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## The Function of Prayers of Ritual Mourning in the Second Temple Period

Performative expressions of grief are enacted and reenacted in all of the world's major religions. This essay will discuss how we might understand a different function of the ritualized mourning practices that accompany the prayers from the Second Temple period. We propose that prayers from this time strategically arouse grief in order to generate first-hand perceptions of foundational events and in effect, to create presence from absence. This type of study falls under a larger category of embodied cognition which understands experiential frames to assist in the imaginative enactment of new experiences.<sup>1</sup> Second Temple prayers are often situated in a narrative context that describes practices of self-diminishment: fasting, sackcloth, ashes, depilatory acts, anguished weeping, collapsing, and hands opened in supplication. The prayers themselves also contribute to the diminishment of the pray-er through the enactment of petitions, confession of sinfulness, and confession of God's greatness. The effects of these practices and prayers can predispose one to experientially reenact grief, which can in turn, lead to rumination, a cognitive state in which presence is made from absence. Such experiences, while they are not predetermined to happen, can help us to imagine how prayers and mourning practices functioned in the generation of apocalyptic visions in the Second Temple period.

The first topic that I will explore is how the cultivation of the emotional state of grief and rumination are natural cognitive processes that are designed to produce experiences of presence from absence. By this I mean a sensory perception of the presence of otherworldly beings, either as a perception of alterity, or as an experience of a vision or voice. Secondly we will consider how such ritual experiences might be understood as social mechanisms that assisted in generating an awareness of God's presence during a period in which the deity's absence was especially felt during times of political uncertainty.

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<sup>1</sup> Lawrence Barsalou et al., "Embodiment in Religious Knowledge," *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 5 (2005): 14–57.

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The reuse of traditional scriptural language in the composition of prayers during the Second Temple period thwarts any attempt to recover a text's original historical author.<sup>2</sup> While form criticism is useful for drawing attention to broader patterns in prayer forms and historical contexts, it unhelpfully severs prayers from their larger narrative contexts. Because historical criticism has focused on origins, many prayers from the Second Temple period were unaccounted for by classic form-critical categories, which were oriented toward ancient Israelite religion. As first person texts, prayers are more helpfully understood through performance studies than form criticism. While we cannot fully recover the historical author of Second Temple prayers, we can aim to understand the kinds of responses that these texts elicited in the one who prays them and in those people who witness and possibly participated in these prayer events. This focus on the performance of and responses to prayers as texts that were enacted and re-enacted also draws our attention to the role of emotion as scripted experiences that are strategically performed. Emotional language in Second Temple prayers are not records of an "original" interiority of a now unknown ancient author but rather a highly rhetorically first-person script by which ancients sought to cultivate desired dispositions in the ritual performer and spectators. In other words, we will examine these Second Temple prayers, not from the usual historical-critical questions that seek to know who authored the prayer. We also will not seek to investigate the process of how the prayer came to be composed and the manner in which scripture is interpreted or redeployed in the prayer. Instead, we will ask the question of how can the prayer (and the things that happen subsequently) be understood to function as a social mechanism that enhanced cooperative living and synchronous behavior?

In this way, our interest in Daniel's prayer goes past the text of the prayer itself (Dan 9:4b–19) to include the subsequent visionary experience of the angel Gabriel (Dan 9:20–27). While we will discuss how the self-diminishing practices and prayers together can be understood to contribute to the cultivation of the vision of Gabriel, the encounter itself is not one that is determined to happen. Instead, Daniel's experience of the angel is presented as an unpredictable and unexpected event, even though the practices and prayers are the necessary conditions for its possibility.<sup>3</sup> Daniel is acted upon by the vision: "And while I was

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<sup>2</sup> Judith H. Newman, "The Scripturalization of Prayer in Exilic and Second Temple Judaism," in *Prayers that Cite Scripture*, ed. James L. Kugel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 7–24; Esther G. Chazon, "Scripture and Prayer in 'The Words of the Luminaries,'" in *Prayers that Cite Scripture*, 25–41.

<sup>3</sup> Amira Mittermaier, "Dreams from Elsewhere: Muslim Subjectivities Beyond the Trope of Self-Cultivation," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S.)* 18 (2012): 247–265. Dreams,

speaking in the prayer, the man, Gabriel whom I had seen in a vision previously flying swiftly, *came to me*, at the moment of the evening sacrifice” וְעוֹד אֲנִי מְדַבֵּר “בתפלה והאיש גבריאל אשר ראיתי בחזון בתחלה מעף ביעף נגע אלי כעת מנחת-ערב: (Dan 9:21). Here, what I wish to note is Daniel’s experience of the angel is reported as “happening to” him; the otherworldly being is said to come at Daniel unexpectedly like something swooping out of the sky. Events like this are constitutive of how Daniel comes to be regarded as a “visionary,” “seer,” or “prophet” by later Jewish and Christian communities. The event also illustrates how the ancient self negotiated and was transformed by unexpected encounters with the other-world.

The prayer in Daniel 9 is an ideal passage to examine as a grief-induced religious experience. The chapter begins with Daniel consulting the books of the sixth-century BCE prophet Jeremiah in the hopes of seeking an answer to the question of how long the exile will last. After engaging in highly-stylized funerary rites of fasting, sackcloth, and ashes, Daniel offers a prayer that includes a lengthy confession of sin that specifies not only his and the people’s sinfulness, but also that of every Israelite everywhere and at every time in history (9:5–8). Daniel’s confession of God’s greatness (9:15) underscores the people’s sinfulness, the just nature of their dire straits, and God’s righteous judgment to enforce the curses described in the Mosaic law (9:4b; 9:7a; 9:14–16). The prayer concludes with a series of petitions pleading for God’s attention that refer to features of embodiment that evoke a sense of the deity’s presence (9:17–19). These petitions further subordinate Daniel, who has already positioned himself among the sinful in the preceding confession of sins. Here vivid and striking imagery about the invisible deity’s rhetorically constructed body is found (e.g., God’s mighty hand [v.15], God’s shining face [v.17], inclining ear [v.18], open eyes [v.18], and acting body [v.19]). The prayer is then followed by a vision of the angel Gabriel who answers Daniel (9:20–23) and reveals an interpretation of the Jeremian prophecy (9:24–27).

