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CELEBRATING THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

A CANADIAN COLLECTION

Edited by

Peter W. Flint, Jean Duhaime, and Kyung S. Baek

with

Twenty-Five Contributions by

Scholars of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature

Society of Biblical Literature
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SECTARIAN TRUTH: THE MEANING OF אמת IN THE *COMMUNITY RULE*

Ian W. Scott

RÉSUMÉ

La vérité sectaire: le sens de אמת dans la Règle de la communauté

La recherche passée sur les manuscrits de Qumrân a été marquée par une certaine confusion à propos du sens du terme אמת, «vérité», un terme clé dans le discours de la secte. Si l'on examine plus attentivement l'utilisation du terme dans la Règle de la communauté (1QS), on constate que אמת signifie toujours la «fidélité» active d'une personne à l'égard d'autrui. Cette «vérité» comporte à la fois un axe «horizontal» de fidélité interpersonnelle et un axe «vertical» de dévotion fidèle au Dieu d'Israël. Même si la Torah encourage clairement un style de vie de אמת, le sens du terme ne peut être réduit à l'enseignement de la loi ou à l'interprétation que la secte donne de ce code. Cette «vérité» est plutôt une posture globale de fidélité. Un tel usage du terme dérive de son rôle dans certains passages du Tanak, prophétiques pour la plupart, qui sont focalisés sur l'idéologie royale davidique et sur la restauration eschatologique d'Israël. Les auteurs sectaires de 1QS prétendent qu'une telle אמת n'est mise en pratique que par les membres du groupe, s'identifiant ainsi avec le reste fidèle d'Israël et accusant les autorités de Jérusalem d'apostasie. Cette forte rhétorique intertextuelle concernant la אמת aurait ainsi joué un rôle important pour contrer les pressions sociales qui s'exerçaient sur les membres du groupe pour qu'ils se réassimilent au courant social majoritaire de la Judée.

1. INTRODUCTION: THE WAY OF TRUTH

One can hardly read a line of the *Community Rule* from Qumran without realizing that “truth” (אמת) is a significant idea for the authors and the community

they hope to shape.¹ There have, however, been surprisingly few focused analyses of this motif.² When we look closely at the scholarship that does exist, we find persistent confusion and vagueness. Does “truth” (אמת) denote a moral quality of “faithfulness” and “reliability,” or has it become a technical term for a body of teaching?³ Does it mean “genuineness” and “authenticity,” or does it convey the ideas of “accuracy” and “factuality”?⁴ Perhaps most troubling is the tendency for these essentially different notions to be combined as if there were no distinction between them. In Nötscher’s pioneering study, published in 1956, the law was said to be אמת in that it contained “reliable commands which, since they are God’s will, really do call for what is right, what is valid, what is expedient.”⁵ Surely, though, one word does not simultaneously bear the senses “reliability,” “rightness,” “validity,” and “expedience.” A similar blurring together of fundamentally different ideas seems to lie behind the way discussions of “truth” at Qumran often shift from one notion to another without explanation. Jerome Murphy-O’Connor initially says in his 1968 essay that אמת denotes a virtue that is observable in some human behavior.⁶ Soon, though, he has shifted to talk about “truth” as a label for the Mosaic torah and its revealed interpretation at Qumran.⁷

1. In general I will refer to the authors of the *Community Rule* in the plural, recognizing that the extant text in IQS is a product of some significant redaction over time. This raises interesting hermeneutical questions, particularly if the interpreter wants (as I do) to read the text historically, that is, as a window into the thought of its creators. These issues are too large to solve here. In the meantime, I refer to the authors (plural) of the *Community Rule* as a way of recognizing that there is a plurality of “authorial intents” involved which, nonetheless, share a similar enough thought structure that in many cases we can discuss the document as expressing a single, coherent perspective.

2. The primary contributions are Friedrich Nötscher, “Wahrheit’ als theologischer Terminus in den Qumran-Texten,” in idem, *Vom Alten zum Neuen Testament* (BBB 17; Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1962 [originally published 1956]), 112–25; A. R. C. Leaney, *The Rule of Qumran and Its Meaning: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (NTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966); Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, “Truth: Paul and Qumran,” in *Paul and Qumran: Studies in New Testament Exegesis* (ed. Jerome Murphy-O’Connor; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1968), 179–230; David J. A. Clines, “אמת,” *DCH* 1:328–32; Leslie W. Walck, “Truth,” *EDSS* 2:950–52.

3. See, e.g., A. R. C. Leaney, “The Johannine Paraclete and the Qumran Scrolls,” in *John and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. Raymond E. Brown; New York: Crossroad, 1990), 38–62, esp. 60.

4. See, e.g., J. Price, “Light from Qumran upon Some Aspects of Johannine Theology,” in Brown, *John and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 9–37, esp. 26.

5. My translation (German: “zuverlässige Vorschriften, die als den Willen Gottes wirklich das Rechte, Gültige, Zweckmäßige verlangen” [Nötscher, “Wahrheit,” 115]). Here he is actually speaking of the law in Neh 9:13, but presents the usage as an appropriate analogy to the pattern at Qumran. See also, e.g., Leaney’s understanding of אמת לַעֲשׂוֹת אֱמֶת in IQS 1:5: “The phrase can be understood simply to mean ‘to practice the true law,’ but it carries with it the further meanings of dealing sincerely with one’s neighbour and of acting rightly according to one’s own real feelings, and not by mere outward show” (*Rule of Qumran*, 119).

6. Murphy-O’Connor, “Truth,” 184; cf. 205.

7. Murphy-O’Connor defines the “truth” in which a community member progresses as “the perfection of his knowledge of the Law and of his response to it” (“Truth,” 212). He sug-

Not only does the change in the word's interpretation go unremarked, but it is difficult to tell in some places which idea Murphy-O'Connor has in mind. The same confusion marks more recent work as well. In his entry on "Truth" in the *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Leslie Walck observes that the word's basic sense is "faithfulness" and "sincerity."⁸ Yet later he is strangely surprised that אמת is opposed to עולה ("wickedness") in the *Community Rule* rather than to some term for "falsehood."⁹ Walck says that "truth" as faithfulness is "discerned in and drawn from the Torah," and then in the same context describes אמת as "the truth," that is, the written code that human beings "seek to live by."¹⁰ He seems not to recognize that the virtue of "faithfulness," as a pattern of action, is different in kind from the written text that encourages the behavior. Likewise, when Walck says that God's statutes "contain the truth and are faithful and consistent with God's character,"¹¹ he blurs together three distinct notions of truth: "correct teaching," "faithfulness," and "correspondence with God's character."¹²

At the root of this confusion lie prior problems in the study of אמת in the Tanak, problems that I hope to lay out in a forthcoming study.¹³ The difficulty, in a nutshell, is that North Atlantic scholars of Hebrew are far too influenced by the glosses that אמת is usually given: "truth" in English, *Wahrheit* in German, *vérité* in French, and so on. We recognize that, in some instances, our European notions of "truth" as reality and correspondence cannot have been what the Hebrew writer had in mind. We make the mental adjustment to accommodate a different kind of truth-talk among Hebrew speakers. At some point, though, our own intuitive ideas about "truth" seem to reassert themselves, often triggered by

gests that אמת "when not obviously restricted in meaning should be understood as designating the entire revelation accepted by the Essenes as authoritative because divinely guaranteed" (p. 191).

8. Walck, "Truth," 950.

9. Ibid. Walck initially says that אמת "occasionally" denotes a body of teaching in the sectarian scrolls, but he goes on to subsume most of the passages he discusses under this category. It is this kind of "truth" that he says "was to be the hallmark of interpersonal relationships at Qumran" (p. 951).

10. Ibid., 951.

11. Ibid., 950.

12. It is not clear, with this last idea of "consistency with God's character," whether Walck is thinking primarily of consistency as the essence of אמת (i.e., "reliability") or whether the emphasis falls on "God's character" as the standard of moral goodness, so that anything reflecting God's character would be "truth."

13. For example, Nötscher appeals to the meaning of אמת in Ps 111:7, as allegedly meaning "das Sachgemäße, Gültige, etwa auch Zuverlässige," and sees it encompassing "die Zuverlässigkeit . . . also Wahrhaftigkeit und Treue im Gegensatz zu Unwahrhaftigkeit, Lüge, Täuschung" ("Wahrheit," 114). The best full-scale treatment of אמת in the Tanak so far is currently "אמת" by A. Jepsen, *TDOT* 1:292–322. Despite heavy criticism lodged against it, I still maintain that the early analysis of Rudolph Bultmann ("Untersuchungen zum Johannesevangelium," *ZNW* 27 [1928]: 113–27) is essentially correct. A sketch of my own analysis is found in the article "Truth," *NIDB* 5:681–86.

the appearance of *אמת* in contexts where we would naturally talk about “truth.” This tendency can often be recognized in translations, where the rendering for *אמת* oscillates inconsistently between “truth” and moral/pragmatic terms like “faithfulness,” “trustworthiness,” or “reliability.”¹⁴ In the better treatments of the word, scholars have recognized the distinction between the various ideas attributed to *אמת*, arguing that the word is “multivalent.”¹⁵ More often, though, this shift from “reliability” to “reality” or “correspondence” is masked by a supposedly obvious causal connection. Something is “reliable” *because* it is “real,” *because* it “corresponds with reality.” Hence we are assured that the shift from *אמת* as “reliability” to *אמת* as “reality” or “accuracy” is a natural one.¹⁶ What most scholars have failed to ask, though, is whether this shift seemed equally “natural” to the Hebrew speaker of the fourth or fifth or sixth century B.C.E.¹⁷

In what follows I offer a reexamination of *אמת* in the language of the Qumran sect. Rather than assuming a homogeneous use of the word across the various sectarian compositions, I will focus on the idea of truth in a single key document, the *Community Rule*.¹⁸ It will be crucial to distinguish clearly between

14. The most blatant example is found in James Barr’s highly polemical essay in *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 189–90. There he simply lines up various Hebrew and Greek sentences, translating either *אמת* or *ἀλήθεια* as “truth,” and urges us to recognize that the statements “plainly” mean similar things. Yet Barr’s usually incisive mind has here succumbed to rhetorical sleight-of-hand. Granted, we *can* translate *אמת* with “truth” and arrive at a statement whose meaning is intuitively obvious, but this does not demonstrate either that we *are correct* to render *אמת* in this way or that our modern intuitions should be trusted. Less blatant, but equally problematic, is the pattern in lexica of setting the gloss “truth” alongside the different notions of “reliability” or “faithfulness” as if they were inherently connected.

15. So A. C. Thiselton, “Truth,” *NIDNTT* 3:874–902.

16. For example, Nötscher argues that the “Unterschied zwischen Treue und Wahrhaftigkeit . . . erscheint dabei unwesentlich, da eine die andere einzuschließen scheint” (“Wahrheit,” 114).

17. The resort to modern, intuitive notions of “truth” is sometimes justified on the basis that the LXX translators thought *ἀλήθεια* a suitable rendering for *אמת*, even alternating between *ἀλήθεια* and other terms like *πίστις* and *δικαιοσύνη* in much the same way that modern translations do (e.g., H. Wildberger, “*אמת*” in *TLOT*, 134–57 [esp. 151]). Yet the LXX treatment of *אמת* is an unreliable guide to the meaning of the Hebrew. Compare, for example, *ἀλήθεια* in LXX Gen 24:48 with *δικαιοσύνη* in 24:29. This would not be the first instance in which a misleading Greek equivalent became the predominant translation for some Hebrew word.

18. Although significant fragments of the *Community Rule* survive from Cave 4, my study will focus primarily on the (nearly) complete copy found in Cave 1 and given the siglum 1QS (1Q28). Sarianna Metso’s important work on the redactional variation between 1QS and the 4Q fragments raises the likelihood that the *Rule* existed in quite different forms at different stages in the group’s development, or even that different theological currents within the community might be reflected in competing editions. A full consideration of these issues would take me too far afield here, so I will focus on the text of 1QS. See further Metso, *The Serekh Texts* (LSTS 62; CQS 9; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2007).

the various ideas that are so often blurred together in the interpretation of *תְּמִנָּה*. At the same time, we will need to resist the gravitational pull of modern notions of “truth” unless the text clearly justifies such a reading. Since its meaning in the Tanak remains disputed, our examination will have to begin as much as possible with an inductive look at its use in IQS itself. Only later, and with caution, will we begin to draw on intertextual connections with Israel’s scriptural tradition. Along the way we will see that a clearer understanding of “truth” in the *Community Rule* offers important insights, not just for lexicography but also for our understanding of the Qumran group’s sectarian identity.

