ICONIC VISUALIZATION AND THE IMAGINAL BODY OF GOD: THE ROLE OF INTENTION IN THE RABBINIC CONCEPTION OF PRAYER

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God incarnate: Beyond the rhetoric of anthropomorphic representation

The general impression that one gets from historians of religion is that Judaism has officially rejected incarnation as a legitimate theological position. Indeed, a commonplace in scholarly literature, reflected as well in popular consciousness, is that one of the critical theological differences between Judaism and Christianity lies precisely in the fact that the latter officially adopted (after the middle of the third century) as a central tenet the belief in the incarnation of God in the body of Jesus. As stated in the council of Nicaea in 325, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, is "of the same substance" (*homoousios*) as God the Father. Whatever Judaic elements helped give shape to the early formation of Christianity, it is presumed that this particular dimension of the nascent religion could not have been derived from Judaism inasmuch as the latter rejects the corporeal imaging of God and the more radical claim that God can inhabit a body.[1] Judged from the Judaic perspective, therefore, the Christological doctrine of incarnation, which Gregory of Nyssa aptly called the "mystery of our faith,"[2] is a scandalous blasphemy that undermines scriptural monotheism.[3]

Thus far the stereotypical characterization of Judaism and Christianity. Like most stereotypes there is a measure of truth to this one, but it is grossly

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oversimplified. While it may be valid to conclude that the particular expression of incarnation in Christianity has neither precedent in the ancient Israelite religion nor parallel in any of the varieties of Judaism in late antiquity that were contemporaneous with the emerging religion, this does not mean that the doctrine of incarnation in general is antithetical to Judaism. On the contrary, as Jacob Neusner has observed, the idea of incarnation unique to Christianity should be viewed as the "particular framing" of the conception of incarnation that was idiomatic to various Judaic authors.[4] By reclaiming the significance of incarnation in the history of Judaism, therefore, one can simultaneously acknowledge the common ground and the uniqueness of this doctrine in the two religious cultures.

To appreciate the place that the concept of incarnation occupies in the spiritual economy of Judaism, one must relate this particular issue to the larger problem of anthropomorphism, the figural representation of God in human terms. In his book on the incarnation of God in formative rabbinic Judaism, Neusner begins with ,this obvious point: "Anthropomorphism forms the genus of which incarnation constitutes a species."[5] In the history of Judaism the problem of anthropomorphism has been directly related to the question of iconic representation.[6] According to a growing consensus in biblical scholarship, textual and archaeological evidence indicates that for the ancient Israelites the issue was not God's corporeality, but the problem of materially representing the divine in corporeal images.[7] The official cult, already in the early monarchic period, was aniconic, but this aniconism did not imply the incorporeality of God. Recently it has even been suggested that the prohibition of iconic representation was related to the taboo of seeing and portraying God's phallus.[8] Of late a variety of scholars have also reexamined the centrality of anthropomorphic representation in the mythic imagination of the rabbis.[9] Although it is premature to speak of a scholarly consensus in this area, we may refer to a new paradigm that is emerging with respect to our appreciation of the mythopoeic nature of rabbinic theological pronouncements.

But what of the notion of incarnation itself: Is there any evidence that belief in divine incarnation is part and parcel of the patrimony of ancient Israelite faith, which served in turn as the basis for subsequent developments in the history of Judaism? The scholar who has dealt with this question in the most systematic way is Neusner, to whose work I have already referred. Yet, as I pointed out in my review of Neusner's monograph,[10] the word "incarnation" is used by him to refer to the representation of God in human form.[11] Incarnation is thus reduced to a rhetorical trope, for to speak of the body of God means depicting God metaphorically in embodied terms. Thus, according to Neusner, the incarnation of God reaches its most perfect expression in the Babylonian Talmud because God is represented in that literary compilation as a "fully spelled out and individual personality: divinity in the form of humanity."[12]

The textual evidence adduced by Neusner does not amount to proof of a conception of incarnation distinguished from anthropomorphic figuration. Describing God as one who wears phylacteries or as a sage wrapped in a prayer shawl are striking examples of the rabbinic utilization of anthropomorphic expressions to convey religious truths, but they are a far cry from positing an incarnational theology predicated on the notion that God can assume a physical appearance or that he/she can be manifest in the flesh.[13] Phenomenologically, the doctrine of incarnation is not merely a rhetorical matter, for it implies an ontological transubstantiation. To say that God is incarnate is to claim something more than that God can be represented metaphorically as a human being. Incarnation is not merely a way to speak of God; it implies that the divine is embodied, whether we understand that embodiment veridically or docetically, a philosophical issue that divided Christian interpreters from an early period.[14]

In this study I examine one example of an incarnational doctrine in rabbinic theology related to the topic of *kawwanah*, intentionality in prayer. I will suggest that *kawwanah*, at least according to one trajectory that can be traced in rabbinic writings, entailed a visual apprehension of the divine predicated on the belief that God can assume an incarnate form. Thus, I am using the word "incarnation" to refer to the ontic presencing of God in a theophanic image. Underlying the rabbinic discussions on intentionality in prayer is the notion of God's imaginal body. By "imaginal body" I wish to convey the idea that the somatic form of God inheres in the human imagination as a symbolic configuration.[15] Within the aniconic framework of classical Judaism, only such a body could be ascribed to God. This does not mean, however, that the rabbinic texts that speak of God's body are to be deciphered as merely allegorical or metaphorical. On the contrary, the language of the texts points to an experience of divine embodiment. One of the key ways to access that body in the symbolic imagination is through prayer.

Prayer and the iconic visualization of God's body

Scholars have generally agreed that the rabbinic idea of *kawwanah*, as it pertains particularly to the recitation of the *Shema'* and the *'Amidah*, entails primarily mental focus or directing the heart to God so that all potentially diverting thoughts are impeded.[16] What has not been sufficiently explored in the scholarly analyses, however, has been the iconic dimension of *kawwanah* and the role of the imagination.[17] Specifically, the thesis that I shall put forth is that the intention implied by this *terminus technicus* in several key rabbinic passages involves the formation of an iconic image of God within the mind (or heart).[18] The term *kawwanah*, therefore, refers to an internal state of consciousness by means of which the worshiper creates a mental icon of God, the function of which is to locate the divine presence in space. In this state of

consciousness the phenomenal boundaries of inside and outside dissolve, for only by means of the internal image does the worshiper experience the divine as external. Through the proper *kawwanah* the heart of the devotee becomes the throne upon which God dwells at the same time that God is transformed into the throne upon which the devotee dwells.[19]

The phenomenological assonance of this rabbinic term can be gauged from a proper attentiveness to its philological ground. The word *kawwanah* is derived from the word *kiwwen* (from the root *kwn*), which means "to turn" or "to face a particular direction" (the word for direction is *kiwwun*). Whatever layers of signification and hermeneutical transformations the term has assumed in rabbinic sources through different historical periods, something of its etymological foundation is retained, for at the core *kawwanah* in prayer involves a turning of the head in a given direction. This intentional facing underlies the ideal of mental concentration, the setting and focusing of the mind on a fixed object and the blocking out of all distracting thoughts.[20] Thus the Mishnah apodictically declares, "One should not rise to pray [the *'Amidah*] save through heaviness of the head."[21] The state of mind referred to as *koved ro'sh*, which I have translated as "heaviness of the head," is achieved by means of proper mental concentration.[22] It is clearly for this reason that, immediately after the aforecited dictum, the redactor(s) of the Mishnah placed the tradition about the ancient pietists who used to wait one hour before they began their prayers "in order to direct their hearts to God," *kede she-yikhawwenu 'et libbam la-maqom*.[23] The case of the ancient pietists provides a particular example of the general rule established in the opening remark. The point is further underscored in the concluding comment of this section of the Mishnah, "even if a king asks about his welfare, he should not respond, and even if a serpent is clinging to his heel, he should not stop." The worshiper's concentration must be so intense that nothing—neither king nor serpent—should divert his attention.

There is a recognition on the part of some rabbis that such a state must be fostered by preparatory mental exercises. Thus, according to another rabbinic dictum, "one should not rise to pray out of conversation, play, or lightheadedness, but only out of words of wisdom."[24] The reference to "words of wisdom," *devarim shel ḥokhmah*, which in a parallel text appears as *davar shel torah*, "word of Torah,"[25] signifies that engagement with intellectual matters helps focus the mind. Study thus prepares the individual for worship. The need for undivided mental concentration is also conveyed in a teaching attributed to R. Eliezer: "A person should always ascertain with respect to himself, if he can direct his heart, then he should pray, but if not, then he should not pray."[26] Intentionality, according to this viewpoint, is not only desired, it is absolutely required, for without the proper focus of mind one cannot pray. Less extreme, and perhaps eminently more practical, opinions have been espoused by different rabbinic authorities over the ages, but it would have been universally agreed in the rabbinic academies, as one

may deduce from the preserved written documents, that prayer as a matter of halakhic necessity demands mental attention.[27] That the internal state of *kawwanah* is related, moreover, to specific external gestures seems to be implied by the tradition, reported by R. Judah, regarding R. Aqiva's excessive kneelings and prostrations when he prayed alone.[28] At the very least, this is how the redactor of this section understood the import of this tradition and thus it is placed right after the general rabbinic statement that the worshiper must direct his heart to heaven.[29] Another physical gesture related to cultivating the proper intention is the general standing posture required by prayer (based on biblical precedent and the posture required in the sacrificial rite) and more specifically to the need to keep one's feet together.[30]

The aforecited statements epitomize the attitude about prayer prevalent in the rabbinic circles, reflected in one of the key terms used to refer to prayer, *'avodah ba-lev* (or, alternatively, *'avodah she-ba-lev*), "worship of the heart."[31] Based principally on the proximity of the words *'avodah* and *lev* in the verse, "to love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart" (Deut. 11:13), the rabbis coined the idiom *'avodah ba-lev* to underscore that prayer must be a heartfelt and mindful experience.[32] The rabbinic ideal of *kawwanat ha-lev* connotes in a general sense mental concentration and contemplative focus, a practice referred to occasionally in the Babylonian Talmud as *'iyyun tefillah*, "meditation in prayer."[33] I suggest, moreover, that, according to some rabbinic authorities, this directing of the heart entailed conjuring a mental image of God, which serves as the object of prayer. Concentration is thus achieved through the faculty of the imagination, a motif that is developed at length in medieval mystical and devotional sources. This is implied, for instance, in the teaching attributed to Simeon the Pious, reported by Ḥana ben Bizna: "The one who prays must see himself as if the *Shekhinah* were opposite him, as it says, 'I have set the Lord always before me' (Ps. 16:8)."[34] The essential thought underlying the teaching of Simeon the Pious is that prayer is predicated on the imaginary presencing of God, a process referred to in the idiomatic rabbinic Hebrew, *ha-mitpallel ṣarikh she-yir'eh 'aṣmo ke'illu shekhinah kenegdo*.[35] The term *ke'illu*, "as if," resonates with semiotic vibrancy, signifying that the worshiper must imaginatively represent the *Shekhinah* in iconic form.[36] The hypothetical "as if" has the power to bridge the ontic chasm that separates different spheres of being or the historical chasm that separates two periods of time.[37] The *ke'illu* functions, therefore, as the hermeneutical key that opens the mind onto the horizon of myth, which is neither true nor false, but a symbolic construct that blurs the distinction between imagined and real. Indeed, the imaginal world of the "as if" is in some sense more real that the empirical and historical realm of space and time.

