though for quite different reasons. Deut. 6.4 was understood as the slogan of the Josianic reformation, and the opening verse of *Urdeuteronomium*.[5]

Even within the context of Deuteronomy a number of factors indicate the significance of the *Shema*. First, the *Shema* opens the section of Moses' parenesis immediately after an account of the giving of the Ten Commandments at Horeb.[6] This section, 6.1-11.32, is given the title וְזֹאת הַמִּצְוָה הַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים, 'this is

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[2] The title '*Shema*' has been used of the single verse, 6.4 (e.g. Hertz 1937: 769; Wyschogrod 1984), of vv. 4-5 (e.g. Janzen 1998) and of the Jewish liturgical unit in which 6.4-9 is found in conjunction with Deut. 11.13-21 and Num. 15.37-41 (e.g. Hertz 1937: 769. For discussions of the meaning of the liturgical unit of the *Shema*, see Horowitz 1975; Kimelman 1992). The use of the *Shema* for Deut. 6.4-5 may well reflect a characteristically Christian usage (Moberly 1999: 125 n. 2), one which finds its basis in the citation of these verses in Mk 12.28-34. The effect is to separate vv. 4-5 from vv. 6-9. My use of the *Shema* for 6.4-9, together with the argument of this thesis, stands in deliberate contrast to such usage.

[3] The *Shema* is the first thing to be taught a child when it can talk (*m. Suk.* 42*a*) and, since Rabbi Akiba, it has been the final confession of Jews before their death (*m. Ber.* 61*a*). The daily repetition is biblically prescribed according to the Talmud (*b. Ber.* 2*a*). Significantly the Mishnah opens with a question on the recitation of the *Shema* (*m. Ber.* 1). To recite the *Shema* is 'to take on oneself the yoke of the kingdom of heaven' (*m. Ber.* 2*b*).

[4] Mt. 22.34-40; Mk 12.28-34; Lk. 10.25-28.

[5] See Preuss 1982: 100-101.

[6] Deut. 5.6-21 is an account of the Ten Commandments. The effect upon the people is so terrifying that they plead with Moses to hear YHWH's commands on their behalf (5.23-27). YHWH orders Moses to dismiss the people, and to stay with him to receive the 'commandment – statutes and ordinances' (5.28-31). This is followed by an exhortation (5.32-33), and an extended introduction to the section (6.1-3). Lohfink has detected a chiastic structure in 5.27-6.3, which acts as a bridging passage between the account of the giving of the Ten Commandments and Moses' parenesis (1963: 66-68).

the commandment – the statutes and ordinances' (6.1).[7] The double expression חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים, which occurs fourteen times in Deuteronomy,[8] has been shown by Lohfink to describe the corpus of commands, which Moses received from YHWH at Horeb, found in 12.1-26.19.[9] The singular מִצְוָה,[10] which occurs fourteen times,[11] can indicate both the entire law[12] and the specific command to love YHWH.[13] The use of מִצְוָה in 6.1 seems to cover both meanings occurring, as it does, in apposition to חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים,[14] whilst also describing Moses' parenesis in chapters 6-11, which not only begins with the commandment to love YHWH but has the commandment as its main theme.[15] The *Shema* then may rightly be seen as both a summary of the law,[16] and an explanation of the Decalogue.[17] Second, the emphatic threefold qualification of 'love' (6.5) is unique in Deuteronomy; the only

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[7] Seitz sees this as part of an older system of titles, which also included 4.45 and 12.1 (1971: 35-44). This suggestion has been criticized by Lohfink (1989: 1 n. 2).

[8] 4.1, 5, 8, 14, 45; 5.1, 31; 6.1, 20; 7.11; 11.32; 12.1; 26.16, 17.

[9] Lohfink 1989. The significance of the term is 'einer authoritativ gesetzen Sammlung von Rechtsbestimmungen (*ḥuqqîm*), die das vom Dekalog her offen Bleibende klärt (*mišpāṭîm*)' (1989: 9).

[10] A clear distinction exists between מִצְוָה and מִצְוֹת. מִצְוֹת can indicate both the entire law, and on six occasions, the Decalogue (5.10, 29; 6.17; 7.9; 8.2; 13.5) (Braulik 1970: 56-60). This distinction is entirely obscured in NIV (and NRSV at 5.31).

[11] 5.31; 6.1, 25; 7.11; 8.1; 11.8, 22; 15.5; 17.20; 19.9; 26.13; 27.1; 30.11; 31.5.

[12] Braulik 1970: 53-56. See esp. 6.25; 17.20.

[13] See esp. 11.22; 19.9.

[14] It is not uncommon to find a collection of terms for the commandments arranged syndetically in Deuteronomy. The asyndetic הַחֻקִּים . in 6.1 is unique. In LXX a copula is found creating a consistent effect. MT is to be preferred as *lectio difficilior* and because of the singular וְזֹאת (Lohfink 1989: 2).

[15] See Miller 1984: 17-18.

[16] As, of course, has been recognized in both Judaism and Christianity.

[17] The *Shema* re-expresses the theme of love towards YHWH, which has already been found in the Decalogue (5.9-10) and is a characteristic theme of Deuteronomy. The relationship between the Decalogue and the *Shema* is made even clearer in the Nash Papyrus and LXX where the *Shema* has a longer introduction formulated on the basis of 4.45 (Dogniez and Harl 1992: 154). In the Nash Papyrus the *Shema* (with extended introduction) follows immediately after the Decalogue (Cook 1903).

other occurrence in the Old Testament is found in 2 Kgs 23.25, where this credentialing of Josiah clearly serves to indicate his obedience of the Deuteronomic legislation.[18] Finally, the actions to ensure that the *Shema* is always at the forefront of the Israelites' lives (6.6-9) are unparalleled.[19]

Moses' sermon opens with a call to listen: 'Hear, O Israel', a phrase characteristic of Deuteronomy.[20] The exhortation to hear is also prominent in Proverbs where the father instructs his son.[21] The instruction of sons by their fathers, and the people by their leaders, is not unknown in Deuteronomy (e.g. 21.18-20). The introduction underscores Moses' role as mediator and instructor of the people. This call to attentive hearing is immediately followed by the crucial יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יהוה אֶחָד. These four words are notoriously difficult to interpret, though they are some of the most common words in the Old Testament. The words are YHWH–our God–YHWH–one.[22] The meaning of the individual words is not in doubt, nor is the verse subject

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[18] See Moberly 1999: 157.

[19] It may also be noted that in MT the letters ע in שְׁמַע and ד in אֶחָד are enlarged (*litera majuscula*), presumably to emphasize 6.4. Other explanations of this phenomenon include that the letters spell עֵד since 6.4 bears witness to YHWH's unity, or that they prevent mistaken readings (either confusing אֶחָד with אַחֵר 'other' or שְׁמַע with שִׁמְאָ 'perhaps') (Hertz 1937: 769-70).

[20] See also 4.1; 5.1; 9.1; 20.3; 27.9; note also 6.3. There is a distinction between שמע with an object, introduced by אֶל (4.1) or אֵת (5.1), and those occurrences with a statement (6.4; 9.1; 20.3; 27.9).

[21] Prov. 1.8; 4.1, 10; 5.7; 7.24; 8.6, 32, 33; 22.17; 23.19, 22. For a discussion of the link between Deuteronomy and wisdom literature, see Weinfeld 1972: 244-319; 1991: 62-65.

Von Rad suggests that 'Hear O Israel' was the traditional summons of the tribal assembly (1966a: 63; cf. Heller 1989: 38-40; Martin-Achard 1985: 256). It is unlikely that Deut. 20.3 can bear the weight of this interpretation.

[22] YHWH is the personal name of Israel's deity and NRSV's LORD obscures this. The preface to the NRSV argues that, 'the use of any proper name for the one and only God, as though there were other gods from whom the true God has to be distinguished, began to be discontinued in Judaism before the Christian era and is inappropriate for the universal faith of the Christian Church' (Metzger 1989: xv). There are a number of significant theological claims made by Metzger, and they cannot be fully discussed here, but many of them are less self-evidently true than the sentence suggests. Some of these will be touched upon in this thesis. For understanding Deuteronomy on its own terms the tetragrammaton should be transliterated and understood as the name of Israel's god.

to any textual uncertainty.[23] The problem lies in the combination of these words. This problem is made up of four smaller interrelated problems. First, in which context is it most appropriate to read the verse? Second, is a verb present in a disguised form and if not what verb should be understood? Third, which words comprise the subject and which comprise the predicate? Fourth, what is the meaning of אֶחָד?

First, understanding and interpreting this verse turns upon not only lexicographical and syntactic argumentation, but also upon whether the object of interpretation is the textual witness as we possess it in Deuteronomy, or the words in some putative original context. The importance of this issue for the interpretation of Deut. 6.4 has rarely been noticed, but has been articulated by Moberly in controversy with T. Veijola. Moberly rightly points out that the disagreement between him and Veijola on the interpretation of יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ largely depends on whether one judges that the verse should be solely, or even primarily, interpreted with reference to an earlier independent existence as an Israelite credo, or with reference to its present context in Deuteronomy.[24] Our present task works with the final form of Deuteronomy, and thus we shall not consider the question of the independent existence of Deut. 6.4b. It may be asked, however, whether the idea of the independent existence of Deut. 6.4b retrojects a particularly Christian notion of a credo. The question of the appropriate context will also appear in the consideration of a mono-Yahwistic interpretation of 6.4b. Should this verse be interpreted in its present context in chapter 6 or within the context of an *Urdeuteronomium* in which it immediately precedes Deuteronomy 12?

Second, יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יהוה אֶחָד contains no verb and translation into English requires that one be supplied. Suggestions that a verb is present in a disguised form prove to be unsatisfactory. V. Orel, for example, has argued that the first יהוה should be understood as a third person masculine singular imperfect. He invites comparison with Exod. 3.14 where the revelation of YHWH's name to Moses plays

[23] *BHS* has no textual notes on these words.

[24] Moberly 1999: 125 n. 3. Cf. Moberly 1990; Veijola 1992a; 1992b.

on the verb הָיָה. His translation, 'Our God is one Yahweh', is a response to the question 'Who is God?'.[25] However, not only would such a question demand the answer יְהוָה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים (cf. 1 Kgs 18), but also יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד seems a rather convoluted way to say 'Our God is one Yahweh', where we might expect יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד הוּא. Further, M. Peter dismissed a similar suggestion arguing 'es ist also fast unwahrscheinlich, daß ein einfacher Israelit den Text Dtn 6,4 in seinem etymologischen Sinn verstehen'.[26] S.D. Sperling argues that the text is corrupt and reads אהב for אֶחָד.[27] There are, however, no grounds for emendation.

Comparison with other verbless clauses would suggest that a predication is expressed, for which, in English, the present form of the verb 'to be' is necessary. Rashi, however, argued that an imperfect should be understood by comparison with Zeph. 3.9 and Zech. 14.9.[28] Not only would this be unusual, but the immediate context of v. 5, with its demand for love of YHWH in the present, suggests predication. Deuteronomy visualizes imminent realization in the land, rather than the eschatological vision of YHWH's kingship in Zephaniah and Zechariah.

Third, there are a number of different suggestions of how these four words form one or more predications. There are four main alternatives, but there also exist a number of other alternatives that have been suggested. The four main possibilities are:[29]

a. YHWH is our God; YHWH is one;
b. YHWH, our God, YHWH is one;
c. YHWH, our God, is one YHWH;
d. YHWH is our God, YHWH alone.

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[25] Orel 1997.

[26] Peter 1980: 255-56. Peter suggested translating the second יְהוָה as a verb, 'Jahwe, unser Gott, ist der einzig existierende' before excluding it as a possibility.

[27] Sperling 1988.

[28] Rashi on Deut. 6.4

[29] These correspond to the four possibilities found in NRSV.

a. *YHWH is our God; YHWH is one*

This first translation understands the verse as two predications, both with order subject–predicate. This parsing has been favoured by a number of modern scholars, including, most recently, Veijola and O. Loretz.[30] Veijola argues that other parsings are unsatisfactory when compared to the neat colometric structure יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ || יהוה אֶחָד. The first predication is compared by Veijola to other biblical expressions, 'you are my God' and 'I am your God'. Significantly both Veijola and Loretz argue that the statement existed prior to its incorporation into Deuteronomy.[31] Against this translation is the consistent appositional use of אֱלֹהִים with יהוה in Deuteronomy.[32] Moreover, predication is consistently indicated by the additional element הוּא (4.35, 39; 7.9). Veijola objects that later usage in Deuteronomy cannot be decisive for the interpretation of 6.4b. However, in its present literary context אֱלֹהֵינוּ must be understood to be in apposition to יהוה.

The first translation understands 6.4b to be making two parallel statements. The first identifies YHWH as Israel's God. The second states that only YHWH is to be Israel's God.[33] The verse is to be understood not as a statement about YHWH's nature, but a statement about the relationship between YHWH and Israel. Veijola suggests that a comparison may be drawn with the early Christian confession κύριος Ἰησοῦς. However, whilst an identification of the (unknown) Jesus as κύριος makes good sense in the New Testament, it is less clear why it is necessary

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[30] Veijola (1992b); Loretz (1997: 62-68). Also Blancy (1995: 65-66); Grubber (1999: 646); Hertz (1937: 769); de Moor (1994: 191); Pakkala (1999: 73-85); Quell (1965: 1079-81); Rendtorff (1985: 151); Scullion (1992: 1042); Sedlmeier (1999); Suzuki (1983). Cf. Gordon who understands two predications, but argues that אֶחָד is a proper noun (1970).

[31] Veijola sees it as the creation of the YHWH-alone movement (1992b: 540-41), and Loretz traces it back to the New Year Festival, and ultimately to statements about Baal (1997). For criticism of Loretz's proposal, see Veijola 1998b.

[32] See Lohfink 1976: 26.

[33] Veijola 1992b: 531-34; cf. Suzuki 1983. Quell understands the first predication to make a monolatrous statement, and the second a monotheistic one (1965: 1079-1081).

here to identify YHWH as 'our God'.[34] Though a comparison may be made with the prologue to the Decalogue, 'I am YHWH your God', it is likely that this functions as an authoritative introduction to the commandments rather than as an introduction of an unknown deity.[35]

b. *YHWH, our God, YHWH is one*

The second translation understands the verse as one predication with אֶחָד as the predicate.[36] This translation may have the support of the early versions.[37] The Septuagint reads κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν κύριος εἷς ἐστιν, which may reflect a *Vorlage* similar to the Nash Papyrus which reads יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד הוא.[38] The explicit quotation of Deut. 6.4 in Zech. 14.9, יְהִיֶה יהוה אֶחָד וּשְׁמוֹ אֶחָד, may also be cited in support.[39] Two objections may be brought against this understanding of the verse. First, the second YHWH appears to be superfluous. Why do we not read יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶחָד? M. Peter writes, 'das ist ein typisch semitischer Satz, der das Subjekt wiederholt'.[40] However, he cites no examples in support. The repetition of יהוה may perhaps be compared to Exod. 34.6 where another significant statement about YHWH involves a repetition of the divine name.[41] The repetition is emphatic.[42] Such an explanation may, however, merely

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[34] As C.L. Miller rightly observes (1999: 4).

[35] See Vervenne 1997: 476.

[36] Scholars who favour such a parsing include Albertz (1994a: 206), Bade (1910); Braulik (1986: 55-56); Janzen (1987a; 1987b); Jensen (1997); Lohfink (1976: 108-110); Moberly (1990); Perles (1908); Pressler (1998: 42); Rechenmacher (1997: 197); Wright (1996: 95, 105). Also, see NIV. An alternative translation understands the first two words as a *casus pendens*, 'as for YHWH our God, YHWH is one' (see Hoftijzer 1973: 484; C.L. Miller 1999: 4).

[37] J.W. Wevers writes, 'the syntax of MT has been variously analysed and the apparent ambiguity can be applied to LXX as well...The Greek statement may be translated: 'As for the Lord our God, the Lord is one' (1995: 114). Dogniez and Harl translate LXX 'Le Seigneur notre Dieu est le seul Seigneur' (1992: 154).

[38] Cook 1903.

[39] See Moberly 1990.

[40] Peter 1980: 254.

[41] Noted by Orel 1997: 616.

[42] Cf., e.g., 1 Kgs 13.2; Isa. 6.3. See GKC, §123*e*, 133*k*.

move the problem from a repetitious יהוה to an interposing אֱלֹהֵינוּ. Second, the order of subject-predicate has been raised as problematic for a classification sentence.[43] However, Andersen lists a number of examples of independent clauses with order subject-predicate where the predicate is a numeral.[44]

The affirmation, in its simplest terms, that 'YHWH is one' is usually taken to be a statement about the nature of YHWH. The exact significance of such a statement has been understood in a number of different ways: as an affirmation of the integrity of YHWH's will;[45] a statement of YHWH's uniqueness;[46] a declaration of YHWH's singularity in contrast to other gods;[47] and as a statement of monotheism.[48]

c. *YHWH, our God, is one YHWH*

The problem of the repeated YHWH is solved by understanding the verse as a single predication, with 'YHWH, our God' as the subject and 'YHWH one' as the predicate.[49] Despite understanding אֱלֹהֵינוּ in apposition to יהוה, in accordance

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[43] C.L. Miller 1999: 4; Andersen 1970: 47, cf. 42-43. Andersen notes that a resumptive הוּא is necessary (as in the Nash papyrus).

[44] See Andersen 1970: 56-57 (#45, 52, 54, 58). These examples are: #45 – Gen. 46.27; Exod. 26.2, 8; 27.18; 36.9, 15; Num. 2.9, 16, 24, 31; 3.39; 26.43; 35.7; #52 – Exod. 27.12, 14, 15, 16; 38.10, 11, 12, 14, 15; twelve times in Numbers 1; Num. 3.22; twelve times in Numbers 7; #54 – Gen. 47.9; #58 – Gen. 46.15, 22, 25, 26. Whether Andersen's judgement is affected by his attribution of all these examples to P is difficult to ascertain.

[45] Janzen 1987a.

[46] Moberly 1999.

[47] Wright 1996: 96. This interpretation is similar to a mono-Yahwistic interpretation.

[48] Weippert argues that the verse's ambiguity allowed it to be understood later as 'unser Gott Jahwe – Jahwe ist einzig', a monotheistic statement (1990: 143).

[49] See Amsler (1991); Craigie (1976: 168); Driver (1902: 89); Höffken (1984); Keil and Delitzsch (1971: III, 322-23); Nielsen (1977); Peter (1980); Rose (1975: 136); Weinfeld (1991: 337); Weippert (1990: 143). Also AV, NJB, RSV.

P.A.H. de Boer translates Deut. 6.4 as '(the term) *Yhwh our God* (means) *Yhwh on its own*' (1982). G.A.F. Knight proposes, 'Yahweh, our God, is Yahweh, all comprehensive'. Knight argues that 'all comprehensive' suggests the unity of YHWH without implying his loneliness or mathematical oneness (1967/68).

with the consistent practice in the rest of Deuteronomy, this parsing of the verse is problematic as it understands יהוה, a proper name, as a count noun.

This anomaly has been explained by suggesting that Deut. 6.4 is a slogan of mono-Yahwism.[50] Against the multiplicity of sanctuaries for the worship of YHWH, with their differing, even divergent traditions, the Deuteronomic movement proclaimed a single YHWH to be worshipped at a single sanctuary.

d. *YHWH is our God, YHWH alone*

In this rendering the first two words form subject-predicate, the subject is then repeated with אֶחָד functioning adjectivally.[51] A variation of this is the translation 'Our God is YHWH, YHWH alone'.[52] There are three problems attached to this understanding of the verse. First, against the consistent usage in Deuteronomy יהוה and אֱלֹהֵינוּ are not understood to be in apposition. Second, a number of Samaritan inscriptions from the Christian era append *lbdw* to Deut. 6.4.[53] This suggests that, at least for these inscriptions, אֶחָד was not understood to function adjectivally. Third, it needs to be determined whether אֶחָד can be understood adjectivally, with the sense 'alone'.

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[50] The term 'mono-Yahwism' was first coined by Bade (1910).

[51] See Christensen (1991: 142-43); Ehrlich (1968: 270); Mayes (1979: 176); Miller (1984: 17, 19, 29); Petersen (1995: 148); von Rad (1962: 227 n. 87; 1966a: 63); Ridderbos (1984: 114); Robinson (1907: 89-90); Steuernagel (1923: 75); Tigay (1996: 76, 438-40); Willoughby (1977); Wyschogrod (1988); also Rashi, Ibn Ezra, NAB, NJPS, NRSV. Cf. Bertholet (1899: 24) and König (1917: 98) who translated Deut. 6.4 with 'Jahwe ist unser Gott, Jahwe als einziger'.

NEB renders it as 'The Lord is our God, one Lord'. REB's 'The Lord is our God, the Lord our one God' is inexplicable.

[52] See Gibson (1994: 55); McBride (1973). I have already noted that contextually it makes little sense to understand Deut. 6.4 as an introduction to 'our God'. Surprisingly Gibson notes that his translation is contrary to a rule he had already given for the nominal clause: 'where both subj. and pred. are definite, the subj. precedes the pred. and the clause is one of identification' (1994: 52).

Note also Moffat's translation 'The Eternal, the Eternal alone is our God' (1926).

[53] See Davies 1999 for details.

This translation suggests the verse is a statement about Israel's allegiance to YHWH, and only YHWH. This bears a fitting sense for both the immediate context, as the ground for the command to love YHWH wholeheartedly, and within the context of the book of Deuteronomy as a whole.

e. *Other Alternative Translations*

F.I. Andersen has suggested that both subject and predicate are discontinuous. The subject is אֱלֹהֵינוּ...אֶחָד and the predicate יהוה...יהוה: 'Our one God is Yahweh, Yahweh'.[54] This not only fails to conform to the appositional use of יהוה and אֱלֹהֵינוּ in Deuteronomy, but the discontinuity of both subject and predicate is unparalleled.[55] M. Dahood suggested that Deut. 6.4 be translated 'Obey, Israel, Yahweh; Yahweh our God is the Unique', where Unique is understood as a name.[56] The creation of two clauses in this way, however, produces the anomalous אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יהוה which Dahood renders 'Yahweh our God'.

Fourth, it is necessary to consider the meaning of אֶחָד.[57] This has already become apparent with the fourth possible parsing of the verse where אֶחָד is understood adjectivally as 'alone'. A number of meanings have been suggested for this 'most important word of the Shema',[58] including the cardinal one, emphatically, 'alone' and as a name.

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[54] Andersen 1970: 47.

[55] C.L. Miller 1999: 5.

[56] Dahood 1972: 361; cf. 1971: 438. The translation of שְׁמַע as 'obey' is based on an Ugaritic text (*KTU* 1.5.v.17-18) in which *šm'* and *'hb* occur in poetic parallelism. In view of Deuteronomy's use of שמע, 'hear', elsewhere, which also provides a good sense here, there is no need to translate as 'obey'. Though in 6.4 the demand to hear also carries with it the implication of obedience.

[57] For standard dictionary articles on אֶחָד, see Jensen (1997); Lohfink and Bergmann (1974) and Sauer (1997). See also Grubber (1999).

[58] A description of אֶחָד by Janzen (1987a).

The usual meaning of אֶחָד is not disputed. It is the cardinal 'one'.[59] It has been suggested that אֶחָד should be understood emphatically here, that is, 'only one, unique, *einzig*'.[60] A number of examples can be produced where אֶחָד may best be translated 'only one'.[61] It is possible in English to retain 'one', which may carry emphatic nuances according to the context.

The suggestion that אֶחָד should be understood adjectivally encounters the problem that Hebrew has a word for 'alone', לְבַדּוֹ. This objection has been met in two ways. First, it has been suggested that there are a few instances where אֶחָד carries the sense 'alone'. A.D.H. Mayes cites Isa. 51.2; Ezek. 33.24; 37.22; Zech. 14.9; 1 Chron. 29.1 in support.[62] In Isa. 51.2 and Ezek. 33.24 there is a contrast between Abraham as one person and the multitude of his descendents. There is also a numerical contrast in Ezek. 37.22 between Israel's past as two nations and her future as one. Zech. 14.9 is a citation of Deut. 6.4 and should be understood as a simple predication.[63] 1 Chron. 29.1 is more difficult; it reads: שְׁלֹמֹה בְנִי אֶחָד בָּחַר־בּוֹ אֱלֹהִים נַעַר וְרָךְ. Braun translates, 'Solomon, my son, whom alone God has chosen, is young and immature'.[64] Moberly argues that this assumes that the Chronicler has characteristically omitted אֲשֶׁר,[65] and that the appropriate context of אֶחָד is the choice of Solomon from David's sons in 1 Chron. 28.4-5. The immediate context, however, is David's address to the gathered *multitudes* whose help Solomon needs. This suggests that the contrast is numerical. This would give

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[59] BDB, 25-26.

[60] Zorell 1946: 31. Cf. Braulik 1994c: 119; Loretz 1997: 68; Peter 1980: 255; Veijola 1992b: 533.

[61] E.g. Gen. 11.1, 6; 27.38; Exod. 12.46; Deut. 17.6; 19.15; Isa. 51.2; Ezek. 33.24; 1 Chron. 29.1.

[62] Mayes 1979: 176.

[63] Moberly 1990: 214-15.

[64] Braun 1986: 277.

[65] See Driver 1913: 537.

'Solomon, my son, is but one man, YHWH has chosen him, an inexperienced youth'.[66] Thus, in no instance does אֶחָד require the translation 'alone'.

Second, it has been argued that לְבַדּוֹ is usually found in verbal sentences, hence אֶחָד can give the same sense in a verbless sentence.[67] While it is true that לְבַדּוֹ is usually found in verbal sentences, it is not unknown for it to function adjectivally in a verbless sentence, for example, 2 Kgs 19.15, 19 and Ps. 86.10. Ehrlich uses this argument and cites 1 Chron. 29.1 as an example of אֶחָד with the meaning 'alone'. Even if this were the case, a reason would have to be given for the use of אֶחָד rather than לְבַדּוֹ in 1 Chron. 29.1, a *verbal* sentence.

C.H. Gordon has suggested that אֶחָד should be understood as a proper noun, 'Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is "One"'.[68] Gordon bases his argument on Zech. 14.9 and comparison with the names of deities in the ancient Near East. It is not necessary, however, to understand the two clauses in Zech. 14.9, יִהְיֶה יהוה אֶחָד וּשְׁמוֹ אֶחָד, as synonymous. Even if אֶחָד were to be understood as a name, it would still remain necessary to answer the question of what it means to call YHWH 'one'.

How then should Deut. 6.4b be rendered? Within the context of Deuteronomy, the verse is best understood as a single predication, with אֶחָד as the predicate. Of all the different ways in which the verse may be parsed this is the least problematic. The principle difficulty is the seemingly redundant second יהוה.

What though does it mean to say that YHWH is 'one'? The way that אֶחָד has been understood can be classified into two types, as Janzen notes: 'the word says something about Israel's God *in se* (Yahweh is "one, unique" or the like); or it says something about the claim of God upon Israel ("Yahweh is our God, Yahweh

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[66] Moberly 1990: 212.

[67] McBride 1973: 292-93; Ehrlich 1968: 270.

[68] Gordon 1970. Cf. Dahood 1972.

alone", or the like)'.[69] The second type of understanding, associated with the renderings 'YHWH is our God; YHWH is one' or 'YHWH is our God, YHWH alone', have proved to be unsatisfactory on a number of grounds. However, despite these difficulties, they provide an excellent sense in the context of Deuteronomy where loyalty to YHWH alone, and a consequent rejection of other gods, is a, if not the, main theme.

The same cannot be said about understandings of אֶחָד as a statement about the nature of YHWH. Statements simply about the nature of YHWH alone do not easily fit the parenetic style of Deuteronomy with its appeal to the response of the people. The statement that 'YHWH, our God, YHWH is one' or 'YHWH, our God, is one YHWH' have been understood to make a number of different statements about the nature of YHWH: mono-Yahwism, there is only one God ('monotheism'), the integrity of YHWH's will, YHWH has no family, YHWH is unchangeable. Each of these proves to be unsatisfactory in different ways.

Rendered as 'YHWH, our God, is one YHWH' Deut. 6.4 is understood as a statement of mono-Yahwism. There is only one YHWH who reveals himself solely at the central sanctuary in Jerusalem. The view that there existed a poly-Yahwism in Israel, against which Deuteronomy is responding, was strengthened by the inscriptions discovered at Kuntillet 'Ajrud in the last century with their references to 'YHWH of Teman' and 'YHWH of Samaria'.[70] As a background to Deut. 6.4, this explanation is problematic in a number of respects. First, it is not clear that the association of YHWH with particular locations resulted in a fragmentation into a number of different YHWHs.[71] Second, the connection between the *Shema* and its statement about YHWH's oneness and Deuteronomy 12, which is usually understood

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[69] Janzen 1987a: 280.

[70] For Deut. 6.4 as a statement of mono-Yahwism, see, e.g., Clements (1998: 343); Höffken (1984); McCarter (1997: 65); (Miller 2000: 79); von Rad (1962: 227); Zimmerli (1978: 118).

For a discussion of the discoveries at Kuntillet 'Ajrud, see Smelik (1991: 155-60) and Emerton (1982). Emerton notes that, although the discoveries can be used as a proof of the existence of poly-Yahwism in Israel, this is not the only way in which they can be interpreted.

[71] See Tigay 1996: 439-40.

as a call for cultic centralization, is far from self-evident. The common characterization in modern scholarship of Deuteronomy's message as 'one God, one people, one cult' appears to have heuristic value, but lacks any textual support. אֶחָד does not have this programmatic significance in Deuteronomy, and is not used of YHWH's chosen sanctuary,[72] or the chosen people.[73] The suggestion that in *Urdeuteronomium* the *Shema* immediately preceded Deuteronomy 12 cannot be adduced in support of this idea, for such a reconstruction bears more evidence of a particular conception of how Deuteronomy's logic is understood to operate.

Second, to affirm that 'YHWH is one' is commonly understood as a declaration of 'monotheism'. There is only one God; no other gods exist. The question of the existence of other deities is clearly alien to the context. Not only is YHWH 'our God', but what must surely be an exposition of some of the implications of the *Shema* in the rest of Deuteronomy 6 implies the existence of other gods. They are perceived as a threat to YHWH's relationship with Israel and Israel is warned, 'do not follow other gods, from among the gods of the peoples around you' (v. 14). Whatever is being said about YHWH, it is not a denial of the existence of other gods. Since this is the case it is not inappropriate to reconsider the translation of אֱלֹהִים in Deuteronomy. The term אֱלֹהִים occurs 374 times.[74] Ninety-five per cent of

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[72] The choice of the term 'chosen sanctuary' is deliberate. Deuteronomy avoids any explicit identification of the sanctuary with one place, whether Jerusalem or Shiloh. Further, a term such as 'central sanctuary' risks placing the accent on a feature that Deuteronomy does not stress. Miller writes, 'the emphasis is not upon one place so much as it is upon the place the Lord chooses' (1990: 131; Miller's italics).

[73] A point made by Moberly 1999: 129.

The only use of אֶחָד for Israel is found in 2 Sam. 7.23. Interestingly the connection of one god with one temple and one people goes back at least as far as Philo and Josephus. Philo writes, 'he moreover foresaw that there could not be any great number of temples built either in many different places, or in the same place, thinking it fitting that as God is one, his temple also should be one' (*Spec. Leg.* 67). Josephus attributes the following words to Moses in his final speech to the Israelites on the edge of the Promised Land, 'Let there also be one temple therein and one altar...And let there be neither an altar nor a temple in any other city; for God is but one, and the nation of the Hebrews is but one' (*Ant.* 4: 200-201). See also *Apion* 2: 193: 'there ought to be but one temple for one God'.

[74] See esp. Lohfink 1976: 101-103. Manley's table of the distribution of divine names in Deuteronomy is unreliable (1957: 37).

these occurrences refer to the gods of other nations or to YHWH in his relation to Israel, usually in the form of אֱלֹהִים with personal suffixes or more rarely as the god of the fathers.[75] On only three occasions is הָאֱלֹהִים found. The exact significance of this will be considered below, but it has a different sense to the other uses of אֱלֹהִים in Deuteronomy. I suggest that the distinction between the terms may best be represented by translating אֱלֹהִים as 'god' and הָאֱלֹהִים 'God'. To render אֱלֹהִים as 'God' when used of YHWH, and 'god' when used of the deities of other nations, as English translations do, is to assume the answer to a question which is very much at stake in Deuteronomy.[76]

Janzen argues that 'YHWH is one' is, 'a reaffirmation of Yahweh's fidelity and integrity'.[77] This integrity is to be reflected by the people of Israel, as Deut. 6.5 demands.[78] Janzen seeks to demonstrate not only that a concern with YHWH's faithfulness is a common theme in the Old Testament, but also that אֶחָד is used of YHWH's integrity in Job 23.13 and 31.15. Job 23.13 reads, 'But he is one (וְהוּא בְּאֶחָד), and who can dissuade him? Whatever he desires, he does'. Within the

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[75] On 310 occasions אֱלֹהִים has personal suffixes and indicates that YHWH is Israel's god. The phrase 'god of the fathers' occurs eight times. The relationship between YHWH and Israel is also clear in the use of אֱלֹהִים in the so-called 'covenant formula' (26.17; 29.12. See Rendtorff 1998). Thirty-eight times it is used of the gods of other nations (this excludes 33.27 which probably refers to YHWH as 'the eternal god' [Cross and Freedman 1948: 196, 209; NIV], rather than to 'the ancient gods' [Gaster 1947: 56, 60-61; NRSV]). Elsewhere, אֱלֹהִים is best rendered indefinitely (4.7, 33, 34; 5.24, 26. In 4.32 אֱלֹהִים should also be rendered indefinitely, cf. the generic אָדָם), or is part of a formula (1.17 'judgment is god's' [cf. 2 Chron. 19.6]; 9.10 'finger of god' [=Exod. 31.18]; 21.23 'accursed of god'; 25.18 'fear of god' [rather than 'fear of YHWH' because Amalek is not in covenant relationship with YHWH, see Moberly 2000a: 93]; 33.1 'man of god'. Lohfink writes, 'in allen diesen Fällen scheint für den Gebrauch des Wortes אֱלֹהִים Sprachzwang der Tradition vorzuliegen' [1976: 103]).

[76] For a similar approach to the New Testament, see Wright 1992: xiv-xv.

[77] Janzen 1987a: 282; 1987b. Cf. Herrmann who argues similarly that 'Jahwe ist nur eine, will heißen, eine ungeteilte Persönlichkeit' (2000: 54), and Miller (1984: 22).

[78] Janzen 1998.

context of Job's attempts to arraign YHWH[79] it is clear, however, that Job is not affirming YHWH's integrity, but protesting against his absolute sovereignty.[80] Similarly in Job 31.15 Job affirms his own integrity, not YHWH's. Janzen also suggests that Jer. 32.38-41 may be a post-exilic application of Deut. 6.4-5 where the terms have been reversed: אֶחָד is used of the people, and 'with all your heart and with all your soul' is used of YHWH.[81] Despite the verbal similarities, it is uncertain that Jeremiah 32 contains a citation of the *Shema*. 'All your heart and all your soul' is common Deuteronomic idiom and does not necessarily reflect a conscious echo of Deut. 6.5. Indeed, the clear echo of the *Shema* in 2 Kgs 23.25 contains *all* three elements from Deut. 6.5: heart, soul and strength. 'One' similarly is too common a word to necessarily reflect a conscious citation of Deut. 6.4. Even if exact parallels to אֶחָד in this sense cannot be found, the final criterion for assessing any interpretation of אֶחָד must be the wider context of Deuteronomy. Here, the evidence for Janzen's interpretation is thin. References in Deuteronomy to the promises given to the Patriarchs hardly necessitate understanding Deut. 6.4 as a statement of divine integrity. More significantly whilst divine integrity plays a central role in Exodus 32-34, the episode about the Golden Calf, other themes come to the fore in the Deuteronomic retelling of that story (Deuteronomy 9-10).[82] It seems difficult to argue, then, that divine integrity is a major theme in Deuteronomy.

C.J. Labuschagne suggests that 'YHWH is one' also includes the idea that YHWH is alone, without a divine family.[83] Whilst YHWH's position outside the Canaanite pantheon has been offered as an explanation of the rise of 'monotheism' in ancient Israel, it is alien to the context of Deuteronomy. Finally, Amsler suggests that 'YHWH is one' is an affirmation of YHWH's diachronic unity, that is, he is one and

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[79] In the context of the book of Job the deity with whom Job seeks a meeting is YHWH (see Job 1-2, 38-42).

[80] See Habel 1985: 344-51.

[81] Janzen 1987a: 287-91.

[82] See chapter 4.

[83] Labuschagne 1966: 137. Uses of אֶחָד which may be offered in support of this interpretation include Gen. 19.9; Isa. 51.2; Ezek. 33.24; Eccl. 4.8-12.

the same to Israel throughout her generations. This interpretation, Amsler argues, embeds Deut. 6.4 in one of Deuteronomy's major themes: continuity to the next generation, but also makes sense of the use of 'our god', which is also used in the context of teaching the children (6.20-25).[84] However, Amsler has excluded most of the occurrences of 'our god' on literary-critical grounds. The appearance of 'our god' in the *Shema* and 6.20-25 is a small base upon which to build a theory of the meaning of the verse, and further 6.20-25 reflects Deuteronomy's almost consistent practice of placing 'our god' or 'my god' on the lips of the people when they speak.[85]

In the face of an impasse between interpretations that are good renderings of the text and those that make good sense in the context of Deuteronomy, a solution may be found in a text which has often been held up as the most illuminating parallel to Deut. 6.4. In Song 6.8-9 the lover praises his beloved,

> There are sixty queens,
> and eighty concubines,
> and young women without number.
> My dove, my perfect one is one (אַחַת הִיא יוֹנָתִי תַמָּתִי),
> to her mother she is one (אַחַת הִיא לְאִמָּהּ),
> she is flawless to the one who bore her.

The context of devoted and extravagant love provides a compelling parallel to the *Shema* with its call for wholehearted love (Deut. 6.5). The lover's statement about this woman is that she is 'one', that is, unique, without peer. Significantly what is not being said is that she is the only child of her mother, or the only woman in the court. Rather she has a place in the affections of her mother and her lover that is unrivalled. In a similar way what Deuteronomy calls the people of Israel to affirm about YHWH is not that other gods do not exist, but that YHWH is unique for Israel, and to receive Israel's wholehearted love.

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[84] Amsler 1991: 295-97.

[85] Cf. 1.25, 41; 5.24, 25, 27; 18.16; 26.14. The exception is found in the declaration to the priest in 26.3.

To suggest that אֶחָד has this meaning is, however, not to suggest that the apprehension of YHWH's uniqueness is a purely subjective matter. The continuation of the lover's praise again provides a suitable vehicle to illustrate this (6.9b),

> Maidens saw her and called her blessed,
> queens and concubines also, and praised her.

That is, there is something about the beloved that may be recognized by others, but not apart from her relationship to them. That is, 'the language and conceptuality in Song of Songs is intrinsically personal and relational' and recognition of uniqueness operates on the same level.[86] The same is true of language about YHWH. Thus, the uniqueness of YHWH is also open to recognition by others, but not detachable from their relationship (however this operates) to him. Something of what this might mean will be seen later in the consideration of what Deuteronomy has to say about YHWH's election of Israel.[87] At very least though it indicates that the distinction between understanding Deut. 6.4 as a statement about YHWH *in se* or YHWH *ad extra* is unhelpful.

2. *The First Commandment*

The relationship between Moses' opening words after the giving of the Decalogue and YHWH's first words to Israel at Horeb has often been noted.[88] Whilst the first commandment is expressed in negative terms in contrast to the positive formulation of the *Shema*, there are similarities between these two opening lines. Both begin with a statement about YHWH (5.6; 6.4) and follow that with a commandment of exclusive devotion (5.7; 6.5). Unfortunately both also share a certain opacity. In the first commandment the problem of translating עַל־פָּנָי is encountered.[89]

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[86] This significant point is made by Moberly 1999: 133.

[87] See chapter 5.

[88] E.g. Miller 1984.

[89] We shall not consider O. Loretz's argument that the original form of the commandment was a poetic לא יהיה לך אל || לא תעשה לך פסל. This, he suggests, was a prohibition of ancestral worship (1994: 496). Not only is my concern with the final form of Deuteronomy, but Loretz's suggestion is far too speculative.

H.G. Reventlow's argument that לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ is an indicative statement (1962: 26-27) has rightly been dismissed (Knierim 1965: 26-27).

Six alternative translations of עַל־פָּנָי have been offered by modern scholars.[90] The alternatives cover a range of possibilities which may be broadly characterized as literal or metaphorical. The traditional German translation is 'next to me'. This would provide a parallel to Deut. 32.39 'there is no god with me' (וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי). However, פָּנִים has the sense of being in front of an object, rather than to the side of it. The second suggestion understands עַל־פָּנָי in this way, 'opposite me, before my face'. The command prohibits placing any idol in YHWH's presence.[91] Closely related to this is the third suggestion that עַל־פָּנָי should be translated 'in front of me, before me', but a wider understanding of the prohibition should be allowed beyond the immediate placing of an image before the ark.[92] Against this suggestion it may be objected that the usual way to express 'before me' would be לְפָנַי.

A metaphorical sense is found in the remaining possibilities. 'Except me' has the support of some of the early versions: πλὴν ἐμοῦ (LXX Exod. 20.3), בר מני (Targums) and לבר אלהא (Pesh.).[93] Some support for this translation may be found in the Phoenician cognate *ʿlt pn* which Albright translates 'in addition to' or 'besides'.[94] However, there is no comparable use of עַל־פָּנָי in the Old Testament.[95] Fourthly, 'to my disadvantage' was suggested by von Rad, on the basis of Deut. 21.16 and the German translation of Albright.[96] Deut. 21.16 may be translated 'in the lifetime of',[97] and 'to my disadvantage' seems to be an

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[90] KB, 944. Rashi suggested the sense of עַל־פָּנָי was 'in my lifetime' (on Exod. 20.3). עַל־פָּנָי has this sense in Gen. 11.28; Num. 3.4 (see Davies 1995: 28). Cf. Weinfeld 1991: 289.

[91] Noth 1962: 162; Knierim 1965.

[92] Childs 1974: 402-403; Nielsen 1968: 100; Weinfeld 1991: 276-77.

[93] Cf. Craigie 1976: 152.

[94] Albright 1957: 297 n. 29.

[95] Weinfeld 1991: 276.

[96] Von Rad 1962: 204 n. 31; van der Woude 1997a: 1012-1013. Further argument was provided by Stamm 1961: 236-37.

[97] Cf. Gen. 11.28 and Num. 3.4.

unwarranted extension by Von Rad of 'in addition to' on the basis of the German *Nachteil*, which means 'disadvantage', but literally 'additional part'.[98] Finally, 'in defiance of me' was first suggested by E. König.[99] This translation recognizes that עַל־פָּנַי may carry a hostile tone, as for example in Isa. 65.3; Job 1.11; 21.31.[100] However, Weinfeld argues that in none of these cases is 'before' or 'in the face of' an unsuitable translation.[101]

Since objections have been brought against all the possible translations it is worth reconsidering the meaning of על־פני in the Old Testament. The most common use has the sense 'on the surface of' (e.g. Gen. 1.2). It may also be used literally of the human face, especially in the common expression 'to fall upon one's face' (נפל על־פני). It can be used of buildings when one building is placed next to another, that is, with the walls against one another (e.g. 1 Kgs 6.3). A significant use occurs with place names. Here it does not have the sense 'east of',[102] but nor is 'near, close by, in the vicinity of' satisfactory.[103] The use with hills and mountains suggests that it retains something of the sense of 'upon the face of'. Thus, in 1 Sam. 26.1 David hides in the hill of Hachilah, which is above the town of Jeshimon, that is, 'overlooks' the town.[104]

The use of על־פני for human beings and gods suggests a sense of opposition, which can naturally be seen as an extension of the spatial and geographical uses of the term. It is used of provoking God, lying to him and cursing him (Isa. 65.3; Job 1.11; 6.28). It is also used of human aggression (Ezek. 32.10; Nah. 2.2; Ps. 21.13,

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[98] Weinfeld 1991: 277.

[99] König 1917: 87. Also Köhler 1929: 174; Preuss 1971: 18; Reventlow 1962: 27; Simian-Yofre 1989; Stamm 1961: 236; 1962: 79.

[100] Cf. Gen. 16.12; 25.18; Deut. 21.16; Nah. 2.2; Ps. 21.13.

[101] Weinfeld 1991: 276-77.

[102] *Contra* Weinfeld 1991: 276. See the discussion by Drinkard (1979).

[103] Drinkard 1979.

[104] See Gordon 1986: 187. This seems to be the case in geographical cases where the locations are identifiable, see Num. 21.11; Deut. 32.49; 34.1; Josh. 15.8; 18.14, 16; Judg. 16.3; 2 Sam. 2.24; 15.23; 1 Kgs 11.7; Zech. 14.4. Cf. Gen. 18.16; 19.28; Num. 21.20; 23.28.

and possibly Gen. 16.12; 25.18). The evil of Israel and of other nations is said to come up against God (Jer. 6.7; Ps. 9.20). On a number of occasions it is used of YHWH thrusting out the temple or nation from 'upon his face' and into exile. Thus, for example, Jer. 7.14-15 reads according to the NRSV:

> So, what I did to Shiloh I will now do to the house that bears my Name, the temple you trust in, the place I gave to you and your fathers. I will thrust you from my presence (מֵעַל פָּנָי), just as I did all your brothers, the people of Ephraim.

Whilst the translation 'before him, in his presence' appears to be satisfactory, it cannot be insignificant that the only context in which על־פני is used of Israel's presence before YHWH is in the context of YHWH removal of Israel from the land.[105] This suggests that YHWH is ridding himself of a provocation. The use of על־פני with no sense of hostility is rare. The only clear example is in the phrase 'pass over before one' (עבר על־פני).[106] However, it would clearly be mistaken to apply the meaning of a term in a stereotyped phrase to other occurrences.

In the light of the use of על־פני elsewhere in the Old Testament a translation such as, 'You shall have no other gods over and against me' may be appropriate. The other gods are a threat to YHWH and to follow them is an act of defiance. The commandment, then, prohibits Israel worshipping any other god. This exclusion of other deities in the first commandment provides a negative expression of the *Shema*'s claim on Israel. In both cases the issue at stake is the devotion of Israel. The existence of other deities is not denied, rather the assumption of Deuteronomy's rhetoric is that other deities do exist and are a real temptation for the affections of the Israelites.[107]

3. *Deuteronomy 4.35 and 4.39*

The account given above of the first verse of the *Shema* and the first commandment is, in its general terms, uncontroversial, though the specific proposals for

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[105] 1 Kgs 9.7; 2 Kgs 13.23; 17.18, 23; 23.27; 24.3; Jer. 7.15; 15.1; 23.39; 32.31; 52.3; 2 Chron. 7.20.

[106] Gen. 32.22; Exod. 33.19; 34.6; 2 Sam. 15.18.

[107] *Contra* Albright 1957: 297.

translating those verses may be disputed. The scholarly consensus runs roughly along the following lines. The *Shema* and the first commandment claim that only YHWH is Israel's god. Other nations also have their gods, but the worship of them and the autochthonous Canaanite deities is prohibited. In the modern scholarly parlance discussed in chapter one, such beliefs can be described as monolatrous.[108] The earlier editions[109] of Deuteronomy, to which the *Shema* and the first commandment belong, were a call to the worship of YHWH alone. However, these verses are now read in a monotheistic sense. This is primarily due, not to the words themselves, but to the editorial framework into which they have been placed.

Such an approach to the theme of YHWH's oneness in Deuteronomy is found in G. Braulik's 'Deuteronomy and the Birth of Monotheism'.[110] Braulik traces the different stages in the development of Deuteronomy's belief about YHWH, from the first stage in which YHWH is in an exclusive relationship with Israel as the 'jealous god' (אֵל קַנָּא) to the final breakthrough of 'monotheism' in Deuteronomy 4 where YHWH alone is 'the God' (הָאֱלֹהִים). Deut. 6.4 represents an early stage in this process. 'However', Braulik argues, 'the reader of the final redaction of the book of Deuteronomy does not see 6:4 until he or she has read chapter 4, in which YHWH is spoken of as the only God. Hence he or she can only understand 6:4 in a monotheistic sense'.[111]

Braulik's argument is clearly significant for a reading of the text in its canonical form. Whatever the *Shema* and the first commandment may have meant on their own terms, this is subsumed, according to Braulik, by the monotheistic framework within which they have been placed. It is therefore important to turn to Deut. 4.35, 39 in order to discover whether they are indeed monotheistic, and have the effect indicated by Braulik. The task then is limited. We shall not consider every aspect

[108] Braulik 1994c: 100; Lohfink 1976: 31.

[109] I am using the term 'earliest editions' in a relative sense, in contrast to the final form of the text. In some construals of the history of Deuteronomy the *Shema* and the first commandment do not belong to the very earliest edition.

[110] Braulik 1994c.

[111] Braulik 1994c: 101.

of the interpretation of these verses, in particular how they function in Deut. 4.1-40. This will be attempted later.

Deuteronomy 4.35 and 39 contain two almost identical statements that Israel is to acknowledge, and may, therefore, be considered together. In MT they read respectively,[112]

יהוה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים אֵין עוֹד מִלְבַדּוֹ

יהוה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל־הָאָרֶץ מִתָּחַת אֵין עוֹד

Both verses have two components: יהוה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים and (מִלְבַדּוֹ) אֵין עוֹד. The exact significance of בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל־הָאָרֶץ מִתָּחַת can be passed over for the moment.[113] Rechenmacher, with Braulik and the majority of modern scholars,[114] regards these two statements together as an explicit expression of 'monotheism':

> Monotheismus ist nach Ausweis der Religionswissenschaft 'der Glaube an einen einzigen Gott, der...den Glauben an die Existenz anderer Götter grundsätzlich ausschließt'.
>
> Ein sprachlich expliziter Ausdruck des Monotheismus muß nach obiger Definition eine affirmierende und eine negierende Komponente enthalten...Dt 4,35 mag als Beispiel dienen für ein Maximum an 'Explizitheit'. Hier werden beide Komponenten in zwei aufeinander folgenden Sätzen realisiert.[115]

On the other hand some scholars have argued that only 'die Tür zum Monotheismus aufgestoßen'[116] or 'die unmittelbare Nähe auch theoretischer monotheistischer Aussage erreicht'.[117] However, the difference between these two views is only whether the use of אֱלֹהִים, 'gods', in the rest of Deuteronomy 4

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[112] *BHS* lists no significant textual variations.

[113] See chapter 6.

[114] Cairns 1992: 61; Craigie 1976: 143; Dawe 1993; Driver 1902: 91; Lang 1983: 45; Pakkala 1999: 223; Rendtorff 1981: 82-83; Robinson 1907: 81, 90; Rofé 1985b; Smith 1918: 98; Tigay 1996: 57; Weinfeld 1991: 212; Wright 1996: 55-56.

[115] Rechenmacher 1997: 191-92.

[116] Rose 1975: 154.

[117] Lohfink 1976: 121; cf. Christensen 1991: 94.

indicates that Israel is in the 'doorway' or has gone through the 'door' to 'monotheism'.

The first statement, יהוה הוא הָאֱלֹהִים, is a simple verbless clause, with the pronoun emphasizing the subject, יהוה.[118] We have already noted that when used of YHWH אֱלֹהִים usually occurs with personal suffixes indicating YHWH's relationship with Israel. אֱלֹהִים with the definite article occurs on only three occasions in Deuteronomy,[119] twice here and in 7.9, where it occurs in the similar phrase יהוה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הוא הָאֱלֹהִים. This formulaic usage, which also occurs elsewhere in the literature that has been influenced by Deuteronomy,[120] is distinctive as Rendtorff has noted.[121] What then does it mean to say that YHWH is הָאֱלֹהִים?

If YHWH is Israel's god and other nations have their own gods, the claim that YHWH is הָאֱלֹהִים is clearly to claim for YHWH a unique position. This may be seen in the battle between Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18). The conflict turns upon the issue, posed as a challenge by Elijah, 'if YHWH is הָאֱלֹהִים follow him, but if Baal follow him' (v. 21). In other words, 'who is הָאֱלֹהִים?'.[122]

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[118] Driver 1892: §199; GKC, §141*g*; JM, §154*j*. There is considerable disagreement about whether the pronoun functions as a copula or not (see Muraoka 1999: 198-201).

Since יהוה (or הוא if יהוה is understood adnominally) and הָאֱלֹהִים are definite the question of which is subject and which is predicate is far from straightforward (see Muraoka 1999: 204-205). יהוה is known and, therefore, should be taken as the subject.

[119] Excluding, for obvious reasons, אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים (10.17) and אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים (33.1).

[120] 2 Sam. 7.28 (=1 Chron. 17.26); 1 Kgs 8.60; 18.37, 39; 2 Kgs 19.15 (=Isa. 37.16), 19; Isa. 45.18; Neh. 9.7; 2 Chron. 33.13; cf. Josh. 22.34.

[121] Rendtorff 1994: 19.

[122] Gray suggests on the basis of this passage that יהוה הוא הָאֱלֹהִים originated in the cult, presumably as a response to מִי הוא הָאֱלֹהִים (cf. Ps. 24.10) (1970: 231, 402). Montgomery suggests it was once a war-cry (1951: 199). These questions whilst interesting are not our immediate concern. However, given the

YHWH's answer by fire shows that he is הָאֱלֹהִים (vv. 37, 39). In this conflict the underlying presupposition is that only one deity can be הָאֱלֹהִים.[123] Thus, within the context of Deuteronomy, then, Deut. 4.35 and 39 affirm that not only is YHWH Israel's god, but he is also uniquely 'the god' (הָאֱלֹהִים). Thus, these verses make the same claim, in different words, that is made in 10.17, that YHWH is אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים. The uniqueness reflected in the title הָאֱלֹהִים can, therefore, I suggest, be best rendered into English with 'God'. It should be noted that in Deuteronomy, as also in 1 Kings 18, to call YHWH הָאֱלֹהִים is to make a claim about YHWH's uniqueness, but it is not, however, a denial of the existence of other deities. Thus, our use of 'God' makes no prejudgement on the existence or otherwise of other gods. The first statement then may be translated 'YHWH alone is God'.[124]

In Deuteronomy 4 and in 7.9 the statement that 'YHWH alone is God' is the content of the *Erkenntnisformel*, 'you shall know that...', a formula identified and described by W. Zimmerli.[125] Elsewhere in the Old Testament, and most characteristically in Exodus 7-14 and Ezekiel, the content is frequently 'I am YHWH'.[126] In the events of salvation and judgement YHWH lets himself be known as 'I am YHWH'.[127] The third person form in Deuteronomy reflects the book's literary form as a series of speeches by Moses.[128]

The second statement אֵין עוֹד (מִלְבַדּוֹ) is commonly translated 'there is no other'. This invites a closer examination for a number of reasons. First, no subject

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Deuteronomic colouring of the phrase it seems more likely that the phrase had its origins with Deuteronomy rather than elsewhere.

