Yahweh at Work
The Significance and Function
of the Theme “Creation” in Isaiah 40 – 48

Aravind Jeyakumar Moniraj
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Dedicated to

Mr. V. A. Moniraj & (Late) Mrs. Beula Moniraj

(my parents)

and

Mrs. Lilly Jeyakumar, Alfred Lemmy & Judith Vivian

(my wife and children)
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\(^1\) OTSEM (Old Testament Studies: Epistemologies and Methods) is a research network of several Northern European universities focuses on research into Hebrew Bible and promotes the development of young scholars.

\(^2\) HARK-Net (Hamburg-Aarhus-Kiel-K(C)openhaven-Network) is a research network of the Old Testament Department from the Universities of Hamburg, Aarhus, Kiel and Copenhagen.
staff of the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, and the Theologische Fachbibliothek, Hamburg.

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Above all, I thank God for enabling me to bring out this piece of research work!

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.
Bless the LORD, O my soul, and do not forget all His benefits.

Aravind Jeyakumar Moniraj
January 2021
# ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Anchor Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABG</td>
<td>Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AfO</td>
<td><em>Archiv für Orientforschung</em></td>
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<td>AnBib</td>
<td>Analecta biblica</td>
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<tr>
<td>AOAT</td>
<td>Alt Orient und Alt Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>AsTJ</td>
<td><em>Asbury Theological Journal</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>BaF</td>
<td><em>Baghdader Forschungen</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>BBB</td>
<td><em>Bulletin de bibliographie biblique</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>BBR</td>
<td><em>Bulletin for Biblical Research</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>BDS</td>
<td>Biblical Dissertation Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>Biblische Enzyklopädie</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEATAJ</td>
<td>Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETL</td>
<td>Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniesium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bib</td>
<td><em>Biblica</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>BibL</td>
<td>Bible and Literature</td>
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<td>Bijdr</td>
<td><em>Bijdragen: Tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie</em></td>
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<td>BL</td>
<td><em>Bibel und Liturgie</em></td>
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<td>BLER</td>
<td><em>Bible Lands e-review</em></td>
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<td>BN</td>
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<td>BR</td>
<td><em>Biblical Research</em></td>
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<td>BSac</td>
<td><em>Bibliotheca sacra</em></td>
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<td>BSh</td>
<td><em>Beer-Sheva</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>BWA(N)T</td>
<td>Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten (und Neuen) Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>BZAW</td>
<td>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBQ</td>
<td>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</td>
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<td>CBQMS</td>
<td>Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>CollRa</td>
<td>Colloquium Raurica</td>
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<tr>
<td>ConBOT</td>
<td>Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conc</td>
<td>Concilium</td>
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<td>Conf</td>
<td>Concordia Journal</td>
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<td>CTM</td>
<td>Concordia Theological Monthly</td>
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<td>DGS</td>
<td>De Gruyter Studium</td>
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<td>EA</td>
<td>Ex auditu</td>
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<td>Edf</td>
<td>Erträge der Forschung</td>
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<td>FAT</td>
<td>Forschung zum Alten Testament</td>
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<td>FOTL</td>
<td>Forms of the Old Testament Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRLANT</td>
<td>Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTL</td>
<td>Forum theologiae linguistae</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAT</td>
<td>Grundrisse zum Alten Testament</td>
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<td>HAR</td>
<td>Hebrew Annual Review</td>
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<td>HBS</td>
<td>Herder Biblische Studien</td>
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<td>HCOT</td>
<td>Historical Commentary on the Old Testament</td>
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<td>HD</td>
<td>Heiliger Dienst</td>
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<tr>
<td>HKAT</td>
<td>Handkommentar zum Alten Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>HThKAT</td>
<td>Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSM</td>
<td>Harvard Semitic Monographs</td>
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<tr>
<td>IBC</td>
<td>Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Int</td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRT</td>
<td>Issues in Religion and Theology</td>
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<tr>
<td>JANER</td>
<td><em>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions</em></td>
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<td>JANES</td>
<td><em>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society</em></td>
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<td>JAOS</td>
<td><em>Journal of the American Oriental Society</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>JBL</td>
<td><em>Journal of Biblical Literature</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>JETS</td>
<td><em>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>JHS</td>
<td><em>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>JQR</td>
<td><em>Jewish Quarterly Review</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>JSOT</td>
<td><em>Journal for the Study of Old Testament</em></td>
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<td>JSOTSUp</td>
<td><em>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>JSQ</td>
<td><em>Jewish Studies Quarterly</em></td>
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<td>JTJQ</td>
<td><em>Jewish Thought Jewish Quarterly</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>JTS</td>
<td><em>Journal of Theological Studies</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>KAT</td>
<td>Kommentar zum Alten Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>KSTh</td>
<td>Kohlhammer Studienbücher Theologie</td>
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<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Mesopotamian Civilizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAC</td>
<td>The New American Commentary</td>
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<td>NCB</td>
<td>New Clarendon Bible. (Old Testament)</td>
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<td>NCBC</td>
<td>New Cambridge Bible Commentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>NICOT</td>
<td>New International Commentary on the Old Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>OBO</td>
<td>Orbis biblicus et orientalis</td>
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<tr>
<td>OrNS</td>
<td><em>Orientalia Nova Series</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>OTE</td>
<td>Old Testament Essays</td>
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<td>OTL</td>
<td>Old Testament Library</td>
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<td>OTM</td>
<td>Oxford Theological Monographs</td>
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<td>OtSt</td>
<td><em>Oudtestamentliche Studiën</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>PLO</td>
<td>Porta Linguarum Orientalium</td>
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<tr>
<td>QuSem</td>
<td><em>Quaderni di Semitistica</em></td>
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RBiLi – Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny
RTR – Reformed Theological Review
RSTh – Regensburger Studien zur Theologie
SAACT – State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts
SBEC – Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity
SBL – Studies in Biblical Literature
SBS – Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBLDS – Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSP – Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBT – Studies in Biblical Theology
SBTh – Studia Biblica et Theologica
Scripta Minora – Scripta Minora Regiae Societatis Humaniorum Litterarum Lundensis
SHJPLI – Studies in the History of Jewish People and Land of Israel Monograph Series
SJOT – Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament
SO – Symbolae Osloenses
StAn – Studia Antiqua
STB – Studies in Biblical Theology
STDJ – Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
ST – Studia theologica
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>ThB</td>
<td>Theologische Bücherei: Neudrucke und Berichte aus dem 20. Jahrhundert</td>
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<td>ThSt</td>
<td>Theological Studies</td>
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<td>ThTo</td>
<td>Theology Today</td>
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<td>TLZ</td>
<td>Theologische Literaturzeitung</td>
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<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Theologia Viatorum</td>
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<tr>
<td>VF</td>
<td>Verkündigung und Forschung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT</td>
<td>Vetus Testamentum</td>
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<tr>
<td>VTSup</td>
<td>Vetus Testamentum Supplements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMANT</td>
<td>Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WBC</td>
<td>Word Biblical Commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WeBC</td>
<td>Westminster Bible Companion</td>
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<tr>
<td>WSB</td>
<td>Wuppertal Studienbibel</td>
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<tr>
<td>YNER</td>
<td>Yale Near Eastern Researches</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZABR</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte</td>
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<td>ZAW</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
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<td>ZDPV</td>
<td>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</td>
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<td>ZTK</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</td>
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INTRODUCTION

“Creation” is one of the significant and prominent themes in the Old Testament (OT). This theme essentially appears in different literary genres of the OT, namely as a mythical narrative in Genesis 1 and 2, as hymns in the book of Psalms – and in wisdom literature (e.g., the book of Job and Proverbs) and as prophecy in the prophetic books. The theme ‘creation’ in the OT basically asserts that Yahweh, the God of Israel is the Creator who has created the entire universe. This assertion is expressed with manifold nuances and specific theological accentuations in the above-mentioned literary genres of the OT. Deutero-Isaiah (DI) is also one among the prophetic books in which the subject of ‘creation’ appears in several of its passages, relatively more than in any other books of the OT.

Even though DI has significantly contributed to the theme ‘creation,’ still, in the history of biblical scholarship it was often considered as a subordinate theme, because the ‘concept of creation’ in DI, which comprehensively describes ‘Creator-Yahweh and His acts of creation,’ was perceived and interpreted through the lens of ‘salvation history.’ At the beginning of the 19th century, particularly the academic contributions of Gerhard von Rad drew attention to the theme ‘salvation history.’ Basically, his works advocated that the faith of the people of Israel in Yahweh is predominately confined to His historical acts of salvation, in which the theme ‘creation’ in a cosmic sense occupies only a peripheral position. In other words, ‘creation’ was perceived as a minor element in the broad-spectrum of ‘salvation history.’ He applied this view to the entire OT and this tendency ultimately paved the way for OT scholarship to observe and debate the theme ‘creation’ primarily in convergence with its role and function to the theme ‘salvation.’

Furthermore, for many decades until now, there have been ample number of projects concerning the theme ‘creation’ in DI. These research works either debated the significance of ‘creation’ in relation to ‘salvation’ or its independent role. Also, after the discoveries of the extra-biblical sources, the Ancient Near Eastern texts (ANE) were used as a lens to have a broader perception or meaning.

3 Bernhard Anderson, From Creation to New Creation (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 19.
4 DI is the second division of the prophetic book of Isaiah which covers chapters 40-55.
7 Chapter 2 exclusively discusses on the research history in which the origin of the debate of the themes: ‘creation’ and ‘salvation’ from the beginning of 19th century until now is enumerated.
for the biblical material. Thus, the theme ‘creation’ in DI was also perceived from the ANE texts that deal with the subject of ‘creation.’\textsuperscript{8} However, the innumerable well-researched investigations have failed to unearth or ignored to perceive the multiple nuances embedded in the DI-end-text itself concerning the theme ‘creation;’ instead, their approaches were peripheral in nature which sought assistance from other themes of DI or ANE texts to understand the significance or to claim the distinctiveness of the theme ‘creation.’

Therefore, my research insists that it is worthwhile and essential for a moment to avoid using the perspective of ‘salvation history’ (however its impact is not undermined) to comprehend the theme ‘creation’ in DI. Instead, it is appropriate to exclusively concentrate with a fresh reading on the theme ‘creation’ as it is presented in the Hebrew-end-text of DI in order to discover the multiple syntactic and semantic textual nuances that are employed to depict ‘Yahweh as Creator and His ingenious acts of creation.’ Such a reading will enable to observe, cognize and exhibit, how DI creatively depicts the innovative activities of ‘Yahweh as Creator’ through human-occupational-imageries, which on the one hand gives a new outlook of Yahweh as skillful Creator and on the other connects Creator-Yahweh deeply with tangible human experiences. Moreover, it leads to a new understanding of inclusive theology of creation that DI insists.

For the textual analysis of the theme ‘creation’ in DI, only selected portions from Isaiah 40-48 are chosen to be exegeted. There are two substantive reasons for confining Isa 40-48 for this research. \textit{Firstly}, Isa 40-48 is commonly identified as the core-text or \textit{Grundschicht} of Isaiah 40-55 (DI) which reflect the milieu of Babylon. Therefore, scholarly arguments assert that this section of DI originated in the Babylonian context from the exiled prophet DI and his disciples. \textit{Secondly}, creation language and vocabularies concerning the theme ‘creation’ appear more in Isa 40-48 than in chapters 49-55.\textsuperscript{9} Therefore this research confines its basic source to Isa 40-48. Moreover, it is not possible in this research work to exegete all the creation-passages from Isaiah 40-48, therefore the following portions are carefully selected for the exegetical study which reflect manifold nuances of occupational imageries to ‘Yahweh as Creator:’ Isa 40:12-31; 41:17-20; 42:5-9; 43:16-21; 45:18-19.

A single approach or method is not adequate to engage in any textual analysis; therefore, this research will apply multiple methods to investigate the

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\textsuperscript{8} Discussed elaborately in chapter 2.

\textsuperscript{9} Chapter 1 deals with the various theories of the redactional progression of Isaiah 40-55 which attempt to place Isaiah 40-48, the core text or \textit{Grundschicht} in the Babylonian context with substantial arguments.
selected passages from Isaiah 40-48. The literary development and the redactional process play a vital role in understanding the role and function of the 'creation-theme' in Isaiah 40-48; especially when trying to understand the basis for the placement of Isaiah 40-48 in the Babylonian context. A lot of research works have been done in this field and therefore the existing various redactional theories are summarized and reviewed in chapter 1 in order to offer substantial arguments to locate Isa 40-48 in the exilic context to give ample foundation for the exegetical study.

The exegetical study (chapter 3) of the selected passages (Isa 40:12-31; 41:17-20; 42:5-9; 43:16-21; 45:18-19) employs structural analysis as the predominant tool through which thorough syntactic and semantic examinations of the selected passages are made in order to understand both the implicit and explicit nuances that the text employs to assert Yahweh as Creator. The structural analysis is the suitable tool for this study because it essentially enables us to examine each word and verse in-depth to find the function and meaning of the words and verses individually and collectively with the help of lexical and grammatical tools. By doing so the appropriate meaning of the words and the verses with regard to the theme ‘creation’ can be directly drawn from the text as primary information from the Hebrew text. This analytical tool is better than the approaches used earlier, from my perspective because the comparative analysis or other methods which were applied previously in order to trace the meaning of ‘creation’ in DI, employed the lens of other themes from DI or perceived ‘creation’ from the perspective of the other ANE texts. Therefore, for me, these earlier approaches actually belittled the manifold nuances that the end-text itself reflects.

Hence, structural analysis of the end-text facilitates to find meaning and interpret the multiple shades of the theme ‘creation’ in the above-mentioned passages which eventually unfolds the various human-occupational-imageries employed to depict ‘Yahweh as Creator.’ For a detailed analysis of the passages, I have designed the following structural frame: firstly, demarcation of the passage is made based on the syntactic and semantic indicators embedded in the text; secondly, the inner-divisions and unity among the verses of the demarcated text are analyzed which enable to structure the passage; finally, a comprehensive analysis of the each verse is carried out, where the individual meanings and grammatical functions of the different words in a verse are investigated in-depth especially


11 The different methods used by various scholars are mentioned in the literature review in chapter 2.
those related to the theme ‘creation’ in order to identify the embedded meanings that are employed to project ‘Yahweh as Creator’ using human-occupational-imageries. Findings from different verses are also compared to bring more nuances to the theme ‘creation.’ Rhetorical criticism is also partially employed in this analysis, since the prophetic passages of Isa 40-48 apply more rhetorical nuances to convey their messages. Therefore, the help of rhetorical analysis is also taken whenever necessary in order to understand the various rhetorical devices that are employed to structure and offer meaning to the passages.

The Hebrew Bible (BHS)\(^{12}\) is used as the primary source along with the other grammatical and exegetical tools (listed in the detailed bibliography) to understand the syntactical and semantical nuances of the selected portions of Isaiah 40-48.

**Chapter I** discusses the issues related to authorship, date, historical context and especially the redactional process of Isaiah 40-55 with the aim of placing Isaiah 40-48 in the Babylonian context. This detailed survey serves as a foundation that aids comprehension of the complexity and versatility of DI and as a textual background to the selected portions of Isaiah 40-48. The aim is to facilitate a wider understanding of the context of the selected passages.

**Chapter II** presents a history of research. Beginning with GERHARD VON RAD and including the current contributions, the chapter depicts how ‘creation’ has been handled in the history of OT scholarship with different approaches and intentions, particularly focusing on the study of the ‘creation’ in Isaiah 40-55. The aim of this chapter is to enumerate and discuss how the significance and function of the theme ‘creation’ are either belittled or ignored in the course of history.

**Chapter III** is the core chapter of this research and it explores and investigates in detail the selected passages (Isa 40:12-31; 41:17-20; 42:5-9; 43:16-21; 45:18-19) which deal with the subject of ‘creation.’ A comprehensive exegetical study is undertaken to explore the selected passages synchronically. Wide-ranging syntactical and semantical analyses are employed in the quest to understand the different, remarkable and versatile rhetorical textual nuances of ‘creation’ which are embedded in the chosen passages. Through the detailed exegetical study, the research sets out to unearth the significance and function of the theme ‘creation;’ especially, the foreseen human-occupational-imageries that are employed by DI’s linguistic presentation which depicts Creator Yahweh at work. In addition, this chapter identifies the inclusive theological insights that DI adds to the existing creation-theology.

\(^{12}\) KARL ELLIGER, WILHELM RUDOLPH, und ADRIAN SCHENKER, (Hrsg.), *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (5. Auflage; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997).
CHAPTER ONE

PLACING ISAIAH 40-48 IN CONTEXT

Historical Setting and Redactional Process of Isaiah 40-55 with Special Reference to Chapters 40-48

INTRODUCTION

The book of Isaiah is considered to be one of the more complex books in the OT due to the vast timeline that the 66 chapters encompass. Since the end of the 18th century, critical research, with the help of traditional methods and the post-critical readings influenced both to identify the multipartite divisions (Proto-: 1-39; Deutero-: 40-55; Trito-: 56-66 Isaiahs) and to comprehend and interpret their micro-structural expressions. Although the end-text of the book is emphasized today for intensive application and to interpret its messages, still a comprehensive knowledge about the role of the redactors and their redactional progressions with their varied perspectives which are proposed by different scholars are noteworthy to be reviewed. This robust exercise will facilitate to perceive and understand the origin and gradual literary development of the different materials of Deutero-Isaiah (40-55) and especially, to identify the conceivable arguments and reasons to place the first part of DI (Isa 40-48) in the Babylonian milieu, the context in which these chapters presumably originated. Therefore, the aim of placing Isaiah 40-48 in the Babylonian context is one of the reasons for describing and assessing the various redactional theories, since the redactional theories attest with substantial arguments that Isa 40-48 reflect the Babylonian milieu. This will eventually expedite to argue for the origin of the passages related to creation in Isa 40-48 in the Babylonian context. With this viewpoint, this chapter discusses mainly a brief historical background and an extensive study of the various theories of the redactional processes of DI with special reference to Isa 40-48.

1.1. ISAIAH 40-55: PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

Towards the end of 18th century CE, singular voices within OT scholarship maintained the notion that Isaiah 40 begins an entirely new section that was not written by the 8th century Isaiah of Jerusalem, rather by a prophet or a prophetic

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13 In the late 18th century, JOHANN CHRISTOPH DÖDERLEIN (1746-1792) questioned the traditional view of considering Isaiah 40-66 as part of the whole book (Isa 1-66) written by one author (i.e., Isaiah son of Amoz of Jerusalem). According to his Deutero-Isaiah-hypothesis, chapter 40 onwards was written by an exilic prophet during the exilic period.
group that lived during the exilic period. These speculations led to further investigation of whether these 27 chapters (i.e., Isa 40-66) are a literary unit and whether they were written by more than one author. The tendency of isolating Isa 40-55 as a single book surfaced during the end of the 19th century CE,14 which

14 However, before the age of Enlightenment, observations with regard to the different sections and multiple authorships of the book of Isaiah were made by the scholars of the middle ages. Especially, ABRAHAM IBN EZRA, a Spanish poet and an exegete composed his work on Isaiah in the 12th century. He recognized that the book of Isaiah is not a single literary unit, pointing out that chapters 1-39 and 40-66 were written by different authors and he specified that chapter 40 begins a new section of Isaiah that was written when the Persian king Cyrus issued the decree which permitted the Jews to return to their homeland. ABRAHAM IBN EZRA, The Commentary of Ibn Ezra on Isaiah (trans. M. FRIEDELÄNDER; 2 vols; London: N. Trübner, 1873), 1: 169-171; cf. URIEL SIMON, “Ibn Ezra between Medievalism and Modernism: The Case of Isaiah XL–LXVI,” in Congress Volume:
gradually insisted on dividing the entire book of Isaiah into three parts (1-39; 40-55; 56-66). The process of composition, authorship (whether single or multiple authors) and dating of Isa 40-55 are some of the significant topics of discussion which prevail even today. In OT scholarship, on one hand very few scholars consider that Isa 40-55 originated from a single author. However, on the other hand, most scholars maintain the theory that the perspective of the text reflects the situation connected to the entry of Cyrus into the historical scenario at around 539 BCE. Though Isa 40-55 does not emerge as a completely amalgamated text, still


BERNHARD DUHM’s commentary on the Book of Isaiah was considered to be a monumental and influential piece of work which marked the beginning of the modern critical research on Isaiah. The innumerable and valuable text observations made by DUHM, have its validity until today. He partitioned the book of Isaiah into three sections which belong to different periods, uttered and composed by different prophets: Proto-Isaiah/First-Isaiah: Isa 1-39, prophesied by Isaiah son of Amoz before the time of exile, probably in the late 8th century BCE; Deutero-Isaiah/Second-Isaiah: Isa 40-55, by an anonymous prophet during the 6th century BCE (exilic-period) and finally Trito-Isaiah/Third-Isaiah: Isa 56-66 also by an anonymous prophet during the post-exilic period (between 6th-4th centuries BCE). He claimed that Isa 40-55 was from around 540 BCE and hence delimitation of Isaiah 40-55 as a separate unit is considered even today to be the point of departure in the research on the book of Isaiah. The early 20th century researches are more influenced by the work of DUHM in proposing that chapters 40-55 of Isaiah comprise of numerous smaller sections which were compiled together to form as one book. However, DUHM’s research did not shed light on the synchronic or diachronic forms of the book of Isaiah. BERNHARD DUHM, Das Buch Jesaja, übersetzt und erklärt (5.Aufl. HKAT; ed. D. W. NOWACK; Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892), xi-xiv, 8; cf. PREUSS, Deuterojesaja, 15; WHYBRAY, Second Isaiah, 2; WEIDNER, Deuterojesajas, 4; SWEENEY, Isaiah 40-66, 13-14; PETER HÖFFKEN, Jesaja Der Stand der theologischen Diskussion (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004), 19-22.

This hypothesis has relatively broad support from most scholars. CLAUS WESTERMANN, Isaiah 40-66 (trans. DAVID M.G. STALKER; OTL; London: SCM Press, 1969), 8; INDEM, Sprache und Struktur der Prophetie Deuterojesajas (CTM 11; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1981), 89-91; JOACHIM BEGRICH, Studien zu Deuterojesaja (BWANT 77; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1938), 63-75; ROY. F. MELUGIN, The Formation of Isaiah 40-55 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976), 159-167;
the text presents itself as a fine piece of literature with a perfect prelude, postlude, and interlinking content which creates a complete coherent text within which the passages can be understood. The passages seem to relate throughout to a common objective, which is understood to be the situation in Judah-Babylon around 539-530 BCE. At the same time, the passages also seem to have an ultimate pragmatic goal in the context in which they were addressed. When it comes to the discussion about the structure of Isa 40-55, it is generally assumed that it has two main parts, i.e. the Jacob/Israel section (40-48) and the Zion/Jerusalem section (49-55). However, there are many internal editions that have been made in the process of redaction. Before investigating and reviewing quite profoundly


According to Blenkinsopp, the call to flee from Babylon (Isaiah 48: 20-21) is a conclusion for the first section. At the same time the second section is structured by an alternation between Servant and Zion passages, but suggested that the last sequence, the fourth servant song (52: 13-53:12) and promises for Zion (Isa 54: 1-17a) could have been added subsequently. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 61. The arrival of Yahweh at Zion/Jerusalem (Isa 52:7-12) which resembles Isaiah 48:20-21 constitutes the first epilogue, where several visions of the prologue (Isa 40:1-11). For example, the announcement of good news and Yahweh’s return to Zion. Rainer Albertz, “On the Structure and Formation of the Book of Deutero-Isaiah,” in *The Book of Isaiah: Enduring Questions Answered Anew. Essays Honoring Joseph Blenkinsopp and His Contribution to the Study of Isaiah* (eds. Richard J. Bauch and J. Todd Hubbard; Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, 2014), 22; It can also be assumed that Isaiah 52:7-12 acted in the earlier stages at the end of the book. Karl Elliger, *Deuterokesa in seinem Verhältnis zu Tritojesa* (BWANT 63; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933), 267; It is also observed that only Isaiah 40:1-52:7 is structured by so-called
the redactional theories with regard to the formation of Isa 40-55, it is significant to sketch the historical situation which would ultimately facilitate to consider and understand whether the chapters of Isa 40-55 were completely written in the Babylonian exile or parts of them were composed in Babylon and the rest were composed and redacted in Judah. Therefore, the following lines intend to chronicle the historical context in order to pave way for the wider discussion on the different redactional theories which would assist in the process of placing Isa 40-48 in context.

1.2. HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE EXILIC PERIOD

Since the biblical accounts are not adequate to trace the background of Judean exile, the Babylonian records and the archeological evidence serve to sketch a considerable image of the situation of the Israelites during the exilic period. Judah, which was a minor state located between Egypt and Babylon had always been disturbed and crushed due to the political and military tensions between the two powerful kingdoms in the ANE. The Babylonian army besieged ‘eschatological hymns.’ Isa 40:10-13; 44:23; 45:8; 48:20-21; 49:13; 52:9-10. ALBERTZ, “Structure and Formation,” 22-23.

21 The biblical sources of history (the book of Kings and Chronicles) do not mention the historical details after the fall of Jerusalem. The following prophetic books are the only primary sources of information from the OT: Isaiah 40-55, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Deutero-Isaiah talks about the emergence of Persians under the leadership of Cyrus which would lead freedom for the Jewish exiles in Babylon. RAINER ALBERTZ, Die Exilszeit 6. Jahrhundert v. Chr. (BE 7; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001), 47-48, 67-68; JAMES MAXWELL MILLER and JOHN HARALSON HAYES, A History of Ancient Israel and Judah (2nd Edition; Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 492.

22 “The documents from Babylon help to trace some information about the Israelites who were settled in Babylon, e.g., the royal cuneiform tablets record that Jehoiachin lived in the Babylonian exile (ANET 308). Further, the excavations from Nippur in 1893 reveal the economic status of a Jewish family who were engaged in the commercial and land-leasing activities. These excavations provide sufficient evidence of the stable economic life of the Jewish descendants in Babylon during the Persian period.” MICHAEL D. COOGAN, West Semitic Personal Names in the Murašû Documents (HSM 7; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976); RAN ZADOK, The Jews in Babylonia During the Chaldean and Achaemenian Periods According to the Babylonian Sources (SHJPLI 3; Haifa: Haifa University Press 1979); cf. MILLER and HAYES, Israel and Judah, 492-493.

23 A detailed description of the history of Israel during the exilic period can be grasped from the following sources: PETER RUNHAM ACKROYD, Israel under Babylon and Persia (NCB 4, London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 1-34; RAINER ALBERTZ, Exilzeit; IDEM, Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E. (SBL 3; trans. DAVID E. GREEN; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 45-138; MILLER and HAYES, Israel and Judah, 478-540; CHRISTIAN FREVEL, Geschichte Israels (KSTh 1,1; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2015), 270-286.
Judah in 597 BCE as Jehoiakim, the king of Judah revolted against Nebuchadnezzar, which resulted in the deportation of part of the Judean population to Babylon.\textsuperscript{24} The subsequent revolt in the following years against Babylonian rule led to the complete devastation of Jerusalem in 587/86 BCE and also resulted in the deportation of another group of Jews to Babylon as exiles; a third deportation took place connected to the murder of Gedalliah in 582 BCE.\textsuperscript{25} Approximately one quarter of the Jewish population was taken as captives to Babylon and a large number of people perished or fled to Egypt or other parts of ANE due to the final destruction of Jerusalem. This disastrous condition is marked as the most traumatic situation in the history of Ancient Israel.\textsuperscript{26}

Based on the archeological evidence one can assume that the social, economic and religious conditions of the remnants in Judah collapsed due to the widespread desolation,\textsuperscript{27} but some view that the deportations did not completely affect Judah.\textsuperscript{28} However, the ruined condition of Judah which was not suitable to

\textsuperscript{24} The book of Kings (2 Kings 25:8-29) and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 52:12-34) narrate the number of deports from Judah, in contrast the chronicular account (2 Chronicles 36:17-23) indirectly opines that all those who survived after the destruction were taken to Babylon. MILLER and HAYES, Israel and Judah, 478.

\textsuperscript{25} MILLER and HAYES chart out an estimation of the number of deportations and deportees based on the scattered biblical evidences (2 Kgs 24-25; Jer. 52): According to the biblical accounts approximately 20,000 Jews were taken as captives at different stages to Babylon. 2 Kings records two deportations: in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar (24:12), all Jerusalem 10,000 captives (24:14) – 7000 brought to Babylon, plus 1000 craftsmen (24:16); and during the ninth year of Nebuchadnezzar the rest of the people left in the city and the deserters together with the rest of the multitude (25:11). But according to Jeramiah, in the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar, 3023 Jews were deported to Babylon (52:28), in the eight year of his rule 823 people were deported (i.e., the second deportation Jer. 52:29) and finally the third deportation took place during the twenty third year of Nebuchadnezzar and 745 Judeans were deported. MILLER and HAYES, Israel and Judah, 81.


\textsuperscript{27} There was a drastic decrease in the size of the settled area in and around Jerusalem and also there was a huge shift in the governing system from the state system to a lower governing system. ODED LIPSCHTS, “Demographic Changes in Judah between Seventh and the Fifth Centuries BCE,” in Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period (eds. O. LIPSCHTS and J. BLEINKINSONP; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 356; DAVID W. JAMIESON-DARKE, Scribes and Schools in Monarchic Judah: A Socio-Archaeological Approach (JSOTSup 109; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 146.

\textsuperscript{28} HANS M. BARSTAD, The Myth of the Empty Land: A Study in the History and Archaeology of Judah during the “Exilic Period” (SO 28; Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1996), 47-55; IDEM, History and the Hebrew Bible: Studies in Ancient Israel and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography (FAT 61; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 90-134. The view of BARSTAD is criticized by other scholars. ALBERTZ took a different view and stated that it is possible to
inhabit, and the absence of a ruler and the political threats from the neighboring nations, especially after the 582 BCE, depict the barely developing economy and poor living conditions of the remnants. In contrast to the ruined condition of the cities and absence of leadership in Judah, the Israelites in Babylon were settled in different cities and to a certain extent they had leaders to guide them in a foreign land. They were settled in different levels of the Babylonian society, making a comfortable livelihood as bureaucrats, businessmen and also as craftsmen. It is explicit that the difficulties which the Judean exiles faced in Babylon were on psychological and religious grounds and not on social or economic ones. Therefore, due to the diminishing hope among the Judean exiles in Babylon regarding the return to their homeland, different groups opted for different solutions. Many opted to be assimilated within the Babylonian society and culture, even to the extent of losing their own Jewish identity, while those with more affinity to their ethnic and religious identity struggled to preserve the same in their new land i.e., Babylon.

The constant dominance of Babylonian power in the ANE came to an end due to the political instability of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign. Three main factors contributed to the fall of Babylonian rule: namely the strong religious factor being that the Marduk priesthood strongly opposed Nabonidus (561-539 BCE) for his acclaim for the moon god – Sin in preference of Marduk; on the economics grounds, the Babylonian merchants witnessed their markets being disrupted and they earnestly desired a new empire which would renew and elevate their markets’ stability; and finally the foreigners living in Babylon felt chances of returning home, where it would be better to be under any rule rather than the present

say that Judah would be slowly stabilized after the complete destruction, but this would have happened only to a certain extent. ALBERTZ, EXILSZEIT, 82-83.

29 Detailed account can be obtained from the account of ALBERTZ, EXILSZEIT, 83-85.


31 The upper-class people settled in Nippur, some of them became irrigational experts. And many made a comfortable living as shepherds, leasing property and stock, owned poultry farms and many others were employed as servants at the royal places. Not all the deportees excelled economically; some served also as slaves and worked in the dam projects. However, even though they themselves did not benefit financially, still they survived in the thriving economy. ALBERTZ, HISTORY OF ISRAELITE RELIGION, 373; ELIAS J. BICKERMAN, “The Babylonian Captivity,” in THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF JUDAISM (EDS. W. D. DAVIES AND L. FINKELSTEIN; 3 VOLS; CAMBRIDGE: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1984), 1: 342-357; RAN ZADOK, THE JEWS IN BABYLONIA, 86-89; MILLER and HAYES, ISRAEL AND JUDAH, 493-495.

32 The above lines affirm that, the Judean exiles lived a better life in Babylon when compared with the remnants in Judah. ALBERTZ, EXILSZEIT, 113-116.

33 MILLER and HAYES, ISRAEL AND JUDAH, 493-495; ALBERTZ, EXILSZEIT, 113-116.

34 MILLER and HAYES, ISRAEL AND JUDAH, 500-505.
establishment. Thus the Persian king Cyrus, who was welcomed by the powerful priesthood of Marduk, took control over the Babylonian empire in 539 BCE. Hence, the Judean exiles were revived and hoped for a national restoration; moreover, the Persian policy of tolerance toward the exiled people renewed their hope. However, after the Cyrus edict few were interested in returning to Judah since they had established their livelihood in Babylon, and also the successive generations who were not aware of and had nothing invested in Judah were not ready to return and start their livelihood from scratch. A great number of Jews decided to remain in Babylon.

Even with Cyrus’ support, the temple to Yahweh did not become a reality immediately, but was dedicated in 515 BCE during the reign of Darius I. There were widespread revolts during the early days of Darius’ rule (522-486 BCE) and

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35 Miller and Hayes, Israel and Judah, 503, 505.
36 Miller and Hayes, Israel and Judah, 500, 503, 505.
37 The extra biblical evidence i.e., the so-called “Cyrus Cylinder” presents the policy of the Persian kingdom particularly in relation to the religious freedom granted to the exiled people in Babylon. These policies also served to allow the exiled people to return to their homeland in order to rebuild their religious sanctuaries (e.g., the Jews were allowed to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem). Furthermore, the Persian king Cyrus also returned the cultic vessels of the Jerusalem temple in order to be kept in Jerusalem and later in the temple which was to be constructed. Miller and Hayes, Israel and Judah, 503, 505; Albertz, Exilszeit, 113-116.
38 During the first return to Judah, less than 20,000 people went back. John Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 366; According to the rabbinic interpretation, the Jews were reluctant to return to Judah. Bickerman, “Babylonian Captivity,” 348; Josephus opines that due to financial considerations they were reluctant to return to Judah. Josephus Ant. XI.8.
39 Clifford states that the edited literature of the exilic period should not mislead us to think that the exiles were more passionate in achieving the national goals. Richard J. Clifford, Fair Spoken and Persuading: Interpretation of Second Isaiah (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 13; Shemaryahu Talmon, “The Emergence of Jewish Sectarianism in the Early Second Temple Period,” in King, Cult and Calendar in Ancient Israel: Collected Studies (ed. Shemaryahu Talmon; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), 595.
40 Scholars agree that due to the secure condition of life in Babylon and because of the conflicting religious, political and social situation in Judah which may not be in favor of the returnees from exile (i.e., the returnees were not sure whether they would be welcomed by the remnants in Judah), most of them decided strongly to remain in Babylon. On the other hand, according to some sources, Cyrus did not allow the entire population of exiled Jews to return, but only a few were allowed those who would rebuild the temple. Miller and Hayes, Israel and Judah, 503, 505; Albertz, Exilszeit, 113-116.
41 Miller and Hayes, Israel and Judah, 512.
42 Though Darius came to power with widespread support, still there was opposition for him in various regions of Babylon. After continuous battles he made himself the ruler of Babylonian kingdom with effective administration (esp. during 522-519 BCE). He murdered more than three thousand of the principal citizens and allowed the rest of the
since Babylon was ravaged for months the Jewish exiles gradually returned to Palestine. The historical background of the completion of reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple took place during the early years of Darius’ rule under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua.\textsuperscript{43}

Therefore, in this historical background the prophet addressed the Jews who were exiled in Babylon (and also to the remnants in Judah) and who had suffered immensely between ca. 540-500 BCE.\textsuperscript{44} Most of the Jews had never seen their homeland, especially those who were in Babylon. Their circumstances led them to doubt whether God still loved the Israelites and whether they still had any future.\textsuperscript{45} Others wondered whether the God of Israel was really the creator of the world and thus powerful enough to defeat the Babylonian rulers and their gods. In the midst of these unsettled queries, the prophet attempted to comfort the exiles, to explain the reasons for their exilic plight and to convince them that the Babylonian empire would soon collapse and that they would be able to return to their ancestral homeland.\textsuperscript{46} A brief historical sketch has been offered above in order to understand the sequence of historical developments and the political, religious and cultural milieu in which Isa 40-55 came into existence. Also, these historical developments certainly pave the way to perceive and analyze the various redactional theories enumerated below which offer numerous proposals to understand the various stages that shaped Isa 40-55.

1.3. Theories of Redactional Progression of Isaiah 40-55

Until the end of 1970s, the form-critical analysis adopted DUHM’S position and attempted to fragment the chapters, sections and verses into smaller units in order to identify the subdivisions of the sayings/poems\textsuperscript{47} with the opinion that

Babylonians to inhabit the city. For detailed description refer: MILLER and HAYES, Israel and Judah, 518-522.

\textsuperscript{43} The support of rebuilding the Jerusalem temple was one of the political policies of the Persian rule. It was an agenda of Darius to send Zerubbabel and Joshua to stabilize the territory due to the destruction caused at the same time the Jews paid heavy taxes in order to complete the reconstruction. ALBERTZ, Exilszeit, 113-116; SCHEUER, Return of YHWH, 5-6.


\textsuperscript{46} SOMMER, Prophet Reads, 187-195.

\textsuperscript{47} Some of the prominent scholars who advocated the form-critical analysis by fragmenting the chapters and verses into multiple-smaller units are: HUGO GRESSMANN, LUDWIG KÖHLER, PAUL VOLZ, SIGMUND MOWINCKEL und JOACHIM BEGRICH. HUGO GRESSMANN, “Die
Isaiah (40-55) is comprised of numerous short oracular-texts which are assembled into a sequence of collections. However, the later developed criticisms, such as the redaction criticism\(^48\) and the rhetorical criticism\(^49\) aimed at understanding the text from the perspective of its larger structural and rhetorical arrangements rather than fragmenting the text into smaller units. Consequently, a combination of different forms of literary criticism with the aim of concentrating on the complete structure or coherence of the text has gradually emerged.\(^50\) Hence, it is necessary to focus on the redactional coherence of Isa 40-55 in order to understand the compositional processes by which the end-text arrived at its final form. Moreover, the objective of this section is to present an overview of the geographic origin of Isa 40-55, which will help to place chapters 40-48 in their context in order to understand the function and significance of the theme “Creation” found in these above specified chapters.

Three aspects that contribute to the understanding of the compositional or redactional process of Isaiah 40-55 are; (i) the identity of the author(s),\(^51\) (ii) the geographical location of the author(s) and (iii) the place of the formation of the book (esp. the redactional process). There are no references in the book of Isaiah

\(^{48}\) CLAUS WESTERMANN and ROY F. MELUGIN demonstrated in their research that the different layers are not poems but that they are compositions. According to their view, different individual texts are related and integrated with one another to form a complete book. WESTERMANN, Sprache und Struktur, 38-40; ROY. F. MELUGIN, The Formation of Isaiah 40-55 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976). 159-167.


\(^{51}\) The vast majority of the prophets in ancient Israel were male, but females also served as prophetesses. An important example is the service of Huldah (Cf. 2 Kgs 22.14–20; 2 Chr 34.22–29). It is only the author of Isaiah 40-55 in OT, who repeatedly uses feminine metaphors and similes that refer to God. So, there is a notion among some of OT scholars that the prophet who prophesied or wrote Isaiah 40-55 could be possibly a woman. Cf. HANNE LØLAND, Silent or Salient Gender? The Interpretation of Gendered God-Language in the Hebrew Bible, Examplified in Isaiah 42, 46, and 49 (FAT 32; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); MAYER GRUBER, “Feminine Similes Applied to the LORD in Second Isaiah,” BSh 2 (1985): 75–84; IDEM, The Motherhood of God and Other Studies (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 3–15.
40-55 that specifically reveal the identity of the person(s) who prophesied. Scholarly consensus affirms the possibility of an individual prophet from the prophetic group who proclaimed the message of salvation and hope of returning to the homeland. It can also be possible that an exilic prophet acted as a group leader whose message was subsequently collected and published by the school of prophets or scholars. Hence the nomenclature ‘Deutero-Isaiah’ refers to a prophet or the prophets and the collectors and redactors who were responsible for initiating the message of salvation and hope among the exiles during the last stages of the Babylonian kingdom who continued their mission even in the following years of the sixth and the beginning of fifth centuries BCE.

52 The following available references are not clear in unveiling the identity of the author: Isa 40:6 – “And he said: what shall I cry? and Isa 50:4-9 – “Yahweh gave me a tongue…” Albertz, Israel in Exile, 380.

53 Albertz states that it might not be a single person/prophet who collected and edited the prophecies, rather a group of prophets might have been responsible for this prophetic book which covers a long period of time in history. Therefore, the role of redactional criticism is remarkable, which plays a vital role in identifying the different bodies in the book. Albertz, History of Israelite Religion, 2: 414-415; cf. Richard J. Coggins, “Do We Still Need Deutero-Isaiah?” JOT 81 (1998): 77-92.


56 It is a debatable matter to assume whether the prophetic message was available in the written or the oral form. The chapters of Isaiah 40-55 are comprised of works possibly collected and edited by various disciples of Deutero-Isaiah. This group can be considered as a reviving group or school which kept the prophecy of salvation during the dark side of the history. Sigmund Mowinckel, “Die Komposition des deuterojesajischen Buches,” ZAW 49: 87-112, 242-260; Michel, “Deuterojesaja,” 521; Yehoshua Gitay, “Deutero-Isaiah: Oral or Written?” JBL 99 (1980): 191; Blaženka Schuever, Return of YHWH, 7; Berges, “Book of Isaiah,” 555-558.
Another main concern which is closely linked when it comes to the discussion of Isa 40-55 is the geographic location and the successive development of the text. ELLIGER observed in his study that the 16 chapters of DI (40-55) consist of two conclusions (i.e. Isa 52:7-12 and Isa 55:6-13) and therefore he opined that Isa 52:7-12 was plausibly the concluding section of the original/first version. Moreover, the lengthy fourth servant song (Isa 52:13-53:12) was added later to the original collection (Isa 40:1-52:7). This collection was further expanded with chapters 54 and 55 and according to ELLIGER, the author of third Isaiah played a vital role in the redactional process of these additional chapters (Isa 52:13-53:12); but for HANS-CHRISTOPH SCHMITT, DI is an extensive post-exilic redactional work, and he speculates whether it is possible to differentiate or dichotomize the basic-layers and the later edited layers. However, SCHMITT accepts the view of ELLIGER that one of the redactors of DI would have conducted the complete redactional process. Thus, SCHMITT underscores that DI is an editorial work, like any other prophetic book of the OT. ELLIGER’S view of third Isaiah as

57 Although an ample number of redactional critics have presented their views on the formation of Isaiah 40-55, here in this section I would like to give a brief systematic and clear view of the redactional process form the selected scholars only.

58 KARL ELLIGER, Deuterojesaja in seinem Verhältnis zu Tritojesaja (BWANT 63; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933), 265-267.

59 This proposal of ELLIGER is even valid today in the critical scholarship of Deutero-Isaiah. Some of the scholars who subscribe to this view are as follows: ODIL HANES STECK, Gottesknecht und Zion: Gesammelte Aufsätze zu Deuterojesaja (FAT 4; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 125; KRATZ, Deuterojesja-Buch, 217; JÜRGEN VAN OSSCHOT, Von Babel zum Zion: Eine literarkritische und redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung (BZAW 206; Berlin: de Gryuter, 1993), 345; ULRICH BERGES, Das Buch Jesaja: Komposition und Endgestalt (HBS 16; Freiburg: Herder, 1998), 549; JÜRGEN WERTLITZ, Redaktion und Komposition: Zur Rückfrage hinter die Endgestalt von Jesaja 40-55 (BBB 122; Berlin: Philo, 1999), 319-23.


63 Because SCHMITT perceives that the redactional work conveys the reason for the delay of the salvation announced by the prophet in Babylon (Isa 40:1-11; 48:1-11, 17-19; 55).

64 SCHMITT, “Prophetie und Schultheologie,” 59; cf. WEIDNER, Deuterojesajas, 17.

65 According to SCHMITT, the redactional emphasis was centered around three points, namely: obedience to Yahweh, the emphasis on universalism and allegiance to the past traditions. SCHMITT, “Prophetie und Schultheologie,” 60-61.

66 SCHMITT, “Prophetie und Schultheologie,” 59; WEIDNER, Deuterojesajas, 17.
the redactor of the concluding sections of DI is not plausible, since Third-Isaiah itself is also a complicated composition.\textsuperscript{67}

MENAHEM HARAN,\textsuperscript{68} who regarded Isaiah 40-55 as composed by an individual author, observed that Isa 40-48 presents the prophetic message in the light of the Babylonian background, for which HARAN places the following elements in the text as evidence: proclamation of the uniqueness of Yahweh, cosmological language and the use of creation verbs;\textsuperscript{69} and for HARAN chapters 49-50 reflect the issues related to Judah and this view substantiates his argument of the continued editorial process in Judah which actually began in Babylon.\textsuperscript{70} KLAUS KIESOW in his study on Isaiah 40-55 deals with the role of *Exodus-motive*,\textsuperscript{71} through which he explains the composition of Isaiah 40-55. He identified that the prolog (Isa 40:1-11) and epilog (Isa 48:21-22; 52:7-12; 55:12-13) function as frames and that they are indications of the redactional process.\textsuperscript{72} Further, he traced out that Isa 55:6-13 is the second epilogue which is linked with the prolog (Isa 40:6-8).\textsuperscript{73} For KIESOW the redactional process took place in the following manner: (i) the *Grundschicht* (basic-text-layer – Isa 40:13-48:20) originated in Babylon and was addressed to encourage the exilic community with regard to returning to their homeland;\textsuperscript{74} (ii) the *Erweiterungsschicht* (first-additional-layer – Isa 49:1-52:10), which emphasized the rebuilding of the temple and the city and presupposes a Jerusalemite redaction;\textsuperscript{75} (iii) the further *Erweiterungsschicht* (second-additional-layer – Isa 52:13-55:13) concentrates on the eschatological issues. This layer was possibly composed in Judah;\textsuperscript{76} (iv) and finally to which the *prologue* (Isa 40:1-11/12) was added.\textsuperscript{77} ROSARIO PIUS MERENDINO\textsuperscript{78} who dealt particularly with Isaiah 40-48,


\textsuperscript{69} HARAN, “Literary Structure,” 133-134.

\textsuperscript{70} HARAN proposed two editions by the same author/prophet who began his ministry in Babylon and returned back to Judah and finished the remaining book of Isaiah (i.e., Isa 49-55). HARAN, “Literary Structure,” 133-134.

\textsuperscript{71} In his reading of Isaiah 40-48 (the basic text), KIESOW identifies the metaphorical theme – *Wegtheologie* in the context of ‘Exodus’ texts. KLAUS KIESOW, *Exodustexte*, 158-168; (cf. Isa 40:1-11; 43:16-21; 49:7-12; 51:9-10; 52:7-12; 55:12-15, etc.).

\textsuperscript{72} KIESOW, *Exodustexte*, 159-161; cf. WEIDNER, *Deuterojesajas*, 18.

\textsuperscript{73} KIESOW, *Exodustexte*, 66, 165.

\textsuperscript{74} KIESOW, *Exodustexte*, 163-165; cf. TIEMEYER, *Isaiah 40-55*, 34

\textsuperscript{75} KIESOW, *Exodustexte*, 164-165; cf. WEIDNER, *Deuterojesajas*, 17f.

\textsuperscript{76} KIESOW, *Exodustexte im Jesajabuch*, 17f; Cf. WEIDNER, *Deuterojesajas*, 17f.

\textsuperscript{77} KIESOW, *Exodustexte*, 165.

adopted the outcome of ELLIGER’s postdoctoral research, and points out that due to the distinct literary style and content, parts of Isaiah chapters 40-48 were the genuine work of the prophet who addressed the exilic community in Babylon. He points out that there is a definite literary limitation to the foundational layer in Isa 48 (40:12-48:22). Further, he states that the subsequent sections were gradually added to the basic layer (i.e. Isa 40:9-11; 49:1-52:12; 54f. and later 40:1-5; 55-66). Moreover, he observes five individual collections in the basic layer (Isa 40-48) and for him the content in the basic layer or Grundschicht is attributed to the anonymous prophet who prophesied in Babylon. Further MERENDINO states that chapters 49:1-52:12 have their own tradition-history which does not match with the tradition-history of Isaiah 40-48. Therefore, MERENDINO’s study explains that the collected sayings (core-text or basic layer) of the Babylonian Isaianic prophet are prophecies which reflect the Babylonian context.

The above-mentioned works of ELLIGER, SCHMITT, KIESOW and MERENDINO changed the research perspectives on DI. The literary uniformity was questioned, where not only individual parts, but also entire chapters were considered to be inserted later into DI over the course of time. Research perspectives of the scholars differed in examining and authenticating the literary unity of Isaiah 40-55. However, this foundation brought a new understanding in the succeeding years in the scholarship on DI. Moreover, attributing the Grundschicht (Isa 40-48) to an anonymous prophet in the Babylonian context is consistently underscored in the argumentative presentations of the above-mentioned scholars who clearly assert the Babylonian origin of Isa 40-48.

In the subsequent years, research on the redactional work of DI continued with the contributions of many scholars, and in the following lines a few significant contributors are to be mentioned: JACQUES VERMEYLEN in his edited book on Isaiah, presented his view on the formation of the book of Isaiah. His point of focus on this issue is those texts that deal with Cyrus and his triumphal occupation of

79 The content and linguistic unity of Isaiah 40-55 has been emphasized by ELLIGER. Cf. WEIDNER, Deuterojesajas, 18f.
80 MERENDINO, Untersuchung vom Jes 40-48, 543.
82 MERENDINO, Untersuchung vom Jes 40-48, 4.
83 MERENDINO used the critical approaches such as form, redaction and literary tools to analyze Isaiah 40-48. MERENDINO, Untersuchung vom Jes 40-48, 543; cf. TIEMEYER, Isaiah 40-55, 35; WEIDNER, Deuterojesajas, 18f.
Babylon. These passages played a major role in the formation of DI to which other materials were added and several editions were made in the course of time until the final formation of Isaiah 40-55. Although he divided DI into small fragments, still he maintained the tripartite division of DUHM as a basis for his research. In his article "Einheit und Komplexität Deuterojesajas," HANS-JÜRGEN HERMISSON discusses the problem of the redactional process of Isaiah 40-55. According to his view, the traces of Babylonian core-text are present not only in Isa 40-48 but also in Isa 49-55. In response to KIESOW, HERMISSON states that DI’s ‘Exodus-motive' concept consists of two names, i.e. Jacob and Zion and that both these terms represent the entire Israel, but in different manners in chapters 40-48 and in 49-55 respectively. The 'Jacob-Israel' in Isa 40-48 represents the 'elected Israel' in the context of departure and journey from Babylon, but the term 'Zion/Jerusalem' represents the homeland (motherland) of the Israelites which is described in the context of arrival in Judah. In his work, HERMISSON identifies five redactional levels of Isa 40-55: the oldest text collection (Älteste-Sammlung-Grundbestand), addition of servant songs layer (Gottesknechtsliedschicht), immanent-expectation-section (Die-qarob-Schicht), and idol polemic passages (Götzenbilderschicht); and finally the addition of individual texts (Übrige Texte) of which evolved over a period of time from 539 BCE to the late years of the sixth century BCE.

ODIL HANNES STECK, who is famously known for his extensive research on the redactional complexities and multi-layeredness of the book of Isaiah adopts the

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87 Isa 40,9.11; 40,12-41,5; 41,21-29; 42,5-7; 44,24-28; 45,1-7; 45,11-13; 46,9-11; 48,12-15.
93 According to HERMISSON, the additions and modifications to the elementary source (Grundbestand) are based specifically on the theological and linguistic inconsistencies present in the text. HERMISSON, “Einheit und Komplexität,” 310-311.
94 HERMISSON presented through his work twelve concepts/categories from Isaiah 40-55 (Isa 42:18-25; 46:8; 12-16; 48:17-19; 49:7, 8-12, 24-26; 50:3; 51:1f, 4-8; 51:12-14; 54:11-17; 55:6f) like, fabrication of idols, delayed and conditioned salvation with the call to repent etc. Isa 55:1-5, 8-13 is the older collection/compilation (539 BCE). HERMISSON, “Einheit und Komplexität,” 311.
95 The collection of STECK’s ten articles (from 1984 onwards) are published as ten chapters in the following book. ODIL HANNES STECK, Gottesknecht und Zion. Gesammelte Aufsätze zu Deuterojesaja (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992); IDEM, Studien zu Tritojesaja (BZAW 203; 2 vols; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991); idem, “Autor und/oder Redaktor in Jes 56-66,” in Writings
basic hypothesis of DUHM and validates it with his new outlook to the discussion of the redactional process of Isaiah.\textsuperscript{96} According to STECK, the two larger portions of Isaiah (Isa 1-34; 36-39 and Isa 40-55) have their own separate formational-history.\textsuperscript{97} The early post-exilic period is an approximate period for the formation of the first-Isaiah (Isa 1-11; 13-34; 36-39), whereas, a complex and multiple layered section (i.e. Isa 40-55) independent from the previous section emerged after 540 BCE to which the remaining chapters (i.e. Isa 60-62) were added. Further, for STECK, Isa 55-66 is not an independent composition; rather these chapters are series of gradual textual expansions which eventually gave rise to the ‘Großjesaja’ (Great book of Isaiah).\textsuperscript{98} Moreover, after the death of Alexander the great (323 BCE) an objectively profiled redactional process took place which incorporated Isa 1-39 and 40-55; 60-62 together (‘Großjesaja’). In addition, STECK points out that Isa 35 played a major role as ‘redactional-bridge-text’ to connect Isa 1-39 and 40-66.\textsuperscript{99}

Moreover, STECK’s approach concentrates on two main terminologies in DI namely ‘Servant’ and ‘Zion.’\textsuperscript{100} He argues that the core-text (Isa 40-46) announces the end of Babylonian rule and the Israelites return to the homeland and moreover, the core-text was from the single exilic prophet who lived in Babylon.\textsuperscript{101} Additions were made to the Grundschicht (core-text) in three stages during the latter part of the Exile ca. 520 BCE (i.e. the Grundschicht and Zion-Fortschreibungen).\textsuperscript{102} Furthermore, the redactional process of the successive layers (Kyros-Ergänzungs-Schicht) continued to occur even after the fall of Babylon.\textsuperscript{103} According to STECK’s hypothesis, between 311-301 BCE the final redactional process (Heimkehrredaktion) took place during which the complete book of Isaiah took its final shape.\textsuperscript{104} STECK indicates that the entire book of Isaiah (including protodeutero-trito) had undergone Schulssredaktion/großjesajanische Fortschreibungen which happened between 301-270 BCE during the Hellenistic period.\textsuperscript{105}

\textit{and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an interpretive Tradition} (ed. CRAIG C. BROYLES and CRAIG A. EVANS; VTSup 70/1; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 219-259.
\textsuperscript{96} HANS-WINFRIED JÜNGLING, „Das Buch Jesaja,” in \textit{Einleitung in das Alte Testament} (E. ZENGER u.a., hrsg. von CHR. FREVEL; 8. Auflage; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2012), 539.
\textsuperscript{97} JÜNGLING, „Das Buch Jesaja,” 539.
\textsuperscript{98} JÜNGLING, „Das Buch Jesaja,” 539.
\textsuperscript{99} JÜNGLING, „Das Buch Jesaja,” 539.
\textsuperscript{101} STECK, \textit{Gottesknecht}, 149-155.
\textsuperscript{102} STECK, \textit{Gottesknecht}, 120-125.
\textsuperscript{103} STECK, \textit{Gottesknecht}, 155-160, 161-166.
\textsuperscript{104} STECK, \textit{Gottesknecht}, 155-160, 166-169.
\textsuperscript{105} ODIL HANNES STECK, \textit{Bereitete Heimkehr: Jesaja 35 als redaktionelle Brücke zwischen dem Ersten und zweiten Jesaja} (SBS 121; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1985), 65-68, 76.
In the subsequent years, extensive works in relation to the redaction history of Isaiah 40-55 were published. RIENHARD GREGOR KRATZ notes through his examination of the Isaianic text that ‘the Cyrus-supplementary-stratum’ are the integrating point for the formation of Isa 40-48 and he analyzed the Cyrus-texts which are not on the same literary level. For KRATZ, the final form of Isa 40-55 is a product of the larger compositional/redactional process which incorporated multiple textual fragments, and this framework was made possible by the *Kyros-Ergänzungsschicht*. Due to the contradictions and obscurities in the final form he assumes that multiple redactional processes took place, each with its own emphasis. Further, KRATZ identifies a major disruption between Isa 40-48 and Isa 49-55. The former passages emphasize the return from exile by Jacob/Israel and the latter passages accentuate on the return to Zion. According to his redactional theory, the Babylonian-core-text (*Grundschicht*) dated 539 BCE, is credited to the anonymous prophet in Babylon which contains most of Isa 40:1-5 and 52:7-10. The *Grundschicht* was enlarged with the *Zion-Fortschreibungen* (Zion-Extrapolation – Isa 49-55) during ca. 530-520 BCE and in this layer the focus was shifted from Babylon to the condition of the people in Jerusalem. The subsequent redactional process is the addition of *Kyros-Ergänzungsschicht* (Cyrus-supplementary-stratum), between ca. 520-515 BCE. This layer emphasizes the rebuilding of the temple and the city; and the recognition of Yahweh as creator. The *Götzen-Schicht* (Idol-polemic-stratum – Isa 40:18-20; 41:6-7, 24b, 29b; 44:9-20; 45: 15-17, 20b; 46:5-6) was added to the existing redactional layer (ca. 500 BCE). And finally, between ca. 500-450 BCE the *Ebed-Israel-Schicht* (Servant-Israel-layer/servant songs) and the *Späte Einzelzusätze* (later-individual-additions) were inserted. According to KRATZ, the Golah community who returned to Jerusalem played a major role in the redactional project of DI.

JÜRGEN VAN OORSCHOT observes that Isa 40-55 is a result of a tradition which originated in Babylon in ca. 550 BCE which reached its final form in Judah (ca. 520 BCE). Therefore, the redaction process of DI happened gradually step-by-step and in all the stages it received a new outlook in response to the changing historical situation, i.e., a new theological *Tendenz*. He identifies three

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106 KRATZ, *Deuterojesaja-Buch*, 148-149.
108 KRATZ, *Deuterojesaja-Buch*, 148-149.
109 KRATZ, *Deuterojesaja-Buch*, 148-149.
110 KRATZ, *Deuterojesaja-Buch*, 148-149.
113 WEIDNER, *Deuterojesajas*, 23.
redactional layers in addition to the core layer (Isa 40:12-46:11) which were composed in Babylon and subsequently six layers were composed in Judah.\textsuperscript{114} He traces the \textit{Grundschrift} (Isa 40-66) to a purported ‘Deutero-Isaiah’ in Babylonian exile. However, this was dominated by a Jerusalem based redaction (including the prologue 40:1-5, 9-11; and epilogue 52:7-10), between ca. 521-520 BCE.\textsuperscript{115} The text continued to expand throughout the fifth century BCE adding five separate layers, which are as follows: the servant songs – \textit{Ebed-Israel-Lieder} (Isa 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 52:13-53:12), the immanent expectation layer (\textit{Die Naherwartungsschicht}) with regard to the wider diaspora, a second Zion layer (\textit{Die sekundäre Zionsschicht}) including the third servant song (50:4-9), and two final redactional layers, the one which depicts obedience and blessings (\textit{Gehorsam und Segen}), and the other which addresses the issue of idols (\textit{Die Götzenbilderschicht}).\textsuperscript{116} He upholds the point that majority of Isaiah 40-55 is a product of Judah.

The redactional method of \textsc{herisson, steck, kratz} und \textsc{orschot} came under serious criticism due to their prognostication in relation to the formation of DI. Critics\textsuperscript{117} opine that it is impossible to rediscover the basic core of the text of DI and the volume of texts that were collected and edited. Moreover, it is difficult to predict from where these texts originated – whether from an individual prophet/person or from a prophetic (group) and the historicity related to it is highly arguable.\textsuperscript{118} These problems are due to the common factor that we are

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsc{oorschot, von babel zum zion}, 345-347; \textsc{weidner, deuterojesajas}, 23f.
  \item The first Jerusalem redaction – \textit{die erste Jerusalem Redaktion} – including the chapters 49, 51, 52, a prologue in Isa 40:1-5, 9-11 and an epilogue in 52:7-10. \textsc{oorschot, von babel zum zion}, 345-347; \textsc{weidner, deuterojesajas}, 23f.
  \item \textsc{oorschot, von babel zum zion}, 345-347; \textsc{weidner, deuterojesajas}, 23-24.
  \item \textsc{whybray} disagrees with \textsc{steck}’s view of using imagery as a tool to identify the authorship and also the opinion of inclusion of the Cyrus passages during the time of Darius I. \textsc{roger n. whybray}, “Review of \textsc{odil h. steck}, \textit{Gottesknecht und zion},” \textit{JTS} 45/1 (1994): 180-183. \textsc{kratz}’s view of dividing the text into minor compositional units was criticized by \textsc{marvin n. sweeney}. For \textsc{sweeney} it not possible to identify the multiple authorship. \textsc{marvin n. sweeney}, “Review of \textsc{r.g. kratz im deuterojesaja-Buch},” \textit{JBL} 113 (1994): 129-131. \textsc{van oorschot}’s work has been criticized by \textsc{seitz}, objecting the possibility of dismantling the text into smaller parts which can be read with authorial unity. \textsc{C.R. seitz}, “Review of \textsc{Van oorschot, von babel zum zion},” \textit{RBL} 06/26/2006. Cf. \textsc{tiemeyer, isaiah 40-55, 40-42}; \textsc{hendrik leene} perceives that due to obscurities and contradictions in the Deutero-Isaianic text, it cannot be concluded by saying that this is due to successive redactional process by various redactors. Moreover, for \textsc{leene}, Isaiah 40-55 is a result of a cautious design and compilation which would have certainly be processed over an extended period of time. \textsc{hendrik leene}, “Auf der Suche nach einem redaktionskritischen Modell für Jesaja 40-55,” \textit{TLZ} 121 (1996): 803-818 (812-813); \textsc{Kristin joachimsen}, “Remembering and Forgetting in Isaiah 43, 44 and 46,” in \textit{New Perspectives on old testament prophecy and history. Essays in Honour of hans m. barstad} (eds. \textsc{rannfrid i. thelle}, et. al.; \textsc{vt}; \textsc{leiden}: \textsc{E.J. brill}, 2015), 42-56.
  \item \textsc{leene}, “Modell für Jesaja 40-55,” 803-818; 812-813; \textsc{weidner, deuterojesajas}, 24.
\end{itemize}
dealing with a text of antiquity. However, the multiple-theories serve as tools to understand the text in wide-ranging perspectives. Firstly, these theories are indications of probabilities for multiple-redational-layers to a larger extent, although it is difficult to predict the accuracy of each layer; secondly, emergence and existence of different themes which paved the way to various redactional processes during different periods cannot be denied; thirdly, perspectival changes in terms of diaspora and homeland illustrate on one hand the vast magnitude of the time-frame that that the text holds and on the other hand, substantial arguments for the origin of the text within the diaspora are emphasized. Nevertheless, a basic consistent aspect that has been maintained in most of the above redactional theories is a strong argumentative emphasis for the origin of the Grundschicht (or Grundschrift or core-text or basic layer) in the Babylonian context.

It can be conclusively observed from the above theories that there is a substantial evidence to prove the origin and existence of the Grundschicht or basic layer (40-48) in the Babylonian milieu.

Ulrich Berge\textsuperscript{119} essentially divides DI synchronically and diachronically into two sections namely; the ‘Jacob-Babylonian-Liberation’ (Isa 40–48) and ‘Zion-Restoration’ (Isa 49–55).\textsuperscript{120} He categorizes the redactional development\textsuperscript{121} into five phases in which only the core material-Grundschicht (Isa 40:12-46:11) originated in Babylon (550-539 BCE) from an anonymous prophet. The messages of this anonymous prophet which are comprised in Isaiah 40-48 were collected and compiled in a hymnical structure by the disciples of the prophet (Golah redaction), who were still active in Golah between 539 to 521 BCE and moreover, they were encouraging the exiles to attempt an exodus from Babylon.\textsuperscript{122} A few of them (i.e., the disciples of the prophet) who returned back to their homeland (ca. 520-521 BCE) are possibly responsible for the ‘first Jerusalem redaction.’ Moreover, their texts were categorized with Jerusalem/Zion accentuation as mentioned earlier (Isa 49:13-52:12).\textsuperscript{123} They formulated the prologue and epilogue for DI and encouraged the diaspora Israelites to reach their homeland (Isa 52:11-12). In the course of

time, they consolidated the two larger sections (i.e., Isa 1-32 and 40-52) in which Isaiah 33 played the role as bridging-text. In the middle of fifth century BCE a 'second Jerusalem redaction' was made which included the other chapters. In the second half of the fifth century BCE the missing chapters of DI and the chapters of third Isaiah were amalgamated through various redactional processes. BERGES strongly opines that the Golah community who had returned back to Judah initiated and contributed for the major redactional processes of DI. Moreover, there is a substantial emphasis in his thesis that Isaiah 40-48 originated in the Babylonian context.

JÜRGEN WERLITZ proposes two main redactional developments in the formation of DI. He claims that the Babylonian collection (Isa 42:14-44:8) was composed by a group in Babylon which underwent a major redactional process by the same prophetic group which arrived in Judah between ca. 539-520 BCE, which he terms as the first major edition. In order to develop the core collection into a well-structured book form, this editorial group added the prologue (Isa 40:1-2, 3-5) and epilogue including the stratum related to Jacob/Israel and Zion/Jerusalem (52:7-12); second servant song (Isa 49:8-12) along with its commentary; eschatological hymns (Isa 40:12-31; 49:14-50:2); and the additional five fragments (Isa 41:1-42:13; 42:14-44:23; 44:24-48:21; 49:1-13; 50-52). His second major edition includes the scholastic redaction, and in addition, Trito-Isaiah and the final form of the complete book of Isaiah.

The observation of two different endings (Isa 52:7-12 and Isa 55:8-13) and two separate opening chapters (40:1-5, 9-11 and 40:6-8) of Isa 40-55 led RAINER ALBERTZ to conclude that Isa 40-55 underwent two successive redactional process. The first edition (DtIE Isa 40:1-5, 9-52:12) was composed shortly before ca. 521 BCE by a group of prophets in Jerusalem, which comprised the proclamation of return from the Babylonian exile to Jerusalem. According to ALBERTZ, this same prophetic group was active in Babylon between 550-539 BCE. He identified in this edition, the occurrence of both Jacob/Israel tradition (40-48)

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124 Isa 40:3a, 6-8; 40:29-31; 46:12-13; 50:4-9; 51:1-2, 12-16; 54-55.
125 BERGES, Das Buch Jesaja, 338-413, 549; WEIDNER, Deuterojesajas, 26.
128 WERLITZ, Redaktion und Komposition, 348-356; cf. SCHEUER, Return of YHWH, 11.
as well as Zion/Jerusalem tradition (Isa 49-52). This edition would have taken place in the historical background of the return of Zerubbabel and his team during the period of Darius I. The second edition (DtIE2) comprised of mainly Isa 54-55 and minor parts of the existing chapters (Isa 40, 44, 45, 47, 51) were expanded and redacted at the end of the sixth or the beginning of the fifth century BCE. Probably this was the time when Isa 40-55 was amalgamated with the remaining book of Isaiah. The prominence of Zion in the chapter 54-55 reveals that the second edition (DtIE2) was made in Judah.

The versatile nature and complexity of Isa 40-55 are precisely and evidently explicit from the above mentioned diversified scholarly argumentations. Obviously, there is no unanimity among the scholars with regard to an identical literary development of the text and this tendency continues even today, since the text traces its origin to the ancient times. However, the above presented extensive arguments lead to a general indisputable consensus that the text of Isaiah like any other early prophetic text has undergone several stages of growth and redaction until it reached its final form.

