

CHAPTER III. THE PROHIBITION OF MAKING ANY IMAGE OF GOD IN EXODUS 32:1-6

3.0 Introduction

In previous chapter, this study dealt with the prohibition on making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6. It was indicated as the provenance of the prohibition of making any image of God found elsewhere in the Old Testament. The golden calf episode reported in Exodus 32:1-6 is the first instance of idolatry by the Israelites narrated in the Bible in sequence to the promulgation of the Decalogue at Mount Sinai.⁸⁵ This passage can be used to explicate and confirm the

⁸⁵ Scholars have different view with traditional one on the chronology between the golden calf episode and the promulgation of the Decalogue at Mt. Sinai and between the golden calf episode and the apostasy that established the golden calves in the religious shrines of Bethel and Dan in Jeroboam's times (1 Ki 12:25-33). On the chronology between the golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1-6 and other events many scholars argues as follows:

Davenport (1983:5-6) shows that the nature of the golden calf account provides some degree of explanation, because of the contrasting conclusions represented by some scholars. The contrasting conclusions come from different presuppositions and the differing exegetical results regarding the question of the relationship between the text and history. Albright (cited by Davenport 1983:5-6) suggests that "the Pentateuchal historical texts with the assumption that basically the texts report an actual historical memory which can be corroborated by external evidence. Consequently, on the basis of fundamental presupposition, Albright is especially open to any ANE material which can be seen as supportive of this particular understanding of the relationship between the text and history." This study regards the Albright's view as more fit to the witness of the Bible and follows it below.

According to Davenport (1983:6), Pedersen (1940:728ff.) works with the supposition that texts like Exodus 1-15 and 32 did not intend to give a "correct exposition of ordinary events" but instead were cultic legends shaped in the cult and served different objectives in different historical periods. Thus, similar to Exodus 32 which originally serves to combat Yahweh-Baal syncretism, the "Paschal Legend" (Ex 1-15), whose origins point to the nomadic period, received its present shape during the period of the royal temple in Zion, since the "spirit" of the legend corresponds to that era, and since the participants (Moses, Aaron) typify the office of king and High Priest (Pedersen 1940:736ff.) According to Davenport (1983:6-7; cf. Noth 1972:142f.), "Noth bases his work on the belief that the Pentateuchal Narrative basically constitutes a pre-literary compilation of five originally independent themes which were arranged in their present historical sequence in an interpretative manner during the creative oral period before Israel became a state. Each of these themes, however, is thought to preserve the actual historical experience or knowledge of some proto-Israelite group or tribe and so conceivably the golden calf tradition could have had a historical origin and is not merely of purely literary elaboration." For the order of the biblical text, the episode of golden calf in Ex 32 is an ideal reconstruction of a period later than which the historical events occurred. Clements (1972:204-206) suggests that Exodus 32, as well as Exodus 26-31, are composed late in Israel's history, and was initially introduced here by the post-exilic P author. Thus, although they are considered as being based on recollections of actual institutions of

meaning of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 being the prohibition of making any image of God. This chapter deals with Exodus 32:1-6 as an example that interprets the second commandment as the prohibition on making any image of God as interwoven with the idea of God's incomparability.⁸⁶

We will first analyze Exodus 32:1-6 within the context of its macro-unit. Any consideration of the literary form of this unit narrating the making of the golden calf in Exodus 32:1-6, must take into consideration the relation of this brief but crucial

worship which existed in Israel, especially in the time of the first temple, much that is contained in them is therefore late, and is in part an ideal reconstruction of what Israel's worship should have been, in the opinion of the author. He insists that the reinterpretation of earlier ritual became necessary when situations changed and ideas developed. He suggests it is recognized that much that had passed for worship in Israel's history had not been in accord with the instructions given at Sinai by Israel. According to Hyatt (1971:301-304), what we have in Exodus 32 is a reflection of a pagan element in Israel's worship, which is alien to Israel. The incident of the golden calf provides an example and a warning lesson against a type of worship, which was to recur in Israel not once, but many times, and to become a major reason for believing that the Sinai covenant had been broken by Israel. Thus although we are presented here with a narrative sequel to the law-giving on Sinai, its intention is to show the spiritual sequel of Israel's disloyal attitude to God, its distrust of Moses, and its readiness to resort back to a type of religion which we know to have been prevalent among the Canaanites. Hyatt (Cf. 1971:301-304) suggests that we may briefly raise the question: "does the present chapter have any historical value as the record of something, which actually occurred in the desert period at the foot of Mount Sinai?" According to Hyatt (1971:301-304), our tracing of history of tradition in the chapter shows that it represents developments that took place over several centuries. Aaron is so shadowy a figure in the early history of Israel that it is precarious to make any historical statements about him. Some scholars insist that the episode of the golden calf was written to warn against the idolatry later on in Israel's history, like the apostasy in Jeroboam's times (Cf. Clements 1972:204-206; Davenport 1983:5-6). Carmichael (1992:27) argues that the narrator of the golden calf episode in Exodus 32 is manifestly writing from a stance after long the exodus from Egypt and the conquest of the land, condemning "the installation of the bull calves at Bethel and Dan in reign of Jeroboam" (Carmichael 1992:28). The golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1-6 is anticipated by narrator, that is, written by the author or compiler later to represent "his own religious, ideological and political perspective" (Carmichael 1992:29). Moreover, Carmichael (1992:29) explains "the first part...of the [D]ecalogue [that is, the first two commandments of the Decalogue]" as "a response to the incident of the golden calf [episode]." Thus, Carmichael (1992:28) regards the statement in Exodus 20:2 as a counterresponse to the people's false claim after the creation of the golden calf. Contrary to these views that regard the episode of the golden calf as a theological reflection of the situation in later history, e.g. the golden calves of Jeroboam (1 Ki 12), Cassuto (1967:407-410) insists that "an ancient story of idolatry in the wilderness in Moses' time [is] recalled and used to condemn Jeroboam. As Stuart (2006:665) says, "[i]n all likelihood" Jeroboam knew of or was informed of the tradition stemming from the passage in Exodus 32:1-6 and "capitalized on its continuing popularity in his own day." Thus, Carmichael's (1992:28) argument that regards the statement in Exodus 20:2 as a counterresponse to the people's false claim after the creation of the golden calf can be explained vice versa. The relation between the first two commandments of the Decalogue in Exodus 20 and the golden calf episode Exodus 32:1-6 is that Exodus 32:1 is alluding to Exodus 20:2. Israel violated the law that Yahweh proclaimed and gave Israel at Mt. Sinia and was judged by the law given already.

⁸⁶ This chapter shows that corresponding to the principle that Scripture interprets Scripture, which the Fathers and the Reformers maintain, how modern exegetical work can activate it.

narrative to the larger literary complex. Exodus 32 forms an integral part of the larger literary complex comprising of chapters 33 and 34. We have to see the chapters of Exodus 32-34 as a whole and make an analysis of them as a unit, indicating the separate scenes and then discuss their relationship. As this larger literary complex is framed by the units of 25-31 and 35-40, the still larger context has to be kept in mind as well. In turn this construction is also linked to the Sinai pericope in Exodus 19-24 and that should also form part of our analysis. This leads eventually to a review of the entire Exodus composition and its various component parts for the analysis of Exodus 32:1-6. The construction of the wilderness sanctuary is reported in Exodus 25-31 and 35-40. The first section in Exodus 25-31 features the account of God's careful, theological instructions to Moses to build the tabernacle; the second section in Exodus 35-40 reports the actual realization of those plans. The episode of the golden calf and its aftermath (Ex 32) stand in the center of these two sections. It will be necessary to examine several details of the narrative of Exodus 32-34, as well as the larger context of 25-31 and 35-40 in which the golden calf episode is found.