In the particular case that I am discussing, the *ke'illu* homologizes the act of prayer and the visionary representation of the *Shekhinah*. Prayer is ritually transformed by the formulaic *ke'illu* into the mental imaging of the divine.

The iconic representation, which involves ascribing anthropomorphic characteristics to God, is related by Simeon the Pious to the verse, "I have set the Lord always before me," *shiwwiti yhwh lenegddi tamid*. Once again, philology can enhance our phenomenological sensibility: *shiwwiti*, which is derived from *shawah*, "to make equal," conveys the analogical function of the imaginal symbol,[38] which allows the inexpressible to be expressed and the nonrepresentable to be represented.[39] The Psalmist's utterance, *shiwwiti yhwh lenegddi tamid*, can be converted semantically to "I form an image in my mind constantly." This is exactly what is implied in the aphorism of Simeon the Pious: the worshiper must symbolically represent the divine presence by imagining God anthropomorphically, for in the absence of this imaginary form there is no image and without an image there is nothing to worship.[40] It is plausible that reflected in the statement of Simeon the Pious is an actual praxis performed by a fraternity of pietists to which he belonged. I suspect, moreover, that imaginative visualization is implied in the tradition recorded in the Mishnah regarding the ancient pietists to which I referred above. The specific context in which this tradition appears suggests that the issue of directing the heart to God involved total concentration. Beyond that, however, I conjecture that this act involved the imaging of God as an anthropomorphic presence, the phenomenological condition that makes prayer in a theistic sense possible.

Imago templi and the localization of God's body in sacred space

From other passages in the rabbinic corpus one may deduce that *kawwanah* entailed in a primary sense the imaginal localization of God in space. One may distinguish two main approaches in the relevant rabbinic comments regarding the precise place wherein God is localized through the imagination.[41] According to one line of thinking, the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctum of the Temple in Jerusalem, is the object of mental intention. This view is based on the biblical conception of the Temple as the building wherein the imageless God of Israel, who could not be represented in material shape, assumed a visible form. The Jerusalem Temple lacked any central cult image, an icon of the deity, but within its spatial confines God could be imaged, especially as an anthropomorphic figure seated upon the throne in the palace-shrine of the Holy of Holies.[42] Moreover, it is evident from a number of biblical verses that the Temple was perceived (both within and outside the geographical boundaries of the land of Israel) as the central locality to which prayers were directed.[43] In light of the fact that the Holy of Holies was understood to be the locus of theophany and the primary place to which prayers were addressed, one can well understand why the rabbis continued to think of that place in particular as the space wherein the divine could be imaginatively visualized through a process of mental concentration associated with liturgical worship.[44] The rabbinic attitude is typified in the

anonymous remark, "Whoever prays in that place in Jerusalem it is as if he prayed before the throne of glory, for the gateway to heaven is there and an opening is opened for prayer to be heard, as it says, 'for this is the gateway to heaven' (Gen. 28:17)."[45] The significance of praying at the site of the Temple is linked to the fact that it is the gateway to heaven through which prayers are received. The earthly Temple is assigned this role because of the ontic correspondence between it and the celestial Temple.[46] More specifically, the ark that is within the Holy of Holies corresponds to the throne of glory, and just as the *Shekhinah* above assumes material shape upon the throne, so below the *Shekhinah* can be imaged in tangible form upon the ark. By praying in the place of the Temple, therefore, one is imaginatively transported to the celestial realm, *kol ha-mitpallel be-maqom ha-zeh bi-yerushalayim ke'illu mitpallel lifne kisse' ha-kavod.* We note, again, the hermeneutical power of the *ke'illu* to effect the imaginary transport across ontological boundaries, in this case from the Temple in Jerusalem to the glorious throne in heaven.

That the presence of God in the Temple was viewed by the rabbis as an object of visual contemplation in a cultic context is implied in the mishnaic description of the water-drawing ceremony on the second night of the festival of Sukkot. When the procession of celebrants reached the gate leading eastward, they turned to the west and said, "Our ancestors who were in this place, 'their backs were to the Temple of the Lord and their faces to the east; they were bowing low to the sun in the east' (Ezek. 8:16). But we are [turned] to the Lord and our eyes are [turned] to the Lord."[47] In contrast to the idolatrous worship, which consisted of prostrating the body in the direction of the sun in the east, the legitimate liturgical worship was dependent on the physical gesture of facing west, an act that facilitated the ocular apprehension of the divine within the spatial confines of the Temple. The westward orientation of the Temple ritual was applied in other passages to prayer, as we find, for example, in the following dictum transmitted in the name of R. Joshua ben Levi: "We must be grateful to our forefathers for they informed us of the place of worship, as it says, 'and the host of heaven prostrate themselves before You' (Neh. 9:6)."[48] Just as the host of heavenly bodies, including the sun, move from east to west and thus prostrate themselves before God in the west, so, too, the Jewish people must direct their prayers in that direction. The implicit theological presumption here, which also had an impact on the architectural planning and construction of synagogues from Late Antiquity,[49] is stated succinctly in another maxim, attributed alternatively to R. Abbahu and to R. Joshua ben Levi, "the *Shekhinah* is in the west."[50]

This orientation is epitomized in the rabbinic dictum that those outside the land of Israel must direct their concentration during worship to the land, those in the land to Jerusalem, those in Jerusalem to the Temple, and those standing on the Temple mount to the Holy of Holies.[51] That the mental

intention here manifests itself kinetically is evident from a careful scrutiny of the language employed in the relevant passages. The version of this dictum in the Tosefta (Berakhot 3:15) begins, *ha-'omdim be-ḥuṣah la-'areṣ mekhawwenin 'et libbam keneged 'ereṣ yisra'el*, and, similarly, the Babylonian Talmud (Berakhot 30a) reads, *hayah 'omed be-huṣ la-'areṣ yekhawwen 'et libbo keneged 'ereṣ yisra'el*.[52] By contrast, the version in the Palestinian Talmud (Berakhot 4:5) begins, *ha-'omdim u-mitpallelin be-ḥuṣah la-'areṣ hofkhin 'et penehen kelappe 'ereṣ yisra'el*, and, similarly, *Sifre Devarim* reads, *ha-'omdim be-ḥuṣah la-'ares hofkhim penehem keneged 'ereṣ yisra'el*.[53] In my view, the semantic variant is negligible, for the directing of one's heart, which lies at the basis of *kawwanah*, is fundamentally a turning of the face. The progressively narrowing focus of the spatial orientation serves the purpose of unifying the people of Israel, for all prayers are to be directed ultimately to the one place that was perceived to be the cosmic navel, the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Jerusalem.[54] The mandate to orient prayer towards Jerusalem underlies the following maxim reported by R. Ḥiyya bar Abba in the name of R. Yoḥanan: "A person should only pray in a house that has windows, as it says, 'in the upper chamber he had windows facing Jerusalem [and three times a day he knelt down, prayed, and made confession to his God]' (Dan. 6:11)."[55] The scriptural prooftext clearly reveals that the necessity of placing windows in a house of worship is to allow the one who prays to emulate Daniel who directed his prayers to Jerusalem.[56]

The sociological function of this orientation is evident in two other rabbinic rulings, the first concerns the worship of one who is riding on an ass and the second the worship of one who is riding on a boat, a wagon, or a raft. According to the mishnaic formulation of the first case, the individual is directed to dismount the animal in order to recite his prayer, but if he cannot do so, he should turn to face Jerusalem, and if he cannot do that, he should direct his thoughts to the Holy of Holies in the Temple.[57] The language of the version of this dictum preserved in the Tosefta is slightly different: if one is available to hold the ass, the person should dismount and pray, but if not, then he should pray in his place, i.e., while mounted on the animal. According to the opinion of R. Judah, referred to simply as "Rabbi," whether there is someone to hold the ass or not, the person can pray while still being mounted on the animal provided that his heart is properly focused.[58] In the Palestinian Talmud the teaching of Rabbi Judah has the following textual variant: the one mounted on the ass should pray from that position "for in that way his heart is settled."[59] Another version of the Tosefta is cited in the Babylonian Talmud as a baraita of the rabbis. In that case the statement of R. Judah is that one who is riding on an ass should pray from that position because "his mind is not settled."[60] R. Judah is not presenting a theoretical alternative to the demand that the worshiper must have the Temple of Jerusalem in mind. On the contrary, I presume that the Tosefta preserves the best reading: the physical position of the worshiper is immaterial, for the

essential thing is that he direct his heart to the place that is considered sacred. According to the variant readings, the main issue is a purely practical one: the traveler will be more relaxed if he does not have to dismount the beast of burden.[61]

In a manner consonant with the dictum regarding one who is riding an ass, the theological principle underlying the law pertaining to one who is riding on a boat, a wagon, or raft is that the Holy of Holies is the focal point of religious devotion and piety.[62] The selection of the Holy of Holies as the object of visual contemplation is related to the larger nexus established in rabbinic writings between prayer and sacrifice, synagogue worship and Temple service. As a variety of scholars have noted, in the Second Temple period prayer began to occupy a more central place in the religious lives of Jews as the significance of sacrifices diminished; indeed, we are justified in speaking of the use of prayers in the Temple even if it is likely that the obligatory prayer of the synagogue service evolved independently.[63] It is thus incorrect to view the institution of prayer as a sudden attempt on the part of the rabbis to compensate for the cultural castration brought on by the destruction of the Temple,[64] but it is nonetheless clear that this event helped catalyze the institutionalization of statutory and fixed prayer as a communal activity. Furthermore, the rabbis consciously modeled the structure and rites of liturgy on the basis of the sacrificial cult. The particular issue of the worshiper's directing his intention to the Holy of Holies is one example of the deep symbolic affinity between Temple and Synagogue.[65] Just as one made a sacred pilgrimage to the holy site of the Temple where sacrifices were offered and the divine Presence was visually encountered, so in the moment of prayer one contemplates and imagines the form of God in that very site.[66]

The determinative factor for the rabbis, however, is not the physical existence of the Temple, but the valorization of the ground where it once stood as sacred. Presumably, the gesture of facing the Temple during prayer applies even after it has been destroyed.[67] Thus, we find the following expansion in the Palestinian Talmud on the tannaitic statement that all of Israel direct their prayers to one place, *kol yisra'el mitpallelin le-maqom 'eḥad*[68]:

> It follows that all of Israel pray to one place, as it is written, "For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isa. 56:7). R. Joshua ben Levi said [this may be derived from the verse], "the front part of the house," *hu' ha-heikhal lifnay* (1 Kings 6:17), [which should be decoded as] inside the house to which all faces are turned (*lifnim heikhal she-kol ha-panim ponim lo*). [This makes sense] during the time that it was built, but from where do we know [that this is so] after it is destroyed? R. Abun said [it may be derived from the verse] "built to hold weapons," *banuy le-talpiyyot* (Song of Songs 4:4) [this refers to] the hill towards which all mouths pray (*tel she-kol ha-piyyot mitpallelin 'alaw*).[69]

The Temple is designated the "hill towards which all mouths pray," or, according to the variant in the Babylonian Talmud, the "hill towards which all mouths are turned,"[70] even after it has been destroyed for it retains its function as the locus of visionary intention in worship. The memory of the Temple's existence is sufficient to endow the space where it once stood with sacred significance. Alternatively expressed, the injunction to face the Temple may be another example of the rabbinic authorities behaving as if the Temple were standing so that liturgical worship could assume the ritual efficacy of the sacrificial cult.[71] Far from fading from the spiritual economy of the Jews, the Temple is transformed symbolically into a ritual space in which there is a convergence of physical and virtual reality. In more conventional phenomenological terms it may be said that the space of the Temple is sacred because the worshiper endows it with meaning by noetically directing his prayers to it. The demand that prayer is principally oriented towards the Temple, even after its destruction, and the related theological claim that the *Shekhinah* does not depart from that place, do not necessarily entail an implicit messianic hope.[72] On the contrary, the claims for the enduring sanctity of the Temple as the locus for the imaginary visualization of God betoken that the messianic expectation has given way to a pietistic quietism according to which proper intention in prayer more than adequately fulfills the spiritual function of the Temple and its sacrificial cult.