Furthermore, the general agreement among the scholars is that the core-text or Grundschicht (Isa 40-48) originated and existed in Babylon. This contains the prophecies uttered by an anonymous prophet which were gathered, compiled and redacted with several other thematic layers (Isa 49-55) in a course of time by his disciples in Babylon and took its final form in Jerusalem in the later decades. This perspective offers substantial grounds for the hypothesis of my research work that, since the Grundschrift (Isa 40-48) originated in Babylon, conceivably, it lays

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132 ALBERTZ also adds that, this edition was reedited by a redactor who was from the group of the Babylon exilic editorial group which contained the major parts of Isa 40-52. ALBERTZ, “Structure and Formation,” 27.
134 In this edition the efficiency of God’s word was stressed, because of the existing situation. After the return and the rebuilding of the temple still the people of Israel were annoyed about the unfulfilled prophecies which were announced in ca. 521 BCE. Therefore, the final edition emphasizes more on spiritual sphere rather than political issues in order to motivate the people to believe in Yahweh and His plans. ALBERTZ, Exilszeit, 298-300.
135 Some scholars term this proposal as ‘twin geographical location’ of Deutero-Isaiah (i.e., Isa 40-48 in Babylon and Isa 49-55 in Judah). Isaiah 40-48 focuses on Jacob/Israel, highlighting the following themes: Cyrus, fall of Babylon, criticism against idol makers and worshipers and finally the cause of exilic life. Isaiah 49-55, focusing on Zion/Jerusalem with the emphasis on rebuilding of the city and the temple with glories future. MELUGIN, Formation of Isaiah 40-55, 82-87; METTINGER, A Farewell to the Servant Songs, 21-28; KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 14-16; BLENKINSOPP, Isaiah 40-55, 63.
emphasis on Yahweh, the God of Israel and specifically, it contains creation language in order to project “Yahweh as the Creator.”

However, in recent times the decisive view of the Babylonian origin of the Grundschicht and the other sections of DI is placed under serious criticism by a few scholarly works which deny the Babylonian origin of DI. They challenge the existing status quo of the Babylonian setting of DI and argue for a Judahite origin of DI which essentially addresses the concerns of the Judahite community. LENA-SOFIA TIEMEYER’s monograph entitled “The Geographical and Theological Location of Isaiah 40-55” occupies a prominent place in the recent scholarly debate which contests the Babylonian-based-author and Babylonian-origin of Isaiah 40-55. TIEMEYER places quite a number of arguments to deny the Babylonian origin of DI and some of them are as follows: firstly, Mesopotamian influence was prevalent in Judah during the exilic period, therefore, the Mesopotamian religious practices and ideas are reflected in DI; secondly, the themes in DI are influenced by Exodus texts rather than the Babylonian texts; thirdly, since the Akkadian language was politically dominant it was familiar even in Judah and so there are Akkadian loan words in DI; fourthly, polemical arguments against the various religious practices (esp. idol-fabrication) which are evident in DI show that the prophet from Judah is aware or envisions these practices from Judah and not necessarily that he should live in Babylon. Therefore, her work completely denies the Babylonian origin of DI and its multiple and sophisticated redactional processes which led to the final form of the entire book.

Nevertheless, TIEMEYER’s proposal of Judahite origin of DI degrades the traditional concepts which indicate the Babylonian experiences of the exiles reflected in the DI’s passages uttered by the Babylon-based-author. The ANE influences from Judah itself are reflected through her argument makes less sense and moreover, the Judahite author of DI has no purpose of addressing the issues that are related to Babylonian setting. Therefore, TIEMEYER’S scheme of approaching DI belittles the significance of the rhetoric nuances that the text unfolds which can be only understood in the light of the Babylonian milieu in which it was proclaimed. Hence, the following lines aim at focusing on the substantive arguments to place Isaiah 40-48 in the Babylonian milieu in order to trace the significance and function of the theme-creation which is discussed in detail in the exegetical chapter.

1.4. Placing Isaiah 40-48 in Babylonian Context to Map the Creation Theme

This research, which aims at understanding the function and significance of the creation theme in DI (esp. 40-48), based on the above evidential and substantial arguments, attests that the chapters of Isaiah 40-48 can be clearly placed in the context of the Babylonian exile.\textsuperscript{137} It is implausible to say that the initial chapters of Isaiah were written after the reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple in 515 BCE,\textsuperscript{138} because the passages in these initial chapters (Isa 40-48 along with other thematic emphasis) which significantly uphold Yahweh as Creator (King and Lord of the history) depict in its textual-setting, an inner Babylonian world of conflict between gods about the supremacy over the other (esp. between Marduk and Sin).\textsuperscript{139} Furthermore, these chapters (i.e. Isa 40-48) also subtly expose the uncertain Babylonian political and religious scenario during the time of Nabonidus which is also attested in the Cyrus cylinder. The following lines will therefore briefly trace out the inner biblical evidences and illuminate the religious-political conflict with more historical facts which would eventually facilitate one to place Isaiah 40-48 in the Babylonian environment.

Firstly, observing from the textual evidences, it is essential to note that important themes and prophecies with regard to the foreign gods/cultic images,\textsuperscript{140} Cyrus,\textsuperscript{141} and Babylon\textsuperscript{142} appear only in Isaiah 40-48 and thus it is one of the clear

\textsuperscript{137} ULRICH BERGES, Klagelieder (HThKAT; Friburg: Herder, 2002), 64-72; cf. BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 43-45.
\textsuperscript{138} LEENE, “Modell für Jesaja 40-55,” 818.
\textsuperscript{139} BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 45.
\textsuperscript{140} Isaiah 40:18-20; 41:6; 44:9-20. Cf. KNUT HOLTER, Second Isaiah’s Idol-Fabrication Passages (BBET 28; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1995), 71-78. According to CLIFFORD, the function of the idol-fabric passages is to serve as a background for emphasizing that Yahweh is the creator of the world. RICHARD J. CLIFFORD, “The Function of Idol Passages in Second Isaiah,” CBQ 42 (1980): 450-464. The portrayal of the images of Bel and Nebo and the observation of Akitu New Year festival and the processions acknowledging the approval of Marduk for Cyrus’ rule in 539 BCE is well criticized in Isaiah 46. This is an evidence that the writer acknowledges the festival, which is another sure evidence for Babylonian background for Isaiah 40-48.
\textsuperscript{141} Indication of Cyrus as the Yahweh’s messiah and his entry into Babylon in 539 BCE which was recognized and well appreciated by the Babylonian priests is an evidence for the setting of Isaiah 40-48 in Babylon. There are parallels between Isaiah 44:28-45:8 and Cyrus Cylinder. Added to that the famous Cyrus edict, which is evident from the Cyrus Cylinder affirms the provision given to the exiled nations to return back to their homelands and rebuild their temples, at the same time maintaining loyalty to Cyrus and Persian rule. Cf. ANET, 315-16.
\textsuperscript{142} Isaiah 43:14; 44:24-25; 46:1f; 47:12-15; 48:14-20, which also includes the prophetic utterance of the fall of Babylon in Isaiah 47.
indications that the major part of Isaiah 40-48 was originated (or written) between the rise of Persian rule (ca. 550 BCE) and their occupation of Babylon in 539 BCE or immediately thereafter. Further, the placement of the Cyrus oracles in the middle of these chapters (Isa 44:24-45:7) also confirms this viewpoint. Another important possibility for placing Isaiah 40-48 in the context of Babylonian exile is the occurrence of the words ‘Jacob/Israel’ and ‘Zion/Jerusalem.’ The historical and political swings which brought the downfall to the Babylonian rule (522/521 BCE) and the rise of Persian domination (esp. the Cyrus edict. Cf. fn. 118) made provisions for the Judean community to return back to their homeland. Apart from a few occurrences in Isaiah 40-48, (Isa 40:2, 9; 41:27; 44:28; 45:13; 46:13) the term ‘Zion/Jerusalem’ does not appear in this section (i.e., Isa 40-48), however, this term explicitly appears more in the remaining chapters of DI i.e., Isa. 49-55 (a few examples are: Isa 49:14; 51:1, 11, 16, 17; 52:7, 9). Therefore, this finding makes it clear, that the emphasis on ‘Jacob/Israel’ (Isa 40:27; 41:8, 14; 42:24; 43:1, 22, 28; 44:1, 5, 21, 23; 45:4; 46:3; 48:1, 12; 49:5, 6) gradually disappears from Isaiah 49 onwards. Moreover, this change of emphasis discloses that, after return to Jerusalem, the point of accentuation was on the theme of ‘Zion/Jerusalem’ (emphasis on rebuilding the temple and the city) rather than ‘Jacob/Israel.’ This shift of emphasis from Zion/Jerusalem to Jacob/Israel is also a hint for the change in geographical location from Babylon to Judah which ultimately places Isaiah 40-48 in the Babylonian context.

Secondly, from the religious and political point of view, it was the time when Cyrus was advancing his conquest in the ANE region, during which, Isaiah 40-48

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143 According to BERGES, some passages give the impression that they were referring to situations in the reigns of the two successors, Cambyses II (530-520 BCE; Isa 43:3; 45:14) and Darius I (522-486). Cf. BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 45.

144 According to the simple structure of Isaiah 40-55, it is a general consensus that Isaiah 40-55 has two main parts, i.e., the Jacob/Israel section (40-48) and the Zion/Jerusalem section (49-55). The ‘Jacob/Israel’ section aimed at the Judean exiles in Babylon, encouraging them to return to their homeland, while the ‘Zion/Jerusalem’ theme focused on the reassurance given to the people returned or on their journey to Jerusalem encouraging them to rebuild the temple and the city. Thus, the absence of Israel/Jacob confirms the shift in geographical location of the text. The emphasis of return from Babylon to Jerusalem (Jacob/Israel) points again to the Babylonian setting of the book. Certainly, such a message was obviously directed towards the people of Israel in Babylon rather than the Jewish population in Jerusalem. Therefore, one can also say that the message in Isaiah 40-55 directed to convince the Jewish exiles in Babylon to return back to their homeland which is again an evidence for Babylonian setting for Deutero-Isaiah esp. chapters 40-48. SWEENEY, Isaiah 40-66, 35; BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 45.
was presumed to be composed.\textsuperscript{147} The Cyrus Cylinder plausibly attests the background, where Nabonidus, the last Babylonian ruler (556-539 BCE)\textsuperscript{148} was accused of attempting to restore the moon-good Sin\textsuperscript{149} by means of untraditional and inappropriate rituals, which led to the significance of other gods being ignored, especially Marduk, who was Babylon’s city-god and the supreme god of the pantheon.\textsuperscript{150} Furthermore, the celebration of Akitu,\textsuperscript{151} the New Year festival, which ensured peace and fertility both to the nation and to the citizens, was completely ignored and eliminated by Nabonidus.\textsuperscript{152} The priests and devotees of the Babylonian supreme god Marduk were annoyed and expected a change in power in order to reestablish Marduk as the god of Babylon.

Thus, the Persian conquest of Babylon under the leadership of Cyrus dethroned Nabonidus and abolished his cultic practices against Marduk. Moreover, according to the desire of the Babylonian priests and supporters, Marduk was reinstated as the supreme deity and the cultic practices were resumed, and above all the celebration of Akitu was recommenced.\textsuperscript{153} The Judeans, who were exiled in

\textsuperscript{147} Cyrus gained victory over nations such Ecbatana, Sardis, the Greek-speaking cities of the Ionian seaboard, Susa, and Babylon and Egypt were expected to be his next target (Isa 40:15-17, 23; 41:1-5, 2543:3, 14; 45:1-3; 48:14-16). Cf. \textsc{Joseph Blenkinsopp}, “Cosmological and Protological,” 507.

\textsuperscript{148} \textsc{Paul-Alian Beaulieu}, \textit{The Reign of Nabonidus, King of Babylon, 556-539 B.C.} (YNER 10; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 43-65

\textsuperscript{149} “Nabonidus and His God,” translated by \textsc{Adolf Leo Oppenheim} (\textit{ANET}, 562-563); “The Sippar Cylinder of Nabonidus,” translated by \textsc{Paul Alian Beaulieu} (\textit{COS} 2.123A:310-313); “Nabonidus’ Rebuilding of E-Lugal-Galga-Sisa, the Ziggurat of Ur,” translated by \textsc{Paul Alian Beaulieu} (\textit{COS} 2.123A:313-314); “Nabonidus and the Clergy of Babylon,” translated by \textsc{Adolf L. Oppenheim} (\textit{ANET}, 312-315); cf. \textsc{Tina Dykkesten Nilsen}, “Creation in Collision?,” 8.

\textsuperscript{150} \textsc{Tammi J. Schneider}, \textit{An Introduction to Ancient Mesopotamian Religion} (Grand Rapids, Michigan; Eerdmans, 2011), 104-108; \textsc{Helmer Ringgren}, \textit{Religions of the Ancient Near East} (London: SPCK, 1973), 83-88; cf. \textsc{Carroll Stuhlmüller}, \textit{Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah} (AnBib, 43; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1970), 75-82.


\textsuperscript{152} According to practice, during the 11 days celebration of the Akitu (New Year) festival, on the 9th day, the Babylonian gods, Marduk and his son Nebo visited each other, i.e., the idols were carried to the temple of the other. However, this practice was stopped during the rule of Nabonidus and above all the New Year festival was completely avoided. Cf. \textsc{Nilsen}, “Creation in Collision?” 8.

\textsuperscript{153} \textsc{Blenkinsopp}, “Cosmological and Protological,” 507.
Babylon, esp. the prophets, singers, poets and other religious leaders were well aware of these religious and political conflicts of Babylon.\textsuperscript{154} The change of Babylonian rule was also the expectation of the exiled Judeans in Babylon; however, their emphasis was on Yahweh who would initiate this change and not Marduk who was ascribed as the changer of history by the Babylonian priests.\textsuperscript{155} Therefore, DI’s accentuation of Yahweh’s role as Creator and controller of history as well as the polemic presentations against the Babylonian cultic-images can be only understood in the purview of the neo-Babylonian religious-political context.\textsuperscript{156} Hence these political and religious tensions which appear in the backdrop of Isaiah 40-48 are explicit indicators to place these chapters in the Babylonian context.

Based on the above mentioned inner-textual evidences and the religious and political reasons I perceive that the use of creation language which emphasize ‘Yahweh as Creator’ has a significant role and function precisely in Isaiah 40-48, since the Grundschicht originated in the Babylonian milieu. Furthermore, the creation language in Isa 40-48 accentuates ‘Yahweh as Creator’ (king and lord of history) and this underlines DI’s propagation of Yahweh’s sovereignty (perhaps over other gods, esp. Marduk) and it underscores Yahweh’s ability to re-create, renew or transform the hopeless situations of the exiles, since He is the mighty Creator. Moreover, the implied imageries, i.e., the human-occupational-imageries which DI uses to depict the innovative activities of Yahweh through His act of creation reflect more the Babylonian context or the cultural nuances of Babylon. Also, these imageries that are used to depict Creator Yahweh are seen enormously in Isa 40-48, i.e., the Grundschicht (a few examples, Isa 40:12-31; 41:17-21; 43:1-7, 16-21; 44:2, 24-28; 45:1-8, 18-21). Therefore, I strongly presume that these passages related to creation reflect the Babylonian milieu and moreover, this can be enumerated more in the exegetical chapter through the detailed structural analysis.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter underscored the versatile aspects of Isaiah 40-55 due to the time and space in which it originated and the gradual redactional process it has undergone to be developed into a unified end-text in the present form. Although

\textsuperscript{154} BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 44-45.
\textsuperscript{155} BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 44-45.
\textsuperscript{156} It should be noted that the religious political debate in Babylon during the reign of Nabonidus (556-539 BCE), which only came to an end with the Greek invasion of Cyrus, was also the breaking point for the breakthrough of the monotheistic confession of Yahwistic faith. BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 45.
there is less consensus and uniformity with regard to the redactional progression of Isaiah 40-55, scholarly opinions do not deny the fact that the DI-text originated in the Babylonian context in the crucial period of Israelite history and gradually developed as a major text body which took its final form in Jerusalem. The issues addressed pertained to the Babylonian context.

Thus, Isaiah 40-48 reflects the socio-political and religious background of Babylon. This is very evident in these chapters, where Yahweh’s Creatorship is more emphasized, when compared with rest of Isaiah. Hence, this research, being well aware of the complexities and unsettled issues in relation to the redactional process of Isaiah 40-55, will keep the focal point on understanding the function and significance of the theme ‘Creation’ in the chapters (Isa 40-48) which are considered to be originated in the Babylonian socio-political and religious milieu.
CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORY OF RESEARCH

_Tracing the Origin and Development of the Discussion about “Creation”_

**INTRODUCTION**

In the history of biblical scholarship and theological discourses the theme—“Creation” occupied a special position. This chapter reviews the origin of the debate on “Creation” from the period of HERMANN GUNKEL and GERHARD VON RAD until the present time. Especially its significance as an independent theme has been questioned and it has been ascertained that it gains importance only when it is associated with the other biblical themes (e.g., redemption). With this outlook the following lines begin with an overview of the origin of the debate on “Creation” in the OT along with the research opinions of selected scholars, which is followed by an exclusive presentation of the research works which focused on the creation theme in the book of Isaiah/DI. The purpose of doing so has two objectives: firstly, to accumulate a wide-ranging impression of how the theme “Creation” has been ‘uplifted or belittled or ignored’ in the course of research history and secondly, in order to pave the way to perceive the theme “Creation” in a much broader sense with its individual identity and manifold nuances which can be precisely comprehended from the detailed exegetical study of the selected passages of Isa 40-48 in the forthcoming chapter.

2.1. EVOLUTION OF THE DEBATE ON THE THEME-CREATION

During the 19th and 20th centuries, enormous studies on “Creation” in the OT scholarship emerged. Scholars made numerous attempts by using different methods to emphasize the significant role of the creation theme. HERMANN GUNKEL was one of the pioneers who initiated a study about the concept of creation. With the help of the comparative-religions-approach\textsuperscript{157} he identified the influence of the

Babylonian mythology on creation as a subject in the OT. However,Gunke1's publication had less impact and influence in the OT scholarship. But it was Gerhard von Rad's famous article entitled “Das theologische Problem des alttestamentlichen Schöpfungsglaubens” which actually prompted debates and subsequent research on the ‘creation-theme’ in relation to the theme ‘redemption.’

2.2. Subordination of Creation to Redemption in the OT

A significant proportion of the discussions on creation and redemption in the OT have been influenced by the contribution of von Rad. By advocating the tradition-historical approach, von Rad's study treated the creation theme as a subordinate theme to redemption. He argued that the Yahweh-faith of the OT is a faith based on the notion of election and therefore it is primarily concerned with redemption. For von Rad, initially the faith of Israel was restricted to Yahweh's historical acts of redemption, and creation in a cosmic sense was peripheral if not

158 Particularly, he presented the similarities between the Babylonian epic Enûma Eliš and the Genesis creation narratives. Hermann Gunke, “Influence of Babylonian Mythology,” 44.


160 Walther Eichrodt states that the understanding and the concept of ‘creation’ was part of Israelite faith from the very beginning. Walther Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament (2 vols; trans. by J.A. Baker; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961-1967), 2:98-107. He attempted to present the different theological concepts in the OT that developed in the course of Israelite history (in contrast to von Rad's approach of viewing the OT as the histories of Israelite religion). Moreover, he points out that the Israelite creation concepts were more unique and distinct when compared with the ANE sources of creation myths. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, 1:30-31; cf. William John Lyons, Canon and Exegesis: Canonical Praxis and the Sodom Narrative (JSOTSup 352; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 20.

absent altogether from the early Israelite faith.\textsuperscript{162} Thus, his article emphasized that even if the OT presents much about creation, it cannot stand on its own.\textsuperscript{163}

In his analysis on the creation narratives from the book of Genesis, \textit{VON RAD} notices that both the Yahwistic and the Elohist writers have used the creation narratives as preface to the course of history which begins with the calling of Abraham until the entry into the Promised Land.\textsuperscript{164} \textit{VON RAD} therefore affirms that the placement of creation before the salvation-history is essentially to emphasize creation as a part of Yahweh’s activity in (salvation) history and moreover these creation narratives are etiologies of the election of Israel.\textsuperscript{165}

In his findings from DI (Isa 40:27ff; 42:5; 43:1; 44:24b-28; 51:9f; 54:5),\textsuperscript{166} \textit{VON RAD} perceives that there is a clear demonstration of the incorporation of the creation faith into the concept of salvation. He argues that though creation is frequently mentioned in DI, its purpose is only to provide a foundation for faith and it never forms the main or independent theme of the prophetic proclamations.\textsuperscript{167} He perceives that the prophet is little concerned with the doctrine of creation and this is explicit in his prophetic proclamations; e.g., the prophet quickly passes over a particular act of God in creation and continues to emphasize the manifestation of

\textsuperscript{162} \textit{VON RAD}, “The Theological Problem,” 132.

\textsuperscript{163} \textit{VON RAD}, “The Theological Problem,” 134. Based on the context (Germany) and the time period (1930s) in which \textit{VON RAD} lived, BRUEGEMANN states that due to the political reasons he emphasized more on ‘salvation’ rather than ‘creation’ in order to safeguard Christianity from the influence of National Socialism. He realized that an overemphasis on the theme ‘creation’ would lead to the misconception of fertility religion. WALTER BRUEGEMANN, “The Loss and Recovery of Creation in Old Testament Theology,” \textit{ThTo} 53 (1996): 177–190 (177–179); WALTER BRUEGEMANN, \textit{Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy} (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977), 160–162; cf. DAVID J. FULLER, “The Theme of Creation in Old Testament Theology from the Twentieth Century Onwards: Assessing the State of Play,” \textit{AsTJ} 72/1, (2017): 44-59 (47).


\textsuperscript{166} \textit{VON RAD}, “Das theologische Problem,” 140-142.

\textsuperscript{167} E.g.: ‘He who created the heavens,’ ‘he who created you, who formed you,’ all these statements are subordinate clauses which are directly related to the main clause ‘fear not I redeem you’ (Isa 42:5; 43:1; 44:24b-28). \textit{VON RAD}, \textit{Old Testament Theology}, 1:137.
God's power in history or to utter the soteriological statement (Isa 40:21-24; 44:24-28; 45:12-17). Therefore, VON RAD views that the creation theme in DI carries out only a supplementary or ancillary role (dienende Rolle) to the redemption theme.

VON RAD observed that creation as a theological subject had entered Israel from the wisdom literature of ANE, and wisdom, foreign to Israel, thus is peripheral to Israel’s historical faith. He justified this through his analysis of Pss 8, 19 and 104 where there is much evidence of Yahwistic belief in creation to attest to it as a distinct doctrine. Though an independent perspective is presented, according to VON RAD they are foreign to Yahwistic belief and they show similarities with the wisdom literature of the ANE world, especially from the Egyptian context. VON RAD’s classification of creation faith within the central belief of salvation-history has been acknowledged by many biblical scholars and even systematic theologians.

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168 Even the saving event is perceived in DI as creation and Yahweh is depicted as creator and redeemer (Isa 44:24; 54:5), moreover, Deutero-Isaiah recognizes the act of saving in creation itself. At the same time in the context where creation is related to the ‘Exodus event’ the saving act of God is emphasized (Isa 43:16-21). VON RAD, “Das theologische Problem,” 140; cf. VON RAD, Old Testament Theology, 1:137.

169 This kind of relationship between Creation and Redemption can be seen in Psalms 74 and 89. VON RAD, Old Testament Theology, 1:137-139, 144, 146. ANDREAS ANGERTORFER, who also analyzed the creation theme in the OT, mainly examined the significance of the Hebrew word סֶפֶר (sifer) in the Old Testament. He validated the view of VON RAD through his research by saying that the themes creation and salvation in the OT though they differ in their perspectives, still they both come under the unique redemptive act of God. ANDREAS ANGERTORFER, Der Schöpfergott des Alten Testaments: Herkunft und Bedeutungsentwicklung des hebräischen Terminus סֶפֶר (sifer) «schaffen» (RSTh 20; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1979), 149.

170 VON RAD, “The Theological Problem,” 141. However, in his later writings especially in his book Wisdom in Israel a renewed view of wisdom and its contribution to the theology of creation can be observed. He perceives wisdom theology’s reflection upon creation, its order, its gifts, its requirements and its limits. It is more obvious in his exposition of Proverbs 8, Job 28, and Ben Sirach 24, where he emphasizes the theology of creation and he acknowledges that the salvation history has little to do with Wisdom. Therefore, creation has independent role and creation obtains the status of the mediator of revelation alongside with salvation history. VON RAD, Old Testament Theology, 1:139; GERHARD VON RAD, Wisdom in Israel (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 157-166.

BERNHARD W. ANDERSON, who has incorporated the views of GUNKEL and VON RAD in his work on the creation theme in the OT, maintains the argument that the creation theme is a larger concept which Israel had in common with the people of the ANE region and it was demythologized in the biblical texts with the acceptance of Yahweh’s historical acts within the cultic framework. In other words, the affirmation that God as Creator arose originally in the context of Israelite worship, and the OT stories of creation presuppose the election faith with the conviction that Yahweh has chosen Israelite history as the special medium of His revelation. Therefore, salvation-history is primary and the creation theme is secondary, both in the theological sense as well as in the order of traditions. He observed creation as a prelude to history rather than cosmology, and creation could lose its significance when it is detached from salvation-history. ANDERSON opines that “DI has taken completely creation out of the realm of mythology and creation is a historical event in the now.”


175 ANDERSON, “The Earth is the Lord’s,” 5-6.

176 ANDERSON, “The Earth is the Lord’s,” 7. This line of thought with regard to creation and redemption continued even in the later writings of ANDERSON. BERNHARD W. ANDERSON, Creation versus Chaos, 36.

177 In his detailed analysis of creation in the OT, ANDERSON has selected biblical passages which were used by GÉRARD VON RAD to emphasis the inferior position to the doctrine of creation. In his presentation he locates the five major theological traditions in which creation is present and how it is related to redemption: redemption expressed in cosmological language (Exodus 15:1-8; Deuteronomy 32:1-43; Isaiah 43: 1a, 15; 44: 2a; 45: 9-13; 51: 9-11; Hosea 8: 14); cosmic and social order in relation to redemption through monarch. (Psalm 47, 74, 89, 91, 93-99); Yahweh’s continuous creative activity (Psalm 104); Cosmic order dependent upon the creator God (Genesis 1 and 2); creation and new-creation (Isaiah 40: 25-26; 43: 18-19; 45: 18, 22; 51: 9-10). BERNHARD W. ANDERSON, “Mythopoeic and Theological Dimensions of Biblical Creation Faith,” in Creation in the Old Testament (ed. BERNHARD W. ANDERSON: Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 4-5, 7-8, 12-13, 15, 19-21.

178 ANDERSON, Creation versus Chaos, 131. Yet another work on OT-creation in the light of ANE creation narratives has been done by SUSAN NIDITCH. She adopted GUNKEL’S comparative literature approach and cultural anthropology and attempts to explore how Hebrew (esp. Genesis 1-11) narratives of chaos, creation, and cosmos structure a mythic-literary world and create an order for human existence. She states that the understanding of creation in the OT developed gradually and was reinterpreted in the course of history. Through the comparative approach, NIDITCH also compares biblical texts with other similar stories of creation in ANE and observes how the different texts compliment and
2.3. CREATION AND REDEMPTION IN POLARIZATION

CLAUS WESTERMANN has significantly contributed to the understanding of creation. His structure of theology is polarized into two main aspects; namely: redemption (history) and blessing (creation). He associates the starting point of history with the ancient credo at Sinai and the saving act of God is reflected in history. However, blessing incorporates the divine power that preserves and sustains life and continues the order of creation. Creation provides a universal basis for the activity of the blessing of God; however, blessing is related to the saving act of God.

WESTERMANN argued that Israel inherited its understanding of divine creation from ANE myths and the function of the ANE myths and rituals is to establish and ensure continuity and sustainability of human life. Therefore the primary function of biblical creation accounts is to emphasize stability of the present world.WESTERMANN opines that the creation narratives (Gen 1 and 2) were actually independent traditions (without any influence from salvation history tradition), even though they had their influence from ANE myths. However, their inclusion into the historical narrations (Gen 12) led them to lose their mythological character and instead they started to resemble history. Even though there is a shift from mythological tradition to historical element, particularly relating to the salvation history, WESTERMANN does not see the doctrine of creation at any case being subordinate to the doctrine of redemption.


180 WESTERMANN, "Blessing in the Bible," 27.


182 For WESTERMANN divine blessing is the gift and continuation of pro-creation, sustenance, and support in all levels of life. Thus, he observes blessing as continuous act of God, while redemption is one-time act and creation is beyond redemption history.

183 WESTERMANN, Elements of Old Testament, 103-104.

184 WESTERMANN, Genesis 1-11, 20.

185 WESTERMANN, Genesis 1-11, 21-22.

186 WESTERMANN, Genesis 1-11, 64-65.


188 RAINER ALBERTZ, Weltschöpfung und Menschenschöpfung. Untersucht bei Deuterojesaja, Hiob und in den Psalmen (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1974). ALBERTZ's study examines Yahweh’s creative activity from the book of Job, Psalms and Isaiah 40-55. He argues that there are
are the other two notable scholars who have maintained to a certain extent the same viewpoints of Westermann.

2.4. Creation – An Independent Tradition in the OT

Although a majority of the scholars claimed a subordinate position for ‘creation,’ there are also studies which directly or indirectly attempt to place ‘creation’ as an independent tradition in the OT. Among those studies the contribution of Frank Crüsemann and Gösta Lindeskog are noteworthy. Using the sociological-reading-approach of the OT, Crüsemann observed that the Urgeschichte (primeval history – Genesis 1-11) is an independent tradition which stands in contrast to the story of promise and blessing (Genesis 12:1-3) that is two different understandings for the term “creation,” namely: Yahweh’s creative action in concrete sense and the other from the understanding of life situations. The creation of the world belongs to the descriptive of praise (hymn), i.e., in the context of worship and it enables to praise the ultimate Yahweh as creator. The creation of man belongs to dispute of the individual and the salvation oracles, i.e., in the emotional mourning ceremonies of the small family circles. It serves to invoke the devotion of Yahweh to His creature. Although, for centuries both these traditions stood side by side and they were united together since the time of exile and DI has redefined ‘creation.’ Albertz, Weltschöpfung und Menschenschöpfung, 6-7, 13, 20-21, 26, 33, 44.

Karl Eberlein, Gott der Schöpfer-Israels Gott: eine exegetisch-hermeuneutische Studie zur theologischen Funktion alttestamentlicher Schöpfungsaussagen (Frankfurt: Peter Long, 1989). In his study Karl Eberlein analyzes the function of the creation accounts in their respective contexts, and reaches the essential question for Old Testament theology of the relationship between Yahweh’s universal creative action and his particular relationship with Israel. A central concern of Eberlein research is to prove the enduring interlinking of “universalistic” and “particularistic” perspectives. In his detailed exegetical work, he has focused particularly on Deutero-Isaiah and the literature of the Psalms. According to his analysis of the theme-creation in DI, the book gives equal importance to the universality of creation and the particularity of history and both these themes are intertwined. Eberlein, Gott der Schöpfer-Israels Gott, 183-184, 188.


related to Abraham and his call to be a blessing to the nations. The etiological presentation of the primeval story talks about the human society which believed in the God 'Yahweh' and experienced the blessing-acts from this God. The creation accounts in the Urgeschichte emerged with an etiological perspective raising some pertinent natural concerns and queries about the state of humankind in this world and their relationship with God. Further these narratives also raised queries with regard to human relationship with rest of the created world; the cause of violence, sin and punishment etc. Therefore, Crüsemann categorizes Genesis 12:1-3 as a secondary tradition to which the primeval story (which was originally independent) was connected and therefore the primeval story (including 'creation') claims its own uniqueness with its own theological emphasis.

In his article entitled "The Theology of the Creation in the Old and New Testaments," Gösta Lindeskog explains the origin of the understanding of Yahweh as creator from a different perspective. According to his observation the idea about creation in Israel is imported or influenced from the Canaanite context. The concurrently existing Mosaic Yahwistic religion and the Israeliite El-religion underwent gradual process of syncretism. This ultimately led to the belief that the Yahweh-El God is the most powerful and superior god than any other gods in the Canaanite context and in the ANE region as well. Moreover, this superior deity Yahweh-El was recognized as creator of the whole cosmos and through this conceptual development, the idea of creation and the creator occupied a significant place in the social, cultural and religious settings. Thus, Lindeskog opines that in the early Israelite context creation was considered as a cyclic process which renews life and so it is natural rather than historical.

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194 This view of Crüsemann is also specifically against Von Rad’s view of placing creation as secondary theme which is just a prelude to the salvation history which begins from Genesis 12 onwards. Crüsemann, “Eigenständigkeit,” 11, 15-16, 22.


201 Mosaic Yahwism was based in the belief of personal, ethical and active God, with its attention turned to election of the people of Israel and to the covenant. Lindeskog, “Creation,” 4-6.


203 Cf. Siqueria, “Creation and Redemption,” 44. Lindeskog observes that the exilic and post-exilic prophetic movements gave a new religious and monotheistic outlook and confined creation in the purview of the larger purview of salvation history and election of Israel. Deutero-Isaiah, the Priestly writers and the inter-testamental Jewish writers
2.5. Creation – The Fundamental Theme in the OT

It was HANS HEINRICH SCHMID, in his article “Schöpfung, Gerichtigkeit und Heil,” who advocated that ‘creation’ is not a minor theme but that it is the fundamental theme in the OT. This was a sharp contrast to VON RAD’S view, who argued for the historical and theological subordination of creation faith to *Heilsgeschichte* (salvation history). SCHMID attempted to understand the concept of creation in Israel in the light of ANE religions and in his careful observation of the history of ANE religions, SCHMID came across different forms of literary tools which were used to depict the creation narratives in the ANE region. Creation myths are one such literary form which were recited during the celebration of New Year festival in order to ensure the renewal of nature and fertility.

In his investigation of the ANE creation myths, SCHMID observed that the narrative purpose of such myths are not to describe how the world came into existence, rather they are concerned with the present world and environment in which humankind reside. Secondly, the ‘order’ which is established through creation and which is annually renewed during the festival of New Year, refers not only to the order of nature but also to the order of the state (political order). Added to the above elements comes the legal order which also belongs to the order of creation. Thus legal codes in the ANE context are always perceived in the context of creation. SCHMID traces the same elements of ANE creation-order-played a major role for subordinating creation to the concept of salvation. LINDESKOG, “Theology of the Creation, 5-8, 20-22.

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208 The creation typology of ‘the battle against the chaos’ in Mesopotamia and Ugarit contexts portray not only the cosmological chaos but also refers to the wider political context (destruction of enemies and political peace/order). SCHMID, “Schöpfung, Gerichtigkeit und Heil,” 3.

209 Here SCHMID refers to the preamble of the Codex Hammurabi as an example, where legal systems are confined to the order of creation. SCHMID, “Schöpfung, Gerichtigkeit und Heil,” 3-4.

210 The cosmic, political and social orders find their interconnectedness and significance in the concept of creation. Disobedience of the nation against any one of these concepts would lead to severe consequences through nature (drought) or/and political threat (from the enemies). SCHMID observes the same phenomena in the prophetic (8th – 6th century) and also in the wisdom literatures, where punishment and restoration are equated with the concept of restoration of the order in creation faith and the concept of
concept in most of the literature of Israel which belong to different time periods of their history.\textsuperscript{211}

ROLF KNIERIM clearly emphasized the significance of creation in his work entitled “Cosmos and History in Israel’s Theology.”\textsuperscript{212} According to KNIERIM, the OT does not speak about God alone, but about God in relationship to a reality that consists of cosmos and nature, history and society, and the individual.\textsuperscript{213} The task of OT theologians is to relate these three spheres to the sovereignty of God. In contrast to many, KNIERIM subordinates the (salvation) history to creation, because for him, the most universal domain of God’s sovereignty is not dependent on history but precedes, transcends, and will follow history. While humans are dependent on the cosmos for life, they were not originally a part of its order. Indeed, the continuation of the cosmos does not require human beings, although it is often threatened by their presence. Therefore, history is subordinate to cosmos. Moreover, KNIERIM argues that human history as well as Israelite history receives its meaning only when it witnesses to God’s universal dominion.\textsuperscript{214}

2.6. \textbf{Exclusive Studies on Creation and Redemption in Isaiah}

There are numerous research-works which have emphasized the relationship or uniqueness of the themes – creation and redemption-exclusively from Isaiah 40-55. Most of these works were influenced by \textsc{von Rad’s} thesis\textsuperscript{215} and therefore a majority of the studies favored supremacy of the redemption theme over the creation theme. Scholars have utilized different approaches to understand righteousness is identical to the concept of the harmonious order of the creation. \textsc{schmid}, “Schöpfung, Gerichtigkeit und Heil,” 4-5.\textsuperscript{211} \textsc{schmid} analyzed the pre-exilic, exilic, prophetic material (p. 6-7) and also other literatures such as Deuteronomistic History (p. 7), Wisdom Literature (p. 7) and other Historical Books (p. 8) and came to the conclusion that the concept of ‘order in creation’ is directly or indirectly embedded in the OT writings and therefore, \textsc{schmid} recognizes creation as the fundamental theme of the OT (p. 15). \textsc{schmid}, “Schöpfung, Gerichtigkeit und Heil,” 6-12, 15.\textsuperscript{212} ROLF KNIERIM, “Cosmos and History in Israel’s Theology” in \textit{Task of Old Testament Theology: Substance, Method, and Cases} (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 171-224.\textsuperscript{213} KNIERIM, “Cosmos and History,” 180-182.\textsuperscript{214} KNIERIM, “Cosmos and History,” 194, 197-198.\textsuperscript{215} \textsc{gerhard von rad’s} view of the ancillary position of creation to salvation-faith has been presented in section 2.1.
the significance of the above-mentioned themes specifically in DI and some important research works are presented here.\textsuperscript{216}

ROLF RENDTORFF in his article, “Die theologische Stellung des Schöpfungsglaubens bei Deuterojesaja,”\textsuperscript{217} partially endorsed the view of VON RAD that the theme “creation” is subservient to theme “redemption” in the book of Psalms.\textsuperscript{218} However, his examination of the theme “creation” in DI led to a different inference.\textsuperscript{219} RENDTORFF investigated the statements concerning creation and redemption in the different ‘forms’ (\textit{Gattungen}) in which they most frequently appear (disputations and salvations oracles) and these forms helped him to observe the traces of hymnic/cultic material in the DI-texts.\textsuperscript{220} He points out that the combination of the themes (creation and redemption) in the DI-texts (e.g. Isa 43: 1; 44: 2; 44: 24) appear initially in the introductory formula and then in the resultant formula.\textsuperscript{221} This combination was further analyzed especially in the creation vocabulary which is used to express Yahweh’s deeds in history.\textsuperscript{222} The statements which speak only of Yahweh as Creator (and not of his historical deeds) are not problematic for RENDTORFF, since they exist elsewhere in conjunction with those which refer to Yahweh who has chosen Israel (historical event).\textsuperscript{223} Therefore, according to RENDTORFF, DI has rescued the theme “creation” from its limiting past, and re-assigned it the place that it has to be placed.\textsuperscript{224} In this sense, RENDTORFF differs from VON RAD, because he does not agree that the creation-faith is secondary or subservient, rather it is one and same as the theme “redemption,” through which both the themes ultimately emphasize faith in the same God and in the one deed of God.\textsuperscript{225}
CARROLL STUHLMUELLER’S book, “Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah” concentrates exclusively on the creation-redemption relationship.226 He examined the various motifs of redemption and examined the creation vocabularies in order to understand the ‘creative-redemption’ in DI.227 He organized his discussion of the creation material according to the major soteriological themes in DI and then these themes were grouped into individual Gattungen (forms).228 According to STUHLMUELLER the theme “creation” in DI has to be perceived as a culmination of Yahweh’s redemptive action for His people Israel and therefore DI indicates ‘creation as a redemptive act of God.’229 DI repeatedly specifies ‘creation’ as a facet of redemption and consequently throughout the book of DI ‘creation’ is referred in the framework of rebuilding Israel and creation is seldomly cited with regard to project ‘Yahweh as the creator of the cosmos.’230 Thus, STUHLMUELLER observes that DI’s presentation of Yahweh as Creator is always misinterpreted as the primordial creation,231 but actually in contrast, ‘creation’ as a theme occupies a subservient position in DI and it is precisely used to emphasize Yahweh role as king and redeemer.232

emphasizes Yahweh’s imminent deliverance of Israel from the Babylonian exile. JOACHIM BEGRICH, Studien zu Deuterojesaja (BWANT 77; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1938), 119-121.  
227 STUHLMUELLER, Creative Redemption, 15.
228 STUHLMUELLER, Creative Redemption, 6.
229 STUHLMUELLER, Creative Redemption, 40, 94.
230 STUHLMUELLER, Creative Redemption, 193.
231 This term refers to Yahweh’s first (cosmic) creation (or cosmogony), and is contrasted to Yahweh’s new creative acts which are in process or are upcoming. STUHLMUELLER, Creative Redemption, 26; idem, “Yahweh-King,” 43-44.
232 STUHLMUELLER, “Yahweh-King,” 43-44; idem, Creative Redemption, 19. JAMES MUILENBURG talks about the ‘creation’ in his commentary on Isaiah 40-66, where he asserts that Yahweh’s redemption is the key concept in DI in which His creative activity is also mentioned. Therefore, the protological and cosmological ideas receive less importance in the eschatological presentation, where creation is always projected as the background in the redemptive history. JAMES MUILENBURG, “The Book of Isaiah Chapter 40-66: Introduction and Exegesis,” Interpreter’s Bible (New York: Abingdon, 1956), 5: 401. JOHN SCULLION, who agrees with the view of VON RAD also underscores in his commentary on Isaiah 40-66 that the theme creation has been venerated by DI with a new outlook and Yahweh has been presented as creator and redeemer. He views ‘creation’ as the beginning of salvation history and course of history is the continuation of Yahweh’s creative power. JOHN SCULLION, Isaiah 40-66, Old Testament Messages (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1982), 31; cf. WANN MARBUD FANWAR, Creation in Isaiah (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller e.k., 2008), 28-29. CHRISTOPHER R. NORTH, in his commentary on DI, states that “The Hebrews first knew Yahweh as their deliverer from Egypt and the doctrine of creation
In his article entitled “Creation faith in Deutero-Isaiah,” Philip B. Harner tries to understand whether creation-faith in DI does not have a role to play even if it was not having an independent status. Thus, he examines the passages with the following themes: creation-faith, the Exodus tradition and the expectation of the imminent deliverance of Israel (Isa 43:1, 16-19; 45:11-13). Harner observes that in all such passages, where creation imageries are used then the prophetic emphasis is confined within the setting of salvation-faith. Therefore, he concludes that on the one hand looking from DI’s point of view – creation-faith does not have an independent role to play; but on the other ‘creation faith’ plays a fundamental role by serving as a linking factor between the themes – the Exodus tradition and the imminent restoration of Israel. Hence for Harner, in spite of its subordinate status, ‘creation faith’ still has a significant role to perform.

Theodore M. Ludwig, in his article entitled “The Traditions of the Establishing of the Earth in Deutero-Isaiah,” intends to understand DI’s creation theology by examining the passages which convey the idea of ‘Yahweh establishing the earth.’ Ludwig identified the different verbs which indicate this idea and analyzed three of them (who spreads out the earth). The phrase (who spreads out the earth) is used to emphasize the creatorship of Yahweh with regard to His continuous ordering of the cosmos through Cyrus in the immediate historical context and caring for humankind as well.

The same expressions used in the book of Psalms (ch. 136) tend to give praise to Yahweh which clearly shows its cultic origin. Ludwig, “Deutero-Isaiah,” 347.

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establishes earth) is a distinct earth creation formula which DI utilizes to proclaim the establishment of Zion through His servant Cyrus.\textsuperscript{244} Finally the term יָשֵׁב (to make) is used to emphasize ‘establishing of the earth’ in the context of creation of man and the place of his inhabitation (i.e. earth).\textsuperscript{245} Through the study of this formula – ‘establishing of the earth,’ LUDWIG notices that DI uses these different cultic expressions to overcome the present chaotic situation in history and to reorder the cosmos; and also the creation of Zion which also emphasizes Yahweh’s creation of earth for humankind’s habitation.\textsuperscript{246} Therefore, LUDWIG opines that creation-faith in DI is not subordinate to salvation-faith and for him creation-faith is the guiding motif in the DI’s proclamation of deliverance.\textsuperscript{247}

Further, there are some more investigations which have been conducted on the theme creation and its relation to redemption with the help of approaches such as structuralism and redaction-critical approach. These studies investigate creation without considering its relationship to redemption. RÉMI LACK has done a structural evaluation of the creation imagery in DI\textsuperscript{248} and examined the principal schemes (i.e., images and articulated symbols) which constitute the Isaianic text

\textsuperscript{244} This expression also appears in other books of the OT namely Job 38; Psalm 24, 78:69; 102:26; 104; Prov. 3:19; Isaiah 51:13; Zech. 12:1. This formula originates from the idea of the primordial conflict with the chaotic forces and Yahweh’s ultimate victory it and this expression stemmed from the cultic setup. LUDWIG, “Deutero-Isaiah,” 350-355.

\textsuperscript{245} LUDWIG, “Deutero-Isaiah,” 356.

\textsuperscript{246} LUDWIG, “Deutero-Isaiah,” 356.

\textsuperscript{247} LUDWIG, “Deutero-Isaiah,” 357. BEN C. OLLENBURGER also in his article talks about the greater theological significance of the creation theme in DI. Yahweh who is the creator of the whole cosmos is presented in DI as the one who is going to redeem Israel and restore Zion which is considered as recreation of the cosmic order. BEN C. OLLENBURGER, “Isaiah’s Creation Theology,” EA 3 (1988): 54-71; (69-70); JOHN L. MCKENZIE opines that it was DI who has presented the creation theme in a meaningful way in the Israelite faith and creation was rescued from the mythological point of view and place in the historical context. Therefore, theology of creation and history are interrelated and both these concepts are ultimately subordinate to the whole concept of God’s mission. JOHN L. MCKENZIE, Second Isaiah: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary (AB 20; New York: Doubleday, 1968), 24; and PAUL D. HANSON in his commentary on Isaiah presents Yahweh as the nucleus of the whole creation to whom everything is linked. From DI’s point of view creation is meant as restoring the distorted community and therefore creation or re-creation is redemptive in nature. PAUL D. HANSON, Isaiah 40-66 (Interpretation; Louisville: John Knox, 1995), 5-10; ROGER NORMAN WHYBRAY observes that Deutero-Isaianic presentation of the creation theme is basically a polemic against the ANE esp. Babylonian creation myths. ROGER N. WHYBRAY, Isaiah 40-66 (NCBC; London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1975), 36.

and how they appear and structure the text. He perceives that DI is divided into two major sections, the first of which stresses creation and making. LACK argues that 40:12-31 contain a semantic reserve of all of the elements of the relevant creation/fabrication language in this section.

Jacques Vermeylen and Richard J. Clifford investigate Isaiah with the help of redaction-critical approach. Vermeylen observes that Isa 40-55 belong entirely to one prophet in one specific historical period. He presents three specific redactional layers in the book in which creation is treated differently. He analyzed these three layers and observed that the creation references in the original passages refer to the phrases that relate to Cyrus and later redactions of creation texts involve the creation of Israel and the return of the exiled people. For Clifford Isa 1-66 is one unit in order to understand the recurring language and themes that appear in the whole book. He notices that three themes are problematic in nature and creation is one such theme and attempted to show how the different themes were derived from Zion tradition and actually reinforce the unity of Isa 1-66. Clifford observed that DI uses the language of creation to describe the emergence of the people and the rebuilding of Zion. This language has its link both in First-Isaiah (1-39) and Third-Isaiah (56-66). Furthermore, in his research Clifford strongly criticizes Von Rad’s theology of creation. His main emphasis is that there are deep differences in defining creation between modern and the ancient views that Von Rad did not sufficiently take it into consideration. Clifford questions Von Rad’s distinction between creation and soteriology.

255 VERMEYLEN, “Le motif de la création dans le Deutéro-Isaïe,” 186-188.
256 VERMEYLEN, “Le motif de la création dans le Deutéro-Isaïe,” 221.
Creation theology is soteriological in nature which shows an organized life emerging from disorganized chaos.\textsuperscript{260}

In his study on Isaiah as a unified whole, Peter Miscall\textsuperscript{261} assumes that the post-exilic writers used the materials from the eighth century BCE to form a composite book and therefore he observes Isaiah as a cohesive literary work. He uses an intertextual-approach and attempts to find the relationship between Genesis 1-3 and Isaiah.\textsuperscript{262} Miscall points out how Gen 1:1-2:4a is ‘dispersed into Isaiah’\textsuperscript{263} and he notes that the book of Isaiah offers a series trope on Gen 1-3, which suggests that the actual earlier texts are replaced by Isaiah. The vocabularies from Genesis (light, darkness, beginning, making, creating, doing, etc.) are used in Isaiah to create a vision of new heaven and new earth (Isa 65-66).\textsuperscript{264}

Christian Streibert in his monograph\textsuperscript{265} analyzes the theology of creation in two contemporary texts; namely: DI and the Priestly text, and he enquires about the significance of creation theology in the time of exile. He observes through his analysis of both of the texts that the initial creation of the world is the basis or fundamental presentation, but it is not the limit of divine action of creation. DI portrays Yahweh’s power of creation which guarantees His future acts of salvation.

\textsuperscript{260} None of the Communal Laments (Psalms 74, 77, 89, 44, 78, 104, 135, and 136) distinguish between creation of the world and the creation of Israel or between the redemption of the one and of the other. In DI the situation is comparable as regards the recreation/redemption of Israel. Here, however, “the perspective differs from Genesis, where the creation of the world took place once and for all.” Clifford next turns to the classic report on creation at the beginning of the book of Genesis. The first creation narrative in Genesis 1: 1-2: 4 is Priestly sources’ preface to the whole. The Priestly redaction intends Genesis 2:1-11:26 to be a single cosmogony, so that here again, creation and history are not distinguished. Genesis 1-11 points in the direction of the call of Abraham and the election of Israel against the background of the care of God for the whole world. Clifford, “The Hebrew Scripture,” 519-521.


\textsuperscript{263} Modes of transumption and metalepsis – a kind of “troping on to a trope, by which one figure of speech leads to another and then on to the others so that a series of figures of speech is formed.” Miscall, “Isaiah: New Heavens, New Earth, New Book, 49-55.

\textsuperscript{264} A reminder is given also to forget the former things (Isa 43:18) indicates that the reader must ignore the earlier manifestations. Miscall, “Isaiah: New Heavens, New Earth, New Book, 46.

\textsuperscript{265} Christian Streibert, Schöpfung bei Deuterojesaja und in der Priesterschrift: Eine vergleichende Untersuchung zu Inhalt und Funktion schöpfungstheologischer Aussagen in exilisch-nachexilischer Zeit (BEAT 8; Frankfurt: Peterlang, 1993).
whereas the Priestly text points to the uninterrupted validity of the order of creation once created, which also ultimately guarantees life to Israel.\(^{266}\)

The recent articles\(^ {267}\) on the theme-creation in DI by Joseph Blenkinsopp\(^ {268}\) and Tina Dykesteen NilSEN\(^ {269}\) indicate the emphasis of Isaiah 40-48 on the uniqueness of Yahweh as God and Creator; and they both assume that this sort of claim certainly has influence and affinities to a wide range of biblical and non-biblical sources. Both the articles have selected the parallel sources and discussed in a broad range. Blenkinsopp analyzed the cosmological and protological language in Isaiah 40-48 and attempted to find their relationship with Gen 1, Deut 4 as well as with Babylonian and Zoroastrian religions. In his intertextual observation, he notices that the creation idea in Genesis is different from DI;\(^ {270}\) and due to the lack of evidence for Zoroastrian influence in the Persian court, there are fewer chances for the influence of Zoroastrian ideas of creation in Isa 40-48.\(^ {271}\) However, Blenkinsopp does not overlook the possibilities of mirroring ideologies that exist between Isaiah 40-48 (which emphasizes Yahweh as the unique, king and creator) and Enûma eliš (where Marduk’s supremacy over the Babylonian gods is mentioned).\(^ {272}\) NilSEN also follows the same pattern of Blenkinsopp, however limited her study to Zoroastrianism, Babylonian religion and Genesis 1. In her comparative approach to understand what inspired the language and theology of

\(^{266}\) In his paper, Douglas T. Mangum shows that “Deutero-Isaiah exploited the themes creation and redemption which were closely connected, in order to emphasize his message of Yahweh’s superiority over the other Babylonian and Canaanite gods and to assert Yahweh’s status as redeemer, king and creator. According to him creation is subservient to redemption, however, DI in the context of his redemptive message, used the creation concept effectively.” Douglas T. Mangum “Creation Traditions in Isaiah 40-55: Their Origin and Purpose,” in AAR/SBL Seminar Papers (paper presented at the Upper Midwest Regional AAR/SBL Meeting, Lutheran Seminary, St. Paul, MN – March 27-28, 2009): 1-16.

\(^{267}\) Another recent article on creation in Isaiah is penned by Terrance R. Wardlaw, which examines the theme of creation throughout Isaiah 1-66 under the assumption of single authorship. This study attempts to demonstrate that Isa 4:2-6, 40-48, and 65-66 hold creation (Gen 1:1-2:3) in tension with exodus and wilderness themes (Exodus 1-18; Numbers 10–21) as types for understanding exile, return, and the aim of election and redemption. Moreover, this article says that Isaiah through the lens of creation understood redemption as the process moving toward new creation through the ministry of the anointed servant of Yahweh. Terrance R. Wardlaw, “The Significance of Creation in the Book of Isaiah,” JETS 59/3 (2016): 449-471.


\(^{271}\) Blenkinsopp, “Cosmological and Protological,” 505-506.

Isa 40-48, NILSEN underscores that though there are traces of influence from the Babylonian religion, the purpose of Isa 40-48 is to refute the Babylonian gods. At the same time, one cannot undermine the innovative unique expressions of creation in Isa 40-48.\textsuperscript{273} What are the innovative expressions that DI uses to depict ‘Yahweh as Creator’ is the inquiry that my research work is focusing on and these expressions can be traced extensively in the exegetical chapter.

**SUMMARY**

The theme “Creation” has been perceived and understood as subordinate or ancillary to “Salvation” throughout the OT as a whole by many scholars starting from GERHARD VON RAD. However, on one hand it has been seen as a theme which occurs in polarity with salvation and on the other hand, it was considered as an independent or fundamental theme of the OT. Further, the creation texts in Isaiah gained importance among the scholars who either identified it as a secondary theme or a fundamental theme. Some scholars viewed “Creation” in DI as an independent theme in spite of its subservient role. It has been understood as part of salvation history, creation of new-Israel, creative-redemption, etc. Moreover, its significance and function in the socio-religious and political background in which it was proclaimed has been often ignored since DI’s prophecies are perceived as message of salvation and hope in the exilic context and therefore, “Creation” has been understood as a tool that was used to emphasize the message of “Salvation.” Although the recent articles of BLENKINSOPP and NILSEN have shed light on the possible Babylonian influences of DI’s subject of “Creation,” still they limit to discuss the mirror-image of the theme “Creation” from the ANE sources. This approach also belittles the significance of DI’s presentation of “Creation” by diluting it as a text influenced by other sources. Therefore, I attempt to investigate few passages from Isa 40-48 (Isa 40:12-31; 41:17-20; 42:5-9; 43:16-21; 45:18-19) in the forthcoming exegetical chapter with the help of an in-depth structural analysis in order to identify the manifold nuances that DI employs through the human-occupational-imageries to depict ‘Yahweh as Creator and His acts of creation’ which certainly have the Babylonian cultural influences, but still the DI-text and its projection of the theme “Creation” developed in parallel manner to those Babylonian cultural influences.

\textsuperscript{273} NILSEN, “Creation in Collision?” 18-19.
CHAPTER THREE

A DETAILED EXEGETICAL STUDY OF THE SELECTED PASSAGES FROM ISAIAH 40-48

An Attempt to Re-Discover the Nuances of the Theme “Creation” in Isaiah 40-48

INTRODUCTION

“Creation” is one of the remarkable themes in the OT. DI employs various creation imageries (more than any other books in the OT) to precisely depict Yahweh as Creator of the heavens and earth and all that they hold in them. Hence, when one reads the DI (esp. chaps. 40-48) creation passages, the following questions would emerge: What are the reasons for the presence of numerous words related to creation in Isa 40-48 and to whom are these passages uttered? Do they possibly have any influence from the cultural context in which they were proclaimed? What are the implicit and explicit meanings that these creation passages exhibit? Is the subject of ‘creation’ which is comprehensively described in Isaiah 40-48 superfluous or just an ancillary theme to ‘salvation’ or does it carry deeper nuances? Is there something new about ‘creation’ or the depiction of ‘Yahweh as Creator’?

Adequate answers to the cluster of questions mentioned above can be plausibly attained only through a profound and comprehensive exegetical analysis of the following chosen passages from Isaiah 40-48: 40:12-31; 41:17-20; 42:5-9; 43:16-21 and 45:18-19. The passages are confined to Isa 40-48 since it is the Grundschicht or core text and the passages from the core-text are selected based on the different shades that they present in relation to the theme ‘creation.’ Thus, this chapter aims at undertaking a deeper syntactic and semantic analysis of the above-mentioned passages in order to discover the in-depth nuances of ‘creation’ that are embedded in these passages. The following procedures are undertaken in the analysis of each passage: Translation of the passage from the Hebrew text is followed by delimiting and structuring the passage based on their syntactical sentence-constructions and moreover, each passage is analyzed with its multiple inner divisions with the help of grammatical and lexical tools in order to trace the inner nuances of each word and verse. These attempts are undertaken through careful and meticulously investigation of each passage with the main objective of drawing-out DI imagination and depiction of Yahweh as creator and His innovative activities of creation.
3.1. Isaiah 40: 12-31

3.1.1. Translation

Strophe: I

12. Who has measured (the) waters in (the) hollow of his hand; or meted out the heavens with a span; or enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure; or weighed the mountains in the balance or (the) hills in a pair of scales?

13. Who has measured the Spirit of Yahweh, or (who) as His counsel, let him know something (or instructed him)?

14. With whom did He consult or (who) made Him understand (or discern), or taught Him in the path of justice, or taught Him knowledge, or made Him known, the way of understanding?

15. Behold, (all) the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are considered as the dust on the scales; behold, He takes up the islands like fine dust.

16. and Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering.

17. All the nations are like nothing before Him, they are reckoned by Him as less than nothing and emptiness.

Strophe: II

18. And to whom will you liken God, or (with) what likeness (similitude) would you compare Him?

19. The idol – a workman (engraver) casts (it), and he refines (it), overlays it with gold, and smelts silver chains (for it).

20. He who is entrusted chooses a wood that will not rot; finds for himself a skillful craftsman to fix (the) image, (so that it) is not shaken.
21. Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told to you from the beginning? Do you not know from the foundations of the earth?

22. It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; (He is) the one who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;

23. Who brings princes to nothing, and makes the judges of the earth as nothing.

24. Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when He blows upon them, and they wither, and the storm carries them off like stubble (chaff).

25. To whom then will you compare me that I should be like him? Says the Holy One.

26. Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of His might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing.

27. Why do you say Jacob, and speak Israel, “My way is hidden from the Yahweh, and my right is disregarded by my God”?

28. Have you not known? Have you not heard? Yahweh is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; His understanding is unsearchable.
29. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.

30. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted;

31. But they who wait for Yahweh shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

3.1.2. Delimitation, Structure, Form and Outline of Isaiah 40:12-31

A remarkable feature of Isa 40:12-31 is the repetition of syntactic and semantic elements which in fact keep the entire unit intact. The entire passage is shaped with numerous syntactically independent rhetorical questions, which are introduced by the interrogative pronoun רַחֲמֵי – ‘who’ (vv.12a, 13a, 26b), רַחֲמֵי – ‘with whom’ (14a), רַחֲמֵי – ‘and to whom’ (18a and 25a), and also the inseparable interrogative particle לְ which is formulated with negative particle לֹא (לֹא לְ) – ‘do you not know’ (v.21a, b, c, and v.28). The rhetorical questions mainly focus on demonstrating that ‘Yahweh is the master of the entire creation and king, who only has the power and ability to redeem Jacob/Israel.’ Along with the above stated textual signals, the refrains, similar phrases at the beginning and end of each strophe, parallelism of words and images and the use of particles as pointers of thought progression facilitate to structure the entire passage.

Apart from the rhetorical question-markers cited above, there are also additional indicators which facilitate to delimit Isa 40:12-31 as single unit: In content and form Isa 40: 2-31 differ from their preceding and succeeding verses. Syntactically, the sentences in vv.1-11 are constructed using more verbal imperatives (commands), while vv.12-31 are made up of rhetorical questions.


along with verbs conjugated in participial forms. Further, unlike vv.12-31, chapter 41 introduces a new text-internal addressee (the people and the islands) with Yahweh as the speaker (v.1). It is more or less explicit that the speaker in vv.12-31 is the prophet himself, however, this is made more explicit only in v.27. The major differences between both passages are: vv.1-11 is addressed to Zion/Jerusalem, whereas, vv.12-31 is addressed to Jacob/Israel. There is unanimity among scholars that vv.12-31 belongs to a literary unit which posts a series of rhetorical questions with a definite implicit projection of Yahweh as Creator and king and more precisely Yahweh’s prominence as Creator. This is quite distinct in this passage as it is expressed in an outstanding artistic manner through the rhetorical questions.

Before analyzing the different subsections of vv.12-31 along with their minute nuances in detail, a few basic insights regarding the rhetorical style are presented in the following lines. Biblical commentators traditionally classify Isa 40:12-31 as ‘disputation speech.’ A disputation genre can be defined as argument or dispute among two or more groups, during which the perspectives are challenged amongst the opponent parties. Disputation genre can be identified in different literatures of the Hebrew Bible: e.g., in the legal texts, specifically in the course of judging competing legal claims; in the wisdom setting, especially while debating contrasting viewpoints; and in the prophetic literature, when a prophet attempts to reject the perspectives of their intended listeners in order to accentuate their viewpoint. Moreover, precisely, in the prophetic literature three essential elements are used when the disputation genre is employed: ‘a thesis’ which will be disputed; ‘a counter-thesis’ for which the prophet will argue and; ‘the stages of arguments’ taken up to accentuate his/her perception.

277 In addition, BERGES also notes that the concluding part of the previous section (esp. v.10a) has to be read from the background of the Persian political context of Deutero-Isaianic time. BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 124.
278 LUND, Way Metaphors, 103; VERMEYLEN, “Le motif de creation dans le Deutéro-Isaie,”190-197; cf. BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 125.
279 There are two separate introductions with Zion/Jerusalem (vv.1-11) and Jacob/Israel (vv.12-31) as titles. This pattern can be observed in the following chapters with chapters 41-48 having Jacob/Israel as theme and chapters 49-55 having Zion/Jerusalem as theme. These two sections are united by chapter 49:1-13 as bridging text. BEUKEN, Jesaja, 60; BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 127; MELUGIN, “Deutero-Isaiah,”329.
280 Cf. LUND, Way Metaphors, 104.
Rhetorical questions are repeatedly used as literary devices in the disputation speeches. These questions are placed fundamentally to persuade or subtly influence the audience. Further, they have implicit answers and therefore, responses are hardly ever noticed. However, some kind of reply can be rarely noted in the poetic texts. In DI, rhetorical questions are frequently used in disputation speeches and there is a tendency to allow these questions to be followed by replies or declarative statements (at times they are unrelated to the rhetorical questions) which further develop the topics that are introduced by those rhetorical questions. This is evident in Isaiah 40:12-31 as well which is tabulated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhetorical questions</th>
<th>v.12-14</th>
<th>v.18</th>
<th>v.21</th>
<th>vv.25-26</th>
<th>v.27-28</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declarative statements</td>
<td>v.15-17</td>
<td>v.19-20</td>
<td>v.22-24</td>
<td>v.26</td>
<td>v.28-31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coming back to the text, a comprehensive reading of Isa 40:12-31 exhibits that this entire pericope is comprised of five distinct strophes or subdivisions.

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284 Watson defines rhetorical question as “...a question which requires no answer since either the speaker or the listener (or even both of them) already knows the answer;” rhetorical questions are often used emphasize a point to make the audience think or rethink what they know. Wilfred E. G. Watson, Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques (JSOTSup, 26: Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 338-42.


286 Holter, Idol-Fabrication, 63.

287 Muilenburg observes seven strophes in this passage and divided it as follows: vv.12, 13-14, 15-17, 18-20, 21-24, 25-27, and 28-31. Further, he perceives parallelism between fourth and sixth strophes (vv.18-20 and vv.25-27) and between fifth and seventh strophes (vv.21-24 and vv.28-31). The emphasis is “Yahweh is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.” Muilenburg, “The Book of Isaiah,” 434; According to Westermann, the only question within 40:12-31 which is not rhetorical is v.27. Westermann, “Sprache und Struktur,” 45; Gitay recognizes elements from classical rhetorical system, and organizes these verses into two divisions - vv.12-16 and vv.27-31. Gitay, Prophecy and Persuasion, 81-97; Bégrich considers these verses as a sequence of unrelated units (vv.12-17, 18-20+25-26, 21-24, 27-31). Joachim Bégrich, Studien zu Deuterojesaja (TB 20; Münich: Kaiser, 1969, rpt.), 48-49; Hans Eberhard von Waldow divides vv.12-26 into one complete disputation and vv.18-20, 21-24, 25-26 as a collection of three fragments which
which are individually and collectively significant (vv.12-17, 18-20, 21-24, 25-26 and 27-31). The rhetorical questions and statements which subsequently appear are the explicit pointers to subdivide the entire passage into five subunits. The first strophe (vv.12-17) consists of rhetorical questions (vv.12-14) and assertive statements (vv.15-17). V.12 begins with the interrogative particle יִתְנָה (who) which also reappears in v.13a and 14a (יתנתה – with whom). The particle יִתְנָה is accompanied by a chain of rhetorical questions in v.12 which subtly assert the role of Yahweh as Creator or identify Yahweh as the master of creation.

The finite verbs such as מָדַר (to measure), מָכַר (to mark, to estimate, to mete out), כָּל (to comprehend, to contain, to measure), שָׁלַל (to weigh) which are conjugated in the perfect (affirmative) forms are used to formulate approximately four to five rhetorical questions with the help of the rhetorical particle יִתְנָה. Moreover, waw conjunction (ו) is used to link together the chain of a first set of questions which postulate the themes: ‘who can measure the elements of the entire nature (such as waters, heavens, dust of the earth, mountains and hills) with any sort of available measuring instruments (with the hollow of hand, span, measuring container, scales and balances). The syntactic nuances also contribute to the rhetorical formulation of this verse. Apart from waw conjunction (ו), the preposition ב (in, by, with) is used constantly in terms of ‘spatial’ or ‘instrumental’ reference: who has measured the waters (ברות) in the hollow of his hand; or meted out the heavens (ברות) with a span; or comprehended the dust of...
the earth (בֵּיתָלַת) in a measure; or weighed mountains (בַּמַּלְכוֹת) in balance; or hills (בָּכָלָיו) in a pair of scales. These nuances add more clarity to the rhetorical questions that are put forward in this verse and simultaneously, they create unity and assonance to the entire verse.

The interrogative styled sentences continue even in v.13 which begins with the particle יִנָּה, however, with a different focal point of asking the addressee ‘who has measured the spirit (or mind) of Yahweh.’ A pair of rhetorical questions appear in this verse which are joined together with waw conjunction (וְ). Reappearance of the same verb that has been employed in v.12 (חָלָל) can be noted in this verse as well. Further, the verse ends with the second rhetorical question in line of thought with the first one: ‘who as His counsel let me know something or instructed Him’ (וַיְדַעְנוּ).

Furthermore, the rhetorical questions which implicitly upraises the distinctiveness of Yahweh keel continuing in v.14 as well. A series of questions are knitted together with waw conjunction (וְ) which makes the questions gradually evolve from the beginning of verse. Moreover, the rhetorical particle that is employed along with the sign of direct object רָאָה (whom) essentially introduces these questions. The subject matter of the rhetorical questions is as follows: ‘whom did He consult (כְּבָא) for His enlightenment, who taught Him (וֹרְטֵר וַיְדַע) the path of justice or taught Him (וֹרְטֵר וַיְדַע) knowledge or made Him known (וַיְדַע) the way of understanding. A noteworthy syntactic observation of this verse is the assonance created by the verbal suffixes: רָאָה (to discern, to understand); יָדַע (to teach, to learn); יָדַע (to be made known) and moreover, v.14 is constructed with verbal sentence by using the imperfect verbs mentioned above (preformative conjugation).

In addition, vv.13-14 replicate the background of wisdom, especially by using the following verbs: כָּה – a to discern/understand; לָא – to teach/learn;

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290 Rhetorical questions often tend to occur in series and it is observed as originated from wisdom circles in the Old Testament. Isaiah 40:12-31 has striking parallels with Job 38-41 and Proverb 30:4. Melugin, “Deutero-Isaiah,” 331-333; Watson, Hebrew Poetry, 339.
Besides, similar to the previous verse (v.13), the verbal suffixes create assonance which leads to internal rhythm and unity within the verse. Repetition of verbs are explicit in this verse: especially the verb רָבַר, which was used in v.13 is again mentioned here which endorses the inner-unity among these verses.