[123] Rendtorff 1994: 19. In 1 Kings 18 YHWH's claim to be God is concerned with Israel (v. 36), not the whole world.

[124] Cf. JM, §154*j*; Weinfeld 1991: 212. 'YHWH, he is God' (Christensen 1991: 91; Craigie 1976: 141) is prosaic.

[125] Zimmerli 1982c.

[126] See Zimmerli 1982b.

[127] Vervenne 1997: 492. Vervenne argues that the *Erkenntnisformel* usually has a consecutive significance, rather than Zimmerli's purposive, or the emphatic significance suggested by Fohrer, Hossfeld and Lang.

[128] Zimmerli 1982c: 51. An exception is Deut. 29.5.

is expressed, thus the form is strikingly succinct, comparable, perhaps, to the *Shema*. Second, עוֹד is a temporal adverb usually rendered 'still, yet'.[129] Here and in some other places the temporal sense is inappropriate, but what sense does it carry? Third, the common suggestion that עוֹד should have the sense 'other' is surprising since there is already a word for 'other' in Hebrew, אַחֵר. Thus in Deuteronomy 4 we should expect to meet אֵין אַחֵר. This is not only found in 1 Sam. 21.10 and at Qumran,[130] but would also resonate strongly with Deuteronomy's polemic against the אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים.[131] Further, the word order of Isa. 45.21, אֵין עוֹד אֱלֹהִים, is problematic for the meaning 'other'. Fourth, the similar וְאַפְסִי עוֹד is placed on the lips of Babylon and Nineveh in the Old Testament.[132] This may be a rhetorical claim, but it cannot have the sense of the absolute denial of the existence of other cities and nations. Fifth, in Isa. 46.9 אֵין עוֹד occurs in parallel with a statement of incomparability, אֵין כָּ, which implicitly allow for the existence of other gods.

Analysis of this expression has been largely passed over in biblical scholarship. The only consideration of it is in the recent work by H. Rechenmacher.[133] The first

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[129] BDB, 728-29.

[130] אֵין אַחֶרֶת זוּלָתָהּ בָּזֶה (1 Sam. 21.10); אין אחר זולתכה להשיב על עצתכה (1 QS 11.18); אין אחר עמו (1QH 12.11).

[131] It is also clear that this would indicate the subject of אֵין אַחֵר, which in Deuteronomy could only be אֱלֹהִים.

[132] Isa. 47.8, 10; Zeph. 2.15. Cf. Sir. 36.12.

[133] Rechenmacher 1997. The studies of B. Hartmann and Labuschagne should also be mentioned at this point, though their primary concern is with statements about YHWH's incomparability. Hartmann suggests that מִי can sometimes have the sense 'not' and כ the sense 'besides'. Thus, statements which had been understood as expressing YHWH's incomparability, such as 1 Sam. 2.2 and 2 Sam. 22.32 (=Ps. 18.32) as well as the names Micaiah and Michael, are to be understood monotheistically (1961). This equation of the statements of YHWH's exclusiveness and incomparability was, however, firmly dismissed by Labuschagne (1966: 12-14). He argued, on the other hand, that, 'although the terms cannot grammatically be regarded as synonyms, they nevertheless had similar connotations. We can, therefore, consider the confessions of the incomparability of Yahweh as confessions of his uniqueness, or, if we choose to use Hartmann's term, we may

part of Rechenmacher's work on the so-called *Ausschließlichkeitsformel* is a linguistic analysis of Hebrew verbless sentences with the particles of negation אַיִן and אֶפֶס.[134] They are examined using a typology of verbless sentences created by W. Richter.[135] This first part is concluded with an examination of prepositions and adverbs with an excluding sense, בַּל, בְּלִי, בִּלְתִּי, בִּלְעֲדֵי, זוּלָת, מִלְבַד, לְבַד מִן, חוּץ מִן and עוֹד.[136] The second part utilizes the results from the first part for a literary analysis of those nominal sentences with a particle of negation and a preposition or adverb with an excluding sense.[137] The results of this analysis are then applied to the discussion about the origins of monotheism.[138]

Rechenmacher argues that a clear distinction should be made between statements of incomparability and the *Ausschließlichkeitsformel*. The former has a more emotional and liturgical character and presupposes polytheism. The latter has a more cognitive and theological character and its denial of other deities is an essential component of monotheism.[139] Certain examples of the *Ausschließlichkeitsformel* are not monotheistic because they introduce a limitation, for example, Hos. 13.4 and 2 Sam. 7.22. The *Ausschließlichkeitsformel* found in Deuteronomy and Deutero-Isaiah are, however, monotheistic in a strong sense. The breakthrough to monotheism is found in Deuteronomy 4 and is thus to be dated to the exile.[140]

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regard them as "monotheistic formulas"' (1966: 146). Both Labuschagne and Hartmann assume that אֵין עוֹד is a monotheistic statement, and try to argue that statements of YHWH's incomparability are also.

[134] Masoretic forms of the words are given rather than W. Richter's system of transliteration which Rechenmacher utilizes.

[135] Rechenmacher 1997: 14-97.

[136] Rechenmacher 1997: 97-114.

[137] In Richter's typology these sentences are a subset of NS II.3. The texts that Rechenmacher considers are Deut. 4.35, 39; 1 Sam. 2.2; 2 Sam. 7.22; 1 Kgs 8.60; Isa. 43.11; 44.6, 8; 45.5, 6, 14, 18, 21; 46.9; Hos. 13.4; Joel 2.27 (1997: 117-89).

[138] Rechenmacher 1997: 190-209.

[139] Rechenmacher 1997: 169, 192, 205.

[140] Rechenmacher 1997: 198.

There are three problems, however, with Rechenmacher's analysis. First, a number of the sentences of the type that Rechenmacher considers are modified by both a prepositional construction with an excluding function and one with a locative function. However, because he is interested in an absolute exclusion they are excluded from his analysis. Second, despite the fact that the *Ausschließlichkeitsformel* is used of Babylon and Moab (Isa. 47.8, 10; Zeph. 2.15) in a sense that is 'natürlich relativ'[141], Rechenmacher does not consider the implications this might have for the sense of the *Ausschließlichkeitsformel* when used of YHWH, or its significance for the discussion of 'monotheism'. Third, Rechenmacher assumes, without argument, that עוֹד is exchangeable for a preposition with excluding function and personal suffix. However, on two occasions אֵין עוֹד occurs with an excluding prepositional construction (אֵין עוֹד מִלְבַדּוֹ, Deut. 4.35; אֵין עוֹד אֱלֹהִים מִבַּלְעָדָי, Isa. 45.21) and such an exchange would create a tautologous expression.[142] Since the assumptions made by Rechenmacher are unsupported it is necessary to re-examine the expression אֵין עוֹד.

In considering the meaning of אֵין עוֹד the role of אֵין is straightforward. אֵין is the negative correlate of יֵשׁ, and functions as a negative in verbless sentences, in contrast to לֹא which has the same function in verbal sentences.[143] עוֹד, however, is more difficult.[144] It is a temporal particle and can express continuance, 'still, yet', and addition or repetition, 'still, yet, more'. In some instances the continuance may be punctual, and can be rendered 'again'. On some occasions a temporal rendering does not give a satisfactory sense.[145] Thus, for example, whilst Jer. 48.2, אֵין עוֹד

[141] Rechenmacher 1997: 56.

[142] Rechenmacher draws a parallel with Gen. 39.11 וְאֵין אִישׁ מֵאַנְשֵׁי הַבַּיִת שָׁם בַּבָּיִת (1997: 56). In this case the addition of בַּבָּיִת presents content not present in שָׁם, this does not seem to be the case in Rechenmacher's understanding of עוֹד.

[143] GKC, §152*a*.

[144] A syntactical analysis of עוֹד has been undertaken by Richter (1994).

[145] BDB, 728-29.

תְּהִלַּת מוֹאָב, may be translated 'the renown of Moab is no longer',[146] a temporal translation would not be suitable for the syntactically similar Deut. 4.35, 39. BDB lists a number of occurrences where עוֹד does not have a temporal sense, these include those verses with אֵין עוֹד. This list is: Gen. 19.12; 43.6; Deut. 4.35, 39; 1 Sam. 10.22; 16.11; 18.8; 1 Kgs 8.60; 22.7, 8; 2 Kgs 4.6; Isa. 5.4; 45.5, 6, 14, 18, 21, 22; 46.9; 47.8, 10; Jer. 36.32; Ezek. 20.27; 23.38; 36.37; Joel 2.27; Am. 6.10; Zeph. 2.15; Prov. 9.9; Eccl. 12.9; 1 Chron. 29.3; 2 Chron. 17.6.

A number of the occurrences listed by BDB have the sense 'additionally, also, again' functioning as a conjunction, as, for example, in Ezek. 23.38.[147] There are also some uses in a verbal sentence where עוֹד functions adverbially.[148] The remaining instances, excluding those where עוֹד is negated by אֵין or אֶפֶס, occur in questions or answers to question, or as in the case of 1 Sam. 18.8 an implied question:

עַד מִי־לְךָ פֹּה	Gen. 19.12
הַעוֹד לָכֶם אָח	Gen. 43.6
וְעוֹד לוֹ אַךְ הַמְּלוּכָה	1 Sam. 18.8
הַאֵין פֹּה נָבִיא לַיהוה עוֹד וְנִדְרְשָׁה מֵאוֹתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־יְהוֹשָׁפָט עוֹד אִישׁ־אֶחָד לִדְרֹשׁ אֶת־יהוה מֵאֹתוֹ	1 Kgs 22.7, 8
הַגִּישָׁה אֵלַי עוֹד כֶּלִי וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ אֵין עוֹד כֶּלִי	2 Kgs 4.6
הַעוֹד עִמָּךְ וְאָמַר אָפֶס	Am. 6.10

In each of these cases what is being questioned is not the absolute existence of an object, but only if there is such an object in a person's possession. Possession is usually indicated with ל, though in Am. 6.10 a similar function is provided by עִמָּךְ. However, in the answer possession need not be indicated, as in 1 Kgs 22.8; 2 Kgs 4.6 and Am. 6.10. Indeed, in Am. 6.10 even עוֹד is omitted from the answer.

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[146] Other examples include Isa. 23.10; Jer. 10.20; 38.9; 49.7; Pss. 74.9; 104.35; Eccl. 9.5, 6.

[147] Cf. Jer. 36.32; Ezek. 20.27; 36.37; Eccl. 12.9; 1 Chron. 29.3; 2 Chron. 17.6.

[148] 1 Sam. 10.22; 16.11; Isa. 5.4; Prov. 9.9.

In each of the questions what is being asked is whether the one being questioned has an additional member besides the ones already taken into account.

The question then is does עוֹד function in the same way in אֵין עוֹד, and the similar אֶפֶס עוֹד? That is, should (מִלְבַדּוֹ) אֵין עוֹד be regarded as the answer to the question הַעוֹד לָכֶם אֱלֹהִים, 'do you have another god'? In the instances where the subjects are not divine a similar question provides a meaningful sense. In Isa. 47.8 and 10 Babylon says to herself אֲנִי וְאַפְסִי עוֹד. This claim, however, is not to be the only city in the world, but the only mistress for the world. Is there anyone besides Babylon for her people, for the world? Her answer is no, she is the only mistress for them. Nineveh too makes similar claims in Zeph. 2.15. Similarly, where the subject is divine the claim that אֵין עוֹד functions not as a claim of the non-existence of other deities, but that YHWH is the only god for Israel. Such a claim upon Israel is, in the context of Deuteronomy 4, grounded in the argument that YHWH is like no other: YHWH alone is God, that is, הָאֱלֹהִים.

The statements that Israel is asked to acknowledge in Deuteronomy 4, therefore, do not suggest a different religious belief from that found in the *Shema* and the first commandment. In all three a claim is placed upon Israel's life.[149] In no case is the existence of other deities denied,[150] though YHWH is affirmed to be unique. Each

[149] E. Elnes has recently argued for the same understanding of 4.35, 39 on the basis of the immediate context. 'The claim being made by Israel, is that Yahweh has given Israel "everything", and other gods have given it "nothing". Beside Yahweh there "is no other" bcause, beside Yahweh, there *has been* no other. This is an experiential claim, not an ontological one' (1997: 129).

[150] Such a statement could be justifiably extended to the whole of the Old Testament, as Barr did in 1957-58. 'It may also be asked whether the question of mere existence is as important as has been commonly been held for those later texts such as Deutero-Isaiah which are supposed to maintain the fullest type of monotheism. When we read in Ps. 14:1 *'amar nabhal be-libbo 'en 'elohim*, we are commonly agreed that the foolish man is no absolute atheist asserting the non-existence of God; he is denying his significance, refusing to reckon with God. Is it not possible to understand in much the same way those places where Deutero-Isaiah uses the same negative particle? So Isa. 46:9 – *'anokhi 'el we-'en 'od 'elohim we-'ephes kamoni*' (1957-58: 53-54). Similar sentiments about Deutero-Isaiah, which is reckoned to be as 'monotheistic', if not more 'monotheistic' than

statement, however, functions in a different way. The statements in Deuteronomy 4 are the culmination of an argument based on the experience of Israel at Egypt and Sinai.[151] They are a call to Israel to recognize and acknowledge that YHWH is unique, and thus the only god for them. The consequence of this recognition is that other gods should not be worshipped. In the first commandment this is expressed as an absolute prohibition. Finally, in the *Shema* YHWH's uniqueness for Israel is the basis of the command for whole-hearted devotion to YHWH (6.5), the theme of Deuteronomy 6-11.

Before leaving the nature and meaning of Deuteronomy's statements about the oneness of YHWH, it is necessary to turn to one more text which has sometimes been understood as 'monotheistic'. This text is Deut. 32.39, part of YHWH's climactic speech at the conclusion of the Song of Moses.

4. *Deuteronomy 32.39*

The conclusion of the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32), before the final call to praise in v. 43, is a speech of YHWH to his people. In this speech YHWH derides the other gods for their powerlessness (vv. 37-38) and affirms his own ability to act on behalf of his people in salvation and judgement (vv. 39-42). YHWH's declaration of his own power begins with the words:

רְאוּ עַתָּה כִּי אֲנִי אֲנִי הוּא
וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי
אֲנִי אָמִית וַאֲחַיֶּה
מָחַצְתִּי וַאֲנִי אֶרְפָּא
וְאֵין מִיָּדִי מַצִּיל

This verse has rightly been understood as the climax of the Song.[152] To consider every aspect of the verse it would be necessary to examine the whole Song. As with Deuteronomy 4 this task must be passed over for now[153] and we will concern

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Deuteronomy, have been expressed by other scholars. See de Boer 1956: 47, 85; Hayman 1991: 2; Mauser 1991: 259.

[151] See chapter 6.

[152] Luyten argues this is the climactic centre of the poem's finale (1985: 346). Cf. Braulik 1992: 234; Olson 1994: 149.

[153] See chapter 5.

ourselves merely with the question of whether the existence of other deities is denied.

The first line contains the striking אֲנִי אֲנִי הוּא. The repetition of אֲנִי and the clause אֲנִי הוּא find parallels elsewhere in the Old Testament, always in poetry, and most notably in Isaiah 40-55.[154] This statement has been understood by a number of scholars as a 'monotheistic' affirmation.[155] In assessing this claim it is necessary to determine how אֲנִי אֲנִי הוּא is to be translated.

The first issue is whether אֲנִי אֲנִי הוּא should be understood as a tripartite verbless clause, or a bipartite verbless clause with repeated first element. The former understanding is suggested by Albright who translates the clause 'I am I', understanding הוּא as a copula.[156] Comparison with Isaiah 40-55, where the same expression occurs with and without the repeated אֲנִי, argues against this suggestion. Further, it is not entirely clear what 'I am I' might mean. Understood as a bipartite verbless clause[157] it is probably best to understand the repeated אֲנִי as

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[154] The repetition of אֲנִי or אָנֹכִי is found in Isa. 43.11; 48.15 and Hos. 5.14. אֲנִי הוּא or אָנֹכִי הוּא occurs in Isa. 41.4; 43.10, 13; 46.4; 48.12; 52.6. The two occur together in Isa. 43.25 and 51.12, though on both occasions in connection with a participle.

אֲנִי הוּא can also be compared to אַתָּה הוּא addressed to YHWH in Ps. 102.28. Comparable uses with human subjects are found in 1 Chron. 21.17 and Jer. 49.12.

[155] E.g. Ringgren writes 'the point in this verse is that Yahweh alone is God, and that he alone acts in human history' (1978: 345). See also Cairns 1992: 288; Driver 1902: 378; Rechenmacher 1997: 202.

For the use of this verse in Rabbinic controversies with the two powers heresy, see van Ruiten 1994.

[156] Albright 1959: 342-43.

[157] 'This, however, is most likely not a real tripartite N[ominal] C[lause]' (Muraoka 1999: 197).

emphatic,[158] which may be translated 'I, alone',[159] 'I, even I', or 'I, indeed'. As a bipartite clause הוּא should bear its full force, 'I, I am he', or 'I, I am the one'.[160]

What might it mean for YHWH to say 'I, I am he'? Two different approaches to the problem may be recognized. The first approach argues that אֲנִי הוּא has a meaning independent of its role in Deut. 32.39. This meaning may be deduced from the phrase's role in Deuteronomy 32 and elsewhere. The second approach argues that הוּא is an anaphoric pronoun, whose corresponding noun can be found in the immediate context of Deut. 32.39.

First, אֲנִי הוּא has been understood as a statement of self-existence by comparison with Exod. 3.14.[161] Three objections may be brought against this suggestion. First, the idea of self-existence is alien to Deuteronomy 32. Second, the link between Deut. 32.39 and Exod. 3.14 is only found in the Septuagint.[162] Finally, self-existence is not the concern in Exodus 3.[163] The second problem is alleviated by N. Walker's suggestion that הוּא is not the masculine pronoun, but the participle of הָוָא, a by-form of הָיָה.[164] However, there is no other evidence of a verb הָוָא in Hebrew.

Second, אֲנִי הוּא has been understood as a statement of divine unchangeability, and, on the basis of Ps. 102.27-28, translated, 'I am the same'.[165] However, the theme of YHWH's faithfulness to his people is expressed clearly in Deuteronomy 32

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[158] Muraoka 1999: 197; Ringgren 1978: 345; Sanders 1996: 238. See the discussion by C.H. Williams (2000: 16-23).

[159] So Macintosh on Hos. 5.14 (1997: 212); Tigay 1996: 313.

[160] Muraoka 1999: 197.

[161] Oswalt 1998: 345.

[162] Williams 2000: 52-54. LXX translated Exod. 3.14's אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה with ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν and Deut. 32.39's אֲנִי אֲנִי הוּא with ἐγώ εἰμι.

[163] See Childs 1974: 76.

[164] Walker 1962.

[165] Cf. North 1964: 94; Whybray on Isa. 46.4 (1975: 61); Ringgren 1978: 344.

and Psalm 102, and it is unnecessary to sharpen this with the translation 'I am the same'.[166]

Third, the best parallels to Deut. 32.39 are to be found in Isaiah 40-55 and in her recent analysis of אֲנִי הוּא C.H. Williams argues that in Deutero-Isaiah אֲנִי הוּא functions as a 'monotheistic formula'. Its 'primary purpose...is to encapsulate Yahweh's claim to be the only true and powerful God'.[167] This is also true for Deut. 32.39. 'The clear implication of this self-proclamation is that הוּא itself, combined with the emphatic twofold אֲנִי, serves – as in the poetry of Deutero-Isaiah – as a succinct self-expression of Yahweh's unique and true divinity, with the result that all other gods are to be excluded.'[168] However, with Sanders she argues that the existence of other deities is not denied.[169] It is clear then that Williams' understanding of 'monotheism' is at least somewhat different from the meaning usually ascribed to the word. Despite this Williams is the most recent exponent of the view that אֲנִי הוּא is a formula with an integral meaning which may be described as 'monotheistic' in some sense, and her arguments should, therefore, be considered. Whether Williams is correct in understanding אֲנִי הוּא in Deutero-Isaiah as a 'monotheistic' formula lies beyond the scope of this work, however it must be questioned whether it is correct to hold that the meaning of אֲנִי הוּא in Deuteronomy 32 should be deduced from Deutero-Isaiah's use. Although Williams is aware of this danger, she does interpret Deut. 32.39 in the light of Deutero-Isaiah, an approach that is questionable given Williams' tentative dating of Deuteronomy 32 before Deutero-Isaiah.[170] The repeated use of אֲנִי הוּא in Deutero-Isaiah may create a rich nexus within which each use of the formula in

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[166] Cf. Williams 2000: 51.

[167] Williams 2000: 39, 41. Wildberger comments on Isa. 43.10 that taken within its context the meaning of אֲנִי הוּא cannot be doubted: 'Wenn vor und nach Jahwe kein Gott gebildet wurde, dann ist Jahwe Gott schlechthin' (1977: 511). Whybray describes אֲנִי הוּא in Isaiah 40-55 as a 'characteristic expression by Deutero-Isaiah to express the conviction that Yahweh is the only God' (1975: 61).

[168] Williams 2000: 48.

[169] Williams 2000: 46; Sanders 1996: 69-80; cf. Nigosian 1996: 19.

[170] Williams 2000: 50; cf. Sanders 1996: 418-21.

Deutero-Isaiah should be understood, but the same does not hold true of the single use in Deuteronomy 32. It is better to seek the meaning of אֲנִי הוּא from its broader context in the Song.

The second approach to the meaning of הוּא is to understand it as an anaphora. Steuernagel argued that הוּא stood for אֱלֹהִים, which is supplied by the following clause.[171] However, not only is it surprising that הוּא should precede אֱלֹהִים, but אֱלֹהִים there refers to other gods, rather than the idea of a single, unique deity. A more suitable antecedent is יהוה (v. 36). However, Williams has rightly argued that this is too distant.[172] A final possibility is צוּר: 'Where are their gods, the rock they took refuge in?' (v. 37). This designation plays an important role in the Song; it is descriptive of YHWH's character in the Song (vv. 4, 15, 18, 30, 31) and, in contrast, highlights the failings of other gods (vv. 31, 37).[173] However, Williams has suggested a number of reasons for rejecting such an understanding of אֲנִי הוּא. First, there are examples of אֲנִי הוּא in Deutero-Isaiah where הוּא clearly cannot be anaphoric.[174] Further, there is no reason for הוּא rather than צוּר in v. 39, and third the statement אֲנִי אֲנִי הוּא 'clearly goes beyond the self-identification of Yahweh as "the Rock"'.[175] As already noted the use of אֲנִי הוּא in Deutero-Isaiah need not be determinate on Deuteronomy. Second, the use of הוּא rather than צוּר may be emphatic. Third, the central theme of the Song is that YHWH is a rock, faithful and just (v. 3) and thus a declaration that YHWH is 'the Rock' is a suitable climax. The argument that אֲנִי אֲנִי הוּא goes beyond this depends on the suggestion that Deuteronomy's use of the formula is identical to that which

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[171] Steuernagel 1923: 171. See also North who suggests 'I am God' by analogy with Arabic *huwa* (1964: 94).

[172] Williams 2000: 47-48. Cf. Motyer who argues that Isa. 41.4 may mean 'I am the one who has been described in the foregoing, the answer to the question "Who?"' (1993: 311).

[173] For the use of the imagery of 'rock' in Deuteronomy 32, see Knowles 1989.

[174] See Williams 2000: 23-41.

[175] Williams 2000: 48.

Williams has argued for in Deutero-Isaiah, and this is by no means self-evident. It is therefore better to understand אֲנִי אֲנִי הוּא as an emphatic affirmation that YHWH is a rock, in contrast to other gods who have proved powerless.

The second line of v. 39, וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי, has also been understood as an expression of 'monotheism'.[176] As Sanders suggests, עִמָּדִי may be translated 'with', 'besides' or 'like'.[177] Sanders' preference for 'like' would suggest a comparison to the statements of YHWH's incomparability such as Deut. 33.26.[178] The translation 'there is no god with me' is also possible. This would parallel 32.12 where it is said that YHWH alone guided Israel and there was no foreign god with him (וְאֵין עִמּוֹ אֵל נֵכָר). In both the desert and in YHWH's deliverance of Israel there is no deity with YHWH aiding him. A. Philips correctly notes, 'this phrase does not have to be interpreted as meaning that there is no other god at all, that Yahweh is the only god (monotheism). It can mean that what Yahweh does, he does on his own unaided by any other divine being.'[179]

The first two lines of Deut. 32.39 have both been suggested as 'monotheistic formulas'. They have been examined with the question of whether either denies the existence of other deities. The first expression, אֲנִי אֲנִי הוּא, is an emphatic affirmation that YHWH is the Rock. The second, וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי, points to YHWH as the only one who can act on Israel's behalf.

Excursus: Other Gods in the Song of Moses

The argument that Deut. 32.39 does not exclude the existence of other gods can be confirmed by an examination of the rest of the Song of Moses. The descriptions of other gods in the Song of Moses are noticeably different from the rest of

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[176] E.g. Craigie 1976: 388.

[177] Sanders 1996: 238. BDB's suggestion of 'except' is unnecessary (768; cf. Ehrlich 1968: 345). Neither of the parallels cited, Ps. 73.25 and 2 Chron. 14.10, require 'except' rather than 'like' or 'besides'.

[178] For statements of incomparability, see Labuschagne 1966.

[179] Philips 1973: 219.

Deuteronomy.[180] The question of whether the existence of other gods is denied in the Song of Moses can, therefore, be considered largely independently of the rest of the book.

The first appearance of other divine beings probably occurs in vv. 8-9. This, however, depends on reading למספר בני אלהים rather than MT's לְמִסְפַּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. The general sense of MT is not difficult to follow. In the primeval past when the nations were divided up YHWH received Israel as his personal possession. However, the meaning of 'according to the number of the sons of Israel' is difficult. Two interpretations for MT have been suggested. First, a numerical link is being established between the number of nations and the number of Jacob's descendants, 'the sons of Israel', who went into Egypt. Genesis 10 has a list of seventy nations that came from Noah's offspring and spread out into the whole earth.[181] According to Gen. 46.27 and Deut. 10.22 Jacob's family numbered seventy when it went down to Egypt.[182] It is unclear, however, why Deuteronomy 32 should make this link. Alternatively, YHWH created a space on earth for the nation of Israel to occupy. Thus Driver writes, 'when Jehovah allowed the various nations of the earth gradually to settle themselves in separate localities, He so determined their boundaries as to reserve among them a home for Israel adequate to its numbers'.[183] Against this Steuernagel objected that Israel had only found a place for herself by the removal of other nations.[184]

The difficulties with MT led a number of scholars to suggest an emendation on the basis of LXX, which reads κατὰ ἀριθμὸν ἀγγέλων θεοῦ. Elsewhere in the

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[180] Braulik 1994c: 127-29.

[181] The use of פָּרַד in Gen. 10.32 of the spreading of the nations, and in Deut. 32.8 of the division of mankind provides an important link between the two passages.

[182] The connection between these two passages is made by *Targ. Ps.-Jo.* on Deut. 32.8 and Rashi on Deut. 32.8.

[183] Driver 1902: 355. Cf. Keil and Delitzsch 1971: III, 469-70; Ridderbos 1984: 284; Smith 1918: 347.

[184] Steuernagel 1923: 166.

Septuagint ἀγγελοι (τοῦ) θεοῦ sometimes renders בְּנֵי (הָ)אֱלֹהִים,[185] and it was therefore suggested that LXX's *Vorlage* read בני אלהים or something similar.[186] This suggestion has been strengthened by the discovery at Qumran of 4QDeut[j] which has the reading בני אל והים.[187] This reading also creates a clear parallelism between בני אלהים and בני אדם. A further argument offered in support of this reading is that the reading in 4QDeut[j] explains the origin of MT's reading, but not *vice versa*.[188] Recent scholars have, therefore, favoured the reading בני אלהים.[189]

If we accept the reading of 4QDeut[j], YHWH[190] is pictured parcelling out the nations to the 'sons of god'.[191] The division of mankind takes place according to the

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[185] E.g. Job 1.26; 2.1; 38.7.

[186] Robinson 1907: 222; Steuernagel 1923: 166.

[187] The fragment containing Deut. 32.8-9 was originally associated with 4QDeut[q] (Skehan 1954), but has been reclassified with 4QDeut[j] (Duncan 1995: 137). However, the impression is sometimes mistakenly given that this reading is preserved in two Dead Sea manuscripts (e.g. Sanders 1996: 156; Elnes 1997: 59 n. 78).

[188] The usual explanation of MT's reading is that the change was motivated by later theological sensibilities (Nielsen 1995: 293; Sanders 1996: 157, 366; Skehan 1951: 154-55), as a process of demythologization (Meyer 1961: 205). However, MT's reading may have originated as a gloss on בני אלהים. In the Song of Moses the people of Israel are frequently designated as YHWH's 'sons' (vv. 5, 19, 20 [43, according to 4QDeut[q] and LXX]; cf. vv. 6, 11, 18). Thus, בני ישראל may represent an attempt to interpret 32.8 within the context of the Song of Moses, rather than a theologically motivated emendation.

[189] One exception is Knight. He sees the reading in 4QDeut[q] as a suppression of Israel's call to be a light to the nations dating to the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (1995: 39-40).

[190] In the context of Deuteronomy עֶלְיוֹן should almost certainly be understood as YHWH (cf. 29.25). The use of Elyon may reflect the titles gentilic association (cf. Gen. 14.18; Num. 24.16) (Manley 1957: 45). Eissfeldt, however, argues that vv. 8-9 envisage the Canaanite father deity El parcelling out the nations to the pantheon, a group which includes YHWH (Eissfeldt 1956: 29; cf. Rendtorff 1981: 77).

[191] Both the person inheriting and the object being inherited may take the accusative with the *hiphil* of נחל. Some interpreters understand the nations to be receiving an inheritance (e.g. Craigie 1976: 377-79; Rowlett 1996: 128-35). However, in view of the description of Israel as YHWH's נַחֲלָה, it is better to understand the nations as the object inherited (Sanders 1996: 154). G.R. Driver, on the other hand, suggested נחל has the sense 'sifted' here (1952).

number of divine beings;[192] but Israel is reserved as YHWH's portion. The 'sons of god' are well known from Ugarit, where they made up the pantheon with El as the head.[193] The idea that other deities were given to the nations, or that the nations were given to other deities also seems to be present in Deut. 4.19-20 and 29.25. In 4.19-20 the heavenly host are allotted (חלק) to the nations for worship,[194] and in 29.25-26 Israel is punished because she went after gods that had not been allotted (חלק) to her. In each passage a consistent picture is presented. Other nations have their own gods, who are legitimate objects of worship. For Israel, however, the position is quite different; she is YHWH's possession, and he alone is to be her concern. The relationship between Israel and other gods is underscored in the description of the wilderness that follows in Deuteronomy 32. There YHWH led Israel alone, no 'foreign god', אֵל נֵכָר, was with him (v. 12).

The description of Israel's apostasy develops the picture of other gods. They are described as 'strange', זָרִים, 'abominations', תּוֹעֵבֹת, 'demons', שֵׁדִים. They are unknown to Israel. Further, they are shown to be powerless. They are 'no gods', לֹא אֵל and 'worthless', הֲבָלִים. These descriptions do not deny their existence, rather the epithet לֹא אֵל indicates their failure to live up to the title אֵל in the same way that לֹא עַם denies the appropriateness of calling Israel's attackers a 'people' (v. 21). The significance of the terms is relative, not absolute. That is, the existence of other nations and other gods is not denied, but rather these 'gods' and 'people' are not worthy of the titles in comparison with YHWH and Israel. The

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[192] The number of the 'sons of god' may well have been seventy. The tradition that there were seventy divine beings can be found in Ugaritic texts from the second millennium BC ('seventy sons of Athirat', *šbʿm.bn.ʾṯrt* [*KTU* 1.4.vi.46]) and in Jewish traditions from the first millennium AD ('When the Most High gave the world as an inheritance to the peoples who came from the sons of Noah, when he divided the writings and languages among mankind, in the generation of the division, at that time, he cast lots on seventy angels, the leaders of the nations, with whom it was revealed to see the city; and at that time he established the borders of the nations according to the sum of the numbers of the seventy souls who went down to Egypt [*Targ. Ps.-Jo.* Deut. 32.8]).

[193] See Mullen 1980.

[194] See Appendix 1.

concern of the Song is the loyalty of Israel to YHWH, and YHWH's faithfulness to Israel.

Divine beings appear in the final call to praise in v. 43. There are considerable textual difficulties with this verse. LXX, 4QDeut^{q} and MT give three different textual traditions, each of which gives a significantly different reading of the verse. These traditions need to be reviewed prior to a consideration of their meaning for the issue of the existence of other gods in the Song of Moses.

The MT of v. 43 reads:

הַרְנִינוּ גוֹיִם עַמּוֹ
כִּי דַם־עֲבָדָיו יִקּוֹם
וְנָקָם יָשִׁיב לְצָרָיו
וְכִפֶּר אַדְמָתוֹ עַמּוֹ

4QDeut^{q} reads:

הרנינו שמים עמו
והשתחוו לו כל אלהים
כי דם־בניו יקום
ונקם ישיב לצריו
ולמשנאיו ישלם
ויכפר אדמת עמו

LXX reads:

εὐφράνθητε, οὐρανοί, ἅμα αὐτῷ
καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες υἱοὶ θεοῦ
εὐφράνθητε, ἔθνη, μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ
καὶ ἐνισχυσάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ
ὅτι τὸ αἷμα τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ ἐκδικᾶται
καὶ ἐκδικήσει καὶ ἀνταποδώσει δίκην τοῖς ἐχθροῖς
καὶ τοῖς μισοῦσιν ἀνταποδώσει
καὶ ἐκκαθαριεῖ κύριος τὴν γῆν τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ

Thus MT has four lines, 4QDeut^{q} six and LXX eight. A table can be created comparing the different lines. In the table the lines are numbered following LXX.

	MT	4QDeut^{q}	LXX
1		x	x
2		x	x
3	x		x
4			x
5	x	x	x
6	x	x	x
7		x	x
8	x	x	x

An application of some of the principles of textual criticism would suggest a shorter reading is preferable to a longer one. Although MT has the shortest text there are at least two problems with it. First, MT cannot account for the presence of lines 2 and 4 in 4QDeut^{q} and LXX.[195] Secondly, the first and last lines of MT (corresponding to lines 3 and 8 in LXX) have no parallel line. It is unlikely then that MT represents the original text.[196] Scholars who argue for an original text with four lines suggest a text made up of lines 1,2, 5 and 8, with line 1 later emended for theological reasons into the reading of line 3.[197] A few scholars have preferred to reconstruct eight lines on the basis of LXX.[198] Homoeoteleuton may account for the omission of two of the first four lines in 4QDeut^{q}. However, it seems more likely that LXX has translated the first two lines in two different ways. The difficulties with positing a four-line original and an eight-line original have led most scholars to suggest that the verse originally contained six lines, somewhat along the lines of 4QDeut^{q}.[199] Nevertheless, a slightly different text to 4QDeut^{q} is usually suggested in order to account for the textual variations in MT and LXX.

A number of observations may be made about the textual problems in v. 43 and the solutions that have been proposed. First, an original text with six-lines can claim to be the dominant position in recent scholarship. Second, despite this there is no consensus on the exact form of the original text. Third, there is a general agreement

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[195] Wevers 1995: 534.

[196] MT is kept by Knight 1995: 134; NIV; cf. Bogaert 1985.

[197] Rofé 2000: 167-68; cf. Braulik 1992: 235; Cross 1961: 182; Skehan 1954.

[198] Albright 1959: 346-37; Wiebe 1989: 141.

[199] Eissfeldt 1958: 14; van der Kooij 1994; Mayes 1979: 393; Meyer 1961: 200-201; Nielsen 1995: 283, 285; Sanders 1996: 248-56; Wright 1962: 33 n. 11; NRSV.

that none of the extant traditions preserve a text that can entirely account for the other traditions. Faced with textual problems which appear to be unresolvable, it is perhaps best to consider the meaning of the different versions.

MT contains a single exhortation to the nations to praise Israel. This, however, appears to be a rather strange conclusion to a Song whose main theme has been Israel's unfaithfulness. There are a number of possible solutions. First, Israel is being congratulated for having a god like YHWH.[200] The end of the Song of Moses would then parallel the end of the Blessing of Moses (33.29). A second solution would be to repoint עַמּוֹ as עִמּוֹ, 'with him', on the basis of LXX. Third, הַרְנִינוּ may be understood as a causative, 'make his people rejoice, O nations'.[201] The reason for praise is because YHWH has taken vengeance against his enemies for Israel's sake and atoned the land.[202]

In LXX the call to praise YHWH occupies four lines. The inhabitants of heaven and earth are exhorted to rejoice, forming a neat *inclusio* with the Song's opening. If the divine beings are to be understood as the gods that were given the other nations and to whom Israel turned in the Song they take on a different role here. The role of the divine assembly in praising YHWH is found elsewhere in the Old Testament, and thus its appearance here is not unusual.[203] LXX's exhortation provides an appropriate close to the Song by drawing together all the actors in the Song's drama for a final curtain call. The reason for the praise of YHWH is almost identical to MT, except for the addition of the line 'repaying those who hate him'. Thus, it is YHWH's act of vengeance promised in v. 41 that is the ground for rejoicing.

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[200] Driver 1902: 380; Oettli 1893: 111; Steuernagel 1923: 171.

[201] NIV footnote. Driver rejects as improbable (1902: 380).

[202] MT is difficult. It reads 'he makes atonement for his land, his people'. Either a copula has been lost through dittography, giving a reading 'his land and his people', or the pronominal suffix could be removed, 'the land of his people' (cf. LXX).

[203] Pss. 29.1-2; 89.6-9; 103.20-21; Job 38.7. For the role of the assembly in YHWH's praise, see Miller 1987.

In 4QDeut^{q} the final praise involves only the divine beings, and possibly Israel. The reasons for rejoicing are almost identical to the reason given in LXX.

In LXX, 4QDeut^{q}, and possibly the original text of Deut. 32.43, the 'gods' or 'sons of god' are involved in praising YHWH. Whether these are the same beings as in vv. 8-9 and 16-39 is not entirely certain. If they are, then however powerless and worthless they may be in comparison with YHWH, they do exist and may exalt YHWH, and possibly Israel. Even if they are not, the idea of some absolute monotheism, where any other divine being besides YHWH is denied existence, cannot be sustained from Deuteronomy 32. It can, therefore, be confirmed that the expression אֲנִי אֲנִי הוּא cannot, in the context of Deuteronomy 32, be interpreted as a denial of the existence of other deities.

5. *Summary*

The significance of the *Shema* (Deut. 6.4-9) is strongly indicated by a number of factors, including its place in the structure of Deuteronomy and its emphatic call for wholehearted devotion. Its opening lines make a declaration that YHWH is one. As the following verse indicates this has personal and relational import: YHWH is the only god for Israel, they are to have no others. This may be viewed as a positive restatement of the first commandment. Both Deut. 6.4 and the first commandment assume the existence of other gods and that they present a genuine temptation to Israel.

The *Shema*'s relational claim on Israel is further supported by a consideration of Deut. 4.35, 39 and 32.39. The exact role of these verses in Deuteronomy 4 and the Song of Moses has not been fully explored. Instead, a more limited task has been undertaken to determine whether they excluded the existence of other gods. Though some have argued that they do, I have argued that this is not necessarily the case. Rather, they are best understood as making the same sorts of claim upon Israel, the people of YHWH, as is found in the *Shema*.

1 Corinthians 8.6, the epigraph at the head of this chapter, contains Paul's well-known application of Deut. 6.4 to the Father and to Jesus Christ.[204] That such a thought lies beyond the horizon of the authors of Deuteronomy hardly needs to be stated; however, there are a number of similarities between Paul's use of Deuteronomy and the argument set forth above that makes this quotation particularly apt. Even more emphatically we could say that Paul's reflections in 1 Corinthians 8 provide a better frame of reference with which to approach Deuteronomy than the peculiarly modern concept of 'monotheism'. On first appearances Paul's statements in v. 4, probably drawn from the 'strong' Corinthians themselves,[205] seem to exclude the existence of other 'gods'. But whilst Paul agrees with the 'strong' Corinthians that the idols are nothing, yet he also believes passionately in their power and their existence.[206] In fact, there are many gods and many lords, and in 10.14-22 Paul associates these gods with demons.[207] Thus, Paul's thought is in tension, a tension that cannot easily be resolved with ontological categories. Paul, it can be argued, is breathing the same spirit as Deuteronomy 32. Other gods exist, but in another sense they are 'no-gods' and 'demons'. It is only YHWH that is 'God'. Paul too wants to express the theme in relational terms. There are indeed many gods that exist, but *for us* (ἡμῖν) there is only one God. The absolute terms are confessional, not ontological.[208] That is not to

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[204] Dunn 1980: 179.

[205] Giblin 1975: 530; Thistelton 2000: 629.

[206] See Conzelmann 1975: 143; Thiselton cites with strong approval Yeo who writes, 'Paul believes in both the vanity and the power of the idol because of the apocalyptic tension and ambiguity in his thought. But the "strong" and the "weak" hold merely to the vanity or the power of the idols respectively' (2000: 634). Thiselton and Horsley (1980: 38) argue that Paul is relying on two polemical traditions against idolatry in the Old Testament. One, associated with Deutero-Isaiah, derided them as powerless; the other, associated with Deut. 4.19; 29.25; Jer. 16.19 and Mal. 1.11, argued YHWH had subjected other peoples to subordinate cosmic powers. An implication of the argument in this chapter is that both elements are present in Deuteronomy and intertwined with a similar degree of subtlety and nuancing as in Paul.

Some interpreters, though, argue that Paul denies any existence to other gods and lords (e.g. Fee 1987: 372-73).

[207] Thiselton 2000: 633.

[208] 'Faith consists not in the thesis that there are no gods, but in the confession of the true God' (Conzelmann 1975: 142).

say that what Paul is saying is devoid of a cognitive truth-claim, but rather that his words cannot be divorced from the personal claim.[209] Finally, according to Paul, a true understanding of what it means that there is one God for us is supremely expressed not in what is known, but in love of God (1 Cor. 8.3).[210]

[209] See Thiselton 2000: 630.

[210] Hays notes that the reference to love in v. 3 suggests Paul already has the *Shema* in mind (1997: 140).

Chapter 3

So Love YHWH, Your God: 'Monotheism' as Devoted Love

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

'It would be atrocious,' William remarked, 'to kill a man even to say "Credo in unum Deum."...'

Umberto Eco

In the previous chapter it was argued that the context within which to understand 'YHWH our god YHWH one' was that of love, the context which Deuteronomy itself supplies. The relationship between the affirmation that 'YHWH is one' and the commandment to 'love YHWH' is expressed by a *waw*-consecutive.[1] This common Deuteronomic idiom indicates that what has been said has implications for what Israel must understand and do.[2] Thus, v. 5 may be translated 'so love YHWH your god with all your heart...'. This chapter addresses the question of how Deuteronomy envisages that love is to be expressed.

The epigraphs are from Wain 1990: 351 and Eco 1983: 107.

[1] A number of scholars have argued that v. 4b and v. 5 come from different literary strata. It has been suggested that either v. 4b (de Boer 1982; García Lopez 1978: 163-66) or v. 5 (Pakkala 1999: 73-74; Veijola 1992a: 372-74) be excised. The chief difficulty with these verses is the switch from אֱלֹהֵינוּ in v. 4 to אֱלֹהֶיךָ in v. 5. Weinfeld argues, however, that '"YHWH our 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' (1991: 331; cf. p. 96). The use of the second person in v. 5, on the other hand, reflects Deuteronomy's consistent practice for the commandments.

[2] See Moberly 1999: 126 n. 4; Nielsen 1977; JM, §119*e*. See 4.40; 7.9; 8.5, 6; 10.19; 11.8. It also occurs in 9.3 and 27.10 having followed a statement initiated with שָׁמַע.

1. *Loving YHWH with Heart, Soul and Might*

Moses commands the Israelites to love YHWH with 'all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might' (NRSV). However, the relationship between the physiological organs and their psychological role is different in the Old Testament than in modern English usage. The 'heart', לֵבָב, is the seat of a person's mind and thus his will.[3] The 'soul', נֶפֶשׁ, is the source of emotions and desires. It is also the term that covers a person's vital force or life. It would be a mistake, however, to represent 'heart' and 'soul' as two separate parts of a human being, for instead there is some overlap.[4] The phrase בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשֶׁךָ is a common Deuteronomic idiom,[5] and indicates the full devotion that is to be shown to YHWH by Israel. The use of כֹּל underscores this singularity and is an appropriate counterpart of אֶחָד. To this familiar Deuteronomic phrase has been added וּבְכָל־ מְאֹדֶךָ. Only here, and in the clear citation of the *Shema* in 2 Kgs 23.25, does מְאֹד function as a substantive. Elsewhere it is used adverbially with the sense 'exceedingly, greatly, very',[6] and thus the Septuagint's δυνάμεώς 'strength' probably gives the best sense. Taken together with בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשֶׁךָ it emphasizes in the strongest possible terms the total commitment and whole-hearted devotion to be shown towards YHWH. The emphatic use of these three terms indicates that of all possible terms 'love' most adequately reflects the sort of response and attitude that is to be shown towards YHWH.

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[3] BDB, 524-25. This is reflected in LXX's διανοία (Wevers 1995: 115). Bascom has argued that the synoptic gospels reflect an awareness that לֵבָב was the mind. In their citation of the *Shema* they used some Greek word for mind, but not as a straight substitute for καρδία (1996; see Mt. 22.37; Mk 12.30; Lk. 10.27).

Weinfeld notes that at Qumran דעת is the equivalent to לֵבָב (1991: 339).

[4] BDB, 661; Mayes 1979: 156.

[5] Deut. 4.29; 6.5; 10.12; 11.13; 13.4; 26.16; 30.2, 6, 10; Josh. 22.5; 23.14; 1 Kgs 2.4; 8.48 (=2 Chron. 6.38 [לֵב]); 2 Kgs 23.3 (לֵב) (= 2 Chron. 34.31), 25; Jer. 32.41; 2 Chron. 15.12.

The abbreviated form בְּכָל־לֵבָב with suffixes is also common: 1 Sam. 7.3; 12.20, 24; 1 Kgs 14.8; 2 Kgs 10.31; Jer. 29.13; Joel 2.12; Pss. 86.12; 111.1; 2 Chron. 15.15; 22.9; 31.21.

[6] BDB, 547.

In early Christian exegesis the text was understood as a description of the three different parts of the inner man: the mind, soul and spirit.[7] This no doubt reflects the Septuagint's translation of בְּ with ἐκ, which has the effect of 'designating not the means by which we are to love, but rather the source from which the love proceeds'.[8] Rabbinic interpreters, on the other hand, understood בְּ as 'with'. לֵבָב was interpreted as the inclinations. Thus, to love YHWH בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ meant to serve YHWH with both good and evil impulses.[9] נֶפֶשׁ may mean 'life' and was understood in this way by the Rabbis. To love YHWH בְּכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ meant a readiness to give one's own life for YHWH.[10] This is exemplified in the famous story about Rabbi Akiba who, when asked by his Roman torturer why he was reciting the *Shema*, replied, 'all my life I have been waiting for the moment when I might truly fulfil this commandment. I have always loved the Lord with all my might and with all my heart; now I know that I love him with all my life'.[11] מְאֹד from at least as early as Ecclesiasticus was understood as 'wealth' (Ecclus. 7.30-31).[12] Thus, to love YHWH בְּכָל־מְאֹדֶךָ was to serve him whether blessed with poverty or wealth.[13]

It is undoubtedly true, as McBride argues, that the three different terms should not be understood as 'distinct acts, spheres of life, attributes or the like, but were chosen to reinforce the absolute sovereignty of personal devotion to God'.[14] However that may be it is also the case that the different, concrete ways in which the Rabbis sought to understand 'heart', 'soul' and 'might' represent good attempts to articulate what recognizing 'the absolute sovereignty of personal devotion to

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[7] McBride 1973: 303.

[8] Wevers 1995: 115.

[9] *Sifre Deb.* 32.

[10] *Sifre Deb.* 32.

[11] *m. Ber.* 14*b*.

[12] If Prov. 3.1-12 is a reflection on the *Shema* then understanding מְאֹד as wealth may go back even earlier (see Overland 2000).

[13] *Sifre Deb.* 32.

[14] McBride 1973: 304.

God' might entail. Further, Rabbinic interpreters demonstrate an awareness that describing what is meant by 'love' cannot be done with just one word or one description. For these reasons the Rabbis provide a good starting point for understanding what love might mean, the sort of response towards YHWH that is entailed. The rest of this chapter will seek to 'count the ways' in which Israel might express her love to YHWH.[15] This will be done in three ways. First, the metaphor of 'love' will be explored in the three different contexts that have been suggested for the word's use in Deuteronomy: marital, filial and political. Second, we shall examine the different expressions that Deuteronomy uses alongside 'love' to articulate how Israel should respond to YHWH. Finally, we shall examine one of Deuteronomy's most evocative ideas, that of *ḥērem* in Deuteronomy 7. It will be suggested that *ḥērem* is a metaphor indicating something of what it means to love YHWH.

2. *Contexts for Loving YHWH*

The use of 'love' (אהב) to describe Israel's relationship to YHWH is characteristically Deuteronomic.[16] Indeed, in the final form of the Pentateuch אהב is only used of response towards YHWH in the Decalogue (Exod. 20.6) prior to Deuteronomy, where it is strikingly prominent.[17] It is not immediately clear, however, what the exact significance of אהב is. Three suggestions have been made for the background of Deuteronomy's use of אהב: marital, filial and political.

The idea that Deuteronomy's use of אהב evokes the imagery of marriage or betrothal is implicit in the suggestion that the closest parallel to the *Shema*'s use of אחד is to be found in the Song of Songs. This view is strengthened if, as is often suggested, Hosea is a literary precursor of Deuteronomy.[18] In Hosea YHWH is said

[15] For a similar approach, see Wurz 1984.

[16] Twenty times in Deuteronomic or Deuteronomistic contexts out of twenty-four occasions according to Snaith (1944: 133).

[17] Deut. 5.10; 6.5; 7.9; 10.12; 11.1, 13, 22; 13.3; 19.9; 30.6, 16, 20.

[18] See, e.g., Weinfeld 1972: 366-70; 1991: 44-50; Wolff 1974: xxxi.

to love Israel and marital imagery is used evocatively of the relationship between YHWH and his people. The imagery of marriage is also found in Jeremiah, which like Hosea is closely related to Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy itself, however, makes no explicit use of marriage in describing the relationship between YHWH and Israel. Further, as Moran has noted, Hosea does not speak of Israel's response to YHWH as one of 'love', despite using 'love' of how YHWH has acted towards Israel.[19] The significance of this may, though, be overemphasized. The response that YHWH requires, according to Hosea, is turning and seeking, terms appropriate in view of Israel's rebellious wandering after other gods.[20]

YHWH's love for Israel is also expressed in terms of a father-son relationship in Hosea and this has been suggested as a possible context for understanding Deuteronomy's exhortation to 'love' YHWH.[21] Unlike marriage, parental imagery is found on a number of occasions in Deuteronomy to express the relationship between YHWH and Israel. In 1.31 it expresses the tender love of YHWH for his people, guiding them through the desert. A quite different aspect is found in 8.5 where YHWH is said to discipline Israel like a father disciplines a child. Such discipline, though, is not detached from YHWH's loving intentions for Israel.[22] In 14.1 individual Israelites, rather than Israel as a whole, are called YHWH's sons. It is likely that the accent there is on Israel's relationship to YHWH alone, and thus certain practices associated with the Baal cult are excluded.[23] In the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32) 'sons' is the characteristic description of Israel. This indicates not only the tender care of YHWH for Israel (32.10-18) and the gravity of Israel's sin, but also offers a picture of YHWH's discipline.[24] Further, the language of sonship emphasizes the duties of the son to be loyal and obedient. In this context,

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[19] Moran 1963a: 77.

[20] Cf. 2 Kgs 23.25 where, in a citation of the *Shema*, שוּב rather than אָהַב is used of Josiah's actions.

[21] See Fensham 1971; McCarthy 1965; McKay 1972.

[22] This will be explored more fully in chapters 4 and 5.

[23] See, e.g., Mayes 1979: 238-39. Tigay correctly notes that the relationship between the introduction (14.1a) and the commandment (14.1b) is unclear (1996: 136).

[24] For a discussion of this see chapter 5.

perhaps more than in that of marriage, the *command* to love, expressed in obedience of the commandments, which appears at first glance as somewhat paradoxical, makes a great deal of sense. However, against this image as the background of 'love' in Deuteronomy has been raised the lack of any explicit connection of it with the command to love. In response to this McKay has shown that the two ideas share common motifs which suggests a close relationship. In 8.2-5 YHWH is said to have tested Israel, an action which reflects the disciplining of a son. In 11.1-2 discipline is closely related to the command to love, and in 13.4 YHWH is said to test Israel to know whether she loves him.[25]

A treaty background for Deuteronomy's command to 'love' YHWH was first argued by W.L. Moran.[26] The importance of ancient political treaties for the understanding of the Old Testament was first suggested by G.E. Mendenhall in 1954.[27] Since then the parallels between the Old Testament and the forms and vocabulary of ancient treaties have been extensively explored.[28] In particular it has been suggested that Deuteronomy, either as a whole or in large part, is modelled upon a political treaty or loyalty oath.[29] Building on these parallels, Moran demonstrated that 'love' was used in diplomatic terminology for the loyalty to be shown by a vassal to his overlord.[30] A striking example is found in the Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon: 'You will love Assurbanipal as yourselves'.[31] In the Old Testament too אהב may be used of political allegiance (1 Sam. 18.16; 2 Sam. 19.6-7; 1 Kgs 5.15). A treaty context for 'love' would explain how love may be something commanded, and expressed in obedience of the commandments.

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[25] McKay 1972: 433-34.

[26] Moran 1963a.

[27] Mendenhall 1954.

[28] For sketches of the scholarly discussion about treaty and covenant, see McCarthy 1972; Nicholson 1985: 3-117.

[29] See Kline 1963; McCarthy 1978: 157-205; Weinfeld 1972: 59-157.

[30] Moran 1963: 78-80. See also the further work by Weinfeld (1976: 383-84).

[31] Wiseman 1958: 49 lines 266-68.

An objection to the treaty parallel to 'love', however, is that it 'is likely to focus maximally on conduct and minimally on intention or motivation...Deuteronomy, by contrast, insists on the thoroughgoing internalization and appropriation of obedience so that action and intention are in full harmony'.[32] This should not lead to the rejection of ancient treaties as suitable parallels, but suggests a limit to all the possible backgrounds of אהב when abstracted from the specific relationship of YHWH and Israel, a danger most acute with this parallel. To indicate what this means it is worth turning to a Deuteronomic use of אהב which offers an important parallel, but one that, to my knowledge, has not been discussed in this context.