Many details from Daniel 9 cohere with Second Temple prayers and practices, such as highly stereotypical and scripturalizing language, and stylized gestures. At the same time, several referential details have been incorporated into the presentation that suggest a high degree of realism. These include the specification of a date which identifies the imperial ruler at the time (vv. 1–2), the occasion for the prayer which is Daniel’s personal longing to know an answer to the end of the devastation (vv. 2–3), the vividness with which the deity’s body is described

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like visions, are unpredictable and cannot be cultivated; instead, such experiences are given (p. 254).

(vv. 17–19), the first-person reporting of events, the details about the precise moment when the angelic encounter occurred (vv. 20–23), and the lengthy quoting of the angel’s words themselves (vv. 24–27). All of these details make for a dynamic account that can be easily visualized in the mind’s imagination, making the retelling of the events vivid and compelling for subsequent readers.

According to the biblical text, Daniel cultivated a visionary experience of the angel Gabriel in such a state of heightened receptivity. This is presented to the reader as the mechanism by which Daniel came to acquire a new understanding of Jeremiah’s sixth-century BCE prophecy. In addition to the practices and prayers, Daniel’s meditation upon and reenactment of the prophet Jeremiah’s anguish would have added a further layer of self-diminishment to Daniel’s experience.

Both Jewish and Christian groups in antiquity found the chronomessianic aspects of Daniel’s vision to be compelling enough to form communities of resistance that banded to revolt against much larger imperial powers, such as the Jewish Revolt against Rome in 67–74 CE, an act that ultimately led to the destruction of the Second Temple.<sup>4</sup> While we cannot verify the historicity of the events, the vividness of the description and realistic elements would have allowed later readers to receive these writings as if they had actually happened. Experiences of texts, whether fiction or non-fiction, are capable of producing similar types of embodied responses in the reader. Our conclusion will discuss briefly how these textualized experiences of prayer and visions might have contributed to actual human experiences of heightened commitment and solidarity.

## 1 Grief-Induced Experiences

If grief is understood to be a complex state of desolation marked by personal longing, the study of emotions is a logical place at which to begin an investigation of how religious practices and prayer can be said to function in Second Temple times. Integrated approaches that examine the human experience of emotion show that regions of the brain that are aroused during first-hand experiences of certain emotions such as disgust or pain are similarly activated when individuals read enactively about such experiences or are asked to empathize with them. The human mind’s capacity for imaginative engagement with the experiences of

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<sup>4</sup> Anthony J. Tomasino, “Oracles of Insurrection: The Prophetic Catalyst of the Great Revolt,” *JJS* 59 (2008): 86–111.

others, whether those events are read about or heard as second-hand reports, appears to have to do more with how those events are conveyed rather than about whether they are verifiably true or not.<sup>5</sup> While this point may be obvious to anyone who has found him or herself engrossed by a novel, it needs to be stated in discussions like these because too often, the conversation can turn to questions of historicity: was there really a historical Ezra? Did Daniel really see an angel? Were these texts really written by a historical Teacher of Righteousness? Such manoeuvres deflect attention away from what I think are the more interesting questions concerning the dynamics and function of prayer in antiquity, and they say more about our disciplinary pre-occupations than about the experience of these texts in the Second Temple period. Richly contoured imaginative worlds are constructed by the rhetorical use of language and the first person voice which draw a reader into the text and assist in the generation of an experience of that text. A text's capacity to compel a reader to have certain types of experiences or to act in a particular way does not hinge upon its historical facticity.

## 1.1 Modern and Pre-modern Mourning Rituals

The ancient context of the book of Daniel requires a pre-modern understanding of grief which highlights its ritualized and performative aspects. In antiquity, the social expression of grief (known as mourning) was highly regulated by public policies; it was not viewed principally as a spontaneous outpouring of interior anguish. Meyer Abram's metaphors of the mirror and the lamp may be helpful here. The lamp signifies the modern emphasis on the self's interior which erupts forth in unique brilliance.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, the pre-modern conceptualization, represented by the mirror, is one in which the self engages in a complex mimetic process of enacting and reenacting received patterns. The expectation that prayers express the distinct interiority of the pray-er resonates with modern readers, but it may not be the best way to describe pre-modern experiences of prayer.

While modern expressions of grief and ritual mourning highlight the heartfelt anguish felt over the loss of a personal relationship, pre-modern understandings of mourning emphasize its ritualized and performative aspects. In pre-

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<sup>5</sup> Cain Todd, "Attending Emotionally to Fiction," *Journal of Value Inquiry* (19 February 2013): 449–465.

<sup>6</sup> Meyer H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953).

modern societies, grief was routinely enacted by professionals who had neither personal experience nor strong affection for the deceased, highlighting the performative dimension of mourning. In antiquity, the social expression of grief was highly regulated by public policies. We can see glimpses of this social regulation of grief today in the public policies that frequently restrict who has the right to grieve in the workplace, oftentimes excluding unmarried partners; ex-spouses; and in some instances although less-frequently now, same-sex partners. Modern Western English-speaking cultures have also developed highly individualized expressions of grieving with more and more people designing their own mourning rituals (e.g., roadside memorials; memorializing the life of loved one with a funerary tattoo made from the ashes of the dearly departed). Some attribute the modern emphasis on the increasingly private individualization of grief (even in forms of public mourning) to Romanticism which celebrated conjugal love, not arranged marriages.<sup>7</sup> The expectation that grief expresses the distinct interiority of the individual resembles the modern ideal of prayer as an individual's heartfelt private conversation with God.<sup>8</sup> Even so, it is still the case that many cultures and religions preserve a tradition of ritualized mourning.

Anthropologists recognize that rituals do not predetermine that uniform experiences will occur among masses of individuals; yet in the case of mourning, the media perpetuate these illusory images of a comprehensive and consistent public experience of grief. Tony Walter in his essay on “the New Public Mourning” writes that decisions about which images are used in news coverage of public mourning influence how people perceive a grieving nation or even globe. Walter traces this back to the late 1990s to England's mourning over the death of Princess Diana. While the “few who came to pay respects were in tears, and even fewer cried aloud, television cameras focused on the one person in tears, cutting away to an apparently large crowd, giving the [misleading] impression of thousands in tears.”<sup>9</sup> These critiques of the illusory nature of the socially normative role of mourning during certain occasions help to reinforce our concern to keep in mind that states of grief aroused by practices of mourning had *diverse* purposes and produced multiple and undetermined responses in individuals that exceed that of

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<sup>7</sup> Tony Walter, “The New Public Mourning,” in *Handbook of Bereavement Research and Practice: Advances in Theory and Intervention*, ed. Margaret S. Stroebe et al. (Washington: American Psychological Association, 2008), 241–262. Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death: The Classic History of Western Attitudes toward Death over the Last One Thousand Years* (London: Allen Lane, 1981).

