

## **CHAPTER II. THE PROHIBITION OF MAKING ANY IMAGE OF GOD IN THE SECOND COMMANDMENT OF THE DECALOGUE IN EXODUS 20:4-6**

### **2.0 Introduction**

The primary motive of this chapter is to focus on the present text itself and try to find the rationale why the text in Exodus 20:4-6 itself presents the second commandment of the Decalogue as the prohibition of making any image of God. The secondary one is to examine that this unit forms the provenance for the aniconic tradition found in the rest of the Old Testament.

This chapter first presents a detailed discussion of the prohibition on making any image of God as found in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6. The main question of this section is whether the immediate reference of the second commandment is to images of other gods or to image of Yahweh. This study maintains that the prohibition of image in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 is that of making any image of God. The prohibition in the second commandment can only be understood against the background of Yahweh's incomparability stated in the introduction of the Decalogue as well as the prohibition of making and paying homage to other gods including their images in the first commandment of the Decalogue.<sup>50</sup> The prohibition in the second commandment is

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<sup>50</sup> This can be applied to all texts related with prohibition of making an image of God in the Old Testament. All passages in the Old Testament should to be studied with this methodology. But this is beyond this thesis. 'The introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue construct' will be applied to the episode of golden calf in Exodus 32:1-6 in the Pentateuch in chapter 3, and in chapter 4 compared with the incomparability of God and the prohibition of making any image of God construct in Isaiah 40:18-20.

sometimes backed up by only the first commandment of the Decalogue and sometimes by both the introduction and the first commandment of the Decalogue.

This chapter will deal with the exegetical investigation of the meaning of the prohibition of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 in relation with the introduction of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2 and the first commandment of the Decalogue Exodus 20:3 against the background of the unity of the Sinai pericope in the present text as the final form.

This chapter secondly poses the hypothesis that all other instances found in the Old Testament prohibiting the fabrication of any image of God is related to this ban in Exodus 20:4-6.<sup>51</sup> This study will therefore investigate whether Exodus 20:4-6 can be considered as the provenance of the prohibition of making an image of God in the rest of the Pentateuch and the rest of Old Testament, or not.

Dealing with the argument on the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 as the prohibition of making any image of God and its probability as the provenance of the programmatic aniconism in the Old Testament, attention has to be given to the date of this provenance of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 and that of the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6. Many modern scholars ask whether the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 comes from a still earlier stage of biblical religion or from a much later stage (Cf. Mettinger

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<sup>51</sup> Even though Patrick (1985:45) maintains that one cannot find explicit Old Testament support for the idea that God is a purely spiritual, immaterial being and therefore incompatible with any representation, one can find the related line of thought in the second commandment in the rest of the Old Testament.

1995:174-175; 1997:175-178). We will, therefore, lastly deal with the argument in related with a provenance for the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6: the relation between two Decalogues in Exodus 20:2-17 and in Deuteronomy 5:6-21 in relation with the composition of the Decalogue in the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11), that is, the problem whether the Decalogue comes from an early stage of Israel's history or later; the formation of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 as the prohibition of making any image of God, that is, the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment of Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 is included in its original form, or inserted or incorporated into it later.

## **2.1 Exegetical consideration of Exodus 20:2-6**

2.1.1 The unity of the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11) in the present text as the final form

Many scholars recognize that the Decalogue is not isolated from the context in the present form of the text and that by taking a literary passage out of its context they can debar themselves from understanding it out of context (Cassuto 1967:238). Taking up the issue of the literary context, Durham (1991:278) says “the single most important point about the canonical form of the Decalogue is its location under consideration.”

Although this point is very important, “it has become too easy to miss, that the Decalogue has so often been taken out of this sequence” (Durham 1991:278).<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Even “the book [Exodus] itself is not a separate, independent work but a subsection of what has virtually always been understood as five-part work, the Pentateuch...Exodus follows closely on Genesis, so that Exodus 1 constitutes not the beginning of an entirely new work but the beginning of a new section of a larger work that has yet other sections (Stuart 2006: 20)...Exodus 40 hardly brings to a conclusion the major written enterprise Moses had in mind for his audience but concludes only the portion that brings

According to Childs (1974:365), the redactional structure and theme in framework of the Decalogue in Ex. 20:1-17 are as follows:

1. Israel's arriving at Sinai and encampment, (Ex 19:1-2)
2. God's covenant with Israel announced (Ex 19: 3-9)
  - (a) Conditions of the covenant (Ex 19:3-6)
  - (b) Israel's response of acceptance (Ex 19:7-8)
  - (c) Moses' special role defined (Ex 19:9)
3. Preparations prior to the third day (Ex 19:10-15)
  - (a) Instruction for purification for two days (Ex 19:10-11)
  - (b) Guarding the people from the mountain (Ex 19:12-13a)
  - (c) The signal for approaching the mountain is set (Ex 19:13b)
  - (d) Commands executed by Moses (Ex 19:14-15)
4. Preparations on the third day (Ex 19:16-25)
  - (a) The beginning of signs and the people's reaction (Ex 19:16)
  - (b) Moses leads the people out to the foot of the mountain (Ex 19:17)
  - (c) Further signs increasing (Ex 19:18)
  - (d) Moses speaking with God (Ex 19:19)
  - (e) Moses summoned for further instructions (Ex 19:20-24)
  - (f) Instructions reported to the people (Ex 19:25)
5. Proclamations of the Decalogue (Ex 20:1-17)

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the reader to the point that the tabernacle is built and ready for use as Israel's worship center. When we speak of the structure of Exodus, therefore, we must remember that it is a substructure-the bigger picture is that of the first five books of the Bible, one integral part of which is the section we call Exodus" (Stuart 2006:20-21). "Exodus is a subunit of a greater literary work, still, that is, the whole of Scripture" (Stuart 2006:21; cf. Fee & Stuart 2002:34-42; Sailhamer 1992).

6. Establishment of Moses' covenant office (Ex 20:18-20:21)
  - (a) The people's reaction of fear (Ex 20:18)
  - (b) The request for intercession addressed to Moses (Ex 20:19)
  - (c) Moses explains the manner of revelation:
    - (i) Do not fear (Ex 20:20a $\alpha$ )
    - (ii) God comes in order to test (Ex 20:2a $\beta$ )
    - (iii) God comes in order to establish obedience (Ex 20:20b)
  - (d) Moses accepts mediatorship for the people (Ex 20:21)
7. Further stipulations of the covenant (Ex 20:22-23:33)
8. Sealing of the covenant (Ex 24:1-18)

Durham (1987:278) also points out that “the Decalogue is given as an integral part of the larger Sinai narrative (Ex 19:1-24:11) and as an essential segment of the account of Yahweh's representation of himself to Israel within the sequence.” Durham (1987:278) insists that

The [T]en [C]ommandments must first of all be seen in the way Exodus presents them, words addressed by Yahweh himself to Israel gathered by his command at the perimeter of holiness about the base of Mount Sinai.

Durham (cf. 1987:256-348) analyzes the structure and theme of the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11) as follows:

- A. Israel prepares for Yahweh's coming (Ex. 19:1-15)
- B. Yahweh comes to Israel at Sinai (Ex 19:16-25)

- C. Yahweh's principles for life in the covenant (Ex 20:1-17)
- D. Israel's response to Yahweh's coming (Ex 20:18-21)
- E. Yahweh's application of his principles: "The Book of the Covenant" (Ex 20:22-23:33)
- F. The making of [the] covenant: The people and their leaders (Ex 24:1-18)

Many scholars regard the location of the Decalogue in this present text as fitting in harmoniously with the other units. In recent, commentators focus on the thematic, literary, and theological links between the Decalogue (Ex 20:1-17) and its surrounding units: The location of the Decalogue (Ex 20:1-17) as the stipulation of the covenant in the Sinai periscope (Ex 19:1-24:11) in the present text as the final form.

There is a difference between the ways scholars explain the arrangement in the present text. On the one hand, some scholars (Blenkinsopp 1997:109-125; Johnstone 1980:358-363; van Seters 1988; Dozeman 1989; cf. Chirichigno 1987:457-479) assume a redaction for the arrangement of the present text. On the other hand, some scholars (Cf. Sailhammer 1992; Song 1992; Niehaus 1984) assume the strict historical composition by Moses as an original authorship for the present text. Although it is not easy to settle down this discussion, as none of the theories discussed above is conclusive, I would prefer to read the Decalogue as a single literary unit within the context of the Sinai pericope.<sup>53</sup> I therefore turn to the sub sections of the Decalogue indicating their interrelationship in the Decalogue forming a larger unit.

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<sup>53</sup> This means that the author will have to study the first two commandments of the Decalogue within the context of the Decalogue itself, as well as within the larger context of the Sinai pericope in the following sub sections.

### 2.1.2 Exodus 20:2 (The introduction to the Decalogue)

In the opening words of the Decalogue Yahweh presents Himself (Ex 20:2) in terms of his act of deliverance: ‘I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage’ (Cf. Durham 1991:283).<sup>54</sup> As Patrick (1985:230) points out, “[t]he covenant texts do not distinguish between Yahweh’s authority to command and his authority to enforce his commandments. It was undoubtedly assumed that the one entailed the other.” The statements concerning Yahweh in the covenant context, “(1) identify him by name and describe his character and (2) grant him authority to command this people and enforce his commandments” (Patrick 1985:283).

#### 2.1.2.1 Exegetical meaning of Exodus 20:2

The introduction to the Decalogue which begins with Yahweh’s autokerygmatic statement, “I am Yahweh, your God, who brought you forth from the land of Egypt” describes “Yahweh’s relationship with Israel as a gift of grace” (Durham 1991:300). ‘I am Yahweh your God...’,<sup>55</sup> functions as an assertion of the authority of Yahweh.<sup>56</sup> Zimmerli (1953:20) writes “all that Yahweh had to say and proclaim to his people

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<sup>54</sup> Before the Decalogue is addressed to Israel, God is already present. Cf. Exodus 19:19a: “the sound of the ram’s horn meanwhile was moving, and growing very strong.” Then God spoke all these words, saying, “I am Yahweh, your God’.” The literary construction ends with the same theophany in Exodus 20:18-20. According to Durham, “this memory of Yahweh speaking from Sinai in the ears of all the people is common to every account of the Sinai theophany in the Old Testament. It is an emphasis integral both to the Sinai narrative sequence and to the larger narrative sequence, which consistently sets Yahweh at the center and leaves no doubt that the proof of his Presence and the climatic revelation of himself is first and foremost with the people of Israel. The clear assertion of the Sinai narrative is that Yahweh’s first words to Israel at Sinai were spoken directly by himself to all the people, assembled for that very purpose.”

<sup>55</sup> Zimmerli calls it a “self-presentation formula” (Cf. Zimmerli 1953:179-209). The autokerygmatic phrase אֲנִי יְהוָה, “I am Yahweh” is a “primary formula” (Elliger 1966:214; cf. Zimmerli 1969:14; Durham 1991:283)

<sup>56</sup> The revelation of God’s name to Moses was tied to the promise that he would deliver Israel from Egypt (Ex 6:2).

appears as a development of the basic announcement: I am Yahweh”. In this regard Elliger (1966:213-216) has suggested that the addition of אֱלֹהֵיךָ, “your God” to יְהוָה אֲנִי, “I am Yahweh” changes a “holiness or sublimity formula” into a “saving history or grace-formula.” This expression, as Cassuto (1967:241) understands it, has the connotation of “in this manner, [as] by announcing their names, the Eastern kings were accustomed to begin their solemn declarations that respect their deeds” and “the King of the universe commences His declaration to man - in man’s style: I, the Speaker, am called YHWH, and I am your God specifically.” Elliger (1966:213-216) further elaborates on this phrase. He divides the objects of salvation-grace - the people of Israel as indicated by Yahweh’s opening word of the Decalogue - into numbered sentences as follows: “(1) who Yahweh is, by use of the self confessional phrase יְהוָה אֲנִי; (2) who they are, by the addition of the self-giving phrase אֱלֹהֵיךָ since Yahweh can only have become *their* God by his act of giving himself; and (3) that these assertions are validated by their completely discontinuous new situation, as a people brought forth from Egypt, and from the non-status of slaves to the status of a people to whom Yahweh has given himself.