2. A KEY SECTARIAN TERM

A brief glance at the frequency of *תְּמִנָּה* in the sectarian compositions from Qumran highlights both why we need more clarity about its meaning and why the *Community Rule* is a suitable place to begin. When we exclude works that would later constitute the scriptural Tanak, *תְּמִנָּה* is attested 381 times among the Qumran Scrolls, distributed across 369 lines in what appear to be fifty-eight separate documents.¹⁹ In comparison, it appears only 127 times (across 125 verses) in the whole Tanak. Even allowing for some inflation of the Qumran numbers due to the presence of books in multiple copies, it is clear that *תְּמִנָּה* has become a far more significant word in the Qumran library than in Israel’s tradition at large; in IQS alone it appears forty-three times. This intense use of *תְּמִנָּה* dwarfs its frequency in any book of the Tanak; for example, the Masoretic Text of Isaiah employs it only twelve times, Jeremiah eleven times. Even in the Masoretic Psalter, where *תְּמִנָּה* is most common, we find it only thirty-seven times.

Neither is this heavy usage of *תְּמִנָּה* distributed evenly across the Qumran collection. The documents composed by the Qumran sect, or those with a very close affinity to the group’s thought, use *תְּמִנָּה* most frequently: seventy-two times in the *Hodayot* (IQH), forty-three in the *Community Rule* (IQS), thirty-four in *Sapiential Work A* (4Q318), fifteen in the *War Scroll* (1QM), and fifteen in various copies of the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (4Q400–405 and 11Q17).²⁰ No other document preserved at Qumran approaches this kind of frequency,²¹ which sug-

19. The statistics are based on a search of the lemma *תְּמִנָּה* in Martin G. Abegg, Jr., *The Qumran Sectarian Manuscripts* database, using the *Bibleworks 8* software. We cannot be certain of the number of documents represented by these manuscripts because a few are too fragmentary for meaningful comparison, while others may (or may not) attest to separate portions of a common book that simply happen not to overlap. We can now see, however, that Nötscher’s collection of some 120 instances in 1956 was far from complete.

20. We also find *תְּמִנָּה* four times in the brief *Rule of Blessing* (IQSb), and nine times in the small Hebrew fragments of *Jubilees* (4Q216; 4Q219; 4Q221; 4Q223–224; 4Q249).

21. It is striking that even the *Damascus Document* uses *תְּמִנָּה* far less often: five times in CD; five in 4Q266; twice in 4Q269; five in 4Q270; and once in 4Q271. Likewise, the *Temple Scroll* (11Q19) uses *תְּמִנָּה* only four times. Apart from the sectarian compositions, or those

gests that an emphasis on “truth” was part of what distinguished the sect’s discourse from other groups. As a mark of the group’s distinctiveness, אמת seems to have been employed as an instrument of group self-definition. To understand how it played this role, however, we need to look more closely at its use in the context of the *Community Rule*.

3. A DEFINING LIFESTYLE

It is generally agreed that the noun “truth” (אמת) is drawn from the root אמנ, which in the *nip'al* means “to be reliable, faithful” or “to be permanent, to endure.”²² Hence we might expect, a priori, that אמת would mean something like “reliability” or “permanence.” Since the noun is used only of people and their actions in IQS, we might expect it to signal their “consistency” or their “faithfulness” to one another. We cannot rely for long on this etymological clue to the meaning of אמת, but it forms a crucial starting point.²³ It reminds us that we are dealing with a word that is very different from the European equivalents with which the term is usually translated. This etymology also suggests that if the meaning of אמת in a given case is ambiguous, our default assumption should be that its sense has to do with some kind of “dependability.”

One way to counter the bias toward our own concepts of “truth” is to begin with passages in IQS where the use of אמת seems *least* familiar to us, least like the way we employ “truth,” *Wahrheit*, or *vérité*. A fitting point of entry is the talk in the *Community Rule* about “doing truth.” In 1:5, at the outset of the document, the authors tell us that the rule is meant to help its adherents “to do truth and justice and uprightness” (לעשות אמת וצדקה ומשפט).²⁴ Likewise, in 5:3–4 we learn that the community’s disciplinary and leadership structure allows its members “to achieve together truth and humility (לעשות אמת יחד וענוה), justice

closely related to the sect’s thought, no document attested at Qumran uses אמת more than five times. Even this frequency appears only in psalmic or hymnic texts such as the *Apocryphon of Joseph* (4Q372, five times), *Non-Canonical Psalms B* (4Q381, four times), and the noncanonical compositions in 11QPs^a (three times). Similarly, the heavy use of אמת in Proverbs (twelve times) is echoed in the sapiential language of *Ways of Righteousness* (three times in 4Q420, and once in 4Q421).

22. See Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (= HALOT) (revised by Walter Baumgartner and Johan Jakob Stamm; 2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 1:63–64, s.v. אמנ.

23. Although etymology has suffered from a poor public image in the last thirty years, even James Barr (whose criticism helped spark the trend to neglect etymology) recognized that a word’s origins provide an irreplaceable starting point in Hebrew lexicography (“Etymology and the Old Testament,” in his *Language and Meaning: Studies in Hebrew Language and Biblical Exegesis* [OTS 19; Leiden: Brill, 1974], 1–28, esp. 1–2).

24. The text and translation of IQS follow Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (= DSSSE) (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), unless otherwise stated.

and uprightness (צדקה ומשפט), compassionate love (אהבת חסד) and seemly behavior (והצנע לכת) in all their paths (בכול דרכיהם).” A very similar statement appears in 8:2, where we learn that the task of the “community council” (עצת היחד) is “to do truth (לעשות אמת), justice (וצדקה), judgment (ומשפט), compassionate love (אהבת חסד) and unassuming behavior (והצנע לכת), each one toward his neighbor. . . .”²⁵

In all three passages, אמת is the direct object of the verb עשה, “to do.” This “truth” is a kind of action, a pattern of behavior. What sort of behavior? In 1:5; 5:3; and 8:2, the noun appears in a list of virtues that are to define the sectarian community: “humility/poverty” (ענוה), “justice/righteousness” (צדקה), “justice/uprightness” (משפט) “compassionate love” (אהבת חסד), and “seemly behavior” (הצנע לכת). Appearing alongside these terms, “truth” seems also to be what Murphy-O’Connor calls “a quality of moral behaviour.”²⁶ This is most apparent in 1:5, where the list of virtues follows another statement of the *Rule’s* purpose. The code helps group members to “keep” themselves “at a distance from all evil” (מכול רע), and to become attached “to all good works” (בכול מעשי טוב) (1:4–5). The list of virtues in 1:5, though standing grammatically independent, seems to spell out in more detail what these “good works” entail. In all three passages, each virtue involves right treatment of other people: they are predominantly *social* virtues. Hence אמת, as well, is most likely a kind of right action directed toward others. If we bring these observations together with the noun’s etymology, it seems that such “truth” is a lifestyle of “faithfulness,” of “reliability” to one’s neighbors. This comes as no surprise to students of the Tanak, where all agree that such “fidelity” and “dependability” are at least one common sense for אמת.²⁷ This “truth” is an active “faithfulness” that one must “practice” (see, e.g., Neh 9:33).

Is there any reason to think that אמת is a euphemism for Torah in these three passages, or for the sectarian leaders’ interpretation of that law?²⁸ One difficulty for such a view is that, as is usual in the *Community Rule*, אמת lacks the definite article. It is not “the truth,” but merely “truth,” which is in marked contrast to “Torah” (תורה), which in IQS is usually definite.²⁹ Still, one can hardly

25. Here I have altered the *DSSSE* translation, where לעשות was rendered as “to implement,” which obscures the parallel with 1:5 and 5:3 and also encourages us to think of the object (אמת) as some teaching applied to the community’s behavior, rather than the behavior itself. I have also altered the translation of איש אם רעהו (*DSSSE*: “of one to another”) to yield a better English style.

26. Murphy-O’Connor, “Truth,” 184.

27. So *HALOT*, 1:68–69, s.v. אמת. In the *DCH*, the first meaning listed is glossed “dependability” or “trustworthiness” (p. 328, s.v. אִמְתָּה). The main dissenting voice here is G. Quell, who argued that אמת always denoted “correspondence with reality” (*TDNT* 1:232–27), an interpretation that has not been followed by the bulk of subsequent scholarship.

28. So Murphy-O’Connor, “Truth,” 183.

29. We find התורה in 8:2; 9:9, 17. In 5:8 the anarthrous תורה is still implicitly definite

deny an intimate connection here between אמת and the Mosaic code. Before the community's life is described in terms of doing "good works" (1:4–5), "truth," or "justice" (1:5), it is depicted as an attempt "to do what is good and just in his [God's] presence, as he commanded by the hand of Moses (באשר צוה ביד מושה) and by the hand of all his servants the Prophets" (1:2–3). So the authors do think that the pattern of "truth" that the *Rule* promotes is part of the same lifestyle set down in the law.

This connection with the Mosaic code does not mean, however, that אמת simply denotes "Torah" or "Torah-observance," any more than "righteousness" (צדקה) or "justice" (משפט) do. An act is "just" not merely because a command is written down in the Pentateuch, but because it conforms to the pattern of "justice," something human beings could (in theory) practice and recognize without ever reading the Pentateuch. The authors of the *Community Rule* would probably have agreed that such acts were "just" already before Moses ever put pen to parchment.³⁰ Hence in 1:4–5 we are first encouraged to practice "what is good and just," and only then are reminded that such actions are "commanded by the hand of Moses." In the same way, "truth" (אמת) is not merely a cipher for Torah. It has been taught to Israel through the books of Moses, but when the authors of the *Community Rule* want "to do truth" (לעשות אמת) they are looking past (or through) that written code to the pattern of behavior itself.

The use of "truth" in these three purpose statements (1:5; 5:3; and 8:2) also confirms what we could guess based on the frequency of אמת in the *Community Rule*—that the word plays a central role in the group's self-definition. It appears repeatedly where the authors want to describe the community's purpose, its structures, and the rules that guide them. Notice, too, that the other virtues listed alongside אמת are themselves used prominently throughout the docu-

because it is in construct, followed by the proper name מושה. Only in 5:16 is תורה clearly anarthrous, here referring to an individual command within the Mosaic code, not Torah as a collection. In the remaining instances in IQS, the noun appears with a prepositional prefix, making it impossible to determine its definiteness. We do find האמת in 3:18–19; 5:6; and 8:4. In 3:18–19 and 8:4 אמת is in the genitive, so its article is probably intended to make the preceding construct noun definite (not "spirit of the truth" but "the spirit of truth"). See further n. 44 below.

30. This is suggested by the popularity (and probable scriptural status) of *Jubilees* among the Qumran sectarians (see CD 16:2–4; James C. VanderKam, "Jubilees, Book of," *EDSS* 1:434–48, esp. 437). *Jubilees* is saturated with polemic for the idea that the whole Mosaic law, even its ritual requirements, was built into the structure of the cosmos at creation and was observed by the angels in heaven (e.g., *Jub.* 2:1, 9–10, 17–19; 3:8–14; etc.). Indeed, the behaviors it teaches are understood to be binding on humanity whether or not people have access to their written expression (e.g., *Jub.* 11:14–17), or even before any text has recorded the command in question (e.g., incest in *Jub.* 16:7–9; oath breaking in 37:11–38:14; astrology in 11:8). See further I. W. Scott, "Epistemology and Social Conflict *Jubilees* and *Aristeas*," in *Common Judaism: Explorations in Second-Temple Judaism* (ed. Wayne O. McCready and Adele Reinhartz; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 195–213, esp. 197–202.

ment.³¹ These are not just generic “virtue lists.” Each of the three passages seems to define the community’s purpose in terms of its communal lifestyle, gathering together key “umbrella terms” which define that lifestyle in the linguistic world of the *Rule*.³² Although the other terms in these lists can vary to some extent, the virtues are in each case headed by אמת. So this “truth” seems to be not just one expression for the sect’s conduct but the chief term that signifies their defining lifestyle.

One implication of this pattern is that this use of אמת to denote “faithfulness” is probably not an “outlier” or exception in the *Community Rule*. The sense of the word found in 1:5; 5:3; and 8:2 is probably the same sense we will find elsewhere in the *Rule*. For if these purpose statements collect key sectarian vocabulary in a statement of group identity, their rhetorical force relies on their triggering ideas that are well established in the sect’s discourse.

Indeed, as we move out to other instances of “truth” in IQS we quickly find other passages in which אמת helps to define the sectarian community over against outsiders. In 2:24, for example, we are told that the group is “a Community of truth (יחד אמת), of proper meekness (וענוות טוב), of compassionate love (ואהבת חסד) and upright purpose (ומחשבת צדק), each one toward his companion (איש לרעהו)” (2:24-25).³³ If there were any doubt that this “truth” is the same pattern of behavior we saw in the purpose statements above, we need only notice that אמת is once again accompanied by several of the same key virtues. Clearly, then, the authors of the *Community Rule* are continuing to employ “truth” as a label for the “reliable faithfulness” that distinguishes the sect from the mainstream of Jewish society.³⁴

4. TWO AXES OF FIDELITY

When we come to 8:9, though, we see hints of a further dimension to this “truth.” The community is called a “house of perfection and truth” (אמת), which exists “in order to establish a covenant in compliance with the everlasting decrees” (לח[.} קית עולם) (8:9-10). As in 1:5, אמת is again closely associated with Torah.