In Deut. 15.12-18 legislation is given for the treatment of Israelite debt-slaves. In the seventh year the slave is to be manumitted, but the Deuteronomic legislation envisages a situation where the slave's situation has been so privileged that he desires to stay with his master. The slave's motive is said to be one of love, אהב, for his master (15.16).[33] Deuteronomy's use of אהב is no less striking if Exod. 21.2-6 is its *Vorlage*,[34] since whilst in Exodus the slave also loves his wife and children, whom he would have to abandon if he took his freedom, in Deuteronomy it is only his master and his master's household that he is said to love.[35] This love results from the master's goodness, כִּי־טוֹב לוֹ עִמָּךְ. In Deuteronomy similar phrases are found used of YHWH's goodness to Israel.[36] Further evidence for this parallel is found with the conclusion that the servant will be the master's 'eternal slave' (עֶבֶד עוֹלָם). This term is only otherwise found in 1 Sam. 27.12, where it is used of David's committed allegiance to Achish, and in Job 40.28 where

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[32] Moberly 1999: 134 n. 19.

[33] Weinfeld notes that 'master' is not employed in the Deuteronomic slave law (1972: 283).

[34] A position taken by most scholars (see Van Seters 1996: 534 n. 3 for references), but not universally (e.g. Van Seters).

[35] Braulik 1994d: 142.

[36] 4.40; 5.16, 29, 33; 6.3, 18, 24; 10.13; 12.25, 28; 19.13; 22.7. In every case they are a promise of future well-being if Israel obeys YHWH's commands, rather than as a description of past well-being as in the case of the Israelite slave.

significantly it is found in poetic parallelism with 'make a covenant'.[37] Finally, the piercing of the ear to create a sign of the slave's status resonates with the physical display of the 'words' on the Israelites required in the *Shema* (Deut. 6.8).[38] The love that Israel is to show YHWH, then, is similar to that which the grateful slave shows his master. This love is based on the gracious actions of the master/YHWH.

The use of 'love' as *the* appropriate response to YHWH may, then, evoke three possible images. Each of these can muster support. The strongest parallels are, perhaps, those with political treaties. However, the three contexts for 'love' need not be mutually exclusive. In political treaties the relationship between the overlord and vassal could be described in terms of a 'father'-'son' relationship.[39] Thus, in 2 Kgs 16.7 Ahaz requests Tiglath-Pileser's help claiming to be Tiglath-Pileser's servant and son. Even marital imagery may not be incompatible with the concept of treaty. In the post-exilic period, if not earlier, 'covenant' could be used of marriage (Mal. 2.14).[40] Each context expresses in its own way the exclusive nature of the relationship between YHWH and Israel. Together they indicate the totality of the response required of Israel. Arbitration in favour of one background runs the risk of losing the evocative qualities of the word 'love'.

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[37] Cf. עֶבֶד לְעוֹלָם (Exod. 21.6; Lev. 25.46).

Manumitting the slave may also have been an act of covenant. See Jer. 34.8-16, where the Deuteronomic law was applied (Van Seters 1996: 536).

[38] Two possible reasons are usually offered for the piercing of the ear. It is seen either as a symbolic action on the organ of hearing (and thus obedience), or it is understood as a slave mark (Tigay 1996: 150).

[39] Fensham 1971.

[40] Cf. Jer. 31.32. This is strengthened when the so-called 'covenant formula' is compared with legal formulas for adoption and marriage (see Sohn 1999).

G.P. Hugenberger has argued that marriage was understood as a covenant outside of Malachi. A strong argument against this is the lack of evidence of a ratifying oath. Hugenberger argues that covenant-ratifying oaths were not necessarily self-maledictory, but often were solemn declarations. Further, oath-signs may be detected in marriage acts and are evidence that marriage was a covenant (1994).

3. *Other Expressions for Loving YHWH*

Loving YHWH is only one verbal expression that Deuteronomy chooses to express the relationship that Israel is to have with YHWH, and, correspondingly, not to have with other gods. These verbs include: אהב, דבק, הלך (אַחֲרֵי), זכר, חוה, ירא, נסה, עבד, עשׂה, (בְּשֵׁם) שבע, שׁבח, שׁמר. These verbs frequently occur in lists. The first of these lists is found in 6.12-19 in the immediate context of the *Shema*. A couple of factors distinguish this list. Lohfink has demonstrated that the lists follow a relatively consistent order: שׁבח – הלך (אחרי) – ירא – אהב – עבד – חוה – דבק – שׁבע (בְּשֵׁם).[41] In Deut. 6.12-19, however, the order is disturbed by הלך (אַחֲרֵי) following (בְּשֵׁם) שׁבע. This variation is compounded by the presence of positive and negative elements; other lists are constituted as either a collection of commandments or a collection of prohibitions.

In the list that makes up 6.12-19 אהב and the closely related דבק are conspicuously absent. The occurrence of אהב alone in 6.5 suggests that the list in 6.12-19 may be seen as an exposition of what it means to love YHWH. This exposition is connected to the *Shema* by a temporal clause in vv. 10-11, which provides the immediate context for the list in vv. 12-19. The Israelites are about to go into a land full of good things and this brings with it the danger that Israel will forget YHWH. The danger of forgetfulness is an appropriate theme immediately after the *Shema* with its emphasis on the remembrance of 'these words' and their transmission to the next generation (vv. 6-9), a motif that is picked up in the conclusion of the chapter (vv. 20-25).

The list begins with the exhortation not to forget YHWH. The description of YHWH as 'the one who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery' echoes the beginning of the Decalogue. שׁבח is a term which characterizes Deuteronomy 8 (vv. 11, 14, 19) where the theme of forgetfulness is prominent.[42]

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[41] Lohfink 1963: 74. The order of the pair עבד – חוה may be reversed.

[42] This will be dealt with more thoroughly in chapter 4.

'Fear' (יראה) is used of YHWH, never of other gods. The fear prohibited to Israel is that of the Canaanites, not their gods.[43] יראה occurs in an extended list on only four occasions: 6.13; 10.12, 20; 13.5. Otherwise it occurs with terms that express obedience to the commandments of YHWH.[44] Fear is particularly associated with the giving of the Ten Commandments at Horeb, an association which is also found in Exodus 20: 'Moses said to the people, "Do not fear. God has come to test you so that his fear may be before you to keep you from sinning"' (v. 20). Moses' exhortation that the Israelites not fear indicates that 'fear of YHWH' is expressed not in abject terror, but in obedience of the commandments.[45] Further, the use of 'fear *of YHWH*', as a term for obedience, shows that such obedience is not divorced from the relationship in which it must be expressed.[46]

The call to serve YHWH (עבד) occurs only six times.[47] Much more frequently עבד is used of serving other gods.[48] The related חוה is only found together with עבד. This double expression is never used of YHWH in Deuteronomy.[49] The use of חוה as well as references to serving 'gods of wood and stone' indicates that עבד and חוה refer to cultic worship. This is particularly clear when the different uses of the verbs with YHWH and other gods are compared. When Israel are exhorted to serve YHWH עבד occurs in conjunction with words for obeying and loving YHWH: אהב, דבק, (בְּדֶרֶךְ) הלך, ירא, שבע, שמע, שמר.[50] When used of other gods עבד and חוה appear in conjunction with words that express some sort of movement: הלך, (אַחֲרֵי) הלך, סור, פנה, פוץ. This is most explicit when Israel is exiled (4.28;

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[43] 1.21; 3.2, 22; 20.3; 31.6, 8.

[44] 4.10; 5.29; 6.2, 24; 8.6; 17.19; 28.58; 31.12, 13.

[45] *Contra*, amongst others, Kooy 1975.

[46] For a detailed and reflective consideration of 'fear of YHWH/God', see Moberly 2000a: 78-97.

[47] 6.13; 10.12, 20; 11.13; 13.5; 28.47.

[48] 4.28; 7.4, 16; 12.30; 13.3, 7, 14; 28.14, 36, 64; 29.17; 31.20.

[49] 4.19; 5.9; 8.19; 11.16; 17.3; 29.25; 30.17.

[50] For the use of הלך אַחֲרֵי, see below.

28.36, 64). Not only does this indicate that some movement is necessary to worship other gods, presumably at a sanctuary, it also suggests that other gods are distant in comparison to YHWH who is near. The distance of other gods and the closeness of YHWH underlines the wilfulness that Israel must demonstrate in order to reject YHWH. Elsewhere in Deuteronomy a similar notion can be expressed as serving gods that are not known.[51]

In the pattern detected by Lohfink דבק precedes (בְּשֵׁם) שבע. דבק is used on five occasions of the relationship that Israel should have towards YHWH, but does not occur in 6.10-19.[52] Outside of Deuteronomy it is used of devotion to YHWH only in Ps. 63.9. It may be used as a synonym of אהב (e.g. Gen. 34.3; 1 Kgs 11.2) but also of devotion to the king (2 Sam. 20.2). Either meaning could provide a suitable sense in Deuteronomy.[53]

'Swear by YHWH's name' (שָׁבַע בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה) is only found in 6.13 and 10.20. Although the Decalogue prohibits swearing falsely (5.11), using the name of another deity in an oath suggests something more. Elsewhere in the Old Testament swearing by YHWH's name is an act which acknowledges YHWH and his power (Ps. 63.12). Notably when YHWH makes an oath he swears by himself.[54] Keller writes, 'since *šbʿ* indicates an irrevocable, total obligation with inescapable consequences in the event of non-fulfilment, the god called on as guarantor and guardian must be able to exercise absolute control over the speaker, who must regard him- or herself as entirely subject to the god'.[55] Such a notion would be appropriate in Deuteronomy in view of the control that YHWH exerts over Israel according to the blesses and curses in Deuteronomy 28. 'Swearing by' should be distinguished from 'swearing an oath to', as YHWH's swearing an oath by himself indicates.[56]

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[51] See 11.28; 13.3, 7, 14; 28.64; 29.25; 32.17.

[52] 4.4; 10.20; 11.22; 13.5; 30.20.

[53] Lohfink 1963: 79.

[54] Greenberg 1972: 1296.

[55] Keller 1997: 1296.

[56] *Contra* Weinfeld 1972: 84 n. 1.

The appearance of הלך אחרי in v. 14, as has already been noted, is somewhat unexpected. Taken together with the verse being couched in the plural it is not surprising that some scholars have argued that it is secondary.[57] However, the appeal that YHWH is a jealous *el*[58] in v. 15 requires the 'other gods' of v. 14. הלך אחרי is only used of following other gods, with the exception of 13.5.[59] This exception can be accounted for in the context of Deuteronomy 13 where it forms a response to the appeal by the prophet to 'walk after other gods and worship them' (13.3). There is also the related warning in 7.4 that the autochthonous population of Palestine will 'turn your sons from after me', that is, YHWH (יָסִיר אֶת־בִּנְךָ מֵאַחֲרָי). Elsewhere in the Old Testament הלך אחרי is used in a variety of contexts. Helfmeyer lists the relationships in which אחרי is used: servant – master, army – commander, supporter – cause, master – disciple, wife – husband.[60] 'What is being expressed in all these instances is a relationship involving dependence or possession, in which those who follow owe obedience to those whom they follow'.[61] The closest parallels, however, are to be found in Jer. 2.2, 25 and Hos. 2.7, 15, where Israel is portrayed as an unfaithful wife. This would provide a fitting context for v. 15's reference to YHWH's jealousy. The idea of motion that הלך אחרי suggests, as has already been noted, indicates that other

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[57] See discussion in Nielsen 1995: 88-89.

[58] A clear distinction should be made between Deuteronomy's use of אֱלֹהִים and its use of אֵל. אֵל occurs eleven times in Deuteronomy (3.24; 4.24, 31; 5.9; 6.15; 7.9, 21; 10.17; 32.4, 18, 21). On the role of אֵל in the Old Testament Rendtorff writes, 'eine wichtige Funktion des Wortes אֵל ist, Jhwh als einen Gott dazustellen, von dem bestimme charackteristische Eigenschaften oder Verhaltensweisen ausgesagt werden können' (1994: 10). With it a number of characteristics are attributed to YHWH. He is 'a jealous *el*' (4.24; 5.9; 6.15), 'a merciful *el*' (4.31), 'a great and awesome *el*' (7.21), 'the great, mighty and awesome *el*' (10.17), 'a faithful *el*' (32.4) and 'the faithful *el*' (7.9). Thus, whilst אֱלֹהִים describes a deity, whether YHWH or other gods, in relationship to their people, *el* is used of a deity's characteristics. In Deuteronomy *el* is always used of YHWH's characteristics, and how they impinge on his people.

[59] 4.3 (of Baal Peor); 6.14; 8.19; 11.28; 13.3; 28.14.

[60] Helfmeyer 1974: 204-205.

[61] Helfmeyer 1974: 205.

gods have to be sought for. This contrasts with YHWH who is said to be 'in your midst' (v. 15).

The reference to YHWH's presence among his people also appears to move Deuteronomy's appeal forward. The exhortation not to test YHWH (נסה) is only found here in the list of expressions for devotion to YHWH. The incident at Massah is recorded in Exod. 17.1-7. There the Israelites are said to have tested YHWH by asking, 'Is YHWH among us (בְּקִרְבֵּנוּ) or not?'. The theme of testing YHWH recurs in Deuteronomy in chapter 8. In 8.15-16 YHWH brings water from the flinty rock, which is probably an allusion to Massah, in order to test the Israelites. While such testing of Israel is undertaken to prove Israel's obedience, the testing of YHWH is forbidden.

The list of expressions which describe different aspects of devotion to YHWH is concluded by an exhortation to keep the commandments (vv. 17-18). As already noted, obedience of the Deuteronomic legislation is understood as one of the characteristic expressions of loving YHWH. Obedience can be demanded in a variety of different ways: (בְּדֶרֶךְ) הלך, עשׂה, שׁמע, שׁמר.[62]

Deuteronomy 6.10-19, then, provides various expressions of what it means to love YHWH. Its unique role as the first list of such expressions in Deuteronomy is underscored by its combination of both positive and negative elements. Particularly prominent among these expressions are the exhortations to obey YHWH's commandments. To set love over against obedience would clearly misconstrue Deuteronomy. As 'fear of YHWH' indicates, Israel's obedience cannot be divorced from the relationship in which such obedience must be expressed. Such obedience entails cultic service of YHWH. The worship of the gods of the surrounding nations involves wilful disobedience to the one who is present with them, and has chosen a place for his name in Israel (Deuteronomy 12). Love of YHWH also entails an acknowledgement of his claim over, and control of, Israel. Testing YHWH involves bringing this position into question.

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[62] For these expressions, see Lohfink 1963: 64-72.

4. Ḥērem *as an Expression of Devoted Love*

Deuteronomy's most striking and disturbing articulation of the nature of loving YHWH is found in the *ḥērem* legislation of Deuteronomy 7. That the chapter is to be understood as another expression of what fulfilling the *Shema* might mean is demonstrated by the chapter's structure and content.[63] Structurally its direction of argument is similar to the material immediately following the *Shema* (6.10-25). Both sections open with an identical temporal clause, כִּי יְבִיאֲךָ יהוה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ, which serves not only to indicate when the commands should be obeyed, but also underscores YHWH's faithfulness. This is followed by the commands, whose formulation and justification echo the Decalogue (6.12-18; 7.2-11),[64] and the blessings which will result from obedience are described (6.18-19; 7.12-15). Finally, a question leads to further clarification and to material that echoes earlier verses and functions as an *inclusio* (6.20-25; 7.17-26).[65] The content of Deuteronomy 7 links it tightly to the *Shema*. Devotion to Israel's one god is expressed in the destruction of Canaanite cultic paraphernalia. Such acts are grounded in Israel's election by YHWH (7.6-10), a correlative of YHWH's oneness as we shall see.[66] Even here the echoes of the *Shema*, or more specifically the Decalogue, are clear in YHWH's generosity to those who *love* him (7.9).

The call to 'devote' or 'ban' the seven autochthonous nations, which is to be understood as their total destruction,[67] is deeply problematic for Christian and

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[63] For similar views of the role of Deuteronomy 7, see Miller 1990: 41-42; Moberly 1999; Schäfer-Lichtenberger 1996: 202-205.

[64] See Lohfink 1963: 154-57; 180-81.

[65] Lohfink detects in both chapters a form he designates as a *große Gebotsumrahmung* (6.10-25; 7.1-5, 17-24). The principle parts are the temporal clause, the commandments and the question. This form is a play on the elements that make up the *Bundesformular* (1963: 113-20). Deuteronomy 7 is a well-worked combination of the *große Gebotsumrahmung*, which is made up of material from Gilgal, and material from the Decalogue (7.6-14) (1963: 167-88).

[66] See chapter 5.

[67] Brekelmans 1997. Schäfer-Lichtenberger argues that חרם does not mean destruction in Deuteronomy 7, only separation (1996: 202; cf. 1994). Schäfer-Lichtenberger's interpretation rests upon a misunderstanding of the prohibition of making covenants with the Canaanites in 7.2. Further, the extermination of the Transjordanian population in Deuteronomy 2-3, with its unambiguous לֹא הִשְׁאִירוּ

Jewish theology. As an expression of a theological truth it is hardly less palatable. 'It would be atrocious to kill a man even to say "Credo in unum Deum"...' as Umberto Eco has William of Baskerville reply to Adso in *The Name of the Rose*. Indeed, to many in our modern world this makes it more repugnant.[68] The difficulties with the chapter are not restricted to communities seeking to appropriate Deuteronomy as sacred scripture. The *ḥērem* legislation strikes a discordant note with the 'humanitarian' concerns of Deuteronomy: the concern for the poor and the stranger.[69] For this reason many interpreters have sought to justify the command or understand the chapter's intentionality as other than the slaughter of the Canaanite population.[70] With some other interpreters I wish to suggest that

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שָׁרִיד (2.34; cf. 3.3), would have provided the reader of the completed book with a clear pre-understanding of the meaning of חרם. See also 20.16, where the destruction of 'everything that breathes' refers to the slaughter of all human beings (cf. Josh. 11.13-14).

[68] See especially Schwartz's recent critique of 'monotheism' (1998).

[69] See Nelson 1997; Wagener 1994.

[70] In Rabbinic literature the Canaanites are not all exterminated, 'Joshua sent out three proclamations to the Canaanites: he who wishes to leave shall leave; he who wishes to make peace shall make peace; he who wishes to fight shall do so' (*Vay. R.* 17.6; *y. Šeb.* 6.5, 36c).

Many modern scholars, who place the book's composition in the seventh century BC onwards, have argued that the *ḥērem* legislation is a utopian ideal (Mason 1997: 69-75; Mayes 1979: 183; Weinfeld 1993b). The writers of Deuteronomy held a much more radical view of the practice of *ḥērem* than was found in ancient Israel. Miller has objected, however, that 'the answer that "in actual fact" the ban or slaughter of the enemy was rarely carried out is not only historically questionable, but in fact begs or avoids the question' (1965: 41; cf. Lilley 1997: 5-6).

More conservative exegetes, particularly those who accept the book as a Mosaic composition, have appealed to the unrighteousness of the Canaanites and to YHWH's justice (Alexander 1995: 180; Lilley 1997; Ridderbos 1984: 120; J.A. Thompson 1974: 73; cf. Niditch 1993: 56-77). Although Deuteronomy may view the dispossession of the Canaanites (and, perhaps, significantly not the *ḥērem*) as an act of divine judgement (9.5; cf. Gen. 15.16), it is difficult, by appeal to divine justice alone, to explain the treatment of the Canaanites compared to, say, the Assyrians or the Babylonians, neither of whom are ever *utterly* destroyed.

Other conservative writers have argued that the commandment is parabolic or theoretical and does not envisage the slaughter of every single Canaanite (Craigie 1978: 45-54; Millar 1998: 156). This merely mitigates the problem.

P.D. Stern has argued that *ḥērem* is deliberately limited by the Deuteronomic authors to Israel's past and to peoples that have long disappeared. Stern argues that the legislation had its origins in discouraging the use of *ḥērem* by Israelite kings

the chapter is best understood as a metaphor which illustrates what it means to love YHWH with heart, soul and strength.[71] That is, the chapter indicates how one might say 'Credo in unum Deum' without requiring the atrocity of killing a man (or a woman, or a child).

The intention of the chapter is best illustrated with an observation about its relationship to the surrounding chapters. Lohfink, following Klostermann, notes that 'Dtn 6 und Dtn 8 sprechen eine Situation im Land Kanaan an, während Dtn 7 noch eine Situation vor der Eroberung voraussetzt. Die Reihenfolge der vorausgesetzen Situationen sei "gegen die Natur"'.[72] A closer inspection of Deut. 7.1-2 reveals that this observation is not entirely accurate. The temporal clause that opens the chapter indicates that the Israelites are to 'devote' the Canaanites after YHWH has driven them out and allowed Israel to defeat them. The execution of this command, then, is to take place when the Israelites are in the land, not as they enter it. This suggests that obedience of the command in Deuteronomy 7 is not markedly different from the commands in chapters 6 and 8. It is an obligation that rests upon Israel while she possesses the land, it is not limited to the years of the conquest.[73] Understood literally as a command to eliminate all the Canaanites it could only have had a limited duration.

The metaphorical significance of the *ḥērem* command is also indicated by the names of the seven nations. The lists of pre-Israelite nations are found on a number

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against Moab (1991: 89-121). This suggestion is, of course, independent of Stern's historical reconstruction (see, e.g., Childs 1985: 78; Hoffman 1999).

G. Braulik examines the canonical form of Deuteronomy, the version produced for the returning exiles. In this version chapters 7-11 are framed by 6.17-19 and 11.22-25 which do not demand the destruction of the Canaanites. In Deut. 29.1-30.10 the destruction of the Canaanites is not mentioned, even in the return to the land (30.1-10), and the Gibeonites are included in the covenant (29.10) (1997).

Y. Suzuki suggests that *ḥērem* is a metaphor for the policy developed after Josiah's occupation of the north. It envisaged the assimilation of the 'Canaanite' population of the north, thus 'destroying' the Canaanites (1995).

[71] See, e.g., Moberly 1999; Wells 2000: 91. For a similar suggestion about Joshua, see Mitchell 1993; Stone 1991.

[72] Lohfink 1963: 168.

[73] The continued relevance of the command is, perhaps, indicated in another way in the chapter by the otherwise paradoxical v. 22.

of occasions and in a variety of forms.[74] The content of the lists are stereotypical and an ideological construction; they are not historical descriptions of the ethnic composition of Palestine.[75] Here the list indicates their size and power in contrast to Israel. Elsewhere in Deuteronomy mention of the other autochthonous nations, the Anakim and the Rephaim, carries echoes of primordial power and evil.[76] The command not to enter into marital contracts with the autochthonous nations provides a further indication that the *ḥērem* command is not to be understood as an order to slaughter all the Canaanites. The prohibition of marriage would make little sense if the Canaanites had been entirely eliminated.[77]

Finally, we should note that understanding Deuteronomy 7 as a metaphor of love towards YHWH, which is to be obeyed in the land after YHWH's expulsion of the previous occupants, reduces the tensions between Deuteronomy 7 and the parallel material in Exodus 23 and 34. In Exod. 23.20-33 YHWH's angel will destroy (בחד) and drive out (גרשׁ) the Canaanites. In response Israel is to destroy their cultic objects. In Exod. 34.11-16 YHWH will drive out (גרשׁ) the Canaanites, and Israel is to destroy their cultic apparatus and shun any alliance with them. At no point is *ḥērem* invoked.[78]

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[74] Gen. 10.15-18; 13.7; 15.19-21; 34.30; Exod. 3.8, 17; 13.5; 23.23, 28; 33.2; 34.11; Num. 13.29; Deut. 7.1; 20.17; Josh. 3.10; 5.1; 9.1; 11.3; 12.8; 24.11; Judg. 1.4, 5; 3.5; 1 Kgs 9.20; Ezra 9.1; Neh. 9.8; 1 Chron. 1.13-16; 2 Chron. 8.7. For the content of these passages, see the table in Ishida 1979: 461-62.

[75] See Lemche 1991: 75-100. Lemche draws particular attention to the Hittites and Amorites. Both names continued to be used in the ancient Near East long after the nations they originally represented had ceased to exist. Mitchell analyses 'Canaanites', 'Amorites' and 'Hittites' and argues they are ideological symbols of 'primordial opposition to YHWH' (1993: 123-33). For an attempt to interpret the names as bearers of historical information about the inhabitants of second millennium BC Palestine, see, e.g., Craigie 1976: 177-78; Ishida 1979: 465-70.

[76] See 2.10-12, 20-23; 3.11; 9.1-3. On the Anakim, see Mattingly 1992, and on the Rephaim, see Smith 1992.

[77] García López argues that this is evidence of two different authors (1982: 439). This does not explain why a later redactor should have juxtaposed these contradictory commandments.

[78] The relationship between Exodus 23 and 34 and Deuteronomy 7 has frequently been discussed, particularly from a literary critical angle. It is common to see the direction of influence from Exodus to Deuteronomy (Fishbane 1985: 201; Schmitt 1970: 13-24; Weinfeld 1991: 379-80). However, it has been argued that the process

The execution of *ḥērem* is envisaged in two ways. First, there is to be no giving or receiving of children in marriage (v. 4). Second, the cultic apparatus associated with other deities are to be destroyed (v. 5). This understands the conclusion of v. 2 'do not make a covenant with them and show them no mercy' as a negative statement of *ḥērem*,[79] rather than as the first stipulation giving content to *ḥērem*. A number of scholars have argued for this latter understanding.[80] However, this interpretation encounters a number of difficulties when a reason for the commandment is sought. Craigie argues that 'to make a treaty with other nations would indicate a lack of faithfulness on the part of the Israelites to their suzerain God'.[81] In Judg. 2.1-2 a close connection is made between YHWH's faithfulness to his covenant with Israel and the prohibition of a covenant with the Canaanites. A.D.H. Mayes, on the other hand, argues that the prohibition of treaties was because 'treaties made with other people necessarily involved a recognition of the

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occurred in the reverse direction (Pakkala 1999: 95-96; Van Seters 1994: 247-89, 355). The questions of literary relationship between the different chapters are many and complex, and cannot be resolved here, if at all. However, it seems likely, as Mayes suggests, that literary dependence was not in just one direction (1979: 181).

There are a number of differences between the material in Exodus and Deuteronomy, besides the role of *ḥērem* in the Deuteronomic command. First, in Exodus 23 the agent of conquest is an angel and not YHWH himself. Weinfeld argues that 'Deuteronomy rejects the view of angels as mediators' (1991: 379). Weinfeld's confidence in the reason for the difference is, perhaps, misplaced. In Exod. 34.11 it is YHWH who will drive out the Canaanites, perhaps reflecting YHWH's response to Moses' prayer in 33.15-16 to go with them. Second, the destruction of the Canaanite religious objects is justified in Deuteronomy by appeal to Israel's special status in YHWH's eyes (7.6-11). There is no comparable justification in Exodus 23 or 34. Third, Deuteronomy 7 makes no connection with the Israelite festivals. In Exodus 23 the promise of YHWH's angel follows instruction about Israel's three festivals and in the following chapter the elders eat and drink before YHWH on Sinai. In Exodus 34 the connection is more explicit. Making treaties or intermarrying with the Canaanites will lead to the Israelites being invited to the festivals for Canaanite gods (34.15-16). Israel, however, is to follow different practices (34.17-26). Deuteronomy 7 makes no reference to religious feasts. However, there are connections with Deuteronomy 12 which is concerned with the consumption of meat and sacrifice (see McConville 1984: 58-65).

[79] See Moberly 1999: 32; Rose 1994: 333.

[80] See, e.g., Wright who suggests three different aspects of distinctiveness are understood in the passage: political, social and religious (1996: 110). See also Craigie 1976: 178; Mayes 1979: 183; Miller 1990: 111; Mitchell 1993: 57.

[81] Craigie 1976: 178.

gods of these people through calling on them as treaty witnesses'.[82] This interpretation is based on the practice known from ancient Near Eastern treaties, and would find a parallel in the command to take oaths only in YHWH's name.[83] Both explanations of the commandment require its universal application as Craigie's 'other nations' and Mayes' 'other people' indicate.

A universal application of the commandment, however, is belied not only by the context of Deuteronomy 7, which restricts *ḥērem* to the pre-Israelite nations,[84] but also by the closely related narrative about the Gibeonites in Joshua 9.[85] In Joshua 9 the Gibeonites succeed in tricking the Israelites into making a treaty with them. Whether the Israelites can make such an agreement turns on the question of whether the Gibeonites are from nearby or from far away, that is, whether they live within the area given to Israel or not. This distinction clearly reflects the legislation of Deut. 20.10-18 where nations outside Palestine are not to be subject to *ḥērem*, but may make peace.[86] Convinced that the Gibeonites come from a long distance away the Israelites agree to a treaty. The nature of the treaty is spelt out in v. 15: 'Joshua made peace (שָׁלוֹם) with them, and he made a treaty with them guaranteeing their lives (וַיִּכְרֹת לָהֶם בְּרִית לְחַיּוֹתָם)'. The agreement is that the Israelites will preserve the lives of the Gibeonites, keeping them as servants,[87]

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[82] Mayes 1979: 183. Cf. Lilley 1997: 8; Schäfer-Lichtenberger 1996: 203.

[83] See above on שׁבע בְּשֵׁם.

[84] The tendency to universalize this commandment which is sometimes to be observed is to be rejected. For example, Niditch writes, *ḥērem* 'has to do with matters of justice and injustice, right and wrong, idolatry versus worship of the true God...Idolaters are perceived as deserving the ban' (1993: 49). Also, Stuhlmueller writes, 'Deut. 7 announces the holy war of *herem* destruction against the non-elect gentile nations' (1977: 356).

[85] For the numerous ways in which Joshua 9 depends on Deuteronomy, see Blenkinsopp 1966: 207-209.

[86] Mitchell makes a delightful comment: 'it is almost as though the Gibeonites have read the text in Deuteronomy' (1993: 85).

For Deut. 20.10-18 and the relationship of vv. 10-14 and 15-18, see Rofé 1985a and Noort 1994. Both Rofé and Noort maintain that vv. 15-18 are later than vv. 10-14 (cf. Schäfer-Lichtenberger 1986: 59-61). Noort notes, however, that Joshua 9 assumes the existence of vv. 15-18.

[87] See Josh. 9.21-27. Schmitt notes that כָּרַת בְּרִית לְ is not used of treaties between equals (1970: 34).

something they are committed to even when they discover the Gibeonites' ruse (9.16-27).[88]

It is evident that the Gibeonite story does not understand treaties to be prohibited *per se*, only those with the peoples of the land. Further, the type of treaties that are forbidden are those that preserve the lives of the inhabitants. Such treaties are a direct inversion of the command to put the nations to *ḥērem*. The prohibition of treaties in Deuteronomy 7 is to be understood as a further indication of what *ḥērem* means. The seven nations are to be utterly destroyed, there is to be no agreement to preserve their lives, keeping them as servants. This is further strengthened by the final clause in v. 2, 'do not spare them' (לֹא תְחָנֵּם), which probably has the same meaning as לֹא־תָחֹס עֵינְךָ in 7.16.[89]

The command not to spare or pity the Canaanites indicates one aspect of *ḥērem*'s evocative nature. The *ḥērem* indicates that devotion to YHWH is an act of radical obedience; an obedience that may act against natural impulses. This aspect of *ḥērem* is found elsewhere in Deuteronomy. The most striking example is found, however, in 1 Samuel 15, the account of Saul's war against the Amalekites. Saul's failure to destroy the animals and the king earns Saul a rebuke from Samuel, 'Does YHWH delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying YHWH?' (1 Sam. 15.22).

In Deuteronomy 7 this radical obedience must occur even if this entails material disadvantage. Thus, in v. 25 the Israelites are warned against coveting the silver and gold that covers the images of the Canaanite gods. Such obedience must also

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[88] Schäfer-Lichtenberger sees לְחַיּוֹתָם as part of a later reworking and therefore suggests that originally the content of the covenant was not specified (1986: 69).

[89] Cf. 28.50; and esp. Josh. 11.20, which probably reflects Deut. 7.2.

It is possible that לֹא תְחָנֵּם should be connected with what follows, the prohibition of intermarriage. In Judg. 21.22 חנן occurs in the context of a complicated inversion of *ḥērem*. If the fathers and brothers of the captured Shilohite women complain to the elders of Israel about the activities of the Benjaminites, the elders decide to respond 'Be generous (חָנּוּנוּ אוֹתָם) and allow us to have them [as wives for the Benjaminites]; because we did not capture in battle a wife for each man'.

transcend familial and national ties as Deuteronomy 13 makes clear. A prophet, family member, or even a whole Israelite city involved in following other gods must be subject to *ḥērem*. The application of *ḥērem* against an apostate city is strikingly harsher than against Canaanite cities. The livestock are to be slaughtered, and the possessions and the whole city destroyed (13.16-17). This action is even described using sacrificial terminology, the town is to be 'a whole burnt offering' (כָּלִיל). The association with sacrificial imagery found here is unique, and its exact significance is uncertain.[90] Whatever is meant, the term creates a singularity which underscores the harshness of the action against an Israelite city. This harshness is particularly striking in view of the limitations placed on war in other cultures where kinship is a factor.[91] Mitigation due to kinship is evidenced in Amos' oracles against the nations, where there is condemnation because such relationships were ignored (Amos 1.9, 11). The description of *ḥērem* against Israelite apostates indicates the radical obedience expected of Israel, and describes a devotion to YHWH that exceeds the closest family loyalties. Understood as a metaphor for devoted loyalty, the *ḥērem* legislation in Deuteronomy 13 finds it closest analogy, perhaps, in the New Testament teaching that one cannot be a disciple of Jesus

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[90] Mayes 1979: 237; Niditch 1993: 63. How this sacrificial imagery is to be understood is unclear. Niditch argues that God is 'one who demands and receives humans in exchange for victory' (1993: 41). This is probably mistaken since חרם is applied to the inhabitants, and כָּלִיל to the town buildings and the spoil. Even in 20.16-17 when חרם is applied to the 'town' it is the inhabitants that are meant. This was understood by the Rabbis, since if חרם was applied to the town buildings there this would contradict the promise in 6.11 of 'houses filled with all manner of good things' (*Sifre Deb.* 201). Mayes understands the sacrifice as expiatory (1979: 237). Driver suggests that it is to be understood figuratively, indicating that the whole city is to be given to YHWH (1902: 155). Lohfink similarly suggests a metaphorical understanding (1995: 110). Hertz translates 'completely' (1937: 807), a sense attested for כָּלִיל (BDB, 483). However, in view of its modification by לַיהוה, a sacrificial meaning is required (Stern 1991: 107).

A close parallel is found in Judg. 20.40 which reads, הִנֵּה עָלָה כְלִיל־הָעִיר הַשָּׁמָיְמָה, where כָּלִיל is used of the plumes of smoke that ascend from the Benjaminite city.

[91] 'Anthropological evidence suggests that limitations on war appear to be more and more strict, the closer the relationship between the combatants' (Niditch 1993: 20).

unless he 'hate father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, even his own life' (Lk. 14.26).

Ḥērem as an illustration of radical obedience and loyalty to YHWH is also found in the account of the conquest of Transjordan in Deuteronomy 2-3. The complete obedience of Moses and the Israelites, in contrast to the disobedience described in Deuteronomy 1, is emphasized. Chapters 2 and 3 structure the move towards the Promised Land in a number of stages each of which has the same essential structure: journey description – divine command – report of accomplishment.[92]

The application of the *ḥērem* metaphor in Deuteronomy 7 is to be realized in two ways, as indicated by the two stipulations. For both a reason is given (כִּי) that indicates the evocative power and substance of the *ḥērem* imagery. The first stipulation forbids intermarriage with the Canaanite population. How though is the command to be realized if the nations are a stereotypical construct of primeval nations? Understanding it as a prohibition of all marriages with non-Israelites encounters the problem that 21.10-14 envisages the marriage of an Israelite with a woman captured in a town outside the land.[93] However, the problem of the legislation in 7.3-4 and 21.10-14 is not mitigated if the seven nations are understood as a historical reality, for in what sense does a woman from outside Palestine not pose the danger of apostasy that a Canaanite woman is understood to?

A solution may be sought in the differences between the marriage in chapter 7 and chapter 21. In Deuteronomy 7 the marriage between the son of an Israelite and the daughter of a Canaanite suggests a level of social interaction which is not present in Deuteronomy 21. There the captured woman is chosen by an Israelite fighter and not given by a father. The actions of shaving her head, paring her nails and putting aside her clothing might suggest a transfer from a foreign community to the

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[92] Miller 1990: 37.

[93] The woman must be from a town outside the land as comparison with 20.10-18 indicates. A move outside the land is possibly the implication of 'when you go out to war' (21.10) (so Mayes 1979: 303).

Israelite one.[94] Indeed, וְהֵסִירָה אֶת־שִׂמְלַת שִׁבְיָהּ (21.13) resonates with the singular בִּי־יָסִיר אֶת־בִּנְךָ מֵאַחֲרַי.[95] The 'removal' of the clothes of her previous life prevents the 'removal' of the Israelite son from following YHWH. The prohibition of giving children in marriage in Deuteronomy 7, then, is limited to other groups who live in the land because they present the temptation of apostasy.

A narrative account in which this legislation is appropriated is found in Ezra 9-10. The number of mixed marriages seems to have threatened the cohesion of the post-exilic community. The officials present the problem to Ezra with words that clearly reflect Deuteronomy 7. 'The people of Israel, the priests and Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the land with their abominations, from the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and for their sons' (Ezra 9.1-2). The legislation concerning the autochthonous nations, extended on the basis of Deuteronomy 23 to the Ammonites, Moabites and Egyptians,[96] is applied in the post-exilic situation of the 'peoples of the lands' (מַעַמֵּי הָאֲרָצוֹת).[97] The 'peoples of the lands' are the surrounding peoples who do not belong to the returned community.[98] Ezra 9, despite its differences from Deuteronomy 7, clearly envisages the continued relevance of the *ḥērem* legislation, and in a way that does not involve killing anyone (though that would clearly be impossible in the post-exilic situation).

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[94] See, e.g., Craigie 1976: 281; Mayes 1979: 303. Mayes argues, by comparison with 14.1, that they cannot be mourning rites.

[95] Nielsen notes of סוּר that 'von Versuchung zur Abtrünnigkeit nur hier im A.T.' (1995: 95). In the parallel text, Exod. 34.16, זנה is found. In Deut. 13.6, 11, 14 נדח is used.

[96] Deuteronomy 23 excludes Moabites from the assembly of YHWH until the tenth generation (23.3) and the Egyptians until the third (23.8) (Fishbane 1985: 117). In 1 Esd. 8.69 the list concludes with the Edomites, who are also mentioned in Deuteronomy 23, rather than the Ammonites.

[97] Williamson notes that 'the text is careful not to identify "the peoples of the lands" as "Canaanites" etc.' (1985: 130).

[98] '"the peoples of the lands"...referring either to neighbouring peoples, as, for example, the Edomites who had taken over the Judean Negeb, or peoples of foreign

The justification of the prohibition of intermarriage is that 'he would turn your son from after me'.[99] The verb סוּר with its imagery of a path from which the Israelites might stray is closely related to the exhortation not to walk after other gods (Deut. 6.14), as has already been noted. This justification of the prohibition of intermarriage, then, indicates the close ties between the *ḥērem* legislation and the execution of the command to love YHWH. This would lead the children into cultic service of other gods (עָבַד).[100] The effect of intermarriage between the children of the Israelites and the children of the Canaanites, then, is to negate the educational measures of 6.20-25. They result in the destruction of the Israelites (7.4), the opposite of the good that will follow from obedience (6.24).

Ḥērem operates here as a powerful indication of the importance of education. Executing the *ḥērem* legislation, preventing the instilling of the beliefs and practices of the Canaanites, is the negative aspect of the positive commandment to instruct the following generation in YHWH's commandments. In 20.17-18 the destruction of the autochthonous nations is to prevent them teaching the Israelites their abhorrent practices. In 12.30 too Israel are warned against seeking after other gods and the manner in which they were worshipped. The importance of education, and resisting learning Canaanite practices, continues in Deuteronomy 13.[101] The

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extraction settled in the northern and central regions' (Blenkinsopp 1988: 98; cf. Williamson 1985: 46).

[99] The problem of the use of the first person for YHWH has been addressed in a variety of ways. Some argue that the final י in מֵאַחֲרַי is an abbreviation for YHWH (e.g. Mayes 1979: 183-84). Ehrlich suggests מֵאַחֲרָיו (1968: 272). The merging of speech by YHWH and by Moses is not unusual, see 11.14; 17.3; 28.20; 29.4-5. Note particularly that 20.17 cites 7.1-2 as a commandment of YHWH.

[100] In Exod. 34.15-16 intermarriage is closely connected with participating in religious festivals for other gods.

[101] Whether Deut. 12.29-31 is to be connected with chapter 13, chapter 12, or both chapters is disputed. McConville notes the connection between 12.1-4 and 12.29-13.1 and suggests a chiastic inclusio: 'These are the statues you shall be careful to do' (12.1)...Canaanite worship (12.2)...'You shall not do so' (12.4)...'You shall not do so' (12.31)...Canaanite religion (12.31)...'Everything I command you, you shall be careful to do' (13.1) (1984: 59, 64; cf. Rose 1975: 59-94). Mayes, however, recognizes a common theme, the problem of apostasy, in the material of 12.29-13.19 (1979: 230; cf. Pakkala 1999: 23 n. 13). It may be best to understand 12.29-31 as a bridging passage (cf. Seitz 1971: 104-108).

temptation to apostasy occurs in three different guises: a prophet, a family member, and a whole city. The problem of this false education is destruction of its sources. *Ḥērem*, then, envisages a radical detachment from the sources of false education, and is therefore a vehicle for emphasizing the importance of the Deuteronomic ideal of educating the next generation.

The second stipulation concerns the destruction of the religious objects of the Canaanites (7.5). Such language recurs in Israel's history, briefly in the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18.4), and at greater length in the account of Josiah's reform (2 Kings 23).[102] There are three main components to the reform: the destruction of the religious sites, reform and purging of the priesthood, and celebration of the Passover. Josiah's actions lead to the epithet in 2 Kgs 23.25: 'Before him there was no king like him, who turned to YHWH with all his heart, with all his soul and with all his strength'. The explicit quotation of the *Shema*, taken together with the recognition of the extent to which Joshua is portrayed as a reflection of Josiah,[103] underscores the importance of the account in 2 Kings 23 for understanding what it means to love YHWH and carry out *ḥērem*.[104]

The destruction of the religious sites and the celebration of the Passover can both be derived from Deuteronomy, which has, in part or as a whole, been identified with the 'book of the law'.[105] However, does the reform and purging of the priesthood, with its slaughter of the priests of the high places of Samaria (2 Kgs 23.20), reflect a literal appropriation of the *ḥērem* legislation? Lohfink argues that *ḥērem* did indeed justify the actions at Bethel.[106] However, the actions at Bethel and in Samaria find their justification not in the actions against the cultic objects, but in

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[102] The verbs for destruction and the objects destroyed vary between the different accounts.

[103] See Gottwald 1995: 111; Nelson 1981; Rowlett 1996.

[104] 'The text uses "turn" (*šub*) rather than "love" (*'ahab*) because the context of 2 Kgs. 22:3-23:3 makes such a term of repentance appropriate' (Moberly 1999: 137).

[105] For the relationship between Deuteronomy and 2 Kings 22-23, see Preuss 1982: 1-12 and the literature cited.

[106] Lohfink 1994: 193; cf. Bächli 1962: 106; Gottwald 1995: 111; Nelson 1981: 540. Cogan and Tadmor suggest that the action at Bethel reflects the legislation in Deuteronomy 13 (1988: 290).

the words of the man of God in 1 Kgs 13.2. The framework surrounding the story of the man of God indicates that the issue at stake is not the worship of other gods, but Jeroboam's consecration of priests according to his own wishes. Thus, 1 Kings 13 concludes, 'even after this event Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but made priests for the high places again from among all the people; any who wanted to be priests he consecrated for the high places'.[107] Thus the sacrificing (זָבַח) of the self-appointed sacrificers in 2 Kings 23 is an act with deep irony, but not one based on the *ḥērem* legislation. Rather, it reflects Deuteronomic perspectives on the priests and Levites.[108]

Loyalty to, or love of, YHWH in Deuteronomy 7 and 2 Kings 23 is expressed by the destruction of cultic paraphernalia which is alien to YHWH's cult. This action is justified by Israel's status as a holy people to YHWH (7.6). Gammie and Wells draw attention to the fact that in Deuteronomy Israel's holiness is not established upon the principle of *imitatio dei*, though Deuteronomy is familiar with such an idea (10.18-19).[109] Instead, it 'is derived from the notion of the oneness of God and of the divine election of a people'.[110] Deuteronomy's concept of holiness involves a distinction between Israel as the holy people and other nations, rather than between priests and laity.[111] This distinction is preserved[112] by the avoidance of what is

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[107] 1 Kgs 13.33; cf. 1 Kgs 12.31, also 2 Kgs 17.32.

[108] This argument is further strengthened if the idolatrous priests mentioned in 2 Kgs 23.5, whom the kings of Judah are said to have ordained, are executed, rather than deposed (see BDB, 992; Provan 1988: 88. For a similar meaning for שׁבת see Hos. 1.4; Amos 8.4; Pss. 8.3; 119.119). This clearly necessitates distinguishing the כְּמָרִים of v. 5 from the כֹּהֲנִים of v. 9 as McConville does (1984: 133) and *contra* Provan (1995: 275-76).

[109] Gammie 1989: 110; Wells 2000: 93.

[110] Gammie 1989: 110.

[111] See Miller 2000: 159.

[112] Wells warns against too strong a contrast between the views of holiness in Deuteronomy and in Leviticus. Rather, 'Deuteronomy makes the holiness of Israel the basis and reason for obedience (Deut. 7.2-5; 14.1-2, 20) whereas in Leviticus, the commandments are a means to holiness' (2000: 95).

'abhorrent' (תּוֹעֵבָה).[113] Deuteronomy particularly labels as 'abhorrent' the cultic objects and practices of the Canaanites.[114] It is such abhorrent practices that have led to the Canaanites being expelled from the land (18.12). Thus, to remain in the land, and because she is holy, Israel must avoid and destroy all that is 'abhorrent'. The concept of *ḥērem* provides an ideal vehicle for expressing the sort of response Israel is to have towards the objects and practices of alien worship in the land. She is to utterly destroy them.

The failure to destroy what is 'abhorrent' to YHWH will lead to contamination, and Israel will then risk being ejected from the land like the Canaanites. The use of this idea appears in the conclusion of Deuteronomy 7.[115] The Israelites are again warned to destroy the cultic objects. The link between vv. 25-26 is clearly established by the repetition of the last three words of v. 5 at the beginning of v. 25. In v. 26 חרם is explicitly applied to the object, rather than to the Canaanites. The failure to treat it as חרם and destroy it results in the Israelite becoming חרם. The paradigmatic narrative expression of this is, of course, the sin of Achan in Joshua 7.[116] It is possible that the ideas of contamination and purity are found in Deuteronomy 13.

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[113] תּוֹעֵבָה is a characteristic term in Deuteronomy found seventeen times. Only in Proverbs and Ezekiel does the word occur more frequently.

[114] Objects: 7.26; 27.15. Practices: 12.31; 18.9, 12; 20.18; possibly also 22.5; 23.19; cf. 13.15; 17.4; 32.16. It is also used of unclean food (14.3), defective sacrifices (17.1) and false wages (25.16).

[115] These verses are often understood to be a later addition to the chapter (Lohfink 1963: 290-91; Pakkala 1999: 106; Schmitt 1970: 132). The use of the nominal form of חרם rather than the verbal form and the concern with the material that covers the idol have been understood as indicating the presence of a different hand. Stern, however, argues 'yet. [sic] Deut 7:25-6 are so not [sic] violently at odds with the remainder of the chapter as all that' (1991: 111).

[116] There are, of course, some important differences between the Achan story and Deut. 7.25-26. There is no explicit suggestion in Joshua 7 that the robe and precious metal that Achan took were used in idolatrous worship (but see Kearney who suggests a relationship to Jer. 10.1-16 [1973: 11]). This reflects a variation to the practice of *ḥērem* in the case of Jericho reflected in Joshua's announcement prior to the walls collapsing (Josh. 6.16-19). The actions against Jericho, including the command not to rebuild the city, draw it close to the application of *ḥērem* against an apostate Israelite city (Deut. 13.13-19). It is not insignificant, however, that Achan confesses to having 'coveted' and 'taken' the articles (Josh. 7.21; cf. Deut. 7.25).

The use of כָּלִיל for the livestock and possessions of the apostate Israelite city in v. 15 may, as Mayes suggests, reflect notions of expiation.[117] Together with the command not to rebuild the city this seems to indicate the idea of the purification of the land of 'abomination'.

It is evident that as a metaphor *ḥērem* creates a powerful picture of purity. In apocalyptic literature peace and the absence of evil are realized in the future. The bounds are temporal. In Deuteronomy the bounds are geographical. A vision is created of a land in which 'abomination' is absent. This vision of purity provides a powerful illustration of the sort of devotion that YHWH expects from Israel. That is, the vision of a land where 'abomination' is absent is a negative correlative of loving YHWH 'with all your heart and all your soul and all your might'.

One further aspect of *ḥērem* remains to be explored, an aspect which is implicit in understanding *ḥērem* as a metaphor. Since slaughter of the Canaanites or anyone else is not envisaged, *ḥērem* could not be an act of judgement in Deuteronomy, as is commonly suggested.[118] If *ḥērem* were to be understood as a command requiring the slaughter of the Canaanites, understanding *ḥērem* as punishment would be problematic, since *ḥērem* is a practice restricted to the autochthonous nations of Palestine, the Transjordanian nations and a few other nations like the Amalekites.[119] A literal interpretation of *ḥērem* would imply an unmatched level of wickedness by those nations.[120]

In Deuteronomy the punishment of the Canaanites appears to receive its clearest exposition in 9.5, 'it is not because of your righteousness and integrity that you are

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[117] Mayes 1979: 237.

[118] See, e.g., Niditch 1993: 56-77; Mitchell 1993: 63-64.

[119] The limitation of *ḥērem* has already been shown. It is a matter that Stern particularly utilizes. He sees the origin of the Deuteronomic laws on *ḥērem* in the Northern Kingdom during the reign of Jeroboam II. The Deuteronomic laws restrict the practice of *ḥērem* to the conquest of the land. Thus, 'the effect of the laws was to prohibit or discourage a king such as Jeroboam II from retaliating against Moab by using the חרם as the Moabites did in Edom...as well as against the Israelites of Transjordan under Mesha' (1991: 93).

[120] See Goldingay 2000.

going in to possess the land, but because of the wickedness of these nations YHWH is dispossessing before you'. As Gottwald notes, 'this is a curious bit of reasoning. Read in one way it would appear merely to reinforce Israel's confidence'. He suggests that its concern is cultic, not moral. This suggestion is supported by its context, immediately prior to the account of the Golden Calf. The expulsion of the Canaanites occurs because of the threat of contaminating Israel, rather than as an act of punishment.[121] The application of *ḥērem* in Deuteronomy 13 and the Achan story, too, reflect the idea of contamination rather than the idea that *ḥērem* is a fitting punishment. Similarly, the destruction of the Transjordanian nations reflects radical obedience of YHWH's orders, rather than the idea that *ḥērem* was deserved because of Sihon and Og's hardness of heart.

In sum, *ḥērem* is a powerful and evocative metaphor, and as such it is a suitable negative expression of the similarly evocative expression 'love'. It provides a potent illustration of the destructive side of love for YHWH, and in doing so underlines the need for the constructive expressions. Thus, a radical separation from those who worship other gods illustrates the importance of the Deuteronomic educational ideal. Similarly the destruction of everything that is an 'abomination' to YHWH finds its positive correlative in obeying YHWH's commands. Thus, a removal of the Canaanite cultic sites (Deuteronomy 7) must also result in seeking YHWH at his chosen place (Deuteronomy 12). Finally, a preparedness to sacrifice family relationships is the negative expression of a totally devoted love.

5. *Summary*

The supreme expression of the modern conception of 'monotheism' is an intellectual recognition. There is only one God, and no others exist. For Deuteronomy the appropriate response to YHWH's oneness is wholehearted love and devotion. To contrast these two conceptions of 'monotheism' in this way is not

[121] Gottwald 1964: 304 (so also Goldingay 2000: 177). Gottwald correctly notes that for the Canaanites Baalism was not 'wickedness' since other deities had been assigned to them. He thus maintains the distinction between Israel and the other nations which is too frequently elided.

Even if Gottwald's argument was not valid, and 9.4-5 concerned the punishment of the Canaanites, it would be possible to maintain a distinction between *ḥērem* and the expulsion of the Canaanites. 9.4-5 concerns expulsion, not *ḥērem*.

an oversimplification, but captures the difference between the two. What it means to 'love' YHWH is not self-evident in the way that knowing there is one God is thought to be self-evident in the modern conception of 'monotheism'. This is recognized in Rabbinic interpretation of the *Shema*. 'Love' cannot be articulated in one way alone. The Deuteronomic commandment of 'love' is expressed in a number of different ways (Deut. 6.10-19). In a similar way *ḥērem* is patient of a number of different construals. It suggests understanding devoted love as radical obedience to YHWH's commands, as the absence of 'abomination', as something that must transcend human desires for wealth or family. *Ḥērem* also indicates the need for separation and the importance of education.

Two points should be noted that will lead us to the next chapter. First, in Deuteronomy's understanding, loving YHWH is expressed in particular, concrete actions, a contrast with the intellectualism of modern 'monotheism'. Thus, the Israelites are to offer cultic service, obey, separate from the Canaanites, destroy their cultic objects, educate their own children. Second, what is implicit in *ḥērem* as a negative metaphor is the threat that exists to loving YHWH, and thus to 'monotheism'. That is, it is possible to envisage Israel or individual Israelites not loving YHWH wholeheartedly. YHWH may be forgotten.

Chapter 4

RECITE THEM: REMEMBERING 'MONOTHEISM'

> *It can therefore justly be said that as soon as piety has anywhere developed to the point of belief in one God over all, it may be predicted that man will not in any region of the earth remain stationary on one of the lower planes...There is nowhere any trace, so far as history reaches, of a relapse from Monotheism, in the strict sense.*
>
> Fredrich D.E. Schleiermacher

1. *Remembering the* Shema

The first two verses of the *Shema* are followed by six instructions, which concern the inculcation and display of 'these words' (Deut. 6.6-9). These not only underscore the importance of the confession of YHWH's oneness and the command to love him wholeheartedly, but they also indicate that the response YHWH demands requires constant vigilance. The instructions are as follows:

> They are to be upon your heart (v. 6);
> Repeat them to your sons (v. 7);
> Recite them when you rest at home, when you walk, when you lie down and when you rise (v. 7);
> Bind them as a sign on your hand (v. 8);
> They are to be as a frontlet between your eyes (v. 8);
> Write them upon the doorposts of your house and on your gates (v. 9).[1]

The epigraph is from Schleiermacher 1928: 36.