3.1 The exegetical consideration of the golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1-6

This study demarcates Exodus 32:1-6, so-called the golden calf episode as a unit of analysis, not all of the chapter (vv. 1-35) because it is enough in showing what is the characteristic of the rebellion as part of covenant breaking in Exodus 32-34 dealing the theme of covenant breaking and covenant renewal.

We can represent the issue raised in this phrase as follows: "Did it represent "other gods" that Israel was now seeking to follow, or was it rather an attempt to make an

image of the one true God, Yahweh, that is, did the golden calf represent polytheism or idolatry?” (Sailhamer 1992:310). According to Sailhamer (1992:310), it is grammatically “possible to translate the passage to reflect either polytheism (worship of many gods) or idolatry (physical representation of God) because the Hebrew text of the narrative is somewhat ambiguous about the intention of the golden calf.” Thus, we must look at the text in context for a solution.

3.1.1 Exodus 32:1

An indication of what the golden calf represents, can be found in Exodus 32:1. As Bloom (1987:116) depicts, this evinces that “the people seem to cry out for a visible manifestation of God rather than for a different god.” The people assembles themselves, approaches Aaron, and commands him, with terse imperative, to make a god, so that it can lead them, taking the place of Moses, who is given credit for leading them up from Egypt. Moses’ protracted absence is stated as justification for their demand (Durham 1991:419). Coats (1968:188-189) points out that in Moses’ absence and the result of making the golden calf, plotting treason against God, “Israel’s problem is not with Moses’ leadership, but with Moses’ absence.” As Stuart (2006:663) says, “a matter of the absence of Moses...was so closely associated with Yahweh’s presence.” Durham (1991:419) touches the core of the subject as follows: “The people may well be asking for “gods”... because their one God seemed to be gone with the absence of Moses.” Moses, the only mediator they know besides the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud, is now also absent. His absence stirs up the rebellion in the golden calf episode. When Moses took a long time to return from his meeting with God, Israel had lost her mediator (Fretheim 1991:280-283). Some scholars consider the golden calf as the

substitute of a mediator, of Moses, not of Yahweh (Fretheim 1991:208-283). “In light of this”, as Enns (2000:569; cf. Durham 1987:419; Sarna 1991:215) puts it, “it is possible to read the golden calf story not only as an act of godless rebellion, but also as an act of panic on the part of a people who fear they have lost their contact with God.”⁸⁷ However, Israel did not transfer their loyalty from YHWH to another deity. Although Moses brought Israel up from Egypt, it is Yahweh who brought Israel up from Egypt. Therefore, making the golden calf and saying, “these are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from Egypt, אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם” is evidently indicating the change of loyalty from Yahweh to others. Cassuto (1967:413) argues that it is evident for the phrase to be borrowed from the expression, “the God who brought you up from Egypt, אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאָתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם.” It illustrates the parallel with the only God who rules the history, as Yahweh, “I am Yahweh, your God” (Ex 20:2). As Carmichael (1992:30) says, the Israelite identified the calf as Yawheh, substituting it for the unseen and unseeable. They regard the calf as an emblem of the Lord, and they considered this emblem itself worthy of divine honour, thus making the calf a partner, as it were, of the Lord. Hence the plural (Cassuto 1967:413). Other “gods” are not named, and Israel attributed the golden calf with a Yahwistic pronominal clause, “the God who brought up Israel from Egypt (Ex 20:2). In this regard, Patrick (1995:117) suggests that their “new religion” is virtually “a parody on Yahwism.” Moberly (1983:47) states “the calf does not represent any new god, but is identical with one, that is Yahweh, who has brought the people to Sinai and entered into a relationship with them on the basis of which he will continue to go with them in

⁸⁷ It is commonly accepted by Old Testament scholars today that ancients did not *equate* an idol with god, but it was some sort of earthly *representation* of that god (Enns 2000:569). Enns points out that “when Aaron asks for gold and the people respond willingly, an act that parallels nicely the freewill offering the people will make for the tabernacle. It is becoming more clear that the calf represents an alternate point of contact between God and his people.”

future.” Reference that mentions the bringing up out of the land of Egypt is seen here.⁸⁸

It is Moses that is mentioned as the subject, who brought about the deliverance from the land of Egypt.

According to Morberly (1983:46), a similar implication can be seen in the parallelism of verse 1b β with verse 4b:⁸⁹

(v. 1) ... כִּי־זָה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם ...

“Because this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt ...”

(v. 4) ... אֵלֶּה אֱלֹהֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם ...

“Here is your, אֱלֹהִים, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.”

According to Morberly (1983:46), that “the אֱלֹהִים is a substitute for Moses, need not imply that Moses himself has been to the people as an אֱלֹהִים.” In verse 4ff. the acclamation of the calf as the divine agent of the exodus may seem slightly discordant with the concern for having an אֱלֹהִים to go before the people (Morberly 1983:46). Morberly (1983:46-47) contends that “the first is that Moses is the one who uniquely mediates Yahweh’s guidance and leadership to the people. It is in and through Moses that Yahweh is known and his saving deeds experienced. The second is that the calf is a challenge to Moses’ leadership. It is a rival means of mediating Yahweh’s presence to the people.”

⁸⁸ According to Cassuto (1967:411), this is one of the “seven references to bringing up out of the land of Egypt in verse 1 (Cf. Ex 32:1, 4, 7, 8, 11, 23, 33:1)”.

⁸⁹ A similar antithesis in verses 7-8 also points to the supplanting of Moses by the אֱלֹהִים.

“Although the calf functions as a challenge to Moses, the parallelism is not exact, nor does it begin to exhaust the calf’s significance. For it seems clear that the calf was actually intended to be a symbol of the divine presence in a more real and direct way than Moses himself could be” (Morberly 1983:46-47).⁹⁰ The people’s request for an אֱלֹהִים on the grounds that Moses has now disappeared is notable, in that it implies that the requested אֱלֹהִים will be a replacement, in some sense, leading them in Moses’ place (Cf. Stuart 2006:663) This shows that the term אֱלֹהִים, was understood as something that could be made, an idol, not a deity as such (Sailhamer 1992:311).⁹¹

The story of the golden calf begins with the theme of Moses’ absence and shows that it is closely connected to the preceding chapter where Moses’s role during the period after the theophany (Ex 19) and during the ratification of the covenant (Ex 24) was very central (Child 1974:564). In Exodus 24:14, Moses appointed Aaron as his substitute

⁹⁰ This is the case that it is customary for the Old Testament to convey a pagan understanding of the deity by the use of the plural of the noun, אֱלֹהִים (Cf. 1 Sm 4:8; Gn 20:13) (Morberly 1983:48). But in several contexts, e.g., Gn 35:7; Dt 4:7; 2 Sm 7:23, any pagan implications would be out of place.

⁹¹ Whereas Bailey (1971), Hyatt (1971) and Morberly (1983) have suggested that אֱלֹהִים should be translated by the singular, “god,” Oswalt (1973:13-20), Sasson (1968:380-387) and Brichto (1983:1-44) have argued against the singular translation “because the plural verb obviates this possibility, because “to read אֱלֹהִים as a plural is supported by the plural verb, יִלְכוּ that follows it” (Cf. Stuart 2006:663). Sailhamer (1992:310) argues this more deliberately. According to Sailhamer (1992:310), “in many instances when the plural “gods” is intended, the verb used with the noun will also be plural, but the sense of the noun אֱלֹהִים is clearly singular and should be translated “God,” even though the verb is plural.” Two textual factors support considering the identity of the golden calf as an image of God, not a foreign god or foreign gods: First, “the Hebrew word noun אֱלֹהִים can be understood and translated either as a plural noun (“gods”) or as a single (“god/God”); Sailhamer (1992:310) says that the book of Nehemiah understood the sense to be singular, pointing out that the singular verb for אֱלֹהִים is used in Nehemiah 9:8 and thus the translation was taken to be, “This is your God who brought you out of Egypt.” Second, “the Hebrew expression “other gods”, אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים or “gods”, אֱלֹהִים is often, if not always, used specifically as a term for idols and not, as we might have expected, for “other gods” *per se*.” (Sailhamer 1992:310). In Deuteronomy 9:8, the expression “other gods” clearly refers not to other deities as such but to “gods of wood and stone”, that is, idols. The expression “other gods”, אֱלֹהִים (plural) meant simply physical images or fetishes (Sailhamer 1992:310-311).