31. See צדקה in IQS 1:21; 10:23, 25; 11:3, 5, 6, 12, 14 (twice), along with צדק in 2:24; 3:1, 20, 22; 4:2, 4, 9; 9:5, 17; 10:26. The singular משפט reappears in 1:26; 4:20; 5:3, 6, 12 (twice), 16; 6:7, 9, 22, 23; 7:4, 8, 18, 21, 25; 8:3, 6, 9, 10, 19, 24; 9:5, 7, 15, 17, 25; 10:7, 9, 11, 16, 18, 20, 25; and 11:10. In addition to טוב in 1:5, see 1:2; 2:3, 24; 4:3, 26; 10:12, 18; 11:14. The expression אהבת חסד is used in 5:25 and 10:26, as well as 5:4, while חסד appears on its own in 1:8; 2:1, 24; 4:4 (cf. the plural in 1:22; 2:4; 4:5; 10:4, 16; 11:12, 13). אהבה is employed on its own in 9:16, 21. The noun ענוה is used in 2:24; 3:8 (twice); 4:3; 5:25; 9:22; and 11:1. The expression לכת הצינע, though not as immediately familiar, shows up again in 5:4 and 8:2, each time associated with אמת.

32. Murphy-O’Connor, “Truth,” 184.

33. I have altered the DSSSE translation to render איש לרעהו as “each one to his companion,” instead of “to each other.”

34. So, correctly, Murphy-O’Connor, “Truth,” 185.

Yet “truth” here is not just one aspect of a Torah-observant lifestyle, but seems to constitute the essence of that life. For while in 1:5 אמת led a long list of virtues “taught by the hand of Moses” (1:2), here it requires only the addition of “perfection” (תמיים) to suffice as a summary for all that the covenant requires. This suggests that the “truth” which defines the sect’s life together involves more than just their “faithful reliability” toward one another. After all, a great deal of the group’s emphasis falls on issues such as Sabbath keeping and ritual purity, practices not obviously related to interpersonal fidelity.

Has אמת taken on a different sense here? Is it now used to denote Torah itself or the sect’s teaching? Before we leap to that conclusion we should remember that, for the community members, God is another person involved in the network of social relationships. The explicit mention of a “covenant” in 8:9 reminds us how Deuteronomy emphasizes that Israel’s obedience is to express a faithful allegiance to their heavenly king, not only obeying his commands but also showing him the “love” due to a beneficent ruler.³⁵ So it may be that in the *Community Rule* אמת involves fidelity not just to other human beings but also (even chiefly) to Israel’s covenant Lord, a fidelity that will be expressed by the consistent performance of all that the Lord commands. If this is correct, then there may be two “axes” to the “truth” that defines the community of IQS. The “horizontal” axis would be an interhuman fidelity that involves just and compassionate relationships, and the “vertical” axis, a human faithfulness to God as covenant Lord that includes a pattern of reliable obedience to all that God commands. While the emphasis in a given passage might fall more on one axis or the other, these two dimensions of אמת are so intertwined that they are inseparable. For just as God is a person to whom fidelity is directed, faithfulness to Israel’s Lord includes the practice of אמת toward one’s fellow Israelites.

Do we find other evidence that the authors of the *Community Rule* had this “vertical” axis of אמת in mind? Following the purpose statement of 5:3–5, the text encourages the reader not to “walk in the stubbornness of his heart” but to “circumcise in the Community the foreskin of his tendency and of his stiff neck in order to lay a foundation of truth (מוסד אמת) for Israel” (5:5). The community lays this “foundation” (probably for the restored eschatological Israel) by embodying the lifestyle of obedience that God requires.³⁶ Yet it is difficult to think that the sectarian author would speak of simply interhuman fidelity as “foundational” for Israel’s existence. Indeed, Israel is described here as “the community of the eternal covenant (יחד ברית עולם)” (5:5–6). So the “truth” that defines them would seem to include covenant faithfulness in general. Simi-

35. The expectation that Israel will “love” God appears with surprising frequency in Deuteronomy, usually accompanied by a call to obedience and wholehearted service. See Deut 5:10; 6:5; 7:9; 11:1, 13, 22; 13:4; 19:9; 30:3, 16, 20. The people are to “fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD your God” (Deut 10:12–13).

36. So Murphy-O’Connor, “Truth,” 222.

larly, not long after the virtue list of 1:5 we find the members of the community defined as “those who volunteer for his truth” (הנדבים לאמתו) (1:11; cf. 5:10).³⁷ This emphasis on a “freely choosing” (נדב) is tied to the community’s highly exclusive ideology, in which adults must demonstrate their ability to keep the community’s rule before being accepted.³⁸ So the object of their “free choice” is usually some expression for their overall obedience: “doing the ordinances of God” (לעשות חוקי אל), “turning from all wickedness” (לשוב מכול רע), “holiness” (לקודש), “returning to his covenant” (לשוב . . . לבריתו) (see 2:7; 5:1, 6, 22). When אמת appears alongside these expressions as a summary for the life chosen by the sectarians, such “truth” again seems to include an overall fidelity toward Israel’s covenant God.

Rather than postulate this vertical dimension to “truth,” why not take the word to mean “Torah” in these cases? Because the context of these passages continues to make such a construal of אמת difficult. In 5:5 the “vertical” use of “truth” language follows closely after the virtue list of 5:3, in which אמת must be a pattern of behavior.³⁹ Immediately following the appearance of “truth” in 5:5 we see a parallel description of sect members as “[those] who freely volunteer for holiness” (המתנדבים לקודש), with “holiness” being the group’s scrupulous observance of Levitical purity. There is no indication, though, that “holiness” was used as a label either for the group’s teaching on purity or for the Levitical regulations themselves. Where קודש is used in a technical sense, it seems to denote the community’s actual observance of ritual purity (5:18, 20) or specific practices such as ritual immersion (3:9) or the communal meal (5:13; 8:17).⁴⁰ To “volunteer for holiness,” then, is to choose a pattern of behavior, to act in a way that qualifies an Israelite as “holy.” On the other hand, when the writers of the *Community Rule* do want to focus on the members’ decision to obey some teaching or command, they employ different syntax. Instead of placing the noun for teaching directly after the verb נדב, they employ a longer expression with an auxiliary verb of action. So in 1:7 the group members are “those who freely volunteer to carry out God’s decrees” (הנדבים לעשות חוקי אל), and in 5:10 they are “those who freely volunteer . . . to walk in his will” (להתלך ברצונו) (cf. 5:22). In fact, these two passages confirm that what the “volunteers” choose is the habitual performance of some action. They volunteer “to carry out,” “to walk,” to maintain

37. The DSSSE translation of להנדבים is “submit freely to,” which seems to reflect the translators’ decision that אמת must be a legal code or teaching. I have altered the translation to conform with the rendering of the analogous expression in 5:10; the shift from *nip’al* in 1:11 to *hitpa’el* in 5:10 is not sufficient justification for the difference.

38. Hence in 5:8 “those who freely volunteer” (המתנדבים) can be used with no further elaboration as a designation for the community members.

39. Here even Murphy-O’Connor (“Truth,” 223) suggests that the community serves as Israel’s foundation because they are “the concrete embodiment of perfect fidelity.”

40. At times “holiness” also seems to denote the separation of sectarians from the regular life of corrupt Israel (e.g., 8:23).

“holiness,” and to practice “truth.” So even where “truth” includes ritual practices it likely remains a pattern of action, a lifestyle of “faithfulness” toward God, rather than a set of doctrines or a written code.⁴¹

On the other hand, one might be tempted to understand אמת as “honesty” in 8:6, where the fifteen members of the community council are to be “true witnesses for the judgment” (עדי אמת למשפט). Such a characterization of witnesses as “true” has been a source of much confusion in the discussion of אמת in the Tanak. It comes so close to our modern use of “truth” terms that many exegetes find it difficult to imagine its meaning anything other than “truthfulness,” *Wahrlichkeit*. Yet these “witnesses” in 8:6 are the same individuals whose role was just described in 8:2 in terms of “practicing truth” (עשות אמת). Such active “fidelity” will issue in factual testimony, of course, but the point is likely broader than this. The community council does not simply give testimony before another human judge. They will execute judgment in the community, “atone for the land,” and even “render the wicked their retribution” (8:6-7). It seems likely that, given this sweeping authority, the council members’ qualification here as אמת is pointing to their history of “doing truth” as well as their faithful exercise of their current role. Built on their firm foundation, the whole community becomes a “tested rampart,” a “precious cornerstone that does not . . . shake or tremble” (8:7-8), reminding us of the “stability” and “firmness” that underlie אמת. The council members are thus not merely “honest,” but are truly “reliable” servants of Israel’s God.

It is hardly surprising that where אמת clearly includes this “vertical” axis, the virtue continues to play a central role in defining the group’s sectarian identity.⁴² In 5:6 the talk of members “volunteering” comes together with the architectural imagery we saw in 5:5, so that the community members are described as those “who freely volunteer for holiness in Aaron and for the house of truth in Israel” (ולבית האמת) (5:6).⁴³ Likewise, the prospective member decides to join the community “so that he can revert to truth (לשוב לאמת) and shun all injustice (ולסור מכול עול)” (6:15).⁴⁴ On the other hand, one “whose spirit turns aside from the foundation of the community” is said “to betray truth (לבגוד באמת) and walk in the stubbornness of his heart (שרירות לבו)” (7:18-19). A decision to

41. Murphy-O’Connor (“Truth,” 191) proposes that “truth” here includes the “hidden things” of 5:11, but there is no need to draw this connection.

42. A variation on this theme is the description of the members in 5:6 as those “who freely volunteer for . . . the house of truth in Israel (לבית האמת בישראל) . . . (המתנדבים).”

43. See also the similar architectural imagery in 8:4-5: “When these things exist in Israel the Community council shall be founded on truth (העצת היחד באמת), blank to be an everlasting plantation, a holy house for Israel and the foundation of the holy of holies for Aaron.”

44. Here in 6:15, as in the following quotation from 7:18-19, I have altered the DSSSE translation of אמת from “the truth” to “truth.” Since the prefixed preposition would obscure any definite article, both translations are possible. Where an article would be visible, though, the noun is usually anarthrous in IQS. See n. 29 above.

leave the group is thus equated with resistance toward Israel's divine sovereign, and the sectarian community is affirmed to be the only site where "truth" is practiced, where Israelites live in faithful allegiance to the covenant God.

5. THE TRUTH OF GOD

Not only does אמת involve faithfulness toward God in the *Community Rule*, but in some sense such "truth" also belongs to God himself. In 1:11, for example, the community members volunteer for "his truth" (אמתו);⁴⁵ and in 2:26 members enter "into the community of his truth" (ביתחד אמתו). Yet as we saw above, אמת seems in both cases to be the pattern of the community member's own actions. What is the relationship, then, between the community's אמת and their covenant Lord? How does human action embody God's "truth"?

In order to answer this question we need first to note that God's own behavior is described as "truth" at several points in the document. During the communal covenant ceremony the *Rule* requires the priests and Levites to "bless the God of victories and all the works of his faithfulness (כול מעשי אמתו)" (1:19). Clearly these are not "works of Torah," since in the Qumran sectarian literature God is never said to "keep" or "do" the law. These are actions that demonstrate God's reliability, his faithfulness. As in the lists of human virtue in 1:5 and elsewhere, God's "truth" (אמת) seems to be paired with his being "just" (צדיק) in 1:26, though the text of 1QS is broken here and so the connection with God is uncertain. Again, in the hymn that closes the *Community Rule* the writer confesses "I realize that in his hand lies the judgment of every living thing, and all his deeds are truth (ואמת כול מעשיו)" (10:16–17). Likewise, the poet is most likely thinking of God's active help for the righteous when he writes:

the truth of God (אמת אל) is the rock of my steps and his might (גבורתו) the support of my right hand. From the spring of his righteousness is my judgment (וממקור צדקתו משפטי) and from the mysteries of his miraculous power (מרזי פלאו) comes the light of my heart. (11:4–5)⁴⁶

With profound gratitude the hymnist declares "He will judge me in the justice of his truth (בצדקת אמתו), and in his plentiful goodness (וברוב טובו) always atone for all my sins" (11:14). Here again, God's "truth" stands in parallel to his "goodness" (טוב), his pattern of beneficent acts. As so often in the Tanak, the hymnist is highlighting אמת as a chief characteristic of God's action toward his people. Nowhere, though, is there any hint that God's own אמת is a body of

45. Although one might find another antecedent for the pronominal suffix here, any other option would be forced. God has just been mentioned at the end of the previous sentence.

