

Listen to the silent voice of the heavens and taste the sweetness of torah: Reading Psalm 19 from a “body phenomenological” and an “embodied understanding” perspective¹

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ABSTRACT

In Psalm 19 we come across an interesting inverted juxtaposition of creation: creation acts like torah, and torah performs like creation. Nature silently proclaims God’s glory, and torah is depicted in terms of bodily experiences. Coupled with this harmonious glorification of God is the psalmist’s strong desire for redemption from sin and his wish that his words and meditation on Yahweh’s glory might glorify Yahweh. The tight revelatory relationship between nature as God’s creation proclaiming his glory, and torah as his restorative teaching in Psalm 19, reflects Israel’s social and cultural definition of the ideal body as a whole body. Israel knew no body/mind dualism and therefore no theological dichotomy of torah as the supreme revelation of God as opposed to nature as the minor mode of revelation. The coherence of cosmic order (creation), religious teachings, and individual obedience to torah is maintained in the psalm. Reading Psalm 19 from a “body phenomenological” and an “embodied understanding” point of view enables us to understand the converting into language of the poet’s thoughts in terms of structures of embodied human understanding based on an interaction with his environment, cultural traditions, values, institutions, and the history of the social community of Israel. Both perceptions of reality and the verbalisation of such perceptions through metaphorical expressions emanate from the poet’s body, the latter which is a reflection of the social and cultural body. It is argued that his yearning for redemption and whole-bodiedness is the motivation behind the poet’s choice of the specific embodied language and metaphors.

A INTRODUCTION

The inverted juxtaposition of creation and torah in Psalm 19 is conspicuous. Creation, on the one hand, is metaphorised as declaring God’s glory *in vocal terms*, something that one would rather link to torah as “word”. Torah, on the other hand, is metaphorised in terms of *physical aspects* relating to creation and bodily experience. This juxtaposition of creation and torah is then linked to the

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supplicant's desire for redemption from sin and whole-bodiedness. The poem, therefore, consists of three stanzas reflecting these three aspects.²

It is important to realise that ancient Israel's anthropology reflects its cosmology (Berquist 2002:11) and *vice versa*. This means that the functional basis at the centre of both anthropology and cosmology is the notion of the "whole body". And in addition, in a similar way that the "whole body" is complete and devoid of the dichotomy of body and mind (or soul), creation and torah³ also function as a unity, as God's revelation of himself. Creation⁴ and torah (God's instruction) also function on exactly the same level and no hierarchical distinction or tension exists between them like in both Western (Eaton 2000:70) and Hebrew (Tirosh-Samuels 2002:xxxiii)⁵ thought.

Speaking about nature and about torah in Psalm 19, the poet closely links these concepts to his own bodily experiences. I want to suggest that the poet's fusing of creation and torah as means of revelation of God's glory, and the influence thereof on his own life, are based on his culturally structured cosmo-anthropological view of whole-bodiedness. This is strongly supported by the notion that meaning, imagination, and reason are experientially triggered and bodily based (Johnson 1987). The petitioner in Psalm 19 puts in an inter-related sequence the language of the heavens, the instruction of Yahweh, and the prayer of the poet (Mays 1987:5) by means of culturally driven, bodily based language in his endeavour to restore his experience of whole-bodiedness.

Reading Psalm 19 from a "body phenomenological" and an "embodied understanding" point of view, enables us to understand the languaging of the poet's thoughts in terms of structures of embodied human understanding based on an interaction with his environment, cultural traditions, values, institutions, and the history of the social community of Israel. The significance of applying modern body theory to biblical texts lies in the fact that language is an embodied activity. Therefore, all expressions and metaphors are being generated through bodily experience and expressed by the mind of the author, which brings the reader much closer to the experiences of authors as reflected in their

² See the theopoetic analysis of Ps 19 by Vos (2004:253-269) in which he refers to various scholars differing in opinion on the structure of the psalm. However, Vos argues convincingly for a tripartite structure.

³ The term תּוֹרָה and its related terms in this psalm should be read as "instruction" and not in the narrow sense of "torah", referring to the first five books of the *Tenach* (Wagner 1999:254).

⁴ Because "creation" is a theological category, it should be distinguished from "nature" and "cosmos" (Fretheim 2005:4). Creation expresses the notion that nature / cosmos was created by God and does not simply exist.

⁵ However, Moshe Sokol (2002:261-282) argues against the tension between Judaism and the natural world.

literary works. An understanding of the embodied language, therefore, facilitates our understanding of Israel's ideology of whole-bodiedness.

Before analysing the psalm in more detail, a brief explanation of the theoretical approach to the psalm is necessary.

B THEORETICAL APPROACH

Three claims are involved in the discussion: a) The physical human body is the centre of all human experience and response, including language. Therefore, human experience, meaning, and reasoning are inseparably linked and are incarnated (see Leder 1990:1; Johnson 1987:xiv). Language, as a cultural phenomenon, is an intensely embodied issue because, similar to any other skill, it gradually becomes part of the bodily "I can" (Leder 1990:121); b) Human bodies are culturally constructed: A culture defines what the ideal body should be and relates individual bodies to the ideal body of that culture (Berquist 2002:5); c) Statements about God, like statements about nature, derive from analogies based on human bodily experience and the resultant behaviour (Coetzee 2008:300).