The rhetorical questions in vv.12-14 are concluded in this first strophe with declarative or assertive statements and they commence with the emphatic particle הֲ – to know/be made known. Besides, similar to the previous verse (v.13), the verbal suffixes create assonance which leads to internal rhythm and unity within the verse. Repetition of verbs are explicit in this verse: especially the verb רָבַר, which was used in v.13 is again mentioned here which endorses the inner-unity among these verses.

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sentence),²⁹⁴ probably in order to have emphatic utterance. In addition, it can also be perceived that the focal point of the assertive statements is repeated and it serves as a frame for the entire subunit that ‘the nations are immaterial before the Creator God – Yahweh:’

Behold, the nations are like a drop from the bucket — הֲנָֽאוֹת הַמָּלָאךְ בְּמִים מָדַי — and All the nations are like nothing before Him.

The remaining sections of these verses are mostly comprised of verbal sentences with a few nominal conjugations. V.15b is formulated as an inverted verbal sentence by giving emphasis to the nouns: ‘and they are counted or considered like the dust on the scales’ — רְשַׁפְּסֵי מַמְאִטָּרָה חַשְׁבָּה —; and it is followed by another emphatic declarative statement with the particle הָיֽוּ — ‘behold, He takes up the isles like fine dust’ — הוֹמֵא יָשֵׁךְ יִשָּׁלֶל. Between vv.15 and 17, v.16 introduces a new content by stating that ‘even the woods or the animals in Lebanon would not suffice for a burnt offering’ —ֵי לְכֹל מַמְאִטָּרָה אֵלֵי אֲנֵי רֵאִים; moreover, v.16 is a combination of nominal and verbal sentences. Further, the contrasting statements in the same unit are presented with the negative particles יַאֲשֵׁי (nothing, v.16a and b), יַאֲשֵׁי (nothing, v.17a) and יַאֲשֵׁי (nothing, v.17b). Thus, the unity in style and content bind these verses as one poetic sub-cluster along with preposition of comparison (פֶּרֶס). Hence, vv.12-17 form a strophe with a mixture of rhetorical questions and declarative statements which assert Yahweh as creator and superior over the nations.²⁹⁵ The repetition of the following elements, i.e. interrogative particle (מי), prepositions (פֶּרֶס and יַאֲשֵׁי — vv.12, 15 and 17), verbs (יַכְבֹּד — vv.12, 13; יָדִישָׁנָה — vv.13, 14) and nouns (מַמְאִטָּרָה — vv.12, 15; וֹאֲשֵׁי — vv.15, 17), enhances interconnectedness and inner-unity among the verses of this strophe.²⁹⁶

The second strophe (vv.18-20) starts with subsequent set of rhetorical questions and statements. The addressee of this section is not specified in terms of, ‘to which particular person or group it was addressed.’ However, the text offers a clue; unlike the previous strophe (vv.12-17) here the rhetorical questions,

²⁹⁴ However, vv.15 and 17 are considered here based on their similar content.
²⁹⁵ W E S T E R M A N N considers vv.12-31 as a unified literary composition to which DI has fused the motives from Israel’s hymn of praise in order to construct a whole unit. W E S T E R M A N N, “Sprache und Struktur,” 48-49.
especially in v.18 are formulated with imperfect verbs and specifically conjugated as verbal sentences in second person masculine forms (you) indicating the addressee:297 ‘to whom (דֶּאָלִים) will you liken God or what (זֹרַע) likeness will you compare Him’ (but it is not clearly indicated in terms of ‘the name of the receiver’).

The interrogative particle יִמְּנָה which begins v.18 refers back to the same rhetoric structural pattern used in the first strophe (vv.12-17). Further, these rhetorical questions with regard to, ‘whether God can be compared with anything’ are followed by statements in vv.19 and 20 that portray a detailed description of how idols are manufactured by skillful craftsmen.298

\[\text{Chiastic pattern ה\text{ }}\]
\text{The idol}
\[\text{Declarative statements}\]
\[\text{Chiastic pattern ה\text{ }}\]
\text{The Engraver}

V.19 is constructed with verbal sentences comprised of perfect (נָעַשׂ – to cast), imperfect (זָכַרְתָּן – to overlay) and participial (זָרַע – to refine) conjugations to express the different stages of the manufacturing process of an idol/cultic image by various professional artisans. This process is further elaborated in v.20 using a verbal sentence which is constructed with a mixture of a participle absolute (בִּמְשָׁפָה), numerous imperfect verbs (רִכְסַת – to rot, בֵּיה – to choose, בִּקְסָן – to seek, לַחֲמָל – to shake) and an infinitive construct (לַכְּפָר). The thematic connection of the second strophe is presented through lexeme הֵמָה/הֵמָה הֵמָה/הֵמָה ‘to compare’/’comparison’ (v.18b) and הִכְלָל ‘cultic image’/’idol’ (v.19a and v.20d). Specifically, vv.19-20 are bridged together by the rhetorical style of placing the definite article ה ‘the’ in the beginning of v.19 and v.20 and through the chiastic pattern word order הִכְלָל

298 HOLTER, Idol-Fabrication, 63.
although there is a syntactic link with the previous strophe (similar interrogative particle ימי), the content and style differ in v.18. According to the content, the issue is no longer the nations, but the gods – idol images. The pattern of rhetorical questions implicitly accentuate the dominance of Yahweh who cannot be paralleled with anything or anyone and these questions are followed by a portrayal of the lengthy process of idol production. Similarly, the style changes from questions without clear destination of the addressee to direct address in second masculine plural (you). The deeper meaning of these verses will be done in the exposition section.

The third strophe (vv.21-24) begins with a combination of interrogative and negative particles אַלְהָלָּב – have you not known’ (v.21a) which is repeated thrice in the same verse (v.21b, c, d). The rhetorical questions, unlike the previous strophes, are introduced in this section not with the interrogative particle ימי rather with ה to which the negative particle אל is suffixed (אלל). In brief, v.21 is comprised of interrogative phrases which are constructed through prefect and imperfect verbal forms; vv.22-23 are composed of participially conjugated declarative phrases and v.24 consists of indicative statements formulated with participial and imperfect verbal forms.

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299 DIETER SCHNEIDER, Der Prophet Jesaja: 2. Teil: Kapitel 40 bis 66 (WSB; eds. GERHARD MAIER and ADOLF POHL; Wuppertal: SCM R. Brockhaus Verlag, 1990), 128; BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 125-126.

300 MELUGIN, "Deutero-Isaiah," 329.


302 In the history of interpretation these two verses were omitted (vv.19-20) due to various reasons. According to VOLZ, it was omitted in defense of the unique identity of Yahweh found elsewhere in DI. PAUL VOLZ, Jesaja II (KAT 9; Leipzig: A Diechertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung; Erlangen: Dr. Werner Scholl, 1932), 6-8; ELLIGER, Deuterojesaja, 65-81. By paralleling vv.18-24 and vv.25-26, WESTERMANN points out that vv.19-20 have no counterpart within vv.25-26, and are thus alien to their present literary context. CLAUS WESTERMANN, Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary (OTL; trans. DAVID MUIR GIBSON STALKER; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 46-49; However, in the later researches this view was rejected and many had argued that vv.19-20 were actually polemic against idolatry which perfectly fits into the theology of DI. MUILENBURG, "The Book of Isaiah," 438-440; HORST D.PREUS, Verspottung fremder Religionen im Alten Testament (BWANT 5; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1971), 193-195; CLIFFORD, "The Function of Idol Passages," 459; WERNER GRIMM und KURT DITTERT, Deuterojesaja: Deutung – Wirkung – Gegenwart (Calwer Biblekommentare; Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1990), 72-76.

303 BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 126.
The rhetorical questions in v.21 serve as introduction to the entire strophe (vv.21-24). An *acrostic* arrangement can be noted in the placement of הָלוָה in the first and the second lines of v.21 and similarly, הָלוָה is used four times in the same verse to posit the questions. There is a relative variance between the manner how ymi was used in the previous strophes (vv.12, 13, 14 & 18) to introduce the rhetorical questions and how הָלוָה is employed in v.21 to formulate the questions. יַּע is placed at the beginning of the verses erstwhile (i.e., in vv.12, 13, 14 and 18) to which many verbs are assembled and combined together with waw conjunction (ו) to formulate a sequence of rhetorical questions. In contrast to this structural pattern, in v.21 the interrogative particle הָלוָה is placed individually before all the four verbs, probably in order to intensify and underscore the significance of the individual queries: הָלוָה – do you not know; הָלוָה – have you not heard; הָלוָה – has it not been told to you; הָלוָה – do you not know. The importance of these questions is also explicit since most of the verbs are conjugated in second person plural forms (*you*) and this structural arrangement serves as assonance in bringing forth a rhythmic presentation of v.21. Apart from its structure arrangement, the second person plural forms (*you*) which appear consistently in v.21 point out that there is an addressee; however, it is not specified so far to which group this message was addressed.

The same strophe continues with assertive statements and perhaps they are plausible answers (vv.22-24) to the questions raised in the previous strophes and in v.21. One of the factors that contributes to the inner-unity of these verses is the *acrostic* arrangement by placing ה in the beginning of each line (esp. in vv.21-23). In the first two lines of v.21 it is the interrogative particle הָלוָה however, in vv.22 and 23 it is the definite article which is prefixed to the participles רָשׁוֹן – it is he who sits (v.22a); רָשׁוֹן – who stretches out (v.22c) and רָשׁוֹן – who brings (v.23a) that forms the *acrostic* structure and also the repetition of the comparative preposition (שׁ – in vv.22 and 23) offers descant to the strophe.304 Vv.22-24 are comprised of three sets of rhetorical answers and each pair is combined together with waw conjunction (ו).

The first pair of rhetorical answers are formulated with participles which function here as nouns: 22a - ‘it is He who sits above the circle of the earth;’ 22b - ‘and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers.’ The second line of v.22 also offers a set of answers with the conjunction of participle (as noun), imperfect verb and an infinitive absolute: 22c - ‘it is He who stretches like a curtain the heavens;’ 22d - ‘and spreads them like a tent to live in.’ A sort of anadiplosis\(^{305}\) can be explicitly perceived in v.22; e.g. the earth – and its inhabitants; heavens – and spreads them (heavens). The third set of rhetorical answers appear in vv.23 and 24 and which also conclude this entire subunit or strophe (vv.21-24). V.23 begins with a participle (as noun) and ends with a perfect (affirmative) verb (יהוה). The beginning of v.23 in fact corresponds to the sentence structure of v.22 (with participle), however, the subject matter is about the rulers and judges and not concerning creation: 23a - ‘who makes the rulers of the earth to nothing/naught;’ 23b - ‘the judges of the earth, He makes nothing.’ As a final point to this strophe, v.24 records threefold metaphorical assertions (concerning the human rulers) with the help of particle-conjunction (אף) (scarcely) and negative adverb (not; v.24a, b and c) and the same strophe is as follows: ‘who are not planted, not sown, and are not rooted in the earth.’ Further, the final two phrases of v.24 narrate a twofold representation of consequences that the rulers will face when Yahweh blows upon them; and these phrases are made up of perfect and imperfect verbal conjugations which are united by waw conjunction (ו) and a comparative preposition (כ) is employed:

\(^{305}\) Anadiplosis is a rhetorical device used in a sentence in which a word or a phrase which ends a sentence or a clause is repeated in the beginning of the next sentence or clause. \textit{Watson, Hebrew Poetry}, 208.
when He blows upon them, they will blow away like chaff before a storm.’ One of the peculiarities of the second part of the first strophe (vv.15-17) and the third strophe is the usage of the preposition כִּ (‘like’/‘as’ to the compare nations and the princes/rulers with the elements from the nature (v.15a, b; c; v.17a; 22b, c, d; 23b; and 24e) in order to accentuate that they are counted by Yahweh as nothing: יְאָלֵי (they are counted as less than nothing) וַחֲצִי (and emptiness) (who brings the princes to nothing) (and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing). 306

In the fourth strophe (vv.25-26), the culmination of rhetorical questions and assertive statements that underscore the creatorship of Yahweh appear with the interrogative particle יָאֹלַי (יָאֹלַי – and to/with whom). The usage of יָאֹלַי in the beginning of v.25 corresponds to the rhetoric structural pattern of v.18a (יָאֹלְיָה). 307

Rhetorical questions

Two rhetorical questions are formulated with imperfect verbal conjugations and they are joined together with waw conjunction (!) in v.25: יָאֹלְיָה וַחֲצִי – ‘to whom will you compare me;’ יָאֹלְיָה – ‘that I would resemble.’ Alike the previous strophes (vv. 18 and 21), these questions were expressed to an unknown addressee (at least until now) which is specified in the second person masculine plural verbal conjugation (יָאֹלְיָה). However, remarkably only at this juncture of the entire pericope (vv.12-31) a hint is given about the speaker for the first time through the ‘speech or messenger formula: יָאֹלְיָה – ‘says the Holy one.’ 308 Besides, unlike the customary structural style of the entire pericope, where rhetorical questions are followed by assertive statements, v.26 begins with two imperatives (וַאֲמַר יְהוָה וַיְהַעֲרָו – ‘lift up your eyes on high and see’) as twofold instruction to the addressee. The imperative sentences are once again followed by the accustomed interrogative question pattern that is formulated by

the particle אשר בְּכִלֵי (who created these);\textsuperscript{309} which further concludes the remaining sections of v.26 with assertive statements:

\textit{Rhetorical question}

\begin{align*}
\text{שָׁאַר בִּקְרֹת עַבֳּדָם וּמְרִכַּבָּם אֵל}
\end{align*}

\textit{Assertive statements}

\begin{align*}
\text{דְּמוּצֵא בִּמְסָפָּר עֲצַמָּה לֵאלֵי בֵּשָׁמְךָ בֵּאֹמָּה}
\end{align*}

The assertive statements in v.26 can be divided into two categories: the second line of v.26 (i.e., the assertive statement) describes categorically the power of creation of the ‘Holy one’ (implicitly understood as Yahweh) mentioned in v.25. This line is formulated with a participle נָפִּיצָה (serves here as noun) and an imperfect (preformative) verb יָשָׁר. These verbs are placed like brackets to the entire line (see above). Moreover, two descriptions about the creative acts of Yahweh are embedded in this entire line: דְּמוּצֵא בִּמְסָפָּר עֲצַמָּה – ‘He who brings out their host in numerous quantity (numbers)’ and לָלֶלּוֹ בֵּשָׁמְךָ יָשָׁר – ‘He calls (of) them by name.’ The second category is causative sentence which offers reasons for the response of the heavenly hosts. It is a combination of nominal and verbal sentences: מְרַב אָוֹטָם יָשָׁר לֹא חָיָה – ‘because (He) is greater in strength and mighty in power’ and אֵאִישׁ לֹא נַעֲבַר – ‘not one is missing.’

The climaxing unit of the entire pericope (i.e., vv.12-31) appears in vv.27-31 which is again constructed with the customary structural pattern of rhetorical questions followed by assertive statements. The whole subunit consists of two sets of rhetorical questions which are introduced by the interrogative particles לְמָה ‘why’ in v.27a and אֵל ‘have you not’ in v.28a. These markers of the rhetorical questions point to the commencement of a new subunit (vv.27-31).

\textit{Rhetorical questions}

\begin{align*}
\text{לְמָה אַתֶּנּוּ הַשְּׁכִּר הַשְּׁבִּיר הַשְּׁכִּרָא}
\end{align*}

\textit{Nestings רַבָּא מִיָּהוָה מְסָפָּר יָשָׁר:}

\textsuperscript{309} Koole, Isaiah 40-48, 108; Naidoff, “Rhetoric of Encouragement,” 72.
V.27 which introduces the first set of rhetorical questions is comprised of two lines. The first line (v.27a) begins with the interrogative particle הָלַּחַת and introduces twofold questions. These questions are composed of two imperfect (preformative) verbs in second person singular form which are combined with waw conjunction: הָלַּחַת תַּשְׁבֵּלָה יִנְּאַבֵּר יִנְּאַבֵּר יִנְּאַבֵּר – ‘why do you say Jacob and speak Israel.’ The rhetorical question in v.27a unveils the long awaited addressee who was referred to using the pronoun ‘you’ in the previous strophes; and the hidden addressee of the previous subunits is noticeably mentioned here with the proper noun יִשְׂרָאֵל – Israel/יִשְׂרָאֵל – Jacob. Until v.26 the addressee is addressed in the plural form verbs, whereas in v.27 the addressee is conjugated in the second person singular form verbs (תַּשְׁבֵּלָה). The personal name Jacob/Israel is introduced in this strophe as a device of getting attention and making the tone more personal towards to addressee. The twofold questions in v.27a extends further with a pair of premise which are composed of verbal sentences: נִשְׁפָּה הָרְכוֹז מִהְיוֹת – ‘my way is hidden from Yahweh;’ and – מָאָמְלָכְתִי מַמָּשׁ מַעְבָּר: ‘and form my God, my case (right) passes away.’ The two verbs are placed as brackets to the entire verse; one at the beginning (כַּשְׁרָה) and one at the end (כֶּנֹּבָר). Moreover, these rhetorical questions have not only revealed the addressee, but also, they clearly indicate the speaker or the addressee in v.27; and it is הָלַּחַת – Yahweh, the God of Israel/Jacob. Furthermore, the final set of rhetorical questions and declarative statements appear in the concluding section of this strophe (vv.28-31).

The interrogative particle הָלַּחַת (a combination of ה and ל) begins v.28 with a twofold question. The sentence is composed of perfect (affirmative) verbs and conjugated in second person singular forms which are directly pointing towards the addressee: הָלַּחַת רֵעַת אֱלֹהֵי שֵׁמֶט – ‘do you not know or

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have you not heard.’ The immediate answer is followed in the next line: ‘God of eternity is Yahweh, the Creator of the ends of the earth.’ These phrases are formulated with a nominal clause sentence and a participle (as verbal adjective) sentence; and assert that Yahweh is the eternal God and the creator of the ends of the earth. Furthermore, the following verses elaborate the attributes of Yahweh:

The first set of attributive aspects describe Yahweh’s endurance and His wisdom inv.28b-d: The negative particle אֵל is placed before the imperfect verbs (יָשָׁר and יַעֲקֹב) to express Yahweh’s endurance (‘He does not faint or grow weary’) which is followed by a nominal clause sentence with an adverb particle יָשָׁר (‘His understanding is unsearchable’). The second set of attributes are presented in v.29; and this verse consists of two verbal sentences, one is formulated with participle יָשָׁר (as verb) and the other is constructed with imperfect verb יָשָׁר and these verbs have bracketed the entire verse intact: ‘Yahweh gives strength to the tired and increases power to those who lack vigor.’ The final set of Yahweh’s attributes appear in vv.30-31 and they encapsulate Yahweh’s ability to sustain and strengthen the powerless. Moreover, Yahweh is no more the subject in these verses (vv.30-31), rather the humans are the subject. V.30 is comprised of verbal sentences which are constructed by imperfect (preformative) conjugations and an infinitive absolute.

The first phrase of v.30 presents a twofold statement: ‘even youths will faint (יָשָׁר) and grow weary (יָשָׁר); and the young men will be caused to fall or stumble (יָשָׁר).’ The conjugation of verbs in third person plural forms, one the one hand produce assonance to the vv.30-31 through their ending (יָשָׁר) and on the other
hand, the change of subject (from second to third person) in the concluding verses (vv.30-31) can be noted unlike the previous strophes. This subunit is concluded in v.31 with a twofold declaration. Those who wait for (יְהֹוָה) Yahweh will renew strength (יָרְזָה יִשָּׁתָה יִנְשָׁה יִנְשָׁה) and they will mount up (כַּפְשָׂרִים) like eagles (כַּפְשָׂרִים). The second line of v.31 is made up of imperfect verbs (preformative conjugation) along with the negative particle (לֹא) and they conclude the declarations: ‘they will run and do not grow weary and they will walk and do not grow tired.’ This stanza is not only bound together by the interrogative particle (לַמֵּן) ‘why’ (v.27a) and the negative particle (לֹא) ‘not’ (v.28a), but also is unified by the chiastic arrangement of the name of God: Yahweh-Elohim (v.27c and d) and Elohim-Yahweh (v.28c). However, the disputative nature of this strophe cannot be overlooked. The speaker’s intention here is obvious with regard to the usage of rhetorical techniques of argumentation – i.e., the disputation genre – to encourage credibility from the perspective of the addressee and promise them the hope of salvation. However, before presuming or drawing such conclusions, so, one can ascertain from the above detailed structural analysis of the entire passage (vv.12-31) that there are various themes

312 WESTERMANN makes a distinction in the classification of form types, between the report of a genuine debate, where the two parties receive full reporting (disputation or ‘Streitgespräch’) and a ‘Bestreitung,’ which Westermann takes as a dialogue that presents an objection from one party in relation to a statement or attitude identified in another party. He also feels that vv.12-26 contain rhetorical questions that do not function as a disputation. Only is light of vv.27ff does the following verses get their actual meaning and a real disputation takes place. WESTERMANN, “Sprache und Struktur,” 125-256; BEUKEN who also problematizes the designation of the genre “disputation” rather wants to call the passage polemic with the inclusion of elements from hymns. WILLEM A. M. BEUKEN, Jesaja deel 11A (De predking van het Oude Testament; Nijkerk: Uitgeverij G. F. Callenbach, 1979), 35-38; GRAFFY uses the term ‘disputation’ or ‘disputation dialogue’ to denote a genuine disputation with two parties involved and ‘disputation speech’ to denote a participant’s refutation of the opponent’s standpoint. GRAFFY, Prophet Confronts, 9.
313 DIJKSTRA suggests that the form of disputation that we find in vv.12-31 should be understood as monologues where the author addresses and, in part, more or less fictively, quotes his own addresses. These monologues represent a typical kind of persuasive strategy developed by wisdom teachers with the goal of convincing an audience in a format that is instructive and thoughtful. The questions introduced with the particle (מְיָלָה יָמֵל יָמֵל יָמֵל יָמֵל) are typical for wisdom rhetoric and invite the reader to relate to the chain of thought, and not to answer the questions to which irony and sarcasm are important elements to the strategy. MEINDERT DIJKSTRA, “Lawsuit, Debate and Wisdom Debate in Second Isaiah,” in Studies in the Book of Isaiah: Festschrift Willem A. M. Beuken (BETL 132; eds. MACVERVENNE and JACQUES VAN RUIJVEN; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), 257-258; NAIDOFF, “Rhetoric of Encouragement,” 73.
which are clustered together through the rhetorical questions and assertive statements. Therefore, a further in-depth investigation will pave way to understand the passage and before unfolding the multiple meanings from the pericope, an outline has been formulated based on the above analysis:

<table>
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</thead>
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</tr>
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<td>i. Who has measured the waters? (v.12a)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii. Who has meted out the heavens? (v.12b)</td>
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<td>iii. Who has weighed the mountains? (v.12c)</td>
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<td>iv. Who has weighed the hills? (v.12d)</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Second set of rhetorical questions: who has measured the spirit of Yahweh (v.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Who has measured the spirit of Yahweh? (v.13a)</td>
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<td>c. Third set of rhetorical questions: whom did Yahweh consulted for enlightenment (v.14)</td>
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<td>i. Who impart understanding to Yahweh? (v.14a)</td>
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<td>ii. Who taught Him the path of justice? (v.14b)</td>
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<td>iii. Who taught Him knowledge? (v.14c)</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Assertions about the nations’ and coastlands’ triviality before Yahweh (vv.15-17)</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Nations’ irrelevancy before Yahweh (v.15a-b)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1) Nation are tiny drops from a bucket (v.15a)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) Nations are like dust on scales (v.15b)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii. Coastlands/Isles are like fine dust (v.15c)</td>
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<td>iii. Assertive statements about Lebanon (v.16)</td>
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<td>(1) Lebanon’s woods are insufficient for burnt offering (v.16a)</td>
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<td>iv. Recapturing the triviality of nations is Yahweh’s sight (v.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) All nations are nothing before Yahweh (v.17a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) They are counted as nothing and void (v.17b)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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2. Rhetorical questions placing Yahweh in contrast to the idols (vv.18-20)

a. Fourth set of rhetorical questions: To whom Yahweh is compared? (v.18)
   i. To whom will you similarize Yahweh (v.18a)
   ii. What similitude can be given to Him (18b)

b. Descriptions of idol-fabrication by skillful artisans (vv.19-20)
   i. Crafting idol with metal (v.19)
      (1) An artisan casts idol (v.19a)
      (2) A goldsmith overlays it with gold (v.19b)
      (3) And He casts for it silver chains (v.19c)
   ii. Carving idol with quality wood (v.20)
      (1) Choosing of quality (v.20a)
      (2) A wood that will not rot (v.20b)
      (3) Seeking a skillful woodworker (v.20c)
      (4) In order to set up an image that will not topple (v.20d)

3. Rhetorical questions of reminder and declarative statements (vv.21-24)

a. Fifth set of rhetorical questions concerning the antiquity of Yahweh (v.21)
   i. Have you not known? (v.21a)
   ii. Have you not heard? (v.21b)
   iii. Has it not told to you from the beginning? (v.21c)
   iv. Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth (v.21d)

b. Implied rhetorical answers asserting Yahweh as Creator (v.22)
   i. The one who sits upon the vault of the earth (v.22a)
   ii. He views the inhabitants of earth as grasshoppers (v.22b)
   iii. The one who stretches out the heavens like a veil (v.22c)
   iv. The one who spreads them like a tent to dwell in (v.22c)

c. He (Yahweh) views earthly rulers and judges as powerless (vv.23-24)
   i. The rulers and judges are naught and void
      (1) The one who brings princes to nothing (v.23a)
      (2) And judges of the earth a void (v.23b)
   ii. Earthly rulers and judges are like stubble before Yahweh (v.24a)
      (1) They are hardly planted (v.24aα)
      (2) They are not sown (v.24aβ)
      (3) Their stem is not rooted in earth (v.24aγ)
   iii. Yahweh blows upon them and they disappear (v.24b)
(1) Yahweh blows and they wither (v.24bα)
(2) The storm wind carries them like chaff (v.24bβ)

4. Rhetorical questions and declaration of Yahweh’s creative power (vv.25-26)

a. Sixth set of rhetorical questions concerning comparing and similarizing Yahweh (v.25)
   i. To whom will you compare me (v.25a)
   ii. That I resemble (v.25b)
   iii. Says the Holy One (speech formula) (v.25c)

b. Creative attributes of Yahweh rhetorically revealed (v.26)
   i. Twofold instructions and a rhetorical question (v.26a)
      (1) Lift up your eyes on high and see (v.26aα)
      (2) Who created these? (v.26aβ)
   ii. Rhetorical statements concerning Yahweh’s creative attributes (v.26b)
      (1) He brings out their host in huge number (v.26aα)
      (2) He calls them by name (v.26bβ)
   iii. The heavenly bodies do not miss due to Yahweh’s power (v.26c)
      (1) Since Yahweh is great in strength and mighty in power (v.26cα)
      (2) None of the heavenly host misses from His sight (v.26cβ)

5. Rhetorical and lamenting questions (vv.27-31)

a. Set of rhetorical questions concerning Jacob/Israel’s complaint (v.27)
   i. Why do you say Jacob and speak Israel (v.27a)
   ii. My way is hidden from God? (v.27bα)
   iii. My right is passed over from Yahweh? (v.27bβ)

b. Set of rhetorical questions affirming the antiquity and creatorship of Yahweh (v.28)
   i. Have you not known (v.28aα)?
   ii. Have you not heard (v.28aβ)?
   iii. The everlasting God, Yahweh is the creator of the ends of the earth (v.28b)
   iv. He neither faints nor goes weary (v.28cα)
   v. His understanding is unsearchable (v.28cβ)

c. Yahweh supports the faint and powerless (v.29)
   i. He gives power to the faint (v.29a)
   ii. He gives strength to the powerless (v.29b)

d. The youths and young men grow weary (v.30)
i. Youths will faint and be weary (v.30a)
ii. Young men will fall exhausted (v.30b)

e. Yahweh renews or recreates the strength of those who wait upon Him (v.31)
   i. Those who eagerly wait for Yahweh will be renewed (v.31a)
   ii. They shall mount up with wings like eagles (v.31b)
   iii. They shall run and do not be weary (v.31c)
   iv. They shall walk and do not faint (v.31d)

3.1.3. **Detailed Exegetical Analysis of Isaiah 40:12-31**

Before analyzing the text in a comprehensive manner, the rhetorical questions with the implicit answers along with the thought progression has been presented below in a flowchart form in order to have a broader view of the passage:

**Strophe I**

*Verses 12-14: Who can measure the entire creation or the spirit of Yahweh?*

- Who can measure the entire creation?
- Who can measure the Spirit of Yahweh?
  - Only Yahweh – the creator God (implied answer)
- Whom did He consult or who instructed Him?

*Verses 15-17: Nations, coastlands and forests are nothing before Yahweh*

- Nations are like a drop, and considered as nothing
- Yahweh is the king (implied answer)
**Strophe II**

*Verses 18-20: Can Yahweh be similarized, even skillful artisans cannot imagine*

- To whom Yahweh can be compared?
- Yahweh cannot be similarized or carved in any form
- Idol-images (gods) are engraved by skillful craftsmen

**Strophe III**

*Verses 21-22: Creator and His creative acts from the foundations of the earth*

- Yahweh sits above the circle of the earth and stretches out the heavens like a tent...
- Yahweh is the everlasting creator

*Verses 23-24: Yahweh’s control over the rulers of the nations*

- Rulers of the earth are nothing and they are like stubble
- Yahweh is the eternal ruler

**Strophe IV**

*Verse 25: Can Yahweh compared with anyone or anything?*

- To whom Yahweh can be compared
- No! Yahweh cannot be similarized (implied answer)

*Verse 26: Yahweh – Creator of the celestial bodies*

- Lift your eyes on high and see: who created these?
- Yahweh is the creator
Strophe V

Verse 27-31: Creator’s hope and strength to His people

Intimate encounter of Yahweh with His people Jacob/Israel

Yahweh is the everlasting God (of Israel) and creator of the ends of the earth

Verses 12-17

As mentioned earlier, a collection of rhetorical questions and assertive statements mark the beginning of a new pericope which have categorically facilitated to detach vv.12-31 from their preceding and succeeding verses. And now, vv.12-17 begin as first strophe of the entire passage and they are comprised of a constellation of rhetorical questions, especially, in vv.12-14 which are led by the interrogative particle ימי (who). All these three verses commence with ימי and employ a sequence of paired rhetorical questions emphasizing on different themes (which will be discussed in the following lines). Moreover, these rhetorical questions are followed by or concluded with assertive statements that begin with the emphatic particle יתלב – behold (in v.15) and these assertions cover a different topic altogether. An aerial reading of this strophe indicates that the rhetorical questions and assertive statements directly or indirectly affirm that Yahweh is the incredible Creator and the nations are insignificant in His sight; however, how artistically these assertions are formulated in the following verses are worth mentioning. V.12 begins with the interrogative particle ימי (who) which is followed by a series of paired rhetorical questions. These questions are arranged in oppositional position and are noteworthy to be analyzed in detail. Firstly, the different rhetorical questions that appear in v.12 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>מְדַבֵּר יָצָא לְדָוִד</th>
<th>מְדַבֵּר יָצָא לְדָוִד</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. or meted out the heavens with a span?</td>
<td>1. Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יִשַּׁקְלָל בְּכָל הָאָדָם</td>
<td>יִשַּׁקְלָל בְּכָל הָאָדָם</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. or weighed the mountains in a balance</td>
<td>3. or enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>מְדוּנָה בְּמִשְׁאָרוֹת</td>
<td>מְדוּנָה בְּמִשְׁאָרוֹת</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. or the hills in a pair of scales?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The poetical nature of the rhetorical questions are evident in the first place from the placement of the elements of nature in opposition: On the one hand, the different elements mentioned below of the nature constitute as sonance to the rhetorical questions that appear in the entire verse because these elements, according to human perception, have or represent different locations (high and low places) and on the other hand, they classify the totality of some of the main elements of nature or creation (water, sand/dust, stone etc.). Besides, they are quantitatively widespread and huge, therefore, their huge number is essentially specified here (they cannot be weighed or measured).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(water)</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>(heaven/sky)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>하دس (dust of the earth)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>하늘 (mountains and hills)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondly, the following verbs are employed to formulate the rhetorical questions along with the above mentioned elements of nature: All these Hebrew verbs (except piel perfect) are conjugated in qal perfect third person singular form and they are translated here as the simple action completed in the past. These verbs are assigned here precisely to express the quantitative measurement of the elements of nature: to measure, to measure out or to verify the measurement; to mark, to gauge; to measure (the volume of something); to weigh.

Thirdly, a group of various nouns are employed in this verse which are indicated as measuring devices to measure the elements of the nature (water, sky, dust of the earth and mountains or hills): natural measurements: hollow hand and a span; and standard measuring devices: a measure, a scale and a balance. The inseparable preposition (in, by, with) is

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316 BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 131; PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 139-140.
318 KELLEY, Biblical Hebrew, 85.
319 This verb in other references used in Qal form with the connotation of God judging one’s heart or the intentions of a person (Prov. 16:2; 21:2; 24:12). However, here it is used with the meaning of measuring the heavens with a span or it can also mean ‘to set out the limits’ (abgrenzen). Cf. KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 87.
320 This word can either mean a ‘measuring cup’ or a ‘measure.’ Cf. KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 87.
321 A span, is a unit of measurement, which is from the tip of the little finger to the tip of the thumb of a fully splayed hand. PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 139; cf. BDB, 285.
322 KAHAL, 279, 656, 240, 604.
prefixed to all the measuring instruments: בַּמָּפֶל (in the hollow of his hand); בַּמָּפֶל (with a span); בַּמָּפֶל (in a measure/measuring container); בַּמָּפֶל (in a balance) and בַּמָּפֶל (in a pair of scales). Apart from the verbs used, the preposition ב that has been prefixed to the nouns accentuates each and every rhetorical question in the following ways: on the one hand, they draw the attention of the addressee and make them to ponder whether it is possible for anyone to measure the elements of the nature which are in huge quantity and on the other hand they subtly and strong reveal the implied answer. In addition, the repetition of the same preposition (ב) creates assonance to the entire verse along with the oppositional arrangement of the nouns (ברוח הנסתרת x מער תארת x שמים x כוכב). Moreover, the waw conjugation also creates rhythmic descant to the verse as it unites all the rhetorical questions and lead them to the particle יếכ.

Based on the above analytical explanation of v.12, when we approach the rhetorical questions, they shed light on the content clearly with its comprehensive meaning. It can be noted that the two sentences in the first line of v.12 are placed in a reversal word-arrangement: מירמד בַּמָּפֶל מים שמים בהרה חונן (verb-adverb-object/object-adverb-verb) – ‘who has measured (the) waters in the hollow of his hand; or (who) meted out the heavens with a span.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>adverb</th>
<th>object</th>
<th>object</th>
<th>adverb</th>
<th>verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>מירמד</td>
<td>בַּמָּפֶל</td>
<td>מים</td>
<td>שמים</td>
<td>בהרה</td>
<td>חונן</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two verbs namely, דַּק (to measure, to measure out or to verify the measurement) and מֶק (to measure or gauge) which are employed here describe the measurement that is performed quantitatively and the nouns such as בַּמָּפֶל (hollow hand) and תַּק (a span) refer to the natural measuring instruments. The objects of measurement mentioned here are water and sky. With all these well-structured elements, the interrogative sentence places a simple question ‘who can with the help of natural measurements (hollow of one’s hand or with a span) in all its proportions measure the physical quantity of the elements of the nature – water and sky?’ The indirect answer is ‘certainly no one’ can measure or the implied answer could be ‘only Yahweh.’ The remaining part of v.12 continues with the

323 BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 131; PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 139-140.
324 NORTH opines that the answer to the question in v.12 is “Yahweh” and the answer to vv.13-14 would be “no one.” CHRISTOPHER R. NORTH, The Second Isaiah – Introduction Translation and Commentary to Chapters XL-LV (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), 83-84;
following rhetorical question: בַּכָּלְתֵּי כָּלְתֵּי חוֹלֵךְ חַיָּרוֹן – ‘or (who) has comprehended or enclosed the dust of the earth in the measure or container.’ The phrase נְפָ ער אָן – ‘the dust of the earth’ indicates a quantity beyond all measure and the verb הֵלָל – refers to hold a quantum. The term מִי לֶשֶׁת (third) refers to the vessel (container/holder/vessel) that measures volume. In addition, in the phrase מַעַל עַל בָּשָׂר הַדַּחְדָּח - ‘or (who) has weighed the mountains in the balance,’ the word מַעַל denotes the vertical rather than a horizontal balance/scale.

Moreover, v.12 concludes with the final rhetorical question מַעַל עַל בָּשָׂר הַדַּח – ‘or (who) has weighed the hills in a pair of scales.’ The usage of the preposition ב (by/through) thrice in the second part of v.12 indicates its rhetorical emphasis and further, it indirectly accentuates that the measures mentioned here are insufficient to comprehend the elements of nature or of entire creation. A brief summary of the rhetorical questions and their implied or presumable answers are enumerated here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhetorical questions</th>
<th>Implied Answers</th>
<th>Presumable Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Only Yahweh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or meted out the heavens with a span?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure/vessel container?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or weighed the mountains in a balance</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or the hills in a pair of scales?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, it is explicit through these rhetorical questions that, no one with the limited available scales of measurement (with either manual or sophisticated devices) can measure, mete out, comprehend, weigh, or balance the elements of the nature. However, the positive implied note from these chain of rhetorical questions can be answered either by saying ‘no one’ or ‘only Yahweh can do this.’

WESTERMANN prefers ‘no one’ all cases. WESTERMANN, Isaiah 40-66, 44: The rhetorical question can be answered either by saying ‘no one’ or ‘only Yahweh can do this.’ KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 88; ELLIGER, Deuterojesaja, 47; WERLITZ, Redaktion und Komposition, 214; CHILDS, Isaiah, 308; PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 138-139.

325 BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 132; cf. BDB, 465.
326 It can also refer to a third of an ephah (a grain measure). PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 138-140; cf. BDB, 1026; KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 90.
questions is – ‘it is only Yahweh, who is the Creator of the entire universe who can measure the elements of the nature.’ On the other hand it can also mean that if the elements of the nature are immeasurable, Yahweh is much greater than these elements of the nature, therefore, Yahweh as Creator cannot be equated with anyone. DI’s selection of the elements of nature and the measuring devices are remarkable which are probably simple and more understandable to his audience in order to explain the greatness of Yahweh (as the source or Creator of all the elements of the nature that are mentioned). Through the rhetorical questions, DI sketches his own picture of Yahweh and they are more visible in the subsequent verses as well. However, in these initial questions the elements of creation surface. These questions have an implied meaning: as the elements of nature cannot be measured so also the greatness/magnitude of Yahweh cannot be measured. Similarly, the subtle indirect answer to the rhetorical questions is that the elements of nature mentioned (water, sky, dust of the earth, mountains and hills) and all creation are elements created by the inestimable or the massive God-Yahweh (this is further clarified in the succeeding rhetorical questions and assertive statements). Human language has been used by DI to sketch the cosmological image which underscores the cosmic Lordship of Yahweh. Although the rhetorical questions in v.12 did not mention explicitly the name of Yahweh, in v.13 it is more evident.

A second set of paired rhetorical questions appear in v.13 which are independent from the previous questions (in v.12). Moreover, the focus of these questions is with regard to ‘measuring the spirit or the mind of Yahweh.’ Again, the interrogative particle יִמֶּל leads the paired rhetorical questions. The reversal order of words is explicit in this verse as well, especially the placement of the verbs: ‘placed at the beginning in the first phrase (אָמֵן) and at the end of the verse in the

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328 BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 132.
329 MATTHIAS ALBANI opines that the affirmation of the incomparability of Yahweh mentioned here (12-17) should also be observed in the light of Yahweh in implicit contrast with the Babylonian imperial deity Marduk who, in creating the world, needed the advice of the wise god Ea. MATTHIAS ALBANI, Der eine Gott und die himmlischen Heerscharen. Zur Begründung des Monotheismus bei Deuterojesaja im Horizont der Astralisierung des Gottesverständnisses im Alten Orient (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2000), 130-132.
330 According to STREIBERT, these rhetorical questions subtly project Yahweh as the supreme creator against the Babylonian religion and gods especially against Marduk and the epic of creation Enûma eliš. CHRISTIAN STREIBERT, Schöpfung bei Deuterojesaja; cf. KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 90.
331 ELLIGER, Deuterojesaja, 47. The reference of v.12 to creation is denied by MCKENZIE and STUHLMUELLER. JOHN L. MCKENZIE, Second Isaiah (AB 20: New York: Doubleday, 1968), 23; STUHLMUELLER, Creative Redemption, 146.
second phrase (דָּרִיְתֵנָה).’ This type of rendering is quite usual in poetic sentences: on one hand this arrangement is employed to create a poetic rhythm to the entire verse and on the other hand mainly to depict the impact of two or more different actions (or subject matters) in both the phrases, and moreover, they are directly or indirectly connected by ‘either-or:’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>נֶפֶשׁ נַפְשֵׁת יָהוֹ</th>
<th>2. or as His counselor has instructed Him?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>יָהוֹ</td>
<td>1. Who has measured the spirit of Yahweh?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V.13 begins with the same verb that is employed in v.12 (דָּרִיְתֵנָה) and it conveys the same meaning in v.13. 332 Although the subject matter in both the verses are different, the repetition of the same verb points out the inner-unity among the verses of the same strophe and simultaneously they make crystal clear, the relationship of thought progression in the subsequent verses. Corresponding to the previous verse, the verb דָּרִיְתֵנָה is conjugated here also in piel perfect form דָּרִיְתָה (third person singular) in order to intensify333 the rhetorical question. Its literal translation is “to measure;” however, in many versions it has been mistranslated as ‘to teach, to direct.’ 334 From the structural aspect, one of the important features in this verse is the significance of the object of the first phrase that is prefixed to the object marker: ‘the spirit of Yahweh.’

Object

The appearance of דָּרִיְתֵנָה in v.12 and its repetition in v.13 (with the same meaning) which points to the object ‘the spirit of Yahweh’ (in v.13) implicitly indicates that the elements of the nature are indirectly referred (in v.12) as the elements (water, sky, dust of the earth, mountains and hills) that are created by Yahweh which cannot be measured. This is based on the supposition since measuring is related to Yahweh’s spirit in v.13. Therefore, to read v.13 in line with

332 Some prefer to translate it as ‘to plumb/test:’ who has plumbed/tested the depth of Yahweh’s thoughts? Indeed, only Yahweh Himself has the measure of all hearts/spirits (Prov 16:2). PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 141; Childs, Isaiah, 309.

333 KELLEY, Biblical Hebrew, 141.

v.12 would give the following interpretation: as it is impossible to measure the elements of nature which were created by Yahweh so it is almost impossible to read the mind of Yahweh. Hence, this rhetorical question conveys the implied reply that Yahweh or the spirit of God is beyond human understanding and it is difficult to measure His thoughts. If one cannot measure the physical world, how can he/she measure God (i.e., measure the mind of Yahweh)?

With the above emphatic outlook v.13b continues the second part of the rhetorical question: ‘is there’ or (who) as His counsel (or counselor) instructed Him? This phrase can also be literally translated along these lines: ‘or (which) man/person as His counsel let Him know something/or instructed Him.’ The verb נִדְבָּעָה (nidadhah) is conjugated in hifil imperfect form (third masculine singular) with pronominal suffix נָדָעָה (nada’ah) (cause to know or to instruct) which is the causative of qal imperfect. Therefore, this verb expresses the meaning with the rhetorical question: ‘Is there’ is indeed someone or some assembly as Yahweh’s counsel (nidadhah) 336 to instruct Him or made him to understand things. Neither Yahweh’s mind can be read or measured nor does He need someone to instruct Him. It is irrational or illogical to think that anyone can measure the depth and the breadth of the mind of Yahweh in order to understand His actions. If no one can measure the mind of Yahweh, similarly it is also not possible for someone to instruct and counsel Yahweh. Moreover, it can be perceived that through v.13 DI sketches a God i.e., Yahweh as a God who can think and act on His own i.e., independently without any assistance or advice and likewise, no one can measure His spirit or mind.

A cluster of syntactically independent third set of rhetorical questions continue in v.14. As a consistent structural style, similar to the previous verses, in

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335 OSWALT does not view the spirit as the Holy Spirit but the mind of God. JOHN N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah Chapter 40-66* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 91.
336 The term נִדְבָּעָה (nidadhah) (counsel/plan) is strongly mentioned in First Isaiah in the context of God’s plan against the nations and the unfaithful in Israel (Isa 5:11; 11:2; 14:26; 19:17; 25:1; 28:29). But in DI it is used to emphasize Yahweh’s plan with regard to the rebuilding of Jerusalem and Judah (Isa 44:26; 46:10, 11) and also His plan against the enemies of Israel. BERGES, *Jesaja 40-48*, 133-134; cf. *BDB*, 420.
339 Some scholars view that these verses implicitly express the Neo-Babylonian context, where the concept of gods helping and assisting each other to take decisions or to accomplish their tasks were common. These are recorded in the Mesopotamian epics especially it is recorded in the Babylonian creation epic *Enûma eliš*. ROGER N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66* (NCBC; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 64-66; Yahweh’s spirit which can also be indicated as the might/power of God is placed indirectly in contrast to the other gods. BERGES, *Jesaja 40-48*, 133.
v.14 also the different rhetorical questions are linked together as a continuous series of questions by waw conjunction (ו) and are collectively led by the interrogative particle (אָהַם) that is placed at beginning of the verse. The two sets of paired rhetorical questions which appear in the first and second line of v.14 are formulated with numerous verbs and in fact they intensify the arguments in relation to emphasizing the distinctiveness of Yahweh which is evident through the different forms of verbal conjugations.

The first pair of questions are formulated by the following verbs: יָנָא (to counsel) is conjugated into niphal perfect form (לֶאַנָי) which also appears as a noun (his counsel); here the verb with niphal formulation suggests reflexive/reciprocal meaning; and בְּיִרְבּוֹתָהו (to discern, understand) with the pronominal suffix (בְּ) and waw consecutive (ו) functioning as narrative with causative meaning and finally, לַלֶמֶר (to learn, teach) is conjugated into piel imperfect form (לֶמֶר לֶמֶר) with prefix (ו) and pronominal suffix (ב); and piel is translated here with intensive in meaning. The cluster of verbs with different formulations and different functions are placed here which form a chain of rhetorical questions undoubtedly intensify the disputative nature of the questions; and the same are explained in the following lines. The niphal form of יָנָא (לֶאַנָי) which is reciprocal in meaning denotes here ‘to take counsel together’ or ‘to consult with someone.’ The similar tone of the second part of v.13 (who as His counsel instructed Yahweh) surfaces here again, however, it is reflected here in an elaborated manner: the reciprocal expression of niphal strongly underscores the intensity of the question – ‘whom did He (Yahweh) consult for better understanding or decision’? The modification of the noun לֶמֶר (from v.13) into a verbal conjugation

340 The emphasis here is not on Yahweh, but with the question from whom He took counsel is accentuated. CHILDs opines that God’s infinite wisdom is the theme discussed in v.14. However, it is clear here that God’s omnipotence in creation in supreme wisdom in history is viewed as fully complementary and that both are directed towards the fulfillment of his sovereign will. CHILDs, Isaiah, 309; BEUKEN argues the importance of the word justice in v.14. He observes that the word justice in DI in encapsulating the redemptive purpose of God for Israel. BEUKEN, Jesaja, 41-42.
341 Cf. KELLEY, Biblical Hebrew, 140, 141, 144.
342 Cf. KOOLE, Isaiah III, 94.
in v.14a signifies the continuous chain of link among the verses which on the one hand creates inner-unity of the strophe and on the other it initiates an apparent progression of the rhetoric arguments. Similarly, the verb נָבַע in the Hifil imperfect form functions with the causative meaning, which means ‘to bring someone (in this case Yahweh) to discernment or a better understanding’ – has someone enabled Yahweh to reach better understanding or discernment? Further, the verb לָטַּה (לְמַזְמַע) is used with the meaning not only ‘to teach,’ but ‘to familiarize’ oneself with something. Moreover, the intensified function of piel postulates here also with the meaning ‘teacher’ – i.e., who was Yahweh’s teacher? All the verbal formulations that are mentioned above are directed towards the following nouns which are placed in opposition: בַּעַלְמָה מְשַׁפָּט. way/path for justice. The detailed nuances and the reinforcing meanings of the verbs focus here on the question: Whom did He (Yahweh) consult or (who) instructed Him or taught Him, (in) the path of justice?

Or (who) taught Him knowledge or the way of understanding (who) showed Him?

The second paired questions continue in the second line of v.14 as well, which again escalate the disputative nature of the verse through the repeated words and poetical arrangement. The paired questions are placed in poetic opposition which creates alliteration to the entire phrase or line. The verb נִלְמַעְרָה begins the question: ‘or who taught Him’ and this same verb (יְנִי) with the similar piel imperfect conjugation (יְמַלְמַעְרָה) appears in the first line of v.14 and here it reappears and intensifies the question once again along with a different noun דַּתָּה (or (who) taught Him knowledge). In the first line it was ‘who taught Him the path of justice’ and here it is ‘who taught Him knowledge.’ The repetition of the same verb creates parallelism and inner-unity to the entire verse; moreover, it facilitates the continuation of the chain of arguments.

343 BDB, 107.
344 BDB, 541; BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 134-135.
345 Way of justice is one of the important themes in DI. Yahweh is more concerned about the rights/justice of the poor and the needy and in this context, specifically, it has to do with the exiled Israelites salvation from Babylonian captivity. Cf. BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 135.
As mentioned in the previous section, the *piel* formulation of this verb (דַלַּדְתָה - הָלַדְתָה) with the intensified meaning puts forward the rhetorical question – ‘who took trouble or toiled or functioned as a teacher to impart knowledge in Yahweh.’ On the other hand, the second question which is placed in opposition begins with a noun and ends with a verb which again heightens the disputative nature of the strophe and it concludes the rhetorical questions with the following final phrase: ‘or the way of understanding (who) taught Him’? In the first place, parallelism can be observed between the first and second line, whereby, the first phrase ends with נַעֲרָה הָבֵוַה וָדוֹרִיתוּ - ‘path of justice’ and the second phrase concludes as נַעֲרָה הָבֵוַה וָדוֹרִיתוּ - ‘way of understanding,’ though both are different words, yet they reflect the same meaning.

Moreover, the verb (יְדַע - יְדַעְתָּ) which also appears in v.13 and concludes the verse, reappears here as a concluding word in v.14 as well. It is conjugated in the similar *hiphil* imperfect form (דָּלַדְתָה - הָלַדְתָה) and expresses the same causative meaning, however, with a different substantive (לְדוֹרֶת). Therefore, the rhetorical question once again reinforces the intensified question: ‘who caused Yahweh to know or instructed Him to know the way of understanding.’ A detailed rhetorical series of questions which are formulated with highly loaded verbal expressions with a variety of meanings appear in v.14 apparently to accentuate that there is no need for Yahweh to be taught by someone, or to be instructed or guided to choose the path of justice or way of understanding, because, the answer is subtle that Yahweh is the source of all wisdom, knowledge, enlightenment and understanding and these attributes of Yahweh are ultimately greater than human knowledge and understanding.\(^{346}\) Yahweh does not require instruction from

anyone because no one can measure the depth and the breath of the mind of Yahweh in order to understand how He thinks or acts. Recapturing the rhetorical questions from vv.13 and 14 into a tabulated form would enable to understand the implied answers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhetorical questions</th>
<th>Implied Answers</th>
<th>Presumable Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who has measured the spirit or mind of Yahweh?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Yahweh is the source of wisdom and knowledge. Human understanding cannot grasp His spirit or mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or (who) as His counsel instructed Him</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whom did He consult...?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or (who) instructed Him...?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or (who) taught Him, (in) the path of justice?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or (who) taught Him knowledge...?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or the way of understanding (who) showed Him?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are varied traditional scholarly opinions when it comes to the interpretation of vv.13 and 14. BRUEGGEMANN observes that these verses are certainly a reaction against the Babylonian gods and He enumerates this in the light of vv.18-20 which talks about the fabrication of idols.347 Similarly, WHYBRAY argues that these verses reflect the context of ANE religions where belief in many gods, the concept of a pantheon and that there was a head of the pantheon (also council of gods) were prevalent. Moreover, many religions had gods of wisdom that customarily offer advice and guidance (Kothar in Ugarit and Ea in Babylon) to other gods. Therefore, he perceives these verses as polemical rhetorical utterances against the Babylonian religion, because the God of Israel, ‘Yahweh’ does not need assistance or counsel from other deities in order to understand or to know or to act.348

After a constellation of rhetorical questions that are formulated with יְהֹוָה in vv.12-14, a chain of assertive statements emerge in vv.15-17 with the particle ה (behold/see) that underscore the irrelevance and insignificance of the nations before the sight of Yahweh.349 Unlike vv.12-14 which are saturated with rhetorical questions, vv.15-17 are clustered with comparative statements with the help of the

347 BRUEGGEMANN, Isaiah 40-66, 23.
comparative particle כ (as/like) in almost all the sentences (v.15a, b, c and in v.17a) with the intention of belittling the nations, coastlands and the earthly resources which are immaterial before the greatness of Yahweh. V.15 is composed of three sentences that elucidates the triviality of nations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>השתחוים עם נאותים נ餮מה</th>
<th>Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>and as dust on the scales, they are considered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above tabulated first two comparative sentences are joined together with waw conjunction (ו) and the first phrase is constructed in a form of nominal clause which begins with the emphatic particle (י) to accentuate the assertive statements regarding the nations: ‘the nations are like a drop (כיפים) from a bucket.’ I perceive that this phrase tends to mean, that a bucket or a vessel filled with water is essentially comprised of multiple-minute drops of water and by enforcing this imagery it is asserted here that the nations are like tiny drops or a drop from the surplus water filled bucket. Through this comparison, plausibly DI is underestimating the nations in the ANE context which consider themselves as powerful due to their political and military strength. Simultaneously, the strength of Yahweh over against the nations is subtly exalted. This assertive statement which has been expressed through the nominal clause is further qualified through the verbal sentence in which once again the comparative approach is employed to discredit the nations: ‘and as dust on the scales they are considered.’ Two basic observations have to be mentioned in the foreground before offering explanation to this phrase: firstly, the noun (pair of scales or balance) is repeated here which is also employed in v.12; secondly the verb (to be thought, regarded or evaluated) is conjugated here into niphal perfect (third common plural) form and it functions here with reciprocal/reflexive meaning. Taking into account these details and keeping the

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351 The other occurrence of the word הָנֵי ‘bucket’ is in Num 24:7, however, the term הָנֵי ‘drop’ is used only here. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 111.
352 The powerful nations in the ANE context are always considered as threat to the existence of Israel and therefore here the author possibly emphasizes in the context of exile that Yahweh, the unique creator controls not only the history of Israel, but the history of the other nations too. Koole, *Isaiah 40-48*, 96; Berges, *Jesaja 40-48*, 137.
353 BDB, 363.
previous phrase in view (יִדְמוּ נִשְׁאָרִים תָּנְגוּ), v.15b unfolds the following implications: the repetition of the noun נַשְּאָרִים (pair of scales or balance) not only tends to create link between the verses which offers inner-unity in the same strophe, to be sure it also constitutes a form of parallelism and opposition especially in relation to the usage of the word נַשְּאָרִים ‘pair of scales’ in v.12d-e and in v.15b:

In v.12d-e נַשְּאָרִים (pair of scales or balance) is used in relation to the rhetorical question, ‘who has weighed the mountains in a balance and the hills in a pair of scales’? Whereas in v.15b it (נַשְּאָרִים) is used to compare the nations with a dust – ‘the nations are considered as dust on the scales’ (or pair of scales). The contrasting factors here are the hills and the dust on the scales. The magnitude and hugeness of the hills cannot be weighed by any sort of measuring scales or balances and on the other hand, a grain of dust in the form of tiny particles is useless and weightless at the same time it is invaluable. Hence, the verb חָשֲׁב that has been conjugated into niphal perfect form נִחַשְׁבָּה in v.15b, with one of its variant meanings (to be thought) can be interpreted in the following way: ‘the nations are to be thought just as dust on the scales,’ because, they are barely considered to be valuable.354 They are like weightless specks of dust that drifts in the air and therefore, Yahweh does not care about the nations or the people of these nations, as they are of no value to Him.355

The third half of v.15 again begins with the emphatic particle and asserts that הָיְתָהוּ – ‘behold He (Yahweh) takes up the Isles/coastlands like fine dust.’ The focus is shifted from greater nations which are counted as infinitesimal in size to the smaller islands or coastland which are even smaller – ‘fine dust’ than the greater nations (tiny drops). This assertion is emphatically depicted and it is obvious through the appearance of the emphatic particle הָיְתָהוּ at the beginning of the phrase which also appears in the first phrase of v.15.

355 SMITH, Isaiah 40-66, 111.
Moreover, once again, the comparative approach has been employed here with the help of the comparative particle בּ. The word יָד refers to something which is ‘thin, small, very fine (one hair),’ \[356\] moreover, the verb לֵבָנָה (to lift, bear) is conjugated into qal imperfect form לֵבָנָה (he lifts or takes up). The immateriality of the islands or coastlands\[357\] are mentioned here through the adjective יָד and Yahweh (יְהֹוָה) takes them up like ‘fine dust’ or they are weighed by Him as ‘fine dust’ which is much smaller than ‘the tiny drop’ of water. These declarations through their comparative assertions constantly and persistently underline the infinitesimal stature of the nations and coastlands in the sight of Yahweh, mutually, these assertive statements subtly exalt the greatness of Yahweh. This implied adulation of Yahweh appears progressively and consistently in each phrase and this is evident from v.12 onwards.

V.16 continues to assert the greatness of Yahweh with the metaphorical usage of Lebanon – its gigantic trees and mammoth animals are insufficient to render burnt offering to Yahweh. The assertive and comparative declarations with regard to the nations and coastlands and their stature in the sight of Yahweh appear in vv.15 and 17; however, the content of v.16 seems like interrupting the flow and continuity of vv.15 and 17 and some scholars even presume v.16 as a secondary or later interpolation.\[358\] However, a meticulous-reading indicates that v.16 serves here to demonstrate the magnitude of Yahweh by referring to everything on earth as miniature including the massive resources from Lebanon forest.\[359\] These metaphorical claims are asserted through two nominal clause sentences in v.16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beirut, Ash or Tiberias</th>
<th>Lebanon is not enough for burning.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nor its animals enough for burnt offering.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two nominal clause phrases in v.16 exhibit poetic articulation: e.g., through the waw conjunction (ו) alternative choices or negative opinions (either/or – neither/nor) of these phrases are conveyed. Secondly, the repetition of words is evident in these phrases: the particle adverb כּ (nothing or naught)

\[356\] BDB, 201.
\[357\] The smaller islands or coastlands such as Greece or Phoenicia can be taken as example to understand this phrase.
\[358\] VOLZ, Jesaja II, 10; ELLIGER, Deuterojesaja, 94.
\[359\] NAI DOFF opines that v.16 should be understood not as a digression, but as the continuation which the prophet uses for the sake completeness. NAI DOFF, “Rhetoric of Encouragement,” 71.
and the noun construct הָרָם (enough, sufficiency). These linguistic nuances create assonance and on the other hand they express the different viewpoints that these phrases communicate in a poetic way. The first sentence declares that לָבוֹן, אַלּוֹ, יָדָּע - ‘and Lebanon is not enough for burning’ (i.e., for fueling the offering). Not even Lebanon,\textsuperscript{360} which is known in antiquity for its abundant forest could provide sufficient wood for a suitable burnt offering for Yahweh. In line with the previous sentence, the subsequent phrase claims that ייְלָהֵי הָרָם אַלּוֹ, שְׂעָרָה - ‘nor its animals enough for burnt offering.’ Even the animals from the huge forest Lebanon will not be sufficient to dispense a suitable burnt offering to Yahweh. Even a densely wooded huge forest cannot yield enough fuel nor would the number of its animals would be enough for burnt offering.\textsuperscript{361} One can perceive that in the chain of declarative and comparative statements an example has been drawn from the familiar image or the famous forest, i.e., Lebanon and by making these declarations the assertive arguments affirm Yahweh’s incomprehensible massiveness. In brief, On the one hand, v.15 describes that the greatness of the nations is insignificant before the greatness of Yahweh, because Yahweh’s greatness is unimaginable and on the other it is absolutely not imaginable to build a huge altar and pile up the fire-wood from Lebanon and the finest animals from it to give a burnt offering to Yahweh. With this image, Deutero-Isaianic argument becomes robust which actually shines a light on the immenseness of Yahweh in comparison to the tiny drops (nations), fine dust (coastlands) and insufficient forest (Lebanon).

The two sets of syntactically independent comparative arguments in vv.15 and 16 reach their culminating point with a third set of paired comparative declarations, and once again they are structurally independent formulations concerning the greatness of nations in the sight of Yahweh. Although these assertions are independent, still the inner-pericopic-unity and their sequential continuation with the preceding verse can be explicitly observed in terms of content and style. The entire unit of comparative declarations begins in v.15 with the noun עמים (nations/people) and concludes in v.17 with the same word כל העמים (all the nations).\textsuperscript{362} Corresponding to the previous strophe (vv.12-14)

\textsuperscript{360} Apart from this reference the term ‘Lebanon’ is also mentioned in Isa 60:13. Lebanon is the famous forest in this area. The cypresses and cedars of Lebanon are well-known motive in the OT which is also found in DI. When Lebanon is described in terms of being blessed by Yahweh, it is depicted as ‘a fruitful field,’ and when it is under the doom of Yahweh, it ‘withers.’ HOLTER, Idol-Fabrication, 72-73.

\textsuperscript{361} PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 141, 143; BLENKINSSOPP, Isaiah 40-55, 192; CLIFFORD, “Function of Idol,” 459; This particular verse could also be a polemic against the offering-cult for Marduk which prevailed in Babylon. ALBANI, Der eine Gott, 132.

\textsuperscript{362} SMITH, Isaiah 40-66, 111.
where chiastic structural pattern is evident, here too a chiastic style is followed in terms of repetition of the same verb חַֽשְׁבִּ֖ים – ‘they are counted’ (v.15b) in v.17, חַֽשְׁבִּ֖ים – ‘they are counted by/for him;’ and especially with the similar verbal conjugation (niphal perfect third common plural).

V.17 is composed of nominal and verbal sentences and a form of poetic constructions can be noted from their artistic formulation. The first phrase repeats or reaffirms the declarative statement that has been proclaimed regarding the triviality of nations before Yahweh. It claims that the nations are nothing before Yahweh and it is formulated in nominal sentence: נֶפֶשׁ נַפְשֵׁי נַפְשׁוֹ. It is clear in this reaffirmation that it is not one particular nation, rather all the nations נֶפֶשׁ נַפְשֵׁי נַפְשׁוֹ are as nothing before him (לְלָדָיו). The reaffirming statement utilizes the same pattern from the previous verse (v.16) by employing the particle ב (nothing or naught). Further, the second phrase of v.17 qualifies the first phrase in a detailed manner to re-accentuate the immateriality of the nations: נֶפֶשׁ נַפְשֵׁי נַפְשׁוֹ – they are counted by Him (Yahweh) as less than nothing and void. The combination of preposition ל with possessive dative usage and the pronominal suffix א accentuates the statement ‘by Him’ (לְלָדָיו). Preposition ב is used here with the function of comparison נאָפַק (as ceasing or terminating). Three terms play the decisive role in this verse to describe the nothingness of (all) the nations: נאָפַק – nothing; נאָפַק – end of existence; נאָפַק – emptiness. The entire creation is enormous in the sight of humankind, whereas the nations and coastlands are too tiny or less than nothing in the sight of Yahweh.

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363 Naidoff, “Rhetoric of Encouragement,” 71. Similarly, it is also implicit that all nations refer here not only the Neo-Babylon but also the Persian kingdom. Berges, Jesaja 40-48, 138-139.
364 BDB, 33, 67, 1062.
Verses 18-20

After a sequence of multiple-paired rhetorical questions and assertive statements that appeared in the previous section (vv.12-17) concerning the greatness of Yahweh which is reflected in the entire creation and the insignificance of the nations and coastlands before Yahweh, commences the second strophe (vv.18-20) with the same pattern of ‘a combination of a set of paired rhetorical questions followed by numerous statements.’ The rhetorical questions, as accustomed in the entire pericope, are led by the interrogative particle יִמְכָּר (to whom;’ however, here it appears along with the preposition אל (to). As a binding factor of the entire passage (vv.12-31), the interrogative particle מ (who) also appears consistently in vv.12-14 and v.25. On the other hand, unlike the previous strophe apart from the interrogative particle מ (who), particle ה (what) also appears in this verse which leads the second rhetorical question.

בִּלֵּא לַאֹרֶץ הֲרָצוֹת הָאָרֶץ יִמְכָּר אֵל 18a

וַיְסֹמֵךְ לְדַיָּהָוָה לֹא 18b

Until now, the rhetorical questions and the assertive statements were presented as though they were addressed to unknown recipient(s) in third person conjugations. However, from this strophe a gradual change of the addressee in second person form can be noted (you). The questions, arguments and statements are deliberately and progressively becoming more or less like a disputation between two parties. On the one hand there are clues which can be traced from the first strophe onwards that the prophet is placing these disputative questions and statements on behalf of Yahweh. Nevertheless, the addressee is not yet specifically made known. Moreover, a sublime reading of this strophe (vv.18-20) unfolds that the discussion here is no more regarding the greatness of Yahweh in opposition neither to the whole creation nor in contrast to the miniature nations or coastlands, but is rather a precise pair of objectified rhetorical questions that is followed by a detailed description about the tedious process of crafting idol-images by skillful craftsmen occupies the entire strophe, and indeed, this is essentially to assert the dissimilitude or the unlikeness of Yahweh. Furthermore, regardless of the independent character of this strophe (vv.18-20) based on the

365 BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 140.
366 GOLDINGAY and PAYNE, Isaiah 40-55, 44-45; BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 140.
content, still the waw conjunction (י) at the beginning of the verse serves here as a visible connecting linguistic factor that unites this strophe within the larger structure of the entire pericope (vv.12-31). At the same time a gradual thematic progression and the underlying interconnectivity with the previous and succeeding strophes cannot be denied. With these preliminary viewpoints, the following lines attempt to analyze the entire strophe in order to unfold its manifold nuances.

V.18 begins the entire strophe with the interrogative particle יִמָּה which eventually introduces two rhetorical questions and they are with united together with waw conjunction (י). ‘יאֱלֹהִי יְהֹוָה יִנָּה – to whom (יִמָּה) then will you liken God or what (כֹּל) likeness will you set (depict/portray) for Him?’ Both the phrases are verbal formulations, however, the selection of words and their conjugations in the form of verbs and nouns are noteworthy which ultimately offers a poetic tone to the verse. The first phrase posits the interrogative question יִמָּה! – ‘and to whom will you liken.’ The verb יִמָּה is conjugated here into piel imperfect form יִמָּה (second person masculine plural) with a specific function of intensifying the disputative rhetorical argument. The various meanings of the verb יִמָּה are as follows: ‘to compare, like, equal, resemble.’ At this point the previous strophe (vv.12-17) with rhetorical questions and declarative statements would facilitate to understand this phrase in a remarkable way. The greatness of Yahweh has been presented in the previous verses: elements of creation cannot be measured so as the Creator; Yahweh’s mind cannot be measured; No one instructs Him or counsels Him for knowledge or understanding; all the nations and coastlands are like a drop (of water or grain) or fine dust; the massive forest Lebanon is not sufficient to contribute for burnt offering to Yahweh. Such a God cannot be imagined in terms of His structure and form, hence, how is it possible for anyone to demonstrate or show that Yahweh is like him/her or He resembles this thing or that object? Especially, the declarative-comparative statements in vv.15-17 have demonstrated how nations and coastlands look like in the sight of Yahweh (e.g., like a drop, fine dust or nothing). On the one hand they are comparable, but on the other hand Yahweh is incomparable God. In this purview, my perception of the implied answer for v.18 is: ‘no one can create a similitude or show a similarity for Yahweh by comparing Him with something or someone and say, this is how Yahweh resembles or looks like.’

With this foundational view, the appended remaining second half of the rhetorical question of v.18 further escalates the disputative nature of the question.

368 BDB, 198.
and it goes in the following direction: ‘or what likeness will you set for Him’? The second half of the verse begins with the interrogative particle הִפְּלָה (what) and this appears only here (v.18b) in the entire pericope. Moreover, the verb רַמְחָה which appeared in v.18a (in piel-conjugation form נִרְמָחֵה) reappears here (in v.18b), but as a noun רַמְחָה (likeness or similitude), however, the same meaning is carried out, probably, to maintain the continuous thought process throughout the verse.