As Labuschagne (1969:136) points out, “by his intervention in history, of which the deliverance from Egypt is the example *par excellence*, Yahweh did something that no other god ever did: He delivered a nation for Himself in a miraculous manner. Through this miraculous act of redemption the incomparability of Yahweh came to light. This act of redemption became the foundation of the Israelite belief in God, and it has remained vividly alive in Israel’s memory.”

### 2.1.2.2 The connection between the introduction to the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2 and the rest of the commandments of the Decalogue

God identifies *himself* in relation to a particular history, which functions to tie the following law to the prior narrative (Cf. Fretheim 1991:224). According to Childs (1974:401), “the introduction of the formula at this place in the narrative not only points back to his history of redemption, but it also points forward to a new stage in [the] relation between God and his people.”

For Israel, the most characteristic quality of their God was exactly this quality of acting in history, and the fact that it is closely linked to his incomparability (Labuschagne 1969:136). It is indicated that Israel saw this particular characteristic as the distinguishing mark between Yahweh and other gods (Labuschagne 1969:136-137). This characteristic of the God of Israel, revealed in his intervention in history as the Redeemer, renders Him unique and identifies Him as the Only God (Labuschagne 1969:137).

This prologue verse introduces the Ten Commandments as a series of principles concerned with the relationship between Yahweh and humankind, in particular with the people of Israel. Especially important is that Yahweh when speaking to them points out that He has given himself to them; He has made them who were no people into a people; He has given freedom and identity to those who were formerly slaves (Durham 1991:284). As Childs (1974:401) says “the prologue serves as a preface to the whole law.” It is not tied to the first commandment only. “It makes absolutely clear that the commandment[s] which follow are integrally connected to God’s act of self-revelation”

(Childs 1974:401).<sup>57</sup>

The law is evidently directly connected to God's grace as the introduction to all the other commandments of the Decalogue. At this point Childs (1974:401) states as follows:

The commandments are prefaced by the formula to make clear that they are understood as the will of Yahweh who has delivered his people from bondage. Yahweh has identified himself as the redeemer God. The formula identifies the authority and right of God to make known his will because he has already graciously acted on Israel's behalf.

The lawgiver is God Himself, presenting himself to the people and giving them a glimpse of the divine mind and will. As Sarna (1991:142) puts it, "morality is the expression of the divine will." God made himself known by his name. He revealed his nature and entered into a covenant with his people. The Decalogue reveals God's nature. It spells out what God requires from his covenant people, whom he liberated without demanding their prior commitment (Childs 1974:402).

Harner (1988:12-13) represents the close relation between the introduction of the Decalogue (Ex 20:2) and the commandments followed (Ex 20:3-17). In the Decalogue as a document of the covenant, introduced by the word Yahweh as the name of God (Ex

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<sup>57</sup> Muilenburg (1964:39, 42) states it that these "first words" of Yahweh to Israel, "indispensably prior to all that is to follow," are "the center and focus of the whole Pentateuch" and "the very heart of the whole Old Testament." In connection with what follows it is, "the association of proclamation and teaching: kerugma kai didache."

20:1-2), God, without any obligation, took the initiative to deliver his people from bondage and tells his people to live according to his law within the covenant relationship that he established (Harner 1983:13). These commandments in turn are to be read in relationship to the introduction of the Decalogue, expressing God's deliverance of his people from Egypt (Harner 1988:61). The structure of the Decalogue, consisting of an introduction and different commandments, seen within the larger context of Exodus 19-24, represents these commandments as requests to obey the covenantal law as a response to God's redemptive grace. God's incomparability as shown redemptive history in the introduction is a motivation for the obedience to the commandments followed. Their liberation is presupposed in each of the Ten Commandments of this covenantal document.

### 2.1.3 Exodus 20:3 (The first commandment of the Decalogue)

The same is to be applied to the connection between the introduction to the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2 and the first commandment in Exodus 20:3. The first commandment is to be considered in this specific context. The first commandment immediately follows on the statement in the introduction to the Decalogue, requesting undivided loyalty of those who will respond to Yahweh's gift (Durham 1991:300). As Enns (2000:413) says, this loyalty is not primarily "payback for God's deliverance; rather, God is worthy of it." The primary meaning of the first commandment of the Decalogue has to be sought in this context and then the question that "the other gods" includes their images or not has to be considered.

### 2.1.3 The exegetical meaning of Exodus 20:3

“The initial problem of the first commandment is the translation of the much debated phrase *עַל־פָּנָי*.” On this phrase, Childs (1974:402) points out that “a wide variety of translations of *עַל* have been suggested in addition to the traditional rendering ‘beside me’ of the Authorized Version, and each of them can find some biblical warrants.” Durham (1991:284; cf. Knierim 1965:25; Stamm and Andrew 1967:7-81) puts it another way: “*עַל* has variously been rendered as expressing preference, defiance, proximity, exclusion, opposition and the like.” The traditional translation ‘beside me’ can be faulted for carrying the connotation ‘except me’, which is foreign to the original sense of the text as Childs (1974:402) points out. *עַל* in connection with *פָּנָי*, Yahweh’s “face” or “presence” refers to Yahweh’s coming to Israel (Durham 1991:284-285).<sup>58</sup> Labuschagne (1969:139) points out “here *עַל* means ‘on account of, because of’, suggesting that the word *פָּנָי* does not only mean ‘face’, but also ‘presence’”. In the light of the concept of Yahweh’s incomparability, as Labuschagne (1969:139) points out, we might as well accept the following translation: “You shall have no other gods because of my presence.” Thus, the reason why Israel should have no other gods is clearly because of Yahweh’s presence, because only He initiated Israel’s history. After introducing Himself as the God who brought Israel out of Egypt, Yahweh forbids Israel to have other gods, because through his redeeming intervention in history he has proved Himself incomparable. It has been made clear that God cannot be put on the same level as other gods, and, therefore, can tolerate no other god in his presence (Labuschagne 1969:139).

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<sup>58</sup> Durham insists “it is possible that “in my presence” is an expansion of a brief earlier form; if so, it could be an expansion, especially appropriate to the Sinai-Theophany context.” But this study doesn’t assume that.

The rest of the first commandment לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים with the singular verb and the singular subject and indirect object, along with the plural direct object, “gods”, as Durham (1991:284) says, is a problem for the application of the first commandment.

The first difficulty in the interpretation is the phrase אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים, “other gods”. Fretheim (1991:224) comments on that as follows: “This commandment with its reference to “other gods” exhibits a henotheism or monolatry, essentially identical words that denote belief in or worship of one God without denying the existence of others.” Childs (1974:403) points out that the claim of Yahweh’s exclusiveness in the sense that He alone exists as God is not contained in the first commandment. Durham (1991:285) says that “the first commandment is not an assertion of the monotheistic conviction, that Yahweh is the only God, and hence the sole choice, in spite of the assumed nonexistence of other gods.” Childs (1974:403), however, adds that in the first commandment the prohibition describes the relation of Yahweh to Israel by categorically eliminating other gods as far as Israel is concerned. Cassuto (1967:241) states something different concerning this point as follows: “The expression other gods became a regular, stereotyped term for the gods of gentiles, who are no-gods. Every deity apart from the Lord is another god. The adjective other came to assume in Hebrew the significance of something strange bizarre, something that is other than it should be.”

Childs (1974:403) understands that the singular form used in לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ emphasizes the restricted nature of the reference. According to Cassuto (1967:241), “the text read, לֹא יִהְיֶה, in singular, in order to emphasize the prohibition of association with even one

god...literally, ‘there shall not be’, the plural [rendered: ‘have no’]; אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים, [‘other gods’, plural], not [‘another god’, singular], so as to make it clear that not only is it forbidden to associate with one deity but with all the deities in general, whoever they may be.”

The conclusion to be drawn here is that “the commandment’s language is theologically compatible with a high monotheism, whatever one’s historical judgments is on the people of God who were drawn into disloyalty to God” (Fretheim 1991:225). Cassuto (1967:241: cf. Enns 2000:415) also concludes that “the first commandment was, in a sense, called for by the many gods who demanded Israel’s allegiance, which Yahweh alone had the right to command.”<sup>59</sup>

Cassuto (1967:241) decodes the message of the first commandment in verse 3 where God requests his people to be his partners in the covenant as follows: “I shall not tolerate your associating Me with any other god from among the divinities of the peoples round about you: *You shall have no other gods.*” The prohibition in the first commandment must be seen in the light of Israel’s experience in history that Yahweh is incomparable (Labuschagne 1969:138).<sup>60</sup> We may conclude that the implication of

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<sup>59</sup> At this point Enns (2000:413) states as follows: “Some have suggested that the first commandment is not an explicitly monotheistic statement but a command to be monolatrous. (Monotheism is the belief that there *is* only on God; Monolatry implies the existence of more than one god, but we must worship only one.)” The commandment does not specify that no one is to have “other gods,” but that Israel is to have no other gods. It is connected with Yahweh’s “jealousy” or “Zeal”, which is described more fully in the expansion of the second commandment in Exodus 20:5a-6.

<sup>60</sup> Scholars tried to solve the problem by qualifying Old Testament monotheism as ‘monarchial’, ‘ethical’, ‘theoretical’, ‘realistic’ and ‘absolute’, or by distinguishing between monotheism, henotheism and monolatry. Vriezen (1966:25) uses the terms ‘mono-Yahwism’ and ‘monotheistic Yahwism’ and he points out that the term ‘monotheism is useful-provided we do not lose sight of the historical development, and that the term is interpreted somewhat liberally. But the real problem and the principal controversy among scholars does not lie in the phenomenon commonly known as monotheism itself, but rather in the interpretation of the term ‘monotheism’ (Labuschagne 1969:143). Labuschagne (1969:143) points out that “the problem of Old Testament monotheism only becomes real when some philosophical system or some

God's incomparability in the Decalogue stems from Israel's experience in history that is delivered from Egypt.

Secondly, the question that "the other gods" includes their images or not has to be considered. Zimmerli (1963:234-248) says "the 'other gods' of the first commandment are, by implication, images made by human beings. Making and worshipping of images is, by implication, a violation of the exclusive claims of YHWH on Israel's loyalty. The

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preconceived religio-historical theory is adopted as the starting point and as the criterion in the approach to historical fact. Thus it is important to approach the factual data without any preconceived system or '-ism', to examine them in their historical context and to keep an eye open for the historical development of the idea of God through the centuries of the Old Testament history." If we accept this, as Labuschagne (1969:143) proposed, we can avoid the incorrect conclusion that the prophets created monotheism, which is still maintained by some scholars. The confession of Yahweh's incomparability probably had its origin already during the earliest period of Mosaic Yahwism (Labuschagne 1966:146). On this point Labuschagne (1966:148-149) says as follows: There was no evolution from pre-Mosaic to the Mosaic concept of God, but certainly a revolution, an incomparable One, the only true God. Only in the Mosaic period do we find all the conditions required by true monotheism: the appearance of a revolutionary reformer, recognition of one single God, rejection of polytheism, intolerance of other religions, a complete negation of the significance of other gods, and a tendency toward universalism.

From this concept, which is basically a new conception representing a spiritual revolution and is found in the transcendental view of the Godhead, flows that "God cannot be depicted by any tangible substance whatsoever, for every form resembles a natural object, and cannot even remotely accord with the absolute, transcendental character of the God of Israel" (Cassuto 1967:236-237). In the rest of the Bible, as the Decalogue of Exodus insists, the Supreme Power ruling the universe is totally different from his creation. God cannot be represented by any form in the universe, and cannot be manipulated by any those forms. The inevitable result of such a belief is monotheism (Oswalt 1998:175). As Sarna (1986:144-145) observes,

The essence of monotheism is that God is absolutely sovereign precisely because He is wholly independent of the world He created, and He does not inhere in it. To present an invisible God in any material and tangible form whatsoever is by definition to distort the divine reality.

