Directing the Heart

Corporeal Language and the Anatomy of Ritual Space

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The relation between an agent, the agent’s body, the location of action, and the conventional categories of language and gesture is a social construction par excellence. Far from the simple naturalness of things given as objects in the world, our ways of understanding the body and of inhabiting its spaces rest on an immense stock of social knowledge. Available in the form of unreflective common sense and habit, what Bourdieu calls “habitus,” this knowledge orients and naturalizes action. It serves as a measure of objectivity and provides the categories in which we delimit what is verifiably here-now … Through its engagements, the body is constantly in the process of transcending its own epidermal limits.

– William Hanks

In his studies of Yucatan deixis, William Hanks shows how ostensibly neutral referential language is in fact socially and culturally varied and dependent, even as it provides shared linguistic grounds for human bodily and spatial experience. Hanks opens up rich insights at the intersection of the body, language, space, and culture. In this paper, I turn to early rabbinic terms that are similarly grounded in and grounding of what Hanks calls a “corporeal field.” I examine tannaitic terminology involved in ritual directions that invoke the body and its limbs or organs on the one hand, and geographical-spatial concepts on the other. Tracking such usage in the context of ritual, I offer readings that privilege the physical and spatial resonances of phrases related to direction or orientation, without foregoing their mental or affective dimensions.

While taking bodily language seriously might seem obvious, certain terms, especially those involving the heart, tend to be read as either purely mental (and thus their bodily dimensions viewed as mere metaphor) or as generically phys-

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1 William F. Hanks, Referential Practice: Language and Lived Space Among the Maya (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 8. Thanks to Ian Moyer for modeling the fruitful possibilities of thinking ancient sources through Hanks in conversation and in his unpublished paper, “A Polis of Priests.” I am grateful to Mira Balberg for her stimulating insights in discussions of this paper in progress, to William Hanks, Clara Bosak-Schroeder, Sasha Stern, and Galit Hasan-Rokem for helpful feedback on an earlier iteration of this paper and to Mika Ahuvia for her detailed comments. Thanks to the participants in the Placing Texts symposium for their thoughtful questions and comments, to Michail Kitsos for his able research assistance, and to Harry Kashdan for his excellent editorial assistance.
Rabbinic instructions regarding the anatomy of ritual summon hearts to be directed, eyes to be raised, faces to be turned, and bodies to be poised in particular ways. The most challenging phrase and the main focus of this article is kavvanat halev, or, “direction of the heart.” I refrain from translating this phrase as “intent” or from classifying it as metaphor, not wishing to succumb to anachronistic binaries. Lakoff and Johnson, proponents of embodied cognition, have argued that metaphors, particularly spatial ones, are never mere, being founded on the body’s experiences. Even more fundamentally, we may question the labelling of certain phrases as metaphor in the first place, in light of our own cultural assumptions.

I will argue that such insights about bodily language are key to understanding how phrases like kavvanat halev (in concert with other bodily language and techniques) express and serve to constitute physical, spatial, and affective dimensions of ritual. Furthermore, in attending to the various spatial and geographical markers that often accompany instructions of kavvanat halev and other bodily deployments, I depart from those who read such markers as generalized references or functional equivalents to the deity without reference to spatial location. I thus ask what happens when we take seriously the injunction to “direct the heart.” What might this entail at the bodily level? I begin in Part I by introducing the usages of k.v.n., lev, and combinations, in biblical and early sources, before moving on to Tannaitic sources using kavvanat halev in Parts II–IV.

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2 Examples of the former are Uri Ehrlich, The Non-Verbal Language of Prayer A New Approach to Jewish Liturgy (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 22: “an innate spiritual awareness”; Moshe Greenberg, Biblical Prose Prayer: As a Window to the Popular Religion of Ancient Israel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 64. The latter include Erhlich, Non-Verbal Language, 66; Lieberman, Tosefta Kifshuta, Berakhot, 44–45. While Ehrlich is attentive to the non-verbal aspects of prayer he is less interested in the bodily dimensions of language.


Part I: Early Usages of Lev and K.v.n.

Lev in the Bible and Tannaitic Literature

In biblical Hebrew lev has multiple senses ranging from mind to affect to sensory perception, and from the innards or interior of the body (or other entities such as the sea or the heavens) to the chest. It is notable that hearts are often referred to as directed, turned, or set toward the deity. Some scholars have argued, pointing to this and other bodily terminology that express affective states, that such phrases indicate Israelite cultural ideas about the bodily sites in which emotions were felt. Such arguments effectively point the way to theories of sensory affect or of embodied emotion. In other words, lev can connote affective and mental states without negating its embodied dimensions.

This variety of meanings continues into tannaitic-rabbinic Hebrew. While it is fair to say that rabbinic Hebrew’s usages of lev on its own often relate to mental state, it can sometimes also refer to the breast or even the internal heart organ anatomically construed. Even in its usages that seem most obviously related to mental contexts, we must still ask to what degree it nonetheless expresses and

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7 E.g., Isa 29:13, “they honor me with their mouth and their lips but have removed their heart far from me.”

8 See Mark S. Smith, “The Heart and Innards in Israelite Emotional Expressions: Notes from Anthropology and Psychobiology,” JBL 117 (1998): 427–36 for the suggestion that emotions are felt physically in the body and that references to body parts ought be understood as “expressions that reflect a cultural association between anger and the physical locations where this emotion is felt” (431). While his essentializing psychology regarding emotion felt in the body is problematic, Smith explanation of the heart’s emotional potentialities as the reason for its deployment in biblical prayer is interesting. See Antione Guillaumont, Les sens des noms du coeurs dans l’antiquité, Études carmélitaines 29 (Belgium: Desclée de Brouwer, 1950), 41–81, who at 51 describes “Semitic psychology” as materialist with psychic facts named according to organs or effects upon organs.

9 For early rabbinic usages of lev as chest or breast see m. Sot. 1:5. (cf. m. Hul. 3:1 for what seems to be the internal organ) and t. Ber. 2:14 on the requirement that the chest be covered for the recitation of the amidah. For very different uses of the chambered heart see Sifre Deut. 321 (ed. Finkelstein, 369) and t. Sot. 7:1 and for an interpretation of the expressions related to a theory of mind and memory see S. Naeh, “The Craft of Memory: Constructions of Memory and Patterns of Text in Rabbinic Literature” [Hebrew] in Mehkerei Talmud 3: Talmudic Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Professor Ephraim E. Urbach, ed. Yaakov Sussmann, and David Rosenthal (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2005) 570–82.
retains its bodily sense. Can one talk of the embodied mind or some hybrid of mind-body (in certain instances), or what William Cohen refers to as “material interiority”?  

K.v.n. in the Bible and Tannaitic Literature

The root k.v.n. in biblical Hebrew has a variety of meanings including to set, to prepare, and to establish, in the qal and other derived stems, and to more geospatial meanings in the hiphil, niphal, and polel. In these latter directional contexts k.v.n. can be used in conjunction with faces (e.g. Ezek 4:3, “and direct your face toward it”), or steps and paths. Van Hecke allows that in the hiphil the verb can designate “the determining of the qualities or the position of an object.” This sense of “direction” in certain biblical usages of k.v.n. can sometimes straddle different registers (as in the English resonances of “direction” or “focus”), from the attentional to the spatial.

In tannaitic-rabbinic Hebrew we find verbal uses of k.v.n., and only very rarely the abstract noun kavvanah. The term k.v.n. can mean awareness or attention,

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10 We might ask about distinctions between terms like lev and da’at. Eilberg-Schwartz distinguishes mahshava from kavvanah, lev, and da’at, whereas Ishay Rosen-Zvi questions such distinctions (see further n. 89).

11 William Cohen, “Material Interiority in Charlotte Brontë’s The Professor,” Nineteenth Century Literature 57 (2003): 443–76, at 445: “In using the term ‘material interiority,’ I mean to designate this literary depiction of ethereal inner qualities in a language of tangible objects, a practice that collapses dualistic conceptions of mind and body (or body and soul) by making subjective inwardness and bodily innards stand for each other.”

12 BDB s. v. כוּן (pp. 465–67); Koch, “Kun,” TDOT 7:89–100; for k.v.n. as a term of art for cultic ritual and encounters see ibid., 96 (the nominal makhon); for usages with lev, ibid., 96–97.

13 Prov 4:26, esp. when read with 4:27. This sense of kvn with path in a geospatial sense simultaneous to a moral sense is found elsewhere: e.g., Ps 119:133 and Prov 16:19, 21:29.

14 Ps 11:12 on shooting an arrow.

15 In 1 Sam 7:3 combined with lev it seems to mean directing the heart in a mental not just geospatial sense (cf. 1 Chr 29:18).

16 Pierre J. P. Van Hecke, “Searching for and Exploring Wisdom: A Cognitive-Semantic Approach to the Hebrew Verb ‘haqar’ in Job 28,” in Job 28: Cognition in Context, ed. E. J. Van Wolde and Ellen Van Wolde, Biblical Interpretation Series 64 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 160. He brings Deut 19:3 regarding the determination of a road’s distance as an example as well as 1 Sam 23:22 on figuring out the location of a hiding place. He also brings this spatial understanding to hekhin in Job 28:27.

17 Besides t. Rosh Hash. 2:7, k.v.n. in the qatal nominal form kavvanah is only found at m. Eruv. 4:4 (though in context there could be a hint of geographical direction in this usage of intention); Midr. Tann. 6:6 (though here as part of the construct mitsvat kavvanah, and as a parallel to kavvanah halev); Midr. Tann. 6:4 (ed. Hoffman, 24–26). For differing views on the nominal form in later rabbinic sources see Ephraim Urbach, The Halakhah: Its Sources and Development, trans. Raphael Posner (Israel: Yad La-Talmud, 1986), 179–81; Leib Moscovitz, Talmudic Reasoning: From Casuistics to Conceptualization, TSAJ 89 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 54, 353. Avraham Even-Shoshan, Dictionary, 750, defines kavvanah in the purely mental senses (concentration, attention, etc.).
concentration, intention,18 or direction,19 in some forms it can mean something like alignment or direction, relating to space.20

Most scholars focus on the mental and specifically intent-related valences of k.v.n. Somewhat differently, Elliot Wolfson claims that kavvanah is a technical term regarding “the formation of an iconic image of God within the mind.”21 While this makes sense for later sources (beginning with b. Berakhot 30a), the earlier source set treated here cannot sustain such a finding. Wolfson is one of the

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18 Often in the hitpael (though this can still have a spatial sense per m. Mid. 2:4) and in the piel (with indirect object, e.g. m. Menah. 13:11 [uviyd sheyekhavein adam et da’ato lashamalyim] or without: e.g., Mek. Beshalakh 6, lo kivantem ela likhvodi [ed. Lauterbach, 155; Horovitz-Rabin, 105]). The term k.v.n. arises with respect to a variety of affirmative obligations, transgressions, torts, crime, and more neutral domains of everyday and sacred transactions. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Human Will in Judaism: The Mishnah’s Philosophy of Intention*, BJS 103 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 7, defines kavvanah as the intention that accompanies an action, which the Mishnah uses to determine whether one’s action constitutes a transgression or fulfillment of divine law. Mira Balberg, *Purity, Body, and Self in Early Rabbinic Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 92, describes kavvanah as “the motivation behind a person’s actions.” Some types of action may require something like specific intent (see n. 43), but this is rarely explicit in tannaitic literature. For possible exceptions, see, e.g., t. Yad. 2:3–4 in which washing the hands for the sake of purifying them accomplishes this; also the unusual usage of mitkavvnim leshem mitzvah in m. Bek. 1:7 (but note that it is specified as such explicitly here). See Urbach, *The Halakhah*, 179, and Moscovitz, *Talmudic Reasoning*, 317, on this type of requirement of kavvanah for the fulfillment of mitsvot in later rabbinic sources. Also Max Kadushin, *Worship and Ethics: A Study in Rabbinic Judaism* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 82–83, 185–98.

