The Body as Image of God in Rabbinic Literature

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The liberation of rabbinic theology from the reins of medieval theology is still underway. One of the central issues that sets rabbinic theology apart from later medieval developments is the attribution of body or form to the godhead. Even though the anthropomorphic tendency of rabbinic thought is widely recognized, it is still early to speak of a learned consensus on this issue. The standard work on the topic remains Arthur Marmorstein's *Essays in Anthropomorphism*, written in 1937.[1] Marmorstein recognized the anthropomorphic tendency of rabbinic thinking. His way of dealing, both theologically and scholastically, with the issue was to suggest the existence of two schools in the tannaitic period. According to Marmorstein, the schools of Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael were divided on the question of the literality of the understanding of the biblical text. Rabbi Akiva's literal reading gave rise to an anthropomorphic understanding of God. Rabbi Ishmael's nonliteral, or allegorical, reading brought about an opposition to anthropomorphism. This description of rabbinic anthropomorphism has informed the discussions of many scholars, including those who have dealt with our present topic—the image of God. I would, therefore, state my differences with this presentation.

[1]Arthur Marmorstein, *The Old Rabbinic Doctrine of God*, vol. 2: *Essays in Anthropomorphism* (London: Oxford, 1937).

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Marmorstein's discussion often confuses the hermeneutic and the theological dimensions. His case is made by reference to the hermeneutic differences between the schools, which no doubt existed. To my mind, however, he does not demonstrate adequately the far-reaching theological differences between the schools. The term "anthropomorphism," as Marmorstein used it, designates a wide spectrum of phenomena and is not limited to the fundamental question of the existence or the meaning of the ascription of bodily form to God. With regard to the heart of the anthropomorphic issue, Marmorstein indicated no differences between the schools. He provided ample documentation both of the notions that God has a body and of the possibility of seeing God. At these crucial junctures he offered little, if any, evidence of the existence of alternative schools of thought. My point may be appreciated better if it is borne in mind that in all of rabbinic literature there is not a single statement that categorically denies that God has body or form.[2]

In my understanding, the question of whether the rabbis believed in a God who has form is one that needs little discussion and therefore is of lesser interest. Nevertheless, once we are able to perceive that rabbinic literature expresses anthropomorphic beliefs, we encounter a series of fascinating questions. Instead of asking, "Does God have a body?" we should inquire, "What kind of body does God have?"[3] In other words, anthropomorphism is classically identified with what we may term crude anthropomorphism. God's body is seen as identical, or similar, to the human body. This understanding leads to a rejection of anthropomorphism. A different understanding of the divine form may lead to a different position.

A section of the Jewish-Christian *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*, recently translated and discussed by Shlomo Pines as paralleling notions found in *Sefer Yeẓirah*,[4] illustrates the possibility of a different notion of the divine form. In this passage Peter teaches concerning God:

[2]A quite different situation exists in early Christian theology; see, however, David Paulsen, "Early Christian Belief in a Corporeal Deity: Origen and Augustine as Reluctant Witnesses," *HTR* 83 (1990) 105–16.

[3]Abraham J. Heschel (*Theology of Ancient Judaism* [2 vols.; London/New York: Soncino, 1965] 2. 22 [Hebrew]) has already explained the significance of fire as a descriptive category of the divine and all that is associated with it, such as the Torah. From his discussion, it seems that Heschel is aware of the possibility that fire may constitute a solution to the problem of anthropomorphism. The present discussion will concentrate on the body of God, as reflected in its image—the human body. Much room is left thereby for extensive discussion of the components and qualities of the divine body itself.

[4]Shlomo Pines, "Points of Similarity between the Exposition of the Doctrine of the Sefirot in the Sefer Yezira and a Text of the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies: The Implications of this Resemblance," *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 7 (1989) 64. The sources discussed by Pines are also relevant for our present discussion concerning the type of body ascribed to God in *Sefer Yeẓirah*.

> For He has a form for the sake of [His] first and unique beauty, and all the limbs, not for use. For He does not have eyes for the purpose of seeing with them—for He sees from every side; [for] He, as far as His body is concerned, is brighter beyond compare than the visual spirit in us and more brilliant than any light—compared to Him, the light of the sun would be held as darkness. . . . He has the most beautiful form for the sake of man, in order that the pure in heart shall be able to see Him, that they shall rejoice on account of whatever they have endured. For He has stamped man as it were with the greatest seal, with His own Form, in order that he shall rule and be lord over all things. And that all things shall serve him. For this reason, he who having judged that He is the All and man His image—He being invisible and His image, man, visible[5]—will honor the image, which is man.

This passage makes a distinction between form and function. Body need not entail bodily use and function. What then is the purpose of the body? The answer is given in aesthetic terms. God has a body for the sake of beauty, so that he may be perceived by the pure in heart. This vision is not a mental impingement on the mind of those perceiving God, but is conceived as the actual divine body. The only other fact known about this body is its effulgence. Compared to this body the light of the sun would be considered dark. Finally, the human being is said to be created in this image.

The homily of Pseudo-Clementine makes us aware of the more nuanced discussion about the divine body. As I shall demonstrate, the notions found in this passage not only enrich our discussion of rabbinic sources, but also constitute an interesting parallel to some rabbinic discussions. In this article, I shall not attempt a full exploration of the nature of the divine body, as expressed in rabbinic literature. Rather, I shall focus on the meaning of the creation of the human in God's image. From the nature of the image much can be learned about the divine form.

The Bodily Meaning of Image in Rabbinic Sources

If God has a body, then obviously the creation of man in God's image refers to man's physical form. Unless there is evidence to the contrary, this is the most obvious understanding. There is absolutely no objection in all of rabbinic literature to such an interpretation,[6] and therefore we may adopt

[5]Pines (ibid., 103) considers this sentence a later gloss, for it contradicts the possibility of seeing the divine form, which is mentioned above. See, however, Col 1:15. "Invisible" may refer to the ordinary state, and not to the exceptional condition that the pure-hearted ones attain.

[6]Alexander Altmann has based his reading of the rabbinic understanding of *ẓelem* on targumic fine points, while ignoring the positive evidence found in the talmudic and midrashic literature. See Alexander Altmann, "Homo Imago Dei in Jewish and Christian Theology," *JR* 48 (1968) 235–39.

it prima facie. This rabbinic reading of *ẕelem* ("image"; Gen 1:26) was noted by Morton Smith,[7] who followed Marmorstein's anthropomorphic theory.[8] Therefore, for Smith, the bodily aspect was one of several aspects in which the human is made in the image of God. Following my stronger anthropomorphic reading of the rabbis, I suggest that the bodily meaning is the only meaning of *ẕelem* in rabbinic literature. This suggestion is borne out in all tannaitic and amoraic sources.[9]

I would mention briefly some of the texts that reveal a bodily understanding of *ẕelem*. In *Lev. R.* 34.3[10] we are told of Hillel, who was on his way to the bathhouse.

> His disciples asked him: "Rabbi, where are you going?" He said to them: "to perform a commandment." They said to him: "and what then is this commandment?". . . He said to them: "To bathe in the (public) bath." They said to him: "and is this a commandment?" He said to them: "yes. If the man who is appointed to take care of the images of kings, which (the gentiles) set up in their theaters and circuses, scours

[7]Morton Smith, "The Image of God: Notes on the Hellenization of Judaism with Especial Reference to Goodenough's Work on Jewish Symbols," *BJRL* 40 (1958) 473–512. See further Morton Smith, "On the Shape of God and the Humanity of Gentiles," in Jacob Neusner, ed., *Religions in Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 1970) 315–26. In the former article, Smith concentrated on the human being—and not on the body—as the image of God. Only in reaction to Jacob Jervell's denial of any form to the human image of God (see below n. 41) did Smith emphasize the bodily as one aspect of *ẕelem*.

[8]I believe this is why Smith, in his earlier article ("The Image of God"), believed that those who understood *ẕelem* in this manner were borrowing ideas from the cult of the emperor. In this article, the bodily meaning of *ẕelem* was not fully seen. This enabled Smith to draw parallels with the emperor cult. Once the theological underpinnings of this use are recognized, the force of the parallel wanes.

[9]All tannaitic and amoraic sources referring to *ẕelem* have been analyzed in the context of the present study. One should admit, however, that in the *Tanḥuma* literature we find several paraphrases that expand the meaning of *ẕelem* to include eternal life (*Tanḥuma* [Buber ed.].*Shelaḥ* 2; compare Wis 2:23), divine glory (*Tanḥuma.Pekudei* 2), and righteous behavior (*Tanḥuma. Bereshit* 7). It is important to note that these expansions occur only within this very specific, and younger, set of texts. Moreover, it seems to me that these expansions do not override the older understanding of *ẕelem* as body, but rather expand it and are derived from it. A relevant example of such an expansion is found in *Pesikta Rabati* addition A to section A. Eternal life is here understood as a function of the divine light, emanating from the divine form. This accords with the understanding of *ẕelem* I shall offer below. Divine glory and eternal life can be the consequence of the fullness of *ẕelem* in its physical understanding. The notion of righteousness, however, seems to be secondary, and merely appended to the physical resemblance as a basis for moral demand. It should be noted that the *Tanḥuma Midrashim* also expand the meaning and usage of the term "eikonin" (a Greek loan word sometimes used as a substitute for *ẕelem*). See *Tanḥuma* (Buber ed.).*Vayikraʾ* 15; *Bamidbar* 10; and *Tanḥuma.Ḥayei Sara* 3.

[10]The translation of this and the following texts are from Smith, "On the Shape of God," 319–20.

> them and rinses them, and they provide his livelihood, and not only that, but he occupies an important place among government officials, then we, who were created in the image (צלם; *ẓelem*) and in the likeness (דמות; *demut*) (of God). . . a fortiori.

The bodily connotations of *ẓelem* and *demut* ("likeness," or "form"; see Gen 1:26; 5:1) here are obvious. They are the basis for giving religious value to taking care of the body by bathing it.[11] At this early stage of the discussion, we should already note that both terms found in Gen 1:26—image and likeness—are used in this passage. Both terms refer to the physical body, and no distinction is drawn between them. In this the rabbis seem to remain true to the biblical text, which also does not distinguish between the terms. This feature is typical of all rabbinic exegesis of this text, which employs the terms interchangeably, without attempting to differentiate image from likeness.[12]

In *Avot de-Rabbi Natan*,[13] we find a list of people who were born circumcised. The first to be so born was Adam, and the proof text offered is that man was created in the image of God. This proof text would only work if the correspondence between man's body and the divine body is understood to be exact.[14]

[11]See also *t. Ber.* 4.1, and compare *b. Šabbat* 50b.

[12]Christian exegesis differs greatly from classical Jewish exegesis on this point. The distinction between image and likeness is one of the fundamental features of the Christian interpretations of Gen 1:26. See Lars Thunberg, "The Human Person as Image of God, Eastern Christianity," in Bernard McGinn, ed., *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century* (World Spirituality 16; New York: Crossroad, 1985) 297–99. It is only under the philosophical influences of the Middle Ages that the Jewish interpretation of this verse did resort to the distinction between image and likeness, as expressing the distinction between body and soul. See below n. 21. In conversation, Moshe Idel has pointed out that the various processes of diminution of the human body are all expressed in terms of *demut* rather than *ẓelem*. See *t. Yebamot* 8.7 (below p.191), where the Hebrew refers to *demut* rather than *ẓelem*. See also the rabbinic parable in *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmaʾel.Baḥodesh* 8. It seems to me, nevertheless, that while this may indeed be an example of a particular linguistic usage, it does not reflect any significant distinction between *ẓelem* and *demut*. The point is best illustrated in the Tosefta's proof text for diminishing the *demut*, where man was created in the *ẓelem* of God.

[13]Solomon Schechter, ed., *Aboth de-Rabbi Nathan* (1887; reprinted Hildesheim/New York: Olms, 1979) (A) 2 (p. 12).

[14]See, however, the attempt in this passage to limit this image to the image fit for the human and to remove the implications concerning the divine body, in *Ḥupat Eliyahu*, in Judah David Eisenstein, *Oẓar Midrashim* (New York: n.p., 1928) 178. See also *Sefer Yeẓira* 1.2. Concerning the divine image and circumcision, see also the Genizah benediction, Simḥa Asaf, "From the Palestinian Prayer Order," in Yitẓḥak Baer et al., eds., *The Dinaburg Festschrift* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1949) 121 [Hebrew]; and compare Louis Ginzberg's comments, *A Commentary on the Palestinian Talmud* (4 vols.; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1941) 3. 230 [Hebrew].

In *Mid. Tan.* on Deut 21:23,[15] Rabbi Meir explains with the aid of the following parable the prohibition against leaving the executed criminal's body hung overnight:

> (This is like) two brothers who were identical twins and lived in the same city. One was made king, and the other became a bandit. The king commanded, so they strung him up. Everyone who saw (the dead body) said "the king has been hung up." So the king commanded and they took him down.

The similarity between the king and his brother is purely physical. Finally, we may refer to a rabbinic parable[16] that explains the prohibition of murder in terms borrowed from imperial Roman life. Whoever hurts, abuses, and kills a fellow human being is likened to someone who injures the statue of the emperor. Underlying this parable is the notion of physical resemblance. Just as the statue resembles the king physically, so a human's physical being resembles God's.[17]

The Body and Rabbinic Anthropology

The rabbinic understanding of a human's physical form as the image of God may seem less shocking when we note one important aspect of rabbinic anthropology: the relation of soul and body. Since Philo, who identified the image of God with the soul or the rational aspect of the soul,[18] Western tradition has mostly identified the image of God with the soul or with a human's intellectual capacity. The Philonic understanding is fed by the philosophic distinction of spirit and matter. The divine self must be nonmaterial, and therefore only the soul may be said to be the image of God. Christian interpretation has largely followed the Philonic lead. In certain of the Eastern church fathers, however, we find an attempt to integrate the body as part of the understanding of image of God. Thus, for Cyril of Alexandria, the double nature of the human as soul and body reflects the unity between divine and human nature in Christ.[19] Nevertheless, the primary locus of the divine image is in the soul or the nous.

Rabbinic anthropology differs in this respect from Hellenistic and later Christian anthropology. The distinction between spirit and matter is not

[15]See David Ẓvi Hoffman, *Midrash Tanaʾim* (Berlin: n.p., 1908) 132.

[16]*Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmaʾel. Baḥodesh* 8.

[17]See also *b. ʿAboda Zar.* 43b, where making an image of a human face is forbidden on the grounds that it is making an image of the divine.

[18]Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (2 vols.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1947) 1. 390.

[19]For the Christian understanding of the creation of the human in the image of God, see Thunberg, "The Human Person as Image of God," 291–312, esp. 295. See also Paulsen, "Early Christian Belief in a Corporeal Deity," 110, 116.

known in rabbinic literature. Consequently, the distinction between soul and body may be seen as a soft, rather than hard distinction. The rabbinic sources contain much talk of soul and body, as well as a recognition of their different qualities. No fundamental metaphysical opposition exists, however, between these two aspects. There may be an existential confrontation, but metaphysically soul and body form a whole, rather than a polarity. Crudely put, the soul is like the battery that operates an electronic gadget. It may be different and originally external to the gadget, but the difference is not one of essence. Nowhere in rabbinic literature is the soul regarded as divine. It may be of heavenly origin, and therefore considered pure in its nature, but it is not divine. More significantly, the gadget and its power source ultimately belong together, rather than apart. Thus, the soul is the vitalizing agent, whose proper place is in the body, not out of it.