The cautious usage of the noun רַמְחָה (likeness or similitude) in line with the verb רַמְחָה probably has a reasonable logic and substantial justification from my understanding of Deutero-Isaianic point of view. The Hebrew word צָלָל is usually translated as ‘image’ which can be ‘molten/carved images or even sculptures.’ However, occasionally it also carries the meaning ‘likeness’ (of resemblance). But on the contrary, here in v.18b the word רַמְחָה (likeness, similitude) is used instead of צָלָל (image) with a definite intention, because, רַמְחָה is not referring to likeness of the molten image, rather it refers to ‘resemblance’ and mostly used to denote external appearance. Moreover, the conjugated verb שָׁקַר הָרְפָּה (to set in order) is used here along with רַמְחָה. Therefore, it can be read as: what likeness will you set up (as an image) for Him? In addition, the preposition אֵל (אֵל) with the possessive pronominal suffix אֵל (אֵל), supplements added emphasis to the entire question. If it is not possible to ‘similarize’ God (i.e., Yahweh) with anyone or anything, how is it possible to set up a likeness for Him (אֵל)? Without having a knowledge about what Yahweh looks like, how is it possible to set up a likeness or molten image based on His likeness? The selection of the above mentioned

369 BDB, 854.
370 Gen 1:26-27. BDB, 854.
371 In Genesis these two terms appear image (צלל) and likeness (Ramah).
373 KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 100. According to KLAAS R. VEEHOF, these are also polemic statements against the Babylonian gods. However, the claim here is to emphasize the uniqueness of Yahweh which is more exclusive and dynamic which cannot be brought into any image or form. KLAAS R. VEEHOF, Geschichte des Alten Orients bis zur Zeit Alexanders
words certainly intends to underline the clear differentiation between the crafting of a statue or an idol based on imagination (or crafting/duplicating based on available images) and the unsuccessful attempt if one tries to craft the image of Yahweh when neither His likeness is known nor an image of Him is beforehand available.\(^{374}\) If Yahweh’s entire creation cannot be measured, or His spirit/mind cannot be measured, how is it possible to create a similitude of Him with someone or something or how it is possible to craft an image of Him when one does not know how Yahweh looks. Therefore, this rhetorical question not only implicitly asserts that Yahweh cannot be compared with anyone/anything in general, but conceivably, it also conveys a strong objection especially against any attempt to visualize Yahweh in any form of cultic image,\(^{375}\) because Yahweh cannot be compared (יָדָעַ), with any carved image (יָדָעַ).\(^{376}\) Moreover, it is absurd or unthinkable (according to the implied meaning) for someone to think about Yahweh’s likeness and craft His image who has artistically created/crafted this world.\(^{377}\) The rhetorical question found in v.18 is briefly tabulated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhetorical questions</th>
<th>Implied Answers</th>
<th>Presumable Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To whom will you liken God?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Yahweh can neither be similarized nor carved as an image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or what likeness will you set in order for Him?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With a detailed orienting rhetorical question which subtly rejects the possibility of applying or attempting to find resemblance or a similitude to Yahweh, continues the second part (vv.19-20) of the second strophe as a syntactically independent unit. This unit is comprised of narrative format sentences which facilitate to illustrate comprehensively the rigorous and different stages of the processes that are employed while crafting or creating idol images.\(^{378}\) These procedures along with their processes are being systematically presented in vv.19 and 20 step by step and moreover, these narrations find more significance and clarity when they are also viewed in the light of the paired rhetorical questions of

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\(^{374}\) Cf. Gen. 1:26; Num. 33: 52; 2 Kgs 11:18. A detailed survey of this issue is available in the following work of HOLTER: Idol-Fabrication, 79-89; cf. BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 142.

\(^{375}\) ELLIGER, Deuterojesaja, 71; cf. BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 142; KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 100-101.

\(^{376}\) LABUSCHAGNE, Incomparability of Yahweh, 142-153.

\(^{377}\) LABUSCHAGNE, Incomparability of Yahweh, 142-153.

\(^{378}\) Some commentators observe that the prophet presents in a reversal manner the process of crafting an idol in the light of Isaiah 44:12-14: the coating of the idol by a goldsmith ( Isa 40:19) to the careful choosing of a wood and its shaping by the carpenter ( Isa 40:20). PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 144.
v.18. The following lines aim at presenting a summarized outline of the procedures that are carried out to cast or craft an idol-image which will be followed by a detailed exposition. The first set of narration (v.19) describes the crafting process of an idol by using metal as raw material. The idol-fabricating procedure depicts, how a skillful-craftsman (metalworker) fabricates an idol – which includes casting (by pouring of) metal; overlaying of (the hammered) gold plate over the carved image by a smelter; and finally, the casting of silver chains:

The Idol – An engraver casts (it); and a smelter (=goldsmith) overlays it with gold; and casts a silver chain (for it).

The Idol

Step 1:

An engraver/artificer casts (it)

Step 2:

and a smelter (=goldsmith) overlays it with gold

Step 3:

and casts silver chains (for it)

The second set of narration depicts how an idol-image is crafted by using a fine wood that will not rot: v.20 illustrates that a poor man’s contribution would be a selection of a quality wood that will not rot and seeks for him a skillful woodworker in order to set up a (wooden) image that will not topple. This illustrated process is outlined below:

The poor contributor (a poor person) chooses a wood that will not rot; (and) he finds (selects) for him a wise (skilled) engraver (carpenter); in order to set up an image that will not topple.

The wooden Idol (emphasis mine) –

Step 1:

The poor contributor chooses a wood

Step 2:

He finds for him a skilled woodworker

Step 3:

in order to set up an image that will not topple
At the outset, I perceive that there is a concrete connection between the rhetorical questions (v.18) and the various procedures of crafting an idol-image which follow them (vv.19 and 20). Especially, the noun לֶשֶכֶם (the idol-image) functions as the bridging factor between the questions and the categorical descriptive explanations of idol-fabrication. In order to rationalize this point, I would like to repeat the rhetorical questions here: ‘to whom (ymi) then will you liken God or what (hm) likeness will you set (depict/portray) for Him?’ The implied answers are (as mentioned above): ‘since it is impossible to similarize Yahweh, absolutely, there is no foreseeable probability to set up an image for Him.’ However, forgetting the implied answer for a moment, if the second rhetorical question of v.18 is read meticulously, it directly leads to the first word of v.20, i.e., לֶשֶכֶם. Now, with this aspect the above argument can be reproduced in the following way: ‘what likeness will you set up (depict/portray) for Him (Yahweh)? – לֶשֶכֶם – ‘the idol-image’?379 With this outlook, the narrative sentences in v.20 illustrate comprehensively how idols are crafted or fabricated which again unfolds manifold explicit and implicit insights to exalt Yahweh as the God who cannot be crafted or created.

Therefore, vv.19 and 20 demonstrate the crafting process of idol-image both from the raw material ‘metal’ as well as from ‘wood.’ V.19 begins with the object noun of the sentence לֶשֶכֶם (the idol-image)380 and this is intentionally placed in the beginning of the sentence in order to give emphasis to the element or object about which the whole discourse takes place in vv.19 and 20. V.19 can be divided into three parts both based on the description about the idol-fabrication process as well as the syntactical construction. Firstly, ישׁר אֲבָדָה – ‘an engraver or artificer casts (it).’ The word ישׁר which is translated here as ‘engraver’ denotes ‘metal-worker’ who works or cuts with different (metal/wood) materials; and in this context he is referred as the (skillful) idol-maker.381 Moreover, this term (i.e. ישׁר) is repeated consistently in several Deutero-Isaianic passages.382 The verb ישׁר

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379 Some commentators and translators consider the ב in לֶשֶכֶם as an interrogative particle ב (e.g. in ס and ו) – ‘The Idol? A workman cast it.’ However, it is preferable in this case to translate ב as the definite article. Cf. Hölter, Idol-Fabrication, 38.
381 BDB, 360.
which is conjugated into qal perfect form connotes ‘casting (metal images).’

During this casting process, one such method is that the metalworker pours the liquid-metal into a mold which has the intended shape of the object. However, another argument is that the verb הָסָר is used here essentially to specify the idol-image fabricating procedure that is undertaken by hammering or beating out ‘metal’ which results in fashioning a creative idol-image and therefore, הָסָר is not referred here in relation to crafting an idol-image by pouring the liquid-metal into the intended mold.

Nevertheless, irrespective of the various methods and procedures that have been used, one can observe that, as a result of these processes, the creative imagination of the metalworker is materialized here which is ultimately transformed into a form of well-casted idol-image. In the next step, as it is mentioned in v.19b:וְלֹא-רָא-י הָסָר בְּבֵית אֱלֹהִים – ‘and a smelter (=goldsmith) overlays it with gold,’ takes place. The word הָסָר is a qal participle absolute form of הָסָר (to smelt or refine), and it functions here as a noun. The participle הָסָר denotes here to a ‘smelter or refiner’ (=goldsmith) who smelts gold and silver and creates attractive jewelry and other items. In the idol-image making process of this verse, the smelter has a role to play. The task of the smelter is to overlay the molded idol-image בְּבֵית אֱלֹהִים – with gold (v.19b). The verb רָאָה is used in v.19b to express the role of the smelter and this verb expresses the entire tiresome procedure that is carried out by the smelter. The verb רָאָה has the following basic meanings, such as ‘to beat or stamp, to beat out or spread out.’ Based on these variable meanings, it can be presumed that the role of the goldsmith here is to spread out or beat out the material i.e., ‘gold’ and form gold-sheets and use them to overlay the molded idol-image in order to refine it and make it more glittering and presentable. Furthermore, the final stage of the idol-image casting process is as follows (v.19c):וְלֹא-רָא-י הָסָר בְּבֵית אֱלֹהִים – ‘and (he) casts silver chains (for it).’ The verb הָסָר is repeated in the similar qal participle form הָסָר in v.19c and here it has the verbal function; and from a linguistic point of view the repetition of the same verb creates assonance and also emphasis to the verse.

383 Casting processes that have been known since ancient times are widely used to form sculptures, jewelry and also weapons and tools.
384 Plausibly this process is explained in detail in order to emphasize Yahweh’s creative act of stretching the heaven and spreading the earth (Isa 40:22; 42:5; 44:24). cf. BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 143; HOLTER, Idol-Fabrication, 55.
385 BDB, 864.
Hence, as a final process, the smelter, beats or spreads out silver and casts silver chains for the idol-image.\textsuperscript{386} The purpose of casting chains for the idol-image is probably to tie it and keep it safe in order to protect it from theft and on the other hand this action also implicitly declares the instability of the skillful craftsmen created idol. There are substantial implied messages which can be drawn from this verse (i.e., v.19). Idol-images are casted or crafted based on the creative imaginations of the skillful artisans. These imaginations are materialized through rigorous processes and procedures such as casting, beating out, hammering, spreading out, overlaying so on and so forth. A team of creative minds can be observed such as the engraver and smelter. The engraver brings out a shape by casting the idol according to his artistry and on the other hand the smelter exhibits his innovative skills through overlaying the idol-image with gold and casts silver chains for the idol. The process of casting chains for the idol as mentioned above depicts how the idols (or gods) have been kept in tight security which also adds a sarcasm by portraying the helpless conditions of the human-made idols (gods) who cannot save or protect themselves with a contrasting idea that Yahweh can save Himself, and save and protect His people. As explained above, the creative skills and the collaborative endeavor of the engraver and smelter are highlighted well in v.19. Therefore, in brief, this verse subtly and significantly describes the visible idols images (or even gods) as outcome of the innovative imagination of skillful artisans.\textsuperscript{387} On the contrary, these depictions of idol-fabrication certainly refer back to v.18 for the significant implied answer. The idols-images are imagined and then materialized, but it is impossible for anyone to create a similitude of Yahweh or to conceptualize His resemblance. Therefore, how is it possible to carve the image of Yahweh? Besides, Yahweh cannot be crafted or created because when it is neither imaginable to weigh His entire creation nor to counsel Him, how is it conceivable to craft or create the Creator 'Yahweh'?

\textsuperscript{386} According to Whybray vv.19-20 are interpolations by the later redactors, which actually distorts the continuity of v.18 and v20. However, Schoors refuses this view and suggests instead to read these verses in the light of Isa 41:6-7. Whybray, 
Isaiah 40-66, 55; Schoors, I am God your Saviour, 253.

\textsuperscript{387} Smith, 
In continuation with the same theme, v.20 depicts how an idol-image is fashioned out of quality-wood. Unlike v.19, where the various stages of idol-fabrication were precisely described, here in v.20, the selection of quality wood, choosing of a skillful-worker and finally, carving the idol-image are briefly explained, in which the making process is not illustrated. V.20 begins with the following phrase: דְּרַשׁ וַתַּחְפִּשׁוּל הֲרֵמוּת יַעֲשֶׂה לְאַרְכּוֹפֵי בְּבָרָה – ‘the poor contributor chooses a wood that will not rot.’ The verb יָכֹס is conjugated into pual participle form (masculine singular) and it functions here as a noun with the meaning ‘he who is improvised in respect to offering,’ (which can also mean: who is poor and can give only meager or poor offering). Therefore, in this context, this can be understood as ‘a poor man who cannot afford more money to get a metal idol-image fabricated for him, so he opt to have an idol made out of wood.’ This can also be further clarified in the following way: He (the poor man) chooses (יבּר) a wood (לֶאָרְכּוֹפֵי) that will not rot (קַרְזִפְּב). A sharp description about how a wood is chosen even by a poor man who cannot invest more money for the fabrication of an idol-image is subtly presented. The syntactical structural presentation has to be noted in v.20a which eventually underscores the crystal-clear meaning of the phrase. V.20a begins with the participle דְּרַשׁ which is followed by a noun הֲרֵמוּת (offering or contribution); and these words are combined together (렴ַסְטִית הֲרֵמוּת – the poor contributor) and are followed by another noun לִין (tree or wood) which functions as the object. However, the verb יָכֹס (to choose) which is placed at the end of the phrase gives meaning to the whole phrase: ‘The poor contributor chooses a wood.’

In between the subject, object and the verb appears the following relative clause: קַרְזִפְּב – (wood) ‘that will not rot;’ and it is ‘this relative sentence’ that categorically qualifies the object (לִין) through which the choice of quality wood that is used to craft the wooden idol-image is underscored. The quality of the wood is emphasized through the relative clause – (the) wood (לִין) that will not rot (קַרְזִפְּב). Wood from trees can eventually rot into dust, therefore, a quality wood

388 BDB, 698.
389 The juxtaposing of idol craft and Yahweh’s artistry creation is one of the special characteristics of polemic DI’s presentation (esp. Isa 40-48). PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 148.
is inevitable in order carve a quality image and on the other hand to hold or preserve the artifacts made out of wood for a long duration. With regard to this aspect, some commentators opine that the word 𒐩𒐢𒐣 is plausibly an Akkadian loanword which means “dalbergia sissoo,” a mulberry tree or a kind of rosewood that is used to carve statues and moreover, this view is also documented in the 𒐠 and 𒐡 versions.\(^{390}\) However, I would not prefer to incorporate the above mentioned assessment, but I consider the fact that ‘quality-wood’ that will not decay is emphasized here in relation to the production of wooden idol. Further, the poor man’s search for a skilled worker is depicted: 𒐣𒐣𒐣 𒐠𒐡 – ‘he seeks for him a skilled engraver or artificer.’ The adjective ܢܕܢ (wise or skillful) qualifies the ‘engraver’ (𒂗𒆠). The adjective ܢܕ𒂗𒆠 which carries the customary meaning ‘wise,’ is understood here in terms of exhibiting skills in relation to technical work (artificers);\(^{391}\) and precisely it refers to the skills of the makers of idol (esp. the woodworker in v.20). Therefore, the creative skills (wisdom) of the woodworker are underlined here who can skillfully craft or create an idol-image out of quality wood that will not decay. Further, the verb 𒐡𒐣 which is conjugated in piel imperfect form 𒐢𒐡𒐢𒐣, intensifies the meaning here – ‘he seeks to find.’ In addition, the preposition 𒄀 is suffixed to the verb along with the pronominal suffix (𒉗) – 𒉗; this indicates possession (for him). Therefore, this formulation emphasizes his (poor man’s) eagerness to seek and find a wise woodworker for him in order to craft the idol-image with a quality wood which would remain enduring. Finally, v.20c concludes with a purpose clause which is led by a prepositional prefixed infinitive verbal conjugation: 𒐪𒐠𒂗𒆠 𒐠𒐡 𒐣 – ‘to set up an image that will not topple.’

The purpose of choosing a quality wood is apparently stated in v.20c, however, two aspects can be observed in the concluding phrase with two types of sentence formulations. Firstly, the purpose clause in expressed with the preposition as mentioned above: 𒐠𒐣𒐣𒐣 – ‘to set up an image.’ The verb 𒐠 is conjugated as hiphil infinitive construct which has various meanings: ‘to set up, establish firmly or stably or securely, to be fixed steadfast, etc.’\(^{392}\) In my opinion,


\(^{391}\) BDB, 315.

\(^{392}\) BDB, 467.
according to the meaning of הביטחון, this phrase expresses the process that takes place after carving a wooden image; especially, ‘setting it up, or fixing it stably.’ However, the crafting process is implicitly evident from the previous phrases: ‘he seeks and finds a skillful artisan.’ The purpose of seeking an engraver is to carve the wooden-idol-image. Nevertheless, the point here is, that the verb הביטחון also means that the carved image in fixed firmly.

Secondly, the function of fixing the idol firmly is expressed in the subsequent relative clause: ‘so that it will not topple or be shaken.’ The verb להטיח is conjugated here into niphal imperfect form יטיח with a passive meaning: ‘be shaken or moved.’ The entire verse carries enormous implied connotations and again this can also be figured out in the light of the rhetorical questions from v.18 and from the assertive statements in v.16 as well. Once again, corresponding to v.19, it is also reemphasized here subtly that idol-images are products of the imagination of skillful artisans. In opposition to DI’s implied message that Yahweh who cannot be similarized, cannot be crafted into any form of idol-image. Secondly, the choosing of quality wood which will not rot carries certain significant insights: even quality wood will eventually rot or decay one day, in contrast to Yahweh who will not decay or rot into dust like the wood, since He is the everlasting God. One of the assertive statements in v.16 is that even Lebanon (i.e., their woods) will not provide fuel to offer burnt offering to Yahweh. This depicts the greatness of Yahweh; on the other hand, the act of choosing a piece of quality wood for crafting idol-image can be placed in opposition with v.16. The huge forest is not sufficient for burnt offering to Yahweh, contrarily, a piece of wood from one of the trees is fashioned as an idol. This again implicitly accentuates the greatness of Yahweh as a God who cannot be similarized or crafted because He is the creator of the entire cosmos. The insignificance and immateriality of the idols before Yahweh is highlighted here.

Thirdly, another fascinating point is seen in both the processes of fashioning idols – metal idol-image and wooden idol-image: chains of silver are made to the metal idol-image; meanwhile, the wooden image is fixed stably so that it will not topple or be shaken. Both these actions essentially underscore the dependency of the idol-images and they are secured through chains or on wooden planks with nails (else, it will be stolen or collapse). The implied message is that ‘Yahweh,’ to whom no resemblance can set out, is an inconceivable stable God with power and might unlike the unstable idol-images.

393 BDB, 557.
Verses 21-24

The third strophe (vv. 21-24) forms a syntactically independent unit with a series of rhetorical questions (v.21) and declarative statements (vv.22-24). The rhetorical questions which appear in v.21 are intended to provoke or remind the addressee’s knowledge about the things that they knew or have heard from the beginning or foundations of the earth which are followed by affirmative statements that subtly depict Yahweh as master of creation (v.22) in contrast to the insignificant earthly princes (vv.23-24). V.21 is composed of four rhetorical questions which are individually introduced by the interrogative particle אֲלֵה (a combination of interrogative particle – א and negative particle – לא).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ראה</th>
<th>הארץ</th>
<th>1. Have you not known?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ראה</td>
<td>הארץ</td>
<td>2. Have you not heard?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ראה</td>
<td>הארץ</td>
<td>3. Has it not been told to you from the beginning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ראה</td>
<td>הארץ</td>
<td>4. Have you not understand from the foundations of the earth?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some initial observations with regard to the structural arrangement of the rhetorical questions which are illustrated while structuring the passage are recapitulated here: firstly, the rhetorical questions are not introduced by the interrogative particle יִשָּׁנָה rather by the particle אֲלֵה. Secondly, in the previous sections a cluster of questions are led by one rhetorical particle יִשָּׁנָה (e.g., vv.12, 13 and 18) and the chain of questions are joined together by a waw conjunction (ו) before each phrase; however, in this section, particularly in v.21 the four different rhetorical questions are introduced individually by the particle אֲלֵה and moreover, there are no waw conjunctions employed to link the questions together (as illustrated in the above table).

Thus, the individual emphasis and significance of each question and the gradual escalation of the intensified poetic discourse can be distinguished in this strophe (v.21a, b, and c). Especially, this can be explicitly observed, the manner in which the argumentative questions and placed one after the other. Besides, they implicitly express that the addressee is well aware of what the prophet is talking about\textsuperscript{394} and on the other hand, through this rhetorical questioning method the

\textsuperscript{394} Koole, Isaiah 40-48, 106.
The four rhetorical questions in v.21 individually employ different verbs in order to gradually intensify the argument through these questions. The verb נָתַן (to know or understand) appears in the first phrase and it is conjugated into הָרָשה qal imperfect second masculine plural form. This same verb (רָשהָה) also appears in vv.13 and 14, however, as Hifil imperfect conjugations (רָשהָה) which are used to express the following views: ‘who as His counsel instructed Him (רוהי), i.e. Yahweh or who showed (taught) Him (רוהי) the way of understanding.’ The second rhetorical question employs the verb מָנָה (to hear, listen, understand or obey) and it is also conjugated into qal imperfect form (מָנָה). The third rhetorical question which is also constructed as a verbal phrase employs the verb בָּרָה (to tell, announce or declare) and it is conjugated into hophal perfect third masculine singular form (בָּרָה) and it offers a causative passive meaning – ‘to be told or announced.’ Moreover, in the same sentence, after the noun הָרָשה (form the beginning) the entire phrase ends with a pronominal

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396 PELT and RATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 4; BDB, 395.

397 PELT and RATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 4; BDB, 1034.

398 KELLEY, Biblical Hebrew, 112.

399 PELT and RATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 8.
suffixed preposition לָךְ (to you) in order to indicate that the question is personally conveyed to the addressee. The final clause rhetorical question with the interrogative particle אֲלֹהֶיךָ formulates another verbal phrase which further deepens the disputative argument: הָלִּכְתָּם מָסַרְתָּה—‘have you not understand from the foundations of the earth.’ The verb יָבֵא (to understand, perceive or consider) appears in the form of הָלִּכְתָּם hiphil perfect third masculine singular conjugation which can be translated with causative active meaning ‘to understand, make understand or to teach.’ The same verb יָבֵא also appears as הָלִּכְתָּם hiphil imperfect form in v.14, where it is used to formulate the following rhetorical question: ‘who instructed Him (Yahweh) the way of justice.’

Corresponding to the previous strophe, where the rhetorical questions (v.18) are addressed in second person verbal formulations, here also except לָכּ (however, the phrase has second person pronominal suffix along with preposition לָךְ) all other verbs are conjugated in second masculine plural forms which further depicts that Yahweh is addressing to a specific group or particular people who are more intimate to Him (their identity is revealed later). Therefore, a plain reading of these questions illustrates that either the listener predicts as if he/she does not know what is being discussed or he/she purposely rejects to affirm the greatness of Yahweh, however, the following explicit and implicit observations will facilitate to understand the possible in-depth meaning v.21.

From three perspectives I would like to perceive this verse: firstly, in line with the usage of some of its verbs in vv.13 and 14; secondly, in relation to the previous strophe (vv.18-20); finally, and precisely as a prelude to the following verses in this strophe (vv.21-24). It is quite clearly mentioned above that two verbs (i.e., יָבֵא and יָבֵא) which appear in v.21 are also employed in vv.13 and 14 in relation to underscore that ‘Yahweh does not need any counsel to advise Him or teach Him the way of understanding or the path of justice.’ Moreover, all the other verbs in v.21 also employ special connotations and these verbs express the presupposed knowledge about the things heard, proclaimed from the beginning and from the foundations of the earth.

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400 KELLEY, Biblical Hebrew, 111.
401 BDB, 107; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 14.
402 According to SMITH and SCHOOIRS in this strophe the prophet is not speaking any new idea, rather he reminds his hearers to recollect what they had already heard, read or witnessed. SMITH opines that, these things were known from their reading of Torah in the temple, from the hymns they sang at festival times and from the messages of the prophets. The rhetorical questions here demand them to pay attention to what was already revealed.
one hand Yahweh does not need to be taught or instructed because His greatness cannot be measured (vv.13 and 14), on the other hand, however, ‘you’ (the addressee) are taught and instructed and made known about this greater God ‘Yahweh’ and His deeds from the beginning or from the foundations of the earth (v.21) and these rhetorical questions provoke the addressee to recollect these deeds of Yahweh.

Secondly, the previous strophe (i.e., vv.18-20) talks about the impossibility of ‘similarizing’ Yahweh to any form and it is also difficult for any skillful artisan to imagine and carve an idol-image and say, this is how Yahweh looks like. These assertive statements implicitly affirm that Yahweh cannot be defined and He is an everlasting God who exists even before anything was formed. In the light of this understanding the rhetorical questions of v.21 elucidate that Yahweh and His attributes were proclaimed and heard and known by His people from the beginning or even from the foundations of the earth; this underscores that Yahweh is an indescribable God and a pre-existent God who exists even before the foundations of the earth were laid.

Thirdly, these rhetorical questions subtly allude to the creatorship of Yahweh which is described in the following verse (v.22). The verbs that appear in v.21 accentuate not only in relation to knowledge about the world and the creation rather the tradition that has been passed on, therefore ‘reason’ (knowledge) and ‘tradition’ are closely related. Therefore, the emphasis is not the about knowledge declared by the servants of God, but the knowledge about the world and its origin which was traced from the tradition that was transmitted over generations; moreover, it is like asking them to recollect some of the basic lessons that they have learned. It was Yahweh who has set the earth on its foundations, so that it could never be shaken (Ps. 104:5a). The terms such as ‘foundations’ and ‘beginning’ which are placed in connection with ‘earth’ are highlighting the stability of the creation of Yahweh. On the one hand v.21 is placing the rhetorical questions to make the people to remember Yahweh’s creative attributes which are known from the beginning of the history, and these questions also serve as a prelude to narrate the creatorship of Yahweh in v.22. On the other hand, I perceive in the light of the previous strophe (vv.18-20), that the mentioning of foundations of the earth which refers to ‘the stability of the earth’ (stabilized by the Creator -Yahweh) is juxtaposed subtly against the efforts taken about God in Torah, and obviously the rhetorical questions here accentuate the uniqueness of Yahweh as the creator of the universe and the lord of history. SMITH, Isaiah 40-66, 114-116; SCHOORS, I am God your Saviour, 253.

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403 BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 145.
404 Cf. ELLIGER, Deuterojesaja, 82-83.
405 Isa 24:18; Pss. 18:16; Jer. 31:37, etc. Cf. BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 146.
by the skillful idol makers who fix the idols of gods firmly through their skills in order that they will not be shaken (v.20).406

With the prelude of rhetorical questions which have subtly inferred Yahweh’s existence and His deeds from the foundations of the earth, vv.22-24 pronounce multiple declarative statements which depict ‘Yahweh’s creatorship’ (v.22) and the insignificant status of the princes and rulers of the earth before Him. Furthermore, these assertions are artistically narrated with the help of a series of hymnic participial formulations and they are more evident in vv.22 and 23. A plain reading of the first two lines of v.22 depicts that they are composed of three participles, one imperfect and an infinitive verb respectively. In addition, comparative statements are formulated by employing the prepositions  "like). Moreover, waw conjunction (') as accustomed, links the different assertive statements together which is one of the roles of ' in most of the verses. Therefore, altogether, the acrostic styled structure sentences (i.e., placement of  at the beginning of each line), the participial formulations and the repetition of the preposition  create assonance and hymnic structure to the entire verse. The rhetorical statements in v.22 appear as prompt answers to the rhetorical questions that are raised in v.21; moreover, remarkably although the name of Yahweh does not appear in this verse, still from the larger context of the entire pericope (vv.12-31) one can understand that all the innovative acts of creation are attributed to Yahweh – the Creator. The rhetorical narration which is one of the incredible styles of the entire pericope, through various stages, from v.12 onwards progresses to v.22 which affirmatively depicts Yahweh as creator and His significant role and position as creator. The four assertions concerning Yahweh’s creatorship that insightfully appear in v.22 have been tabulated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>22b</th>
<th>22a</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers.</td>
<td>The one who sits above the horizon of the earth?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22c</td>
<td>22d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. and spreads them like a tent to live in?</td>
<td>The one who stretches out the heavens like a curtain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The first line of v.22 begins with the first participial formulation חֶבֶל which is derived from the verb בֵּית (to sit, dwell, remain or inhabit);\(^{407}\) and the participle derivation functions here as an absolute noun.\(^{408}\) A brief recapitulation of the assertions from the previous strophes are indispensable in order to understand this unit. The rhetorical questions and the subsequent assertions in the previous strophes have essentially through their subtle statements sketched how inexpressible or indescribable this God 'Yahweh' is. The elements of the entire creation cannot be measured in the same way how Yahweh's mind or spirit cannot be measured. No one can counsel Him or guide Him, neither instruct nor teach Him the path of justice. The nations and coastlands are dust or fine dust or less than nothing before Him. He cannot be similarized nor can any image in the form of idol be carved. The intensification of the rhetorical questions in v.21 are categorically advancing from the previous subunits which facilitate to emphatically describe in v.22 that it is this unimaginable God – Yahweh (name not directly mentioned) about whom you have heard from the beginning is the one who sits upon the arch of the earth. The greatness or magnitude of Yahweh which were depicted in the previous strophes takes another form of referring to Him as a monarch who sits or dwells on the horizon (גָּדוֹל)\(^{409}\) of the sky, which forms a circle around the earth.\(^{410}\) This can also mean that God as the king rules over everything and nothing is hidden from His face and His kingly rule all over the earth from one end to the other is underscored here.\(^{411}\)

The phrase and its meaning of v.22b are placed in opposition to the earlier one since it denotes the inhabitants of the earth like grasshoppers: דִּשְׁבוּת חֶבֶל. Both the phrases are tabulated below to demonstrate their oppositional arrangement, moreover, the oppositional statement in v.22b subtly depicts the insignificant nature of the people who live on the earth before the huge God (implied projection) who sits on the vault of the earth. Through this depiction, the prophet consistently aims at subtly elevating the position of Yahweh, the God of

\(^{407}\) BDB, 443; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 3.
\(^{408}\) KELLEY, Biblical Hebrew, 201.
\(^{409}\) The word גָּדוֹל (circle) is also used in the following references: Job 22:14; 26:10; Prov. 8:27. In all these references including the one in DI (Isa 40:22) it is used with the connotation of describing Yahweh and His creation.
\(^{410}\) The Mesopotamians also thought that the heavens were circular and referred to them as kippat šâmê/burûmê, ‘the circle of heaven/sky. ADOLF L. ÖPPENHEIM et. al., The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of Chicago (CAD), Vol. 8: K (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1971) 397-399; WAYNE HOROWITZ, Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography (Mesopotamian Civilizations 8; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1998), 264-265; cf. PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 149; BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 149.
\(^{411}\) SMITH, Isaiah 40-66, 117.
Israel against the other gods, nations and now in opposition to the inhabitants of the earth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse 22a</th>
<th>Verse 22b</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He who sits upon the vault of the earth</td>
<td>And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, the significance of elevating Yahweh here in v.22 is to depict Him exclusively as the creator of the entire cosmos and to portray His artistic attributes of creation. A close reading of both the oppositional phrases facilitates to acknowledge that both the phrases employ the same root verb יושב and it is formulated as participial absolute (determined noun) in the first phrase (יושב) and as participial noun plural construct with pronominal suffix (יושב) in the second sentence. In spite of the interpretation of distancing the one who sits (יושב – i.e. Yahweh) on the vault of the earth from its inhabitants (יושב), the usage of the same verb יושב (to sit, dwell, remain or inhabit) suggests on the one hand, that Yahweh, the creator God who sits on the horizon of the earth depicts about Yahweh as the God who protects the inhabitants of the earth and on the other, DI’s stamp of personifying God in human terms as being-with the people accentuates that the Creator not only sits or dwell upon the vault of the earth, but He also dwells among the people, i.e. with the inhabitants who are infinitesimal in His sight like grasshoppers. Therefore, I presume that through his oppositional rhetoric presentation of the Creator and His creation, DI sketches two different images of Yahweh. He is portrayed as an undefinable ultimate God and like a monarch sitting on the vault of the earth, who rules over the entire cosmos and its inhabitants are insignificant before Him, however, I presume because of the usage of the same verb יושב that Yahweh is also a Creator depicted here as the one who relates with His creation by protecting and dwelling among them.

The second line of v.22 which is also composed of three phrases are another set of answers to the rhetorical questions of v.21. Here the rhetorical statements affirm and depict indirectly the attributes of Yahweh as Creator. A part of the artistic creative work of Yahweh is presented here in a hymnic style. These statements appear as a continuation of the chain of participial phrases from the first line of v.22.

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412 According to the tradition of Psalms Yahweh’s enthronement is in heavens (Pss. 2:4; 123:1).
As mentioned above, the entire line is composed of three different phrases: namely, a participial clause, an imperfect verbal phrase and a final or result clause. (the one who stretches out) is the participial conjugation of the verb רֵחַם (to stretch out, spread out, extend, incline or bend) and the participle functions here as a noun prefixed with definite article: – ‘who stretches out the sky like a curtain.’ Moreover, the preposition כְּ (like) is prefixed before the noun דָּשָׁן (like a thin curtain or veil) in order to demonstrate that the creator (Yahweh) is the one who stretches out the heavens like stretching out a curtain or veil and the preposition here expresses similarity. The second assertion which illustrates Yahweh’s creative act is formulated with the help of מָקֵיא, a qal imperfect third masculine conjugation of the verb מָקֵא (to spread). Along with the pronominal prefixed imperfect verb this phrase is also constructed with a noun לֹאָל (tent) prefixed with the preposition כְּ in order to express the action of the verb: – ‘and He (Yahweh) spreads them (heavens) like a tent.’ The preposition כְּ functions in the same way that it functioned in the previous phrase to express the similarity between two objects. The heavens are like a curtain or veil in the hands of Yahweh and He stretches them out and spreads them like a tent. Moreover, the purpose of Yahweh doing so is expressed through the final or result clause which is as follows: – ‘in order to live or to dwell.’ The action of Yahweh as creator who stretches the heaven and spreads them out has a premeditated purpose of making it as a tent so that all living things including humankind can make it as their habitat or home.

There are a substantial number of explicit and implicit structural and semantic connotations that make v.22 remarkable, especially when it comes to its hymnic indirect description of Yahweh as creator. At the foremost, from the structural point of view, the careful selection of verbs plays a major role in forming

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413 BDB, 641; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 12.
414 The noun דָּשָׁן which is used here to refer a ‘thin veil or curtain’ is particularly referring to a thin transparent material rather than a heavy cloth made out of any animal skin. PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 74; cf. KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 109.
415 BDB, 607.
416 The same concept can be noted in the following references: Isa. 42:5; 44:24; Pss. 104:2.
emphatic and consistent statements with regard to creation. Firstly, the verb יָשַׁב, which appears in three instances of the same verse. V.22a begins with יָשֵׁב and it depicts 'Yahweh as the one who sits (or dwells) upon the vault of the earth;' and then the same verb is used in the following phrase (i.e. in v.22b) with the similar participial formulation (רָשָׁבָה), however, with the prefix רוֹ and suffix י. Furthermore, it is used here to refer to 'the inhabitants or dwellers of it (i.e., the earth).'</p>

Finally, יָשַׁב is conjugated as an infinitive construct verb לָשֵׁת (i.e. in v.22c) where it functions as a purpose clause to express the purpose of stretching out the heavens like a curtain and spreading them out like a tent i.e. 'to dwell or live.' At the outset the repetition of the same verbs in different forms creates a literary inclusio and assonance to the entire verse; besides these structural significances I presume that a nexus has been formulated using the same verb (יָשַׁב) between the creator, creation and the created place (earth) through which DI is presenting Yahweh as the Creator who is always connected with His entire creation and cares for the well-being of His creatures as well.

**Participles**

Secondly, two verbs (i.e., הָנָה and לָשֵׁת) are precisely employed to depict Yahweh’s action of stretching out and spreading out the heavens (esp.in v22c and d). The verb הָנָה is conjugated into qal participle masculine singular absolute נָה – 'the one who stretched out.' The action of stretching out the heavens is similarized with stretching a curtain or veil (בָּדֶךְ) and on the other hand the verb לָשֵׁת is employed to describe Yahweh's competence of spreading out the heavens like a tent (לַכֹּר). The choice of verbs namely הָנָה and לָשֵׁת and also the similarizing nouns (בָּדֶךְ and לַכֹּר) facilitate to determine DI’s accustomed human-occupational-imagery that has been employed intentionally in order to sketch the attribute of Yahweh's creatorship. This can be further clarified in the following lines: Through using these verbs and nouns DI is depicting the creator God.

'Yahweh' in the image of 'tent-maker.' The verb קפל is also literally used to denote 'to pitch or make a tent,'\(^{418}\) therefore, the description of Yahweh's action is subtly signifying Him as a 'tent maker.' As how a tent-maker stretches out a curtain or veil and spreads out (ברוח) to build or construct a tent, thus, the handiwork of Yahweh’s creative attribute is illustrated in the similar way. It is not a chronological presentation of Yahweh's creatorship rather it is a rhetorical and artistic way of depicting the craftsmanship of Yahweh, and perhaps it also signals implicitly in contrast to the human-craftsmanship mentioned with regard to the skillful idol-makers (vv.19-20). Therefore, one can understand that the consistent usage of the imagery of skillful craftsmanship has an implied intention in the DI’s passages in order to elevate or heighten the prophet’s distinct depiction of the creative-handiwork of Yahweh. In addition, the tent is made as a habitat for all living things, this can also be drawn from this verse: e.g. on the one hand the purpose of spreading out the heavens like a tent is directly mentioned through the infinitive construct (קפל), and on the other, the comparison of the inhabitants like grasshoppers who are insignificant in the sight of Yahweh also subtly signifies that human beings inhabit the same tent as grasshoppers or any other living creature which further indicates the equality and inter-dependence of the living creatures which share the same tent i.e., living together under the same sky. Moreover, another aspect which is explicit in the DI’s presentation is the oppositional imageries which are depicted in the first and the second line of v.22. In the first section of v.22, Yahweh is presented as the one who sits upon the horizon of the earth, however, in the immediately following line, He is picturized or attributed with the imagery of 'tent-maker.' Among the two implied imageries (i.e., king and tent-maker), DI’s presentation of Yahweh with the figure of a skillful tent-maker adds more meaning to the creation imageries that are attributed to Yahweh. The contrasting imageries are illustrated below by placing the oppositional statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse 22a and b</th>
<th>Verse 22a and d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **He who sits upon the vault of the earth**  
and the its inhabitants are like grasshoppers | **Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,**  
and spreads them like a tent to dwell. |

The next set of assertive statements continue in vv.23 and 24 which describe the stature of earthly kings and judges who are brought to naught by Yahweh and

\(^{418}\) BDB, 641; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 12.
these earthly powers are like chaff before Him. The abounding participial formulations in this strophe (i.e., vv.21-24) also appear in the beginning of v.23.

**Participial formulation**

The assertive statements in v.23 concerning the princes and judges of the earth are composed of two different verbal clauses. The first phrase (v. 23a) begins with [participle] (the one who brings or puts) is a participial formulation of [verb] (to give, set or put). The participle is determined with definite article (and moreover, it functions here as a noun. The participle is followed by the noun which is translated as ‘rulers’ (derived from [noun]) and, furthermore, this plural noun can also be equated with the other Hebrew plural noun which refers to ‘kings’ – . Moreover, the first participial phrase concludes with the particle of nonexistence (nothing or naught) along with the inseparable preposition ( to naught or non-existence.’ The participial phrase accentuates that it is Yahweh who brings the rulers to lose their power or in other words Yahweh ceases or terminates them from their powerful positions as kings or rulers of dominant nations. After subtly mentioning about the plight of the rulers of the dominant nations, the remaining verse (v.23b) in continuation with the previous phrase depicts that it is Yahweh who makes the judges of the earth as void or as nothing (the inseparable preposition also appears in v.23b and it functions to express similarity. The preceding verse (i.e., v.22) would facilitate to understand the aspect concerning rulers and judges that has been discussed in v.23. V.22a talks implicitly about the kingship of Yahweh: – ‘It is He (Yahweh) who sits upon the vault of the earth.’ This expression implicitly underscores the kingship of Yahweh and moreover, it is precisely employed here to illustrate His dominance over the entire cosmos which even includes its inhabitants who are like grasshoppers and in which specifically the earthly kingdoms or nations and their rulers and judges are also counted. Therefore, I

419 BDB, 681; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 3.
420 BDB, 931.
422 The same line of thought can also be noted in Dan 2:21: – ‘He removes kings and sets them up.’
perceive that DI intends to portray that Yahweh who is the Creator and controller of the entire cosmos has the authority and power to dethrone any earthly kings or judges (who are unjust). On the other hand, a persistent and logical presentation of portraying the insignificant status of the entire creation (v.12), nations and coastlands (v.15-17) and idol or skillful idol manufacturers (vv.19-20) can be observed directly or indirectly through the rhetorical statements that appear in the entire pericope. The continuation of this chain of thought can also be traced in v.23 and moreover, there are some clear-cut similarities between v.17 and v.23. There are two specific words namely, תְּלֹה and יִרְדָּן which appear in v.23 can also be seen in v.17, and both these verses are presented below in order to understand the coincidence of the words mentioned above:

These words (i.e., תְּלֹה and יִרְדָּן) are used in v.17 in the context of connoting the insignificance or nonexistence of the nations and coastlands before the greatness of Yahweh. Similarly, here in v.23 as well, they are employed to depict how insignificant the rulers and the judges of this world are before Yahweh who is represented as having dominion over the entire cosmos which has been depicted in v.22: ‘the one who sits upon the arch of the earth.’ Therefore, the greatness and magnitude of Yahweh in contrast to the imperceptible structure and position of powerful kings and judges are affirmatively underscored in v.23.

The infinitesimal position of the earthly rulers and judges are further elaborated in v.24. The entire verse is composed in two lines; the first line employs three metaphorical description of the limited powers of earthly rulers or judges and the second line describes the consequences that they will face when Yahweh interferes.

The first line of v.24 is made up of three verbal sentences. It has been demonstrated above that each verb is prefixed with the negative particle גל (no or never); it is a poetic device which appears often in the poetical texts and moreover, each statement begins with the emphatic conjunction א (indeed). The three verbal statements with the above-mentioned poetical devices stay as an interconnected chain of assertions even without being linked together with waw conjunction (ְ). Apart from creating a rhythmic structural pattern to the entire line with the help of these poetic devices, certainly, א (indeed) makes each statement through the repetition of these devices a specific assertion concerning the instable and fragile nature of the rulers and judges of the earth before Yahweh. This has been metaphorically portrayed with the imagery of a plant which is indeed neither properly sown or planted, nor deeply rooted into the soil. The power and domination of the earthy kings and judges are compared to this allegory a fragile plant. These metaphorical assertive statements concerning the judges and rulers are tabulated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse 24a</th>
<th>Verse 24b</th>
<th>Verse 24c</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>אני כל-זרעינא</td>
<td>אני כל-זרעינא</td>
<td>אני כל-זרעינא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indeed, they are not planted</td>
<td>indeed, they are not sown</td>
<td>indeed, they are not rooted in the earth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first verbal phrase is constructed with a niphal perfect third common plural conjugation יִשְׁתֶֽה of the root verb יִשְׁתֶֽה (to plant); and the second sentence has employed a pual (וּפֶל) verbal formulation of פָּל (to sow or scatter seed). Both the perfect conjugations (יִשְׁתֶֽה and פָּל) function here as passive stems. These two verbs along with the negative particle compare or parallelize the earthly rulers and judges with a plant which is hardly planted or hardly sown. Moreover, the third phrase further intensifies the previous statements by emphatically asserting that the plant is not rooted strong enough (אני כל-זרעינא) therefore, it is implied that when there is a change in weather the plant will certainly not withstand. The verb יָרְדֵֽה (to root) is conjugated in poel perfect form יָרְדֵֽה to denote ‘to be rooted;’ therefore, it is employed here to state that the plants is not deeply rooted. Especially, these three metaphorical assertions are made with a poetic device which appears often in the poetical texts and moreover, each statement begins with the emphatic conjunction א (indeed).

424 PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 18 and 26. The conjunction א is repeatedly used in DI especially in the chapters 40-48 and it is often employed to express similar or parallel clauses (Isa 41:10, 26; 44:15; 46:11).
mainly to parallelize the fragile plant with the rulers and judges who are not deeply rooted, i.e., they are not firm or permanent rulers and these descriptions give the implied meaning that it is Yahweh who is the only firm, permanent and eternal ruler and judge and not these earthly ones. Hence, Yahweh has power and authority to bring the nations and their strong rulers into nothing (v.23). Though these kings and their nations claim themselves to be more powerful, still in the sight of Yahweh they are nothing and weaker than a tender plant.\(^{427}\)

Moreover, the plight of rulers and judges is not only allegorically compared with a fragile plant which is not deeply rooted in soil, but the second line of v.24 also further depicts with its twofold statements the ability of Yahweh to blow them away which would lead them to wither and finally, to be carried by storm wind like a chaff.

\[\text{Conditional clause} \quad \text{Inverted verbal formulation} \]

These twofold statements in v.24 are composed out of a verbal conditional clause\(^ {428}\) and an inverted verbal formulation. The conditional clause begins with waw conjunction \(\text{waw} \) and the particle \(\text{w} \text{vb} \text{YI} \) – ‘and when He blows at them, they wither.’ The verb \(\text{vb} \text{YI} \) which is conjugated into \textit{qal} imperfect form also has other meanings such as ‘to dry up or to be(come) dry;’ therefore, in this case, when Yahweh blows \((\text{vb} \text{YI})\) at them (blowing at the rulers and judges), they become dry or wither \((\text{vb} \text{YI})\) corresponding to the way, how a plant dries up or withers. Moreover, the witheredness or dryness symbolizes their fall into decay or decline from power as kings or judges; which again implicitly signifies that the earthly rulers’ positions are not stable and they are controlled by Yahweh. The further severe consequential effect of the disappearance of the earthly powers is underlined in the concluding inverted verbal phrase of v.24: \(\text{vq;} \text{chaff or stubble.}\) ‘and a storm wind carries them off like the chaff or stubble.’ Therefore, after being dried up or becoming withered, when a storm wind blows, they will be carried away like chaff, and again similar to the way how dried leaves or plants are carried away by a strong wind. The word \(\text{vq;} \text{chaff or stubble’ denotes something which is}

\(^{427}\) \text{SMITH, Isaiah 40-66, 116; HOLTER, Idol-Fabrication, 75.}

weightless and which could be easily carried away by wind. One of the literary devices of this strophe, i.e. the usage of the preposition כִּ (like) to parallel the different actions can be noted in this phrase as well: כִּשָּׁם – like a chaff (they will be carried away) and moreover, the verbal conjugation כְּנֶשֶׁת is suffixed with the pronoun in order to specify ‘them’ those who will be carried away by the storm wind. Yahweh not only brings down the powerful rulers and judges and their dominant kingdoms to nothing or naught, but consequently they will be decayed like a withered plant and finally they will disappear from power. As mentioned earlier, the insignificant stature of the entire cosmos including the powerful kingdoms, the inhabitants of the earth and the rulers and judges are consistently and gradually presented in the entire strophe through the rhetoric questions and declarative statements. Moreover, there are some similarities between different strophes in relation to the structural style and context which are tabulated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse 15</th>
<th>Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as dust on the scales; behold, He takes up the coastlands like fine dust.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verse 17</td>
<td>All the nations are as nothing before him; they are counted by Him as less than nothing and emptiness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 22a</td>
<td>It is He who sits upon the vault of the earth and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 23</td>
<td>...who brings the rulers to naught and makes the judges of the earth as nothing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 24b</td>
<td>When He blows upon them, they wither, and the storm wind carries them off like the chaff or stubble.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A careful reading of the table formulated above justifies the opinion that I have mentioned earlier concerning the systematic and strategic presentation of the

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greatness and magnitude of Yahweh in contrast to the minute status of the entire creation, nations, rulers and judges of the power nations. Therefore, this strophe not only elevates the position of Yahweh as the controller of the earthly rulers and judges, but specifically, Yahweh's artistic creative attribute has been depicted (in v.23) with the image of skillful tent-maker through which Yahweh is presented here as the creator of the entire cosmos who has a special relationship with the entire creation i.e., the inhabitants of the earth including humankind.

**Verses 25-26**

After the implied assertion of Yahweh's creative attributes and His control over the entire cosmos and the earthly rulers appears in vv.25-26 furthermore a syntactically independent strophe with rhetorical questions and affirmative statements; in which the discussion about Creator 'Yahweh's control over the celestial bodies' occupies the major place. A plain reading of this strophe unfolds some of the basic following observations: firstly, the rhetorical question that appears in v.25 is resembling the question pattern which has appeared in v.18, at least the initial part of the structural formulations and the usage of words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse 18</th>
<th>Verse 25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with Him?</td>
<td>To whom will you compare me that I may resemble? Says the Holy one.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondly, the prophetic messenger speech: 'says the Holy one,' occurs here for the first time in the entire strophe (vv.12-31), which explicitly denotes or reaffirms that Yahweh is the speaker of the entire passage. Thirdly and specifically, though rhetorical in style, but still a question about 'who created the celestial bodies' (אללמ נויברנ אָלֶל) appears, which is another indication to assert that the theme 'creation' and the portrayal of Yahweh as Creator are either notably or subtly ingrained throughout the rhetorical questions and the declarative statements of the entire pericope (vv.12-31). The present strophe (i.e., vv.25-26) is composed of imperfect, perfect, imperative, participial verbs and a few nominal clauses which are employed with different verbal functions which essentially invite the addressee to witness, know and understand indeed, who the creator is (or perhaps to differentiate between the creator and His innovative creations that one witnesses).
V.25 begins with a rhetorical question that is introduced by the customary interrogative particle ymi however, it is prefixed with waw conjunction ו and the preposition ל (‘then to whom’). The interrogative particle is followed by two verbs and the first one is הקינתי מ (which begins the initial question ‘to whom will you compare me’). As mentioned above a similar rhetorical question pattern has been employed in v.18 as well, where even the same verbal conjugation is used. The verb ידוה (to be like or resemble) is conjugated into piel imperfect second masculine plural form in both the cases (i.e., vv. 18 and 25) and moreover, the customary intensified piel meaning is enforced. However, v.18’s expression has a kind of different connotation (although the verbal meaning is the same) when compared with v.25. From my observation, v.18 places certainly an intensified rhetorical question i.e.: אלהים מ underworld ל – ‘to whom then will you compare God’ and moreover, it is addressed in second person and the noun אל (God) is mentioned, whereas, in v.25 the noun אל is omitted and the expressive language of the rhetorical question is becoming more intimate because of the pronominal suffix that has been attached to the verbal conjugation ידוה. ‘(to whom then) will you compare me.’ A gradual development of closeness between the speaker and addressee can be noted here.

Much has been discussed about the verb ידוה in v.18 in the context of skillful artisans who can imagine and efficiently carve perfect idol-images. The implied answer of the rhetorical question in v.18 is as follows: Yahweh cannot be similarized with anyone, He cannot be imagined by human brains and carved into a form by any skillful artisan and show or display and say ‘this is what Yahweh looks like.’ Similarly, by repeating the same verb, once again the identical implied meaning is accentuated in v.25 and moreover, the second verb ידוה (that I would resemble) puts additional emphasis to this rhetorical question. The verb ידוה (to be(come) like, the same, equal of, be equivalent to, resemble) is conjugated into qal imperfect first common form which functions here as cohortative in its meaning. With the cohortative formulation the speaker’s desire is expressed here: ‘(to whom will you then compare me) that I would resemble’ (ידוה אל). The rhetorical question in v.25, from my perception, can also be understood in a better way in the light of the previous strophe especially v.22a: ידוה אל – ‘He

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431 BDB, 1001; KAHAL, 592; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 71.
432 Cohortative often appears with י in first person imperfect verbal form to express the speaker’s desire, determination, or self-encouragement to perform certain action. KELLEY, Biblical Hebrew, 427.
who sits upon the vault or horizon of the earth.’ This participial formulation offers
a hint here indirectly concerning the unimaginable greatness and magnitude of
Yahweh. Therefore, by depicting subtly Yahweh as the Creator who sits upon the
horizon of the earth, the rhetorical question is still placed before the addressee: ‘Is
it possible for anyone to imagine or get an approximate picture of Me (i.e. Yahweh)
and compare Me (ךָרָהִיםニִי) with anyone or anything and say this is what I resemble
or look like (ךָנַזְרָא) or is it possible to carve an image like Me?’ (at least based on
the hint in v.22a) and the accustomed emphatic implied answer is ‘No.’ The
noteworthy and significant element in this rhetorical question is not only the
inclusion of first common pronominal suffix (ךָניִי), but more than that, it is the
incorporation of the speech formula which has been referred to the speaker, that
makes the entire interrogative sentence more outstanding: נִיִּא מֵא – ‘says the
Holy one.’

There are more discussions with regard to the term the Holy one (ךָרָהִים) and
Holy one of Israel (ךָרָהִים שְּׁרַאֵל). These two terminologies are repeated quite a
number of times in the book of Isaiah. These epithets are often used in OT to
denote the transcendent nature of Yahweh who is Holy and projected as a distant
God who keeps Himself away from the people because of His holiness and no one
is as holy as Him. However, Isaianic usage of this epithet is to portray that the Holy
God manifests Himself to His people and He dwells with and among His people.
These conceptual arguments will be discussed in the third exegetical passage in an
elaborate manner (Isa 41:17-20).

After the rhetorical questions in v.25 which have depicted the
distinctiveness of Yahweh, v.26 begins with an elaborative description of
assertions and instructions to witness the spectacular creative power of Yahweh.
V.26 can be divided into two sections; the first section, i.e., the first line commences
with imperatives, followed by a rhetorical question and the second section that is
comprised of sentences made out of participle, perfect and nominal clauses that
depict the act of Yahweh as creator.

\[ \text{Imperative clause} \]

\[ \text{Rhetorical question} \]

433 These epithets are used in Isa 1-39 to mock those who underestimate the power of
Yahweh and in Isa 40-55 the Holy one or the Holy one of Israel is used with the
connotation of acknowledging the power of Yahweh to redeem the Israelites. JOHN OSWALT,
“Isaiah: Theology of,” NIDOTTE 4: 729; BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 151; PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 151;
The first phrase of the first line of v.26 is composed of imperatives which function as instructions for the addressee to view the innovation of Yahweh. The twofold instructions are as follows: וָּפַה—‘lift up your eyes and see.’ Both the verbs (וָּפִּ֖ה—‘to lift or raise’ and רָאָֽיִֽה—‘to see, perceive or understand’)\(^{434}\) which are employed here are conjugated into qal imperative masculine plural forms which serve to express positive command.\(^{435}\) The noun מִרְכָּבָה (height, elevation or pride)\(^{436}\) is placed immediately after the first imperative (וָּפַה) and it is generally used to connote ‘looking towards heavens, elevated place, height of mountains and etc.’ Therefore, the first imperative along with the nouns commands the addressee to ‘lift up their eyes on high;’ and this denotes here looking at the sky or the heavens and see or perceive (וָּפַה). The imperative statements which urged the people ‘to look at the sky or heavens,’ are immediately followed by a rhetorical question which is introduced by נִי, the customary interrogative particle: מִי מִרְכָּבָ֑ה— who created these? This is the first occurrence in the entire pericope (vv.12-31) that a rhetorical question is asking about ‘who has created these things’ that one witness in the sky. In this rhetorical question the verb בָּרָא is employed which is by and large used to express the divine activity (only with God as subject) of creating, fashioning or shaping the heavens and earth and humankind as well. \(^{437}\) This rhetorical question is followed by a cluster of participial, verbal and nominal clause phrases which depict the action of Yahweh as creator, which is moreover a rhetorical description for the above question. However, before looking at these descriptive statements, I would like to read the first line of v.26 in the light of the participial rhetorical assertions in v.22c and d. Therefore, the selected sections of these verses are listed below:

\[

tb,v'(l' lh,aoK' ~xeT'm.YIw: ~yIm;v' qDok; hj,ANh; 22c-d
\]

\[

tb,v'(l' lh,aoK' ~xeT'm.YIw: ~yIm;v' qDok; hj,ANh; 26
\]

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\(^{434}\) BDB, 672 and 909; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 3 and 5.

\(^{435}\) KELLEY, Biblical Hebrew, 165.

\(^{436}\) BDB, 929; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 32.

\(^{437}\) The verb בָּרָא is specifically used only with Yahweh to denote Him as creator and in all occurrences, Yahweh is the subject to this verb (Isa 40:26, 28; 41:20; 42:5; 43:1, 7, 15; 45:7, 8, 12, 18; 48:7). This verb also occurs in other passages of the OT, esp. in the book of Genesis (1:1, 21, 27; 2:3, 4; 5:1; 6:7) and Psalms (89:13, 48) where it is used specially to refer Yahweh as creator. KARL-HEINZ BERNHARDT, ThWAT, I: 775; BDB, 135; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 34.
The assertive or the rhetorical participial statements in v.22c and d affirm that ‘it is He (i.e., Yahweh) who stretches out the heavens like a curtain or veil and spreads out them like a tent to dwell.’ Nevertheless, the first line of v.26 presents the imperative statements and a rhetorical question which have been already discussed above, however, the gist of v.26a is a rhetorical command to the addressee to ‘look at the sky and see and ponder who has created these things.’

It is to be noted that, although the assertive statements in v.26 portray the innovative creative act of Yahweh, the answer for the rhetorical question in v.26 has been already given through the participial declarative statements in v.22c and d. Therefore, both the verses can be summarized in the following way: ‘lift up your eyes on high and see the heavens which has been stretched out like a curtain and spread out like a tent by ‘Yahweh,’ He is the one who has created the celestial bodies which ones sees and moreover, He is the Creator of the entire cosmos.’

This clearly shows that there is a consistent and decisive emphasis of Yahweh as creator which can been witnessed as a chain of thin layer of ideal assertion either implicitly or explicitly seen from the beginning of this pericope. Moreover, the assertive statements about the artistic creative activity of Yahweh that has been depicted in the remaining sections of v.26 further intensifies and affirms that Yahweh is the Creator of the heavens and earth and especially, in these statements His creatorship of the celestial bodies is attested.

The following lines are intended to analyze these statements in detail and to trace out the DI’s anthropomorphic picture of Yahweh as Creator. The assertions with regard to Yahweh’s creative power is comprised of two lines which begins after the rhetorical question in v.26. The first line is composed of a participial phrase and an imperfect verbal clause.

**Participial clause**

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\text{לָלֶךְ בְּשַׁמְיֹם אַלָּבָּאָה}
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**Rhetorical question**

The participial phrase is a subtle answer to the imperative statements and the rhetorical questions that appeared in the beginning of v.26. The verb \( לָלֶךְ \) (to go out, come out) is conjugated into hiphil participle absolute form \( לָלֶךְ בְּשַׁמְיֹם אַלָּבָּאָה \) (the one who brings out or bringing out) which is determined with definite article and

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therefore, it functions here as a masculine noun. Moreover, the hiphil stem carries the causative meaning here and thus, it can mean, ‘the one who causes to bring out’ their host (נְכָאָם) in huge numbers (גָּלָה) – in more quantity). Furthermore, the second phrase describes in continuation with the previous one that לָלָּשׁ בֵּית הָרָה – ‘He calls each of them by name.’ It is an implied answer that these statements are conferred concerning ‘who created these things that appear in the sky?’ It is the Holy one or Yahweh who brings the hosts of the sky, i.e., the sun, moon and stars in huge numbers and He calls them according to their names, individually; and therefore, He is the creator of the celestial bodies that one sees enormously in the sky.

The subsequent phrase which accentuates ‘Yahweh’s power that does not let any heavenly host to go missing’ is formulated as a causal statement which precisely depicts the cause and effect using nominal and verbal clause formulations.

Nominal clauses

Verbal clause

There are two nominal clause phrases which are joined together by waw conjunction (ו) and they function here as the cause-factor of the clausal sentence: because He (the Creator, i.e. Yahweh) is great in strength (aylight עֵזָא ולָנָה) and mighty in power (ךֵלָּה אֵמְרֹת); and then comes the effect of causal phrases: ‘not one is missing.’ Apart from the commonly used nouns such as רָב (great or multitude) and כֵּלָּה (strength or mighty) the other nouns that are employed in the nominal clauses are as follows: the noun plural עֵזָא which can also mean vigor, manhood or wealth is translated here as strength (`א) and other adjective which is used for mighty is עֵזָא. The nominal sentences as accustomed, enforce emphasis to underscore the power, might and strength of the creator, i.e., Yahweh. The verb רָב (be lacking or fail) is conjugated into niphal perfect form and it gives passive meaning which also functions as signifying effect of the causal clause. The verb כֵּלָּה which has the general connotation referring to ‘lacking in something’ is used here to denote that the celestial bodies or the heavenly hosts will not ‘remain or lag behind’ without appearing in the sky according to

the command of the Creator or in other words, they will not fail to appear in the sky according to the will of the creator.

There are different ways of perceiving the verses that appear in this strophe (vv.25-26) which subtly exemplifies the ingenious attributes of Yahweh as creator. Conventionally, a few aspects are observed from this strophe. The affirmative statements not only assert that Yahweh- the Holy one is the creator of the celestial bodies, but the rhetorical narration in the second part of v.26 strongly underlines that the heavenly hosts are controlled by Yahweh: ‘He brings them out and they do not fail to appear and moreover, He calls them by name individually, since He is great in strength and mighty in power.’

On the one hand Yahweh-the Creator is presented as an army commander who commands his soldiers to assemble and perform their duties, similarly Yahweh brings the heavenly hosts in numerous quantity and calls them by name, and they do not fail to appear and finally, they perform their regular duties of giving light to the entire universe. On the other hand, it is also decisively mentioned that it is Yahweh, the creator (茬בר) who formed or fashioned these heavenly elements and He causes them to appear in the sky in order to benefit the inhabitants of the earth and therefore, Yahweh’s handiwork as a skillful handworker is again emphasized in this section. V.26 can also be viewed in the light of v.25 (the rhetorical question) as well as from the perspective of the previous strophe. Firstly, the rhetorical narration of Yahweh’s role in creating and assigning duties to the celestial bodies (in v.26) is also basically a substantial answer based on to the rhetorical questions that have been raised in v.25: ‘to whom will you compare me that I would resemble.’ The depiction of Yahweh who sits upon the horizon of the earth (in v.22a) was also, according to my observation, given as a hint to the addressee and to see whether there is a possibility to imagine and similarize Yahweh with something. The implicit answer is that, it is not possible.

In a similar way, the rhetorical question in v.25 and the further presentation of asking the addressee to lift up their eyes and see, is to implicitly and decisively ask, whether Yahweh resembles the celestial bodies. There is a substantial reason for observing in this way, because the celestial bodies are perceived as gods in the ANE contexts and the natural world was worshipped rather than seeing them as creation of their gods.

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[^441]: Cf. Job 38:31-33; Pss 147: 4-5. SMITH, Isaiah 40-66, 119.
[^442]: It is a famous ideology or belief in the ANE (esp. in Egypt and Canaan) that an earthly king soon after his death does not quit his kingship, rather he participates in the eternal celestial world. Moreover, the earthly kings were considered as the representatives of God. ALBANI, Der eine Gott, 153-155. Similarly, ALBAN opines that these statements are also
Hence, on the one hand the celestial bodies are not representation of powerful gods, rather they are innovative creative work of Yahweh; secondly, the celestial bodies show how skillful and creative like an adroit handworker that Yahweh has created them and moreover these handiworks of Yahweh cannot be equated with them or perceived as resembling Him. Secondly, when v.26 is read in the light of v.23 where the insignificant stature of the earthly rulers and judges are mentioned, one can perceive that v.26 depicts not only that the earthly kingdoms and kings are under the control of Yahweh, but also the celestial bodies that one witnesses in the sky. Whether anything on earth or in sky comes under the dominion of Yahweh. In addition, the last line of the causal clause and the verbal clause which conclude v.26 (because Yahweh is great in strength and mighty in power not one is missing) serve as preparatory lines for v.27 where Yahweh asks Jacob through the rhetorical question: ‘why do you think O Israel, that my way is hidden from Yahweh;’ this will be further explained in the following strophe.

Apart from the above various perspectives of looking at vv.25-26, a close reading of v.26 precisely reveals that DI is employing a human-occupational-imagery to depict the creative activity of Yahweh and this is explicit in v.26 when it comes to the portrayal of Yahweh’s action of bringing out the heavenly hosts; calling them by name; and not allowing even one to be missed or left behind. Especially, these lines, from my observation, personify the creator God ‘Yahweh’ as ‘shepherd;’ like how a shepherd leads out huge number of sheep from the stable and assembles them, thus Yahweh brings out the heavenly host which are numerous in number. A shepherd knows his sheep individually and he calls them one by one which shows his affinity towards his flock. Similarly, Yahweh calls the celestial bodies by name, because they are His skillful and creative handiwork and He relates Himself to His creation (including the celestial bodies).

In the previous verse Yahweh’s relation with the earth and its inhabitants has been underscored by using the verb בָּרַע (to dwell). Corresponding to the previous strophe, here too the shepherd imagery depicts how Yahweh owns the celestial bodies. Moreover, the last phrase asserts precisely this shepherd imagery; not even one is missing from Yahweh’s sight since He is great in strength and mighty in power. A shepherd always watches over his sheep therefore, not even polemical declarations against the astral deities which were famous in the ANE world.

ALBANI, Der eine Gott, 239-240.

443 GOLDINGAY and PAYNE, Isaiah 40-55, 124; GOLDINGAY, Message of Isaiah 40-55, 58.

444 According to SEITZ, God’s total grasp of every star in the sky – not one missing – is meant to anticipate the concern of Jacob/Israel that somehow God has disregarded or forgotten about the way of the people. CHRISTOPHER R. SEITZ, “The Book of Isaiah 40-66: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections,” in The New Interpreter’s Bible (ed. LEANDER KECK et al.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 6: 344.
one will be missed out or left astray or lost anywhere. Similarly, Yahweh preserves His entire creation, and His care for the celestial bodies is another suitable example to prove. Hence, based on the above embedded views in the strophe, the ‘shepherd imagery’ is also ingrained in the DI’s presentation of Yahweh as creator of the celestial bodies (vv.25 and 26).

Verses 27-31

The concluding strophe (vv.27-31) is the culminating unit of the entire pericope (vv.12-31) which is also comprised of rhetorical questions and declarative assertions. Although themes are discussed, still the basic emphasis of this strophe is ‘the everlasting Creator God ‘Yahweh’ can redeem Jacob/Israel.’ Moreover, the culminating strophe incorporates all the different themes about Yahweh which are discussed in the previous strophes and they are once again reasserted here, e.g.: Yahweh as the Creator of the entire cosmos; who controls the nations, coastlands, rulers and the judges; as the God who exists from the foundations of the earth; as Creator who relates with creation (earth and its inhabitants); from whom nothing is hid and who controls everything upon the earth and in the sky, then certainly, this God of Israel, ‘Yahweh’ is able to redeem Jacob/Israel from any calamitous situation.

According to the typical features of each strophe, a series of rhetorical questions appear in v.27 and in v.28 as well. However, v.27 begins with a new interrogative particle הַלַּמְנוּ (why) which is employed here for the first time in the entire pericope because, in the other strophes either the particle הָיָה or לְתוֹם is used to introduce a cluster of rhetorical questions (e.g., vv.12-14, 18, 21, 25 and 28). The interrogative particle לְתוֹם is significant because it is used here to express the speaker’s reproachful disappointment, which appears as a chain of questions after the particle and the same are listed in the following page:

445 MELUGIN compares the complaint in v.27 with the lament psalms. These laments begin with protest and conclude with the assurance of salvation. This can be observed in vv.28-31. MELUGIN, “Deutero-Isaiah,” 35 & 92; NAIDOFF, “Rhetoric of Encouragement,” 73; GOLDINGAY, Message of Isaiah 40-55, 64; PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 153.