19 E. W. Wolfson, “Iconic visualization and the imaginal body of God: The role of intention in the rabbinic conception of prayer,” *Modern Theology* 12 (1996): 137–62, at 140, relates k.v.n. and the pi’el (kiven) to the noun kivun as in orientation or direction. While certain k.v.n. relate to spatial direction, to my knowledge we do not find kivun (the qittul form, the pi’el verbal noun) in the bible or tannaitic literature. Thus, as least for rabbinic writing, we cannot make claims based on various forms of k.v.n. and the cognate kivun. On kivun, see Even-Shoshan, *Dictionary*, 749, for the various meanings of k.v.n.’s derived stems (including pi’el, pu’al, hiphil, and huphal), including those with geospatial senses related to direction. The passive participle is often used in spatial-directional contexts as “directed,” “opposite,” “aligned,” sometimes with prepositions (e.g. keneged). Thus m. Ohal. 12:5, in which the beams of a house and upper chamber are aligned with one another (mekhuvanot); similarly m. Ohal. 16:2. Highly pertinent to our inquiry is the prohibition of light-headedness (kalut rosh) while opposite the eastern gate (keneged sha’aar hamizrakh) because it is aligned toward (mekhuvan keneged) the holy of holies. For additional uses of mekhvun keneged in spatial and sometimes architectural contexts, see, e.g., m. Ohal. 17:5; Mek. de-Rabbi Ishmael, Shirah § 10 (ed. Lauterbach ed., 78; Horovitz-Rabin, 149: play on makhon, k.v.n.); Mek. de-Rabbi Ishmael, Paskha § 17 (ed. Lauterbach, 103; Horovitz-Rabin, 67); Sifra Leviticus Dibbura Denedava, parsha 5:7 (ed. Finkelstein, 2:53).

20 In the pi’el or hitpael, or passive participle (e.g., m. Mid. 2:4: eastern wall’s height allowed the high priest to “direct himself and gaze [mitkaven ve-ro’eh] at the entrance of the sanctuary”). See Even-Shoshan, *Dictionary*, 749, for the various meanings of k.v.n.’s derived stems (including pi’el, pu’al, hiphil, and huphal), including those with geospatial senses related to direction. The passive participle is often used in spatial-directional contexts as “directed,” “opposite,” “aligned,” sometimes with prepositions (e.g. keneged). Thus m. Ohal. 12:5, in which the beams of a house and upper chamber are aligned with one another (mekhuvanot); similarly m. Ohal. 16:2. Highly pertinent to our inquiry is the prohibition of light-headedness (kalut rosh) while opposite the eastern gate (keneged sha’aar hamizrakh) because it is aligned toward (mekhuvan keneged) the holy of holies. For additional uses of mekhvun keneged in spatial and sometimes architectural contexts, see, e.g., m. Ohal. 17:5; Mek. de-Rabbi Ishmael, Shirah § 10 (ed. Lauterbach ed., 78; Horovitz-Rabin, 149: play on makhon, k.v.n.); Mek. de-Rabbi Ishmael, Paskha § 17 (ed. Lauterbach, 103; Horovitz-Rabin, 67); Sifra Leviticus Dibbura Denedava, parsha 5:7 (ed. Finkelstein, 2:53).

21 Wolfson, “Iconic Visualization,” 139. He continues by describing this as “the means by which the worshipper creates a mental icon of God, the function of which is to locate the divine presence in space” (my emphasis).
few who attend explicitly to kavanah’s spatial and bodily resonances, dovetailing with the approach taken here.

K.v.n. + lev in the Bible and Tannaitic Literature

The combination of k.v.n. and lev is relatively rare in biblical and tannaitic sources. Psalm 78 describes “a generation that did not align its heart” (verse 8 in the hiphil) and whose “heart was not aligned with him” (verse 37 in the niphal). First Samuel 7:3 enjoins Israelites to return with whole hearts to God, get rid of their “foreign” gods, and “direct your hearts to God and serve him alone.” Thus there is a combination of spatial imagery and affective and mental direction. The latter senses seem to be present in Ps 10:17 and Prov 23:26.

Perhaps most pertinent to our inquiry is “If you direct your heart (im hakhinota libekha) and spread out your palms toward him (ufarasta elav kapekha)” (Job 11:13). Carol Newsom reads the expression hekhin lev, along with the body language deployed across verses 13–15, as “literal descriptions of the reorientation of the body in prayer.” She views hakhanat halev as a preliminary practice that “disciplines and reorders the body” before it assumes the posture described in the second part of the verse. Newsom also attends to spatiality in charting how the “body of the one at prayer thereby structures an environment.”

This approach is sensitive to context, does not seek to downplay bodily language as mere metaphor, and attends to the combination of body, space, and habitus in ritual. The Job example is particularly instructive for what I will argue about tannaitic sources, given its combination of bodily techniques (hearts and hands) and spatial elements. Biblical prayer often involves not only the turning of hearts and raising of hands to God, but also the lifting of eyes and of faces.

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22 The promised result is being saved from the hands of the Philistines; cf. m. Rosh Hash. 3:8 and the efficacy of kavvanat halev in that martial scenario.

23 Moshe Greenberg, Biblical Prose Prayer, 49: “We speak of pouring out our guts to someone and mean the same: to expose one's innermost being, revealing its secret concerns without reservation, without withholding anything—to speak all that is in one's mind with utter sincerity and candor.” Despite his own bodily language, Greenberg translates this into a requirement for sincerity in prayer.


25 Newsom, Book of Job, 109, links it to the rabbinic kavvanat halev. Greenberg, Biblical Prose Prayer, 64, also notes that the Mishnaic Hebrew kiven et halev is “descended both etymologically (from the root kvn) and semantically from the biblical term hekin leb (nakon leb), direct the heart (have one's heart directed, devoted).”

26 Newsom, Book of Job, 110. This carries through with her observations about the language of distancing from evil, and raising the face up to God in the verses that follow.

27 E.g. Lam 2:18–19 on crying hearts, tears, pouring hearts out like water before the face of God and raising palms toward him; Ps 143:6, arms outstretched; Pss 28:2 and 141:2, palms directed toward sanctuary; Neh 8:6, hands lifted; 1 Esd 4:58, “he (Zerubavel) lifted up his face to heaven toward Jerusalem and praised the King of Heaven.” Dan 6:11, which speaks of Dan-
This brings us to combined usages of k.v.n. and lev in tannaitic-rabbinic Hebrew. As mentioned, there are barely any instances of the noun kavvanah, and thus of the noun construct kavvanat halev. Furthermore, there are only a few examples of the verb plus noun form in tannaitic literature (e.g. yekhaven et libo), and these are mostly found in ritual contexts. These usages are concentrated in the Mishnah and Tosefta in the tractates of Berakhot and Rosh haShanah and will be treated below. Additional instances are found in m. Meg 2:2, t. Ter. 3:6, and Sifre Deut. 335.

This concludes our brief survey of the various nominal, verbal, independent, and combined forms of k.v.n. and lev, which evince a variety of usages, including those rooted in the body, the senses, and space. In many cases, other body parts or sensory organs are engaged together with such usages. Moving to the tannaitic cases of k.v.n. + lev, I will suggest pace Greenberg that the early rabbinic use of kiven et halev is not sufficiently understood as a technical term for devout intention and attention. I will argue that the local contexts of ritual conduct, gesture, and space complicate purely mental understandings of this term. The meaning of kavvanat halev and its various permutations elides binary conceptions of internal/external, literal/figural, and physical/mental.

I present this argument in three phases. In Part II (Kavvanat halev: Mind or Body?) I discuss six Tannaitic cases, seeking to revise the purely mental interpre-


While not combined, m. Ter. 3:8 contrasts a properly executed ritual utterance “when one's heart (libo) and lips (i.e. utterances) are the same” versus “intending to say (hamitkaven lomar)” x but saying y.


m. Meg. 2:2 concerns someone already reading the Megillah in one capacity or another, who only fulfills the obligation if he directs his heart; t. Ter. 3:6 is related to the location and designation of specific items in space; see Lieberman, Tosefta Kifshuta, ad loc. and cf. m. Maaserot 5:4. Sifre Deut. 335 (ed. Finkelstein, 384–85) enjoins a person’s heart, eyes, and ears to be directed toward words of Torah just as they are toward the Temple. See Steven Fraade, “Hearing and Seeing at Sinai: Interpretive Trajectories,” in The Significance of Sinai: Traditions about Sinai and Divine Revelation in Judaism and Christianity, ed. George J. Brooke, Hindy Najman, and Loren T. Stuckenbruck (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 267–68.

Greenberg, Biblical Prose Prayer, 64.
tations of some of them. Part III (The Praying Body in Space) moves to kavvanat halev in prayer. Here I argue for a strongly bodily and spatial interpretation of kavvanat halev, alongside similarly bodily and directional terminology (such as turned faces and raised eyes). Finally, Part IV (Senses, Heart, and Space in Ritual) brings us to m. Rosh Hash. 3:7–8 and t. Rosh Hash. 2:6–7, where I show how the tannaim use the problem of overcoming gaps and blockages as an opportunity to embed ritual in space. They accomplish this by interweaving the bodily dimensions of kavvanat halev with other sensory capacities (such as looking and hearing).

Part II: Kavvanat halev: Mind or Body?