This understanding is reflected in rabbinic eschatology. The future life takes the form of resurrection of the dead, rather than the eternal life of the soul. As the classic parable of the lame and the blind, introduced in *Leviticus Rabbah* as a commentary on the verse "when a soul sins" (Lev 4:2), expresses it,

> R. Ishmael taught: this may be compared to the case of a king who had an orchard containing excellent early figs, and he placed there two watchmen, one lame and the other blind. He said to them: "be careful with these fine early figs." After some days the lame man said to the blind one: "I see fine early figs in the orchard." Said the blind man to him: "come let us eat them." "Am I then able to walk?" said the lame man. "Can I then see?" retorted the blind man. The lame man got astride the blind man, and thus they ate the early figs and sat down again each in his place. After some days the king came into that vineyard, and said to them: "where are the fine early figs?," the blind man replied: "my lord the king, can I then see?" The lame man replied: "my lord the king, can I then walk?" What did the king, who was a man of insight do with them? He placed the lame man astride the blind man, and they began to move about. Said the king to them: "Thus have you done, and eaten the early figs." Even so will the Holy One blessed be He, in the time to come say to the soul: "why hast thou sinned before me?" and the soul will answer: "O Master of the universe, it is not I that sinned, but the body it is that sinned. Why, since leaving it, I am like a clean bird flying through the air. As for me, how have I sinned?" God will also say to the body: "why hast thou sinned before me?" and the body will reply: "O, Master of the universe, not I have sinned, the soul it is that has sinned. Why, since it left me, I am cast about like a stone thrown upon the ground. Have I then sinned before thee?" What will the Holy One, blessed be He, do to them? He will bring the soul and force it into the body, and judge both as one. (*Lev. R.* 4.5)

The body and soul operate as one unit, like the seeing lame who sits on the shoulders of the walking blind. The disembodied soul is like a bird flying in the air; the soulless body is a corpse. They belong together and therefore will be put back together in the future. The thousand years of midrashic activity indicate a growing prominence in the place of the soul in rabbinic anthropology.[20] The final severance of soul and body, however, occurs only when Hellenistic anthropology enters Judaism through the philosophical masters of the Middle Ages.[21] From a perspective that sees body and soul united, the thought that the body is the image of God seems far less problematic.[22]

The Image as Body of Light

Differences in quality can be expressed not only through the distinction of body and soul, but also through the use of "body language." The kabalistic understanding sees *ẓelem* as the astral body.[23] This astral body is said to grow with a person, survive after his death, and be instrumental in the process of spiritual growth. This kabalistic understanding of *ẓelem* may be seen as a development of the bodily understanding of *ẓelem* in rabbinic literature. In rabbinic literature itself we do not have a clear notion of an astral body. In the rabbinic period, however, speaking of the resurrection of the dead, Paul draws a distinction between the physical body in which we live at present and the spiritual body which will be resurrected.[24] We thus have notions of other bodies, or other possible bodily forms, both in the literature paralleling rabbinic literature and in the literature that developed from rabbinic literature. Are such notions reflected in rabbinic literature itself? Is "body language" employed only in its crudest form, or can a qualitative difference be drawn between different aspects of bodily existence and thus between different aspects of *ẓelem*?

[20]See the parable introduced immediately after this parable in *Leviticus Rabbah*. See also the discussion of Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1975) 241–52. It is possible that a greater polarization of body and soul also led to a reinterpretation of the image of God in some of the later midrashim. See above n. 9.

[21]See *Mid. Ḥag.* on Gen. 1:26 where the two terms, "image" and "likeness," correspond to soul and body. This post-Maimonidean midrashic compilation is the earliest midrashic reference to the soul as image. I cannot follow Smith's reading ("On the Shape of God," 318) of *Pesikta Rabbati* 21.

[22]The story about Hillel's bathing his body as the image of God is followed by a story about Hillel regarding his mealtime as a time in which he, as body, hosts a guest—the soul. The juxtaposition of these stories supports our claim that the body-soul relationship does not threaten the physical understanding of *ẓelem*.

[23]Gershom Scholem, *Elements of the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1976) 358–80 [Hebrew].

[24]1 Cor 15:35–51.

We may consult the rabbinic descriptions of the body of Adam to solve our question. We find the following description of Adam's body:

> Resh Lakish in the name of R. Simon ben Menasseya said: "the apple of Adam's heel outshone the globe of the sun; how much more so the brightness of his face. Nor need you wonder. In the ordinary way, if a person makes servants, one for himself and one for his household, whose will he make more beautiful? Not his own? Similarly, Adam was created for the service of the Holy One, blessed be He, and the globe of the sun for the service of mankind." (*Lev. R.* 20.2)

The body of Adam is more radiant than the sun. We have already noted the comparison to the solar effulgence in the homily of Pseudo-Clementine. Here it is the body of the created Adam, not the body of God, that outshines the sun. In other words, I would suggest that Adam is envisioned as possessing a body of light. This of course would shed new light on the physical understanding of *ẕelem*. One of the consequences of Adam's sin was the diminishing of his luminosity, along with the diminishing of his cosmic proportions.[25] If the cosmic proportions of Adam are regarded as a description of this body of light, this difficult mythologoumenon takes on new meaning as well.[26]

Another famous source that touches upon the luminous aspect of Adam's existence is Rabbi Meir's gloss on the text in Gen 3:21: God made Adam and Eve כתנות עור ("garments of skin"), which is rendered by Rabbi Meir as כתנות אור ("garments of light"). These garments of light would be suitable for a body of light. It would thus seem that, according to Rabbi Meir, Adam had not lost his luminous quality as a result of the sin, even though some adaptation to sin had to take place in this luminous body. Alternatively, one might suggest that these garments are not made of light, but rather veil the light which had to be dimmed as a result of the sin. Thus,

[25]*Gen. R.* 12.6.

[26]We lack a clear methodology for tying together different rabbinic dicta. Thus, we can only point to the possible connection between the cosmic dimensions of this body of light, which extends from one end of the world to the other, and the ability of Adam (or, possibly, humans in general) to see from one end of the world to the other by means of the special light that prevailed during the six days of creation (*b. Ḥag.* 12a). If we note the transition, bordering on confusion, between the light of the six days of creation and the light emanating from Adam's body, as found in *Gen. R.* 12.6, we recognize that we may have before us a network of myths that form a coherent whole when read together. Our recognition of the luminous aspect of Adam's being may constitute an important clue to uncovering and bringing together these different sources. As long as our basis for these associations is thematic, rather than terminological, however, we are in danger of projecting latter-day understandings onto the rabbinic sources. In any event, these possible connections would account for the ways in which later generations might have put the disparate rabbinic statements into a coherent whole.

Adam comes into a physical body.[27] In any event, the original luminosity of Adam's body is at the base of Rabbi Meir's gloss.

This argument for the luminosity of the original *ẓelem*, based on the traditions concerning Adam, calls for a brief methodological reflection. In trying to refine our understanding of the bodily meaning of *ẓelem*, it is legitimate to turn to the legends describing the creation of Adam. It is he who was created in this *ẓelem*. We must ask, however, whether the connection between such descriptions and the concept of *ẓelem* is one that we supply, or whether the rabbinic sources connect these descriptions of Adam to his being a *ẓelem* of God. This doubt exists even concerning the rabbinic legends and myths appended to the verse, "Let us make man in our own image."[28] Are they merely commenting on the creation of humans, or do they uncover the meaning of the making of the human specifically in the image of God? Analyzing the Adam legend thus leaves us at an impasse. To get out of it we need to find texts—even younger rabbinic texts—that explicitly tie the notion of *ẓelem* to light-related terms. Several rabbinic texts refer to both *ẓelem* and light. These texts can help to substantiate our claim that the understanding of *ẓelem* as a body of light is possible within the rabbinic context. Most striking is the following passage from the Babylonian Talmud:

> R. Banaʾah used to mark out caves [where there were dead bodies]. When he came to the cave of Abraham, he found Eliezer the servant of Abraham standing at the entrance. He said to him: "what is Abraham doing?" He replied: "he is sleeping in the arms of Sarah, and she is looking fondly at his head." He said: "go and tell him that Banaʾah is standing at the entrance." Said Abraham to him: "let him enter, it is well known that there is no passion in this world." So he went in, surveyed the cave, and came out again. When he came to the cave of Adam, a voice came forth from heaven saying: "thou hast beholden the likeness of my likeness, my likeness itself thou mayest not behold." "But," he said, "I want to mark out the cave."—"The measurement of the inner one is the same as that of the outer one" [came the answer]. . . . R. Banaʾah said: "I discerned his two heels, and they were like two orbs of the sun." Compared with Sarah all other people are like a monkey to a human being, and compared with Adam Eve was like a monkey to a human being, and compared with the Shechinah Adam was like a monkey to a human being. The beauty of R. Kahana was a reflection of the beauty of R. Abbahu, the beauty of R. Abbahu was a reflection of the

[27]See *Adam and Eve* 20.2 (*OTP* 2. 281). The nakedness, referred to in Gen. 3:7, reflects the loss of glory in which Adam and Eve were clothed. Glory may here be identical with the image of God, referred to in *Adam and Eve* 10 (*OTP* 2. 273).

[28]Gen 1:26. See *Gen. R.* 8. It should be noted that Adam's luminosity is not one of the themes elaborated by this section of midrash.

> beauty of our father Jacob, and the beauty of Jacob was a reflection of the beauty of Adam. (*b. B. Batra* 58a)

What I find interesting in this *sugiya* are not only the specific traditions that it incorporates, but also the common thread connecting these sources into a continuous sequence. We once more encounter a glimpse of Adam's brilliance. We are told of his heel because it is all that R. Banaʾah glimpsed. It is interesting that unlike the tradition in *Genesis Rabbah*, Adam's body has not lost its luminescence. This may agree with Rabbi Meir's gloss. Indeed, the loss of Adamic qualities is not viewed in this passage as an outcome of sin, but as an almost natural devolutionary process. The devolutionary process brings about a growing similarity to apes.[29]

The discussion of brightness leads to a discussion of beauty. Beauty as such may be independent of luminosity. There are traditions in early Jewish mysticism that emphasize beauty as a special feature of the encounter with the divine.[30] The talmudic discussion of beauty need not therefore be identified with the mention of radiance.[31] The *sugiya*, however, moves comfortably between radiance and beauty, which would seem to suggest that beauty is a function of luminosity. The form of the light may be the subject of aesthetic admiration. Thus, light and the form it takes may be two interdependent aspects of the special image—human and divine. The association of beauty and luminosity is borne out by Pseudo-Clementine's homily. Further support for such an association may be found also within rabbinic literature. *Ecclesiastes Rabbah*'s reference to Adam, "His beauty made his face shine,"[32] is further testimony to the relation of beauty to luminescence.[33]

[29]The association of loss of luminescence with similarity to animals is also found in the Armenian text "The Words of Adam to Seth," in Michael E. Stone, ed., *Armenian Apocrypha Relating to the Patriarchs and Prophets* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1982) 13. In this text, however, the loss of divine light is the result of Adam's sin. See also Moshe Idel, "Enoch is Metatron," in Joseph Dan, ed., *Proceedings of the First International Conference on the History of Jewish Mysticism* (Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought 6.1–2; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1987) 155 [Hebrew].

[30]See the many references to the beauty of the king, listed in Peter Schäfer, *Konkordanz zur Hekalot-Literatur*, s.v. ביופיו.

[31]To think of beauty in terms other than luminosity is conceivable. It is possible, moreover, that proportion also defines beauty and that humankind shares in the divine proportions. Saul Lieberman has pointed out a parallel between the Talmud and the *Shiʿur Qomah*. The same proportions are used to describe the perfect divine body and the body which a priest who is qualified to serve in the temple ought to have. Different proportions are considered a blemish. See Saul Lieberman, *Shekiʾin* (Jerusalem: Vahrman, 1970) 12; and idem, "Mishnat Shir Hashrim," in Gershom Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism and Talmudic Traditions* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1965) 125.

[32]*Eccl. R.* 8.1.

[33]See further *Pesikta Rabbati* 21 in which Israel at Mount Sinai shares in the divine light. The proof text from Ezekiel refers only to beauty.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the afterlife is here conceived as an extension of bodily life, and even of bodily relations, but the flaw usually associated with bodily existence is lacking, namely, "there is no passion in this world." Thus, bodily form testifies neither to bodily function nor to the quality of bodily existence. Abraham and Sarah's embrace has a different quality than a physical embrace. Finally, the relation of the human form and the divine form is spelled out: Adam's form—ostensibly, his beauty and radiance—is a pale reflection of the divine beauty and radiance.

It is interesting to note that the image is not a replica of the original. This is by no means the only rabbinic outlook. We are told, for example, that "when the Holy One, blessed be He, created Adam, the ministering angels mistook him, and wished to exclaim 'Holy' before him."[34] This mistake is based on the identification of the form of the source with that of the image. God places sleep upon Adam in order to distinguish his image from the divine image.[35] Adam is distinguished from God not by form,[36] but by the different quality of life attached to the same form; in other words, God and Adam are distinguished not by body, but by bodily function.[37] Unlike such a description, the passage from *b. Baba Batra* assumes a fundamental dissimilarity between source and image. Adam is a monkey compared with the form of the divine. The move away from fullness of light and beauty is a gradual and gradated move away from the source, rather than a sudden break or fall.[38]

The luminescent quality of *ẓelem* is the basis for comparison between Moses and Adam in the following midrashic dialogue.

[34]*Gen. R.* 8.10. Concerning the antignostic background of this legend, see Alexander Altmann, "The Gnostic Background of the Rabbinic Legends," *JQR* n.s. 35 (1945) 379–91. Some additional midrashim employing the same motif are adduced by Altmann.

[35]It should be noted that to the extent that we have already had a tampering with the divine image, it is not the result of human sin, but stems from the need to differentiate the human form from the divine form. A further instance of identity between the human and divine image is discussed in Shamma Friedman, "Graven Image," *Graven Images* 1 (forthcoming). Friedman analyzes the description of the sleeping Jacob, whose image is identical to God's image which is above (*Gen. R.* 68.12). Not only is this a further instance of identity of image, but also a parallel to the sleeping image of God, as found in *Gen. R.* 8.

[36]A later reworking of midrashic motives associates the diminishing of the macroanthropic proportions with the problem of the angelic confusion of the divine and the Adamic forms. See *Otiyot de-Rabbi Akiva* (B) in Shlomoh Wertheimer, *Batei Midrashot* (2 vols.; Jerusalem: Ketav ve-Sefer, 1955) 2. 412.

[37]All the proofs that Marmorstein marshalled for nonanthropomorphic rabbinic views relate to bodily functions and not bodily existence. We cannot assume that the denial of bodily function implies the denial of bodily existence. See Marmorstein, *Essays in Anthropomorphism*, 24–42.

[38]See *b. Soṭ* 10a; five were created in the pattern of above. After the removal of *ẓelem* these five individuals were given special qualities, resembling the divine qualities or the divine form.

> Adam said to Moses: I am greater than you because I have been created in the image of God. Whence this? For it is said: "and God created man in his own image." Moses replied to him: I am far superior to you, for the honor which was given to you has been taken away from you, as it is said: "but man (Adam) abideth not in honor," but as for me, the radiant countenance which God gave me still remains with me. Whence? For it is said: "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." (*Deut. R.* 11.3)

Moses is again Adam's luminous counterpart[39] in the following passage from *Midrash Tadshe* 4:

> In the likeness of the creation of the world the Holy One blessed be He performed miracles for Israel when they came out of Egypt. . . . In the beginning: "and God created man in his image," and in the desert: "and Moshe knew not that the skin of his face shone."[40]

It should be noted that this correspondence between Adam and Moses does not amount to a rectification of the Adamic sin. Nor are we told that the lost *ẓelem* has been restored. Sinai does not restore the lost *ẓelem*.[41] Individuals may share in the divine light, but this does not change the fact that the *ẓelem* has been lost.