According to the second line of thinking expressed by rabbinic authorities, the object of *kawwanah* is not the earthly Temple but the celestial one. Such a view is consistent with those who maintained that the ultimate purpose of *kawwanah* is to direct one's attention to God, believed by the rabbis to occupy a throne in heaven. Thus, for example, in the Palestinian Talmud there is the following explanation of the mishnaic ruling, referred to above, that if one is riding on an ass he should descend before he prays, and if he cannot descend he should turn his head toward the Temple, and if he cannot turn his head physically he should direct the concentration of his heart to the Temple: "To which Temple? R. Ḥiyya the Great said the Temple above, and R. Simeon ben Halafta said the Temple below. R. Pineḥas said there is no disagreement between them for the Temple below parallels the Temple above."[73] According to R. Ḥiyya, the worshiper, who is at a distance from the earthly Temple, must direct his mind to the heavenly Temple because the latter is the true locus of visionary devotion. It is possible that the opinion of R. Ḥiyya is a tacit rejection of, or at least an open alternative to, the practice of visionary ascensions to the heavenly Temple cultivated by apocalyptic and/or mystical fraternities.[74] That is to say, R. Ḥiyya's position implies that the way to make contact with God in the celestial abode is through proper mental concentration rather than by means of an ascent, whether in or out of body. R. Simeon ben Ḥalafta, in contrast to R. Ḥiyya, is of the opinion that the physical locality of the earthly Temple must be the object of one's *kawwanah*. Even in the absence of the Temple one must direct one's mental

concentration to the place where the Temple stood. The Palestinian amora, Pineḥas bar Ḥama, ostensibly resolves the dispute between the two tannaim by affirming the parallelism between the celestial and terrestrial Temples: by directing attention to the one the worshiper is concomitantly directing his attention to the other.[75]

The shift from physical to imaginal space is clearly evident in another tannaitic ruling: a blind person and someone who cannot orient himself in space, and therefore cannot discern the direction of Jerusalem, must direct the attention of their hearts to God in heaven when they pray, *mekhawwenin 'et libbam keneged 'avihem she-ba-shamayim u-mitpallelin.*[76] The logical implication of this halakhic injunction is clear: the real object of intention is the divine Presence and thus those who cannot visually orient themselves in the spatial world (even to the degree of blindness) must concentrate their mental focus on the heavenly abode of God. The point is driven home in the second statement attributed generically to the rabbis: "The worshiper must direct his heart to [God who is in] heaven. Abba Saul said, a sign for this matter [can be found in the verse] 'You will make their hearts firm, You will incline Your ear' (Ps. 10:17)."[77] The implication of the dictum, *ha-mitpallel ṣarikh she-yikhawwen 'et libbo la-shamayim*, is that the obligation to pray is only fulfilled when the one who prays has directed his heart to God, here referred to metonymically by the term *shamayim*, for it is assumed that heaven is the permanent location of the divine.[78] Mental iconography (realized in imaginal space) replaces physical geography. One might argue that the example of the blind person mitigates against my view that *kawwanah* entails a visionary element or an iconic depiction of God. But the understanding of blindness in this particular context does not necessitate or validate such a claim. On the contrary, the supposition is that the blind person, much as the one who cannot find his bearings in space, can still visually direct the mind's eye to God in the heavenly chamber. The heterogeneity of the invisible to the visible is challenged by the fact that the invisible itself enters the realm of the spectacle inasmuch as the task assigned to the human imagination is to form an image by means of which the invisible is seen.[79] Indeed, the rationale for pairing the blind person and the one who cannot determine spatial directions is that in both cases physical sight, which proves to be of no avail in the process of worship, is replaced by mental vision and the object of intention is God in heaven rather than the glory in the Temple. The transference of the scopic field from the earthly to the celestial only underscores that *kawwanah* in its originary sense entailed the visual representation of the divine as a spectacular object.[80]

The displacement of which I speak is implied as well in the tradition attributed to R. Yose, "the one who prays should cast his eyes below and his heart above."[81] Contextually, this opinion is presented as a compromise between the opposing views of R. Ḥiyya and R. Simeon ben Judah ha-Nasi, for according to the latter the one who prays must cast his eyes below to the

earthly Temple, a view linked exegetically to the verse, "My eyes and My heart shall ever be there' (1 Kings 9:3), whereas according to the former the one who prays must direct his heart above to the heavenly Temple,[82] a position supported by the verse, "Let us lift up our hearts with our hands to God in heaven" (Lam. 3:40). R. Yose's opinion fosters a split consciousness predicated on the ontological assumption that the Temple above parallels the Temple below. The worshiper can simultaneously look in the direction of the Temple below and contemplate the Temple above because there is perfect symmetry between the two. According to various medieval Talmudic commentators, the instruction of R. Yose is removed from any specific reference to the Temple, that is, the contrast is between physically looking down and mentally directing one's heart above.[83] Other commentators, by contrast, well understood that the gestures recommended by R. Yose are related more specifically to the image of the Temple on the earthly and heavenly planes. Thus, commenting on the words "his eyes below," Solomon ben Isaac (Rashi) remarks: "towards the land of Israel because the *Shekhinah* exists there." An attempt to synthesize the two interpretative positions is found in the statement of Jacob ben Asher, although it is evident that he recognized that the primary meaning followed the orientation of Rashi:

> He should bend his head down a bit so that his eyes will be below toward the ground, as it says, "My eyes and My heart shall ever be there" (1 Kings 9:3), and we pray facing the Temple. Therefore, he must cast his eyes below corresponding to it, and it will be considered as if he were standing in it and praying, and with his heart he should concentrate above, as it says, "Let us lift up our hearts with our hands to God in heaven" (Lam. 3:40).[84]

The import of R. Yose's statement, as Jacob ben Asher's explanation makes clear, is that proper intention in prayer demands the split consciousness of which I spoke above, that is, looking with the eyes towards the Temple in Jerusalem and contemplating with the heart the Temple in heaven. In an even more dramatic vein, Jonah ben Abraham Gerondi, in the commentary compiled by one of his disciples on Isaac ben Jacob Alfasi's register of laws and customs derived from Berakhot, relates to the talmudic claim that the worshiper "must cast his eyes below and his heart above" a twofold imaginative process:

> He should contemplate in his heart as if he were standing in heaven, and he removes from his heart all delights of this world and all pleasures of the body, in the manner that the ancients said, "when you wish to focus [the mind] you should strip your body from your soul."[85] After he has attained this thought, he should also contemplate as if he were standing in the Temple that is below, for by means of this his prayer is more pleasing to God.[86]

This passage, which the disciple of R. Jonah transmitted as a direct (and perhaps oral) tradition "from the mouth of my teacher, the rabbi," affirms that *kawwanah* requires that the worshiper imagine that he is standing, initially, in the heavenly Temple and, secondarily, in the earthly Temple. The mystical pietism of R. Jonah, in my opinion, is consonant with the symbolic intent of the *imago templi* operative in R. Yose's teaching. Furthermore, it is clear that with respect to this issue, as in several others, R. Jonah's view reflects an orientation that is in full accord with the esoteric teaching of Haside Ashkenaz,[87] which I have discussed at length elsewhere.[88]

God's imaginal body and the sanctity of the synagogue

From the detailed analysis of the rabbinic texts that I have offered in the previous section, it may be concluded that the rabbis themselves, both within and outside the land of Israel, presumed that the transcendent and imageless God could be manifest in a visible, tangible form through prayer. Even though the rabbis clearly would not have articulated an incarnational theology of the kind affirmed by Christianity, they attempted in their own way to keep alive the theophanic traditions attested in Scripture. The effort to mediate between the aniconic and iconic tendencies resulted in the positing of what I have called the "imaginal body." I have focused, moreover, on prayer, which is one of the key ways affirmed by the rabbis to access that body. Indeed, a central phenomenological feature of the rabbinic understanding of intentionality in liturgical worship is the localization of the divine Presence in space.

If one begins from the theological premise that God is omnipresent, then it would follow that wherever one prayed, the Presence would be there. Yet, rabbinic authorities insisted on the importance of circumscribing prayer within the spatial confines of the synagogue. "R. Abba [in the name of] R. Ḥiyya in the name of R. Yoḥanan said: A person must pray in a place that is designated for prayer ... R. Tanḥum bar Ḥanina said: A person must designate a place within the synagogue to pray."[89] The mandate to establish a fixed place of worship within the synagogue generated a variety of ethical and pietistic teachings,[90] but the essential point for the purposes of this analysis is to note that the distinctiveness of the synagogue is related to the assumption that the presence of God is found in that space.[91] The point is accentuated in a statement attributed to R. Abbahu: " 'Seek the Lord while He can be found' (Isa. 55:6). Where is He found? In the houses of worship and the houses of study."[92] In another statement, ascribed to R. Isaac, the same idea is derived from the verse, "God stands in the divine assembly" (Ps. 82:1), i.e., the gathering of worshipers is compared to a divine assembly, *'adat 'el*, in which God is found.[93] The synagogue is viewed, like the Tabernacle and the Temple, as a sacred site wherein God dwells.

It is preferable, therefore, to pray in the synagogue, an opinion that is expressed hyperbolically in the dictum attributed to Abba Benjamin: "The prayer of a person is not heard except in the synagogue, as it says, '[Yet turn, O Lord my God, to the prayer and supplication of Your servant,] and hear the cry and prayer [that Your servant offers before You this day]' (1 Kings 8:28), in the place where there is crying there is prayer."[94] The underlying rationale here is the homology that the rabbis made between the Temple and the synagogue: just as the former was the permanent place of God's dwelling so, too, the latter. It is thus not coincidental that the interpretation (attributed to R. Isaac) of the expression "diminished sanctuary" (*miqdash me'aṭ*) in Ezek. 11:16 as referring to "the houses of worship and the houses of study in Babylonia" is contextualized in B. Megillah 29a after Abbaye's statement that the *Shekhinah* in Babylonia was limited to two well-known synagogues. The statement of Abbaye is itself placed by the redactor of the text after the dictum attributed to R. Simeon ben Yoḥai that the *Shekhinah* accompanies Israel in all of their exiles. The position of Abbaye is a modification of the more general claim of R. Simeon ben Yoḥai: the *Shekhinah* is present with the Jewish people, but only within the sacred space of select synagogues. The comment of R. Isaac similarly qualifies the viewpoint of R. Simeon ben Yoḥai, but in a more expansive way than Abbaye, for he maintains that the *Shekhinah* is present in all synagogues and academies in Babylonia.