Two instances of statements about the general requirement for kavvanat halev can be found in Tosefta Berakhot:

One who recites the Shema must direct his heart (tsarikh sheyekhaven et libo). R. Akhai says in the name of R. Judah: if he directed his heart (kiven et libo) in the first paragraph, even if he did not direct his heart (kiven et libo) in the last paragraph, he has fulfilled his obligation. (t. Ber. 2:2)

One who prays must direct his heart (tsarikh sheyekhaven et libo). Abba Saul says: [there is] an allusion to (lit. sign for) prayer, “Direct their hearts (takhin libam), cause your ears to listen” (Ps 10:17). (t. Ber. 3:4)

These two rulings mandate kavvanat halev for the Shema and the amidah (the standing prayer), respectively, but they do not define what it entails. The following, while not a general rule, offers an illustrative exemplar:

One only stands to prayer with heaviness of the head (koved rosh). The ancient pious ones would linger for a length of time before prayer in order that they might direct their hearts to the place (sheyekhavnu et libam lamakom). (m. Ber. 5:1)

At first glance this might seem to be all about mental state and affect. From the gravitas implied in koved rosh to what almost seems like a meditation practice on the part of the early hasidim, this seems to speak to concentration at its most idealized. I suggest, however, that rather than viewing this passage in solely

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32 t. Ber. 2:2 and 3:4 on general rules for kavvanat halev during prayer and Shema; m. Ber. 5:1 and t. Ber. 2:7 on kavvanat halev in bodily contexts; m. Ber. 2:1 on intent; m. Rosh Hash. 3:7 on kavvanat halev for shofar.


34 Partial parallel in t. Rosh Hash. 2:7 (discussed below).

35 David Henshke, “Directing Prayer toward the Holy: the Plain Meaning of the Mishnah and its Echoes in Talmudic Literature,” Tarbiz 70 (2011): 5–27, at 13. This usage of koved rosh is the only instance in tannaitic literature. It seems to contrast with lightheadedness (kalut rosh). Most notably see the inversely constructed m. Ber. 9:5 which forbids a person from “lightening his head” (yakel rosho) while opposite (keneged) the Eastern Gate since it is directed opposite.
mental/affective terms, we also take its somatic sense seriously. Thus, I translate *koved rosh* on its own terms, in a way that preserves its bodily sense, especially given how the text moves from standing with heaviness of head (maybe a lowered head?) to what are arguably exemplars of that technique: pious supplicants who would stand still for some time in order to direct their hearts.\(^{36}\) This is clearly a technique of prayer that involves stillness and a relationship to motion and body, as well as to a type of direction of the heart which is as much spatial (*makom* as divine focus, highlighting place) as it is mental or affective.\(^{37}\) In this sense we might speak of the heart’s direction as “material interiority,” or, proceeding in the other direction, a “technique of the body” that shapes or intertwines affect/mind.\(^{38}\)

I read the following example of *kavvanat halev* in a similar fashion:

The porter, even when his burden is on his shoulder, behold this one recites (the *Shema*). But when he is unloading and loading he should not recite because his heart is not directed (*she-en libo mekhavein*).\(^{39}\) Either way, he should not pray (the *’amidah*) until he has unloaded. (t. Ber. 2:7)

In this case, someone carrying a load may recite the *Shema* but may not do so while in the process of loading and unloading. We also learn that even when merely bearing a burden a porter may not utter the standing prayer. One might argue that the *kavvanat halev* that is possible while bearing a load but not while loading and unloading refers to differing requirements of attention or concentration on the ritual act of recital. Without negating the mental and affective dimensions cultivated for the recitation of the *Shema* or the standing prayer, I would like to suggest a more bodily understanding of this ruling, similar to the lingering pious ones in m. Ber. 5:1.

The second clause ought to give us pause, for here we learn that the *’amidah* may not be prayed in either case (whether loading or simply carrying something on his shoulder). If *kavvanat halev* entails mental concentration exclusively, then it is hard to understand why in the case of *Shema* a porter carrying something

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\(^{36}\) Thanks for Shira Schwartz for her suggestion about lowered heads. I thus read the word *mitokh* as pertaining to chronology, i.e., one stands to pray after first establishing *koved rosh* in a similar fashion to the pious ones who first lingered before starting to pray.


\(^{38}\) Cohen, “Material Interiority,” 445; cf. n. 11 above.

\(^{39}\) *Mekhavein* (מְקהֵיָין) according to Ms. Vienna, lit. directs; *mekhuvan* in Ms. Ehrfurt and Fragment OR. 1080 II, p. 1, accessed on-line through “Primary Textual Witnesses to Tannaitic Literature,” at http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/tannaim.
could concentrate but in the case of the amidah he would fail to. It is more likely that the meaning of kavvanat halev here incorporates his upper body (which must be positioned properly for the standing prayer). This differential bodily treatment of the lev (between Shema and the amidah) is also at work in t. Ber. 2:14, which demands that one standing in a field or laboring while naked make sure his genitals are covered when reciting Shema, but requires the heart to also be covered when reciting the amidah.\footnote{The Shema thus requires a certain bodily alignment of the heart that is possible whilst bearing a burden but is not possible to maintain when the body is in motion while loading/unloading. The amidah requires a different type of alignment. Note the structural and terminological resemblances between t. Ber. 2:7, 2:14, and 3:18. In t. Ber. 3:18, which involves sitting on a donkey while praying the amidah, the language is “either way he should pray in his place as long as his heart directs” (ben kakh uven kakh yitpalel bimkomo u-vilvad sheyehe libo mekhavein). Compare t. Ber. 2:7’s description of how loading and unloading does not allow the heart to direct (she-ein libo makhevein) and how “either way he should not pray (ben kakh uven kakh lo yitpallel ad) until he unloads.” Also t. Ber. 2:14: “either way he should not pray until he covers his heart (ben kakh uven kakh lo yitpallel ad sheyekhaseh libo).”}

We will notice a related concern about the body’s position and the heart’s alignment in t. Ber. 3:14’s case of one who prays on a donkey.

As can be gleaned from various rules and cases in the Mishnah, the standing prayer requires a certain bodily comportment: the supplicant must be on the ground, stationary, and in an upright posture. These bodily requirements explain why carrying a heavy burden is not allowed while saying the amidah but is permitted during the Shema (similarly one may say the Shema while up a tree but not the amidah: m. Ber. 2:4; t. Ber. 2:8). Correspondingly, not being permitted to recite the Shema while performing the bodily motion of bending and rising involved in loading and unloading informs us of the body’s implication or impingement in directing the heart – and of this technique and expression’s physical sense. I suggest that a bare minimum of kavvanat halev entails a bodily component of stasis – similar to the heavy head or lingering stillness required or idealized with reciting the Shema. An understanding of kavvanat halev that sees how the physical and the mental, are intertwined can allow for how a person may not be able to direct the body/mind when in motion.

**Intent**

In the following cases we find borderline scenarios regarding kavvanat halev that seem to convey something closer to intention: “One who was reading scripture and the time for recital (of Shema) arrived, if he directed his heart (kiven et libo) he fulfilled his obligation, and if not he did not fulfill” (m. Ber. 2:1).

Here, someone is ostensibly already performing the necessary action for the ritual by reading (and doing so out loud) the scriptural passage of the Shema. What converts coincident action to ritual act is kavvanat halev. In this context
kavvanat halev refers to something more than a generalized requirement for concentration or attention. It seems to refer to some kind of consciousness that the action be in fulfillment of ritual obligation: what we might call intention, or possibly even specific intent.\footnote{Specific intent refers to not only to doing something intentionally (or with purpose) but also to doing it with a reflective awareness that it is a specific type of act or mitsvah. This distinction is articulated in later rabbinic sources, e.g., b. Hul. 31a, and b. Rosh Hash. 28a–b, but it is by no means clear that such this mishnah refers to this type of intentionality. Eilberg-Schwartz, Human Will, 50, distinguishes between two types of kavvanah: a generalized intention to perform an action (whether or not it was actualized), and the purpose with which the person performs the action; he cites m. Ber. 2:1 as an instance of the latter. Both Eilberg-Schwartz and Albeck understand k.\textit{v.n. libro} in this mishnah “to mean that the actor intends his action to fulfill the religious obligation in question” (Human Will, 210; cf. Mishnah, Zeraim, ed. Albeck, 16). Contrast with the scholars cited in n. 18 above.} However, if kavvanat halev can convey within its semantic range the sense of ritual technique involving some aspect of bodily comportment, is it possible that this sense is indicated even here?

In many ways the following case seems very similar in terms of temporal coincidence:

If someone was passing behind the back of the synagogue, or if his house were adjacent to the synagogue, and he hears the sound of the shofar or the sound of the megillah; if he directed his heart – he has fulfilled his obligation, if not he has not. Even though this one heard and that one heard, this one directed his heart and that one did not direct his heart. (m. Rosh Hash. 3:7)

As we will see in Part IV, a contextual reading of this mishnah and its parallel t. Rosh Hash. 2:7 calls for an understanding of kavvanat halev that is infused with bodily and spatial meaning rather than the purely mentally-driven understanding we might associate with the example just shown in m. Ber. 2:1.

Overall, then, this section has showcased six of the most obvious places in which we might ascribe mental meanings to kavvanat halev associated with attention, concentration, and intention. However, I have sought to argue that while some of these examples might align with such mental meanings to a certain extent, at least two cases (m. Ber. 5:1 and t. Ber. 2:7) also suggest bodily and/or spatial engagements. This is similar to what I will argue for the last case (m. Rosh Hash. 3:7) in Part IV. Before discussing m. Rosh Hash. 3:7 and parallels, I move to a set of cases (t. Ber. 3:14–18, par. m. Ber. 4:5–6) which demonstrate a bodily-spatial sense of kavvanat halev in the ritual context of the amidah prayer.

Part III: The Praying Body in Space

I believe precisely that at the bottom of all our mystical states there are body techniques that we have not studied, which were studied fully in China and India, even in very remote
periods. This socio-psycho-biological study should be made. I think that there are necessarily biological means of entering into “communication with God.”

– Marcel Mauss

In “Techniques of the Body,” Mauss considers the various ways in which different cultures train the body, even (or especially) in its most “natural” attitudes such as sleeping, walking, eating, or giving birth. Mauss argues that the body is educated and that its deployments vary across different social formations. Below, we find rules that constitute a sort of manual that seeks to educate bodies in prayer. They establish that, through its deployments, whether oriented this way or that, whether in motion or stasis, whether seated or standing, the body founds a sacred geography within which a supplicant directs their prayer to a divine address. In addition to the features we have already noted (being upright, stationary, on the ground), t. Ber. 3:14–18 specifies:

A. (t. 3:14) A blind person and one who cannot determine the direction of the cardinal points (lekhaven et haruhot): they should direct their hearts towards (mekhavnin et libam keneged) their father in heaven (avihem shebashamayim, Ms. Vienna; Erfurt has lamakom; editio princeps has lifnei hamakom) and pray, as it says, “and they shall pray to the Lord your God” (1 Kgs 8:44).