The Loss of the Image

Various midrashim regard different points in history as the point when the *ẓelem* was lost.[42] The loss of Adam's splendor was seen above as an outcome of his sin. Another tradition regards the generation of Enosh as the turning point in the history of the image.

> And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enosh. Abba Cohen Bardela was asked: [why does scripture enumer-

[39]This luminosity, however, is not necessarily the original *ẓelem*. The dialogue of Adam and Moses may be based on the notion that the *ẓelem* has been lost.

[40]Adolph Jellinek, *Beit ha-Midrash* (6 vols.; Leipzig: Niese, 1853; reprinted Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1967) 3. 168.

[41]Contra Jacob Jervell, *Imago Dei: Gen 1,26f. im Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis, und in den paulinischen Briefen* (FRLANT 76; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960) 83. Jervell's whole thesis is based on the limiting of *ẓelem* to Israel through the Sinai event. Even though we find references to Sinai as a reflection of the Adamic sin (*b. Šabbat* 146a), nowhere is this expressed in terms of *ẓelem*. The references above to the light received at Sinai do not consciously relate to the divine image. The only possible restoration of *ẓelem* is in the messianic future. Our explanation of *ẓelem* may account for this fact.

[42]In this context I have not included certain sources that could be considered relevant to the present discussion. *Gen. R.* 8.10 describes God as placing sleep upon Adam in order to counteract the undesired effects of Adam's physical identity with God. This source does not associate the sleep placed upon Adam with a loss of *ẓelem*. One could, of course, offer such an association, but one would then have to regard all changes in the original Adamic form as a loss of *ẓelem*. See below n. 46.

> ate] Adam, Seth, Enosh and then become silent? Hitherto they were created in the likeness and image [of God], he replied, but from then onwards centaurs were created.
>
> Four things changed in the days of Enosh: the mountains became [barren] rocks, the dead began to feel [the worms], men's faces became apelike, and they became vulnerable to demons. Said R. Isaac: They were themselves responsible for becoming vulnerable to demons, [for they argued]: What is the difference whether one prostrates himself before an image or prostrates himself before man? Hence, then man became degraded to call upon the name of the Lord. (*Gen. R.* 23.6)

This midrash is based on the fact that only concerning two generations is the creation in *ẕelem* and *demut* mentioned. Nowhere else in biblical history do these terms recur. The conclusion drawn is that in the times of Enosh the divine image was lost. We encounter here again the transition from divine form to apelike form—a kind of reverse Darwinism. According to this passage, this transition may be taken to mean that the physical form itself underwent change, rather than that the physical vehicle became the primary means of human expression. The loss of *ẕelem* in this passage, however, is also expressed through the image of centaurs. As I understand it, both images express a form that is half-human and half-animal. The loss of the divine form implies the taking on of an animal, or semianimal form. This half-animal existence also makes humans susceptible to the influence of another class of beings that obviously affect only the lower-natured humans, namely, the demons.

According to the last passage, human susceptibility to demonic influence is a universal consequence of the sins of a particular generation. In contrast, from the following passage it seems that through this divine image, humans even now can be protected from demonic influence. The loss or retention of the image is seen here from the personal perspective.

> God said to Israel: if you will keep the words of the law, I will guard you from the demons. R. Abba b. Ze'ria said: there is not a *beth roba* [a measurement of land] in the universe where there are not to be found ever so many thousands of demons, every one of whom has a mask over his face to prevent him looking at man and injuring him. And when man's sins warrant it, he removes his mask, and turns his gaze on him and injures him. Whence this? For it is said: "he hath redeemed my soul in peace so that none came nigh to me." When is this? "For there were many that were with me" (Ps 55:19). And who are they? The angels who guard man. R. Joshua b. Levi said: a procession [of angels] pass before man and the heralds proclaim before him saying: make room for the image of God. See how many watchmen guard you. When is this the case? When you observe the words of the Torah. (*Deut. R.* 4.4)

It is interesting that humanity's dominion over nature, as related to the image of God in Gen 1:26, finds no echo in rabbinic teaching. The closest statement we find relates to the protective aspect of the *ẓelem*. The *ẓelem* protects the human from demons, and in other sources, from the animals as well.[43] Nowhere is it the basis for dominion over the animal kingdom. The protection of humans from the demons is related to their being the image of God. As image of God, they receive angelic protection. When they sin, it seems that they are no longer in possession of the divine image or its concomitant angelic escort.

One further notion warrants consideration, namely, the mask worn by the demons. This mask is supposed to protect humans, and its removal enables the demons to harm them. As a result of the previous discussion, a new possibility emerges for understanding this mask. It is as images of God that humans are protected from the demons. The image of God is radiant. The demons who are unable to approach this radiance must veil their faces. Only when humans sin, and their radiance diminishes, can demons approach humans and harm them.[44] This passage allows us to reflect upon the nonphysical nature of the divine image. The image is clearly visible. The heralds declare its coming. This passage, however, does not record a physical transformation, as in the *Genesis Rabbah* passages. The transformation is discernible to angelic and demonic eyes, but not necessarily to human eyes. The *ẓelem* form seems to be something other than the physical form.

The loss of the divine image may also be reflected in a liturgical formula that has been preserved in the Cairo Genizah. We find there the following benediction:

> Blessed art thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has created the first Adam in his likeness and his image. Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue (Ps 120:2). So may will and compassion be before you, the Lord, our God and God of our fathers, that you rebuild your city in our days, and establish your temple in our years, and you shall comfort us in it, and rejoice us in its building

[43]See *Adam and Eve* 37.3 (*OTP* 2. 272). I understand this text to designate human vulnerability to animal attacks as a result of sin.

[44]See also 3 Enoch 5 (in Hugo Odeberg, ed. and trans., *3 Enoch; or The Hebrew Book of Enoch* [New York: Ktav, 1973] 14–15) where Adam and Eve are sitting at the gates of the garden of Eden and contemplating the image of the splendor of the Shekinah. The text informs us that whoever contemplates this splendor is protected not only from demons, but from illness, mosquitoes, and flies. Here it is the divine effulgence, and not the human effulgence, that offers protection. Moshe Idel, in conversation, has suggested that Adam and Eve are contemplating the divine effulgence and receiving protection from it since their own light has been lost.

> soon, as you have spoken and promised us, blessed art thou God, the builder of Jerusalem with compassion, Amen.[45]

This unique version of the "builder of Jerusalem" benediction commences with reference to the *ẓelem* of the first Adam. It then continues with a quotation from Psalm 120, asking God to save the speaker from lying lips, and proceeds to a more common request for the rebuilding of the temple and Jerusalem. We can attempt to interpret this text as a theologically coherent unit. I submit that the specific reference to the image of the first Adam implies the understanding that this image was lost.[46] The loss of the image seems to be tied to false speech.[47] The loss of the divine image is a result of original sin. The juxtaposition of the lost image to the destroyed temple would then imply that all subsequent sins and disasters reflect, or are the consequence of, the original sin that led to the loss of the divine image.

Image of God: The Religious Applications

Up to this point we have considered midrashic sources that imply or state that the divine image was lost. This picture must be offset against those rabbinic sources that make didactic and moralistic use of the concept of the image of God. When Rabbi Akiva declares that man is beloved, for he was created in the image of God (*m. ʾAbot* 3.14), the possibility of loss of the divine image does not seem to figure in his statement. The same

[45]Asaf, "From the Palestinian Prayer Order," 121. See also Jacob Mann, "Genizah Fragments of the Palestine Order of Service," *HUCA* 2 (1925) 277. See also Ginzberg's attempt to disregard the theological implications of this benediction in his *A Commentary on the Palestinian Talmud*, 3. 230.

[46]The more common blessing אשר יצר את האדם בצלמו ("who created man in his image"; *b. Ketub.* 8a), recited at the time of marriage, may refer to Adam, but clearly also to his progeny. The *ẓelem* is the basis for the propagation of further generations, who share in this *ẓelem*. One should note that this benediction can also be related to the restitution of a lost *ẓelem*, or at least a lost unity. According to the midrashic tradition (*Gen. R.* 8.1) the original Adam was both male and female. The creation of Eve was a process of separating this original unity. It is only when man and woman are united in marriage that this unity is reestablished. It would therefore be appropriate to make a blessing referring to the creation in God's image at this particular occasion. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in the midrash the term *ẓelem* is not related to Adam's bisexual nature, but see *Gen. R.* 8.9: "Not man without woman, and not woman without man, and not both of them without the divine presence." This comment explains the words, "in our image and likeness." This sharp interpretation, however, may dissociate this image from the divine image. See also *Gen. R.* 8.11, "the heavenly beings were created in image and likeness, and do not propagate." Humans are to share in the divine likeness, as well as to propagate. Thus, it would seem that propagation is not in and of itself an attribute of the divine image. Concerning the appearance of the term *ẓelem* in conjunction with Adamic myths, see *Tanḥuma* (Buber ed.).*Tazriʿa* 10, where the adjacent notion in *Genesis Rabbah*, relating Adam's cosmic dimensions, is connected to the divine image.

[47]This idea may perhaps follow traditions such as *Gen. R.* 19.3.

holds true for sources that emphasize the gravity of hurting, offending, or killing a fellow human being who was created in the image of God.[48] What kind of relationship can be established between these two types of attitudes to the divine image? Some scholars have opted for the one type and thus emphasized the lost *ẓelem*.[49] Others have insisted on the universal validity of the image.[50] How are these two understandings to be reconciled?

Morton Smith has suggested that there are various components of the divine image.[51] According to such an understanding, it would be possible for some components to be lost, while others would be retained. Smith's understanding, however, is based on the assumption that the bodily understanding is only one aspect of the image of God.[52] The multiplicity of aspects of *ẓelem* in turn rests upon Marmorstein's thesis that there existed an antianthropomorphic rabbinic school. We cannot accept these presuppositions and cannot, therefore, follow Smith's suggestion. Another course would be to point to the different functions these various texts fulfill. The didactic texts see the image as given to humanity and therefore as still present, while the more mythological midrashic discussions refer to the person of Adam. Yet a functional distinction merely sidesteps the issue of whether the *ẓelem* was lost; it does not directly address it.

A chronological distinction would be more productive. The sources that utilize the concept of image for didactic purposes are from the tannaitic period,[53] and those that refer to the loss of the image are from the amoraic period. This distinction would, of course, open our texts to the historical considerations of antignostic polemics, which are beyond our present scope.[54] It seems to me, however, that such a division is too sharp. The posttannaitic sources continue to quote the didactic statements and do not mitigate them in light of the loss of *ẓelem*.[55]

[48]*Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmaʿel.Baḥodesh* 11; Hoffman, *Midrash Tanaʾim*, 140. See also *b. Moʿed Qaṭ.* 15b: every person who dies is an image of God that has been removed.

[49]See esp. Jervell (*Imago Dei*, 113–14), who relies on Ginzberg, among others.

[50]See esp. George Foot Moore (*Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* [3 vols.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927] 1. 446–49), who makes no mention of the possibility of losing the divine image and sees in the image a universal moral principle; see further 1. 479. Gerhard Kittel ("εἰκών," *TDNT* 2 [1964] 393) explicitly denies the idea that the image was lost and limits the possibility of losing the image to individuals rather than to humanity as a whole.

[51]Smith, "On the Shape of God," 320.

[52]The other aspects of the image would be those mentioned in the later *Tanḥuma* literature; see above n. 9.

[53]These texts include *m. ʾAbot* 3.14; *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmaʾel. Baḥodesh* 8, 11; Hoffman, *Midrash Tanaʾim*, 140.

[54]See Altmann, "The Gnostic Background."

[55]See, for example, *Tanḥuma.Yitro* 17; *Pesikta Rabbati* (ed. Meir Friedmann; Vienna: n.p., 1880) 21/108b.

Part of the problem stems from the nature of the material under discussion. The overall number of sources employing the concepts of *ẓelem* and *demut* within the rabbinic corpus is not large. Most of the relevant sources are referred to in the present article itself. Many of these sources are cited only once in all of rabbinic literature. The relatively small body of statements under discussion can be seen as testimony to the relatively minor role the concept plays in all of rabbinic thinking. In understanding the individual pericope's use of *ẓelem* we are on fairly safe ground, because the contextual and philological analyses help determine its meaning. At this point in our discussion, however, we are searching for a way in which seemingly contradictory statements can be reconciled when no conscious attempt at reconciliation is made by the sources themselves. We ask, therefore, not about the meaning of a passage, but about the implied logic of the literature as a whole, assuming that the conflicting notions were known at least to the editors of this literature, if not to some of those who actually submitted the traditions. If we reject the chronological distinction that stems from the division of this literature to individual corpora, we must construct a theoretical explanation, as Smith did, for example, in suggesting that the image has various components. Any such suggestion is clearly hypothetical. A leap into the realm of the educated hypothesis is required if we wish to make sense of the material as a whole.

Now that I have established both the need for offering a theoretical explanation of the material and the conjectural nature of any proposition one may make, I shall proceed to offer an understanding that would enable us to speak simultaneously of the loss and the retention of *ẓelem*. I do not suggest that this understanding is implied in any individual text, because each text emphasizes a particular aspect of *ẓelem*, according to its particular agenda. It is possible, however, to propose a model that would account for rabbinic literature's ability to sustain seemingly conflicting understandings of *ẓelem*. This model finds its legitimation in our previous discussion of the nature of *ẓelem*. As we have seen, Adam's *ẓelem* is his luminous body. In other sources, such as the story of Hillel washing his body, the *ẓelem* referred to the physical body. *Ẓelem* can thus refer to various levels, or aspects, all of which bear a resemblance to the physical body. I would propose that these various levels, or various bodies, reflect one another. The physical body is a reflection of the body of light. This reflection may translate itself down to the details of circumcision. The kind of graded devolutionary process that we encountered above may be a model for two ways of talking about *ẓelem*. The *ẓelem* in its original form may be lost, but the dimmer reflection of this form is extant in the physical body, which may still be spoken of as *ẓelem*.[56]

[56]An illustration of such a conceptual approach, although without the active use of *ẓelem*, may be found in two teachings of Rabbi Meir, which I have cited above. In one passage, we

When we analyze the use of *ẕelem* in rabbinic literature, the relatively minor role this concept plays is striking. It figures in relatively few statements,[57] and the lessons adduced from it are rather limited. Hillel uses the concept to justify bathing the body, and Gen 9:6 engenders several statements in which murder is seen as affecting the divine image. Other than this, no religious action, particularly of a positive nature (מצות עשה), is based on this concept. It is notable that the didactic use of *ẕelem* refers to the other as image.[58] There is no reference to the self, or to oneself, as image. This may account for the fact that nowhere is the idea of *imitatio dei* related to the image of God.[59] The image of God would be the natural background for such a demand, especially when we consider that the anthropomorphic God himself observes the commandments.[60] The physical understanding of *ẕelem* could thus have yielded far richer uses than those found in the literature.[61] One possible explanation for this situation is that *ẕelem* plays a minor role in the Bible itself. Aside from several occurrences in the opening chapters of Genesis, the idea is nowhere echoed in the entire Bible. Rabbinic usage, however, should be regarded as reflecting the rabbis' choices and interests; it need not merely echo biblical usage. One possible explanation for the relatively minor role of *ẕelem* is that other categories play such a vital role that there is little need for *ẕelem*. It is interesting to note that in several instances when *ẕelem* is used, the Torah also appears, as something of greater value.[62] The Torah is the greater source of value

find him referring to Adam's garments of light. In another, the hanged man's corpse resembles the divine form and therefore must not be left hanging on a tree. See also *Adam and Eve* 10; 12 (*OTP* 2. 273; 275). As I understand it, the animal can both attack Seth, because of the loss of the divine image, and yet be reprimanded for it, on account of the creation in the image of God, which subsists in some form.