With this in mind, I can now define my analysis of Psalm 19 as a "body phenomenological" and an "embodied understanding" approach. The supplicant's "linguaging" or metaphorising of nature, of torah, of God, and of himself is an embodied activity.

Every human being experiences his/her world through the body and its senses. However, when we mention "body," we should acknowledge that bodies are not only physiological/biological entities. Bodies are socially and culturally constructed phenomena. All humans participate in body discourse of some kind (Berquist 2002:5). Cultures give meaning to their bodies through their speech and they formulate ideal bodies to which individuals within a specific culture should relate. In the words of Mark Johnson (1987:14):

[M]eaning includes patterns of embodied experience and pre-conceptual structures of our sensibility (i.e., our mode of perception, of orienting ourselves, and of interacting with other objects, events, or persons). These embodied patterns do not remain private or peculiar to the person who experiences them. Our community helps us interpret and codify many of our felt patterns. They become shared cultural modes of experience and help to determine the nature of our meaningful, coherent understanding of our "world".

From a cognitive perspective, "'body' is used as a generic term for the embodied origins of imaginative structures of understanding, such as image schemata and their metaphorical elaborations" (Johnson 1987:xv).

With reference to the first claim that the human body is the centre of all experience, modern theories of meaning and rationality such as that of Johnson (1987) help us understand how language is directly related to bodily experience. This is also applicable to Israel and its literature found in the Bible. In this regard I find myself related to Drew Leder's (1990:1) theory that all human experience is incarnated, and that it is via bodily means that one is capable of responding, and to Mark Johnson's (1987:xiv) theory that structures of imagination and understanding emerge from our embodied experience and form the basis for the language and metaphors we use. Johnson mentions two types of imaginative structuring of bodily experience, namely image schemata and metaphorical projections. Examples of prominent image schemata that form the basis for verbal expressions are: container, path, cycle, part-whole, full-empty, surface, balance, counterforce, link, near-far, merging, contact, mass-count, centre-periphery, scale, splitting (Johnson (1987:126)). These are all mental structures, based on bodily experience, helping us to formulate ideas into language.

An *image schema*, according to Johnson (1987:xiv) is

a recurring, dynamic pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that gives coherence and structure to our experience. The VERTICAL schema, for instance, emerges from our tendency to employ an UP-DOWN orientation in picking out meaningful structures of our experience. We grasp this structure of verticality repeatedly in thousands of perceptions and activities we experience every day, such as perceiving a tree, our felt sense of standing upright, the activity of climbing stairs....The VERTICALITY schema is the abstract structure of these VERTICALITY experiences, images, and perceptions.

Our bodily movement, our handling of objects, and our perceptual interaction "involve recurring patterns without which our experience would be chaotic and incomprehensible" (1987:xix). These patterns are called "image schemata", because they function primarily as abstract structures of images.

The *metaphor* as related type of embodied imaginative structure, according to Johnson (1987:xiv-xv) is

a pervasive mode of understanding by which we project patterns from one domain of experience in order to structure another domain of a different kind. So conceived, metaphor is not merely a linguistic mode of expression; rather, it is one of the chief cognitive structures by which we are able to have coherent, ordered experiences that we can reason about and make sense of. Through metaphor, we make use of patterns that [we] (*sic*) obtain in our physical experience to organize our more abstract understanding.

Both these types of imaginative structure (image schemata and metaphor) will be exposed and explained in more detail in my analysis of Psalm 19.

With reference to the second claim above, while analysing Psalm 19, one should keep in mind that, culturally speaking, Israel's ideal body was the "whole body" (Berquist 2002:19).⁶ For Israel almost everything was at stake in the wholeness of bodies. Bodies had two important social functions, namely, the body "mediated a person's involvement with the rest of society and it symbolically represented social cohesion" (2002:20). I want to expand this idea by stating that Israel's theological, cosmological, and anthropological thinking and metaphorising inclusively form part of this concept of one-bodiedness. And so did every other aspect of their human and cultural life driven by this notion (e.g. economics, politics, societal issues, etc.). As Berquist (2002:181) asserts, "[s]ecular life and religious life came together in the practices of the body and the metaphors of society related to the body. The overall effect was an integrated vision and practice of reality, thoroughly connected to the entirety of society."

The last of the three claims mentioned above, which will also be dealt with in more detail below, is about the poet's application of metaphor in describing creation, torah, the supplicant, and Yahweh in terms of the human body. Statements about God, like statements about nature, derive from analogies based on human experience and behaviour. Malina (1993:77-81) identifies in the Bible metaphorical descriptions of the stereotyped, non-introspective make-up of dyadic personalities. Biblical authors use body parts, which form part of the human organic whole, to describe a person. For instance, the human heart is the thinking organ, while the eyes fill the heart with data. Vision is, more than the other senses, directly connected to intellectual activity (Johnson 1987:108). This is identified as the first zone in the make-up of the biblical person, namely the zone of *emotion-fused thought*. The mouth is depicted as the speaking organ, along with the ears that hear the speech of others, which is the second zone, namely *self-expressive speech*. The hands and feet are described as the acting body parts and constitute the third zone, namely *purposeful action*. These three zones are used to describe human behaviour right through the Bible (Malina 1993:74). This model is also applicable to metaphors for God. Malina (1993:77) appropriately states that "[s]ince statements about God, like statements in the physical sciences, derive from analogies based on human behavior, it follows that biblical descriptions of how God functions will take the shape of analogies drawn from perceptions of how human beings function." This is in full accord with both Leder's and Johnson's theories on human embodied experience, meaning, understanding, and reasoning.