The portrayal of the synagogue as a *miqdash me'aṭ* has had a great impact on liturgical practices that evolved through the generations.[95] Related to this motif is the assumption that within the space of the synagogue God's imaginal body can be visualized by means of the proper intentionality. This feature of the rabbinic phenomenology of prayer is well captured in a comment made by Hai ben Sherira Gaon, head of the talmudic academy in Pumbedita. Reflecting on the dictum attributed to R. Joshua ben Levi, "it is forbidden for one to sit within four cubits of prayer,"[96] Hai comments as follows:

> When a person rises to pray, it is forbidden for another to sit within four cubits in proximity to the worshiper because this is a place of the Presence (*maqom shekhinah*). A proof of this is that, when a person finishes his prayer, he must take three steps backwards and afterward offer a parting farewell. If he does not do so, it is as if he has not prayed. Why is this so? Because of the glory of the Presence (*kevod shekhinah*),[97] and thus it is established that the "four cubits of prayer" are the place of the Presence.[98]

The expression *maqom shekhinah* conveys the idea that through prayer the divine Presence is contained and localized in the sacred space of the synagogue. That this expression should not be understood in a merely figurative way is evident from the halakhic issue to which Hai Gaon relates this idea,

viz., it is prohibited for a person to sit idly within four cubits of the one who is worshiping because the latter is standing in the company of the somatic presence of the *Shekhinah*. To appreciate the full import of this text, it is necessary to note that in Hai Gaon's religious philosophy the *Shekhinah* refers to the amorphous light of the divine that is configured in particular shapes within the human imagination. In my opinion, the term "imaginal body" is an appropriate way to describe Hai's ontological assumption regarding the *Shekhinah*, for the body of the *Shekhinah* is constituted by the imaginative faculty.[99] Hence, an idle person is forbidden to sit within four cubits of one engaged in prayer because the space within which one prays is the place wherein the *Shekhinah* resides. The visual form of the divine inheres in the imagination, but the visualization can take place only within a specific space that is designated as holy.[100] Moreover, Hai mentions a custom that is specified in another talmudic discussion: the one who prays must formally depart from the prayer by the gesture of taking three steps backwards and offering a farewell by bowing to the right and to the left.[101] To appreciate the mythic force of this ritual (transmitted in the name of R. Joshua ben Levi) one must bear in mind the larger talmudic context from which this passage is extracted. The general principle underlying this particular gesture is found in the mishnaic ruling (M. Yoma 5:1) that the High Priest must exit from the Holy of Holies the way that he came in, *yaṣa' u-va' lo be-derekh beit kenisato*, i.e., he exists by walking backwards with his face turned south and the ark to his left. Clearly, the gesture of taking three steps backward when one completes the *'Amidah* is an application of this principle, for just as the High Priest could not turn his back on the Holy of Holies, so, too, the worshiper must walk backwards in order not to turn his back on the *Shekhinah* who dwells within the ritualized space of prayer. Inasmuch as prayer occasions the ontic presencing of the divine, it follows that departure from prayer requires a physical rite that facilitates the psychic transition from the sacred to the mundane. Thus we read in another geonic responsum:

> You have asked what is the reason why after prayer we take three steps backwards. It is because when a person stands in prayer he stands in a place of holiness and the *Shekhinah* is on top of his head, as it says, 'I have set the Lord always before me' (Ps. 16:8), and within four cubits from the place of his standing it is [considered] a place of holiness. Whence [is this known]? For thus the sage said, "it is forbidden for one to sit within four cubits of prayer" ... when a person departs from his prayer he must take three steps backwards, for he is going out of a holy place and he will stand in a profane place. Proof of this matter is that when we go back three steps we bid farewell to one [side] and to the other, that is to say, up to this point we were in a place of holiness and now we have gone out to a profane place.[102]

This text is extraordinary for many reasons, not least of which because it presents in lucid terms how the ritualized behavior reflects the mythic structures operative in the rabbinic understanding of prayer. When one rises to recite the *'Amidah*, the *Shekhinah* rests atop one's head,[103] an experience that is exegetically linked to Ps. 16:8, for in the moment of worship one mentally conjures an image of the divine. Even though the locus of the iconic form is in the mind, it has the power to transform the physical space of the worshiper from profane to sacred and thus one who is not praying must distance himself in an adequate manner from the worshiper. At the completion of the prayer there is a reverse transition from the sacred to the profane, and this, too, must be marked by the specific rites of taking three steps backwards and bowing the head to the right and the left side.

The geonic texts analyzed above render explicit what is implied in the rabbinic material: prayer necessitates the iconic visualization of God, for in order to pray, one must stand in the continual presence of God, but that is achieved only through the formation of a mental image of the divine body within the sacred space of the synagogue. The point is articulated clearly by Solomon ben Abraham ibn Adret. Commenting on the talmudic dictum that one must establish a fixed place for worship within a synagogue, ibn Adret remarked that the "awesomeness of the place causes the One who is sought there to be standing before his eyes and at his right side all day, and from this he will come to the attributes of piety and modesty, and his heart will not stir from his intentions, as it says, 'I have set the Lord always before me; He is at my right hand, I shall never be shaken' (Ps. 16:8)."[104] The synagogue provides the physical space wherein the imaginary vision of the divine body can take place.

To sum up: In the history of Judaism, unlike Christianity, belief in incarnation never attained the status of dogma. On the contrary, in rabbinic texts there are clear polemical statements against the Christological doctrine, and in medieval philosophical literature one of the recurring tenets viewed as basic to Judaism was the claim that God is not a body. However, in rabbinic Judaism of the formative and the medieval periods, based on biblical precedent, an anthropomorphic conception of God is affirmed. These anthropomorphic characterizations are not to be taken figuratively. Underlying the rhetoric of representation is the eidetic presumption that God can be experienced in a tangible and concrete manner. Prayer, according to the rabbis, is one of the key ways that God is so experienced.. Proper intentionality in prayer is predicated on the iconic visualization of the divine within the imagination. In the physical space delimited by the liturgical rites, the imaginal body of God assumes incarnate form. It may be concluded, therefore, that the rabbinic notion of incarnation embraces the paradox that God's body is physical only to the extent that it is mental and it is mental only to the extent that it is physical.

Notes

1 This is not, of course, the perception of all Christian authorities for some located the roots of the Christological doctrines in Judaism and thus tried to support their arguments with scriptural prooftexts See R L Wilken, *The Myth of Christian Beginnings* (Notre Dame, 1980), pp 87–94, J Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton, 1987), pp 96–97 Other thinkers maintained that the truth of incarnation depended on faith alone, even if the doctrines of the divine Logos and of the Holy Spirit were based on Hebrew Scripture See J Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism* (New Haven, 1993), pp 187 and 318

2 See Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, pp 119, 264–267, 284–285

3 See, for example, H J Schoeps, *The Jewish-Christian Argument A History of Theologies in Conflict* (New York, 1963), pp 23–25, M Wyschogrod, *The Body of Faith Judaism as Corporeal Election* (New York, 1983), pp xv, 11, 95, 113, 138, 212–213, S S Schwarzschild, "De Idololatria," in *Proceedings of the Academy for Jewish Philosophy*, ed D Novak and N M Samuelson (Lanham, 1992), pp 223–225

4 *The Incarnation of God The Character of Divinity in Formative Judaism* (Philadelphia, 1988), p 6

5 *Ibid*, p 11

6 See E R Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton, 1994), pp 33–51 In the history of Christianity as well, the doctrine of incarnation was the ultimate justification for the iconic representation of Christ in human form See Herrin, *Formation of Christendom*, pp 333, 344–345

7 See J Glen Taylor, "The Two Earliest Known Representations of Yahweh," in *Ascribe to the Lord Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C Craigie*, ed L Eslinger and G Taylor (Sheffield, 1988), pp 557–566

8 See H Eilberg-Schwartz, "The Problem of the Body for the People of the Book," in *People of the Body Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective* (Albany, 1992), pp 17–46, and idem, *God s Phallus and Other Problems for Men and Monotheism* (Boston, 1994) Independently, I have explored the phallomorphic nature of the visionary encounter with God in Jewish mystical literature, based in great measure on the earlier biblical and rabbinic sources See reference to my book given in n 6

9 See M Idel, *Kabbalah New Perspectives* (New Haven, 1988), pp 38–39, 113–122, 128–136, 156–172, idem, *Golem Jewish Magical and Mystical Traditions on the Artificial Anthropoid* (Albany, 1990), pp 27–43, D Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Bloomington, 1990), idem, *Carnal Israel Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture* (Berkeley, 1993), M Fishbane, "Some Forms of Divine Appearance in Ancient Jewish Thought," in *From Ancient Israel to Modern Judaism Intellect in Quest of Understanding Essays in Honor of Marvin Fox*, ed J Neusner, E S Frerichs, and N M Sarna (Atlanta, 1989), 2 261–270, idem, "The 'Measures' of God's Glory in the Ancient Midrash," in *Messiah and Christos Studies in the Jewish Origins of Christianity Presented to David Flusser on the Occasion of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, ed I Gruenwald, S Shaked, and G G Stroumsa (Tubingen, 1992), pp 53–74, idem, "The Well of Living Water A Biblical Motif and its Ancient Transformation," in *Sha arei Talmon Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon*, ed M Fishbane and E Tov (Winona Lake, 1992), pp 3–16, idem, "Arm of the Lord Biblical Myth, Rabbinic Midrash, and the Mystery of History," in *Language, Theology, and the Bible Essays in Honour of James Barr*, ed S E Balentine and J Barton (Oxford, 1994), pp 271–292, E R Wolfson, "Images of God's Feet Some Observations on the Divine Body in Judaism," in *People of the Body Jews and Judaism From An Embodied Perspective*, pp 143–181, Y Liebes, "*De Natura Dei* On the Development of the Jewish Myth," in *Studies in Jewish Myth and Jewish Messianism*, trans B Stein (Albany, 1993), pp 1–64, M Bar-Ilan, "The Hand of God A Chapter in Rabbinic Anthropomorphism," in *Rashi 1040–1990 Hommage a Ephraim E Urbach*, ed G Sed-Rajna (Paris, 1993), pp 321–335, A Goshen-Gottstein, "The Body as Image of God in Rabbinic Literature," *Harvard Theological Review* 87 (1994) pp 171–195 Cf also the study of Eilberg-Schwartz cited in preceding note and that of David Stern in n 13

10 *Jewish Quarterly Review* 81 (1990) pp 219–222

11 *Incarnation of God*, pp ix, 1–2, 4, 11–12, 168, passim

12 *Ibid*, p 120, and cf pp 165–197, 201–230

13 A similar position is taken by D Stern, "*Imitatio Hominis* Anthropomorphism and the Character(s) of God in Rabbinic Literature," *Prooftexts* 12 (1992) pp 151–174