(Childs 1974:564). The people's request is for a substitute to take Moses's place in leading them.⁹² The substitute, however, is not Aaron, but the golden calf.

What Aaron and the people do is in many ways in agreement to what Yahweh has specified in his covenant. Yet "the people's attempt to affirm the identity of the calf with Yahweh by echoing Exodus 20:2 is to be seen as a parody of the true nature and purposes of Yahweh." (Morberly 1983:48) Thus, as Gowan (1994:222) points out, this shows that "Israel has really given up on Yahweh", from God's point of view.

3.1.2 Exodus 32:2-4

As Durham (1991:419) mentions, "the exact nature of the calf and Aaron's work" in creating it, has been the subject of considerable discussion and conjecture, mainly for both "the ambiguity of the text," especially "uncertainty about the proper translation of the term *חֲרָט* and *מִסְכָּה*." Durham (1987:416, 419-420) translates *מִסְכָּה* as "overlaid image" and Stuart (2006:665) also agrees with Durham (1987:416, 419-420), but chooses "plated idol" for its translation.⁹³ According to Sailhamer (1992:311), "the Hebrew word for "idol", *מִסְכָּה* is actually used in this passage to describe the "god" that Aaron made: He took what they handed [over to] him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf (v.4). Cassuto (1967:412) says that "[i]n order to sculpture the finest details on the gold plating, such as the eyes the hair and the like, artistic work

⁹² Childs insists that this reflects the absolute disapproval of the author who, in contrast to Aaron, sees the disaster from the outset (Childs 1974:564).

⁹³ Stuart (2006:665) interprets verse 4a as follows: "he shaped it with a stylus and made it into a young bull metal cast idol." Stuart (2006:665; cf. Oswalt 1973:13-20; Aberbach and Smolar 1967:129-140; Bailey 1971:97-115; Wainwright 1933:42-52) suggests that the idol in the shape of a young bull made by Aaron was "fits with the Egyptian concept of how deity was to be envisioned." For a different theory of the origins of the calf/bull idol worship, see Key 1965:20-26; Lewy 1945-1946:405-489.

required a sharp and delicate instrument, namely, a graving tool. This, then, is the meaning of this verse: and he fashioned it - the gold - with a graving tool, producing by means of this instrument an exact likeness, and made it, when his work was complete, a molten calf - a calf overlaid with molten gold.” In order to understand the details of the narrative, it is necessary to pay attention to the method of making any image of silver and gold in antiquity. Hyatt (1971:304) points out that this rendering of Exodus 32:4 into ‘and cast it in a mould’ is supported by the statement of Aaron in verse 24 that he throws the gold into the fire. According to Cassuto (1967:412), the process can be depicted as follows:

First, they would make a wooden model, and then overlay it with plating of precious metal. The existence of the inner core of wood, which formed a greater part of the idol, serves to explain v. 20, which relates that Moses burnt the calf and ground it to powder; whilst the gold plating, which was made by melting down and casting the metal, elucidate the word מַסֵּכָה, *massekha* [‘molten image’] in v. 4.

Aaron fashioned only one golden calf. The reference to a single calf suggests that it represented one god/God and not many gods. The “god” Aaron made is always referred to with the singular pronoun “it.” Aaron may intend “only to present the people with a palpable symbol, a kind of empty throne, [but] the Israelites went astray after the concrete representation, and treated it as an actual deity.” (Cassuto 1967:413).

It was, therefore, not only against the first and but also against the second commandment they transgressed, by creating God in the image of his creation, namely, fashioning an image of Yahweh and declaring that this created thing is the gods who

brought them out of Egypt (Enns 2000:415). By making the golden calf, Israel has broken not the first commandment, but actually the second one as well. The calf is, thus, not only the equation of an idol with God, but also the pagan representation of the true God (Enns 2000:415; Sarna 1986:203). Many signs suggest the original issue to be syncretistic, by representing Yahweh in the figure of a calf :“Yahweh was not being replaced, but represented” as an image of foreign god (Childs 1974:565). Stuart (2006:665) also says that “Yahweh was now being represented by an idol, the very sort of thing forbidden clearly by the second word/commandment.” We can, therefore, see that there is a close connection between Yahweh’s self-declaration as the only God, the “I am Yahweh,” and the prohibition of making his image from the golden calf story.

3.1.3 Exodus 32:5

The people receive the calf with the confession “these are your gods, Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt,” an act they had attributed to Moses in verse 1, albeit as Yahweh’s representative (Durham 1987:421). And Aaron, in response, declares a sacred day to Yahweh, not to the calf, or to any other god or gods. Aaron proclaimed, “tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord” not to the calf (Cf. Cassuto 1967:413). That the calf was seen as a real embodiment of the divine presence of the Lord is indicated by לַיהוָה in verse 5 characterizing the altar and its sacrifices during the festival as something done for Yahweh, as is אֱלֹהִים in verses 1, 4 and 8 (Morberly 1983:47). This is made clear in the attributing the grace of the rescue from Egypt to the calf when Aaron constructs an altar for sacrifices, by the declaring of a זָבַח , “feast” for Yahweh (Durham 1987:422).

3.1.4 Exodus 32:6

By the people's worship the next morning by the very offerings the calf was identified with Yahweh in verse 6 (Durham 1987:422). This scene reminds us that the elders of Israel sat down to eat and drink after making a covenant with God in Exodus 24:11. It is evident that the emphasis in Exodus 32:1-6 is primarily on the second commandment. Israel has violated Yahweh's own unambiguous requirement about how he is to be worshipped (Durham 1987:422).

3.1.5 Summary

It is clear that although the calf is intended to be a symbol of Yahweh's presence, this is to be understood as a grotesque parody. Israelites saw the calf as a representation of the Lord rather than another deity (Sailhamer 1992:311). In demanding such an image, the people have firstly violated the second commandment. It is suggested that the calf made by Aaron was not intended to represent the deity, but was to function as the pedestal of the invisible God of Israel (Cf. Sarna 1986:218). Aaron's calf would be an example of the ancient Near Eastern practice where gods were depicted standing upon animals, mostly bulls and lions (Sarna 1986:218). But since the God of Israel may not be represented in any material form, His Presence on the calf would be proven as human imagination (Sarna 1986:218). The calf serves the same purpose as the cherubim in the Tabernacle (Sarna 1986:218).⁹⁴ This could be correct for the original image(s), but in

⁹⁴ Cf. Sarna 1986:211-213, especially in 213, on the function of the cherubim. Sarna explains "the function of cherubim is to guard over the tablets of the Covenant, to signify the presence of the sovereign God, and to act as the perfect embodiment of divine mobility. Although the cherubim were hidden from

the present account, offerings are made on an altar to the image. Thus, the records in their present form consider the images to be idolatrous objects (Hyatt 1971:306).

In Exodus 32:1-6, the term gods, or rather god, as represented by the golden calf, seems to have been understood as an attempt to present the God of the covenant by means of a physical image. The apostasy of the golden calf episode, therefore, was idolatry, not polytheism (Sailhamer 1992:310-311). The calf represents Yahweh but on the *people's* term, while Yahweh had made it clear repeatedly that he could be received and worshipped only on *his* own terms (Durham 1987:423).