[1] An almost identical list of instructions occur in 11.18-21. It may function as an inclusio with 6.6-9, bracketing Moses' parenesis on the command to love YHWH (Braulik 1994e: 190-91). There are a number of differences between the two lists, including the order of the instructions. Fischer and Lohfink have argued that 11.18-21 is arranged palindromically:

a Learn by heart (18a)
  b Signs on the body (18b)
    c Teaching (19)
  b' Signs on buildings (20)
a' Blessing (21)

In each instruction the object is 'these words', but to what does 'these words' (הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה) refer? A number of different possibilities have been suggested ranging from the whole of the book of Deuteronomy to the four words 'YHWH – our god – YHWH – one' (v. 4b). An answer depends not only on the meaning of 'these words' and 'that I am commanding you today' elsewhere in Deuteronomy; but also depends on the way in which the six instructions in vv. 6-9 are to be realized. If the 'words' are to be visibly displayed on the body and on the doorposts then certain possible meanings are excluded, since it is not possible to envisage a person carrying the whole Deuteronomic code on their hands and between their eyes. However, since the interpretation of the six instructions depends on the meaning of 'these words', the two issues cannot be considered independently of each other.

Disagreement on the meaning of 'these words' is long-standing. Since talmudic times *tefillin*, the small capsules that are worn on the forehead and left arm during prayer, have contained Exod. 13.1-10, 11-16, and Deut. 6.4-9 and 11.13-21; *mezuzoth*, the containers placed on doorposts, have contained Deut. 6.4-9 and 11.13-21. However, the Qumran *tefillin* contained various texts, including, most notably, the Decalogue. The *mezuzoth* of the Samaritans often displayed the Decalogue,[2] but some have the *Shema* or only Deut. 6.4.[3]

According to G. Braulik the singular and plural forms of דָּבָר are used nineteen times of the commands.[4] On eight occasions it refers to the Decalogue,[5] and in Exod. 20.1 the Decalogue is introduced as 'all these words' (כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה). Since the Decalogue immediately precedes the *Shema*, this would seem to provide

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The centre and the framework are related to each other. The theme of learning links a and c, and the reference to children links c and a' (1987: 64-65).

[2] For a list, see Keel 1981: 175-78.

[3] See Davies 1999: 16-18.

[4] Braulik 1970: 45.

[5] 4.10, 13, 36; 5.5, 22; 9.10; 10.2, 4.

a good sense.[6] However, the Decalogue is always described as spoken by YHWH in Deuteronomy, whilst in Deut. 6.6 (cf. 11.18) the words are Moses'.[7]

On a number of occasions דְּבָרִים is used of the whole of Deuteronomy, or chapters 5-26. Thus, in 1.1 'these are the words' (אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים) serves as an introduction not only to Moses' first speech,[8] but also to the whole book. In the so-called 'canon-formula' in 4.2 and 13.1 it probably refers to Deuteronomy 5-26.[9] Despite being held by a number of scholars, it is difficult to find contextual support in 6.4-9 for this interpretation.[10] Braulik argues that למד, which occurs in 11.18, the parallel to 6.6, is used elsewhere with terms for the entire Mosaic law:[11] חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים[12] and מִצְוָה הַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים.[13] However, in the instructions concerning the Song of Moses (31.19, 22), למד refers to the Song alone.

Thirdly, דָּבָר may be used of individual commandments. Thus it is used on three occasions in humanitarian commandments justified by an appeal to remember the Exodus:

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[6] Clements 1998: 343.

[7] Braulik 1970: 45-46, 49. The only exception is 5.5 where Moses is said to be the mediator between YHWH and Israel.

[8] See Lohfink 1962: 32.

[9] See Braulik 1970: 47. In 4.2 דָּבָר is found in connection with חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים and מִצְוֹת. For these terms see above p. 81.

[10] For הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה as the whole of the Deuteronomy or chapters 5-26, see Braulik (1970: 48-49), Christensen (1991: 144), Fischer and Lohfink (1987: 60), Lohfink (1987: 155), Tigay (1996: 68). Veijola argues that with אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם, which, he argues, is a later addition, 6.6 now refers to the whole of the Deuteronomic code (1992a: 371-72).

[11] Braulik also argues that 'originally, דברים probably referred to דבר pi., the verb for promulgating the law in the old heading of 4:45. Now it does not appear to refer to anything in particular' (1994e: 187).

[12] 4.1, 5, 14; 5.1.

[13] 5.31; 6.1. But see above p. 81 for the possible significance of מִצְוָה הַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים.

> So remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and YHWH, your god, redeemed you, therefore I am commanding you this matter today.[14]

דְּבָרִים is also used in this way in 12.28 of the command regarding YHWH's chosen place. דְּבָרִים is used in the instructions concerning the Song of Moses (32.44-47), where it refers to the Song. Significantly, there are a number of parallels between these instructions and those in the *Shema*. In both cases the heart is mentioned, דְּבָרִים is modified by a similar relative clause, and the teaching of children is commanded:

שִׂימוּ לְבַבְכֶם – (6.6) וְהָיוּ עַל־לְבָבֶךָ (32.46);
אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מֵעִיד בָּכֶם הַיּוֹם – (6.6) אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם (32.46);
תְּצַוּם אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶם – (6.7) וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ (32.46).[15]

In the same way as the immediately preceding words of the Song are to be remembered in Israel, so are 'these words' in the *Shema*. Thus, it seems best to understand הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה in the *Shema* to refer to vv. 4-5.[16] This would appear to be confirmed by the parallel in 11.18 (which refers to 'my words' rather than 'these words'), which is sandwiched between two references to the commandment to love YHWH (vv. 13, 22).[17]

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[14] 15.15; 24.18, 22.

[15] Braulik objects to the comparison between 6.6-9 and 32.44-47: 'But in 32:45 at the end of the speech(es) of Moses, כל־הדברים האלה is a verbal reminiscence of 1:1 [Braulik has a reference to Perlitt 1988]. Finally, the promulgatory sentence formulated with מעיד and the unique (to Deuteronomy) צוה pi. for the transmission by the parents in 32:46 cannot be compared with 6:6' (1994e: 265-66 n. 32). Although these dissimilarities may point to different redactional layers, they do not seem to justify neglecting the parallels between these passages in the final form of Deuteronomy.

[16] This position is held by a number of scholars, usually without much justification: Driver (1902: 92), Ehrlich (1968: 270), Nielsen (1995: 87), Smith (1918: 99), Weinfeld (1991: 340).

Veijola (1992a: 377) and Pakkala (1999: 74) argue that הדברים האלה originally referred to 6.4b alone.

[17] See also 28.14 where דְּבָרִים is used in the context of turning to other gods, that is, disobeying the command to love YHWH; and 30.14 where הַדָּבָר is probably identical with הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת, which often functions as a shorthand for the command to love YHWH (see above p. 81).

The phrase 'which I am commanding you today' (אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם) occurs thirty-one times in Deuteronomy,[18] always with Moses as the subject. It may be used with expressions for the entire Deuteronomic code,[19] individual commandments[20] and הַמִּצְוָה,[21] which is sometimes used as a shorthand for the command to love YHWH.[22] Thus, the phrase may be understood as a reference to the entire Deuteronomic law, or vv. 4-5. The expression is not used of the Decalogue. Since the Decalogue was given at Horeb, a similar expression is used but with a perfect, rather than a participle, with YHWH as the subject, and without 'today'.[23]

The use of 'these words' and 'that I am commanding you today' suggests that the object of the six instructions in vv. 6-9 are the words immediately preceding, that is, vv. 4-5. However, this need not absolutely exclude a reference to the rest of the book since, as we have already seen, the command to love YHWH is 'the quintessence of the entire teaching of the book'.[24]

The first instruction is that the words are to be 'upon your heart' (v. 6). The heart, as we have seen, is the seat of the mind,[25] and consequently the seat of the memory. Most interpreters understand this verse as an instruction to memorize 'these words'. The way in which the words are to be memorized is then described in v. 7. However, Couroyer has argued that this assumes that בְּלֵב and עַל־לֵב have the same meaning.[26] Whilst עַל־לֵב may have the sense 'in the mind' (e.g. 2 Chron. 7.11) it may also be used with the sense 'upon the heart', that is, 'upon the chest'.

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[18] See Weinfeld 1972: 356-57.

[19] 4.2[2], 40; 8.1, 11; 10.13; 11.13, 27, 28; 13.1, 19; 27.10; 28.1, 13, 15; 30.8, 16; cf. 6.2.

[20] 12.14, 28; 27.4; cf. 24.18, 22.

[21] 11.8, 22; 15.5; 19.9; 27.1; cf. 28.15; 30.2, 11.

[22] See above p. 81.

[23] 4.13; 5.33; 6.17; 9.12, 16; 13.6.

[24] See above p. 81. The phrase is Driver's (1902: 92). See also von Rad who argues that 'these words' have more than one referent (1966a: 64).

[25] See above p. 126.

[26] Couroyer 1983.

The clearest example is found in Exod. 28.30. The Urim and Thummim are to be placed in Aaron's breastplate so that 'they will be upon Aaron's heart' (וְהָיוּ עַל־לֵב אַהֲרֹן). Significantly, this is the closest verbal parallel to Deut. 6.6.[27]

The same ambiguity is present in the parallel text, Deut. 11.18: 'You shall place these words of mine upon your heart and upon your soul'. The expression שִׂים עַל־לֵב(ב) may be understood metaphorically, 'give careful attention to',[28] or literally 'place them upon the heart'.[29] 'Soul' (נֶפֶשׁ) can indicate the seat of the emotions and desires, but it may be used of the throat. In Proverbs the parental teaching is to garland the son's neck (Prov. 1.9; 3.21-22; 6.20-21). What may be envisaged there and in Deut. 11.18 is wearing a small plaque or amulet, inscribed with 'these words', around the neck.[30] Such an understanding of Deut. 11.18 is strengthened by the juxtaposition of the command to place them upon the 'heart' and 'soul' with the instructions to bind the words on the hand and between the eyes.

Second, the Israelites are to repeat the words to their children (6.7). Some uncertainty surrounds the meaning of the *piel* of שָׁנַן, which only occurs here in the Old Testament. The broad sense of the passage is not in doubt, since in the parallel passage, 11.19, לִמֵּד 'to teach' is used. In the *qal* שָׁנַן means 'to sharpen' with a weapon as the object.[31] In the book of Psalms it is used metaphorically of words on two occasions, for example, 'who sharpen their tongues like swords' (Ps. 64.4; cf. Ps. 140.4). Thus, the *piel* may have the sense 'to teach incisively'.[32] However, Driver has drawn attention to an Ugaritic root *tnn* 'to do a second time', and

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[27] See de Moor 1994: 190-91. De Moor like Couroyer argues for a literal meaning for this instruction.

[28] Isa. 42.25; 47.7; 57.1, 11; Jer. 12.11; Mal. 2.2.

[29] Song 8.6.

[30] For Egyptian amulets carried around the neck, see Keel 1981: 213-14.

[31] BDB, 1041.

[32] BDB, 1042.

suggests the *piel* of שָׁנַן is derived from a different root than the *qal*.[33] This may explain Aquila's δευτερώσεις and Peshitta's ܬܫܢܢ.[34] If שָׁנַן has this sense then the command envisages the repetition of the commandment by the child after the parent.

Third, the words are to be recited when sat at home, walking in the way, when lying down and rising up (v. 7). Until recently וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם, as Fischer and Lohfink have shown, was understood to have the sense 'talk about them'.[35] Thus, S.R. Driver writes, '*And shalt talk of them*]...in order that they may not be forgotten, they are to be a subject of conversation at all times'.[36] Fischer and Lohfink have shown that there are good grounds for rendering דבר ב as 'recite', even 'hum'.[37] In particular, דבר is used of the physical act of speaking, and not of speech about speech. What is envisaged, then, is not the words being the subject of conversation, but their regular repetition.

The contrasting pairs, sat at home – walking in the way, lying down – rising up, could indicate four occasions when the mind is inactive and demand that at those times 'these words' should be recited. Alternatively, it may be that they should be understood as merisms: 'these words' are to be recited at home and away, throughout the day.[38] This command, 'at which one can only shudder',[39] emphasizes the uncompromising claim of the *Shema*. However, it may be that the actions themselves are to be understood as merisms. That is, as in Jewish tradition,

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[33] Driver 1950: 48. Cf. Hebrew שִׁנֵּן.

[34] Weinfeld denies the existence of two roots (1991: 332).

[35] Fischer and Lohfink 1987.

[36] Driver 1902: 92.

[37] German *summen* (Fischer and Lohfink 1987: 67).

Comparison should be made to Josh. 1.8 and Ps. 1.2 where הגה ב 'murmur, recite' is used. It is likely that both passages are dependent on the *Shema* (for Psalm 1, see André 1982).

[38] Fischer and Lohfink 1987: 188; Mayes 1979: 177; Tigay 1996: 78.

[39] Fischer and Lohfink 1987: 183.

by reciting the *Shema* in the morning and the evening the whole day is symbolically covered.

The fourth and fifth instructions appear to concern the display of the words upon the person. Here, as with the first instruction, what fulfilling the instructions entails has been far from uncontroversial. Are these instructions to be understood metaphorically, or are 'these words' to be literally placed upon the hand and between the eyes? If the latter, how exactly is this to be realized? Which words, and are they to be visible or enclosed in boxes? At least as early as the Roman period two different answers are discernible. The *Letter of Aristeas*, the Pharisees of Jesus' day and Josephus clearly understood the verse to mean that some texts should be worn on the body.[40] At Qumran *tefillin* have been discovered.[41] The Samaritans, however, understood Deut. 6.8 metaphorically. In the Middle Ages the Rabbanites and Karaites debated the issue.[42] In modern scholarship the metaphorical interpretation was preferred, but recently a number of scholars have argued the verse should be understood literally.[43]

A metaphorical understanding of these commands may be suggested by a comparison with similar statements in Exodus 13 and the first nine chapters of Proverbs. In Exod. 13.9, 16 it would appear that the feast of Passover and the consecration of the firstborn 'are to be as a sign on your hand and as a reminder/frontlet between your eyes'.[44] In Proverbs the father frequently exhorts his son to bind the parental teaching to his body.[45] It has been suggested that the son was to bind the words of his father to his body (e.g. 6.20-21).[46] In Proverbs 3

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[40] See *Ep. Arist.*, 158-60; Mt. 23.5; Josephus, *Ant.*, 4.8.13.

[41] See de Vaux and Milik 1977.

[42] Tigay 1996: 442.

[43] See esp. Keel 1981. This trend is most clearly illustrated in Weinfeld (compare 1972: 300 with 1991: 341-42).

[44] However, some have argued that 13.9, 16 refer to the statements made immediately prior. So, e.g., Cassuto 1967: 152; Fretheim 1991: 147-48.

[45] Prov. 1.8-9; 3.3, 21-22; 6.20-23; 7.1-3.

[46] E.g. Couroyer 1983.

though, where abstract qualities are to be bound to the body, a metaphorical interpretation must be envisaged (3.3, 21-22).

Whilst good contextual reasons can be found in Exodus 13 and Proverbs 1-9 for interpreting similar statements metaphorically, this is not the case in Deut. 6.8.[47] Instead, there are good grounds for suggesting that the instructions should be understood literally. First, there is archaeological evidence from Israel and the ancient Near East that charms, symbols and words were worn. At Ketef Hinnom two silver plaques were discovered, dated to the sixth or seventh century BC. Measuring 9.7 cm by 2.7 cm and 3.9 cm by 1.1 cm they contained the so-called priestly blessing, Num. 6.22-27. Holes in the plaques suggest that they were worn on the body as a sort of amulet. It is likely that the impetus for this practice is found within the text itself, for in v. 27 the priests are said 'to put my name on the Israelites'.

O. Keel has collected a large amount of material from the ancient Near East, particularly Egypt, to illustrate the instructions in vv. 8-9. He suggests that the אוֹת עַל־יָדֶךָ may be similar to armbands worn in Egypt. These were given to civil servants and had the name and title of Pharaoh upon them.[48] As such they would indicate the servants' loyalty to Pharaoh, or perhaps their possession by him. Certainly slaves bore their owner's name on their wrists in fifth century BC Elephantine.[49] On the basis of artistic representations of the inhabitants of Syro-Palestine, Tigay and Keel have sought to discover an object which may have been intended by the mysterious טֹטָפֹת.[50] Keel cites figures with headbands, upon which

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[47] Keel lists a number of criticisms of the metaphorical interpretation of Deut. 6.8-9 (1981: 179-83).

[48] Keel 1981: 212-15.

[49] Cowley 1923: no. 28.4-6.

[50] The meaning and etymology of טֹטָפֹת is uncertain. The most recent work is by Tigay (1982). In MT it is vocalized as a feminine plural noun, but Tigay argues it is likely that it should be a segholate, טֹטֶפֶת. The feminine vocalization, though, goes back as far as the Roman period (see 4QDeut^{o} in García Martínez 1994: 71). There have been many suggestions for its meaning including frontlets, phylactery, circlet, pendant, symbol and headband. The versions shed little light. The Greek translations have the idea of being firm or unshakeable: ἀσάλευτα (LXX), νακτά

is placed a medallion. Some Syrian goddesses have a *taw* on the headband, which may be a generic mark or an indication of specific allegiance.[51]

Second, other biblical passages utilize the image of writing upon a person. In Isaiah there are two references to writing on the hand. In Isa. 44.5 the Israelites will write לַיהוה on their hands, an indication of ownership or allegiance. In Isa. 49.16 YHWH tells Israel he cannot forget her because her name is on his hands.[52] A parallel to the frontlet is found in Ezek. 9.4-6, where in a vision Ezekiel sees a linen-clothed man marking with a *taw* those who are distressed by Jerusalem's abomination. An even more suggestive parallel, and one which has already been mentioned in the context of the first instruction, is Aaron's clothing in Exodus 28. As well as the breast-plate with the names of the sons of Israel upon it, Aaron is to wear a turban. On this turban there is to be a plate inscribed with קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוה. This inscription is clearly intended to be visible. If this parallel is apt, this would be another interesting reflection of the well-known tendency in Deuteronomy for the sacral to be extended beyond the priesthood to the whole nation.[53]

If the commands in v. 8 did entail the Israelite bearing 'these words' upon their hand and head, biblical and ancient Near Eastern parallels suggest the words were to be visible. Tigay cites evidence that some early Jews understood the commands

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(Aquila). Pesh. has ܛܛܦܬ 'mark'. *Sam. Targ.* has *ṭpym* 'drops', which suggests understanding טֹטָפֹת from נטף. *Targ. Onq.* and *Targ. Ps.-Jo.* have תפילין 'tefillin'.

A number of derivations have been suggested. S.R. Driver offered an Arabic root *ṭāfa* 'to walk around, make a circuit' (1902: 92). E.A. Speiser suggested a quadliteral **taptap* (on analogy with כּוֹכָב from **kabkab*), with the meaning 'double (-headed) companion (figurine)' (1957). A derivation from נטף (cf. *Sam. Pent.*) suggests נְטִ(י)פוֹת (Judg. 8.26; Isa. 3.19), which is often translated 'pendant'. In *m. Šab.* טפת is a piece of women's jewellery.

[51] Keel 1981: 193-211; cf. Tigay 1982.

[52] Comparison may be made with the Rabbinic teaching that YHWH wears a *tefillin* with 2 Sam. 7.23 written in it (*b. Ber.* 6*a*).

[53] See, e.g., Weinfeld 1972: 227-28. The use of the term 'secularization' almost certainly obscures more than it enlightens. See especially Lohfink 1992.

in this way.[54] However, in rabbinic Judaism these commands have been obeyed through the practice of wearing *tefillin*, in which slips of parchment are kept in leather capsules.

Finally, 'these words' are to be written upon the doorposts of the house and the gates of the city (v. 9). If the instruction to recite on getting up and lying down places 'these words' at important chronological junctures in the day, these final instructions place 'these words' at important geographical or societal boundaries. As with v. 8 there are good grounds for suggesting that this verse should be understood literally. First, in Egypt there was a practice of having a list of instructions upon the doorway to the Temple.[55] In Israel too it is likely that the priest sat at the entrance to ensure purity commandments were met.[56] Again this would fit Deuteronomy's extension of the sacral to the whole nation. Second, elsewhere in the Old Testament, symbols are placed on the doorpost. In Exod. 12.7 the blood of the Passover lamb is daubed on the doorposts and lintel. In Isa. 57.8 the Judahites are rebuked for setting up a memorial behind the door and doorpost. This is clearly a pagan memorial, associated, perhaps, with the fertility cult or the cult of the dead.[57] Third, in Judaism and Samaritanism this verse gave rise to *mezuzoth*. In Judaism these are small cases containing Scripture, whilst the Samaritans' *mezuzoth* were stone slabs with visible writing.[58]

In summary, each of the six instructions in vv. 6-9 should probably be fulfilled in specific practices. The nature of some of these practices, that is, those that involve physical display, entails that 'these words' cannot be a large piece of text like the book of Deuteronomy. More appropriate candidates are the Decalogue or Deut. 6.4-5. If the words are to be placed upon the body, such that they are visible, it is

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[54] Tigay 1996: 442.

[55] Keel 1981: 183-92; cf. Driver 1902: 93.

[56] See 1 Sam. 1.9; 2 Chron. 23.19 and the entrance liturgies of Pss. 15 and 24.

[57] Ackerman 1992: 153-54. The chapter interweaves death and fertility throughout, see Ackerman 1992: 101-163.

[58] Philo, however, understood the writing to be visible (*Spec. Leg.* 4.142).

likely that only a short text was envisaged.[59] This would agree with our conclusions on the meaning of 'these words' in Deuteronomy.

The realization of these instructions in these six specific ways clearly has the intention of placing the exacting command of 6.4-5 constantly before the Israelites and their children. Through these external instructions the words of the *Shema* were embedded in the memory and lives of the Israelites, or, if the first instruction is not to be understood as a command to place the words upon the chest, in the words of v. 6 'upon the heart'. It would be mistaken to oppose the external and the internal as, for example, D.L. Christensen does. 'The injunctions of vv 8-9 led in turn to specific practices which, at times, caused people to lose sight of the remarkable vision of an "internalized covenant" suggested in vv 5-7'.[60] The question that has to be addressed is how the 'internalized covenant' might be realized without specific, concrete actions through which the words of YHWH are implanted and retained in the Israelites' hearts and minds. The constant recital of 'these words' suggests that realizing the 'internalized covenant' is far more taxing than, perhaps, Christensen allows. To explore this further it will be necessary to consider what else Deuteronomy has to say about remembering and forgetting YHWH.

2. *Food, Land and Memory*[61]

The twin themes of remembering YHWH's words and teaching them to the next generation, which find expression in Deut. 6.6-9, are two characteristic emphases of the book of Deuteronomy. In no other book in the Old Testament do teaching

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[59] It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that, given the common Samaritan understanding of 'these words' as the Decalogue, v. 8 was interpreted metaphorically and v. 9 literally.

[60] Christensen 1991: 144.

[61] The title of this sub-chapter has a passing resemblance to an essay by R. Knierim entitled 'Food, Land and Justice' (1995c). Knierim draws attention to the lack of study on food in the Bible, and attempts a contribution to the subject. This sub-chapter examines an aspect of food which Knierim did not explore in his essay: that response to food can act as a measure of response to YHWH.

and learning, remembering and not forgetting, play such an important role.[62] This can be seen not only in the frequency of שׁכח, זכר and למד,[63] but also by considering the book's narrative plot. The book is a collection of the four final speeches of Moses. In view of his imminent death, Moses instructs the new generation in YHWH's commands and concludes a covenant between them and YHWH. The book describes a period of transition, and is delicately poised between the desert and the land,[64] between the old generation and the new,[65] and between the leadership of Moses and Joshua. The exhortation to teach, to remember and not to forget express the importance of the continuity that must be preserved. Above all else, devotion to YHWH alone must be maintained in the present generation and instilled in the coming generations.

The theme of memory has already been encountered in the previous chapter as one of the ways in which Israel is to express her love to YHWH. When Israel enters into the land, full of abundant good things, she is to ensure she does not forget YHWH (6.10-12). The position of the theme of memory as the first in the row of expressions indicates its importance. The most sustained reflection on this theme is found in Deuteronomy 8 where the terms 'forget' and 'remember' are clustered.[66]

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[62] For the role of teaching and learning in Deuteronomy, see Braulik 1994e; Lohfink 1987. For the theme of memory in Deuteronomy, see Blair 1961; Childs 1962: 50-56.

[63] Braulik notes that למד occurs seventeen times in Deuteronomy. Only in the Psalms does it occur more frequently (twenty-seven times) and thirteen of these occasions are in Psalm 119 (1994e: 264 n. 8). Childs notes that, with Israel as the subject, זכר occurs thirteen times in Deuteronomy. Again, only the Psalms has more occurrences (seventeen times) (1962: 45-46). With human subjects שׁכח occurs thirteen times in Deuteronomy. Only in the Psalms does it occur more frequently (twenty-three times), of which nine times are in Psalm 119.

[64] For the identification of Israel's journey prior to the crossing of the Jordan as one through 'desert', see Gomes de Araújo 1999.

[65] See Deurloo 1994.

[66] M.K. Deeley points out that the terms are clustered from 7.18 to 9.7 (2000: 112). Deut. 8.1-20 is generally recognized, however, as a well-defined textual unit, with a number of scholars arguing that it has a chiastic structure (Christensen 1991: 173-74; Lohfink 1963: 194-95; Gomes de Araújo 1999: 150-61; O'Connel 1990; van Leeuwen 1985). Deeley's observation indicates that the boundaries between textual units in Deuteronomy are frequently crossed, as befits parenetic material. This is

Israel is to remember the wilderness (8.2-4); she is not to forget YHWH (8.11, 14), but to remember him (8.18); following other gods is to forget YHWH (8.19). This consideration on remembering YHWH begins with a historical retrospect that is the catalyst for the whole chapter. In these verses the other prominent themes of the chapter are also expressed: the desert (and by implication the land) and the commandments. It is, therefore, best to approach the chapter through this retrospect.

The reminder of Israel's time in the desert is bracketed by vv. 1 and 6, both of which concern the commandments.[67] The historical retrospect must serve then as a reminder to Israel to keep the commandments. The importance of this is given in v. 1: obedience will bring life in the land. The retrospect itself, however, concerns Israel's existence outside the land. The previous forty years are explained to be a period of divine testing (8.2). The intentions of the divine testing are spelt out by the two verbs associated with the verb 'to test': 'to humble' and 'to know'.[68] The divine testing, therefore, has a twofold direction, the loss of either of which leads to a form of reductionism. We shall examine each of them in turn.

First, the desert experience is designed to humble Israel. YHWH caused Israel to hunger and then fed her with manna. On a number of occasions in the Old Testament a humble attitude is expressed by the concrete action of fasting.[69] Thus here YHWH humbles Israel by letting her hunger. The aim of this humbling is that Israel might know that she does not live by bread alone, but by what proceeds from the mouth of YHWH (עַל־כָּל־מוֹצָא פִי יהוה, 8.3).[70] L. Perlitt has argued

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important, for as we will see, despite the clear delimitation of the chapter it should not be considered apart from Deuteronomy 9.

[67] V. 6 is joined to v. 5 with *waw* (see above p. 125).

[68] For testing, see Moberly 2000a: 97-107, which includes a discussion of Deut. 8.2-5.

[69] Isa. 58.3, 5; Ps. 35.13; Dan. 10.12; Ezra 8.21; cf. Lev. 16.29, 31; 23.27, 29, 32; Num. 29.7. It is perhaps not insignificant that Moses, 'the most humble man on earth' (Num. 12.3), fasted for forty (or eighty) days and nights on Horeb (Deut. 9.9, 18).

[70] The form of the verse, which may be proverbial, refers to 'man' rather than Israel specifically.

convincingly against the suggestion that what proceeds from YHWH's mouth is manna, and that a contrast is being created between natural food (such as will be obtained in the land) and spiritual food (manna). Rather, one cannot depend on bread *alone*. In the final analysis, man depends upon what YHWH decrees,[71] which includes the manna and the commandment. It is by this that one lives (cf. 8.1).[72] Elsewhere in Deuteronomy the use of 'the mouth of YHWH' (פִּי יהוה) is connected with YHWH's commands in the desert. The actions of the Israelites at Kadesh Barnea are described as 'rebellion against the mouth of YHWH' (1.26, 43; 9.23). Such rebellion brings death to the Israelites, and even to Moses, who dies by the decree of YHWH (וַיָּמָת...עַל פִּי יהוה, 34.5). The sort of knowledge that Israel is to acquire is more than purely intellectual. This is confirmed by v. 5 where YHWH's actions towards Israel are compared to parental disciplining. The kind of educative process that took place in the desert is one of moral formation, in which both intellectual comprehension and correct behaviour are central.[73] The testing in the wilderness aims at Israel's recognition of her dependency on YHWH, which expresses itself in obedience to YHWH's command.[74]

Second, through the desert experience YHWH seeks to know what is in Israel's heart (v. 3). Whatever may or may not be said about the extent of divine knowledge, there is a basic congruence between the knowledge YHWH seeks and the knowledge he desires for Israel. Both may be described as relational. The question posed by the test remains unanswered however. In Genesis 22 when YHWH tests Israel's ancestor (v. 1) it is stated that, through Abraham's preparedness to sacrifice Isaac, YHWH has come to know that Abraham has fear of god (עַתָּה יָדַעְתִּי כִי, v. 12). There is no comparable statement in Deuteronomy 8. Indeed, no explicit answer is

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[71] Cf. Isa. 45.23; 48.3; 55.11.

[72] Perlitt 1981.

[73] See Moberly 2000a: 101.

[74] In other words these two belong inseparably together. Mayes distinguishes two layers of material in Deuteronomy 8. 'The early sections of the chapter, in vv. 7-11*a*, 12-14, 17-18*a*, use it [the word 'forget'] in the sense of the arrogant ascription to oneself of the power which is Yahweh's (see especially vv. 14, 17), while the later sections, in vv. 1-6, 11*b*, 15-16, 18*b*-20, use it in the sense of forget the commandments' (1979: 189). Such a division loses the essential dynamic of the chapter.

found until YHWH's speech in 31.21, when the judgement passed upon Israel is 'I know (יָדַעְתִּי) what they are inclined to do'. In the speech that follows Moses picks up the words of YHWH. 'I know (יָדַעְתִּי) your rebelliousness and stubbornness' (v. 27); 'I know...that (יָדַעְתִּי כִּי) you will act corruptly and turn aside' (v. 29). Moses' reference to the Israelites' 'rebelliousness', 'stubbornness', 'acting corruptly' and 'turning aside' undoubtedly alludes to the episode with the Golden Calf in Deuteronomy 9.[75] The account of the Calf in Deuteronomy 9 should not, therefore, be considered to be completely distinct from Deuteronomy 8.[76] The time of testing in the wilderness, according to 9.7 (cf. 9.22-23), is a time of failure.

The Golden Calf incident, perhaps more than anything else, indicates what is meant in Deuteronomy by remembering and forgetting YHWH. The surprising nature of Israel's sin must not be obscured. Within such a short time of hearing the very voice of YHWH (Deuteronomy 5), including the commandment not to serve other gods, or make an idol, Israel is found to be disobedient. Israel have 'been quick to turn from the way that I command them' (9.12; cf. v. 16). The sin is viewed as so grievous that YHWH is set on destroying the people, an action only prevented by the intercession of Moses (9.25-29). The narrative provides the paradigmatic example of forgetfulness. What is forgotten is not an intellectual fact, such as, perhaps, the wording of the first commandment. It is YHWH that has been forgotten. Israel's dependency on YHWH expressed in obedience to the commandments, the aim of moral formation, has been lost. Or, as it is expressed in 9.24, Israel is 'rebellious against the mouth of YHWH', that is, what he decrees.

Although the time in the desert proved to be a time of rebellion against YHWH, Israel is now on the edge of the Jordan. A new opportunity is present. In

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[75] For 'rebelliousness' (מרה), see 9.7, 23, 24 (cf. 1.26, 43); 'stubbornness' (ערף קשׁה), see 9.6, 13; 10.16; 'corruption' (שׁחת), see 9.12 (cf. 4.16, 25); 'turning aside' (סור), see 9.12, 16 (cf. 11.28).

[76] 'Durch die erneute Anrede Israels in 9,1 (שׁמע ישׂראל) ist zwischen 8,20 und 9,1 rein formal zweifellos die Mittellinie von Deuteronomium 5-11 angezeigt...Anderseits gehören allein schon durch die Wüstenthematik das Endstück der ersten Hälfte des paränetischen Teils der Tora und das Anfangsstück von dessen zweiten Hälfte offenbar eng zusammen' (Gomes de Araújo 1999: 119).

Deuteronomy 29, in the context of Israel's humbling and disciplining by YHWH (vv. 4-5),[77] this is expressed with the words 'YHWH has not given you a heart to know or eyes to see or ears to hear until this day' (v. 3). Might it be that after the forty years of humbling without bread, wine or strong drink, comparable with Moses' forty days without food and water,[78] Israel has been disciplined by YHWH such that she can know and see and hear?[79] Only from the other side of the desert can Israel view the events in Egypt (vv. 1-2) and recognize what YHWH has done, that is, their dependence on him.[80] To express this in different terms, moral formation is a prerequisite for spiritual perception. The narrative context presents Israel at the end of the desert, she has been disciplined so that she can see and hear what Moses will give her. Entrance into the land, however, does not mark an end to YHWH's discipline of Israel. The participle in 8.5 (מְיַסְּרֶךָּ) indicates that this disciplining continues, but it does so in a different mode. The disciplining has its focus, again, around food. But whilst in the desert there was no bread (v. 3; cf. 29.5), the land has no lack of it. In this land of abundance the challenge remains for Israel to continue to recognize her dependence on YHWH. The land, no less than the manna, is a gift from YHWH.[81] Israel must not ascribe the land to her own power (8.17), but to YHWH (8.18). The appropriate response in the land is to 'eat your fill and bless YHWH' (8.10).

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[77] The aim of the desert experience is described as 'in order that you might know that I am YHWH' (v. 5). In Exodus 5-15 Pharaoh is made to realize that 'I am YHWH', which is described in Exod. 10.3 as *humbling* himself before YHWH.

[78] Gomes de Araújo 1999: 318-19.

[79] This verse has puzzled many commentators. The interpretation given above suggests that divine causality and human freedom are not the best frames of reference for approaching this text (see, e.g., Tigay 1996: 276). Luther, however, appears to have made the connection to chapter 8. He writes, 'You should strive with fear and concern, so that by your humility you may deserve this gift of an understanding heart, a hearing ear, and a seeing eye' (1960: 271-72).

[80] Craigie writes, 'with this perspective of time, the Israelites could learn to see God's presence in their past experience, but it required insight and perception...When we read today the accounts of Hebrew history, the divine perspective has already been provided' (1976: 356). Unfortunately he appears to suggest that it is the distance of time, or the presentation of the events as divine actions that is needed. His suggestion that 'insight and perception' is required more closely indicates that what is important is moral formation.

[81] See Perlitt 1981.

In Deuteronomy 8, then, food is the vehicle through which Deuteronomy envisages Israel expressing her remembrance of YHWH. Through hunger and the manna she is to express her humble dependence on YHWH, and through the abundance of bread in the land she is to express thankfulness to YHWH.[82] Remembering YHWH is expressed in concrete ways: through humility, thankfulness and obedience of the commandments. The chapter does not describe the 'passive response of covenant loyalty' in contrast to the 'active response' of chapter 7 as O'Connel has it.[83] Remembrance in Deuteronomy is not something passive. Instead, both chapters describe the active ways in which 'love' to YHWH is to be expressed.

3. *An Enduring Song*

Deuteronomy's final, and most striking, mnemonic device is the Song of Moses (32.1-43). This, too, has as its goal reminding the people of Israel that YHWH is the only one to whom they should be completely devoted (32.39).[84] Despite being embedded in the narrative plot, the only poem in the Old Testament for which this is the case,[85] the Song is almost universally recognized as an independent composition.[86] Deuteronomy indicates the same thing, although it describes it in its own idiom. The Song and the speeches in 31.14-23, though spoken by Moses, are said to be, like the Decalogue, the words of YHWH.[87]

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[82] With its emphasis on food as a vehicle for expressing love to YHWH, Deuteronomy 8 shares in a theme that runs throughout the book (see, for example, chapters 12 and 14). In particular one of the reasons for the curses coming upon Israel is her failure to serve YHWH and rejoice in the goodness he has given her (28.47).

[83] O'Connel 1990: 451.

[84] For 32.39 as the climax of the Song, see above p. 110.

[85] Watts 1992: 64-65; cf. Labuschagne's comment, 'the most striking feature with regard to the Song of Moses is the way it is set in its context' (1971: 85-86).

[86] 'It has long been evident that ch. 32 has undergone a lengthy period of independent existence and only secondarily has been given its present context in relation to ch. 31' (Childs 1979: 220).

[87] Vv. 14-23 are also in a style quite different from the rest of Deuteronomy, see Driver 1902: 336-38.

Scholarly research has, therefore, been largely concerned with questions about the date of the Song's composition and its meaning in this context.[88] The dating of the Song is far from certain, and dates ranging from the 12th century BC to 400 BC have been suggested. A number of factors have been important in dating the Song. The first factor has been the historical situation the Song describes, in particular the identification of the 'no people' (לֹא עַם, v. 21).[89] The description of Israel's enemy is so evocative and indefinite such that no certain identification is possible, and a definite identification may not have been intended.[90] There is, however, a broad consensus that the Song describes events after the Conquest but does not mention the Exile.[91] Second, the language of the Song has been used in establishing

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[88] P. Sanders' recent monograph on the Song is characteristically concerned with exactly these sorts of questions (1996).

[89] Cassuto argued that the enemy was the Canaanites (1973: 43). Eissfeldt suggested that the enemy were the Philistines, and that the Song had its provenance in the period between the events of 1 Samuel 4 and 11 (1958: 20-25, 41-43). His suggestion has proved influential and has been followed by Albright (1959: 344; although Albright himself believes that the 'no-people' in v. 21 are Israel, he recognizes the Philistines as the enemy *par excellence* in the Song), Mendenhall (1975: 65-66) and Cairns (1992: 286). De Moor has recently suggested that the Song was written in response to defeat by the Sea-peoples (1997: 249-54). Dillmann argued that the enemies were the Arameans (1886). The Assyrian invasion of the northern kingdom is preferred by Reichert (1986: 59), a view that Sanders is prepared to consider (1996: 434-35). Driver suggests that rumours of Scythian invasions in Josiah's reign are the most likely source of the concept of the 'no-people', although they may not have been meant by the expression (Driver 1902: 365-66). Ewald (1857: 42-43), Steuernagel (1923: 168-69), Löhr (1903: 15) and Fohrer (1970: 190) understood the enemy to be the Babylonians. This idea can also be found in the Targums and Rashi (*Targ. Ps.-Jo.* on Deut. 32.23; Rashi on 32.21). Sellin argued that the Song was a post-exilic composition and the 'no-people' should be understood as a description of the Samaritans (1925). Similarly Reichert has also suggested that if the 'no-people' are not the Assyrians they could be the peoples who were settled in the north after the fall of Samaria (1986: 59).

[90] A number of scholars have argued that the language could characterize any of Israel's enemies and is not meant to be 'a concrete description of the enemy though whom Yahweh will punish his people' (Mayes 1979: 388). See also Craigie (1976: 383) and Ridderbos (1984: 281).

[91] Sanders views the exile as the *terminus ad quem* (1996: 433-36). Similarly Nigosian argues that the absence of any mention of the exile indicates a pre-exilic date (1996: 22). However, Sellin argued that the omission reflected a post-exilic origin (1925: 161).

a date of composition. The abundance of *hapax legomena*[92] and continued debate about the classification of words as Aramaisms or archaic do not aid firm dating.[93] Third, the form of the Song has been used as a criterion for dating,[94] but there is no agreement upon the Song's form or structure.[95] A fourth factor has been the theology of the Song. This has focused on the Song's 'monotheism'.[96] However, disagreements about the 'monotheism' articulated in the Song and the development of Israel's religion have problematized this approach.[97] Finally, the intertextual

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[92] Driver notes fourteen *hapax legomena* and twenty other uncommon words (1902: 348).

[93] Many of the words that were regarded as Aramaisms by older commentators (see, e.g., Driver 1902: 348) have been found at Ugarit or could be understood as northern or archaic. Both Nigosian and Sanders have recently rehearsed the arguments about the language of the Song. They consider the work of other scholars on Deuteronomy 32, but for their own work they rely heavily on the categories and analysis of D.A. Robertson. Both reject a date which is very early, or one that is very late. Despite this, Nigosian argues that the linguistic evidence points to a date for the Song between the 10th century BC and the 8th century BC (1997), while Sanders is non-committal, but thinks the evidence for a late date is less conclusive than it once was (Sanders 1996: 332-33). Robertson himself dated the Song to the 11th or 10th century BC (1972: 155). Wiebe follows him and dates the Song to 1100 BC (1989: 146-50).

[94] Nigosian 1996: 5-7.

[95] Some scholars emphasized the didactic character of the Song. The consensus within biblical scholarship on the late date of wisdom literature led to a corresponding late date for the Song (e.g. Boston 1968). Others have argued that the Song is a mixture of forms, a *Mischgedicht*, and dated the Song late (von Rad 1966a: 200; Reichert 1986: 56-59; Winter 1955: 45). Those who have followed Huffmon's suggestion that the Song is a covenant lawsuit, or *rîb* (1959), have tended to prefer an early date (Wright 1962; Nigosian 1996: 22).

[96] Other theological factors have been utilized in dating the Song. The idea of idolatry followed by punishment and restoration was an indication of an affinity with the late pre-exilic prophets according to Driver (1902: 347). Von Rad noted the Song's conception of YHWH as the creator of Israel, and the idea that Israel's punishment might have a 'psychological effect on the nations'. Both of these ideas began to emerge in the Exilic prophets (1966a: 200). Mendenhall argues that the lack of any reference to Israel's slavery in Egypt is an indication of the Song's early date (1975: 67).

[97] Eissfeldt argued that, although monotheism which denied the existence of other gods did not find expression until Deutero-Isaiah, there had existed expressions of YHWH's incomparable uniqueness and superiority in the conflict with other peoples during the taking of the land and the United Monarchy (1958: 19-20). Similarly, Albright argued that the 'virile monotheism' exhibited in the Song suggests a time when Yahwism was fighting for its life. This would fit the time of Samuel (1959: 346). On the other hand, Meyer agreed with Eissfeldt that the Song is a mixture of

links between the Song and other biblical literature have been used to secure the Song's dating. However, there is no certainty regarding the direction of influence.[98]

Most attempts at dating the Song have relied on more than one of these factors. However, none of them conclusively supports a single date. On the contrary, each has been used to support a variety of dates. Even in recent scholarship de Moor has argued that the Song reflects the 12th century BC conflicts with the Sea Peoples, Sanders has suggested that the Assyrian and Aramean invasions of the Northern kingdom provide the most probable background, and Nigosian has argued for a date between the 10th century and 8th century BC.[99]

Whilst questions of the Song's provenance and role clearly have a place, my intention is to consider the Song's function within the context of Deuteronomy. For the reader of Deuteronomy, the meaning and purpose of the Song has already been preconditioned by the narrative account which precedes it in chapter 31, and is further clarified by the concluding words in 32.44-47. The structure of the narrative in Deuteronomy 31-32 is, unfortunately, far from straightforward, as has long been recognized.[100] The chronological order of events is difficult to reconstruct.[101] The

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the theology of Yahwism and Canaanite religion. However, the idea of God assigning the nations to the sons of God is an idea of cosmic governance based on the Persian empire. Thus the Song should be dated to 400 BC (1961: 203-204). Recently Sanders has argued that the Song is monotheistic, but he defines monotheism in such a way as to forbid the veneration of other gods, but not deny their existence. Such an understanding of the theology of Deuteronomy 32 suggests a date before Deutero-Isaiah (1996: 420, 426-29).

[98] The Song's many links to the prophetic literature, especially in the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, have been understood in quite different ways. At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth many scholars dated the Song later than the prophets. However, this was turned on its head by Cassuto, Eissfeldt and Albright who suggested that the Song should be dated to the 11th century BC and thus the prophetic material was dependent upon the Song. The intertextual links between the Song and other literature, both in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East, have been studied in detail by Sanders (1996: 354-426).

[99] De Moor 1997: 249-54; Sanders 1996: 433-36; Nigosian 1996; 1997.

[100] Von Rad speaks of 'debris of traditions rather than a real advance in the narrative' (1966a: 190) and G.E. Wright regards it as 'something of a mystery why the heterogeneous contents of this chapter are so badly disarranged. The evidence suggests the attempt by an editor to copy a series of MS fragments without editing

overall theme of the chapters is the appointment of three successors to Moses: Joshua, the Torah and the Song. This is presented in a series of speeches.[102] Prior to the introduction of the Song (vv. 16-22) the narrative poses no major difficulties. Moses speaks to the people, encouraging them to cross over the Jordan with boldness (vv. 2-6). He then turns to Joshua and encourages him in the task of leadership (vv. 7-8). He then transcribes the Torah and entrusts it to the priests and the elders and instructs them to read it to the people every seven years (vv. 9-13). In v. 14 YHWH begins to speak. He instructs Moses to bring Joshua to the tent of meeting to be commissioned. The actual commissioning is cut across by the introduction to the Song (vv. 16-21). With its dark warnings of Israel's apostasy it changes the bright optimism that appeared to characterize the previous verses. Moses is then said to have written the Song down and taught it to the Israelites (v. 22). The commissioning of Joshua then takes place with YHWH reiterating Moses' encouragement (v. 23; cf. vv. 7-8). In v. 24 Moses is again said to have transcribed the Torah (v. 24), but this time he entrusts it to the Levites. Further, there are no instructions about the reciting of the Torah so that the people can obey it, instead the Torah is a witness against Israel (vv. 24-27). Moses then calls for the elders in order to recite 'these words', which appears to mark an abrupt return to the Song as the subject (vv. 28-29). Moses then recites the words before the whole assembly of Israel (31.30-32.43). At the end of the Song the reciting of the Song is mentioned again, but this time it is by Moses and Joshua (32.44). Finally, Israel is given instructions about the Song (vv. 45-47).

A solution to these difficulties will not be provided here. There are a number of recent treatments of the chapters, which attempt to engage with the present form of

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or relating them' (1953: 516). Interpreters at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century discerned the re-emergence of J and E (see Nielsen 1995: 273-75).

[101] For the most recent attempt, see Lohfink 1993. He argues for the following order: Transcription of the Law (31.9, 24); conclusion of the covenant and appointment of Joshua in an assembly of the people (29.1-31.8); theophany with Joshua and Moses (31.14-23); commissioning of the Levites with the Torah (31.24-27; cf. 31.9); commissioning of the Elders through the Levites and giving of the Song to them (31.28-30); instructions concerning the reading of the law (31.10-13); teaching the Song to the whole assembly (32.44); final words of Moses (32.45-47).

[102] See Lohfink 1962.

the material and try to explain its narrative structure and content.[103] The most fruitful of these treatments, in my opinion, is that by E. Talstra who analyses the structure of the text without recourse to either notions of the author's artistic skill or a reconstruction of the chronological order of the events. He argues that 'the frequent change of actors in the narrative frame can be taken as a signal that the most effective way of entering the text is to analyse it in terms of the various roles and actors presented, rather than in terms of its chronological order or its theological concepts'.[104] Analysing each of the speeches he argues that the Song interferes with the process of Moses' succession, forcing the roles of the other successors to be redefined.[105] To understand the Song it is necessary to understand its relationship to the other successors, and *vice versa.*

The relation between Joshua and the Song is indicated by the interruption of Joshua's commissioning by YHWH's words concerning the Song (31.16-21). Although the words of the commission in v. 23 do not differ markedly from vv. 7-8, they are placed in a quite different context. In vv. 7-8 Moses' encouragement of Joshua occurs in the context of his death. Joshua is to be Moses' successor and will complete the task of taking the Israelites from Egypt to the land. In v. 23 the commissioning occurs after YHWH's pessimistic portrayal of Israel's future history. Joshua's task now marks the beginning of a new episode, and not the conclusion of the Mosaic era.[106] Both Joshua and the Song, as Moses' successor, are means of YHWH's presence for the Israelites. But whilst YHWH promises to be with Joshua the Song remains to be a witness when he turns away from them. The Song may, perhaps, be described as YHWH's presenting his absence, or absenting his presence.[107]

The Torah in vv. 9-13 is transmitted to the priests and elders so that it may be read to the Israelites every seven years and obeyed. When the issue of the Torah is again

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[103] See Britt 2000; Labsuschagne 1997a; Lohfink 1993; Talstra 1997; Watts 1992: 63-81.

[104] Talstra 1997: 96.

[105] *Contra* Britt who sees Torah as the most important successor to Moses (2000).

[106] Talstra 1997: 98-99.

[107] Cf. Turner 1999.

addressed in vv. 25ff. it appears to have been totally subsumed by the Song. So complete is this embrace that Moses can move from Torah to Song, with no clear indication of where one ends and the other begins.[108] Torah now shares the Song's role as a 'witness'. Torah and the Song do not have a role as trial witnesses. Rather like the altar in Joshua 23 and the stones in Gen. 31.26, they are a sign of the covenant and, thus, a warning.[109] Similarly, heaven and earth are called not as witnesses in a trial against Israel, for she has not yet sinned, but to warn her.[110] They warn Israel of the consequences of angering YHWH and set before her the choice of obedience and disobedience (cf. 30.19). The positive role of the Song appears in 32.45-47 where the Song is said to help Israel to obey Torah and thus live.[111]

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[108] There have, of course, been a number of attempts to make vv. 24-29 speak either about the Song or the Torah. These have either involved emending הַתּוֹרָה to הַשִּׁירָה in vv. 24, 26 (e.g. Ehrlich 1968: 340), understanding הַתּוֹרָה as the Song (e.g. Labuschagne 1997a: 124), denying any reference to the Song in vv. 28-29 (e.g. Mayes 1979: 379-80), rearranging vv. 24-29 to before chapters 29-30 (e.g. Oettli 1893: 11-12), or assigning them to different layers (e.g. Driver 1902: lxxvi).

[109] Bovati 1994: 264.

[110] It appears to be difficult to justify the usual translation of הֵעִיד בְּ in Deut. 4.26; 30.19; 31.28; 32.46 as 'witness, testify against' when it is consistently rendered 'warn' outside Deuteronomy (see, e.g., NRSV. On the rendering 'warn', see Seeligmann 1967: 265-66). Bovati notes, 'the verb *'wd* (*Hi*), usually used with the preposition *b*^{e}, means to testify solemnly against someone. In the majority of cases this testimony precedes the crime, and so is not properly an accusation, nor, so to speak, a conditional anticipation of it (cf. Gen. 43.3; Exod. 19.21, 23; Deut. 4.26; 8.19; 30.19; 31.28; 32.46 etc.)' (1994: 301).

[111] Understanding the framework to the Song in this way corrects the assumption made, for example, by von Rad. 'This interpretation of the Song [31.16-22] as issuing out of the state of penitence (Israel is accused by the words of the Song) is a very arbitrary one, and it must be said that it diminishes to some extent the purport of the Song. For the comforting statements in the Song (vv. 36, 40ff.), if interpreted in this way, no longer come to fruition' (1966a: 190-91).

The view that the interpretation in 31.16-22 refers to only a limited portion of the Song has led to a number of solutions. Ewald suggested that vv. 16-22 referred to a different Song (1857: 63-65). A number of scholars suggest that the author of 31.16-22 knew an earlier version of the Song, which lacked the hopeful material (Baumann 1956; Braulik 1992: 227; Cairns 1992: 290). Huffmon (1959: 289) and G.E. Wright (1962) saw the second part of the Song as an extension to the classic *rîb* form. Sanders suggests that the writer of vv. 16-22 was aware of the whole Song, but his view of the Song reflects that he lived in 'conditions of extreme helplessness or in confident expectation of such conditions' (Sanders 1996: 348).

The role of the Song, therefore, is chiefly envisaged as a witness, warning the Israelites, making YHWH's words and Torah present to the nation. It is less 'a kind of time bomb' or 'mnemonic...ready to come to mind when the troubles arise'[112] and more a constant reminder, regularly taking Israel to the place of decision. It does not appear when Israel has turned from YHWH as a witness in a trial, but is envisaged as acting as a regular challenge to her. Whenever the Song is recited deep heart-searching is provoked. Are they the generation who have abandoned the rock? The evocative, non-specific nature of the 'no people' allows the poem to engage each new generation.

The close relationship between Torah and Song suggests, as J.W. Watts argues, that Deuteronomy 31-32 'presents the psalm as a popularly accessible summary of Deuteronomy's theology and thus a counterpart to the law-book itself'.[113] The relationship between the Song and the rest of the book, mostly the framework to the code, may be demonstrated not only on the basis of individual expressions, but also with broader theological themes. Some of the expressions that are found in the Song and have comparative expressions in the rest of the book are: 'heaven – earth',[114] 'faithful *el*',[115] 'corrupt',[116] 'allotted inheritance',[117] 'flint rock',[118] 'abominations',[119] 'unknown gods',[120] 'jealous',[121] 'anger'.[122] However, as is well known, the Song does not employ classic Deuteronomic idioms, and its own characteristic vocabulary, such as 'rock' and 'sons', is either not to be found in the

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[112] Fisch 1988: 51.

[113] 1992: 67. Cf. Levenson's comment that 'the exilic frame to Dtn is the sermon for which the Song of Moses is the text' (1975: 217).

[114] 32.1; cf. 4.26; 30.19; 31.28.

[115] 32.4 (אֵל אֱמוּנָה); cf. 7.9 (הָאֵל הַנֶּאֱמָן).

[116] 32.5; cf. 4.16, 25; 9.12; 31.29.

[117] 32.8-9; cf. 4.19-20; 9.26, 29; 29.26.

[118] 32.13 (מֵחַלְמִישׁ צוּר); cf. 8.15 (מִצוּר הַחַלָּמִישׁ).

[119] 32.16; cf. 7.25, 26; 12.31; 13.15; 17.1, 4; 18.9, 12; 24.4.

[120] 32.17; cf. 11.28; 29.26.

[121] 32.16, 21; cf. 4.24; 5.9; 6.15.

[122] 32.16, 19; cf. 4.25; 9.18; 31.29.

rest of Deuteronomy or is infrequently evidenced.[123] More important, then, are the broader thematic similarities between the Song and the book.