<sup>8</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, III.xx.4,5,16.

<sup>9</sup> Walter, “The New Public Mourning,” 247.

lamenting over death. So too, modern studies have begun to recognize that grief is less like an emotion and more like a complex state of distress in response to loss.<sup>10</sup>

While the modern mind typically understands emotions as a glimpse of a person's interiority that erupts forth, "the classical conception of the emotions (...) looked more to agency and effect on social standing than on one's interior experiences."<sup>11</sup> For the ancients, emotions were not uniformly accessible to all since the passions (*pathe*) were experienced and negotiated only within the context of a highly stratified society. Emotions that are understood as universal today would simply not have been available to those without power or privilege (e.g., indignation presumes a person's dignity). In antiquity, grief, i.e., distress marked by personal loss, differed strikingly from the classical Greek notion of *pathe* because grief was experienced by all, *regardless* of one's power or prestige, making it closer to a physical pain than a passion.<sup>12</sup> So too, modern studies have begun to recognize that grief is less like an emotion and more like a complex state of distress in response to loss.<sup>13</sup>

There were several ways of describing the experience of grief in antiquity. The Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo describes grief (*lupē*) as generating powerlessness, a sense of immobility, smallness, and the loss of words (*Mos.* i. 139; *Quod. Omn. Prob.* 159; *Quis Her.* 270; *Virt.* 88; *Ios.* 214).<sup>14</sup> The natural regret that arises in states of longing perhaps can account for grief's well-attested associ-

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**10** George A. Bonanno, "Grief and Emotion: A Social-Functional Perspective," in *Handbook of Bereavement Research: Consequences, Coping, and Care*, ed. Margaret S. Stroebe et al. (Washington: American Psychological Association, 2001), 493–516.

**11** David Konstan, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 258.

**12** Daniel King, "Galen and Grief: The Construction of Grief in Galen's Clinical Work," in *Unveiling Emotions II. Emotions in Greece and Rome: Texts, Images, Material Culture*, ed. Angelos Chaniotis and Pierre Ducrey (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2013), 251–272.

**13** Bonanno, "Grief and Emotion," 493–516. The English word emotion has been critiqued by Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), for being an overly inclusive word in the modern period, masking significant distinctive elements and experiences that were recognized in premodern societies. Dixon's point is important and significant, however, the word emotion remains useful insofar as it refers to the biological expression of endocrine changes or heart palpitations, e.g., the physiological changes that could be detected by another in the form of trembling, tears, blushing, etc. In this sense the discussion offered here is a redescriptive project that uses the language of religion and religious experience but which acknowledges that ancient societies would not themselves categorize their experiences of grief as "emotion." See Brent Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

**14** Jerome Neyrey, "The Absence of Jesus' Emotions – The Lucan Redaction of Lk 22,39–46," *Bib* 61 (1980): 153–171, esp. 156–157.

ation with guilt or sinfulness, and may perhaps reflect the effects of a natural process of ruminating over what had or had not been done during the lifetime of the deceased. The outward expression of grief was strictly governed by social expectations. While modern western English-speaking cultures have developed highly individualized expressions of grieving, it is still the case that many cultures and religions preserve some tradition of ritualization for mourning. In pre-modern societies, grief was routinely enacted by professionals who had neither personal experience nor strong affection for the deceased, highlighting the performative dimension of mourning.

## 1.2 Rumination – Making Presence from Absence

The cognitive and emotional processes that occur naturally during grief known as rumination can be said to resemble those experienced during the ritualization of mourning which is enacted and reenacted in religious contexts. Pascal Boyer and Pierre Liénard distinguished such ritualization behaviors from mundane routinization, in which repetitive acts come to be performed with some degree of automaticity over time.<sup>15</sup> They acknowledge that many naturally occurring experiences that are neither religious nor ritualized exhibit such features. Leonard Martin and Abraham Tesser write that it is possible to define rumination generically as a reference “to several varieties of recurrent thinking, including making sense, problem solving, reminiscence, and anticipation.”<sup>16</sup> Ritualized experiences of grief within the context of highly controlled public expression of mourning can arouse the state of rumination, a phenomenon that naturally resembles the repetitive behaviors of ritualization, albeit with certain differences.

In the context of mourning, rumination is an obsessive on-going longing for that which has been lost. Enacting the practices associated with mourning by performing highly stylized funerary behaviors and by uttering self-deprecating statements of sinfulness can generate a predisposition to experience bodily the self-diminishing state associated with grieving and rumination, although such

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<sup>15</sup> Pascal Boyer and Pierre Liénard, “Whence Collective Rituals? A Cultural Selection Model of Ritualized Behavior?,” *American Anthropologist* 108 (2006): 815; idem, “Why Ritualized Behavior? Precaution Systems and Action Parsing in Developmental, Pathological and Cultural Rituals,” *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 29 (2006): 606, 611.

<sup>16</sup> Leonard L. Martin and Abraham Tesser, “Clarifying Our Thoughts,” in *Ruminative Thoughts: Advances in Social Cognition* 9, ed. Robert S. Wyer Jr. (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 1996), 192.

experiences are not predetermined to happen.<sup>17</sup> The naturally associative aspects of memory and emotion can generate a state in which personally significant memories of loss or devastation can be imagined from cultivating practices such that a state of vivid bodily “experiencing” is achieved.<sup>18</sup>

Cognitive processes associated with ritualized experiences of mourning can be said to share similarities with other naturally occurring states of distress due to personal loss which are not occasioned by death. A psychobiological study comparing grief experienced as a result of death and as a result of rejected romantic love demonstrated this, concluding that common areas of the brain are activated. Such ritually induced intrusive cognitive states fit the kinds of natural experiences that Boyer and Liénard associate with ritualized behavior.<sup>19</sup>

The complex state of grief can be described as a strong “yearning and sadness,” sometimes accompanied by feelings of guilt over what has been lost.<sup>20</sup> Individuals in bereavement often report experiences of intense introspection and examination. Studies of the post-traumatic growth that sometimes follows grief have noted the critical role of rumination in bereft individuals, observing a correlation between rumination and experiences of transformation.<sup>21</sup> While rumination was previously thought to be maladaptive by prolonging the bereavement process, preventing an individual from moving beyond their grieving, more recent studies have shown that this is not an avoidance strategy but rather a way by which the bereaved continually confronts the reality of the loss, ultimately resulting in a greater frequency of reported experiences of transformative growth.<sup>22</sup>

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17 For a discussion of the performative aspects of mourning practices and penitential prayer language, see Angela K. Harkins, “A Phenomenological Study of Penitential Elements and their Strategic Arousal of Emotion in the Qumran Hodayat (1QH<sup>a</sup> cols. 1[?]-8),” in *Ancient Jewish Prayers and Emotions: Emotions associated with Jewish prayer in and around the Second Temple period*, ed. Stefan C. Reif and Renate Egger-Wenzel, DCLS 26 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 297–316.