Without giving a full exposition of what the Old Testament proclaims about the service of one God and faith in one God, we need only to summarize the results of our investigation of the concept of Yahweh's incomparability, in order to deduce therefrom what light it sheds on Old Testament monotheism. When Israel compared her God with other gods, it is assumed that there were gods in the polytheistic world, and their existence is taken for granted (henotheism). Whenever the Old Testament refers to idols, irrespective of what judgment is being passed on them, it presumes that they are really there and they are real, at least for their worshippers. There was no monotheism or monotheistic religion that did not reckon with polytheism and took the existence of other gods seriously. The negation of the existence of idols in a monotheistic religion is in fact secondary; primarily it rejects polytheism and negates the significance of other gods. The fact that Israel did, as a matter of fact, compare its God with other gods, confirms that they took the existence of other gods seriously. The view that the idea of Yahweh's incomparability is nothing more than an honorific ascription, and that any definite comparative notion had fallen into the background, is to be rejected. Israel used other terms and epithets as honorific ascriptions to express the greatness and sublimity of Yahweh, e. g. 'God of gods and the Lord of lords', 'the Most High', 'King', 'Lord' and 'Zebaoth' which do not connote either Yahweh's incomparability or his uniqueness. On the other hand we can see that the comparative expressions primarily express Yahweh's 'being different', emphasizing the contrast between Him and all other beings ( Labuschagne 1969:144-145).

Ten commandments, promulgated at Mt Sinai, fused together the prohibition against ‘other gods’ and the prohibition against images in such a way that they interpret each other (Ex 20:3-6).” Zimmerli (1963:234-248) distinguished between the commandment against images and the prohibition against worshipping other gods. The fluidity between “gods” and “images,” however, suggests that a good deal of overlapping and merging, occurred through history.

#### 2.1.3.2 The connection between the first commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:3 and other commandments of the Decalogue in Exodus 20.

In the same way the introduction to the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2 is to be read in conjunction with the first commandment in Exodus 20:3, the first commandment is to be considered in terms of the rest of the Decalogue.

As Patrick (1986:43) indicates “the first commandment protects Yahweh’s sovereignty as well as his religious prerogatives in Israel by establishing a basis for the rest of the Commandments.” Durham (1991:284) points out that “the first of the Ten Commandments is basic to the nine that follow it and to the relationship the Decalogue is designed to ensure.” It is, thus, the basis for all the others, explaining “what loyalty to God entails in the various aspects of their relationship.” (Fretheim 1991:224) It has absolute priority to other commandments as “a first and fundamental requirement of those who desire to enter into the covenant relationship with Yahweh” (Enns 2000:414).

This undivided loyalty is the foundation of the nine commandments that follow, especially in the three commandments that deal with the worship of God. Durham

(1991:285) represents the relation as follows:

The first of the commandments is the essential foundation of the building of the covenant community. Yahweh had opened himself to a special relationship with Israel, but that relationship could only develop if Israel committed themselves to Yahweh alone. Yahweh had rescued them and freed them, delivered them and guided them, and then came to them. The next step, if there was to be a next step, belonged to them. If they were to remain in his Presence, they were not to have other gods.

#### 2.1.4 Exodus 20:4-6 (The second commandment of the Decalogue)

Enns (2000:414) points out that ‘the first commandment provides the conceptual framework in which the other commandments are to be understood. Yahweh alone is God, and he is speaking to the people who belong to him.’ Durham (1991:285) says “the second commandment, with the other two commandments that follow” describes “special dimensions to their relationship with him.” While the first commandment forbids any association with other gods, three specifications of how Yahweh *is* to be worshiped are followed. “The first of these specifications is the prohibition of the use of images in the worship of Yahweh” (Durham 1991:285).

##### 2.1.4.1 Exegetical consideration of Exodus 20:4-6

In verse 4, the making of a פֶּסֶל, “idol” is prohibited. According to Childs (1974:404), “it is generally agreed that the prohibition of making a פֶּסֶל refers, first of all, to an

image carved from wood or stone, but which later came to include metal figures as well (Is 40:19; 44:10).” In this regard Durham (1991:285) suggests that “פסל means to “cut or shape” something, stone in particular, and the noun פסל refers to an image, of whatever likeness, and involving a variety of materials, made for use in the worship of deity.”

Nevertheless, some questions on the meaning of verse 4 still remains : “Is it a separate commandment or only an elaboration of verse 3?” (Fretheim 1991:225)<sup>61</sup> Labuschagne (1969:139) asks whether images of Yahweh should also be included in this prohibition. Other Scholars also point out the core of this issue as either: “Does “idol” refer to an idol of one of the gods [previously] spoken of in verse 3, or does it also include any sort of representation of Yahweh?” (Enns 2000:415; Fretheim 1991:226) and “whose image is being forbidden to Israel in the second commandment, Yahweh’s, or those of the gods rivaling Yahweh?” (Durham 1991:285) All these questions deal with the same problem and can be dealt with simultaneously.

As Childs (1974:407) points out, “the initial problem to be recognized is that the reason

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<sup>61</sup> Fretheim points out that Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Jews have different views on the division of the first and second commandments from the majority of Protestants including the Reformeds. Roman Catholics and Lutherans count Exodus 20:3-6 into the first and one commandment; Jews consider Exodus 20:2 to be the first and Exodus 20:3-6 the second, considering it as one commandment. This question is deeply rooted in pre-critical religious traditions, with many groups designating verse 3-6 as a single commandment (Roman Catholics, Lutherans and Jews). Sailhamer (1992:283) sees the first and second commandment as one commandment. He points out that all of Exodus 20:2-6 can be read as merely one commandment, a prohibition of idolatry, and counted it as the first commandment as in Augustine, Luther, MT. Sailhamer (1992:283) suggests the expression “other gods” is taken to mean “idols.” Thus for him, the prohibition in verse 4-6 means the prohibition against idolatry. In that, Sailhamer agrees with Jewish tradition, although the former recounts it as the first commandment, the latter sees it as the second commandment. On the issue of the enumeration and division of the Ten Words/Commandments, which has differed notably between Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions, this study follows the Protestant tradition, “not because it is a tradition but because ...it reflects the better analysis of the structure of the Ten Words.” (Cf. Stuart 2006:448; Youngblood 1994:30-35, 50, 52).

which lies behind the commandment is never fully explained.” There is a key point from which the intent can be inferred, like the meaning of the commandment in the context of Exodus 20:3. It furnishes a key for the solution of the problem. A couple of scholars also deal with this question.

Obbink (1929:264-274) defended the thesis that the images which were prohibited did not refer to images of Yahweh, but rather to images of foreign gods, whose use was rejected in Yahweh’s cult. Obbink (1929:264ff.) argues with reference to Yahweh’s jealousy: how could Yahweh be jealous of a picture of himself? Obbink (1929:264-274) suggests that the second commandment forbade the making of images of any kind, that it meant that Yahweh’s worship was to be kept pure of defacement with “all kind of heathen material.”

This interpretation seems plausible and cautious, yet it requires further examination. The reasons against this thesis are stated by Childs (1974:406):

[T]he need to distinguish between the issues involved in the first and second commandments has not been met by Obbink’s artificial distinction between cultic prohibition... and the worship of foreign gods in general....

Some scholars suggest the possibility that it can also be considered as command prohibiting making any image of God. There is a significant difference between the meanings of the first and second commandments in what they prohibit. In regard to the question whether the second commandment (Ex 20:4-6) is a separate commandment or only an elaboration of Exodus 20:3, it can be said that “Exodus 20:4 is a separate

commandment from the first commandment because the inclusion of an image of Yahweh in Exodus 20:4-6 can be explained when it is seen as a separate commandment.” (Fretheim 1991:225) It is not easy to establish the valid reason why the images of other gods are prohibited in verse 4 because it is already mentioned in verse 3. “Those who view verses 4-6 as an elaboration of verse 3 encounter problems with the inclusion of images of Yahweh, which is an apparent move beyond verse 3.” (Fretheim 1991:226) As Fretheim (1991:226-227) says, “this can be overcome if worshipping images of Yahweh is in fact understood to be idolatry.”

Thus, “those who view verse 4 as a separate commandment tend to regard it as a prohibition of images of Yahweh, stressing the ‘for yourself’ (i.e. Israel’s worship), other divine images having been dealt with in verse 3.” (Fretheim 1991:225; cf. Craigie 1976:153; McConville 2002:126)

Durham (1991:286) says concerning this point:

The first commandment states definitively that each individual who would enter the covenant with Yahweh is to have no other gods. Only disobedience of that commandment would allow the use of image[s] of foreign gods, a point von Rad recognizes in his connection of the two commandments. Further, the emphatic לְךָ “for yourself,” surely unnecessary if v 4a is only an extension of v. 3, may be a clue to the direction to the second commandment is taking: the worshiper who has made a commitment to worship only Yahweh must not compromise that worship by making it easy, that is, by adopting for his own use shaped images to provide a concrete center for worship, a practice common to all of Israel’s neighbors. The personal reference of

this and indeed all the commandments must be kept clearly in mind. A paraphrase of the commandment might even be, “not one of you is to have a shaped image for the worship of Yahweh.

Bernhardt (1956:88, 93f.) investigates the problem and then concludes that it originally did refer to an image of Yahweh. There is no ready answer why the making of images was forbidden. The reason given in the Decalogue is that Yahweh is an **אל קנא** (Labuschagne 1969:140; cf. Kuechler 1908:42-52; Renaud 1963:7-159). These theories, which consider the prohibition of the image in verse 4 as other god’s image, as Durham (1991:286) criticizes, “do not allow the difference between the first and the second commandments, or for the differences between the essential statement of the second commandment (v. 4a) and the lengthy and layered expansion of it (vv. 4b-6).” The reason for it is that an image of God is emphasized in the context of God’s incomparability expressed by **אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ** (Ex 20:2, 5a). When the grounds for the commandment are given, they are in terms of the intense anger, which is aroused in God. From this, one can deduce that the worship of images is understood as an encroaching on the prerogative of God, but precisely how is not stated (Childs 1974:407).

There are also some indications within the rest of the Old Testament that do shed some light on interpreting the commandment. It seems clear that the second commandment must originally have functioned different from the first commandment which prohibited the worship of other gods. It is reinforced by numerous parallels to the

commandment throughout the Pentateuch, although the parallels repeat and expand the prohibition without aiding greatly in explaining the fundamental reason behind the commandment (Childs 1974:407).<sup>62</sup>

#### 2.1.4.2 The connection between the introduction of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2 and the first commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:3, and the second commandment in Exodus 20:4-6

In the Decalogue it is clearly stated that “not only the making of images but also their worship was forbidden. Yahweh’s jealousy of the idols as such would imply that He took their power and influence seriously, which is, of course, absurd.” (Labuschagne 1969:141) Therefore the prohibition in the second commandment can only be understood against the background of Yahweh’s incomparability: no image of him, or else He might find Himself standing in the company of idols; no image and no worship of the idols, or else He, the incomparable, would have to compete on a level with the idols for his rights as far as Israel was concerned (Labuschagne 1969:141).