In the Song and the rest of the book YHWH's claim to Israel's devotion is an important theme. In v. 39 this claim is made at a climactic moment. However, it underpins the whole of vv. 10-21. Other gods, in contrast, are regarded as strange and unknown to Israel. They are allotted to other nations (vv. 8-9). The rest of the book presents a similar account of deities other than YHWH: they are 'other gods' or 'gods of the nations'. In the Song and the rest of the book the centrality of YHWH's claim to Israel's devotion is underscored by the view that following other gods is the greatest sin. In both, Israel's abandonment of YHWH is traced back to Israel's satiation. YHWH's generosity is seen as the greatest expression of his faithfulness and the greatest threat to Israel's faithfulness (vv. 10-15; cf. ch. 8). Whilst the description of vv. 10-15 probably portrays, as is generally held, Israel's wilderness experience and time in the land, it is an account which is different from those found elsewhere in the Old Testament.

The portrayal of Israel's sin and YHWH's anger against his people in vv. 19-27 reflects, at least in part, the account of the Golden Calf in Deuteronomy 9-10. The themes of jealousy and anger are common to both accounts, with fire an evocative image of this anger.[124] Whilst aspects of YHWH's wrath reflect life in the land (v. 25), some of the language used is reminiscent of the descriptions of the desert (v. 24; cf. 8.15). YHWH's decision to rescind (v. 27) is made on the basis of the enemy's provocation, the same grounds on which Moses appeals in 9.28.

The Song follows a similar logic to that found in the rest of Deuteronomy. Abandoning YHWH leads to wrath and the fulfilment of YHWH's curse. The curse can be described in terms of physical hunger and disease, the opposition of the

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[123] Despite having its own style (see above p. 172 n. 87), YHWH's introduction to the Song (31.16-22) acts, to some extent, as an interface between the Song and the rest of the book. Not only does it refer explicitly to the Song, it also relates it to Deuteronomic concepts such as 'covenant', 'other gods', 'land flowing with milk and honey', 'oath to the ancestors'.

[124] v. 27; cf. 9.15.

animal world and defeat by enemies. Although these are similar to the curses in Deuteronomy 28,[125] they are more closely paralleled in the curses in Leviticus 26. After the curses the Song envisages the possibility of YHWH again intervening for his people, and the destruction of his enemies (32.36-42). A similar future is described in 30.1-10, though here a return from exile is explicitly mentioned.

As a summary of the Torah, the Song allows the words of Moses to be remembered from generation to generation. It is thus part of the fulfilment of the promise that the word is in the people's mouth and heart (30.14; cf. 31.19). According to YHWH's introduction to the Song, these words will not be forgotten (31.21). This is not to suggest that the words do not need to be remembered. These words of the Song need to be displayed and taught in ways similar to the *Shema* (32.44-47).[126] In the terms used by v. 47 remembering the Song is 'no empty matter'. This is also indicated by an examination of the Song which reveals a number of rhetorical features that enable the Song to be remembered.

First, the Song has as its basic structure a continuous narrative, which moves from primeval past through to restored relationship in the future. The didactic use of stories is found elsewhere in Deuteronomy, for example, 6.20-25, 8.2-5 and 26.5-10. There, as in the Song, the recital of the narrative should lead to a correct response to YHWH. The Song's journey from past to future is not the only movement in the Song. The Song also moves from heaven to earth to Sheol and back again. Second, within this narrative structure the Song is moved forward by oscillating between different speakers. The principal speaker is the Song's narrator. YHWH is heard in vv. 20-27, 34-35 and 37-42. It is possible that the voice of the elders of Israel is heard in vv. 8-14.[127] An indication of the possible speeches is as follows:

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[125] Compare 32.23-24 with 28.20-24; 32.30 with 28.25; 32.24 with 28.26.

[126] See above p. 158.

It is probably these similarities which explain the discovery of a *tefillin* at Qumran containing the Song (4Q142. See Vaux and Milik 1977: 72-74). Since this use clearly depends on the context provided by Deuteronomy, it does not support arguments for the Song's independent existence (*contra* Irsigler 1990: 162).

[127] On a number of occasions, vv. 8-14, 28-33, it is difficult to distinguish between one voice and another, or to decide when one voice ends and another begins.

Narrator (1-7)
Elders (8-14)
Narrator (15-19)
YHWH (20-27)
Narrator (28-33)
YHWH (34-35)
Narrator (36)
YHWH (37-42)
Narrator (43).[128]

As well as the speakers there are a number of 'actors' with walk-on parts, such as the gods and other nations. All appear at the beginning in the call to heaven and earth, and in the final curtain call at the end, according to some versions (v. 43).[129]

Third, the Song has a careful use of rhythm. The main rhythm is 3:3, but this is lost, particularly in vv. 23-32, which is perhaps not insignificant, since the subject of these verses is the destruction of Israel. The current verse division makes the song fluctuate between longer colons (four lines) and shorter colons (two lines). There are also two exceptionally long colons with five lines in vv. 14 and 39. If a balancing line is not be sought for the fifth line,[130] the extra lines occur at the end of vv. 10-14 emphasizing YHWH's overwhelming kindness to Israel, and at the climax of YHWH's final speech emphasizing YHWH's overwhelming power.

Fourth, the song uses recurring motifs to enforce its message. The main theme of the Song is the contrast between the faithfulness of YHWH and the unfaithfulness of Israel. YHWH's faithfulness finds expression in the title, 'Rock', in contrast to other gods who are not rocks.[131] Israel's characteristic epithet is 'sons', which highlights the enormity of Israel's unfaithfulness.[132] Finally, there may be examples of various words-plays. Paronomasia may occur in vv. 6-7 where YHWH is described as קָנְךָ

[128] Given the oscillation between different speakers it is perhaps not unimportant that after the initial recital of the Song to the Israelite officials by Moses (31.30, see Lohfink 1993), both Moses and Joshua recite the Song to the Israelites. Judges 5 also has two speakers.

[129] See above pp. 119-22.

[130] For v. 14, see Eissfeldt 1958: 10; Sanders 1996: 174-78; Steuernagel 1923: 167. For v. 39, see Lust 1994; König 1917: 212.

[131] 32.4, 13 (?), 15, 18, 30, 31, 37.

[132] 32.5, 8 (LXX, 4QDeut^{j}), 19, 20, 43 (LXX, 4QDeut^{j}); cf. 32.6, 18.

and אָבִיךָ and the elders as זְקֵנֶיךָ and אָבִיךָ. In the same verses rhyme, -ךָ, and alliteration, קָנְךָ...וְיִכֹּנֶנְךָ, can be found. Rhyme also occurs in vv. 10-11, -הוּ, and in v. 15, -תָּ. In v. 36 there is alliteration: עָצוּר וְעָזוּב.

Before we take leave of the Song, it is necessary to explore one paradoxical matter which remains unexamined. The Song, as we have seen, contains a number of features which enable it to be remembered. Further, Moses gives the people strict instructions to pass the Song on to the next generation. It is, perhaps, not surprising then that YHWH says that this Song will not be forgotten from their mouths (31.21). How then can the people come to the point where they forget YHWH (32.18)? This paradox should probably be viewed as similar to that found in the incident with the Golden Calf in Deuteronomy 9. Full appropriation of the Song by the people is no easy matter. It is possible to know the words of the Song, and yet not to 'know' them. Or, in the Song's terms, the Israelites are foolish and senseless (32.6). Again, a simple contrast between internal and external covenants is inappropriate at this point. For Deuteronomy there is no internalized covenant without the instructions that place YHWH's words permanently upon their lips (cf. 31.21). The task of 'remembering YHWH' in the Song, as elsewhere in Deuteronomy, is an enormously demanding one. In common with Deut. 8.2-6 and 29.3-5 the Song also suggests that it is a task in which YHWH's discipline is needed. It is only in Israel's utter desolation (32.36) that YHWH is able to confront the people and enable them 'to see' (32.39; cf. 29.3). Only in YHWH's provision for them at that moment of hopelessness can they see their utter dependence on YHWH, the one who kills and gives life, wounds and heals (32.39).

4. *Summary*

This chapter opened with a quotation by Schleiermacher. In his opinion 'there is nowhere any trace, so far as history reaches, of a relapse from Monotheism, in the strict sense'. It is has become evident in our examination of Deuteronomy that whatever Schleiermacher meant by 'Monotheism, in the strict sense' it is quite different from Deuteronomy's confession of the oneness of YHWH. This confession is characterized not by its inherent stability, but by its precariousness in the life of Israel. In order not to forget YHWH the commands must be learnt, recited and

taught, as one part of the process of discipline. Such discipline will lead to the recognition of Israel's total dependence upon YHWH and his decrees, which the penetration of YHWH's word into every sphere of life (6.6-9) so graphically portrays. For Deuteronomy this is what it means to confess YHWH is one. It is to recognize that there is no god with YHWH, and that Israel depends on YHWH for life and death (32.39).

Chapter 5

HEAR O *ISRAEL*: 'MONOTHEISM' AND ELECTION

> *If God is to be exhaustively described and represented as the Subject who governs and determines everything else, there must be an advance beyond the immediate logical sense of the concept to the actual relationship in which God has placed Himself; a relationship outside of which God no longer wills to be and no longer is God, and within which alone he can be truly honoured and worshipped as God*
>
> Karl Barth

It is not inconsequential that the *Shema* begins, not with the four words 'YHWH – our god – YHWH – one', but with an address to a particular people, YHWH's people, Israel: 'Hear, O Israel'. This sense of address is present throughout the *Shema* with the continuous reference to 'your'. In the concluding instruction the words of the *Shema* are to be written on the city gates, making the words binding on the whole community (v. 9). Reading the words of the *Shema* is, therefore, to enter into a privileged conversation between Moses and Israel. The words are not directed to any other nations, but to Israel alone. The content of the *Shema* makes this entirely appropriate, for, as has been argued, the primary significance of the *Shema* is the relationship between YHWH and Israel. YHWH is to be Israel's one and only; and Israel, in response, is to love YHWH. This carries with it the important consequence that, in examining what Deuteronomy has to say about the oneness of YHWH, such statements cannot be detached from what it has to say about Israel. It will be necessary then, in exploring what Deuteronomy has to say about 'monotheism', that we give careful attention to what is said about YHWH's chosen people.

The recognition that election is, so to speak, the other side of 'monotheism' has been made before. The Rabbis recognized this and expressed it in their own idiom. YHWH, like Israel, wears a phylactery. His contains the words of 2 Sam. 7.23: 'and

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The epigraph is from Barth 1957: 7.

who is like your people, like Israel, one nation in the earth?'.[1] Modern scholars have also recognized this relationship,[2] often expressed in the slogan 'one God, one people, one cultic place'.[3] Sometimes it is argued that 'monotheism' is the framework within which election can develop. In his work on election in Deuteronomy, Rendtorff writes, 'von der Erwählung Israels aus allen Völkern nur dort gesprochen werden kann, wo Jahwes alleiniges und ausschließliches Gottsein erkannt worden ist und behauptet wird'.[4]

The importance of election in Deuteronomy can hardly be overstated. Th.C. Vriezen went as far as to call the theology of Deuteronomy 'eine Erwählungstheologie'.[5] In terms of a history of Israel's religious thought, Deuteronomy is attributed with the first use of בָּחַר for Israel's election,[6] and Deut. 7.6-8 is frequently described as the *locus classicus* of election.[7] Deuteronomy uses בָּחַר with Israel as the object of the choosing in 4.37; 7.6, 7; 10.15; 14.2. Apart from 14.2, these occur in conjunction with statements about YHWH's uniqueness (4.35, 39; 7.9; 10.17). Further, the concept of election is also closely associated with formulae such as the so-called 'covenant formula' -ל -היה ל (4.20; 26.17-19),[8] and with other terms found in Deuteronomy: לָקַח (4.20, 34),[9] נַחֲלָה (4.20;

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[1] See *b. Ber.* 6*a*.

[2] E.g. Altmann 1964: 7; Brueggemann 2000; Rowley 1950: 60-63.

[3] For this slogan, see p. 93.

[4] Rendtorff 1981: 83. Rendtorff argues that Deuteronomy's formulation of election is an attempt to solve the tension between the traditions of Israel's privileged position and the new universal understanding of God. Cf. Danell 1953: 23-24.

[5] Vriezen 1953: 47.

[6] Driver 1902: lxxx; von Rad 1962: 178; Weinfeld 1991: 60; Wildberger 1997a: 215. Koch, however, comes to a different conclusion on the basis of work on בָּחַר in the Psalms (1955: 206-14). Whatever the history of בָּחַר, the concept is certainly found earlier. According to Weinfeld, prior to Deuteronomy יָדַע and הִבְדִּיל were used for the same concept (1991: 60). For a history of the concept, see Shafer 1977; Wildberger 1960, 1970; Zobel 1968.

[7] This description is so frequent that citing examples is unnecessary.

[8] See Rendtorff 1998.

[9] Seebass 1997: 20; Preuss 1995: 31.

32.9), עַם סְגֻלָּה (7.6; 14.2; 26.18), עַם קָדוֹשׁ (7.6; 14.2, 21; 26.19; 28.9). In each case the terms and formulae are closely integrated with the context in which they are found. This presents the interpreter with the same problem as is confronted when examining Deuteronomy's statements about YHWH's oneness; that is, there is no obvious place to begin examining Deuteronomy's richly interwoven presentation of election. If the Gordian knot has to be cut then perhaps no place can lay better claim than the so-called *locus classicus* of election, Deut. 7.6-8. This will be examined first, followed by the story of the Golden Calf and Moses' intercession in Deuteronomy 9-10. Finally, Deuteronomy 4 and the Song of Moses will be considered. These not only frame Deuteronomy's teaching on election, but place election into a larger narrative picture.

1. *Deuteronomy 7: Israel and other Nations*

The so-called *locus classicus* of election, Deut. 7.6-8, occurs in the context of the commandment to put the Canaanite nations to *ḥērem*.[10] The realization of this command through a prohibition on intermarriage with the Canaanites and the destruction of their cultic objects suggests a radical separation between the Israelites and the autochthonous inhabitants of the land. As I have already suggested, this commandment should be viewed as one of the ways in which the command to love YHWH is to be realized. Disobedience of the command threatens the relationship between YHWH and Israel that the *Shema* describes. The two stipulations of the *ḥērem* legislation are justified in vv. 4 and 6ff. through explanations introduced by כִּי. Intermarriage is prohibited in order to prevent the Israelites being turned away from YHWH (v. 4). The destruction of the Canaanites' cultic objects is justified on the basis of Israel's special status as YHWH's elect. Israel is a 'holy people', עַם קָדוֹשׁ, and must not defile herself with what is abhorrent to YHWH.

[10] As Moberly (1999: 135 n. 2) and Elnes (1997: 27) note, when Deut. 7.6-8 is cited this context is frequently ignored.

'Holy People' (Deut. 7.6)

The description of Israel as עַם קָדוֹשׁ is unique to Deuteronomy, but is similar to expressions found in Exodus. In Exod. 19.6 Israel will be YHWH's 'holy nation', גּוֹי קָדוֹשׁ, if she obeys the commandments that are given to her at Sinai.[11] In Exod. 22.30 meat that has been picked over by beasts is prohibited, since Israel is to be אַנְשֵׁי־קֹדֶשׁ. In the Old Testament, however, the use of 'holy' with the people is relatively rare.[12] It is far more common for it to be used with objects in the cultic sphere. This has led Wildberger to suggest that Israel has been taken into YHWH's holy domain and is thus inviolable, 'die Heiligkeit, die Israel in der Erwählungstradition zugesprochen wird, besteht also in seiner Unantastbarkeit; mit kultischer Reinheit oder moralischer Tadellosigkeit hat die Vorstellung nicht zu tun!'.[13] On the other hand, Procksch argues that the concern is with cultic purity.[14]

In Deut. 7.6 עַם קָדוֹשׁ is closely related to questions of cultic contamination from the Canaanites. Verse 6b suggests that the affirmation that Israel is YHWH's עַם קָדוֹשׁ has a twofold direction. It entails that Israel is different; she is separated from the nations. 'YHWH has chosen her from all the peoples on earth'. Israel, therefore, has a particular relationship to other nations. Second, she has a special relationship towards YHWH; she is his עַם סְגֻלָּה. The term עַם סְגֻלָּה occurs in Deuteronomy on three occasions (7.6; 14.2; 26.18). On each occasion it is found in the context of election, and in association with עַם קָדוֹשׁ.[15] The cognate terms in

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[11] Deuteronomy's עַם קָדוֹשׁ is usually considered to be dependent on Exodus' גּוֹי קָדוֹשׁ (Wildberger 1960), but some have argued for the reverse (Le Roux 1982/83; Van Seters 1994: 274).

[12] Wildberger writes, 'die Ermittlung der näheren Bedeutung von גּוֹי קָדוֹשׁ in Ex. 19 ist bei der Spärlichkeit des Echos, das die Vorstellung gefunden hat, nicht leicht' (1960: 97).

For a consideration of Israel as a 'holy people' which considers the thematic links, rather than just the linguistic use of קדשׁ with גּוֹי, see Wells 2000.

[13] Wildberger 1960: 98.

[14] Procksch 1964: 91-92.

[15] Cf. Exod. 19.5. In Mal. 3.17 and Ps. 135.4 סְגֻלָּה alone is used of Israel. In both cases עַם קָדוֹשׁ is also absent.

Akkadian and Ugaritic suggest wealth, sometimes with royal associations.[16] In two late Old Testament texts, 1 Chron. 29.3 and Eccl. 2.8, it is used of treasure. Despite the rarity of סְגֻלָּה and its cognates, we may plausibly suggest that in Deuteronomy the term has the sense 'favoured possession, treasure'.[17]

In Deuteronomy 14 עַם קָדוֹשׁ occurs twice and its use suggests that it is Israel's relationship to other nations which is particularly in view. In 14.2 it justifies the prohibition of certain mourning practices. In 14.21 it is used in a comparable way to Exod. 22.30 to prohibit the consumption of a carcass by Israelites. As well as its immediate connection with these specific commands the two uses of עַם קָדוֹשׁ frame the prohibition of eating what is 'abhorrent' (Deut. 14.3-21).[18] Why the practices and foods, described as unclean in Deuteronomy 14, should be 'abhorrent' is unclear. The suggestion that they relate to specific Canaanite cultic practices is, in the context of the chapter's position following the warnings in 12.29-13.18, attractive, but in individual cases difficult to prove. The mourning practices in 14.1 find their closest parallel in the bloodletting of the prophets of Baal at Carmel (1 Kgs 18.28),[19] though in 1 Kings 18 there is no obvious connection to mourning. The dietary instructions in vv. 3-21 may reflect the association of particular animals with certain cultic practices.[20] This theory struggles, however, to cover all the animals prohibited in Deuteronomy 14.[21] The suggestion that the prohibition of boiling a kid in its mother's milk reflects a Canaanite practice has had adherents since Maimonides.[22] An Ugaritic text (*KTU*

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[16] See Lipiński 1986; Wildberger 1997b.

[17] Uffenheimer suggests that סְגֻלָּה means 'vassal', on the basis of the use of its Ugaritic and Akkadian cognates in treaties with the term 'servant' (1999: 516-29). There is no reason, however, why the general meaning of 'wealth, favoured possession' should not be understood. For a criticism of Uffenheimer, see Loewenstamm 1992b.

[18] Houston 1993: 56.

[19] Mayes 1979: 239.

[20] As argued in some cases, for example, by Craigie (1976: 231).

[21] See Houston 1993: 72-74. Houston also reviews the various explanations that have been offered for the prohibited animals (1993: 68-123).

[22] For an account of the interpretations of this verse, see Haran 1979.

1.23) once thought to be a close parallel, is now generally judged to be inconclusive.[23] A more comprehensive explanation than an appeal to Canaanite practices is that the boundaries between clean and unclean, between what is acceptable and what is 'abhorrent', symbolize the boundary between Israel and other nations.[24] They indicate the distinctiveness of Israel; she is YHWH's holy people.

The symbolic boundaries between Israel and other nations suggest something significant about the nature of Israel's election. What is prohibited is abhorrent to YHWH and to Israel, but this is not a universal principle. In the list of foods certain animals are described as 'unclean for you' (vv. 7, 10, 19). Similarly, a carcass may be sold to non-Israelites as food (v. 21). For Deuteronomy its instructions are not to be applied universally, but are restricted to those who are in the relationship created by YHWH. The practices are important for Israel to follow as they symbolize the distinction between her and the other nations. Failure to keep the stipulations demanded of a holy people threatens the distinction between worship of YHWH and worship of other gods (Deut. 12.29-13.19).

Deuteronomy's use of עַם קָדוֹשׁ, however, suggests more than a separation between Israel and other nations, as we have seen in 7.6. In 26.17-19 YHWH and Israel commit themselves to the covenant. Israel makes YHWH declare that he will be her god and she agrees in three parallel statements to obey his commands (v. 17). YHWH, for his part, makes Israel declare she will keep his commandments and he affirms in three parallel statements that he will give her a unique position. Israel will be a עַם סְגֻלָּה, she will be set high above all the nations made by YHWH for fame, praise and honour, and she will be a holy people (vv. 18-19), as he has

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[23] Labuschagne 1992: 12-13.

The most exhaustive study of the relevant passage in the Ugaritic material has been attempted by Ratner and Zuckerman. They conclude, 'Is there a "kid in milk" in *KTU* 1.23, line 14 and does it have any relevance to the biblical prohibition enjoining boiling a kid in its mother's milk? Our personal opinion is *no* on both counts – especially on the latter' (1986: 52).

[24] See, e.g., Houston 1993: 241-44; Mayes 1994.

promised her.[25] We have already seen that עַם סְגֻלָּה indicates the special relationship that Israel has with YHWH; she is his treasured possession. Israel's honoured status finds further expression in YHWH's promise to set her high above all the nations.[26] For whom, though, is the 'fame, praise and honour', YHWH or Israel? The immediate context would seem to suggest that it will be conferred upon Israel. However, the same phrase is also found in Jer. 13.11 and 33.9. On both occasions the recipient of praise is YHWH. It is possible that Deut. 26.19 bears the same sense. It may be unwise, though, to prefer one to the other. In Miller's words, 'the special status of Israel and the fame, praise, and honor that accrue to them are not ends in themselves or, perhaps better, not simply for Israel's sake but *to the glory of the Lord of Israel*'.[27] The use of עַם קָדוֹשׁ in 26.19 suggests, therefore, that this is an honour and a privileged position amongst the nations.

In 28.9-10 the covenant commitments of 26.17-19 are alluded to in the context of YHWH's promise to bless Israel if she obeys (28.1-14).[28] YHWH will establish Israel

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[25] The translation of vv. 17-19 is straightforward apart from the unique *hiphil* of אמר (BDB, 56). The meaning of the *hiphil* may be causative (which includes declarative) or intensive (GKC, §53*c*, *d*). Both causative and intensive senses have been suggested. With a causative *hiphil* v. 17 is a declaration by YHWH, and vv. 18-19 a declaration by Israel (see, e.g., Driver 1902: 293). With an intensive *hiphil* v. 17 is a declaration by Israel, and vv. 18-19 a declaration by YHWH (see, e.g., Craigie 1976: 324-25; Robinson 1907: 188). The content of the declarations provide no simple solution to the problem, since v. 17 contains one infinitive clause appropriate to YHWH, and three appropriate to Israel, and in vv. 18-19 the second infinitive clause is appropriate to Israel, and the third to YHWH, but the other two are uncertain. In his detailed examination of the passage Lohfink has drawn attention to a treaty between the Hittite emperor, Hattisilis III, and the Egyptian Pharaoh, Ramases II, in which each king declares his commitment and then the commitment he expects from the other king. Further, he draws attention to the repeated כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר in vv. 18, 19 which refers to promises YHWH has made and suggests these verses are part of a declaration by Israel. Lohfink therefore suggests the *hiphil* has the meaning 'to accept what someone says', and offers the translation 'Du hast heute zugestimmt zur Erklärung Jahwes...' (1969). Mayes notes, however, that this translation is 'somewhat awkward' (1979: 339). It is, perhaps, better to accept the usual causative sense of the *hiphil*.

[26] A similar statement is made about David in relation to other kings in Ps. 89.28.

[27] Miller 1990: 188. Miller's italics.

[28] Lohfink 1969: 533-34; Mayes understands YHWH's oath as a reference to the Sinai covenant (1979: 353; cf. Driver 1902: 305-306; Ridderbos 1984: 255).

as his עַם קָדוֹשׁ, for she will be keeping YHWH's commands. The relationship between Israel's status as עַם קָדוֹשׁ and the obedience of the commands is indicated by כִּי. This should be translated 'for', rather than 'if', since here, as elsewhere in Deuteronomy, Israel's status as עַם קָדוֹשׁ does not depend on her obedience to the commandments, but her position entails keeping the commandments.[29] What is expressed here is clearly seen in 26.17-19 where neither obedience nor bestowal of the status of עַם קָדוֹשׁ precede the other, but rather they relate to one another as privilege and responsibility. Whilst 26.17-19 describes Israel receiving an honourable position amongst the nations for praise, fame and honour, in 28.9-10 the other nations will see that YHWH's name is called upon Israel.[30] The expression 'to see that' (רָאָה כִּי) is a variation on the more common expression 'to know that' (יָדַע כִּי), the so-called *Erkenntnisaussage*.[31] The content of the nations' recognition is YHWH's ownership of Israel.[32] This is a position of honour and praise, and is contrasted with how Israel will be regarded if she does not obey YHWH: she will be an object of horror to the nations (28.25, 37).

It is evident, then, from our examination of the use of עַם קָדוֹשׁ that neither Wildberger nor Procksch have adequately expressed the term's meaning in Deuteronomy. It is used in contexts which suggest that both cultic purity and obedience to YHWH's commandments are entailed in being a holy people. It implies, therefore, a distinctiveness from other nations. However, it also indicates a special relationship to YHWH, which may be described in various ways. The two aspects of Israel's relationship are closely entwined. Israel's distinctiveness from other nations is expressed in ways that confirm her relationship to YHWH, and

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[29] Driver 1902: 306; Smith 1918: 309; Wells 2000: 46, 66.

[30] 28.10 is connected by a *waw* to the statement about Israel being a holy nation.

[31] Zimmerli cites two examples of רָאָה כִּי from Ezekiel: 21.4 and 39.21 (1982c: 31). To this can also be added Isa. 41.20 and possibly 40.5.

[32] See KB, 1130; Driver 1902: 306. The name of YHWH is said to be called over Jerusalem (Jer. 25.29; Dan. 9.18, 19), the temple (1 Kgs 8.43 [=2 Chron. 6.33]; Jer. 7.10, 11, 14, 30; 32.34; 34.15), the ark (2 Sam. 6.2). It is used of Israel in Jer. 14.9; Isa. 63.19; 2 Chron. 7.14; Sir. 47.18.

Israel's special relationship to YHWH is something that can be recognized by other nations.

It is also worth noting that the election of Israel, for Deuteronomy, takes place within a universal horizon. Israel is chosen 'from all the nations'. Within this universal horizon a fundamental distinction is created between Israel and the nations. Israel is YHWH's holy nation; the other nations are not. Israel is chosen; the other nations are not. Israel has certain obligations placed upon her; they are not shared by the other nations. The use of עַם קָדוֹשׁ within Deuteronomy does not suggest that other nations will share in Israel's status, or that they will be chosen by YHWH. The universal horizon of Israel's election does not entail the erasure of any distinction between Israel and the other nations. Since this is the case, Deuteronomy's nuanced handling of election cannot be described as either 'universalistic' or 'not universalistic', without eliding important elements of Deuteronomy's presentation.[33]

The Basis of Election (7.7-8)

The establishment of a privileged relationship between Israel and YHWH, which excludes other nations, appears to have raised the question of the basis of this relationship. Verses 7-8 reject the assessment that Israel was chosen because of some innate characteristic. Israel was not loved by YHWH because of (לֹא מִן) her numerical greatness, since Israel is, in fact, small.[34] Rather (כִּי מִן), the choice of Israel is located in YHWH's love of Israel and his promise to the patriarchs. The paradoxical logic of vv. 7-8, then, is that YHWH loved you (חָשַׁק) because he loved

[33] For a criticism of the use of 'universalism', see Levenson 1996. 'Universalism' is frequently used in scholarship in a variety of ways, often with no clear indication of what is meant by the term.

[34] Some commentators have detected a contradiction between the statement here and other statements in Deuteronomy about Israel's great size, and have sought a solution on a historical level. Thus, Weinfeld writes, 'this is to be understood against the background of the kingdom of Judah before its destruction in the sixth century B.C.E. and stands in contradiction to verses such as 1:10; 10:22; and 28:62, which are dependent on older sources reflecting the flourishing situation of the united kingdom' (1991: 361). However, notions of size are not absolute, and a solution may, perhaps, be sought by reference to the rhetorical function of such statements.

you (אֹהֵב). This decisive location of election not in Israel, but in YHWH, undercuts any attempt to explain Israel's election. There is a mystery here, which is ultimately irreducible.[35] The strategy that bases election in YHWH's sovereign choice, and not in any quality that Israel possesses, also has the implication that Israel's election cannot be explained by an appeal to her poverty and lowliness. This is not a universal movement by YHWH on behalf of the weak and poor, but the election of a particular people. Taking Israel as his 'holy people' means that YHWH leaves many weak and poor in the other nations outside.[36] This need not imply, of course, that YHWH is not concerned for the weak and poor outside of Israel's boundaries.

The election of Israel in vv. 7-8 is closely related to two historical events: the oath to the patriarchs, and the exodus from Egypt. In Deuteronomy the oath to the patriarchs, in all but a few cases, refers to the promise of the land.[37] YHWH has, therefore, been faithful to that promise as is seen in the exodus from Egypt, which has as its ultimate aim the taking of the land, the context of the chapter. The promise to the patriarchs again reflects YHWH's sovereign choice, not something deserved by Israel herself. The land, then, is a tangible expression of YHWH's election.

The Faithful El

The description of YHWH's election of Israel leads to the demand that Israel recognizes YHWH as God (הָאֱלֹהִים). However, YHWH's claim to uniqueness is tightly connected to his electing actions towards Israel. First, as the *waw* connecting v. 9 to v. 8 indicates, the demand to confess that YHWH is God is a consequence of YHWH's actions. Second, the meaning of הָאֱלֹהִים is explained by the statement that follows about YHWH being a faithful *el* (vv. 9b-10).

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[35] See Levenson 1996: 156.

[36] For a critique of easy equations of YHWH's election of Israel with a divine preference for the poor, see Levenson 1993d.

[37] 1.8, 35; 6.10, 18, 23; 7.12, 13; 8.1, 18; 9.5; 10.11; 11.9, 21; 19.8; 26.3, 15; 28.11; 30.20; 31.7. In 13.18 it refers to descendants, and in 29.12 it refers to the promise that Israel will be YHWH's people.

It has already been noted that אֵל functions in a distinctive way in Deuteronomy. Whilst אֱלֹהִים describes a deity, whether YHWH or other gods, in relationship to his people, *el* is used of a deity's characteristics seen in that relationship.[38] The *niphal* participle, נֶאֱמָן, is used frequently of trustworthy and reliable men,[39] but is only used of YHWH on one other occasion in the Old Testament, in Isa. 49.7. The conceptual links between Deuteronomy and Isaiah 40-55 are well known, and include the election of Israel and the uniqueness of YHWH.[40] Significantly, Isa. 49.7 places נֶאֱמָן in parallelism with YHWH's election of Israel:

לְמַעַן יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר נֶאֱמָן
קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּבְחָרֶךָּ

As in Deuteronomy 7, YHWH's faithfulness is seen in his election of Israel.

The nature of YHWH's faithfulness is described in the two participle clauses that follow (vv. 9b-10). These two clauses describe YHWH's actions in two directions depending on human response to him. The content of the second clause is repeated in detail in v. 10b.[41] These verses are a re-presentation of a statement about YHWH that was clearly considered to be significant, since it is found in a number of places.[42] Its first appearance in the book of Deuteronomy (and in the Old Testament)[43] is in the Decalogue. For my limited concern here, to consider Deuteronomy and 'monotheism', it is not necessary to explore the intertextual links

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[38] See above p. 136 n. 58.

[39] Jepsen 1974: 295.

[40] See, most recently, Labahn 1999.

[41] NIV understands v. 10 as a poetic fragment. Weinfeld suggests that vv. 9-10 originated from a 'liturgical-hymnic formula' (1991: 371).

[42] E.g. Exod. 20.5-6; 34.6-7; Num. 14.18; Deut. 5.9-10; Jer. 32.18; Joel 2.13; Jon. 4.2; Nah. 1.2-3; Pss. 86.15; 103.8; 145.8; Neh. 9.17. On Exod. 34.6-7 Brueggemann writes, 'the statement itself appears to be a rich convergence of Israel's preferred adjectives for Yahweh' (1997: 215).

[43] Exod. 34.6-7 is frequently understood to represent the oldest form of the statement in the Old Testament (see, e.g., Krašovec 1999: 114). On a canonical level, however, the version in the Decalogue precedes that in Exodus 34. See Moberly 1983: 37-38.

between Deuteronomy 7 and the rest of the Old Testament. But comparison with its use in the Decalogue is important.[44]

A comparison between Deuteronomy 7.9-10 and 5.9-10 reveal a number of important differences. First, in 7.9 the concept of the covenant, בְּרִית, is found, which is not present in 5.9-10. In the context of Deuteronomy 7 this is not the Horeb or Moab covenant, but the oath YHWH swore to the patriarchs (v. 8). Second, the order of the two participle clauses in Deuteronomy 7 is the reverse of that found in the Decalogue. This has the effect of emphasizing YHWH's anger against those who hate him in the Decalogue, and YHWH's steadfast love to those who love him in Deuteronomy 7. Contextually such a difference is appropriate for, whilst the Decalogue is concerned with the consequences that will result from abandoning YHWH, Deuteronomy 7 focuses upon YHWH's unmerited election of Israel.[45]

Third, both passages differ in the way that YHWH expresses his anger towards those who hate him. In 5.9 the sin of the fathers is visited (פָּקַד) upon the sons, and upon the third generation and upon the fourth generation. In 7.10, however, YHWH repays (שָׁלַם) the one who hates him to his face.[46] The difference is usually explained as a repudiation of the idea of corporate responsibility by the author of Deut. 7.10. Thus, Weinfeld writes,

> The author of Deuteronomy retains the first part of the hymnic formula, 'keeping kindness to the thousandth generation', but changes altogether the clause about punishing the next generations for the sin of their ancestors. He does not accept the view that God visits the fathers' sins upon the descendants but, on the contrary, requites the sinner personally.[47]

Certainly the principle that children suffer for the sins of their parents is critiqued in a number of places in the Old Testament,[48] but the case for that understanding in

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[44] Cf. Braulik 1994c: 111-12.

[45] Cf. Exod. 20.5-6 and 34.6-7.

[46] 'The negative section (v. 10) departs notably from the classical formula' (Krašovec 1999: 126).

[47] Weinfeld 1991: 371; cf. Braulik 1994c: 111; Tigay 1996: 436-37.

[48] E.g. Jer. 31.28; Ezek. 18.2; Job 21.19.

Deut. 7.10 is less strong than is often assumed. Such a critique is not explicitly made, and depends upon understanding Deut. 7.10 as a polemical recasting of 5.9.

If Deut. 7.10 does not polemically recast 5.9 then what does it do with it? Clearly YHWH's response to those who hate him is central, since the participle clause, which finely balances the clause in v. 9b, is further explained with a finite clause: 'he is not slow to the one hating him to his face he will repay him' (לֹא יְאַחֵר לְשֹׂנְאוֹ אֶל־פָּנָיו יְשַׁלֶּם־לוֹ). A close verbal parallel is found in Deut. 23.22, 'if you make a vow to YHWH, your god, do not be slow to fulfil it' (לֹא תְאַחֵר שַׁלְמוֹ). What is at stake here is that there must be no delay in fulfilling a vow, and thus the concern of 7.10 is to affirm that YHWH repays evil in the present. Thus an asymmetry is created between the two participle clauses. The first clause promises the *permanent duration* of divine favour (where one thousand is a Hebrew idiom for something unlimited), the second clause promises divine anger in the *present* to those who hate YHWH. However, such asymmetry is found in the Decalogue. Against Weinfeld, the first part of the formula is not retained, for YHWH's grace is shown 'to thousands' (לַאֲלָפִים) in 5.10, not 'to the thousandth generation'(לְאֶלֶף דּוֹר), as in 7.9.[49] Thus, in the Decalogue the divine anger is promised for a *short duration* (where three or four is a Hebrew idiom for something small), whilst divine favour is given in the *present* for those who love YHWH. Thus, both statements are fully congruent with one another. In their contexts they each emphasize different aspects of YHWH's actions. In the Decalogue YHWH will punish to the third and fourth generation, but this will in no way exclude him showing grace to thousands. In Deuteronomy 7 YHWH shows grace to the thousandth generation, but this will in no way exclude him from punishing those who hate him.

[49] Also Krašovec 1999: 126. He writes, 'the expression *lē'elep dôr* provides a valuable confirmation that, in the passages already dealt with, *la'ălāpîm* (Exod 20:6 = Deut 5:10; Exod 34:7; Jer 32:18) must be understood in the sense of a succession of up to a thousand generations and not as denoting a mass of people living at one particular time'. This is not the only way of understanding the relationship.

The emphasis in Deuteronomy 7, in contrast to the Decalogue, indicates, then, something of the paradoxical nature of election. YHWH's actions are in both cases directed towards Israel, and those who are part of Israel, for both 'love' and 'hate' are words that belong in a covenant context, and thus are only appropriate for Israel.[50] Whilst YHWH's covenantal favour is unending to those who have loved him and to their descendants, he is not slow to bring punishment upon those who hate him. The tension that exists between these two aspects of election is left unexplored in Deuteronomy 7. Within the context of vv. 6-8, it suggests that although YHWH will show his anger against those who turn away from him, yet his electing love and faithfulness will continue to be maintained to Israel because of YHWH's election of the patriarchs. Thus, Israel's obedience remains of crucial importance, but her election cannot be repealed, because it is founded on YHWH's love (7.8), which continues to the thousandth generation.[51] It is entirely appropriate, therefore, that the demand to confess that YHWH is the faithful *el* should lead to an exhortation to obedience (v. 11).

Before we leave Deuteronomy 7, it is necessary to consider the relationship between the confession that YHWH is God, and YHWH's election of Israel. The confession that YHWH is God (v. 9) is to be found embedded in a consideration of election (vv. 6-8, 9-10). Indeed, the confession of YHWH flows from the description of YHWH's electing actions, and is defined in terms of YHWH's faithfulness. P.D. Miller is the only commentator, as far as I am aware, who has considered something of the significance of this linkage,

> The meaning of this election and redemption for *Israel's understanding of its Lord* is also spelled out. For one thing, it shows quite clearly that the Lord of Israel is God. Redemption from slavery and Pharaoh's hand

[50] This is not to say that the words cannot be re-appropriated and applied to Israel's enemies in other contexts (e.g. 32.41).

[51] Moberly's reflections on God's repentance touch upon this same issue. 'On the one hand, God acts on God's own initiative, calling people with a call that is irrevocable precisely because it depends on God and not on the one called. On the other hand, the relationship thus initiated is a real one in which there is everything to be gained or lost according to how human beings live within that relationship with God. It depends on God, and it depends on human response' (1998: 121). YHWH's 'repentance' is, of course, the way that Jonah rearticulates the tension in Exod 34.6-7 (Jon. 4.2).

> is the evidence of the Lord's claim to be God. Claim to divinity is found here in the power to break the chains of slavery and oppression (cf. Ps. 82).[52]

Although the central concern of Deuteronomy is not the breaking of the chains of slavery and oppression,[53] Miller nevertheless indicates the right direction to locate YHWH's claim to divinity. YHWH's claim to be God is demonstrated not so much in his relationships with other deities, or in his nature, but in his electing actions towards Israel. This is to reverse the order suggested by Rendtorff: 'von der Erwählung Israels aus allen Völkern nur dort gesprochen werden kann, wo Jahwes alleiniges und ausschließliches Gottsein erkannt worden ist und behauptet wird'.[54] That is, in order to recognize YHWH's uniqueness we must first recognize Israel's election. Whether this is the *only* way in which YHWH's uniqueness can be recognized would be to claim too much on the basis of Deuteronomy 7 alone. It does suggest, however, a basic congruence between Israel's love of YHWH and YHWH's oneness, for as Israel's love can only be seen through concrete actions, so also YHWH's oneness can only be seen in his actions.

Since the content of the *erkenntnisaussage* in 7.9, that YHWH is God, is an expression of YHWH's election of Israel, it should be noted that the content of the *erkenntnisaussage* in 8.5 is not of a fundamentally different kind. The statement that as a man disciplines his son so YHWH disciplines his child is usually passed over in a discussion of Deuteronomy's 'monotheism', but its own affirmation of YHWH's electing action towards Israel needs to be considered along with the formulations that are usually considered 'monotheistic'. Indeed, like the *erkenntnisaussage* in 7.9, the recognition in 8.5 results from YHWH's actions to Israel (8.2-4; cf. 7.6-8) and provides the justification of the demand to follow YHWH's commands (8.6; cf. 7.11). In the light of the intellectualization of 'monotheism', however, it is perhaps not surprising that this passage with its emphasis on YHWH's disciplining of Israel has been passed over in favour of statements that are perceived to be making ontological statements about YHWH.

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[52] Miller 1990: 113. Miller's italics.

[53] See above p. 186 n. 36.

[54] Rendtorff 1981: 83.

2. *Deuteronomy 9-10: The Golden Calf and Moses' Prayer*

Election and YHWH's uniqueness are found together again in 10.12-11.1. This section, however, is part of a larger speech by Moses, which begins at 9.1 and continues into chapter 11.[55] The section on election is connected to the preceding material with וְעַתָּה. This provides an important structural marker in Moses' sermon. Weinfeld notes that 'the word *we'attah* "and now" marks a transition from history (9:7-10:11) to the moral religious lesson that is to be drawn from it'.[56] The account of the Golden Calf cannot, however, be detached from the context of the Mosaic sermon, of which it too is part.[57] Therefore, it is necessary to consider the structure and argument of 9.1-10.11 and its relationship to 10.12-11.1.

Moses' speech begins with the promise that YHWH will give them the land. As in Deuteronomy 7, the promise of the land to Israel, which is closely tied to YHWH's election of Israel, carries with it the danger that Israel may interpret the gift of the land as evidence of their own quality. But whilst Deuteronomy 7 rejects Israel's size as a reason for her election, Deuteronomy 9 rejects Israel's righteousness as a reason for the gift of the land. In Deuteronomy 7 Israel's diminutive status is merely asserted, but in Deuteronomy 9 the demand to Israel to recognize her stubbornness (lit. stiffness of neck, קְשֵׁה־עֹרֶף, v. 6) is justified by recounting Israel's rebelliousness in the desert.

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[55] The exact delimitation of the unit is the subject of some controversy. 9.1-7a is often considered separately from 9.7b-10.11 since it is parenesis and not narrative, and because of the singular address rather than plural address found in 9.7b-29. 10.12ff. is also considered separately. However, in its current literary setting the narrative account of 9.7b-10.11 is part of the direct speech which begins in 9.1 and continues at least until the beginning of chapter 11.

The material in chapter 11 is intrinsically linked to chapters 9 and 10. However, since these verses move beyond the question of Israel's election, they can be passed over in this study.

[56] Weinfeld 1991: 435.

[57] Talstra 1995: 196-97.

The account of Israel's rebelliousness in Deuteronomy 9-10 is usually considered to be based on material from Exodus and Numbers,[58] though this is not universally held.[59] Whichever way the relationship is to be understood it is evident that the account in Deuteronomy 9-10 bears its own distinctive stamp, with characteristic Deuteronomic language, such as 'tablets of the covenant', and its own narrative structure.[60] Thus, Deuteronomy 9-10 may legitimately be examined on its own terms without recourse to theories of literary dependence. Indeed, in the case of Deuteronomy 9-10 the literary structure has often been obscured because the narrative plot of Exodus 32-34 has been the lens through which it has been viewed. Thus, Driver notes that the intercessory prayer in 9.25-29 reflects the occasion of the second prayer in Exod. 34.9, but is using the text of the first prayer in Exod. 32.11-13.[61]

Lohfink argues that the key to the structure of 9.7-10.11 is the repetitious 'forty days and forty nights' (9.9, 11, 18, 25; 10.10) and 'fire' (9.10, 15, 21; 10.4).[62] This creates a fivefold division of the narrative. Unfortunately Lohfink's analysis depends on a prior judgement to exclude 9.22-24 and 10.6-9.[63] Further, the final division (10.10-11) does not mention 'fire'. A more apt observation has been made by Talstra who notes that the account of the intercession of Moses in 9.18-19 is partly repeated in 9.25 and 10.10, effectively framing the material in between.[64]

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[58] E.g. Boorer 1992: 307; Driver 1902: 112; Weinfeld 1991: 407. Both Driver and Weinfeld describe in detail the similarities and differences between the material they assign to D and that they assign to JE.

[59] E.g. Van Seters 1994: 301-310; Johnstone 1997.

[60] 'The author of Deuteronomy makes use of the essential elements in the tale of the Golden Calf, right up to the renewal of the covenant, but he does subjugate them to the basic pedagogic-didactic aim of his own writing' (Krašovec 1999: 105).

[61] Driver 1902: 116. This example is from Talstra 1995: 189-90.

[62] Lohfink 1963: 214-15.

[63] Literary-critical studies have generally detected a number of layers in 9.1-10.11. Mayes suggests that a deuteronomic account of the Golden Calf has been elaborated by the deuteronomist, to which even later material has been added (1979: 194-96; cf. Boorer 1992: 277-79; Seitz 1971: 51-69; Talstra 1995). Lohfink has argued, on the other hand, that the narrative material is substantially one piece, with the parenetic material (9.1-8, 22-24) later.

[64] Talstra 1995: 198.

The account of the Golden Calf, therefore, is made up of two parts. The first part, vv. 7-24, is framed by a statement of Israel's rebelliousness (vv. 7, 24) and an account of the places where they rebelled (vv. 8, 22-23). It emphasizes the enormity of Israel's sin and YHWH's wrath. The second part, 9.25-10.11, concerns Moses' intercession, the ark and the priesthood. It emphasizes, in contrast to the first part, the continuation of YHWH's grace to the people. Neither part is self-contained, though, for 9.18-20 describes Moses' effective intercession, and in 10.6 Aaron dies, in contrast to 9.20 where Moses intercedes for him.

The two parts of 9.7-10.11 correspond, in essence, to the two aspects of YHWH's election in 7.9-10. Against those who rebel against him YHWH's anger is immediate. Although Israel are not destroyed, the allusion to Kadesh Barnea in 9.23 is a reminder that the entire generation of Israelites who rebelled against YHWH died in the desert. The unexpected appearance of Aaron in 9.20 has often been taken to suggest that the verse is a secondary addition.[65] In the present form of the narrative, however, Aaron symbolically represents the people. As with Moses (1.37; 4.21; cf. 3.26), no reason is given for YHWH's anger against Aaron, and this silence suggests that YHWH's anger against Aaron and Moses is because they are, in some way, representative of the people.[66] The death of Aaron in 10.6 is a stark reminder that YHWH does not delay but repays those who are unfaithful to him.

The other aspect of YHWH's election is seen in Moses' intercession for the people (9.25-29). In the prayer there are three grounds for Moses' intercession.[67] First, he appeals to YHWH's redemptive action, which, as we have seen, is a sign of his electing love. Second, he asks YHWH to remember the patriarchs. The exact nature

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[65] E.g. Mayes 1979: 201.

[66] Reasons can be sought elsewhere in the Pentateuch (Num. 20.1-13; Exodus 32), but in Deuteronomy no reason is given. This has been noticed frequently in the case of YHWH's anger against Moses, but no one, as far as I am aware, has noticed that the same is true in Aaron's case. Indeed, the phrase used to describe YHWH's anger, וּבְאַהֲרֹן הִתְאַנַּף יְהוָה מְאֹד לְהַשְׁמִידוֹ, is very similar to that used of Moses (Deut. 1.37; 4.21).

[67] Christensen 1991: 191-92. Alternatively, Miller sees four appeals dividing what I suggest is the first appeal into two parts: an appeal to the nature of the relationship and an appeal to the redemptive work of YHWH (1990: 123).

of this appeal is unclear. Von Rad writes, 'Moses appeals...quite generally to the patriarchs'.[68] Weinfeld understands it as an appeal to the merits of the patriarchs,[69] whilst Craigie sees it as an appeal to YHWH's promises to the patriarchs.[70] Craigie's suggestion is to be favoured for two reasons. First, on the other occasions that the fathers are mentioned in Deuteronomy it is the love of YHWH for them, or his promise that is the reason for YHWH's present actions, not the fathers' merits.[71] Second, in the parallel text in Exod. 32.13 it is to YHWH's promise to the fathers that Moses appeals. Moses' third appeal is to YHWH's honour before the Egyptians. Moses' intercession is largely based, then, on an appeal to YHWH's election. This is implicit in his reference to the people as עַמְּךָ וְנַחֲלָתֶךָ (9.25, 29). נַחֲלָה is used elsewhere in Deuteronomy in the context of election (4.20; 32.9) and seems to suggest like סְגֻלָּה that Israel is YHWH's special possession.[72] Moses' appeal to YHWH's election corresponds to that found in 7.9-10. YHWH's faithfulness to those who love him lasts for a thousand generations. Despite Israel's sin, her election is not revoked.

The account of the Golden Calf in Deuteronomy 9-10 can, therefore, be viewed as a narrative exposition of the two aspects of election described in 7.9-10. On one level the nature of election appears to be paradoxical, but the events at Horeb indicate the way that the paradox is to be understood. Israel's obedience matters, and her rebellion will be punished immediately. Nevertheless YHWH is faithful to his promises, and Israel's disobedience will not lead to the dissolution of her privileged relationship with YHWH.[73]

Since the nature of YHWH's election of Israel is a prominent theme in 9.1-10.11, it is not surprising that the 'religious lesson that is to be drawn from it' in 10.12-11.1

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[68] Von Rad 1966a: 79.

[69] Weinfeld 1991: 415-16.

[70] Craigie 1976: 197; cf. Cairns 1992: 106; Mayes 1979: 203; Miller 1990: 123.

[71] E.g. Deut. 1.8, 11, 35; 4.37; 6.3; 7.8; 10.11; 28.11.

[72] For discussion of נַחֲלָה in this and other contexts, see Wanke 1997; Loewenstamm 1992c.

[73] The meaning and role of 10.1-11 are considered in greater detail in chapter 6.

refers to election. The passage divides into four different parts. The second (vv. 14-16) and third parts (vv. 17-19) have a number of structural and thematic similarities. Both parts begin with statements about YHWH and his actions on behalf of Israel and the poor which proceed from his love. Also both parts draw conclusions about what Israel is to do from YHWH's actions.[74] These parts are framed by exhortations to give YHWH exclusive obedience (10.12-13; 10.20-11.1).

Israel's appropriate response to YHWH's election of her is, first, to love and obey YHWH (cf. 7.11). This is introduced in 10.12 through a question and answer which is similar to Mic. 6.8. In 10.20-11.1 the exhortation to keep the commandments is more complicated, containing a justification (vv. 21-22), which again appeals to YHWH's electing actions towards Israel.

The second part of the section (vv. 14-16) makes a direct appeal to election in order to justify the command not to be stubborn any longer. The statement about Israel's election begins with the universal horizon, as in Deuteronomy 7. Although the world is YHWH's possession the emphasis remains firmly on his election of Israel, rather than any relationship to the rest of the world. However, the sense of tension between the two is suggested by their juxtaposition with the strong רַק, 'yet'.[75] YHWH's universal control provides the background of election, rather than the justification of it.[76] The universal horizon underlines Israel's privilege. YHWH is

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[74] The commands to Israel are connected by *waw*, whose syntactic force we have already noted in other places in Deuteronomy (see above p. 125).

For this structure, see Christensen 1991: 205; Mann 1995: 104; Wright 1996: 145-46. Lohfink, on the other hand, divides 10.12-11.12 into a series of six commandments and grounds (1963: 220-21). Thus, 10.14-15 provide the ground for 10.12-13; 10.17-18 for 10.16 and 10.19b for 10.19a. Unfortunately this ignores the connections between vv. 14-15 and v. 16, and between vv. 17-18 and v. 19.

[75] 'Prefixed to *sentences*, to add a limitation of sthg. previously expressed' (BDB, 956). See also 12.15 and 20.16. A Qumran phylactery has the reading עַל־כֵּן (8Q3).

[76] *Contra* Rendtorff who argues that election 'ihren Grund in Jahwes Schöpfermacht hat' (1981: 80) and von Rad who writes, 'the argument from Yahweh's rule over the whole world actually reminds us of the zeal of Deutero-Isaiah, who is fond of proving the trustworthiness of Yahweh by pointing to the creation of the world' (1966a: 84). Though this may be true of Isaiah 40-55 it plays no role in Deuteronomy.

said to have loved the Patriarchs and to have chosen their seed. It is possible that a distinction is drawn between YHWH loving the Patriarchs and choosing Israel.[77] As in 7.8 the surprising irrationality of YHWH's love is indicated by חָשַׁק. The command to circumcise the heart's foreskin[78] and its negative counterpart, not to be stubborn, are seen as necessary corollaries. YHWH's gracious election is double-edged. If Israel is not to feel YHWH's quick repayment of evil, she should not be stubborn as she was at Horeb (9.6, 13).

The third part of the section (vv. 17-19) is connected to the second part with כִּי. A few commentators understand vv. 17-18 to provide a reason for circumcising the heart,[79] but the connection is in no way self-evident. This means that two reasons are given for the circumcision of the heart, and the statement about YHWH's nature in vv. 17-18 is the grounds for two commands (vv. 16, 19). Others see vv. 17-18 as a ground for general obedience of YHWH's commands.[80] It is likely that כִּי functions here, as it does in other places in Deuteronomy, as a weak link without any causal force.

Verse 17 begins with a statement about YHWH's uniqueness. He is 'God of the gods' and 'Lord of the lords'. Similar epithets are used of YHWH elsewhere in the Old Testament,[81] and similar statements are made of ancient Near Eastern kings and deities.[82] As elsewhere in Deuteronomy the existence of other gods is not denied, but YHWH is unique amongst them. The phrasing of the first epithet

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[77] Cf. 4.37. בַּחַר is only used of a Patriarch (Abraham) in Neh. 9.6.

[78] Cf. Lev. 26.41; Deut. 30.6; Jer. 4.4; 9.25; and Ezek. 44.7-9.

[79] 'As a reason for this admonition, Moses adduces in vers. 17sqq the nature and acts of God...From this it follows that the true God will not tolerate haughtiness and stiffness of neck either towards himself or towards other men' (Keil and Delitzsch 1971: III, 344). 'The basis for this proper attitude [an attitude opposite to being stubborn] toward God is stated in another hymnlike passage in v. 17' (Craigie 1976: 205). 'The call to circumcise the heart is grounded in the inexplicable and astonishing electing love and the nature of God as great, mighty and just' (Miller 1990: 125).