18 Tanya M. Luhrmann and Rachel Morgain, “Prayer as Inner Sense Cultivation: An Attentional Learning Theory of Spiritual Experience,” *Ethos* 40 (2012): 359–389; also Thomas Csordas, *The Sacred Self* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

19 Boyer and Liénard, “Whence Collective Rituals?,” and idem, “Why Ritualized Behavior?”

20 M. Katherine Shear, “The Cutting Edge: Getting Straight about Grief,” *Depression and Anxiety* 29 (2012): 461–464.

21 Peter Bray, “Accentuating the Positive: Self-actualising Post-traumatic Growth Processes,” in *How Trauma Resonates: Art, Literature, and Theoretical Practice*, ed. Mark Callaghan (Oxford: Interdisciplinary Press, 2014), 149–162; Lawrence G. Calhoun et al., “Positive Outcomes Following Bereavement: Paths to Posttraumatic Growth,” *Psychologica Belgica* 50 (2010): 125–143.

22 Maarten C. Eisma, “Avoidance Processes Mediate the Relationship between Rumination and Symptoms of Complicated Grief and Depression Following Loss,” *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 122 (2013): 961–970.

In the case of both romantic love and death, grieving can also bring about an intense idealization of the one who is lost, a phenomenon detected in fMRI studies.<sup>23</sup> Such states of hyperawareness and imaginative rumination can be the means whereby the bereaved creates presence from absence. Goodkin and others have included this sense of vivid contact with the deceased in their definition of grief: “Grief includes depressed mood, yearning, loneliness, *searching for the deceased, the sense of the deceased being present, and the sense of being in ongoing communication with that person*” (italics mine).<sup>24</sup> In other words, the naturally occurring cognitive processes associated with grief, viz., rumination, make it possible to perceive the presence of someone who is not physically there. The natural rumination over vivid episodic memories suggests an evolutionary response in which “both separation and grief reactions are deficit-driven reactions to loss of a loved one, whose function is reunification.”<sup>25</sup> These aspects of grief are especially interesting if we consider the bodily emotional and cognitive processes that enable the generation of an experience of presence and strong desire for eventual reunification to be the mechanism by which Second Temple communities were able to recover an experience of foundational events with first-hand intensity after the rupture of the exile. The psychophysiology of longing, vivid presence, and idealization that accompanies the experience of grief is not phenomenally dissimilar to the Deuteronomic activity of “searching” or “seeking” which is the theological underpinning of these Second Temple prayers.

Boyer calls the general cognitive processes that allow for the vivid perceptions of someone who is not there to be an expression of the evolutionary adaptiveness of imagination, which participates in the larger aim of prosociality by constructing an ethical constraint.<sup>26</sup> The ability to imagine vivid egocentric emotional memories (such as the ones that are generated from ruminative states of grieving) can contribute to the imaginative processes that can compel one to follow a law, even if no one is watching. This is because one can mentally construct the presence of someone who is not there and vividly imagine the consequences for not

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**23** John Archer and Helen Fisher, “Bereavement and Reactions to Romantic Rejection: A Psychobiological Perspective,” in *Handbook of Bereavement Research and Practice*, ed. Margaret S. Stroebe et al. (Washington: American Psychological Association, 2008), 349–371.

**24** Karl Goodkin et al., “Physiological Effects of Bereavement and Bereavement Support Group Interventions,” in *Handbook of Bereavement Research: Consequences, Coping, and Care*, ed. Margaret S. Stroebe et al. (Washington: American Psychological Association, 2001), 672.

**25** Archer and Fisher, “Bereavement and Reactions to Romantic Rejection,” 359–360.

**26** Pascal Boyer, “What are Memories for? Functions of Recall in Cognition and Culture,” in *Memory in Mind and Culture*, ed. Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 16.

performing the right behavior.<sup>27</sup> In this way, the mind's capacity to make presence from absence is an adaptive function.

The prayer in Daniel 9, like other prayers from this period, surely spoke to the experiences of longing for God had by those who returned to Judea after the sixth-century BCE expulsion by the Babylonians. This emphasis on mourning and rumination may have assisted in cultivating states of rumination and other imaginative processes that allowed groups throughout the Second Temple period to access God's presence. This may help us to understand the relationship that these prayers of ritual mourning have with covenant remaking experiences.<sup>28</sup> The rumination aroused by these practices and prayers have the capacity to create vivid egocentric emotional memories and states of longing and rumination that would have allowed for a way of perceiving God's presence during times of great political uncertainty when God's absence would be most acute. Imaginative emotional memory making would have been instrumental for these communities to access foundational events from the past with the intensity of first-hand experience. In so doing, the emotional memory frame would also allow for the creative updating of those received traditions,<sup>29</sup> allowing the foundational events from the past to be re-imagined in such a way as to maintain their adaptive relevance in new circumstances. Jeremiah's vivid sixth-century BCE prophecy concerning the duration of the exile has been preserved in a book that is highly charged emotionally and can be understood to be a foundational event of revelatory disclosure upon which Daniel meditates.

### 1.3 Petition, Confession, and Imaginative Meditation

Rumination allows for the re-experiencing of past foundational events with a first-hand intensity. In a similar way, the cognitive processes that are aroused in states of grief can allow for an imaginative generation of presence from absence. Mourning and rumination is a natural process which may be the mechanism by which communities of this time maintained a sense of divine palpable presence and continuity with the past.

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<sup>27</sup> Boyer, "What are Memories for?," 18–20.