B. (t. 3:15) Those who are standing outside of the land direct their hearts toward (mekhavnin et libam keneged) the land of Israel, as it says, “And they shall pray toward their land” (2 Chr 6:38).

C. Those standing in the land of Israel direct their hearts towards (mekhavnin et libam keneged) Jerusalem and pray, as it says, “And they shall pray toward this city” (2 Chr 6:34).

D. (t. 3:16) Those standing in Jerusalem direct their hearts towards (mekhavnin et libam keneged) the temple as it says, “And they shall pray toward this house” (2 Chr 6:32).  


43 For Mauss, body techniques need to be understood as social (the broader structures within which particular bodies are educated), biological (the bodily mechanics involved), and psychological (the mediator between the social and the bodily/biological).

44 Scholars have critiqued Mauss’s “bodily techniques” for their overemphasis on the social and mechanical deployments of the body over emotion, mind, and the individual; see, e.g., Nick Crossley, Reflexive Embodiment in Contemporary Society (Open University Press, 2006), 103–4. This is viewed as problematic by some, and favorably by others. Thus, when comparing Anthony Giddens and Mauss’s self: “Giddens’ self is something which masters the body, while the Maussian self involves the body”; see Scott Lash and John Urry, Economies of Signs and Space (London: Sage Publications, 1994), 46. The same scholars note how “theorists such as Mauss and Bourdieu displace the subject of reflexivity in the direction of the body” (ibid.).

45 See parallels in y. Ber. 4:5, 8c; Sifre Deut. 29 (ed. Finkelstein, 47); b. Ber. 30a; Songs Rab. 4:4; Pesiq. Rab. 33 (ed. Friedmann, 149b); Tanh. Vayishlakh 21 (ed. Buber, 87b).  

46 Sifre Deut. 29 has hofkhin pneihem where the Tosefta gives mekhavnin et libam in B–D. The emphasis on faces in the first few lines of the Sifre is arguably triggered by verse (Deut 3:27) from which it claims to derive this set of rules. Deuteronomy 3:27 describes Moses being told to gaze at Canaan from afar: “Raise your eyes toward the west, north, south, and east, and look with your eyes.” This triggers, “from here (this verse) they said: ‘Those standing outside of the land turn their faces toward the land.’” Additionally, the association of this set of teachings, particularly
E. Those standing in the temple direct their hearts toward *(mekhavnin et libam keneged)* the chamber of the holy of holies and pray, as it says, “and they shall pray toward this place *(hamakom)*” (1 Kgs 8:30). 47

F. Those standing in the north are thus found *(nimtse’u)* to have their faces to *(pneihem l’)* the south, in the south their faces to *(pneihem l’)* the north, in the east their faces to *(pneihem l’)* the west, in the west their faces to *(pneihem l’)* the east.

G. All Israel are thus found *(nimtse’u)* to be praying toward one place *(lemakom ekhad)*. 48

H. (t. 3:17) A man should not stand on top of a bed, or on top of a bench or chair, nor on top of an elevated place and pray, as there is not elevation before hamakom, as it says, “from the depths I called to you, O God.” But if he is old or sick, it is permitted.

I. (t. 3:18) One who was riding on a donkey, if he has someone who can hold the donkey he should dismount and pray, and if not he should pray in his place *(bimkomo)*. Rabbi says: either way he should pray in his place *(bimkomo)* as long as his heart directs *(mekhaven)*.

In this passage sections A and H–I present exceptional cases and act as bookends to the intervening material in B–G, which presents the standard rules and in turn is composed of two units stitched together: B–E using the language of the directed heart *(k.v.n. + lev → keneged x)* and mapping praying bodies in concentric circles; and F–G using the language of “their faces are toward” *(pneihem l’)* and plotting cardinal points. Let me elaborate these initial suggestions.

Kavvanat Halev and Locating Prayer

In B–E there are five adjacent, concentric regions of varying scale, each with increasing proximity to the sacred. At each location, the praying subject directs the heart in increasing focus. Thus, from outside of the land to the land, from inside the land to the city of Jerusalem, from inside the city to the sacred enclosure, and from inside the temple to the very heart of its interior – the holy of holies. It is only when inside the temple that the rule of directing the heart to the holy of holies applies. It is not the general rule that everyone, everywhere, direct their hearts to the holy of holies. Those scholars who harmonize line E with the parallel borderline cases in m. Ber. 4:5–6 (below) to read for a default, general rule that

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47 Sifre Deut. 29 has *mekhavnin et libam* for this line. If the Sifre’s emphasis on faces relates to the exegetical context in which Moses is instructed to set his eyes toward the land, then the reversal to *kavvanat halev* in the case of someone standing within the temple (and directing their heart toward the holy of holies) makes sense, as the holy of holies would be hidden from view.

all prayer is directed toward the holy of holies must explain the variety of foci for kavvanat halev in these lines.\textsuperscript{49}

Kavvanat halev here is resolutely rooted in the body’s relation to space. The precise coordinates of the direction of the heart are described geographically (with the preposition keneged + destination), according to the geographical location of the supplicant’s standing body. There is, furthermore, nothing neutral about the foci toward which the heart is to be directed. The boundaries set up at each hypothetical interval delineate the land of Israel and all that is beyond, the holy city of Jerusalem and the remainder of Israel, the Temple, and the rest of the holy city, and the holy of holies and the rest of the Temple. This highly dynamic ritual map is similar to that in m. Kel. 1:6–9, which sets up a geospatial map of concentric (and increasing) circles of holiness from outside the land to the holy of holies. Here, too, the accumulative and repeating literary structure gives a sense of mounting approach, closing in ever more narrowly. The rhetorical effect is thus to stage the climactic praying position within the Temple with heart directed toward the holy of holies as an ideal, even if it is not the rule.\textsuperscript{50}

**Multiple Foci of Kavvanat Halev**

That kavvanat halev is also rooted in the body and that its default focus is not the holy of holies is further bolstered by A and I (t. Ber. 3:14 and 18):

A. (t. 3:14) A blind person and one who cannot determine the direction of the cardinal points (lekhaven et haruhot): they should direct their hearts towards (mekhavnin et libam keneged) their father in heaven (avihem shebashamayim, Ms. Vienna; Erfurt has lamakom; editio princeps has lifnei hamakom) and pray, as it says, “and they shall pray to the Lord your God” (1 Kgs 8:44) . . .

I. (t. 3:18) One who was riding on a donkey, if he has someone who can hold the donkey he should dismount and pray, and if not he should pray in his place (bimkomo). Rabbi says: either way he should pray in his place (bimkomo) as long as his heart directs.

Line A describes the blind person and those who cannot determine directions (lekhaven et haruhot, literally to direct the “winds” or cardinal points). If kavvanat halev were a purely mental or imaginary activity without relation to the supplicant’s body, these hypotheticals would not make sense as borderline cases. Lack of vision and inability to geolocate impede observance of the rules in B–E, regardless of where the supplicants finds themselves. The very terminology of lekhaven et harukhot reinforces the strongly geospatial sense of kavvanah in the passage as a whole.

Furthermore, the Tosefta’s alternative prayer directions for these cases are equally rooted in the body and its relation to space, as it is possible even for the

\textsuperscript{49} See below n. 56.

\textsuperscript{50} Perhaps this rhetorical effect has unduly impacted scholars such as Ehrlich and Lieberman who then force a unifying geography of prayer toward the holy of holies/Shekhina on all sources.
non-sighted or those unable to determine directions to discern what is above.  
In other words, all the elements of the injunction to “direct their hearts toward their father in the heavens” (i.e. upwards) are directions about direction, and are not exclusively figurative language for a purely mental device. Kavvanat halev is best understood as a technique whereby the heart organ aligns itself geospatially – almost like an internal compass – whether through the assistance of vision and a sense of direction, or (as in these exceptional cases), even without. Thus, in these exceptional cases the object of kavvanat halev, “their father in the heavens,” is a spatial designation (above) similar to “the land of Israel” or “the Temple,” rather than a generic divine appellation. In the case of line I (t. Ber. 3:18), Rabbi’s view mentions kavvanat halev but with an unspecified focus. The target of kavvanat halev might also implicitly be upward, or it might depend on the supplicant’s location (as laid out in t. Ber. 3:15–17), or perhaps it relates to aligning the body in some way (also as suggested for t. Ber. 2:7).

Thus far, I have argued for taking the language of kavvanat halev and its (indirect) objects (i.e. foci) seriously as pertaining to a bodily rooted (and in the case of t. Ber. 3:14–18), spatially embedded prayer technology. I should add that in doing so one need not negate the sense of a mental or affective dimension. These readings are still compatible with ideas about mental focus which surely also resonate in the terms lev and k.v.n. In this regard, I part ways with Ehrlich

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51 This concern with verticality is also present in the previous halakkah in line I (t. Ber. 3:17), which concerns those who pray while elevated.

52 Oddly, Ehrlich (Language of Prayer, 87) reads this rule’s difference to the Mishnah’s rule about direction of the heart toward the holy of holies as evidence of a different, non-temple-directed sensibility. He believes that the tanna here has deliberately changed the destination of thoughts “directly to the Shekhinah” versus m. Ber. 4:6’s “holy of holies.” (Though, see above for my disagreement that the Mishnah has a default orientation toward the holy of holies.) He has a purely mental understanding of kavvanat halev here, and wishes to see it as distinct from the type of body-direction in t. Ber. 3:16, which he characterizes as only “for the sake of national-religious unity” (ibid). But this overlooks the fact that in the parallel m. Ber. 4:6 the issue is not that the supplicant is unable to determine the position of Jerusalem, but rather that they are in motion (e.g., on a ship) and so unable to guarantee the stability of their orientation. Further, this argument about the location of the Shekhinah forces more onto these passages than they express or warrant.

53 Something of this bodily and geospatial notion seems to inform the teaching that one ought to set (yiten) their eyes downward and heart upward (b. Yevam. 105b, in which R. Ishmael b. Yose makes the same recommendation regarding heart and eyes).

54 Cf. Ehrlich, Language of Prayer, 87, and pace Lieberman, Tosefta Kifshuta, 43. While they read the holy of holies as geospatial, “father in heaven” takes on a more generalized understanding as the Shekhinah (a term that does not actually surface in these texts).

55 It is worth noting the structural and terminological similarity in t. Ber. 3:18 to t. Ber. 2:7 (libo mekhavein, bein kakh o-vein kakh). It is possible that the type of kavvanat halev referred to in t. Ber. 3:18 relates to the type of bodily groundedness in t. Ber. 2:7’s case of the porter. See also the similar language in t. Ber. 2:8 (after discussing the instances in which workers may recite the Shema while up a tree, the text declares that “either way a householder should get down and pray”). See also t. Ber. 2:14.
and Lieberman who, finding the terminology in B–E difficult, assert that k.v.n. + lev should be read as an analogue for turning the body, in the manner of what follows in F–G (pneihem l', their faces are toward).\(^{56}\) An either/or insistence on a purely mental understanding of kavvanat halev is in part what pushes for this impulse to simply negate its meaning here.