446 Moreover, the interrogative particle לְתוֹם is also used in the public lamentations. BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 156; PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 153; BLENKINSOPP, Isaiah 40-55, 194; NAIDOFF, “Rhetoric of Encouragement,” 73. There is a similar interrogative particle הַלַּמְנוּ with the same connotation is used to express informational aspects. JENNI, Lehrbuch der hebräischen Sprache, 79.
One of the basic or essential observations from v.25 is, that the speaker and addressee are explicit in the rhetorical questions; it is Yahweh who is the speaker (v.27b) and the addressee is Jacob/Israel (v.27a). Therefore, it can be asserted or reaffirmed evidently that the entire pericope is addressed to the people of Israel by Yahweh, the God of Israel. V.27 is comprised of two lines and each line is formulated with twin statements in a rhythmic manner and which will be further explained in the following lines. The first line of the rhetorical questions is comprised of two verbs namely ר께서 ('se'asi) and נשארת ('sharet) which are conjugated into qal (ר께서 'se'asi) and piel (שארת 'sharet) imperfect second masculine stems respectively; and the two verbal phrases are joined together by waw conjunction (ו). The salient feature here is, although the verbs are conjugated in second masculine forms, still the proper names Israel ('ישראל) and Jacob ('יעקב) are placed after the verbal conjugations which on the one hand, indicates the personal and intimate discourse of the speaker with the addressee and on the other, it denotes the upcoming reproachful disappointment that the speaker is about to express in the second line. Thus, the subsequent lines express the inner-perception of Jacob/Israel possibly due to their Babylonian exilic situation which is depicted through the rhetorical statements addressed by Yahweh.

447 CHILDS, Isaiah, 310.
448 This expression Jacob/Israel appears in Isa 40-48 (than any other books in OT) in several occasions together and separately, however the name Israel appears frequently than Jacob (Isa 40:27; 41:8, 14; 42:24: 43:1, 22, 28; 44:1, 5, 21, 23; 45:4; 46:3; 48:1, 12). Moreover, in many instances it is connected with the verb my servant ('עבד). In addition, the term Jacob/Israel appears in composite form with other words (e.g., Holy one of Israel, God of Israel, creator of Israel, king of Israel, king of Jacob, seed of Israel, seed of Jacob, savior of Israel, house of Israel, house of Jacob, etc.). BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 157; GOLDINGAY, Message of Isaiah 40-55, 126; ELLIGER, Deuterojesaja 40:1-45:7, 97; KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 119.
449 Israelites plight in Babylon is reflected here. They felt as if they were abandoned by Yahweh and there is no hope of salvation. PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 148; GOLDINGAY and PAYNE opine that the name Jacob/Israel empirically denotes the Judean refugees in Babylon. GOLDINGAY and PAYNE, Isaiah 40-55, 125. WATTS links these words to a group of people who feel that their life in Babylon in insignificant and they are no more important in the sight of God. WATTS, Isaiah 34-66, 94; WESTERMANN observes that the complaint presented here (v.27) is the crux of the entire argument in this pericope. WESTERMANN, Isaiah 40-66, 169;
The complaints of Jacob/Israel which are expressed through Yahweh’s rhetorical questions are formulated using two verbal sentences and they are linked together by waw conjunction (ו). Some of the syntactical structural indicators signify the intensity of the argument as well as the intimate relationship between Yahweh and the people of Israel, at least which has been expressed from the side of the speaker. The pronominal suffix that has been attached to most of the words in the second line of v.27 esp. in the divine name יְהֹוָה רָאָיָה (Yhwh Yr'ya') indicates that Yahweh/Elohim is the God of Jacob/Israel and the Israelites are His people. Moreover, both the divine names יְהֹוָה רָאָיָה (Yhwh Yr'ya') and אֲלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Al'yi'sr'yl') are employed in this line as how the two names such as Jacob (בֻּקְר* יָבֹע) and Israel (אֲלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) are mentioned in the previous line which basically creates assonance and specifically emphasizes the direct discourse and authority of the speaker. The first phrase begins with the verb נָרָה (to be hidden or hid oneself)⁴⁵⁰ and it is conjugated into niphal singular form נָרָה which functions here as a passive stem. The first complaint is as follows: ‘my way (נָרָה) is hidden from Yahweh (יְהֹוָה יַמְלֹא). The second complaint is formulated using an inverted verbal sentence where the sentence begins with waw conjunction (ו) prefixed and the noun is also prefixed with the preposition מ (from), and in addition, the object-noun also carries a first common possessive suffix: 'from my God, my right has been passed over.’

As mentioned earlier, there exists always a natural inner-unity among the different strophes even though they are independent units and therefore, a rhetorical question from one strophe may have an answer in the other strophe, or vice versa. As indicated above, v.27 not only projects the ‘Holy one’ as Creator of the celestial bodies, but it also concludes by saying that none of the elements in the sky will be missed out from the sight of Yahweh. This view remains as a background or introduction to the concluding strophe (vv.27-31) and this assertion is decisively implied in v.27. The Creator God ‘Yahweh,’ who is greater than the entire creation (v.12) nations, coastlands (vv.15-17), kings and judges (vv.23-24) and including everything that is seen in heaven and upon earth (vv.25-26), absolutely knows everything and nothing is hidden from His sight. Therefore,

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the emphatic rhetorical question from Yahweh is, ‘how is it possible for you Jacob/Israel to say that my way is hidden from Yahweh, from whose sight nothing can be (or is) hidden?’ The first strophe (v.13-14) talks about Yahweh as unique God whose spirit or mind cannot be measured and moreover, He does not need anyone to teach or instruct Him the path of justice or way of understanding.

However, in v.27 the implied meaning indicates in the light of vv.13-14 that Yahweh, who does not need instruction to learn His way or path, ‘perceives and certainly knows the path or way of Jacob/Israel and it is not likely hidden from the sight of Yahweh. Therefore, the all-powerful God speaks in a personal level through this rhetorical question saying that He controls the situations that the people of Israel are undergoing and there is hope for restoration.451 Secondly, the other aspect that has been mentioned in the rhetorical question is Jacob/Israel’s complaint of losing their right from Yahweh: ‘from my God, my right is passed over.’ Israelites close affinity to God that they belong to Him, and moreover, Israel as Yahweh’s own people are underscored in this verse (although a complaint is expressed here). Especially, it is explicit through the inverted verbal sentence and the possessive pronoun suffixed noun (and my God). The verb (to pass over, pass through, or pass by) is conjugated into qal imperfect form which can also mean ‘to sweep by.’452 Moreover, the noun (my right) is basically a legal term concerning judgment, decision, ordinance, law and so on.453

The judicial term is used in the rhetorical question in order to express what Israelites are thinking from their perspective. From my observation, according to their point of view, ‘justice’ has not been done to them by Yahweh and their case (my case or judgment) has passed away or been swept away; in other words, their case is not taken into consideration in order to offer or establish justice. The above twin complaints in the rhetorical questions indeed precisely expound the common view which existed among the Israelites that Yahweh, the God of Israel is somehow unaware and unconcerned about their taxing exilic situation. However, the implied answer for these rhetorical complaints asserts that Yahweh, the Creator of the entire cosmos from whose sight nothing is hidden, is aware and concerned about the people of Israel whose restoration is definite.

451 BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 158; BLENKINSOPP, Isaiah 40-55, 194.
452 PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 6; BDB, 719.
453 BDB, 1049; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 7.
After the implied assertion of Yahweh’s concern over the people of Israel through the rhetorical pattern, a chain of rhetorical questions and assertive statements appear once again in v.28 as a continuation of the previous strophes which are essentially aimed at reaffirming Yahweh as the master of creation and all-powerful everlasting God of heaven and earth, who will certainly meet the needs of His people. Moreover, v.28 begins with the similar rhetorical question pattern that has been employed in v.21 (esp. the initial phrases), which is followed by the affirmation of eternal God, Yahweh as creator and in addition, a description of His unique qualities is enumerated.

Although the same structural pattern of v.21 has been employed in the formulation of the rhetorical questions in v.28, especially, in terms of the selection of the same interrogative particle (יָדַע, הָיוֹן) as well as the verbs (רָאִים, רָאתָ, רָאתָם), still in v.28 only two verbal sentences along with the interrogative particle are employed; however, the remarkable element is that the questions are personally addressed in the second personal singular conjugation (ךָדָה, כָּדָתָה) aiming at addressing to each and every individual Israelite who are exiled in Babylon. The following lines are intended to explain the formulations of the rhetorical questions in v.28a in the light of the first two verbal rhetorical phrases of v.21.

Both the verses begin with the interrogative particle (have you not) to introduce the questions. In v.21 the same interrogative particle (יָדַע) appears almost four times (i.e., in the entire verse) before each rhetorical question in order to precisely lay emphasis on each individual question. However, in v.28 the interrogative particle (יָדַע) is employed only once at the beginning of the verse which is applied to both the verbal formulations. The rhetorical particle (יָדַע) is followed by the verb (to know) which is conjugated into qal perfect second person singular form (ךָדָה - ‘you’ know). Further, the interrogative particle (יָדַע) is applied to the second verbal phrase as well, however, the verb (ךָדָת) which is conjugated into qal perfect second masculine singular form (ךָדָת), is preceded by
the emphatic negative particle לֹא with a combination of the conjunction אֲבָל (אֲבָלָּו). Here, the conjunction אֲבָל which is basically translated as ‘if’ becomes an emphatic negation along with לֹא and therefore, the stress on the subsequent rhetorical question is further intensified; and the entire first line of v.28 is as follows: $$	ext{הָלַךְאֲבָל}{} ^{454}$$ - have you not known? Have you not heard?

In spite of many similarities between the formulations of the rhetorical questions in vv.21 and 28, there is one major difference which makes the questions in v.28 more personal to the addressee. In v.21 the verbs are conjugated into qal imperfect second masculine plural forms (you in plural), whereas in v.28 the two verbs (רִית and שְׂמֹשֶׁה) are conjugated into qal perfect second masculine singular forms (רִית and שְׂמֹשֶׁה) which from my perception make the message more personally addressed to the Israelites focusing on each and every individual (you in singular), whereby Yahweh’s closer affinity with the people of Israel, ‘the addressee’ is once more underlined here. Much has been explained about the rhetorical questions in v.21; the implied answer is that the addressee is already aware of what the speaker is trying to convey through these rhetorical questions. They have heard and know about this God ‘Yahweh’ and His deeds as Creator and redeemer from the beginning. 

Another major difference between v.21 and v.28 is, in v.21 after the above mentioned two rhetorical questions a chain of more questions was employed to make the addressee realize or recollect what they have heard and know from the beginning or the foundations of the earth; whereas, in v.28 the two questions are followed by assertive statements which begin to depict Yahweh as Creator and explain His qualities.

Thus, the assertive statements of the creatorship of Yahweh then follows in the second line of v.28 which are composed of two phrases, a nominal clause and a participial phrase respectively.

455 Smith, Isaiah 40-66, 121.
The nominal clause (without auxiliary verbs in translation) entitles Yahweh as the ‘everlasting God:’ אֵלֶּה יְהֹウェָה – ‘God of antiquity, or everlasting God.’ The word לֵוְלָם which is also spelled as לֵוְלָם has various meanings such as ‘forever, ancient, everlasting, long duration, antiquity.’456 Before depicting Yahweh as the Creator of the ends of the earth, the designation אֵלֶּה יְהֹウェָה serves here to depict the antique existence of Yahweh, the God who exists from the beginning even before the foundations of the earth – the everlasting God.457 The implied meaning of Yahweh’s superiority or claiming uniqueness for Himself can be perceived here. The assertion about Yahweh’s ancient and everlasting existence is subtly mentioned in the rhetorical questions of v.21 which has been underlined here in a declarative manner. Hence, this affirms the interconnectedness between the strophes and their connotations as well. Therefore, this entitlement for Yahweh as the ‘God of antiquity’ אֵלֶּה יְהֹウェָה whose duration of existence cannot be estimated is an overture to present Him as the creator of the ends of the earth: יְהֹウェָה, בַּדַּיְתָה יְהֹウェָה יְהֹウェָה – ‘Yahweh, is the creator of the ends of the earth.’

For the first time in the entire pericope (vv.12-31) Yahweh is explicitly asserted as creator בַּדַּיְתָה, although implicitly in several occurrences, either the theme creation or Yahweh’s attributes as Creator are profoundly ingrained in all the individual strophes. The verb בַּדַּיְתָה has been initially used in v.26, especially, in the rhetorical question where the Holy one urged the addressee to lift up their eyes high and see – ‘who created this’ בַּדַּיְתָה. In v.26 בַּדַּיְתָה is conjugated as qal perfect form to frame the rhetorical question with regard to identifying the creator based on the created things that one witnesses (who created these?), however, here in v.28 בַּדַּיְתָה is conjugated into a participial masculine singular absolute form בַּדַּיְתָה, principally as a further step to reveal the ‘actor’ or ‘protagonist’ who has performed the ‘action of creation.’ Until the previous strophe the protagonist of creation was not declared, but in the concluding strophe specifically, in v.28, the identity of the creator is finally disclosed.

This is one of the characteristic features of the argumentative prophetic presentation with rhetoric devices which facilitates to gradually unknot the riddles by the speaker with uninterrupted rhetorical questions and declarative statements, simultaneously, giving space to the addressee to arrive to their conclusions or answers that are embedded in the rhetorical questions. Thus, the entire pericope has reached its culminating point of identifying or revealing the everlasting God ‘Yahweh’ as Creator of the entire cosmos. As mentioned in v.26, the

456 BDB, 763; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 7.
457 KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 123.
verb נָבַה is always used to denote the divine activity of creating, forming, shaping, in which God is always placed as the subject.\(^\text{458}\) It is a special theological term which is clearly employed in the OT passages to underline the creative work of Yahweh in contrast to the human skills of creating or manufacturing products from the existing raw materials.\(^\text{459}\)

Etymologically, the word נָבַה is seldom found outside the OT. But remarkably there is an equivalent old Arabic root and it is ‘barâ’ meaning ‘to build’ which is also translated as ‘to bring forth or give birth to.’\(^\text{460}\) Its noun form is translated as ‘sculptor.’ However, the Hebrew root נָבַה is assumed to have the original meaning ‘to separate or divide.’\(^\text{461}\) Among the 49 occurrences in OT, נָבַה appears 17 times in DI and it is considered that the term נָבַה was first introduced only during the exilic period into the OT literature.\(^\text{462}\) Moreover, unlike the general connotation, the ‘theology of creation’ or even the word נָבַה is perceived in DI in relation to the ‘theology of salvation.’ In other words, theology of creation finds its meaning only in connection with ‘salvation history’ and it is not an independent theme. However, in DI creation is not only seen as a primitive action which has happened in the ancient past, but it also happens in the immediate present or anytime in the future. Thus, this notion led many scholars to give soteriological connotation to creation relating it to the context or exilic redemption and rebuilding of the Israelite community.\(^\text{463}\) Therefore, traditionally DI’s understanding of the creative work of Yahweh is interpreted as Yahweh’s act of salvation for Israel.

However, the above-mentioned view cannot be negated, neither can it be confined to the Deutero-Isaianic presentation of Yahweh as Creator and His creative works with the conventional interpretation through the concept of salvation. On the one hand, Yahweh is projected as infinite God, who cannot be defined or compared or similarized with either anything or anyone, however, on the other hand, the nuances DI uses to define Yahweh’s creative attributes are phenomenal. Yahweh is the supreme God, at the same time He crafts this world as Creator which can be understood in the imagery of tentmaker, skillful artisan and so on and therefore, these types of portrayals of Yahweh as Creator make Deutero-

\(^{458}\) BDB, 135.

\(^{459}\) Karl-Heinz Bernhardt, "נָבַה bārā’,” TDOT 2: 246.


\(^{461}\) Bernhardt, TDOT 2: 245.

\(^{462}\) Bernhardt, TDOT 2: 245.

\(^{463}\) Cf. Von Rad, Old Testament Theology II, 238-240.
Isaianic presentation more exceptional. The same striking feature can also be noted here in v.28, where Yahweh is finally revealed as Creator of the ends of the earth. In this regard, I would like to read the Hebrew word אָרֶב in the light of the old Arabic word ‘barā’ which carries the meaning ‘to build, to bring forth or give birth to,’ and its noun form meaning ‘sculptor.’

These various connotations again offer new shades of human imageries to understand the creative attributes of Yahweh. Therefore, from my perception, the word אָרֶב keeping all its divine attributive connotation, presents Yahweh here as a skillful sculptor who with His highly exceptional fine artistic ideas develops a sculpture. Yahweh has carved the entire cosmos according to His own creative ideas without anyone’s instruction. Moreover, the other two meanings in the light of the old Arabic understanding are also significant. Yahweh has built (‘barā’) the entire cosmos to the ends of this earth like a builder. A builder takes the help of an architect usually to get the entire construction project designed in its blueprint form and then executes according to the design and structure created in the blueprint.

Yahweh takes here the role of an architect and a builder and creates the entire cosmos according to His plan and therefore, in this perspective, Yahweh is personified as ‘builder’ in DI’s presentation of Yahweh as Creator. Finally, another significant aspect that I would like to draw from the word אָרֶב in the light of its old Arabic equivalent ‘barā’ is ‘to bring forth or give birth to.’ Through this meaning, אָרֶב intends to equate the creative works of Yahweh with the ‘mother imagery’ who gives birth to a child. ‘Giving birth to’ connotes bringing new life into this world. The DI’s designation given to Yahweh as Creator (בָּרָה), from my perception, certainly, incorporates this aspect of seeing Yahweh with the imagery of mother who brings new life into this world. The entire cosmos consists of the aspect of life because of the life-giver Yahweh and by subtly connoting Yahweh with the imagery of mother (‘barā’ – to give birth to) Deutero-Isaianic depiction of Yahweh as Creator reaches its peak.

After revealing the God of antiquity, ‘Yahweh’ as ‘Creator’ (בָּרָה) which has multiple shades of meanings, continues the last line of v.28 to present the twofold qualities of the Creator such as His endurance and wisdom. These attributes appear as enhancing statements to reinforce the unique qualities of the creator, simultaneously, their significant implications can also be understood in the light of the previous strophes as well.
The above depicted entire line is composed of three phrases which is explicit from the different sentence formulations. The first and second phrase are verbal clauses which are individually introduced by the negative particle אֲלֵּי and the final phrase is a nominal clause that has been introduced by the particle of nonexistence (אֵין). The first phrase through the negative particle אֲלֵּי emphasizes that the Creator, 'Yahweh' does not faint (יָרָא אֱלֹהִים). The verb יָרָא (be weary or faint)⁴⁶⁴ is conjugated into qal imperfect form יִיָּרֵא which expresses the repeated habitual action or state of being. Therefore, here the implication of the verb (יָרָא) subtly emphasizes that Yahweh is always energetic. The same notion of meaning is also carried out in the subsequent phrase: יָרֵא אֱלֹהִים – ‘or (He) does not grow weary.’ The verb יָרֵא (toil, grow or be weary)⁴⁶⁵ is conjugated into the same verbal form (qal imperfect) of the previous verb (יָרָא) and it also carries to some extent the same meaning with the same verbal function. The final phrase which appears as a nominal clause unfolds one of the important attributes of Yahweh, i.e., אֲלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל – ‘for His understanding is unsearchable.’ The implicit meanings of the above lines can also be illuminated in the light of certain verses from the previous strophes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse 28c</th>
<th>Verse 26c</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>לֹא יָרֵא אֱלֹהִים He does not faint or grow weary</td>
<td>מֵרָא אֲדָמִים יְום עָלֶּיהָ because He is great in strength and mighty in power</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yahweh, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not faint or grow weary; the answer for this statement appears in v.26: ‘because He is great in strength and mighty in power.’⁴⁶⁶ Moreover, Yahweh is the everlasting God, the creator of the entire cosmos and due to this untiring power, nothing is hidden from His sight, i.e., the inhabitants, rulers, nations and so on. In addition, since He is the everlasting God, His creative power has a long-time span which will not faint or grow weary. Furthermore, the last phrase ‘His understanding is unsearchable’ in well connected with the first strophe, especially with the last section of v.14.

⁴⁶⁴ BDB, 419.
⁴⁶⁵ BDB, 388.
⁴⁶⁶ There are also different perspectives when it comes to the understanding of Yahweh neither fainting nor growing weary. Some commentators opine that these statements reflect the Babylonian context where certain epics depict gods taking rest. Therefore, DI is placing a subtle sarcasm against the Babylonian religious views. PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 154-155.
For His understanding is unsearchable

Who taught Him knowledge or showed Him the way of understanding

The first strophe which implicitly underscored through its rhetorical questions that none can measure the spirit or mind of Yahweh, has also subtly emphasized that no one can teach Him knowledge or show Him the way of understanding. These implied answers of the rhetorical questions which have appeared in the first strophe, finds a definite explicit and emphatic answer in the last section of v.28: ‘His (Yahweh’s) understanding is unsearchable.’ The same noun הָבָתָה (understanding or skill)⁴⁶⁷ is employed in both the verses (i.e., in vv.14 and 28) which is precisely indicated in the assertive statement of v.28 (אֶת הָבָתָה). Therefore, the declaration in v.28 not only serves as an answer to the rhetorical questions in v.14, but in the final strophe, it essentially underlines that ‘Creator-Yahweh’s ways and methods of crafting the entire creation is unimaginable because His understanding is unsearchable.’⁴⁶⁸ Oppositional aspects of depicting Yahweh as Creator can be noted in DI’s presentation; on the one hand, Yahweh is incomprehensible and His understanding is unsearchable, however, on the other hand, human imageries are employed to describe Yahweh’s artistic way of creating the entire cosmos.

The last section of v.28 which has depicted the exceptional qualities of Yahweh is followed by vv.29-31 in which DI offers words of encouragement and comfort by saying since Yahweh is mighty in power and great in strength, He has the potentialities to empower the weak and the powerless. These declarations begin from v.29 onwards.

V.29 is composed of a participial and a verbal clause sentences and the verse begins with a participial formulation (לָיֵיתָה) of the root verb לְיָתָה (to give, put or

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⁴⁶⁷ PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 39; BDB, 108.
⁴⁶⁸ Cf. PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 154.
The participial conjugation functions here as a verb which is not confined to a time limit, rather it is durative and therefore, in translation it can mean the continuous action of the verb. Yahweh is always giving (כָּלָה) power (כָּלָה) to the weary or faint (לִכְבָּר). The verb יִנְחָה (be weary or faint) which is employed in v.28 to emphasize ‘Yahweh does not faint’ (לִכְבָּר יִנְחָה), is used here in v.29 as an adjective to denote the weary or faint (לִכְבָּר). The formulation of the same word יִנְחָה as verb (יִנְחָה) and adjective (לִכְבָּר) on the one hand, facilitates to interlink the verses and their arguments or statements and on the other it reinforces the implied remarkable meaning, i.e. Yahweh does not faint because He is mighty in power and therefore, He gives power to the faint or weary. The contrast between Yahweh and humankind are subtly distinguished here, especially, God’s strength and human’s weakness. The interrelation between the similar words in vv.28c and 29 is illustrated below:

In continuation with the first phrase, in its second part v.29 further depicts that Yahweh strengthens the powerless: לָא יְנַחֵהוּ לְפִיו חַיָּה מִּי נַחְקָה יְנַחֵהוּ – He (Yahweh) increases power or might to those who lack in vigor. In both phrases (i.e. v.29a and b) the preposition לָא is employed to specifically indicate to whom Yahweh is going to offer strength or power: ‘to the faint or weary’ – לִכְבָּר and ‘to those who lack in vigor’ – לָא. Another aspect that has to be noted here, is the particle of nonexistence לָא which is placed before the noun לָא which is placed here to categorically emphasize the complete lack of vigor or inadequateness of vigor in a person. Moreover, the plural form לָא of the noun לָא (vigor) accentuates the intensified range of inactiveness of a person either bodily or mentally due to the circumstances. Therefore, the first phrase says, Yahweh gives power to the faint or weary who have less power, and the subsequent phrase states that He also increases might to those who lack in might or in other words those who are powerless or completely dried up or

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469 BDB, 681; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 3.
470 KELLEY, Biblical Hebrew, 200.
471 BDB, 419.
472 BDB, 419.
exhausted without power. These two different aspects which describe Yahweh’s support for the faint and powerless are tabulated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse 29</th>
<th>Verse 29</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>לְיָשָׁע נֶפֶשׁ</td>
<td>וּלְיָשָׁע נֶפֶשׁ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>power to the weary or faint</td>
<td>and might to the one who lacks in vigor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, v.30 depicts the state of the youths and young men who are weary and faint and they even stumble in spite of their energetic youthfulness. However, in contrast to the condition of the youths, v.31 describes that those who wait upon Yahweh shall renew their strength and sustain their energy. V.30 is formulated with twofold statements concerning the plight of young men and these statements consist of multiple verbal sentences.

The first-fold statements are formulated with two verbs which have already appeared in v.28c: ‘Even youths will faint and grow weary.’ In both the verses the verbs namely, לְיָשָׁע נֶפֶשׁ and וּלְיָשָׁע נֶפֶשׁ are conjugated into qal imperfect forms, however, only their number varies, because, in v.28 it is Yahweh who will not faint or grow weary, but here in v.30 it is the youths and young men who will faint and grow weary.

An implied oppositional placement of Yahweh, ‘the God of antiquity and the Creator of the ends of the earth who is eternally mighty and powerful,’ can be observed in contrast to the youths and young men who faint and grow weary. By stating youths and young men perhaps, DI depicts that young men with robust stature are always seen as brisk and energetic with more power and might, both physically and mentally. Some commentators opine that DI is referring here to the
well-trained military men who are selected and trained for special tasks; even these best trained military men who are young will faint and grow weary in spite of the special training that they have received to sustain their stamina in all circumstances. Further, the second phrase of v.30 which is an inverted verbal sentence, underscores the predicament of the young men once again: ‘and the young men shall surely stumble.’ The verbal formulations of the verb רחל (stumble, stagger, totter) as qal imperfect third masculine plural (Rachel) and qal infinitive absolute (כֹּשְׁלָה) are more salient in this phrase. Apart from the imperfect conjugation (כֹּשְׁלָה), the same root is formulated as infinitive absolute (כֹּשְׁלָה). This is one of the features of infinitive absolute which often stands before the cognate verb in order to strengthen, reinforce or intensify the verbal idea. Therefore, here the verbal idea is reaffirmed that young men (כֹּשְׁלָה) shall surely stumble (כֹּשְׁלָה). Moreover, this phrase is also reinforcing the idea that has been expressed in the previous phrase about the youths and young men (who will faint and grow weary); therefore, it is reaffirmed here through the imperfect and infinitive combination of verbs that young men will surely fall exhausted. Hence, the implied meaning indicates that Yahweh remains stable and powerful for eternity.

Even though young men faint, grow weary and fall exhausted, the concluding verse (v.31) states that those who wait upon Yahweh will renew their strength and grow stronger. This affirmation has been presented through paired declarative statements in the form of action and positive reactions which will happen to those who trust in Yahweh. The prerequisite which is expected from the people and the responsive reaction for their enduring and persistent waiting are stated in the following line: ‘but those who wait for Yahweh will renew strength.’ The sentence begins with the qal participle masculine construct conjugation (חֲפָר) of חֲפֵר which means ‘to wait for or wait with eagerness.’ Therefore, ‘those who wait for Yahweh or wait with eagerness for Yahweh, will renew strength or power (קָחַף).’ The verb חֲפֵר (pass by, away or change) which is conjugated into hiphil imperfect form is translated here as ‘to change’ for better, i.e. ‘to renew.’ The meaning ‘transformation’ or ‘change for better

474 BDB, 876; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 3.
475 KELLEY, Biblical Hebrew, 185.
476 BDB, 506; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 35. The verb חֲפָר is derived from the noun חֵפר, which denotes ‘measuring scale/cord.’ Therefore, according to BERGES, the possible basic meaning could be ‘excited or curious.’ BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 162.
477 PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 52; BDB, 322.
renewal’ which is connoted above can also be understood with the subsequent meanings: ‘come on anew’ i.e. ‘to sprout again’ (Pss 90:5, 6), ‘shew newness’ (of tree) – ‘putting forth fresh shoots’ (Job 14:7).\footnote{BDB, 322.} Therefore, it can perceived, that there are several nuances with different shades of meanings to the verb לָבֵּשׁ. Furthermore, \textsc{Samuel Krauss} states, that the same verb i.e. לָבֵּשׁ (to change) which is conjugated in Job 14:7; 29:20 – לָבֵּשׁ (it will sprout out) has the same meaning in Isa 40:31 as well: לָבֵּשׁ – (they shall renew or sprout out).\footnote{\textsc{Samuel Krauss}, “Notes on Sirach,” JQR 11 (1898-99): 157; Cf. \textsc{Wido van Peursen}, “The Word in Ben Sira,” in \textit{Conservatism and Innovation in the Hebrew Language of the Hellenistic Period. Proceedings of a Fourth International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls & Ben Sira} (STDJ 73; eds. \textsc{Jan Joosten} and \textsc{Jean-Sébastien Rey}; Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2008), 135-136.} Moreover, the renewal process (לָבֵּשׁ) – they shall renew or sprout out) that is mentioned in this verse, is done by Yahweh; and it is Yahweh who renews the power or strength of those who wait upon Him. Hence, based on Yahweh’s act of ‘renewing the people,’ or ‘making the people to sprout out’ like a fresh plant, especially, in light of the above mentioned different shades of meanings to לָבֵּשׁ, ‘Yahweh can be called as ‘renewer’ or ‘procreator.’’\footnote{\textsc{Karl V. Ryssel}, “Die Sprüche Jesus’ des Sohnes Sirachs,” in \textit{Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments 1. Die Apokryphen des Alten Testaments} (ed. \textsc{E. Kautzsch}; Tübingen, 1900), 451; Cf. \textsc{Peursen}, “The Word in Ben Sira,” 136.} Yahweh is not only creator of the seen world (Isa 40:22, 26, 28) or renewer of the nature (e.g. Isa 41:18-20; 43:19-21), but He is also the re-creator or pro-creator who renews or revitalizes the faint, weary and the powerless. The different shades of DI’s presentation of Yahweh as Creator takes a new dimension by portraying Him as ‘renewer’ or ‘procreator.’ Hitherto, on the one hand, the greatness of Yahweh as mighty and powerful Creator are underscored, and on the other, His crafting skills are described in detail with the help of different dexterous human imageries. However, His act of renewing, strengthening or empowering the faint and weary appears here for the first time and certainly, it occupies a special position in Deutero-Isaianic presentation of Yahweh as Creator.

It is observed that the imagery of ‘counsellor’ is embedded in the lines which project Yahweh as renewer or procreator of the weak and the faint. V.13 has attested through its implicit answer that Yahweh neither need a counsel nor a counsellor to instruct Him.\footnote{\textsc{Roger N. Whybray}, \textit{The Heavenly Counsellor in Isaiah XL 13-14: A Study of the Sources of the Theology of Deutero-Isaiah} (Cambridge: University Press, 1971) 61-63.} However, here He functions as counsellor who has the ability to re-create or re-vitalize those who eagerly wait for Him.
Moreover, the significant results or outcome of empowerment offered by the procreator or renewer (i.e., Yahweh) to the faint, weary and powerless are listed into three categorical statements which are depicted below:

- **They shall mount up (with) wings like eagles** (יָגְדוֹלָה לַאֲשֶׁר כִּשְׁכֹרָה)
- **They shall run and will not be weary** (ירֹדֵה לַאֲשֶׁר והֶבְחֵה)
- **They shall walk and will not faint** (יָלְכוֹר לַאֲשֶׁר יִיּכְמוּ)

There are three metaphorical positive aspects that the powerless receive as the outcome to revitalization: they will be able to rise up like eagles; they can run and walk; however, they will not grow weary or faint. The first metaphor states that those who are revitalized can rise up (יָגְדוֹלָה) their wings like eagles (אֱלֹהֶם כִּשְׁכֹרָה). The verb יָגְדוֹלָה (to go up, climb or ascend)⁴⁸² is conjugated into hiphil imperfect (יָגְדוֹלָה) and it functions as the causative of qal imperfect and moreover, it emphasizes that through revitalization they bring up or lead up their wings like eagles which symbolizes that the people of Israel will be rejuvenated and become vigorous in strength and might. In addition, this metaphor resembles the folk belief which says that an eagle periodically re-grows its wings and is periodically renewed.⁴⁸³ Therefore, this metaphor is plausibly encouraging the exiles and giving them the message of hope that they will be revitalized which would ultimately lead them to return back to their homeland from the Babylonian exile.⁴⁸⁴ Apart from this metaphor there are two more aspects that are recorded in the last two phrases of v.31 which comes as a result of renewal of strength (יָגְדוֹלָה לַאֲשֶׁר יִיּכְמוּ).

These two different aspects which appear in two separate sentences are formulated as verbal phrases, in addition, the negative particle לא is employed in each phrase in order to put emphasis on the positive impact that Yahweh offers. Firstly, יָרֹדֵה לַאֲשֶׁר והֶבְחֵה – they shall run but they will not grow weary or faint; and יָלְכוֹר לַאֲשֶׁר יִיּכְמוּ – they shall walk but they will not be weary or faint. All the verbs that appear here are conjugated into qal imperfect forms and moreover, two verbs,

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⁴⁸³ This metaphor resembles the folk belief which says that an eagle periodically re-grows its wings and is rejuvenated. PAUL, *Isaiah 40-66*, 154.
namely וַיְפָרֵשׁ (שֶׁפֶר) and וַיְמַלְּשֶׁך (מְלָשֶׁך) are repeated which have already appeared in vv.28c and 30. All human weaknesses will be replaced by the strength and power of Yahweh who is the renewer and procreator, whose act of creation is durative and unending which takes different forms. The weary legs will be transformed into strong legs that can run fast and the fainting one will be able to walk miles without becoming weary.485

As mentioned above, these verses subtly reflect the immediate crisis that the people of Israel are facing in Babylon, however, the remarkable aspect here is the DI’s adoption of the creation imageries. They are certainly employed here to encourage the exiles, and mainly to reemphasize that Yahweh – ‘the God of antiquity and the creator of the ends of the earth,’ whose attribute of creatorship is unceasing and uninterrupted still has the ability to recreate and revitalize the weak, weary, faint and powerless. A consistent linkage among the following verses, i.e., vv.26, 28, 29, 30 and 31 can be observed which emphasize that the creator ‘Yahweh’ recreates or renews the strength of the faint and weary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Hebrew Text</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>והב אמונת יאמיר פה</td>
<td>Because He is great in strength and mighty in power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>אלֹהֵי עָלָם יוהֵה בורָא קְצֵת הָאָרֶץ</td>
<td>The Everlasting God, Yahweh is the creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>נָתַן כְּלַשׁ כְּלַשׁ אֲוָרֶנִים נַעֲמָה רָבָה</td>
<td>He (Yahweh) gives power to the faint and He strengthens the powerless.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>מִמָּשׁ וְנַעֲמָה וְרֵעֲמָה שְׁמֵאל יְשׁוֹלָל</td>
<td>Even youths will faint and be weary and the young will fall exhausted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>(סֵיָּפָה נַעֲמָה וְרֵעֲמָה שְׁמֵאל יְשׁוֹלָל)</td>
<td>(Since the procreator and renewer ‘Yahweh’ renews their strength (summarization mine))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>יִרְאוּוּ אֶלֶף וַלְּעָלָם וְלַאֲוָרֶנִים</td>
<td>They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1.4. Observations

The incredible way of depicting Yahweh as Creator through the rhetorical questions and declarative statements is the exceptional function of Isa 40:12-31. These verses which are divided into five strophes are skillfully knitted with the help of various literary devices which unite and keep the different strophes intact. The constructive development of the content in the successive strophes were well

485 SMITH, Isaiah 40-66, 122.
placed with the rhetorical questions by using the interrogative particles רָאָשׁ (vv.12, 13, 14, 18, 25) and הָא (vv. 21, 28).

A sort of consistency can be observed in the presentation, where DI constructively develops his argument and declaration gradually not only through the rhetorical nuances, but also with the usage of chiastic patterns, lexeme, inclusio, assonance, acrostic style etc. Two major aspects can be observed in these verses, on the one hand Yahweh is projected as superior and ultimate God, king and everlasting Creator who cannot be defined, and is impossible to be imagined even by skillful artisans, but on the other hand DI’s stamp of personifying the Creator to human-occupational-imageries can be observed which are implied in the rhetorical questions and assertive statements. Creator ‘Yahweh’ is depicted as ‘tentmaker’ who stretches out the heavens like a veil and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.

The creator is portrayed as ‘shepherd’ who calls the celestial bodies by name. Like how a mother brings forth a new child into this world, so Yahweh brings forth the entire creation, through which the ‘mother’ imageries are bestowed on Yahweh. Moreover, by renewing the people, He is illustrated as the creator who has the ability to re-create or re-new people and things, through which His durative creative potentiality or the ongoing and continuous process of Yahweh as Creator are underscored.
3.2. Isaiah 41: 17-20

3.2.1. Translation

17. When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I Yahweh will answer them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

18. I will open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

19. I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive; I will set in the desert the cypress, the plane and the pine together,

20. So that all will see and know, all will consider and understand, that the hand of Yahweh has done this, the Holy One of Israel had created it.

3.2.2. Delimitation, Structure, Form and Outline of Isaiah 41:17-20

Isaiah 41:17-20 is a subunit of the larger section Isa 41:1-42:13\(^{486}\) which is comprised of different discourses.\(^{487}\) In contrast to the previous chapter (Isa 40), Yahweh is described here not in third person (‘He or He who’); rather Yahweh Himself speaks (in first common singular form) directly and this is explicit throughout the entire pericope (Isa 41:1-42:13). Yahweh speaks in first person to the coastlands (Isa 41:1); to His people – Israel/Jacob (Isa 41:8-10, 11-13 and 14-16); and this is also obvious in the appointment of His servant (Isa 41:2-4; 42:1-4 and 5-9).\(^{488}\) The syntactic and semantic coherence holds Isa 41:1-42:13 together

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\(^{488}\) BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 168.
as one unit (in spite of the different speech forms) and this is evident from the following observations: Yahweh’s direct address as speaker appears in first person and often with self-declaration formula (Isa 41:4, 10, 13, 17; 42:5, 6, 8); repeated occurrences of the following words and phrases such as — my servant (Isa 41:8, 9; 42:1), — justice (Isa 41:2, 10; 42:1, 4), — the Holy one of Israel (Isa 41:14, 16 and 20), and the repetition of the word ’hand’ with diverse expressions: — my victorious right hand, — your right hand, and — hand of Yahweh.

In this textual context where the promise of salvation to the exiles (Isa 41:8-13, 14-16) and disputation discourses (Isa 41:1-7, 21-29) appear, the selected subdivision (i.e. Isa 41:17-20) highlights Yahweh as Creator: Yahweh responds to the distressful situation of the poor and needy (after the unsuccessfulness in their search for water);’ thus Yahweh is depicted in these verses not only as creator but also as re-creator or transformer of the nature (’Umwandlung der Nature’). Moreover, the use of human-occupational-imageries can also be discovered through the detailed analysis. This particular subsection differs from the preceding and succeeding verses especially because of the protagonists presented here: — ‘the poor and the needy’ and moreover, this expression does not appear in the other passages of DI. Although the speaker is Yahweh, the Holy one of Israel, the addressee is only mentioned in third person plural (i.e., in v.17a and v.20a, b) and it is not clearly mentioned, to whom it was addressed or in other words, who are ‘the poor and the needy.’
However, based on the content of this chapter which assures salvation to Jacob/Israel, it can be presumed that it was addressed to the exiled Israelites in Babylon.\textsuperscript{496} Moreover, with regard to demarcating the passage, the placement of the subject at the commencement of the sentence signals the beginning of a new strophe or subject matter with emphasis on the subject (\textit{הַעֲנֵיִים הָאֲבָדָה} – the poor and the needy),\textsuperscript{497} and this facilitates to delimit Isa 41:17-20 from the preceding verses. Similarly, v. 21 begins a new literary unit (\textit{כִּרְבֵּי רִיבְּכֵם יִאֵרֵר יָהָא} – set forth your case says Yahweh) with trail motif in imperative form and so it indicates on the one hand, the beginning of a new section and on the other, it specifies that v.20 has concluded the previous section (Isa 41:17-20). Therefore, based on the content as well as the syntactic markers, Isa 41:17-20 can be treated as one subsection which underscores ‘Yahweh as Creator’ with remarkable hidden imageries of the creator.

An in-depth reading of the Hebrew text of Isa 41:17-20 shows, how the syntactic and semantic arrangements enable to construct individual sentences and verses and how in an artistic manner they unite the entire unit together and moreover, they facilitate to form a nexus among the verses and thus create an inner unity of the passage (vv.17-20). The entire subunit begins with the depiction of the ‘poor and needy,’ who search for water and they end up unsuccessful on their attempt and to which Yahweh responds in the following verses.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Poor’s search} \hspace{1cm} \textbf{Yahweh’s response}
\end{center}

The first line of v.17 is comprised of verbal and nominal clauses. The poor and the needy are subject in this verse which is followed by a \textit{piel} participle absolute conjugation (functions as verb): \textit{םָכַּהִים מַמְכַּהִים תְּהִי לְאָדָם לְעָרָה בֶּנֶתָה} – ‘when the poor and needy seek water,’ continues with a negative clause nominal form: \textit{לֹא אִמְּרָה} – and there is none (nothing). The participial and nominal clauses are joined with waw conjunction (\textit{ו}). Further, the first line ends with a verbal clause (\textit{qal} perfect conjugation of \textit{לְשָׁןִים מָכַּהִים} – ‘their tongue is parched with thirst.’ The response of Yahweh is stated in v.17b with twofold statements

\textsuperscript{496} WESTERMANN observes this passage (Isa 41:17-20) along with other passages (Isa 42:14-17; 43:16-21; 49:7-12; 51; 54 and 55) as oracle of salvation. \textit{WESTERMANN, Isaiah 40-66, 35-36.}

\textsuperscript{497} BERGES, \textit{Jesaja 40-48}, 200.
Acrostic style composed of verbal clauses (with the emphatic אֲנִי): - 'I, Yahweh will answer them;' after self-declaration of Yahweh, the verb נָתֵן in conjugated into first person form. The second statement is constructed with a qal imperfect formulation of אִישָׁנָא לא אֶתָּנוּ - ‘[I] the God of Israel will not forsake them.’ With Yahweh as the speaker v.17 serves as introduction to the entire unit (vv.17-20). Furthermore, as a result of the poor’s unsuccessful attempt to find water, Yahweh responds to fulfill their thirst, which is elaborately portrayed in vv.18-19.

Vv.18-19 are composed of verbal sentences (imperfect conjugations) in which Yahweh is the subject and the verbs (i.e., vv.18-19 and even in v.17c, d) are constructed in first common singular forms (vv.18-19: אָפָה - I will open; אָסִי - I will make/set; נָחַ - I will put). Besides, the subject of the verses in the middle part is either Yahweh (יהוה) or the God of Israel (אלוהי ישראל) or the Holy one of Israel (כַּרוֹשׁ ישראֵל). Vv.18-19 describe in detail fourfold depiction of Yahweh’s action as Creator which is initiated to ‘satisfy or quench’ the thirst of the poor and needy. V.18a is a verbal conjugation of xt;P' into of qal imperfect form: אָפָה - ‘I will open the streams in the bar sailing heights.’ Here again, Yahweh is the speaker which is expressed through the first common singular verbal conjugation of xt;P'. The same verb remains as the subject for rest of the phrase which is formulated with nouns and is joined with the previous phrase by waw conjunction: נִבְּרֵי בָּקָעֲת פָּרִינַה - ‘and springs in the valleys.’ The second line of v.18 continues to portray the creation of water resources by Yahweh in the wilderness and dry land. The first phrase of v.18 begins with first person qal imperfect verbal conjugation of אָסִי which again denotes Yahweh as the speaker: אָסִי מָרֵב לַאֲמָס לָפָי - ‘I will make Wilderness a pool of water.’ Corresponding to the previous line, the second half of the second line of v.18 continues with the same subject verb אָסִי and forms the following sentence which is joined to the previous phrase with waw conjunction: אֶלָּמָאֲמִי - ‘and the dry land springs of water.’ Furthermore, v.19 depicts again Yahweh as Creator which
elaborates His action of setting (planting) seven different types of trees in the desert. The planting of trees in the wilderness or desert is expressed through two verbal sentences in v.19. The first phrase is composed of the verb נָתַן (to give or set) which is conjugated into qal imperfect form and is followed by numerous nouns referring to four different trees: נַעֲרָה הָאֱשֶׂגּוֹרְתָּהּ: 'I will set or plant in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive.' In continuation with the previous sentence, the setting of different trees in the desert is further elaborated in the remaining phrase of v.19: נַעֲרָה הָאֱשֶׂגּוֹרְתָּהּ – 'I will set in the desert plain the cypress, the plane and the pine together.' Similar to the previous phrase, first common qal imperfect verb נַעֲרָה as subject verb is followed by various nouns related to different sorts of trees.

There is several linguistic uniqueness that one can observe in these verses. Firstly, the beginning letter of each line i.e., vv.17c, v.18a and 19a and c start with a and thus especially, the middle portion of the entire unit form a uniform acrostic style arrangement. Secondly, recapitulation of the same words, e.g. נַעֲרָה (18b and 19a) and נַעֲרָה (18a and c and v.19a and c) can be noted. Moreover, a sort of the consonance is created specifically, in v.18b with the letter m since it appears twice in the same verse (ֶגֶה ending and ָהָ occurring – water) which constitutes a rhythmic outlook both to this particular line as well as to the entire unit. These aspects actually create consistency to the passage and in addition, they form inner-unity among these verses which eventually keep the entire subunit (vv.17-20) intact.

The entire unit (vv.17-20) ends in v.20 with a result clause that states the purpose of Yahweh taking the role as Creator and transforms the entire desert, valleys and bare heights into place of water resources and plants diverse kinds of trees.

Twofold aspects can be noted in v.20. The first line begins with the result clause preposition (in order that) which is followed by a series of imperfect verbs (two qal and one hiphil) which express Yahweh's purpose of transforming or re-creating the nature: נְתַן – 'In order that they (the poor and needy) will see, know, consider and understand together.' Change of subject from first person (Yahweh) to 'they' (the poor and needy) which is evident.
from the plural verbal conjugations can be observed here in the first line of v.20. Moreover, the adverb יִשְׂכְּרוּ (together) which appeared in the context of explaining the setting of trees in the desert (different trees together; v.19b) is repeated and placed at the end of v.20 to denote that the addressee will see and know, consider and understand 'together' (יִשְׂכְּרוּ). Therefore, repetition of the same word i.e. יִשְׂכְּרוּ forms continuation and interconnectedness between vv.19 and 20 and in fact assonance. Further, the second line of v.20 finally concludes with the main focal point and function of the entire passage by using a purpose clause particle כִּי נִרְדָּה יְהוָה לְאָתָה נַחֲלָה כִּי (‘that the hand of Yahweh has done this’; יְהוָה נַחֲלָה כִּי) – ‘and the Holy one of Israel has created it.’ The verbs are conjugated here in qal imperfect third person singular forms along with pronominal suffixes (כִּי נִרְדָּה יְהוָה לְאָתָה נַחֲלָה כִּי) in order to emphasize the creative action of Yahweh. The entire passage begins (v.17a and b) and ends (v.20a and b) with the subject in plural form (v.17: נָשְׂא יְהוָה נַחֲלָה כִּי – the poor and needy) using different verbs (v.17: נָרָא – they seek; v.20: נָרָא – they will see; נָרָא – and they will know; נָרָא – and they will consider; נָרָא – and they understand) which are conjugated in third person plural forms and thereby, these two verses with their plural subject function as brackets to frame the entire passage as one unit.500 The above analysis enables to understand the structural unity of these verses which validates Isa 41: 17-20 to be a syntactically independent unit.

Although interpreters501 generally categorize the larger pericope (Isa 41:1-42:13) as a mixture of trail speeches in a disputative tone, yet the reassurance of salvation appears consistently using the self-declaration formula (including Yahweh’s address in the first-person form) in order to offer hope to the exiled Israelites and to restore them to their homeland from the Babylonian exile. The reassurance message is yet another indication for the Babylonian origin of this passage. In the midst of all these categorizations, the portrayal of ‘Yahweh as Creator’ (Isa 41:17-20) appear to be the most captivating theme, whereby Yahweh brings restoration through re-creation or by transforming nature. This quite remarkable portrayal of ‘Yahweh’s Creatorship’ has taken a new dimension through presenting the ‘Creator’ in human language, i.e., ‘common-occupational-imageries’ that are subtly employed in this passage and which will be discussed in the following exposition before analyzing the verses individually in detail; an outline of Isa 41: 17-20 has been given below based on their structure that has be comprehensively examined earlier:

500 BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 200; PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 172-176
501 SWEENEY, Isaiah 40-66, 76.
YAHWEH – THE (RE)CREATOR AND TRANSFORMER OF THE NATURE (ISA 41:17-20)

1. The poor and needy seek water (vv.17a)
   a. The poor and needy search for water to quench their thirst? (v.17a)
      i. The search for water (v.17aα)
      ii. The unsuccessful results (v.17aβ)
      iii. The anguish consequence due to lack of water (v.17aγ)
         (1) Their tongue is parched with thirst

2. The response of Yahweh to the poor and needy (vv.17b)
   a. I (Yahweh) will answer them (v.17bα)
   b. God of Israel will not forsake them (v.17bβ)

3. The response of Yahweh elaborated – making water resources (v.18)
   a. I will open rivers upon bare heights (v.18aα)
   b. And streams in the midst of valleys (v.18aβ)
   c. I will turn wilderness into pool of waters (v.18bα)
   d. And dryland into springs of water (v.18bβ)

4. The response of Yahweh elaborated – planting trees (v.19)
   a. I will plant in the wilderness cedars, acacia, myrtle and olive tree (v.19a)
   b. I will set in desert plains cypress, plane, and pine tree (v.19b)

5. The purpose of making water resources and planting trees (v.20)
   a. The people will see, know, confirm and comprehend (v.20a)
   b. The hand of Yahweh has done this (v.20bα)
   c. The Holy One of Israel has created it (v.20bβ)

3.2.3. Detailed Exegetical Analysis of Isaiah 41:17-20

Verses 17

The change of subject is explicit in v.17 since the verse begins with third person plural nouns – יָנוֹם יָדְוָאֹר הָאֲמָהֲהָו (the poor and needy) as subject of the first line. In brief, the first line of v.17 is composed of three sentences namely, two verbal and a nominal clause. The first verbal sentence begins with the subject nouns and both are joined together with waw conjunction יָנוֹם יָדְוָאֹר הָאֲמָהֲהָו; moreover, the placement of nouns at the beginning of a Hebrew sentence unlike the customary...
The pattern indicates that the nouns are emphasized here. The verb שָׁפַק (to seek or sought) is conjugated here into piel participial plural absolute form מַשְּפָקִים וְיַרְכֹּחָה and it functions here as a verb referring to the continuous action; moreover, the verb שָׁפַק appears in singular form in most of the OT passages, however, it is used here in plural while referring to 'the poor and needy.' In addition, the participial plural form מַשְּפָקִים (seeking or searching) functions here also as a conditional clause which can be translated into English with the definite conditional clause particle 'when.'

Verbal clause

Participial clause

Negation

Therefore, the first phrase can be translated in the following way: מַשְּפָקִים וְיַרְכֹּחָה – 'when the poor and needy are seeking or searching for water.' Furthermore, it is necessary to explicate the subject nouns, specifically, מַשְּפָקִים וְיַרְכֹּחָה which are not often used in DI, however, they appear in few passages of first Isaiah as twin terms. There are some questions which surround these two terms: Firstly, who are referred here as the poor and needy? Certainly, these terms are aimed at the exiled Israelites in Babylon, and this is evident from the preceding verses that have assured salvation (vv.8-16) to the Israelites in Babylon, and who are compared with worms in v.14. Moreover, the phrases such as לַאֲלֵהַי הַЄֹרָא – 'the God of Israel' (17b) and the לַאֲלֵהַי הַЄֹרָא – 'the Holy one of Israel' (20c) in which the term 'Israel' is mentioned, is also an explicit signal to determine that 'the poor and needy' are assigned here to refer the exiled Israelites in Babylon. Secondly, these terms are more abstract since they are not clear which group of Israelites in Babylon are referred here as 'the poor and needy;'

502 KELLEY, Biblical Hebrew, 87.
503 BDB, 135.
504 KELLEY, Biblical Hebrew, 200.
505 Cf. Gen 24:13; Exo 2:16; I Sam 9:11; Jer 14:3 and etc.
506 BEUKEN, Jesaja, 89; KELLY, Biblical Hebrew, 200.
507 BDB, 776, 2.
508 The concept מַשְּפָקִים וְיַרְכֹּחָה – 'the poor and the needy' is used comparatively in first-Isaiah (Isa 14:30-32; 29:19; 32:7), however, it is not encountered anymore rest of Isa 40-55. At the same time the usage of the term מַשְּפָק – 'poor' is used throughout the book of Isaiah in many other places (Isa 3:14-15; 10:2, 30; 14:32; 26:6; 32:7; 41:17; 48:10; 49:13; 51:21; 54:11; 58:7; 66:2). Cf. BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 171.
and there is difference of opinions with regard to the phrase ‘poor and needy,’ whether it refers to a socially deprived class or the miserable condition of the Babylonian exile or it has an implied meaning in a spiritual sense.

Nevertheless, keeping all these various interpretations aside, a decisive reading facilitates to understand that these terms are referring to the entire community of exiled Israelites. In addition, the historical setting of Isaiah 40-48 certainly indicates that these words were proclaimed to the Israelites in Babylon who are encouraged to return back to Judah after the downfall of the Babylonian empire. Therefore, it makes sense to decide that the subject nouns are referring to Israelites who are exiled in Babylon. Moreover, the verb (to seek or

Some scholars argue that the words ‘poor and needy’ refer to poverty in spiritual life for which cross references from other books of OT are cited (Pss 40:17; 70:5; 86:1; 109:22; Jer. 20:13 and 22:16). There are also other passages that denote poverty in spiritual sense (Job 24:14; Pss 37:14; Isa 25:4). However, there are also references which clearly refer to material wealth (Deut. 15:11; 24:14; 1Sam 2:8; Pss 72:4, 12; 74:21; 109:16; 113:7; 140:12; Prov 31:9, 20; Isa 10:2; 14:30; Ezek. 16:49; 18:22; 22:29; Amos 8:4-6). The terms ‘poor and needy’ also refer to the economic condition of the exiled Israelites.

The Israelites in Babylon were settled in different levels of the society. The upper-class people settled in Nippur, some of them became irrigational experts. Many made a comfortable living as shepherds, leasing property and stock, owned poultry farm and many others were employed as servants at the royal places. However, not all the deportees excelled economically; some served also as slaves and worked in the dam projects. However, even though they were not financially benefited, still they survived in the thriving economy.

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search)\textsuperscript{512} is mostly used in Isaiah to refer to one’s constant search for God,\textsuperscript{513} however, it is used here to depict the search of ‘the poor and needy’ for ‘water’ (םֹּפִּים). In addition, the participial formulation of the ‘search for water’ (םֹּפִּים) is followed by a short negation sentence: ‘וּנֵאָפָת – ‘and there is none (nothing).’ The immediate outcome of their search is expressed in this nominal clause by indicating that ‘there was no water’ (none or nothing) and moreover, it is expressed decisively and precisely to the point, in order to present the ruthless consequences that they face because of the lack of water which appear as a pictorial description in the following verbal conjugation: ‘וּנֵאָפָת – ‘and their tongue is parched (dried) with thirst.’ Simultaneously, the phrases that depict the immediate outcome (וּנֵאָפָת) and the subsequent ruthless consequences (םֹּפִּים) are joined together with waw conjunction (וְ) and this is perhaps to present the change of events along with their fast intervals – ‘action-outcome-reaction.’ The sentence structure of the final phrase of the first line of v.17 once again indicates the prominence given to the nouns since the leading verb יָנָה (to be dry or parched)\textsuperscript{515} and moreover, it is complemented with the noun כָּפָר (םֹּפִּים) which is prefixed with the inseparable preposition ב (םֹּפִּים) and it denotes ‘with thirst.’ The dreadful consequence one will face due to lack of water or the cruel outcome or repercussion of the scarcity of water which is the basic necessity for humankind is intensely expressed through this phrase and therefore, it can also be illustrated in the following way: ‘scorching of tongue due to thirst.’\textsuperscript{516}

The combination of the two nouns\textsuperscript{514} namely, כָּפָר and יָנָה play a major role here which attempt to expound the terrible consequences one will face when there is lack of water to quench the thirst. The pronominal suffixed noun יָנָה (their tongue) functions here as the subject indicating the tongue of ‘the poor and needy’ that is parched or dried up and it is expressed through יָנָה the qal perfect singular conjugation of יָנָה (to be dry or parched)\textsuperscript{515} and moreover, it is complemented with the noun כָּפָר which is prefixed with the inseparable preposition ב (םֹּפִּים) and it denotes ‘with thirst.’ The dreadful consequence one will face due to lack of water or the cruel outcome or repercussion of the scarcity of water which is the basic necessity for humankind is intensely expressed through this phrase and therefore, it can also be illustrated in the following way: ‘scorching of tongue due to thirst.’\textsuperscript{516}

\textsuperscript{512} Koole observes, DI using these two terms searching and water, emphasizes the search for God like seeking water and here water symbolizes God’s life-bringing power (Isa 45:19; 51:1; 65:1). Koole, Isaiah 40-48, 177-178.

\textsuperscript{513} Cf. Isa 45:19; 51:1; 65:1.

\textsuperscript{514} BDB, 854, 546.

\textsuperscript{515} Koole opines this from the spiritual drought point of view, during the time of distress one’s tongue cannot be able to lament. Koole, Isaiah 40-48, 178.

\textsuperscript{516} Westermann observes this as one of the implied complaints from the people, who feel, how it would be possible to fulfill their needs, if they return to Judah – ‘Angedeutete Klage.’ Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, 37.
Another important term which appears in v.17a is ים (water) and it needs further illumination in this context. Conventionally, the term ים ‘water’ is often mentioned in DI as an element of creation,\textsuperscript{517} as a gift of God,\textsuperscript{518} and also as a threat.\textsuperscript{519} The theme water is understood by Israelites in the light of ANE mythologies with three levels of meaning and with regard to this, William Propp\textsuperscript{520} opines that the theme ‘water’ can be referred to as ‘creation’ from a mythical point of view; to the ‘wilderness wandering’ in relation to Exodus from a historical point of view and finally, from an economic point of view – i.e. referring to economic prosperity that this text implicitly depicts as an outcome of the transformation of the nature.\textsuperscript{521}

All these three perspectives can be acknowledged in this passage (vv.17-20). However, based on the presumed historical setting of this passage it is questionable, whether such a statement (i.e., ‘the poor and the needy search for water and there is none and their tongue is parched with thirst’) to the exiled community makes sense in the Babylonian context where water scarcity is hardly experienced.\textsuperscript{522} However, this verse can also be perceived as a prediction of the future journey (plausibly the desert journey) to reach their homeland. I would not totally reject such presumptions; however, my significant observation is the text’s projection of Yahweh’s attributes as Creator who can create, re-create and transform the nature when His people are in need.

Therefore, v.17a and b serve as a prologue to the following verses which comprehensively underline Yahweh’s creatorship as the source and giver of ‘water’ which will ultimately provide life and prosperity to the Israelites. It implicitly connotes that they search for the life-giving source (i.e., water) and it is Yahweh, the God of Israel (and creator) who has the power to create or make available this source of life. Through these expressions Yahweh’s authority or control over ‘water’ (nature) is accentuated which is going to bring forth fertility.\textsuperscript{523}

\textsuperscript{517} Cf. Isa 40:12; 50:2; 51:10.
\textsuperscript{519} Cf. Isa 43:2, 16; 44:3f, 12; 54:9.
\textsuperscript{520} William Henry Propp, Water in the Wilderness: A Biblical Motif and its Mythological Background (HSM 40; ed. Frank Moore Cross; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1987), 40.
\textsuperscript{521} Further, Propp explains that: from creation perspective, irrigation is emphasizing and in the exodus perspective it refers to the water provided in the wilderness and in this Isaianic context it is referred to the upcoming fertilized condition. Propp, Water in the Wilderness, 125.
\textsuperscript{522} Berges, Jesaja 40-48, 201.
\textsuperscript{523} Yahweh is described as living water in the prophetic books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Jer. 2:13; 17:13; Ezek. 47:1-5), however here Yahweh is implicitly presented as the creator or water sources and thus He offers the life-giving water.
The following line, i.e., v.17c and d, unveils the emphatic reply from Yahweh in response to the unsuccessful results that the ‘the poor and needy’ gained in their task of searching for water which led their tongue to be parched with thirst. From this line onwards the change of subject is explicit; it is no more the subject nouns of v.17a and b (i.e., אָנִי יְהוֹ הָאֲבָרִים but ‘Yahweh’ is the subject which is emphatically expressed either through the self-declaration formula (אנני יהוה) or through the common name of the God of Israel (אלוהי ישראל) or predominantly through the first common singular verbal conjugations.

The second line of v.17 is composed of two verbal sentences and these sentences are loaded with emphatic words and phrases. The first phrase begins with the self-declaration formula of Yahweh i.e., אני יהוה – ‘I am Yahweh.’ As mentioned above, the change of subject and the direct address by Yahweh make the assertions more emphatic. Although the first phrase carries the first common singular verb (אני – I will answer them) to express Yahweh’s assertions, yet, deliberately the declaration formula (אנני יהוה) is employed to authenticate the declarative and direct reply of Yahweh. The verb ניב (to answer or respond) which follows the declaration formula and which is conjugated into qal imperfect form also carries a third person masculine plural pronominal suffix (אני – I will answer or respond them). This formulation depicts that the emphatic declaration of Yahweh is directly and personally addressed to the addressee (the people of Israel) and moreover, it expresses a sort of belongingness of the people of Israel to Yahweh. In addition, the verb ניב (to answer) which is employed here can also be translated as ‘to react’ and also ‘to bow down.’ The word ‘to bow down’ portrays that Yahweh bows down (to them) to listen or to respond to His people like how a father or mother bows down to listen or respond to his/her little children’s plea.

Hence, with this elucidation, the declaration formula along with the pronominal suffixed common singular verb reinforces Yahweh’s personal and immediate reaction as Creator to bow down (towards them) and act immediately.

to quench the thirst of ‘the poor and needy.’\footnote{Cf. BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 202.} In this context, according to my view, these phrases depict Yahweh’s attempt or readiness to appease the thirstiness of the poor and needy (although ‘water’ is yet to be offered) and it signifies His might to create anything (He is the source of creation) and also Yahweh is the One who has power over nature and the entire cosmos, who can only transform any sort of scarcity into sufficiency.\footnote{Cf. KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 178.}

The second phrase i.e.: ‘(I) the God of Israel will not forsake them,’ precisely reasserts God’s immediate response to His people. The personal pronoun אַיִן which begins this line (ָאַיִן יְהוָה אֶלֹהִים) can also be employed while translating the second phrase as mentioned above. This phrase is comprised of a verbal conjugation with negation sentence using the negative particle אָלַי (not). The construct form יְהוָה אֶלֹהִים (God of ) along with the noun יְהוָה אֶלֹהִים further asserts Yahweh’s intimate relationship with the people of Israel (אַיִן יְהוָה אֶלֹהִים – ‘(I) the God of Israel’). Moreover, the verbal formulation with negative particle אָלַי in addition, accentuates Yahweh’s concern over His chosen ones: אָלַי יְהוָה אֶלֹהִים – ‘I will not forsake them.’ Identical in formulation to the previous verb, בֵּזֵא (to leave, forsake or lose)\footnote{BDB, 737.} is conjugated in this phrase into qal imperfect form בֵּזֵא אָלַי אֶלֹהִים which also has a pronominal suffix and this again depicts that the addressee belongs to Yahweh (possessive connotation), i.e., the people of Israel (the poor and the needy in this context).\footnote{This is expressed in many different ways in whole book of Isaiah, Cf. Isa 5:17; 6:11; 13:19-22; 14:22-23; 17:2-9; 27:10-11; 29:17; 30:23-25; 32:13-20; 34:8-11, 13-15; 35:6-9; 42:11, 15; 43:18-21; 44:3; 48:21; 49:9-13; 51:3.}

Moreover, the verb בֵּזֵא conveys other resilient connotations such as ‘to abandon, leave completely, refuse completely;’ a sort of the tone of rejection has been expressed through these various meanings. However, the negative particle אָלַי along with the verb בֵּזֵא אָלַי אֶלֹהִים accentuates that ‘the God of Israel will not forsake them.’

In the above formulations, DI stamp of the anthropomorphic portrayal of Yahweh, the God of Israel is subtly and distinctly depicted. Especially, the combination of the two verbs i.e. בֵּזֵא (to answer, respond, bow down) and בֵּזֵא (to leave, forsake or lose) are used to sketch according to my observation what type of God this Yahweh or Elohim is. Therefore, through employing these verbs the analyzed verse portrays that Yahweh (יְהוָה אֶלֹהִים) is a God who can see, observe, listen,
understand and respond; and above all He can bow down like a father or mother and respond; and moreover, can meet the needs of His people.

On the other hand, the depiction of the God of Israel – אֱלֹהִים who does not forsake or reject or abandon His people perhaps in a similar way illustrates how parents will not abandon their children so as God of Israel will not abandon His people. Through these human imageries the Isaianic text describes the relationship of Yahweh with the people of Israel and simultaneously these introductory phrases serve as prolog for the forthcoming promises of Yahweh through the transformation of nature which are mentioned in the following verses.529 Therefore, v.17 depicts Yahweh’s readiness to see, observe and listen to the poor and needy (the people of Israel) and also these introductory lines serve as preliminary remarks to the greatest artistic and resourceful activity of Yahweh as Creator which is specifically enumerated in vv.18 and 19.

**Verses 18**

V.18 begins to narrate in detail the response that Yahweh, the God of Israel is going to display or perform in response to the unsuccessful results that the poor and needy have gained in their constant search for ‘water’ (חֲבֵשׁוֹן שָׁם מָיִם).530 The action of Yahweh in this context where He responds by transforming the bare heights, valleys, wilderness and dry lands into places of surplus water resources, characterizes Him as ‘creator or re-creator’ of nature and the same has been profoundly and artistically illustrated in v.18. As mentioned earlier, from v.17c onwards Yahweh addresses directly either through His declarative responses or His attributes of creation with the help of first common singular verbal formulations. Moreover, the initial letter of the first word in each line i.e., from v.17c until the last line of v.19 begins with the consonant ה through which an acrostic stylistic structure has been formed which brings assonance to the entire unit and moreover, this pattern is also evident in v.18. In addition, the careful selection of nouns and prepositions in v.18 with opposite connotations and their structural arrangement in opposition reinforce a hymnic style to the content.

529 BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 200.

530 In the Sumerian context God Enki/Ea is the ruler over the sweet water and in the Babylonian tradition God Marduk has control over the streams in the hills and he opens the source of water from the mountains. UDO RÜTERSWORDEN, “Erwägungen zur Metaphorik Des Wassers in Jes 40ff,” SJOT 2 (1989): 1-22 (12). Therefore, METZGER opines that Yahweh is placed here as polemic against the ANE gods, who are projected as having control over nature or water resources. MARTIN METZGER, “Gottheit, Berg und Vegetation in vorderorientalischer Bildtradition,” ZDPV 99 (1983): 54-94 (56-57).
V.18 is composed of two lines and each line is constructed with one verb; however, two different oppositional assertive statements appear in each line and distinctly all these four statements are concerning water in the wilderness, valleys and bare heights and dry land. The following lines intend to enumerate these nuances in v.18 through a detailed exposition. V.18a unfolds the first declaration, addressed by Yahweh: אֲפַחַת עֲלָיְשִׁית נְחָרֵה נְבָךְ וְקָנָה - ‘I will open rivers upon the bare heights.’ The first phrase is made up of a verbal formulation and the verb פָּחַת (to open) is conjugated into qal imperfect form פָּחוּת and here it enumerates that Yahweh will open up streams (נְחָרֵה) on high places or upon bare heights (עֲלָיְשִׁית); the noun עֵיֶף can be referred to hills – smooth heights, treeless heights, or a bare hill. Therefore, עֵיֶף is employed here to denote a bare, plain or dry hill which has no traces or signs of water resources, but still Yahweh is enabled even to open up waters i.e., rivers in those bare heights where there are no clues of water resources. This assertive statement which has unfolded Yahweh’s attributes of creation is followed by another set of declarations which are led by the same verb פָּחַת (to open); however, a chain of different nouns are employed and moreover, these two statements of v.18 are joined together with waw conjunction (ו): וָאֵל (נְחָרֵה) - ‘and (I will open) fountains in the midst of (among) the valleys.’