<sup>28</sup> Edward Lipinski, *La liturgie pénitentielle dans la Bible* (Paris: Cerf, 1969); Odil H. Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten: Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum und Urchristentum*, WMANT 23 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1967).

<sup>29</sup> Boyer, "What are Memories for?," 16–18.

Daniel's practices of mourning, his prayer, and meditation upon Jeremiah's prophecy can be said to assist in the cultivation of a predisposition for experiencing the emotional state of grief, without predetermining that it would happen. Ancient prayers were not spontaneous unique expressions of the ritual actor; they were reenactments styled on traditional prayer components: petitions, confessions of sin, and confessions of God's greatness. The discursive prayer elements that are also associated with this type of prayer (viz., petitions, confessions of God's greatness, and confessions of the speaker's sinfulness) are understood here as strategies for placing the speaker in a position of subordination to the deity. The embodied sensation of smallness could also generate perceptions of alterity,<sup>30</sup> an experience by which the sovereign deity's presence could be known. The prayer, in conjunction with Daniel's imaginative meditation upon Jeremiah's prophecy, works to layer multiple self-diminishing experiences so that a state of mourning and rumination can be achieved.

### 1.3.1. Petition and Confession

Ancient ritual prayers of petitioning did not assume that God would respond to the request at hand – although they certainly sought to compel a divine response.<sup>31</sup> While conceptualizing petition as a need to which God will eventually respond prevails in modern times, the pre-modern world understood petitionary prayer as a highly stylized ritual script that aimed to generate a vivid experience of the deity's presence within the practitioner, one that would also affect the witnesses at hand.<sup>32</sup> These practices along with the prayer allow Daniel to achieve a decentering of the self that makes possible the crucial perception of alterity. According to Angelos Chaniotis, performative emotions within ritual contexts seek to generate vivid sensations of alterity, usually of being in the real presence of the deity, so as to construct compelling religious experiences for the spectators who are present.<sup>33</sup> In this sense, the intense and highly emotional experiences expressed

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<sup>30</sup> Thomas J. Csordas, "Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology," *Ethos* 18 (1990): 36–37.

<sup>31</sup> Angelos Chaniotis, "Emotional Community through Ritual: Initiates, Citizens, and Pilgrims as Emotional Communities in the Greek World," in *Ritual Dynamics in the Ancient Mediterranean: Agency, Emotion, Gender, Representation*, ed. Angelos Chaniotis (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 2011), 265–266.

<sup>32</sup> Angelos Chaniotis, "Staging and Feeling the Presence of God: Emotion and Theatricality in Religious Celebrations in the Roman East," in *Panthée: Religious Transformations in the Graeco-Roman Empire*, ed. Laurent Bricault and Corinne Bonnet (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 169–189.

<sup>33</sup> Chaniotis, "Staging and Feeling the Presence of God."

by the first person voice in the prayer are not solely to cultivate an experience in the one who prays.

The cognitive behaviors of rumination that accompany grief can help to generate perceptions of the other because the experience of grieving is one in which the bereaved is acutely aware of the absence of the one who is gone. The appearance of the heavenly being is part of the staging of the immanent experience of heavenly beings, and is timed to coincide with the evening sacrifice (Dan 9:20–23).<sup>34</sup> The invisible and distant God is rhetorically constructed by the prayer which recollects the deity's saving deeds in the exodus from Egypt (Dan 9:15–16) and the frequent mention of divine punishment for disobedience. With this in mind, it is notable that the prayer meditates upon the invisible God's face, ear, eyes, and hand, thereby constructing the physical human-like body of the deity which may even account for the vividness of the vision of the otherworldly agent who appears in human form as the angel Gabriel.

It is helpful to remember that the cumulative effect of these petitionary prayer elements, petition and confession of sin, converges with the outcome of funerary practices: self-diminishment. In other words, petitionary prayer is far more about the performative reenactment of the subordinating behavior of beseeching than about that which is being petitioned.<sup>35</sup> Second Temple ritual practices and prayers that generate the desired emotional state of grief-stricken desolation also serve to transform the individual from a state of longing to joy.<sup>36</sup> The same can be said about the confessional language used in Daniel's prayer, which include both the confession of sins and confession of God's greatness. While Second Temple prayers often include a confession of sins, the transgressions are not personal crimes. Daniel confesses the sinful violations of the covenant in the first-person plural (Dan. 9:5,6,7,8,9,10,13,15,16), all of which are stereotypical statements of Israel's wrongdoings, even though it is not clear that Daniel himself is guilty of these deeds.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Incidentally, the synchronization of the performance of penitential prayer with the incense offering of the Jerusalem Temple appears in Jdt 9:1.

<sup>35</sup> Harkins, "A Phenomenological Study of Penitential Elements," 297–316.

<sup>36</sup> This phenomenon of the transformative role of ritually experienced emotions of mourning and desolation in ancient Israelite religion is described well by Gary A. Anderson, *A Time to Mourn, a Time to Dance: The Expression of Grief and Joy in Israelite Religion* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991).

<sup>37</sup> In another example, Ezra passionately confesses the sin of intermarriage, including himself among the guilty, even though it is clear that he himself has never committed this deed (e.g., Ezra 9:6,7,10,13,14,15). Moses also uses the first-person plural to confess the sin of the golden calf, but clearly he played no part in the crime (Exod 34:9).

While the modern mind is accustomed to viewing these petitionary elements and confessional statements (both the confession of sins and the confession of God's greatness) as the spontaneous outpouring of the pray-er's innermost thoughts, the language of the prayer and the larger ancient cultural context indicate that these are performative reenactments of highly stylized ritual components.<sup>38</sup> All of these elements highlight the speaker's diminution and subordination vis-à-vis the deity, and can be recognized as strategies for bringing about self-diminishment.

### 1.3.2 Reenacting Jeremiah's Anguish

If Daniel 9 is understood as a scripted performance for decentering in which the funerary acts and the prayer elements contribute to the successive layering of self-diminishment, a further mechanism for decentering can be identified in Daniel's imaginative meditation upon the sixth-century BCE prophet Jeremiah. The report of Daniel's ritualization of mourning can be said to be a reenactment of the prophet's anguish and distress.