As Durham (1987:421) points out, “the composite of Exodus 32:1-6 is not an account of the abandonment of Yahweh for other gods. It is an account of the transfer of the center of authority of faith in Yahweh from Moses and the law and the symbols he has announced, to the golden calf without a law, and without any symbols beyond itself.” Moses is the representative of a God invisible in mystery. The calf is to be the representative of that same God, whose invisibility and mystery is compromised by an image he has forbidden (Durham 1987:421-422).

3.2 In-textuality of Exodus 32:1-6

1 וַיִּרְא הָעָם כִּי־בָשַׁשׁ מֹשֶׁה לָרֶדֶת מִן־הָהָר וַיִּקְהַל הָעָם

public gaze, and they did not represent any identifiable, existing reality, while the calf was publicly displayed, and was very much the image of a living entity.” Many scholars maintain that the bull-images erected by Jeroboam, as well as any earlier image erected at Bethel, or in the desert period by the Israelites, were not really considered to be idols. Inasmuch as Near Eastern religions frequently represented a deity in human form standing upon a bull or other animal, the bull is interpreted as being originally only a pedestal upon which the invisible Yahweh stood. Thus the bull-image is considered as an originally northern counterpart of the Ark, which may have been conceived as a portable throne for the invisible Yahweh, or of the cherubim, who upheld the invisible Yahweh (Hyatt 1971:306).

עַל־אֶהְרֹן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו קוּם עֲשֵׂה־לָנוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ
כִּי־זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מַה־הָיָה לוֹ

² וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶהְרֹן פָּרְקוּ נְזָמֵי הַזֶּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵי נְשֵׁיכֶם
וּבְנִתֵיכֶם וְהָבִיאוּ אֵלָי

³ וַיִּתְפָּרְקוּ כָּל־הָעָם אֶת־נְזָמֵי הַזֶּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶל־אֶהְרֹן בְּנֵיכֶם

⁴ וַיִּקַּח מֵיָדָם וַיַּצֵּר אֹתוֹ בַּחֲרֹט וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ עֵגֶל מִסֹּכָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ
אֵלֶּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹף מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

⁵ וַיֵּרָא אֶהְרֹן וַיִּבֶן מִזְבֵּחַ לְפָנָיו וַיִּקְרָא אֶהְרֹן וַיֹּאמֶר חַג לַיהוָה מָחָר

⁶ וַיִּשְׁכַּיְמוּ מִמַּחֲרַת וַיַּעֲלוּ עֹלֹת וַיִּגְשׂוּ שְׁלָמִים וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל
הָעֵם לֶאֱכֹל וְשָׁתוּ וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק

The result of the in-textuality of Exodus 32:1-6 confirms that the people replaces God's servant Moses as the golden calf, by which Israel have really given up on Yahweh.

אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1aβ).

זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:1ba).

The god is the one who walks and leads them (v. 1aβ). It stands in contrast to Moses who brought them from Egypt (Ex 32:1ba).

אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1aβ)

אֵלֶּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹף מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:4b)

אֱלֹהִים (v. 1aβ) is the one who walks and leads Israel. In verse 4b, it is identified with אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל who brought them from Egypt. Each of Exodus 32: 1aβ and 32:4b, while sharing identical subordinate clauses dealing with a redemptive history: Adverb + verb + אֲשֶׁר + אֱלֹהִים, attributes it to the same subject. The phrase אֱלֹהִים (Ex 32:1aβ) as the syntactical subject of Exodus 32:1aβ is identical with אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Ex 32:4b). Considering the context, which discerns whether the redemptive history is attributed to true God or not, the phrase אֱלֹהִים (Ex 32:1aβ) is identical with יִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵי (Ex 32:4b), designating the same thing, the image of God.

אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1aβ)

כִּי־זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֵנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מִה־הָיָה לוֹ (Ex 32:1ba)

אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלוּךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:4b)

While Exodus 32:1ba depicts Moses as the servant of Yahweh who brought Israel up from the land of Egypt, Exodus 32:1aβ says that it is the golden calf who brought Israel from the land of Egypt, being in accordance with the statement in Exodus 32:4b designating the golden calf as “Your God , O Israel, who brought Israel from the land of Egypt, and attributing the redemptive grace to the golden calf” (v.4b).

Each of Exodus 32:1ba and 32:4b, while sharing identical subordinate clauses dealing with a redemptive history: אֲשֶׁר + עָלָה + verb מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, attributes it to different reference. The phrase זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ as the syntactical subject of Exodus 32:1ba is not same with אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Ex 32:4b). Considering the context, which discerns whether the redemptive history is attributed to true God or not, the phrase מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ

זֶה (Ex 32:1b) is contrast to אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Ex 32:4b), designating different reference.

אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1aβ)

זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:1bα)

אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלוּךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:4b)

אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לָךְ-רָד כִּי שָׁחַת עִמָּךְ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלִיתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:7)

אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלוּךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:8bβ)

יְהוָה יַחְרֶה אִפְךָ בְּעַמָּךְ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּכַח גְּדוֹל וּבְיַד חֲזָקָה (Ex32:11)

אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:23a)

מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַענוּ (Ex 32:23b)

אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לָךְ עָלָה מִזֶּה אֲתָה וְהָעַם אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלִיתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 33:1a)

From the stylistic point of view, secondly, it can be indicated that as soon as an image of God functions as a substitute for Moses (Morberly 1983:46), who delivered God's word speaking to his people, it turns into just an image of God, who cannot deliver God's word to his people. As Moberly (1983:46-47) contends, "the first is that Moses is the one who uniquely mediates Yahweh's guidance and leadership to the people. It is in and through Moses that Yahweh is known and his saving deeds experienced. The second is that the calf is a challenge to Moses' leadership. It is a rival means of mediating Yahweh's presence to the people." Thus, the following remark can be made:

It is the Lord, your God אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה (Ex 20:2) who brought Israel from the bondage of Egypt by the servant of God, Moses whom God used as his tool to bring his people from Egypt (Cf. Ex 32:1bα). When the peculiar history of redemption is attributed to

Moses, the servant of God and the deliverer of God's word (Cf. Ex 32:18ff), it is really to the God. However, it is also attributed to a thing whatever not to designate true God (v. 1aβ, 4b).

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶהְרֶן פָּרְקוּ נִזְמֵי הַזֶּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵי נְשִׁיכֶם (Ex 32:2)

בְּנִיכֶם וּבְנִתֵיכֶם וְהִבִּיאוּ אֵלַי

וַיִּתְּפָרְקוּ כָּל־הָעָם אֶת־נִזְמֵי הַזֶּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶל־אֶהְרֶן

(Ex 32:4a) וַיִּקַּח מִיָּדָם וַיִּצַר אֹתוֹ בַּחֲרֹט וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ עֵגֶל מַסֵּכָה

Verses 2-3 and verse 4a refer to the procedure of making an image of God (Cassuto 1967:412).

וַיֵּרָא אֶהְרֶן וַיֵּבֶן מִזְבֵּחַ לְפָנָיו וַיִּקְרָא אֶהְרֶן וַיֹּאמֶר חַג לַיהוָה מָחָר

(Ex 32:6) וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ מִמַּחֲרָת וַיַּעֲלוּ עֹלֹת וַיִּגִּשׁוּ שְׁלָמִים וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל

הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל וְשָׁתוּ וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק

Verses 5-6 depict a ceremony for making a covenant between God and Israel as Exodus 19-24. Thus, it can be considered as a renewal of covenant with Yahweh, not making a covenant with another god.

Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that the golden calf is an image of God. As a result of making an image of God, Yahweh was compared with a god and degraded into a common god.