According to Patrick (1985:44), “the second commandment was rather narrow in scope, excluding iconographic representation of Yahweh. Images of other deities would be

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<sup>62</sup> “The most helpful parallel is Deuteronomy 4:9ff which attempts to probe into the reason behind the prohibition. Here the author argues that because God did not reveal himself in a *form*, but only in a voice, Israel should beware of making a graven image. Images are prohibited because they are an incorrect response to God’s manner of making himself known, which was by means of word. In the rest of the Old Testament the stress on the word is particularly characteristic of Deuteronomy, and the prophets also share it. The second parallel to the second commandment to shed any light on its meaning are the expressions in the rest of the Old Testament, which are consistent with the Decalogue in tying the prohibition to the self-introductory formula “I am Yahweh your God.” The third parallel to the second commandment is the golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1-6. It reiterates the intolerance against images, most probably in an earlier and later level of tradition, without addressing the question of the ground for the command” (Childs 1974:407). God, thus, testified to himself with his voice, which is the particular extension of the argument in Deuteronomy 4:2.

excluded by the first commandment, but a separate prohibition was required to ban images of Yahweh.”<sup>63</sup> At this point Childs (1974:409) says “in the second commandment the central issue is the nature of legitimate worship.” As Durham (1991:285) says, “the second commandment being the first of these specifications to which the first commandment is applied is a prohibition of the use of images of God in the worship of Yahweh. With regard to this prohibition, one should think of images of Yahweh himself (Labuschagne 1969:139). Thus there is also a close connection between the prohibition of making any image of God and the idea of Yahweh’s incomparability (Labuschagne 1969:139).

The issue, therefore, turns on Yahweh’s testimony to himself, over against man’s arbitrary witness to God, that is to say, witness on the human idea about God (Childs 1974:409). The prohibition of images is grounded in the self-introductory formula, “I am Yahweh,” which summarizes God’s own testimony to himself (Childs 1974:409). In contrast to this true witness, its substitution with images is judged to be a false witness, and hence a delusion (Childs 1974:409).

The second commandment has to do with Yahweh himself and the gift of his presence in Israel. Israelites are forbidden to make images for the worship of Yahweh because he is Yahweh. He is in a way present in all creatures Yahweh created, but, what is more important, he is also beyond them all. No image conceivable to them could serve to represent him. They must worship him as he is, not as they can envision him or would

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<sup>63</sup> Patrick points out that we can see the original meaning behind the condemnation of Gideon’s ephod (Jdg 8:27) and the images, ephod, and teraphim made by Micah and stolen by the tribe of Dan for its sanctuary (Jdg 17-18), and it probably stands behind the condemnation of “golden calves” at various times in the narrative (Ex 32; 1 Ki 12:28-30; Hs 8:5-6; 13:2).

depict him to be (Durham 1991:286).

The comparison of God with other gods in the Old Testament always indicates that there is no god like Yahweh, that none can be compared to him, that no one and nothing can be placed on the same level as Him.

In the second commandment of the Decalogue (Ex 20:4-6 and Dt 5:8-10), “emphasis of the [f]irst commandment is not the “other gods”, but Yahweh’s uniqueness, and, likewise, the emphasis of the [s]econd commandment is not the “image’, but how to secure Yahweh’s uniqueness.” (Holter 2003:112). Holter (2003:12) says that the other foreign gods are identified with and known through their images and likewise Yahweh can be sought to be known in the same way. The second commandment is the way to securing Yahweh’s uniqueness, as preventing Yahweh from being understood like the other gods. It can be cahrtd as follows:

Prologue: the historical background of God’s incomparability (Ex 20:2)

The 1st commandment: the statement of God’s incomparability (Ex 20:3)

The 2nd commandment: the first way securing God’s incomparability (Ex 20:4-6)

The 3rd commandment: the second way securing God’s incomparability (Ex 20:7)

The 4th commandment: the third way securing God’s incomparability (Ex 20:8)

### 2.1.5 Summary

In this section, this study indicated the theological rationale for the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment. It was linked to the idea of Yahweh's incomparability stated in the introduction of the Decalogue and the exclusion of other gods in the first commandment. The prohibition in the second commandment can only be understood against the background of Yahweh's incomparability stated in the introduction of the Decalogue as well as the prohibition of making and paying homage to other gods including their images in the first commandment of the Decalogue. The prohibition in the second commandment is sometimes backed up by only the first commandment of the Decalogue and sometimes by both the introduction and the first commandment of the Decalogue.

## 2.2 In-textuality of Exodus 20:2-6

<sup>2</sup> אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים

<sup>3</sup> לֹא יִהְיֶה-לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל-פָּנָי

<sup>4</sup> לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה-לְךָ פֶסֶל וְכָל-תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל מִתַּחַת בָּאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת  
וְאֲשֶׁר בַּיָּם מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ

<sup>5</sup> לֹא-תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם כִּי אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קָנָא פֶקֶד

עֵוֹן אֲבֹת עַל-בְּנֵים עַל-שְׁלֵשִׁים וְעַל-רְבַעִים לְשָׁנָא

<sup>6</sup> וְעָשָׂה חֶסֶד לְאֲלֹפִים לְאַהֲבֵי וּלְשֹׂמְרֵי מִצְוֹתַי

The in-textuality of Exodus 20:2-6 shows, firstly, the God who speaks to his people, Israel (v. 1) is Yahweh who brought them from the bondage of Egypt (v. 2). The formula "I am Yahweh your God, אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ is used to express the incomparability of God in Exodus 20:2 (Cf. Harner 1988:62). Furthermore, according to

Keiser (1996:490), “the combination of the phrase יהוה אלהיך with אנכי gives the decisional use to the meaning of the name of God. The expression יהוה אלהיך is a formula of God’s self-declaration used in the context of God’s incomparability with other gods.”

Secondly, לא יהיה-לך in verse 3 makes clear and emphasizes that God is the one who brought Israel from the bondage of Egypt (v. 2b) and became her king (v. 2b). The phrase אלהים אחרים על-פני in verse 3 can mean that no other god brought Israel from the land of Egypt, while God is the one who brought them from the bondage of Egypt (v. 2). אלהים אחרים (Ex 20:3) with the singular verb and the singular subject and indirect object, along with the plural direct object, “gods” which differ from אלהים אחרים, [‘other gods’, plural], not, אל אחר, [‘another god’, singular] makes it clear that not only is it forbidden to associate with not only one deity but with all the deities in general, whoever they may be” in verse 3a (Cassuto 1966:241). Cassuto (1966:241) decodes the message of the first commandment in verse 3 which means that God requests his people to be his partners in the covenant as follows: “I shall not tolerate your associating with Me any other god from among the divinities of the peoples round about you: You shall have no other gods”, showing explicitly that God is incomparable with other gods who can be replaced by images. Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that Exodus 20:2-3 clearly shows the incomparability of God. It requires his people to remember.

Thirdly, the ground for the prohibition of making any image, לא תעשה-לך פסל, is the “I am Yahweh your God, יהוה אלהיך. It functions as a motive for the prohibition

on the image of God in verse 4 by using the phrase in verse 5, which was used in verse 2. Thus, the prohibition of God's image has to be understood in the context of the incomparability of God. אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֵל קַדְמוֹן in verse 5 shows us that making an image of God stands in contrast to the incomparability of God. Thus, making any image of God is prohibited to his covenant people.

### **2.3 A provenance for the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6**

As stated above many scholars support the opinion that the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4 including Deuteronomy 5:8-9a represents prohibiting making any image of God as it is found in the present text. Nevertheless, opinions differ on the stage when the prohibition on making image of God started to appear. Many modern scholars (Cf. Dohmen 1985:236-277; Zimmerli 1974:247-260; Mettinger 1997:175-178) do differ on its origin, that is, whether it occurred for the first time in earlier tradition or incorporated into it later. They argue that the explicit prohibition of making image of God, formulated in all the legal codes of the Hebrew Bible seems to be of late origin (Mettinger 1995:16). They “wish to make the prohibition of making an image of God in the second commandment a late feature of the biblical religion, largely because they assume that such a concept must have been risen as a result of a long process of theological evolution” (Oswalt 1998:63). Von Rad (1962:216) notes as follows: “Here the commandment is drafted wholly with reference to the commandment forbidding the worship of other gods.” He describes it as a late and specialized prohibition against representing Yahweh by “an image belonging to another deity” (Von Rad 1962:216) Dick (1999:2) says:

The classical formulations of the *Bilderverbot* are found in the Decalogue, Exodus 20:3-4 and Deuteronomy 5:7-8. The syntactical irregularities in these texts strongly suggest that this pivotal commandment has undergone evolution.

Dohmen (1985) and Dick (1999) maintain that the prohibition of cult image was largely a product of 6<sup>th</sup>-century redaction and thus the passages dealing with the prohibition of cult image shared the same theological theme with each other, although they stem from different traditions (Dick 1999:2). Dick (1999:14) says the second commandment emerged during the Exile as the chief defense of newly emerged monotheism, supposing the redaction of the second commandment of the Decalogue as a final stage of the redaction by the Deuteronomistic editor. It is Dick's (1999:15; cf. Dohmen 1987:157) supposition that "the '*Bilderverbot*' had originally arisen as a special instance of the commandment against other gods, but now was to dominate." Before the finalizing the '*Bilderverbot*' as the dominant meaning of the prohibition in the final stage, the prohibition existed as a form of "double commandment" condemning both the worship of foreign gods and making images (Dick 1999:14). Through the process of combining two commandments into one and giving priority to the prohibition of making images as in the 'golden calf' story in Exodus 32, at last, arrived at the final stage as in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus and Deuteronomy (Dick 1999:14). Moreover, according to Dick (1999:15), "during the late exilic period, there also was a tendency to expand this prohibition to all artistic representations, the final stage in the evolution of the *Bilderverbot* in the Hebrew Bible" and "the original prohibition against cult images was extended to embrace all types of cult object" (Dick 1999:16).

Mettinger (1997:175) says that “the attempts undertaken by scholars to find the provenance of the negative attitude towards making any image of God in the Old Testament is mainly aimed at working out the main lines of the development of aniconism suggesting different stages of development.” Mettinger (1997:175) regards Exodus 20:4 and Deuteronomy 5:8 as “the programmatic aniconism in its uncompromising form.” Nevertheless, Mettinger’s (1997:175-178) presupposition on the formation of the programmatic aniconism in both the Decalogue, is basically the same line with other scholars. Mettinger (1979:22-25) sees the prohibition of making any image of God as the development of an existing tradition of aniconism practiced in daily life, and as a Deuteronomistic product.

In this section, the sharp contrast between these views on the provenance of the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 will be discussed. Several observations should be made concerning the argument. The first one is that the relation between the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11) and the Moab covenant (Dt 4:45-28:69), that is, the Sinai pericope in Exodus 19-24 as a strict historical composition, that is, an original writing of Moses or an insertion by the redactor, Deuteronomist or whatever in later period of Israelite history. The second one is that the relation between two Decalogues in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, that is, the Decalogue exists from an early period of Israel’s history and plays an important role in Israel religion as mother law or stems from the ideological work to represent in later period of Israel history. The third one is that the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 was placed in the present text by an original author in early period of Israel religion or redactor(s) in later period. The last one is that the formation of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 as the prohibition of making any

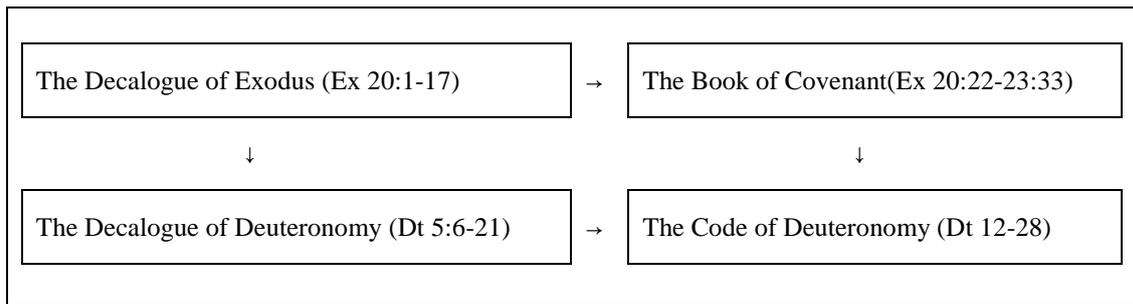
image of God is found in the Decalogue from the beginning or inserted in it by someone in the late exilic or the early post-exilic period of the Israelite history.