The specific prophecy concerning the duration of the exile is found in Jeremiah 25 and 29. It is not said that Daniel went to a specific scriptural text, but rather that Daniel consulted *books* and perceived in them the number of years that Jerusalem must lie in devastation (viz., 70). While the modern mind may imagine the seer gazing intently at a specific text from the book of Jeremiah, a scroll apparatus would not allow for random access. It is more likely that Daniel was pouring over the scrolls associated with Jeremiah – reading and re-reading them – while pondering their contents as he performed the practices and prayer. Meditation upon Jeremiah's career, which was marked by desolation, rejection, and anguish, would have been a further means by which Daniel was able to layer self-diminishing experiences to bring about a decentering experience. Such an imaginative reading can generate an experience of “presence,” that is, a perception of being in the space that has been constructed by the rhetorical elements in the text.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Gary Ebersole, “The Function of Ritual Weeping Revisited: Affective Expression and Moral Discourse,” *History of Religions* 39 (2000): 211–246.

<sup>39</sup> Anežka Kuzmičová writes that presence is “the sense of having physically entered a tangible environment,” in her essay, “Presence in the Reading of Literary Narrative: A Case for Motor Enactment,” *Semiotica* 189 (2012): 24. According to Kuzmičová, the passage must be detailed and long enough for the reader to mentally enact the kinesthetic behavior; it cannot be a fleeting summary reference. See also István Czachesz, *The Grotesque Body in Early Christian Discourse: Hell, Scatology, and Metamorphosis* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2012), 172.

The image in Daniel 9:2 is of Daniel pouring over a scroll and imaginatively meditating upon and visualizing Jeremiah's prophetic career as it was expressed by his anguished experiences highlights an enactive reading which could have heightened his own emotional experience of the sixth-century prophecy. Daniel's practices and prayers can also be understood as initiating a decentering process that allowed for the natural processes of problem solving to happen, expressed in the biblical text as a new interpretation of Jeremiah's prestigious sixth-century BCE prophecy. The first-person speech that often characterizes the discourse of the prophetic utterance is also a means by which Daniel could have accessed a richer and more imaginative experience of Jeremiah's prophecies. Studies of narrative theory and cognitive science suggest that the activity of reading empathically can engage sensory faculties of perception that make possible a vivid enactive experience of events described in the texts<sup>40</sup>

Daniel can be understood as performing an affective reenactment of the intense grief felt by the prophet Jeremiah, particularly as these emotions are described in Jeremiah 25–29 and especially in the biographical sections in Jeremiah 27–29. The reader is only told that Daniel is actively meditating upon the content of the book of Jeremiah; we are not told that Daniel focused on a particular passage. It may be that the mourning and first-person prayer vividly recreated the emotions of desolation and grief that were experienced by the prophet and expressed in Jeremiah 25 and 29, which speak of the Babylonian devastation as a manifestation of the invisible God's just punishment of a disobedient people. Jeremiah's career spanned key decades in Judean history, posing distinct challenges as he preached to an unreceptive community who rested confidently in the fact that they had earlier escaped the Assyrian destruction that had been experienced by the northern kingdom of Israel in the eighth-century BCE. In addition to being pained by this international crisis, Jeremiah was also greatly anguished by personal challenges to his authority, as is reported in his dramatic public controversies with the false prophet Hananiah (Jer 27–29). Placing the fictive literary setting of the book of Daniel within the context of the tumultuous events during Jeremiah's lifetime suggests that the uncertainty of the Babylonian era resonated deeply for the author of Daniel, whom many believe to have written and compiled traditions during the second-century BCE.

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**40** The most effective rhetorical details for enactive reading are the use of the first person voice and reports of kinesthetic movement; Kuzmičová, "Presence in the Reading of Literary Narrative," 27–28; Angela K. Harkins, *Reading with an "I" to the Heavens: Looking at the Qumran Hodayot through the Lens of Visionary Traditions*, Ekstasis: Religious Experience from Antiquity to the Middle Ages 3 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 94–113.

## 1.4 Reenacting Grief as a Decentering Technique

Patrick McNamara discusses how various practices can be used to decenter the self, and he notes that the right temporal prefrontal regions of the brain are responsible for what he calls the “anatomy of the Self” and religious experience.<sup>41</sup> The social mechanisms and practices by which religion contributes to the ongoing and dynamic process of transforming the self include: “prayer; meditations; mental exercises involving the imagination; confessing sins before God and forming resolutions and goals concerning better behaviors; reading and studying scriptural texts; private rituals and devotional practices.”<sup>42</sup> The involvement of the body in various behaviors and gestures is a critical part of transformative cognitive processes. These integrative models of embodied cognition understand the self phenomenologically as “grounded and situated in social and bodily contexts.”<sup>43</sup> Daniel’s practices and prayers can also be understood as initiating a decentering process that allowed for the natural processes of problem solving to happen, expressed in the biblical text as a new interpretation of Jeremiah’s prestigious sixth-century BCE prophecy.

Emotions that are strategically performed within ritualized settings play a key role in the experiences attributed to Daniel. While the ongoing reenactment of performative emotions does not predetermine that transformative cognitive processes will occur (e.g., rumination, the sensations of smallness, the awareness of alterity), the cultivation of these perceptions through imaginative practices of meditation is the necessary precondition for their occurrence.<sup>44</sup> Religious communities use a number of practices for training and disciplining bodily sense perceptions in order to generate within their members a predisposition to expe-

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<sup>41</sup> Patrick McNamara, *The Neuroscience of Religious Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 146.

<sup>42</sup> McNamara, *The Neuroscience of Religious Experience*, 148.

<sup>43</sup> Sebastian Schüler, “Synchronized Ritual Behavior: Religion, Cognition, and the Dynamics of Embodiment,” in *Religion and the Body: Modern Science and the Construction of Religious Meaning*, ed. David Cave and Rebecca S. Norris, Numen 138 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 90; Armin W. Geertz, “Brain, Body and Culture: A Biocultural Theory of Religion,” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 22 (2010): 304–321; Eliot R. Smith, “Social Relationships and Groups: New Insights on Embodied and Distributed Cognition,” *Cognitive Systems Research* 9 (2008): 24–32; Shaun Gallagher, “The Practice of Mind: Theory, Simulation, or Primary Interaction?,” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 8 (2001): 83–108.