[80] Driver 1902: 125; Tigay 1996: 108.

[81] Ps. 136.2, 3; Dan. 2.47.

[82] Rose 1975: 124; Weinfeld 1991: 438. Elnes 1997: 131-32.

suggests, as already indicated,[83] that to say YHWH is 'God of the gods' has the same meaning as to say he is 'God' (הָאֱלֹהִים). Elsewhere in Deuteronomy the affirmation that YHWH is God is closely linked to election (4.35, 39; 7.9), in vv. 17-18 it is related to YHWH's justice.

As in Deuteronomy 7 the statement that YHWH is the supreme god is followed with a statement about the kind of *el* that YHWH is. He is 'the great, mighty and fearful *el*', expressions which are reminiscent of royal epithets.[84] Moses stakes YHWH's claim as a fearful lord; he is the divine warrior king. The description of YHWH's actions in vv. 18b-19 are based on the ideals of kingship, and thus articulate what it means for him to be the most supreme lord. First, YHWH rightly exercises the king's judicial function. He does not show favouritism and he is not open to corruption.[85] Second, YHWH fulfils the royal function of positive intervention for the weak and vulnerable in society. The translation of עֹשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט as 'do justice' suggests YHWH's intervention in the judicial processes of the court.[86] This would seem to suggest that YHWH has less interest in justice for the elite. Weinfeld has shown, however, that 'the phrase *ʿśh mšpṭ* in this context does not mean to sit in judgement and adjudicate the case but to administer justice by helping the poor and needy'.[87] Thus, what Moses affirms about YHWH in Deut. 10.18 is that YHWH intervenes positively on behalf of the orphan, the widow and the stranger. That this is so is

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[83] See above p. 104.

[84] Mayes 1979: 210; Weinfeld 1991: 438.
See also 7.21 where Moses reassures the Israelites that YHWH is a 'great and fearful *el*' and the Canaanites will be driven from the land.

[85] As such he is the pattern of Israel's judges (1.17).

[86] This verse is often understood by commentators to refer to actions in a court. Cairns, for example, writes, 'God is the firm defender of their rights and full human dignity. This is not favouritism but justice, right' (1992: 112).

[87] Weinfeld 1991: 439. עֹשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט here is a shortened form of the formula עשה מִשְׁפָּט וּצְדָקָה (cf. Isa. 1.17; 10.2; Jer. 7.5; 22.13; Mic. 6.8; Pss. 140.13; 146.7; ; Job 29.14; Lam. 3.35), which paralleled the Mesopotamian practice of 'doing truth and righteousness' (*kittam/mīšaram šakānum*). In Mesopotamia this was a practice linked to the start of a king's reign and included 'cancellation of the debts of the state and of individuals, liberation of slaves, restoration of land to its owners, and rectification of other economic injustices, such as overpricing, falsification of weights and measures, etc.' (Weinfeld 1995: 9).

indicated by YHWH's action of providing food and clothing, which is clearly not a judicial response, but rather an act of charity, or grace. These interventions on behalf of the poor were to be characteristic of human kings (Isa. 11.3-4; Ps. 72.1-4). Thus, YHWH's righteous godship and lordship is seen in two directions. First, he is impeccably just, not respecting persons. Second, he intervenes for the poor and marginalized of society. The juxtaposition of these elements suggests that they were not perceived to be contradictions in YHWH's kingship, but rather central to what kingship meant to the writers of Deuteronomy.

The question that is naturally raised is whether YHWH's actions on behalf of the orphan, widows and strangers are universal actions towards the marginalized that qualify YHWH's election of Israel. That is, should Israel's election be dissolved into a general concern of YHWH for the poor and needy whatever their nationality, of which the exodus is just one example? This question can only be answered by considering which of YHWH's actions are being referred to. Where has he been seen to be impartial and to act for the orphan, widow and stranger? YHWH's actions for the stranger appear to be straightforward. In the context of Deuteronomy 10 they are seen in YHWH's election of Israel. Elsewhere in Deuteronomy those who are fed and clothed by YHWH are Israel whilst she was in the wilderness (8.2-4; 29.5-6). Widows and orphans are mentioned in a number of places in Deuteronomy. In 14.29 and 26.12 the triannual tithe is to be given to Levites, strangers, widows and orphans. The same group, bar the Levites, are not to be deprived of justice (24.17; cf. 27.19), and are to be left some of the harvest (24.19, 21). In each case these actions are demanded of Israel, not done by YHWH. Might it be that YHWH's positive intervention on behalf of the widows and orphans is to come through Israel? If this is the case, it might also explain the exhortation in v. 19 where only the stranger is mentioned, and not the widow and orphan. Lest Israel suppose that YHWH requires only that they care for the native-born Israelites, whether widows or orphans, since YHWH has already shown his love for the stranger by redeeming Israel, the command to love the stranger is spelt out explicitly. In the way that YHWH loved (אהב) the patriarchs, Israel is to love (אהב) the resident alien (10.19).

In its own particular way, then, Deuteronomy expresses the principle of *imitatio dei*.[88] However, this does not sufficiently express the relationship between YHWH and his people. YHWH's claim to be God is seen through his election of Israel. However, it is also seen in Israel's actions towards the oppressed in her society. Thus, the way that Israel and YHWH are perceived are intrinsically linked.[89] The concern for the orphan, widow and stranger does point in the direction of a universal concern for the marginalized, but not one that can be detached from the particularity of YHWH's elect people.

3. *Deuteronomy 4, The Song of Moses and the Drama of Election*

The material on election that we have been examining has largely been derived from what would be generally regarded as the central core of Deuteronomy, Moses' second speech at Horeb (4.44-28.68). This material has been framed by the other three speeches. It is recognized too that there are a number of links between the material with which Deuteronomy opens and concludes.[90] One thing that the two parts of the framework have in common is that they possess extended reflections on Israel's election. In both chapter 4 and the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32) a glimpse of Israel's future beyond Moab is given. Neither

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[88] The importance of the imitation of YHWH in seeking social justice as a central part of the Jewish Bible's presentation of election has found much reflection in recent Jewish work (Buber 1968: 87; Levenson 1996: 154; Novak 1995: 120-38). A particularly significant text in this context is Gen. 18.19 where it is said that YHWH chose Abraham so that his sons would do justice and righteousness, which is described as 'walking in the way of YHWH' (*imitatio dei*). What God's justice and righteousness means, and how Abraham is to embody it, is the subject of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18.16-19.29).

[89] The suggestion that YHWH's actions towards the oppressed is seen through Israel's actions may appear to be quite strange. However, I do not think it is unprecedented in the Old Testament. In Psalm 82 the 'gods' are rebuked for their injustice and oppression. YHWH judges that they should die like mortals. It is well-known that the psalm's *crux interpretum* is the meaning of 'gods'. Does it refer to divine beings or to men? Almost certainly the alternative is a false one. Tate correctly argues that 'the judgement of the gods is at the same time a judgement of their human agents' (Tate 1990: 341; cf. Morgernstern 1939; Niehr 1987). Thus, the recognition of the members of the divine council's injustice through the actions of foreign kings is a close parallel to the way I am suggesting Deuteronomy 10 is to be understood.

[90] Levenson 1975.

chapter is narrative, in the strict sense, but both present Israel's future as a drama for which YHWH's election of Israel provides the key to understanding.

Deuteronomy 4

In Deuteronomy 4 election is explicitly mentioned in vv. 37-38: 'Because he loved your fathers he chose his seed after him and he brought you out of Egypt by his presence, by his great strength, to drive out before you nations greater and larger than you to bring you into and give you their land as an inheritance as it is today'. YHWH's act of election is related in two directions. First, Israel is elected on the basis of YHWH's love for the patriarchs.[91] Second, Israel's election is closely related to the exodus from Egypt and the possession of the land. The exact relationship between Israel's election and the exodus and conquest is not entirely clear, they are related to one another on a textual level by *waw*-consecutive, that is, both are consequences of YHWH's love of the patriarchs.

The relationship between the two can be further illuminated by examining 4.37-38 in its immediate literary context. It functions in Deuteronomy 4 as part of the *peroratio* of Moses's first speech (4.32-40). The *peroratio* consists of two panels which both climax with statements about the incomparability of YHWH (vv. 32-35, 36-39). These two panels are followed by the final verse of Moses' speech, a final exhortation to obey the commandments (v. 40). To some degree the two panels parallel one another and this can be illustrated diagramatically:

Panel 1	Panel 2
Creation (v. 32)	
Horeb (v. 33)	Horeb (v. 36)
Egypt (v. 34)	Egypt (v. 37)
	Canaan (v. 38)
Acknowledgement (v. 35)	Acknowledgement (v. 39)

Thus, the statement about YHWH's election of the Israelites in v. 37 finds its counterpart in the rhetorical question of v. 34: 'Or has any god ever attempted to go and take for himself a nation from the midst of nation by trials, by signs and

[91] The suggestion that וְתֶחֱזֶה be read as וְחֶזֶה 'and live' (cf. v. 33 LXX, Vg. and Pesh.) is unnecessary. תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר 'because of that' is more common (e.g. Deut. 21.14; 22.29; 28.47), but תַּחַת בְּ is not unattested (Prov. 1.29).

wonders, by war, by an outstretched arm and by awesome deeds as all that YHWH, your god, did for you in Egypt before your eyes'. The act of election here finds expression with the verb לָקַח.[92] The same use is also found in 4.19-20 where the heavenly hosts are allotted the nations, but YHWH is said to have *taken* Israel for himself. This suggests that the act of election is seen in YHWH's deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt (and in their settlement in the land of Canaan).

Both panels of the *peroratio* climax in the confessions of YHWH's uniqueness in vv. 35, 39. In both cases the confessions depend upon the statements that precede it. Horeb and the exodus were shown to the Israelites in order to bring them to the acknowledgement that YHWH is God (vv. 32-35). Similarly in vv. 36-39 Horeb, the exodus and the imminent conquest lead to the demand to recognize YHWH as God. The same logic is presented here, therefore, that we have seen elsewhere in Deuteronomy. The recognition that YHWH is God comes through YHWH's election of Israel. In his discussion of the election of Israel, G. Quell writes, 'the idea of the people of God obviously cannot have theological value apart from an adequate concept of God'.[93] The logic of Deuteronomy suggests that this statement may be reversed. As we have seen in 7.6-11 and 10.12-11.1, the recognition that YHWH is God also leads to a demand to keep his commands. In v. 40, as in 7.11, the connection is made with a *waw*, 'so'.

As we have seen elsewhere in Deuteronomy, the election of Israel takes place within a universal horizon. In v. 32 Moses appeals across the whole of human history and the geographical expanse of the whole earth to ask whether anything comparable to Israel's experience at Horeb and in Egypt has taken place. However, the revelation of YHWH's uniqueness is made to Israel alone. The 'you' in v. 35 is emphatic.[94] The call to acknowledge YHWH and to obey his commandments is consequently made to Israel, and not to other nations. This universal horizon is also found in vv. 19-20. Whilst the sun, moon and stars have been allotted to the other

[92] See above p. 186.

[93] Quell 1964: 160.

[94] Driver 1902: 76.

nations for worship,[95] YHWH has taken Israel as the people of his inheritance. Since Israel has been placed in this relationship, she is forbidden from worshipping the heavenly host. Although Israel's relationship to YHWH is placed within a universal context, the appeal to Israel not to worship the sun, moon and stars is not based on a universal principle. Instead, it is based on YHWH's election of her. This is expressed with לָקַח and the so-called 'covenant formula', ל- ל- היה, 'to become for him a people of his inheritance'.[96] Israel's special relationship with YHWH entails particular responsibilities that no other nation has.

The uniqueness of YHWH, which is recognized through Israel's election, is a central theme in 4.32-40. This section of chapter 4 is balanced by the opening verses, vv. 1-8. Both sections are characterized by the root גדל,[97] by rhetorical questions and an acknowledgement. In 4.1-8 the nations recognize Israel's uniqueness through her obedience to YHWH's laws, and in 4.32-40 Israel recognizes YHWH's uniqueness through his mighty deeds in Egypt and at Horeb.[98] The contrast in 4.1-8 is between Israel and the nations, and in 4.32-40 between YHWH and other gods. This difference is particularly clear in a comparison of the questions in verses 7 and 34. 'What *nation* has a god...?' and 'Has any *god*...taken a nation...?'. However, an absolute distinction cannot be made between the two, nor can one be detached from the other. Israel's uniqueness depends on YHWH's, and YHWH's uniqueness on

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[95] See Appendix 1.

[96] See Rendtorff 1998.

[97] 4.6, 7, 8 and 4.32, 34, 36, 37, 38.

[98] Le Roux also notes: the words for the laws in vv. 1 and 40; the *piel* of צוה in vv. 2 and 40; למען introducing the promise in vv. 1 and 40; the gift of the land in vv. 1 and 40; witnessing of YHWH's deeds in vv. 3 and 34 (1982/83: 64-65).

It should also be noted that both sections contain an allusion to the promises to the patriarchs. In v. 37 YHWH is said to have loved the fathers and chosen their descendants. In 4.6-8 the promise to Abram is alluded to with the words 'great nation' (גוי גָּדוֹל). The use of גוי for עַם is unusual (Cody 1964). Other uses of גוי גָּדוֹל, or something similar, refer to the promise given to Abram in Gen. 12.2, 'I will make you into a great nation' (Gen. 17.20; 18.18; 21.18; 35.11; 46.3; Deut. 26.5. It is also used in Exod. 32.10; Num. 14.12 and Deut. 9.14. On these three occasions YHWH expresses his desire to destroy Israel and replace her with Moses' descendants, who YHWH will make into a 'great nation'. This seems to be a founding promise to Moses and, thus, a conscious echo of the original promise to Abraham).

Israel's. Israel is unique only because she has received and obeys YHWH's laws, and YHWH is unique because he has redeemed and spoken to Israel.

Deuteronomy 4.1-8, in contrast to the other passages on election in Deuteronomy, describes what the non-Israelite nations recognize, rather than what Israel herself is to recognize. Obedience of the laws evidences Israel's wisdom and discernment, and this is seen by the nations.[99] There are clearly importance differences between what it is expected that Israel will recognize and what the nations will recognize. Through the actions that YHWH does for Israel, she is to recognize that YHWH is God, and there is no one else for her. Such a recognition is exclusive to Israel. The nations, on the other hand, do not recognize something about YHWH, but about his elect people. If the nations may, in any sense, be said to have a relationship with YHWH, it is to be found through Israel.[100]

The election of Israel, then, as conceived in Deuteronomy 4, involves a passive relationship with other nations, though it is active in the sense that it entails wholehearted obedience to YHWH's commands. Israel is not assigned a mission to the other nations. This is clearly seen in the relationship between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. At Gibeon Solomon asks for wisdom and YHWH promises to give him a 'wise and discerning heart', לֵב חָכָם וְנָבוֹן (1 Kgs 3.12), the only other use of חָכָם וְנָבוֹן in the Old Testament.[101] This wisdom and discernment makes Solomon unique (3.12). His wisdom leads him not only to be held in awe in Israel, who perceive the 'divine wisdom' in him (3.28), but also in the whole world. The Queen of Sheba hears of his fame and her visit leads not only to praise of Solomon, YHWH's elect king (10.6-8), but also of YHWH himself (10.9).

The nations' recognition of Israel's wisdom in Deut. 4.6 may be compared to 28.9-10. The recognition is expressed using a variation of the *erkenntnisaussage* as we

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[99] Miller rightly notes that it is the obedient people who are wise and discerning, not the laws that YHWH has given. The laws are described as 'righteous' (v. 8) (1990: 55).

[100] Comparison may be made with the promise to Abraham that 'all nations will be blessed through you' (Gen. 12.3).

[101] But, cf. Gen. 41.33, 39; Deut. 1.13.

have already seen. The nations see that Israel is called by the name of YHWH. Again this stems from Israel's obedience of YHWH's commands. Further, the recognition of Israel also entails a corresponding recognition of YHWH. Thus, in the eyes of the nations, Israel is intimately connected to YHWH, and her honour to his. As elsewhere in Deuteronomy there is no independent access for either Israel or the nations to YHWH apart from his election of Israel. Whilst Israel's appropriate response to the recognition of YHWH is obedience, which may be expressed as 'fear of YHWH', the nations are to fear Israel.

Between the introductory section of chapter 4 (vv. 1-8) and the conclusion (vv. 32-40) the drama of election is played out. The central section (vv. 9-31) may be divided into three parts as G. Braulik has shown: vv. 9-14, 15-22, 23-31. Each part is introduced by a form of the verb שׁמר followed by לְךָ/לָכֶם or לְנַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם/נַפְשֶׁךָ and פֶּן.[102] The central section is, therefore, a warning to Israel to keep the commandments, specifically the command against making idols. This command is justified by Israel's special relationship to YHWH in 4.19-20.

In the third part of the central section, vv. 23-31, which follows the grounding of the prohibition in Israel's election, the logic of election, which we have seen elsewhere in Deuteronomy, receives one of its most vivid expressions. Israel is confronted with the future which she can expect if she disobeys YHWH's command: a dramatic and extreme punishment. As in the rest of Deuteronomy, the election of Israel is described with descriptions of YHWH as *el*. The section opens with an exhortation not to forget the covenant and a statement that YHWH is a jealous *el* (vv. 23-24) and closes with a statement that YHWH is a merciful *el* who will not forget his covenant (v. 31).[103] The covenant that Israel is not to forget has been identified in v. 13 as the Ten Commandments, and specifically the prohibition of idolatry.[104] Disobedience will result in destruction and scattering among the nations. It is this

[102] Braulik 1978: 82-83.

[103] Knapp notices the repetition of בְּרִית but attributes them to different hands because the covenants are different (1987: 36).

[104] The only occasion in Deuteronomy that the 'covenant' is particularly associated with the prohibition against idolatry; on other occasions it is associated with the first commandment (17.3; 29.25; 31.16, 20) (Braulik 1970: 44).

account of scattering and the future possibility of repentance that shows YHWH's character as both the jealous and merciful *el*. Verse 31 contains a subtle allusion to a possible return from the nations in YHWH's remembrance of the covenant with the fathers, which elsewhere in Deuteronomy is closely connected to the giving of the land.[105]

The dramatic account of election in vv. 23-31 adds a future dimension to Deuteronomy's idea of election, which we have not seen elsewhere. There are, however, a number of aspects which correspond to the understanding of election elsewhere in the book. First, the two sides of election found in 7.9-10 are again to be found in vv. 23-31. YHWH's punishment of those who disobey is swift. Israel will not live long in the land (v. 26). The language of destruction, שׁמד, is reminiscent of 7.10. However, Israel's election is not revoked, for YHWH remains faithful to the promises that he made to the patriarchs. Second, the land is a tangible sign of election and is jeopardized when Israel disobeys. Third, the close relationship between election and, on the one hand, YHWH as the jealous *el* and merciful *el*, and, on the other hand, YHWH as God, would seem to suggest that these statements about YHWH are fundamentally related, perhaps even identical. In other words, as is the case elsewhere in Deuteronomy, YHWH is seen to be God in his election of Israel, that is, in the way that he is a jealous and merciful *el*. Fourth, YHWH's nature is seen through his actions towards Israel.

The Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32)

The dramatic account of Israel's future finds poetic expression in the Song of Moses. The main theme of the Song is expressed in vv. 4-5. The faithfulness of YHWH is contrasted with the unfaithfulness of Israel. As the Song develops this contrast, the paradoxical logic of election is unfolded. Israel's privileged position is expounded in vv. 7-9. In language similar to that in 4.19-20 Israel is taken by YHWH as his inheritance. The election of Israel takes place against a universal horizon. The other nations are given by Elyon, who should be identified with

[105] See Lohfink 1976: 124 and above p. 186 n. 37.

YHWH,[106] to members of the divine court. Israel's relationship with YHWH sets her apart from the other nations, as the asseverative כִּי of v. 9 indicates.

Two benefits result from Israel's election by YHWH: protection (vv. 10-12)[107] and nourishment (vv. 13-14). Despite YHWH's generosity Israel proves herself unfaithful and seeks other gods. YHWH's wrath is immediate and devastating (vv. 19-27). He aims at their utter destruction (v. 26). Its accomplishment is only prevented by the taunt of the enemy in v. 27.

From v. 28 to v. 43 YHWH executes his vengeance on his enemies, and saves his people. This would appear to be straightforward, but the actual interpretation of individual verses is problematic. Many of the difficulties, I want to suggest, result from the difficulty of identifying YHWH's enemy. Is it Israel's enemies, or is it rebellious Israelites? An examination of vv. 28-43 will indicate the difficulties.

In vv. 28-29 a nation is described that lacks discernment, failing to understand its latter end. But who is this nation? A number of interpreters have suggested it is Israel.[108] Israel has already been described in similar terms, as a 'foolish and senseless people', in v. 6. In v. 20 YHWH decides to hide his face and see what Israel's 'latter end' will be. On the other hand, vv. 28-29 could refer to Israel's enemies.[109] They are the subject of the preceding verse and in v. 21 they are described as a 'foolish nation'. One of the fullest examinations of these verses was undertaken by K. Fullerton, who argued that if the verses are considered in the light of what precedes (vv. 26-27) they must speak of Israel's enemies, but in the light of what follows (v. 30) they must speak of Israel's enemy.[110] The problem of

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[106] See above p. 117 n. 190.

[107] For an argument that the eagle is a metaphor of protection rather than teaching, see Peels 1994.

[108] Craigie 1976: 385-86; Driver 1902: 371; Oettli 1893: 108; Robinson 1907: 227; *Targ. Neo.* on 32.28-29.

[109] Eissfeldt 1958: 11 n. 1; Hertz 1937: 900; Labuschagne 1971: 96; Mayes 1979: 389-90; Von Rad 1966a: 198-99; Ridderbos 1984: 291; Rose 1994: 570-71; Sanders 1996: 207-210; Tigay 1996: 310.

[110] Fullerton 1928: 138-44.

identifying the nation described also emerges in vv. 32-33, as has been recognized since Rabbinic times.[111] Who are the nation whose stock can be described as from Sodom and Gomorrah? Driver argues that the metaphor is not applicable to Israel as she has degenerated from original stock, and is not from corrupt origins.[112] However, the imagery of a false vine and the language of Sodom and Gomorrah is often used of Israel, including Deut. 29.22.[113] Further, the main theme of the song is Israel's corruption. The difficulties with vv. 28-33 has led a number of scholars to excise some of the verses in order to provide a consistent sense.[114] Might it be possible, however, to understand the verses as a deliberate blurring of sinful Israel and her enemies?[115] The use of בֵּן for both Israel and the divine beings already suggests a studied use of ambiguity in the Song.[116]

YHWH's declaration of vengeance in vv. 34-35 gives no indication of whom the vengeance is directed against. However, the language is reminiscent of expressions found elsewhere in the context of election in Deuteronomy. YHWH promises that he will repay, שלם, the same root found in 7.10. Also, as we have noticed elsewhere, YHWH's vengeance is promised quickly. Thus, in two ways YHWH's wrath in these two verses is similar to YHWH's anger expressed against his rebellious elect people elsewhere in Deuteronomy. Verses 34-35 may suitably be applied to YHWH's enemies, in Israel and outside.[117]

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[111] 'R. Judah interprets the matter [the vine] to speak of Israel, R. Nehemiah interprets it to speak of the nations of the world' (*Sifre Deb.* 323). Most scholars have followed R. Nehemiah, but some have agreed with R. Judah (e.g. Keil and Delitzsch 1971: 484-85; Oettli 1893: 109).

[112] Driver 1902: 372.

[113] See, e.g., Isa. 1.10; 3.9; 5.1-7.

[114] Baumann 1956: 418; Bertholet 1899: 99; Braulik 1992: 233; Cairns 1992: 286-87; Fullerton 1928; Steuernagel 1923: 165.

[115] The ambiguity of vv. 29-43 has already been noticed by Watts. He, however, tentatively suggested that the whole Song could be understood negatively, though v. 43, in his opinion, was unambiguously positive (1992: 69-70).

[116] See above p. 117.

[117] It is argued by Keil and Delitzsch that vv. 34-35 referred to Israel (1971: 486-87), though most scholars have maintained that it is Israel's enemies that are being threatened. Cf. Heb. 10.30.

Though YHWH's wrath has been fully extended against Israel, YHWH decides to intervene for her (v. 36).[118] The stark contrast is introduced by asseverative כִּי. The grounds for YHWH's restraint in v. 27 are the taunt of the enemy (cf. 9.28). In this verse it is because they are his people, and he has compassion on them in their desperate condition, that he is restained. Again, the logic of election operates. Despite the people's guilt, YHWH is gracious to them.

YHWH's intervention for his people, in which the paradoxical logic of election is seen, leads to the triumphant challenge to acknowledge YHWH (v. 39). This occurs in the form of the *erkenntnisaussage*. The content of the confession, that YHWH alone is the rock, is a statement similar to those found elsewhere in Deuteronomy, for it is not only a statement about YHWH's uniqueness, but also about his election of Israel. YHWH is the one who kills and brings to life; he wounds and heals. In the context of the Song of Moses it is clear that these are not general statements about YHWH's dominion over life and death, instead they describe his particular actions towards his elect people. He is the one who kills, bringing his people to destruction, but he is also the one who intervenes giving them life. This verse gives expression to the pattern of election found in Deuteronomy, which, on the basis of the Song, could be described as 'the death and resurrection of the beloved son'.[119]

The triumphant high point of the Song expresses the logic of election in a way that does not resolve the paradox inherent in the idea. In the verses that follow this paradox remains, for YHWH will intervene on behalf of his people, yet there are also striking expressions of YHWH's anger against his own people. The blurring of those who rebelled against YHWH and Israel's enemies in vv. 28-35 allows this to continue in vv. 40-43. Thus, in v. 41 when YHWH declares that he will take vengeance on his adversaries, and repay those who hate him, the language could suitably describe his actions against Israel's enemies, and against those who hate YHWH within Israel herself. The description of the negative direction of election in 7.10 is repeated in v. 41. In v. 42 YHWH obtains the blood of his 'long-haired

[118] It is unlikely that the first line in v. 36 refers to the whole of Israel, and the second line to the remnant as suggested in Keil and Delitzsch (1971: 487-88).

[119] Cf. the title of Levenson's book on the pattern of election in the Old Testament: *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son* (1993a).

enemy' (פֹּרְעוֹתָ). But who is his enemy? Is it those who rebel in Israel, or Israel's enemies?[120] Janzen argues that פרע's 'consistent connotation is of the relaxing and disregarding for, or flouting of and rebellion against, structures and constraints considered...to be foundational to true and life-giving order'.[121] Such a description would be as apt for the rebellious in Israel as for the enemy nation.

The conclusion of the Song in v. 43 also contains elements that may be ambiguous. In the Septuagint and 4QDeut^{q} the negative direction of election in 7.10 is again cited. This suggests that the declaration that YHWH will avenge the blood of his children whilst also taking vengeance on his adversaries may express in a different way the tension present in the more familiar Deuteronomic presentation of election in 7.9-10. In other words, YHWH's vengeance both operates for his people, and against them if they hate him.[122] These two aspects are also seen in the promise to purify the land and the people. The use of 'purify', כפר, may suggest sacrifice.[123] If the Song is a reflection upon the paradoxes of the election of Israel, the tensions between the faithfulness of YHWH and the unfaithfulness of his children, it is entirely appropriate that the Song's dramatic conclusion should end with an expression of these tensions.

The Song of Moses, then, articulates in narrative poetry the tensions that are present in Deuteronomy's presentation of Israel's election by YHWH. YHWH is seen to be utterly faithful, preserving his people and intervening for them. On the other hand, those who hate him and follow after other gods are punished swiftly. Whilst the formulation of election in Deuteronomy 7 is alluded to on a number of occasions, the Song of Moses has its own idioms with which it expresses election. Some of these, such as vv. 8-9, touch upon ideas found elsewhere in Deuteronomy.

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[120] It might not be insignificant that פרעה is used of Israel when she made the Golden Calf in Exod. 32.25.

[121] Janzen 1990: 604.

[122] Cf. the tension in Exod. 34.6-7 with regard to 'sin' (see Brueggemann 1997: 217).

[123] Watts 1992: 70.

Others, like the description of the tensions of Israel's election as death and giving life (v. 39), are peculiar to the Song.

4. *Summary*

Barth's argument that God cannot be known apart from the relationship into which he has chosen to enter aptly describes the dynamics that are present in the book of Deuteronomy. YHWH is frequently represented as unique. He is 'one'. He is 'God' or 'the God of the gods'. There is no one like him for Israel. But such uniqueness cannot be recognized apart from his election of Israel. For Deuteronomy there is no access to YHWH apart from this relationship, and the only true knowledge of YHWH that Israel possesses comes from his electing actions towards Israel. This is true not only for Israel, but also for the nations. Their relationship to YHWH, if we may describe it as such, cannot be realized apart from Israel. How the nations respond to Israel determines their response to YHWH. This is clearest in the Song of Moses where Israel's enemies are YHWH's enemies.

The relationship between election and statements about YHWH has significant implications for understanding Deuteronomy's 'monotheism'. Like the *Shema*, the statements in 4.35, 39; 7.9; 10.17; 32.39 are not ontological statements about YHWH. Instead, what they say about him is that he is an electing god, characterized by faithfulness, jealousy and mercifulness. For Israel, then, he is a god like no other, and indeed his actions for Israel show that he is 'god of the gods'.

The relationship between election and 'monotheism' in Deuteronomy demands also that the relationship between 'monotheism' and 'universalism' be considered. 'Universalism' is a problematic category for describing any aspect of Deuteronomy's ideas about YHWH, Israel and the world. The difficulties with the term are further compounded when used as a polar opposite with 'particularism'. Deuteronomy's teaching does not fit into either category.

YHWH's election of Israel is presented within a universal horizon. Israel was chosen by YHWH from amongst the nations. Israel, therefore, occupies a privileged place among the nations, and obedience of YHWH's laws will bring further blessing.

The nations occupy an inferior position. Through Israel's obedience they too can come to recognize something about YHWH. However, in Deuteronomy such knowledge cannot take place apart from Israel. Though the other nations receive any knowledge of YHWH that they possess through Israel, there is nowhere any sense of obligation for mission in Deuteronomy. A difference is always maintained between Israel and the nations, and their obligations are to be different. Although the nations will recognize YHWH and Israel if Israel is obedient, there is no commandment to the nations. Deuteronomy's message is always to Israel, and concerns the sort of response that YHWH expects from Israel. This includes obedience of YHWH's commandments, and certain actions towards the poor and marginalized.

The linkage between the nations' recognition and Israel's obedience of YHWH's commands is clearly problematic when Israel disobeys. Indeed, YHWH's punishment of Israel is understood as a threat to the recognition of him by the nations. The dilemma of the necessity of punishment and the mistaken inferences that the nations might draw from it is solved only by the paradoxical logic of election that sees YHWH restore his people (cf. 9.25-29). Through the workings of election, YHWH's steadfast love to Israel and his jealous wrath when she disobeys, the nations can recognize something about YHWH (cf. 32.43). In the paradoxical actions of YHWH Israel too sees that YHWH is God. Indeed, the necessity of discipline in order to see often entails that it is only through such action that Israel rightly recognizes who YHWH is. This finds expression particularly in chapters 4 and 32. The 'death and resurrection of the beloved son', then, is a pattern whose goal is appropriate recognition of YHWH and response in obedience to his commands.

At no point does Deuteronomy suggest that Israel's election will be revoked. YHWH's faithfulness to the thousandth generation and his promise to the patriarchs make this unthinkable. However, YHWH's immediate anger against those who hate him makes obedience and covenant loyalty, 'love', obligations that must be kept. Although election is not revoked, the most tangible symbol of it, the land, may be jeopardized. For the generation at Horeb and Kadesh Barnea the land was lost because of their disobedience. Similarly for the future generations the land will be

lost if they abandon the covenant, as Deuteronomy 4 makes clear. However, even from such a position the land may be restored when YHWH turns again to his people in grace (4.31; 32.43).

Chapter 6

BIND THEM AS A SIGN: 'MONOTHEISM' AND IDOLATRY

> *While other people carried carved seals and figurative decorations as amulets the Israelites were instructed to carry portions of the Torah on their persons. Many a Babylonian house had a head of Nhuwawa or a Kusarikku figure to dissuade demons from entering, whereas the Israelite house had lines of Scripture on its doorposts; and instead of a shrine with an image of their God, the Israelite priests carried an ark containing a copy of the Book of the Law.*
>
> Karel van der Toorn

In his essay on the veneration of the Torah and the Babylonian cult of images, K. van der Toorn persuasively argues for an analogy between the role of YHWH's words in Deuteronomy and the image in Babylonia. Certainly the religion envisaged by Deuteronomy appears to be sharply differentiated from other ancient Near Eastern religions by its programmatic aniconism, and its emphasis on the words that YHWH spoke at Horeb. The words of YHWH, prominently placed in every aspect of Israelite life (Deut. 6.6-9), occupy a central position in the piety of Deuteronomy, which in other ancient Near Eastern religions was taken by the image.

1. *The Relationship between 'Monotheism' and Idolatry*

If Deuteronomy describes a religion where portions of *torah* occupy the position usually taken by the divine image, how is this related to that theme of Deuteronomy which is the focus of this work, the confession of YHWH's oneness? In other words, what is the relationship between 'monotheism' and the prohibition of images, the *Bilderverbot*?[1] That there exists a bond between the two would

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The epigraph is from van der Toorn 1997: 229.

[1] Throughout this chapter I have adopted the German term *Bilderverbot* to cover the various prohibitions against images found in the Old Testament. This term has

appear to be undeniable. This emerges most strikingly in the Decalogue's version of the *Bilderverbot* (Deut. 5.8).[2] Zimmerli has shown that the *Bilderverbot* is not merely juxtaposed with the demand for exclusive devotion, but sandwiched between the two halves of the first commandment (5.7, 9-10).[3]

The observation that 'monotheism' and the *Bilderverbot* are related is, of course, not novel. B.B. Schmidt notes that 'frequently represented in scholarship is aniconism's close ties with monotheism'.[4] However, the exact reason for the linkage is unclear. Discerning the logic of the relationship is problematized by continued disagreement about the exact reason for the prohibition of idolatry within Israel.[5] The usual approach to this question has been on the level of the religious

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a number of advantages. First, it is less clumsy than any English alternatives such as, 'the prohibition of images'. Second, the most significant context in which the *Bilderverbot* has been transmitted to Jewish and Christian religious communities has been as part of the Decalogue. However, within the different traditions that have received the Ten Commandments different enumerations of the commandments have resulted. These differences have focused around the *Bilderverbot* (see Zimmerli 1963). The use of a foreign word draws attention to the problems of labelling the commandment. Third, the use of *Bilderverbot* covers a number of prohibitions against images including those found in the Decalogue and in Deuteronomy 4 (A recent exegetical examination of all of the *Bilderverbot* is Dohmen 1987).

[2] I have given the versification for Deuteronomy, rather than Exodus, for two reasons. First, the focus of this work is Deuteronomy. Second, in Exodus the prohibition reads פסל וכל תמונה (Exod. 20.4), which would provide a plural subject for 20.5, creating a distinction between the first and second commandments (Schmidt 1995: 79-80).

[3] Zimmerli 1963.

[4] Schmidt 1995: 75. See, for example, 'one God, therefore, it would seem, no idol; no idol because only one God' (North 1958: 156); 'Das Gebot der alleinigen Verehrung Jahwes ist, teils einfach faktisch, an wichtigen Stellen aber auch ganz explizit, mit dem Bilderverbot verknüpft' (Mauser 1988: 72); 'The theological stresses of 586 B.C.E. assured both the triumph of Yahwistic monotheism and of aniconic worship: Yahweh's cult had probably always been aniconic, but now there were no gods but Yahweh, so there was utterly no room for any cult image!' (Dick 1999: 2).

On the other hand, I. Cornelius has recently written, 'monotheistic cults were not necessarily aniconic, nor is polytheism without examples of aniconism' (1997: 43).

[5] Mettinger 1995: 195. C.D. Evans remarks on the questions raised by Israel's aniconic practice, 'perhaps most slippery of all is the question of the underlying rationale and purpose of the aniconic tradition' (1995: 196). Indeed, R.P. Carroll

history of Israel. That is, scholars have sought to detect the original impulse behind Israel's rejection of idols and to locate this impulse within Israel's developing religion.

The task I wish to attempt here is of a different kind and, in some sense, more limited. I wish to examine the link made between the *Bilderverbot* and the oneness of YHWH in Deuteronomy. This exegetical exercise is, of course, at least part of the task for those engaged in determining the reason for the rise and development of aniconism in Israel, because Deuteronomy provides some of the most significant reflections on idolatry in the Old Testament. Nevertheless it is useful to consider, in broad terms, some of the solutions that have been offered to the problem of aniconism in Israelite religion, and how they contribute to the question of the relationship between aniconism and 'monotheism'; for this will provide us with a typology in which to locate the explanation given in Deuteronomy, and also indicate the way in which this explanation is on a different level.

The solutions that modern scholars have offered to the question of why aniconism developed in Israel may be broadly classified into three types. First, aniconism resulted from Israel's beliefs about the nature of YHWH, for example, his spirituality, invisibility, or transcendence.[6] 'Monotheism' and aniconism are two

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argues 'that the postulates behind the ban on images cannot now be ascertained' (1977: 64; cf. Schmidt 1983: 80-81).

[6] A.B. Davidson and P. Volz established the logic of the *Bilderverbot* in the spirituality and, thus, the invisibility of YHWH ('there can be no doubt that the second commandment teaches the spirituality of God in the sharpest manner' [Davidson 1904: 111]; 'dieses Verbot, in dem Gott als Geist erklärt wird' [Volz 1932: 40]). The Old Testament, however, suggests that YHWH has a form, but that this form cannot be seen, or described by humans. The argument of Davidson and Volz is based on a dichotomy of the material and spiritual which is alien to the thought of the Old Testament (Von Rad 1962: 213; Schmidt 1983: 81).

Craigie located the logic of the prohibition in the transcendence of YHWH: 'to attempt to represent and limit God by human form in wood or stone would be to undermine the transcendence of God' (1976: 135). Driver (1902: 65), von Rad (1962: 217-18), M. Fishbane (1985: 322) and R. Albertz (1994a: 65) argue similarly. However, as R.S. Hendel notes the notion of the deity's transcendence is not unique to Israel (1988: 371).

Zimmerli argued that YHWH is a god of history, who cannot be manipulated by magic, and for those reasons he must not be represented (1963: 246-48). The idea

characteristics of YHWH's nature. Second, aniconism resulted from social factors, that is, something in Israel's nature, for example, nomadism or an anti-monarchic ideology.[7] In this type, 'monotheism' and aniconism are related to one another only as the most conspicuous and extreme expressions of radical Yahwism.[8] Third,

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that YHWH is a god of history in contrast to other deities in the ancient Near East was conclusively rejected by B. Albrektson (1967). Further, the idea that other Near Eastern gods were open to magical manipulation is a misunderstanding of ancient Near Eastern religion (Hendel 1988: 370). At the heart of Zimmerli's suggestion is a contrast between a god dynamically intervening in history and a god worshipped with a static image, a contrast which is problematic as a notion for understanding Israelite and ancient Near Eastern ideas of divinity (Schmidt 1983: 81).

[7] Hendel understands the prohibition as an expression of early Israel's anti-monarchic ideology, 'the divine image that symbolized the authority of the king was prohibited' (1988: 378; cf. 1997: 205-228). Why the imagery of divine kingship should survive in many other ways in Israel (see Brettler 1989), but not the actual depiction of the king is unclear.

Israel's aniconism has also been understood as a reaction to the idols of Egypt, or Canaan (Cassuto 1967: 242; also Assmann 1997: 23-54). Why such an extreme, and unexpected, reaction to the cultures that Israel encountered should have occurred is left unexplained.

A *de facto* aniconism has been attributed to Israel's nomadic past (Dohmen 1987: 237-44; Keel 1977: 39-40). Israel, however, was never more than semi-nomadic (and the concepts of nomadism and semi-nomadism are not straightforward and can only be used with caution), and it is unlikely that her material culture was ever so rudimentary that simple images were not possible.

Evans argues that it was with Hezekiah and Josiah that episodic iconoclasm, undertaken for a variety of reasons, became a theological program. He has suggested that a social policy, Hezekiah's program of defense, was turned into an ideological vision by Josiah's scribes (1995).

[8] 'Note that the development of programmatic aniconism in Deuteronomy and other works is related to the development of "philosophical" or "self-conscious" monotheism in that both involve the critique of traditional modes of representation of the deity' (Hendel 1997: 221 n. 61).

Recent scholarship has particularly associated the *Bilderverbot* with the YHWH-alone party, the faction in Israelite society to whom most of the important steps towards 'monotheism' are attributed (Mettinger 1995: 196. 'In der Sprache des späteren Dekalogs kann man folglich sachlich zusammenfassend sagen: das Fremdgötterverbot hat als Spezialfall das Bilderverbot im 8.Jh. geboren. Die weitere Entwicklung im AT zeigt, daß dieses "verwandtschaftliche" Verhältnis zwischen beiden Tatbeständen die Entwicklung beider immer geprägt hat' [Dohmen 1987: 262]. In his account of the development of the *Bilderverbot*, Dohmen sees a close relationship between it and the claim for exclusive devotion to YHWH [1987: 237-77]).

aniconism resulted from the nature of images, for example, their ambiguity.[9] Aniconism and 'monotheism' are related as steps towards rationality.[10]

To consider how the relationship between the oneness of YHWH and the *Bilderverbot* is conceived in Deuteronomy no better place can be chosen to begin than with Deuteronomy 4. Within the Old Testament, Deuteronomy 4 is held to be the closest attempt to an explanation of the prohibition of images. Further, Deuteronomy 4 also contains both a version of the *Bilderverbot* and statements about YHWH's uniqueness. The arguments made about Deuteronomy 4 will be correlated with an examination of Deuteronomy 1-3. Finally, the story of the Golden Calf in Deuteronomy 9-10 will be examined.

2. *The Problem of Deuteronomy 4*

Deuteronomy 4.1-40 is the climax of Moses' first speech, spoken on the other side of the Jordan.[11] Verse 1 begins with וְעַתָּה, which, in the words of Weinfeld, 'marks the transition from a story to the moral-religious lesson that is to be drawn from it'.[12] Such a statement obscures two problems. First, how is the moral-religious lesson drawn from the story? And second, is it possible to speak of a single lesson? A solution to the former problem can only be provided on the basis of solving the latter, and thus we shall turn to this problem first.

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[9] Dohmen attributes the development of the *Bilderverbot* to the ambiguity of images (1987: 258-62, 267-69). The *Bilderverbot* is a means of ensuring Israel's exclusive devotion to YHWH. Arguments that rely on the inferior nature or ambiguity of imagery, however, have been criticized by Keel and Uehlinger, who have stressed that language is arbitrary and, further, more ambiguous than pictures (1998).

[10] Compare with R.P. Carroll who advocates an agnosticism on the reasons for the *Bilderverbot*, but does suggest it 'may be regarded as an advance towards rationality' (1977: 62).

[11] In the present form of the text 1.1-4.43 come under the superscription found in 1.1 'these are the words Moses spoke to all Israel...'.

[12] Weinfeld 1991: 199. Cf. 10.12.

On the basis of both conceptuality and literary style some interpreters have considered Deuteronomy 4 a composite text. Indeed, in the words of Braulik, the chapter has functioned as a 'Schibbolet der Literarkritik am Deuteronomium',[13] with passionate voices arguing for and against the unity of the chapter.[14] Stylistic arguments have revolved around the nature and function of the *Numeruswechsel* in the chapter. The conceptual problems were expressed by von Rad in his commentary,

> The contents do not make a perfect whole, for the admonitions proceed oddly along a double track. On the one hand the law revealed by Yahweh at Horeb is mentioned in comprehensive and general terms (vv. 9-14); but beside it there runs an exhortation which revolves around a single concern, namely that of making the prohibition of images compulsory (vv. 15-20; 23-24). This cannot be the original form.[15]

Both von Rad and D. Knapp use the distinction between law and the *Bilderverbot* as the starting point of their literary critical considerations.[16] This problem is further exacerbated when it is seen that whilst vv. 9-14 concern the Ten Commandments that YHWH spoke at Horeb, vv. 1-8 concern the law in general, the חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים. Other scholars have noted the similarities between vv. 1-8 and vv. 32-40, which describe the uniqueness of YHWH and his people Israel with rhetorical questions.[17] Whilst the contrast in vv. 9-20 is YHWH and images, in vv. 1-8, 32-40 it is YHWH and other gods. How, then, does uniqueness relate to the law, the Ten Commandments and the *Bilderverbot*? Is there a logic or theme that underpins the whole chapter?

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[13] Braulik 1989: 266.

[14] Voices for the literary unity of the chapter include Braulik (1978), Lohfink (1965), Mayes (1981) and Otto (1996). Those arguing against unity include Begg (1980), Driver (1902: lxxvi), Knapp (1987), Mittmann (1975), von Rad (1966a: 49) and Rofé (1985b).

[15] Von Rad 1966a: 49.

[16] Von Rad 1966a: 49; Knapp 1987: 26-27

[17] Miller 1990: 53-54; Le Roux 1982/83: 64-65.

Weinfeld argues that 'the central concern of the chapter is the preservation of Israel's uniqueness by its abstention from idolatry'.[18] However, as Weinfeld goes on to show this central concern only touches vv. 9-29. Verses 1-8 are an exhortation to obey the law and vv. 30-40 are reflections on the election of Israel and the uniqueness of YHWH. Indeed, vv. 30-40 describe the preservation of Israel's uniqueness despite her idolatry, a preservation located not in her abstention from idolatry, but in YHWH's character as the electing god.[19]

N. Lohfink's seminal essay on Deuteronomy 4 does not provide us with any further aid, despite being convinced of the chapter's essential unity. He detects three different threads running through the chapter. The first thread is constituted by references to Israel's history that penetrate deeper and deeper into the past as the chapter progresses. In vv. 3-4 the Israelites are reminded of the recent failure at Baal Peor. Verses 10-14 describe the events at Horeb and v. 20 the exodus from Egypt. In v. 32 the perspective is widened to its greatest extent with an appeal to all of history from the creation of mankind.[20] The second thread is a vision of the future, which from the perspective of the land of Moab, extends further and further into the future. Verse 5 speaks of the imminent conquest of the land. Verses 6-8 reflect Israel's prominence during Solomon's reign. The apostasy during the Assyrian period in the Southern kingdom is alluded to in vv. 15-19. This leads to the punishment of the exile in vv. 26-28, whilst vv. 29-31 suggest post-exilic possibilities of repentance and a restored relationship with YHWH.[21] The third thread is a continual cycle of themes and key words. The first theme is an exhortation to keep the commands and the promise of the land (vv. 1, 5-8, 14, 21-22). The second theme is the prohibition against idols (vv. 2, 9, 15-19, 23-24). The third theme is exemplification through historical overview (vv. 3-4, 10-13, 20).[22]

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[18] Weinfeld 1991: 221.

[19] See chapter 5. Comparison may be made with Deut. 9.25-29. Despite Israel's idolatry it is YHWH's election of Israel that forms the basis of Moses' prayer.

[20] Lohfink 1965: 94.

[21] Lohfink 1965: 95.

[22] Lohfink 1965: 96.

There are a number of problems that emerge with Lohfink's analysis. First, though Lohfink has uncovered interesting possible historical allusions, it is not clear that he has uncovered the rhetorical logic of the chapter. Second, the different threads do not cover the whole chapter. The third does not continue beyond v. 24. The first two have finished by v. 32. Third, the progression of the 'historical' thread is confused by allusions to Horeb, Egypt and the patriarchs in vv. 32-40, and even before v. 32 with references to Transjordan (v. 22). Finally, it is far from certain that all the allusions to events that lie, from the perspective of Moab, in the future are to be understood in such a definite way. H. Cazelles does not see vv. 6-8 as an allusion to the Solomonic period,[23] and Fishbane argues that 'the latter days' in v. 30 refers to the imminent future from the speaker's historical perspective.[24]

Lohfink argues that the premature end of the third thread is due to the chapter's construction on the basis of the treaty form. 4.1-24 contains a historical overview and proclamation of the greatest commandment and in 4.25-31 we have the curse and blessing.[25] D.J. McCarthy similarly detects the form of the ancient Near Eastern treaty in 4.1-31. However, vv. 32-40 are devoid of treaty elements and sit as a 'kind of peroration, at once a conclusion on a positive, encouraging note...and a transition by which the discourse is adapted to its present position'.[26] Lohfink also sees vv. 32-40 as a peroration. However, recognizing treaty elements in Deuteronomy 4 does not solve the problem of the chapter's underlying logic. Form has a direct bearing on meaning, but meaning is not exhaustively described by form. Further, McCarthy notes that the chapter does not strictly follow the treaty form;[27] this is almost certainly because the chapter is a speech, not a covenant.

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[23] Cazelles 1967: 213-14.

[24] Fishbane 1972: 351.

[25] Lohfink 1965: 92.

[26] McCarthy 1978: 194.

[27] McCarthy 1978: 193.

In both Lohfink and McCarthy it is noticeable that vv. 32-40 sit uncomfortably with the rest of the chapter. This feeling has been expressed by other scholars.[28] The link between v. 32 and what precedes is made by כִּי. In the Septaugint כִּי is untranslated, a practice followed by the NIV and Weinfeld.[29] Driver, followed by Begg, sees vv. 32-40 as deriving from a separate source with כִּי providing a weak link.[30] In his commentary Driver attempts to provide some explanation for כִּי:

> introducing the considerations, tending to show that Jehovah will not forget his covenant (v.[31]); nothing so marvellous has ever happened at any time, or in any place, since man appeared upon earth, as the wonders which Israel has witnessed at Horeb (v.[13]) and in Egypt (v.[34])'.[31]

However, Driver himself expresses dissatisfaction with this explanation.

Given the secondary position that vv. 32-40 are often given in understanding the chapter, J.G. McConville's essay 'Time, Place and the Deuteronomic Altar-Law' appears novel. Building on I. Wilson's research into divine presence in Deuteronomy,[32] he suggests that the chapter's principle theme is the dialectic between transcendence and immanence which finds particular expression in vv. 32-40.[33] YHWH's transcendence is guarded by his presence in his words, rather than in an image, and by the emphasis on YHWH's uniqueness. YHWH's immanence is seen in his nearness to his people (vv. 7, 10, 11), particularly at Horeb where 'the transcendent God meets the earth and is among his people'.[34] The relation of YHWH's transcendence and immanence to the law and the *Bilderverbot* provides the chapter with its inherent unity. The law is closely related to the divine nearness, and this concept stands over against the localization of the deity in an image. YHWH's transcendence and immanence also provide the basis of his particularizing

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[28] Mayes 1981: 26.

[29] Weinfeld 1991: 194.

[30] Driver 1902: lxxvi; Begg 1980: 53-54.

[31] Driver 1902: 75.

[32] Wilson 1995.

[33] McConville 1994: 132-38.

[34] McConville 1994: 135.

love for Israel, whilst also maintaining his freedom. McConville applies this understanding of Deuteronomy 4 to Deuteronomy 12 and detects the same ideas there. YHWH's transcendence is expressed in his free choice of a place, whilst the idea of the chosen place as a meeting place between YHWH and his people captures YHWH's immanence.[35]

McConville's analysis of Deuteronomy 4 provides a promising way of understanding the tensions that exist in the chapter. His argument may be moved forwards in a number of ways. First, his analysis suggests the need for a closer examination of the chapter. McConville devotes only five pages to Deuteronomy 4 and his work is only a stepping stone to a consideration of Deuteronomy 12. Second, the discovery of the logic that underpins Deuteronomy 4 demands a reconsideration of Deuteronomy 1-3 and the relationship between the account of Israel's journey to Moab and 'the moral-religious lesson that is to be drawn from it'.[36]

3. *The Argument of Deuteronomy 4*

Deuteronomy 4 has been described as 'probably the most complex chapter in the whole book of Deuteronomy. It is laden with theological meaning'.[37] As such it permits no easy analysis. A comparison with Exodus 19 illustrates something of the nature of the chapter. Whilst Exodus 19 tries to catch something of the *mysterium tremendum* in its description of the encounter with YHWH, Deuteronomy 4 provides a more reflective account of the events at Horeb.[38] To consider one part of the

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[35] McConville 1994: 137-38.

[36] It may also be noted that McConville uses the categories of 'transcendence', 'immanence' and 'presence' in an unreflective way. 'Immanence' is used of YHWH's presence in a certain place, Horeb or 'the chosen place'. But, this is to use 'immanence' in a way that is different to its use in modem theological discourse, and begs the question of whether human beings who are present in a certain place are 'immanent'. In his use of 'presence' McConville sometimes prefixes 'actual' or 'real'. What does 'presence' mean when used of YHWH? Can YHWH be 'present', but not 'really present', or *vice versa*? Although beyond the scope of this work, it would be desirable to formulate a grammar of presence.

[37] Millar 1994: 32.

[38] Von Rad 1962: 216-17.

chapter necessitates considering all the other parts. The chapter is no jumble, though, instead there is a clearly discernible structure. The chapter begins with an appeal to 'see' (v. 1) and 'hear' (v. 5) the statutes and ordinances that Moses is now giving the Israelites. This appeal is justified both negatively (vv. 1-4) and positively (vv. 5-8). This is followed by the central section (vv. 9-31) which is an extended exposition of the *Bilderverbot*, and can be divided into three parts.[39] Finally, there is the *peroratio,* vv. 32-40.

In the following analysis we shall first consider the *peroratio,* vv. 32-40, and then the other parts of the chapter in relation to it. A number of reasons may be given for such an approach. First, S.A. Geller has shown that the chapter contains two striking word-pairs, see-hear and heaven-earth, both of which cluster in the *peroratio,* particularly in v. 36.[40] Second, even if we do not grant all of Lohfink's analysis, there is a definite sense of direction in the chapter. However, assuming the usual dating, for the sake of argument, to the exilic or post-exilic period we would expect the possibility of return from exile and a restored relationship with the merciful *el* to be a suitable climax of the chapter. The fact that Moses' speech does not finish with v. 31 should lead us to consider carefully the purpose of the *peroratio.* Third, the twice-repeated confession that YHWH is God (הָאֱלֹהִים) in vv. 35, 39 appears as a significant climax to the entire chapter. In the final analysis, though, approaching Deuteronomy 4 through the *peroratio* can only be justified to the extent that it produces an enlightening exegesis of the chapter.

Deuteronomy 4.32-40

As has already been shown, the *peroratio,* vv. 32-40, consists of two panels which both climax with statements about the incomparability of YHWH (vv. 32-35, 36-39). These two panels are followed by the final verse of Moses' speech, an exhortation to obey the commandments. To some degree the two panels parallel one another, but there are also important differences. These can be illustrated diagramatically:

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[39] See above p. 213.