⁶ Berquist mentions two primary aspects involving whole-bodiedness in Israel: a) A whole body contains all its parts and functions; b) A whole body contains itself within fixed boundaries. See Berquist (2002:18-50) for the explanation of these remarks.

In what follows, Psalm 19 will be analysed from the perspective of embodiment.

C ANALYSIS OF THE PSALM

1 Stanza 1 (vv. 2-7)

In stanza 1 elements of creation carrying the declaration of the glory of God are described by means of terminology, which is structured in a climactic manner culminating in the effect the heat (radiance) of the sun has on everything on earth. Verse 4 prepares the scene for the metaphor of the sun in 5c-7c, while verse 5c has a hinge function to introduce the sun metaphor, connecting the skies/heavens in 2-5b with the sun metaphor in 5c-7. The psalmist's imaginative personification of creation is based on the notion common in biblical thinking, namely that every created object or creature has the capacity of acknowledging its creator (Mays 1994:97).

The following metaphorical expressions and words are found that link the human body, creation, and torah, and fit into Bruce Malina's three zones model (cf. Malina 1993:74).⁷

2a(1a)

The heavens *declare* the glory of God הַשָּׁמַיִם מְסַפְּרִים כְּבוֹד־אֱלֹהִים

Creation is symbolised in terms of the human body (self-expressive speech) and, in this context, also in terms of torah (announcing something). The glory of God (כְּבוֹד־אֱלֹהִים) is a metaphor describing the visible power of God, which is not static but can be *experienced* (Eberlein 1989:281). The fundamental meaning of *kbd* is "weightiness" in both a physical and figurative sense (honour, respect), and has the *mass-count* image schema as its bodily experiential basis (Johnson 1987:126). Status or honour refers to a person's social position relative to other people in the same social system (Malina 1993:96). God's status or honour is the highest or weightiest of all persons of high authority and power (Botterweck & Ringgren 1982:26) and is therefore related to the heavens and the skies and the sun. In the Hebrew Bible *kbd* is also a visible extension of God's holiness (Jacob 1974:79). It is always intended to be seen and is in constant association with phenomena connected with light (:80). Human bodily experience of weightiness and of fire, heat, lightning, and light in general forms the basis for the idea of *kbd* (:80).

⁷ The numbers are the verse numbers of the Hebrew text and the bracketed numbers those of the translation used.

2b(1b)

The skies *declare* the work of his hands וּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו מְגִיד הַרְקִיעַ

This verse is an example of self-expressive speech where nature is symbolised in terms of the human body. Purposeful action is implied when God is symbolised in terms of the human body as someone who produces (makes) objects with his hands. The Hiphil participle מְגִיד (declare) is revelatory in character (to place a matter high, conspicuously before a person [Koehler & Baumgartner 1958:591]). The metaphor describing the skies as declaring the work of God's hands is, therefore, based on the containment image schema, which mentally organises human experiences of *in-out* movement with reference to containment. A container can either conceal or reveal something through *in-out* movement. To declare something is to make known what was contained and not previously known or visible.

3a(2a)

Day to day pours forth speech יוֹם לְיוֹם יִבְיַע אָמָר

Verse 3a(2a) is a further example of self-expressive speech where nature is symbolised in terms of the human body. The verb יִבְיַע (pour out) is rooted in the *containment* image schema, which is a mental structure of physical human experiences of being *in* something (Johnson 1978:21). The continual bodily experience of *in-out* movement with reference to containment and the bodily experience of the pouring out of liquid from a container were structured mentally in the mind of the psalmist in order to express his thoughts in metaphorical terms as the pouring out of speech. One important consequence of the recurring experiential image-schematic structures for *in-out* orientation is that the container can either block or hide an object or it can release the object so that it can be seen or heard (Johnson 1978:22). In this sense the metaphor, “pour forth speech” which the psalmist uses, is clearly based on his own bodily experience of *in-out* orientation and has a revelatory meaning, which links up with the second half of the verse line.

3b(2b)

Night by night they announce knowledge וּלְיָלָה לְלַיְלָה יִתְנַהֲדָעַת

This expression, as part of the extended metaphor, represents self-expressive speech and emotion-fused thought. The Piel imperfect verb יִתְנַהֲדָעַת (√ חוה I) also carries the meaning of disclosing something (the *containment* image schema), in this case “knowledge”. The parallel terms “speech” (אָמָר) and “knowledge”

(דַּעַת) express the inseparable human mental and verbal functions applied metaphorically to “day” and “night” and personified as heralds announcing God’s glory. “Day” (v. 3a) and “night” (v. 3b) are a temporal function of the rising and setting sun (vv. 6-7). “Day by day” and “night by night” serve as a merism signifying temporal completeness in the revelation of God’s glory. The sun is the underlying subject behind these metaphors and merism. In this way the poet is setting the stage for the sun metaphor in verses 5c-7c.

4(3)

There is no *speech* nor are there *words*; their אין-אמר ואין דברים בלי נשמע קולם
voice cannot be heard⁸

Self-expressive speech is implied in this personification of nature, referring back to what was said in verses 2-3 and linking up with verse 5ab. However, it is speech that cannot be heard by humans. By this expression the poet admits the metaphoric nature of the speech of creation, however, this speech is no less real (Willis 1988:65). In his aesthetic absorption into creation and creation into him (Leder 1990:165), the visible becomes vocal; seeing is experienced as hearing (Mays 1994:97).