<sup>44</sup> Tanya Luhrmann, *When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical relationship with God* (New York: Knopf, 2012); Saba Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety: Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

riencing religion. Tanya Luhrmann's recent study of the spiritual experiences of contemporary evangelical Christian groups is yet another ethnography that highlights the enormous energy and effort that is expended in order to create an experientially accessible presence of the deity for religious communities.<sup>45</sup> Both Saba Mahmood and Luhrmann describe how sensory imagination and emotional energies are carefully trained through self-cultivating practices of prayer and meditation to generate the necessary predisposition to experience God vividly in the here and now. In doing so, religious subjects could be said to interact with God, Jesus, Muhammad, or any number of holy men and women whom "they have never met face-to-face," thus broadening and complicating how we understand the possible relationships and experiences that are constitutive of the self.<sup>46</sup>

From a modern perspective, we might describe the events in Daniel 9 as the cultivation of religious experience through practices and imaginative meditation, but it would be a mistake to conclude that such effects were determined to happen or that they could be mechanically replicated. In this sense, visionary experiences cannot be generated at will. Instead, one might speak of the cultivation of a predisposition for these experiences, but natural explanatory theories cannot fully account for the unpredictable occurrence of prophetic visionary experience that are phenomenologically indistinct from the unpredictability of dreams.<sup>47</sup> "Religious experiences are best termed emergent precisely because the mixture of cognitive-emotional processes will not account for the complex, dialogical characteristics of religion."<sup>48</sup>

## 2 Prayer as a Social Mechanism

Daniel's chronomessianic understanding of Jeremiah's prophecy has been read and re-read by Jewish and Christian communities throughout the centuries who have used this text to support their own revolts and resistance movements. Perhaps the most famous of these political movements is the great Jewish

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<sup>45</sup> Luhrmann, *When God Talks Back*.

<sup>46</sup> Amira Mittermaier, *Dreams that Matter: Egyptian Landscapes of the Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 230.

<sup>47</sup> Elliot R. Wolfson, *A Dream Interpreted Within a Dream: Oneiropoiesis and the Prism of Imagination* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2011), 112–113.

<sup>48</sup> James W. Haag and Whitney A. Bauman, "De/Constructing Transcendence: The Emergence of Religious Bodies," in *Religion and the Body*, 37–55.

Revolt that resulted in the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. This raises important questions about how the prayer and angelic vision found in Daniel 9 functioned to enhance prosocial aims. This section offers three ways in which we could imagine Daniel 9 contributing to cooperative living and intensify commitment.

## 2.1 The Display of Grief and Self-abasement as a Signal of Deep Commitment

First, the ritually correct display of self-abasement on the body of the pray-er (Daniel) could have increased the power and prestige that he enjoyed within the group by signaling his commitment to the group, thus generating entitativity among members and compelling them to behave in cooperative ways.<sup>49</sup> David Lambert has already argued persuasively that fasting is not an expression of interior sinfulness but rather a ritualized performance and socially meaningful display that can have multiple and diverse purposes.<sup>50</sup> In this framework, the non-violent behaviors of abstaining and fasting from foods and the performance of self-diminishing practices and prayers could be understood as compelling signals of deep commitment that effected a strengthening of the social bonds that tied together the ancient communities who read the book of Daniel. The display of emotion can produce the additional social benefits of a convergence of emotional states among individuals (explained by some scholars as emotional contagion<sup>51</sup> or by the concept of mirror neurons), thereby resulting in greater behavioral synchrony.

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<sup>49</sup> McNamara, *The Neuroscience of Religious Experience*, 30–31; Joseph Henrich, “The Evolution of Costly Displays, Cooperation and Religion: Credibility Enhancing Displays and their Implications for Cultural Evolution,” *Evolution and Human Behavior* 30 (2009): 244–260; Richard Sosis, “The Adaptive Value of Religious Ritual: Rituals Promote Group Cohesion by Requiring Members to Engage in Behavior that is Too Costly to Fake,” *American Scientist* 92 (2004): 166–172.

<sup>50</sup> David Lambert, “Fasting as a Penitential Rite: A Biblical Phenomenon?,” *HTR* 96 (2003): 477–512.

<sup>51</sup> Elaine Hatfield, John L. Cacioppo, and Richard L. Rapson, “Emotional Contagion,” *Current Directions in Psychological Sciences* 2 (1993): 96–99.

## 2.2 A Mechanism for Adaptive Transformation of Foundational Events

The practices, prayer, and resulting vision in Daniel 9 can be understood as providing a social mechanism for the updating of traditional narratives,<sup>52</sup> thereby allowing later communities to use the power and prestige of Jeremiah's received prophecy in a new age, and to adapt and transform older folktales and ethnic narratives into new national histories. The new narratives are compelling because they retain their emotional impact, even though they have been significantly altered.<sup>53</sup> Daniel 9 recasts and renews the sixth-century BCE Jeremian prophecy in a way that meets the needs of the second-century BCE community, while retaining the prestige and emotional impact of the foundational prophecy which was disclosed during the Babylonian period. The evolutionary advantage of staging such ritualized experiences and otherworldly encounters is that it allows the Judean community an opportunity to update the tried-and-true sixth-century BCE prophecies in Second Temple times. One could say that the long-standing judgments understood to be issued by the deity long ago concerning the duration of the exile (e.g., Jeremiah's original prophecy) has been reimagined within a newly constructed revelatory framework that both stages the encounter with the angelic being and also authenticates the content that is revealed. Daniel's practices and prayer aroused an emotional state that allowed for the creation of a vivid meditation on the sixth-century BCE prophecy, which then became the emotional frame for its revision, thereby allowing it to address the specific concerns of a much later, second-century BCE Hellenistic Jewish community.

## 2.3 The Complexity of Ancient Revelatory Experiences

Thirdly, and most directly related to our previous discussion of grief and rumination, ritually-induced grief cultivated a state of rumination that heightened Daniel's receptivity to perceive the presence of otherworldly agents. In the case of Daniel 9, this expressed itself as a visionary experience of the angel Gabriel (Dan 9:21–27), and a revealed interpretation of the Jeremian prophecy. The reenacting of mourning practices of self-diminishment occurs in Daniel 10 when Daniel has an experience of the angel Michael, but this time at the bank of the Tigris River

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<sup>52</sup> Boyer, "What are Memories For?," 3–28.

<sup>53</sup> Boyer, "What are Memories For?," 10.

(Dan 10:2–18). Ruminative mourning could have generated an altered state of consciousness that allowed for the cultivation of a vivid perception of that which is longed for, the immediacy of otherworldly contact during a politically fraught time.