[57]It should also be noted that for the most part Genesis 9 is used, rather than Genesis 1. Louis Ginzberg ("Adam Kadmon," *JE* 1 [1901] 138) has raised the question concerning Rabbi Akiva's choice of a proof text in *m. ʾAbot* 3.14. Ginzberg ascribes to a noncorporeal understanding of *ẕelem*, which he uses to explain this difficulty. I can only suggest that perhaps this verse was chosen because it translated the concept of image into a practical commandment.

[58]I suggest that Hillel, who washes his body, regards his body as the other. The Philonic use of the word εἰκών ("image") would enable reference to the εἰκών as self.

[59]See Henry Fischel's discussion of the Ben Azzai traditions; Fischel tries (*Rabbinic Literature and Greco-Roman Philosophy* [Leiden: Brill, 1973] 92) to tie the two notions together. There is no textual evidence for this association. See, however, the juxtaposition of the regard for the divine image and God's identification with Israel (*Mid. Tan.* to Deut 21:23 [Hoffman, *Midrash Tanaʾim*, 132]).

[60]See the extensive discussion in Marmorstein, *Essays in Anthropomorphism*, 62–68.

[61]This is why the growing polarity of soul and body itself should not be seen as a reason for the minimal usage of *ẕelem*.

[62]See *m. ʾAbot* 3.14. There is a clear hierarchy leading from *ẕelem* to Torah. It should be noted that this is the only passage in rabbinic literature that builds on *ẕelem* as a positive category that endows humanity with value. See also *t. Yebamot*, discussed below, p. 191. Ben Azzai prefers the Torah to the possible effects on the divine image of not having children. The Torah is the basis for owning and losing the *ẕelem* in *Deut. R.* 4.4, discussed above, p. 184.

and signification, and therefore there may be less need for *ẓelem*. I believe there is a deeper issue, however, that does not find explicit mention in the rabbinic sources we have analyzed, but which nevertheless severely affects their use of *ẓelem*. The creation of the human in the image of God would refer to all humankind. The physical resemblance of all human beings would be the basis for their resemblance to the divine image. In his 1960 work, *Imago Dei*,[63] Jacob Jervell suggested that the rabbis limited *ẓelem* to the Israelites who had received the Torah at Sinai. Thus, Sinai defines the image of God. Jervell's formulation rightly angered Smith, who devoted an article to refuting Jervell's thesis.[64] Jervell's thesis is a systematic, delimited German *Heilsgeschichte* inappropriately projected onto rabbinic sources. Nevertheless, while Jervell may have missed the mark in reading the sources, he has touched upon a point that is significant for understanding the rabbinic subconscious. Even if formally no rabbi would define *ẓelem* as pertaining to Israelites only, rabbinic theology on the whole undermines the religious ideals of the great pre-Abrahamic heroes and tones down the religious value that might be ascribed to Gentiles. Of course, as with any overview, this point is also oversimplified, but I would suggest that it is precisely its universal potential that leads to the limited use of *ẓelem* in rabbinic literature and prevents its utilization on a wider scope. The source that sees the murder of an *Israelite* as damaging the image of God testifies to such a tendency.[65] We may even consider the possibility that the motif describing the loss of *ẓelem* was influenced by similar considerations.[66] In any event, given the centricity of the Torah in rabbinic religion, the loss of the divine image does not seem to be regarded as a major disaster, nor does it shape rabbinic religious practice or outlook.

The Image and the Great Body

To what has just been said there is, however, one great exception. In *Sifra* on Leviticus 19 we find the following controversy between Ben Azzai and Rabbi Akiva concerning the great principle from which all the precepts of the Torah may be derived:[67]

[63]Jervell, *Imago Dei*, 83.

[64]Smith, "On the Shape of God."

[65]See *Exod. R.* 30.16. See also Smith, "On the Shape of God," 325.

[66]The elaboration of this point would call for a detailed assessment of the place of myth in rabbinic literature and how much polemic is expressed in the various Adam legends. These questions are beyond the scope of this paper.

[67]This is my understanding of כלל גדול ("great principle") in this instance. It should be noted that this is the only nonhalakhic instance of the term in rabbinic literature. It is also the only case of disagreement over what is the "great principle." See also Wilhelm Bacher, *Erkhei Midrash* (Tel Aviv: n.p., 1923) 56.

> "And you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev 19:17). Rabbi Akiva said: this is the great principle of the Torah. Ben Azzai said: "this is the book of the generations of Adam, when God created man he made him in the likeness of God" (Gen 5:1) is an even greater principle.[68]

In my understanding, Rabbi Akiva's great principle could be limited to Israelites. Ben Azzai's proof text is more universal, and it is noteworthy that Ben Azzai would here be using the image of God as a basis for proper religious behavior in the widest sense. This is the most expansive use of this concept in all of rabbinic literature. We can get a better idea of Ben Azzai's understanding of this divine image by referring to another of his statements.[69]

> R. Akiva says: whoever spills blood, such a one annuls the [divine] likeness, since it says: "he who shed the blood of man by man his blood will be shed" (Gen 9:6). Ben Azzai says: whoever does not engage in reproductive sexual relations such a one sheds blood and annuls the [divine] likeness, since it says: "for in the image of God he made man," and it says: "and you be fruitful and multiply." (*t. Yebamot* 8.7)[70]

Both rabbis discuss the effects of human action on the divine image and both express the effect in terms of diminishing or annulling this image. Rabbi Akiva teaches about the effects of murder. It is noteworthy that Ben Azzai refers not only to the effect of harmful behavior, but also to the effects of abstention from fulfilling a commandment. This would accord with the former passage in which the creation in the divine image is the great principle. The second passage may clarify our understanding of the divine *demut*. In what way does one who murders or abstains from procreation affect the divine image? Two understandings are possible.[71] One is that all of humanity constitutes the great divine body of manifestation.[72]

[68]*Sifra on Leviticus* (ed. Isaac H. Weiss; Vienna: n.p., 1862) 89b (Lev 19:17).

[69]I should note that Ben Azzai is not the only one mentioned in the following passage. The corroborative evidence of these two passages, however, enables us to speak of his beliefs. These beliefs may not have been exclusive to him.

[70]Parallel versions, such as *Gen. R.* 24, read "diminishes" instead of "annuls."

[71]A third possibility may exist; if the human is analogous to the emperor's statue (see above n. 16), the diminishing of life is a diminishing of the king's representation. Although such a reading is indeed possible, I favor the other explanations discussed in the article. The starkness of the unique expression— "annuls the image"—is lost in this third interpretive possibility, which might have been better phrased: "annuls the image of *makom* [a common rabbinic epithet for God]," or even "the image of the king," as in *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmaʾel. Baḥodesh* 8.

[72]It is important to note that humanity, and not the world as such, would be the divine body. The only rabbinic source in which the world—and not people—is seen as the divine image is

Therefore, harming humanity is harming the body of God. Diminishing humanity's potential size diminishes the dimensions of the body of God. The two proof texts that refer to humans being *in* the image, or *in* the likeness, could be taken to mean that humans are in them and a part of them.[73] Being a part of the body of God could obviously be the great religious principle.[74]

Another possible interpretation would regard the image mentioned in both passages as the great body of Adam, which contains in it all the future generations. Concerning the creation of Adam we read:

> R. Tanḥuma in R. Banayah's name and R. Berekiah in R. Eleazar's name said: he created him *golem* ("an embryo"),[75] and he lay stretching from one end of the world to the other. . . . R. Judah b. R. Simon said: while Adam lay *golem* before him at whose decree the world came into existence, he showed him every generation and its sages, every generation and its judges, scribes, interpreters, and leaders. (*Gen. R.* 24.2)

The later midrash *Exodus Rabbah* is explicit about the relation of these generations to this cosmic form of Adam. The future generations are all parts of Adam's body.[76] The body of Adam is actually the great plan for the unfolding of humanity.[77] Whoever affects the life of another affects the historic unfolding of the great Adamic *demut*. Such reading could also serve as the basis for moral behavior. The understanding that all humans are part of one body has obvious consequences on their behavior.[78] This

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Exod. R. 15.22, with the parallel in *Tanḥuma.Ḥayei Sara* 3. This, however, fits in with the wider use of "eikonin" in the *Tanḥuma Midrashim*. See above n. 9.

[73]Such a notion would accord with other notions of the time regarding the great macroanthropic being. See Gedaliahu G. Stroumsa, "Forms of God: Some Notes on Meṭaṭron and Christ," *HTR* 76 (1983) 269–88. This understanding of the divine image need not exclude the simple understanding of physical resemblance. The structure of the part may reflect the structure of the whole.

[74]Perhaps we should contrast this with Rabbi Akiva's lesson from the creation of the image of God—"beloved is man." For Ben Azzai, who is willing to use the image as the great principle, being a part of the greater image of God may be an ontological statement. It should be noted that if this understanding of Ben Azzai is correct, this notion does not seem to find further expression in rabbinic literature. The fact that the divine image would necessarily include Gentiles may serve as an explanation. See Robert Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms* (Leiden: Brill, 1971) 240.

[75]For this understanding of "golem," see Moshe Idel, *Golem* (New York: SUNY Press, 1990) 34.

[76]See *Exod. R.* 40.3.

[77]The association of body and plan is related to the book metaphor that appears in the midrash, based on Ps 139:16. See *Gen. R.* 24.2.

[78]See also *y. Ned.* 9.4, where Rabbi Akiva and Ben Azzai's controversy is adduced and the metaphor of body is used explicitly to effect proper behavior between the different components of the body.

notion of the unfolding of history as the incarnation of all parts of the Adamic body finds expression in the same talmudic *sugiyah* that introduces Ben Azzai's second statement.

> R. Assi stated: the son of David will not come before all the souls in *guf* are disposed of, since it is said, for the spirit that enwrappeth itself is from Me and the souls which I have made. (*Yebamot* 63b)

This *guf*, (literally, "body") may well be the great body of humanity, seen either as the body of manifestation of God or as the incarnating body of the primordial Adam. This body forms a plan. Only as the plan unfolds, through the furtherance of life, can history take its course, until the final designated end, namely, the coming of the Messiah.

In view of this last suggestion, I wish to turn now to some New Testament texts. The last few texts we analyzed have already been discussed in relation to New Testament, and in particular Pauline theology. These texts have been explored primarily in the context of tracing the roots of Pauline thought, and in particular the concept of body of Christ.[79] Rabbinic Adam myths have served as one theoretical source for the concept of body of Christ.[80] The physical understanding of image of God in rabbinic literature may be relevant to the development of the concept of body of Christ when we realize that Christ is both image and body.[81] The hymn found in Col 1:15–17 describes Jesus thus,

> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in him all things were created. . . . He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church.

In light of our discussion, we may read the theologoumenon of this passage as expressing ideas similar to those found in the rabbinic sources. Jesus as image is also Jesus as body. As first-born Jesus restores the original *ẓelem*.[82] This is the great body of all believers, and as image of God it is open to all believers. The concept of image of God allows Paul to address Gentile as well as Jew,[83] for this image is not a natural body, but

[79]W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: SPCK, 1948) 45–57; Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms*, 239–45.

[80]For a survey of possibilities for the origin of this concept, see Markus Barth, *Ephesians 1–3* (AB 34; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974) 183–210.

[81]The concept of Christ as image is commonly seen as drawing upon the Hellenistic identification of image and wisdom. This obviously would have little to do with any understanding of Christ as body. See, for example, Eduard Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* (ed. Helmut Koester; trans. William R. Poehlmann and Robert J. Karris; Hermeneia; Fortress: Philadelphia, 1971) 46–48. See also Altmann, "Homo Imago Dei," 244–47.

[82]On the relation of Jesus and the first Adam, see Rom 5:12–19; 1 Cor 15:20–22.

[83]Nevertheless, the image is not a natural category, but one that must be attained through joining the community of believers.

a body of the elect, that is, the church. It should be noted that in the *Exodus Rabbah* passage to which we referred, it is the righteous who constitute Adam's body.

It is up to New Testament scholarship to assess whether the rabbinic identification of image and body is of any significance for the development of New Testament ideas. More significant for our purposes is the use of the Pauline texts as background against which a particular feature of the rabbinic texts may be highlighted. What distinguishes the New Testament passages about the body of Christ from the rabbinic references to *ẓelem* is not only the subject of the body, but also the nature of the processes related to this body. As I have learned from Moshe Idel, talk of body can be both static and dynamic.[84] A body may be viewed from a static point of view, like the *Shiʿur Qomah* body that has set and constant dimensions. Alternatively, a body may be viewed dynamically, like the references to the diminishing of the *demut*. It is striking that all dynamic processes concerning *ẓelem* are in the direction of loss, hurt, diminution, and waning. The *ẓelem* is natural to creation, and we only find mention of its loss. It is not viewed as spiritual achievement. We find no reference to regaining the lost *ẓelem*. Sinai in no way rectifies the loss of *ẓelem*. The didactic uses of *ẓelem* refer only to its potential diminishing. Against this negative dynamic movement, it is interesting to note that the New Testament use of the same metaphor has positive aspects.[85] The Colossians, states the writer of the epistle, "have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge, after the image of its creator" (Col 3:10). The all-encompassing dimensions of Christ's body are mentioned, "The fullness of him who fills all in all" (Eph 1:23). Yet, positive growth is possible for this body: "Holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God" (Col 2:19). "We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love" (Eph 4:15–16).

Compared with this usage, the exclusive negative dynamism of the rabbinic sources is obvious. In later stages of Jewish thought, the dynamic effects of human action upon the divine body are both positive and negative. In the rabbinic sources, dynamic movements in the present time are only negative. The positive reinstatement of *ẓelem* can only come at the

[84]Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah—New Perspectives* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1988) 158.

[85]These are, of course, not the only aspects. The notion of the diminishing of the divine form is reflected in Jesus' incarnation. See Phil 2:6–8; and Stroumsa, "Forms of God," 283.

point in time when the divine or macroanthropic body has reached its fulfillment. Rabbinic speculation about the divine image leaves us in abeyance, waiting for the coming of the son of David.[86]

Conclusion

The examination of rabbinic sources concerning the concept of the image of God corroborates our understanding of the anthropomorphic nature of the rabbinic God. The physical and bodily understanding of the image of God is nowhere refuted and emerges as the only rabbinic understanding of image of God. An examination of rabbinic myths regarding the creation of Adam, however, reveals that the meaning of body is not necessarily the physical body with which we are acquainted. Adam's body is a body of light. Thus, the divine form would also be conceived of in anthropomorphic, although not necessarily corporeal[87] or physical terms. The rabbinic description of the loss of the divine image is best understood in reference to such a luminescent body. Because of the very particular meaning that the image of God receives in rabbinic literature, this concept does not lend itself easily to moral or didactic uses. This is one possible reason why the concept is not widely elaborated in rabbinic literature and cannot be seen as a paramount feature of rabbinic anthropology or moral teaching. To this reason we should add, however, the fact that the concept of image of God addresses all of humanity, in potential. Rabbinic theology is more anxious to highlight the religious values unique to the Torah and Israel, and thus it seems to employ the concept of image of God less frequently.