3.3 The golden calf episode (Ex 32:1-6) in context

Any consideration of the literary form of the narrative of the making of the golden calf in Exodus 32:1-6 must take into consideration the relation of this brief but crucial

narrative to its larger literary complex, Exodus 32-34 (Durham 1991:416). This episode is also framed by the units of chapters 25-31 and 35-40, its wider context. This construction is also linked to the Sinai pericope in Exodus 19-24. The link should also be part of the analysis. It leads eventually to a review of the entire Exodus composition and its various component parts to analyze Exodus 32:1-6 (Durham 1991:416). Although it comes from redactional criticism, Durham's insight is helpful for our understanding of the section: "Beyond the valuable data provided by form criticism and tradition-historical studies...there remains the need to consider the text of each pericope of the biblical text in the light of the theological purpose binding the pericope into larger sequences, entire books, and even a whole section of the Bible." (Durham 1999:417)

3.3.1 The golden calf episode (Ex 32:1-6) in the literary context of Exodus 32-34

Chapters 32-34 will be analyzed, indicating the scenes and episodes of these chapters before discussing their relationship. Firstly, an outline of the structure of Exodus 32-34 will be presented and secondly, Exodus 32:1-6 will be analyzed in the context of this macro-unit of Exodus 32-34.

Exodus 32:1-6 has generally been considered as a unit that provided the nucleus for the narrative of chapter 32 (Durham 1991:418; cf. Hyatt 1972:301). In the scenes of Exodus 32:7-30 and 32:31-35 that follow upon Exodus 32:1-6, there are two dialogues between God and Moses. Firstly, God speaks in Exodus 32:7-10, and Moses reacts to God in Exodus 32:11-13. Thereupon Moses speaks to his people and enacted judgment in Exodus 32:15-30. Secondly, Moses speaks in Exodus 32:31-32. God answers in Exodus 32:33-34 and enacted judgment in Exodus 32:35. The paragraph, Exodus 32:11-33:23

deals with Moses' intercession and descent from the mountain. The people's sin below the mountain has been seen. Nevertheless, the focus is on the divine splendour of the tablets, described more fully here than anywhere else. It is stressed that they are the work of God, and that the writing on them is the writing of God. There is perhaps a contrast implied between these and the man-made idols of the people. The metrical cola of verse 18, by attracting attention to the word play, continue to build up suspense for the moment of actual confrontation with the people (Morberly 1983:53-54). Exodus 33:12-23 explicates that God is invisible and his word is heard.⁹⁵ The announcement of the theophany in Exodus 33:18-23, especially in verse 20, shows that God's sovereignty would be compromised by sight (Fretheim 1991:300). It refers to "the epistemic distance between God and human beings, structured into the created order for the purpose of preserving human freedom" (Fretheim 1991:301).

Exodus 32:1-6, however, also sets up "the plot of the entire narrative sequence of Exodus 32-34" (Durham 1991:418; Aberbach and Smolar 1967:135-140).⁹⁶ Childs (1974:562) maintains that "Exodus 32 forms an integral part of the larger literary complex which includes chapters 32 and 34." Its integrity can be easily observed in the series of major themes which run through the three chapters and tie them closely together.⁹⁷ Clement (1972:205) says: "Chapter 32 belongs to chapters 33-34 as a series

⁹⁵ See and compare with Deuteronomy 4:15-19.

⁹⁶ This is one of the telling reasons why the golden calf episode cannot be the propagandistic plant from the Rehoboam-Jeroboam era it has sometimes been made out to be. Stuart (2006:665) suggests that "[i]n all likelihood Jeroboam knew of or was informed of the tradition stemming from this passage and capitalized on its continuing popularity in his own day. In either case, there is little doubt that Israelites of all times believed that it was Yahweh, and no other god, who had delivered them from Egypt."

⁹⁷ The fact that chapter 32 introduces the larger literary unit does not effect its integrity, which forms an impressive example of Hebrew narrative style. Childs (1974:557-558) points out that there are many signs which indicates that chapters 32-34 were purposefully structured into a compositional unit. But here Childs suggests the view that the final form of this passage is one of the final stages of this development. He attributes this compositional unity to the hand of a literary redactor, who composes his story, making much use of older sources, not simply piecing together parallel accounts from the J and E sources. Childs

of narratives that are all concerned with the situation facing Israel immediately after the Sinai laws and instructions have been received.” In relation with the making of the covenant at Sinai, Exodus 32-34 shows the breaking and recovery of the covenant.⁹⁸ Chapters 32-34 cannot be separated into parts without affecting the integrity of the whole. As Enns (2000:568) mentions, to divide this narrative into small units will only disrupt the message they are intended to convey as a unitary whole: rebellion, mediation, and restoration. Baltzer (1960:48-51) also reports that the three elements of covenant formulas dealing with the recovery of the covenant are also found in Exodus 34. Childs (1974:557) points out that “while Chapter 32 recounts the breaking of the covenant, Chapter 34 narrates its restoration. Moreover, these chapters are held together by a series of motifs which are skillfully woven into a unifying pattern.” The tablets are received and smashed in chapter 32, and recut and rewritten in chapter 34 (Childs 1974:558). Moses’s intercession for Israel begins in chapter 32, continues in chapter 33, and comes to a climax in chapter 34. As Childs (1974:558) says, “the theme of the presence of God which is the central theme of chapter 33” joins, on the one hand, “the prior theme of disobedience” in chapter 32, and on the other hand, “the assurance of forgiveness in chapter 34.”

The verbal links between the two passages show that the writer of 34:5ff understood the passage as a conclusion of the former; and the exegetical discussion suggests that the differences between the two accounts may in fact be explicable in terms of literary and theological considerations. The link between images and divine self-revelation is

(1974:557-558) emphasizes the decisive role of the redactor in the formation of chapters 32-34. See 1.3.1 The final text of the canon for the character of the final form in this study.

⁹⁸ The recovery of the covenant is different from the covenant renewal in some aspects. The former has, in form, sometimes only a legal variable element as Exodus 34, while the latter does not only always have legal variable elements, but also cultic variable elements as in Exodus 19-24 and Deuteronomy 5-28 (Cf. Song 1992).

pertinent to this pericope. There is an intimate continuity between God *an sich* and God as revealed; God entirely corresponds to himself in revelation and activity (Fretheim 1991:226).

3.3.2 The relation between Exodus 32:1-6 and Exodus 25-31 and 35-40

Cassuto (1967:497) asks why the episode of the golden calf and its aftermath in Exodus 32-34 was composed to be placed between Exodus 25-31 and Exodus 35-40. The construction of the wilderness sanctuary is reported in Exodus 25-31 and 35-40. The first section (Ex 25-31) features the account of God's careful, theological instructions to Moses to build the tabernacle; the second section (Exodus 35-40) reports the actual realization of these plans. Between these two sections "the narrative of the golden calf is placed (Ex 32:1-6) with its aftermath (Ex 33:12-23 and Ex 34)." Set in the structure of the three theophanic episodes (Ex 19:3-24:2; 24:3-34:35; 35:1-40:38), the events of the golden calf are part of the second episode (Hauge 2001:156). This connection is indicated by God's command to Moses to go down from the mountain in Exodus 32:7, which continues the story that was concluded in Exodus 31:18. Parallel to and contrasting with the encounter on the mountain, the golden calf distorts the established pattern of events. Compared to the earlier scenes, the descent of Moses and the mediation in the camp are turned into a set of negative events. The mediation of the divine instructions in chapter 35 resumes to the story line that was temporarily halted in Exodus 31:18. The account of the instructions God gave for the building of the Tabernacle closes in Exodus 31:18. "This verse forms the connection with and the transition to the episode of the golden calf." (Sarna 1991:215). It is important to note this because it demonstrates that "the Book of Exodus has been deliberately structured