46. So Murphy-O'Connor, "Truth," 204. *DSSSE* here translates רזי פלאו as "wonderful mystery," which I have altered to better reflect the plural רזים and the fact that פלא usually denotes a "wondrous act" of God.

teaching. Still less is it a matter of “telling the truth;” as with the human objects of his faithfulness, God’s “truth” is a characteristic of his “deeds” (מעשים), a pattern of fidelity in action.⁴⁷

Against the backdrop of these passages, we can make better sense of the identification of God’s “truth” with human “truth” in 1:11 and 3:26. God’s active אמת appears in close association with the same virtues we saw connected with human אמת above: “righteousness” (צדקה, 11:4–5, 14), “justice” (משפט, 11:4–5), “goodness” (טוב, 11:14).⁴⁸ It seems that God’s own actions are understood to exhibit the same pattern of reliable faithfulness that the authors of the *Community Rule* want to see embodied in the sect’s life. Or, put the other way around, the אמת that defines the community’s conduct is understood to derive from, to reflect, God’s prior faithfulness. If this is the case, then those who “volunteer” for the life of the sect would in a very real sense be adopting God’s own אמת as the pattern for their actions.⁴⁹

What, though, of the ritual and festival observances that seem to constitute an important element of the community’s “truth,” that comprise its “vertical” dimension? In 1:15, near the end of the *Rule*’s introduction, we read that the “volunteers” for the community “shall not veer from the precepts of his truth (מחוקי אמתו).” Earlier in this prologue obedience to God’s “precepts” (חוקים) was elaborated as “complying with all the revealed things concerning the regulated times of their stipulations (כול הנגלות למועדי תעודותם)” (1:8–9). If “his truth” in 1:11 is God’s own pattern of faithfulness, now to be demonstrated by the community, we would tend to interpret the “precepts of his truth” in 1:15 similarly. These are commands (חוקים) that teach Israel how to demonstrate such fidelity. It may seem difficult to imagine how proper calendrical practice would emulate God’s reliable faithfulness; hence García Martínez and Tigchelaar here translate חוקי אמתו as “his reliable precepts,” taking אמת as a property of the commands themselves. Yet God’s acts of “truth” may include more than his intervention for Israel. The writers may also consider the constant movements

47. See, similarly, Neh 9:33, where God is said to “have been just (צדיק) in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully (אמת עשית) and we have acted wickedly (הרשענו).” We also see evidence that God’s אמת is a kind of “faithfulness” in Jer 42:5 and Ps 111:7, where the noun appears in combination with the cognate *nip’al* participle נאמן, “faithful, trustworthy” (HALOT 1:63, s.v. אמן).

48. We find similar parallels in the Tanak. Ps 45:5(4) reads, “In your majesty ride on victoriously for the cause of truth (על דבר אמת) and to defend the right (וענוה צדק),” and Ps 89:15(14) “Righteousness and justice (צדק ומשפט) are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness (חסד ואמת) go before you.”

49. So Walck, “Truth,” 950. This same connection between human and divine “truth” seems to be made in Zech 8:8: “I will bring them to live in Jerusalem. They shall be my people and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness (באמת ובצדקה).” These two prepositional phrases seem to describe both sides of the divine human relationship, Jerusalem’s “being God’s people” and God’s “being their God.” Note, too, how in Ps 29:3 באמתך seems to hover between the senses “in the faithfulness you demonstrate” and “in faithfulness to you.”

of the “luminaries” to reflect God’s ongoing “dependability,” his faithful maintenance of the orderly cosmos. This idea seems to have precedent in Ps 146:6, where God is praised as the one “who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever (הַשְׁמֵר אֱמֶת לְעוֹלָם).” Although the focus in 3:15–17 is on the activity of the “two spirits” and not the luminaries, we find there a similar emphasis on God’s constancy as creator:

From the God of knowledge stems all there is and all there shall be. Before they existed he established their entire design. And when they have come into being, at their appointed time, they will execute all their works according to his glorious design, without altering anything.

Notice, too, how the Hymn of the Instructor, at the close of the *Rule*, is to be recited “during the periods which God decreed: at the commencement of the dominion of light” and “the commencement of the vigils of darkness” (10:1–2). God is the one who, at these moments, “opens his store and stretches them upwards” (10:2). Moreover these celestial turning points are “a sign of the opening of his everlasting mercies for the beginnings of the seasons in every future age” (10:4–5). Following this emphatic reminder of the unchanging cycles in the heavens, we hear the Instructor declare that “all his deeds are truth” (אֱמֶת כּוֹל מַעֲשָׂיו), 10:17). To be sure, these “deeds” include God’s “judgment of every living thing,” but also his “great marvels” and “power” displayed in creation (10:16). If such ideas stand in the background of the “truth” language in the *Community Rule*, its authors may well have believed that by observing the community’s calendar they were reenacting God’s fidelity as creator, the same kind of reliability demonstrated in the motion of the heavenly bodies along their unswerving courses.

6. “TRUTH” AND INTERTEXTUAL POLEMIC

When we look for the intertextual context of this usage of אֱמֶת, we turn naturally to the Israelite Scriptures with which the community at Qumran was so absorbed. Yet it soon becomes clear that the noun’s use in the *Community Rule* is markedly different from what we find in much of the Tanak. In particular, we do not find the word-pair חַסֵּד and אֱמֶת that is so common in the Pentateuch, the Former Prophets, and most of the Psalter.⁵⁰ The noun חַסֵּד is used fifteen times in IQS, usually pointing to God’s acts of compassion and mercy toward Israel.⁵¹

50. The pair חַסֵּד and אֱמֶת appears describing human behavior in Gen 24:27, 49: 32:11; 47:29; Josh 2:14; 24:14; 1 Kgs 3:6; Ps 25:10; 26:3; 85:11; Prov 3:3; 14:22; 16:6; and 20:28. The word-pair describes God or his activity in Exod 34:6; 2 Sam 2:6; 15:20; 1 Kgs 3:6; Ps 26:3; 40:11–12(10–11); 57:4(3), 11(10); 61:8(7); 69:14(13); 86:15; 108:5(4); 115:1; 117:2; 138:2; and Mic 7:20. On the other hand, אֱמֶת describes God or his actions without חַסֵּד in Ps 30:10; 31:6(5); 43:3; 71:22; 91:4; 111:7; 132:11 (cf. Ps 45:5[4]; 54:7[5]); Isa 38:18, 19; 61:8; Jer 10:10; 32:41; and Dan 9:13.

51. See IQS 1:8, 22; 2:1, 4; 4:4, 5; 10:4, 16; 11:12, 13.

Although this “loyalty” appears four times in a list of virtues headed by אמת, it is embedded each time in the phrase אהבת חסד (“loving devotion”), an expression that appears nowhere in the MT of the Tanak. The words אמת and חסד are never placed side by side in the *Community Rule* and seem no more closely related than any of the other virtues in these lists (2:24; 5:3–4, 25; 8:2).⁵² This suggests that the typical identification of God (or a human being) as חסד ואמת is not the primary background for the “truth” language in the *Community Rule*.

We find a similar use of אמת without חסד, however, in key passages from the Former Prophets that focus on Davidic royal ideology. In 1 Kgs 2:4 the aged regent recalls God’s promise to preserve his lineage: “If your heirs take heed to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness (ללכת לפני באמת) with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail you a successor on the throne of Israel.”⁵³ Soon after David’s death, Solomon reminds God that his father “walked before you in faithfulness (באמת), in righteousness (ובצדקה), and in uprightness of heart toward you (ובישרת לבב עמך)” (1 Kgs 3:6). Similarly, Hezekiah, one of the heroes of the davidic dynasty, calls on God to remember “how I walked before you in faithfulness (באמת) with a whole heart (ובלבב שלם), and have done what is good (והטוב) in your sight” (2 Kgs 20:3).⁵⁴ Not only does “truth” appear in these passages without an association with חסד, but it stands together with other terms for virtue: צדקה, טוב, לבב שלם, and ישר. While not exactly the same as any of the lists found with אמת in the *Community Rule*, this usage is strikingly similar.

The other set of significant parallels comes from the Latter Prophets. In their condemnations of Israel or Judah for betrayal of the covenant, the prophets often single out “truth,” without any mention of חסד, as a pattern of behavior they have failed to find among the people. In Isa 59:14–15 we read:

Justice (משפט) is turned back, and righteousness (צדקה) stands at a distance; for truth (אמת) stumbles in the public square, and uprightness (נכח) cannot enter. Truth (אמת) is lacking, and whoever turns from evil (רע) is despoiled. The LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice (משפט).

As in the *Community Rule*, this “truth” is central to Israel’s ideal lifestyle and once again is set alongside other virtue terms including “justice” (משפט) and

52. The expression אהבת חסד appears also in 10:26, in a list of community virtues likely headed by אמת, though the beginning of the list is now broken. Note that חסד always denotes God’s activity in 1QS, while אהבת חסד is always a human virtue. This terminological separation of divine action from human response is quite different from the pattern we find with אמת.

53. Quotations from the Tanak are taken from the NRSV.

54. Likewise, in 2 Chr 31:20 we hear that Hezekiah “did what was good (הטוב) and right (והישר) and faithful (והאמת) before the LORD his God.”

“righteousness” (צדקה).⁵⁵ Again, in Isa 48:1 the prophet identifies the Judeans as those “who swear by the name of the LORD and invoke the God of Israel, but not in truth or right (לא באמת ולא בצדקה).” Similarly Daniel, in his apocalyptic vision of the ram and the goat, sees the goat’s final horn “cast truth (אמת) to the ground” (8:12).⁵⁶ In each case, אמת is a crucial pattern of action that is absent in Israel, a “faithfulness” in their relationships both with one another and with their God.

On the other hand, the same prophets expect “truth” to characterize God’s people when their deliverance and healing finally arrive. Isaiah describes how, on the day of Israel’s judgment, “the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean on the one who struck them, but will lean on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth (באמת)” (Isa 10:20). At this point, the prophet declares, a faithful “remnant” will be restored. This eschatological recovery of אמת is related by Isaiah to the hope for a Davidic king. In ch. 16 we are told that the Davidic throne will not be left desolate, and “on it shall sit in faithfulness (באמת) a ruler who seeks justice (משפט) and is swift to do what is right (צדק)” (Isa 16:5). The same “truth” that characterizes God’s restored people will be displayed by the Davidic heir who leads them. Similarly, we hear that the enigmatic servant of the Lord “will faithfully (באמת) bring forth justice (משפט)” (Isa 42:3). Nor is Isaiah the only prophet to associate “truth” with Israel’s hope of restoration. In Jer 4:2 the prophet tells the Judeans “[I]f you swear, ‘As the LORD lives!’ in truth (באמת), in justice (במשפט), and in uprightness (ובצדקה), then nations shall be blessed by him, and by him they shall boast.” Ezekiel, too, defines the righteous man (צדיק) as one who “follows my statutes, and is careful to observe my ordinances (ומשפטי שמר), acting faithfully (לעשות אמת)” (Ezek 18:9).⁵⁷ Likewise, in Zech 8:3 God announces that he will return to Zion and “Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city (עיר האמת)” (cf. Zech 8:16).

The fact that these passages employ אמת without חסד was our initial clue

55. See also Jer 2:21, where the Judeans are reminded how God “planted you as a choice vine, from the purest stock (זרע אמת).” Superficially, אמת refers here to the “reliable” productivity of the stock from which the vine was taken. We are likely meant to hear, though, an overtone of the idea that treacherous Jerusalem is descended from a once “faithful” nation. Jeremiah 9:4(5) makes the accusation that they “all deceive their neighbors, and no one speaks the truth (אמת); they have taught their tongues to speak lies (שקר); they commit iniquity (העוה) and are too weary to repent.”

56. In Dan 8:12, אמת is often understood differently by modern interpreters, as a semi-technical term for “true religion” (e.g., Thiselton, “Truth,” 881). I would argue, though, that אמת is here close enough to its use by the prophets for the sectarian interpreters to understand it as “faithfulness.” As George J. Brooke notes, 4Q174 4:3 provides clear confirmation that the Qumran group regarded Daniel as a prophet (“Prophecy,” *EDSS* 2:694–702, esp. 695).

57. In the previous verse the prophet tells us that the righteous one “does not take advance or accrued interest, withholds his hand from iniquity (רע), and executes true justice (משפט אמת) between contending parties” (Ezek 18:8). This use of אמת likely carries the same sense as in 18:9, but (as the NRSV illustrates) its meaning here is disputed.

that such prophetic texts might lie behind the “truth” terminology in the *Community Rule*. Yet once we recognize these intermingling royal and eschatological trajectories in the use of אמת, we see the same themes in some prophetic texts that do pair “truth” with חסד. Hosea rails against the people’s faithlessness: “There is no faithfulness or loyalty (אין אמת ואין חסד), and no knowledge of God in the land” (Hos 4:1). Zechariah calls on the people to “render true judgments (ממשפט אמת שפטו), show kindness and mercy (ווחסד ורחמים עשו) to one another” (Zech 7:9). We also find a similar picture of Israel’s restoration in the Psalter, a collection that seems to have been read prophetically at Qumran.⁵⁸ In Ps 85:11-12(10-11) we read:

Steadfast love and faithfulness (חסד ואמת) will meet;
righteousness and peace (צדק ושלום) will kiss each other.
Faithfulness will spring up from the ground (אמת מארץ תצמח),
and righteousness (וצדק) will look down from the sky.