If this translation and interpretation are correct, the poet is preparing the reader/hearer for replacing the “verbal announcements” of the heavens and the skies, the day and the night (vv. 2a-3b), with the rays and heat of the sun (vv. 5c-7c), the heavenly body whose radiance becomes a metaphor for the medium through which the glory of God is experienced. “Communication” and “light”/“heat” merge in this way.

5ab(4ab)

their *voice*⁹ goes out into all the earth, their בכל-הארץ | יצא קולם ובקצה חבל מליהם
words to the end of the world

⁸ *Hearing* can also metaphorically mean “to understand” (Johnson 1987:108-109), but the parallelism between *vision* and intellection occurs much more frequently. A number of translations interpret this verse as follows: “There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.” Weiser (1962:197) translates it as follows: “There is no language nor are there words in which their voice is not heard.”

⁹ The word קָ can have the meaning “measuring-line”, “elasticity”, or “sound imitation” (Koehler & Baumgartner 1958:830). In terms of the parallel placement with “utterance”, “sound” seems to fit the best, which is supported by the Septuagint, Syriac, and Jerome translations (φθόγγος – tone, voice). However, the context also allows for “measuring-line” in the sense of distance range. Brown (2008:68) points out that the literal meaning of “measuring line” might point to the psalmist’s way of

Self-expressive speech is again implied in this personification of the heavens/skies and day and night. The mental image schema of *near-far* links up with the image schema of *surface*. Bodily experience of distance is mentally structured as a *near-far* image schema and verbally described as “to the end of the world,” which probably, in the context and worldview of the poet, means “as far as one can see”. Human experience of the surface of objects and the surface of the earth leads to the *surface* image schema, which is then implemented to metaphorically describe the proclamation of God’s glory by the heavens and the skies onto the entire surface of the earth. The *surface* image schema, therefore, complements the *near-far* or *distance* image schema. Eventually it is also the *verticality* image schema (from heaven to earth), as well as the *horizontal* and *surface* image schemata (in/onto all the earth) that together play a role in the verbalisation of the poet.

5c(4c)

For the sun He *pitched* a tent in them’ (heavens)¹⁰ לְשֶׁמֶשׁ שָׁם-אָהָל בָּהֶם:

Purposeful human action is metaphorically applied to God and nature. Apart from the implied actions of God in the expression “the work of his hands” in verse 2b, the only other mention being made of God performing an act in the first two stanzas of the psalm is here in verse 5c where God is described as erecting (עָשָׂה – put up) a tent for the sun in the heavens.¹¹ “The work of his hands” (v. 2b) is thus an expression which subtly links up with the sun metaphor (v. 5c) as the light-giving, heat-emitting object *created by God*. This mythically based¹² description of God pitching a tent emanates, of course, from human activity, which is metaphorically projected onto God and creation. The personification in the simile in verse 6a of the bridegroom coming out of his tent relates to this. The pitching of a tent has to do with the experience of set-

“coaching an essentially *visual* image in the language of verbal discourse. This curious term could refer either to the designated ‘paths’ or circuits that the celestial bodies follow, such as the sun’s ‘course’ (*’ōrah*) referenced in v. 6, or, more likely, to beams or rays emanating from the astral bodies themselves, particularly the sun — a widespread motif in ancient Near Eastern iconography.”

¹⁰ In Near Eastern mythology “the sun was considered a god, a hero who gaily runs his course. At the end, tired, he reaches his resting-place, his tent in the far West, deep down in the sea. There – thus say the heathen – lives his bride; but in the morning he rises anew, fresh and young, like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber” (Gunkel 1903: 281-283).

¹¹ Within the context it is logical that בָּהֶם refers to “heavens” in v. 2. See also v. 7 (Kraus 1972:153).

¹² The strophe on the sun is one of the few relics that survived in the Bible of the numerous solar myths which must have been current among the Hebrews and other Near Eastern people in early times.

ting up an object to stand in an upright position, a verbal outcome of the *verticality* image schema. The *verticality* mental image schema, therefore, forms the basis of this expression. According to Johnson (1987:xiv) “the VERTICALITY schema...emerges from our tendency to employ an UP-DOWN orientation in picking out meaningful structures of our experience....The VERTICALITY schema is the abstract structure of these VERTICALITY experiences, images, and perceptions.”

6a(5a)

And he (the sun) is like a bridegroom going out of his tent וְהוּא כְּחָתָן יֵצֵא מִחֻפָּתוֹ

The sun is metaphorised and personified in terms of human purposeful action and bodily experience. The emotion-fused thought of joy is implied in the metaphor (see 6b). The *container* mental image schema, including the *in-out* orientation, lies at the root of this expression. Our daily encounter with containment and boundedness is one of the most pervasive features of our bodily experience (Johnson 1987:21). We experience our bodies as containers in which we put water, food, et cetera and which our bodies excrete. The experiential basis for *in-out* orientation is that of containment. The bridegroom leaves his container/tent into the open where he is free and can be seen. The metaphor of the sun is extended by means of another simile in verse 6b where the sun is personified as a champion.