The textualized record of Daniel's prayer and vision had this-worldly consequences for the groups that inherited them, effectively emboldening small disenfranchised groups to revolt against much larger imperial powers.<sup>54</sup> This is not dissimilar to the role that visionary experiences and omens played in shoring up the resolve of Greco-Roman troops who were fatigued by battle.<sup>55</sup> Daniel's encounters with otherworldly beings were constitutive of communities came to understand him as a prophet or a seer. Otherworldly experiences contribute to the negotiation of power and authority in this world.

### 3 Conclusion

How can we consider the complexity of Daniel's experience as it would have been experienced in its time? Revelatory experiences such as dreams and visions have, in many cultures throughout time, been a mechanism by which disenfranchised people were able to access the power of the supernatural world – a power that often unpredictably ruptured the earthly hierarchical power structures.<sup>56</sup> Was Daniel a seer, or was he a prophet? – regardless of how precisely Jews and Christians come to understand him, it is clear that he was known for his otherworldly visionary experiences. These events were constitutive of his identity in this world and had lasting implications for the communities that inherited his legacy. The figure of Daniel is able to access multiple new relationships with beings who are not of this world. In this respect, Daniel negotiates multiple realms of experience, and in so doing, he reminds readers that there is more than this world. The possibility of an otherworldly realm, one that is vividly accessed by Daniel, contributed to how later readers of this book chose to act in the social and political worlds in which they lived.

This way of understanding Daniel's visionary experiences is part of a larger interest in recovering the embodied experiences of individuals in an emerging

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<sup>54</sup> Tomasino, "Oracles of Insurrection."

<sup>55</sup> Steven Weitzman, "Warring against Terror: The *War Scroll* and the Mobilization of Emotion," *JSJ* 40 (2009): 213–241; Jean Duhaime, "The *War Scroll* from Qumran and the Greco-Roman Tactical Treatises," *RevQ* 13 (1988): 150.

<sup>56</sup> Mittermaier, *Dreams that Matter*, 13.

area known as phenomenological approaches to anthropology.<sup>57</sup> Especially useful is the work by Amira Mittermeier, who writes how these experiences “from elsewhere” should be understood as constitutive of the self and reveal how otherworldly events contribute to transformations in status and authority within living religious communities.<sup>58</sup> The question is not whether Daniel’s claim of angelic visions and revelation were authentic or fraudulent. Such assessments can never be proven and ultimately divert attention away from the dynamic construction of identity and the ongoing negotiation of relationships and power that is taking place.<sup>59</sup>

This discussion of Daniel’s experience has been an attempt at trying to recover what individual experiences from the past might have been like, based on a textual record. While such a task has long been recognized to be difficult and challenging, *not* to consider subjective experiences as data for understanding the past can lead to over-determined monochromatic images of the self in antiquity that inevitably (and wrongly) reserve any high-definition texturing such as complexity, contingencies, competing desires, to the world of the observer alone.<sup>60</sup>

We can only speculate about the cognitive processes that would have assisted a figure such as Daniel to have the kinds of visionary experiences that are reported in chapter 9. The ritualization of mourning could have generated the presence of otherworldly agents in a way that met the needs of a languishing second-century BCE community who was being harshly persecuted by imperial powers. We can say with more certainty that this account of Daniel’s experience of otherworldly encounter was received as evidence of the deity’s presence (indirectly mediated through angels) by the Jewish and Christian communities in antiquity who understood themselves as heirs to his legacy, and that this prayer text heightened their commitment to cooperative living.

Who was the historical Daniel? Was he real? In some ways, the question is not relevant for understanding how this text functioned in antiquity. Because emotive and cognitive processes are similarly enacted in the reading of fiction and non-fiction, the question of historicity is peripheral for a discussion of how a text would have been experienced.<sup>61</sup> Later communities who received the tradition of Daniel’s prayer and the angelic revelation of the interpretation of Jeremiah’s

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57 Robert Desjarlais and C. Jason Throop, “Phenomenological Approaches in Anthropology,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40 (2011): 87–102.

58 Mittermaier, *Dreams that Matter*.

59 Mittermaier, *Dreams that Matter*, 27–28.

60 Desjarlais and Throop, “Phenomenological Approaches in Anthropology.”

61 Todd, “Attending Emotionally to Fiction.”

prophecy could have experienced this text in compelling ways, even though it could not be proven or disproven to be historical in their own day or in ways that would satisfy modern sensibilities. These apocalyptic visions functioned as evidence of God's palpable nearness to Second Temple readers, despite their lived experience as politically subjugated peoples. Otherworldly experiences were known to have had significant this-worldly consequences – they were generative of meaning, constitutive of identity, and reminders of God's unexpected presence in the here and now.

Naturally, the Temple played a significant role in the struggle. It was the symbol of God's presence amongst the Jewish people and so a monopoly on the Temple was tantamount to a monopoly on the word of God. The tension between the factions reached a peak in the period after the death of Herod in 4 CE. The essence of the Pharasaic philosophy in the period after the destruction is condensed into this story. First, the Pharisaic Rabbi is elevated to the status of a prophet. The prayers were now considered "Temple ritual performed in the heart" (*Avodah she ba Lev*). Prayers which were generally recited thrice daily were to be named after the daily sacrifices in the Temple and the times allotted to them were to correspond to the times allotted to the sacrifices. Regarding the ritual of the Temple itself, the descriptions that we have in the Mishnah and Tosefta were not edited in their present form until a century or more after the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. There is little doubt, however, that they reflect an authentic tradition dedicated to preserving the rituals of the Temple in the hope that they. The role of verbal prayer also increased at that time. And people became more aware of their need to attain forgiveness and atonement for their own sins as opposed to focusing on purely ritual matters. Rituals in the Second Temple were carried out with great splendor. if anything, the presence of so many pilgrims at these rites made them more solemn and impressive than ever before. Excerpted from *Entering the High Holy Days*. In this historical period, fixed daily prayer was becoming popular, but since it lacked explicit biblical warrant, a number of strategies emerge at this time to legitimize and promote this custom as an important religious practice. this dissertation, I will take up this challenge and focus on the setting of specific hours and patterns of time for daily prayer in the Second Temple period. In the process, I hope to shed light on a range of questions: 1) When exactly during the day did ancient Jews pray? 2) How is fixed daily prayer explained and legitimized given the absence of explicit biblical warrant? 3) Can the practice of fixed daily prayer tell us anything about ancient Jewish identity and related socio-historical questions?