The psalmist hopes to see a day when Israel’s injustice and unfaithfulness are replaced by a pervasive lifestyle of faithfulness, in which human beings do right to one another and to God, so that the whole community experiences “peace” (שלום). Then God’s anger will be “set aside” (Ps 85:2[3]) and the nation will be “revived” (Ps 85:5[6]).

Taken together, these parallels likely constitute the primary intertextual setting for the role of “truth” language in the *Community Rule*. In themselves, such connections with royal ideology (and hence messianism) and prophetic eschatology are not surprising. We have known since the discovery of the first scrolls that the Qumran sect’s theology and identity were forged amid the intensive reading of the prophets evident in the *pesherim*. The prophets are even listed alongside Moses in the opening of the *Community Rule* as a vehicle for God’s revelation of his will (1:3). Isaiah, the prophet in which we find the largest number of the parallels above, was clearly a favorite.⁵⁹ In fact, the list of parallels above come from precisely the sections of the prophetic corpus that we know were central to the sect’s thought. 4QFlorilegium, for example, contains a messianic reading of 2 Sam 7:10–14, the institution of the “Davidic covenant,” which is recalled in 1 Kgs 2:4 and 3:6 above. The surviving section of 4QFlorilegium combines this Davidic passage with messianic and eschatological expectations drawn from the Psalter (Ps 2:1) and from three of the five prophetic books mentioned above: Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.⁶⁰ None of the Tanak passages in which אמת is used

58. The clearest evidence of a prophetic reading of the Psalms is the existence of a *pesher* on the Psalter (see 4Q171; 4Q173). See further Brooke, “Prophecy,” *EDSS*, 2:696.

59. In addition to the two Isaiah scrolls found in Cave 1, eighteen more were found in Cave 4. Brooke suggests that Isaiah “ranked alongside *Genesis*, *Deuteronomy*, and the *Psalms* as a kind of canon within the canon for the community” (“Prophecy,” 695).

60. See Isa 8:11 in 4QFlor 1–3 i.15–16; Ezek 44:10 in 4QFlor 1–3 i.16–17, Ps 2:1 in 4QFlor 1–3 i.18–19, and Dan 12:10//11:32 in 4QFlor 1–3 ii.3–4a.

actually appears in 4QFlorilegium, but some of the texts come from nearby sections of Isaiah and Daniel.⁶¹ On the other hand, the prominent use of אמת in Isa 10:20 does appear in the *Isaiah Peshar* (4Q161 1 i.20-21).⁶² The writer explains that the people expected to lean “faithfully” (באמת) on God “is [the assembly of his chosen one . . .] the men of his army . . .” (4Q161 1 i.23-24). So not only do such prophetic and royal texts furnish the Tanak’s closest analogies to the use of אמת in IQS, but these parallels appear in the same sections of the prophets and the Psalms that we know helped shape the sect’s self-understanding.⁶³

If such royal and prophetic uses of אמת were central to shaping the word’s role in the *Community Rule*, this intertextual context helps flesh out our understanding of the role “truth” talk played in sectarian self-definition at Qumran. The prophets use אמת to differentiate between faithful Israelites and apostates, between those who will be destroyed in judgment and the righteous remnant. Read against this background, the Qumran sectarians’ claim to constitute the locus of “truth” is a claim to embody the true Israel, renewed in preparation for the coming judgment. It is also an implicit accusation that the mainstream leaders in Jerusalem are covenant traitors, no better than the “sinners” crushed under the boots of Assyria and Babylon.

What is more, by repeatedly identifying themselves in terms of their lifestyle of “truth,” the community members drew on their intertextual resources to counter the social forces threatening their commitment to the group. The marginal nature of any sect produces continual social pressure for its members to conform, to reintegrate into the mainstream of their society. Much of this tension

61. 4QFlorilegium includes an interpretation of Isa 8:11, a passage that comes not long before the appearance of “truth” in Isa 10:20. Note, too, the emphasis on Isa 11:1-5 in Qumran messianic expectation (IQSb 5:20-29; 4Q161 8-10 iii.11-25). Likewise, we find emphasis in sectarian compositions on Isa 61:1-3, which appears just after the mention of “truth” in ch. 59 (11QMelch 2:6; 4Q521 2 ii.1-12). The prominent reference to Isaiah in IQS 8:14 is from Isa 40:3, near the reference to “truth” in Isa 42:3 (see also Isa 40:11-12 in 4Q165 frgs. 1-2.1-4). 4QFlorilegium also quotes Dan 12:32, which stands in the same broad section of that apocalypse as the “casting down” of אמת in 8:12, though the connection here is not as close as we might like.

62. Cf. the same verse in 4Q163 4-6 ii.9, where its interpretation falls in a lacuna in the manuscript.

63. אמת in Hos 4:1 would presumably have been found in the *Hosea Peshar*; however, the document has not survived between the commentary on Hos 2:14 (the end of 4Q166) and 5:13 (the beginning of 4Q167). We find further evidence of this use of אמת at Qumran in 4Q176a, a possible fragment from *Jubilees*. Fortuitously, the fragment opens with a line that is itself a quotation from Isa 48:1: “[. . . and they will invoke the great name, (but) not in truth] nor in justice (ולוא בצדקה) (לוא באמת)” (*Jub.* 23:21). This is part of a description of Israel’s fresh apostasy, after which the people will return to the study of Torah, to the path of righteousness, and will see the dawn of a utopian eschatological age (*Jub.* 23:26-31). Here the connection with the prophetic use of אמת in the Tanak is only secondhand, yet it provides evidence that such a use of אמת for Israel’s “faithfulness” to God continued in the mid-Second Temple period. What is more, this text comes in a document that was likely regarded as scriptural by the Qumran sect.

would arise, for members of the Qumran community, from their lack of outside status and recognition, particularly if some had previously been members of the elite in and around Jerusalem. By identifying the group as the center of *תְּמִתָּה*, and hence as true Israel, the authors of the *Community Rule* offered an alternative scale of honor and prestige to its members. At the same time, their use of “truth” language would activate in the minds of group members the prophetic narrative of exile and remnant, offering the “volunteers for truth” a powerful rationalization, even valorization, of their marginal status in the present. Those who “practice truth” have always faced such opposition because *תְּמִתָּה* has always been rejected by the majority. In this way the sect members’ lack of honor becomes itself a kind of empirical confirmation that they are indeed the “remnant” who have returned to a life of *תְּמִתָּה*.

As we have seen, the eschatological scenario connected with “truth” talk in the prophets also included divine judgment on the wicked. Hence by appealing time and again to the key language of *תְּמִתָּה*, the Qumran teachers would have encouraged the sectarians’ hope for revenge and vindication, that in the end those at the center would be forced to recognize the group’s true prestige and be punished. The royal Messiah, whose own reign will be characterized by *תְּמִתָּה*, will recognize the “community of truth” as his own, and those who dismiss the sect so easily will realize their error just before they die on the swords of the righteous army. It is likely because of these powerful intertextual resonances that the authors of the *Community Rule* were so enamored with the language of *תְּמִתָּה*, which offered another effective strut for the “plausibility structure” supporting their followers’ belief.

This connection with the prophetic and royal “truth” discourse in the Tanak also confirms our inductive look at the meaning of *תְּמִתָּה* so far. This “truth” in the Tanak’s royal and prophetic texts is not the Torah, though the law of Moses does point Israel toward such *תְּמִתָּה*. Neither is it “reality” or “accuracy.” It is a matter of faithfulness, of reliability in one’s actions toward God and neighbor. This is the kind of “faithfulness” with which David ruled, the lifestyle that was absent when the prophets decried the people’s injustice. This “reliable fidelity” is, by the same token, the kind of harmonious relationship that will fill Israel and the whole cosmos when God intervenes to remove the wicked.

7. TRUTH AND SECTARIAN TORAH

THE CLEAR CASES

So what is the relationship in the *Community Rule* between “truth” and Torah?⁶⁴ We have seen above that *תְּמִתָּה* seems to denote a lifestyle of faithfulness toward

64. Parallels from the Tanak are particularly tricky here. Although Torah is occasionally characterized as “true,” it remains a matter of debate exactly what *תְּמִתָּה* means in each of these

which the Mosaic code points, but can we say more? And just how does the interpretation of “truth” as “faithfulness” in IQS stand up in passages where earlier scholarship has seen a transparent identification of אמת with the group’s teaching of Torah?

There has been a tendency among some scholars to equate “truth” with the law’s contents whenever Torah happens to be mentioned in the immediate context. Based on what we have already seen, though, אמת can retain its sense of “faithful action” even when the Mosaic code is part of the discussion. I have already made this point above with regard to the purpose statement in 1:5. Likewise, the purpose statement of 8:2 comes immediately after a call for the council to be “perfect in everything that has been revealed from all the law (בכול הנגלה מכול התורה)” in 8:1–2. Yet, as we saw above, the “truth” of 8:2 is clearly a pattern of active faithfulness. It may include the council member’s “perfect” obedience to Torah’s demands, but אמת is not identified with that body of revelation itself. It is a personal “fidelity” that cannot be restricted to fulfilling any particular set of commands.

We are led to the same conclusion in 5:25, where those who administer discipline are urged to “reproach one another in truth (באמת), in meekness (וענוה) and in compassionate love for one’s fellow man (ואהבת חסד לאיש).” The point here is not that they should employ Torah or sectarian teaching in their rebukes; such a reminder would be redundant, since the whole disciplinary system is designed to enforce the law’s observance. We also find אמת in parallel again with familiar terms for active virtues: ענוה and אהבת חסד. So “truth” here is still “faithful action.” The writers of the *Community Rule* have the foresight to see that the members’ constant evaluation of one another could easily become a competition for status, a platform for humiliating one’s rivals and reinforcing one’s standing within the community. So they emphasize that this correction, too, must be performed as an expression of “faithfulness” to one’s neighbor. Even when the sect members call one another out for their failures or missteps they are to embody the virtues we saw listed in 1:5 and 8:2.

Something similar is said of the Instructor, the community’s chief teaching authority, near the end of the document:

scriptural passages. It is worth observing that where אמת is attributed to Torah in the Tanak we still find it alongside terms for virtues, patterns of right behavior, such as ישר, טוב, and צדק. See, e.g., Neh 9:13, where God is said to have descended on Sinai and given Israel “right ordinances (משפטים ישרים) and true laws (ותורות אמת), good statutes and commandments (וחקים ומצוות טובים).” See also Pss 19:10; 119:142, 151, 160; Mal 2:6; and cf. Pss 25:5; 86:11; 119:43. In at least a few cases it seems clear that the אמת associated with Torah cannot be factuality or accuracy; cf. Ps 111:8, where God’s laws are “established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness (באמת וישר).” If one can carry out Torah “faithfully” (באמת), it stands to reason that the אמת associated with Torah elsewhere may be this same kind of “faithfulness.” In any case, אמת is not a very common attribute of Torah in any part of the Tanak.

He should reproach (with) truthful knowledge (דעת אמת) and (with) just judgment (ומשפט צדק) those who choose the path, each one according to his spirit, according to the regulation of the time. He should lead them with knowledge (בדעה) and in this way teach them (להשכילם) the mysteries of wonder and of truth (ברזי פלא ואמת). (1QS 9:17–18)

Once again, our modern European assumptions about “truth” language might lead us to assume that, side by side with דעת, this אמת in 9:17 must be “accuracy,” “correspondence with reality.” Or we might assume that דעת אמת is “knowledge of Torah.” Yet both interpretations face difficulties when we notice the parallel between דעת אמת and משפט צדק, the instruments with which the Instructor is to correct community members. Both expressions begin with a construct noun referring to the sect’s teaching.⁶⁵ The two genitives אמת and צדק then complete these construct phrases, each qualifying that teaching in some way. In the phrase משפט צדק, the “righteousness” may be a characteristic of the Instructor’s “judgment.” Alternately, צדק could be the aim of the teaching, so that משפט צדק would mean “judgment that produces righteousness.” Few would suggest, though, that צדק is a label for the group’s teaching in general or for Torah. “Righteousness” is, instead, a morally praiseworthy pattern of behavior. Since this “righteousness” stands in parallel with אמת in the following construct phrase, we would expect it to designate a similar kind of action. We have also seen how אמת and צדק (or צדקה) are frequently linked in 1QS as terms for the community’s distinctive lifestyle. The phrase דעת אמת, then, might mean “knowledge exercised faithfully,” with אמת pointing to the Instructor’s own “fidelity.” Or, more likely, this “truth” in 9:17 may be the focus and goal of the Instructor’s “knowledge.”⁶⁶ It is “knowledge of how to be faithful.”