[86]See *Gen. R.* 12.6. Compare also the Genizah benediction discussed above. The juxtaposition of *ẕelem* and the restoration of the temple may imply the simultaneous reinstatement of both. See further Idel, "Enoch is Metatron," 152–56.

[87]See the recent discussion of Kim Paffenroth, "Paulsen on Augustine: An Incorporeal or Nonanthropomorphic God?" *HTR* 86 (1993) 233–35.

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Gottstein, Alon Goshen. The body as image of God in rabbinic literature. *Harvard Theological Review* 87 (1994), 171-195

Abstract:

The rabbinic tendency toward anthropomorphism is reflected in the interpretation of man as created in the image of God. Rabbinic sources suggest that Adam possessed a body of light, which according to some sources was lost or diminished through sin. Thus, the anthropomorphic concept of divine form does not necessarily refer to a corporeal body. However, the idea of the image of God receives little elaboration in rabbinic literature, possibly because it has universal implications that would detract from the emphasis on Israel's uniqueness.

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The liberation of rabbinic theology from the reins of medieval theology is still underway. One of the central issues that sets rabbinic theology apart from later medieval developments is the attribution of body or form to the godhead. Even though the anthropomorphic tendency of rabbinic thought is widely recognized, it is still early to speak of a learned consensus on this issue. The standard work on the topic remains Arthur Marmorstein's Essays in Anthropomorphism, written in 1937.(1) Marmorstein recognized the anthropomorphic tendency of rabbinic thinking. His way of dealing, both theologically and scholastically, with the issue was to suggest the existence of two schools in the tannaitic period. According to Marmorstein, the schools of Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael were divided on the question of the literality of the understanding of the biblical text. Rabbi Akiva's literal reading gave rise to an anthropomorphic understanding of God. Rabbi Ishmael's nonliteral, or allegorical, reading brought about an opposition to anthropomorphism. This description of rabbinic anthropomorphism has informed the discussions of many scholars, including those who have dealt with our present topic--the image of God. I would, therefore, state my differences with this presentation.

Marmorstein's discussion often confuses the hermeneutic and the theological dimensions. His case is made by reference to the hermeneutic differences between the schools, which no doubt existed. To my mind, however, he does not demonstrate adequately the far-reaching theological differences between the schools. The term "anthropomorphism," as Marmorstein used it, designates a wide spectrum of phenomena and is not limited to the fundamental question of the existence or the meaning of the ascription of bodily form to God. With regard to the heart of the anthropomorphic issue, Marmorstein indicated no differences between the schools. He provided ample documentation both of the notions that God has a body and of the possibility of seeing God. At these crucial junctures he offered little, if any, evidence of the existence of alternative schools of thought. My point may be appreciated better if it is borne in mind that in all of rabbinic literature there is not a single statement that categorically denies that God has body or form.(2)

In my understanding, the question of whether the rabbis believed in a God who has form is one that needs little discussion and therefore is of lesser interest. Nevertheless, once we are able to perceive that rabbinic literature expresses anthropomorphic beliefs, we encounter a series of fascinating questions. Instead of asking, "Does God have a body?" we should inquire, "What kind of body does God have?"(3) In other words, anthropomorphism is classically identified with what we may term crude anthropomorphism. God's body is seen as identical, or similar, to the human body. This understanding leads to a rejection of anthropomorphism. A different understanding of the divine form may lead to a different position.

A section of the Jewish-Christian Pseudo-Clementine Homilies, recently translated and discussed by Shlomo Pines as paralleling notions found in Sefer Yezirah,(4) illustrates the possibility of a different notion of the divine form. In this passage Peter teaches concerning God:

For He has a form for the sake of [His] first and unique beauty, and all

the limbs, not for use. For He does not have eyes for the purpose of

seeing with them--for He sees from every side; [for] He, as far as His

body is concerned, is brighter beyond compare than the visual spirit in

us and more brilliant than any light--compared to Him, the light of the

sun would be held as darkness.... He has the most beautiful form for

the sake of man, in order that the pure in heart shall be able to see

Him, that they shall rejoice on account of whatever they have endured.

For He has stamped man as it were with the greatest seal, with His

own Form, in order that he shall rule and be lord over all things. And

that all things shall serve him. For this reason, he who having judged

that He is the All and man His image--He being invisible and His

image, man, visible(5)--will honor the image, which is man.

This passage makes a distinction between form and function. Body need not entail bodily use and function. What then is the purpose of the body? The answer is given in aesthetic terms. God has a body for the sake of beauty, so that he may be perceived by the pure in heart. This vision is not a mental impingement on the mind of those perceiving God, but is conceived as the actual divine body. The only other fact known about this body is its effulgence. Compared to this body the light of the sun would be considered dark. Finally, the human being is said to be created in this image.

The homily of Pseudo-Clementine makes us aware of the more nuanced discussion about the divine body. As I shall demonstrate, the notions found in this passage not only enrich our discussion of rabbinic sources, but also constitute an interesting parallel to some rabbinic discussions. In this article, I shall not attempt a full exploration of the nature of the divine body, as expressed in rabbinic literature. Rather, I shall focus on the meaning of the creation of the human in God's image. From the nature of the image much can be learned about the divine form.

The Bodily Meaning of Image in Rabbinic Sources

If God has a body, then obviously the creation of man in God's image refers to man's physical form. Unless there is evidence to the contrary, this is the most obvious understanding. There is absolutely no objection in all of rabbinic literature to such an interpretation,(6) and therefore we may adopt it prima facie. This rabbinic reading of zelem ("image"; Gen 1:26) was noted by Morton Smith,(7) who followed Marmorstein's anthropomorphic theory.(8) Therefore, for Smith, the bodily aspect was one of several aspects in which the human is made in the image of God. Following my stronger anthropomorphic reading of the rabbis, I suggest that the bodily meaning is the only meaning of zelem in rabbinic literature. This suggestion is borne out in all tannaitic and amoraic sources.(9)

I would mention briefly some of the texts that reveal a bodily understanding of zelem. In Lev. R. 34.3(10) we are told of Hillel, who was on his way to the bathhouse.

His disciples asked him: "Rabbi, where are you going?" He said to

them: "to perform a commandment." They said to him: "and what then

is this commandment?"... He said to them: "To bathe in the (public)

bath." They said to him: "and is this a commandment?" He said to

them: "yes. If the man who is appointed to take care of the images of

kings, which (the gentiles) set up in their theaters and circuses, scours

them and rinses them, and they provide his livelihood, and not only

that, but he occupies an important place among government officials,

then we, who were created in the image

(zelem) and in the

likeness

demut) (of God)... a fortiori.

The bodily connotations of zelem and demut ("likeness," or "form"; see Gen 1:26; 5:1) here are obvious. They are the basis for giving religious value to taking care of the body by bathing it.(11) At this early stage of the discussion, we should already note that both terms found in Gen 1:26--image and likeness--are used in this passage. Both terms refer to the physical body, and no distinction is drawn between them. In this the rabbis seem to remain true to the biblical text, which also does not distinguish between the terms. This feature is typical of all rabbinic exegesis of this text, which employs the terms interchangeably, without attempting to differentiate image from likeness.(12)

In Avot de-Rabbi Natan,(13) we find a list of people who were born circumcised. The first to be so born was Adam, and the proof text offered is that man was created in the image of God. This proof text would only work if the correspondence between man's body and the divine body is understood to be exact.(14)

In Mid. Tan. on Deut 21:23,(15) Rabbi Meir explains with the aid of the following parable the prohibition against leaving the executed criminal's body hung overnight:

(This is like) two brothers who were identical twins and lived in the

same city. One was made king, and the other became a bandit. The

king commanded, so they strung him up. Everyone who saw (the dead

body) said "the king has been hung up." So the king commanded and

they took him down. The similarity between the king and his brother is purely physical. Finally, we may refer to a rabbinic parable(16) that explains the prohibition of murder in terms borrowed from imperial Roman life. Whoever hurts, abuses, and kills a fellow human being is likened to someone who injures the statue of the emperor. Underlying this parable is the notion of physical resemblance. Just as the statue resembles the king physically, so a human's physical being resembles God's.(17)

The Body and Rabbinic Anthropology

The rabbinic understanding of a human's physical form as the image of God may seem less shocking when we note one important aspect of rabbinic anthropology: the relation of soul and body. Since Philo, who identified the image of God with the soul or the rational aspect of the soul,(18) Western tradition has mostly identified the image of God with the soul or with a human's intellectual capacity. The Philonic understanding is fed by the philosophic distinction of spirit and matter. The divine self must be nonmaterial, and therefore only the soul may be said to be the image of God. Christian interpretation has largely followed the Philonic lead. In certain of the Eastern church fathers, however, we find an attempt to integrate the body as part of the understanding of image of God. Thus, for Cyril of Alexandria, the double nature of the human as soul and body reflects the unity between divine and human nature in Christ.(19) Nevertheless, the primary locus of the divine image is in the soul or the nous.

Rabbinic anthropology differs in this respect from Hellenistic and later Christian anthropology. The distinction between spirit and matter is not known in rabbinic literature. Consequently, the distinction between soul and body may be seen as a soft, rather than hard distinction. The rabbinic sources contain much talk of soul and body, as well as a recognition of their different qualities. No fundamental metaphysical opposition exists, however, between these two aspects. There may be an existential confrontation, but metaphysically soul and body form a whole, rather than a polarity. Crudely put, the soul is like the battery that operates an electronic gadget. It may be different and originally external to the gadget, but the difference is not one of essence. Nowhere in rabbinic literature is the soul regarded as divine. It may be of heavenly origin, and therefore

considered pure in its nature, but it is not divine. More significantly, the gadget and its power source ultimately belong together, rather than apart. Thus, the soul is the vitalizing agent, whose proper place is in the body, not out of it.

This understanding is reflected in rabbinic eschatology. The future life takes the form of resurrection of the dead, rather than the eternal life of the soul. As the classic parable of the lame and the blind, introduced in Leviticus Rabbah as a commentary on the verse "when a soul sins" (Lev 4:2), expresses it,

R. Ishmael taught: this may be compared to the case of a king who had

an orchard containing excellent early figs, and he placed there two

watchmen, one lame and the other blind. He said to them: "be careful

with these fine early figs." After some days the lame man said to the

blind one: "I see fine early figs in the orchard." Said the blind man to

him: "come let us eat them." "Am I then able to walk?" said the lame

man. "Can I then see?" retorted the blind man. The lame man got

astride the blind man, and thus they ate the early figs and sat down

again each in his place. After some days the king came into that

vineyard, and said to them: "where are the fine early figs?," the blind man

replied: "my lord the king, can I then see?" The lame man replied:

"my lord the king, can I then walk?" What did the king, who was a

man of insight do with them? He placed the lame man astride the blind

man, and they began to move about. Said the king to them: "Thus have

you done, and eaten the early figs." Even so will the Holy One blessed

be He, in the time to come say to the soul: "why hast thou sinned

before me?" and the soul will answer: "O Master of the universe, it is

not I that sinned, but the body it is that sinned. Why, since leaving it, I

am like a clean bird flying through the air. As for me, how have I

sinned?" God will also say to the body: "why hast thou sinned before

me?" and the body will reply: "O, Master of the universe, not I have

sinned, the soul it is that has sinned. Why, since it left me, I am cast

about like a stone thrown upon the ground. Have I then sinned before

thee?" What will the Holy One, blessed be He, do to them? He will

bring the soul and force it into the body, and judge both as one. (Lev.

R. 4.5)

The body and soul operate as one unit, like the seeing lame who sits on the shoulders of the walking blind. The disembodied soul is like a bird flying in the air; the soulless body is a corpse. They belong together and therefore will be put back together in the future. The thousand years of midrashic activity indicate a growing prominence in the place of the soul in rabbinic anthropology.(20) The final severance of soul and body, however, occurs only when Hellenistic anthropology enters Judaism through the philosophical masters of the Middle Ages.(21) From a perspective that sees body and soul united, the thought that the body is the image of God seems far less problematic.(22)

The Image as Body of Light

Differences in quality can be expressed not only through the distinction of body and soul, but also through the use of "body language." The kabalistic understanding sees zelem as the astral body.(23) This astral body is said to grow with a person, survive after his death, and be instrumental in the process of spiritual growth. This kabalistic understanding of zelem may be seen as a development of the bodily understanding of zelem in rabbinic literature. In rabbinic literature itself we do not have a clear notion of an astral body. In the rabbinic period, however, speaking of the resurrection of the dead, Paul draws a distinction between the physical body in which we live at present and the spiritual body which will be resurrected.(24) We thus have notions of other bodies, or other possible bodily forms, both in the literature paralleling rabbinic literature and in the literature that developed from rabbinic literature. Are such notions reflected in rabbinic literature itself? Is "body language" employed only in its crudest form, or can a qualitative difference be drawn between different aspects of bodily existence and thus between different aspects of zelem?

We may consult the rabbinic descriptions of the body of Adam to solve our question. We find the following description of Adam's body:

Resch Lakish in the name of R. Simon ben Menasseya said: "the apple

of Adam's heel outshone the globe of the sun; how much more so the

brightness of his face. Nor need you wonder. In the ordinary way, if a

person makes servants, one for himself and one for his household,

whose will he make more beautiful? Not his own? Similarly, Adam

was created for the service of the Holy One, blessed be He, and the

globe of the sun for the service of mankind." (Lev. R. 20.2)

The body of Adam is more radiant than the sun. We have already noted the comparison to the solar effulgence in the homily of Pseudo-Clementine. Here it is the body of the created Adam, not the body of God, that outshines the sun. In other words, I would suggest that Adam is envisioned as possessing a body of light. This of course would shed new light on the physical understanding of zelem. One of the consequences of Adam's sin was the diminishing of his luminosity, along with the diminishing of his cosmic proportions.(25) If the cosmic proportions of Adam are regarded as a description of this body of light, this difficult mythologumenon takes on new meaning as well.(26)

Another famous source that touches upon the luminous aspect of Adam's existence is Rabbi Meir's gloss on the text in Gen 3:21: God made Adam and Eve

("garments of skin"), which is rendered by Rabbi Meir as

("garments of light"). These garments of light would be suitable for a body of light. It would thus seem that, according to Rabbi Meir, Adam had not lost his luminous quality as a result of the sin, even though some adaptation to sin had to take place in this luminous body. Alternatively, one might suggest that these garments are not made of light, but rather veil the light which had to be dimmed as a result of the sin. Thus, Adam comes into a physical body.(27) In any event, the original luminosity of Adam's body is at the base of Rabbi Meir's gloss.

This argument for the luminosity of the original zelem, based on the traditions concerning Adam, calls for a brief methodological reflection. In trying to refine our understanding of the bodily meaning of zelem, it is legitimate to turn to the legends describing the creation of Adam. It is he who was created in this zelem. We must ask, however, whether the connection between such descriptions and the concept of zelem is one that we supply, or whether the rabbinic sources connect these descriptions of Adam to his being a zelem of God. This doubt exists even concerning the rabbinic legends and myths appended to the verse, "Let us make man in our own image."(28) Are they merely commenting on the creation of humans, or do they uncover the meaning of the making of the human specifically in the image of God? Analyzing the Adam legend thus leaves us at an impasse. To get out of it we need to find texts--even younger rabbinic texts--that explicitly tie the notion of zelem to light-related terms. Several rabbinic texts refer to both zelem and light. These texts can help to substantiate our claim that the understanding of zelem as a body of light is possible within the rabbinic context. Most striking is the following passage from the Babylonian Talmud:

R. Bana'ah used to mark out caves [where there were dead bodies].

When he came to the cave of Abraham, he found Eliezer the servant of

Abraham standing at the entrance. He said to him: "what is Abraham

doing?" He replied: "he is sleeping in the arms of Sarah, and she is

looking fondly at his head." He said: "go and tell him that Bana'ah is

standing at the entrance." Said Abraham to him: "let him enter, it is

well known that there is no passion in this world." So he went in, sur-

veyed the cave, and came out again. When he came to the cave of Adam,

a voice came forth from heaven saying: "thou hast beholden the like-

ness of my likeness, my likeness itself thou mayest not behold." "But,"

he said, "I want to mark out the cave."--"The measurement of the inner

one is the same as that of the outer one" [came the answer].... R.