14 See H A Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers Faith, Trinity, Incarnation* (Cambridge, Mass, 1970), pp 364–493 See also M Werner, *The Formation of Christian Dogma* (Boston, 1965), pp 128–129, 147–149, U B Muller, *Die Menschwerdung des Gottessohnes Fruhchristliche Inkarnationsvorsteeungen und die Anfange des Doketismus* (Stuttgart, 1990)

15 My use of terminlogy has been influenced by the work of Henry Corbin See *Through a Speculum That Shines*, pp 8, 61–63, and pertinent notes

16 See H G Enelow, "Kawwana the Struggle for Inwardness in Judaism," in *Studies in Jewish Literature Issued in Honor of Professor Kaufmann Kohler on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (Berlin, 1913), pp 84–88, G F Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era The Age of the Tannaim* (Cambridge, Mass, 1927), 2 223–225, E E Urbach, *The Sages Their Concepts and Beliefs*, trans I Abrahams (Jerusalem, 1975), p 397, T Zahavy, "*Kavvanah* for Prayer in the Mishnah and Talmud," in *New Perspectives on Ancient Judaism, Volume One Religion, Literature, and Society in Ancient Israel, Formative Christianity and Judaism*, ed J Neusner, P Borgen, E S Frerichs, and R Horsley (Lanham, 1987), pp 37–48, idem, *Studies in Jewish Prayer* (Lanham, 1990), pp 39–40, 111–119

17 One scholar who has paid attention to the role of symbolic images in the rabbinic idea of *kawwanah*, compared especially to the intuitive state of poetic consciousness, has been Zahavy, *Studies in Jewish Prayer*, pp 112–116

18 My discussion is of necessity limited to the rabbinic texts wherein the word *kawwanah*, or one of its grammatical conjugations, is used in a liturgical context I will not be discussing the rabbinic application of *kawwanah* to other contexts, most notably the observance of religious rituals in general (cf B Berakhot 13a, 'Eruvin 95b, Pesahim 114b) Moreover, I am focusing on one particular theme related to prayer in the rabbinic corpus of the formative period, principally Mishnah, Tosefta, Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds I am not claiming that my particular focus is the exclusive or even the most recurring meaning assigned to the term *kawwanah*, although I would argue that it has a certain priority

19 See A Goldberg, "Service of the Heart Liturgical Aspects of Synagogue Worship," in *Standing Before God Studies on Prayer in Scriptures and in Tradition with Essays in Honor of John M Oesterreicher*, ed A Finkel and L Frizzel (New York, 1981), pp 195–211

20 Consider the tradition reported in P Berakhot 2 5, 5a, regarding Hiyya the Great's meditational practice, which consisted of thinking about the Persian hierarchy In the same passage Samuel is described as someone who improved his mental focus during prayer by counting birds or clouds, whereas Bun bar Hiyya used to count stones for this purpose See S Lieberman, *Texts and Studies* (New York, 1974), pp 59, 276–277, Zahavy, "*Kavvanah* for Prayer in the Mishnah and Talmud," p 44 The idiom *kiwwen libbo* also has the connotation of directng the mind to a specific task at hand Cf M Berakhot 2 1, T Berakhot 2 3, B Berakhot 13a For a different explanation of the dictum in the Tosefta, see S Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-Fshutah, Order Zera'im, Part I*, second edition (Jerusalem, 1992), p 15 (in Hebrew) According to Lieberman, the intent of this remark is simply that the one reciting the *Shema'* must direct his heart to God

21 M Berakhot 5 1 Cf *Tanhuma'*, Wayyera', 9, ed S Buber (Vilna, 1885), 45b, *Midrash Tehillim* 108 1, ed S Buber (Vilna, 1891), 232a The sentiment of the mishnaic ruling is captured in one of the teachings reportedly transmitted by R Eliezer to his students when he was ill "When you pray, know before whom you stand, and on account of that you will merit the life of the world-to-come" (B Berakhot 28b) A slightly different version of this passage appears in *'Avot de-Rabbi Natan*, version A, ch 19, ed S Schechter (Vienna, 1887), p 70, and in the medieval composition, *'Orhot Hayyim*, § 18, cited in *Ozar Midrashim*, ed J D Eisenstein (New York, 1956), p 29

22 In a number of medieval commentators the expression *koved ro sh* is associated with awe, submission, and humility, and, in some cases, it is linked to the teaching of Simeon the Pious regarding the need to imagine the *Shekhinah* Cf *She'iltot de-Rav Ahai Ga on* (Jerusalem, 1961), Lekh lekha, § 8, p 45, D Hedegård, *Seder R Amram Gaon Hebrew Text with Critical Apparatus, Translation with Notes and Introduction* (Lund, 1951), ch 34, p 79 (Hebrew text on p 32), Rashi's commentary to B Berakhot 30b, s v, *koved ro sh*, *Perush ha Tefillot le-Rabbenu Shelomo*, included in *Sefer ha-Pardes*, ed H L Ehrenreich (Budapest,

1924), p 298, *Siddur Rashi*, ed S Buber (Berlin, 1911), § 25, pp 18–19, Abraham ben Isaac of Nabonne, *Sefer ha-'Eshkol*, ed Z B Auerbach (Halberstaadt, 1868), Hilkhot Tefillah, § 9, p 18, *Mishnah 'im Perush Rabbenu Mosheh ben Maimon*, ed Y Kafah (Jerusalem, 1963), Seder Zera'im, p 41, Asher bar Saul of Lunel, *Sefer ha-Minhagot*, in *Sifran shel Ri'shonim*, ed S Assaf (Jerusalem, 1935), p 130, Sedeqiah ben Abraham, *Shibbole ha-Leqet ha-Shalem*, ed S K Mirsky (New York, 1966), § 17, p 182, Judah ben Yaqar, *Perush ha-Tefillot we-ha-Berakhot*, ed S Yerushalmi (Jerusalem, 1979), pt 1, p 55, Eleazar of Worms, *Sefer ha-Roqeah* (Jerusalem, 1967), p 214, Jacob ben Asher, *Tur*, 'Orah Hayyim, § 93, Isaac ben Moses, *'Or Zaru'a* (Zitomir, 1862), § 100, 19b, Joseph Karo, *Shulhan 'Arukh*, 'Orah Hayyim, § 93 1 The possibility that *koved ro'sh* denotes the bodily gesture of bowing the head is raised by Nathan ben Yehiel, *Aruch Completum*, ed A Kohut, 4 193, s v *koved* See also *Perushe Rabbenu Hananel le-Masekhet Berakhot*, ed D Metzger (Jerusalem, 1990), p 68

23 M Berkahot 5 1 According to another tradition, the ancient pietists waited one hour before their prayers and one hour after their prayers Cf P Berakhot 5 1, 8d, B Berakhot 32b, Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhot Tefillah 4 16 In *Sefer Hasidim*, ed J Wistinetzki with introduction by J Freimann (Frankfurt a M , 1924), § 451, the talmudic tradition is rendered as "the ancient pietists would wait one hour during their prayers, for they would wait before every word So with respect to each and every blessing, they were silent until they directed their hearts this is the foundation of prayer from the outset " On silence as a means to invoke the proper intention of the heart during worship, cf *ibid* , §§ 456, 1605

24 T Berakhot 3 21 On the prohibition of acting with lightheadedness (*quallut ro'sh*) in the synagogue, cf T Megillah 2 11, P Megillah 3 4, 74a

25 P Berakhot 5 1, 8d In B Berakhot 31a the expression *halakhah pesuqah*, "decided law," appears in place of *davar shel torah* or *devarim shel hokhmah* According to another tradition recorded in that context, the "joy of ritual," *simhah shel miswah*, is presented as the condition that prepares one for worship

26 B Berakhot 30b Cf *Midrash Le'olam*, in *Bet ha-Midrash*, 3 110 "A person should always focus his attention (*le'olam yekhawwen 'adam 'et 'asmo*), if he can direct his heart, then he should pray, but if not, then he should not pray "

27 According to a baraita in B Berakhot 32b, the practice of waiting one hour before and one hour after prayer is presented as a proscription for every worshiper Cf Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhot Tefillah 4 16, Asher bar Saul of Lunel, *Sefer ha-Minhagot*, p 130, Jacob ben Asher, *Tur*, 'Orah Hayyim, § 93, *Shulhan Arukh*, 'Orah Hayyim, § 93 1 In light of this, as well as other textual considerations that cannot be pursued here, I cannot agree with the argument of I Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy A Comprehensive History*, trans R P Scheindlin (Philadelphia, 1993), pp 205 and 285–286, that the rabbinic interest in *kawwanah* as an inward, spiritual ideal is expressed only in works of aggadah and not in codes of halakhah An examination of the rabbinic sources indicates that this dichotomization is not appropriate On the contrary, the issue of *kawwanah* has a direct impact on halakhic regulations Cf B Berakhot 34b, Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhot Tefillah 10 1, *Tur*, 'Orah Hayyim, § 101, *Shulhan 'Arukh*, 'Orah Hayyim, § 101 1 For a more measured approach to this question, see M Kadushin, *The Rabbinic Mind* (New York, 1952), pp 208–209

28 B Berakhot 31a

29 For discussion of the role of kneelings and prostrations in Jewish prayer according to talmudic and medieval sources, see E Zimmer, "Poses and Postures During Prayer," *Sidra* 5 (1989) pp 109–116 (in Hebrew), U Ehrlich, "Modes of Prayer and Their Significance in the Time of the Mishnah and the Talmud," Ph D thesis, Hebrew University, 1993, pp 27–66 (in Hebrew)

30 P Berakhot 1 1, 2c, B Berakhot 10b See Zimmer, "Poses and Postures During Prayer," pp 107–116, Ehrlich, "Modes of Prayer," pp 9–26 On hand gestures related to liturgical worship, see Zimmer, op cit , pp 95–107, Ehrlich, op cit , pp 119–128 In a variety of medieval texts, related especially to pietistic groups in France and Germany, the custom of swaying or shaking the body during worship is emphasized, a practice linked exegetically to Ps 35 10 and reported on the basis of an older homiletical (*midrash*) or esoteric work (*ma aseh merkavah*) See Abraham ben Nathan of Lunel, *Sefer ha-Manhig*, ed Y Raphael (Jerusalem, 1978), 1 85, and other sources cited in n 19 ad locum For additional sources and an analysis of the evolution of this custom, see Zimmer, op cit , pp 116–127

31 P Berakhot 4 1, 7a, B Ta'anit 2a, *Sifre on Deuteronomy*, 41, ed L Finkelstein (New York, 1969), p 88 (see S D Fraade, *From Tradition to Commentary Torah and Its Interpretation in the Midrash Sifre to Deuteronomy* [Albany, 1991], pp 89–92), *Midrash Tehillim* 66 1, 157b, *Midrash Samuel*, 2 10, ed S Buber (Cracow, 1893), 25b