6b(5b)

Rejoicing like a champion to run his course וְשִׁישׁ כְּגִבּוֹר לָרוּץ אָרַח

The term “rejoicing” describes emotion-fused thought, while “run his course” describes purposeful action (Malina 1993:74-75). The expression “to run his course” emanates from the *path* image schema in the mind of the poet. The connection with our spatial world is also one of the most pervasive experiences the human body encounters. We purposefully walk from one point to the following; we project paths in our imagination, such as the path the sun follows. “In all of these cases there is a single, recurring image-schematic pattern with a definite internal structure” (Johnson 1987:113). Paths always have the same parts, namely a starting point, an end-point, and sequence of adjacent locations connecting the beginning to the end. This mental image structure is even more clearly verbalised in verse 7a.

7ab(6ab)

From the one end of the heavens it goes out מִקְצֵה הַשָּׁמַיִם מוֹצֵא וְתִקְוָתוֹ עַל-קְצוֹתָם
and its route is to the other (end)

The noun מוֹצֵא (his going out) emanates from the image schema of *containment*. The sun's "point of going out" from a certain place implies a contained place, which is supplemented by its travelling to another extremity where it disappears again. The *path*-image schema forms the basis for the metaphor of the sun travelling along a path from one point to another (על- - מן).

7c(6c)

Nothing is hidden from its heat וְאֵין נִסְתָּר מִחֻמָּתוֹ

This expression has two links with the human body. Firstly, "nothing is hidden from" also emanates from the *container* image schema. The word "hide" implies containment. However, the image schema of *contact* also plays a role in the expression, in the sense that the warm rays of the sun touch the surface of everything. The sensory organ (skin) forms the basis of the experience of heat and bodily contact, which is verbalised in this expression.

From our analysis of stanza 1 it is evident that "the glory of God" (v. 2a), "the work of his hands" (v. 2b), and "the sun" (v. 5c) are all related in the sense that the luminosity and the heat of the sun (as work of God's hands) serve as metaphors for cosmic revelation of God's glory. The glory (radiance) of the sun is metaphorised onto the domain of the divine. However, the sun does not become an object of worship as in Ancient Oriental mythology but it is metaphorised as radiating the glory of God. The sun acts as the pivotal metaphor of the psalm. It unites the various literary components of the psalm, "thereby conjoining the discursive rhythms of the cosmos with the moral contours of torah" (Brown 2002:84). The metaphorical projections and personifications are based on bodily experiences and the image schemata they involve (Johnson 1987:xv). By depicting the sun in terms of his own "bodiliness", the poet also intimately acknowledges his deep-seated bonds with creation (Viviers 2001:149). This is a bodily-based act of opening up (Leder 1990:164-173) to the created cosmos in its completeness, a state of one-bodiedness and whole-bodiedness in its broadest sense.

2 Stanza 2 (vv 8-12)

In stanza 2 the torah of Yahweh is described by means of the following terminology, which is structured in a climactic manner culminating in the affect of Yahweh's instruction on the supplicant. In what follows, a more in depth ex-

planation of embodied language with reference to torah, its qualifications, and its affects on the individual person is presented.

8a(7a)

The torah of Yahweh is perfect, it brings back life תּוֹרַת יְהוָה תְּמִימָה מְשִׁיבַת נֶפֶשׁ

The term *torah* and its equivalent terms used for “the instruction of Yahweh”, imply self-expressive speech (Malina 1993:75) with Yahweh as the subject. The term תְּמִימָה (perfect) expresses completeness, namely blamelessness in this context. It is not without reason that the poet uses this word first in connection with torah. It stresses his perception of the wholeness of the Israelite societal and religious body (see Berquist 2002:19-20) inspired by torah. The image schema of *completeness* forms the basis for this metaphor of torah. Wholeness or completeness is bodily and thus experience based and has to do with our experience of *part-whole*. The human body itself is experienced as complete if all the body-parts are in place and functioning properly. When a limb is lost, the body becomes incomplete (part-whole). When a clay tablet or a cup breaks, it loses its wholeness. All our bodily experiences of *part-whole* form mental image structures in the brain and become the basis for metaphorising ideas about wholeness or completeness. Such embodied patterns do not remain private to the person experiencing them. As social beings our community helps us interpret these individually felt patterns and they become cultural modes of experience that help us understand ourselves and our “world” (Johnson 1987:14). The notion of the completeness of torah is an example of such a cultural construction, which guides the life of the individual and the corporate Israelite. In Psalm 19 this ties up with the metaphor of the complete effect or impact of the message of the heavens and the skies, and the heat of the sun upon the surface of the earth (stanza 1, vv. 3, 5, 6, 7).

The expression “it brings back life” (מְשִׁיבַת נֶפֶשׁ) verbalises purposeful human action metaphorised onto torah. The expression is based on the image schema of *turning*. The Hiphil participle מְשִׁיבַת (שׁוּב √) metaphorises the human body’s frequent experiences of the turning movement. Torah is capable of turning around fatigue into new life. The *path*-image schema is also involved in the sense that the expression implies that life-force (*nefesh*) has left the person and is returned by torah.