This passage in col. 9 is important also because it helps clarify the relationship between אמת and the revelation received by the group’s teachers. In 9:19 we read that the Instructor is to correct the community members “so that they walk perfectly (להלך תמים), one with another, in all that has been revealed to them (בכול הנגלה להם).” This “revelation” seems to be identical to the “knowledge” and “judgment” of 9:17. Yet we have just seen that “righteousness” and “truth” are the qualities or aims of that revealed teaching, not labels for it; so “truth” is not equivalent to “revelation.” Rather, God has revealed to the Instructor how people may act faithfully and justly. Hence the Instructor teaches “the mysteries of wonder and of truth” (ברזי פלא ואמת, 9:18). The revealed teaching

65. This is almost certainly the sense of דעת here, with משפט likely referring to the sectarian “judgment” on a given point of Torah. The singular משפט may be the “judgment” offered by the Instructor regarding some point of halakah. Alternately, it could act here as a collective term for all the Instructor’s many judgments on points of practice. In theory, משפט could denote “justice,” as it does in the virtue lists of 1:5, etc. Here, though, the parallel with דעת and the following emphasis on “revealed things” suggest a focus on substantive teaching.

66. So Murphy-O’Connor, “Truth,” 214–15.

itself is denoted by the plural רזים (“mysteries”). Once again, “wonder and truth” (פלא ואמת) are either the topics discussed in those revelations or qualities of God’s revelatory act. “Wonder” (פלא) is not a state of astonishment but an amazing act, the term used by the Psalmists and Isaiah for God’s miraculous intervention on Israel’s behalf.⁶⁷ So the “mysteries of wonder,” revealed to the Instructor for the community’s edification, are either accounts of God’s amazing acts or revelations that are themselves astonishing, miraculous. In either case, then, אמת likewise refers to God’s action. Either the “mysteries” provide insight into miraculous acts that express God’s “faithfulness” toward Israel, or God’s acts of revelation are both miraculous and “faithful” or “reliable.” What is clear is that “truth” is not another label for God’s revelation to the community; אמת remains the pattern of “reliable fidelity” demonstrated by God toward his faithful community.

Similarly, the description of the community’s council of fifteen closes in 8:4 with the reminder that they are “to walk with everyone in the measure of the truth (ובתכון העת) (ב.ב) מדת האמת) (8:4). One might assume here that “the truth” is Torah, the standard according to which council members are to guide the group’s behavior; indeed, this is one of the few instances in IQS in which אמת carries the definite article. Yet we should not conclude too quickly that the articular noun here denotes “the truth,” since אמת stands in the genitive, following the construct noun מדת. The article may well be used here to make the preceding construct noun definite, not to express the definiteness of אמת itself; מדת האמת may not mean “the measure of the truth” but simply “the measure of truth.”⁶⁸ We should also notice that this infinitive clause in 8:4 is the last in a series of such clauses, a series that opened with the purpose statement of 8:2. There the council was constituted “to practice truth (לעשות אמת), justice, judgment, compassionate love, and unassuming behavior toward one another” (8:2). In other words, the whole description of the council’s role in 8:2–4 is bracketed at the beginning and end by אמת as a defining feature of their behavior, and the phrase “the measure of truth” in 8:4 forms the closing “bracket.” If the writers employ אמת to describe the council’s function at the opening and closing of this section, they most likely intend the second instance to carry the same meaning as the first—a pattern of interpersonal reliability.⁶⁹

67. So HALOT 2:928, s.v. פלא. See Isa 25:1; 29:14; Pss 77:12, 15; 78:12; 88:11, 13; 89:6. In, for example, Exod 15:11 and Isa 25:1 פלא is the object of עשה. Murphy-O’Connor (“Truth,” 191) translates רזי פלא ואמת as “wondrous mysteries of truth” and takes the whole expression to refer to the sect’s revealed teachings. It is unlikely, though, that פלא and אמת are meant to stand in different relationships to רזים, since the two construct nouns are coordinated by ו.

68. See Christo H. J. Van der Merwe, Jackie A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (3 vols.; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 3:187; Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 240–41.

69. Anyone familiar with New Testament studies will immediately think here of Paul’s

So why do we find *מדת האמת* in parallel here with the “regulation of the time” (*תכון העת*)? Despite the legal nuances of the *DSSSE* translation, this latter phrase probably refers not to Torah but to God’s eternal “plan” or “arrangement” of cosmic time. Certainly the genitive “time” does not denote any legal code, but rather the cosmic structure of temporality.⁷⁰ So the parallel genitive *אמת* likewise refers to the practice of “faithfulness” in general. What would it mean for the community members to “walk in the measure of truth”? The point is most likely that “faithfulness,” as a pattern of life, ought to be the yardstick or guideline for all of the sect’s actions, just as they seek to structure their lives in harmony with the movements of the luminaries. This parallel reinforces our tentative impression above that even calendrical observance is, for the authors of the *Community Rule*, a kind of relational fidelity toward the Creator. Even here in 8:4, though, *אמת* seems to retain the sense of “reliable faithfulness.” This “truth” is a pattern of life that is encouraged by Torah’s specific commands yet is broader than any legal code. It must be embodied in all of the sectarians’ behavior, even in areas where Moses remained silent, such as one’s correction of fellow Israelites. In this sense, “truth” makes an even farther-reaching claim on one’s life than either written Torah or the Instructor’s interpretation of specific points. By setting Torah observance in the context of “faithfulness” toward God and neighbor, the authors of IQS set up a discourse that resists the appropriation of Torah for personal advancement or self-aggrandizement.

HANDLING THE AMBIGUOUS CASES

These relatively clear instances of “truth” help us to handle those passages in which the relationship between *אמת* and Torah or the sect’s teaching is ambiguous. We have seen that, in the large majority of cases in the *Community Rule*, “truth” is a pattern of faithful behavior, and that *אמת* can retain this sense even when closely associated with the Mosaic code. So where the context of *אמת* does not allow for such clarity, it would be methodologically hazardous to introduce a new sense. Instead, we should assume that “truth” continues to denote this active “fidelity,” unless the context renders this impossible.

In 3:6–7, “it is by the spirit of the counsel of the truth of God (*ברוח עצת אמת אל*) that are atoned the paths of man.”⁷¹ This four-member construct chain offers enormous latitude for interpretation, and several different readings might fit the context. To be sure, *עצת* likely denotes the community’s teaching, which is

notoriously inconsistent use of *νόμος* in his letter to the Romans (compare, e.g., Rom 3:21 with 3:31). There, however, Paul is engaging in deliberate rhetorical wordplay; there is no evidence of that kind of rhetoric in the use of *אמת* here.

70. This is evident especially in the use of the singular “time” (*עת*) rather than the plural “times” (*עתיים*) used in 1:14 for the ritual times (Sabbaths, festivals, etc.) set down in Torah.

71. The *DSSSE* translation, “the true counsel of God,” prejudices the sense of the construct too far.

understood to pass on God's own instruction. So אמת might here be equivalent to Torah, with אמת אל being the "counsel that teaches God's law." Or, אמת may have the sense of "factuality" or "reality," so that the writers would mean "God's genuine counsel." A far more elegant solution, however, is to understand אמת in the same sense as elsewhere. אמת אל might then be rendered "the reliable counsel of God," and we can easily imagine why the authors of the *Community Rule* would think their teaching "reliable." Still, this would be the only case in IQS where "truth" was a property of an impersonal entity. More likely, "truth" modifies the following link in the construct chain, that is, God himself: this "counsel" is either an expression of God's own "faithfulness," or teaches the community how to live out the same faithfulness that God has shown to Israel. Since either reading works perfectly well, we should assume that אמת continues to denote here a pattern of faithful personal action.⁷²

Perhaps the most difficult use of אמת to pin down comes in 1:12, just before the start of the covenant liturgy. Those who volunteer to join the community "will convey all their knowledge (דעתם), their energies (וכוחם), and their riches (הונם) to the Community of God in order to refine their knowledge in the truth of God's decrees (אל) (לברר דעתם באמת חוקי אל)" (1:11–12). The knowledge in view seems to include at least an element of intellectual content, primarily one's understanding of Torah.⁷³ Hence אמת here could mean "correctness" or "reality," the last phrase then meaning "the truth concerning God's decrees," that is, the sect's proper interpretation of Torah.⁷⁴ Or "truth" could here be a label for Torah itself, in which case the phrase would mean "the truth that consists of God's decrees." Yet we have already seen that the "truth" in 1:5 and even at the beginning of the sentence under discussion (1:11) denotes a pattern of behavior, not a body of teaching or "reality" in general. Since אמת was introduced so prominently and polemically as the group's defining characteristic in 1:5, it would be odd for the writers to employ it so soon in a different sense. Still, is it not equally awkward to think that the "faithfulness of God's decrees" somehow "refines" the community member's knowledge of the law?

It is helpful here to look at the mirror-opposite statement in 3:1–3. One who rejects the community's practices, whose "soul loathes the disciplines of knowl-

72. This construal of the passage seems confirmed in the following clause: "And it is by the holy spirit of the community, in its truth (וברוח קדושה ליחד באמתו) that he is cleansed of all his iniquities" (3:7–8). Once again, what defines the sectarian community (יחד) is its lifestyle of consistent faithfulness to God and one another. It is this global pattern of fidelity that opens the door for the atonement and forgiveness that its members receive from the "spirit of holiness."

73. Note the parallel between "knowledge" (דעת) and "discernment" (שכל) in 2:3. In 2:22 דעת is given an explicit content.

74. So Murphy-O'Connor, "Truth," 190–91. He also suggests that this "truth" encompasses not only the five books of Moses, but "the whole of the O.T." as it was made the object of the community's "immense exegetical labour" in the *pesharim* and elsewhere ("Truth," 191).

edge of just judgments (יִסוּרֵי דַעַת מִשְׁפָּטֵי צַדִּיק) (3:1; cf. 2:24), cannot become a member: “His knowledge (דַּעַתוֹ), his energy (וְכוֹחֹ) and his wealth (וְהוֹנֹ) shall not enter the council of the Community because he ploughs in the mud of wickedness and there are stains on his conversion” (3:2–3). Apparently a probationary candidate for membership in the community has not passed one of the two entrance examinations.⁷⁵ Hence he is barred from taking the final step of entry into the community, when one’s possessions become part of the common fund and one gains full access to the common meals.⁷⁶ The “disciplines” which the candidate “loathes” (3:1) are probably the detailed rules that regulate the community’s life:⁷⁷ the daily practices that arise from “knowledge of just judgments,” that is, the community’s correct interpretation of Torah. The problem for the failed candidate is not primarily a lack of understanding, but a lack of will to put this new understanding of God’s commands into practice. He “has not the strength to convert his life (לְמִשׁוֹב חַיּוֹ) (3:1). This failure to live by the group’s rules makes the candidate a threat to the “reliable faithfulness” which they must embody as “the community of his [that is, God’s] truth (יְחַד אֱמֶתוֹ)” (2:26).

If the situation in 1:12 represents the opposite case, in which a successful candidate is inducted into full membership, we begin to understand more clearly how these candidates must first “refine their knowledge in [or by means of] the truth of God’s decrees (לְבַרְרֵר דַּעַתְם בְּאֵמֶת חֻקֵי אֱלֹ) (1:11–12). One’s theoretical understanding of Torah is inseparable, for the Qumran sect, from the ability to live by its instructions, for anything short of “perfect” (תְּמִימִים) obedience will place the whole community in danger of God’s judgment. Hence, while דַּעַת includes an element of intellectual content, perhaps this “knowledge” also encompasses the “know-how,” the *savoir-faire*, which the candidate needs to overcome the “stubbornness of his heart” (2:26) and live in harmony with God’s revealed will.⁷⁸ The candidate’s probation gives him a chance not only to study but also to

75. This would explain why the individual knows the sect’s teachings but resists adopting them in practice (2:24).

76. On the community’s probationary procedures, see 6:13–23. Following an initial examination to evaluate the candidate’s suitability (6:13–14), he is then allowed to “enter into the covenant” 6:14–15). After one year living with the community, the candidate is evaluated “about his affairs, concerning his insight and his deeds in connection to the law” (עַל דְּבָרָיו) (6:18). Only after this first examination can “his possessions and his earnings (לְפִי שְׂכָלוֹ וּמַעֲשָׂיו בְּתוֹרָה מִלְּאֲכָתוֹ) (6:18). Only after this first examination can “his possessions and his earnings (אֶת הוֹנֹ וְאֶת מְלֶאכְתּוֹ) be handed over to the control of the community leadership (6:19). The candidate may eat the pure food of the community at this point, but he must wait another full year to enjoy the pure drink (6:20–21). Only after this second year of probation, and a second formal evaluation, will his “possessions” (הוֹן) actually be used as part of the community’s common fund (6:20, 22).

77. See 6:14, where a new candidate is accepted “[i]f he suits the discipline” (אִם יִשְׁיֵג מוֹסֵר). Since מוֹסֵר is anarthrous we should probably understand it as a generic term, “discipline” rather than “the discipline.” The assumption, though, is that only the sect’s common life constitutes the true “discipline” that God requires.