32 That proper intention of the heart, *kawwanat ha-lev*, has an effect on the acceptability of prayer by God is emphasized in the statement attributed to R Samuel ben Nahman in P Berakhot 5 5, 9d Cf *Leviticus Rabbah* 16 9, ed M Margulies (New York, 1993), pp 366–367, and see n 5 ad locum, *Midrash Tehillim* 10 7, 49a, 108 1, 232a, *Pesiqta' Rabbati* 47, ed M Friedmann (Vienna, 1880), 198b, *Tanhuma'*, Naso', 18, ed Buber, 17b, *Numbers Rabbah* 11 4 In other rabbinic passages it is emphasized that prayer must be a spontaneous event surging from the heart or flowing from the mouth, an ideal that in part contrasts with the notion of deliberate intentionality implied in the statements about *kawwanah* Cf M 'Avot 2 13, M Berakhot 4 3–4 and 5 5, T Berakhot 3 3 For a recent study of these and other related passages, see S Naeh, " 'Creates the Fruit of Lips' A Phenomenological Study of Prayer According to Mishnah *Berakhot* 4 3, 5 5," *Tarbiz* 63 (1994) pp 185–201 (in Hebrew)

33 Cf B Berakhot 55a, Shabbat 118b (and cf Tosafot, s v *'iyyun tefillah*), 127a (cf commentary of Rashi, s v *we-'iyyun tefillah*), Baba Batra 164b

34 B Sanhedrin 22a

35 The point was well understood by the Aramaic translator of Ps 16 8, the verse cited as a prooftext in the dictum attributed to Simeon the Pious "I will place the Lord before me constantly because His presence rests upon me, and I will not stir " See A Goldberg, *Untersuchungen uber die Vorstellung von der Schekhinah in der Fruhen Rabbinischen Literatur* (Berlin, 1969), p 425 Compare also the paraphrase of the dictum of Simeon the Pious in *She'iltot de-Rav 'Ahai Ga'on*, Lekh lekha, § 8, p 45 "The one who prays must see himself as if the *Shekhinah* were dwelling opposite him (*sheruyyah kenegdo*), as it says, 'I have set the Lord always before me' (Ps 16 8) " Cf *Hilkhot Rav Alfasi*, Tractate Berakhot, 22b The additional word *sheruyyah* lends emphasis to the ontic presencing of God's imaginal body implied by the original talmudic statement Cf B Tamid 32b The rabbinic idiom *shekhinah kenegdo* thus parallels the biblical expression *nokhah pene 'adonai*, and it is obvious that it signifies the dwelling of the Presence Thus in the commentary of Rashi, ad locum, the words *shekhinah kenegdo* are rendered as *shekhinah sheruyyah 'alaw*, the "Presence dwells upon him "

36 The idea that I am attributing to Simeon the Pious bears a resemblance to the doceticism espoused by some early Christian thinkers The connection of Simeon the Pious and Jewish-Christians may be suggested by the tradition preserved in B Keritot 6b concerning Simeon's insistence that if the "sinners of Israel" (*posh'e yisra'el*) do not fast on a particular day that day cannot be considered an official fast A Marmorstein, *Studies in Jewish Theology*, ed J Rabbinowitz and M S Lew (London, 1950), pp 183–184, 207, 215, argued that in this context the term *posh'e yisra'el* refers to Jewish-Christians See also M Simon, *Verus Israel A Study of the Relations Between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (135–425)*, trans H McKeating (Oxford, 1986), pp 256–258, 408–409 The term "sinner of Israel," *poshe'a yisra'el*, seems to be used as a description of Jesus in B Gittin 56b–57a See J Z Lauterbach, *Rabbinic Essays* (New York, 1973), pp 502–503, 508 For a recent survey of the historical presence of Jewish-Christians in Palestine in the first two centuries, see J E Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins* (Oxford, 1993), pp 1–47 The presumed priestly lineage of Simeon the Pious may have had an impact on the centrality of the visionary dimension in his understanding of *kawwanah* The priestly pedigree of Simeon the Pious is implied by T Kelim 1 6 wherein he boasts that once he entered the sacred space of the Temple (between the altar and the porch) without washing his hands and feet See L Finkelstein, *The Pharisees The Sociological Background of Their Faith* (Philadelphia, 1966), pp cvii–cix, 85 The particular link between the priests and visionary experience is related, of course, to the fact that the Temple was viewed as the sacred site in which visions could occur See Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines*, pp 17–18, and references to other scholarly material given on p 18 n 28 It is also of interest to consider the tradition reported in the name of Simeon the Pious by Hana ben Bizna in B Berakhot 7a "the Holy One, blessed be He, showed Moses the knot of the phylacteries " The tradition regarding the knot of God's head phylacteries is found in a passage in one of the key textual units of the Hekhalot literature See G Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah*

Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition (New York, 1965), p 105, and *Synopse zur Hekhalot Literatur*, ed P Schafer et al (Tubingen, 1981), § 500, a translation is found in M D Swartz, *Mystical Prayer in Ancient Judaism An Analysis of Ma'aseh Merkavah* (Tubingen, 1992), p 229, for alternative translations and analyses, see P Schafer, *The Hidden and Manifest God Some Major Themes in Early Jewish Mysticism*, trans A Pomerance (Albany, 1992), p 87, and Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines*, p 98 It is likely that the motif of the head phylacteries is related to the image of the crown that is also found in Jewish esoteric literature and in Karaitic polemics against rabbinic anthropomorphism See M Bar-Ilan, "The Idea of Crowning God in Hekhalot Mysticism and the Karaitic Polemic," in *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 6 1–2 (1987) pp 221–233 (in Hebrew) Perhaps the statement ascribed to Simeon the Pious should be located within the spectrum of esoteric Jewish beliefs, which may also have some connections to the priestly phenomenon S C Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History* (Cambridge, 1993), p 105, discusses this tradition ascribed to Simeon the Pious in conjunction with the tannaitic remark regarding the meditational practice of the "early pietists " He notes the mystical nature of both pietistic traditions See also Kadushin, *The Rabbinic Mind*, p 208 Other traditions reported in the name of Simeon the Pious link him either to mystical or magical speculation, cf B Berakhot 3b (parallel text in Sanhedrin 16a), Yoma 77a, Sukkah 52b, Yevamot 60b, Sotah 10b and 36b, Sanhedrin 91b

37 The hermeneutical function in midrashic sources of the "as if" to create a "time-shift" from the biblical past to the historical present has been noted by M Bregman, "Past and Present in Midrashic Literature," *Hebrew Annual Review* 2 (1978) pp 47–49 I have discussed this hermeneutical term in rabbinic sources in "The Mystical Significance of Torah Study in German Pietism," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 84 (1993) p 60, and again in "The Face of Jacob in the Moon Mystical Transformations of an Aggadic Myth," in *The Seductiveness of Jewish Myth Challenge or Response?*, ed S Daniel Breslauer (Albany, 1996), p 236 See also M Fishbane, *The Kiss of God Spiritual and Mystical Death in Judaism* (Seattle, 1994), pp 87–91, repeated with slight variations in idem, "The Imagination of Death in Jewish Spirituality," in *Death, Ecstasy, and Other Worldly Journeys*, ed M Fishbane and J J Collins (Albany, 1995), pp 184–189

38 On the analogical function of the term *shawah* (conjugated as *shiwwah* or *hishwah*), cf Isa 38 13, 40 25, 45 5, Hosea 10 1, Lam 2 13 Particularly relevant is the expression *shaweh li* placed in the mouth of God Cf *Tanhuma'*, Wayyera', 14 (ed Buber, 32, 53a), Behuqotai, 4 (ed Buber, 6, 56a), *Pesiqta Rabbati* 42, 175a (Michael Fishbane, who kindly called my attention to this expression in midrashic souces, is presently working on this trope as part of his full-scale study on the mythic creativity of classical midrash) In these contexts the import of the expression is clearly that one becomes like or equal to God, which is precisely the underlying meaning in the statement of Simeon the Pious discussed in the body of this paper Cf *Leviticus Rabbah* 30 2, p 693, where Ps 16 8 is used as a prooftext for the idea that scribes and teachers of young children will stand to the right of God in the future In this midrashic context as well the analogical function of the symbol seems to be implied in the interpretation of the verse *shiwwiti yhwh lenegddi tamid* By contrast, in *Midrash Tehillim* 119 5, 246b, Ps 16 8 is applied to a state of living in God's presence without any overt iconic dimension

39 See my discussion of the symbol in *Through a Speculum That Shines*, pp 61–63, 67–73

40 The point was well understood by G van der Leeuw who aptly called his chapter on the phenomenology of prayer, "Endowment With Form In Worship " See *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, trans J E Turner, with new foreword by N Smart (Princeton, 1986), pp 447–453

41 The spatial orientation connected with human intentionality in prayer is also evident in B Baba Batra 25b "R Isaac said The one who wants to become wise should face south [when he prays] and the one who wants to become wealthy should face north A sign for you is that the table was in the north and the candelabrum in the south R Joshua ben Levi said One should always face south because by becoming wise one becomes wealthy, as it says, 'In her right hand is length of days, in her left, riches and honor' (Prov 3 16) " The implications of the orientation of the face in the rabbinic notion of worship have recently been explored by Ehrlich, "Modes of Prayer," pp 20–22, 67–108

42 See B Goldman, *The Sacred Portal A Primary Symbol in Ancient Judaic Art* (Detroit, 1966), pp 34–38, J D Levenson, "Jerusalem Temple in Devotional and Visionary Experience," in

Jewish Spirituality From the Bible Through the Middle Ages, pp 32–61 Needless to say, the ancient Israelite belief, cultivated in the period of the Second Temple as well, regarding the visionary status of the Temple is the basis for the Christological notion of the Temple as either the visible form of God in the body of Christ or the symbolic prefiguration of the Church See Y M -J Congar, *Le Mystére du Temple ou l'Économie de la Présence de Dieu a sa Creature de la Genese a l'Apocalypse* (Paris, 1963), pp 139–180, R J Mckelvey, *The New Temple The Church in the New Testament* (Oxford, 1969), S Ferber, "The Temple of Solomon in Early Christian and Byzantine Art," in *The Temple of Solomon Archaeological Fact and Medieval Tradition in Christian, Islamic and Jewish Art*, ed J Gutmann (Missoula, 1976), pp 21–43, J B Chance, *Jerusalem, the Temple, and the New Age in Luke-Acts* (Macon, 1988), A F Segal, *Paul the Convert The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven, 1990), pp 168–169 For a new approach to the story of Jesus from within the framework of cultic activities of the Pharisees during the last decades of the Second Temple period, see B Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus His Sacrificial Program Within a Cultural History of Sacrifice* (University Park, 1992)

43 The directing of prayers from outside the land to the Temple in Jerusalem is affirmed in 1 Kings 8 48–49 and Dan 6 11 That the Temple was perceived as the favored setting for prayer is affirmed in any number of biblical passages, especially in the book of Psalms This motif is clearly related to the comparison of the Temple to the Tent of Meeting, which served as the meeting-point of God and human See Congar, *Le Mystere du Temple*, pp 115–119, 279–293, C R Koester, *The Dwelling of God The Tabernacle in the Old Testament, Intertestamental Jewish Literature, and the New Testament* (Washington D C , 1989)