2.3.1 The relation between two Decalogues in Exodus 20:2-17 and in Deuteronomy 5:6-21 in the context of the relation between the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11) and the Moab covenant (Dt 4:45-28:69)

Blenkinsopp (1997:109-125) considers the Sinai-Horeb Narrative in Exodus 19-34 as an insertion by the Deuteronomist. Johnstone (1980:358-363) views the Sinai narrative as rather a theological interpretation on the past than a strict historical composition. Seters (1988) sees the Sinai pericope in Exodus 19:1-24:11 as based on the theophany of Horeb in Deuteronomy contrary to the general view that the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11) is based on the Book of Deuteronomy which was written in the times of Josiah. Dozeman (1989) is of opinion that Exodus 19-24 developed in three stages: first, pre-exilic (the God's mountain tradition), second, late pre-exilic / exilic (Deuteronomic), third, late exilic or post-exilic (priestly tradition). Theologically these three differ from each other (Cf. Chirichigno 1987:457-479).

Scholars who suggest Deuteronomic Pentateuch built their theories on the hypothesis that the Deuteronomy is produced after 6<sup>th</sup> century and the Exodus is written for the prologue of Deuteronomy. They share the view that “until the period of the Exile at the earliest there was no ‘Pentateuch’: in other words, whether the earliest stages through which the material now contained in the Pentateuch may have passed, the first comprehensive work, covering the whole period from beginning to Moses, was composed not early than the sixth century BC.” (Whybray 1987:221). Childs

(1974:351) and Nicholson (1997:422-433), as Van Seters (1994:270) says, focus on the similarity between the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11) and Moab covenant of Deuteronomy (Dt 4:45-28:69).<sup>64</sup> They represent the structural similarity between them as an evidence that the former was formed by the latter by Deuteronomistic history redactor(s).<sup>65</sup> The Decalogue (Ex 20:1-17) and the Book of Covenant (Ex 21-23) are represented as covenantal document in the Sinai periscope (Ex 19:1-24:11) to anticipate the Decalogue of Deuteronomy (Dt 5) and the Deuteronomic code (Dt 12-26) and inserted in the present location (Cf. Noth 1981:1-25; von Rad 1956). It can be charted as follows:



Scholars supporting a Deuteronomistic Pentateuch on the making of the Pentateuch, which postulates that “the main narrative of Genesis-Numbers ‘belong to the environment of the Deuteronomistic-Deuteronomistic...literary activity’”(Schmidt cited by Whybary 1987:223) and that “the first comprehensive edition of the Pentateuch was ‘marked with a Deuteronomistic stamp’”(Rendtorff cited by Whybray 1987:223) share a

<sup>64</sup> English versions of the Bible represent Deuteronomy 28:69 as 29:1. ‘Moab covenant’ in Deuteronomy 28:69 is an unique expression in Deuteronomy and parallels ‘the Horeb covenant’. Its scope is Deuteronomy 4:45-28:69. See Song 1992:188-198 for detail.

<sup>65</sup> Scholars (Cf. Noth 1943, von Rad 1947, Nicholson 1967, Weinfeld 1972) who investigate the Deuteronomic history prior Noth (1981) regard the former prophets (Joshua-Kings) as work stemming from the Pentateuchal material and redacted by Deuteronomic history redactor in exilic period. Noth (1981) argues that Deuteronomy –Kings is a consistent history written by Deuteronomic history redactor in exilic period, while some scholars (Cf. O’Brien 1989) argue that the Deuteronomic history was redacted more than one times.

view about the nature and purpose of the Pentateuch. It presupposes that “the notion that Israel was bound to Yahweh by a *b<sup>e</sup>rit* or covenant, did not exist in Israel in early times but was an invention of the Deuteronomist in the seventh or sixth century BC” (Whybray 1987:223).

Most of all, Perlitt’s view (1969) on the covenant theology of Deuteronomistic Pentateuch is contrast to the Sinai Pericope, which “speaks of a covenant established on the mountain” (Whybray 1987:223) and thus suggests that “Genesis-Numbers never exist as an independent work: rather, it was deliberately composed as an introduction to an already existing Deuteronomistic History” (Rendtorff cited by Whybray 1987:224).

Whybray (1987:225) shows the process of arrangement of Genesis-Numbers into the Deuteronomic History:

Since the Pentateuch as we have it is basically a Deuteronomistic work that it would be necessary to demonstrate that the material which it contains has been arranged and edited in its entirety in accordance with a comprehensive and consistent plan and has a structure which is wholly in accordance with a Deuteronomic theology, it [Genesis-Numbers] was composed as a complement to the Deuteronomistic History in a looser and less strictly theological sense: that it is the work of an historian whose intention was to provide-not necessarily under the influence of any one ‘theology’-an account of the origins of the world and of Israel that would supplement the Deuteronomistic History so that both work together would tell the whole story from the beginning to the fall of the Israelite kingdoms.

Kitchen (2003:299-304) differs on the hypothesis suggested by modern scholars. He says that that the bulk of Deuteronomy in form and content is irrevocably tied to usages in the late second millennium is a fact that clashes horribly with the hollowed speculations about the origin and history of “Deuteronomic” thought”, insisting Deuteronomy itself is a wholly separate and foundational work before the works of so-called Deuteronomic history.

Furthermore, some scholars (Cf. Alexander 1999) beg to differ the redaction of the Pentateuch in later of Israelite history assuming a strict historical composition by an original authorship for the present text. Patrick (cited by Alexander 1999:10) acknowledges ““point of contact” between the narrative framework of the Covenant Code and Deuteronomy/Deuteronomistic literature.” Nevertheless, Patrick (cited by Alexander 1999:10) regards “the latter as having been influenced by the former, and not vice versa.” Phillips (1984:43-44 cited by Alexander 1999:11) arguing with Nicholson (1973), also observes that Deuteronomic version of Decalogue “shows clear signs of having been altered from the Exodus version in order to comply with Deuteronomic legal concerns.”<sup>66</sup> As Alexander (1999:11) says. “the arguments presented by both Patrick and Phillips against a Deuteronommic redaction of the Sinai narrative are more convincing than those offered by Nicholson in favour of such, and several recent studies [Weinfeld 1991:242-319; Kratz 1994:205-238] have also come out strongly in support

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<sup>66</sup> His argument has to be modified in two points: one is that he calls the redactor of the Sinai periscope (Ex 19:1-24:11) Proto-Deuteronomist. The redaction of the Sinai periscope (Ex 19:1-24:11) can be dated more earlier than Phillip’s dating because it reflects the earlier covenant ceremony prior to the establishment of Israel Kingdom (Cf. Alexander 1999:1-13). The second one is that the essence and extant of the redaction in Exodus 19-24 is not automatically guessed, if the existence of the Deuteronomistic material in Exodus 19-24 is rejected as supporting that the Sinai periscope (Ex 19:1-24:11) was composed prior the Deuteronomy (Alexander 1999:13).

of the priority of the Exodus version of the Decalogue.” Alexander (1999:20) says that some observations evince that “the narrative frame work surrounding the divine speeches in Exodus 19:3-6 and Exodus 20:22-24:2 comes from the author who shaped the entire Sinai narrative in Exodus 19:1-24:11.” Alexander (1999:20) suggests the date of the composition of the Sinai periscope (Ex 19:1-24:11) from the evidence considered in his discussion: firstly “the Sinai narrative in Exodus 19:1-24:11 already exists before the book of Deuteronomy was composed”; secondly “it could have been penned as early as the pre-monarchic period.” Marshall (1993), who is opened to the possibility that the Book of Covenant is arranged in the early period of Israelite history, also dates the redaction of the Sinai pericope (Ex 19-24) to the earlier time of Israelite history on the dating the arrangement of the Book of Covenant to the early period. Although the latter is not a warrant for the former, the redaction of the Sinai pericope (Ex 19-24) cannot be dated later than the arrangement of the Book of Covenant, because the Decalogue in the Sinai pericope (Ex 19-24) is presupposed in Exodus 20:22.

Moving away from the older antitraditional approach, there are now “a variety of competing viewpoints on the authorship of the Pentateuch” (Stuart 2006:29; cf. Wenham 1996:3-13; Peterson 1995:31-45; Whybray 1995:12-28). Patrick (1995:108) questions the adequacy of hypotheses, like that of scholars that presupposes an evolution. As Patrick (1995: 108) says,

It is possible, of course, that the pattern was imposed at a late stage in the composition of the extant text, but that is a matter of speculation.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> There are some reservations about certain details. These views do not give convincing answers to many questions in regard to the origin of the prohibition of images in the Decalogue, e.g. why is the view that the prohibition of images in the Decalogue originated from the early period of Israel from Moses’s

Stuart (2006:29) points out that we can recognize the “substantial philosophical and methodological distance” that is laid between “those following the traditional approach, who regard Moses as the author of Exodus, and those who believe that the book was produced partly after the introduction of the monarchy in Israel (i.e., not until at least the tenth-ninth centuries), partly another century or so thereafter (i.e., sometime in ninth or eighth century) and partly after the Judean exile (i.e., essentially during the late sixth and/or fifth century BC).”<sup>68</sup>

According to Vasholz (Cf.1990:26-27), history in the Pentateuch may, for our purpose, be divided into three periods: “pre-Abraham history (Genesis 1-11); patriarchal history (Genesis 12-50); and national history (Exodus-Deuteronomy).” In the last category, as Vasholz (1990) puts it, “we have the history describing events almost all of which took place during Moses’ lifetime. In summation, the legal material in the Pentateuch drew on various sources for information but one source for its authority.”

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time rejected? There are various views on the age of the Decalogue. See for the times of Moses, Gressman 1913:471-474; Driver 1911:413-417. For the exilic times, Beer 1939:103-104; For post-exilic times, Hölscher 1952:129, According to Durham (1987:278ff.; Rowley 1963:1-36), in recent times, scholars tend to assume that the times of the Decalogue is earlier than exilic or post-exilic times and insist on the possibility or probability of the time of Moses.

Phillips (2002:3; cf. Mendenhall 1954:24-46, 50-76) argues that the Decalogue in an original short form given at Sinai constituted pre-exilic Israel’s criminal law, connecting this thesis with Mendenhall’s assertion that the description of the inauguration of the covenant at Sinai in the Exodus narrative and its theological interpretation was modeled on the form of the Hittite suzerainty treaties. Phillips assumes that although the suzerainty treaty form does influence the later compilation of the Sinai narrative in Exodus, as well as Deuteronomy, it only entered Israel’s theology following the fall of the northern kingdom to Assyria. Thus, according to Phillips, consequently if the Decalogue derives from earliest times, the [Hittite suzerainty] treaty form plays no part in its original composition and interpretation. Phillips considers the Hittite suzerainty treaty form of the Sinai narrative in Exodus as the result of addition of a later period. But this study argues that the characters of the Hittite suzerainty treaty form in the Decalogue as the product of earlier times can be seen. Theirs are a matter of speculation (Cf. Kitchen 2003:289-299).

<sup>68</sup> Stuart (2006:29) gives an overview of the source criticism and asserts that “the interrelationship between the preference for style variation in ancient Israelite writing and the criterion of vocabulary preference that has been a foundational means of differentiating sources by those who hold to the Documentary Hypothesis (:30)...and concludes “Moses was the following the popular tendency of ancient literary convention in employing varying vocabulary forms and orthography ” (:32).

Whybray (1997:233) says that “the recent application of the techniques of modern literary criticism to the study of the Old Testament has served to emphasize the literary qualities of the Pentateuch understood as a single composition.” For Alter (1981 quoted by Whybray 1997:235), the literary artistry can be ascribed to “that of an author or a redactor.” The argument of the authorship of Moses of the Pentateuch still is debate, but more persuading in recent.

This study, therefore, shares the view point that the dating of the Sinai periscope should be attributed to the time of Moses.<sup>69</sup> Even the way it is formulated now can be attributed to Moses.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Garrett (quoted by Stuart 2006:29) argues that “the Pentateuch shows no knowledge of later Israelite experience over the centuries in the promised land of Canaan; all its five books [i.e., Pentateuch] are consistently anticipatory, looking forward to occupying the promised land just as they at points look back to bondage in Egypt-but they are always in between Egypt and Canaan in their perspective.”