78. Knowledge (דַּעַת) does seem at times in 1QS to be a skill in thinking rather than just

live with the Qumran group, to follow their daily routines and internalize their habits. In this way the “truth” practiced by the community, faithfully living out God’s commands day after day, will clarify, correct, and deepen the new candidate’s knowledge of God’s will. If this is correct, we find in 1:12 a praxis-oriented epistemology and pedagogy, in which faithful practice is an indispensable part of the journey into knowledge.⁷⁹

We cannot be certain of this interpretation. There are not enough cues in the text to decide with confidence either whether *דעת* includes this kind of “know-how” or exactly what role *אמת* would play in refining it. Yet it must be stressed once again that we *can* find a perfectly plausible reading of 1:12 in which “truth” continues to denote faithful practice. So given the ambiguities of this passage, and the overwhelming evidence elsewhere in the document, we should assume something like the reading laid out above. To miss an atypical use of *אמת* in 1:12 would be less damaging than to domesticate the *Community Rule* by injecting a sense for “truth” that better suits our modern habits of thought.

So we cannot say definitively that *אמת* is never used in IQS to denote Torah, its interpretation by the sect, or other revealed teaching. We can say, though, that in none of these cases does the word’s context force us to interpret “truth” as a body of teaching or a text. On the contrary, in all passages where a confident judgment is possible, *אמת* has denoted a pattern of faithful action, a pattern described and encouraged by “Moses.” The Qumran group’s rule also trains its followers to practice such “faithful” behavior. Like “justice” and “compassion,” though, *אמת* seems to point toward a pattern of life that cannot be reduced to any limited set of rules or commandments. This “truth” seems even to have existed before Torah was given, since God’s own actions display the same “faithfulness.” In fact, for the authors of the *Community Rule*, God’s revelations to the sect may themselves be acts of “truth,” in which he faithfully restores a remnant of Israel to covenant obedience.

8. THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

THE CONSISTENT PATTERN

Given the consistency with which the writers of the *Community Rule* seem to use *אמת*, we might expect the “spirit of truth” to promote the same sort of fidelity. It is, after all, created by God, and its “truth” also comes to define the identity of its

intellectual content. In 6:3–4, “knowledge” is set alongside “wisdom” (חכמה) and associated terms like “intelligence” (שכל) and “understanding” (בינה). In 4:22 the “knowledge of the Most High (בדעת עליין)” seems also to require an element of experiential familiarity, of *Ken-
nen* as well as *Wissen*.

79. Note, too, that this growth in knowledge is understood to continue long past the candidate’s successful entry. Full members continue to be tested each year, and their rank is adjusted based on their progress in “knowledge” (see preceding note).

“sons.” This connection is not quite a foregone conclusion, however, since there is some evidence that the “Treatise on the Two Spirits” (3:13–4:26) was composed separately from the surrounding material, or at least was an editorial addition.⁸⁰

It soon becomes clear, though, that here as well אמת is a moral virtue, a pattern of faithful behavior. Walck notes correctly that the opposite of “truth” in 3:13–4:26 is not “falsehood.” The “spirit of truth (רוח האמת)” is opposed, instead, to the “spirit of deceit (רוח העול)” (3:18–19).⁸¹ Although often translated “deceit” or “falsehood” in the *Community Rule*, עול is a general term for immoral behavior. In the Tanak it is usually glossed with terms such as “perversity” or “injustice.”⁸² The noun can on occasion denote “dishonesty,” but involving unjust practices like cheating in trade rather than simple false statements (see, e.g., Ezek 28:18; Prov 29:17). Hence a different Masoretic pointing of the same consonants עול yields a generic term for a “criminal” or “sinner.”⁸³ “Deception” (שקר) is mentioned as a symptom of the wicked spirit’s influence, but, as Walck notes, this is “but one of several qualities that comprise” עול.⁸⁴ That negative counterpart to truth consists of “greed, sluggishness in the service of justice, wickedness, falsehood, pride, haughtiness of heart, dishonesty, trickery, cruelty, much insincerity, impatience,” and so on (4:9–10). Such עול is certainly not focused on intellectual falsehoods or “false teaching.” Neither is the emphasis here on transgression of Torah per se—though the “sons of deceit” are hardly paragons of obedience—but rather on one’s inner dispositions and basic patterns of behavior. Instead of “transgression” we find that the “spirit” of עול inspires

much foolishness, impudent enthusiasm for appalling acts performed in a lustful passion, filthy paths in the service of impurity, blasphemous tongue, blindness of eyes, hardness of hearing, stiffness of neck, hardness of heart in order to walk in all the paths of darkness and evil cunning. (4:10–11)

This “deceit” seems to be a blanket term for every attitude and act that violates one’s obligations to neighbor and to God. In the strong dualism of this “Treatise,” such statements also serve to mark out negatively the territory belonging to “truth.” Hence, the אמת that opposes עול would seem, by implication, to be the

80. Two of the Cave 4 copies of the *Community Rule* (4Q258 and 4Q259) may have begun with the material in IQS 5:1. In IQS we also find marginal markers that seem to set 3:13–4:26 apart from the surrounding materials. Some debate remains on the significance of this evidence, particularly since IQS has been dated earlier than the 4Q fragment in question.

81. Walck, “Truth,” 950.

82. HALOT 1:797–78, s.v. עָוֵל. See especially Mal 2:6: “True instruction (תורת אמת) was in his mouth, and no wrong (עול) was found on his lips. He walked with me in integrity and uprightness (בשלום ובמישור), and he turned many from iniquity (מעון).”

83. HALOT 1:797–78, s.v. עָוֵל.

84. Walck, “Truth,” 950.

same global faithfulness in all one's relationships that we have seen throughout the *Community Rule*.

This understanding of "truth" as "faithfulness" in 3:13–4:26 is confirmed when we look at its relationship with "righteousness" (צדק). The "sons of truth," those governed by the "spirit of truth" (or "Prince of Lights"), can also be called the "sons of justice (בני צדק)" (3:20). In both cases, this positive division of humanity is set over against the same "sons of deceit" (בני עול), implying that אמת and צדק are more or less interchangeable as defining terms for the lifestyle God seeks. So when we hear how the the spirit of truth influences the individual human heart, we are told: "In agreement with man's inheritance in truth (כפי נחלת איש באמת), he shall be righteous (צדק) ..." (4:24).⁸⁵ One might argue that אמת designates revelation or teaching, but in that case one would have to argue that "righteousness" too has been emptied of its usual meaning and become a mere label for Torah or its interpretation.

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

Similarly, if we examine the redemptive role played by the "spirit of truth" in this section, it is overwhelmingly preoccupied with the actions of its "sons," not their right doctrine. Near the opening of the treatise we learn that God created the two spirits of "truth" and "deceit," and that "on them [he] established every deed (כול מעשה)" (3:25). If the fundamental role played by these spirits is to influence actions, it would seem that the "truth" and "deceit" they promote are patterns of *acting* (עשה).

What creates confusion in the "Treatise on the Two Spirits," however, is that intellectual activity seems to be woven together in the lifestyle of "truth" with other kinds of action. The general definition of the two spirits' assignments in 3:18–26 is followed in 4:1–6 by a more specific description of the role played by the "spirit of truth." This spirit exists "to enlighten the heart of man" (איר בלבב איש) (לה) (4:2). Since we associate "light" with knowledge, it is natural to assume that the "spirit of truth" is tasked with teaching its "sons." A little further on in this list of the spirit's purpose, it instills "intelligence" (שכל), "understanding" (בינה), and "potent wisdom" (חכמת גברה) (4:3). The spirit is called "a spirit of knowledge in all the plans of action" (רוח דעת בכל מחשבת מעשה) (4:4), and the "sons of light" are moved by a spirit "of concealment concerning the truth of mysteries of knowledge" (וחבא לאמת רזי דעת) (4:6).⁸⁶ All of this easily gives the

85. Here again I have altered the *DSSSE* translation from "the truth" to "truth" so as not to imply that באמת is definite, or identical with a body of teaching.

86. Contra Walck, "Truth," 951 (with reference to both 4:6 and 9:16–18). He writes, "The community conceived of truth as a body of knowledge and a quality of their insight, which was to be taught to members of the community but concealed from the wicked" ("Truth," 951). Similarly, Murphy-O'Connor understands this knowledge to be "an accurate comprehension

impression that the “spirit of truth” reveals “the truth” to its children, a body of accurate knowledge.

If we pause to reflect for a moment, however, there are two immediate problems with such an understanding. First, this spirit promotes “truth” and not “the truth.” As elsewhere in the *Community Rule*, אמת appears without the definite article when it describes the goal of this spirit’s work, which would seem odd if “truth” were a body of teaching. Second, the word “Torah” is completely absent from this passage, and in fact does not appear anywhere in 3:13–4:26. So the role played by the “spirit of truth” is not tied explicitly here to revelation or scriptural interpretation.

If we take a second look at 4:1–6, then, the evidence for the supposed revelatory role played by the “spirit of truth” is much more ambivalent than it first seemed. How certain are we that “enlightening the heart” is a matter of imparting new knowledge? After all, the sectarian authors would have known Ps 43:3: “O send out your light and your truth (אורך ואמתך); let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling.” Commentators are not at all agreed that the poet had intellectual “light” in mind here, and we find in this passage the same juxtaposition of “light” (אור) with “truth” (אמת) as in 1QS 4:2.⁸⁷ Notice, too, that the “spirit of truth” is called the “spirit of light” precisely where its role is most clearly a matter of encouraging attitudes and virtues (e.g., 3:25–26). On the other hand, “darkness” is often a moral category in the “Treatise on the Two Spirits.” In 4:11, for example, the “paths of darkness” (דרכי חושך) are also the paths “of evil cunning” (ערמת רוע). So the “light” shined into the human heart by the “spirit of truth” may just as well be a moral orientation, a properly humble stance toward God. Here again our modern instincts for the significance of such metaphors can be a treacherous guide.⁸⁸

of the truth revealed to it,” which is “expected to flower into moral endeavour” (“Truth,” 215). Yet his analysis here, prioritizing knowledge over subsequent moral action, seems too swayed by the Pauline teaching with which he is comparing the Qumran material.

87. See, e.g., John Eaton, *The Psalms: A Historical and Spiritual Commentary with an Introduction and New Translation* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 181–82; Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 352.

88. The point here is not that light imagery was never associated with knowledge in Jewish antiquity. Rather, light motifs could also be associated with other ideas in Jewish thought, ideas that may seem less “natural” to us. In *1 Enoch* (Gk) “light” is the eschatological blessing of the righteous, equivalent to “salvation” (1:8; 3:6, 7, 8; *Pss. Sol.* 3:12). In *T. Zeb.* 9:8 God is called the “light of righteousness” who will come with “healing and compassion” to rescue the righteous from Beliar. In *T. Naph.* we are told “neither can you do the works of light while you are in darkness” (2:10); and *T. Benj.* 5:3 offers a parallel between “respect for good works and light in the mind.” In the Gospel of John, the “light” is at one point the sphere within which one’s deeds cannot be hidden (John 3:19–21; cf. *Jos. Asen.* 6:3). On the other hand, in John 8:12 “light” seems to be God’s life-giving power, and in 11:9–10 “light” seems to approach “faith,” the basic posture receptivity to God’s work that makes it possible to perceive the meaning of Jesus’ “signs” and respond.

Moreover, when we examine the apparent references to revelation or teaching in 4:2–6, the “spirit of truth” seems to play a less direct role in relation to teaching than we first assumed. When the spirit’s “enlightening” role is mentioned, this appears in parallel with two other statements in which its function is not primarily intellectual. The “spirit of truth” is to “straighten out in front of him [that is, the son of truth] all the paths of righteousness and truth (דרכי צדק אמת)” (4:2; cf. 4:17).⁸⁹ This spirit does not reveal the right path to walk, but “straightens out” (לישר) the path, makes it somehow easier for the sons of light to follow. Notice, too, that “truth” is here a characteristic of the path itself, of human behavior, and is set once more alongside “righteousness.” So the “spirit of truth” is tasked with making its “sons” able to live out a lifestyle of אמת. Immediately following is that this spirit works in the human being to “establish in his heart respect for the precepts of God” (לפחד לבבו במשפטי אל) (4:2–3). This seems to restate the way in which the “spirit of truth” straightens out the “paths of truth” before its sons. The spirit does not unveil any new precepts or their meaning but rather influences the human moral disposition so that one can adopt a proper stance of humility and submission to God’s commands.⁹⁰ It seems quite likely that the “enlightening” work of the “spirit of truth” was introduced in 4:2 as the first in a threefold parallel statement stretching into 4:3. This spirit enlightens the heart, that is, it straightens out the paths of truth, encourages a proper attitude toward God’s precepts. If this is correct, then the “enlightenment” offered by the spirit of truth has nothing to do with fresh revelation and everything to do with the quality of one’s response to the revelation at hand.