44 See Urbach, *The Sages*, pp 57–58, Ehrlich, "Modes of Prayer," pp 18–22

45 I have followed the reading of this dictum preserved in *Pirqe Rabbi 'Elie'ezer* (Warsaw, 1852), ch 35, 82b For a different reading, cf *Midrash Tehillim* 91 7, 200b "Whoever prays in Jerusalem it is as if he prayed before the throne of glory " The passage from *Pirqe Rabbi 'Eli'ezer* is cited according to this reading by a number of medieval commentators Cf Nahmanides' commentary to Gen 28 12, Israel ibn al-Nakawa, *Menorat ha-Ma'or*, ed H G Enelow (New York, 1930), 2 110

46 On the parallelism between the earthly Temple and its celestial counterpart, see V Aptowitzer, "The Celestial Temple as Viewed in the Aggadah," in *Tarbiz* 2 (1931) pp 137–153, 257–277 (in Hebrew, abridged English translation in *Binah Studies in Jewish History, Thought, and Culture*, vol 2, ed J Dan [New York, 1989], pp 1–29), R Patai, *Man and Temple in Ancient Jewish Myth and Ritual* (Toronto, 1947), pp 130–132 For a different approach to this material, see E E Urbach, "The Lower Jerusalem and the Supernal Jerusalem," in idem, *The World of the Sages Collected Studies* (Jerusalem, 1988), pp 376–391 (in Hebrew)

47 M Sukkah 5 4 The connection of this statement and the tradition about directing the heart to God in prayer was previously noted by Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-Fshutah, Order Zera'im, Part I*, p 44 n 65 See also Urbach, *The Sages*, pp 59–60, Ehrlich, "Modes of Prayer," pp 100–105

48 B Baba Batra 25a

49 Cf T Megillah 3 22 "The entrances to the synagogues are only made on the east for thus we find that the Temple was open on the east as it says, 'Those who were to camp before the Tabernacle, in front—before the Tent of Meeting, on the east' (Num 3 38) " See Urbach, *The Sages*, p 62 On the question of the Jerusalem-orientation in the architectural structure of synagogues in the land of Israel and the Diaspora, see A R Seager, "Ancient Synagogue Architecture An Overview," in *Ancient Synagogues The State of Research*, ed J Gutmann (Ann Arbor, 1981), pp 39–47, esp 41, L I Levine, "The Form and Content of the Synagogue in the Second Temple Period," in *Synagogues in Antiquity*, ed A Kasher, A Oppenheimer, and U Rappaport (Jerusalem, 1987), p 16

50 B Baba Batra 25a This view is set against the idea that the *Shekhinah* is in every place, an opinion attributed to R Ishmael and R Hoshaya Urbach, *The Sages*, pp 61–62, raised the possibility that the tendency to eliminate the fixed prayer-orientation on the grounds that the Presence is ubiquitous may be seen as a reaction to Judeo-Christians who emphasized that prayer must be directed to Jerusalem (Regarding this possibility, see S Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-Fshutah, Order Mo'ed, Part V* [Jerusalem, 1992], p 1200 n 82–83) Urbach also notes that by the third century it became a universal practice amongst Christians to face

east in prayer As he further observes (pp 62–63), a polemic against such liturgical practices is clearly operative in the statement in B Baba Batra 25a attributed to R Sheshet that one can direct prayer to all directions except east because the heretics give instruction to face in that direction during their worship On the prohibition of facing west during prayer on account of the presence of the demonic force in that place, cf *Tiqqune Zohar* 21, ed R Margaliot (Jerusalem, 1978), 56b Interestingly, this medieval kabbalist accepts the talmudic tradition regarding the location of the *Shekhinah* in the west, but he suggests that because of the impure powers that are attached to that place, it is necessary for the Jews to relocate the *Shekhinah* in the south, which is the right side of mercy Needless to say, the practice in countries west of the land of Israel is to face east, as a number of traditional commentators point out Cf Tosafot to B Berakhot 30a, s v , *le-talpiyyot*, Moses ben Jacob of Coucy, *Sefer Miswot Gadol* (Jerusalem, 1983), positive commandments, 19, 10d, *Tur*, 'Orah Hayyim, § 94, Menahem ben Solomon Meiri, *Bet ha-Behirah 'al Massekhet Berakhot*, ed Samuel Dickman (Jerusalem, 1965), p 106, Israel ibn al-Nakawa, *Menorat ha-Ma'or*, 2 110, the note of Moses Isserles to the *Shulhan 'Arukh*, 'Orah Hayyim, § 94 1 In his marginal gloss Isserles remarks that the place of the ark and the precise spot to which the prayers are directed is not the place where the sun rises because that would appear to be worship of the sun, which is the "way of the heretics " This is obviously an effort to deal with the statement of R Sheshet discussed above and the contemporary practice of facing east during prayer See also the commentary of Moses Isserles, *Darkhe Mosheh*, to Joseph Karo's *Bet Yosef* on the *Tur*, 'Orah Hayyim, § 94

51 T Berakhot 3 15–16, P Berakhot 4 5, 8b–c, B Berakhot 30a, *Sifre on Dueteronomy*, 29, p 47, *Song of Songs Rabbah* 4 11, ed S Dunansky (Jerusalem, 1980), p 110, *Pesiqta' Rabbati* 33, 149b, *Tanhuma'*, Wayyishlah, 21, ed Buber, 87b, the fragment of *Tanhuma'* published by L Ginzberg, *Genizah Studies in Memory of Doctor Solomon Schechter* (New York, 1969), 1 99–100 (in Hebrew) Needless to say, the rabbinic ideas are based on motifs expressed in Scripture See Urbach, *The Sages*, pp 58–59

52 A similar form is found in the versions found in *Pesiqta' Rabbati* and *Tanhuma'* For references, see previous note

53 *Sifre on Deuteronomy*, 29, p 47 Virtually the same formulation is found in *Song of Songs Rabbah* 4 11, p 110

54 Smith, "Earth and Gods," pp 112–115

55 B Berakhot 34a A slightly different version of this dictum, also attributed to R Hiyya bar Abba, appears in B Berakhot 30a

56 Cf Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhot Tefillah 5 6, *Sefer Miswot Gadol*, positive commandments, 19, 10d, Joseph Karo, *Bet Yosef* to the *Tur*, 'Orah Hayyim, § 90, s v , *we-sarikh she-yiheyu halonot*, idem, *Shulhan 'Arukh*, 'Orah Hayyim, § 90 4, Israel ibn al-Nakawa, *Menorat ha-Ma'or*, 2 113 By contrast, in his commentary to B Berakhot 34b, Rashi explains that the windows "cause a person to direct his heart for he looks [through them] toward heaven and his heart is humbled " Jacob ben Asher, *Tur*, 'Orah Hayyim, § 90, cites the explanation of Rashi from which he draws the following conclusion "According to this it is necessary that [the windows] should be opened to the very direction towards which one prays " See Ehrlich, "Modes of Prayer," pp 117–118

57 M Berakhot 4 5

58 T Berakhot 3 18

59 P Berakhot 4 5, 8b

60 B Berakhot 30a

61 The point is made clear in a later reworking of the rabbinic text in *Tanhuma'*, Hayye Sarah, 1

62 M Berakhot 4 6

63 See Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, pp 187–199, J Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud Forms and Patterns* (Berlin, 1977), pp 122–155, L I Levine, "The Second Temple Synagogue The Formative Years," in *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity*, pp 7–31, idem, "The Form and Content of the Synagogue in the Second Temple Period," in *Synagogues in Antiquity*, pp 11–29, E Fleischer, "On the Beginnings of Obligatory Jewish Prayer," *Tarbiz* 59 (1990) pp 397–441 (in Hebrew), S Reif, "On the Earliest Development of Jewish Prayer," *Tarbiz* 60 (1991) pp 677–681 (in Hebrew), and the rejoinder by Fleischer in *Tarbiz* 60 (1991) pp 683–688 (in Hebrew)

64 This topic has been discussed by many scholars I offer here some representative treatments J R Brown, *Temple and Sacrifice in Rabbinic Judaism* (Evanston, 1963), R Goldenberg, "The Broken Axis Rabbinic Judaism and the Fall of Jerusalem," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 45 (1977) pp 869–882, idem, "Early Rabbinic Explanations of the Destruction of Jerusalem," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33 (1982) pp 518–525, B M Bokser, "Rabbinic Responses to Catastrophe From Continuity to Discontinuity," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research* 50 (1983) pp 37–61, D W Nelson, "Responses to the Destruction of the Second Temple in the Tannaitic Midrashim," Ph D dissertation, New York University, 1991

65 See S J D Cohen, "The Temple and the Synagogue," in *The Temple in Antiquity*, ed T G Madsen (Provo, 1984), pp 151–174, S Safrai, "The Temple and the Synagogue," in *Synagogues in Antiquity*, pp 31–51

66 On the role of the pilgrimage to the holy site of the Temple in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, see F E Peters, *Jerusalem and Mecca The Typology of the Holy City in the Near East* (New York, 1986), pp 80–122 For a recent review of the role of pilgrimage and sacred places in the phenomenology of religious experience, see C C Park, *Sacred Worlds An Introduction to Geography and Religion* (London, 1994), pp 245–285

67 It is likely that underlying these dicta is the view, expressed for example by R Eleazar ben Pedat, that the divine Presence did not depart from the site of the Temple even after it had been destroyed R Samuel bar Nahman, by contrast, expressed the view that as a result of the destruction God removed his Presence to heaven See Urbach, *The Sages*, pp 56–57

68 T Berakhot 3 16

69 P Berakhot 4 5, 8c

70 B Berakhot 30a Cf *Pesiqta' Rabbati* 33, 149b *tel she-kol ha-peniyyot ponim bo, Song of Songs Rabbah* 4 11, p 10 *heikhal she-kol ha-piyyot mitpallelot bo*

71 See Bregman, "Past and Present in Midrashic Literature," pp 53–54

72 As suggested by Urbach, *The Sages*, p 708 n 94

73 P Berakhot 4 5, 8c Cf parallel in *Song of Songs Rabbah* 4 11, p 110

74 A similar argument has been advanced by Fraade, *From Tradition to Commentary*, pp 93–94

75 The point was well understood by Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-Fshutah, Order Zara'im, Part I*, p 43 "These are the two details that are operative for every worshiper, that he should imagine as if his prayer passes by way of the Holy of Holies to the *Shekhinah* " See also L Ginzberg, *A Commentary on the Palestinian Talmud A Study of the Development of the Halakah and Haggadah in Palestine and Babylonia, Berakhot IV* (New York, 1971), 3 402–403 (in Hebrew)

76 T Berakhot 3 14 Cf P Berakhot 4 5, 8b, B Berakhot 30a, compare B Yoma 76a

77 B Berakhot 31a Cf T Berakhot 3 6, *Tanhuma'*, Hayye Sarah, 1

78 The underlying principle here, that God occupies a place in the celestial Temple even when the earthly Temple is destroyed, is the position affirmed most frequently in rabbinic sources One text that stands in marked contrast is the dictum attributed to R Yohanan in B Ta'anit 5a "The Holy One, blessed be He, said, I will not enter Jerusalem above until I enter Jerusalem below " Cf *Midrash Tehillim* 122 4, 254b

79 My language here reflects the discussion in J Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*, trans P -A Brault and M Naas (Chicago, 1993), p 45

80 Cf Menahem ben Solomon Meiri, *Beit ha-Behirah 'al Massekhet Berakhot*, p 106 "Regarding the fact that we turn to the east, it is not because the essence of prayer is toward the east, but because we are standing to the west of Jerusalem and we direct our intention to the Temple and to the glory of God that dwells within it " Meiri's remark is a comment on the tannaitic decree that a worshiper who is blind or who cannot orient himself in space should direct the intention of the heart to God in heaven On the textual level there is an obvious difference between the directive to focus one's attention on the earthly Temple and the instruction to focus one's attention on God in heaven, indeed, the latter possibility is upheld as the alternative approach adopted by those who cannot fulfill the former Yet, for Meiri, the two positions are completely homologized, for the point of facing Jerusalem is to direct one's attention to the place where God appears, which is the ultimate purpose of directing one's prayers to God in his heavenly abode Ezekiel Landau, *Selah ha-Shalem he-Hadash* (Jerusalem, 1995), 1 23, notes that all worshipers must face the Holy of Holies

because "through there one's prayer would ascend." The ruling that a blind person or one who cannot determine spatial directions should direct his attention to God in heaven also refers to the Holy of Holies "because there is the tabernacle of his Father in heaven." On the special significance of the synagogue, cf idem, *Derushe ha Selah* (Warsaw, 1886), 33c

81 B Yevamot 105b

82 In the printed text, as well as some manuscripts, the reading is one who prays must cast one's eyes above, which contrasts with the opinion that one who prays must cast one's eyes below. My paraphrase reflects the textual emendation suggested by Isaac Alfasi and Asher ben Yehiel, both authorities are cited in *'Ein Ya aqov* to B Yevamot 105b. See also Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-Fshutah, Order Zara im, Part I*, p 43. Ehrlich, "Modes of Prayer," pp 110–111, has argued that the better reading is the standard one.