to place that event between the two parts of the Tabernacle narrative, its instructions (Ex 25-31) and their implementation (Ex 35-40)” (Sarna 1991:215). In this regard, Sarna (1991:215) points out “the intrusion is thus seen to be purposeful, and as such it becomes a sort of commentary on the text. It is of no consequence whether or not the literary arrangement actually corresponds to the chronological sequence of the events which are related.” Seemingly ignoring the events of Exodus 32-34, the divine instructions of Exodus 25-31 are mediated and implemented by the people. Accordingly, Exodus 32-34 seems to have a function as an ‘intermission’. Fretheim (1991:280) indicates that “the meaning of the golden calf episode, therefore, is unveiled by its comparison with the building of the tabernacle.” The impact of the composition is greatly enhanced to by the complex function of Exodus 32-34. As Sarna (1991:191) points out, the conjoining of two different topics indicates that the one illuminates the other. It is necessary to understand the meaning of the narrative of Exodus 32-34 in which the golden calf episode is placed, as well as of the larger context of 25-31 and 35-40 (Sarna 1991:216). The situation in the wilderness produced two different, contradictory, and mutually exclusive responses: the one is the illegitimate and distortive fabrication of the golden calf; the other the legitimate and corrective building of the Tabernacle. This explains why the story of the golden calf was composed to be placed in the Tabernacle theme (Sarna 1986:219). As Fretheim (1991:280) indicates, “Israel’s building of the tabernacle as the place of the worship commanded by God is contrasted with the golden calf episode at every key point.”⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Fretheim (1991:280) points out “the irony between the two accounts is as follows: (1) The people seek to create what God has already provided; (2) they, rather than God, take the initiative; (3) offerings are demanded rather than willingly presented; (4) the elaborate preparations are missing altogether; (5) the painstaking length of time needed for building becomes an overnight rush job; (6) the careful provision for guarding the presence of the holy One turns into an open-air object of immediate accessibility; (7) the invisible, intangible God becomes a visible image; and (8) the personal, active God becomes an impersonal object that cannot see or speak or act.”

There are some parallels between 32:1-6 and 25:1-9, with its directions for building the ark and the tabernacle. In Exodus 25:1-9 Yahweh proposes that a symbol or vehicle of his presence should be constructed from the offerings from the people, willingly contributed, and containing gold and other precious substances. The construction should follow his stipulations and so he will dwell among his people (Ex 25:9). In Exodus 32 they did not obey the commands of Exodus 25. The people, however, willingly offer ornaments of gold (Ex 32:3). Aaron, the representative of Moses (and also designated as priest in Exodus 28:1ff., so being in a position to act with Yahweh's authority), fashions the object which is then interpreted as conveying the divine presence (Ex 32:4b, 5b). The calf thus functions not only as a mediator parallel to Moses, but also as surrogate to the ark/tabernacle. These two are not incompatible, for Yahweh's presence is mediated in more ways than one (Morberly 1983:47). In the present context the intention is clear. The tabernacle worship depicted in chapters 25-31 (and even chapters 35-40), repeatedly suggests its symbolism. This is then thrown into terrifying jeopardy by the shattering act of disobedience in the golden calf episode (Ex 32-34). These events threatened to plunge Israel into a situation far deadlier and more ignominious than the Egyptian bondage at its worst (Durham 1991:417).

Having experienced the violent scene of Exodus 32, the harsh divine words and the people's sorrow in 33:1-6, and the concluding scene in 34:29-35, the reader can accept that the people of the earlier parts of the story have been changed into the exuberantly and meticulously obedient people of chapters 35-39, which ultimately can even be set in a situation of permanent *visio Dei*. The development of the central themes of ascent and locus also reflects the crucial significance of Exodus 32-34 for the connection of

chapters 19-24 and 35-40. Bridging the two parts of the composition, the golden calf and its aftermath are part of the line of events which lead to the climax of the story (Hauge 2001:157). This must have repercussions for our understanding of the function of Exodus 32-34. The story of the golden calf and its aftermath can be perceived both as an intermittent ‘non-story’ and as part of the linear development. But leading to the presentation of a permanent post-Horeb situation centered around Moses’ Tent of meeting, the story also represents a ‘loop’ within the story line as a relatively independent episode (Hauge 2001:160).

3.3.3 The relation between Exodus 32:1-6 and the Sinai pericope in Exodus 19:1-24:11

While Childs (1974:407) deals meticulously with the structure of Exodus 32-34, he attributes the literary construct of the text to a theological editor. This episode of the golden calf, however, is to be elucidated in light of, and in comparison to, the Sinai pericope.

The final form of the text and its present context demand that Exodus 32:1-6 should be read in conjunction with the Sinai pericope in Exodus 19-24. It depicts how Yahweh let the people approach Sinai with the possibility of being “my own possession,” if they will “obey my voice and keep my covenant” (Ex 19:5). Then Moses receives the Decalogue (Ex 20:1-18) and the Book of the Covenant (Ex 21-23), and it ends with a direct warning to the people not to serve the gods of the nations (“their gods”, Ex 23:32-33). Having heard the contents of the Book of the Covenant from Moses, the people respond, “all the Lord has spoken, we will do, and we will be obedient” (Ex 24:7; cf. Ex 24:3). The next time the people speak in Exodus 32:1 as follows: “Up, make us gods,

who shall go before us.” They emphatically attributed the exodus from Egypt to “this Moses” rather than to Yahweh (Cf. Ex 20:2). It is clear that the narrator of the final form of Exodus 32:1-14 understands the people’s request and Aaron’s action as willful disobedience, which amounts to nothing less than the rupture of the recently established covenant (Ex 24:1-2). It is not coincidental that several of the actions in Exodus 32:1-6 are parallel to those in Exodus 24:1-12. In both instances, people arise early to offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon an altar (Ex 24:4-5; 32:5-6), and they eat and drink (Ex 24:12; 32:6). In chapter 24, these acts are accompanied by obedience (Ex 24:3,7), but such is not the case in Exodus 32:6 where the people arise “to play” (Cf. Ex 32:25, which suggests that “the play” was out of control (note the pejorative sense of “play” in Gn 39:14,17). Aaron “made” the calf (Ex 32:4), an act forbidden by Exodus 20:4. When the people hailed Aaron’s creation as the one “who brought you up out of the land of Egypt,” they contradicted Exodus 20:3. The people have broken the first two commandments. They have broken the covenant (McCann 1990:277-278).

There is also a connection with Exodus 24:14 in which Aaron is appointed as Moses’ substitute.¹⁰⁰ The story of the golden calf begins with the theme of Moses’s absence and shows that it is closely connected with the preceding chapter, which relates Moses’ role during the period after the theophany at Sinai (Ex 19) and the ratification of the covenant (Ex 24) (Childs 1974:564). Moses ascended the mountain to finalize the covenant to be made in Exodus 19-24 (Cf. Ex 24:12-18; Sailhammer 1992:310; Childs

¹⁰⁰ Unfortunately, in recent years the complexity of the crucial questions has tended to obscure the literary achievement in the final form of the text. Thus, Childs (1974:563) suggests that “several features should be kept in mind as one attempts to understand this chapter within its present Old Testament context. The failure to evaluate properly this literary shaping has often led literary critics to fragment the chapter into multiple layers and sources which lack internal cohesion.”