Bana'ah said: "I discerned his two heels, and they were like two orbs of

the sun." Compared with Sarah all other people are like a monkey to a

human being, and compared with Adam Eve was like a monkey to a

human being, and compared with the Shechinah Adam was like a mon-

key to a human being. The beauty of R. Kahana was a reflection of the

beauty of R. Abbahu, the beauty of R. Abbahu was a reflection of the

beauty of our father Jacob, and the beauty of Jacob was a reflection of

the beauty of Adam. (b. B. Batra 58a)

What I find interesting in this sugiya are not only the specific traditions that it incorporates, but also the common thread connecting these sources into a continuous sequence. We once more encounter a glimpse of Adam's brilliance. We are told of his heel because it is all that R. Bana'ah glimpsed. It is interesting that unlike the tradition in Genesis Rabbah, Adam's body has not lost its luminescence. This may agree with Rabbi Meir's gloss. Indeed, the loss of Adamic qualities is not viewed in this passage as an outcome of sin, but as an almost natural devolutionary process. The devolutionary process brings about a growing similarity to apes.(29)

The discussion of brightness leads to a discussion of beauty. Beauty as such may be independent of luminosity. There are traditions in early Jewish mysticism that emphasize beauty as a special feature of the encounter with the divine.(30) The talmudic discussion of beauty need not therefore be identified with the mention of radiance.(31) The sugiya, however, moves comfortably between radiance and beauty, which would seem to suggest that beauty is a function of luminosity. The form of the light may be the subject of aesthetic admiration. Thus, light and the form it takes may be two interdependent aspects of the special image--human and divine. The association of beauty and luminosity is borne out by Pseudo-Clementine's homily. Further support for such an association may be found also within rabbinic literature. Ecclesiastes Rabbah's reference to Adam, "His beauty made his face shine,"(32) is further testimony to the relation of beauty to luminescence.(33)

Furthermore, it should be noted that the afterlife is here conceived as an extension of bodily life, and even of bodily relations, but the flaw usually associated with bodily existence is lacking, namely, "there is no passion in this world." Thus, bodily form testifies neither to bodily functon nor to the quality of bodily existence. Abraham and Sarah's embrace has a different quality than a physical embrace. Finally, the relation of the human form and the divine form is spelled out: Adam's form--ostensibly, his beauty and radiance--is a pale reflection of the divine beauty and radiance.

It is interesting to note that the image is not a replica of the original. This is by no means the only rabbinic outlook. We are told, for example, that "when the Holy One, blessed be He, created Adam, the ministering angels mistook him, and wished to exclaim 'Holy' before him."(34) This mistake is based on the identification of the form of the source with that of the image. God places sleep upon Adam in order to distinguish his image from the divine image.(35) Adam is distinguished from God not by form,(36) but by the different quality of life attached to the same form; in other words, God and Adam are distinguished not by body, but by bodily function.(37) Unlike such a description, the passage from b. Baba Batra assumes a fundamental dissimilarity between source and image. Adam is a monkey compared with the form of the divine. The move away from fullness of light and beauty is a gradual and gradated move away from the source, rather than a sudden break or fall.(38)

The luminescent quality of zelem is the basis for comparison between Moses and Adam in the following midrashic dialogue.

Adam said to Moses: I am greater than you because I have been cre-

ated in the image of God. Whence this? For it is said: "and God

created man in his own image." Moses replied to him: I am far supe-

rior to you, for the honor which was given to you has been taken away

from you, as it is said: "but man (Adam) abideth not in honor," but as

for me, the radiant countenance which God gave me still remains with

me. Whence? For it is said: "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force

abated." (Deut. R. 11.3)

Moses is again Adam's luminous counterpart(39) in the following passage from Midrash Tadshe 4:

In the likeness of the creation of the world the Holy One blessed be

He performed miracles for Israel when they came out of Egypt.... In

the beginning: "and God created man in his image," and in the desert:

"and Moshe knew not that the skin of his face shone."(40)

It should be noted that this correspondence between Adam and Moses does not amount to a rectification of the Adamic sin. Nor are we told that the lost zelem has been restored. Sinai does not restore the lost zelem.(41) Individuals may share in the divine light, but this does not change the fact that the zelem has been lost.

The Loss of the Image

Various midrashim regard different points in history as the point when the zelem was lost.(42) The loss of Adam's splendor was seen above as an outcome of his sin. Another tradition regards the generation of Enosh as the turning point in the history of the image.

And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name

Enosh. Abba Cohen Bardela was asked: [why does scripture enumer-

ate! Adam, Seth, Enosh and then become silent? Hitherto they were

created in the likeness and image [of God], he replied, but from then

onwards centaurs were created.

Four things changed in the days of Enosh: the mountains became

[barren] rocks, the dead began to feel [the worms], men's faces became

apelike, and they became vulnerable to demons. Said R. Isaac: They

were themselves responsible for becoming vulnerable to demons, [for

they argued!: What is the difference whether one prostrates himself

before an image or prostrates himself before man? Hence, then man

became degraded to call upon the name of the Lord. (Gen. R. 23.6)

This midrash is based on the fact that only concerning two generations is the creation in zelem and demut mentioned. Nowhere else in biblical history do these terms recur. The conclusion drawn is that in the times of Enosh the divine image was lost. We encounter here again the transition from divine from to apelike form--a kind of reverse Darwinism. According to this passage, this transition may be taken to mean that the physical form itself underwent change, rather than that the physical vehicle became the primary means of human expression. The loss of zelem in this passage, however, is also expressed through the image of centaurs. As I understand it, both images express a form that is half-human and half-animal. The loss of the divine form implies the taking on of an animal, or semianimal form. This half-animal existence also makes humans susceptible to the influence of another class of beings that obviously affect only the lower-natured humans, namely, the demons.

According to the last passage, human susceptibility to demonic influence is a universal consequence of the sins of a particular generation. In contrast, from the following passage it seems that through this divine image, humans even now can be protected from demonic influence. The loss or retention of the image is seen here from the personal perspective.

God said to Israel: if you will keep the words of the law, I will guard

you from the demons. R. Abba b. Ze'ria said: there is not a beth roba

[a measurement of land] in the universe where there are not to be

found ever so many thousands of demons, every one of whom has a

mask over his face to prevent him looking at man and injuring him.

And when man's sins warrant it, he removes his mask, and turns his

gaze on him and injures him. Whence this? For it is said: "he hath

redeemed my soul in peace so that none came night to me." When is

this? "For there were many that were with me" (Ps 55:19). And who

are they? The angels who guard man. R. Joshua b. Levi said: a proces-

sion [of angels] pass before man and the heralds proclaim before him

saying: make room for the image of God. See how many watchmen

guard you. When is this the case? When you observe the words of the

Torah. (Deut. R. 4.4)

It is interesting that humanity's dominion over nature, as related to the image of God in Gen 1:26, finds no echo in rabbinic teaching. The closest statement we find relates to the protective aspect of the zelem. The zelem protects the human from demons, and in other sources, from the animals as well.(43) Nowhere is it the basis for dominion over the animal kingdom. The protection of humans from the demons is related to their being the image of God. As image of God, they receive angelic protection. When they sin, it seems that they are no longer in possession of the divine image or its concomitant angelic escort.

One further notion warrants consideration, namely, the mask worn by the demons. This mask is supposed to protect humans, and its removal enables the demons to harm them. As a result of the previous discussion, a new possibility emerges for understanding this mask. It is as images of God that humans are protected from the demons. The image of God is radiant. The demons who are unable to approach this radiance must veil their faces. Only when humans sin, and their radiance diminishes, can demons approach humans and harm them.(44) This passage allows us to reflect upon the nonphysical nature of the divine image. The image is clearly visible. The heralds declare its coming. This passage, however, does not record a physical transformation, as in the Genesis Rabbah passages. The transformation is discernible to angelic and demonic eyes, but not necessarily to human eyes. The zelem form seems to be something other than the physical form.

The loss of the divine image may also be reflected in a liturgical formula that has been preserved in the Cairo Genizah. We find there the following benediction:

Blessed art thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has created

the first Adam in his likeness and his image. Deliver my soul, O Lord,

from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue (Ps 120:2). So may will and

compassion be before you, the Lord, our God and God of our fathers,

that you rebuild your city in our days, and establish your temple in our

years, and you shall comfort us in it, and rejoice us in its building

soon, as you have spoken and promised us, blessed art thou God, the

builder of Jerusalem with compassion, Amen.(45)

This unique version of the "builder of Jerusalem" benediction commences with reference to the zelem of the first Adam. It then continues with a quotation from Psalm 120, asking God to save the speaker from lying lips, and proceeds to a more common request for the rebuilding of the temple and Jerusalem. We can attempt to interpret this text as a theologically coherent unit. I submit that the specific reference to the image of the first Adam implies the understanding that this image was lost.(46) The loss of the image seems to be tied to false speech.(47) The loss of the divine image is a result of original sin. The juxtaposition of the lost image to the destroyed temple would then imply that all subsequent sins and disasters reflect, or are the consequence of, the original sin that led to the loss of the divine image.

Image of God: The Religious Applications

Up to this point we have considered midrashic sources that imply or state that the divine image was lost. This picture must be offset against those rabbinic sources that make didactic and moralistic use of the concept of the image of God. When Rabbi Akiva declares that man is beloved, for he was created in the image of God (m. ?? 3.14), the possibility of loss of the divine image does not seem to figure in his statement. The same holds true for sources that emphasize the gravity of hurting, offending, or killing a fellow human being who was created in the image of God.(48) What kind of relationship can be established between these two types of attitudes to the divine image? Some scholars have opted for the one type and thus emphasized the lost zelem.(49) Others have insisted on the universal validity of the image.(50) How are these two understandings to be reconciled?

Morton Smith has suggested that there are various components of the divine image.(51) According to such an understanding, it would be possible for some components to be lost, while others would be retained. Smith's understanding, however, is based on the assumption that the bodily understanding is only one aspect of the image of God.(52) The multiplicity of aspects of zelem in turn rests upon Marmorstein's thesis that there existed an antianthropomorphic rabbinic school. We cannot accept these presuppositions and cannot, therefore, follow Smith's suggestion. Another course would be to point to the different functions these various texts fulfill. The didactic texts see the image as given to humanity and therefore as still present, while the more mythological midrashic discussions refer to the person of Adam. Yet a functional distinction merely sidesteps the issue of whether the zelem was lost; it does not directly address it.

A chronological distinction would be more productive. The sources that utilize the concept of image for didactic purposes are from the tannaitic period,(53) and those that refer to the loss of the image are from the amoraic period. This distinction would, of course, open our texts to the historical considerations of antignostic polemics, which are beyond our present scope.(54) It seems to me, however, that such a division is too sharp. The posttannaitic sources continue to quote the didactic statements and do not mitigate them in light of the loss of zelem.(55)

Part of the problem stems from the nature of the material under discussion. The overall number of sources employing the concepts of zelem and demut within the rabbinic corpus is not large. Most of the relevant sources are referred to in the present article itself. Many of these sources are cited only once in all of rabbinic literature. The relatively small body of statements under discussion can be seen as testimony to the relatively minor role the concept plays in all of rabbinic thinking. In understanding the individual pericope's use of zelem we are on fairly safe ground, because the contextual and philogical analyses help determine its meaning. At this point in our discussion, however, we are searching for a way in which seemingly contradictory statements can be reconciled when no conscious attempt at reconciliation is made by the sources themselves. We ask, therefore, not about the meaning of a passage, but about the implied logic of the literature as a whole, assuming that the conflicting notions were known at least to the editors of this literature, if not to some of those who actually submitted the traditions. If we reject the chronological distinction that stems from the division of this literature to individual corpora, we must construct a theoretical explanation, as Smith did, for example, in suggesting that the image has various components. Any such suggestion is clearly hypothetical. A leap into the realm of the educated hypothesis is required if we wish to make sense of the material as a whole.

Now that I have established both the need for offering a theoretical explanation of the material and the conjectural nature of any proposition one may make, I shall proceed to offer an understanding that would enable us to speak simultaneously of the loss and the retention of zelem. I do not suggest that this understanding is implied in any individual text, because each text emphasizes a particular aspect of zelem, according to its particular agenda. It is possible, however, to propose a model that would account for rabbinic literature's ability to sustain seemingly conflicting understandings of zelem. This model finds its legitimation in our previous discussion of the nature of zelem. As we have seen, Adam's zelem is his luminous body. In other sources, such as the story of Hillel washing his body, the zelem referred to the physical body. Zelem can thus refer to various levels, or aspects, all of which bear a resemblance to the physical body. I would propose that these various levels, or various bodies, reflect one another. The physical body is a reflection of the body of light. This reflection may translate itself down to the details of circumcision. The kind of graded devolutionary process that we encountered above may be a model for two ways of talking about zelem. The zelem in its original form may be lost, but the dimmer reflection of this form is extant in the physical body, which may still be spoken of as zelem.(56)

When we analyze the use of zelem in rabbinic literature, the relatively minor role this concept plays is striking. It figures in relatively few statements,(57) and the lessons adduced from it are rather limited. Hillel uses the concept to justify bathing the body, and Gen 9:6 engenders several statements in which murder is seen as affecting the divine image. Other than this, no religious action, particularly of a positive nature

is based on this concept. It is notable that the didactic use of zelem refers to the other as image.(58) There is no reference to the self, or to onself, as image. This may account for the fact that nowhere is the idea of imitatio dei related to the image of God.(59) The image of God would be the natural background for such a demand, especially when we consider that the anthropomorphic God himself observes the commandments.(60) The physical understanding of zelem could thus have yielded far richer uses than those found in the literature.(61) One possible explanation for this situation is that zelem plays a minor role in the Bible itself. Aside from several occurrences in the opening chapters of Genesis, the idea is nowhere echoed in the entire Bible. Rabbinic usage, however, should be regarded as reflecting the rabbis' choices and interests; it need not merely echo biblical usage. One possible explanation for the relatively minor role of zelem is that other categories play such a vital role that there is little need for zelem. It is intersting to note that in several instances when zelem is used, the Torah also appears, as something of greater value.(62) The Torah is the greater source of value and signification, and therefore there may be less need for zelem. I believe there is a deeper issue, however, that does not find explicit mention in the rabbinic sources we have analyzed, but which nevertheless severely affects their use of zelem. The creation of the human in the image of God would refer to all humankind. The physical resemblance of all human beings would be the basis for their resemblance to the divine image. In his 1960 work, Imago Dei,(63) Jacob Jervell suggested that the rabbis limited zelem to the Israelites who had received the Torah at Sinai. Thus, Sinai defines the image of God. Jervell's formulation rightly angered Smith, who devoted an article to refuting Jervell's thesis.(64) Jervell's thesis is a systematic, delimited German Heilsgeschichte inappropriately projected onto rabbinic sources. Nevertheless, while Jervell may have missed the mark in reading the sources, he has touched upon a point that is significant for understanding the rabbinic subconscious. Even if formally no rabbi would define zelem as pertaining to Israelites only, rabbinic theology on the whole undermines the religious ideals of the great pre-Abrahamic heroes and tones down the religious value that might be ascribed to Gentiles. Of course, as with any overview, this point is also oversimplified, but I would suggest that it is precisely its universal potential that leads to the limited use of zelem in rabbinic literature and prevents its utilization on a wider scope. The source that sees the murder of an Israelite as damaging the image of God testifies to such a tendency.(65) We may even consider the possibility that the motif describing the loss of zelem was influenced by similar considerations.(66) In any event, given the centricity of the Torah in rabbinic religion, the loss of the divine image does not seem to be regarded as a major disaster, nor does it shape rabbinic religious practice or outlook.