As in its biblical deployments, the sense of aligning the heart seems at once affective, bodily, and spatial. The heart here operates as an organ in the chest area that serves as a compass-like device, one that aligns (k.v.n.) the supplicant in relationship to a liturgical environment. It is, in this sense, neither a machine that allows a bird’s eye view of the self (i.e. a deep sense of subjectivity), nor a flatly behaviorist or ‘objective’ subjectivity; rather, it is a bodily device that coalesces the body/affect in relation to ritual spatial context.

Faces, Cardinal Points, and “One Place”

Given this understanding of kavvanat halev, what is to be made of the different bodily language and spatial coordinates deployed in F–G?

F. (t. Ber. 3:16) … Those standing in the north are thus found (nimtse'u) to have their faces to (pneihem l') the south, in the south their faces to (pneihem l') the north, in the east their faces to (pneihem l') the west, in the west their faces to (pneihem l') the east.

G. All Israel are thus found (nimtse'u) to be praying toward one place (lemakom ekhad).

Here we find an account of supplicants facing (pneihem) toward a cardinal direction (la-darom, etc.) depending on bodily location, also expressed in terms of cardinal points (omdin be-tsafon, etc.). This section ought to be understood, in contrast to the preceding, as pertaining to a descriptive, bird’s eye view of a

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\(^{56}\) Ehrlich (Language of Prayer, 66) is forced to declare that t. Ber. 3:15–16’s use of kavvanat halev is “problematic” given its meaning of “direction of thought and spirit and not physical orientation of face and body.” His binary understanding of kavvanat halev (as solely mental) has him negate the text of the Tosefta in favor of parallels that use turning the face (hafikhat panim) instead (i.e., Sifre Deut. 29, y. Ber. 4:5, 8b–c, but not b. Ber. 30a, which does not support this reading). Ehrlich (ibid.) argues that “notwithstanding its use of heart this halakhah clearly enjoins turning one’s face in a particular direction.” This allows him to privilege F–G’s facing language and notion of everyone praying toward one place, to read it harmonistically with m. Ber. 4:5–6, and ultimately to claim a tannaic position of prayer facing the holy of holies. Yet, elsewhere in his writings, Ehrlich harmonistically reads a host of sources to argue for a spiritualizing, general rule that a supplicant “directs his mind toward the holy of holies and its indwelling divine presence” (ibid., 22). There, kavvanat halev has no special relationship to the body, “rather it is an innate spiritual awareness of being opposite the holy of holies and its indwelling shekhinnah.” Lieberman (Tosefta kifshuta, 44–55) analyzes the parallel to the Tosefta in Pesikta Rabbati (which he strains to argue is a source independent of the other tannaic parallels) and which has similar usage of kavvanat halev to the Tosefta. He argues that kavvanat halev in that case is “actual” (mamashit) rather than “mental” (mahshavah). This is then taken up by Ehrlich to support his corporeal reading of kavvanat halev in t. Ber. 3:15–16. Compare Urbach, The Sages, 58, for whom kavvanat halev in t. Ber. 3:15–16 refers to orientation of both body and thoughts.
corporate (bodies making the body of) Israel in space. I argue this not only because this is the explicit and emphatic content presented, but also in light of the twice-used introductory nimtse’u.

The term nimtse’u (lit. “they are found”) at the beginning of F and G is a literary marker of summation of what precedes. The first nimtse’u in F represents an inference based on the preceding B–E. The second nimtse’u in G follows upon F. Therefore, as a unit F–G explicitly tags itself as translating B–E into an alternative formulation: the resultant corporate effect on Israelites from following the directions in B–E.57

Significantly, F–G does so by proffering a bird’s eye view that is descriptive (“thus those in the North are found”) rather than the step-by-step prescriptive delineation of B–E (“those standing in … direct their hearts toward …”). We are informed that “their faces are toward” (pneihem l’).58 F redraws the concentric circles of B–E along the cardinal points. G provides a panoramic perspective in which the sacred center, “one place,” anchors corporate Israel instead of B–E’s shifting and gradually honed foci (the holy land, city, Temple, the holy of holies).59

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57 Lieberman, *Tosefta Kifshuta*, 45, ascribes it to the Toseftan redactor (versus its absence in what he views as the original version of the baraita in Pesikta Rabbati).

58 This is as opposed to the more active formulations such as “they direct their hearts toward” or “they turn their faces toward” (hofkhim pneihem l’) as per y. Ber. 4:5, 8c; Sifre Deut. 29. Compare the usages in m. Sot. 7:5 or m. Suk. 5:5, though see m. Sot. 11:7, where we find pneihem le-darom/tsafon in a description of the changing of the showbread by priests.

59 It is this final summary that also unduly influences Ehrlich and Lieberman to view the holy of holies as the default address of prayer.
Overall, when read against B–E, this unit is not only descriptive rather than prescriptive, but is also generalized rather than individuated or graduated, and solely corporal (pneihem l’) rather than the blend of body/mind in F–G’s kavvanat halev. Put differently: the function of F–G is to look at bodies and their faces and to record the overall effect by which Israelite bodies are disciplined in space, whereas B–E accounts for how to get there.60 F–G’s functional equivalence serves to underline the physical dimensions of the preceding kavvanat halev.

Borderline Cases and Prayer Directions in the Mishnah

F–G’s summation that all of Israel pray “toward one place,” has emboldened some to argue for a generalizable tannaitic principle that all prayer is directed toward the holy of holies.61 They have further supported this view by invoking the parallel mishnah to the Tosefta’s borderline cases in A and I (t. Ber. 3:14, 18).62 In this section, I call this into question with an alternative reading of the mishnah. If one reads each phrase of m. Ber. 4:5 on its own terms it is by no means inevitable to conclude that the holy of holies is the default focus of prayer in all cases. One need not read the recommendation to direct the heart to the holy of holies in the final scenario (one who is on a donkey and cannot turn his face) back into the preceding scenarios (i.e. that one who is on donkey and/or cannot dismount must turn his face toward the holy of holies).63

60 For accounts of cultural variation in mapping space see Hanks, Referential Practice, 295–351.
62 For a corrective to this harmonistic reading of this mishnah see Henshke, “Directing Prayer,” 7–10.
63 Louis Ginzberg infers from the language of this mishnah that the focus of the kavvanat hallev (i.e., the holy of holies) should be read back into the phrase about turning the face, seeing the lack of explicit mention of direction as shorthand; Ginzberg, A Commentary on the Palestinian Talmud: A Study of the Development of the Halakah and Haggadah in Palestine and Babylonia [Hebrew], vol. 3 (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1971), 402–3; see also Ehrlich, Language of Prayer, 22–23, 67, 107. Judith Hauptman, Rereading the Mishnah: A New Approach to Ancient Jewish Tests, TSAJ 109 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 3–5, argues that this mishnah postdates t. Ber. 3:14–18 and effectively resolves what is a debate in t. Ber. 3:18 while innovating in requiring the person who cannot face the temple to direct their heart toward the holy of holies. Henshke, “Directing Prayer,” 9, calls this reading into question and denies that the mishnah is interested in the direction of prayer; instead he argues that the mishnah concerns the need to cease all other activities and dedicate oneself completely to prayer. Less convincing is the claim that orientation is not the concern of the Mishnah at all (because “this is not specifically the issue for one who descends from a donkey” [ibid.]) and that both this mishnah and the parallel tosefta are solely concerned with how to properly devote oneself to prayer amidst other activities.
m. Ber. 4:5–6  
5. One who was riding on a donkey shall dismount, and if he cannot dismount he should turn his face (yakhzir et panav), and if he cannot turn his face, he should direct his heart (yekhaven et libo) toward the holy of holies.

6. One who was sitting in a ship or a raft should direct his heart (yekhaven et libo) towards the holy of holies.

t. Ber. 3:18, 14  
18. One who was riding on a donkey, if there is someone who can hold the donkey let him dismount and pray. And if not, he should pray in his place. Rabbi says, either way he should pray in his place, as long as his heart directs (libo mekhaven).

14. A blind person and one who cannot locate the directions, they should direct their hearts (mekhavnin et libam) toward their father in heaven and pray, as it says “And they shall pray toward God your Lord, etc.” (1 Kgs 8:44).

The instruction to dismount in the first scenario could simply accord with the basic requirement of standing on the ground (with various exceptions in this case, and for workers on trees, allowed). Thus, in the first case, one should ideally dismount and be upright. However, perhaps recognizing concerns of practicability (after all, this mishnah follows on R. Joshua’s ruling that one who walks in a dangerous place perform a short prayer), alternatives are allowed, from turning the face to directing the heart.

The second scenario, turning the face, when read on its own, also says nothing of a particular direction towards which a face ought to be turned. This expression is used elsewhere in the Mishnah in contexts that need not indicate orientation toward particular locations but simply turning away (from some other activity or person). On its face, m. Ber. 4:5 is intelligible without the assumption that the holy of holies is the default destination for the prayer. The scenario in m. Ber. 4:6 also shares the elements of a seated and mobile, rather than standing and stationary, supplicant. Both mishnayot should thus be read, like their parallels

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64 See m. Ber. 2:4, t. Ber. 2:18, and the language of “standing to pray” in m. Ber. 3:5 and 5:1. In fact, the basic requirement to stand on the ground also works for the parallel t. Ber. 3:18, which is preceded by negating the permissibility of praying while standing on an elevation.

65 Thus in m. Pesah. 7:13 the slightly different language of hafikhat panim is used in a context of two separate groups consuming the paschal sacrifice in one space. They are enjoined to turn their faces (from each other) so as to maintain separation and not appear to be merged (see Albeck, ad loc.). The same mishnah uses the hekhzer panim when it describes how a member of one group can get a drink from a waiter while turning his face (u-makhzir et panav), presumably away from the other group, until he gets back to his own group (see similarly, with explanation, in t. Pesah. 6:11). For hekhzer panim, that seems to connote a turning away from rather than toward in m. Maaserot 2:2. For this reading see. Henshke, “Directing Prayer,” 9–10.
in the Tosefta, as borderline cases. The particular target for the direction of the heart is also solely mandated for these exceptional cases.67 Mishnah Berakhot 5:1’s description of kavvanat halev toward hamaqom testifies to just this kind of variation within the Mishnah.68 What does this imply for m. Ber. 4:5–6’s understanding of kavvanat halev?69 It seems that the Mishnah allows that there can be kavvanat halev without the turning aside of the face. However, this does not negate a geographic understanding of directing the heart as grounded in bodily space, similar to t. Ber. 3:14 (heavens).70 Neither does it negate the possibility of supplementary physical techniques involving faces (or heads as in m. Ber. 5:1). Indeed, the turning of the face in m. Ber. 4:5 could coexist with kavvanat halev, even if the mishnah also allows a type of alignment of the heart that can take place in borderline scenarios, e. g. while physically constrained on a donkey or raft. Conceptually, at least, there is no necessary contradiction between the Mishnah’s bodily, facial deployment, and the technique of kavvanat halev. We will press further on the ways in which kavvanat halev conjoins with other bodily techniques in m. Rosh Hash. 3:7–8.