8b(7b)

The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making עֲדוֹת יְהוָה נֶאֱמָנָה מִחֻכְיֹמֹת פְּתִי:
wise the simple

The Niphal participle נִאֲמָנָה (trustworthiness) reflects emotion-fused thought (Malina 1993:74) and functions in the ethical sphere. The body is able to project metaphorically from its sense of physical force and interactions onto the more abstract, psychological realm of moral interactions (Johnson 1987:16). We learn physically that we can trust a suspension bridge across a stream because of the forces involved—the tight knots and strong wooden strips, or that we can trust the upright walls of our home not to fall in on us because of the forces holding the wall in position. We use bodily force to move objects. Metaphorically these experiences of physical force are projected onto abstract domains such as the moral sphere within which *torah* acts as a moral force. *Torah* is trustworthy because one can rely on it but also because it “forces” the unwise person in the direction of wisdom.

9a(8a)

The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. פְּקוּדֵי יְהוָה יִשְׂרָיִם מְשִׂמְחֵי לֵב

The word יִשְׂרָיִם (right – ישר √) carries the basic meaning of “straight” and is here metaphorised onto the moral sphere. The image schema of *path* forms the basis for this ethical description of torah. The expression מְשִׂמְחֵי לֵב (Pi. part. – giving joy to the heart) denotes emotion-fused thought (mood) (Malina 1993:74). Emotion is a function of the visceral organs (Leder 1990:136) such as the heart. The “heart” (לֵב) symbolises the inner person in this instance (Schroer & Staubli 2001:42-43).

9b(8b)

The commands of Yahweh are pure, making the eyes shine. מִצְוֹת יְהוָה בְּרָה מְאִירַת עֵינַיִם

The term בְּרָה (pure) metaphorises cleanliness in terms of torah. Brown (2002:100) asserts that the ethos of torah is given cosmic stature by means of this metaphor because it reflects the sun metaphor. “[T]he word becomes transformed into a cosmic image, ‘giving light and ‘reviving the soul.’” The image schema of *pure-dirty* plays a role in the formulation of this metaphor and has to do with the cult and whole-bodiedness. In the culture and cult of Israel, bodily purity played a major role as part of the notion of whole-bodiedness (Berquist 2002:11, 16). Cleansing of the body-parts was a regular bodily ritual and experience. Washing of certain objects brings forth brightness. It is not difficult to explain that the metaphor of the commands of Yahweh serving as a purifier, bringing shine to the eyes, comes forth from bodily experience of cleansing.

The expression מְאִירַת עֵינַיִם (making the eyes shine) is a metaphor describing emotion.

10a(9a)

The fear of Yahweh¹³ is pure, standing for ever יִרְאַת יְהוָה טְהוֹרָה עוֹמְדָה לְעַד

The term טְהוֹרָה (pure), like בָּרָה in 10a, refers to the cult context (whole-bodied-ness) but stems from the *pure-dirty* and *cleansing* bodily experience and image schemata. The expression עוֹמְדָה לְעַד (standing for ever) is a metaphor for the “fear of Yahweh” based on bodily experience of standing firmly. The mental image schema of *inflexibility* is at the root of this metaphor.

10b(9b)

The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether מוֹשְׁפְטֵי יְהוָה אֱמֶת צְדָקוֹ יְהוָה: righteous

Both אֱמֶת and צְדָקוֹ are metaphorical projections onto the ethical sphere. Truth (אֱמֶת) originates from the bodily based image schema of *firmness* or *stability*, while the verb צְדָקוֹ reflects “order” in the broad sense (Murray 2000:29). The order of the path of the sun and the rhythmic order of day and night, relate to the moral order inspired by torah.

11a(10a)

They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold הַנְּחָמָדִים מְזָהָב וּמִפֶּזֶז רַב

This metaphor is stated first in the comparative degree followed by the superlative degree. The Niphal participle הַנְּחָמָדִים מֵ- (more desirable than...) is an example of emotion-fused thought (desire). Desire as a specific kind of emotion involves an intertwining of visceral and ecstatic features of the body (Leder 1990:56). The desire for pure gold can be wealth driven or it can be cosmetically driven, both relating to bodily wants prompted by what the eyes observe. The quantitative notion of “more” results from the *verticality*-image schema (including more-less experience) which emerges from our tendency to employ an up-down orientation (Johnson 1987:xiv-xv). More is up, and less is down — common everyday experiences such as pouring water into a mug or a glass. The torah is more desirable than gold.

¹³ “Fear of Yahweh” in this verse is a description of torah in line with the other parallel terms for torah and it does not in the first instance refer to human emotion (also see Ps 34:12; 111:10; Prov 1:7-9; 2:1-6).

11b(10b)

They are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb וּמְחֻקִּים מִדְּבַשׁ וְנֹפֶת צוּפִים:

This metaphor is also stated first in the comparative degree followed by the superlative degree. The taste sense and the experience of sweetness form the basis for this metaphor. The comparative and superlative expressions are quantity driven (more-less) as in the previous expression in 11a and are also based on the *verticality* image schema.

12a(11a)

By them is your servant warned גַּם־עֲבָדְךָ נִזְהָר בָּהֶם

The Niphal verb נִזְהָר (warned) expresses self-expressive speech metaphorised onto torah and eventually onto the sphere of the divine.

12b(11b)

In keeping them there is great reward בְּשִׁמְרָם עֲקֹב רָב:

The Qal infinitive שִׁמְרָם (keeping/watching) emanates from the sight organ, the eye. This is an example of emotion-fused thought as well as purposeful action (Malina 1993:74). The act of guarding or keeping demands entails the constant studying and practising of torah. The idea of a great reward emanates from the fact that the human body possesses a built-in telic function, which can be called *hope*. The actions of the human body are motivated by outer-directed concern (Leder 1990:19) and focuses upon the goal of the activity (:20). In the faithful keeping of Yahweh's torah great reward is awaited.