1974:34).¹⁰¹ Hyatt (1971:301) also points out that “Moses’ breaking of the two tablets symbolizes the breaking of the covenant.” The literary and historical questions concerning the relationship between the covenant sealed in chapter 24 and the one given to Israel in chapter 34, are of significance for our purpose only in that as these materials are combined to form the present book of Exodus, chapter 34 represents the renewal of a broken covenant (Gowan 1994:218).¹⁰² Exodus 32:1-6 is related to both the covenant ratification ceremony in Exodus 24:3-8 and the celebration of the ratified covenant in Exodus 24:9-11 (Cf. Song 1992). In light of this view, the recovery of the covenant in Exodus 34 broken in Exodus 32 is to be elucidated as the legal invariable element of the covenant, while the cultic variable element is omitted.¹⁰³

3.4 Inner-biblical interpretation of Exodus 20:2-6 in Exodus 32:1-6

Comparing Exodus 20:2-6 and Exodus 32:1-6 in terms of inner-biblical interpretation, both Exodus 20:2-6 and Exodus 32:1-6 demonstrate the structure of God’s incomparability and the prohibition of making any image of God. The following is a collation of the examples presented in the previous chapters and the first half of this chapter.

¹⁰¹ Moses’ ascent and descent are related with the giving and receiving the law. Thus Moses’ ascent and descent testify to the giving and receiving of the law as part of the covenant.

¹⁰² Gowan points out that the question whether these may originally have been two versions of the same covenant ceremony remains a debated subject. The theology associated with chapters 32-34 makes sense only with reference to a rupture and efforts to bring about healing. Once this subject has been bracketed, it becomes clear that most of the theology in this section is contained in the long dialogue between God and Moses, which extends from 32:7 through 34:10.

¹⁰³ In this light Exodus 25-30 is charted as follows:

making a tent of meeting, sacrifice:	Ex 25-31	Ex 35-Lv 25
Covenant breaking & covenant recovering:	Ex 32-34	
covenantal blessing & curse:		Lv 26

Exodus 20:2-6 and Exodus 32:1-6

אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים (Ex 20:2)

לֹא יִהְיֶה־לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל־פָּנָי (Ex 20:3)

וַיֵּרָא הָעָם כִּי־בָשַׁשׁ מֹשֶׁה לָרֶדֶת מִן־הָהָר וַיִּקְהַל הָעָם (Ex 32:1aβ)

עַל־אֲהָרָן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו קוּם עֲשֵׂה־לָנוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ

כִּי־זָה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מַה־הָיָה לוֹ (Ex 32:1bα)

וַיִּקַּח מִיָּדָם וַיִּצַר אֹתוֹ בַּחֶרֶט וַיַּעֲשֵׂהוּ עֵגֶל מִסֹּכָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ

אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

The inner-biblical interpretation of Exodus 32:1-6 with Exodus 20:2-6 confirm the hypothesis of this study.

אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים (Ex 20:2)

כִּי־זָה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מַה־הָיָה לוֹ (Ex 32:1bα)

אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1aβ)

אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:4b)

Each of them has a subordinate clause following it by which each subject identifies himself in relation to a peculiar history in Exodus 20:2, 32:1aβ, 1bα and 4b. In the Syntactic point of view, speaking roughly, all of them have the same structure and a shared word or phrase with each other in its subordinate clause.

אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים (Ex 20:2)

כִּי־זָה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מַה־הָיָה לוֹ (Ex 32:1bα)

Exodus 32:1b α and Exodus 20:2 each has an identical structure, sharing some words or phrases: מִצְרַיִם מֵאֶרֶץ + verb + אֲשֶׁר + Subject. The phrase זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ (Ex 32:1b α) is not same as אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ (Ex 20:2). However, considering the context, which discerns whether the redemptive history is attributed to the true God or not, the phrase זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ (Ex 32:1b α) can be identical with אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ (Ex 20:2), designating the same reference, although the shared language is not accompanied by a shared form of word and phrase. Thus, a couple of points on the name of God shared in two passages can be presented. It is “I am the Lord, your God (אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ)” who brought Israel from the bondage of Egypt in Exodus 20:2. “I am the Lord, your God (אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ)” (Ex 20:2) is replaced by the servant of God, Moses whom God used as his tool to bring his people from Egypt (Ex 32:1b α).

אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים (Ex 20:2)
 בִּירוּחַ מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֵעֵלֵנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מִהֲהִיָּה לּוֹ (Ex 32:1b α)

אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1b β)
 אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֵעֵלֶיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:4b)

The reference mentioned in Exodus 32:1b β and 32:4b, sharing an identical subordinate clause dealing with a redemptive history: Adverb + verb + אֲשֶׁר + אֱלֹהִים and attributing it to the same reference is not identical with the reference in Exodus 20:2. But Exodus 32:4b and 20:2 has an identical structure, sharing some words or phrases: מִצְרַיִם מֵאֶרֶץ + verb + אֲשֶׁר + אֱלֹהִים. The phrase אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל (Ex 32:4b α) shares the same

word אֱלֹהִים (Ex 20:1). However, considering the context, which discerns to whom the redemptive history is attributed, to the true God or not, the phrase אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Ex 32:4b) can not be identical with אֱלֹהֵיךָ יְהוָה אֲנֹכִי (Ex 20:2), not to designate the same reference. Rather, it can be identified with אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1aβ), designating the same reference.

While the Lord, your God, אֱלֹהֵיךָ יְהוָה אֲנֹכִי (Ex 20:2) is substituted in the golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1aβ and 32:4b, each of them share the same words and phrase, the Lord, your God, אֱלֹהֵיךָ יְהוָה אֲנֹכִי (Ex 20:2). אֱלֹהֵיךָ יְהוָה אֲנֹכִי (Ex 20:2) is absolutely different to אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Ex 32:4b) in the reference. The phrases אֱלֹהִים (Ex 32:1aβ) and אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Ex 32:4b) reverted the fact that the Lord, their God brought Israel from the land of Egypt (Ex 20:2). In reality the phrases in Exodus 32:1aβ and 32:4b attribute the work of salvation to the golden calf, not to Yahweh.

The god is the one who walks, and leads them אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1aβ). It is contrasted with God who only speaks to his people (Ex 20:1) and his word to his people is delivered by his servant Moses (Cf. Ex 32:1b). In reality, each designates different reference.

אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1aβ)

זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם (Ex 32:1bα)

אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹף מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם (Ex 32:4b)

אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים (Ex 20:2)

While it is in accordance with the statement in Exodus 20:2 that Yahweh himself brought Israel from the land of Egypt, by depicting Moses as the servant of Yahweh who brought Israel from the land of Egypt (Ex 32:1b α), it is contrasted to the statement of Exodus 20:2 that it is the golden calf that brought Israel from the land of Egypt, by designating the golden calf as Yahweh who brought Israel from the land of Egypt and attributing the redemptive grace to the golden calf (Ex 32: 1a β ; Ex 32:4b).

לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לָךְ פֶּסֶל וְכָל־תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל מִתַּחַת
בָּאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת וְאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ

(Ex 20:5a) לֹא־תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם

(Ex 20:5b) כִּי אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קָנָא פֶקֶד

עֵוֹן אָבֹת עַל־בָּנִים עַל־שָׁלְשִׁים וְעַל־רַבְעִים לְשָׁנָאֵי

(Ex 20:6) וַעֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד לְאֲלֹפִים לְאַהֲבֵי וּלְשֹׂמְרֵי מִצְוֹתַי

(Ex 32:2) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶהְרֹן פָּרְקוּ נְזָמֵי הַזֹּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵי נְשִׁיכֶם
בְּנִיכֶם וּבְנִתֵיכֶם וְהָבִיאוּ אֵלַי

(Ex 32:3) וַיִּתְּפָרְקוּ כָל־הָעָם אֶת־נְזָמֵי הַזֹּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶל־אֶהְרֹן

(Ex 32:4a) וַיִּקַּח מִיָּדָם וַיִּצַר אֹתוֹ בַּחֲרֹט וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ עֵגֶל מִסֶּכֶה

Exodus 20:4-6 and Exodus 32:2-3, 4a also a connection of theological themes, like Exodus 20:2-3 and Exodus 32:1a β , 1b α and 4b. Each reveals its theological theme syntactically, and in some respects they can be compared.