**The Mishnah and Tosefta on Kavvanat Halev in the Amidah**

Scholars have suggested that rabbinic prayer practices either derived from or were modelled on Temple cult.71 Some have synthesized tannaitic (and pre- or

66 On why the mishnah would specify directing the heart toward the holy of the holies rather than the staggered foci of t. Ber. 3:15–16, see Ginzberg, Commentary, 377, who argues that the general focus is the holy of holies, but the Tosefta expands on this with more practicable geographical instructions that vary in their specificity depending on one’s location.

67 Contra Ehrlich and Lieberman. Ehrlich states, “Direction of the heart toward the chamber of the holy of holies is not therefore an image of geographical direction that serves as a substitute for actually turning the face (just as turning the face is not a substitute for dismounting the donkey), but is rather an image of prayer facing the chamber of the holy of holies. This is the obligation of every supplicant” (Ehrlich, “Shekhinah,” 317). Lieberman states that “everyone who prays, who should imagine that his prayer passes through the holy of holies to the Shekhinah” (Tosefta Keifshuta, 43).

68 E. g., Urbach, The Sages, 72, as opposed to Langer, To Worship, 8; Ehrlich, “Shekhinah,” 317.

69 Hauptmann claims that in the Tosefta k. v. n. lev means both physical and “spiritual” turning whereas in the Mishnah it only means spiritual turning as opposed to the newly introduced lehakhzir panim (to turn the face); see Hauptmann, Rereading the Mishnah, 4–5 (she infers this because of someone who can turn his face and one who cannot but who can direct his heart).

70 Pace Henshke, who understands the final clause of m. Ber. 4:5 as an instruction for the supplicant to “separate himself from his surroundings by means of thought alone: he shall set himself as if standing opposite the chamber of the holy holies” (Henshke, “Direction of Prayer,” 11, my emphasis.)

post-tannaitic) sources in various ways to suggest that the shekhinah dwelling in the holy of holies was the destination of prayer.\textsuperscript{72} Reading a variety of sources about the temple and the shekhinah (e.g. t. Kelim Bava Qama 1:12; m. Ber. 4:5–6), Uri Ehrlich posits a general rule that a supplicant “directs his mind toward the holy of holies and its indwelling divine presence.”\textsuperscript{73} He speaks of an “existential-experiential similarity between the Prayer and Temple service,” founded in the “unmediated encounter between the worshipper and his God.”\textsuperscript{74} As Wolfson explicates it, rabbinic prayer is effected by a type of visualization that is modelled on the visual encounter with the deity that took place in Temple pilgrimage. Whereas this impulse toward visualization, and an emphatically interiorized, mental understanding of kavvanat halev do appear in the later, Babylonian Talmud, I would argue that they are not at play in our earlier sources.\textsuperscript{75}

Rather, a case-by-case assessment of the material reveals that direction of the heart often entails an embodied technique, even if not without mental or affective effect or content, with varying foci. Mishnah Berakhot describes standing, heaviness of head, and a technique of lingering in order to directing the heart toward the geospatially unspecified “place”; and it is only in certain exceptional instances that it recommends turning the heart toward the holy of holies. It speaks of different foci and varying supplementary techniques. Tosefta Berakhot 3:14–18, on the other hand, taken as a unit, grounds kavvanat halev in the standing bodies of supplicants, while effecting a corporate Israel whose faces turn centripetally toward “one place.”\textsuperscript{76} The Tosefta’s kavvanat halev targets differ in scale and even

\textsuperscript{72} This narrative leads Ehrlich to read kavvanat halev as hafikhat panim when the kavvanat halev clearly does not consistently call for focus toward the holy of holies in t. Ber. 3:15–16.

\textsuperscript{73} Ehrlich, \textit{Language of Prayer}, 22.

\textsuperscript{74} Ehrlich, \textit{Language of Prayer}, 21.

\textsuperscript{75} I have shown how the Babylonian Talmud interiorizes the temple by redirecting the body when relieving itself; Rachel Neis, “‘Their Backs toward the Temple, and Their Faces toward the East:’ The Temple and Toilet Practices in Rabbinic Palestine and Babylonia,” \textit{JSJ} 43 (2012): 328–68, esp. 360–65. There, one imagines that one is seen by the temple (as far away as Mesopotamia) or by other humans, and turns one’s body accordingly. I argued that “the Jerusalem temple has become a panopticon, internalized to produce a sense of the self as visible and as viewer, with concomitant bodily effects” (361).

\textsuperscript{76} In Neis, “Temple and Toilet Practices,” I show how this bodily kavvanat halev toward the temple is reinforced by a bodily direction away from the temple while relieving oneself: see t. Meg. 3:26 which juxtaposes the directions of faces/rears of various consituents of the syna-
location (land, city, temple, holy of holies; in exceptional cases: father in heavens). As suggestive as it might be to posit a continuity from cult to prayer, the tannaitic evidence on this particular issue is in fact more complex.77

Part IV: Senses, Heart, and Space in Ritual

In Part II we encountered several instances in which kavvanat halev is mandated, some of which called into question its exclusive meaning as related to mental state (whether intent, specific intent, concentration, or awareness) to the exclusion of bodily or spatial semantic registers. In Part III, I have shown examples from the realm of prayer in which kavvanat halev refers to a ritual technique that is rooted in the body and its relation to geospatiality. I also argued that those who claim otherwise often do so at the expense of the bodily and spatial elements in these texts and approach sources with a-priori, often harmonistic ideas about prayer and the sacred that are not grounded in the sources themselves.

In this section, I expand on an example briefly cited in Part II that blends bodily, spatial, and affective/mental meanings in its usage of kavvanat halev in a ritual context. This is m. Rosh Hashanah 3:7, the case of a person hearing the sound of the Shofar or the recitation of the Scroll of Esther while outside of or next to the synagogue. I initially suggested that despite its apparent similarity to m. Ber. 2:1 ("One who was reading scripture when the time for recital arrived, if he directed his heart he fulfilled his obligation, and if not he did not fulfill"), given a similar temporal coincidence which seems to mandate a specific type of consciousness in order to convert an action into a ritual act, something more spatially oriented is in fact afoot. Armed with a stronger sense of what a sensory, bodily, and geospatial kavvanat halev can look like in the liturgical context of prayer, let us now return to expand on this claim.

3:7 ... And so someone who was passing behind the back of the synagogue, or if his house were adjacent to the synagogue, and he hears the sound of the shofar or the sound of the megillah; if he directed his heart (im kiven libo) – he has fulfilled his obligation, if not he has not. Even though this one heard and that one heard, this one directed his heart (kiven et libo) and that one did not direct.

3:8. “And it was whenever Moses raised his hands and Israel prevailed” (Exod 17:11). And did the hands of Moses make or break war? Rather, whenever Israel would gaze upwards (mistaklin klapei ma’alan) and direct their hearts (u-mekhavnin et libam) to their

gogue (elders, ark, prayer leader, congregation) vis-a-vis the temple (qodesh) with those relieving themselves (with different directions for defecation and for urination). I also note a similar inverse directionality between t. Ber. 3:15–16 and m. Ber. 9:5.

77 In Neis, “Temple and Toilet Practices,” I sought to claim that the temple was a directional focus of both invitation and prohibition. Here I revise that claim somewhat by highlighting the various foci of kavvanah in tannaitic sources.
father in the heavens (le-avihem shebashaymayim), they would prevail. And if not, they would fall.

Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 3:7’s spatial elements of adjacency, proximity, and lack of co-presence merit attention in light of the midrash in m. Rosh Hash. 3:8. The biblical exegesis in 3:8 is at pains to reread Exod 17:11 and to negate the impression that Moses’ hands are themselves the cause of Israelite victory over the Amalekites. Instead, it clarifies that the win is thanks to the actions of the Israelites. Specifically, “Israel gazed upwards and directed their hearts (umekhavnin et libam) toward their father in the heavens.” The vav linking Israel’s upward gaze and their directed hearts could imply a conjoining of ocular and cardiac techniques in which the vav operates as a simple connective. The vav could also signify chronological sequence (i.e. first they looked up, then they directed their hearts). It could also denote logical consequence, as in the following example: “Her military service was disrupted by illness and she dropped out of the army.” Finally, the vav could indicate equivalence or means, in other words “by gazing upwards, they directed their hearts.” It is likely that the “and” here is used in this last sense, and that it does more work than that of simple connective.78 In other words, we learn that it is by gazing upwards that the Israelites directed their hearts to the requisite target – God in the heavens – a highly spatialized designation for the deity, which we recognize as the address in t. Ber. 3:14.79

If in the manner of simultaneous equations we were to feed the illustrative midrash back into the previous mishnah, we might find the fit a little awkward. Are we to surmise that just as the sight of Moses’ hands accomplishes nothing without Israelites gazing upwards and directing their hearts toward God in heaven, so too the sound of the shofar must be accompanied by a turning of the ear plus kavvanat halev in order to count? In 3:8 Moses’ hands effectively point the way upward to God – does the shofar blast function analogously? At minimum, we can admit this: both scenarios demand that their subjects (shofar auditors and Israelites) actively engage their bodily senses (eyes, ears, hearts) in geospatial contexts. Hands or blasts are not efficacious on their own but require actors to engage them fully. Sensory engagement and kavvanat halev are what accomplish this.

In order to appreciate how the scenario in m. Rosh Hash. 3:8 draws into relief physical, sensory (sight and sound), and spatial dimensions of kavvanat halev, let us compare it to the parallel in the Mekhilta (tannaitic run-along midrashic commentary on Exodus).

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78 I would argue that it is not just that gazing at the hands is necessary but insufficient, but also that ultimately gazing beyond the hands is what facilitates correctly focused kavvanat halev.
79 We also recognize this deployment of bodily technique in aid of directing the heart a focal point in m. Ber. 5:1 (lingering, directing the heart to the place). On the gaze and the encounter with the divine in tannaitic reconstructions of temple pilgrimage see Neis, Sense of Sight, 41–52, 82–86.
“And it was when Moses raised his hands and Israel prevailed, etc.” (Exod 17:11). And did the hands of Moses make Israel victorious or break the Amalekites?

Rather, as long as Moses would raise his hands upwards (klapei ma’alan), Israel would gaze at him (mistaklin bo) and believe in the one who ordered Moses to do so and the Makom wrought victories and miracles for them.