Concepts such as perfect; trustworthy; wise; right; joy; pure; making glow the eyes; sure; righteous; precious; sweet, all emanate from the human body in the sense of expressing value, emotion or perception of the senses. In the whole of stanza 2, the notion of self-expressive speech is present in the mentioning of the torah and its parallel concepts including where the suffixes refer to these.

In relation to the sun-metaphor functioning in stanza 1, torah becomes cosmically expansive and complete (Brown 2002:57, 93). "As the sun, full of strength and exuding joy, makes its trek across the domed sky, penetrating the darkness with its rays, so tôrâ performs an enlivening and purifying function

for the reader” (:90). “The ethos of *tôrâ* is given cosmic stature, and the mythos of the sun is imbued with ethical force” (:100).¹⁴

According to Lönig and Zenger (quoted by Fretheim 2005:143) this psalm is a “bold attempt to think the voice of creation and the voice of the Torah together in such a way that the voice of creation on the one hand becomes Torah and so that, on the other hand, the Torah is declared to be a concentration of the voice of creation”. Stanza 2 pictures torah in comparable terms with the heavenly bodies. “[T]he law is as reliable, clear, life-giving, spirit-reviving, enlightening, joy-giving, supportive, guiding, piercing, and sure as are day and night and the workings of the heavenly bodies” (Fretheim 2005:144). The biblical law is, therefore, “of the same order as the laws of nature, the inner mechanism of creation” (:144). The descriptions of the value of torah relate directly to the glory of God reflected upon in stanza 1.¹⁵ Torah and the laws of nature unify so that torah enables the supplicant “to bring his own life into harmony with the rhythm of the cosmos and to have access to the creative and life-giving energy that drives the world” (Levinson quoted by Fretheim 2005:144). For the supplicant’s life to be whole and fruitful, he must live in harmony with torah as well as with natural law in ways that are shaped by mindfulness, reverence, and gratitude to the source of life, namely God (Fisher & Van Utt 2007:933).

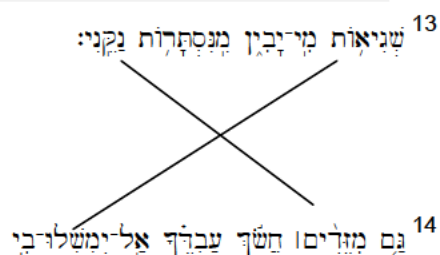
3 Stanza 3 (vv. 13-15)

Stanza 3 constitutes the petition of the supplicant comprising a plea for forgiveness and preservation from transgression (vv 13-14), and a closing prayer (v. 15) seeking Yahweh’s approval of his words and meditation. The earlier hymnic style of the prayer is replaced by personal emotion directed towards God but linked to torah and morality. Spieckermann (1989:71) asserts that “[i]n V. 12-15 spricht nicht mehr der Toraverliebte, sondern der Toraveränstigte”.¹⁶ The chiasmic pattern containing imperatives found in verses 13 and 14, stresses the possibility that the motivation behind this prayer as a whole stems from the supplicant’s yearning for forgiveness of sin.

¹⁴ Clines (1974:8-144) argues that Psalm 19:8-10a may be seen as a meditation upon the law of Yahweh as the source of wisdom, in the light of the Genesis 3 narrative concerning the tree of knowledge. If so, according to him, the background of the first stanza is the creation narrative of Genesis 1 and that of stanza 2 the fall narrative of Genesis 2-3.

¹⁵ Contrary to Wagner (1999:255) who states that the dialogue of the heavens was speech *about* God, while torah embodies Yahweh’s own speech, therefore, torah is far superior to the revelation offered by the cosmos.

¹⁶ I disagree with Spieckermann that verses 12-15 had been added to the psalm by a secondary character. See my argument in what follows.



In this regard, Seybold (1996:85-86) asserts that this last strophe (vv. 12-15) is the key to our understanding of the psalm as a whole. The first two strophes have been introduced in preparation of the prayer of petition in the third strophe.¹⁷

In this stanza, the supplicant’s meditation on creation and torah, Yahweh as his rock and redeemer, and the supplicant’s begging for redemption from his sin form the climax of his yearning for whole-bodiedness. If all of this will please Yahweh (v. 15a), the supplicant will experience whole-bodiedness again.

13a(12a)

Who can discern his errors? שְׁגִיאוֹת מִיָּבִין

The verb יָבִין describes emotion-fused thought (Malina 1993:74). Language is a profoundly embodied affair, and so is thought (Leder 1990:121). Thought, is logically and temporally dependent upon speech as employed in the public setting (:123). And thought involves the hidden activities of the brain. The question asked in verse 13a directs the attention towards wrong-doing (שְׁגִיאוֹת – 13b) or moral deviation from the teachings of torah, which is prominent in stanza 3.