The Image and the Great Body

To what has just been said there is, however, one great exception. In Sifra on Leviticus 19 we find the following controversy between Ben Azzai and Rabbi Akiva concerning the great principle from which all the precepts of the Torah may be derived:(67)

"And you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev 19:17). Rabbi

Akiva said: this is the great principle of the Torah. Ben Azzai said:

"this is the book of the generations of Adam, when God created man

he made him in the likeness of God" (Gen 5:1) is an even greater

principle.(68)

In my understanding, Rabbi Akiva's great principle could be limited to Israelites. Ben Azzai's proof text is more universal, and it is noteworthy that Ben Azzai would here be using the image of God as a basis for proper religious behavior in the widest sense. This is the most expanisve use of this concept in all of rabbinic literature. We can get a better idea of Ben Azzai's understanding of this divine image by referring to another of his statements.(69)

R. Akiva says: whoever spills blood, such a one annuls the [divine]

likeness, since it says: "he who shed the blood of man by man his

blood will be shed" (Gen 9:6). Ben Azzai says: whoever does not

engage in reproductive sexual relations such a one sheds blood and

annuls the [divine] likeness, since it says: "for in the image of God he

made man," and it says: "and you be fruitful and multiply." (t. Yebamot

8.7)(70)

Both rabbis discuss the effects of human action on the divine image and both express the effect in terms of diminishing or annulling this image. Rabbi Akiva teaches about the effects of murder. It is noteworthy that Ben Azzai refers not only to the effect of harmful behavior, but also to the effects of abstention from fulfilling a commandment. This would accord with the former passage in which the creation in the divine image is the great principle. The second passage may clarify our understanding of the divine demut. In what way does one who murders or abstains from procreation affect the divine image? Two understandings are possible.(71) One is that all of humanity constitutes the great divine body of manifestation.(72) Therefore, harming humanity is harming the body of God. Diminishing humanity's potential size diminshes the dimensions of the body of God. The two proof texts that refer to humans being in the image, or in the likeness, could be taken to mean that humans are in them and a part of them.(73) Being a part of the body of God could obviously be the great religious principle.(74)

Another possible interpretation would regard the image mentioned in both passages as the great body of Adam, which contains in it all the future generations. Concerning the creation of Adam we read:

R. Tanhuma in R. Banayah's name and R. Berekiah in R. Eleazer's

name said: he created him golem ("an embryo"),(75) and he lay stretch-

ing from one end of the world to the other.... R. Judah b. R. Simon

said: while Adam lay golem before him at whose decree the world

came into existence, he showed him every generation and its sages,

every generation and its judges, scribes, interpreters, and leaders. (Gen.

R. 24.2)

The later midrash Exodus Rabbah is explicit about the relation of these generations to this cosmic form of Adam. The future generations are all parts of Adam's body.(76) The body of Adam is actually the great plan for the unfolding of humanity.(77) Whoever affects the life of another affects the historic unfolding of the great Adamic demut. Such reading could also serve as the basis for moral behavior. The understanding that all humans are part of one body has obvious consequences on their behaviro.(78) This notion of the unfolding of history as the incarnation of all parts of the Adamic body finds expression in the same talmudic sugiyah that introduces Ben Azzai's second statement.

R. Assi stated: the son of David will not come before all the souls in

guf are disposed of, since it is said, for the spirit that enwrappeth itself

is from Me and the souls which I have made. (Yebamot 63b)

This guf, (literally, "body") may well be the great body of humanity, seen either as the body of manifestation of God or as the incarnating body of the primordial Adam. This body forms a plan. Only as the plan unfolds, through the furtherance of life, can history take its course, until the final designated end, namely, the coming of the Messiah.

In view of this last suggestion, I wish to turn now to some New Testament texts. The last few texts we analyzed have already been discussed in relation to New Testament, and in particular Pauline theology. These texts have been explored primarily in the context of tracing the roots of Pauline thought, and in particular the concept of body of Christ.(79) Rabbinic Adam myths have served as one theoretical source for the concept of body of Christ.(80) The physical understanding of image of God in rabbinic literature may be relevant to the development of the concept of body of Christ when we realize that Christ is both image and body.(81) The hymn found in Col 1:15--17 describes Jesus thus,

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For

in him all things were created.... He is before all things, and in him

all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church.

In light of our discussion, we may read the theologoumenon of this passage as expressing ideas similar to those found in the rabbinic sources. Jesus as image is also Jesus as body. As first-born Jesus restores the original zelem.(82) This is the great body of all believers, and as image of God it is open to all believers. The concept of image of God allows Paul to address Gentile as well as Jew,(83) for this image is not a natural body, but a body of the elect, that is, the church. It should be noted that in the Exodus Rabbah passage to which we referred, it is the righteous who constitute Adam's body.

It is up to New Testament scholarship to assess whether the rabbinic identification of image and body is of any significance for the development of New Testament ideas. More significant for our purposes is the use of the Pauline texts as background against which a particular feature of the rabbinic texts may be highlighted. What distinguishes the New Testament passages about the body of Christ from the rabbinic references to zelem is not only the subject of the body, but also the nature of the processes related to this body. As I have learned from Moshe Idel, talk of body can be both static and dynamic.(84) A body may be viewed from a static point of view, like the Shi[iota]ur Qomah body that has set and constant dimensions. Alternatively, a body may be viewed dynamically, like the references to the diminishing of the demut. It is striking that all dynamic processes concerning zelem are in the direction of loss, hurt, diminution, and waning. The zelem is natural to creation, and we only find mention of its loss. It is not viewed as spiritual achievement. We find no reference to regaining the lost zelem. Sinai in no way rectifies the loss of zelem. The didactic uses of zelem refer only to its potential diminishing. Against this negative dynamic movement, it is interesting to note that the New Testament use of the same metaphor has positive aspects.(85) The Colossians, states the writer of the epistle, "have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge, after the image of its creator" (Col 3:10). The all-encompassing dimensions of Christ's body are mentioned, "The fullness of him who fills all in all" (Eph 1:23). Yet, positive growth is possible for this body: "Holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God" (Col 2:19). "We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love" (Eph 4:15--16).

Compared with this usage, the exclusive negative dynamism of the rabbinic sources is obvious. In later stages of Jewish thought, the dynamic effects of human action upon the divine body are both positive and negative. In the rabbinic sources, dynamic movements in the present time are only negative. The positive reinstatement of zelem can only come at the point in time when the divine or macroanthropic body has reached its fulfillment. Rabbinic speculation about the divine image leaves us in abeyance, waiting for the coming of the son of David.(86)

Conclusion

The examination of rabbinic sources concerning the concept of the image of God corroborates our understanding of the anthropomorphic nature of the rabbinic God. The physical and bodily understanding of the image of God is nowhere refuted and emerges as the only rabbinic understanding of image of God. An examination of rabbinic myths regarding the creation of Adam, however, reveals that the meaning of body is not necessarily the physical body with which we are acquainted. Adam's body is a body of light. Thus, the divine form would also be conceived of in anthropomorphic, although not necessarily corporeal(87) or physical terms. The rabbinic description of the loss of the divine image is best understood in reference to such a luminescent body. Because of the very particular meaning that the image of God receives in rabbinic literature, this concept does not lend itself easily to moral or didactic uses. This is one possible reason why the concept is not widely elaborated in rabbinic literature and cannot be seen as a paramount feature of rabbinic anthropology or moral teaching. To this reason we should add, however, the fact that the concept of image of God addresses all of humanity, in potential. Rabbinic theology is more anxious to highlight the religious values unique to the Torah and Israel, and thus it seems to employ the concept of image of God less frequently.

(1)Arthur Marmorstein, The Old Rabbinic Doctrine of God, vol. 2: Essays in Anthropomorphism (London: Oxford, 1937).

(2)A quite different situation exists in early Christian theology; see, however, David Paulsen, "Early Christian Belief in a Corporeal Deity: Origen and Augustine as Reluctant Witnesses," HTR 83 (1990) 105--16.

(3)Abraham J. Heschel (Theology of Ancient Judaism [2 vols.; London/New York: Soncino, 1965] 2.22 [Hebrew]) has already explained the significance of fire as a descriptive category of the divine and all that is associated with it, such as the Torah. From his discussion, it seems that Heschel is aware of the possibility that fire may constitute a solution to the problem of anthropomorphism. The present discussion will concentrate on the body of God, as reflected in its image--the human body. Much room is left thereby for extensive discussion of the components and qualities of the divine body itself.

(4)Shlomo Pines, "Points of Similarity between the Exposition of the Doctrine of the Sefirot in the Sefer Yezira and a Text of the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies: The Implications of this Resemblance," Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities 7 (1989) 64. The sources discussed by Pines are also relevant for our present discussion concerning the type of body ascribed to God in Sefer Yezirah.

(5)Pines (ibid., 103) considers this sentence a later gloss, for it contradicts the possibility of seeing the divine form, which is mentioned above. See, however, Col 1:15. "Invisible" may refer to the ordinary state, and not to the exceptional condition that the pure-hearted ones attain.

(6)Alexander Altmann has based his reading of the rabbinic understanding of zelem on targumic fine points, while ignoring the positive evidence found in the talmudic and midrashic literature. See Alexander Altmann, "Homo Imago Dei in Jewish and Christian Theology," JR 48 (1968) 235--39.

(7)Morton Smith, "The Image of God: Notes on the Hellenization of Judaism with Especial Reference to Goodenough's Work on Jewish Symbols," BJRL 40 (1958) 473--512. See further Morton Smith, "On the Shape of God and the Humanity of Gentiles," in Jacob Neusner, ed., Religions in Antiquity (Leiden: Brill, 1970) 315--26. In the former article, Smith concentrated on the human being--and not on the body--as the image of God. Only in reaction to Jacbo Jervell's denial of any form to the human image of God (see below n. 41) did Smith emphasize the bodily as one aspect of zelem.

(8)I believe this is why Smith, in his earlier article ("The Image of God"), believed that those who understood zelem in this manner were borrowing ideas from the cult of the emperor. In this article, the bodily meaning of zelem was not fully seen. This enabled Smith to draw parallels with the emperor cult. Once the theological underpinnings of this use are recognized, the force of the parallel wanes.

(9)All tannaitic and amoraic sources referring to zelem have been analyzed in the context of the present study. One should admit, however, that in the Tanhuma literature we find several paraphrases that expand the meaning of zelem to include eternal life (Tanhuma [Buber ed.]. Shelah 2; compare Wis 2:23), divine glory (Tanhuma. Pekudei 2), and righteous behavior (Tanhuma. Bereshit 7). It is important to note that these expansions occur only within this very specific, and younger, set of texts. Moreover, it seems to me that these expansions do not override the older understanding of zelem as body, but rather expand it and are derived from it. A relevant example of such an expansion is found in Pesikta Rabati addition A to section A. Eternal life is here understood as a function of the divine light, emanating from the divine form. This accords with the understanding of zelem I shall offer below. Divine glory and eternal life can be the consequence of the fullness of zelem in its physical understanding. The notion of righteousness, however, seems to be secondary, and merely appended to the physical resemblance as a basis for moral demand. It should be noted that the Tanhuma Midrashim also expand the meaning and usage of the term "eikonin" (a Greek loan word sometimes used as a substitute for zelem). See Tanhuma (Buber ed.). Vayikra' 15; Bamidbar 10; and Tanhuma. Hayei Sara 3.

(10)The translation of this and the following texts are from Smith, "On the Shape of God," 319--20.

(11)See also t. Ber. 4.1, and compare b. Sabbat 50b.

(12)Christian exegesis differs greatly from classical Jewish exegesis on this point. The distinction between image and likeness is one of the fundamental features of the Christian interpretations of Gen 1:26. See Lars Thunberg, "The Human Person as Image of God, Eastern Christianity," in Bernard McGinn, ed., Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century (World Spirituality 16; New York: Crossroad, 1985) 297--99. It is only under the philosophical influences of the Middle Ages that the Jewish interpretation of this verse did resort to the distinction between image and likeness, as expressing the distinction between body and soul. See below n. 21. In conversation, Moshe Idel has pointed out that the various processes of diminution of the human body are

all expressed in terms of demut rather than zelem. See t. Yebamot 8.7 (below p. 191), where the Hebrew refers to demut rather than zelem. See also the rabbinic parable in Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishma' et. Bahodesh 8. It seems to me, nevertheless, that while this may indeed be an example of a particular linguistic usage, it does not reflect any significant distinction between zelem and demut. The point is best illustrated in the Tosefta's proof text for diminishing the demut, where man was created in the zelem of God.

(13)Solomon Schechter, ed., Aboth de-Rabbi Nathan (1887; reprinted Hildesheim/New York: Olms, 1979) (A) 2 (p.12).

(14)See, however, the attempt in this passage to limit this image to the image fit for the human and to remove the implications concerning the divine body, in Hupat Eliyahu, in Judah David Eisenstein, Ozar Midrashim (New York: n.p., 1928) 178. See also Sefer Yezira 1.2. Concerning the divine image and circumcision, see also the Genizah benediction, Simha Asaf, "From the Palestinian Prayer Order," in Yitzhak Baer et al., eds., The Dinaburg Festschrift (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1949) 121 [Hebrew]; and compare Louis Ginzberg's comments, A Commentary on the Palestinian Talmud (4 vols.; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1941) 3. 230 [Hebrew].

(15)See David Zvi Hoffman, Midrash Tana'im (Berlin: n.p., 1908) 132.

(16)Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishma'el. Bahodesh 8.

(17)See also b. 'Aborda Zar. 43b, where making an image of a human face is forbidden on the grounds that it is making an image of the divine.

(18)Harry Austryn Wolfson, Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (2 vols.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1947) 1. 390.

(19)For the Christian understanding of the creation of the human in the image of God, see Thunberg, "The Human Person as Image of God," 291--312, esp. 295. See also Paulsen, "Early Christian Belief in a Corporeal Deity," 110, 116.

(20)See the parable introduced immediately after this parable in Leviticus Rabbah. See also the discussion of Ephraim E. Urbach, The Sages (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1975) 241--52. It is possible that a greater polarization of body and soul also led to a reinterpretation of the image of God in some of the later midrashim. See above n. 9.

(21)See Mid. Hag. on Gen. 1:26 where the two terms, "image" and "likeness," correspond to soul and body. This post-Maimonidean midrashic compilation is the earliest midrashic reference to the soul as image. I cannot follow Smith's reading ("On the Shape of God," 318) of Pesikta Rabbati 21.

(22)The story about Hillel's bathing his body as the image of God is followed by a story about Hillel regarding his mealtime as a time in which he, as body, hosts a guest--the soul. The juxtaposition of these stories supports our claim that the body-soul relationship does not threaten the physical understanding of zelem.