[40] Geller 1996: 36.

Panel 1	Panel 2
Creation (v. 32)	
Horeb (v. 33)	Horeb (v. 36)
Egypt (v. 34)	Egypt (v. 37)
	Canaan (v. 38)
Acknowledgement (v. 35)	Acknowledgement (v. 39)

The two panels move through time and space from the day (לְמִן־הַיּוֹם) of man's creation (v. 32) to the present day (כַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה) in Moab (v. 38).[41] This leads to the demand to confess YHWH's incomparability today (v. 39), and obey the commands that are being given today (v. 40). In moving from creation to conquest both panels touch upon the events at Horeb and Egypt. The order Horeb-Egypt is unusual and may, perhaps, be explained by the fact that it is Horeb that is the primary focus of the chapter as a whole. In both panels the events in Egypt evidence not only YHWH's great power, but also his election of Israel, expressed in v. 34 with לָקַח (cf. v. 20) and v. 37 with בָּחַר.

The acknowledgements of YHWH's incomparability that form the climaxes of each panel are not identical either. In v. 35 Moses indicates that the Israelites were shown the events at Horeb and in the exodus to lead them to an acknowledgement of YHWH's uniqueness, whilst in v. 39 the actual demand for acknowledgement is made. Thus, v. 35 acts as an anticipation of the actual demand in v. 39. Second, v. 39 includes the additional element 'in heaven above and on the earth beneath'. The origin of this expansion in v. 39 is clearly v. 36 which speaks of YHWH's voice from heaven, and his fire on earth. The demand in v. 40 to keep the commandments should not be viewed as a mere inclusio with v. 1.[42] The *waw* functions, as in 6.5, to indicate the consequence to be drawn from the statement about YHWH. The

[41] Von Rad is mistaken when he writes, 'in v. 38 the preacher has forgotten the fiction of Moses' speech before the conquest' (1966a: 51; see also Driver 1902: 77; Rose 1975: 155; Ridderbos 1984: 93). The form ל + infinitive/לְמַעַן followed by כַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה is found in 2.30; 4.20; 8.18 and 29.27 (see also 10.8). In each case what is stated is a present situation, not a past event. In 4.38 the present situation is the conquest of the land. The land has not been conquered, but is being conquered. The nearest parallel is found in 2.30. There the present situation is YHWH's handing over of the land, though at that point Sihon has not been defeated.

[42] Weinfeld 1991: 221.

statement about YHWH's incomparability always carries with it a demand for total devotion from Israel (cf. 7.9-11; 10.17-19). The demand to obey the commands is closely linked to living in the land (4.40).

The climax of the chapter, then, comes in the demand that Israel acknowledge that 'YHWH is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other' and in consequence, obey the statutes and ordinances. Four elements make up the demand. First, the acknowledgement that YHWH is God. Second, that he is God in heaven above and on the earth below. Third, that all his statutes and commandments should be obeyed. Fourth, obedience will result in living in the land. Each of these elements is found, not only in the *peroratio*, but also in the rest of the chapter. The first element, the acknowledgement that YHWH is God, is closely tied to YHWH's election of Israel (vv. 32-34). The theme of election appears in vv. 5-8, 20, 23-31. The second element, the acknowledgement that YHWH is God in heaven above and on the earth below, finds its basis in the events at Horeb (v. 36). Horeb appears in vv. 9-20. The third element, the demand to keep the commands, is found in vv. 1-8, 9-14. The fourth element, the promise of long life in the land if the commands are obeyed, is found in vv. 1-8, 9-14, 23-31. It is evident that none of the three elements occurs in the rest of the chapter distinct from other elements. To concentrate on one element is inevitably to bring in the others. If a pattern may be discerned it is that the elements appear, to a large extent, in the rest of the chapter in the reverse order in which they appear in the *peroratio*.

The Acknowledgement that YHWH is God

The acknowledgement that YHWH is God (הָאֱלֹהִים) is tied tightly to YHWH's election of Israel, as we have already seen. The archetypal act of election in the chapter is the exodus from Egypt (vv. 20, 34, 37). It is this act that YHWH caused Israel to see so that she might acknowledge him as God (v. 35). Thus, the uniqueness of YHWH can only be approached through the uniqueness of Israel. But, it may equally be said that the uniqueness of Israel can only be approached through the uniqueness of YHWH. Thus 'has any people...' (v. 33) and 'has any god...' (v. 34) stand and fall together.

This dialectical relationship between the uniqueness of YHWH and the uniqueness of Israel also finds expression in vv. 5-8. Again, rhetorical questions underscore the uniqueness of Israel and YHWH. In v. 7 and v. 8 it is asked 'who is a great nation...?'. But Israel's incomparability depends on YHWH's incomparable nearness, and YHWH's giving of incomparably just statutes and ordinances. In vv. 1-8 and vv. 32-40 YHWH's uniqueness and Israel's uniqueness are stressed with the repeated use of the word 'great', גָּדוֹל.[43] However, whilst Israel is described as 'great' in vv. 1-8, it is YHWH's deeds, rather than YHWH himself, that is 'great' in vv. 32-40. It is through the greatness of YHWH's deeds that his greatness is perceived (3.24).

The idea of election is found in each section of the chapter, especially vv. 5-8, 19-20, 23-31. As we have seen, it is immediately before the *peroratio* that the logic of election receives its most vivid expression (vv. 23-31). It is this dramatic account of election that leads into the rhetorical questions of vv. 32-34 and the confession that YHWH is God (v. 35). YHWH is seen to be God in his election of Israel, that is, in his direction towards Israel as the jealous and merciful *el*.[44]

YHWH is God in heaven above and on the earth below

The establishment that YHWH is God, on the basis of his election of Israel, provides only one part of what Moses is seeking to get the Israelites to acknowledge. YHWH is also God in heaven above and on the earth below. The basis of such an assertion is found in v. 36, a description of the events at Horeb, which was the principle theme of vv. 9-20. The word-pair 'heaven'-'earth' together with 'see'-'hear' form an important parallel, a parallel linked by the final part of the verse:

α	מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם	הִשְׁמִיעֲךָ	אֶת־קֹלוֹ	לְיַסְּרֶךָּ
α'	וְעַל־הָאָרֶץ	הֶרְאֲךָ	אֶת־אִשּׁוֹ הַגְּדוֹלָה	
β		וּדְבָרָיו שָׁמַעְתָּ מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ׃		

α	From heaven	you were caused to hear	his voice
α'	And upon earth	you were caused to see	his great fire
β	and his words you heard from the midst of the fire.		

[43] 4.6, 7, 8 and 32, 34, 36, 37, 38.

[44] See chapter 5.

The question is how to understand the parallelism that has been formed. The majority of exegetes have understood the parallelism as antithetic. The two halves of v. 36 represent two contrasting ideas. What is seen is contrasted to what is heard. The heavenly is opposed to the earthly.

Weinfeld's comment on this verse is, in many ways, typical,

> In contrast to the account about God's descent upon Mount Sinai in Exod 19 (vv 11, 20), according to the account here...God did not descend and did not show himself on the mount: only his fire was shown there, and out of it came his words, which were proclaimed from the heavens.[45]

The contrast between Exodus 19 and Moses' speech forms the basis of Weinfeld's understanding of the text. The writer of Deuteronomy 4 has taken the former, with its ideas of YHWH speaking and the fire at Horeb, and formulated an 'abstract notion of revelation'.[46] YHWH was not present on the mountain, instead he remained in heaven. From there he spoke and the Israelites heard the words from the fire. This marks the victory of the concept of YHWH's dwelling in heaven over the idea that he might dwell, even temporarily, on earth. Simultaneously, it is the victory of what is heard over what is seen, as Weinfeld explains, 'Deuteronomy has, furthermore, taken care to shift the centre of gravity from the visual to the aural plane'.[47] Thus, von Rad describes the heart of the message of Deuteronomy 4 as the victory of the word over the image.[48]

For a number of reasons this interpretation militates against the sense of the chapter as a whole, and the sense of v. 36 in particular. First, the final part of v. 36 links the two halves of the verse in a way that undermines an antithetical

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[45] Weinfeld 1991: 212-13.

[46] Weinfeld 1991: 213.

[47] Weinfeld 1972: 207.

[48] Von Rad 1962: 216. See also Carroll 1977: 62: 'but insofar as the word is an advance on the image in abstract terms, just as the icon precedes the idea in human history, so the aniconic cult may be regarded as an advance towards rationality in Israelite religion'.

interpretation.[49] YHWH's words proceed, not from heaven, but from the fire. It is not that the heavenly aspect of the Horeb revelation is substantial, whilst the earthly aspect is superficial. The two aspects of the revelation form a whole. The fact that the words proceed 'from the midst of the fire' is significant. Wilson has argued that the other occurrences of the phrase suggest YHWH's presence in the fire.[50] Second, we have already argued that the additional element in the confession of v. 39, 'God in heaven above and on the earth below' finds its basis in the account of the Horeb revelation in v. 36. If the intention of v. 36 is to argue that YHWH is to be exclusively located in heaven then v. 36 not only fails to provide the logical basis for v. 39, but is in contradiction to it.

Third, elsewhere in Deuteronomy 4 the pair of senses, hearing and seeing, are not set up in opposition to one another. Instead, both are necessary in order to draw the appropriate conclusion from YHWH's revelation at Horeb. In the first section of the chapter, vv. 1-8, the exhortation to keep the חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים is expressed with the twofold imperative: hear (v. 1) - see (v. 5). The use of the imperatives of שׁמע and ראה occurs on a number of occasions in Deuteronomy,[51] but only here do they occur together, expressing the totality of the senses that are to be involved in receiving the 'statutes and ordinances'. The word-pair appears again in vv. 9-14 when Israel is exhorted to remember what they have seen (v. 9) and heard (v. 10). What was heard was the voice of YHWH declaring the Ten Commandments; what was seen is more problematic. In v. 12 it is stated that YHWH's voice was heard at Horeb, but no form was seen. This may be set up in terms of a victory of aural phenomena over visual, but if this were the case the Israelites would have been exhorted to remember only what they had heard. Are the Israelites really to be expected to remember that they saw nothing? Though no form is seen, dark clouds

[49] For this reason it is often viewed as an addition, see Knapp 1987: 41-42; Mittmann 1975: 123.

[50] Wilson 1995: 68.

[51] ראה occurs particularly in the 'framework' (1.8, 21; 2.24, 31; 11.26; 30.15; 32.39); שׁמע on the other hand, is found in chapters 5-28 (5.1; 6.4; 9.1; 20.3; 27.9).

and, most importantly, a fire are seen.[52] The point of v. 12 is not that YHWH was not on earth, but that no form was seen. In fact, Wilson's work on the phrase 'from the midst of the fire' suggests that v. 12 'would most naturally imply that YHWH himself was present within the fire'.[53] In vv. 32-35, 'hearing' (v. 33) and 'seeing' (v. 35) are both needed to appreciate the uniqueness of what happened at Horeb and Egypt. Thus throughout Deuteronomy 4 seeing and hearing are not contrasting notions, but instead form a rhetorical pair that indicates the attention that needs to be given to the commandments that Moses is inculcating.[54]

Fourth, that a fire was seen is problematic for an antithetical interpretation of v. 36. This fire is described as YHWH's fire, but in what sense can it be described as his? The description of YHWH as a 'devouring fire' (v. 24) is particularly troubling for an interpretation of v. 36 which understands YHWH to be present exclusively in heaven. 'YHWH, your god, is a devouring fire, a jealous *el*' is a clear allusion to the Decalogue's version of the *Bilderverbot* (5.9), but 'devouring fire' is no traditional element; here alone it is added. The addition of this element is striking in view of the use of the imagery of fire in the rest of the chapter.

The voice and the fire then are the two aspects of the divine revelation at Horeb. These two aspects of the revelation at Horeb are connected, in some way, with the statement in v. 39 that 'YHWH is God in heaven above and on the earth below'. But what does such a statement mean? Does it mean that YHWH is powerful in heaven above and on the earth below, or is it in some way an expression of divine presence? The use of 'in heaven above' and 'on the earth below' together is surprisingly rare, found on only three other occasions: Josh. 2.11; 1 Kgs 8.23 and

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[52] The events at Horeb are described with language reminiscent of Exodus (e.g. v. 11 cf. Exod. 19.18; 20.18, 21; 24.16). Weinfeld notes that Deuteronomy does not mention lightning or the sound of the trumpet (1991: 204). This reflects the different rhetorical effect that Exodus and Deuteronomy are trying to achieve. Exodus tries to catch something of the *mysterium tremendum* with phenomena that overwhelm the senses. Deuteronomy provides a more reflective account of the events at Horeb. The description of only visual phenomena allows the voice of YHWH to be the only sound the people hear.

[53] Wilson 1995: 62.

[54] See also Geller 1996: 40-41.

Eccl. 5.6. It is far more common to find YHWH described as the creator of heaven and earth;[55] and there are also references to him as 'god of heaven and earth'.[56] In Josh. 2.11 and 1 Kgs 8.23 the phrase is used of YHWH in a similar way to that which is found in Deut. 4.39.[57] In both cases it is connected with YHWH's actions on Israel's behalf. That the phrase is connected with YHWH's presence is indicated by Eccl. 5.6 where the terms are used antithetically: God is in heaven and man is upon earth; and also by the other occurrences of 'in heaven' when used of YHWH.[58] Thus, the phrase 'in heaven above and on the earth below' makes a statement about YHWH's presence, not about the extent of his power.[59] The use of the word-pair 'heaven'-'earth' elsewhere in the chapter indicates that the totality of the cosmos is intended,[60] in the same way that 'see'-'hear' indicates the totality of the senses involved in receiving the revelation of YHWH. There is thus nowhere that YHWH is not present as הָאֱלֹהִים.

We must also ask the question of how YHWH may be 'God in heaven above and on the earth below' in the way that no other god is. YHWH's uniqueness was revealed in his electing actions on Israel's behalf, seen particularly in the exodus. How then is YHWH shown to be הָאֱלֹהִים in heaven above and on the earth below? The answer to this question lies in the events at Horeb. At Horeb, in the voice and fire, YHWH shows himself to be God in heaven above and on the earth below. In vv. 15-20 the events at Horeb, the revelation in the words from the fire, form the basis of the contrast with other gods.

Deuteronomy 4.15-20 is the most extended reflection upon the *Bilderverbot*, and the repetitious (כָּל־) תַּבְנִית is striking and emphatic. It begins by taking up one of

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[55] E.g. Gen. 14.19; Exod. 20.11; Ps. 115.15.

[56] Gen. 24.3; Deut. 10.14 and Dan. 2.19

[57] For 1 Kgs 8.23, see Appendix 2.

[58] E.g. Pss 2.4; 11.4; 123.1.

[59] See also Houtman 1993: 323.

[60] 4.26, 32. See Geller 1996: 36.

the themes of the previous verses (vv. 9-14): Israel saw no form at Horeb.[61] This leads to the exhortation to 'take care of themselves' and two reasons are given for this exhortation. First, lest they make an idol (vv. 16-18), and second, lest they worship the heavenly host (v. 19). It has been noticed that there are similarities between vv. 16-18 and both the Decalogue's *Bilderverbot* and the account of creation in Genesis. Weinfeld writes,

> *the form of any beast on earth...winged bird...in the sky...any fish...in the waters below the earth.* The tripartite cosmic division—sky, earth, the subterranean waters—in connection with pagan iconography, is taken from the second commandments.[62]

Weinfeld's quotation is selective and misleading.[63] Likenesses of male and female are first forbidden (4.16), then the order follows a fourfold, not threefold, division: beasts on the earth, birds in the air, creeping animals on the ground, and fish in the waters below the earth.[64] Fishbane suggests that Deut. 4.16-19a,

> is the reverse of the creation sequence in Gen 1-2.4a, as the following makes clear:
>
> *zākār ʾô nᵉqēḇâ*
> *bᵉhēmâ*
> *ṣippôr*
> *rōmēś*
> *dāgâ*
> *haššemeš wᵉeṯ hayyārēᵃḥ wᵉeṯ hakkôḵāḇîm*
> *kôl ṣᵉḇāʾ haššāmayîm.*[65]

Again, this is misleading.[66] The כֹּל צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם make no appearance in Genesis 1.[67] Further, the הַיָּם in Genesis mentioned between the birds and the fish are sea-

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[61] Pakkala incorrectly argues on the basis of Deut. 4.15-16a that the nomist redactors of Deuteronomy held that YHWH *had* no form (1999: 186), but the text only indicates that they *saw* no form.

[62] Weinfeld 1991: 205; Weinfeld's ellipses and italics.

[63] Schmidt similarly argues that Deuteronomy 4 uses a triadic scheme (1995: 81-83).

[64] The fourfold division is also found in Leviticus 11. There, though, the order is: beasts, fish, birds, creeping animals.

[65] Fishbane 1972: 349.

[66] D.T. Olson's 'in *precisely* the reverse order in which they appear in Genesis 1' is unfortunate (1994: 34; my italics).

creatures, not land creatures; the land-based רֹמֵשׂ are mentioned after בְּהֵמָה. There is a clear logic to the order found in Genesis and in the Decalogue; what then is the logic of Deuteronomy 4? The order may, perhaps, be explained by the references to the earth (לָאָרֶץ/בָּאָרֶץ) which both opens and closes the list. All the animals that are listed belong to the earthly sphere. Verse 19, in contrast, forbids the worship of the members of the heavenly sphere: sun, moon and stars. Thus, the two reasons for the Israelites to 'take care of themselves' are lest they give incorrect worship to anything on earth or in heaven.[68]

Understanding 4.15-20 in this way enables us to see the parallel logic between the confession that YHWH is God and that YHWH is God in heaven above and on the earth below. The incomparability of YHWH is shown by his unique election of Israel and leads to the demand that Israel acknowledge him as הָאֱלֹהִים without peer. The presence of YHWH in heaven above and on the earth below, however that presence should be expressed, is shown by his unique revelation at Horeb and leads to the demand that Israel acknowledge him as הָאֱלֹהִים in heaven above and on the earth below. The corollary of this acknowledgement is the *Bilderverbot*, for YHWH is superior to the other gods because he is not a god who can be made 'present' by images or by celestial objects. YHWH's uniqueness as הָאֱלֹהִים, and his presence in heaven above and on earth below cannot, however, be detached from the particularity of Israel's experience at the exodus and Horeb. Von Rad's statement that 'Deut IV.9-20 is in fact only a substantiation from history and not an explanation'[69] is both correct and misleading. Correct, because YHWH cannot be known apart from his particular actions in Israel's history; misleading, because the logic of the *Bilderverbot* is explained by YHWH's presence in heaven and earth.

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[67] Gen. 2.1 reads וַיְכֻלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל־צְבָאָם. Here, however, the 'host' includes all the occupants of heaven and earth. Further, כָּל־צְבָאָם appears at the end of the creation sequence, rather than at its beginning as Fishbane requires.

[68] Thus, 'in v. 19, the warning and prohibition move from the animal world to the cosmic sphere' (Craigie 1976: 136) does not describe the relationship between vv. 16-18 and v. 19 as accurately as possible. See also Christensen 1991: 87.

[69] Von Rad 1962: 217. See also Carroll 1977: 55.

Making an image of YHWH, then, is to make YHWH 'present' in an inappropriate manner. To do so is to contradict what YHWH is, or rather, what he has shown himself to be in the revelation at Horeb: the God in heaven above and on the earth below. Instead, at Horeb YHWH made himself 'present' in the fire and in the voice. But what kind of presence was that? And how is YHWH 'present' after Horeb?

The earthly phenomenon, what was seen at Horeb, is described as 'fire...with black clouds and deep darkness'. The language expresses the mystery and hiddenness of the revelation.[70] It is the imagery of fire in particular that dominates the chapter's description of the visual plane at Horeb.[71] It is a powerful image of the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*,[72] which Israel's encounter with YHWH at Horeb involves.[73] The fire is that which the people see, to which the people draw near (vv. 10-11), but it is also that which symbolizes YHWH's jealousy (v. 24), and the people shrink from it (5.5). The heavenly phenomenon is the voice, which is said to speak from the fire (v. 33). This too expresses the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, the voice which no other nation has heard (vv. 32-33), and yet the voice that commands and the people fear (5.23-27). With both the fire and the voice it is the element of *tremendum* that finds most expression in the chapter.

Quite why an image is inappropriate is unclear, but it may be that an image localizes the presence of YHWH in a way that was perceived to be unacceptable. As such it is unable to represent the one who is God in heaven above and on the earth below, or capture the mystery and hiddenness of YHWH's revelation.

Neither the voice nor the fire continue beyond Horeb. What remains is the memory of the events at Horeb and the words that were spoken by the voice from the fire. It is these words that express, in some way, the nearness of the God who is in heaven above and on the earth below. In v. 7 the question of YHWH's presence emerges within the context of obedience to the commandments. The rhetorical question in v.

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[70] Miller 1990: 58-59.

[71] 4.11, 12, 15, 24, 33, 36.

[72] See Otto 1924: 12-41.

[73] Miller 1990: 49; von Balthasar 1991: 47-50.

8 naturally develops this exclamation of the nations in v. 6. Thus, v. 7 has the appearance of an insertion with no mention of the law, only of YHWH's nearness.[74]

A close association between the two rhetorical questions in vv. 7 and 8 is suggested by the parallels between the two:

7 כִּי מִי־גוֹי גָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ
אֱלֹהִים קְרֹבִים אֵלָיו
כַּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּכָל־קָרְאֵנוּ אֵלָיו׃
8 וּמִי גוֹי גָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ
חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים צַדִּיקִם
כְּכֹל הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי נֹתֵן לִפְנֵיכֶם הַיּוֹם׃

7 For which great nation has for itself
a god as near to it
as YHWH, our god, is when we call to him?
8 And which great nation has for itself
righteous statutes and ordinances
as all this *torah* that I am presenting before you today?

This paralleling 'suggests that the nearness of God and the righteous laws are closely related'.[75] This would seem to be confirmed by Deut. 30.11-14 in which the language of 'near' reappears. There though it is not YHWH who is near, but the 'commandment'. This would seem to suggest that YHWH's presence is, in some way, manifest in his commandments. However, this can be no easy equation, for it is said that YHWH is a near god when his people call to him, and not when they obey his commandments. The parallelism suggests that the obedience of the commands and calling to YHWH must go together.

What does it mean to call to YHWH? Elsewhere in Deuteronomy it is the poor and distressed that call to YHWH (15.9; 24.15). This is in keeping with the rest of the Old Testament where the majority of the ninety-eight occurrences of קרא with YHWH as the subject[76] take place in situations of distress or peril. It is not surprising, then, that when the location of the one calling to YHWH is indicated it is

[74] Steuernagel regarded v. 7 as an insertion (1923: 65).

[75] Miller 1990: 56.

[76] Labuschagne 1997b: 1163.

usually in the place of distress wherever that may be,[77] rather than at a cultic place.[78] Thus, the nearness of YHWH is not bound to the sanctuary, but instead may be known whenever the Israelites are keeping the commandments and call to YHWH.

The exact relationship between YHWH's presence, the laws and Israel's obedience to the laws may, perhaps, be seen to parallel the presence of YHWH at Horeb in the words and fire. This may be seen from an examination of v. 6. The verse describes the recognition of the nations. The wisdom and discernment of Israel are manifest in the eyes of the nations (לְעֵינֵי הָעַמִּים), but it is YHWH's statutes that they hear (יִשְׁמְעוּן). Thus, the experience of YHWH's presence by the nations in vv. 6-8 parallels Israel's experience at Horeb in v. 36, but where Israel hears YHWH's words and sees his fire, the nations hear YHWH's words and see the people who obey YHWH and call on him. It is important to notice that as at Horeb the earthly and heavenly elements go closely together, this is also the case here. It is not the case that the heavenly aspect is substantial, whilst the earthly aspect is superficial, for the two aspects form a whole. The words proceed not from the fire, but from the people. That is, the nations have no access to YHWH apart from Israel's obedience of YHWH's statutes – the righteous laws need to be obeyed.

The nearness of YHWH whenever and wherever Israel calls to him and responds to him in obedience also undergirds the logic of vv. 29-31 when Israel seeks YHWH from where she has been scattered. Here a similar parallelism is found:

29 וּבִקַּשְׁתֶּם מִשָּׁם אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
וּמָצָאתָ
כִּי תִדְרְשֶׁנּוּ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשֶׁךָ׃
30 בַּצַר לְךָ וּמְצָאוּךָ כֹּל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים
וְשַׁבְתָּ עַד־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְקֹלוֹ׃
31 כִּי אֵל רַחוּם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא יַרְפְּךָ וְלֹא יַשְׁחִיתֶךָ
וְלֹא יִשְׁכַּח אֶת־בְּרִית אֲבֹתֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לָהֶם׃

[77] Judg. 15.18; 16.28; 2 Sam. 22.7 (=Ps. 18.7); 1 Kgs 8.52; 17.20-21; 2 Kgs 20.11; Jer. 29.12; Jon. 1.6, 14; 2.3; 3.8; Pss 3.5; 20.10; 28.1; 61.3; 138.3; 2 Chron. 14.10.

[78] 1 Sam. 12.17-18; 1 Kgs 8.43 (= 2 Chron. 6.33); Isa. 43.22; Joel 1.19; Ps. 27.7; 1 Chron. 21.26.

29 When you seek YHWH, your god, from there
then you will find
when you search with all your heart and all your soul.
30 When in your distress all these things happen to you in the latter days
then you will return to YHWH, your god, and obey him
31 for YHWH, your god, is a merciful *el*; he will not abandon you or destroy you or forget the covenant of your forefathers that he swore to them.

Again, the nearness of God, 'then you will find [YHWH]'[79] and the righteous laws, 'then you will return to YHWH, your god, and obey him' are closely related. In the nations, in which Israel has been scattered, the words of YHWH again mediate his presence, but again this is no simple equation for YHWH is only found when he is sought wholeheartedly. To have the commandments, or even to obey the commandments is not 'to have YHWH', but neither can YHWH he found by the people, that is, be present to them, unless they have the commandments and obey them. Again, the presence of YHWH has both heavenly and earthly aspects.

The nearness of YHWH when his people call to him in vv. 29-31 provides a contrast to the other gods, as also occurred in vv. 6-8. The nearness of YHWH and his ability to act for them contrasts strongly with the impotence of the gods of wood and stone who cannot see, hear, eat or smell (v. 28). Whilst the one who is present in heaven and earth can act for or against his people wherever they are, the gods that are images are, by contrast, limited and impotent. They are not God in heaven above and on the earth below, since they are limited to the earthly sphere.

Despite the general tendency to date Deuteronomy 4 to the late exilic or post-exilic period, the speech concludes not with the assurance of divine nearness in the nations, but an assurance of the divine nearness in the conquest. In vv. 37-38 YHWH's presence, בְּפָנָיו is said to have been active in the exodus.[80] The mention of YHWH's presence in the exodus acts as an assurance of YHWH's continued presence

[79] YHWH as the object of מָצָא is rare: Jer. 29.13; Hos. 5.6; Job 23.3; 37.23 (Gerleman 1997: 684). Significantly, in Jer. 29.13 'calling to YHWH' and 'finding YHWH' are closely related in the context of the Babylonian exile.

[80] 'The whole presentation in vv. 37-38 strongly implies his personal involvement in, and presence with, his people on the earth' (Wilson 1995: 72).

in the present task of the conquest. In the literary context of Moses' final words on the other side of the Jordan this is a fitting conclusion to Moses' first speech. Such a conclusion is far from accidental and is an entirely fitting conclusion for the 'moral-religious lesson' that has been drawn from the 'story' of Deuteronomy 1-3.

So keep his decrees and commands that I am giving you today

The appropriate acknowledgement of YHWH entails the response of obedience to the one who is God in heaven above and on the earth below. Indeed, as we have seen the presence of YHWH amongst his people depends upon their obedience. The theme of obedience to the law is found throughout the chapter. Verses 1-8 exhort the Israelites to keep the חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים. The term חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים occurs four times in Deuteronomy 4.1-40,[81] and indicates the commands that were given to Moses at Horeb, in distinction to the Ten Commandments (v. 14; cf. 5.31).[82]

The importance of obeying YHWH's חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים is expressed negatively in vv. 3-4 and positively in vv. 6-8. The destruction (אבד, v. 3) of those who followed Baal Peor acts as a prototype of the destruction (אבד, v. 26) that Israel will face in the future if she makes an idol. Such destruction is an expression of YHWH as the jealous *el*, the one who has revealed himself as Horeb as a consuming fire. The positive exhortation to keep the statutes and ordinances is that such obedience (not the commandments themselves)[83] will demonstrate Israel's wisdom and understanding. In vv. 10 and 36 wisdom language describes the appropriate response to YHWH's words at Horeb. In v. 10 hearing the words at Horeb results in fear of YHWH. Whilst arguably an echo of Exod. 20.20,[84] the vocabulary is also characteristic of Israel's wisdom traditions. 'The fear of YHWH is the beginning of wisdom' (Prov. 1.7). According to v. 36, YHWH let his voice be heard, 'in order to discipline you (לְיַסְּרֶךָּ)'. Thus, the positive exhortation and negative warning to

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[81] 4.1, 5, 8, 14.

[82] See p. 81.

[83] Miller 1990: 55; Braulik 1994b: 9.

[84] Weinfeld 1991: 203.

obey the statutes and ordinances can be expressed as appropriate responses to the Horeb revelation, to the words and the fire.

In order that you may live long in the land

The theme of the land is found throughout Deuteronomy 4 reflecting the rhetorical placement of the speech on the very edge of the land. The commandments that were given by YHWH to Moses at Horeb are the commands which Israel is now to be taught in order that they might obey them in the land (vv. 1, 4, 10, 14, 40). Obedience of the law will entail long life in the land for the Israelites and their descendants; on the other hand, disobedience will result in expulsion from the land (vv. 23-31). As already indicated, returning to YHWH and obeying him seems to open the possibility of return to the land.[85] Possession of the land, then, depends on obedience to the commands, but this relationship works in not just one direction. Again, a dialectic is formed, for obedience takes place inside the land. The statutes and ordinances that Moses is giving the people are those that are to be obeyed in the land, and when the people are driven from the land they will worship gods of wood and stone (v. 28). It is because of this dialectical relationship between land and obedience that Moses can exhort the people in v. 1 to do the commands *in order that* they may go into the land, and in v. 5 to do the commands in the land *that* they are going into.[86]

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[85] See p. 214.

[86] Mayes sees this tension as a result of the modification of the treaty form. 'On the one hand the land is the place where the law is to be obeyed (see, for example, 6:1, 10ff.); but on the other, it also appears as the place which Israel cannot possess unless she obeys the law (see, for example, 4:1). These views are not simply to be assigned to different authors or editors in Deuteronomy; rather they result from the adoption and modification of the covenant or treaty form in which Deuteronomy is presently expressed. That possession of the land results from obedience is a view which belongs clearly within the covenant or treaty category of reward; that the law is for Israel's life in the land is a fundamental modification which results from Israel's conception of her place as the elect people of God, for this election is expressed not simply through the rescue of Israel from Egypt but also through the bestowal on Israel of the land of Palestine' (1979: 79). This dialectic between land and obedience may be viewed as analogous to that between law and grace in Christian thinking.

The Elements of Deuteronomy 4

In the conclusion of Moses' first speech, Deuteronomy 4, four key elements are found intertwined throughout the chapter. This intertwining is seen in vv. 39-40 where obedience links the confessions that YHWH is God, and that YHWH is God in heaven above and on the earth below, with the giving of the land. These relationships can be seen as dialectical. Land and obedience are closely related. On the one hand, obedience depends on being in the land, but on the other hand, Israel's life in the land depends on her obedience. Similarly, the confession that YHWH is God forms a dialectical relationship with Israel's obedience. YHWH shows himself to be God in the election of Israel, but this necessarily entails Israel's obedience (vv. 32-34, 40). On the other hand, it is Israel's obedience to *torah* that shows that YHWH is unique (vv. 6-8). Obedience may also be considered in dialectical relationship to YHWH's presence in heaven and on earth. YHWH's presence is made manifest in Israel's obedience to *torah* and her calling on him, but it is only through YHWH having made himself manifest in his words that Israel's obedience is made possible.

What though is the relationship between the two confessions? They 'proceed oddly along a double track'. The events at the exodus show both that Israel is YHWH's elect and that YHWH is God. This leads to the obligation to keep the commandments wholeheartedly. On the other hand, the events at Horeb show that YHWH is God in heaven above and on the earth below. This leads to the obligation not to make YHWH 'present' inappropriately, the *Bilderverbot*. He is present only in obedience and calling upon him. At every point these two confessions are intertwined. For the events at Horeb and the Exodus belong together; the *Bilderverbot* is part of the wholehearted obedience to the law; and, perhaps most significantly, the confession that YHWH is God entails saying that YHWH is God in heaven above and on the earth below, and *vice versa*.

As Israel stands upon the edge of the Jordan, Moses exhorts the people to make an appropriate confession about YHWH and to obey his commands. In this way the people will live in the land. All four elements must belong together. Israel's disobedience, however, threatens every element (vv. 23-31). Disobedience entails the loss of the land. Disobedience threatens the recognition of YHWH as God,

because, as we have seen, it is only through Israel's election that YHWH is seen to be God, and disobedience involves Israel not being what she is. Finally, disobedience threatens YHWH's presence for it is in obedience and calling to YHWH that YHWH has chosen to make himself 'present' to his people, and to the world (vv. 6-8). It is the paradoxical logic of election, the commitment of YHWH to his people and the promises that he has made that makes possible a new obedience, a return to the land, and YHWH's renewed nearness.

4. *YHWH's Presence in Deuteronomy 1-3*

We have already noted that, according to Weinfeld, וְעַתָּה in 4.1 'marks the transition from a story to the moral-religious lesson that is to be drawn from it'.[87] I have argued that Deuteronomy 4 does inculcate a unified moral-religious lesson. It is necessary, then, to consider the way that the lesson is drawn from the story. In the light of Weinfeld's words we would expect to find themes in Deuteronomy 1-3 similar to those we have detected in Deuteronomy 4; and, thus, we might expect to find confirmation that YHWH's presence in heaven above and on earth below, realised particularly in Israel's obedience to YHWH's word, is the overarching theme of Deuteronomy 4. Such an expectation is not easily confirmed: Weinfeld's words suggest an interaction between Moses' words in 1.6-3.29 and 4.1-40 that finds little expression in his commentary or in the work of other scholars. On the contrary, it is common to regard the linkage between chapter 4 and chapters 1-3 as artificial. More specifically, chapter 4 is understood as a later deuteronomistic addition between 3.29 and 4.41,[88] and thus 4.1-40 is interpreted independently of its present literary context. McCarthy's words accurately represent the manner in which Deuteronomy 4 has been interpreted in much recent scholarship:

> C. 4 has, of course, been attached to the foregoing as a kind of conclusion by the formula with which it opens: 'And now give heed.' However, this is the work of a redactor tying his new material into the

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[87] See p. 226.

[88] Knapp 1987: 28-29; Levenson 1975: 203-233; McCarthy 1978: 190; Mayes 1981; Miller 1990: 20; Veijola 1988.

> older for here the results of classic source criticism are by the demonstration that the chapter is a formal unit.[89]

The break between Deuteronomy 1-3 and Deuteronomy 4 has been felt to be very deep. Knapp notes a number of problems, which can be indicated in summary form. First, Deuteronomy 1-3 concerns history, Deuteronomy 4 parenetic explanation. Second, there are no lines of argument between the two sections. Third, the events cited in Deuteronomy 4 are different from Deuteronomy 1-3. Fourth, Deuteronomy 4 makes no use of the events in Deuteronomy 1-3. Contacts only occur in 4.3-4 (merely a key word) and 4.21-22. Fifth, the words that characterize 4.1-14, חֻקִּים, מִשְׁפָּטִים and לָמַד are not found in Deuteronomy 1-3. Sixth, 1.34-40 assumes none of the Horeb generation go into the land, whilst 4.10-14 presuppose they are still alive. Seventh, Beth Peor is only the end of the route in 3.29, but has other connections in 4.1-4. Finally, the words in 4.1 indicate the start of a new section.[90]

The differences noted by Knapp between Deuteronomy 1-3 and Deuteronomy 4 may be broadly categorized in two groups. First, there are problems on the level of the form of the material. This group includes Knapp's first and seventh problem. However, it is uncertain whether formal characteristics alone are a sufficient reason to consider the chapters independently.[91] Whatever differences may exist between the forms of the chapters they are all part of Moses' first speech to the Israelites.[92] Second, the rest of the problems that Knapp detects are thematic differences, and here a sharp disjunction between the themes of Deuteronomy 1-3 and Deuteronomy 4 is detached.

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[89] McCarthy 1978: 190. For a detailed overview of opinions on the relationship between Deuteronomy 1-3 and Deuteronomy 4, see Knapp 1987: 3-20. Knapp concludes that 'es besteht ein einigermaßen großer Konsens darüber, daß Dtn 4 entweder ganz oder doch zum größten Teil ein (wahrscheinlich sukzessiv entstandener) Zusatz zu den ersten drei Deuteronomium-Kapiteln ist' (1987: 20).

[90] Knapp 1987: 28-29.

[91] See Talstra 1995.

[92] Cf. Deuteronomy 9-10.

For a number of reasons I wish to re-assess the necessity of the exegetical move that examines Deuteronomy 4 separately from Deuteronomy 1-3. First, in this thesis I have set out to examine the final canonical form of the book of Deuteronomy. An examination of Deuteronomy 4 in its present literary setting must take account of the linkage made in 4.1 to the preceding chapters. Second, recent scholarship has emphasized the importance of literary themes in larger units, even when source criticism has insisted that the material is variegated. There has been little, or no, utilization of such ideas on Deuteronomy 1-4, even by scholars who are open towards the idea of a literary and theological unity in Deuteronomy.[93] Third, the 'and now' in Deut. 4.1 suggests that, at some stage, a link was felt to exist between the material in chapters 1-3 and chapter 4, or, at least, an attempt was made to create a link.

I will, therefore, examine some of the major themes of Deuteronomy 1-3. In so doing I hope to provide confirmation of the arguments made concerning the theme of Deuteronomy 4. Since many of the reasons for suggesting a disjunction between Deuteronomy 1-3 and Deuteronomy 4 concern a perceived thematic disharmony, it is clear that if there is a substantial agreement between the themes of Deuteronomy 1-3 and Deuteronomy 4 it might become appropriate to reconsider the literary-critical move that separates them. That, however, would be to move beyond the limited task with which I am concerned.

One of the main subjects in Deuteronomy 1-3 is the unsuccessful campaign from Kadesh Barnea (Deuteronomy 1), which contrasts sharply with the successful conquest of Transjordan. N. Lohfink has characterized Deuteronomy 1 as

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[93] J.G. Millar suggests there is continuity between the chapters. However, this receives little more substantiation than, 'if chapters 1-3 concentrate on the beginnings of the journey of Israel then chapter 4 focuses on places on the way' (1998: 74). P.D. Miller makes a similar remark to Weinfeld, 'the "so now" (NRSV) at the beginning of chapter 4 indicates that what follows is the appropriate implication or consequence of the preceding historical review' (1990: 43) However, Miller's exegesis of Deuteronomy 1-3 contains a single reference to Deuteronomy 4 (Moses' death in 3.26 cf. 4.21-22) whilst his exegesis of Deuteronomy 4 does not refer to Deuteronomy 1-3 at all. Olson is similar (1994: 23-39).

'pervertierter Gotteskrieg' and 'Anti-Exodus'.[94] This leads to thirty-eight years in the wilderness. In Deut. 2.3 the command of YHWH comes again (cf. 1.6) and Israel approaches the land from the east. In Deuteronomy 2 and 3 the failure of chapter 1 is reversed and wars against Sihon and Og are successfully concluded. The identification of what occurred is, however, only part of the task. The question of why it occurred must engage us. Why was there a 'pervertierter Gotteskrieg' in chapter 1 and why was this reversed in chapter 2 and 3?

The success and failure of the war in Deuteronomy 1-3 is directly related to the people's response to the command of God. In Deuteronomy 1 the Israelites do not believe YHWH and fail to go up into the land. Then when YHWH orders them back into the desert they disobey by attempting a conquest. Disobedience leads to defeat. In Deuteronomy 2 and 3 disobedience is replaced by obedience, and defeat by victory. This reversal of Deuteronomy 1 is emphasized by the recurring structure that dominates chapters 2 and 3: travel notice – divine command – report of accomplishment.[95] Each divine command is obediently followed by the people and they meet with complete victory over Sihon and Og.

Closely allied with the response of Israel to the commands is YHWH's presence. It is this too that dictates whether the wars are prosecuted successfully. In Deuteronomy 1 Moses meets the people's discouragement with the argument that YHWH's presence will be with them, in the same way that it was with them in the Exodus and the wilderness (1.29-30; cf. 1.33). The nearness of YHWH is poignantly illustrated with the picture of a father carrying his son. The people do not listen and YHWH orders them back into the wilderness. At this point the people experience a change of heart and attempt to take the land. But YHWH warns them that defeat is inevitable because he will not be with them (v. 42). In the successful campaign of Deuteronomy 2 and 3, the victory is due to YHWH's action in handing over Israel's enemies to them (2.30-32, 36; 3.3). At the conclusion of the Transjordanian campaign, Joshua is encouraged with Moses' words about the presence of YHWH to

[94] Lohfink 1960: 120. For the suggestion that 'inverted holy war' would be a more appropriate designation, see Moran 1963b.

[95] Miller 1990: 37.

fight for them in the land (3.21-22). Significantly, Deuteronomy 1-3 conclude with Moses' request to go into the land. In this prayer Moses asks what *el* is like YHWH in heaven and on earth.[96] This confession of YHWH's power and presence finds its justification in the actions against the Transjordanian nations (vv. 24-25).

Thus, in Deuteronomy 1-3 we have the same theme of YHWH's presence that formed the crux of Deuteronomy 4 and particularly 4.39-40. In both Deuteronomy 1-3 and Deuteronomy 4 YHWH's presence depends on Israel's obedience. This provides a fitting introduction to Moses' proclamation of the law. Possession of the land depends on YHWH's presence with the Israelites, which can happen only if Israel is obedient to the commands of YHWH. In Deuteronomy 1-3 YHWH's command is to go into the land and take it. Though the dialectical relationship between obedience and the land is not made explicit in Deuteronomy 1-3 it is clear that there can be no obedience of this command outside of the land.

A second theme that finds expression in Deuteronomy 1-3 is the theme of hearing and seeing, and how this should result in the appropriate response of fear and obedience. In Deut. 1.19-33 two different voices collide. These two voices present the people of Israel with two different sights. On the one hand, Moses reminds the people that they had *seen* the terrible wilderness, which YHWH had brought them through (v. 19), they had *seen* what YHWH had done in Egypt (v. 30), and they had *seen* how YHWH had cared for them in the wilderness (v. 31). On the other hand, the spies report *seeing* the Anakites (v. 28).[97] The result of this sight is fear, but what they hear and see results not in fear of YHWH, but in fear of the Anakites (v. 29). As appropriate fear leads to obedience so inappropriate fear leads to disobedience and lack of YHWH's presence.

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[96] The declaration that YHWH is God 'in heaven and on earth' may, perhaps, be a subtle allusion to the cities of the Anakites which are said to go 'into heaven' (1.28; 9.1). The only comparable statement to this can be found in Gen. 11.4 where the people resolve to build a tower that reaches 'into heaven'.

[97] Miller 1990: 35.

The importance of hearing and seeing is found not only in Deuteronomy 1-3, but also in Deuteronomy 4. In Deuteronomy 1-3 hearing and seeing leads to fear of the Anakites, whilst in Deuteronomy 4 hearing and seeing leads to a rightly orientated fear, a fear of God expressed in obedience of the commandments (4.9-14).

A third theme that is found in Deuteronomy 1-3 is the impending absence of Moses. R. Polzin has drawn attention to the diminishing of Moses' uniqueness,[98] and more recently D.T. Olson has argued that Moses' death is a major theme in Deuteronomy.[99] 1.9-18 sees others in Israel being appointed as judges. In 1.37-38; 3.23-28 and 4.21-22 YHWH announces that Moses will not cross into the land because of the disobedience of the people. This theme of Moses' impending absence forms an important function within the narrative context of Deuteronomy, Moses' speech on the other side of the Jordan. Moses is about to die and Joshua will take over the leadership of Israel. In Deuteronomy 18 there is the promise of a prophet 'like Moses' who will be raised up by YHWH. This theme emerges particularly in Deuteronomy 31 where a threefold succession is instituted: Joshua, *torah* and the Song.

In our earlier examination of Deuteronomy 4 the purpose of Deut. 4.21-22 in the chapter was passed over, and it is appropriate now to consider its role within the chapter. Deut. 4.21-22 concludes the section whose primary focus has been the dangers of trying to make YHWH present in an earthly image or celestial object. As such it is difficult to account for their place. Mayes writes, 'the subject of vv. 21f. has little relevance to the context; probably the intention of the author is to provide a link with the first three chapters where the subject is treated'.[100] It is most common to see Moses' imminent death as a warning of the dangers of lapsing into idolatry and coming under YHWH's wrath.[101] This is not entirely satisfactory, for although Moses comes under YHWH's wrath it is not because of idolatry on his part. If this was what was intended then an allusion to the death of Aaron or the

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[98] Polzin 1993: 36-37.

[99] Olson 1994.

[100] Mayes 1979: 154.

[101] Driver 1902: 71; Millar 1994: 46; J.A. Thompson 1974: 107; Wright 1996: 52.

judgement of Israel because of the Golden Calf would be more appropriate. The immediate context of the prohibition of idolatry suggests to Olson that Moses may have been viewed as an idol:

> but what do idols have to do with Moses' dying outside the promised land...Did Moses have to die outside the land as a reminder that he himself was not a god, an object of worship for the people?'[102]

Olson's suggestion that Moses may have been equated with a god is suggestive, but cannot be supported from elsewhere in Deuteronomy for there is nowhere any suggestion that the Israelites made such an equation.[103] However, for Deuteronomy, Moses mediates the presence of YHWH, because he is the one to whom YHWH has given the commandments and who speaks in the name of YHWH.[104] Thus, the death of Moses marks the end of one of the means by which YHWH has made himself present for his people as God in heaven and earth. Thus, it may be that 4.21-22 serves as a warning that disobedience of YHWH's commandments, particularly by making an illegitimate means of divine presence, jeopardizes the means YHWH has provided to make himself present. Alternatively, rephrasing Olson's suggestion, 4.21-22 may warn the Israelites that in the same way YHWH's presence is not to be equated with any earthly image or heavenly object neither is it to be exclusively identified with Moses.

The theme of Moses' impending absence may, then, be related to the dominant theme of YHWH's presence. Moses, more than anything or anyone else, has mediated YHWH's presence to the Israelites since Egypt.[105] The disobedience of the people in Kadesh Barnea leads to the loss of the indications of the divine presence and the divine blessing: the land, the battle, and Moses (1.34-45). The loss of Moses, however, does not mean the permanent loss of YHWH's presence; Moses' account of Israel's experience prior to the fields of Moab emphasizes that YHWH's

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[102] Olson 1994: 35.

[103] The idea that Moses might be worshipped as a deity by the Israelites is, of course, found in *The Assumption* (or *Testament*) *of Moses* (see Bauckham 1983: 65-76).

[104] See Appendix 3.

[105] This is particularly the case in Deuteronomy's account because the words that YHWH spoke to Moses at Horeb were not transmitted to the Israelites until Moab.

presence is assured by obedience of the commands. This message is again expressed in different form in Deuteronomy 4. When *torah* is obeyed YHWH will be near the people (4.7), but disobedience will see them driven from the land.[106]

Deuteronomy 4, then, inculcates the lessons that Israel must learn from the events recorded in Deuteronomy 1-3. Israel must remember what YHWH has caused them to see and hear, and this must lead to fear of YHWH and obedience. This obedience of YHWH's commands both guarantees and demonstrates that YHWH is present with them.[107] This presence of YHWH results in blessing, and, in particular, the blessing of the land. Disobedience, however, will result in the means of YHWH's presence in blessing being removed and, instead, YHWH will be present as the jealous *el* and the Israelites will perish like their ancestors outside the land. Thus, as the Israelites stand on the edge of the Jordan with their past vividly placed before their eyes they are encouraged that YHWH will be present with them in the conquest (4.38) to give them the land if they are obedient (v. 40). Thus many of the themes found in Deuteronomy 4, particularly the theme of YHWH's presence in heaven and on earth, are also found in Deuteronomy 1-3. Whether or not this was the logic intended by the editorial placement of 4.1 after chapters 1-3, it is a logic sufficient to enable a modern reader to make sense of the present sequence within these chapters.

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[106] Doubts about the continued presence of YHWH with the Israelites following Moses' death is also found in the early chapter of Joshua. In Joshua 1 the death of Moses dominates the chapter, and the consciousness of Joshua. The theme of YHWH's presence acts as a counter emphasis to Moses' demise (1.5, 9, 17). In the crossing of the Jordan in Joshua 3 the theme of YHWH's presence remains prominent. The parting of the Jordan will show that YHWH is with Joshua as he was with Moses (3.7, 10). Importantly, this is closely linked to war in 3.10: 'This is how you will not that the living *el* is in your midst and will surely dispossess the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites before you'. In the account of the fall of Jericho, Joshua is assured of YHWH's presence in an encounter with the commander of YHWH's army (5.13-15), which is reminiscent of the story of Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3). The circumambulation of Jericho by the Israelites includes a ritual that alludes to the Sinai theophany (esp. Exod. 19.13, 16) and the narrative concludes 'so YHWH was with Joshua' (Josh. 6.27).

[107] The relationship between obedience and presence is found elsewhere, see Exod. 33.2; 1 Kgs 6.11-13; Jer. 7.3, 12; Ezek. 8.5-18.

5. *YHWH's Presence in Deuteronomy 9-10*

The themes which we have detected in Deuteronomy 1-4 find their echo elsewhere in Deuteronomy, particularly in Deuteronomy's retelling of the story of the Golden Calf (Deut. 9.1-10.11). According to Childs, 'the story of the Golden Calf...offers the most extended canonical witness regarding the use of images',[108] and as such is closely linked to Moses' words in Deuteronomy 4. The account of the Golden Calf focuses on the problem of Israel's rejection of the commandments of YHWH and the way that this jeopardizes her election and her existence as a people. Further, Moses' approach to the Golden Calf exemplifies the approach that should be taken to the religious objects of the 'Canaanites' (9.21; cf. 7.5; 12.3).

Although a clear example of disobedience of the *Bilderverbot*, the calf is described as a עֵגֶל or מַסֵּכָה, terms absent from Deuteronomy 4-5. There are a number of other parallels between the chapters. Each includes the fire[109] and the ten words in prominent positions,[110] as well as taking place at Horeb. In Deuteronomy 4 and 9.1-10.11 Israel's election plays a prominent role,[111] and in both sections Israel is said to have become corrupt or destroyed (שׁחת) because of her disobedience of the *Bilderverbot*.[112] Further, links may be noticed between Deut. 9.1-10.11 and Deuteronomy 1-3: the Anakites and their cities appear in 1.28 and 9.1-2 and Israel's failure to go up and take the land from Kadesh Barnea is mentioned again in 9.23.[113]

Deuteronomy 9 opens with the assurance of YHWH's presence with the Israelites, a presence that will bring blessing in the gift of the land. Despite the close relationship between obedience and the giving of the land, Israel is not to

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[108] Childs 1985: 67.

[109] 4.11, 12, 15, 24, 33, 36; 5.4, 5, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26; 9.3, 10, 15, 21; 10.4.

[110] 4.13; 5.1-22; 9.9-11, 15, 17; 10.1-5.

[111] 4.24-39; 9.25-29.

[112] 4.16, 25, 31; 9.12, 26; 10.10.

[113] The existence of relationships between 9.1-10.11 and other parts of Deuteronomy, including Deuteronomy 4, has been explored in detail by M.A. Zipor (1996).

understand the land as a result of her own righteousness, as the story of the Golden Calf illustrates. The first part of the Golden Calf account creates a contrast between two means of making YHWH present: one is a legitimate way, the stone tablets bearing the law, which must be obeyed for YHWH to be present, and the other an illegitimate way, the calf.[114] The clash of these two means of making YHWH present finds its climax in v. 17. The stone tablets cannot co-exist with the Golden Calf. The existence of the calf entails the smashing of the stone tablets, and the stone tablets can only be re-carved when the calf has been utterly destroyed (9.21).[115] It is important to note, however, that the coexistence of these two means of making YHWH present is impossible not because it is impossible that there should be two means of YHWH being present, but because one is forbidden and one is sanctioned by YHWH. Further, of course, the stone tablets can only mediate YHWH's presence, if the people obey him. Devoid of this aspect – we might say, the earthly aspect – they also are in danger of becoming an idol, since they cannot appropriately represent YHWH as God in heaven above and on the earth below.

Thus, the theme that has already emerged in Deuteronomy 1-4 is found in 9.1-10.11. Disobedience, and particularly the making of images, threatens the means which YHWH has provided to make himself present for the people. In Deuteronomy 9 it is not only the stone tablets that come under threat, but also Aaron. As we have already noted the threat to Aaron, another means by which YHWH's presence is mediated,[116] directly parallels the threat to Moses in chapters 1-3. In the same way that no justification is given for YHWH's anger no reason is given for the threat against Aaron. Indeed, Aaron's unexpected appearance in the drama, and rapid

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[114] Carroll talks about Moses having an alternative *psl* to the calf, and points to the instruction to Moses to 'carve', פְּסָל־לְךָ, two stone tablets (1977: 58). It is doubtful whether this should be seen as an allusion to the Decalogue's *Bilderverbot*, but it does, in my view, suggestively point to the basic issue at stake in the story of the Golden Calf.

[115] Begg has shown that the destruction of the calf is a literary device, and could not 'literally' be carried out (1985; 1997). Weinfeld writes, 'it serves...as a model for iconoclasm in the future' (1991: 411). The language used is different from the language of destruction in the rest of Deuteronomy, though 9.7-10.11 characteristically uses different idioms from the rest of the book.

[116] See Appendix 3.

disappearance is surprising, for nowhere else is his role in the making of the Golden Calf mentioned.

The unexpected appearance of Aaron in 9.20 and the Levites in 10.6-9 has led many exegetes to suggest that these verses are secondary.[117] However, if the same themes that we found in Deuteronomy 1-4 are re-expressed in Deuteronomy 9-10 the appearance of Aaron is, perhaps, less inexplicable. In Deuteronomy 1 the disobedience of the people led to the withdrawal of YHWH's presence in the war, and ultimately will lead to the loss of Moses. The impending loss of Moses, a mediator of the presence of the God in heaven above and on the earth below, will, however, be mitigated by other means of presence, amongst which the most important is the Torah. In Deuteronomy 9-10 the disobedience of the people led to the destruction of the signs of YHWH's presence, the two tablets and ultimately the loss of Aaron. However, in the second part of the Golden Calf account (9.25-10.11) the tablets are replaced and Aaron is succeeded by Eleazer and the levitical priesthood.