<sup>70</sup> Two questions can be asked here. Firstly, the fact that the formulation of the Pentateuch was done to the time of Moses does not necessarily indicate to his authorship of the Pentateuch. The argument that does not discern between the issues of time and authorship can be criticized as it can not be any proof that these are the words Moses wrote. It is therefore just as impossible to prove that these are the words of Moses himself as it is to theorize that these words are the outcome of a tradition in which the words were changed or added to.

It can be guessed that Moses wrote Exodus “during the times period between the Israelites’ departure from Sinai and his death and exactly how many days or weeks he spent doing do is impossible to reconstruct” (Stuart 2006:28). “Exodus would have been produced in writing sometime near the end of the forty-year period after the Israelite left Egypt and before they enter Canaan, that is, when Moses himself was nearing the end of his life.” (Stuart 2006:28) “One reason for the description of Moses as still possessing all his faculties up to the time of his death (Dt 34:7). May have been the assurance it would give to readers of the Pentateuch that he was fully capable of sophisticated, accurate authorship and reliable remembrance of the events that constitute the subjects matter of the five books to which Deuteronomy provides the conclusion” (Stuart 2006:28). “Exodus describes events that took place mainly over a period of about eighty-one years (i.e., starting with the time of Moses’ birth as described in Exodus 2:1ff. to the time of the completion of the tabernacle as described in [Exodus] 40:1-35. When Moses was about eighty-one years old). It gives the background of the Israelite’s sojourn in Egypt... and provides as well a small bit of “foreground” in [Exodus] 40:36-38, describing how the glory cloud of God moved spatially relative to the tabernacle to lead the Israelites through the wilderness, something that could have taken only a few weeks or months to establish as a pattern but a phenomenon that was in fact experienced by the people all during the wilderness wanderings of that roughly forty-year period” (Stuart 2006:28-29). “Nothing in [Exodus 40:36-38] requires that conclusion that Moses penned the book toward the end of his life, i.e., toward the end of the forty years in the wilderness since the wording “during all their travels” (Ex 40:38) could effectively means “all their travels to this point,” meaning the point at which Moses wrote the book.” (Stuart 2006:29). “On the other hand nothing prohibits the possibility that he wrote some of Exodus, or at least the last few verses of it, while in Moab during the time he was

Some scholars, on the one hand, assume the priority of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5 to the Decalogue in Exodus 20 and regard the latter as the result of the redactional hand(s) as based on the former. Scholars who argue that the Decalogue in Exodus 20 depends on the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5 say that “[t]he formulation in the Book of Exodus is dependent on its counterpart in Deuteronomy...The form in Deuteronomy is *lectio difficilior* and claims priority...The version in Deuteronomy is the older than of the two” (Mettinger 19997:175).

Some scholars, on the other hand, assume that the formulation found in Deuteronomy is dependent on its counterpart in the Book of Exodus. Kratz (1994:205-238; cf. Levin 1985:165) also concludes that in the relation between the Decalogue of Exodus (Ex 20:1-17) and the Decalogue of Deuteronomy (Dt 5:6-21), the former is original and latter follows the former.

To speak of the relation between two Decalogue in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 in the related with the relation between the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11) and the Moab

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preparing to preach Deuteronomy to the people in anticipation of their entering the promised land” (Stuart 2006:29). Most of all, “Moses described himself as the author of what he had written ”(Cf. Stuart 2006:32-33). That Moses was described in the third person in the Pentateuch and didn’t make any statement of his authorship within his works can be understood against background of the ancient Near Eastern convention (Cf. Stuart 2006:32-33). Although we can not prove that what he had written can be identified with the Pentateuch as it stands on the present text, it increases the probability of the authorship of Moses of the Pentateuch.

Secondly, our oldest manuscripts come from the 4/3rd century BCE and only contains the words in the form of the Masoretic Text. However, we can say the text of the book of Exodus is on the whole rather well preserved in the Masoretic tradition (Stuart 2006:26). The reason for this good states of preservation textually is that many generations of Israelites revered the books including Exodus as holy Scripture. The care with which they were preserved stems from this reverence (Cf. Nehemiah 8) (Cf. Stuart 2006:26). Although “the text of Pentateuch was copied many dozens of times thereafter before it became into the form now known as the Masoretic Text and exelified by the most commonly used manuscript from that tradition the Lenningrade Codex of AD 1008” (Stuart 2006:26).

covenant (Dt 4:45-28:69), this study takes the position believing that the form in which we have received the Ten Commandments comes directly from the hand of Moses.

Cassuto (1967:236; cf. Patrick 1985:39-40) also declares that

There is nothing in the essential content of the Decalogue that could not have been expressed in the generation of Moses, and therefore it should be attributed to Moses in its original form, which contained only short, lapidary sentences like: I am the Lord your God – You shall have no other gods... and so on and so forth; whilst all the rest, according to this view, is to be considered merely as accreditations that accumulated in the course of time, particularly under the inspiration of the Book of Deuteronomy.

The aim of the study is to trace the provenance of the prohibition of making images of God in the Old Testament and evince that it stems from the second commandment of the Decalogue in the earlier period of Israelite history or religion- whether it is the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 or in Deuteronomy 5:6-28, in contrast to the later period of Israelite history, that is, in late exilic or in early post-exilic period, it does make a difference. Thus, it is not necessary to deal with the second commandment of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy as far as the Decalogue in Exodus is earlier than the Decalogue in Deuteronomy.

### 2.3.2 The arrangement of the Decalogue in the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11)

That the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 was placed in the present text by an original author in early period of Israel religion or redactor(s) in later period is argued. Some

exegetes deal with the Decalogue as an isolated document, i.e. an independent unit. Some literary critics have even suggested the relocation of the Decalogue, supposing that it was an unlucky insertion because it destructs the narrative sequence of the narrative of which it now forms part (Nicholson 1982:74-86). There are many interpretations trying to rearrange the present arrangement of the Sinai narrative (Ex 19:1-24:11), because the Decalogue was regarded as an insertion by redactor(s) for the purpose of theological work. According to Song (1992:99), one theory is that “the original order was (1) Exodus 19:1-25→(2) Exodus 20:18-21→(3) Exodus 20:22ff.” The theory explains that “the Decalogue (Ex 20:1-17) was inserted at a later stage into the present position, between Exodus 19:1-25 and Exodus 20:18-20 (Noth 1959:124f, 139; 1962:155f, 168).” Reichert (1972:150ff.) even says that “Exodus 20:18-21 is also an insertion into the present position along with Exodus 24:3-8.” This theory denies being of the direct speech of God itself, although it accepts being of the direct speech of God. Song (1992:99-101) says:

Although this theory has some merit, it does not answer the following question. “If Exodus 20:19 and 22 do express that God was directly speaking to them and if the Decalogue (Exodus 20:1-17) was not originally part of the sequence, what does the direct speech of God refer to them?” The referred direct speech of God (Ex 20:19, 22) is in fact the Decalogue which was originally there even before Exodus 20:19, 22.

Song (1992:101) points out that “another interpretation is that the original order was (1) Exodus 19:1-25→(2) Exodus 20:18-21→(3) Exodus 20:1-17→(4) Exodus 24:1ff. (Kuenen 1881:177, 189ff.; Smend 1963:42f.; Eissfeldt 1966:213).” The second theory represents that “when the Book of the Covenant (Ex 20:21-23:33) was interpolated into

the Sinai pericope before Exodus 24:1ff., the order (2)-(3) was inversed into the present text order of (3) 20:1-17 followed by (2) 20:18-21 to function as an introduction to the Book of the Covenant. Originally 20:1 followed 20:21 and this means that the Decalogue was given indirectly through Moses” (Song 1992:101). As Song (1992:101) points out, “by putting Exodus 20:1-17 after Exodus 20:18-21” the second theory also “has the same difficulty that Exodus 20:19, 22 together with other texts especially in Deuteronomy (e.g. Dt 9:10; 10:4; 19:16) say clearly that God has spoken directly to the people.”

They consider the Decalogue as fitting in harmoniously within the present context, directly connect Exodus 20:1 as the narrative introduction with the previous section (Ex 19:16-25) (Cf. Song 1992:99-101). The Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-21 should include the epilogue of the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:18-21). Although not part of the Decalogue itself, these verses are clearly to be understood as connected with it, because Exodus 20:22 begins with: “Then the Lord said to Moses,” which implies that a new dialogue has begun (Enns 2000:410).<sup>71</sup> The Ten Words (Enns 2000:410)<sup>72</sup> are presented in a given framework, and should be considered within this literary context.

Patrick (1977:145) shows how Exodus 19:3b-8, 20:22-23 and 24:3-8 form parallels in the structure, language and theology, and together form a perfect unity in the Sinai pericope, with the same covenant frame. Song (1992:99) suggests that Exodus 19:1-24:11 is a passage dealing with the making of a covenant between God and Israel.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> See Enns 2000:425ff on the relation between Exodus 20:18-21 and 1-17.

<sup>72</sup> In our day they are referred to as the Decalogue instead of the Ten Commandments (lit., “ten words”, עֲשֵׂרֵת הַדְּבָרִים). The “ten words” is actually a more accurate title, since this phrase appears in Exodus 34: 28; Deuteronomy 4:13; 10:4.

<sup>73</sup> Song (1992:99; cf. Kitchen 2003:242-244) suggests that the theme of the controversial Sinai pericope

Song (1992:185) suggests that there are thematic, literary and theological links between these units. Song's (1992:185; cf. Alexander 1999:3) suggestion is that the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 as God's direct speech is located between the direct meeting of covenant partners and the people's asking Moses to be the mediator of the covenant. Alexander (1993:38) also sees the present Exodus 19:1-24:24 as describing the ratification of a covenant between Yahweh and the Israelites, involving a divine theophany at Mount Sinai. In the literary context of Exodus 19:1-24:24, describing the ratification of a covenant between Yahweh and the Israelites, involving a divine theophany at Mount Sinai, the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-21 is located between Exodus 19:16-25 and Exodus 20:22ff. It is found in the story of the making of the covenant between the Lord and Israel, proposed to Israel, according to Exodus 19:5-6 (Cassuto 1967: 238).<sup>74</sup> The location of the Decalogue between Exodus 19:16-25 and Exodus 20:22ff explicates that this segment was intentionally put here in this position to show what the nature of God is and what type of law are to be obeyed by the people of God. The reason for the location of the Decalogue in Exodus 20 as the stipulation of the covenant can be seen in the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:18) from the relation between the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 and its surrounding unit (Cf. Song 1992:99-101; Patrick 1977:145).<sup>75</sup>

With regard to the thematic, literary and theological links between these verses of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 and the Sinai covenant in Exodus 19:1-24:11, it has to be

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(Ex 19:1-24:11) is the first covenant between YHWH and Israel.

<sup>74</sup> The Ten words are not the substance of the covenant, nor its conditions, but the introduction to each commandment.

<sup>75</sup> While Childs (1974) and Durham (1987) both suppose the hand of a redactor in the present form of the text, dealing with the making of a covenant in Exodus 19:1-24:11, some scholars suggests that the unity of the Sinai narrative is attributed to an author during the early period, i.e. at Moses' times. Patrick (1985:64) says that the divine speeches in this pericope are parallel in style and thought, and can be ascribed to the same author.

read according to the narrator's presentation as God's direct words, spoken in the meeting of his covenant partners when the people asked Moses to be the mediator of the covenant.

### 2.3.3 The formation of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 as the prohibition of making any image of God

Mettinger (1997:175; cf. Zimmerli [1963]1969:236-238; Moran 1967:553; Levin 1985:170; Veijola 1996:258-260) argues that "the prohibition of images in Deuteronomy probably was not found in the Decalogue from the beginning." They commonly share the view that originally the prohibition of image of God in the second commandment was not in the text of Deuteronomy 5:8 and it was inserted in it by someone, for example, the Nomistic redaction, DtrN or Bundestheologische Redaktion, DtrB in the late exilic or the early post-exilic period (Cf. Mettinger 1997:175-176).<sup>76</sup>

Mettinger (1997:176; cf. Houtman 1996:29-37) says that although "the Decalogue commandment presupposes the aniconic nature of the cult of YHWH...the commandment refers to images of other deities, not primarily to images of YHWH."