Rather this comes to tell you, as long as Israel gazed upwards (mistaklin klapei ma’alan) and directed their hearts toward their father in the heavens they would prevail. And if not – they would lose.

In the Mekhilta, in what is likely the original setting for our midrash, the exegete is at pains to emphasize that various things – Moses’ outstretched hands, the copper serpent that saved the Israelites from snake bites, and the sacrificial blood pasted on doorposts in Egypt – were not efficacious in and of themselves. These bodily gestures, images, and signs were markers with no necessary relationship to that to which they referred. Thus, for the Mekhilta, Moses’ hands are themselves meaningless; their role is not primarily to cause Israel to gaze at him per se, but to beyond him. In fact, the role of visuality is not crucial, the main goal being to solidify “belief” in the deity (“Israel would gaze at him and believe in the one who ordered”). Ultimately, then, the hands and gazing give way to belief in God, which allows the God to make “victories and miracles.” The substance of Moses’ body language is negated in favor of its gesture to mental states or beliefs. Even the very wording for God (“the one who ordered Moses to do so”) is curiously circumlocutious and unlocatable. Contrast this with the Mishnah’s emphatic specification of the geospatial location and target of the Israelites’ upward gaze and directed heart as “their father in the heavens.”

Another important emphasis of the Mishnah in contrast to the Mekhilta concerns Israelite agency. In the Mekhilta we have: “as long as Moses would raise his hands … the Makom wrought victories and miracles for them,” whereas in the Mishnah we find “as long as Israel gazed upward … they would prevail.”

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82 The term *emunah* echoes Exod 17:12’s description of Moses’ upright and steady hands as *emunah*: “But Moses’ hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on the one side, and the other on the
Mekhilta highlights the role of the deity. By contrast, the Mishnah emphasizes proper Israelite ritual agency and action (the associative link that draws this explicatory midrash here in the first place), specifically directed gazing and *kavvanat halev* rather than proper belief (*emunah*) ensures victory (that is emphatically theirs).

Contrasting the Mishnah and the Mekhilta allows us to see just how the midrash has been reworked in the former to emphasize not only Israelite agency, ritual efficacy, and action, but also how bodily and spatial dimensions of ritual are crucial rather than incidental. Hearts, like eyes (and, as we have already seen, faces, too) must and can be directed in the proper way – in this case, upward toward the deity. We may ask, returning to the initial scenario in m. Rosh Hash. 3:7 of hearing a shofar, about the role of the heart’s direction. Certainly, the notion that *kavvanat halev* is simply intent (specific, or otherwise) is put to rest by the midrash in m. Rosh Hash. 3:8. Does m. Rosh Hash. 3:8 imply that just as the hands of Moses summon the gaze of Israel upward and their *kavvanat halev* toward “their father in heaven,” the shofar’s blast next door summons passersby’s ears and hearts beyond, toward God? Or is the focus less the shared features of spatial dynamics, and more about the collaborative deployment of the senses (ears or eyes) and *kavvanat halev*?83

Another question that needs to be addressed concerns the significance of the (quite literal) borderline nature of the scenario in m. Rosh Hash. 3:7. Does m. Rosh Hash. 3:8 illuminate something that goes above and beyond what applies in general to ritual efficacy and *kavvanat halev* in all cases of listening to the *shofar*? Do the corporal techniques and spatial dynamics in the battle of Amalek illuminate the ritual mechanics involved in listening to the sound of a shofar next door, or a broader issue?84

Several possibilities suggest themselves. One is that the spatializing dynamics of *kavvanat halev* in m. Rosh Hash. 3:8, if applied back to 3:7, suggest that one direct one’s ears toward the source of sound in the next room while directing one’s heart heavenward toward the deity; that one comport oneself “as if” one were in the synagogue, which itself would involve a geospatial directing toward the heavens. This may seem like a rather trivial implication, but this collapse of spa-


84 I am not convinced by Frankel’s division of *kavvanah* in m. Rosh Hash. 7–8 into two types: “rational halakhic *kavvanah*” and aggadic “emotional, religious *kavvanah*”; Yonah Frankel, *Midrash and Aggadah* (Tel Aviv: The Open University Press, 1996), 686–93, esp. 691.
tial barriers and gaps was a significant issue in ritual, particularly in prayer – as we have seen. The liminality of the (potential) ritual actor in m. Rosh Hash. 3:7 serves to create a double displacement, which needs to be overcome to allow for the shofar’s blast to nonetheless be efficacious. Indeed, the parallel Tosefta on this mishnah seems to reinforce a such a reading.

m. Rosh Hash. 3:7–8

If someone was passing behind the back of the synagogue, or if his house were adjacent to the synagogue, and *hears* the sound of the shofar or the sound of the megillah;

if he directed his heart – he has fulfilled his obligation, if not he has not.

Even though this one *heard* and that one *heard*, this one directed his heart and that one did not direct his heart.

“And it was when Moses raised his hands and Israel prevailed, etc.” (Exod 17:11). And did the hands of Moses make or break the war? Rather this comes to tell you: as long as Israel gazed upwards and directed their hearts toward their father in the heavens they would prevail. And if not, they would lose.

The first part of the Tosefta is almost identical to the Mishnah. Additional linguistic and conceptual parallels are also visible (rendered here by italics, asterisks, and capitalization). It is likely that the Tosefta knows a version of m. Rosh Hash. 3:8. Instead of the ensuing Mishnah’s midrash about Moses’ hands, the Tosefta brings together two biblical texts designed to support its general proposition that “everything goes according to kavvanat halev.” Firstly, Ps 10:17 is cited; this source includes hearts directing and ears listening, although in context these are God’s ears. The play on hearing then serves two purposes: to establish the hearing + kavvanat halev combination, and ritual efficacy (God hears when hearts are properly directed).

The Tosefta then follows with an additional proof-text (Prov 23:26) that speaks to the focusing and directing of both heart and eyes. This seems to make the same link as that in the parallel m. Rosh Hash. 3:8 between gazing and directing.

85 I have italicized phrases related to directing the heart, placed asterisks around those related to *hearing*, and set those related to sight in small caps.

86 We see this verse invoked as a support in t. Ber. 3:4 for the notion that the amidah requires that one “direct his heart.”
(or “setting”) the heart. The double serving of prooftexts in the Tosefta parallels m. Rosh Hash. 3:7 and 3:8: the initial hypothetical of adjacent listening and the subsequent anecdote of gazing upwards. Moreover, the Tosefta establishes the borderline case of listening next-door as underpinning a more general rule about ritual acts and clarifying them as sensory actions involving bodily organs, requiring *kavvanat halev*.

**Thinking Mishnah and Tosefta Rosh Hashanah with Tosefta Berakhot**

While m. Rosh Hash. 3:7 may at first glance seem analogous to m. Ber. 2:1 in declaring that an action must have the added element of intent to convert it into a ritual act, in fact m. Rosh Hash. 3:7–8 is at pains to cast the type of *kavvanat halev* at play more along the lines of the type of physical and spatial *kavvanat halev* exemplified in t. Ber. 3:14–18. Furthermore, m. Rosh Hash. 3:7–8 (and parallel Tosefta) and t. Ber. 3:14–18 are concerned with adjacency and distance. In Tosefta Berakhot location and target are designed in such a way as to set this up as a set of nested, adjacent spaces. The ritual actor directs the heart toward variously scaled adjacent locales (depending on his/hers own location). The Tosefta also sets out how this directing of heart effects the turning of faces in cardinal terms. In Mishnah and Tosefta Rosh Hashanah we are in two different ritual realms: first, hearing and how it may be turned into ritual listening even at a distance; and, second, the efficacy of the gaze, both of which take effect with properly directed hearts.

Both sets of sources present a type of *kavvanat halev* that is grounded in the body’s location and in geospatial direction (whether toward geographical locations such as the temple, or along a vertical axis such as the father in the heavens, or according to cardinal points). So, too, do both sets of sources concern types of liturgical ritual (prayer, megillah, shofar). Concerns about proper direction of the heart in prayer might appear to be more sublime than the apparently trivial borderline case of the performance of a ritual while not quite in the right place. But this sense of “not quite being there” is an immensely compelling and productive concern in early rabbinic ritual writ large and sponsors the ritual technology of prayer.87 I have sought to show that the techniques of overcoming this distance are not purely mental, and that *kavvanat halev* in these contexts is rooted in the body, its sensory operations, and its location.

“Not quite being there” is iconographically embedded as a type of place-marker of Jewishness in many places in the Roman East, including in the second-century CE synagogue of Dura Europos, and also in the Galilee, which witnessed a

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87 Sifre Deut. 335 (ed. Finkelstein, 384–85) links the poignancy of adjacency to *kavvanat halev* during prayer, as it bases the directions for prayer from various locations on Moses’ gazing into the land of Canaan from afar (Deut 3:26–27).
surge in synagogue building in the fourth century. Synagogues (and other spaces) were marked by architectural, material, and iconographic motifs related to the Jerusalem temple. From the association of the Torah niche wall with the temple or the holy of holies via depictions of the façade of the Holy Ark and related cultic implements, there is a sense that these places located themselves by referring to an elsewhere and an else-when. This type of space-making partakes in a similar geographic sensibility in which one’s physical location is not necessarily the ultimate destination or address of one’s ritual activity.

As we have shown, though, in the case of the tannaim, there is not a consistent conception of ritual space marked by reference to the Temple. Moreover, later Amoraic and post-Amoraic sources not only continue to demonstrate some variation about the focus of prayer but explicitly question whether the temple or the holy of holies is the proper target. Even those that consider the temple to be the focus nonetheless consider the question of “elsewhen,” suggesting that perhaps such a practice ought not continue when the temple is no longer. What our tannaitic sources show is how one group of scholastic Jews sought to think through the place and space of ritual by recourse to a highly physicalized and spatial understanding of kavvanat halev as a technique. In their hands, an apparently trivial technical problem about ritual next-door becomes a vehicle for thinking through the broader dynamics of sacred space and ritual bodily technologies.

Conclusion: Mind/Body Dualisms and Embodied Language

it is also worthwhile to test whether a people’s expressions are properly to be seen as metaphorical or are simply signs of a different world-view or a different ethno-theory of the body which they have …

— Andrew Strathern

I close this study by considering broader implications, both in terms of recent discussions of ancient kavvanah and subjectivity, and in light of methodological and theoretical debates about language, body, and metaphor. Drawing on the work of anthropologist Andrew Strathern on body “metaphors” and concepts of self and body, I then offer some synthetic reflections on rabbinic subjectivity and bodily language.