Aaron's death outside the land provides a model for Moses' imminent death. Aaron's death comes about through Israel's disobedience and threatens a means by which YHWH has made himself present to the people. However, successors to Aaron are provided for Israel: Eleazer succeeds him as priest, and the Levites are commissioned to carry the ark and bless in the name of YHWH. The law of YHWH too is a means by which YHWH is made present to the people, and thus for the ark to contain the law is not evidence of desacralization in contrast to earlier ideas of the ark as YHWH's throne.[118]

Aaron's death outside the land, however, provides not only a model for Moses' death, but also for Israel. In 9.20 YHWH was angry against Aaron in order to destroy him, וּבְאַהֲרֹן הִתְאַנַּף יְהוָה מְאֹד לְהַשְׁמִידוֹ, and only the prayer of Moses

[117] See, e.g., Mayes 1979: 201, 205-206.

[118] So also Miller 1990: 56 and van der Toorn 1997: 242. *Contra* Clements 1965: 96; Mayes 1979: 203-204; Nicholson 1967: 56, 71; von Rad 1966b: 106; Weinfeld 1991: 417.

prevented his destruction. In 9.8 the same terms are used to describe YHWH's anger against Israel, וַיִּתְאַנַּף יְהוָה בָּכֶם לְהַשְׁמִיד אֶתְכֶם. Such anger is only assuaged by Moses' intercession. Aaron is a means of YHWH's presence to the Israelites, but is in no way indispensable. He may be replaced by his descendants. Israel too, though she is a means of YHWH's presence to the world since she obeys the commandments (4.6-8) and bears his name (28.10), may find that one generation is passed over for another, as happened in Deuteronomy 1. Thus, the mention of Aaron and the Golden Calf serves a double purpose. It suggests that YHWH will provide successors to Moses to mediate his presence, as becomes clear in Deuteronomy 31, but it acts also as a warning to Israel of the perils of disobedience.

6. *Summary*

In Deuteronomy's presentation Israel is to be found on the other side of the Jordan, immediately prior to Moses' death and the conquest of the land. Moses' imminent death raises the question of whether YHWH will be with the people as they go in to conquer the land. The experience at Kadesh-Barnea suggests that if Moses is absent then YHWH is too. To these fears Moses assures the people that YHWH has placed himself in a particular relationship with the people such that he will be present for them in a variety of different ways providing they obey the words that Moses is giving them. Since obedience is so central to YHWH's continued presence with them, *torah*, more than anything else, is the means by which YHWH is present for the people. The centrality of obedience for YHWH's continued presence provides a clear justification for Moses' decision now, on the edge of the Jordan and a new era without him, to place the *torah* in front of the people.

YHWH's decision to be present to the people in particular ways entails his decision not to be with them in other ways, most especially the making of idols which characterizes other nations. The danger of idols in Deuteronomy appears to be the identification of YHWH with something, whether in heaven or on earth. Such a simple identification of YHWH with something may even take place with appropriate means of YHWH's presence to Israel, as is the case with Moses on one reading of Deut. 4.21-22.

For Deuteronomy the logic of the *Bilderverbot* is located in YHWH's nature: he is God in heaven above and on the earth below. Nevertheless this cannot be detached from his elect people, Israel. This can be seen in the particularity of Israel's experience of YHWH at Horeb, for it is in this event that YHWH's voice is heard from heaven and his fire seen on earth. Further, it can be seen in Deuteronomy 4's assertion that YHWH's presence cannot be perceived by the nations apart from Israel, her obedience, and her calling on YHWH's name (vv. 6-8).

The logic of the *Bilderverbot* in Deuteronomy 4 can be related to the typology we detected amongst modern examinations of Israelite aniconism. Nevertheless it is also of a different kind. Von Rad describes it as a substantiation from history, rather than based on causal logic. To a degree he is right, for nothing that Israel says about YHWH can be divorced from the particularity of her experience of YHWH. It is primarily at Horeb that YHWH has demonstrated that he is God in heaven above and on the earth below. Nevertheless, there is a causal logic. The *Bilderverbot* is justified because YHWH is God in heaven above and on the earth below. However, the causal logic cannot be abstracted from the particular relationships that YHWH has entered into with Israel: to be present at Horeb, and later to be present through obedience to his word and through Israel calling upon his name. Further, by implication, YHWH's nature excludes the possibility of being made present by, amongst other things, images of heavenly or earthly things. In terms of the typology introduced at the start of this chapter there is a sense in which the *Bilderverbot* is located in the nature of YHWH, but this cannot be detached from the relationships YHWH has with his people and, by implication, does not have with idols. In other words, Deuteronomy bases the *Bilderverbot* primarily on a characteristic of YHWH's nature, the first type of explanation, but the social reality of Israel and the characteristics of idols, the second and third type of explanation, are inseparable.

The logic of the *Bilderverbot*, then, shares a number of features with the logic of oneness in Deuteronomy. YHWH is unique, nevertheless this cannot be abstracted from the relationship between YHWH and Israel. Specifically, the uniqueness of YHWH has been seen in YHWH's actions for his people in the Exodus (4.32-35). Thus, YHWH is seen to be unique through the relationship he has with Israel and, by

implication, does not have with other nations. Thus in both cases something is said about the nature of YHWH, an ontological statement, so to speak, but a statement that cannot be divorced from the personal claim on Israel.

The recognition that YHWH is God and that he is God in heaven above and on the earth below are both dependent on Israel's obedience, and are closely linked with Israel's election. It is in the incident with the Golden Calf that all three threads come tightly together. Israel's disobedience jeopardizes the recognition of YHWH by the nations, and the recognition that he is a God whose presence cannot be realized in the form of an earthly animal. Such disobedience threatens the means by which YHWH has made himself present to his people and even threatens Israel's existence as a nation. However, it is the paradoxical logic of election in Deuteronomy that sees all these things restored after their disappearance for a short time.

Conclusion

BREAD NOT STONE

> *Mit dem 'aufgeklärten Gottesbegriff' hätte Moses den Israeliten einen Stein statt des Brotes gegeben*
>
> Julius Wellhausen

Wellhausen's rhetorical claim that a raw 'monotheism' would not have satisfied the longings of oppressed Hebrew slaves is a rather startling one to make in the light of subsequent Israelite history.[1] For, in Wellhausen's sketch of Israel's religious history, this 'enlightened conception of God', which can elsewhere by described as 'ethical monotheism', is the creation of the canonical prophets. In a strange reflection of the testing of Jesus what was stone to the redeemed Hebrews becomes bread for later Israelites and Jews. In the context of our argument, we may wonder if Wellhausen intended his '*aufgeklärten* Gottesbegriff' to resonate so clearly with *die Aufklärung* or did he, like the prophets of old, speak better than he knew? Then such a portrayal of Israelite religious development naturally begs the question: could this 'enlightened conception of God' ever prove satisfactory for later Israelites? Could the stone ever have become bread?

The first aim of this work has been to argue that Deuteronomy does not, at any point, present a doctrine of God that may be described as 'monotheism'. That it affirms that YHWH is one, who is unique, and there is no other for Israel is undeniable. However, this is not 'monotheism', at least not in the sense in which the term is usually used. In the case of the *Shema* this is to claim nothing new. However, the argument of this thesis is that this is true of passages such as Deut. 4.35 and 39. Indeed, it may be asked whether what has been shown to be true of Deuteronomy may also be true of the rest of the Old Testament, including the

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The epigraph is from Wellhausen 1965: 20; cf. 1881: 399.

[1] The context of Wellhausen's claim is indicated in p. 41.

priestly material and Isaiah 40-55? Such a suggestion, far removed from the scholarly consensus, would need to be established on the basis of detailed exegetical work, and goes far beyond the remit of the limited objective of this work. However, investigation of other parts of the Old Testament is extremely desirable, since it has been argued that the description of Deuteronomy's message as 'monotheistic' obfuscates at least as much as it enlightens.

The second aim of this work has been to analyse and describe what is meant in Deuteronomy by affirming that 'YHWH is one' or something similar. This thesis has argued that the resulting picture is significantly different from what is usually understood as 'monotheism'. First, the intellectualization implicit in the use of 'monotheism' is not found in Deuteronomy. Modern 'monotheism' represents a call to recognize the objective state of metaphysical affairs. There is only one God, other deities are mythical, figments of the imagination, divinized natural forces or projections of psychological needs. The primary (only?) sin is ignorance. The primal sin in More's *Grand Mystery*, Eve's mistaken identification of Cain as Jehovah, is paradigmatic. In Deuteronomy, however, the recognition of YHWH's oneness is a call to love YHWH, a love expressed in obedience and worship. The demand to show exclusive loyalty to YHWH depends, for its rhetorical effectiveness, on a common recognition that other gods exist and represent a serious challenge to Israel's commitment to YHWH. For Deuteronomy, the primary sin is disloyalty.[2]

As an article of knowledge, 'monotheism' fails to comprehend Deuteronomy's emphasis on 'love' as the appropriate human response to the oneness of YHWH. Such 'monotheism' is a fact that one must assimilate, part of a body of knowledge similar to the recognition, so important to Henry More and his contemporaries, that the sun is the centre of the solar system and one sun among many. Such an understanding hardly intersects with the demand to love YHWH with heart, soul and strength. What such love might mean cannot be stated with a simple proposition, but, like human love, must be explored in a variety of contexts and with a number of different metaphors.

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[2] For further reflections upon this contrast, see the stimulating work by Halbertal and Margalit 1992.

Such love, unlike an article of knowledge, is acquired with great difficulty. The 'one' of Deut. 6.4 and the three-fold 'all' of 6.5 describe an obligation that is all consuming and incomparably demanding.[3] Any attempts to restate the *Shema* which dilute this demand are problematic. W. Brueggemann argues, rightly, that Deut. 6.5 summarizes Israel's obligation to YHWH. He continues,

> *Love* is a dense term. Clearly it is a covenant word that means to acknowledge sovereignty and to keep one's oath of loyalty, on which the covenant is based. But such a political dimension to the term does not rule out an affective dimension, in light of the terms *set one's heart* (*ḥšq*), which we have already considered. Thus at the core of Israel's obligation to Yahweh is the desire to please Yahweh and to be with Yahweh (Pss 27:4, 73.25). This dimension of desire and joy is what, in the best construal, keeps Israel's obligation to Yahweh from being a burden. At its best this obligation is not a burden, but is simply living out Israel's true character and identity, for Israel lives by and for and from Yahweh's freedom and passion.[4]

Brueggemann is surely right, as we have already argued, to protest against a definition of love that ignores its affective aspects. However, is it right to suggest that love is *simply* Israel being herself? For example, in what sense was Abraham being himself when he bound Isaac on the altar? Was the sacrifice of Isaac not demanding and searching beyond limit?[5] The question is whether YHWH is devalued if Israel's obligation is not demanding.

Brueggemann is not the only one who glides over the rhetorical force of Deut. 6.5. To appeal to ancient Near Eastern treaties as evidence that love may be demanded and is simply a call for obedience[6] hardly does justice to the intended force of the verse. Nor does a discussion of ultimate and penultimate loyalties, however well intended pastorally, do so.[7] The demand to love YHWH is uncompromising, and no rival loves are brooked.

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[3] Comparison may be made with von Rad's comments on the first commandment, that it 'is something incomparably more demanding than what we understand by monotheism' (1980b: 131).

[4] Brueggemann 1997: 420-21.

[5] For a discussion of Genesis 22, see Moberly 2000a.

[6] Mayes 1979: 177.

[7] Miller 1990: 103-104.

In this respect it is significant that the Old Testament's reflection upon loving YHWH emphasizes how difficult it is to fulfil this command. Israel's future, seen from the fields of Moab, is one of disobedience. Ultimately, a future which will require YHWH to circumcise the Israelites' hearts (30.6). In his final words to the Israelites, Joshua rhetorically describes serving YHWH as impossible (Josh. 24.19). Josiah's epitaph that there was no king like him who turned to YHWH with all his heart, all his soul and all his strength similarly points to the enormous demand that the *Shema* makes upon the Israelites.

Nowhere is the uncompromising nature of this love demonstrated more vividly than in the *Shema* itself. The demand for constant recitation, the placement of the words upon the body and upon public and private buildings make the observance of the *Shema* an all-engaging occupation. This is entirely consonant with the rest of Deuteronomy where the difficulty of remembering YHWH and Israel's propensity to forgetfulness are indicated repeatedly.

Deuteronomy's emphasis on the need to remember YHWH's oneness and the danger of forgetfulness contrast starkly with the idea of 'monotheism' as an item of knowledge that so dominates the discussion of Israelite religion. A common assumption held by all the Old Testament scholars examined in chapter one is that 'monotheism' was a realization that Israel reached at a distinct point in her history, from which there could be no return to polytheism. Kuenen affirmed that 'apostasy from monotheism to polytheism is inconceivable'.[8] For Albright the recognition of 'monotheism' by Moses is a point from which Israel never looked back. Mosaism is an 'abrupt break with the past'.[9] With such a notion of 'monotheism' it is crucial for Albright's argument that passages that suggest henotheism (such as Judg. 11.24; Exod. 20.3) cannot be read as such.[10] If Moses proclaimed 'monotheism', his successors cannot retreat from it. Only the 'ignorant and moronic' (which are, of course, intellectual terms) fail to be monotheists in Israel.[11] The argument of

[8] See p. 40.

[9] Albright 1957: 124.

[10] Albright 1957: 288, 297, n. 29.

[11] Albright 1957: 288.

Kaufmann's history is that the Israelites' thought was so utterly different to her pagan neighbours that she could not even comprehend their idolatry. Again, Israel's monotheism is a step from which there is no way down, and this step is primarily intellectual. Only von Rad dissents from this common assumption.[12]

Modern accounts of the development of 'monotheism' share this basic assumption about 'monotheism', an assumption that derives, I suggest, from the intellectualization implicit in most uses of 'monotheism'. Gnuse's model of punctuated equilibria understands there to have been a rapid evolutionary development in Israel's thought in the time of exile. This new species quickly displaces the inferior ancestral species. For Gnuse this new species is pre-linear *thought* and replaces post-cyclical *thought*. Again what has changed is a matter of human knowledge, and the new knowledge is so much more rational that devolution to polytheistic post-cyclical thought is inconceivable.

The idea that 'monotheism' cannot be retired from is powerfully presented in the common portrayal of the 'breakthrough' to 'monotheism' in the exile. There is no need to cite the numbers of scholars who suggest that Israel decisively rejected polytheism in the exile so that post-exilic Judaism was entirely monotheistic. Barr, to chose one example, writes, 'after the return from Exile monotheism was scarcely challenged in Israel'.[13] Often the Rabbinic suggestion that idolatry was carried off into exile is cited as evidence for this view.[14] However, as S. Ackerman has shown, the theory of exilic purification cannot be maintained: 'popular cults continued to thrive throughout the exilic and into the post-exilic period'.[15] It is perhaps not too strong to describe the idea that all Israel decisively rejected polytheism in the exile as one of the most enduring myths in the study of the Old Testament. The myth has been maintained despite contrary evidence, I want to suggest, primarily because of a particular account of 'monotheism'. What is envisaged as taking place during the exile may be described with Schleiermacher's words:

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[12] See p. 59.

[13] Barr 1985a: 652.

[14] See *Cant. R.* 7.8; cf. *b. Yom.* 69*b*.

[15] Ackerman 1992.

> It can therefore justly be said that as soon as piety has anywhere developed to the point of belief in one God over all, it may be predicted that man will not in any region of the earth remain stationary on one of the lower planes...there is nowhere any trace, so far as history reaches, of a relapse from Monotheism, in the strict sense.[16]

The intellectual coherence of 'monotheism' is so persuasive that once proclaimed by Deutero-Isaiah it must necessarily permeate the whole of exilic and post-exilic Judaism such that a return to polytheism is inconceivable.

In stark contrast, the account of YHWH's oneness in Deuteronomy suggests that recognizing and correctly responding to YHWH's lordship with wholehearted loyalty is a duty that is extremely taxing. Israel's propensity to idolatry is not solved by the recognition of a simple fact. Instead, the discipline of humility so that she can recognize the one who says 'I am YHWH' (29.5) is something that takes many years. Even with the discipline of the wilderness, Israel needs constant reminders, like the Song, and continued discipline (8.5) in order not to forget YHWH when she enters the bountiful land.

The picture of YHWH's oneness is different from the modern conception of 'monotheism' in a second way, its assessment of Israel. In the examination of 'monotheism' in Old Testament scholarship, it is evident that 'universalism' is considered concomitant with 'monotheism'. Whichever is historically prior, the other follows in quick succession. If there is one God, he must be the God of the entire world, and thus equally interested in other nations outside of Israel. The emphasis on Israel's election in Deuteronomy cuts across such theologizing, and as such is often seen as deeply problematic as an element of the canonical scriptures.

Two distinct approaches may be taken to the problem of election. The first is to set 'universalism' over and against election, and in the ensuing arbitration find election lacking. This approach may be historical, where the arbiter is the objective processes of history. Thus, Wellhausen holds election to be an inferior, albeit necessary, stage in the development of a true universalism. But should 'universalism' be seen as the crucial yardstick by which the Old Testament should

[16] Schleiermacher 1928: 36.

be measured? As placing Deuteronomy on a scale from polytheism to monotheism fails to capture Deuteronomy's character, so does trying to place it on a scale from particularism to universalism. On the other hand, this approach may be canonical. R.P. Knierim, for example, sets YHWH's universal justice at the centre of his biblical theology. In the light of this central theme, election must be rejected, or better, extended to all humanity,[17] which it can be argued amounts to the same thing. However, it may be questioned whether the polarization of universal justice and election provides a useful starting point from which to examine Deuteronomy or other parts of the Old Testament. As we have seen in Deut. 10.12-22, a universal horizon, YHWH's justice and concern for the marginalized, and Israel's election can all be articulated with no sense that they are ultimately incompatible.[18]

The second approach to election is to seek readily explicable criteria which may explain Israel's election. The classic expression of this is to be found in H.H. Rowley's *The Biblical Doctrine of Election.*[19] Election, Rowley contends, is for service, supremely exemplified in mission to other nations.

> It is ever election for some purpose, and God ever chooses those who are best suited for his purpose. His purposes are many, and He chooses many to serve Him. His greatest purpose is to reveal Himself to men, and for that purpose Israel was chosen because Israel was must suited to it.[20]

In Rowley's presentation of election, one can infer that Israel possesses some quality that makes her particularly suitable for the divine purpose. The privilege of Israel's election still remains, but is mitigated by the claim that many nations are chosen to serve him, as Rowley goes on to illustrate with Greece. The importance of purpose in Rowley's presentation of election naturally raises the question of what happens if Israel does not fulfil her missionary mandate. Rowley's answer is simple: she will be rejected. However appropriate Rowley's lectures may be for

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[17] Knierim 1995b: 135.

[18] For further critique of Knierim's reflections on election, see Kaminsky 2000.

[19] Rowley 1950. See also Seebass's claim that Israel's election is 'entirely rational and understandable' (1974: 83).

[20] Rowley 1950: 39.

those preparing for Christian service[21] it singularly fails to capture Deuteronomy's articulation of election. Such election is grounded not in any characteristic that Israel possesses, but in YHWH's love. This love is ultimately irreducible to a simple criterion; even when Israel fails, by disobedience of YHWH's commands (not by failure to fulfil the call to Christian mission), YHWH's love is maintained because he loved the patriarchs. Further, such love brings privilege; Israel will be YHWH's treasured possession, set high above other nations (Deut. 26.18-19).

Both approaches outlined above use 'universalism' as the criterion by which to assess election. But why this criterion? Like 'monotheism', it is a criterion largely drawn from the humanism of the Enlightenment. That is not to say that it does not reflect in some way Christian thought, for the Enlightenment developed out of a culture in which Christianity was the dominant cultural force. Nevertheless, it may be possible to compare the development of 'monotheism' from the Christian confession of one god to the development of 'universalism' from Christian concerns. Sherwood's examination of the interpretation of Jonah is very instructive in this respect. The early Christian exposition of Jonah can be broadly characterized as 'christological'. The understanding of Jonah as an opponent of 'universalism' is an approach, which, whilst being partially foreshadowed in Augustine, is a characteristically Enlightenment exposition of the prophet.[22]

For Deuteronomy, as we have seen, YHWH's oneness, indeed YHWH himself, is not conceivable without Israel. At the heart of Deuteronomy's parenesis is the relationship between YHWH and Israel. It is Israel that is to recognize that YHWH is one, to respond to him in love and obedience, to remember him and to approach him through the means he has given. This is a relationship in which Israel is privileged as the 'chosen one', but is also under obligation. Other nations are not under the same obligation. Instead, they may worship their own gods. Any recognition of YHWH that they may be said to make is a recognition made through his people.

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[21] The book was originally presented as a series of lectures for Spurgeon's College, London.

[22] Sherwood 2000: 9-32.

In summary, what is at stake is not the assessment of whether YHWH's election of Israel may be deemed acceptable to the exegete. Rather, the question is whether 'universalism' provides a useful category with which to understand election. This thesis argues that a simple 'universalism', with an implied 'particularism' at the other pole, does not provide a useful scale by which to measure Deuteronomy's description of the relationship between YHWH, Israel and the nations, nor does 'universalism' provide an appropriate rubric under which to place 'election'.

Third, 'monotheism' does not capture what it means in Deuteronomy to say that 'YHWH is God' (הָאֱלֹהִים). 'Monotheism' has generally been understood, with exceptions such as Albright, as the denial of the existence of other gods, but one. In Deuteronomy the existence of other gods is not denied. Nevertheless, it is still claimed that 'YHWH is God', or 'god of the gods'. This claim to be a unique divinity is based not on creation, or YHWH's role in parcelling out the nations to other gods, but on YHWH's faithfulness, mercy and jealousy demonstrated by his election of Israel. In his particular actions for his people, YHWH shows that he is God. We might say, to use the language of theological discourse, that YHWH's claim to be God is not primarily an ontological claim, but more a soteriological one (though such a claim carries with it ontological implications). It is then, perhaps, not entirely inappropriate to compare this claim to the New Testament one that Jesus is Lord. This title derives from the exaltation of the one who has humbled himself even to death on a cross so that he might save his people.

However, it may be objected that, at least in the study of Deuteronomy, some of these dimensions of the claim that YHWH is one have been noticed. In particular the common summary of Deuteronomy's message with the words 'one God, one people, one cultic place' may be pointed to. Whilst this points to the intrinsic link between YHWH and his people, it is not without its problems. First, it reflects the natural tendency of a diachronic approach to the text to highlight the political dimensions of a text to the detriment of other elements.[23] Deuteronomy is understood as literature whose primary, if not sole, aim is to promote, or enforce, national unity through centralization. The preservation, and later canonization, of

[23] See Levenson 1993c: 110-17.

the book suggests that it contains other elements which may be fruitfully explored, without in any way denying the role of political factors in the creation of the book. Second, 'one' does not have the programmatic significance in Deuteronomy that the slogan suggests. Importantly, Israel and the place where YHWH will put his name are 'chosen'. Israel does possess something that distinguishes her from other nations, and the chosen place similarly is distinguished from other places; in this sense both are like YHWH who is unique among the gods. But, however close the similarity, there is a fundamental difference, because this distinctiveness is not a quality derived from something inherent in them. The language of choice directs the reader to the one doing the choosing. Thus we may say, or perhaps should say, that Israel and the place where YHWH will put his name are not 'one' in the way that YHWH is 'one'.[24]

The critique of 'monotheism' undertaken in this thesis is not novel. A number of scholars, including Childs,[25] Hayman,[26] Loretz[27] and Mauser,[28] have expressed unease with the word as a description of Israelite or early Jewish belief. However, this thesis is, I think, the most thorough attempt to examine the question of what the term is usually taken to mean and how this might measure up to a specific biblical text. The critique of 'monotheism' is easily misunderstood, however, and it will therefore be useful to consider a recent misunderstanding by Barr in order to defend this thesis against possible objections.

In a sustained criticism of Childs' theological method, Barr on two occasions highlights Childs' objection to 'monotheism' as 'theologically inert'.

> While the monotheism of Israel has been much celebrated in ancient and modern culture, some recent biblical theology has looked with disdain on the subject, thinking that the term was an 'abstract' or 'philosophical' one, or otherwise lacking in the 'kerygmatic' flavour

[24] The only reference to Israel as 'one' is found in 2 Sam. 7.23 in David's prayer. The consistent use in Deuteronomy of 'chosen' rather than 'one' suggests an awareness of the danger of what Brueggemann calls 'mono-ethnism' (2000: 90).

[25] Childs 1992: 355-56.

[26] Hayman 1991.

[27] Loretz 1994: 508.

[28] Mauser 1991.

> supposed to attach to biblical concepts. But what difference is there between 'monotheism' and the 'kerygmatic' demand 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God, the Lord is One'? Grammatically they are different, but historically they are deeply related. And in fact 'monotheism', even if pronounced by Childs to be 'theologically inert', may well have been – along with the opposition to idols – perceived as one of the most important elements of Judaism in the years of the Greek and Roman empires and in the time of Christian origins. For the junction between Old and New Testaments it may have been just as important as, indeed perhaps more important than, all the ideas of 'events', of salvation history and 'kerygmatic' proclamation. A 'theology' that leaves it out, on the ground that it is a matter for history of religion, is ignoring one of the major themes of the entire subject.[29]

> For what he [Childs] fails to do is to present the theology of the Old Testament *as it must have seemed to a person of the first century*...Childs gives us a good example with *monotheism*. The term 'monotheism', he tells us, is 'theologically inert and fails largely to register the basic features of God's self-revelation to Israel'. That, however, is only an expression of his present-day theology. In the first century, I would think it likely that monotheism was far more important than all the salvation history, kerygma and canonicity which are so much emphasized in this volume.[30]

Barr's attack is largely justified on the basis that Childs is making *ex cathedra* statements with no scholarly justification: '"monotheism" is *pronounced by Childs*'; '"monotheism" *he tells us*'. However, as Moberly has argued, Barr's attack misses its target, for Childs indicates the reason for his description of 'monotheism' as 'theologically inert':[31]

> Although the historian of religion has every right to employ the term monotheism to the religion of Israel in contrast to polytheistic religions, the term itself is theologically inert and fails largely to register the basic feature of God's self-revelation to Israel. For one thing, God's existential demand for absolute loyalty relativizes the theoretical question of the existence of other deities, assigning to it a peripheral role. Equally important is to recognize that the unity and uniqueness of God (Deut. 6.4f.) which calls for utter devotion – heart, soul, and might – did not denote God's being as that of a monad, or of a monolithic, unchanging entity...Nor does the Old Testament make the move to separate God's 'real being' from his historical revelation in action even

[29] Barr 1999: 137-38.

[30] Barr 1999: 420.

[31] Moberly 2000b: 44.

> when employing predicates which are adapted from pagan mythology (Hab. 3.3ff.).[32]

It simply will not do for Barr to dismiss Childs' criticism of 'monotheism' in such a fashion, unless Childs' specific objections against the term can be met. To appeal to the importance of 'monotheism' to the first century BC Jews and Christians does not prove Barr's case, for the recognition of one God, in the context of offering incense to the emperor, was primarily an act of *loyalty*.[33] Seen in this light Barr's argument only serves to reinforce Childs' point: that is, Barr's commitment to the term 'monotheism' allows the most characteristic feature of the Jewish and Christian recognition of only one God to be obscured.

Childs' contention, which this thesis supports, is that the meaning of 'monotheism' does not provide a good description of the dynamics of Israelite belief. The argument of my thesis, that the term has generally been taken to entail an intellectualization of Israelite religion, a flat 'universalism', and an emphasis on the metaphysical reality of God, rather than his character, and that as such 'monotheism' does not provide a good description of Israelite religion, needs to be answered by those who wish to continue using the term. It cannot be left unexamined.

A second objection that may be raised against the thesis' arguments, again by someone like Barr, is that it is erroneous to reject the heritage of the Enlightenment.[34] To construe my argument in this way would be mistaken. I am not suggesting a wholesale rejection of the Enlightenment, as if that were possible. Rather, I am arguing that in this specific area the term 'monotheism' does not adequately describe the dynamics of Israelite belief and practice related to Israel's affirmation that YHWH is one. The rejection of this particular term has, of course, entailed questioning some of the convictions that bear the imprint of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, but still hold many in biblical scholarship enthralled. These include universalism, and the place of reason and religion.

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[32] Childs 1992: 355-56.

[33] See Moberly 2000b.

[34] See Barr 1999.

However, questioning these convictions is hardly a novelty. This work, then, is not a rejection of all of the Enlightenment's heritage. Similarly, a focus on the final form of the biblical text, often described as post-critical interpretation, rather than the history behind the biblical text, should not be construed as a rejection of the gains made by modern biblical study. Post-critical interpretation is not the same as pre-critical interpretation (where critical is, of course, a cipher for historical-critical, for in what sense are either pre-critical or post-critical interpretation 'uncritical'?). At no point do I intend to repudiate every aspect of the Enlightenment.

A third misunderstanding of this thesis would be to read it as a demonstration that Deuteronomy is not 'truly monotheistic' because of its emphasis on memory, the danger of other gods and its lack of 'true universalism'. This is not an exercise in rejecting the claims of Deuteronomy to 'true monotheism' so that Ezekiel, Deutero-Isaiah or the priestly material can claim the crown that is rightly theirs. My argument that 'monotheism' is a creation of the modern world prohibits the term's simple application to any other biblical book. The results of this thesis suggest there are good grounds for pressing such an argument, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis to justify it in every detail since this would involve the sort of detailed work on those books as has been done on Deuteronomy.

Despite wishing to defend this thesis against various objections, it is right to recognize its limitations. Three in particular should be mentioned, all of which arise out of our focus on the framework to the Deuteronomic law-code. First, a consideration of Deuteronomy 12 and centralization as an expression of loving YHWH would be desirable in considering YHWH's oneness in Deuteronomy. Its omission reflects the complexity of the issue, which would require a detailed analysis. This work has largely focussed on texts in the framework to the law-code, and there is, therefore, at least some justification for omitting this topic rather than any of the others considered in the thesis. Nevertheless, the exegetical work undertaken has indicated at least one matter pertinent to the understanding of Deuteronomy 12. As we have indicated the slogan 'one God, one people, one cultic place' is problematic as a summary of Deuteronomy's message. Like Israel, the place where YHWH will put his name is chosen; it is not 'one' in the way that YHWH

is 'one'. The description of the thrust of Deuteronomy 12 as centralization, rather than pilgrimage to the chosen place, is in danger of obscuring this distinction.

Second, no consideration has been given to the role of 'magic'[35] in Deuteronomy. A full consideration of 'magic' in Deuteronomy would require an examination of those passages relevant to that question, and the nature of the practices forbidden or allowed. Again, such material is largely located outside of the framework of the law-code, which has been the focus of most of this thesis. Nevertheless, by analogy with YHWH's oneness and the existence of other deities, it is appropriate to question whether Deuteronomy denies the efficacy of 'magic', or whether it restricts certain practices to other nations. F.H. Cryer argues in his work on divination,

> that the Deuteronomistic and Priestly strictures against certain forms of divination [must be understood] not, as scholarship has traditionally assumed, as a blanket prohibition of the practice of divination, but as a means of restricting the practice to those who are "entitled" to employ it.[36]

Described in the terms used elsewhere in this thesis, rather than with Cryer's sociological categories, we might say that YHWH has chosen to reveal himself in certain ways and to exclude certain other ways. However expressed, Deuteronomy is not denying the existence of 'magic', and this is surely true of the rest of the Old Testament. Understanding Deuteronomy in this way would challenge the assumption that 'magic' and 'monotheism' are antithetical. Both Dietrich and Gnuse hear in the breakthrough of 'monotheism' the death knell of 'magic'. For Gnuse this leads ultimately to a rationalized world in which 'magic' is (no doubt in Gnuse's mind, rightly) seen to play no role. Such a world cannot be claimed to be Deuteronomy's world. Indeed, Gnuse's description of the development of the 'rationalized world' sounds more like the decline of magic that can be charted before and during the Enlightenment.[37]

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[35] The scare quotes indicate the problematic nature of the term 'magic'. It is too easily used as a catch all term for everything that cannot be believed, whilst eliding the similarities between these practices and 'orthodox' practices, such as prophecies or miracles.

[36] Cryer 1994: 327.

[37] See Thomas 1971.

Third, the relationship between 'monotheism' and ethics has not been considered. A few observations may, however, be made. First, we have noted that the suggestion that Deuteronomy evidences a secularizing trajectory in Israelite religion is to be rejected. Rather, Deuteronomy represents a different notion of the holy compared to the priestly material; holiness is extended to the whole nation. This means that the axis of ritual-ethical popular at the end of the nineteenth century, and still found in Gnuse, is of questionable value, and certainly cannot be projected onto a polytheism-monotheism axis in some simple way. Second, the recognition of YHWH as one is always closely related in Deuteronomy to the exhortation to obey YHWH's commands. Indeed, the exhortation is presented as a necessary consequence of Israel's recognition of YHWH. This is not, however, a world that has been de-deified, where the ethical imperative of the one God can more easily be heard. Instead, Israel's obedience of YHWH's commandments is a consequence of her loyalty to YHWH.

Despite this thesis' shortcomings, it does indicate something of what it means in Deuteronomy for Israel to confess that 'YHWH is one'. Together with its associated ideas and practices this confession forms a rich nexus. In particular, it was shown that YHWH's claim to be God could not be abstracted from his relationship with Israel. Our analysis of the meaning of 'monotheism' indicates that Deuteronomy's claim that 'YHWH is one' for Israel cannot be circumscribed by the term 'monotheism'. Indeed, at many points the two are irreconcilable.

'Monotheism' was coined as an organizing principle by which religions could be measured. This role has not been lost in recent usage, and yet it singularly struggles to describe the contours of Deuteronomy's claims about YHWH. An application of the term to Deuteronomy reveals the truth of Lash's claim, in his discussion of the creed's 'I believe in one god', that 'there is nothing that may easily be said of God, that, if we find it easy to say certain things of God, the chances are that, when we say them, we lose sight of God'.[38] Implicit in some of the argument of this thesis, however, has been a further claim. If the modern notion of 'monotheism' proves to be a poor means by which to approach Deuteronomy's reflections on YHWH, it may

[38] Lash 1992: 22.

be asked what would prove more suitable. Perhaps traditional expressions of piety from the church and the synagogue may offer more suitable starting points for exploration.

It is perhaps not insignificant, then, that of all the discussions of 'monotheism' examined, it is von Rad's explicitly Christian reflections for a Christian audience that comes closest to grasping the claims of the biblical text. For him, 'the confession to God that says "besides Thee there is no saviour"' is a 'confession of great trust...[that] must be ventured again and again'. In Judaism a similar understanding, *mutatis mutandis*, is found when the recitation of the *Shema* is described as 'the acceptance of the yoke of the kingdom of heaven'.[39] Such an understanding of the *Shema* emphasizes the appropriate response towards YHWH's sole lordship, a response of 'love' or obedience, rather than mere knowledge. The difference between the traditional expressions of devotion towards YHWH and the modern intellectualized notion of 'monotheism', that is, between the bread and the stone, has received no more succinct formulation than that by Jon Levenson: 'One God or One Lord?'.[40]

[39] Cf. *m. Ber.* 2.2.

[40] Levenson 1985: 56.

Appendix 1

DEUTERONOMY 4.19

In Deut. 4.19 it is stated of the celestial objects that 'YHWH, your god, allocated them to all the peoples under the entire heavens' (אֲשֶׁר חָלַק יהוה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֹתָם לְכֹל הָעַמִּים תַּחַת כָּל־הַשָּׁמָיִם). There are two possible interpretations, either the heavenly host were allotted as legitimate objects of worship, or they were given for light. The first interpretation, that the heavenly hosts may be worshipped by everyone except Israel, is favoured by the majority of scholars.[1] The second interpretation has been advocated in recent times by Albright and C.J.H. Wright.[2]

There is no consensus amongst earlier interpreters. On the one hand, Clement of Alexandria, Justin Martyr, Origen, Eusebius and Isidore of Pelusium understood the verse as sanctioning gentile worship of the heavenly host. On the other hand, Jerome translates 'quae creavit Dominus Deus tuus in ministerium cunctis gentibus quae sub caelo sunt', *b. Meg.* 9a records a tradition that the Septuagint added להאיר to the verse, Theophilus of Alexandria denies the heavenly host are given for worship, and *Targ. Ps.-Jo.* and Symmachus may have attempted to avoid the suggestion that the heavenly host may be worshipped by the gentiles.[3]

The heavenly host are allocated to 'all the peoples' (לְכֹל הָעַמִּים). Does this include or exclude Israel? If Israel are included then the heavenly hosts cannot be allocated for worship, since Israel is to worship YHWH alone, and if Israel is not

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[1] Bächli 1962: 46; Braulik 1978: 36; Cairns 1992: 59; Christensen 1991: 87; Craigie 1976: 137; Driver 1902: 70; Hertz 1937: 759; Keil and Delitzsch 1971: 312; Knapp 1987: 72; Lohfink 1965: 108; Millar 1998: 151; P.D. Miller 1999: 187; von Rad 1966a: 50; Ridderbos 1984: 87; Robinson 1907: 78; Tigay 1996: 50; Weinfeld 1991: 206.

[2] Albright 1957: 320; Wright 1996: 51-52 (but contrast Goldingay and Wright 1992: 51).

[3] See Salvesen 1991: 147-49.

included then the heavenly host cannot be given as lights, since they serve Israel for that purpose too. If v. 19 had read לְכֹל הַגּוֹיִם, it is almost certain that Israel should be excluded, as other uses in Deuteronomy indicate.[4] The term עַמִּים may or may not include Israel and is used in a variety of contexts in Deuteronomy. First, it is used of the Canaanite nations. In this case its restrictive use is indicated with a relative clause.[5] Second, in the context of Israel's election, Israel is said to have been chosen 'from all the peoples' (מִכֹּל הָעַמִּים). This phrase suggests that Israel is included in the set 'all the peoples'.[6] Third, in the context of the prohibition of other gods it is used of nations around Israel.[7] Fourth, it is used of the nations into which Israel will be scattered if she disobeys YHWH.[8] Fifth, it is used of the other peoples in the world that hear about Israel.[9] Amongst these uses of עַמִּים in Deuteronomy, 2.25 provides a close linguistic parallel with 4.19. YHWH promises to place the dread and fear of the Israelites 'upon the peoples everywhere under heaven' (עַל־פְּנֵי הָעַמִּים תַּחַת כָּל־הַשָּׁמָיִם).[10] This is the only other occurrence of תַּחַת כָּל־הַשָּׁמָיִם in Deuteronomy.

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[4] גּוֹיִם is used of a variety of groups in Deuteronomy: the Canaanites (4.38; 7.1, 17, 22; 8.20; 9.1; 11.23; 12.29; 19.1; 20.15; 31.3), the nations of the world that Israel will lend to and rule (15.6; 26.19; 28.1, 12), the Transjordanian nations (29.15), the nations around Israel (17.14; 29.23), and the nations amongst which Israel is exiled (4.27; 28.65; 30.1). On no occasion does גּוֹיִם include Israel, with one possible exception. The exception is 32.8, which is a close parallel to 4.19-20, and needs to be considered in greater detail.

The singular גּוֹי, by contrast, may be used either of the nation which YHWH uses as the instrument of judgement (28.36, 49, 50; 32.21; perhaps also 32.28) or of Israel, probably when the Abrahamic promise is in view (4.6, 7, 8, 34; 26.5; cf. 9.14).

[5] 7.16, 19; 20.16.

[6] 7.6; 10.15; 14.2. In the same context 7.7, 14; cf. 33.3.

[7] 6.14; 13.8.

[8] 4.27; 28.64; 30.3.

[9] 2.25; 4.6; 28.10, 37.

[10] One Hebrew manuscript, Genizah fragments, *Targ. Ps.-Jo.* and LXX suggest reading כֹּל before עַמִּים. However, the כָּל before הַשָּׁמָיִם is omitted by some Hebrew manuscripts, LXX and Pesh.

The use of עַמִּים in Deuteronomy provides no clear answer to the question of whether it includes Israel in 4.19 or not. The second use of עַמִּים, in the context of election, would provide a close parallel to 4.19. This would favour including Israel in the עַמִּים. However, 2.25 is the closest linguistic parallel, and the third use of עַמִּים also provides a close parallel to the use of עַמִּים in 4.19. These factors would favour עַמִּים as a designation for non-Israelite nations in 4.19.

In the immediate context of Deuteronomy 4, עַמִּים is only found in vv. 6 and 27, both of which exclude Israel. In the context of the book 17.3, 29.25 and 32.8-9 are thematically close to 4.19. In 17.3 the 'other gods' of the nations are also described as 'the sun, moon and host of the heavens'. Deut. 29.25 is part of the answer to the nations' query about Israel's punishment. Her punishment is the result of her worshipping gods that had not been allotted (חָלַק) to her. Together with 17.3 it suggests that in 4.19 the celestial objects are given to the nations as objects of worship, rather than as lights. Deut. 32.8-9 uses עַמִּים in parallel to גּוֹיִם. In the context of Deuteronomy, this can only mean the non-Israelite nations. The boundaries of these nations is determined by the number of the 'sons of *el*' (v. 8).[11] Israel, however, is not included in this number, and has been taken by YHWH as an inheritance (v. 9). This confirms the interpretation of 4.19 suggested by 17.3 and 29.25: the most persuasive understanding of עַמִּים in Deut. 4.19 is that it refers to the non-Israelite nations. It therefore follows that the sun, moon and stars have been allotted to those nations as objects of worship.

[11] For this reading, see p. 117-18.

Appendix 2

1 KINGS 8.23

The MT of 1 Kgs 8.23 reads:

aα וַיֹּאמַר יהוה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵין־כָּמוֹךָ אֱלֹהִים
β בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל־הָאָרֶץ מִתָּחַת
bα שֹׁמֵר הַבְּרִית וְהַחֶסֶד
β לַעֲבָדֶיךָ הַהֹלְכִים לְפָנֶיךָ בְּכָל־לִבָּם׃

The verse has no significant textual variants and is translated in the NRSV as follows:

> He said, 'O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and steadfast love for your servants who walk before you with all their heart'.

YHWH is incomparable and unlike any other deity whether astral or terrestial. YHWH is incomparable in his covenant faithfulness and, as Solomon's prayer goes on to explain, in his utter transcendence (v. 27).

A closer examination reveals a peculiarity in the first part of the verse. The word order אֵין־כָּמוֹךָ אֱלֹהִים is unusual. According to Gesenius-Kautzsch, 'the construct state אֵין stands in its natural position immediately before the substantive whose non-existence it predicates, or before the subject of the sentence which is to be negativized'.[1] Thus we would expect כָּמוֹךָ אֵין־אֱלֹהִים a form found twice in 1 Sam. 2.2 אֵין־קָדוֹשׁ כַּיהוה...אֵין צוּר כֵּאלֹהֵינוּ.[2]

The difficulty with the verse has not gone unnoticed. According to M.J. Mulder, F. Böttcher in 1864 suggested rendering אֵין 'where': 'Wo (findet man), wie Dich,

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[1] GKC, §152*l*.

[2] Compare also 2 Sam. 7.22 וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים זוּלָתֶךָ and Ps. 77.14 מִי־אֵל גָּדוֹל כֵּאלֹהִים. The only exception is to be found in Job 36.22, מִי כָמֹהוּ מוֹרֶה.

einen Gott?'.[3] The problem with this suggestion is indicated not only by the addition of 'findet man', but also because אֵין־כָּ֫- is used on a number of other occasion of YHWH with the sense 'there is none like...' as clearly indicated by poetic parallelism.[4] Labuschagne correctly dismisses translating אֱלֹהִים as a vocative, 'there is none like you, O God'. First, this would duplicate the vocative at the beginning of the verse. Second, in Ps. 86.8 the vocative follows the prepositional clause: אֵין־כָּמוֹךָ בָאֱלֹהִים אֲדֹנָי. Labuschagne follows J.A. Montgomery and suggests 'there is none like thee as God in heaven above or earth below'.[5] As with Böttcher's suggestion, the problematic nature of this translation is indicated by the need for the additional word, 'as'.

The problem with this verse could be solved if the Masoretic punctuation was emended to read:

aα וַיֹּאמַר יהוה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵין־כָּמוֹךָ
β אֱלֹהִים בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל־הָאָרֶץ מִתָּחַת

A number of reasons justify such an emendation. First, the phrase 'there is no one like me/you/YHWH' is found a number of time in the Old Testament with YHWH as the subject. On these occasions the comparison is implicit.[6] Second, the other occurrences of בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל־הָאָרֶץ מִתָּחַת in the Old Testament are used of YHWH in comparison to other gods, that he is present in heaven and on earth (Deut. 4.39; Josh. 2.11).[7] On both occasions that this phrase occurs it modifies אֱלֹהִים(הָ). It is significant that when used by Rahab in Josh. 2.11 אֱלֹהִים occurs without the definite article, 'for YHWH, your god, is god in heaven above and on the earth below'. Finally, the statement of incomparability is sometimes followed by an indefinite noun and a combination of nominal and participle clauses. In Job 1.8 and 2.3 YHWH says to the satan concerning Job אֵין כָּמֹהוּ בָאָרֶץ אִישׁ תָּם וְיָשָׁר יְרֵא

[3] Mulder 1998: 411.

[4] 1 Sam. 2.2; 2 Sam. 7.22; Ps. 86.8.

[5] Labuschagne 1966: 12; cf. Montgomery 1951: 196.

[6] Exod. 8.6; 9.14; Deut. 33.26; 2 Sam. 7.22; Jer. 10.6, 7; Ps. 86.8; cf. 1 Sam. 10.24; Job 1.8; 2.3.

[7] Cf. Deut. 3.24 and 2 Chron. 6.14 which have בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ.

אֱלֹהִים וְסָר מֵרָע, 'there is none like him on earth, a man blameless and upright, fearing god and turning from evil'.[8]

1 Kings 8.23, then, should be translated, 'he said "O YHWH, god of Israel, there is none like you, a god in heaven above and on earth below, keeping the covenant and steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart"'. Solomon's statement is probably a combination of the statement of incomparability, and the statements of YHWH's uniqueness found in Deut. 4.39 and Josh. 2.11. It is important to understand the nature of what Solomon is stating about YHWH. There is none like YHWH for he is a 'god in heaven and on earth'. It is not being said that there is none like YHWH in heaven or on earth.[9] By comparison with Job 1.8 and 2.3, such a statement would be written, אֵין־כָּמוֹהוּ בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל־הָאָרֶץ מִתָּחַת.

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[8] Other comparable examples include Deut. 33.29 מִי כָמוֹךָ עַם נוֹשַׁע בַּיהוה, 'Who is like you, a people saved by YHWH?'; 1 Sam. 22.14 וּמִי בְכָל־עֲבָדֶיךָ כְּדָוִד נֶאֱמָן וְחֹתֵן הַמֶּלֶךְ, 'Who along all your servants is like David, a faithful man and the king's son-in-law?'; 2 Sam. 7.23 וּמִי כְעַמְּךָ כְיִשְׂרָאֵל גּוֹי אֶחָד בָּאָרֶץ, 'Who is like you, O Israel, one people in the earth?'. In Deuteronomy there are two forms that are related: Deut. 3.24 מִי־אֵל בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה כְּמַעֲשֶׂיךָ וְכִגְבוּרֹתֶךָ, 'Who is an *el* in heaven and on earth that can do as your deeds and mighty acts?' and Deut. 4.7 כִּי מִי־גוֹי גָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ אֱלֹהִים קְרֹבִים אֵלָיו כַּיהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּכָל־קָרְאֵנוּ אֵלָיו, 'For who is a great people that has a god close to him like YHWH, our god, whenever we call to him?'.

[9] Comparison may be made with Labuschagne's remark on 1 Sam. 22.14:

> ומי בכל עבדיך כדוד נאמן וחתן המלך – *'Now who among all your servants is like David? – a faithful man, the son-in-law of the king... '.* The current rendering of this verse *'And who among all your servants is so faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law... '* is not quite correct, for the impression is given that David is called incomparable by virtue of his faithfulness alone. It is obvious, however, that he is considered incomparable by virtue of all the qualities mentioned.

(1966: 18-19; Labuschagne's italics).

Appendix 3

YHWH'S NAME IN DEUTERONOMY

As is well known the presence of YHWH, or the equivalent of YHWH's presence, in Deuteronomy is frequently expressed by means of the 'name', שֵׁם. Most conspicuous is the description of the chosen sanctuary as the 'place YHWH, your god, will choose from amongst your tribes to put his name there to dwell' (12.5).[1] There is considerable disagreement about whether the 'name' is a characteristically Deuteronomic means by which to express YHWH's presence,[2] or a means by which only YHWH's name is made present in the Temple while YHWH himself remains in heaven.[3] The latter view, which at one stage represented the scholarly consensus, has been subject to a great deal of criticism recently.[4] In this thesis I align myself with the latter position, a position my reading of Deuteronomy 1-4 would tend to support.[5]

The chosen sanctuary, where the name is said to dwell, is particularly associated in Deuteronomy with blessing. It is here that the Israelites offer the sacrifices from the

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[1] There are a number of variations upon this formula in Deuteronomy, see Mettinger 1982: 54-59; Rose 1975: 77-87. The short form does not mention the 'name', whilst the two variants of the long form do.

[2] See McConville 1994: 111-23; Mayes 1979: 60; Ridderbos 1984: 153; Vriezen 1970: 208; Weippert 1980: 77-78; Wilson 1995; van der Woude 1997b.

[3] See Albertz 1994a: 11, 394-95; Clements 1965: 90-95; Eichrodt 1967: II, 40-45; Nicholson 1967: 31, 55-56, 71-73; von Rad 1953; Ringgren 1966: 92; Rose 1975: 85-87; Weinfeld 1972: 191-210.

For a survey of the debate, see Mettinger 1982: 42-45. There are also a variety of alternative views. R. de Vaux suggests the formula indicates YHWH's possession (1967). Zimmerli argues that the name formula is 'not to be considered primarily as the locus of Yahweh's physical manifestation...it is rather the place where...the *'ny YHWH* is spoken and under its auspices Yahweh's merciful acts and law are proclaimed' (1982d: 104). However, both de Vaux and Zimmerli also associate the name of YHWH with ideas of presence at the sanctuary.

[4] See esp. Wilson 1995.

[5] See chapter 6.

bounty of the land and celebrate the feasts. It is, perhaps, not insignificant, that every use of the formula with the name is associated with sacrifices or the three feasts.[6] The shorter formula, in which the name is not mentioned, can also be used in this context, but is also used in other contexts, such as judicial decisions.[7] The association of the chosen sanctuary with YHWH's presence is suggested by the recurring term, 'before YHWH', לִפְנֵי יְהוָה.[8] Some, however, regard this as a linguistic fossil, or as an earlier deuteronomic layer.[9]

Despite the concentration of scholarly work on the use of the name with the sanctuary the name also occurs in other relationships in Deuteronomy. If Israel obeys, the nations will see that YHWH's name is called upon Israel (28.10). The use of the *niphal* of קָרָא with עַל 'expresses ownership; proclaiming the name over something was a legal act by which ownership was claimed and established'.[10] However, YHWH's claim of ownership does not need to be detached from YHWH's presence. In Jer. 14.9 'you are in our midst' is found in poetic parallelism to 'your name is called upon us'.[11] The recognition that Israel is called by YHWH's name is closely associated with YHWH's blessing of Israel.

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[6] Deut. 12.5, 11, 21; 14.23, 24; 16.2, 6, 11; 26.2.

[7] Deut. 12.14, 18, 26; 14.25; 15.20; 16.7, 15, 16; 17.8, 10; 18.6; 31.11. For an attempt to assign the formulas to different literary layers, see Rose 1975: 77-87; Mettinger 1982: 52-59.

[8] Occurrences of the term which probably have the chosen sanctuary in view: 10.8; 12.7, 12, 18[2]; 14.23, 26; 15.20; 16.11; 18.7, 19.17; 26.5, 10[2], 13; 27.7. Other occurrences of the term in Deuteronomy are: 1.45 (in Kadesh-barnea); 4.10; 9,18, 25 (Sinai); 6.25; 24.4, 13 (observance of the commandment before YHWH); 29.9, 14 (Moab).

[9] It is not clear whether Mettinger regards the term as a linguistic fossil or part of the original Deuteronomy, which he does not believe articulated a 'name theology'. He merely notes the problem in passing (1982: 53). For arguments against viewing לִפְנֵי יְהוָה as a 'linguistic fossil', see Wilson 1995: 131-97; McConville 1994: 113-16. M.D. Fowler connects the phrase with the ark of the covenant (1987).

[10] Mayes 1979: 353.

[11] Mettinger 1982: 64.

This same association of the blessing of YHWH and the name occurs in the tasks assigned to the priests and Levites.[12] These tasks include serving in the name of YHWH (18.5, 7) and blessing Israel in the name of YHWH (10.8; 21.5). The clearest indication of what this involved is seen outside of Deuteronomy in Lev. 9.22-24 and Num. 6.23-27. In Leviticus 9 the blessing of Israel is closely associated with the manifestation of the glory of YHWH. In Numbers 6 the Aaronic blessing is described as 'putting YHWH's name on the Israelites' and the means by which YHWH blesses the people. Here too the blessing of YHWH is closely associated with expressions of YHWH's presence with the people, particularly his face, פָּנִים. This would suggest that the priests and Levites, in their blessing of the people, were seen as a means by which YHWH was made present in Israel.

The name of YHWH is also associated with the prophet like Moses. The prophet is said to speak the words that YHWH has spoken (18.18, 21) and to speak in YHWH's name (18.19, 20, 22). Thus, the prophet by speaking the words that YHWH speaks is a means by which YHWH, or at very least his name, was made present in Israel. This resonates with the association of YHWH's nearness with the obedience of YHWH's statutes and ordinances (4.7-8). The description of the prophet as one who speaks in YHWH's name necessitates that Moses, the prototype of the prophet, is also understood as one who speaks in YHWH's name. Thus, Moses is also to be regarded as a means by which YHWH was made present in Israel.[13]

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[12] For the issue of Aaronites and Levites, see Mayes 1979: 205-206; Weinfeld 1991: 422.

[13] The importance of names can also be illustrated by other references in Deuteronomy. The importance of the continuance of a name in Israel is seen in 25.5-10. A dead man's brother has a responsibility to maintain his name. We might say, he has a responsibility to keep his brother 'present' within Israel. This is suggested by the phrase 'blot out the name' in the context of the destruction of the inhabitants of Canaan or Israel (7.24; 9.14; 29.19). To 'blot out the name' is to destroy, to make someone no longer 'present'.

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