The incomparability of God, shown in the form of אֱלֹהֶיךָ יְהוָה in Exodus 20:2 prohibits the image of God (פֶּסֶל, Ex 20:4a) which was made by those who were

brought out of the bondage of Egypt. This point is ascertained in the context of the covenant curse as God's incomparability (Ex 20:5a) is mentioned again.

According to Exodus 32:4a, **וַיִּקַּח מִיָּדָם וַיַּצַּר אֹתוֹ בַּחֶרֶט וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ עֵגֶל מִסַּכָּה**, the golden calf was made, nominated and identified by Aaron as Yahweh who brought Israel from the land of Egypt, **אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם** in Exodus 32:4b.

וַיֵּרָא אֱהֲרֹן וַיִּבֶן מִזְבֵּחַ לְפָנָיו וַיִּקְרָא אֱהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמֶר חַג לַיהוָה מָחָר (Ex 32:5)

וַיִּשְׁכְּבוּ מִמִּחֶרֶת וַיַּעֲלוּ עֹלֹת וַיִּגְשׂוּ שְׁלָמִים וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל הָעֵם לֶאֱכֹל וְשָׂתוּ וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק (Ex 32:6)

וְאֶל-אֲצִילֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא שָׁלַח יְדוֹ וַיַּחֲזוּ אֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים וַיֵּאָכְלוּ וַיִּשְׂתּוּ (Ex 24:11)

By demanding an image, the people have firstly violated the second commandment. This is made clear in the composition by identifying the calf with the Lord rescuing Israel from Egypt, by Aaron's construction of an altar for sacrifices, by his declaration of a חַג, "feast" for Yahweh, and finally, by the people's worship the next morning with the very offerings Yahweh has specified for himself in verse 6. (Durham 1987:422).

The phrase **וַיֵּאָכְלוּ וַיִּשְׂתּוּ** is the same as **הָעֵם לֶאֱכֹל וְשָׂתוּ וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק** (Ex 24:11) not only syntactically but also semantically. Both come from an element of the Sinai Covenant. **וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק** was added in verse 6b. This similarity gives a hint that Israel identifies the feast as an element of the making of the covenant at Sinai. As a result,

they actually make a renewal of the Sinai Covenant with Yahweh through the golden calf.

Considering the rules of the nature of analogies between texts (Cf. Bergey 2003:52), the variety of syntactic affinities between Exodus 20:2-6 and Exodus 32:1-6 demonstrate that the first and second commandment of the Decalogue and the golden calf episode are linguistically linked.

Having made a linguistic inventory, it is now necessary to inquire whether intertextuality (borrowing) has occurred (Cf. Leonard 2008:262-263; Sommer 2003:71). The concluding linguistic correlation between Exodus 20:2-3a and Exodus 32:1a β , 1b α and 4b satisfies the guidelines for both the text's dependence on another, as Leonard (2008:246) suggests.

As Leonard (2008:246) says, the phrases in Exodus 32:1a β and 4b are evidences that these passages share some language with other texts i.e. Exodus 20:2-3. Exodus 20:2-3 and Exodus 32:1a β and 4b sharing God's self-predication of his incomparability such as "I am Yahweh, your God", which is almost directly found in the context. Exodus 20:4-6 and Exodus 32:2-3, 4a are sharing with each other the prohibition of making any image of God. Exodus 19-24 and Exodus 32:5-6 are all dealing with the covenantal meal after making a covenant between God and Israel.

The determining of the direction of these allusions, as Leonard (2008:257) suggests, can be drawn. Considering the sequence of two events actually described or implied in two passages of the present text in terms of a self-consciously literary analysis of the Bible's

own plot line related (Cf. Eslinger 1992:56), Exodus 32:1-6 assumes Exodus 20:2-6. Inner-biblical interpretation of later legal texts on the prior text represents that the meaning of the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 is interpreted in the golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1-6 more clearly, because the prohibition of making any image of God, the *traditum* revealed after the promulgation of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 at Mt. Sinai is reinterpreted as a *traditio* at the golden calf episode. Thus the conclusion can be drawn that Exodus 20:1-6 is alluded to in Exodus 32:1-6.

3.5 Summary

Exodus 32:1-6 can be considered to be an interpretation of the prohibition on making an image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6.

The issue raised by Exodus 32:1-6 is whether the golden calf represents polytheism or idolatry. Does it implicate “other gods” that Israel was following, or was it rather an attempt to make an image of the one true God, Yahweh?

It is evident that the emphasis in Exodus 32:1-6 is primarily on the second commandment. Israel has violated Yahweh’s own unambiguous requirement about how he is to be worshipped (Durham 1987:422). In relation with God’s incomparability, the prohibition against making any image of God is always tightly bound up with the prohibition to worship God through images. Exodus 32:1-6 that deals with making a golden calf, forbids the use of images to serve God, as well as making any image of God (Labuschagne 1966:139; Holter 1993:78). The passages in Exodus 32:1-6 therefore

confirms the prohibition against serving God through images, as forbidden by the second commandment of the Decalogue. The resume of Exodus 32:1-6 stated that Yahweh is the incomparable; there is none like him. It is, therefore, prohibited to Israel, to represent Yahweh with any image. Because by doing so, Israel compares Yahweh with other gods who are usually represented by images (Harner 1988:152).

The in-textuality of Exodus 32:1-6 confirms this point. While they acknowledged that Moses, the servant of Yahweh, brought them from the land of Egypt (Ex 32:1b α), Israel cancelled it with the statement in Exodus 32:4b, that it is the golden calf that brought them from the land of Egypt, by designating the golden calf to be Yahweh, who brought Israel from the land of Egypt, and attributed redemptive grace to the golden calf (v. 4b). Verses 2-3 and verse 4a refer to the procedure of making an image of God. Verses 5-6 depicts a ceremony for making a covenant between God and Israel as stated in Exodus 19-24 through and with the image of God. Thus, it can be considered as a renewal of the covenant with Yahweh, not making a covenant with another god.

Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that the golden calf is an image of God. As a result of making an image of God, Yahweh was compared with a god and degraded into a god.

In sum, the calf was a pagan representation of the true God, that is, by making the golden calf, Israel broke the second commandment demanding no presentation of the image of God.

The story of the golden calf in Exodus 32:1-6 explicates the meaning of the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus

20:4-6. The prohibition of making any image of God was suggested in the context of the incomparability of God as the ground of the command. The story of the golden calf explicates that since the second commandment was promulgated at mount Sinai in the form of the Decalogue, the people of God had the principle of worship, as well as the prohibition of making an image of God to worship him, because God is incomparable to idols.

Comparing Exodus 20:2-6 and Exodus 32:1-6 in terms of inner-biblical interpretation, the inner-biblical comparison of Exodus 32:1-6 with Exodus 20:2-6 confirms the hypothesis of this study.

Considering the rules of the nature of analogies between texts (Cf. Bergey 2003:52), there is a correlation between the second commandment of the Decalogue and the passages dealing with golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1-6.

Having made a linguistic inventory, intertextuality (borrowing) has occurred (Cf. Leonard 2008:262-263; Sommer 2003:71), the phrases in Exodus 32:1a β and 4b are evidence that these passages share some language with other texts as well, i.e. Exodus 20:2-3.

Considering the sequence of the two events described or implied in the two passages of the present text in terms of a self-consciously literary analysis of the Bible's own plot line (Cf. Eslinger 1992:56), it can be shown that Exodus 32:1-6 assumes Exodus 20:2-6. Exodus 32:1-6 expounds and corroborates Exodus 20:2-6, while the former is more clear in the interpretation of prohibition of making image than the latter and may be a later

elaboration of the simple and original one. Thus Exodus 20:2-6 is alluded to in Exodus 32:1-6.