Yahweh has the abilities or attributes of creation not only to open rivers or streams in the bare heights, but His creative power can also open springs in valleys. These assertive statements depict Yahweh as creator who opens rivers and springs

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531 *BDB*, 835. *Paul* observes the same expression in the Akkadian verb ‘petû’ ‘opening up’ of rivers, canals, streams and springs. This concept of valleys and highlands can also be seen in Jer. 49:9. According to an Ugarit poem desert/valley is the birth place of beautiful and pleasant gods. *Paul, Isaiah 40-66*, 173.

532 *BDB*, 1046. The same idea of Yahweh providing water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert appears also in Isa 43:20.
to quench the thirst of ‘the poor and the needy.’ The structural arrangement of the words that appear in v.18a and b; and the oppositional wordplay that have been employed in this entire line is exceptional and an overview of the first line of v.18 has been tabulated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse 18a</th>
<th>Verse 18b</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>אָפָה</td>
<td>אָפָה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will open</td>
<td>(I will open)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יָעַל</td>
<td>בְּחָתָר</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>upon</td>
<td>and in the midst of (among)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>נֹרָם</td>
<td>נֹרָם</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bare heights</td>
<td>valleys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>הָרֹהוֹת</td>
<td>הָרֹהוֹת</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>streams or rivers</td>
<td>springs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The oppositional arrangement and selection of words not only the nouns but also the prepositions, on the one hand, offer hymnic shade to the statements and on the other they accentuate the message appropriately that Yahweh is competent enough to open water resources from any extreme geographical or environmental conditions. Therefore, these statements pronounce the power of ‘Yahweh as Creator,’ who has sovereign supremacy power over nature.\(^{533}\)

In continuation with the previous assertions, the second line of v.18 commences to declare that Yahweh will turn the desert into ponds and parched land to water resources. Corresponding to the previous line of v.18, the second part is also composed of two assertions constructed with two phrases, however, they are linked together with waw conjunction and are introduced by the same verb (אָשִׁיש) which is applied to both the sentences. The first phrase of the second line begins with אָשִׁיש, a *qal* imperfect conjugation of אָשִׁיש or שָאַם שָאַם which has the meaning ‘to put, place or set,’\(^ {534}\) and it is followed by a series of nouns: אָשִׁיש מַרְבָּעִים נֵבְרָה – ‘I will set wilderness to pool of waters.’ Apart from the object noun מַרְבָּעִים (desert) there are two other words which are prefixed with the preposition לְ (to or into): לְאָשִׁיש מַרְבָּעִים נֵבְרָה ‘(into) muddy pool of water.’ Therefore, one can also render the following interpretative translation: ‘I will convert or change (set) wilderness into ponds (muddy pool of water).’ Once again, this expression authenticates Yahweh’s attributes of creation, who can convert even wilderness

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\(^{533}\) Berges, *Jesaja 40-48*, 205.

\(^{534}\) BDB, 964.
into a pool of waters. Furthermore, the same verb (אשיה) leads also the remaining phrase which states: ‘and (I will) set or place dry land into a place or source or springs of water.’ Similar to the structural pattern of the previous phrase, here too the preposition ל (to or into) is employed to indicate what type of change or transformation that a dry land it going to receive: לָמָהִי יָאכִי ~yfia’): ‘and (I will) set or place dry land into a place or source or springs of water.’ Besides, unlike the previous phrase where different nouns and prepositions are placed in opposition, here the two statements employ the same preposition, i.e., ל but different nouns are used, however, relatively, they express the same ideas.

Verse 18c

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>אֲשִׁים</th>
<th>Verse 18d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will set (convert)</td>
<td>(I will set/convert)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>מָרֹם</td>
<td>נָחַר יָאכִי</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wilderness</td>
<td>dry land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ל</td>
<td>ל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>into</td>
<td>into</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>אֲשִׁים צֶרֶם</td>
<td>מָלְתָּם יָאכִי</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pool of waters</td>
<td>springs of water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, these statements, underscore decisively that Yahweh will and can convert either wilderness into ponds filled with water and dry land into springs of water. These renderings once again accentuate the mighty acts of Yahweh as Creator who has the power to convert any barren-land such as wilderness or dry land into a reservoir of waters. Furthermore, the repeated occurrence of the plural absolute noun מָלָתָם יָאכִי ‘water’ in this verse: מָלָתָם יָאכִי – ‘pool of water’ and מָלָתָם יָאכִי – ‘spring of water in the wilderness or dry land,’ denotes that Yahweh the Lord of the waters, does not just open waters in different ecological settings, but He completely transforms the desertified topography into its opposite form i.e.,

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535 SAGGS considers water in a more metaphorical way in the context of Babylonian prosperity, about which the exiles were more aware of. Most of the exiles found occupation in the irrigation sector and were aware of the fact that water was vital for the financial stability. Ships were used as common mode to transport and receive goods in Babylon. Therefore, for the economic stability water plays a major role. **Henry William Frederick SAGGS, The Greatness That was Babylon: A Survey of the Ancient Civilization of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley** (2nd Edition; London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1988), 282.
surplus of water on infertile landscapes.\(^{536}\) יִּנַּח ‘water,’ which is the symbol of life and fertility is opened by the creative power of the Lord of waters, i.e. Yahweh. The abundance of water supply is indicated by the fourfold designation of water supply which originates from different sources such as ‘rivers, fountains (or wells), pools and springs,’ which altogether represent different environmental conditions. Moreover, the abundance of waters from different environmental conditions signifies ‘water’ not as a destructive element, but as a ‘life-giving source.’

Two important aspects can be traced out from v.18; firstly, there is a purpose for any creative accomplishment of Yahweh; and in this context as it was indicated in the beginning of this subunit, the transformation of parched land into a place of unlimited water resources is a constructive reaction by Yahweh after witnessing the anguish of ‘the poor and needy,’ due to lack of water. However, there is an implied purpose of creating or opening the water resources for the poor and the needy. This can be further illuminated in the light of Pss 107:35-38:\(^{537}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psalm 107:35-38</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He turns a desert into pools of water, and a parched land into springs of water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And there He lets the hungry dwell, and they establish a city to live in;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They sow fields, and plant vineyards and get a fruitful yield.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By His blessing they multiply greatly; and He does not let their cattle decrease.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same expression which appears in Isa 41:18c and d, has been used in Pss 107:35 concerning Yahweh’s action of converting or turning desert into ponds and parched land into water resources:

\(^{536}\) Paul opines that the images of water in the desert, wilderness or dry land are influenced by the description of desert wandering of the Israelites from Egypt (Exod. 17:1-7, 21, 33; Num. 20:1-13). Paul, Isaiah 40-66, 174.

\(^{537}\) Probably a post-exilic psalm.
Apart from the verbal conjugation of יָבוּשׁ or יָבוּשַׁי into qal imperfect third person form, the entire verse (i.e., Pss 107:35) reflects the perspective of Isa 41:17-20. Further, the psalmic perspective has been presented here in order to understand the ‘main purpose’ of Yahweh’s act of turning the desert into a place with sufficient water facilities; and moreover, the objective of this transformation has been clearly mentioned in the remaining cited verses from the book of Psalms (Pss 107:36-38). In this transformed wilderness, ‘the hungry will dwell and establish a city to live in; they will sow fields, plant vineyards and they will receive a fruitful yield; moreover, by the blessings of Yahweh they will multiply demographically and their cattle will not decrease.’ Based on the above-mentioned verses from the book of Psalms, one can perceive that the transformation of the desert leads to economic and social transformation of the poor and needy; although it is not explicitly mentioned in Isa 41:17-20, this implicit meaning can be ascertained with the help of the rendering from the book of Psalms (Pss 107:36-38).

Therefore, the above-mentioned perspectives from the book of psalms promote the following implications: firstly, Yahweh as the Creator who has dominion over nature, transforms nature and brings prosperity to the dry land through various water resources; this signifies the creatorship of Yahweh. Secondly, these drastic transformations of the barren places into water resources underscores that these resources are created for the benefit of all including the poor and the needy; this accentuates equal distribution and accumulation of the resources established by Yahweh to all. Thirdly, through this ecological transformation Yahweh brings as mentioned above, both economic and social transformations i.e., water resources which are created by Yahweh should be shared and appropriately used for the well-being, i.e., for survival and economic productivity of all people or the entire creation and especially, this should benefit the poor, needy and destitute. This is one aspect and objective or the purpose of transforming the nature which v.18 subtly records.

The identification of the purpose of the transforming the wilderness leads to the second aspect, i.e., the depiction of Yahweh as ‘Creator’ in v.18. Yahweh is not mentioned directly as Creator, however, His actions of opening water in bare heights and making of pools in the valleys assert that He is engaged with an important assignment, i.e., ‘creation.’ However, there is always an outstanding picturization of Yahweh as Creator in the passages of Isa 40-48 which can be subtly

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538 Elliger, Deuterotjesaja 40:1-45:7, 166; Koole perceives the transformation of nature purely from a spiritual renewal point of view. Koole, Isaiah 40-48, 176; Propp observes it purely from the economic transformation which is predicted by DI in forehand. The concept of ‘water in the desert’ highlights the transformation of creation which includes social transformation. Propp, Water in the Wilderness, 125.
observed in v.18 also and so, the following lines attempt to unveil the image of Yahweh as ‘Creator.’ Firstly, the usage of the first common singular verbal conjugations of the verbs שָׂרַת and שָׂבַט or שְׁבַּת (כַּלָּה and כָּלֹא) specify that the actions (of creation) expressed through these verbs are personally performed by Yahweh Himself (as Creator).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse 18a and b</th>
<th>Verse 18c and d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>אָפֹתַה</td>
<td>אָשִּׁים</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I will open</em></td>
<td><em>I will set (convert or turn)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These utterances of Yahweh in the first common singular verbal conjugations are not merely commands from a distance which converted or transformed the desert into a pool of waters, rather these specified verbal expressions personify the action of Yahweh in human form or human understanding which emphasize that Yahweh himself performed these actions like a skillful professional human worker. This can be further clarified when these verbs are read along with the entire constructed sentences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>18a-b</th>
<th>18c-d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>אָפֹתַה עַל-שֵׁפֵר יָהְרוֹת וְקְהָרוֹת בְּקֶנֶהְתוֹת</td>
<td>אָשִּׁים מַחְרַב לוֹאָמֶס פָּהֲדֵנֶה וְאֲרָם צֵהֲלַמְיָא פְּרָה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I will open rivers in the bare heights and fountains in the midst of valleys.</em></td>
<td><em>I will turn the wilderness into a pool of waters and the dry land into springs of water.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The expressions such as ‘opening fountains in the midst of valleys,’ ‘setting pools of water in the wilderness,’ and ‘springs of water in the dry land’ reflect certain human crafts or skillful professional workers who engage in building ponds and lakes, or digging water wells. Yahweh’s personal initiation by engaging himself in ‘opening’ or ‘setting’ or ‘making’ such water resources in the wilderness, dry land or in the midst of valleys personifies, Yahweh as ‘builder’ or ‘constructor’ of ponds or a ‘well-digger’ or even ‘farmer’ who construct these water resources and make them available for the purpose of drinking and irrigation – ‘for the livelihood, plants, animals and humankind.’

Therefore, it is obvious that Yahweh’s ‘act of creation’ (re-creation or transformation) in changing the wilderness into a reservoir of waters precisely depicts Him ‘not as a distant creator who commands and makes things to appear’ (cf. Gen. 1), but ‘as a farmer’ (a personified form of Yahweh), as a ‘well-digger’ who digs a well/fountain and channels them to fill the dry places for cultivation and
drinking purposes which eventually benefit the survival of all humankind and the rest of the creation.’ Hence, apart from upraising Yahweh as the sole creator, this verse uses familiar human-occupational-imageries to personify Yahweh as a ‘farmer’ or a ‘well-digger’ or ‘builder.’ Moreover, v.18 subtly connotes these attributes of ‘professional skillful workers’ imageries to the creator God – ‘Yahweh,’ through which the creator God is personified in human-occupational-images.

**Verse 19**

After the depiction of Yahweh’s creative formation or construction of water resources in bare heights, valleys, wilderness and dry land, begins v.19 to record in detail another set of Yahweh’s deeds of creation of ‘setting’ or ‘planting’ seven different varieties of trees in the wilderness and desert valleys as a continuation of His chain of responses to the ineffective outcome that ‘the poor and needy’ encountered in their search for ‘water.’ The entire verse (v.19) is formulated in two lines and each line begins with the consonant א which adds *acrostic* style to the entire verse.

The first line of v.19 is composed of a verbal phrase which begins with א which expresses Yahweh’s action of setting or planting the following trees in the wilderness: א – ‘I will set or plant in the wilderness, cedar, acacia, the myrtle, and the olive.’ The noun מַרְכַּר (wilderness) appears in the second line of v.18 where it is employed to express where Yahweh sets or converts ‘wilderness into a pool of water;’ and here in v.19 the converted or transformed wilderness which has water resources now is the same place where Yahweh sets or plants the above-mentioned trees.

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539 BDB, 681.
An additional information, the word נָּהֵרָה (wilderness) refers to a wild or dry region which is a hostile place for cultivation or habitation (perhaps inhabited only by wild animals), due to its both extreme cold and hot weather conditions. Therefore, in such an extreme dry and uncultivable region, Yahweh creates or opens surplus water resources in order to make it fertile or in other words He pre-arranges this region to be filled with water resources therefore, different trees can be planted. This creative process of Yahweh once again decisively asserts Him as ‘Creator.’ Furthermore, Yahweh’s task of planting another set of different varieties of trees also continues in the second phrase of v.19:

<frame>

The above mentioned trees along with the verb ḫלָּקָה confirms that they are planted by Yahweh Himself in the desert valley; the noun בֵּרֹב is employed here to denote ‘desert valley’ which can also be translated as ‘desert plain or steppe.’ A steppe or desert plain (בֵּרֹב) is a vast area of flat grassy land which are treeless tracts and moreover, these desert plains are common in the certain areas of ANE. The action of Yahweh by setting or planting diverse trees in the wilderness and desert plain are tabulated in the following page to have a brief overview:

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541 BDB, 787.
542 BDB, 787.
This passage (esp. vv.18 and 19) which talks about the transformation of nature is a debated section due to the significant aspects that these verses express. Firstly, the transformation of desert into a region of surplus water resources is often seen as a mirror-image of the ‘Exodus wandering-event’ which is adopted by DI in order to encourage and prepare the exiled Israelites and to facilitate their return journey from Babylon to the homeland. According to Bernhard W. Anderson certain sections in Isa 40-48 (i.e., 41:17-20; 43:16-21; 49:10) explicitly resemble the first Exodus event where Yahweh led the people of Israel in the wilderness-wandering and took care of them by protecting and feeding them. Therefore, for him, the mirror-images of the Exodus event in Isa 40-48 are connoting to the second Exodus event which He terms as ‘the return of Israelites to their home country – Judah.’ In the similar line, William Henry Propp, whose views were mentioned earlier, also aims at the literal reading of this passage and he interprets it as an actual event which is going to take place when the Israelites return from Babylon and for him this passage highlights God’s providence of providing water and shade during their wilderness journey.

Secondly, the issue about the location of this desert region specified in vv.18 and 19, scholars have long debated with regard to this subject matter. Based on the terms referring to wilderness (ירמיה), dryland (ארץ) and desert plain (בר), in vv.18 and 19, scholars like Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer assert that these specifications plausibly denote Judah and the regions between Babylon and Judah. Moreover, for her and other scholars, the different varieties of trees mentioned in v.19 are not fruit trees rather they are trees that are used as quality wood for various construction purposes. Some of the details and the usage about these trees are as follows:

**Cedars**: The wood of cedar is used in the construction of idols and also referred as the ‘majesty of Lebanon.’ Often it is mentioned as Lebanese cedar (Isa 44:14; 60:13; Ezek. 31:3-7).

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545 Tiemeyer, Comfort of Zion, 177.
546 The trees which are mentioned in v.19 are not fruit trees rather they are trees that are used as quality wood for various construction purposes. Some of the details and the usage about these trees are as follows:
not found in the Mesopotamian region, rather, they are famous in the Syrian-Palestinian region and especially they are familiar in Judah rather than in the wilderness region, because TIEMEYER is of the opinion that this passage refers to the reforestation of Judah which has been symbolically presented in Isa 41:17-20. Therefore, for many interpreters this passage emphasizes more on the ecological transformation that Yahweh will bring forth in Judah soon after Israelites return. Moreover, this transformation has been symbolically expressed and Yahweh’s providence of water resources and natural resources will bring economic and social transformation to rebuild the nation’s infrastructure which will certainly incorporate the poor and the needy as well.

However, the text mentions in the beginning that Yahweh responds to the need of the poor and needy and moreover, there are neither direct allusions to Exodus nor references to the economic transformation of Judah. Therefore, the scholarly views mentioned above which place this text and its interpretation to the Judahite context are not plausibly admissible. Nevertheless, it is explicit that the text underlines more of DI emphasis of transformation of nature and caring for the poor by Yahweh. From my reading, I perceive that the transformation of nature

ACACIAS: The name of this tree is mixture of Egyptian and Akkadian derivation. This is common in Israel and in Sinai desert.

MYRTLES: It grows in wild on the Carmel and the Upper Galilean mountains and adjacent to the streams and springs in the Golan.

OLIVES: It is usually identified with the Jerusalem pine of the silver oleaster. Its leaves and olive branches were used as roofs of the tabernacles (Neh. 8:15).

PLANE: This tree which is also called as juniper is common to Lebanon and was used in the construction and decoration of the Jerusalem temple. This is also used in the building of places and temples in Mesopotamia.

BOXTREE: This is one of the trees which are quite frequently mentioned in the royal inscriptions of Mesopotamia. This is also used for construction projects.

CYPRESS: This is also identified as one of the Mesopotamian trees. At the same time this tree grows in the Lebanon foothills, in Bashan, and in the mountains of Cyprus. PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 174-175; KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 180-182; WHYBRAY, Isaiah 40-66, 67; BERGES opines that it places a polemic connotation against the idol fabricators who deny accepting that, the material (wood) which they use from these trees (v.19) to manufacture idols were created by this almighty and sovereign God – Yahweh. BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 202, 205-206.


depicted here, especially the planting of different trees together which was initiated by Yahweh (אֱלֹהִים) depicts Him not simply as creator in general terms but as ‘Creator Yahweh’ portrayed here as ‘gardener’ who plants different trees. Yahweh is personified here with human-occupational-imagery – ‘the gardener Yahweh.’ This picturization of ‘Yahweh as gardener’ is further augmented or reinforced in v.20. The anthropomorphic expressions attributed to Creator-Yahweh in a polychromatic manner is one of the specialties of the creation passages of Isa 40-48.

**Verse 20**

After the direct address of Yahweh in the first person which has enumerated His creative actions of transforming the wilderness into a fertile region with surplus water resources and different varieties of trees (vv.18-19), the entire passage reaches its concluding statements in v.20 which serves as the functional text of the whole unit; and the functional verse essentially states the motif of Yahweh’s actions as Creator.

V.20 is composed of two lines and each line begins with a conjunction which leads the rest of the phrase with assertive verbal formulations. The first line of v.20 begins with the result or consecutive clause particle לָמָּן (לָפָנִי) and it is followed by a series of third masculine plural verbal conjugations. The consecutive clause particle לָמָּן (so that, in order that) along with the conjugated verbs function here to denote the intended results of the actions indicated in the main clause (i.e., vv.17b-19). A chain of *qal* imperfect third masculine plural verbs that appear in v.20a demonstrate the change in subject from first person (Yahweh’s personal address) to third person possibly referring to the subject nouns that appeared in the initial phrases of v.17 (the poor and needy).

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**Series of imperfect 3mp PK verbal conjugations**

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**Consecutive clause particle**

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The series of imperfect verbal formulations with a cluster of different assertions that are arranged together reinforce categorically the significance of each and every verb which certainly underscore the substantive purpose of Yahweh's act of transforming nature (v.20a). Therefore, it is necessary to comprehensively analyze the significant nuances of these individual verbs along with their explicit and implicit connotations in the result clause as well as in the entire unit.

The first three verbs of v.20a are conjugated as qal imperfect third masculine plural forms and their conjugations and multiple meanings are as follows: the verb ראה which is conjugated as וראי has various meanings such as 'to see, perceive or understand.' The second verb is ידוע and is conjugated as ידוע and can be translated as 'to know, have understanding, notice or observe.' The last verb of the same conjugational pattern is קים and its root word קים carries several connotations such as 'to set (up), put, place, lay (upon), set in place, establish or confirm.' In addition, there is also another final verb in the first line i.e., לך which is conjugated into hiphil imperfect third masculine plural form לך which also has ample number of meanings e.g. 'to understand, comprehend, have insight.' Moreover, all these verbs are linked together with waw conjunction (ו) in order to express the chain of assertions. Besides, after the chain of imperfects appears the adverb סעם which means 'together or at the same time.' A parallel placement of סעם at the end of the previous verse (v.19b) and here (20a) at the end of the first line indicates on the one hand the parallel expressions (i.e., different trees together and different verbal conjugations together) and on the other it denotes the inner-unity of the passage.

The various meanings of the different verbs (in v.20a) from a larger perspective resembles similar; however, the precise meaning of each verb has been

552 BDB, 909; Pelt and Pratico, Vocabulary Guide, 3.
553 BDB, 395; Pelt and Pratico, Vocabulary Guide, 4.
554 BDB, 395; Pelt and Pratico, Vocabulary Guide, 6.
555 BDB, 968; Pelt and Pratico, Vocabulary Guide, 30.
chosen to be expressed in the text and the same have been attributed to them in the following way:

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<td>והבךַּלַּה</td>
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<td>They will see</td>
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I perceive that it would have been much easier for the prophet to employ only one verb e.g., יראַּא to say that the poor and the needy ‘will see’ the creative actions of Yahweh and praise Him. But the series of verbs that appear in the same sentence with different connotations underline the significance of the versatile actions of ‘Yahweh as Creator’ and therefore the response from the people should also be perceptible. These different verbs explicate a mixture of physical and mental exercises that come along with their meanings: firstly, the poor and needy will use their sight sense and ‘see’ (יראַּא) or witness with their own eyes and perceive the images of transformation that appear before them; secondly, witnessing the transformation leads to ‘understanding’ (บายַּע) from what they have perceived; thirdly, their understanding will lead them to ‘confirm’ (ברַישָׁה) or ‘consider’ firmly and finally to comprehend (ברַישָׁה) or discern and appreciate the creator who has done this remarkable transformation (which is dealt with v.20b). A chain of systematic human reactions can be observed in v.20a. From my observation of v.20, I perceive few implied similarities and interrelations between v.17b and v.20a.

V.17 which depicts the adversity of the poor and needy due to their deteriorating results of finding water to quench their thirst, promptly describes (v.17) in its second half the immediate response of Yahweh in first person to answer them and not to forsake them; and moreover, to fulfill their needs. In between the process of search (by the people) and response (from Yahweh), i.e. I assume that before Yahweh responded He too ‘saw, perceived, understood and acknowledged the afflicted situation of the poor and needy (which is not mentioned in the text). Therefore, from my reading, v.20a also reflects the presumed implied notion in v.17 with regard to the reaction of Yahweh (as mentioned) before initiating His creation or re-creation process recorded in vv.18
and 19. Thus, the poor and the needy are invited to see, know, understand and acknowledge what has happened (the transformation of nature) and who has done the transformation. Moreover, my purpose of comparing v.17 and v.20 is to emphasize that the presumed reading of Yahweh’s pre-response of seeing and understanding the situation of the people is to underline decisively that Yahweh is the God of Israel who can only see or perceive and understand and consider the difficult situations of His people.\(^556\) Hence, once again, by applying human senses to Yahweh (i.e., to see, understand and so on), the DI stamp of personification of human imageries to Yahweh can be noted.

Finally, the entire unit ends in v.20b; and the verse begins with the particle יִכְּבָּ (‘that’) which functions here as a particle-conjunction that leads the object clause sentence.\(^557\) Indeed, this object clause sentence distinctly depicts the purpose of transforming the nature which appeals the poor and needy to see and understand ‘that the hand of Yahweh has made this and the Holy one of Israel has created it.’

The last line of the entire unit which begins with יִכְּבָּ is composed of two verbal clauses. The first verbal sentence commences with a genitive compound noun יְהֹוָה יִדוּעַ – ‘the hand of Yahweh’ which functions as the subject and moreover the entire phrase is conjugated with יִשְׁתַּחַת a qal perfect third feminine singular verbal form of יָשָׂה (to do or make). In addition, the demonstrative pronoun תֹאֶז (this) is placed after the verbal conjugation. The emphatic assertion that has been expressed in this phrase can be observed from its sentence formulation. The subject noun (יְהֹוָה יִדוּעַ) is placed before the verb (unlike the customary Hebrew sentence structure) in order to emphasize the subject (a sort of inverted verbal sentence); and, moreover, the demonstrative pronoun תֹאֶז reinforces or intensifies the idea of the entire phrase: תֹאֶז יִכְּבָּ יְהֹוָה יִדוּעַ – ‘that the hand of Yahweh has made this.’ The term ‘the hand of God’ (יְהֹוָה יִדוּעַ) occurs invariably in the book of Isaiah,\(^558\) and the conventional interpretations emphasize through this phrase that ‘the hand of God’ symbolizes Yahweh’s assertiveness and creative ‘power’ or the ‘sovereign power’ that He possesses which is demonstrated in His creative

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\(^{556}\) Perhaps, it can also be an implied emphasis that Yahweh can see and understand but other human-made gods cannot do that.

\(^{557}\) JENNI, Lehrbuch der hebräischen Sprache, 64; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 2.

\(^{558}\) Cf. Isa 40:2; 51:17; 59:1; 62:3; 66:14.
attribute by transforming nature (vv.18 and 19). However, in the light of the previous verses (i.e. vv. 18 and 19) which depicted Yahweh’s personal initiatives (ָלָּךְ and ָלָּךְ) of turning the bare heights, wilderness, dry lands and desert valleys into places with surplus water resources and His action of (ָלָּךְ and ָלָּךְ) setting or planting different trees in the desert plains, one can clearly understand that the DI anthropomorphic presentation of Yahweh as farmer/well-digger or builder and gardener (vv.18-19) has been strongly and emphatically reaffirmed here through this phrase: כְּרי רַדְּבַּרְתָּה תְּשָׁחַת – ‘that the hand of Yahweh has made this.’ Yahweh Himself with His own hands performed these creative actions or resourceful acts of creation (i.e., opened the waters, and planted the trees) in order to meet the needs of the poor and needy. Therefore, the personification of Yahweh with skillful human workmanship as ‘gardener’ and the ‘builder’ imageries along with the other human images make DI presentation of ‘Yahweh as Creator’ in a more phenomenal way.

Furthermore, the same particle כְּ also leads the other affirmative statement which also explains the purpose of transforming the nature (in order that they will see and understand that...): כְּרי רַדְּבַּרְתָּה תְּשָׁחַת – ‘and the Holy one of Israel has created it.’ The epithet הַרְדְּבַּרְתָּה תְּשָׁחַת occurs rarely outside the book of Isaiah and therefore, many scholars opin that this epithet was coined by Isaiah, however, there are contesting views against this opinion to prove that the usage of this epithet was prevalent even before it was used in the Isaianic rendition.

However, the point here is to trace the meaning of this epithet and what role it plays here in connection with acknowledging this Holy One of Israel as creator. There are several interpretations with regard to the meaning of this epithet הַרְדְּבַּרְתָּה תְּשָׁחַת: for some it is a divine title to overtone Yahweh’s holiness and for

559 BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 206.
562 A. VAN SELMS, “The Expressions ‘the Holy One of Israel,’” Von Kanaan bis Kerala: Festschrift für Prof. Mag. Dr. Dr. J.P.M. van der Ploeg O.P. zur Vollendung des siebzigsten
others it denotes Yahweh’s divine transcendence and kingship\textsuperscript{563} who has the incomparable power to redeem Israel.\textsuperscript{564} However, Yahweh is a God who is also known as being-in-relationship with His people\textsuperscript{565} and therefore, God is not only ‘transcendent’ but He is also ‘condescending’ – who seeks to have communion with His people.\textsuperscript{566}

Hence, ‘the Holy One of God’ is not implied only to a distant and Holy God who is away from the people, but Yahweh is a God who has the attribute of engaging in personal relationship with the chosen ones and especially, with the poor and the needy. Thus, ‘the nearness of Yahweh’ is expressed in Isa 40-48 in the context of exile and the hope of salvation and restoration through the epithet: יְהֹוָה הָאֱלֹהִים – ‘the Holy One of Israel.’ Especially, in this context it is used with regard to creation, using the verb בָּרָא (to create). It is the God who dwells among Israel that has created it (בָּרָא). Moreover, the verb בָּרָא which is conjugated into qal perfect third masculine singular form בָּרָא, carries also a pronominal suffix ה, in order to accentuate the action (transformation of nature with water and trees) and the doer, i.e., the Holy One of Israel’ (i.e., the ‘Creator Yahweh’ and ‘His action of creation), who dwells among Israel.

As mentioned in the previous exegetical passage (Isa 40:28) בָּרָא in the light of old Arabic root ‘barā’ can also be translated as ‘to build or to bring forth,’ therefore, one can underscore that Yahweh with His hand has brought forth everything in the wilderness and dry land such as surplus water and trees which led to total transformation of the lives of the poor and needy.

3.2.4. OBSERVATIONS

The presentation in Isa 41:17-20 about the total transformation of the wilderness or dry-land and planting of different trees and moreover, the consequent events that are chronicled, unfolds a cluster of nuances about the ‘Creator – Yahweh’ and ‘His versatile act of creation, re-creation or transformation.’ Firstly, the creator God – Yahweh is the God who sees or perceives the unsuccessful

\textsuperscript{564} JOHN N. OSWALT, “Isaiah: Theology of,” NIDOTTE 4:729.
\textsuperscript{565} BERNHARD W. ANDERSON, Contours of Old Testament Theology (Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1999), 50.
situation of the poor and needy (who search for water) and then He acts by providing water in the desert. This depicts Yahweh as the God with emotions who can feel and understand the sufferings of His people. Secondly, Creator – Yahweh can change or transform any sort of dry environment into to fertile or resourceful place. Thirdly, this transformation of desert with abundant resources is mainly to meet the needs of the poor and needy – through which equal distribution of the created resources is emphasized. Fourthly, the materialization of the total transformation which is brought forth by Yahweh can be witnessed and perceived; they are not mere words. In addition, and more precisely, the human-occupational-imageries are employed in this passage which facilitate to perceive Yahweh as skillful ‘gardener’ or ‘builder’ or ‘farmer’ who personally engaged or worked as any other skillful laborer to transform the desert into a place of water and also with other resources. This is strikingly underlined in the last verse: נִי יְרֵיחוֹת שְׁמַה יְאָה – ‘that the hand of Yahweh has made this.’ In the context of adorning creator as superior, most powerful and unimaginable, this passage personifies the creator God ‘Yahweh’ with human-occupational-imageries and this conceptualization reveals that Yahweh dwells among His people and His art of creation can be translated into tangible human experiences.
3.3. Isaiah 42: 5-9

3.3.1. Translation

5. Thus says the God Yahweh who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and its produce (offspring), who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to (those) who move in it:

6. I am Yahweh, I have called you in righteousness, and I hold you by hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people and a light to the nations,

7. to open the blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from dungeon; those who sit in darkness. 8. I am Yahweh that is my name and my glory I give to no other nor my praise to the idols.

9. The first things, behold, they have come and new things I now announce, before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

3.3.2. Delimitation, Structure, Form and Outline of Isaiah 42: 5-9

As mentioned in the previous exegetical passage (i.e., Isa. 41:17-20), Isa 42 vv.1-9 are also part of the larger section of 41:1-42:13. However, the main issue here is whether to consider vv.1-9 as a single pericope or to divide vv.1-4 and vv.5-9 as separate units. Different views exist among scholars with regard to the division of this pericope (i.e., vv.1-9). Duhm opines that vv.1-4 form a separate unit based on his view of certain sections as later interpolations (Isa 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12); Duhm’s position with regard to the ‘servant songs’ is elucidated in fn. no.4. Duhm, Das Buch Jesaja, 284-290. However, there are also scholars like, Baltzer, Blenkinsopp, Koole, Paul and others who consider vv.1-9 as one pericope with two sections (vv.1-4 and vv.5-9). Klaus Baltzer, Deutero-Jesaja. Kommetar zum Alten Testament (KAT X 2; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1999), 169-174; Blenkinsopp, Isaiah 40-55, 208-212; Koole, Isaiah 40-48, 213; Berges, Jesaja 40-48, 233-234; Paul, Isaiah 40-66, 184. There are also proponents who observe vv.5-9 as a separate unit and not as a subsection of the entire unit (vv.1-9). Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, 98; North, Second Isaiah, 110.
distinct pericopes. The explicit syntactic reasons to consider them as separate units are as follows: Firstly, v.1 begins with the emphatic particle ויחיה (behold/see) and v.5 begins a new content with the messenger formula כה אמר יהוה – ‘thus says God, Yahweh;’ secondly, the servant is addressed with third person suffixes (he) in the first part (vv.1-4), while in the second section (vv.5-9) the servant is addressed with the second person suffix (you). These two sections (vv.1-4 and vv.6-9) are well connected by the messenger formula and the participial verbs (Isa 42:5) which endorse Yahweh as creator. Thirdly, in both sections the speaker is Yahweh, however, in vv.5-9 the messenger formula (כְּהַמֵּדֶּרֶךְ לְאָֽלָּךְ יְהוֹ) is employed. Even though these linguistic indicators signal to separate them into two separate units, yet there are some syntactic and semantic indications which paved the way for some scholars to consider them as one pericope with two subsections (from vv.1-4 and vv.5-9 respectively).

This view has been mainly justified by observing the repetition of the same words in both the sections, e.g., ויהי (to give v.1c, 5d, 6c, and 8b), והי (v.1c and 5e), בני (peoples/nations v.1d, 6d), ויהיה (v.4b and 5c). In addition, the content/prophecy here in both the subsections is concerning the servant of Yahweh (i.e., Israel). The first section (vv.1-4) of this pericope is concerning the

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568 Koole, Isaiah 40-48, 210; Berges, Jesaja 40-48, 233.

569 Spykerboer notes that the particle ויחיה which begins a new section in Isa 42:1 is an indication that this is an outcome or continuation of the argument from the preceding lines. Therefore, ויחיה does not introduces here a new paragraph. Spykerboer, Structure and Composition of Deutero-Isaiah, 80-81.

570 Koch, Baltzer, Blenkinstopp and a few others.


designation and appointment of the servant and his responsibility in establishing justice. Apparently, with this emphasis the first section is held together with the repetition of the key word מְשָׁפִּית – 'justice' (v.1b, 3b, 4b), while the second part (vv.1-5) is not only concerned about his appointment or the confirmation of his office, but more specifically they narrate a detailed description concerning the tasks of the servant. Therefore, I perceive vv.1-4 and 5-9 as separate units which eventually describes the commissioning and the mission of the servant. The messenger formula with the chain of participial verbs indicates a clear demarcation of vv.5-9; the addressee in vv.5-9 in second person is also a sign for a separate unit and the addressee is again changed to third person in vv. 10-13. Therefore, vv.5-9 can be delimited as one single subunit.

In its presentation, the structure of this passage is simple and crystal clear. V.5 begins with an expanded messenger formula כְּהֵנָא עַמְרָא יָהֹוָה – 'thus says God, Yahweh,' and continues with a lengthy hymnic introduction formulated with participial verbs that depict Yahweh’s attributes as Creator.

All the five verbs (ךֵּרֵךְ-ךֵּרֵךְ–ךֵּרֵךְ–ךֵּרֵךְ–ךֵּרֵךְ) which are employed in the second and third line of v.5 are conjugated in participial forms with the function of attributive usage. They are used to depict in detail the artistic creation-activity of Yahweh: בְּרֹאשֵׁיָם וּרְפֶחְתֵּם – ‘who created the heavens and stretched them out;’ כֹּסַהוֹר אָפַר – ‘who spread out the earth and their produce (or offspring);’ נַחַת וְשָׁמָה לֵעָדָה וְרָוָה לְחַלֵּלָם בַּה – ‘who gave breath to the people upon it;’ נַחַת וְשָׁמָה לֵעָדָה וְרָוָה לְחַלֵּלָם בַּה! – ‘and spirit to those who move in it.’ The participial arrangement enhances a hymnic assonance to the entire verse from a syntactic point of view which moreover, elevates the significance of the attributes of Yahweh expressed in this verse.

Theological Reflections after Brevard Childs and Hans Hübner (FAT: 73; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 78-83.

573 Koole terms the different subsections with the content in the following way: vv.1-4 ‘servant of the LORD and vv.5-9 ‘the Lord of the servant.’ Koole, Isaiah 40-48, 208; Smith, Isaiah 40-66, 159.

574 Kratz, Kyros, 128-129.
After the messenger formula and the creation attributes of Yahweh, begins Yahweh’s commissioning speech in vv.6-9. The commission to the servant appears in vv.6-7 with four important aspects.

V.6 commences with the self-declaration of Yahweh in nominal clause: אֱלֹֽהִ֖ים: ‘I am Yahweh’ which further continues with the following fourfold components with regard to ‘commissioning’ (using verbal sentences): קָרָאתָ֖ו לָרוּחַ – ‘I have called you in righteousness;’ לָרוּחַ בֵּרוּחַ – ‘and I will strengthen your hand;’ לָרוּחַ בֵּרוּחַ – ‘and I will guard you;’ לָרוּחַ בֵּרוּחַ – ‘and I have given you as covenant to the people and a light to the nations.’ Some of the structural nuances in this verse are significant in terms of their arrangement which also serve as indicators to demarcate vv.5-9 as one unit. The speaker and the subject of these verses is Yahweh and the addressee is the servant to whom it was directly addressed. This is explicitly evident from the second person singular pronominal suffix which is suffixe to the first common singular verbal conjugations (קָרָאתָ, לָרוּחַ). Unlike the preceding verses (vv.1-4) where the servant was mentioned in third person, here Yahweh is the subject and the servant is mentioned in second person (the addressee).

Therefore, the usage of second person suffix (you) is also a strong reason to delimit vv.5-9 as a separate unit as mentioned above. The commissioning of the servant in v.6 is followed by the purpose of commissioning (in v.7) which is formulated with the help of infinitives (expressing purpose clause) and a participle construct: לְפָסֵק עִיְּנֵי בִינָה – ‘to open the blind eyes;’ לְפָסֵק עִיְּנֵי בִינָה – ‘to bring out prisoners from the dungeon;’ מְבָרָֽאָה מְבָרָֽאָה – ‘from the prison (house of confinement), those who are sitting in the darkness.’ The entire subunit is concluded in vv.8-9 with a twofold portrayal of Yahweh and His action in the future.

575 The same expression is also mentioned in Isa 49:9, which scholars assume as parallel compositions. Werlitz, 281; Albertz, Exilszeit, 294; cf. Berges, Jesaja 40-48, 236.
V.8 begins once again with the self-declaration of Yahweh (using nominal clauses): אֱלֹהִי וַאֲם הָאָדָם וָנָאָו - ‘I am Yahweh and that is my name.’ The self-identification of Yahweh is followed by twofold statements which accentuate that Yahweh will not accept or share His divine identity with others (deities). V.9 concludes the entire unit with Yahweh’s twofold announcements: וַהֲרָאָשִׁים וְהָנָרָבָא – the former things, behold they have gone; וַהֲרָאָשִׁים וְהָנָרָבָא – and the new things, I am going to declare; וַהֲרָאָשִׁים וְהָנָרָבָא – even before they spring forth; וַהֲרָאָשִׁים - I inform you.

A structural unity can be observed in this entire passage (vv.5-9) in a twofold way: on the one hand in terms of the speaker – Yahweh who is expressed in the first common singular form and the addressee, the servant, who is addressed using the second person pronominal suffix, both these entities appear repeatedly throughout the passage; on the other hand v.5 which serves as an introduction to the entire unit and v.9, the concluding section of the pericope project Yahweh as Creator, on the one hand as Creator who has created the entire cosmos and as Creator who is going to create a new thing in the future. Therefore, the creation theme in these two verses binds the passage together.

Moreover, the entire unit (vv.5-9) has a structure of ‘commissioning speech,’ whereby, Yahweh commissions His servant to be a covenant to the people and a light to the nations in order to open the eyes of the blind and release the captives from prison and darkness. Therefore, they will recognize Yahweh as the God of Creator. However, apart from these elements, an in-depth reading of the entire passage unfolds multiple-nuances of Yahweh’s creatorship which are expressed in DI’s accustomed human imageries in relation to different human-occupational-skills. This can be further understood from the detailed exegetical study that has been undertaken in the successive sections and before doing so, an outline has been presented in the following page based on the structural analysis that has been done in the previous paragraphs:

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3.3.3. DETAILED EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF ISAIAH 42:5-9

Verse 5

V.5 begins with the prophetic messenger formula הוהי יָהָה יְהֹוָה - ‘thus says God, Yahweh.’ The messenger formula serves on the one hand as an indication that a new unit begins and on the other, the speaker is explicit, it is Yahweh who speaks to the addressee. However, the addressee is not mentioned as clearly as it is mentioned in the other passages where the messenger formula577 is employed (e.g., Isa 43:1). Nevertheless, the term ‘servant’ which is used in this passage specifies that it was addressed to Jacob/Israel578 based on the following reason: The first nine verses of Isa 42, as mentioned above, are structured under the larger unit Isa 41:1-42:12. In this larger section the addressee is mentioned as Jacob/Israel (Isa 41:8, 14). Therefore, it can be noted that the addressee in Isa 42:5-9 is also Jacob/Israel. The messenger formula in v.5 which carries the term לא is determined with the definite article ה (ההוה - the God).579 This usage (i.e. ההוה), apart from this occurrence (i.e. in v.5), can be observed in the entire OT, only in the book of Psalms (85:9).580 In most of the passages of DI the term לא is used in relation to argumentation or disputation against the foreign gods or idol-images.581

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577 Using messenger formula is a standard theological feature not only in Israel but also in other regions of ANE. EDWARD NOORT, Untersuchungen zum Gottesbescheid in Mari: Die “Mariprophetie” in der alttestamentlichen Forschung (AOAT 202; Kevelaer: Butzon und Bercker: Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1977), 30-31; cf. KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 225.
578 GOLDINGAY and PAYNE opine that the servant mentioned in Isa 42 is Jacob/Israel and not Cyrus. GOLDINGAY and PAYNE, Isaiah 40-55, 1:212; BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 233; WILLIAMSON states that DI consistently presents Israel as the royal figure. HUGH G. M. WILLIAMSON, Variations on a Theme King, Messiah and the Servant in the Book of Isaiah (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998), 132-134.
579 In 1QIsa it is mentioned as הוהי יָהָה יִהוּדָו which means ‘the God of the gods.’ PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 187; POULSEN, God, His Servant, 107.
581 Isa. 40:18; 42:5; 43:10, 12; 44:10, 15, 17; 45: 14, 15, 20, 21, 22; 46:6, 9. After Isa 46, the term לא does not appears anymore in the rest of the book of Isaiah. In Isa 1-39 this term
The definite article is added to the noun הָאָרֶץ (אֲרֵי) in order to accentuate the self-declaration of Yahweh as ‘the sole God’ possibly who claims His superiority over the other gods. Nevertheless, the explicit point here is that Yahweh as speaker addresses to His servant, i.e. Israel.

The messenger formula leads to a detailed and lengthy hymnic participial presentation which depicts the creative works of Yahweh as Creator. Apart from the messenger formula, v.5 is comprised of basically three participial phrases and these three phrases along with their supplementary sentences illustrate how Yahweh engaged in crafting the heaven and earth. The first participial phrase not only defines Yahweh as Creator, but it continues to portray the action of Yahweh as Creator who stretched out the created heavens.

The verb נָבָא is conjugated into qal participle singular masculine absolute form (נָבָא הָאָרֶץ) which functions here as verbal participle and it agrees with the proper noun הָאָרֶץ (Yahweh). Moreover, the verbal participle נָבָא indicates the timeless (durative) action. Such a durative meaning of the verb נָבָא underscores both the action, as well as the actor (the protagonist). Yahweh is the protagonist here, i.e., the creator (נָבָא הָאָרֶץ) whose creative activity is both unimaginable as well as continual, constant, ceaseless, everlasting, uninterrupted and unending (Jahwes fortlaufendes Schöpferhandeln). As mentioned in the first exegetical passage (i.e., Isa 40:28), that in the OT, the verb נָבָא is employed only with הָאָרֶץ as subject in order to denote the divine activity of creation (Yahweh created, formed or shaped the heavens and earth).

However, based on its old Arabic counterpart ‘barā,’ the Hebrew verb נָבָא apart from its basic meaning ‘to create,’ it can also be translated as ‘to build,’ ‘to bring forth or give birth to.’ Therefore, in Isa 40-48 the imagination of Yahweh

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583 ELLIGER, Deuterojesaja, 231; Cf. POULSEN, God, His Servant, 107.

584 TREIGER, “Arabic Translation,” 533.
as Creator is not presented in an abstract sense, rather Yahweh’s skills as Creator are depicted with the help of human-imageries or human-occupational-skills such as ‘builder’ or ‘architect’ or even ‘mother imagery’ who gives birth to a child or bring forth a new life into this world. Among these various renderings, it would be preferable to read בַּלְתָּן in v.5 as ‘to build’ or ‘construct.’ Hence, it can be presumed, that the creation imagery (בַּלְתָּן) here personifies Yahweh as a ‘builder’ or ‘architect’ who plans creatively and skillfully and eventually executes His imagination in constructing something creatively. Similarly, Yahweh has designed creatively as an ‘architect’ and executed His plan of creating heavens (יֱלַשׁנֵי) like a ‘builder.’

The first participial phrase, which depicts the creation of the heavens, not only uses ‘builder’ or ‘architect’ imagery (out of בַּלְתָּן) to portray Yahweh as a skillful Creator, rather, it furthermore continues to illustrate the subsequent action of Yahweh as Creator, ‘who stretches out the heavens.’ This action of Yahweh has been expressed through another participial formulation, i.e., בָּאָרֶב – ‘and He stretched them out’ (i.e. the heavens). The verb בָּאָרֶב (to spread out, stretch out, extend or pitch a tent) is conjugated into qal participle masculine plural construct נַעַרְבֵּנוֹ with a third masculine plural suffix (יָרְבֵּנוֹ) which refers to the heavens (יֱלַשׁנֵי). Moreover, the two separate verbal participles are joined together with waw conjunction (ו): בָּאָרֶב נַעַרְבֵּנוֹ יֱלַשׁנֵי.

On the one hand by using this expression that ‘Yahweh has stretched the heavens out,’ the remarkable ability of Yahweh as Creator who is most powerful and has potential enough to stretch the heavens with His hands is underlined here; thus, Yahweh’s greatness and His creative power have been emphasized, and, on the other hand, DI customary brand of using skillful human-occupational-imageries can also be noted through this expression (i.e., בָּאָרֶב – ‘and He stretched them (the heavens) out.’).

The verb בָּאָרֶב also carries a meaning ‘to make or pitch a tent;’ hence, Yahweh’s action of stretching out the heavens is similarized with ‘the task of making a tent.’ Therefore, Yahweh is personified by DI as ‘tent-maker’ or ‘camper’

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585 One of the significant peculiarities in DI in the placement of the heaven and earth in opposition or parallel whenever creation is mentioned and this idea indicates the totality of creation (Isa. 40:12, 22; 42:5; 44:23, 24; 45:8, 12, 18; 48:13; 49:13; 51:6, 13, 16; 55:9, 10).
587 Stretching out the heavens is similar to pitching of a tent (Gen 12:8). PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 187-188; KLAUS BALTZER, Deuterojesaja, 179.
who stretches the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like tent to dwell in. The detailed description of ‘tent-maker’ imagery for Yahweh can be observed in Isa 40:22 and the same imagery has been employed here in Isa 42:5 as well.

| 40:22b | Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. |
| 42:5b  | Who has created the heavens and stretched them out (implied tentmaker imagery) |

The imagery of ‘tent-maker’ or ‘camper’ which has been employed by DI to depict the creative activity of Yahweh as Creator is phenomenal. Furthermore, in continuation with Yahweh’s skillful activity of creating the heavens and stretching them out, appears additional participial phrases in v.5 to narrate Yahweh’s immense acts of creation. The second phrase with regard to Yahweh’s creative activity, describes Yahweh as the one who spreads out the earth and what comes from it.

Participial formulation

\[ \overset{\text{5c}}{\text{heq} \text{ disf. hakhel \text{ yihv}}(5a)} \]

The second creative attribute of Yahweh as Creator begins with the participial formulation נָעַרְנָה which is a qal masculine singular participial conjugation of the root verb נָעַרְנָה (beat, stamp down or out, beat out, spread out). The verb נָעַרְנָה which is translated here as ‘spreading out’ in relation to ‘Yahweh’s act of spreading out the earth,’ is used with different connotations in some of the following passages of the OT which express various nuances: firstly, ‘to beat’ or ‘to stamp down a person’ (2 Sam 22:43); secondly, it is mainly used in relation to the industry of metal-crafting, e.g. a goldsmith overlays an idol with gold plate (Isa 40:19) which literally means ‘to beat it out;’ they beat out the plates of gold (Exod. 39:3); they beat them out as plating (Num 17:4); Sliver is beaten out (Jer. 10:9) and so on. Thus, the same verb נָעַרְנָה which is used in the above mentioned references is also employed in Isa 42:5 in the participial form נָעַרְנָה to denote Yahweh’s act of spreading out the earth (נָעַרְנָה). Therefore, ‘spreading out’ has to be meant here like ‘beating gold or any other metal repeatedly with a hard

588 BDB, 956; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 85.
589 BDB, 956.
instrument such as hammer in order to make it flat.' The process that Yahweh has undertaken as Creator to spread out the earth (אֶפְרֹאָה לֶחָסְגּוֹ) is similar to beating out a metal with the help of a hammer and making it a flat metal plate. By doing so, the creative act of Yahweh is similarized here with the profession of ‘metalworker;’ like a skillful metalworker, Yahweh has skillfully spread out the earth by beating it out to a flat surface. This overview makes it apparent that DI was aware of metal industry or witnessed the different metal-crafting processes which were applied during the manufacturing process of idols, artifacts and other domestic instruments;\(^{590}\) and from my perception this view is evident even in Isa 40:19-20 where DI narrates the process of crafting idols out of metal and wood. Therefore, the creative act of Yahweh as Creator which DI has perceived through the lens of human activity or occupation (in this context, metalworker) is unquestionably outstanding.

Furthermore, the participial phrase which has subtly depicted Yahweh as ‘metalworker’ through his act of spreading the earth, further continues to portray that Yahweh not only spreads out the earth, but He also brings forth the produces or offspring from the earth (אָמַע הָאֲחָא/אֹא/אָא). The noun אָמַע is employed with the meaning ‘produce, offspring, or descendants;’\(^{591}\) moreover, the noun אָמַע appears as a continuation of the participial formulation לַעֲרַךְ אָמַע which is joined together with waw conjunction (וְ); and in addition, it is has a pronominal third feminine singular suffix referring to the earth: אָמַע לֶהָא/אָא/אָא – He (Yahweh) brings forth (spreads out or beats out) the produce or offspring of the earth.

The noun אָמַע has the verbal form of אָמַע and has various meanings such as ‘to come out’ or ‘come forth, to bring forth.’\(^{592}\) Therefore, the meaning of אָמַע can be understood in the light of its verbal form (אָמַע) as well. Hence, it is perceptible that Yahweh not only spreads out or beats out the earth, but He also causes the earth to bring forth its produces or the offspring. By referring to produce or offspring of the earth (אָמַע), the word אָמַע\(^{593}\) refers both to the agricultural products such as various grains, crops, fruits and vegetables, as well as the progeny of the living creatures including human beings which are seen on the surface of the

\(^{590}\) Cf. POULSEN, God, His Servant, 107.

\(^{591}\) BDB, 425; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 85.

\(^{592}\) BDB, 425; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 107.

\(^{593}\) Elsewhere in DI the word אָמַע is translated as descendants (Isa 44:3; 48:19). However, in some references this word is mentioned as ‘vegetation’ which comes forth from the earth (Gen 1:12; Job 31:8) and in other instances (Gen 1:24) it is used to describe the animal world that the earth brings forth. Therefore, אָמַע in this verse refers both to the plants as well as the animal world (Isa 42:5). ELLIGER, Deuterojesaja, 231.
earth. By spreading out or beating out the earth and bringing into to form, Yahweh is depicted here as a skillful metalworker, on the other hand, His act of bringing forth the earth’s produces and its offspring depicts Him as a ‘farmer’ or ‘agriculturer.’ The ‘farmer or agriculturer’ imagery is embedded in DI presentation of Yahweh as Creator; by saying so, DI characterizes Yahweh as ‘farmer’ who cultivates crops and raises cattle. Therefore, through these common human-occupational-imageries such as ‘tentmaker’ or ‘camper,’ ‘metalworker’ and ‘farmer’ or ‘agriculturer,’ DI reinforces the insightful understanding that ‘Yahweh is the God and Creator who dwells among His people, Israel, through which Yahweh becomes tangible part of human existence and experience.’

Furthermore, v.5 concludes with the last and the final aspect of the creative attribute of Yahweh, and moreover, the final phrase also extends as a continuation of the messenger formula. The final phrase is also composed of a participial sentence with a cluster of nouns in which the role of the preposition לָ (to) is significant.

*Participial formulation with a cluster of nouns*

The final clause begins with the qal participial conjugation ‏לָ (to give, put or set). Through the participial formulation, this verb (i.e., ‏לָ) is derived from the root verb ‏לָ (to give, put or set). Through the participial formulation, this verb (i.e., ‏לָ), like the other creation-attribute verbs (i.e., אָלָה and הָוָה), asserts that it is Yahweh who gives breath (בִּשְׁמָהוּ) to the people (ָלֶם) upon it (לְ), i.e., upon the earth – (וֹ). Yahweh brought forth the offspring (אָ) of the earth (v.5c) and here (v.5d) it states that Yahweh is the one who gives breath to the people upon the earth; Yahweh makes the people of the earth living-beings through the breath (בִּשְׁמָהוּ) that He places in them. Therefore, through this expression Yahweh is presented here as ‘life-giver’ of the entire humankind of this world. Moreover, the next phrase continues to narrate that (וֹ) and (Yahweh) gives spirit to those who walk (are walking) in it. Another qal participial conjugation can be observed here which is obtained from the root word (לָ) (to go or walk). The verb (לָ) in connection with (in it, i.e., in the earth – (וֹ) can also mean those who live in the earth and moreover,
the two different phrases which are referring to giving breath to people and spirit to the living beings upon the earth are joined together with waw conjunction (\(\text{w}\)).

The two terms namely, נְשָׁמָה (breath) and רוּחַ (spirit) which are employed in v.5d need further clarification in order to understand the specific purpose of the prophet for employing them here. He gives breath to people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it.\(^{596}\) Conventional interpretations denote רוּחַ in relation to the life of animals, while נְשָׁמָה is referred to the breath that humankind possess.\(^{597}\) From my observation, both these words mean ‘the breath of life’;\(^{598}\) however a comprehensive elucidation has to be given from the Deutero-Isaianic perspective. It can be presumed that the word נְשָׁמָה which is one of the key terms in the Genesis creation account (2:7) is used here in a broader and holistic or comprehensive perspective. It is employed in the Genesis creation narrative in the following way:

| Gen 2:7 |
|------------------|------------------|
| Then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the earth | נִכְלָא יְהוָה אַלֹהִים אַחַיָּה יָכְרֵא מִיְּאָהֶמָא |
| And He breathed into his nostrils ‘the breath of life’ | נִפְסֶה בָּאָסֶפֶי נְפָשַׁת חַיָּה |
| And the man became a living being | נָרָה הָאָדָם לֹאָפַש חַיָּה |

In the Genesis account the first man (אֲדָמָה) is mentioned as the one who was given the breath of life (נְשָׁמָה)). The term נְשָׁמָה can be understood as the first individual man (the person Adam אֲדָמָה) or as the first man (the man אֲדָמָה) representing the whole humankind. However, here, breath נְשָׁמָה is not given to an individual primitive figure (Adam), but to the people, i.e. the entire humankind upon the earth (נָרָה חַיָּה) and there is no other option given in this verse to assume whether it is referring to an individual or to the whole humankind. Therefore, a collective understanding of humankind is underlined here. Moreover, the word רוּחַ is used here (in Isa 42:5) to emphasize the creative and life-giving power of Yahweh.

\(^{596}\) Cf. Gen 2; Ps 104; Ezek. 37.

\(^{597}\) Seldom רוּחַ is used for animals (Gen 6:17; 7:22; Eccl 3:19, 21); and נְשָׁמָה apart from Gen 7:22 in other occurrences is always used to indicate humankind (Gen 2:7). TERENCE MITCHELL, “The Old Testament Usage of Nešâma,” VT 11 (1961): 177-187.

\(^{598}\) Cf. Job 27:3.
The reference to people (בָּנָי) is not limited to the people of Israel but it also refers to all people and this view can be defended by the next phrase which mentions הָלְכוּ יָוִי (those who walk on it) and therefore, בָּנָי refers to the entire humanity in a more generic sense (cf. Isa 40:7). Another significant meaning of the word הָוִי has to be mentioned here; the term הָוִי not simply expressed here in the sense of ‘wind’ ‘spirit’ or ‘emptiness.’ Rather it has a special connotation and according to the words of BERGES, הָוִי is not as a physiological element that is prerequisite for human life, but as a distinctive element that connects human beings with the Creator ‘Yahweh;’ and this ultimately distinguishes humankind from rest of the creation. This can also be termed as the intellectual competence that human beings possess and it is offered by Yahweh.

On the one hand v.5 has ascertained that Yahweh’s creative attributes reflect human occupational imageries which are subtly expressed through the different processes that Yahweh has undertaken in crafting the heavens, earth and all that in it. However, on the other hand, the sharing of His intellectual competence with humankind and His act of life-giving breath to all the living creatures depict the nexus that Yahweh forms between the creator and creation, therefore, this attribute of Yahweh as creator is also phenomenal through which He identifies Himself with the creation.

**Verses 6-7**

The previous verse, with its chain of participial hymnic description, has portrayed the creative activity of Yahweh as Creator with His implied human-occupational-identities such as ‘tentmaker, builder, metalworker and farmer;’ simultaneously, v.5 also serves as the introduction to the entire unit (i.e., vv.5-9). Keeping v.5 as introduction, vv.6-7 commences to chronicle Yahweh’s commissioning and assigning various tasks to His servant. Some of the major and basic differences that can be identified in terms of its structural presentation in vv.6-7 are listed here: firstly, unlike the participial formulations in v.5, vv.6-7 consist of a combination of nominal and verbal clause sentences; secondly, it is

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601 GOLDINGAY opines that Yahweh’s activity in nature as creator and in history as redeemer are intertwined. GOLDINGAY, *Message*, 161.
explicit that the messenger formula in the beginning of v.5 has indicated that Yahweh is the speaker, however, in v.6 Yahweh as speaker of the entire unit is once again underlined through the self-declaration formula and moreover, Yahweh addresses His servant in first person verbal conjugations. In addition, the direct address from the speaker to the addressee is emphasized through the second person pronominal suffixes which are attached to the verbs and in exceptional cases to the nouns (esp. in v.6).

V.6 begins with the self-declaration of Yahweh in nominal clause: אֲנִי חָיָה - ‘I am Yahweh.’ The self-description formula focuses on the speaker as well as His speech (the same pattern is again repeated in v.8 - אֲנִי חָיָה). As a continuation of the self-declaration speech, Yahweh makes three direct categorical assertions with regard to the servant in v.6. These assertions are essentially words of assurance, followed by statements that systematically present the tasks which are assigned to the servant; moreover, the narration of these tasks is also elaborated in v.7.

Verbal formulations

Nominal clause: self-declaration

The first two assertive statements appear in the verbal formulations of the first line of v.6, soon after the self-declaration formula. At the outset, the first commissioning statement is as follows: הָאָכַל בְּכָרֶךְ אָמַח בְּכָרֶךְ – ‘I have called you in justice.’ The direct utterance of Yahweh is explicit from the verbal conjugation in first person. The verb נָאַפְר (to call, summon, proclaim, announce or give a name) is used in various occasions in DI; firstly, to call ‘Israel’ (Isa 41:9). Israel was called by Yahweh; has been formed by Yahweh; and has been taken by His hand (Isa 41:9-10, 13; 43:1, 7; 48:12; 54:6). Secondly, it is also used to address Cyrus (Isa 45:3; 46:11; 48:15) or servant. The usage of the expression ‘Yahweh calling the servant in His righteousness and holding him by the hand’ is used both to refer Israel/Jacob and also the Persian emperor Cyrus as an

602 BDB, 896; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 5. The verb נָאַפְר is used in various occasions in DI; firstly, to call ‘Israel’ (Isa 41:9). Israel was called by Yahweh; has been formed by Yahweh; and has been taken by His hand (Isa 41:9-10, 13; 43:1, 7; 48:12; 54:6). Secondly, it is also used to address Cyrus (Isa 45:3; 46:11; 48:15) or servant. The usage of the expression ‘Yahweh calling the servant in His righteousness and holding him by the hand’ is used both to refer Israel/Jacob and also the Persian emperor Cyrus as an
is conjugated into qal perfect first common singular form \( ^\text{ג} \text{רָא}
\) which also has a second singular pronominal suffix. The conjugated verb \( ^\text{ג} \text{רָא}
\) is followed by a preposition prefixed noun \( ^\text{ז} \text{רְיָרָּה}
\) (in justice/righteousness). Two main aspects can be drawn from the first commission; Yahweh calls the servant in justice, which implicitly underlines on the one hand, that Yahweh is the God of justice (\( ^\text{ז} \text{רְיָרָּה}
\)) and on the other hand He commissions His servant in or with justice in order to bring justice to the nations. Moreover, it is the same God, ‘Yahweh’ – ‘who has stretched out the heavens and spread out the earth and its produces and gave spirit and breath to its people,’ has called His servant with a purpose.

The second commission is conjugated with the verb \( ^\text{ן} \text{רֲנָנ}
\) (to (be)come strong, grow firm or have courage) into hiphil first common form \( ^\text{ן} \text{רֲנָנ}
\) and it is joined together with the first statement by waw conjunction (\( ^\text{ג} \)\). Through the hiphil jussive form \( ^\text{ן} \text{רֲנָנ}
\) the command of the speaker is expressed: I (Yahweh) hold you (i.e. the servant) by your hand (\( ^\text{ג} \text{רָא}
\)). Unlike the previous verb, in this case, the pronominal suffix appears in the noun instead of the verb and moreover, it precisely accentuates the action of Yahweh, that He takes hold of the hand of the servant. This can also be interpreted as Yahweh strengthening the servant which can be understood in the light of ‘Yahweh strengthening those who wait upon Him’ (cf. Isa 40: 29-30; 41:6-7, 9, and 13). However, DI’s implication of ‘holding by hand’ cannot only be understood metaphorically, rather, it has its own embedded connotation which is explained below after dealing with the last commissioning statement. The remaining or the last commissioning statement appears in the second line of v.6.

instrument in the hands of Yahweh to bring forth political change (Isa 41:2, 9, 25; 43:1; 45:3; 46:11; 48:15). FRIEDRICH V. REITERER, “Das geknickte Rohr zerbricht er nicht. Die Botschaft vom Gottesknecht,” *HD* 35 (1981): 162-184; PAUL, *Isaiah 40-66*, 188. LAATO states that the linguistic features of the servant and Cyrus passages resemble the same and probably from a royal Akkadian source and therefore, he opines that the servant mentioned in Isa 42:1-9 is Cyrus. LAATO, *Servant of Yahweh*, 84. Moreover, the same term is used in relation to calling generations (Isa 41:4) and also calling the celestial bodies (Isa 40:26).


604 *BDB*, 305; PELT and PRATICO, *Vocabulary Guide*, 10; FRANZ HESSE, “^\text{ן} \text{רֲנָנ}
,” *TDOT* IV: 301-308.

605 A jussive form appears in the second- or third-person imperfect form to express the desire, wish or command of the speaker. KELLEY, *Biblical Hebrew*, 435.
The verbal phrase  יָאָסַר appears as a continuation of the previous commissioning statements and the waw conjunction (וֹ) which is prefixed to the verbal formulation indicates it. The first two commissioning statements have depicted: I (Yahweh) have called you in righteousness; and I hold by your hand and here it states:  יָאָסַר – ‘and I kept you’ (guarded or watched over you); which can also mean that Yahweh has protected His servant. The verb יָאָסַר is a qal imperfect conjugation of the root verb רכָּנָה (to keep, watch, watch over, guard, protect or preserve). With regard to the verb רכָּנָה there are different opinions which prevail among interpreters.

Some commentators opine that it is indeed the verb רכָּנָה (to form or fashion) which is employed here and not the verb רכָּנָה. Moreover, the justification for this rendering is as follows: since v.5 depicts Yahweh as Creator, it is plausible to state that the verb רכָּנָה is employed here to state that, ‘it is the same ‘Creator-Yahweh’ who has formed the servant.’ However, there are also views which totally reject the above mentioned suggestion of indicating the verb רכָּנָה instead of רכָּנָה and therefore, these scholars determine to use the verb רכָּנָה as the root verb for the verbal conjugation יָאָסַר. It is hard to take positions with regard to the above mentioned contrasting opinions. From my assessment, both the above mentioned views are more convenient and they both reinforce emphasis to the interpretation of this verse, through which one can say, ‘Yahweh has both formed (רכָּנָה) as well as preserved or protected (רכָּנָה) His servant.

However, BHS prefers רכָּנָה and not רכָּנָה, therefore, it is reasonable and relevant to use רכָּנָה (to guard or protect). Taking into consideration the commissioning statements which are mentioned so far, i.e., ‘Yahweh calls His servant (perhaps by name), He holds him by his hand and He protects or preserves him’ – all these assertions are not simply abstract statements which address Yahweh’s act of commissioning His servant, rather from my perception, these verbal expressions not only make the servant more personal to Yahweh, but

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606 BDB, 666; Pelt and Pratico, Vocabulary Guide, 29.
607 DUHM, Jesaja, 314; ELLIGER, Deuterojesaja, 233; PAUL, Isaiah 40-66, 189; WESTERMANN, Isaiah 40-66, 97. There are several occasions where the verb רכָּנָה is used in relation to the servant (cf. Isa 43:1; 44:3, 21, 24; 49:5).
608 Some scholars opine that in this context it יָאָסַר is from the verb רכָּנָה which means ‘keep or guard’ and not ‘form or fashion.’ BDB, 428, 666; BLENKINSOPP, Isaiah 40-55, 209; GOLDINGAY and PAYNE, Isaiah 40-55, I, 227. Some of the ancient translations such as LXX and Vulgate translate יָאָסַר as I will strengthen (έννισκω, sw) and I preserved (σωρώ). Cf. POULSEN, God, His Servant, 109.
fundamentally, they express that Yahweh is a God who can be touched and felt and moreover, He is more a personal God. In addition, perhaps DI is implying a ‘shepherd imagery’ to Yahweh, the Creator, who calls, holds and protects His servant (i.e., Israel).

After the threefold commissioning statements of calling, holding and preserving, appear the different functions or the idea behind commissioning the servant in the last phrase of v.6 and in the entire verse that follows (v.7):

The first functional statement is as follows: ‘I have given you as a covenant to the people and a light to the nations.’\(^609\) These functional aspects are introduced by a qal imperfect first common verbal conjugation of לְבָּרָה (to give, put, place or set)\(^610\) and three aspects can be noted in this verbal formulation: it is conjugated in first person, i.e., Yahweh is the speaker and He speaks to His servant which is accentuated by the second singular pronominal suffix (וֹ) and finally through waw conjunction (ו) this functional statement is connected to the previous commissioning statements. There are twofold purposes which are mentioned in the first statement: Yahweh has given His servant as a covenant to the people (לְבָּרָה) and a light to the nations (לֵאָרוֹת נְהָר גוֹים).

The formulation of the two aspects that are mentioned above cause perplexity with regard to their translation based on their linguistic factors.\(^611\) The preposition ל is translated as ‘to;’ however, it should mean ‘as or like’ in this context and moreover, the two nouns namely, לְבָּרָה (as a covenant of) and לֵאָרוֹת (as a light of) appear in noun-construct forms. Hence, the translation of the entire phrase should be read in the following way: ‘I have placed you as a covenant of people and a light of the nations.’

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\(^610\) BDB, 681; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 3.