Scholars have treated the particular combination of k.v.n. + lev amidst broader discussions of kavvanah (on its own), and also alongside other thought-related terms (such as makshavah, ratson, da’at). Recently, we find a fascinating de-

89 See Rosen-Zvi, “Mental Revolution,” 40, for skepticism about attempts to track hard definitions and distinctions between terminology (e.g. kavvanah, mahshava, ratson) and corpora. Rosen-Zvi notes how kavvanah varies across and even within tractates. I nonetheless would claim that kavvanat halev (esp. with indirect object) bears investigation as a somewhat sta-
bate about kavvanah (and other intention-related terms) and its relationship to subjectivity.\textsuperscript{90} The debate has tended to be argued in terms of the relationship between intention and action (where action seems to be understood as residing in the realm of the material or external), with the body sometimes serving as an unstated underside.\textsuperscript{91}

The conversation has centered on the type of subject in play in early Rabbinic literature. Joshua Levinson argues that by introducing “the necessity of intention as a component of action,” tannaitic literature “constructs a new kind of legal subject who must be constantly aware of the thoughts that accompany his actions.”\textsuperscript{92} Levinson links this “technology of self-fashioning, transforming the subject into an object of knowledge for himself” to the reflective self in Stoic thought.\textsuperscript{93} Mira Balberg avers that the Mishnah introduces a notion of “standardized subjectivity” rather than of individualized subjectivity.\textsuperscript{94} Ishay Rosen-Zvi denies that kavvanah and related terms (such as ratson or mahshavah or da’at) instantiate a subject of the self-reflective, introspective variety. He argues instead that “the subject … formed by rabbinic halakha is flat; its thoughts and deeds are on the same plane. There is no inner world which is fundamentally different from the outer one …”\textsuperscript{95}

One may question whether it is possible to arrive at a unified theory of halakhic subjectivity.\textsuperscript{96} My study here, restricted as its data-set is, and oriented to different term of art, especially when found clustered in related ritual and textual contexts. In the same vein, one might question whether one can draw a general theory of the subject based on thought-related terminology from a variety of different types of halakhic subfields and textual loci. Kavvanah (including but not limited to k.v.n. lev) in the fields of criminal law, purity, vows, betrothal, divorce, ritual (e.g. prayer, shofar, megillah), etc., manifests a great deal of semantic variety. E.g. m. Sanh. 9:2 and m. B. Qam. 5:4 speak to discrepant intentions, acts, and outcomes in tort or criminal law; the determination concerns liability rather than efficacy, and kavvanah is a requirement rather than a technique. It is not clear that one can draw conclusions from kavvanah in these cases to kavvanah or k.v.n. + lev in ritual contexts, and hence the same account of subjectivity.


\textsuperscript{91} However, Balberg explicitly engages the question of the “subjection of the body” and the relationship of “one” to “one’s body” (Balberg, Purity, 48–73).

\textsuperscript{92} Levinson, “From Narrative Practice to Cultural Poetics,” 88.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 89.

\textsuperscript{94} Balberg, Purity, 70.

\textsuperscript{95} Rosen-Zvi, “Mental Revolution,” 55. Note that Balberg, even when talking of the distinction between subject (“one”) and body (“one’s body”), is very careful to stress that the mishnaic subject is not “immaterial or nonbodily” (Purity, 51). I thus wonder whether there is more concord than Rosen-Zvi allows with his notion of a flattened subjectivity and an internal realm that mirrors and affects the external.

\textsuperscript{96} I have some hesitation in following Rosen-Zvi’s notions of a generalized inner realm shaped within the “halakhic realm” but am more comfortable with his description of categories like
ering questions about body, language, and ritual space, offers a somewhat more limited intervention in this conversation. My attention has been to the local contexts of kavvanat halev, allowing the geo-spatial dimension of kavvanah to come into view alongside the somatic dimensions of lev, as well as the variously linked prepositions and indirect objects (and their goespatial dimensions) and any attendant bodily expressions. This tilt toward the body rather than thought-related dimensions of kavvanat halev means that the very notion of the subject does not automatically come into view, or necessarily deserve privileged consideration.

Before elaborating on possible implications of a bodily-oriented kavvanat halev on subjectivity, let me reflect further on the impulse toward a bodily reading in the first place. Besides seeking to justify this hermeneutic predisposition in my interpretations of sources along the way, I have argued against a metaphorical tendency that ends up de-corporealizing corporeal language, invoking Lakoff and Johnson and Andrew Strathern, among others. Their thinking about bodily language may be productively joined with considerations of mind/body and subjectivity.97

In Philosophy in the Flesh, Lakoff and Johnson challenge the Western philosophical tradition’s dualism of mind/body by careful deployment of cognitive linguistics and a philosophy of embodied mind. Key to their argument is the bodily basis of language.98 Lakoff and Johnson apply this logic to what they call metaphor. However, an arguable criticism is that while their highlighting of the bodily basis of metaphor undermines a hard and sharp binary between the literal-physical and the metaphorical-conceptual, their linguistics framework ultimately maintains the binary between metaphors and literalisms, or source and target domains.99

This is where the work of Andrew Strathern is most useful. He explicitly enjoins scholars to suppress “our tendency to assign usages that are strange to us to the realm of metaphor.”100 Strathern warns that cultures may have a “conceptualization of the ‘person,’ in which a different arrangement of ideas is found from that implied in the dichotomy between ‘body’ and ‘mind’ which has preoccupied thinkers in European languages since the time of Descartes.”101 This

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98 E.g., Lakoff and Johnson, Philosophy in the Flesh, 34: “The concepts front and back are body-based. They make sense only for beings with fronts and backs…. We have faces and move in the direction in which we see. Our bodies define a fundamental set of spatial orientations that we use not only in orienting ourselves, but in perceiving the relationship of one object to another.” And ibid., 37: “While perception has always been accepted as bodily in nature, just as movement is, conception – the formation and use of concepts – has traditionally been seen as purely mental and wholly separate from and independent of our abilities to perceive and move.”
100 Strathern, “Organs and Emotions,” 5.
insight about corporeal language and reading practices is particularly relevant to reading *kavanat halev*.\(^{102}\) Strathern notes that problems arise particularly when confronting different cultural-linguistic ways of linking body parts and so-called mental states. Strathern observes that the “stress on metaphor goes with a textual emphasis, but ‘reading the body’ may require us to alter our categories more radically.”\(^{103}\)

It is at this confluence of body, bodily language, and reading practices that we might consider *kavanat halev* and the arguments I have marshalled here.\(^{104}\) My intervention asks us to recognize how the semantic range of *lev* includes bodily center in a fleshy sense, and it asks us to note how *k.v.n* is deployed in quite straightforwardly geospatial ways.\(^{105}\) The cases highlighted relate to ritual contexts, and my readings of *kavanat halev* (and its indirect objects) alongside other bodily technologies call attention to the curious entanglements of body/mind in cultivating ritual space.\(^{106}\)

To the extent that it is feasible to extrapolate from this localized data-set about subjectivity, we can conclude that the directed heart and its workings involve a complex interplay of what we might call the mental, the somatic, and the geospatial, one which challenges a binary split between internal and external worlds, or

\(^{102}\) The blend of anthropological, historical, and linguistic method that Strathern deploys helps drive his claims, and is a model that might be useful to scholars of antiquity. Strathern specifically discusses terms locating emotion in human organs in ancient Greek literature and scholarship thereon, as well as the prohibition of the Gnaun of Papa New Guinea against a person eating something he has killed because it said to contain his own blood. He cautions against opting for a metaphorical rather than a bodily understanding of the Gnaun prohibition, instead showing how it explicates a “theory of the body and of the person” (“Organs,” 6). See also Ruth Padel, *In and Out of the Mind: Greek Images of the Tragic Self* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 12–13, on psychic phenomena as bodily activities. Padel (p. 27) warns against viewing ancient Greek deployment of physical language (such as “innards”) as metaphor, analogy, or slippage from physical to non-physical realms, and states that “it is not useful to project semantic fields of our own words like heart, soul, mind, or spirit, or to talk in terms of slippage” (ibid., 39).

\(^{103}\) Ibid.


\(^{105}\) E. g., m. Ber. 9:5.

\(^{106}\) As I have argued, this body-based approach is warranted by the language itself. The body also allows one to get beyond a thought-action distinction. Rosen-Zvi (“Mental Revolution,” 56) states that, “thoughts and deeds are on the same plane There is no inner world which is fundamentally different from the outer one.” Rather than flattened subjectivity, at least in the cases studied here, we might speak about the heart’s direction involving the body-mind in ways that are not representationalist (involving some notion of an inner world that either mirrors or effects an outer world, which Rosen-Zvi adheres to even as he softens a binary subject/world relation), thus avoiding a distinction between internal/external, and mental/material or mind/body. In the cases discussed in the article I would then suggest revising Rosen-Zvi’s statement that “in the ancient world mental realities were perhaps no less ‘real’ than physical ones” (“Mental Revolution,” 39), to the suggestion that “mental” states were perhaps no less “physical” or bodily (and hence capable of being embedded in material space).
“subject” and world (or other). The disposition toward the corporeal dimensions of the language and terminology of prayer and ritual directions thus puts us closer to the Maussian educated or technical body (itself a notion that errs in favor of the body over a reflexive self), rather than toward a theory of subjectivity.107

Once we abandon a-priori notions about dichotomous differences between hearts, eyes, and faces, what comes into view is an assortment of bodily organs deployed in various ritual contexts.108 What I have tried to sketch here is an understanding of kavanat halev that confounds our etic ideas about mind versus body, internal versus external, conceptual versus material, or indeed metaphorical versus literal. The heart, when directed, is an organ that embeds the body and its complements in ritual space.

Bibliography


107 See n. 44 on this tendency in Mauss.
108 On attributions of various sensory capacities and body parts to the heart (e.g., eyes, ears, hands) in early through medieval Christian sources and on not reading these as metaphors see Jean Louis Chrétien, “From the Limbs of the Heart to the Soul’s Organs,” in Carnal Hermeneutics, ed. Richard Kearney and Brian Treanor (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 92–114. For what is arguably a blend of geospatial and bodily usages of heart and eyes, and a notion of interiority, see Aphrahat, Dem. 4.13: “The moment you start praying, raise your heart upwards, and lower your eyes downwards; enter inside your inner person and pray in secret to your Father who is in heaven … There are amongst us people who multiply prayers and make long supplications, doubling themselves up and spreading out their hands, while the true task of prayer is far from them” (trans. Sebastian Brock, The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life [Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1987], 17). Compare this to b. Yevam. 105 in which R. Ishmael b. Yose makes the same recommendation regarding heart and eyes. On the phrase sursum corda in Eucharistic liturgy, attested as early as the third century, and its relationship to bodily posture (standing, raised hands and eyes), see Everett Ferguson, “The Liturgical Function of the Sursum Corda,” Studia Patristica XIII, ed. Elizabeth Livingstone, TU 116 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1972), 360–61.


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