Mettinger (1997:176-177) regards "the insertion of the prohibition into the first commandment and the close link between the veto on images and the ban on foreign gods in Deuteronomy 4 (vv. 3-4, 19 and esp. 23) indicate that the Decalogue's

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<sup>76</sup> Mettinger (1997:175) depends on the argument of Hossfeld (1982:21-31). Hossfeld (1982:21-31 cited by Mettinger 1997:175) argues that the last two words in the expression *כָּל־תְּמוּנָה פֶּסֶל*, in Deuteronomy 5:8 are in apposition to the first, while Exodus 2:4 has a juxtaposition with *וְ*: reading *כָּל־תְּמוּנָה פֶּסֶל*." As Graupner (1987:311-315) criticizes, Hossfeld's (1982) argument can, however, be rejected. Graupner (1987:314) argues as follows: "Hat das umstrittene *waw* (>>und<<) nicht ehre nur explikativen Sinn (>>und zwar<<)...so daß an diesem Punk gar kein sachlicher Unterschied zwischen beiden Dekalogfassung besteht? Diese Erlärung bietet zwei Vorzüge. Zum einem kommt sie mit dem geringsten Aufwand an Annahmen aus. Zum andern erlaubt sie es, in den Relativsätzen Dtn 5:8 mehr zu sehen also lediglich eine unvollkommene und inhaltlich entbehrliche Anpassung an Ex 20:4."

prohibition of images is primarily directed against other deities. YHWH cannot permit the presence of other deities in his sanctuary (Cf. אֲנִי יְהוָה 'ittî, 'in my presence', Ex 20:23)." Mettinger (1997:177) says, "in Deuteronomy 4 (vv. 12, 15-16) it is clearly an image of YHWH that is forbidden: the veto on images is based upon the fact that the Israelites saw no form when the Lord spoke at Horeb." Mettinger (1997:177) is "inclined to speak of the 'second commandment' as an *implicit* attestation of a programmatic aniconism of Yahwistic faith. The aniconic nature of the cult for YHWH is presupposed, simply assumed." Mettinger (1997:177) suggests that "the commandment prohibiting the contamination of [the] Yahwistic cult with images of other deities [is] thus formulated on the basis of the practice of the aniconic cult for YHWH. The prohibition of images of other gods is *a fortiori* a prohibition on images of YHWH and it has been thus understood in the *Auslegungsgeschichte*."<sup>77</sup>

Mettinger (1997:177), thus, maintains on the date of the prohibition of images: "the prohibition of images is a Deuteronomistic phenomenon from late exilic or early post-exilic times," relating it to the "Deuteronomistic Name theology" that "Yahweh is represented in his sanctuary by his Name, while other deities would have been represented by their images" (Mettinger 1997:177; cf. 41, 54-56, 59-66, 78).<sup>78</sup> Moreover, the prohibition of image of God is just presupposed *implicitly* in

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<sup>77</sup> The fact the second commandment doesn't say explicitly a programmatic aniconism of Yahwistic faith and the other passages, for example, Deuteronomy 4, says it explicitly is not always understood as an insertion of an interpretation in the exilic period or post-exilic period. It is a speculative matter. The passages, for example, Deuteronomy 4 can be written as an interpretation in pre-exilic period, for example, in the context of renewal of the Sinai Covenant.

<sup>78</sup> After doing discussion about the possibility of existence of programmatic aniconism in the pre-exilic period, Mettinger (1997:184) says that "it is difficult to argue that there was a living tradition of programmatic aniconism to the exilic period." However, the passages dealt with in this section are selected by his own subjectivity, dropping many passages witnessing the programmatic aniconism of the pre-exilic period and the judgment on whether they represent the programmatic aniconism in the pre-exilic period or not can be different. For example, Mettinger (1997:178; cf. 1995:138; Dohmen 1995:182-184, 257) says that "Exodus 20:23 and 34:17 can no longer be adduced as evidence for the existence of a

the second commandment of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5 and also in Exodus 20, and then interpreted in Deuteronomy 4 as the prohibition of image of God *explicitly*. The explicit representation of prohibition of the image of God stems from the interpretation of redactor in the late exilic or the early post-exilic period. Mettinger's (1997:178) conclusion is represented:

The prohibition of images is found in a late Dtr layer in Deuteronomy 5 (DtrB), and Exodus 20:4 should be dated even later. In absolute terms this Dtr strand should probably be dated to the second half of the 6th century BCE. In Deuteronomy 5 the prohibition of images forms an insertion into a first commandment. In Deuteronomy 4 the prohibition is a prohibition of images of YHWH. This layer of Deuteronomy presents programmatic aniconism.

They analyze the mixture of the two layers of redaction in Deuteronomy 4: while in Deuteronomy 4:3-4, 19 and 23 “the veto on image is closely linked up with the ban on foreign gods” (Mettinger 1997:176), in Deuteronomy 4:12 and 15-16 “it is closely an image of YHWH that is forbidden, that is, the veto on image is based upon the fact that the Israel saw no form when the Lord spoke at Horeb” (Mettinger 1997:177). Mettinger (1997:177) explains the cause that the layer of Deuteronomy 4:12 and 15-16 “derives

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prohibition of images [of God] prior to the Decalogue formulation.” Mettinger (1997:178) says that not only the prohibition of image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4 but also the prohibition of image of God in Exodus 20:23 and 34:17 can no longer be regarded as evidence for the existence of a prohibition of image of God in the pre-exilic period. These passages, however, can be regarded as the interpretation of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4. Exodus 20:23 as part of the Book of Covenant that was given as the law of covenant of the Sinai Covenant with the Decalogue (Ex 20:1-17), reflects the prohibition of making any image of God (Song 1992:98-99). Exodus 34:17 also reflects the prohibition of making any image of God in the early period, because it deals with covenant recovering, that is, the restoration of the Sinai Covenant after the golden calf episode (Ex 32:1-6) (Baltzer 1960:48-51). See 3.3.3 The relation between Exodus 32:1-6 and the Sinai pericope in Exodus 19:1-24:11 for detail.

from the redactor who inserted the prohibition of images into its present place.” Mettinger (1997:177) suggests that whereas the former represents the prohibition of image of God *explicitly*, the latter *implicitly*. However, his division between the two layers in Deuteronomy 4 is arbitrary. Moreover, his argument is following Veijola’s (1996:258-260) that “the redactor responsible for this insertion [of Deuteronomy 4:12b, 15, 16a] was the very redactor who also reworked a basic layer in Deuteronomy 4 rendering it [Deuteronomy 4:12b, 15, 16a] into a rationale for the prohibition on images [of Yahweh].”

Dick (1999:7) also reconstructs the process of the evolution, following the dichotomy suggested by Dohmen (1985) as follows:

Perhaps an original ‘you shall not make for yourself an idol’ has undergone a later broadening by the addition of an ‘any form’, perhaps derived from the Deuteronomistic paraenesis in Deuteronomy 4. In any case, the *Bilderverbot* as recorded in Exodus and Deuteronomy seems to be the end of a long development and not its beginning.<sup>79</sup>

Holter (2003:4), however, points out that “the terminological and structural organization of these examples of allusions successively follows the order of the second commandment itself.” Holter (2003:6) argues that Deuteronomy 4 is arranged by following the second commandment in Deuteronomy 5, demonstrating that Deuteronomy 4 is arranged by following the second commandment in Deuteronomy 5 as follows: “(i) that Deut 4 contains a number of allusions to the Second commandment,

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<sup>79</sup> See Dick 1999:7-9 on Dohmen’s reconstruction on the evolution of the *Bilderverbot* in the Old Testament and 14-16 on Dick’s view on the evolution of the second commandment of the Decalogue. (Cf. Phillips 1984:39-52, 282-294 on the two Decalogues in Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5: 6-21)

and (ii) that the terminological and structural organizing of these allusions successively follows the order of the [second] commandment [in Deuteronomy 5] itself,” and that “central part of Deut 4 is made up of some sort of a word-by-word or phrase-by-phrase successive interpretation of the [second] commandment [in Deuteronomy 5]”. “From a chronological perspective, Deut 4 traditionally been understood as younger than [in] the Deut 5 Decalogue version of the second commandment.” The view that “some of the authors responsible for Duet 4 have also touched the final version of the second commandment [of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy]” is rejected by Holter (2003:15). Considering the chronological relationship between the two texts, Holter (2003:15) says that “the [second] commandment [of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5 is]...the source text and Duet 4 a text alluding to this source text.” Moreover, arguing that the prohibition of making any image of God of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5 was not from the beginning, scholars also regard Deuteronomy 4 as reworked by the redactor rendering it into a rationale for the prohibition on images (Dt 4:12, 15, 16a). Holter (2003:2-3), however, points out that the exegetical approach that “emphasizes literary critical questions related to generic models for a supposedly textual growth of Deut 4, often with a quite atomizing result” (Cf. Dohmen 1987:200-210; Knapp 1987; Schmidt 1995:75-105; Mettinger 1997:173-204) and religio-historical approach that “paraphrase text, or, at best, echo the generic models of the exegetes and then build them into broader models for understanding the development of the religion of ancient Israel ” (Cf. Schroer 1987:161-163; Keel and Uehlinger 1992:344, 363, 396; Mettinger 1995:15,25; Berejung 1998:38) are all “a lack of sensitivity for the overall structure.” Holter (2003:7-8) shows that “the various sets of criteriology in the hands of some interpreters...have been tools serving to advocate a many-layered interpretation of Deut

4...whereas they in the hands of others...have been tools serving to advocate a literary unity of the chapter.”

Nevertheless, this study doesn't totally agree with Holter's (2003:6-19) argument on that “how does Deut 4's interpretation of the commandment relate more generally to the questions of the textual genesis and literary organizing of the chapter [Deuteronomy 4:1-40],” because Holter (2003:6-13) regards the context of Deuteronomy 4 as the interpretation of the second commandment by a redactor in the exilic period and that “a methodology for approaching this successive interpretation of the [s]econd commandment, not because a diachronic approach *itself* of alluding text's re-use of the source text, but because his presupposition on the relation between two texts, that is, Deuteronomy 4's re-use of the second commandment (Cf. Holter 2003:14-19). This study regards the Deuteronomy 4 as part of the prologue of the Moab Covenant (Dt 4:44-29:1). Thus, the prohibition of image of God in Deuteronomy 4:9-31 is an interpretation of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 and is correspond the second commandment of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5:8-10 because Deuteronomy 5:8-10 as well as the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5:6-21 are following the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 as well as the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 (Cf. Song 1992:197-198; Stuart 2006:439-440).

This study argues against scholars' hypothesis that the prohibition of image of Yahweh in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 is inserted into it in the late exilic or the early post-exilic period. This study argues against two statements in their hypothesis.

Firstly the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 on the prohibition of making images of God is not seen as the product of the Exilic period of the 6<sup>th</sup>-century B.C.E., or the early post-exilic period, but as the product of the early Sinai covenant tradition, later handed over to the Prophets.

Secondly the second commandment was not formulated after the time of the writing prophets. It already existed and was handed over the Prophets. The parodies of the prophets on idols or idol-fabrication comes from an existing second commandment in the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6. My presupposition is that the prophetic texts are dependant upon the Decalogue text.<sup>80</sup>

My motivation is as follows:

As Kitchen (2003:243-244, 284) points out, the Sinai Covenant has its extension or its many renewal in the Pentateuch: in Leviticus, the direct continuation of the content of Exodus; in Deuteronomy, a record of the covenant as renewed; In Joshua 8:30-35 and 24, an event and its detail of the content of the renewed covenant. Most of them contain prohibiting of making any image of God in it (Cf. Ex 20:4; 20:23; 34:17; Lv 19:4; 26:1; Dt 5:8; 27:15). The connection between the incomparability of God and prohibition of making any image of God is also seen in both the Decalogue of Deuteronomy 5:7-10 and the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2-6. According to my point of view, the Bible's narrative is a factual report of the sequence of history. The Decalogue in Exodus presents the older form of the commandment. This point of view stands in direct

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<sup>80</sup> The question can still be raised: was the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 handed over in the form of an oral/literary tradition of aniconism, or word by word in the present form of the text as we know it today, whether in redacted form or the form written by a single author?

contrast to other scholars' view thinking that Deuteronomy's Decalogue is the older one and the representation in Exodus comes from a later time.