\(^611\) BERGES opines that the לְבָּרָה (literal translation: to the covenant with the people) and the grammatical construction is problematic because this type of phrase appears only in this reference. In other passages of Isaiah, the word covenant is placed in genitive form (status constructus – Isa 54:10; my covenant of peace and Isa 55:3; 61:8; eternal covenant/covenant of eternity). BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 237. A detailed study with regard to the covenant can be found in the following material: NOBERT LOHFINK, “Bund und Tora bei der Völkerwallfahrt (Jesajabuch und Psalm 25),” in Der Gott Israels und die Völker: Untersuchung zum Jesajabuch und Psalmen (SBS 154; ed. NOBERT LOHFINK und ERIC ZENGER; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1994), 37-83.
Yahweh has placed the servant (i.e., Israel) as a covenant of people and a light of the nations. The word covenant (ברית) should not be understood here in terms of obligation imposed by Yahweh, rather it is a divine pledge and promise. Further, the two terms which are used here referring to ‘people’ (עם) and ‘nations’ (andelier) are indicating the people and nations of the earth, i.e. the entire humanity. Especially, the term עם is often employed in relation to the covenant people (i.e., the people of Israel); however, in this context it has a broader usage of denoting to the entire humankind and this can be justified conclusively in the light of v.5 which refers עם to the people upon earth (illustrated below). On the other hand the ‘nations’ – עם (e.g. Isa 40:15-17) and the אַרְכֵּי עָרְבִים – rulers and גִּבְעֹת – judges of the earth (e.g. Isa 40: 23-24) are always considered as insignificant and miniature in the sight of Yahweh.

Conventionally, these two phrases are interpreted in the following way: ‘Yahweh has meant, that the servant would serve as His servant not only to restore the Judean captivity to its homeland but also to bring light and redemption to the pagan nations of the world.’

However, different nuances from these statements can also be brought to light when they are read in the background of v.5. The servant is also created by Yahweh and he belongs to the created world and moreover, this servant is placed upon the earth which has been spread out (كرم)

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by Yahweh (in which even other peoples and nations too exist), in order to be a covenant or a promise for the entire humanity.

This perception underscores Yahweh’s intention of opening up a broader-universal-perspective of ‘restoring the creation’ by incorporating or re-emphasizing that the entire humanity is His handiwork and that the servant plays a mediating role in the process of restoration.\(^\text{613}\) The second phrase states that the servant is placed (upon the earth) by Yahweh as the light of the nations (ךְָּלָאָר וַיָּבֵא). The imagery of light which has been employed here indicates implicitly that Yahweh Himself is light (Pss 27:1) and He is the creator of lights – celestial bodies (Isa 40:26) and moreover, He turns darkness into light (Isa 42:16).

V.7 further continues to narrate the twofold purpose of Yahweh placing His servant as a covenant of the people and light of the nations. Two infinitive verbal conjugations along with the preposition ל which indicates the purpose clause are employed to express the twofold task of the servant:

\[ךְָּלָאָר וַיָּבֵא עִיצָּם עִירָהּּ לְחוּזָאָיָּה מֵמְשֶׁר אָסֶר.\]

The first task is to open the eyes of the blind – the verb וַיָּבֵא (to open the eyes)\(^\text{614}\) is conjugated into qal infinitive construct form which is followed by a noun and an adjective connoting ‘blind eyes’ (עִירָהּּ, עִיצָּם). The expression ‘blindness’ or ‘blind-eyes’ is metaphorically used in Isa 40-48 either to point out the repeated blind and sinful acts of Israelites (Isa 42:18; 43:8) and on the other hand it is used to denote the idol worshippers who worship idol-images as gods and whose eyes should be opened to witness Yahweh (Isa 44:18). Although the contextual and conventional readings attest these views, I presume that the creator of lights – ‘Yahweh’ has kept the servant as light of the nations in order to remove the blindness from the eyes of the people (entire humanity), therefore, they will not only be transformed from their ignorance of the knowledge about Yahweh, but also mainly they will witness the artistic and unique creative handiwork of Yahweh as Creator (cf. v.5), ‘who has stretched out the heavens (like a tentmaker), spread out the earth (like a metalworker) and brought forth its produces (like a farmer),’ and eventually confess that Yahweh is the creator and there is no other creator similar to Him.


\(^\text{614}\) BDB, 824; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 60.
Furthermore, the second task is composed of twin-functions; namely both to bring out the prisoners from their dungeons as well as those who dwell in dark place, i.e., in the prison. The first one of the two twin-functions begins with the hiphil infinitive construct (לְחַנִּיתָא) which is derived from the verb בֹּא (bring forth, cause to go out, lead out)\(^{615}\) and moreover, hiphil’s customary causative meaning is reinforced here to emphasize that the servant will cause to bring out the prisoners forcefully from prison. Further, the second twin-function more or less express the same view in a different manner, i.e., those who are sitting in darkness (i.e., prison) will also be brought out by the servant. The same hiphil infinitive construct (לְחַנִּיתָא) is also applied to the second phrase, moreover, an additional qal participial construct (יִבְנֶה) also appears which facilitates to depict the condition of the prisoner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isa 42:7b-c</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To bring out the prisoners from the dungeon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the prison, those who sit in darkness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The usage of the term prisoners from prison (גֵּרְסֵי אָסָֽר) or house of confinement (בֵּית כָּלַ֑ה) are not clear whether they are rendered in a descriptive or symbolic sense. Some commentators view this as a message connoting to political redemption of Israelites from the Babylonian Exile,\(^{616}\) whereas others perceive it as God’s announcement of salvation to the entire world in which the Israelites redemption from the exile and restoration are included. Apart from these views, these expressions are also seen from a spiritual-religious point of view especially a spiritual redemption both for the Israelites as well as for the other nations.\(^{617}\) However, the implied meaning from my observation in the light of v.5 is as follows: Yahweh, the Creator who has called His servant is the one who has assigned the servant to redeem the people who are imprisoned. Therefore, one can

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\(^{615}\) *BDB*, 425; *PELT* and *PRATICO*, *Vocabulary Guide*, 4.

\(^{616}\) However, *SMITH* views that unlike the Assyrian period there are less information from the other exilic letters related to Babylon to attest that the people of Israel lived in dungeons and Jeramiah’s letter is one such example which do not attest this claim (Isa 29:1-20). *SMITH, Isaiah 40-66*, 168-169.

\(^{617}\) *BALTZER*, 181; *BERGES*, *Jesaja 40-48*, 238; *ELLIGER*, 236; *LAATO*, *Servant of Yahweh*, 59; *KOOLE*, *Isaiah 40-48*, 235.
discern the subtle meaning that creation of new life is made possible through the redemptive act of Yahweh.

**Verses 8-9**

The concluding verses (vv.8-9) of this unit begin with the self-declaration of Yahweh which previously appeared in v.6 which is followed by an emphatic statement which asserts that Yahweh will not give His glory to idols. Moreover, v.9 concludes with twofold announcements of Yahweh which will take place in the near future. V.8 is composed with a cluster of nominal and verbal sentences; the first two nominal phrases appear not only as self-description of Yahweh but also as an assertion that underlines the name of Yahweh.\(^{618}\) The self-declaration of Yahweh (יהוה יְהֹוָה) which has appeared in v.6, has been essentially employed to underline the speaker i.e., ‘Yahweh’ who has personally called and appointed the servant with a task that has to be fulfilled (elaborated in vv.6 and 7). However, in v.8 the self-description is repeated in order to authenticate the identity and uniqueness of the God ‘Yahweh.’\(^{619}\)

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**Statements concerning the servant**

![Diagram of statements concerning the servant]

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After the declarative statements which are formulated in nominal clauses, two verbal sentences appear where Yahweh states that He will give His glory to no other as well as His praise to no idols.

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\(^{618}\) The revelation of the name of God is also attested or emphasized in the similar way in the book of Exodus (Exod 3:14-15) when Moses was commissioned by Yahweh – (this is my name forever). **Berges, Jesaja 40-48**, 238. The special accentuation on Yahweh’s name appears frequently in Isa 40-48 (43:7; 47:4; 48:2, 9).

\(^{619}\) Koole opines that although the repetition of the self-introductory formula is superfluous since it was already mentioned in vv.5 and 6, God makes it clearer that He is in fact what He is called. Further, the name here significantly reminds Israel concerning the faithfulness of Yahweh who always keeps His word. **Koole, Isaiah 40-48**, 236. However, Elliger states that this expression underlines the divine reality of who Yahweh is. **Elliger, Deuterojesaja**, 237.
Inverted verbal clause with negation

The first statement of the twofold assertion is formulated as an inverted verbal sentence. The noun \( \text{לְּאָמָה} \) begins the statement with waw conjunction prefixed to it along with a first common pronominal suffix; and moreover, placing the noun at the beginning of phrase is basically to put emphasis on it – ‘my glory’ (\( \text{לְּאָמָה} \)). Furthermore, the verb \( \text{נְתִּן} \) (to give, put or place)\(^{620}\) is conjugated into qal imperfect form with the negative particle \( \text{לָא} \) prefixed to it in order to emphasize the negation that has been conveyed through the statement which can be literally translated as follows: ‘my glory to other (gods) I will not give’ – \( \text{לְּאָמָה} \). The adjective \( \text{אָרָם} \) is referred here as other gods.\(^{621}\) The second statement further intensifies the first assertion that Yahweh does not give His praises to idols. The two nouns which are employed here reinforce these aspects: \( \text{לְּאָמָה} \) – ‘and my praise,’ and \( \text{לְּאָמָה} \) – ‘to idols.’ In addition, the same pattern of pronominal suffix (i.e., first common singular) which is employed in the previous phrase to emphasize the possessive element also appears in this statement: \( \text{לְּאָמָה} \) (my praise). The significant connotation of this verse is quite clear that Yahweh is asserting Himself as the unique and sole God who cannot be similarized with idols and therefore, He affirms strongly with the self-declaration speech that His glory and praises cannot be equated with any other gods or idols.\(^{622}\)

In addition, it is observed that there is a concealed link between v.5 which illustrates Yahweh as Creator and v.8 which through the self-declarative statement depicts that idols (\( \text{לְּאָמָה} \)) cannot take the glory of Yahweh. V.5 has decisively underscored that Yahweh is the one who has hammered out the earth (\( \text{רָכְתֵּך} \)) like the way how a metal such as gold is hammered out in order to be overlaid above the crafted idol-image (Isa 40:19). Therefore, the underlying nuance is that Yahweh who has spread out (created) the earth like an efficient ‘metalworker’ cannot be similarized or praised or glorified with an idol which is crafted by a skillful metalworker. Hence, not only the distinctiveness of Yahweh is highlighted here, but also His attribute as Creator is strongly indicated.

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620 BDB, 681; PELT and RATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 3.
621 BDB, 29; PELT and RATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 15.
622 The usage of the term \( \text{לְּאָמָה} \) (idols) in plural is unique to DI and it refers plausibly to the idol images in Babylon. POULSEN, God, His Servant, 113.
The final verse of this unit (v.9) announces twofold hope-giving statements of the forthcoming actions of Yahweh. The entire verse affirms that the past has gone or it has passed by like the passing clouds and therefore there will be something new which will spring forth now and moreover, Yahweh announces it, even before it happens. The first line of v.9 which announces the passing of former things and the announcement of new things is composed of a verbal and a participial phrase.

Verbal clause

Participial phrase

The determined plural noun הָּרְאָשָׁנָה (former things) appears in DI consistently with different nuances;\(^\text{623}\) e.g. in Isa 43:18 (הָּרְאָשָׁנָה is dealt in detail in this exegetical passage), it is referring to the Exodus event as a historical past event and the addressee is urged to forget this former event since Yahweh is going to do a new thing which will spring forth now and moreover, it is much greater than the past historical event.\(^\text{624}\) However, although the meaning of the noun is the same here as well (i.e. in 42:9), still from my observation along with the verbal conjugation הָלָה (qal perfect conjugation of הָלָה – to go or come)\(^\text{625}\) it is referring here to the life situations or circumstances of the Israelites in Babylon who are awaiting for a total transformation in terms of redemption from the exilic life.

Moreover, this view can be justified from v.7 which has proclaimed about the task of the servant to bring out the prisoners from their dungeons (a message to the Israelites and the nations). In addition, this affirmation of depicting that the past has gone is assuredly substantiated by the demonstrative particle הִנֵּה (behold or look). Therefore, in light of v.5 one can ascertain that the Creator God 'Yahweh' has the ability to not only create but also to erase the distressing and miserable past events in the history of Israel and especially, in this context the 'exilic life.' Furthermore, the next phrase depicts Yahweh's declaration of the 'new-thing'

\(^{623}\) Isa 41:22; 42:22; 43:18; 44:7; 45:21; 46:10; 48:3.

\(^{624}\) North states that in some case the word 'former things' refer to Exodus event, however, mainly for him this specifically denotes the conquests of Cyrus until the fall of Sardis in 547 BCE and the new things would refer to the later conquests of Cyrus. Christopher R. North, "The 'Former Things' and 'New Things' in Deutero-Isaiah," in Studies in Old Testament Prophecy Presented to Prof. T.H. Robinson (ed. Harold H. Rowley; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1957), 111-126.

\(^{625}\) BDB, 99; Pelt and Pratico, Vocabulary Guide, 2.
which is formulated as a participial phrase along with the personal pronoun: דְּגוִּמֵנִי tAvd”x:w:) – ‘the new things I declare.’ The verb דָנַּה (to tell, announce, declare, inform or report)\(^{626}\) which is conjugated as hiphil participle absolute form (דַּנָּה) functions here as a verb denoting ‘present progressive or durative’ meaning.\(^{627}\) Moreover, the hiphil stem expresses on the one hand that Yahweh is going to cause this ‘new-thing’ to happen, certainly His redemptive act of bringing the Israelites to the homeland from their Babylonian exile and on the other hand its durative nature i.e., continuation of Yahweh’s ability in creating new-thing or re-creating (renewing) situations and circumstances is assuredly emphasized. Yahweh’s promise of bringing forth this ‘new-thing’ is further reasserted by the concluding statement of this entire unit in the following way: בָּאָרָהַת אֲשִׁרֵי אָםָה: ~k,(t.a ymiv.a; hn”x.m;c.Ti ~r<j,B. – ‘before they spring forth I declare them (to you).’ The verb הָקַּץ (to sprout, spring up or grow)\(^{628}\) which is conjugated into qal imperfect form הָקַצֶּנָה has also appeared in a singular conjugated form (דהָקַצֶּנָה) in Isa 43:19. In that reference it is used to announce the forthcoming transformation of nature that will benefit the entire creation (Israel and the wild animals). Moreover, here in this passage (esp. in v.5), the same root word is formulated into a noun form (הָקַּץ) to depict that it is ‘Yahweh’ – the Creator, who has brought forth the produce and offspring of the earth. The idea of ‘springing forth’ (דהָקַץ) has been also used in other references to express the phenomena of plants sprouting out from the ground and growing up (Isa 55:10), people springing up like grass (Isa 44:4), the sudden appearance of righteousness/salvation in God’s people (Isa 45:8).

Therefore, in the light of all the above observations, the formulation הָקַּץ which symbolizes the springing forth capacity of a plant underscores creation of new-life or total transformation or even renewal of life situations.\(^{629}\) Therefore, the plant imagery from the verb הָקַּץ symbolizes Yahweh’s ability to transform the life situations of the exiles and it subtly personifies Him again as a ‘gardener’ who prepares the soil, cultivates and acts as an initiating factor for the new plants to spring forth through His nurturing. Yahweh is Creator and re-Creator who brings new-life into being and transforms the past and brings new hope and chances. The final piece of v.9 ends with a verbal formulation: דָנַּה אֲשִׁרֵי אָםָה: ~k,(t.a ymiv.a; hn”x.m;c.Ti ~r<j,B. – ‘I proclaim them (to you).’ The verb דָנַּה which’s qal stem conjugation generally meant as ‘to hear,

\(^{626}\) BDB, 617; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 8.
\(^{627}\) KELLEY, Biblical Hebrew, 200-201.
\(^{628}\) BDB, 855; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 45.
\(^{629}\) KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 238. It can also refer to God’s eschatological work of transforming humankind and nature.
listen or understand,’ is formulated here as *hiphil* imperfect with causative in meaning, therefore it is translated as ‘to cause to hear or proclaim.’ The passage which has begun (v.5) with the self-introduction of Yahweh along with a detailed narration of His creative attributes is again reflected in the concluding verse which reaffirms that Yahweh the creator God can bring forth new-things. He can re-create or re-new any sort of situations or circumstances, in a similar way to how a plant springs forth, He brings forth new-life and renewal of life situations, through which the durative creative attribute of Yahweh as Creator is attested.

3.3.4. Observations

The passage of Isa 42:5-9 is predominantly seen as a unit which depicts the appointment of the servant of Yahweh and the tasks that are assigned to him. However, the implied creation imageries of Yahweh and their positive effects that influence the task of the created servant to be light to the nations are not perceived from the outlook of creation. Moreover, the customary ample nuances of innovative creation (Isa 40-48) are also embedded in this passage. The various activities of Yahweh as Creator in v.5 reflect human-occupational-imageries such as ‘tentmaker, metalworker and farmer or agriculturer.’ These imageries are more evident through Yahweh’s action of stretching the heavens, spreading out the earth and bringing forth its produce and offspring. Moreover, the close connection between Yahweh and His creation is expressed through the ‘spirit of life’ that He has offered to the inhabitants of the earth. Not only as giver of life, but Yahweh is also depicted as giver of the produce and offspring to all the people of the earth and rest of His creation. The anthropomorphic identity of Yahweh who can be touched and felt is expressed in His act of holding His servant by hand who will accomplish His mission. In addition, it is emphasized that the ‘Creator God-Yahweh’ is the creator of the servant who is assigned to be light to the nations who has also been assigned to bring forth the prisoners out of the dungeons. The mission of the servant makes it clear that Creator Yahweh and His creation are not subject-matters that are confined to Israelites, rather Yahweh’s act of creation and the outcome of His creation is universal in nature in which all people are incorporated. Therefore, creation can be certainly perceived from this passage (Isa 42:5-9) as ‘universal restoration or reconciliation of Yahweh’ with all created beings of the earth. Moreover, the constant emphasis of the ongoing creation of DI is evident here in the form of ‘bringing forth new things’ which eventually accentuates Yahweh as the eternal Creator.
3.4. Isaiah 43:16-21

3.4.1. Translation

16. Thus says Yahweh who sets a way in sea, and a path in the mighty waters,

17. who bring out chariot and horse, army and warrior; they will lay there together, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick.

18. Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.

19. Behold, I am about to do a new thing, now it sprouts forth, do you not foresee it? Surely, I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers (paths) in the desert.

20. The wild animals will honor me; the jackals and the ostriches; for I will set water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people,

21. the people whom I formed for myself, they will recount my praise.

3.4.2. Delimitation, Structure, Form and Outline of Isaiah 43:16-21

The announcement and assurance of Yahweh’s redemption are prevalent in Isa 42:14-44:23 with the emphasis on Yahweh’s plan to redeem Israel (42:14-43:8), followed by the passages similar to trail disputations (43:9-44:22) which is concluded with a hymn of praise (44:23). The selected passage which emphasizes ‘Yahweh’s role as Creator or re-Creator’ ( Isa 43:16-23) comes under the above-mentioned larger unit. However, a widespread reading of the Hebrew text of Isa 43:16-21 offers the following hints to demarcate vv.16-21 into a separate subunit from their preceding (vv.14-15) and succeeding verses (v.22-28). Here, the apparent determining primary factor is the messenger formula חַיָּה מַעֲדָה לֵוָא – ‘thus says Yahweh’ which specifies the commencement of a new subunit. Furthermore, vv.16-21 can also be detached from their preceding and succeeding sections based on the following reasons: Vv.14 and 15 form a separate subunit with the messenger formula (v.14: יִשָּׁא הָאָרֶץ בְּגִלָּלי) with the point of convergence of
overthrowing Babylonian power, whereas v.22 begins a new speech (but you did not call me Jacob) – focusing on Jacob/Israel as recipient of the message with a new subject matter (Israel’s past rejection of Yahweh). In spite of these differences, vv.16-21 are also indirectly interrelated with the previous and the subsequent verses (i.e., v.22 onwards) based on the theme of redemption of Israel by Yahweh. This unit is traditionally perceived under the genre – proclamation of salvation and hope using the Exodus typology.

However, keeping that as one aspect, this passage can be seen from the perspective of a creation-text which implicitly projects Yahweh as Creator by portraying Yahweh’s ‘skillful craftsmanship’ and His benevolent creatorship which incorporates the entire creation; these views will be justified in the detailed exposition of the verses and therefore, the imagery of ‘Yahweh as Creator’ and His acts of creation occupy a major point of discussion in Isa 43:16-21. Moreover, the speaker in this passage is Yahweh and this is based on the usage of the messenger formula which begins the passage (v.16) and moreover it is also evident through the conjugation of verbs in the first common singular person referring to Yahweh (vv.16, 19a, b, etc.). The addressees of the unit are the chosen ones (v.20-21), the Israelites and this is also evident in the succeeding passage (Jacob/Israel – v.22).

Furthermore, the delimited subunit (vv.16-21) can be further divided into three subunits based on the various themes discussed and the syntactic structure as well. The first subsection (vv.16-17) begins with an expanded messenger formula. After the messenger formula, a chain of participles can be observed in vv.16 and 17.


631 Goldingay opines that vv.22-28 should be treated as a continuation of vv.16-21, because, though it begins a new form type, its utterance is based on the preceding section. The absence of the messenger formula in this new unit (i.e., vv.22-28) indicates that the utterance is to the same addressee. John Goldingay, “Isaiah 43:22-28,” ZAW 110 (1998): 173-191 (174).

The messenger formula הָאָרֶץ יָהַה יָהַה יִתְבֹּדֶק בָּנָם בָּרֹא אֱלֹהֵי הָעָם יִתְנַחֲמָה: ‘thus says Yahweh’ is followed by a lengthy description of Yahweh which qualifies His actions in the past specifically in vv.16-17. These qualifications of Yahweh are formulated in a hymnic style by using participles which function here as nouns. The first qualification begins with the participle המֵמה (the one who makes/sets) and describes: יָהַה יָהַה – (Yahweh as the one) ‘who makes a way in the sea;’ יִתְבֹּדֶק – ‘and a path in the mighty waters’ (vv.16-16b).

The second qualification (v.17a) claims Yahweh (הָמֵמה) as the one: המֵמה – ‘who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior together.’ The consequence of bringing out the chariot and other things together (into the sea) is further elaborated by saying: they lie down (ברך); they cannot rise (בלשכה); they are extinguished (ברך); quenched (ברך) like a wick (כָּפֹר). This entire subsection (vv.16-17) foreshadows the Exodus narrative of deliverance of the people of God from Egypt and passing through the red sea and the plight of the Egyptians who followed them with their chariots and army troops. In this manner, the messenger formula and the added descriptions to qualify Yahweh’s actions (in the past) function here as introduction to the entire subunit.

After the introduction (in vv.16 and 17), the presentation further continues in vv.18 and 19a to describe the new actions that Yahweh is going to perform for Israel and they are addressed in the second person masculine forms as a direct speech from Yahweh to Israelites. The direct speech is presented with prohibitive

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634 ELLIGER opines that the repetition of the exodus event here does not resemble the style and language used in chapters 14 and 15 of Exodus. Elliger, Deuterodesaja 40:1-45:7, 346.
in chiasmus (v.18) which is followed by verbal and interrogative sentences (v.19).635

Prohibitive ַל in chiasmus

Interrogative sentence

The sentence structure of v.18 is bracketed (at the beginning and end) with jussive form imperfect verbs prefixed with the negative particle ַל which indicates prohibitive statements (in chiasmus) urging ‘not to remember (ואל תזכור) the former things (ואל השמות),’ or not to consider (ואל התכנים) the old ones (ואל התכנים). The prohibitive declarations are followed by Yahweh’s announcement which begins with an emphatic particle (והני) and a participle verb (והני) declaring that ‘behold I am about to do a new thing which will appear now/spring-forth’ (והני השם). The announcement ends with a rhetorical question (גא:ק וני) ‘do you not perceive it/not know it.’ Keeping the introduction to this subunit (v.16-17) as a background, this subsection (vv.18-19a) elucidates that Yahweh is going to perform something extraordinary which is worth more than what happened during the time of exodus.636 Furthermore, the final subsection (vv.19b-21) begins with a verbal sentence followed by the substantiation with יק which is further developed into a final clause (with ל) and the entire unit ends with a verbal sentence. The verbal sentences at the beginning and end of this subdivision form a rhythmic consistency or uniformity.

Verbal sentence
Causal clause
Final clause
Verbal sentence

635 KIESOW, Exodus Texte im Jesajabuch, 69.
This section which is comprised of promises of hope or salvation describes the new thing that ‘Yahweh as creator’ is going to re-create. Through the following verbal sentence v.19b announces what the creator God ‘Yahweh’ is going to create (or re-create): ‘I will make/set way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.’ V.20a continues to narrate the response by wild animals, jackals and ostriches to Yahweh’s creative actions; (they will honor me). Here the change of subject from first person (I am, i.e., Yahweh) is shifted to ‘the animals of the field.’ This is followed by the reason for the animals’ actions in v.20b which begins with the causal particle (for) and continues again in the first person as subject ‘for I (Yahweh) give, in the wilderness water’ (water resources in the wilderness/desert is expressed in v.20c which is formulated as infinitive construct (final clause) – to give drink to my people. A further specified description about, who this people i.e., the people whom I have formed for myself concludes the entire subsection with the verbal sentence ‘they will declare my praise.’

In brief, the general progression of Isa 43:16-21 can be summarized as follows: Messenger Formula – Expansion of the text – Intervention of Yahweh – Goal of Yahweh’s intervention. The inner-unity of the entire section (vv.16-21) is more evident from a perceptive reading of the passage. Each subdivision is quite coherent and moreover in each section a tripartite element can be observed (v.16, v.19a, v.20b and 21). The inner-unity among the verses is emphasized by the leading word in each section, which underlines the nature of its distribution and the concentric structure of the whole unit: e.g. sea-way/waterpath (v.16); wilderness-way/desert-stream/river (19b);

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637 BEGRICH and WESTERMANN observe ‘proclamation of salvation’ as the main emphasis of this passage. JOACHIM BEGRICH, Studien zu Deuterojesaja (BW ANT, 4 Folge, Heft 25 (77); Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1939), 6; H. E. VON WALDOW, Anlaß und Hintergrund der Verkündigung des Deuterojesaja (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Rheinischen Friedrich Wilhelms-Universität at Bonn, 1953), 240-241; WESTERMANN, “Sprache und Struktur,” 120. Some other scholars find that the three following themes constitute this passage namely: reference to complaint, proclamation of salvation and the attainment of the goal. WHYBRAY, Isaiah 40-66, 87; ELLIGER, Deuterojesaja 40:1-45:7, 343-346; BEUKEN, Jesaja, 178-179 and 182-183. At the same time one can also observe other themes in the passage apart from the message of salvation. MELUGIN, “Isaiah 40-55,” 110-112; BEUKEN, Jesaja, 178-179 and 182-183.

638 BLEINKINSSOPP, Isaiah 40-55, 228; LUND, Isaiah 40-55, 180.

639 KIESOW, Exodus Texte im Jesajabuch, 68.
wilderness-water/river/stream-desert/wilderness (v.20b). The first and the second strophe have way/path together, the second and the third strophe wilderness/desert and the third strophe water/rivers. Thus, the interrelationship between the verses is obvious through a series of the following chain of words: water-way/way-wilderness/wilderness-water. Hence, based on the above detailed structural analysis of the passage an outline of the entire subunit (i.e., Isa 43:16-21) has been formulated below:

**The Creator, Re-Creator and Transformer of the Wilderness (Isa 43:16-21)**

1. Exodus Imagery: Deliverance Recaptured (vv.16-17)
   a. Messenger formula proper (v.16a)
   b. Qualification of Yahweh by citing His actions in the past (vv.16b-17)
      i. Making a way in the sea and path in mighty waters (v.16b)
         (1) Road in the sea (v.16bα)
         (2) Way in the mighty waters (v.16bβ)
      ii. Drowning and devastation of chariots and army troops (v.17)
         (1) Bringing out chariot and horse; army and warrior (v.17a)
         (2) They lie down and cannot rise (v.17b)
         (3) They were extinguished and quenched (v.17c)

2. Proclamation of New Action: New Creation (vv.18-19a)
   a. Remember not the past (v.18)
      i. Do not remember the former things (v.18a)
      ii. Do not remember the old things (v.18b)
   b. Yahweh’s creation of new things (v.19)
      i. Something new approaches (19aα)
      ii. It springs forth (v.19aβ)
      iii. Rhetorical question: can’t you perceive it (v.19aγ)

   a. Way in the desert (v.19b)
      i. Road through the wilderness (v.19bα)
      ii. Rivers in the desert (v.19bβ)

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640 **Schoors, I am God your Saviour**, 94-95; **Kiesow, Exodus Texte im Jesajabuch**, 69.
b. Significance and purpose of making way and rivers (v.20)
   i. Wild animals will honor me (v.20a)
   ii. Water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert (v.20b)
   iii. To give drink to my chosen people (v.20c)

c. Purpose and function of the transformation of desert (v.21)
   i. Recognizing Yahweh’s creatorship (v.21)
   ii. Acknowledgement by chosen people (v.21a)
   iv. Pronouncing praise by chosen people (v.21b)

3.4.3. Detailed Exegetical Analysis of Isaiah 43:16-21

Verses 16 and 17

A pericope with expanded messenger formula: ‘thus says Yahweh,’ draws attention to a new thought and a new genre pronouncing that Yahweh Himself tends to speak. Therefore, the authentication of Yahweh’s words here gains the attention of the addressee (specifically mentioned in vv.20 and 21 – chosen people/my people). The subsequent expanded sentences of the messenger formula (i.e., vv.16-17) which are formulated with participial, imperfect and perfect conjugation of verbs are intended to explain, who this speaker (Yahweh) is. Moreover, these participial sentences recapture a historical event in relation to Yahweh’s action in the distant past. This can be certainly the summarization of the exodus tradition; a significant event in the history of Israel, where Yahweh miraculously delivered the people of Israel through the waters (red sea) and on the other hand, the Egyptian army was thoroughly engrossed into water when they pursued Israelites (Exo 14).

Participial formulation

Participial formulation

Messenger formula

Participial formulation

Imperfect and perfect conjugations

\[\text{Participant formulation: } \\
\text{Messenger formula: } \\
\text{Imperfect and perfect conjugations: }\]

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642 Smith, Isaiah 40-66, 209.
The formulation of the verbs in the form of participles, imperfects and
perfects adds significance to the sentence construction and deepens the message
which qualifies Yahweh. Firstly, the participles:644 the one who makes way in the
sea and a path in the mighty waters; — these statements clearly refer to the dividing of red sea that eventually paved way for the
Israelites to cross through it. The second phrase: He who brings out chariot and
horse, army and warrior — further, this sentence talks about the Egyptian force which pursued after the Israelites into the red sea in
order to enslave them again. The hymnic styled twofold participial phrases
underscore who this Yahweh, the speaker is, by citing His historic action in the
past.645 Secondly, the imperfect verbal sentences are extensions of the previous
participial phrases and they depict the consequences faced by the Egyptian army
whey they followed the Israelites into the red sea: וַיְבָקְרוּ יִנְהָהָם — ‘they lie down and they will rise.’ Possibly, the qal imperfect646 conjugations are employed here to emphasize on the one hand that the Egyptian powers have been submerged
referring to the past, using the verb יָנָהָו and on the other referring to future
using the verb יָנָהָו along with the negative particle, to accentuate that they
will no longer rise again. Finally v.17 concludes with perfect verbal conjugations which clearly underline the plight of the Egyptian armies in the way of answering and connecting to the previous sentence why the drowned Egyptian army will not rise again: וְאֶפְרַּע מַכְסָתְתָה — (because) they are extinguished and quenched like a wick; therefore, they will not emerge yet again.647

The conventional interpretations648 claim that DI presentation of the Exodus
text (in vv.16-17) allude to the historic first Exodus event and this has been
deliberately mentioned in order to project a new Exodus in the following verses
(vv.18-19). Although the resemblance of the Exodus tradition is explicit, the
language and style of the depiction have little in common which I would prefer not
to discuss in detail at this point.

644 A participle expresses a continuing or enduring action. JENNI, Lehrbuch der hebräischen Sprache, 92-93.
645 The Exodus tradition (Exod. 14:21, 22, 26 and 29) has been repeated mentioned in
other references too (Exod. 15; Pss 77; 78; Hab. 3:15; Neh. 9:11). BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 297;
SPYKERBOER, Deutero-Isaiah, 107; SMITH, Isaiah 40-66, 209.
646 KELLEY, Biblical Hebrew, 130.
647 SMITH, Isaiah 40-66, 209.
648 MUILENBURG, “The Book of Isaiah,” 494-97; WALDOW, Deuterojesaja, 45-46; WESTERMANN,
Das Buch Jesaja, 104-106; WHYBRAI, Isaiah 40-66, 88-89; BEUKEN, Jesaja, 183-184; KOOLE,
Isaiah 40-48, 332; BALTZER, Deutero-Jesaja, 230-32; RONALD E. CLEMENTS, Prophecy and
Covenant (SBT 43; London: Allenson, 1965), 114-115.
Nevertheless, DI’s emphasis here is beyond the basic conception of Exodus. The basic elements of the Exodus event are utilized here however, DI transforms the conventional understanding of it and prioritizes according to his own concerns. Neither the leading of the people nor the main protagonists (i.e., Moses or Pharaoh) are mentioned here. Instead, the action of Yahweh with regard to defeating the enemies (evidently seen) and His control over the waters (implicitly understood) are emphasized here. Keeping these views aside, I would prefer to read these verses of Exodus depiction in their present form; especially, in the purview of the ‘theme-creation’ and in the light of the succeeding verses which talk about making/creating ‘a new thing’ (or new things) and the transformation or re-creation of the desert by Yahweh.

At the foremost, the expanded messenger formula with the qualifications of Yahweh (vv.16-17) which are formulated with hymnic styled structural sentences not only elevate the eminence of the speaker (i.e., Yahweh), but a clear structured description of the Exodus event also acts like a framework to understand the creative actions of Yahweh in the succeeding verses (vv.18-20).

It is observed that the action of Yahweh, especially the event of dividing the red sea which is artistically presented in v.16 (He who makes way in the sea and path in the mighty waters) is an act of creation and hence, this verse subtly depicts ‘Yahweh as creator.’ However, an implicit reading of the Exodus event as it is presented here reveals that Yahweh made a way in the sea so that the Israelites could cross through the red sea and save their lives. In contrast, the Israelites walking through the ‘way made by Yahweh’ is not specified, rather the destruction of the Egyptian army is described meticulously step by step in v.17: (who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior); and also the second part of v.17 specifies (they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick). Hence, one can read the implied meaning from DI’s perspective that ‘the way/path in the sea/mighty waters’ which was made or created by Yahweh on the one hand benefited a group (Israelites) and on the other hand destroyed a group (Egyptian army; perhaps on the grounds of evil deeds

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which were attempted against His people). Nevertheless, according to my impression, there is a reason for subtly presenting the action of Yahweh in a dialectical manner (creation of way/destruction of the army), since the ‘new thing’ that is going to spring forth and the transformation that is going to happen in the wilderness are going to bring a holistic transformation and not destruction anymore. With this perception I would like to analyze the following verses and clarify certain things specifically in relation to vv.16 and 17 gradually in the succeeding verses and in the final observations.

**Verses 18-19a**

After an expanded messenger formula with the synopsis of the Exodus event which specified Yahweh’s might in making a way in the sea and His act of destroying the Egyptian army in the previous section, the new subunit announces (vv.18-19a) Yahweh’s new action for Israel. As a prerequisite before announcing the new action, Yahweh instructs the addressee (v.18) through the verbal sentences (formulated with prohibitive chiasmus) not to recall the past:

do not remember the former things or consider the things of old. In line with the immediate succession from the Exodus recapitulation in vv.16 and 17, v.18 is seen as an immediate reaction to the event mentioned. In line with this, v.18 can also be seen in the light of the previous verses. However, a small digression is necessary here to understand the meaning of the two words used in this verse namely: יְדֵי אוֹרֶשׁ – former things and יְדֵי יָדֵי אוֹרֶשׁ – the things of old.

 الوزراء: It is etymologically related to יִדְיָךְ (head, first, former, old) and corresponds to Akkadian רֶשֶׁת (first). This word occurs 182 times in the OT, 3 times in the book Sirach, twice in the Arad inscriptions and frequently in the Dead Sea scrolls. In the LXX it is translated as πρῶτος (first). It appears most commonly as a masculine singular or plural or as a feminine singular and the feminine plural appears only in Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah.

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655 Cf. Isa 41:22; 42:9; 43:9; 18; 46:9; 48:3; 65:17. The distribution of occurrences is unremarkable; the only unusual phenomenon is the theological usage of the word in DI and the other post-exilic books.
Similarly, the word קדמ denotes to ‘east, east side, and easterly direction, or east wind, primeval storm.’ The meaning of this word in other ANE languages are as follows: ‘old, ancient, in existence of eternity, preceding, one who is superior, in front of, at first, forehead, beforehand, earlier, opposite, what was foremost, former, ancient, primeval, etc.’

Traditional interpretations highlight that these words are used to emphasize that a new Exodus is going to take place literally and it will replace the first Exodus which has happened in the ancient times – ‘the earlier event will be replaced by the latter one.’ Apart from this view there are also other perspectives, however, in the given immediate context of the passage, it clearly connotes to the Exodus event that has been mentioned in the previous verses and simultaneously, it prepares the addressee to wait for the new action of Yahweh.

Moreover, the syntactic arrangement of this particular verse gains more attention due to a sort of assonance that it creates because of the repeated negative particle (לָא) which is prefixed to the verbs at the beginning (מָדַק וְרֵאשׁ) and end (וּסְתֹר בִּלְתִי) of the verse which functions as prohibitive chiasmus in intensely instructing the people not to remember or consider the former or ancient (old) things. Therefore, in my opinion it talks about the Exodus event in this context in connection with vv.16-17.

656 HAL, III, 1067-1068; JENNI, “quem qedem past times,” TLOT, III, 1102-3.
658 The traditional interpretation assumes that the expression of Exodus event in vv.16-17 is literally referring to the actual event and a similar event would happen, where the exiles will travel through the desert from Babylon to their homeland. This is accentuated by the earlier interpreters, since the ‘former things’ was identified with the ‘new thing’, which they assumed as ‘new exodus.’ BEUKEN, Jesaja, 183; WESTERMANN, Das Buch Jesaja, 104-105; KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 329-330; BALZER, Deutero-Jesaja, 229-230; SCHOORS, I am God your Saviour, 94-95; MELUGIN, Isaiah 40-55, 112-113; cf. LUND, Isaiah 40-55, 188.
659 KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 329. According to KLAUS KOCH in the other books like wisdom literature and DI, קדמ is used to denote both primeval stories as well the salvation history events. The primeval creation stories narrate how Yahweh fought against the universal chaotic situation during the time of creation as well as in the historical events of Israel, how He saved them from several catastrophic situations. KLAUS KOCH, “Qädäm: Heilsgeschichte als mythische Urzeit im Alten (und Neun) Testament,” in Verknuft des Glaubens: Wissenschaftliche Theologie und kirchliche Lehre: Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Wolfhart Pannenberg: mit einem bibliographischen Anhang (eds. J. ROHLS., et. al; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), 260-265.
Yahweh’s announcement of His new action appears in v.19a which includes the following statements: ‘I am making (going/about to do) a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?’ The entire sentence is formulated with a combination of participial, and imperfect verbal conjugations along with a rhetorical question.

A dramatic sequential progression is followed in this passage which gradually arrives at the subject matter or the nucleus of the entire unit. The whole passage began with the messenger formula along with a detailed description of Yahweh’s action in the past which was followed by the instruction ‘not to remember the past.’ These preparative elements now lead to the direct speech of Yahweh in first person to the addressee (His chosen ones). V.19a begins with a first person pronominial suffixed emphatic particle יְהַנְיָה (behold, I am/me) which depicts the significance of the speaker and on the other hand it also gains the attention of the addressee. With the emphatic particle, v.19a continues with Yahweh’s direct address in participial formulation: הַזֵּה – ‘I am about to make a new thing.’

The participial construction here serves as a verb which holds the function of expressing a repeated action in the past, present or future according to the context. Yahweh’s ability to make or create something new is expressed through this participial formulation, correspondingly, His unending or everlasting creative-activity is also underscored implicitly. The subsequent verbal formulation: הֶעָשֶׂה – ‘now it springs forth,’ pronounces the time of materialization of the action.

660 The verb עָשֶׂה (to do/make) is frequently used in DI and it underlines Yahweh’s absolute sovereignty over the creation and history. Isa 40:23; 41:4, 20; 42:16; 43:7; 44:2, 23f; 45:7, 12, 18; 46:10, 11; 48:3, 11; 51:13; 54:4; 55:11. According to BERGES, the projection of Yahweh’s power over creation and history is here mainly expressed to place in contrast against the gods which are made or created by human beings. BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 301.
of Yahweh expressed in the previous participial sentence and it affirms the
certainty that some ‘new thing’ is going to happen.\(^{661}\) The particle adverb הָקַנָל (now) emphasizes, moreover, the imminent action of Yahweh.\(^ {662}\) Therefore, the phrase ‘now it springs forth (מִפְּנַי)\(^ {663}\) depicts clearly the capability of Yahweh as creator/maker to perform anything creatively at any time for His chosen ones (in this context).\(^ {664}\) The rhetorical phrase which concludes the first part of v.19 and the entire subunit (וַיֵּשֶׁב – ‘do you not know’) conveys the rhetorical function by subtly provoking the addressee (the chosen ones) to recollect or remind them about the ability of Yahweh and His might to create something new,\(^ {665}\) about which they were already aware of. Moreover, it persuades the addressee to realize that Yahweh who did wonders in the past (perhaps, pointing to the Exodus event), is also capable of doing ‘new things now!’

This unit (vv.18-19a) serves as a bridge between the introduction (the expanded messenger formula with the qualification of Yahweh) and the body of the text (vv.19b-21) which narrates in detail what ‘new thing’ that Yahweh is actually going to perform. Moreover, v.18 mirrors more of the introductory unit (vv.16-17) and v.19a reflects the following verses in terms of replicating a gist of the content as well as bridging the preceding and succeeding sections. The chart of chiastic arrangement of vv.18 and 19 makes it evident which has been presented in the following page:

\(^{661}\) BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 301.
\(^{662}\) BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 302.
\(^{663}\) The word יִפְנָי is used in several occasions in DI with different connotations. It can denote the new salvation experience, fertile condition of the earth, sprouting out of vegetation, transformation of desert and so on (Isa 42:9; 43:19; 44:4; 45:8; 55:10; 58:8; 61:1).
\(^{664}\) LUND interprets the ‘new thing’ as the new situation i.e., the new the salvation experience in which the redemption through the work of Cyrus is also included. LUND, Isaiah 40-55, 191; Some scholars opine the concept of ‘new thing’ as the outcome of the salvation experience which will provide the possibility of returning to the homeland, blessings of water and fertility in relation to agriculture and vegetation. However, this is not the focus of approach towards this passage. BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 300-301.
\(^{665}\) ELLIGER observes strongly that the return from exile is more emphasized here which he considers as the new thing Yahweh is going to do. ELLIGER, Deuterojesaja 40:1-45:7, 354; BEUKEN opines that here the inner transformation of Jacob/Israel is considered as something new. BEUKEN, Jesaja, 185.
Verse 18

Do not remember

Verse 19a

Behold, I am about to do

the former things

a new thing

the ancient/Old things

now it springs forth

do not consider

do you not perceive

Verses 19b-21

The central focus of the entire passage appears in vv.19b-21, where Yahweh elaborately announces the new thing that He is going to make or create. Therefore, let me analyze clearly in a detailed manner, the specified ‘new thing’ that Yahweh is going to perform as it is mentioned in vv.19b-21. V.19b begins with the emphatic particle (indeed) and narrates the transformation that is going to take place using a verbal sentence: – ‘indeed, I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.’ The verb also has the meanings ‘to put’ or ‘to set,’ therefore, it can also mean that Yahweh is going to construct (set or put/place) a way in the wilderness and bring forth rivers in the desert. Moreover, the conjugation of in first common singular form affirms that Yahweh (the speaker with authentic message) is addressing personally to His people without any mediation. Further, the words – wilderness and – desert which are employed here carry different interpretations in terms of meaning and also the way how they are perceived; whether they have to be taken literally or figuratively.

The word (wilderness) refers not to a barren desert rather it denotes a region suitable for pasturing sheep and cattle, however,

666 BERGES opines that there are also other references in DI where different terms are used to denote wilderness and desert in pairs; e.g. (Isa 40:3); (Isa 41:18); (Isa 50:2); (Isa 51:3). Moreover, in his opinion these words are understood more in a figurative sense and not in a literal sense. BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 302-303. For LUND both these words indicate the miserable situation of the people of Israel particularly to the situation of Jerusalem after the fall in 587/6 BCE as a desert. LUND, Isaiah 40-55, 192.

667 Pss 65:12; Isa 42:12; Jer. 23:10; Joel 1:19; 2:22.
it is not a cultivable area; it is uninhabited or inhabited only by wild animals. These two terms are used in a poetic way in order to indicate a desolate area and a wasteland in which Yahweh is going to make way and rivers.

The dryland or desert (אָרֶץ הָעֵר) is more isolated than wilderness (אֲבָדָה), however, these two terms also express the situation of desolation. Besides, this verse is also taken literally to project the ‘new Exodus’ focusing on the returning-journey of the exiled Israelites to their homeland and Yahweh’s providence during their journey. Placing these views aside, a plain reading of this line underscores, ‘the ability of Yahweh as Creator to make/set/place/put/create way or rivers in an utterly waterless dryland or an uncultivable land.’

The creative action of Yahweh as Creator which transforms the wilderness and desert into a way and rivers is followed by the adoration and worship offered by different animals which are benefited by Yahweh’s creative transformation. V.20a precisely records the outcome of setting (נַחַל) rivers in the desert; and here Yahweh claims that the wild animals (animals of the field) will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches:

V.20a is a verbal sentence with imperfect conjugation (חֲבֵרֵנִי) in which ‘wild animals’ (animals of the field) is the subject of the verb; however, the sentence still continues with words placed in opposition: הָעֵר וּבֵית הַבַּשָּׁם יִעַנֵּהוּ – ‘the

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669 It is also referred to a desert place located towards the north of Dead Sea. BDB, 445.

670 These two terms are also used to express the hostility of life situation through wilderness and desert metaphors which depicts that these places are not suitable for prosperity. The absence of way or water in the desert symbolizes the pathetic atmosphere of the dry land where one can witness the absence of Yahweh’s presence and His blessings. In contrast to that way and water in the desert place symbolizes God’s saving act and His blessings. In many other occasions of DI Jerusalem is referred to desert situation and the transformation of the dry land is also emphasized. Berges, Jesaja 40-48, 303-304; Lund, Isaiah 40-55, 193.

671 This occurs in other instances of DI (Isa 41:18-19; 50:2; 51:3).
jackals and the ostriches.’ The words placed here in opposition function as an extension or clarification of the subject (wild animals) and therefore, here they are further specified with their names mentioned in opposition – ‘the jackals and the ostriches.’ An additional explanation regarding these animals is necessary in order to understand their significance in this context (Isa 43:16-21). The names of these two animals לָעֹד (jackal) and עֵין (ostrich) occur elsewhere in the OT in an unauspicious way rather they are often referred as unclean animals.

In all those occurrences, they are presented as negative models or are described as representations of all kinds of misery and agony that one encounters. These wild animals and their habitation (נְחֵיתָה wilderness) are referred to as unclean and as symbols of curse and punishment. Moreover, the presence of these animals makes the wilderness menacing, tormenting and polluted. Against the traditional perception these wild animals obtain in Deutero-Isaianic narration a special position and they are depicted here as honoring Yahweh.

The reason for the action of animals in honoring Yahweh is expressed in the following phrase which is formulated in causal clause: כִּי יָבִא אֶל אֲרוֹם – ‘for I (Yahweh) have given water in the wilderness.’ Once again, the elements of creation surface in these phrases: Yahweh claims here as creator (my emphasis) granting water in the wilderness which has quenched the thirst of the wild animals. ‘Water’ the source of life is granted by the creator (Yahweh) and here it is clearly underscored that Yahweh – the creator of water resources has the ability to bring forth water from wilderness or any sort of dry land.

The focus in the following phrases has been shifted from the wild animals to the chosen people (Israel). The following line accentuates the purpose of making streams in the desert: נִישֲׁתָה בְּרֵשִׁית לְאֶשְׁפָּקָה עַם בָּהֵרִי – ‘in order to give drink to my chosen people.’ The result or the purpose clause is expressed through the prepositioned infinitive construct (לְאֶשְׁפָּקָה), meaning ‘to give drink’ along with the pronominal suffixed noun and adjective (עַם בָּהֵרִי), denoting ‘my chosen people.’ The next purpose of creating or making rivers or streams is to ‘give water’ to Yahweh’s chosen people (Israel). Yahweh’s relationship with His people has been expressed using the pronominal suffix – ‘my chosen people.’ Yahweh

673 According to OSWALT, animals are compared here with the power of chaos and now the total transformation of the nature particularly the desert confirms that, even the chaotic power (symbolized as animals) surrender and submit to the sovereignty of Yahweh. OSWALT, Isaiah 40-66, 183.
creates/makes rivers or streams in the wilderness not only to quench the thirst of the wild animals but to satisfy the thirst of His chosen people as well.

The concluding line of this subdivision and the entire unit ends with an assertive statement from Yahweh which again refers to the chosen people - ‘I have formed or created this people for me, they will declare my praise.’ V.21 serves as a qualifying verse to enhance one to understand who this ‘chosen people’ are, who were mentioned earlier in v.20. Yahweh assertively declares here that this people (my chosen people) are created by me. The element of creation again surfaces absolutely in this verse.

The chosen people (Israelites) are created/formed by Yahweh – ‘the creator who has made way in the wilderness and streams in the desert and gave water to the wild animals. The creator who brought transformation in the desert and wilderness is the creator of the chosen people. The verb יצר - ‘to form/build’ is used in relation to the creation of His chosen people by Yahweh. This verb is more resilient than the other two creation verbs, namely, ברא and ח實現. The verb יצר is used to refer or relate to the ‘crafting’ aspect of handicraft by a skillful craftsman. In v.21 it denotes the chosen people (Israel/Jacob) as the wholesome handiwork of Yahweh. By His own hands Yahweh has crafted or fashioned the chosen people. Yahweh’s creatorship has been equated with craftsmanship and the Creator (Yahweh) is depicted here as a skillful craftsman (a qualified skilled worker) who has created (יצר) humankind (or His chosen people) with skill or dexterity.

The human-language (anthropomorphic) of creation has been employed here to describe the skillful creative activity of Yahweh like a craftsman. The concluding line of v.21 states that the chosen people whom He has skillfully created or formed ‘like a craftsman’ will declare His praise: יצר - ‘they will declare my praise.’ Besides, vv.20 and 21 also display a form of chiastic arrangement especially in relation to the subject matter and the same is charted below:

- The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches;
- For I give water in the wilderness,
- Streams in the desert,
- To give drink to my chosen people;
- This people I formed for myself; they will declare my praise

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674 BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 36.
A form of union and harmony or reconciliation between humankind, animals and nature can be perceived from the above chart (vv.21 and 22). Yahweh is presented here as the giver of water; the source of life (i.e., Yahweh) makes life giving source (water) available in the wilderness and desert. Yahweh gives water to the wild animals in the same way that He gives drink (water) to His chosen ones. This clearly underscores that Yahweh makes His sources available to all. Therefore, Yahweh has created here ‘water’ which gives life in its fullness to all and has offered it to all. The praise and honor of the wild animals and the chosen people are due to their satisfaction (thirstiness quenched) that they have received from the resource of Yahweh (i.e., water).

Yahweh as a creator here is depicted as the not only the creator of the source of life (water), but He also satisfies the entire creation (created things) including animals through the resource that He has made (created). This is underscored once again using the verb (to give to drink or to water) and this can be meant as Yahweh satisfying the thirst of both the animals as well as the human beings. The animals which were considered as wild, unclean, threatening and dangerous are now honoring Yahweh. The wilderness which is not an approachable place because of the presence of wild animals is transformed into a place which is accessible because Yahweh has made a way and given water in the wilderness. Moreover, a form of co-existence among the entire created beings has been underscored as a consequence of the transformation that has been initiated by Yahweh. A total transformation of the devastated desert and threatening wilderness into a place of living has been precisely emphasized – a place of curse turns into a place of blessing and a place of co-existence. Therefore, Yahweh’s craftsmanship as Creator and His concern for His entire creation are emphasized through this passage.

Another aspect that must have attention paid to it in this passage is the mirror image of similar elements that appear both in the introductory section (vv.16-17), i.e., the (presumed) Exodus event and in the focal unit (vv.19b-21). Therefore, a comparative analysis especially in relation to their style and content is inevitable in order to discover some deeper insightful elements which are embedded in DI’s presentation. Consequently, it is my strong opinion that DI has deliberately placed here only certain elements from the Exodus event and on the


676 LUND, Isaiah 40-55, 197; BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 302-305.
other hand He has presented His new idea about Yahweh as creator and what He is going to make, set, form, create or re-create and how different it is from the Exodus event and so on and so forth. In order to extract His new perception from the given text, the following lines intend first to present a flow chart to cite the analogies between vv.16-17 and vv.19b-21 which will be followed by the newer insights that appear in the text especially in vv.19b-21:

**Action: Creation**
- Way in the sea
- Path in the mighty waters (v.16)
- Way in the wilderness
- Rivers in the desert (v.19b)

**Reaction: Destruction – Transformation**
- Destruction of chariot and horse; army and warrior (v.17)
- Water to the wild animals, Drink to the chosen people (v.20b)

**Consequences: Cursing – Praising/Honoring**
- Cursing God as they were drowning in the water? (Implied reading)
- Honoring and praising Yahweh – the creator (v.20a; 21)

**Yahweh: Destructor? – Creator**
- Destruction through water
- Transformation through water

The above charted analogies of the Exodus event (vv.16-17) and the present text (vv.19b-21) have entrenched multiple layers of insights. Firstly, Yahweh is presented in both the sections (implicitly) as creator; who makes a way in the waters and a path in mighty waters (v.16); and on the other hand, Yahweh makes a way in the wilderness and streams in the desert (v.19b). The second theme that occupies prominence in both the sections is ‘water.’ In both the occasions Yahweh brings forth ‘water,’ through which Yahweh’s creatorship in relation to the source of life (i.e., water) is highlighted.

Yahweh’s control over water is evident as He divided the Red Sea and similarly, He brings forth water in the dryland and the wilderness and this depicts
His control over water and moreover, His ability to bring forth/create water from any hostile landscapes. But the remaining elements/incidents that both the sections present contradict or in other words, they have different focuses or accentuations. The mirror-image of the Exodus event in vv.16-17 deliberately avoids the salvation and protection that the people of Israel received from Yahweh while crossing through the Red Sea (cf. Exod. 14), rather the damage and destruction caused to the Egyptian chariot and horse, army and warrior is elaborately described by DI. In my opinion, ‘water’ which is the source of life that was created by Yahweh, saved the lives of the Israelites without devastating them but on the contrary, it snatched the lives of the animals and men of Egypt.

On the one hand the chosen people were saved from the threat of water and they praised Yahweh for saving them from the hands of Egyptians and nature (cf. Exod. 15), on the other the same water which saved the life of Israelites, captivated, immersed, overwhelmed and killed a group of people and animals which ultimately would have led to anguish, grumbling and uproar because of the hopelessness to save their lives. Therefore, from my observation, DI is presenting a new model of creation or a sort of reconciled-creation-model in vv.19b-21 which again presents Yahweh as the source of water resources and in contrast to the destructive element of water (cf. Exodus event), here water is referred to as the element of source of life both to the wild animals as well as to the chosen ones. Water has turned the devastated dry land into a fertile land. Therefore, both the animals as well as the chosen people praise and honor Yahweh for His innovative acts of creation.

Another aspect that gains attention is the ‘way’ imagery. Yahweh made ‘a way’ in the sea and path in the mighty waters – a way/path in the sea became a way of salvation to the chosen ones (possibly the benevolent attribute of God), however a same way/path became a way of threat, horror and nightmare to another group, i.e., to the animals and men of Egypt (who lost their lives), when they pursued the Israelites (possibly the malevolent attribute of God). A dualistic attribute (creator-destructor) is employed to Yahweh in the Exodus event (vv.16-17). In contrast, according to my observation, DI’s presentation of Yahweh with regard to making way in the wilderness and giving water resources to the wild animals, describes that there is no more threat from these so-called wild animals which were considered as menacing and hence, now there is a ‘way’ approachable towards them who are also part of Yahweh’s creation. A wholesome, co-existence of the entire creation is underlined through the portrayal of acceptance of wild animals and the aspect of their honor towards Yahweh. Hence the interdependency between humankind and the rest of the creation is evident in this passage.
3.4.4. Observations

The reconciled-creation-model, which is ascertained in the passage of Isa 43:16-21 in the light of Exodus typology, unfolds multiple elements of creation. There are manifold nuances which depict ‘Yahweh, the Creator’ with human-occupational-imageries as well as compliment a fresh approach to the theology of creation. Yahweh’s act of making ‘way in the wilderness’ and ‘rivers in the desert and wilderness’ personifies Him with skillful professionals such as ‘architect’ and ‘builder’ who engage with the task of construction. Moreover, changing desert or wilderness into a place of fertility accentuates the ability of the Creator to transform any sort of miserable environment into a place of life with abundance. Apart from the human-occupational-imageries this passage offers new emphasis to the understanding of “Creation” and “Yahweh as Creator.” The use of ‘Exodus typology’ which is conventionally interpreted as ‘return to homeland’ or ‘new Exodus,’ serves here as an analogy to clearly depict the new thing (i.e., re-creation or transformation) that Yahweh is going to bring forth in contrast to the prevailing understanding of Exodus. Thus, the transformation that Yahweh brings forth as Creator in the desert with water resources is perceived as the life-giving source which is offered to all – His chosen people, so-called unclean animals and rest of His creation. There is no more destruction through water (creation), rather there is abundance of life through the surplus water resources that Yahweh is bringing forth in the wilderness. Therefore, one can perceive a reconciled model of creation from this passage in which His chosen people, animals and the entire creation of Yahweh have significant space in the new created order. In addition, two more aspects are emphasized: namely Yahweh’s act of creation or His creatorship is a continuous action or it is an ongoing process for which ‘bring forth new thing or transformation’ is an appropriate example; and secondly, the new created order forms a nexus between the Creator and His creation which ultimately provides a universal outlook of the theology of creation.
3.5. Isaiah 45: 18-19

3.5.1. Translation

18. For thus says Yahweh, who created the heavens, He is God, who formed the earth and made it; He established it; He did not create it a chaos; He formed it to be inhabited; I am Yahweh, and there is none besides (me).

19. I have not spoken in secret, in a place of the land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring (seed) of Jacob, “seek me in chaos (vain).” I am Yahweh speak the truth; I declare what is right.

3.5.2. Delimitation, Structure, Form and Outline of Isaiah 45:18-19

Isaiah 45 verses 18 and 19 constitute a syntactically independent subunit in the larger pericope of Isa 45:14-25. There are structural and thematic differences which serve as explicit indicators to divide the larger pericope into different subunits; among which the messenger formula ‘thus says Yahweh,’ serves as the visible structural marker. There are two messenger formulas that appear in the larger pericope namely in v.14 (vv.14-17) and in v.18 (vv.18-25) and besides, they are linked together by the conjunction particle (for) in v.18. A comprehensive reading of vv.18-19 would, however, enable to delimit them from their preceding and succeeding verses. There are various views that prevail among scholars in structuring vv.14-25 based on linguistic and thematic grounds. The preceding section (vv.14-17) of the selected verses

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679 BALTZER, Isaiah 40-55, 245.

680 MELUGIN classifies 45:14-17 as a salvation speech addressed to Israel, while Isa 45:18-21 appears as a trail speech, where it begins with the messenger formula (v.18) and ends with a question and its answer in v.21. He understood Isa 45:22-25 as an exhortation to the nations. MELUGIN, Isaiah 40-55 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1976), 126-131; IDEM, “Deutero-Isaiah and Form-Criticism,” VT 21 (1971): 326-337 (330–33); although WESTERMANN differed in the unity of vv.14-17, nevertheless he agreed that v.18 begins a
(vv.18-19) begins with the messenger formula and it deals with Yahweh’s announcement that the nations and their wealth will be surrendered to Israel which will ultimately affirm Yahweh as unique God and there is no other god; idols and their makers will be confused; however, Israel will be saved by Yahweh.681

The verbal constructions in vv.14-17 are comprised of imperfect, perfect and participial conjugations. Therefore, it can be observed that vv.14-17 are composed of the announcement of deliverance to Israel and they will be saved by Yahweh, and therefore, these verses constitute a separate subsection. The succeeding verses (vv.20-25) of the selected section (vv.18-19) are comprised of various announcements of Yahweh to the nations and are mostly composed of imperative clauses, rhetorical questions and assertive statements. These announcements depict Yahweh’s ability to foretell the prevailing events which will prove Him as true God; an appeal was given to the nations to turn to Yahweh and finally all the nations will recognize that Yahweh is the sole God. Hence, the themes that are discussed in these verses (vv.20-25) and their linguistic structural presentation (mostly in imperatives) facilitate to consider them as syntactically and thematically independent unit.

In this textual-thematic context, Isa 45:18-19 emerges as a separate subsection which describes the distinctiveness of Yahweh (His unchangeable position) whereby the uniqueness of His creatorship is apparently underlined. Hence, these verses form an independent unit and the following lines aim at structuring these verses and illustrating their syntactical independent features. The new subsection begins in v.18 with the messenger formula יי ה הא’ נויה – ‘for thus says Yahweh.’ The messenger formula is prefixed with the conjugation

new unit. He opined that after Isa 45:18 it is harder to define the units according to their forms. And he saw Isa 45:18-19 as a hymnic introduction to the succeeding sections (Isa 45:20-25 and 46:1-13). WESTERMANN, Isaiah 40-66, 169 and 172; MUILENBURG views the demarcation of vv.18-25 as one unit will be precarious for vv.14-25, which he considers as a larger literary whole. For him the particle ‘for’ found in v.18 along with the messenger formula unites the preceding (v.17) and the succeeding (v.18) pericopes together. MUILENBURG, "Book of Isaiah," 531 and 528; SCHOORS questions whether vv.18-19 are part of vv.14-25. For him vv.14-17 and vv.20-25 belong to the genres of salvation and trail speeches respectively, whereas vv.18-19 fit into hymnic genre. At the same time, he also opines that vv.18-19 could not stand alone. SCHOORS, I am God your Saviour, 234.

681 SPYKERBOER opines that vv.14-17 has the theme of salvation to Israel and the similar theme can be traced even in vv.20-25, where the survivors of the nation’s acknowledge God. SPYKERBOER Deutero-Isaiah, 138; KOOLE und OSWALT consider vv.14b-15 as the confession of the nations to Israel. KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 469; OSWALT, Isaiah 40-66, 216; BLENKINSOPP, opines that v.15 is not a continuation of v.14, where the confession of the nations is mentioned, for him v.15 is a comment either by the author or the redactors. BLENKINSOPP, Isaiah 40-55, 258.
(for) which subtly indicates the inner unity of the larger strophe and this section’s affinity to the preceding verses (i.e., vv.14-17).

The previous section has affirmed Yahweh’s saving attribute and incomparable aspect in comparison with the idols and again through יכ the messenger formula in this section intends to reaffirm Yahweh’s uniqueness through creation and the attributes in it, portrays Yahweh as the God who cannot be paralleled.

However, vv. 18-19 still remain thematically and syntactically as an independent subsection. In continuation with the messenger formula v.18 is comprised of verbal participles and these participial formulations are also structural markers which enable to demarcate this section from its preceding and succeeding verses. Apart from the significant participial formulations there are also other various prefect verbal conjugations that are employed in v.18.

The subsequent sentences that appear in v.18 after the messenger formula are a sort of extended messenger formula which qualifies Yahweh, focusing essentially on His role as creator. The first line of v.18 is composed of verbal sentences and a nominal clause sentence. The messenger formula leads to the following phrase: בורא השמיים והאלהים – ‘(Yahweh), who created the heavens.’ The attributive usage of the qal participle is expressed through the verb ברא (to create), which asserts Yahweh as creator of heaven; it is followed by a nominal clause: הוא האלוהים – ‘He is God.’

The emphatic and assertive nominal clause sentence is placed in opposition which commences with the pronoun הוא (he). The second line continues with a qal participial verb which again identifies Yahweh as the creator of earth: יצר הארץ – ‘(Yahweh), who formed (created) the earth.’ A pronominal suffixed qal verbal participial sentence continues in the same line and it is joined with the previous phrase with waw conjunction: יעשיה – ‘and He made it;’ which substantially qualifies the previous line. Further, the last phrase of the second line and the entire third line articulate threefold assertions or elaborations which underline Yahweh’s purpose of forming and making the earth: The first statement begins with the
personal pronoun אָדָם (he) which is followed by a pronominal suffixed polel perfect verbal conjugation: אָדָם בְּנָתָה - He established it (earth). The striking significance of this phrase is the inclusion of the personal pronoun אָדָם before the verb, even though the verb is conjugated in third person singular form; and this in fact accentuates the assertive statement. The second statement begins with a negative particle, followed by a noun and a pronominal suffixed qal perfect verbal conjugation: לְאָדָם בְּנָתָה - ‘He did not created it a chaos.’ The final statement is expressed through the result or final clause qal infinitive conjugation along with a pronominal suffixed qal perfect verb: לְאָדָם בְּנָתָה - ‘He formed it (earth) to be inhabited.’ In the concluding line of v.18 two assertive statements appear which are composed in nominal clauses: אָדָם בְּנָתָה - I am Yahweh and there is none besides (me). Yahweh’s speech in the in first person is emphasized through the first-person personal pronoun אָדָם which is succeeded by the proper name הוהי (Yahweh).

Moreover, the second phrase which is also formulated in a nominal clause (a combination of negative particle וְאָדָם and adverb נָתָה) is joined with the first phrase of this line with waw conjunction (ו). Being nominal clauses, the last line of v.18 is framed to emphasize the statement uttered by Yahweh which is actually a direct speech. Some of the characteristic features of this verse are also follows: a cluster of participial formulations create hymnic assonance to the whole verse; combination of nominal and verbal sentences can be noted; the verbs especially which appear in the second and third line are essentially suffixed with third person pronouns (it – referring to earth) which create not only assonance to the entire verse but they also function as emphatic object pointers; the personal pronoun אָדָם (He) appears twice along with the divine name or His actions in order to emphasize the unique creative ability of Yahweh. These elements create inner unity-and hymnic presentation to the entire verse which characteristically emphasizes the role of Yahweh as creator.

V.19 is composed of assertive statements in the form of disputative speech in first person verbal conjugations which are addressed by Yahweh to the seed of Jacob. The first two lines of v.19 begin with the negative particle וְאָדָם and thus, it creates an acrostic arrangement to the first two lines. Two sentences appear in each line of each verse and the second sentence of each line functions as a qualifying statement to the preceding one in order to emphasize its declarative assertion. The last line of v.18 acts as a connecting link between these two verses (vv.18 and 19); on the one hand, after the elaboration of affirming Yahweh as Creator, the last line concludes v.18 with the declaration: וְאָדָם בְּנָתָה - I
am Yahweh and there is none besides (me); on the other, the above mentioned phrase also serves as an introduction to the assertive statements that appear in v.19.

With the concluding lines of v.18, begins v.19 and formulates three affirmative elaborations, out of which two statements begin with the negative particle נָּא. The first line is a verbal conjugation sentence which is introduced by the negative particle (נָּא): נָּא בֹּקָמְרָה בֹּקָמְרָה אִרְאֵי חַשָּׁשָּׁשׁ – I do not speak in secret; in a dark place of the earth. The piel perfect verb in first person (Yahweh as speaker) is placed at the center of the first line and the entire sentence begins with נָּא which is followed by an inseparable preposition prefixed noun – בֹּקָמְרָה (in secret); and the preposition is referring here to location. The rest of the phrase is placed after the noun along with the preposition בֵּ. (in) and this sentence is the second half of the statement: נָּא בֹּקָמְרָה אִרְאֵי חַשָּׁשֶׁךָ – ‘in the dark place of the earth.’ The second line again commences with the negative particle נָּא and the speaker (Yahweh) is addressing in first person qal perfect verb: נָּא אָמְרֵה לְוָדֵי יִתְקַפְּה – ‘I do not say to the seed of Jacob.’ Here the verb אָמְרֵה is positioned next to the negative particle unlike the previous sentence. Moreover, the first sentence of the second line accomplishes its completeness in meaning only with the remaining phrase which is formulated in piel imperative form with pronominal suffix: נָּא לְזִעַרְתִּי יִתְקַפְּה נָּא בֹּקָמְרָה – ‘seek me in chaos’ (i.e., I did not say to the offspring (seed) of Jacob, ‘seek me in chaos’).