(23)Gershom Scholem, Elements of the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1976) 358--80 [Hebrew].

(24)1 Cor 15:35--51.

(25)Gen. R. 12.6.

(26)We lack a clear methodology for tying together different rabbinic dicta. Thus, we can only point to the possible connection between the cosmic dimensions of this body of light, which extends from one end of the world to the other, and the ability of Adam (or, possibly, humans in general) to see from one end of the world to the other by means of the special light that prevailed during the six days of creation (b. Hag. 12a). If we note the transition, bordering on confusion, between the light of the six days of creation and the light emanating from Adam's body, as found in Gen. R. 12.6, we recognize that we may have before us a network of myths that form a coherent whole when read together. Our recognition of the luminous aspect of Adam's being may constitute an important clue to uncovering and bringing together terminological, however, we are in danger of projecting latter-day understandings onto the rabbinic sources. In any event, these possible connections would account for the ways in which later generations might have put the disparate rabbinic statements into a coherent whole.

(27)See Adam and Eve 20.2 (OTP 2. 281). The nakedness, referred to in Gen. 3:7, reflects the loss of glory in which Adam and Eve were clothed. Glory may here be identical with the image of God, referred to in Adam and Eve 10 (OTP 2. 273).

(28)Gen 1:26. See Gen. R. 8. It should be noted that Adam's luminosity is not one of the themes elaborated by this section of midrash.

(29)The association of loss of luminescence with similarity to animals is also found in the Armenian text "The Words of Adam to Seth," in Michael E. Stone, ed., Armenian Apocrypha Relating to the Patriarchs and Prophets (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1982) 13. In this text, however, the loss of divine light is the result of Adam's sin. See also Moshe Idel, "Enoch is Metatron," in Joseph Dan, ed., Proceedings of the First International Conference on the History of Jewish Mysticism (Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought 6.1--2; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1987) 155 [Hebrew].

(30)See the many references to the beauty of the king, listed in Peter Schafer, Konkordanz zur Hekalot-Literatur, s.v.

(31)To think of beauty in terms other than luminosity is conceivable. It is possible, moreover, that proportion also defines beauty and that humankind shares in the divine proportions. Saul Lieberman has pointed out a parallel between the Talmud and the Shi'ur Oomah. The same proportions are used to describe the perfect divine body and the body which a priest who is qualified to serve in the temple ought to have. Different proportions are considered a blemish. See Saul Lieberman, Sheki'in (Jerusalem: Vahrman, 1970) 12; and idem, "Mishnat Shir Hashrim," in Gershom Scholem, Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah

Mysticism and Talmudic Traditions (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1965) 125.

(32)Eccl. R. 8.1.

(33)See further Pesikta Rabbati 21 in which Israel at Mount Sinai shares in the divine light. The proof text from Ezekiel refers only to beauty.

(34)Gen. R. 8.10. Concerning the antignostic background of this legend, see Alexander Altmann, "The Gnostic Background of the Rabbinic Legends," JQR n.s. 35 (1945) 379--91. Some additional midrahim employing the same motif are adduced by Altmann.

(35)It should be noted that to the extent that we have already ahd a tampering with the divine image, it is not the result of human sin, but stems from the need to differentiate the human form from the divine form. A further instance of identity between the human and divine image is discussed in Shamma Friedman, "Graven Image," Graven Images 1 (forthcoming). Friedman analyzes the description of the sleeping Jacob, whose image is identical to God's image which is above (Gen. R. 68.12). Not only is this a further instance of identity of image, but also a parallel to the sleeping image of God, as found in Gen. R. 8.

(36)A later reworking of midrashic motives associates the diminishing of the macroanthropic proportions with the problem of the angelic confusion of the divine and the Adamic forms. See Otiyot de-Rabbi Akiva (B) in Shlomoh Wertheimer, Batei Midrashot (2 vols.; Jerusalem: Ketav ve-Sefer, 1955) 2. 412.

(37)All the proofs that Marmorstein marshalled for nonanthropomorphic rabbinic views relate to bodily functions and not bodily existence. We cannot assume that the denial of bodily function implies the denial of bodily existence. See Marmorstein, Essays in Anthropomorphism, 24--42.

(38)See b. Sot 10a; five were created in the pattern of above. After the removal of zelem these five individuals were given special qualities, resembling the divine qualities or the divine form.

(39)This luminosity, however, is not necessarily the original zelem. The dialogue of Adam and Moses may be based on the notion that the zelem has been lost.

(40)Adolph Jellinek, Beit ha-Midrash (6 vols.; Leipzig: Niese, 1853; reprinted Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1967) 3. 168.

(41)Contra Jacob Jervell, Imago Dei: Gen 1,26f. im Spatjudentum, in der Gnosis, und in den paulinischen Briefen (FRLANT 76; Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960) 83. Jervell's whole thesis is based on the limiting of zelem to Israel through the Sinai event. Even though we find references to Sinai as a reflection of the Adamic sin (b. Sabbat 146a), nowhere is this expressed in terms of zelem. The references above to the light received at Sinai do not consciously relate to the divine image. The only possible restoration of zelem is in the messianic future. Our explanation of zelem may account for this fact.

(42)In this context I have not included certain sources that could be considered relevant to the present discussion. Gen. R. 8.10 describes God as placing sleep upon Adam in order to counteract the undesired effects of Adam's physical identity with God. This source does not associate the sleep placed upon Adam with a loss of zelem. One could, of course, offer such an association, but one would then have to regard all changes in the original Adamic form as a loss of zelem. See below n. 46.

(43)See Adam and Eve 37.3 (OTP 2. 272). I understand this text to designate human vulnerability to animal attacks as a result of sin.

(44)See also 3 Enoch 5 (in Hugo Odeberg, ed. and trans., 3 Enoch; or The Hebrew Book of Enoch [New York: Ktav, 1973] 14--15) where Adam and Eve are sitting at the gates of the garden of Eden and contemplating the image of the splendor of the Shekinah. The text informs us that whoever contemplates this splendor is protected not only from demons, but from illness, mosquitoes, and flies. Here it is the divine effulgence, and not the human effulgence, that offers protection. Moshe Idel, in conversation, has suggested that Adam and Eve are contemplating the divine effulgence and receiving protection from it since their own light has been lost.

(45)Asaf, "From the Palestinian Prayer Order," 121. See also Jacob Mann, "Genizah Fragments of the Palestine Order of Service," HUCA 2 (1925) 277. See also Ginzberg's attempt to disregard the theological implications of this benediction in his A Commentary on the Palestinian Talmud, 3. 230.

(46)The more common blessing

("who created man in his image"; b. Ketub. 8a), recited at the time of marriage, may refer to Adam, but clearly also to his progeny. The zelem is the basis for the propagation of further generations, who share in this zelem. One should note that this benediction can also be related to the restitution of a lost zelem, or at least a lost unity. According to the midrashic tradition (Gen. R. 8.1) the original Adam was both male and female. The creation of Eve was a process of separating this original unity. It is only when man and woman are united in marriage that this unity is reestablished. It would therefore be appropriate to make a blessing referring to the creation in God's image at this particular occasion. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in the midrash the term zelem is not related to Adam's bisexual nature, but see Gen. R. 8.9: "Not man without woman, and not woman without man, and not both of them without the divine presence." This comment explains the words, "in our image and likeness." This sharp interpretation, however, may dissociate this image from the divine image. See also Gen. R. 8.11, "the heavenly beings were created in image and likeness, and do not propagate." Humans are to share in the divine likeness, as well as to propagate. Thus, it would seem that propagation is not in and of itself an attribute of the divine image. Concerning the appearance of the term zelem in conjunction with Adamic myths, see Tanhuma (Buber ed.). ?? 10, where the adjacent notion in Genesis Rabbah, relating Adam's cosmic dimensions, is connected to the divine image.

(47)This idea may perhaps follow traditions such as Gen. R. 19.3.

(48)Mekhilta de-Rabbi ??. Bahodesh 11; Hoffman, Midrash ??, 140. See also b. ?? Qat. 15b: every person who dies is an image of God that has been removed.

(49)See esp. Jervell (Imago Dei, 113--14), who relies on Ginzberg, among others.

(50)See esp. George Foot Moore (Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era [3 vols.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927] 1. 446--49), who makes no mention of the possibility of losing the divine image and sees in the image a universal moral principle; see further 1. 479. Gerhard Kittel

TDNT 2 [1964] 393) explicitly denies the idea that the image was lost and limits the possibility of losing the image to individuals rather than to humanity as a whole.

(51)Smith, "On the Shape of God," 320.

(52)The other aspects of the image would be those mentioned in the later Tanhuma literature; see above n. 9.

(53)These texts include m. ?? 3.14; Mekhilta de-Rabbi ??. Bahodesh 8, 11; Hoffman, Midrash ??, 140.

(54)See Altmann, "The Gnostic Background."

(55)See, for example, Tanhuma. Yitro 17; Pesikta Rabbati (ed. Meir Friedmann; Vienna: n.p., 1880) 21/108b.

(56)An illustration of such a conceptual approach, although without the active use of zelem, may be found in two teachings of Rabbi Meir, which I have cited above. In one passage, we find him referring to Adam's garments of light. In another, the hanged man's corpse resembles the divine form and therefore must not be left hanging on a tree. See also Adam and Eve 10; 12 (OTP 2. 273; 275). As I understand it, the animal can both attack Seth, because of the loss of the divine image, and yet be reprimanded for it, on account of the creation in the image of God, which subsists in some form.

(57)It should also be noted that for the most part Genesis 9 is used, rather than Genesis 1. Louis Ginzberg ("Adam Kadmon," JE 1 [1901] 138) has raised the question concerning Rabbi Akiva's choice of a proof text in m. ?? 3.14. ginzberg ascribes to a practical noncorporeal understanding of zelem, which he uses to explain this difficulty. I can only suggest that perhaps this verse was chosen because it translated the concept of image into a practical commandment.

(58)I suggest that Hillel, who washes his body, regards his body as the other. The Philonic use of the word

("image") would enable reference to the

as self.

(59)See Henry Fischel's discussion of the Ben Azzai traditions; Fischel tries (Rabbinic Literature and Greco-Roman Philosophy [Leiden: Brill, 1973] 92) to tie the two notions together. There is no textual evidence for this association. See, however, the juxtaposition of the regard for the divine image and God's identification with Israel (Mid. Tan. to Deut 21:23 [Hoffman, Midrash ??, 132!).

(60)See the extensive discussion in Marmorstein, Essays in Anthropomorphism, 62--68.

(61)This is why the growing polarity of soul and body itself should not be seen as a reason for the minimal usage of zelem.

(62)See m. ?? 3.14. There is a clear hierarchy leading from zelem to Torah. It should be noted that this is the only passage in rabbinic literature that builds on zelem as a positive category that endows humanity with value. See also t. Yebamot, discussed below, p. 191. Ben Azzai prefers the Torah to the possible effects on the divine image of not having children. The Torah is the basis for owning and losing the zelem in Deut. R. 4.4, discussed above, p. 184.

(63)Jervell, Imago Dei, 83.

(64)Smith, "On the Shape of God."

(65)See Exod. R. 30.16. See also Smith, "On the Shape of God," 325.

(66)The elaboration of this point would call for a detailed assessment of the place of myth in rabbinic literature and how much polemic is expressed in the various Adam legends. These questions are beyond the scope of this paper.

(67)This is my understanding of

("great principle") in this instance. It should be noted that this is the only nonhalakhic instance of the term in rabbinic literature. It is also the only case of disagreement over what is the "great principle." See also Wilhelm Bacher, Erkhei Midrash (Tel Aviv: n.p., 1923) 56.

(68)Sifra on Leviticus (ed. Isaac H. Weiss; Vienna: n.p., 1862) 89b (Lev 19:17).

(69)I should note that Ben Azzai is not the only one mentioned in the following passage. The corroborative evidence of these two passages, however, enables us to speak of his beliefs. These beliefs may not have been exclusive to him.

(70)Parallel versions, such as Gen. R. 24, read "diminishes" instead of "annuls."

(71)A third possibility may exist; if the human is analogous to the emperor's statue (see above n. 16), the diminishing of life is a diminishing of the king's representation. Although such a reading is indeed possible, I favor the other explanations discussed in the article. The starkness of the unique expression--"annuls the image"--is lost in this third interpretive possibility, which might have been better phrased: "annuls the image of makom [a common rabbinic epithet for God]," or even "the image of the king," as in Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishma??el. Bahodesh 8.

(72)It is important to note that humanity, and not the world as such, would be the divine body. The only rabbinic source in which the world--and not people--is seen as the divine image is Exod. R. 15.22, with the parallel in Tanhuma. Hayei Sara 3. This, however, fits in with the wider use of "eikonin" in the Tanhuma Midrashim. See above n. 9.

(73)Such a notion would accord with other notions of the time regarding the great macroanthropic being. See Gedaliahu G. Stroumsa, "Forms of God: Some Notes on Metatron and Christ," HTR 76 (1983) 269-88. This understanding of the divine image need not exclude the simple understanding of physical resemblance. The structure of the part may reflect the structure of the whole.

(74)Perhaps we should contrast this with Rabbi Akiva's lesson from the creation of the image of God--"beloved is man." For Ben Azzai, who is willing to use the image as the great principle, being a part of the greater image of God may be an ontological statement. It should be noted that if this understanding of Ben Azzai is correct, this notion does not seem to find further expression in rabbinic literature. The fact that the divine image would necessarily include Gentiles may serve as an explanation. See Robert Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms (Leiden: Brill, 1971) 240.

(75)For this understanding of "golem," see Moshe Idel, Golem (New York: SUNY Press, 1990) 34.

(76)See Exod. R. 40.3.

(77)The association of body and plan is related to the book metaphor that appears in the midrash, based on Ps 139:16. See Gen. R. 24.2.

(78)See also y. Ned. 9.4, where Rabbi Akiva and Ben Azzai's controversy is adduced and the metaphor of body is used explicitly to effect proper behavior between the different components of the body.

(79)W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (London: SPCK, 1948) 45--57; Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms, 239--45.

(80)For a survey of possibilities for the origin of this concept, see Markus Barth, Ephesians 1--3 (AB 34; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974) 183--210.

(81)The concept of Christ as image is commonly seen as drawing upon the Hellenistic identification of image and wisdom. This obviously would have little to do with any understanding of Christ as body. See, for example, Eduard Lohse, Colossians and Philemon (ed. Helmut Koester; trans. William R. Poehlmann and Robert J. Karris; Hermeneia; Fortress: Philadelphia, 1971) 46--48. See also Altmann, "Homo Imago Dei," 244--47.

(82)On the relation of Jesus and the first Adam, see Rom 5:12--19; 1 Cor 15:20--22.

(83)Nevertheless, the image is not a natural category, but one that must be attained through joining the community of believers.

(84)Moshe Idel, Kabbalah--New Perspectives (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1988) 158.

(85)These are, of course, not the only aspects. The notion of the diminishing of the divine form is reflected in Jesus' incarnation. See Phil 2:6--8; and Stroumsa, "Forms of God," 283.

(86)See Gen. R. 12.6. Compare also the Genizah benediction discussed above. The juxtaposition of zelem and the restoration of the temple may imply the simultaneous reinstatement of both. See further Idel, "Enoch is Metatron," 152--56.

(87)See the recent discussion of Kim Paffenroth, "Paulsen on Augustine: An Incorporeal or Nonanthropomorphic God?" HTR 86 (1993) 233--35.