13b(12b)-14

^{13b}Forgive my hidden faults. שְׁגִיאוֹת מִיָּבִין ^{13b}

¹⁴Keep your servant also from wilful sins; may they not rule over me. גַּם מִזֵּדִים חֹשֶׁךְ עֲבָרָךְ אֱלֹהֵי־מִשְׁלוֹבֵי אֲזֵ אֵי־תָם ¹⁴

Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression וְנִקְיִתִי מִפֶּשַׁע רָב:

¹⁷ Craigie (1983:182-183), Wagner (1999:249), and Gerstenberger 1991 [1988]:103 turn the argument around by saying that the psalmist’s contemplation of the heavens and the divine law lead to a heartfelt request for forgiveness and wholeness.

This is an example of the social construction of body awareness, namely social dys-appearance¹⁸ on the moral or ethical level (Johnson 1987:97). Yahweh is requested to acquit the supplicant of his hidden faults (נִסְתָּרוֹת – v. 13b); to keep him away from wilful sins (מַזְדִּים חָשֶׁךְ – v. 14a); he pleads for his sin not to rule over him (אֶל-יִמְשִׁלוּ-בִי – v. 14b); so that he can be blameless (complete) and innocent (אִיתָם וְנִקְיָתִי – v. 14c). Sin and guilt stem from error or wrong-doing, which is a bodily based experience and which can be metaphorised onto the moral sphere. From a bodily perspective, in the words of Johnson (1987:16), we

project metaphorically from our sense of physical force and interactions onto the more abstract, psychological realm of moral interactions. Our moral responsibility consists in our making commitments and performing (or refraining from) actions that are not physically compelled. So moral responsibility is understood metaphorically on the basis of our experience of more bodily responses. It is such disruptive moments in one's life and bodily experience that demand 'hermeneutic and practical strategies of repair'.

It is the hidden faults, the wilful sins, the force of sin ruling over him that compel the supplicant to implement strategies of repair, such as writing this poem, speaking to Yahweh in prayer, and humbling himself before Yahweh.

15a(14a)

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your face

יְהִי לְרִצּוֹן אֱמִרָתִי וְהִגִּיוֹן לִבִּי לְפָנֶיךָ

These words relate to all the instances in stanza 1 where the proclamation of the skies/heavens is mentioned, as well as to stanza 2 where the effect of torah on the "heart/life" of a person is metaphorised. In effect the supplicant, in collaboration with the heavens and torah, also announces God's glory and the value of torah. The wish of the supplicant in 15a is a final example of bodily-based speech. "The words of my mouth" is an expression linked to the mouth and to verbalised language, and includes the physical functions of the brain but also bodily functions and mental image schemata fundamental to the metaphors used in the poem. "Meditation of my heart" is a metaphor describing the inward deliberation of the supplicant, which is constructed on the model of deliberation with others (Perelman & Olbrecht-Tyteca 1969:14). During the process

¹⁸ Leder (1990:83-84) distinguishes between *disappearance* and *dys-appearance* of the body. The first term describes the state when the body is functioning normally resulting in an unawareness of one's own body, while the second term describes the body in a 'dys-' state, a bad state, which demands a direct and focal thematization.

of meditation the supplicant became convinced that his choice of metaphors (based on his bodily experiences and related image schemata) will be pleasing in Yahweh's face, namely, will be acceptable to Yahweh. This expression describing Yahweh is, of course, also a human bodily-based description of human emotion metaphorised onto God.

15b(14b)

Yahweh my rock and my redeemer

יְהוָה צִרְיִי וְגֹאֲלִי

The last metaphor used for Yahweh, namely "my rock and my redeemer" is prevalent in the Old Testament. The realm of nature is metaphorised onto the realm of the divine in order to describe Yahweh as the source of redemption. The expression mirrors solid trust in Yahweh. The first person singular suffixes (my rock; my redeemer) contribute to the bodily expression of communion (Leder 1990: 167-173) with God, creation, and torah searched after by the supplicant to form one body and to restore whole-bodiedness.

In the last stanza the petitioner is searching for unity with God. Because the body is transpersonal in the sense that it can reach out to its surroundings, to other people, to nature, to torah, to God, "each visceral or sensorimotor function can become a channel for the experience of communion" (Leder 1990:172). His desire for unity with God is thus bodily based and includes his unity with creation and torah.

D CONCLUSION

It is clear from the analysis of the psalm that there is a tight relationship between the proclamation of God's glory by creation and the revelation of God's will through torah. The juxtaposition of creation and its announcement of God's glory with torah and its metaphorical, physical effects on bodily senses, is bodily based and expresses completeness. In this way creation and torah are metaphorised as a complete, whole body involving the declaration of God's glory and his will. No hierarchy between creation and torah or dichotomy between body and soul is involved.

It is also clear that the supplicant's strong desire for redemption is bodily based. It is his mental awareness of sin and his bodily experience of wrongdoing, which compel him to enter the realm of inward deliberation. The moral dys-functioning experienced by the supplicant via bodily means urges the need to step into a process of self-humiliation before the glory of God as experienced through creation and through torah. The comprehensive declaration of the glory of God by creation and torah, and the willingness to physically and mentally acknowledge and understand and accept that declaration in humiliation before God, are to the supplicant the way to please Yahweh and to receive redemption

or the state of whole-bodiedness. If Yahweh accepts his meditation and speech on the complete unity of creation and torah as means by which God's glory is declared, as well as his own humiliation before God, then whole-bodiedness will be restored in the petitioner's own life. The supplicant thematised his body at a problematic time in his life in a way which would not have been necessary, were he a whole person. He selectively chose his metaphors in such a way as to express wholeness/completeness in order to meet his desire to experience wholeness in everyday life again.

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