The entire verse concludes with the assertive statement directly spoken by Yahweh which is introduced by the self-declarative formula: נָּא יָהָה – I Yahweh; and this also appears in the concluding line of v.18. The following is the final assertive affirmative statement with self-declarative formula: נָּא יָהָה בֹּדֶר צָפָן מִישְׁרִים: נָּא יָהָה שָׂקָע הַתְּשׁוֹעָה מִישְׁרִים – I Yahweh speak the truth (what is right) and I declare what is upright. These are declarative statements uttered by Yahweh. The self-declaration formula in v.18a and in v.19b (נָּא יָהָה) represents an acrostic style. Apart from the self-declarative formula, v.19b is composed of two verbs in participial forms (בֹּקָמְרָה and נָּא בֹּקָמְרָה) which brings assonance to the entire line.
Therefore, with these concrete observations, one can state that vv. 18 and 19 form a single unit with syntactical independency, simultaneously these two verses have interconnectedness mainly because of the self-declaration of Yahweh and also in terms of content where an effortless continuation from v.18 to v.19 can be observed.

At the same time, the inner-unity of the larger unit i.e. vv.14-25 can also be noted primarily based on the repetition of words and phrases: יָשָׁנָה ‘right’ (vv.19, 21, 23, 24 and 25), בְּשֵׂיר ‘shame’ (vv.16, 17 and 24), יָשָׁנָה ‘right’ (vv.15, 17, 20, 21 and 22), כָּבָד ‘hide or be secret’ (vv.15 and 19), בֵּית ‘idol’ (vv.16 and 20), אַיִן ‘there is no other God (gods)’ (v.14), אַיִן ‘there is no other’ (v.18), אָדָם ‘there is no one beside me’ (v.21), and בְּשֵׂיר ‘For I am God and there is no other’ (v.22).682

However, keeping this aside, this exegetical study is essentially concentrating on a detailed analysis of vv.18-19 in order to unearth the creative attributes that are expressed in the Deutero-Isaianic text to accentuate Yahweh as Creator. The messenger formula (v.18a) validates that Yahweh is the speaker in these verses. Moreover, it is explicit in the formulations of verbs in first common singular forms especially from v.18d to v.19c, where Yahweh speaks in first person. In addition, the self-declaration statements of Yahweh confirm this claim firmly (vv.18d and 19c). Furthermore, the evident addressee of these verses is apparently ‘Jacob/Israel’ or the seed of Jacob (19). This is also evident from the previous section (esp. in v17). The entire presentation resembles a hymnic styled disputative speech with assertive statements which affirm Yahweh’s attributes as creator and His unparalleled distinctiveness.683 Before engaging with a detailed exposition of these verses, the following lines intend to outline vv. 18 and 19 into multiple fragments based on the above structural analysis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The Attributes of Yahweh as Creator of Heavens and Earth (Isa 45:18-19)</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Yahweh – the Creator of heavens and earth (v.18)</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Messenger formula (v.18a)</td>
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<td>b. The attributes of Yahweh as Creator (v.18b)</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Yahweh – the Creator of heavens (v.18bα)</td>
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<td>ii. Yahweh – the Creator of earth (v.18bβ)</td>
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</table>

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682 Wilson, Nations in Deutero-Isaiah, 95.

683 According to Whybray vv.18-19 employs disputative style Whybray, Isaiah 40-66, 110; and for Melugin it is trail speech. Melugin, Isaiah 40-55, 127-128.
(1) Yahweh formed the earth
(2) Yahweh made it (earth)
(3) Yahweh established it (earth)

iii. Yahweh’s purpose of creating the earth (v.18c)
   (1) Not for chaos Yahweh created it (earth)
   (2) Yahweh formed it (earth) in order to be inhabited

iv. Self-declaration of Yahweh (v.18d)
   (2) I am Yahweh
   (3) There is none besides me

2. Yahweh’s direct speech in a disputative style (v.19)
   a. I did speak in secret, in a dark place (v.19a)
   b. I did not say to the seed of Jacob – ‘seek me in chaos’ (v.19b)
   c. Self-declaration and assertive statements (v.19c)
      i. I Yahweh speak the truth
      ii. I declare what is right

3.5.3. Detailed Exegetical Analysis of Isaiah 45:18-19

Verse 18

The entire unit begins with the messenger formula הוהי – ‘for thus says Yahweh.’ Moreover, the messenger formula along with the conjunction particle יד (for) which leads the unit in v.18 not only serves as a connecting element between the preceding and the following verses, but it also indicates that a new syntactically independent subunit commences with a different content. In addition, the particle יד functions here as a conjunction which reaffirms the authenticity of the speaker (Yahweh) and the message. One of the exceptional renderings of the DI passages is their explicit and implicit categorical messages that are embedded beneath the text. Moreover, the rhetorical nature of the text unfolds multiple nuances of meanings of which vv.18-19 are one such example.

An overview-reading of vv.18-19 indicates that these verses essentially underline the attributes of Yahweh as Creator; however, an extensive in-depth and comprehensive reading would facilitate to visualize the multiple-shades of the creatorship of Yahweh that are ingrained in these verses. V.18 contains four lines

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684 BERGES, Jesaja 40-48, 427.
and each line depicts Yahweh’s creative actions which are supplemented by additional phrases either to clarify or to reaffirm these attributes with their significant features.

The first line of v.18 begins with the particle ש prefixed messenger formula and it continues to formulate a verbal participial and a nominal clause sentence. The participial formulation which is an extension of the messenger formula qualifies through its attributive presentation, who this God (speaker) ‘Yahweh’ is:

\[_arEAB \text{הו}^\prime \text{hy} > \text{rma}^\prime \text{hko}^\prime\] – ‘thus says Yahweh who created the heavens.’ The verb_ar'B_(to create, shape, fashion, etc.) is conjugated here into qal participial absolute form and it expresses the attributive usage of the participle; in other words, it adds qualification to the speaker (Yahweh). Moreover, the verb_ar'B_ which has various meanings is exclusively employed in the OT always in relation to divine activity, precisely with reference to the creation of heavens and earth (e.g. Gen 1). Therefore, to emphasize the divine creative attribute of Yahweh as creator the verb_אָבְר_ is used here which underscores that ‘it is Yahweh who created – the heavens.’ Further, the participial attributive phrase which emphasized Yahweh’s creatorship is followed by a nominal clause: \[_yhiloa/h' \text{aWh}^\prime\] – ‘He is God.’

The nominal clause functions here as an auxiliary emphatic phrase which again qualifies and clarifies who this God ‘Yahweh’ is. ‘Yahweh is the creator God,’ who created the heavens and this creator is ‘the only God,’ i.e., the exclusivity of Yahweh is underscored. There are implied nuances that the first line of v.18 unfolds. The messenger formula both explicitly and implicitly gains the attention of the addressee and affirms that it is ‘Yahweh’ who is the creator of the heavens

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685 However,_אָבְר_ is also used denote something new: creating a new heart (Pss 51:12), new creation (Isa 65:17), transformation of nature (Isa 41:20), Jerusalem (Isa 65:18), new condition, etc. In all the occurrences_אָבְר_ is used to express the divine activity. BDB, 135.

686_הו_אָבְר_ alone can be literally translated as ‘the God,’ but since names and titles do not usually take a definite article, the addition of the article communicates that He is ‘the (real) God’ or ‘this God.’ By placing the article, the name of God is accentuated. KAHAL, 28.
and He is the only God. The implied meaning is that there is no other God similar to this creator God ‘Yahweh.’

Moreover, this affirmation can be understood well in the light of the preceding and succeeding sections (esp. vv.14, 21, 22): ‘there is no god besides Him;’ ‘there is no one besides me;’ – ‘for I am God, there is no other.’ The God of Israel, i.e., Yahweh’s uniqueness is expressed in the preceding and the succeeding strophes and only through Him Israel will be saved (v.17). In this context v.18, which lays emphasis on the theme ‘Yahweh as the creator,’ underscores once again with the nominal clause that ‘this Creator Yahweh is ‘the sole God,’ there is no other god besides Him. Nevertheless, the prominence here is the projection of ‘Yahweh as Creator of the heavens.’ Revealing the attributes of Yahweh as savior of Israel and an unparalleled God in comparison with the idols (in the previous strophe, vv.14-17) attain the pinnacle here (v.18) where His position is elevated to ‘creatorship.’

Yahweh is always projected as the superior and distinctive God, especially here, in terms of His activity of creation; however, simultaneously, one cannot deny Deutero-Isaianic remarkable characteristic features of using human imageries to explain the process of creation which ultimately depict Yahweh as ‘Creator’ who skillfully engaged Himself in the course of creating the entire cosmos. These implicit ideas are also embedded in v.18 and they are unfolded in the following lines.

In continuation with the creation theme, the second line of v.18 depicts ‘Yahweh as the creator of earth.’ A pair of participles are employed which again function here with attributive usage to describe the creative activity of Yahweh. In addition, the entire line ends with a statement formulated using verbal sentence; corresponding to the previous line here too the verbal sentence accentuates the message that is being conveyed through the participial adjectives.

Three different verbs are employed here to explain the one and the same action of Yahweh – ‘formation of the earth,’ however, they have significant emphasis individually as well. This line also has to be read in connection with the messenger formula: (for thus says Yahweh)  – ‘who formed the earth.’ Therefore, through the messenger formula another attribute of Yahweh as creator of the earth is underscored using a participial formulation. The creation of heaven and formation of earth are placed in opposition through the hymnic rendering of the participles. On the one hand the oppositional presentation of nouns signifies
the greatness and magnitude of Yahweh who cannot be comprehended and on the other it implies the cosmic lordship of Yahweh who is the lord of the heavens and earth.

For thus says Yahweh

Who created the heavens!

Who formed the earth!

Further, the verb יצר which is conjugated into participial form יצר has several meanings in relation to divine and human activities. Firstly, when it comes to human activity, יצר refers to ‘creating’ or ‘forming,’ such as how a potter forms or fashions a vessel out of clay (Isa 29:16; 41:25; Jer. 18:4, 6, etc.) or how an engraver carves an idol-image out of wood or metal (Isa 44:9, 10, etc.). Secondly, in relation to divine activity יצר is used to denote the formation of Adam, beasts and animals out of אדמה – ‘ground’ (Gen 2:7, 8), moreover, it is also used to refer to the formation of Israel (Isa 27:11; 43:1), individuals (e.g. Jeremiah in the womb, Jer. 1:5) and so on.

It is to be noted that both the connotations can be employed here to interpret the divine activity of Yahweh of forming the earth. According to my reading, Yahweh, the Creator is personified here as a ‘potter’ who forms or fashions a vessel out of clay, likewise, Yahweh’s hands have formed or fashioned the earth; and the earth is the handiwork of Yahweh. Moreover, there is also an implied meaning that has to be noted if the ‘potter imagery’ along with the verb יצר is used to denote Yahweh as Creator. The same verb (i.e., יצר) is also used to depict the idol-image carved or formed out of metal or wood by the engravers or woodworkers.

Therefore, the significant point here is, the skillful artisans engrave idols based on their imaginations and term them as gods (cf. Isa 40:18-20), in contrast to Yahweh who actually fashions the earth (with His hand) like a ‘potter.’ The affirmation of Yahweh forming the earth continues also in the same line using other verbal conjugations. Firstly, the phrase ‘Yahweh formed the earth’ further prolongs with the verb יצר which is connected to the previous phrase with waw.

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688 BDB, 428.
689 BDB, 428.
conjunction ו – ‘and He made it.’ The verb יְשַׁעַל which is formulated in participial form can be translated as ‘to do or make.’ Furthermore, this verb is often used to describe the following things such as ‘doing or performing a work, doing something efficiently, exercising power and so on.’ In v.18 the verb יְשַׁעַל which is conjugated into participial form יְשַׁעַלוֹ also has a third person pronominal suffix י (it) attached to it and moreover the waw conjunction ו connect it to the previous phrase.

The pronominal suffix refers to the preceding word י (the earth) which is accentuated again in this phrase, i.e., יְשַׁעַל – ‘and He (Yahweh) made it (the earth).’ Repetition of the same action using a different verb here accentuates the action by reaffirming it and also the subject is underlined which has performed the action. In other words, Yahweh is the one who has formed the earth is reaffirmed by saying – ‘He has made it.’ The implied meaning is that ‘it is Yahweh who has made it and no one else’ (cf. Isa. 45: 14, 21 and 22). Apart from this, the reaffirmation of Yahweh’s action carries multiple nuances.

On the one hand, based on the lexical meaning it can be read as follows: ‘Yahweh has made it efficiently.’ On the other hand, the waw conjunction which connects יְשַׁעַל with the previous verb יְנַוַּעַל permits to interpret this verb with the help of the previous one. In other words, a single idea has been expressed with two verbs (i.e., *hendiadys*). The two participles, namely יְנַוַּעַל and יְשַׁעַל function here as *hendiadys*, and hence, it can mean: Yahweh who made the earth by forming it. The ‘potter’ imagery for ‘Yahweh as Creator’ is designated based on the verb יְנַוַּעַל which points out that Yahweh has efficiently made the earth and formed or fashioned it like a skillful potter who forms an earthen vessel. It is Yahweh who has planned the process and executed it efficiently and skillfully from its initial stage until its end result which brought the earth into its final-form which one witnesses; ‘Yahweh made earth by forming it on His own as His handicraft.’

Finally, the second line of v.18 concludes with an emphatic verbal clause along with the personal pronoun: יְשַׁעַל – ‘He established it.’ Although the

690 PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 2.
691 BDB, 795.
692 *Hendiadys*, which is an expression from Greek, is essentially a rhetorical device in which complex ideas are expressed by two nouns or verbs or adjectives and they are joined together with a conjunction. Moreover, this rhetorical device has been considered to be an important linguistic element which is used frequently in the Biblical Hebrew than any other language. Cf. ROSMARI LILLAS, *Hendiadys in the Hebrew Bible. An Investigation of the Application of the Term* (Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, 2012), 15-20; YOUNG, *Book of Isaiah, 211.*
third person verbal formulation is sufficient enough (i.e., הָקַל הַגִּנָּה), still, begins the phrase with the third personal pronoun אֹהֶל (He) in order to re-emphasize the entire saying. Here the polel conjugation of הָקַל means 'to set up, establish, make firm,' moreover, the pronominal suffix הָקַל הַגִּנָּה refers again to the earth (רְאָה).

Therefore, the verbal conjugation הָקַל הַגִּנָּה conveys the meaning that Yahweh has established a firm, stable and solid earth and He (רְאָה) Himself has set it up (or established it). In other words, here too I presume that there is a subtle implication which underscores that whatever humankind establishes will be unstable (referring to the carved images which are chained or set up firmly so that it will not topple, cf. Isa 40:19-20), however, Yahweh the creator establishes the earth firmly with stability, because He has formed and made it and established it. Keeping aside the implied meanings, it is explicit that the selection of these different verbs (רְאָה יְשַׁלָּל and הָקַל) are essentially to enumerate the idea of creation and to uphold Yahweh as the only or sole Creator who has systematically planned and efficiently executed His creative actions by designing and initiating, forming and molding, performing and executing (till all was done), and finally, imparting stability and constant security. In addition, the verb הָקַל (to setup or establish) and significant here by underlining הָקַל הַגִּנָּה – ‘He (Yahweh) established it’ which emphasizes that Yahweh established the earth or set up the earth.

This is highlighted especially through the personal pronoun too (רְאָה). However, my main observation here is that Deutero-Isaianic human occupational imagery is again employed here by depicting Yahweh as a ‘builder’ or ‘constructor’ who engages in skillfully establishing or building a strong structure. Similarly, Yahweh like a ‘builder’ sets up the earth and establishes it firmly.

Furthermore, two aspects are depicted in the remaining part of v.18 – firstly, ‘for what reason the earth was not formed, made or established’ and secondly, ‘for what purpose the earth was essentially formed, made or established.’ This is apparently expressed in two sentences: namely, a negation sentence and a purpose clause sentence.

693 BDB, 467; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 12.
694 GOLDFINGAY and PAYNE, Isaiah 40-55, 49.
696 PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 12.
To underscore the essential purpose emphatically, the first phrase begins with the negative particle \( \text{לָא} \) (not) and it negates the noun \( 
Aleph 
Beyt 
Ayin \) (a chaos) and besides, the negation is expressed through the pronominal suffixed participial conjugation (\( \text{כָּרַב} \)) of the verb \( 
Aleph 
Beyt \). Moreover, the verb \( 
Aleph 
Beyt \) which appeared in the commencing phrase of v.18 is again repeated here to affirmatively express the purpose of forming the earth with the same participial conjugation, however, with a pronominal suffix (\( 
Aleph 
Beyt \)). The repetition of the same verb \( 
Aleph 
Beyt \) not only creates assonance but also recapitulates the theme concerning ‘creation’ which repeatedly reasserts ‘Yahweh as Creator’ and His purpose of creating the earth.

The effort of ‘Yahweh as Creator’ in the imagery of ‘potter’ who has carefully with His efficiency made the earth by forming it, did not execute it to remain as chaos (\( \text{כָּרַב} \)). This negation sentence asserts how Yahweh has imagined, planned and accomplished or materialized His design of forming the earth with a purpose. The earth was beautifully formed by Yahweh with a specific intention which appears after the negation sentence in the purpose clause formulation with the preposition \( \text{לָא} \) - ‘to be inhabited He formed it or He formed it to be inhabited.’ The previous phrase with negation (\( 
Aleph 
Beyt 
Ayin \)) along with the repetition of the verb \( 
Aleph 
Beyt \) (to create) has depicted the sovereign and divine attribute of Yahweh as Creator ‘who has not created the earth as a chaos or to remain disordered,’\(^{697}\) rather He has certainly created it ‘in order to be inhabited.’

The word \( 
Aleph 
Beyt \) is conventionally referred to as ‘formlessness, confusion, unreality, emptiness and particularly it also has another meaning, i.e., ‘wasteland.’\(^{698}\) Therefore, in this context it is referring to ‘wasteland,’ a land which is an ‘empty or uninhabited’ space.\(^ {699}\)


\(^{698}\) BDB, 1062; Pelt and Pratico, *Vocabulary Guide*, 62.

The two phrases, i.e., לָשָׁבֶת יֹהֶוָה בָּרָא and בְּרָא יֹהֶוָה are placed in opposition in order to present the contrasting views, especially, to underline, for what not and for what Yahweh formed the earth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse 18</th>
<th>‘Not (to be)’</th>
<th>‘(But) to be’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>לָשָׁבֶת יֹהֶוָה בָּרָא</td>
<td>Not (to be) a chaos or wasteland He created it</td>
<td>לָשָׁבֶת יֹהֶוָה בָּרָא</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, a chain of consistent usage of the same verb in v.18, such as בְּרָא (to create) and יָכַר (to form, fashion, shaper or create) can be observed, however, they are carefully employed while relating them with the different actions of Yahweh:

The word בְּרָא which appears always only with Yahweh as subject, is employed twice in v.18. When it is generally mentioned that ‘Yahweh has created’ in order to emphasize His divine attribute, then the verb בְּרָא is employed. But when the act of Yahweh such as ‘forming’ or ‘shaping’ the earth is narrated, then the verb יָכַר is employed. This careful selection of the different verbs and the manner in which they are used are clearly illustrated above. Although the verb בְּרָא can also mean ‘to bring forth or give birth to’ (especially referring to ‘mother imagery’ of giving birth) which has been already discussed in the exegetical passage of Isa 40:28, however, the main emphasis here is the usage of the verb יָכַר. Therefore, it is explicit that the repetition of the same verb or the purpose of choosing the same verb (לָשָׁבֶת) is to re-emphasize the formation of the earth in the line of thought with the ‘potter’ image; and this once again essentially accentuates
that ‘Yahweh like a potter, carefully, skillfully and efficiently formed, made and established the earth to be inhabited by His entire creation.’

The verb יָכֵב is conjugated into qal infinitive construct form with the preposition לָבֶשֶׁת in order to accentuate the purpose of forming the earth. The verb יָכֵב refers in this context to the ‘place of dwelling;’ ‘for the purpose of dwelling’ Yahweh ‘formed the earth.’ An earthen vessel is formed or fashioned by a potter without any defect in order to be used to hold solid or liquid elements. Similarly, Yahweh has formed the earth so that it will become a perfect dwelling place or home for all. Moreover, the thematic words ‘creation’ (from אָכַר – to create) and ‘habitation’ (from יָכֵב – to inhabit) appear here to denote that Yahweh has formed the earth like His living space ‘Lebensraum Gottes’ for the benefit of all creatures.

Moreover, this can be well-understood from the efforts that Yahweh as Creator has invested or put forth to form the earth skillfully like a potter. The creation reference from Gen 1:28 elucidates here again the purpose of creation. After creating everything, Yahweh blessed all the creatures, including the humankind to be multiplied (procreation) and to fill the earth. However, the narration of creation in Gen 1 does not present God with an anthropomorphic aspect as how He and His creative actions are depicted in Isa 45:18. Nevertheless, the point here is that inhabitation of all living creatures’ i.e., human beings and rest of the creation is the fundamental purpose of forming the earth, i.e., Yahweh formed earth as a dwelling place or home for all creatures. The verbs that are employed in v.18 which enumerate the creation of heavens and formation of earth and its purpose display a sort of invisible pyramidal structure:

![Diagram]

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700 KAHAL, 230; BDB, 443.
701 SCHNEIDER, Der Prophet Jesaja, 133.
The last phrase of v.18 begins with the self-declaration of Yahweh to assert that there is none besides (Him): אֱלֹהִים יָהִיּוּאָר – ‘I am Yahweh and there is no other (god).’ The structure of the two nominal clauses is crystal clear; the first half is the self-declaration formula (אֱלֹהִים יָהִיּוּאָר) and the second half is composed of the negative participle (לֹא) with an adverb (לֹא) and moreover, the two nominal clauses are joined together by waw conjunction (ו). This self-declaration and the assertive statement about His distinctiveness mirror the similar statements which appear in the preceding and succeeding verses (vv.14, 21 and 22). Hence, the self-declaration and the assertive statements in v.18 can also be rewritten in the following way: אֱלֹהִים יָהִיּוּאָר – ‘I am Yahweh (the only God) and there is no other Yahweh.’ This is an implied reading and therefore, in the light of Yahweh’s creative attributes in v.18, the last line can also be subtly re-read as: אֱלֹהִים יָהִיּוּאָר (לֹא) – ‘I am Yahweh, (the Creator) and there is no other (Creator).’ Moreover, it is my presumption that the Deutero-Isaianic texts which depict Yahweh as Creator, on the one hand portray Yahweh’s divine attribute as the exclusive creator, which express His greatness and magnitude that are unparalleled, but on the other, human imageries are used to portray ‘Yahweh as Creator,’ especially, when it comes to the way how He crafts or undertakes the process of creation, and in this case (v.18) the ‘potter’ imagery (based on the verbal meaning נָחַל) is used to depict Yahweh’s process of forming, making and establishing the earth, which He made basically to be inhabited by all.

Verse 19

The last line of v.18 serves as a bridging sentence between v.18 and v.19 and there are explicit indications for this observation. In terms of content, the last part of v.18 affirms through its asserting self-declaration formula that Yahweh is God and there is no other God after the enumeration of ‘Yahweh as Creator’ which was elaborately discussed in v.18. The same last section of v.18 which served as the conclusion for the entire message of v.18, is implicitly employed as the introduction to the entire content of v.19; and this will be further explained through the syntactic signals which endorse the above view.

The direct address of Yahweh is evident from the last part of v.18 until the end of v.19; the direct address by Yahweh is formulated either by first common singular verbal conjugations or by first person pronoun (לֹא) followed by nominal clause sentences. In addition, the acrostic structured pattern can also be observed

from the last section of v.18 until the concluding section of v.19. Therefore, notably and subtly the concluding section of v.18 can be incorporated to understand v.19, which essentially, serves as a bridging line between v.18 and v.19.

The first two lines of v.19 are comprised of elaborated negation sentences which are introduced by the negative particle אָל which are followed and concluded by the self-declaration formula which asserts the uniqueness of Yahweh who is the unparalleled God. As mentioned above, v.19 explicitly depicts that Yahweh is the direct speaker of the entire verse and on the other hand, it is more evident that the addressee is the people of Israel who are mentioned as ‘the seed of Jacob’ (יִשְׂרָאֵל). The first line of v.19 begins with the negative particle אָל and continues as follows: לא בַּכֶּסֶר בֵּית הָאָרֶץ אֲדֹנִי - ‘I did not speak in secret, in a dark place of the earth.’ This negation sentence is comprised of many nouns and some of them are also prefixed with the inseparable preposition ב. (in) which refers to location (where: בַּכֶּסֶר - in secret). The placement of the noun next to the negative particle along with the preposition prefixed בַּכֶּסֶר (in secret) signifies that the noun is stressed (inverted verbal sentence), although customarily verbs begin Hebrew sentences.703

Further, Yahweh addresses in first person and it is expressed using the verb בָּרָכָה (to speak), conjugated into piel perfect first common singular form בָּרָכָה which has an intensified meaning here. The negative particle אָל at the beginning of the sentence is connected with the verb and therefore, the entire phrase is translated in the following way: לא בָּרָכָה בֵּית הָאָרֶץ - ‘I (Yahweh) do not speak in secret.’ The noun בָּרָכָה has several meanings such as ‘covering, hiding-place, secrecy or secret place and shelter;’704 moreover, in conjunction with the verb בָּרָכָה ‘to speak in secret,’ the prevailing wide-range opinion is, that the above word

703 KELLEY, Biblical Hebrew, 87.
704 BDB, 712; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 44.
(בָּטַרְתָּן) refers to the art of divination practiced in the ANE religious world within their cultic settings, secretly or in secret places.705

In addition, the expression that Yahweh did not speak in secret is further qualified by the following nouns which are placed in opposition: בָּטַרְתָּן אֲרוֹן הַשָּׁמַיִם – ‘in a dark place of the earth,’ which can also be translated as ‘a land of darkness.’ The term אֲרוֹן (place or land) connotes ‘a locality or a particular place or land’706 and the noun אֱרֶץ refers to ‘earth or land.’707 Nevertheless, the word אֲרוֹן as a noun absolute gives meaning to the other nouns here.708 Therefore, ‘the land filled with darkness or the dark place of the earth’ is a possible rendering. In connection with the previous phrase these nouns can be expressed in the following way: I did not speak in secret, ‘in a dark place of the earth.’ The secret place or the place of darkness of the earth has different interpretations.

The foremost opinion is that the context of DI-text reflects the Babylonian captivity, therefore, the secret place or place of darkness refers to Babylon and especially, its secret places of divinations. On the other hand, in juxtaposition with Isa 42:7 ‘dark place’ is referred to the ‘dark prison of Babylon.’709 In addition, referring Babylon as a ‘place of darkness’ has an implied meaning. In Babylon, religious and cultic practices flourished and there were different forms of divination practices such as engaging in consultation with the dead and certain other secret occult practices prevailed.710 These and several other different divine mediums are practiced in the Babylonian religious and cultural contexts.

Therefore, in contrast to this background, Yahweh in first person asserts here that ‘He does not speak neither in a secret nor in a dark place’ or ‘He does not seek help or advice from divinations or other gods.’ Moreover, His will and plans are not invisible, inaudible, unrecognizable, or impossible to understand.711

706 BDB, 880; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 8.
707 BDB, 76; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 3.
708 For Koole the word אֲרוֹן in DI is always referred to ‘absence of salvation.’ KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 479; BDB, 365; PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 24.
709 However, Babylon is also referred as a land of treasure. Isa 45:3: I will give you the treasures of darkness – Here it connotes to the treasures of Babylon. GOLDINGAY, Message of Isaiah 40-55, 291.
711 SMITH, Isaiah 40-66, 276.
Rather, Yahweh speaks and acts publicly and not secretly or not through obscure ways like the Babylonian religious cults. Hence, Yahweh’s intensified assertion which is expressed through the piel verbal conjugation states that ‘He did not speak in secret or in a dark place of the earth.’ This phrase can also be understood in the light of v.18 which portrays artistically the attributes of Yahweh as Creator which are apparently evident from the heavens and earth and the entire creation that one witnesses. Neither the plans of Yahweh nor His skills of creation are hidden, everything is visible as how His entire creation is visible; the created sky and the skillfully formed earth proclaims Yahweh’s transparency in public. Moreover, I would like to try placing the two phrases from vv.18 and 19, i.e., which state about the creative work of Yahweh in contrast to the dark places of the earth and observe the nuances that they offer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse 18</th>
<th>Verse 19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>יָּצָר הַבָּהֵר וִיתַּשָּׁהְתָוְא הָלוֹם כָּלָהְתָוְא</td>
<td>לא בָּסָה וִיתַּשָּׁהְתָוְא מַמָּֽקִּים אָלִּים תְּשָּׁהְתָוְא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>He (the one who) formed the earth and made it, He established it</em></td>
<td><em>He did not speak in secret, in the dark place of the earth</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I observe two aspects by placing the above illustrated phrases in opposition. On the one hand, v.18 states that Yahweh made the earth (יָּצָר הַבָּהֵר) and formed it and He established it and the purpose of forming it has also been mentioned in v.18, that Yahweh created it not as a chaos (as wasteland), rather He formed it in order to be inhabited. On the other hand, v.19 states that Yahweh did not speak in the dark places of the earth (לא בָּסָה). When this statement is read in the light of the understanding of the dark places as the places of divination and Babylonian religious practices (in secrecy), then one can presume the implicit meanings that are embedded in these two contrasting verses.

The first aspect is that Yahweh has created the earth as His handiwork and creative work like a potter and offered it to all to dwell in it. Through this action He publicly showed His power to create or form the earth for the benefit of all. In contrary to this, certain places of earth have become places of practicing divination in secrecy in order to harm others, just opposite to the actual intention and purpose of Yahweh forming the earth. Moreover, people deserve to approach and take help from these secret places of divinations rather than seeking the creator God ‘Yahweh’ who has publicly shown His power and creative works through His entire creation. Therefore, He says, I speak not in secret, in the dark places of the earth.

712 MCKENZIE, Second Isaiah, 82; ZAPFF, Jesaja: 40-55, 280.
'my speech and actions are transparent which are explicit and evident in public domain' and one example for that is the entire created cosmos.

The second line of v.19 consists of two sentences: namely, a negation sentence formulated as verbal clause led by the negative particle אָלָ and an imperative clause.

Negation sentence

音频

Imperative clause

The negation-sentence begins with the negative particle אָלָ and continues with the following verbal phrase: אָלָ - 'I did not say to the seed (offspring) of Jacob.' The first common singular qal perfect verbal conjugation אָמַר of the verb אָמַר (to say) indicates that Yahweh is addressing here again directly in first person to the people of Israel who are metaphorically depicted as 'the seed of Jacob' (אָמַרְתָּם). Moreover, the preposition לָ (to) signals that Yahweh speaks to Israel. Therefore, the addressee of this entire unit (i.e., vv.18-19) is more evident in this line. Moreover, the second half of the second line of v.19 brings meaning to Yahweh's direct address to the people of Israel or the seed of Jacob: אָמַרְתָּם - 'seek me in chaos' (i.e., I did not say to the seed of Jacob 'seek me in chaos'). The first common singular pronoun suffixed piel plural imperative אָמַרְתָּם offers an intensified meaning to the statement uttered by Yahweh. Furthermore, the noun והֵיה תְוָאַר which has appeared in v.18 to denote that Yahweh created the earth not to be or to remain as an empty wasteland or uninhabited place,

The noun והֵיה תְוָאַר which can be translated as 'formless, confusion, unreality, emptiness, and etc.,'713 was employed in v.18 to denote that Yahweh created the earth not to be or to remain as an empty wasteland or uninhabited place,

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713 *BDB*, 1062.
rather it was formed or shaped by Him (like a potter) to be inhabited (לאראה בָּרָאתּתי לִשְׁמָעָה) (714). However, in v.19 is used with a different connotation: (715) firstly, והควร can also be translated as ‘vain, waste or to no purpose’ and these variant meanings would facilitate the following reading: I did not say to the seed of Jacob ‘to seek me in vain or with no purpose.’ (716) In addition, this phrase makes sense in the light of the previous phrase.

The previous line depicts the ‘secret place or the land of darkness’ in relation to the religious and cultic divination practices of Babylon. Therefore, והควร can be used here to refer to these practices as chaotic, vain or useless and hence it can be explained that Yahweh addresses here by saying, I did not ask the offspring of Jacob to seek me in vain, like the people who seek the useless cultic and religious divinations in secret. (717) Unlike the idol-images, Yahweh responds to His people and therefore seeking Him will not lead to vain. (718) The implied meaning is that seeking other gods (perhaps human-made idol-images) will lead to chaos and is completely useless, however, seeking Yahweh, the Creator, ‘whose power is proclaimed publicly and visibly through His creation,’ will bring greater results. Therefore, Yahweh demands the seed of Jacob to seek Him with a purpose and not in vain (והควร), and moreover, the different connotations of the same noun וה yayg can be observed in v.18 and in v.19.

Finally, the concluding phrase repeats the self-declaration of Yahweh along with participial formulations. The self-declaration of Yahweh along with the vocalized Tetragrammaton (יְהֹוָה) has been employed in vv.18 and 19 is three occurrences. Firstly, in the form of the messenger formula it appears in the entire subunit i.e. in beginning of v.18: כי הוא אַמְנוּתָוּ; (719) secondly, at the end of v.18: פִּנֵי והוּא נָעֲשָׁה: which also serves as an introduction to v.19; and finally, it appears in the conclusion as a leading speech formula to the assertive statements uttered by Yahweh (v.19): אָמַר יְהוָה הָעֵדָן פַּעַם מִשְׁנִי מִשְרֵים.

The repeated manifestations of the self-declaration phrases, on the one hand authenticates that the speaker is Yahweh and on the other hand they give emphasis to the message which is directly uttered by Yahweh. The first line of v.18 which begins with the messenger formula employs a participial formulation with

715 Some scholars prefer ‘chaos’ as the right meaning for והควร both in v.18 and in v.19. WESTERMANN, Isaiah 40-66, 173.
716 SCOORS, I am God your Saviour, 233.
717 MUILENBURG opines that וה shouldBe denoted the ‘vain idols’ in this context. MUILENBURG, Book of Isaiah, 535.
718 KOOLE, Isaiah 40-48, 480.
attributive usage referring to ‘Yahweh as Creator.’ Similarly, the concluding phrase of v.19 after the self-declaration applies participial formulation with verbal usage which expresses Yahweh’s unique characteristics. Therefore, similar pattern at the beginning and at the end of this subunit (i.e., Isa 45:18-19) can be noted which creates assonance as well as facilitates to keep the unit intact.

Two characteristic features of Yahweh are expressed in the twin participial phrases which are introduced by the self-declaration formula אֲנִי יְהוָה — ‘I am Yahweh.’ Firstly, Yahweh is self-claiming that He speaks righteous or righteousness (כָּרֶת כָּרֶה). The qal participle כָּרֶה (from כָּרֶה — to speak)\(^719\) which appears after the self-declaration formula of Yahweh has a verbal function with durative in meaning (timeless)\(^720\) and the same function is applied to the hiphil participle as well כָּרֶה (from כָּרֶה — to declare or announce)\(^721\) which says that ‘Yahweh declares what is right.’\(^722\) These characteristic features of Yahweh can be understood in the light of the first line of v.19 which states that ‘He did not speak in secret, in the dark places of the earth.’

In the purview of the statements that have been made earlier, it is once again accentuated in the final phrase of v.19 that it is not in secrecy or in the secret places of divinations that Yahweh speaks, rather He speaks in public which is also reflected through His visible creative works, and moreover, specifically, He speaks

\(^719\) BDB, 182; Pelt and Pratico, Vocabulary Guide, 3.
\(^720\) Kelley, Biblical Hebrew, 200-201.
\(^721\) BDB, 617; Pelt and Pratico, Vocabulary Guide, 8.
\(^722\) Whitley translates this phrase as “I Yahweh uttered a divine decision (כָּרֶה), I declared what is destined (כָּרֶה).” Charles F. Whitley, “Deutero-Isaiah’s Interpretation of sedeq,” VT 22 (1972): 469-475; Schoors translates כָּרֶה in all instances as “salvation” or “victory.” Schoors, I am God your Saviour, 236.
only righteousness or justice (צדק) and He declares only what is right (צדק). The two terms namely צדק and י跟你 Hãy which are employed in the participial phrases have several meanings: צדק is translated as 'righteous or equity' which can also mean 'righteous act or justice;' 723 therefore, it can be understood that 'Yahweh speaks words of justice or equity (fair and impartial).' The other noun י跟你 Hãy is translated as 'level path, uprightness or straightness;' 724 therefore, it connotes that 'Yahweh is upright or straight, just or level.' 725

3.5.4. Observations

Isaiah 45:18-19 is yet another passage which underscores the ‘innovative activities of creation’ of the Creator God – ‘Yahweh’ which are expressed through human-occupational-imageries. The creative actions of Yahweh decisively depict Him as ‘potter’ through the way that He forms or shapes the earth; and ‘builder’ or ‘architect’ through His action of firmly establishing the earth. These imageries bring the Creator – Yahweh much closer to the tangible human experiences.

The passage also clearly emphasizes that Yahweh has formed the earth and established it not to remain as wasteland, but as a place that will be inhabited by all. This is certainly underscored as the main purpose of forming the earth. Earth is the ‘habitat for all the creation of Yahweh’ and there is no discrimination and therefore, all have space on earth. This asserts that equality is insisted upon throughout the created order and the need for co-existence of all the creation of Yahweh under one roof. This offers a classical universal perspective of portraying Yahweh as the universal creator and the theme ‘creation’ carries a new universal perspective. Through the innovative creation Yahweh is asserting Himself as the idiosyncratic God whose glory is expressed through the entire cosmos. Moreover, this Creator God – Yahweh whose glory is revealed through the entire creation is not a God who is hidden or speaks in secret, rather, they are explicit and one can witness them by looking at His artistic creation of the heavens and earth.

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723 PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 124.
724 PELT and PRATICO, Vocabulary Guide, 63.

The creatorship of Yahweh is a significant theme in the OT books and it occupies a special place in DI (Isa 40-48) because of its emphatic tone that is expressed through different imageries and also the Babylonian cultural context in which it was proclaimed by DI. Therefore, the creation imageries in Isaiah 40-48 are unique and noteworthy due to their creative rendering. The categorically analyzed exegetical passages (i.e., Isa 40:12-31; 41:17-20; 42:5-9; 43:16-21 and 45:18 and 19) have unfolded manifold nuances of creation and Yahweh’s crafting ability as Creator which are amply ingrained in each and every individual word of the exegeted verses, both implicitly and explicitly. Therefore, at the foremost, the detailed analysis has proven that the theme “Creation” is a perceptible theme that carries its own significance among the other themes that are discussed in DI. Moreover, it is obvious that “Creation” cannot be anymore considered as subordinate or supplementary concept to other themes (esp. “Salvation” in DI), however, one cannot completely deny or avoid its relation or affinity to other themes. Therefore, either collectively or individually the theme “Creation” has its impact.

Secondly, there are reasonable views to support that Isaiah 40-48 reflect Babylonian context and these passages were uttered to the people of Israel who were exiled in Babylon. These prophetic utterances encouraged the people of Israel who were hoping to return back to their homeland after the downfall of the great Babylonian empire. In this contextual reality, DI’s depiction of Yahweh’s creatorship using innovative skillful-occupational-imageries certainly would have given a new imagination and perspective about Yahweh as skillful Creator.

Conventionally, the theme “Creation” is always perceived as the theme related to “Salvation” which accentuates the renewal or recreation, i.e., mainly focusing on the rebuilding of the exiled Israelite community. At the same time, the use of plentiful and diverse creation vocabularies in Isa 40-48 led to more presumptions. One such assumption is that, the creation-passages of Isa 40-48 certainly reflect Babylonian context in which the creatorship of Yahweh was basically underscored in order to upraise Yahweh against the gods of Babylon. However, I do not totally subscribe this view, even though substantive evidences are provided, because they nullify the rich structural nuances of DI who creatively present Yahweh as Creator with his own emphasis.

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726 Among the many other works, the articles of BLENKINSOOPP and NILSEN attest this view. According to them the creation-passages in Isa 40-48 are essentially aimed at presenting
Keeping the above arguments aside, a deeper cognitive conceptualization of DI’s presentation of Yahweh’s creative and artistic crafting abilities as “Creator” that are inherent in the exegeted passages facilitate to permeate into the imagination of DI. On the one hand, although the deeper nuances of the creation-passages in Isaiah 40-48 depict Yahweh as the supreme Creator who is great in strength and mighty in power, whose creative attributes are finer and indescribable, still, on the other hand, these passages in a more remarkable and fascinating manner depict DI’s imagination of “Yahweh as Creator” through his lens of skillful human-occupation-imageries.

It can be observed that these images elucidate essentially to understand “Creator-Yahweh” with the day-to-day human language and occupations and especially, to identify Him with tangible human experiences. These diverse human-occupational-models that one encounters in Isa 40-48 depict Yahweh as Creator in human-language in contrast to the traditional images which distance Yahweh as transcendent God who creates everything from a distance through His commands (e.g., Gen. 1). Apart from this there are also general metaphors in the OT which personify Yahweh as savior and friend; however, I perceive such metaphors or personification of Yahweh as more abstract in nature. Therefore, by employing human-occupational-imageries to enumerate the crafting skills of Yahweh as Creator, DI not only offers incredible human-images to ‘Yahweh,’ but also, he emphatically demonstrates how Yahweh becomes an increasingly tangible part of human experience. With this preliminary perception about DI’s creation language of ‘human-occupational-imageries’ the following paragraphs attempt to recapitulate the different images and their significance that are discovered from the chosen exegetical passages.

contrasting views against the Babylonian epic of creation Enûma Eliš and its protagonist Marduk who was hailed as king, warrior, and supreme god and creator of the universe in the Babylonian context. So, the emphasis on “Creation” and “Yahweh as Creator” in Isaiah 40-48 are often perceived as polemical assertions against Marduk’s creatorship; therefore, DI formulated his creation theology with the main aim of elevating the position of Yahweh as the everlasting God and Creator of the ends of the earth (uttered in the Babylonian context, where conflicting ideologies existed). Thus, DI’s emphasis is observed as mirror images of Enûma Eliš. BLENKINSEPP, “Cosmological and Protological,” 506-510; NILSEN, “Creation in Collision?” More information for Enûma Eliš can be obtained from the following materials: WILFRED G. LAMBERT, Babylonian Creation Myths (Mesopotamian Civilizations 16; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013); BENJAMIN R. FOSTER, “Epic of Creation: Enûma Elish,” in The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World (eds. WILLIAM W. HALLO and K. LAWSON YOUNGER JR.; Vol. 1; Leiden: Brill, 1997); EPHRAIM A. SPEISER, “Akkadian Myths and Epics: The Creation Epic,” in Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (3rd ed.; ed. JAMES B. PRITCHARD; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).
3.6.1. Creator Yahweh at Work: Implied Human-Occupational Imageries

The human imageries which are personified to Yahweh in the DI’s creation-passages depict ‘God at work.’ They sketch a new picture about Yahweh, who like any other skillful human-worker engages in building or constructing or skillfully crafting the heavens and shaping the earth and all that is in it. Rather than depicting Yahweh as a powerful God who commands and creates the world from a distance or from heaven, DI’s implied meaning of picturing Yahweh with the help of worker-imageries facilitate to contextualize these images to human experiences. The different human-occupational imageries which are encapsulated in the exegeted passages are summarized below:

3.6.1.1. Creator Yahweh: The Tentmaker

Yahweh is repeatedly depicted as Creator of the heavens and earth in most of the creation passages of DI (Isa 40:22; 42:5; 45:18). In all these passages, especially in Isa 40:22 and 42:5 the act of forming the heavens - precisely Yahweh’s action of ‘stretching the heavens like a curtain and spreading them like a tent to dwell in’ indicates that DI employs the human-occupational ‘tentmaker’ imagery. The crafting skills of Yahweh who stretched out the heavens and created the place underneath it like a tent to dwell in for His entire creation is significantly expressed through the occupation of a ‘tentmaker.’

3.6.1.2. Creator Yahweh: The Gardener

The creative action of Yahweh in Isa 41:19-20, especially, His act of setting/planting different trees in the wilderness and dry land and in addition, the concluding statement of the verse which states that ‘Yahweh’s hand has made this,’ subtly underlines that a ‘gardener’ imagery is employed by DI which relates Yahweh the Creator to human occupation. The image of ‘gardener’ which receives less attention has been used here to emphasize the efforts that are put in by the people who are engaged in this occupation, in the process of both beautifying as well as preserving the nature.
3.6.1.3. Creator Yahweh: The Metalworker

The ‘metalworker’ imagery is one of the repeated imageries in DI. It is used to denote the skillful work efficiency of the artisans who carve idol-images out of metal or wood. However, this imagery is used in Isa 42:5 to depict Yahweh’s act of ‘spreading out the earth.’ Further, Yahweh’s such creative action is equated with ‘hammering of a metal’ in order to spread it wide and to form it as a plate or any useful instrument. Through this imagery, DI depicts Creator Yahweh as ‘metalworker.’ On the one hand, the skills of the metalworkers are acknowledged through this depiction and on the other the implied meaning emphasizes that Creator-Yahweh is not an abstract God but He can be personified as a skillful metalworker who spreads out the earth and brings forth its produce and offspring. However, this Creator-Yahweh who is in the form of metalworker cannot be crafted or carved through human imagination into any forms.

3.6.1.4. Creation Yahweh: The Shepherd

The image of shepherd is not new to the OT passages, however, in the creation passages of DI, one can trace the idea of shepherd or Yahweh’s role as Creator reflects the activity of a shepherd. In Isa 40:26 the following rhetorical question appears – ‘look up and perceive, who created these? In this context, Yahweh narrates about what He does as Creator, He calls each and every element in the sky by name and they do not disappear from His sight. The act of bringing them (the celestial bodies) out and calling them and preserving them depict the role of a shepherd who gives attention to each and every sheep and he knows them by name and preserves them from all endanger. Therefore, Yahweh’s act as Creator here resembles the image of a shepherd. The occupation which is often ignored or looked down is adopted to depict the marvelous creative acts of the Creator God Yahweh.

3.6.1.5. Creator Yahweh: The Potter

The Creator Yahweh is personified in the image of ‘potter’ in Isa 45:18. In the similar way to how a potter skillfully and carefully with more patience forms or shapes or fashions an earthen pot and make it as a useful container to be used, Yahweh also forms or shapes the earth with His hand and creates it as a useful and...
resourceful place for His entire created beings to dwell in. The usage of the potter imagery on the one hand acknowledges the skillful working efficiency of the potters which is shown in the process of shaping a pot, and on the other hand the patience and creativity that Yahweh has shown in forming the earth which has become the home for His entire creation is also decisively underlined.

3.6.1.6. Creator Yahweh: The Farmer

The image of ‘farmer’ is yet another human-occupational-imagery that has been employed by DI to illustrate the creative activity of Yahweh as Creator. This imagery is implicitly depicted in Isa 42:5 and 45:18. Especially, in Isa 42:5 Yahweh’s act of spreading out the earth and what comes from it denotes the produce such as crops and grains and offspring (progeny). Therefore, this indicates that Yahweh has been presented here as a ‘farmer’ or ‘agriculturist’ who causes to bring forth the produce from the land through cultivation and harvest. The art of irrigation or agriculture is elevated here by using this occupational-imagery to personify Yahweh as Creator. Moreover, this also signifies Yahweh’s role in bringing forth the resources of the earth which have been given as source of livelihood of all. Equal distribution of the resources is subtly emphasized here.

3.6.1.7. Creator Yahweh: The Builder or Architect

‘Yahweh created the heavens and formed the earth and established it; He opened the rivers in the bare heights and ponds in the valleys’ – all these narrations intend to depict Yahweh as a Builder and architect or even as a construction worker. Isa 45:18 specifically states that Yahweh has formed the earth and ‘He established it;’ therefore, His act of firmly and strongly establishing or setting up can be equated with a ‘builder’ who engages in the occupation of constructing different types of structures. These verses finely identify Yahweh with the skillful human occupations (builder or architect).
In another instance (e.g., Isa 43:19) Yahweh’s act of making a way in the wilderness and opening rivers and streams; and making ponds in the valleys, depict His creative act of turning any sort of devastated or dryland into a road or as a place filled with surplus water resources. But, these creative acts of Yahweh also have implicit nuances that portray Yahweh with the help of human-occupational-imageries and here in this case He is personified as ‘builder’ or ‘constructor.’ Creator-Yahweh is at work to construct a road or to make water resources for His people.

### 3.6.1.8. Creator Yahweh: The Sculptor

The Hebrew word אָרֵב which is not in commonly used in other cultures, by chance has an old Arabic counterpart with more or less the same letters i.e., ‘barā’ meaning ‘to bring forth or give birth to.’ The noun of this Arabic verb ‘barā’ is translated as ‘sculptor’ which is equivalent to the Hebrew participle arewOB – ‘creator.’ Therefore, from the light of the Arabic meaning of ‘barā’ (sculptor) one can presume that Creator-Yahweh is also denoted in DI as ‘sculptor;’ the entire creation that one witness is the creative work of the sculptor – Yahweh who has artistically crafted it like a skillful sculptor.

Apart from these imageries one can also perceive the images such as mother in the DI which are subtly employed to depict the creative activity of Yahweh. The verb אָרֵב which is mentioned above, can also be translated as ‘to bring forth or to give birth to’ and it denotes the ability of a woman who gives birth to a child, brings new-life into this world. In this similar way, Yahweh has brought forth the entire creation like His child. Therefore, the ‘Creator-Yahweh’ can also be identified with mother imagery. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, creation in DI always carries durative meaning through its participial presentations.

Yahweh is depicted as the Creator who creates and recreates and renews lives of people by transforming nature. He renews the difficult circumstances of His people by renewing or recreating the situations and rejuvenating them. Moreover, creation, recreation or transformation of the entire cosmos (in all the exegeted passages) is constantly presented as the gift of Yahweh for His entire creatures including humankind, through this a nexus between God-nature-humankind has been created. In spite of all these various interpretations, the human-occupational imageries which are subtly employed to illustrate the creative crafting ability of
the Creator God 'Yahweh' occupy the Everest position in the creation-passages of DI.

**SUMMARY**

Isaiah (40-48), which is one of the richest sources with abundant nuances concerning the theme “Creation” has been precisely underscored and proven again through the comprehensive syntactic and semantic investigations that were undertaken in this core exegetical chapter. A detailed investigation of the selected passages from Isa 40-48 (40:12-31; 41:17-20; 42:5-9; 43:16-21; 45:18-19), at the first place has proven that “Creation” is not an independent concept in DI and it is not a theme which finds its meaning only in relation with other themes (e.g., “Salvation”). The subject of “Creation” carries manifold rhetorical nuances which depict Yahweh’s creatorship in an incredible manner. This has been evidentially proved through the meticulous and careful analysis of each word and verse from the passages that were chosen for the exegetical study. Two emphases are mainly drawn from the exegetical study which are described below: *firstly*, the various human-occupational-imageries that are employed to depict Yahweh as Creator and *secondly*, the universal theology of creation that has been expressed through the passages that focus on the theme “Creation.”

*Firstly*, the creatorship of Yahweh or the depiction of Yahweh as Creator has been redefined or taken new imageries in Isa 40-48. Creator Yahweh has been conventionally perceived as the transcendent God who creates everything through His verbal commands from a distance. But the portrayal of “Yahweh as Creator” and His innovative activities of creation are expressed with the help of “human-occupational-imageries” in the selected passages that were exegeted. The use of different verbs and nouns which are carefully selected by DI have different functions and they are purposely employed to personify Yahweh in anthropomorphic language such as “tentmaker, gardener, metalworker, shepherd, potter, farmer, builder or architect and sculptor.” The Babylonian cultural influence of DI in the context where Isa 40-48 was uttered, is evident through these images. These familiar skillful and often unnoticed occupations which were witnessed by DI were used creatively by him to bring forth his imagination of the creatorship of Yahweh or Yahweh’s innovative activities of creation. Moreover, these human-occupational-imageries connect Yahweh with tangible human experiences, through which Yahweh is projected as the skillful Creator who personifies the other various skillful craftsmen who are engaged in different occupations.
Secondly, apart from the human-occupational-imageries that are artistically employed by DI to depict Creator-Yahweh in human language, the purpose of Yahweh’s creation is also emphatically enumerated in almost all the selected creation-passages which are exegeted from Isa 40-48. Yahweh’s creative acts bring His entire creation under one umbrella. He stretches out the sky like curtains and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in (Isa 40:22). He spreads out the earth and brings forth its produce and offspring (Isa 42:5). He formed the earth in order to be inhabited (Isa 45:18). These statements prove that humankind, animals and the rest of the creation find their space and significance in Yahweh’s created order, not even one will be ignored or discriminated. Moreover, transformation of wilderness and desert into places of surplus water resources with enormous trees depicts Yahweh as the Creator who brings forth transformation in the form of re-creation in order to sufficiently meet the needs of the poor and needy (Isa 41:17-20). Creation theology in Isaiah 40-48 gives significant place for the poor and needy which ultimately insists upon the equal share of the resources created by Yahweh and this is one of the purposes of Yahweh’s creation. Moreover, a new reconciled model of creation is insisted by drawing insights from Exodus narrative (Isa 43:16-21). Creation of a way through the Red sea saved the people of Israel but killed the Egyptian army and animals. However, in the reconciled-model of creation, there is no room for destruction due to enormous water. Water brings life to Yahweh’s people and animals and this symbolizes the incorporation of the entire creation in the new reconciled-model of creation. Moreover, a nexus between Creator Yahweh and the entire creation is insisted in the creation theology of Isa 40-48. Therefore, the creation theology in Isa 40-48 offers a universal perspective which incorporates the entire creation as Yahweh’s skillful handiwork. Yahweh is not only the Creator, re-creator or transformer of nature, but He also renews and transforms the people who are weak and He rejuvenates them (Isa 40:27-31). Finally, the innovative act of creation of Yahweh is not static in nature, rather it is an ongoing and continuous process which is expressed syntactically through participial formulation in all the exegeted passages. “Yahweh is the everlasting and eternal Creator” (Isa 40:28).
CONCLUSION

‘Creation’ is one of the major themes in the theological discourses for decades and the same has been perceived and interpreted from different perspectives. The biblical creation accounts essentially affirm that, it is God (Yahweh), who has created the entire cosmos and the infinite creation which one witnesses depicts His creative-handiworks. Moreover, this traditional view has been persistently reflected and endorsed in most of the previous research works. However, in spite of its priority, specifically in the history of OT scholarship the ‘theology of creation’ has constantly gained only the secondary position and was consistently considered as the subordinate theme to ‘salvation history.’

This perception can also be observed in the academic investigations with regard to the theme ‘creation’ in DI, where numerous scholarly works sought to find meaning for ‘creation’ only with the support of the theme ‘salvation.’ Although the uniqueness of Yahweh’s creatorship has been emphasized, still the subject of creation is viewed as a complementary or supplementary theme to the salvific power of Yahweh. In addition, subsequent research-works which employed comparative analysis between the ancient near eastern sources of creation and the Deutero-Isaianic creation accounts have conclusively paved the way to perceive the biblical accounts either as superior in its unique presentation of Yahweh as creator or as polemical assertions that exalted Yahweh against the ANE creation narratives and gods.

The above-mentioned research tendencies had led to overlook or negligibly belittle the ingrained rhetorical nuances in the Deutero-Isaianic-Hebrew-end-text which incredibly depict the creative-handiwork of Yahweh, the creator, with ‘human-imageries’ and moreover, they decisively present the purpose of creation and recreation or renewal of creation with a fresh outlook. Therefore, taking into consideration the context in which the Deutero-Isaianic (esp. chps. 40-48) creation passages were uttered; this research approached the selected passages of DI (Isa 40:12-31; 41:17-20; 42:5-9; 43:16-21 and 45:18-19) with an in-depth and meticulous structural analysis in order to unearth the hidden or embedded human-imageries used by DI to depict the creative actions of Yahweh.

The initial chapters of this research have attempted to sketch a broader framework to understand the Babylonian background of the selected passages from Isaiah 40-48 and in addition, an extensive review of the various investigations with regard to the subject of ‘creation’ in the OT with special reference to DI has been chronicled. The diverse redactional theories with regard to the formation of Isaiah 40-55 which were proposed by various scholars have substantially facilitated to perceive the complex nature of the text, especially when it comes to
the issues related to its origin and formation, date and authorship and so on. However, the complicated subject matters and diversified theories, on the other hand, have served as points of departure in offering defensible reasons to place Isaiah 40-48 in the Babylonian background in order to observe the contextual influences that are surfaced in the selected passages dealing with the theme ‘creation.’

Secondly, the comprehensive literature review of the subject of ‘creation’ in the entire OT from the time of GERHARD VON RAD until the present time has been rendered in order to gain a categorical and critical viewpoint of how the theme ‘creation’ has been understood and handled by various scholars from their diversified approaches and perspectives. Generally, the topic of ‘creation’ is seen as an ancillary theme to ‘redemption,’ however, for some, it occurs in polarity with redemption and for others it is a fundamental theme in the OT. Moreover, in the context of DI, ‘creation’ is not completely perceived by the interpreters as an insignificant theme but it gains its emphatic connotation only under the dominant purview of ‘redemption.’ In addition, it is understood and regarded as playing only an instrumental role in the salvific act of Yahweh in recreating or renewing the exiled community in Babylon who are hoping to return back to their homeland.

In the recent times, the comparative research approaches identified parallelisms and mirror-images between Deutero-Isaianic creation accounts and ancient near eastern accounts esp. the Babylonian creation epic Enûma elîš. These approaches resulted either in affirming the influence of Enûma elîš on the Deutero-Isaianic creation accounts or asserting the superior position of Yahweh as unique creator in contrast to the creator god in Enûma elîš (i.e., Marduk).

This research work acknowledges the perspectival and methodological evolutions that occur progressively in approaching the biblical passages and they are apparently evident in the manner in which the previous investigations have perceived and treated the theme ‘creation’ in the OT and precisely in DI. Therefore, the initial chapters of this dissertation which have facilitated to recognize the Babylonian background of the Deutero-Isaianic text and its contextual repercussions and moreover, the versatile perceptions and interpretations of the subject of ‘creation’ are the essential driving forces that have persuaded to approach the theme ‘creation’ from the selected passages of Isaiah 40-48 with a new outlook. Hence, a fresh textual reading has been attempted in the exegetical chapter (i.e., ch. 3) with the help of synchronic structural approach which eventually enabled to meticulously analyze the syntactic and semantic nuances that rhetorically describe ‘creator Yahweh’ and His ‘innovative creative activities.’ As a result, the exegetical work unfolds manifold and unique depictions about the creator and the creation.
Contextual influence and its impact play a major role in human imagination or in other words, imagination or creative thinking is strongly influenced by socio-cultural realities. The same phenomena are evident in the Deutero-Isaianic passages which portray the subject of creation. The conventional interpretations on the one hand, offered a secondary position to the theme ‘creation’ and on the other, they have drawn mirror-images between Marduk of Enûma eliš and Yahweh, through which it is argued that Enûma eliš has influenced the creation texts in DI. Moreover, Deutero-Isaianic creation-passages were customarily perceived as polemical assertions against Marduk as creator in contrast to Yahweh, the unique creator and God of Israel. Nevertheless, these traditional and typical renderings have failed to unearth the multi-layered nuances that are hidden in the Isaianic texts. The mirror-image of Enûma eliš in Deutero-Isaianic texts is not totally denied at the point, however, the innovative activities that are performed by Yahweh as creator and His process of creation reflect or have the mirror-image of human-occupational-imageries and moreover, this is the foremost affirmation and thesis of this research work. Human-occupational-imageries play a vital role in representing or relating the creative activities of Yahweh with human occupations. This is evident as a result of the in-depth syntactic and semantic analysis of the selected passages from Isaiah 40-48 (Isa 40:12-31; 41:17-20; 42:5-9; 43:16-21; 45:18-19).

Deutero-Isaianic creation passages depict the ordinary and everyday occupational models that one encounters. Therefore, one can decisively presume that the images of human vocations which DI came across have certainly influenced him to imagine or identify the creative activity of the creator God ‘Yahweh’ with the familiar human-occupational-imageries. Personifying God in human forms of understanding such as father, mother, liberator, and so on is common in the biblical narrations. However, portraying the creative-handiwork of Yahweh with skillful human-occupational-imageries is more idiosyncratic to DI than any other books of the OT which depict Yahweh as creator.

DI is not chronologically presenting the creative works of Yahweh as how it is systematically recorded in the book of Genesis, rather, wherever (in Isaiah 40-48) the creative acts of Yahweh are subtly and rhetorically presented, there, the conceptualization of these actions in human-work-related-images can be implicitly or explicitly observed. A gist of the human-occupational-imageries which have been discovered from the comprehensive exegetical study is tabulated in the following page:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>OCCUPATIONAL IMAGES</strong></th>
<th><strong>BRIEF DESCRIPTION</strong></th>
<th><strong>SUPPORTING VERSES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tentmaker</strong></td>
<td>Yahweh’s action of stretching the heavens like a curtain and spreading them out like a tent to live in portrays His as a tentmaker.</td>
<td><em>Isa 40:22; 42:5; 45:18</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gardener</strong></td>
<td>Yahweh’s act of setting or planting variety of trees in the wilderness and desert. Yahweh’s hands only planted them depict Him as a gardener.</td>
<td><em>Isa 41:19-20</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metalworker</strong></td>
<td>Yahweh’s act of spreading out the earth as a place to live resembles the hammering of metal piece by a metalworker in order to make it flat.</td>
<td><em>Isa 42:5</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shepherd</strong></td>
<td>Bringing out the celestial bodies in the sky and calling them by name which will not disappear from His sight depicts Yahweh as a shepherd.</td>
<td><em>Isa 40:26</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potter</strong></td>
<td>Yahweh forms or shapes the earth like the way how a potter shapes an earthen vessel.</td>
<td><em>Isa 45:18</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farmer</strong></td>
<td>Yahweh’s act of spreading out the earth and bringing forth its produces (progeny) pictures Him as a farmer.</td>
<td><em>Isa 42:5; 45:18</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Builder or Architect</strong></td>
<td>Yahweh’s act of opening rivers from the bare heights, making pool of waters in the wilderness and His act of establishing the earth firmly illustrate Him as a builder or architect.</td>
<td><em>Isa 41:18-19; 43:19; 45:18</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sculptor</strong></td>
<td>The entire creation is a creative work of Yahweh who has crafted it like a skillful sculptor.</td>
<td><em>Isa 40:28</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the outset, the human-occupational-imageries depict the contextual influences of DI whose imagination was highly influenced by what he had witnessed in his day-to-day life affairs. However, to the greatest extent, Yahweh’s handiwork of His innovative creative activities which is personified with human skills categorically draws the attention of the readers to perceive that ‘Yahweh is
also at work’ like any other skillful artisan or gardener or potter. Moreover, by identifying Yahweh’s creative activities with human vocations, a fine human-touch has been rendered to the actions of Yahweh as creator, who feels and touches the things that He creates, shapes, forms, crafts, plants, constructs or establishes.

Most of these human occupational models have less significance in society, however, they are inevitable, and at the same time, they are mandatory for the sustenance of human society. Nevertheless, such human occupations also demand innovative ideas in order to skillfully materialize their unique imaginations. Therefore, Yahweh is relating and identifying Himself with human experiences through which human skillfulness is acknowledged. Moreover, the personification of the creator God ‘Yahweh’ in human occupational forms underscores that this God of Israel is a God who dwells among His people or in other words Yahweh stands in relationship with the entire cosmos. However, the superiority of Yahweh is also subtly emphasized: Yahweh, the creator God, who possesses the skills of versatile human vocations cannot be crafted in any carved forms by any skillful artisan.

The second major thesis is that, the Deutero-Isaianic passages which treat the subject of ‘creation’ offer a fresh and new perspectives to the theology of creation which is at least evident from the passages that are exegeted. The various ways in which Yahweh creates and recreates have a purpose and that can be subtly or obviously seen in the chosen passages (Isa 40:12-31; 41:17-20; 42:5-9; 43:16-20; 45:18-19). It is self-evident that one of the foremost functions that is underlined in the creation texts is that the people of Israel or the nations (i.e., the people of the entire world) should acknowledge and perceive that the entire cosmos and all that in it which one witnesses is the handiwork of Yahweh and therefore, Yahweh only has to be recognized as the creator. However, apart from this preferential and accustomed statement which DI subtly and explicitly employs to uphold the creatorship of Yahweh as distinct and unparalleled in comparison with the other so-called creators of ANE texts, still the various purposes of Yahweh’s creative works are obvious and a gist of those insights are as follows:

Firstly, the acts of the creator ‘Yahweh’ are personified in human-occupational-imageries in order to accentuate that ‘God is at work’ and He relates Himself with the experiences of the common people.

Secondly, creation is defined as renewal or restoration. The creator (i.e., Yahweh) not only engages in the process of creation, but He also renews or recreates and revitalizes His chosen people in order to give hope in their hopeless situations (Isa 40:27-31). Thereby, the act of creation is not projected as a one-time event that happened in the past, but it is a continuous process and moreover, on the other hand, Yahweh not only creates things, but He also renews the situations
and minds of the people. This unique act of Yahweh differentiates Himself from the other creators (perhaps Marduk of Enûma eliš).

Thirdly, transformation of nature or recreation is initiated in order to meet the needs of the poor and needy (Isa 41:17-20). The preference for the poor and needy in Yahweh’s created order is precisely underlined in this passage especially, in the manner how Yahweh Himself takes initiative to bring forth waters resources and to plant various trees – ‘His hand has made or created this.’ Thus, it is obvious that Deutero-Isaianic concept of creation incorporated the poor and needy.

Yahweh’s purpose of stretching the heavens like a curtain and spreading them out like a tent is emphasized repeatedly (Isa 40:21-24; 42:5; 45:18). Yahweh created everything in order that the entire creation can dwell or live in it. The purpose of forming the tent, i.e., the sky and earth, is to make it a place of dwelling for all – His chosen people, other nations and rest of the creation. This is specifically underlined once again in Isa 45:18, whereby it says, He formed the earth and made it; He established it; He did not create it as chaos; ‘He formed it to be inhabited.’

Fourthly, Yahweh’s act of spreading forth the earth and bringing forth its offspring (Isa 42:5) which includes the produce of the earth and progeny of humankind and animals emphatically underscores the purpose of Yahweh’s creation. On the one hand it indicates the multiplication of offspring and on the other, the produce of the earth denotes subtly that it is for all and there should the equal access and distribution of resources to all created beings.

Finally, a reconciled model of creation has been highlighted in Isa 43:16-21 whereby Yahweh’s ability of transforming the nature is depict. Any sort of creation should not bring destruction in any form and this aspect is stressed and formulated citing exodus narrative to differentiate how the new creation incorporates all (including the so-called unclean animals) and brings life to all.

Therefore, one can observe, that the Deutero-Isaianic creation texts carve a new paradigm in understanding the purpose of the creation and re-creative handiwork of Yahweh in which not only the chosen people but also other nations and the rest of the creation have space. Hence, a universal outlook of the creator ‘Yahweh’ and His creative actions occupy the central position in the Deutero-Isaianic theme of ‘creation.’ Moreover, in spite of the Babylonian influences, in the form of contextual realities and the presupposed oral-material influences from other creation texts (Enûma eliš), yet Deutero-Isaianic rhetorical nuances of creation have been developed alongside with their own emphasis and moreover, this is evident from the versatile textual nuances and rhetoric styles that are employed by DI in the passages concerning creation.
Although creation theology plays a major role in the other books, e.g., Psalms, where Yahweh as creator is celebrated within the framework of meditation, still they have Ugaritic influences than Akkadian. In addition, one can observe that the human-occupational-imageries of creator Yahweh appear more explicitly and implicitly in DI than in the book of Psalms or the other books of the OT. Therefore, the subject of creation in DI is more significant and vital in its presentation which brings a universal outlook to the creation as well as to the creator. Above all, the meticulous study of the subject of creation in the Deutero-Isaianic passages not only unfolds rich nuances about the creator and creation, it also asserts and affirms strongly that the theme ‘creation’ has its own significance without being subordinate to any other themes.
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