The details on the shared elements between two covenants can be seen in Song's (1992:99) comparison between the Sinai covenant and the Moab covenant where a renewal of the Sinai covenant took place:

	Sinai Covenant	Moab Covenant
definition of the partners	Ex 19:5-6	Dt 26:18-19
meeting of the partners	Ex 19:9-25	Dt 5:2-3
covenant-law giving and [its] accepting	the Decalogue / Ex 20:1-17	the Decalogue / Dt 5:6-21
direct covenant-law		
indirect covenant-law	the Book of Covenant / Ex 20:22-23:33	the Book of Covenant / Dt 6-11/12-26
ratification ceremony	Ex 24:3-8	Dt 27
celebration of the ratified covenant	Ex 24:9-11	Dt 27:7

There are some differences between the two covenants. For example, only the Moab covenant has stipulations on the blessing and curses (Deuteronomy 28), while the Sinai covenant hasn't got any, although the episode of the golden calf in Exodus 32 is followed by God's judgment and God gives stipulations of blessing and curses in Leviticus 26 in the same way as in the Moab covenant. The Moab covenant also has some elements, which are not found in any other ancient Near Eastern covenant, like

God's special forgiveness for Israel, who destroys the relation of the covenant. It founded the institution of sacrifices through which Israel obtains peace with God. The sacrifice is prepared for the renewal of the Sinai covenant. There has been some discussion on whether Deuteronomy 5:2-3 is the representation or the actualization of the covenant renewal. Song (1992:193; cf. Zimmerli 1972:45; Noth 1960:76-88) points out: "It is not just for the 'Vergegenwärtigung' or the 'actualization' of the past event, the first covenant, but it is another covenant which is the same as and at the same different from the first covenant. In this sense we fully agree with the understanding of the Moab covenant as covenant renewal." It is said that the past event of Horeb becomes the present event in Moab, the real sense is not simply that the past event is actualized (or revitalized or rehabilitated) by preaching. Although the admonitional or preaching style is important in Deuteronomy, this derives from the more fundamental fact that Deuteronomy describes a concrete cultic activity-the covenant renewal, but not from the (Levitical) preaching as such. Otherwise, the real function of the regulations for the future rituals within Deuteronomy cannot be explained appropriately (e.g. Dt 11:26-32, 26:16-19, 37:1-26; 29:1-69) (Song 1992:210. Cf. Perlitt 1981:408-13; Levin 1985:165).

Song (1992:344) suggests the following historical relationship between the two covenants: the Sinai covenant (Ex 19:1-24:11) first and the Moab covenant (Dt 4:45-28:69) next. Song (1992:344-345) maintains that some facts suggests that "the account of the Sinai covenant (Ex 19:1-24:11) is older than of the Moab covenant (Dt 4:45-28:69): "Firstly the witness is not mentioned in the Moab pericope... Secondly the order of building activities in the Moab covenant (the stones and the altar) is different from that in the Sinai covenant (the altar and מַצֵּבָה[pillar])... Thirdly in the Sinai covenant

there is no mention of curse, while in the Moab covenant blessing and curse coexist... Fourthly in the Moab covenant there is no oath of the superior, YHWH, compared with Sinai covenant where we find the oaths of both parties.” The latter is conscious of the former and transforms it according to its own theological concerns.

Although that the Decalogue as a covenant document of the two covenants is inserted later can be suggested, it will be more reasonable that the Decalogue is located in the arrangement of the present text originally by a creative author.

Therefore, if the Decalogue is considered as a covenant document and dealt with according to the arrangement of the present text, then the conclusion that the Decalogue of Exodus is older than the Decalogue of Deuteronomy may be drawn.<sup>81</sup>

It appears that Israel’s historiographers were fully aware of the fact that the contrast between the true God and the other gods became apparent only during the time of the exodus and not before it, and that the idea of Yahweh’s incomparability only emerged through the event of the exodus. In this regards Patrick (1995:108) says that the first commandment [and second commandment] was promulgated for the first time at Mt Sinai/Horeb; before the event, it was not in force. The Genesis narrative presents a different picture from that of the Mosaic period.<sup>82</sup> In this regard, Labuschagne (1966:

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<sup>81</sup> The Decalogue of Deuteronomy, which is similar with the Decalogue of Exodus, at least as far as the first two commandments are concerned, belongs in this historical line. What if someone, thus, raises the point that the Deuteronomic presentation of the Decalogue was rather the material used by Isaiah, it doesn’t matter for this study because this study views the Decalogue of Deuteronomy as corresponding to the Decalogue of Exodus in contents.

<sup>82</sup> In Genesis 31:19, 34-5, as Patrick (1995:108) puts it, “the story of Rachel’s theft of her father’s household gods has to do with objects which violate the second commandment, and probably the first.” Nevertheless, in this narrative, we cannot found any God’s judgment on the transgression. We can say God didn’t judge it, because Israel doesn’t still make a covenant with God and was not judged by the covenantal law.

148-149) says that “this different view and... description of the relation between Yahweh and the other gods presented by the Exodus tradition” is in contrast to prior attitude on them.

Although “one of the major themes of biblical literature is the struggle against paganism,” as Sarna (1986:144) points out,

The patriarchal narratives give no inkling of this phenomenon. They do not feature any tension between the Patriarch[s] and their surroundings as far as religion is concerned. The matter is simply not an issue for them. It is the arrival of Moses on the scene of history that heralds the first appearance of a notion of war on polytheism, expressed by the statement in Exodus 12:12.<sup>83</sup>

Since Sinai, idolatry became unacceptable, condemned, and judged by God. For that reason Patrick (1995: 116-117) says as follows:

Before the promulgation of these two commandments, there was no accountability. But once the two commandments were introduced as law, there was a transgression and accountability. Once Israel had entered into the covenant with YHWH at Mt. Sinai, they had entered the era of responsibility.

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<sup>83</sup> Patrick (1995:113) points out that “there are a couple of incidents that allude to the first and second commandments... here[Gn 31:32-34] alone in the entire patriarchal narrative do we find actions that assume the first (and second) commandments.” Patrick (1995:46; 1985:117) also indicates that this is the only violation of the first and second commandments before the golden calf episode (Ex 32: 1-6). He points to “the former in relation with the story of Rachel’s theft of her father’s household gods (Gn 31:19, 34-35) as an example of the violation of the first and second commandments before the promulgation of the Decalogue at Mt. Sinai and the latter, as a violation after the promulgation.”

Barcellos (2001:81; cf. Kaiser 1991:81-22; Reisinger 1997:18-22), however, argues that “although not necessarily in the identical *form* as they appear in the Decalogue”, all ten commandments can be found scattered throughout the book of Genesis, that is, before it was promulgated by Moses in the form seen in Exodus.<sup>84</sup> But these different forms can be seen as conventional laws before its legislation as a written code. At least the explicit provenance of the prohibition of making any image of God can be traced to the promulgation of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6, although evidences of the prohibition of making any image of God before the promulgation of the Decalogue at Sinai can be argued.

Many Israelites still made an image of God, as well as other god’s, after promulgation of the Decalogue. It shows that although the Ten Commandments clearly and unambiguously mandate the absolute prohibition of polytheism and idolatry for the people of Israel (Sarna 1986:144; Enns 2000:415), many Israelites fell prey to idolatry (Oswalt 1998:63).

## 2.4 Summary

In this chapter, this study substantiated the thesis that the prohibition of images in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 is the prohibition of making any image of God. The prohibition of making any image of God is originally expressed in the second commandment when the Decalogue as covenantal law in the Sinai

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<sup>84</sup> According to Kaiser (1991:81), “in spite of its marvelous succinctness, economy of the words, and comprehensive vision, it must not be thought that the Decalogue was inaugurated and promulgated at Sinai for the first time. All Ten Commandments had been part of the law of God previously written on hearts instead of stone, for all ten appear, in one way or another, in Genesis.”

Covenant (Ex 19:1-24:18) was given to Israel, not incorporated into it in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, or the late exilic or the early post-exilic period by redactor(s). This study supposes that the dating of the prohibition of making any image of God in the Decalogue should be attributed to Moses' times as stated in the text. Israel's historiographers were fully aware of the fact that it was only during the time of the exodus and not before it that the idea of Yahweh's incomparability emerged. Since Sinai, idolatry became unacceptable, condemned, and judged by God. This study concluded that at least the explicit provenance of the prohibition of an image of God can be traced to the promulgation of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6.

In the literary context of Exodus 19:1-24:11 that describes the ratification of the covenant between Yahweh and the Israelites, involving the divine theophany at Mount Sinai, the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 is located between Exodus 19:16-25 and Exodus 20:22ff. Thematic, literary and theological links between the units of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 indicate the Ten Commandments as God's direct speech in a meeting of the covenant partners and the people's request to Moses to be the mediator of the covenant. The location of the Decalogue explicates that this segment is intentionally put here in the present context to show the nature of God and his law for his people to be obeyed as their response to Yahweh who demonstrated his nature, his comparable might and love, and his redemptive grace.

The prohibition of making an **פֶּסֶל**, "idol" in verse 4 was rather narrow in scope excluding iconographic representation of Yahweh. For images of other deities would be excluded by the first commandment in verse 3, but a separate prohibition was required

to ban images of Yahweh. The result of the comparison of God with other gods in the Old Testament was at all times that there is no god like Yahweh, that none can be compared to him, that no one and nothing can be placed on the same level as Him.

The second commandment has to be read against the background of the idea of God's incomparability in Exodus 20:2 and the exclusion of the images of other gods in the first commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:3. It must be seen in the light of Israel's experience in history that Yahweh is incomparable in the introduction of the Decalogue and the image of other gods is prohibited when the worship of other gods was prohibited to Israel in the first commandment of the Decalogue.

As a result of the in-textuality of Exodus 20:2-6, we can confirm that, firstly, the formula "I am Yahweh your God, **יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ** **אֲנִי** is used to express the incomparability of God in Exodus 20:2. Secondly, **לֹא יִהְיֶה-לְךָ** makes clear and emphasizes that God is the one who brought Israel from the bondage of Egypt (v. 2b) and became her king (v. 2b). **אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל-פְּנֵי** can mean that another gods is the one who didn't brought Israel from the land of Egypt (v. 3), while God is the one who brought them from the bondage of Egypt (v. 2). The conclusion can be drawn that Exodus 20:2-3 clearly shows the incomparability of God. Secondly, the ground for the prohibition of image, **לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה-לְךָ פֶסֶל** is the "I am Yahweh your God, **יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ** **אֲנִי**. It functions as a motive for the prohibition of God's image in verse 4 by using the phrase in verse 2, which is repeated in verse 5a. Thus, the prohibition of God's image have to be understood in the context of the incomparability of God. **אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קַיָּא** **אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קַיָּא** in verse 5 shows us that making an image of God are contrasted with the

incomparability of God. Thus, making an image of God is prohibited to his covenant people.

If so, does this unit form the provenance or reason for the aniconic tradition found in the rest of the Old Testament? Exodus 19-24 contains an account of the covenant God made with Israel at Mount Sinai. The covenant was conditioned by Israel's obedience to the laws that were given to the people at Sinai. The rest of the Old Testament contains the story of how Israel responded to the demands of this covenantal relationship. The idea of God's incomparability in Exodus 20:2 and the exclusion of the images of other gods in the first commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:3 provides a framework within which the meaning of the prohibition of making an image of God not only in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus, but also in the rest of the Old Testament can be understood.