83 Cf *Sefer Halakhot Gedolot*, ed E Hildesheimer (Jerusalem, 1971), 1 34, "He who prays must look below and direct his mind above." According to a variant reading of this passage recorded in n 74 ad locum, "when one prays one should lower one's face to the ground and one's heart should be [turned] to heaven." The latter reading (with slight variation) is found in *Sefer Halakhot Gedolot* (Jerusalem, 1992), p 56. A similar explanation is adopted by Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhot Tefillah 5 4. See also *Sefer ha Orah* (attributed to Rashi), ed S Buber (Lemberg, 1905), p 7, Simhah ben Samuel, *Mahzor Vitry*, ed S Hurwitz (Nurnberg, 1923), p 15. Zimmer, "Poses and Postures During Prayer," p 90, follows this line of interpretation. By contrast, Ehrlich, "Modes of Prayer," p 110, notes that the correct interpretation is the orienting of the eyes towards the Temple.

84 *Tur*, 'Orah Hayyim, § 95. Cf *Shulhan Arukh*, 'Orah Hayyim, § 95 2. This is one of a variety of examples that demonstrate Karo's propensity to follow earlier Ashkenazi customs and rites, especially when they buttress his mystical leanings. See I Ta-Shema, "Rabbi Joseph Karo: Between Spain and Germany," *Tarbiz* 59 (1990) pp 153–170 (in Hebrew).

85 The idea of *kawwanah* expressed here, reported as a tradition of the ancients (*qadmonim*), bears a phenomenological resemblance to the notion of *devequt* developed by Provençal and Geronese kabbalists, which likewise emphasized the separating of mind from body. On the relationship of Jonah Gerondi to the kabbalists, see G Scholem, "A New Document on the History of the Beginning of Kabbalah," in *Sefer Bialik*, ed J Fichman (Jerusalem, 1934), pp 141–162, esp 143–144 (in Hebrew), idem, *Reshit ha-Qabbalah* (Tel-Aviv, 1948), pp 155–156 (in Hebrew), idem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, ed R J Zwi Weblowsky and trans A Arkush (Princeton, 1987), p 392, J Dan, *Jewish Mysticism and Jewish Ethics* (Seattle, 1986), pp 32–38, idem, "The Cultural and Social Background of the Emergence of Traditional Ethical Literature," *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 7 (1988) pp 239–264, esp 250–252 (in Hebrew).

86 *Hilkhot Rav Alfasi*, Tractate Berakhot, 22b. The passage is cited by Isserles, *Darkhe Mosheh*, to the *Bet Yosef* on the *Tur*, 'Orah Hayyim, § 95. R Jonah's interpretation of R Yose's statement is based on the symbolic homology between the sacrificial cult of the Temple and the liturgical rite of the Synagogue. Cf R Jonah's comment on M 'Avot 1 2 in *Perush Rabbenu Yonah Mi Gerondi al Massekhet Avot* (Jerusalem, 1969), p 4.

87 See I Ta-Shema, "Ashkenazi Hasidism in Spain: R Jonah Gerondi—the Man and His Work," *Exile and Diaspora: Studies in the History of the Jewish People Presented to Professor Haim Beinart on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed A Mirsky, A Grossman, and Y Kaplan (Jerusalem, 1988), pp 165–194 (in Hebrew), E Kanarfogel, *Jewish Education and Society in the High Middle Ages* (Detroit, 1992), pp 77–78, and references to other scholarly literature on p 176 n 78.

88 See *Through a Speculum That Shines*, pp 195–214, and "Sacred Space and Mental Iconography: Imago Templi and Contemplation in Rhineland Jewish Pietism," to appear in the *festschrift* honoring Baruch Levine.

89 P Berakhot 4 5, 8b. The requirement to establish a permanent place in the synagogue for prayers was widely accepted in the standard codes of Jewish law and ritual. Cf Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhot Tefillah 5 6, 8 1, *Tur*, 'Orah Hayyim, § 90, *Shulhan Arukh*, 'Orah Hayyim, § 90 19. See also the responsum against individuals who worship while standing on the outside of the synagogue in *Teshuvot Rav Natronai ben Hilai Gaon*, ed J Brody (Jerusalem, 1994), 1 131–132.

90 P Berakhot 5 1, 8d, B Berakhot 6b and 7b.

91 Cf *Midrash Tehillim* 90 10, 196a, *Pirqe Rabbi 'Eliezer*, ch 35, 82a, *Bereshit Rabbati*, ed C Albeck (Jerusalem, 1940), p 188, *Midrash ha-Gadol on Genesis*, ed M Margulies (Jerusalem, 1975), p 498, Israel ibn al Nakawa, *Menorat ha-Ma'or*, 2 43–44

92 P Berakhot 5 1, 8d

93 B Berakhot 6a

94 *Ibid*

95 See I Ta-Shema, "Synagogal Sanctity—Symbolism and Reality," *Knesset Ezra Literature and Life in the Synagogue Studies Presented to Ezra Fleischer*, pp 351–364 (in Hebrew) In this study Ta-Shema investigates two specific rituals, the lighting of the perpetual light (*ner tamid*) in the synagogue and the prohibition of the ritually impure entering into the sanctuary, which are related to the symbol of the synagogue as a *miqdash me'at* The attitude of Jews through the generations is well summarized by Israel ibn al-Nakawa, *Menorat ha-Ma'or*, 2 39 "The one who enters the synagogue, even when it is not the time of prayer, must behave with dignity because the *Shekhinah* dwells there and it is called a 'diminished sanctuary' "

96 B Berakhot 31b

97 On the gesture of taking three steps as a sign of respect and honor for God, cf *Song of Songs Rabbah* 3 3, p 84 *Ruth Rabbah* 2 15, *Tanhuma'*, Ki Tissa', 5, *Pesiqta' de-Rav Kahana*, 2 7, ed B Mandelbaum (New York, 1962), 1 24 Cf also *Tanhuma'*, Shemot, 15 (ed Buber, 13)

98 Cited in *Shibbole ha-Leqet ha-Shalem*, § 25, pp 203–204, *Sefer ha-Pardes*, p 327, Israel ibn al-Nakawa, *Menorat ha-Ma or*, 2 121–122, B Lewin, *Otzar ha-Gaonim Thesaurus of the Gaonic Responsa and Commentaries* (Jerusalem, 1984), 1 74 (in Hebrew)

99 See my discussion of Hai's thought in *Through a Speculum That Shines*, pp 144–148, and 157–158

100 Consider the interpretative gloss in *Perushe Rabbenu Hananel le-Massekhet Berakhot*, p 10, on the talmudic statement, "whence do we know that the Holy One, blessed be He, is found in the synagogue?" (B Berakhot 6b) "That is, whence do we know that the glory of the Holy One, blessed be He is found [in the synagogue]"? Cf Eliezer ben Nathan of Mainz, *Sefer Raban*, ed S Z Ehrenreich (New York, 1958), Berakhot, § 126

101 B Yoma 53b Cf Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhot Tefillah, 5 10–11, *Tur*, 'Orah Hayyim, § 123

102 B Lewin, *Otzar ha-Gaonim Thesaurus of the Gaonic Responsa and Commentaries*, 6 24, cf *Shibbole ha-Leqet ha-Shalem*, § 18, p 191, and H Taubes, *Otzar ha-Gaonim le-Massekhet Sanhedrin* (Jerusalem, 1984), 13 164

103 It is probable that the same mythical notion underlies the custom to cover one's head during prayer Cf *Sefer ha- Orah*, p 7, Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhot Tefillah 5 5, *Tur*, 'Orah Hayyim § 91, *Shulhan Arukh*, 'Orah Hayyim § 91 5 In B Shabbat 118b a tradition is recorded regarding R Huna ben Joshua who did not walk four cubits with his head uncovered In B Qiddushin 31a this tradition is reiterated, but in that context the rationale given for this custom is that the *Shekhinah* is on top of one's head Cf Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhot De'ot 5 6, *Guide of the Perplexed* III 52, Jonah ben Abraham Gerondi, *Sefer ha-Yir ah* (Brooklyn, 1974), p 2, *Tur*, 'Orah Hayyim § 2, *Shulhan Arukh*, 'Orah Hayyim § 2 6, *Zohar* 3 122b (*Piqqudin*), 187a It is likely that this is the reason why the medieval commentators included the custom to pray with one's head covered in their list of bodily postures required for prayer See, in particular, Israel ibn al-Nakawa, *Menorat ha-Ma or*, 2 122 "It is necessary that his head be covered during the time of prayer because of the glory of the *Shekhinah* before whom he prays " Regarding this custom, see E Zimmer, "Men's Headcovering The Metamorphosis of This Practice," in *Reverence, Righteousness, and Rahamanut Essays in Memory of Rabbi Dr Leo Jung*, ed J J Schachter (Northvale, N J , 1992), pp 325–352 On the possibility that Paul polemicized against this ritual, see Segal, *Paul the Convert*, pp 152–156 On covering the head as an external sign of the fear of God, cf B Shabbat 156b Finally, it is worth mentioning that in kabbalistic sources the tradition about not walking four cubits with an uncovered head is merged with the rabbinic statement that the covering of the head was restricted to those who are married (B Qiddushin 29b), for the obvious reason that, according to the kabbalists, the *Shekhinah* rests only on the head of one who is married Cf *The Book of the Pomegranate Moses de Leon s Sefer ha Rimmon*, ed E R Wolfson (Atlanta, 1988), p 224 (Hebrew section)

104 *Commentary on the Legends in the Talmud*, ed L A Feldman (Jerusalem, 1991), p 6 (in Hebrew)