It is not so easy to dismiss the intellectual dimension in 4:3, where the “spirit of truth” produces in human beings “intelligence” (שכל), “understanding” (בינה), and “potent wisdom” (חכמת גברה) (4:3). This trio seems drawn self-consciously from the conservative wisdom tradition stretching from Proverbs through Ben Sira, and into the so-called *Sapiential Work A* that was evidently popular at Qumran. We should observe, however, that none of these terms denotes a body of knowledge. Each is, instead, an intellectual skill. Moreover, while our modern mind-set usually decries any moral prerequisites for knowledge, the intellectual skills highlighted in 4:3 are at once moral virtues. “Intel-

89. DSSSE translates אמת צדק as “true justice,” which is misleading since it prompts English speakers to think of “genuine” (as opposed to counterfeit) justice. We have already seen how אמת and צדק in 1QS (and within the two-spirits discourse itself) are closely related as terms for the defining lifestyle of the *yahad*. So we should probably understand אמת in this construct relationship as an epexegetical genitive, partitive genitive, or genitive of source. These paths are defined by “justice which is truth,” or “justice which is one element of truth,” or “justice which arises from truth.”

90. Note that the אל משפטי may not be God’s “precepts” at all, but may refer to God’s “just acts” in history on behalf of Israel. This would change the shape of my argument here, though it would also offer further corroboration that the “spirit of truth” encourages a faithful response to God’s own faithfulness (אמת).

ligence” and “understanding” are, in Israelite wisdom, a cognitive capacity that includes at its foundation a proper existential response to the God in whose world we live. Wisdom begins, as the sage makes abundantly clear, with “the fear of the Lord” (Prov 1:7). In fact, it is precisely this dimension of wisdom that is emphasized here. It is a “potent wisdom (חכמת גבורה) which trusts (מאמנת) in all the deeds of God and depends (ונשענת) on his abundant mercy” (4:3–4). The wisdom promoted by the “spirit of truth” is primarily a stance of submission and reliance, not toward Torah but toward God as an active presence in the world. We also cannot overlook the fact that the “trusting” involved in such wisdom is expressed with the *hip’il* participle מאמנה, from the same root (אמן) as the noun אמת. The “intelligence” (שכל) and “understanding” (בינה) of 4:3 are not elaborated in the same way, but the writer of the “Treatise on the Two Spirits” probably intends all three wisdom nouns to express a single underlying attitude. This one disposition, called “intelligence” or “understanding” or “wisdom,” is a matter of faithful trust and dependence on God. It involves intellectual activity, to be sure, but the main idea here is that the “spirit of truth” encourages a kind of thinking that relies on Israel’s God.

Moreover, this trio of wisdom terms comes toward the end of a longer series of virtues promoted by the “spirit of truth” in 4:3–4. This is a “spirit of meekness” (ענוה), “patience” (אורך אפים), “generous compassion” (רוב רחמים), and “eternal goodness” (טוב עולמים) (4:3). This list is not identical with any of the virtue lists that define אמת elsewhere in the *Community Rule*, but we do find here the familiar terms ענוה and טוב, the former primarily an attitude of humility, and the latter focused more on the right actions such an attitude will produce. Taken as a whole, this list of virtues emphasizes that the “spirit of truth” produces in human beings the same lifestyle of active fidelity to God and neighbor that constitutes אמת in rest of the *Rule*. The “intelligence” (שכל), “understanding” (בינה), and “wisdom” (חכמה) of 4:3–4 simply fill out this description of ideal human fidelity, emphasizing that אמת in one’s thoughts involves a mind-set of reliance on the God who is entirely dependable.⁹¹

We have examined so far two main stages in the description of the role played by the “spirit of truth” in IQS 4:2–6. In the first (4:2–3), the text emphasizes the interior “illumination” that brings about a proper stance of respect toward God’s revealed commands. The second (4:3–4) outlines a trust and reliance on God that the “spirit of truth” evokes, a trusting wisdom that involves humility and “goodness” in thought and action. A third stage in this spirit’s role comes in 4:4, where it is called “a spirit of knowledge in all the plans of action” (רוח דעת בכול מחשבת מעשה). רוח דעת here may well be a technical term for sec-

91. See the similar connection between “truth” (אמת) and “wisdom” in Ps 51:8(6). “Truth” is likewise associated with “wisdom, instruction, and understanding” (חכמה ומוסר ובינה) in Prov 23:23.

tarian teaching, in particular the group's understanding of Torah. It is less clear, though, that the spirit *reveals* such knowledge, or that the spirit's "truth" is identified with that "knowledge." Instead, the spirit could simply encourage the *application* of such knowledge when one is "planning what to do" (מחשבת מעשה). After all, this role is immediately restated in terms of promoting "enthusiasm for the decrees of justice" (קנאת משפטי צדק) (4:4). In this pair of parallel statements, then, 4:4 seems to assign the "spirit of truth" the task of encouraging responsiveness to God's revealed will, so that it is embraced wholeheartedly and put into practice in life.

This third stage of the overview draws to a close with the statement that the spirit of truth is a spirit "of concealment concerning the truth of the mysteries of knowledge" (4:6). Once again, the *DSSSE* produces the misleading impression that אמת is equated with the "mysteries" of the community's teaching. "Truth," however, is probably not the thing being "concealed" (חבא). The preposition ל which introduces אמת would not usually mean "concerning," as if it introduced the subject matter to be hidden,⁹² but more likely introduces the purpose of the "concealment." The sons of light are moved to keep something hidden in order to promote or maintain "truth" (אמת).⁹³ It would be odd if the righteous were practicing concealment here "for the sake of" revealed knowledge, for in context, this same knowledge is the thing to be concealed. Why would the authors employ such a circuitous turn of phrase instead of simply making אמת the direct object of חבא?⁹⁴ The passage makes much better sense, however, if we understand אמת to denote "reliable faithfulness." In this case, the term "mysteries" (רזים) that follows in the construct chain is probably not an exegetical genitive, pointing to the same referent as אמת, but rather a genitive of advantage. The sons of truth practice faithfulness *toward* these mysteries. The final term of the construct chain, דעת, is then a genitive of content or of result. The esoteric truths revealed to the sons of light are labeled the "mysteries *that contain* knowledge" or "mysteries *that bring about* knowledge." If this is correct, the "spirit of truth" helps the community members to practice "faithfulness *in handling*

92. The preposition only plays this role in the Tanak when it follows a verb of speaking such as אמר. See *HALOT* 1:508, s.v. ל; Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction*, 210. The so-called dative use of ל can indicate possession or personal relationship, the author of some text or the indirect object of a verb. It does not, though, indicate the direct object of a verb (in this case an infinitive absolute), except with verbs of hearing (e.g., Gen 3:17). See Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction*, 206–7.

93. So A. R. C. Leaney, *Rule of Qumran*, 151. We find a similar use of the preposition ל with אמת in 9:3–4: "When these exist in Israel in accordance with these rules in order to establish the spirit of holiness in truth eternal (רוח קודש לאמת עולם)." Again, *DSSSE* here obscures what is probably the purposive or causative sense of the preposition.

94. This could be accomplished, for example, by using אמת as an objective genitive, without the preposition.

the mysteries of knowledge” (אמת רזי דעת) (4:6). What does such faithfulness involve? A prominent aspect is their “concealing” such mysteries from outsiders.

Hence, this outline of the assignment given to the spirit of truth in 4:1–6 gives us no reason to identify the “truth” that it inculcates with the sect’s revealed interpretations of Torah. Still less is this אמת a generic term for “accuracy” in one’s ideas, for “correspondence” with reality, or for “genuineness.” Instead the “truth” advanced by this spirit is a global faithfulness toward God and (righteous) humanity, a pattern of behavior that includes both vertical and horizontal dimensions, a “generous compassion with all the sons of truth” and a “magnificent purity which detests all unclean idols” (4:5). “Truth” is a lifestyle that takes seriously its obligations, a pattern of “careful behavior in wisdom concerning everything” (4:5–6). Indeed, it is these various dimensions of “faithfulness” that constitute “the foundations of the spirit of the sons of truth (in) the world” (סודי רוח לבני אמת תבל) (4:6). We find in this statement of the spirit’s role a greater emphasis on faithfulness in one’s thinking; “truth” here more clearly includes attitudes of respect and humility toward God as well as the acts of faithfulness that those attitudes sustain. Ultimately, though, it remains the faithful acts themselves that are the primary focus of the אמת this spirit is commissioned to foster in its “sons.”

THE ESCHATOLOGICAL VICTORY OF TRUTH

The close of the “Treatise on the Two Spirits” contains an eschatological section looking forward to the final establishment of “truth” in the world. After surveying the nature of “deceit” (עול), the text emphasizes once more the seemingly eternal hostility between the two spirits, and the arena for this conflict is human deeds. “Truth” detests the “[d]eeds of injustice” (עלילות עולה), and “all the paths of truth” (כול דרכי אמת) are “an abhorrence to injustice” (תועבת עולה) (4:17). The scene shifts, though, to reveal that this deadlock between the two powers will not last forever:

God, in the mysteries of his knowledge (ברזי שכלו) and in the wisdom of his glory, has determined an end to the existence of injustice (עולה) and on the appointed time of the visitation he will obliterate it forever. Then truth (אמת) shall rise up forever (in) the world, for it has been defiled in paths of wickedness (בדרכי רשע) during the dominion of injustice (עולה). (1QS 5:18–19)

“Truth” here (again indefinite) is still not identified with Torah or teaching. It is still a pattern of “faithfulness” in one’s relationships, primarily in the human relationship with God. “Truth” is once more set over against עולה (“injustice”) and רשע (“wickedness”). The focus of the conflict is, once again, the determination of which “paths” human beings will walk, with another echo of the prophetic hope for a restored Israel, perfected in אמת.

Beyond just confirming our earlier analysis, though, this final sequence helps clarify the relationship between “truth” and the sect’s revealed “mysteries.” It has often been observed that the use of “mystery” (רז) in IQS is indebted to the language and thought world of apocalyptic literature.⁹⁵ Such “mysteries” are not merely hidden knowledge; they are typically knowledge of the future or of heavenly realities. It is often difficult to distinguish, in talk about such “mysteries,” between knowledge of these realities and the realities themselves. The public unveiling of a future רז is often identical with the emergence of the event in history. This ambiguity likely arises from the way God’s thoughts are understood to be the wellspring of reality, so that for God to know something is identical with his bringing it into being.⁹⁶

Here in 4:18 the victory of “truth” is said to be “determined” (נתון) in “the mysteries of his [God’s] knowledge (ברזי שכלו) and the wisdom of his glory (ובחכמת כבודו).” Far from identifying “truth” with the revealed “mysteries,” this emphasizes the difference between the two. The “mysteries of his knowledge” (ברזי שכלו) are God’s thoughts, his decisions about how the future will unfold. “Truth,” though, does not denote these thoughts, nor is it “the source of the special knowledge on which the Essenes prided themselves.”⁹⁷ Rather, the victory of “truth” in the world is one of the events that God has “determined” will take place. To the extent that the sectarian teachers have been given a preview of these “mysteries,” such knowledge is not called אמת. The mysteries give them prescience of a future event, the moment when God will restore אמת, faithfulness, as the pattern of life throughout the cosmos.

Also confirmed here is the connection discussed above between divine “reliability” and human אמת. In 4:20 we read that “God will refine, with his truth (באמתו), all man’s deeds.” It is no accident that אמת is mentioned at this point; following the announcement of the coming victory in 4:18–19, this statement opens a description in lines 20–22 of how God plans to accomplish the feat. The mode of God’s coming intervention is his “refining” of human “deeds,” which he will do באמתו. The role of “truth” in the refining process may be understood in one of two ways, depending on how we construe the preposition ב. If it is instrumental, “truth” is the means or tool with which God will transform human

95. Compare, for example, *1 Enoch* 9:6; 103:2; and *4 Ezra* 14:5. On the Qumran use of “mystery” language, see John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (2nd ed.; Biblical Resource Series; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 150 (and the bibliography he provides in n. 24).

96. See, e.g., IQS 3:15: “From the God of knowledge stems all there is and all there shall be. Before they existed he established their entire design. And when they have come into being, at their appointed time, they will execute all their works according to his glorious design, without altering anything.”

97. Murphy-O’Connor, “Truth,” 192. To be fair, O’Connor points to passages in IQH as examples (1QH 11:27–28; 7:26–27; 2:9–10; 5:26), but he does treat the statement as applicable to sectarian thinking generally.

hearts for the better. Since human אמת has also been set out as the end goal of this transformation, though, the same pattern of “truth” is not the means of purification as well. More likely, באמתו describes the manner of God’s action. His restoration of “truth” in the cosmos is itself an act of “truth,” a manifestation of his own faithfulness toward creation.⁹⁸ We find here a symmetrical relationship between God’s own pattern of fidelity, manifested in the very act of restoration, and the human faithfulness he is producing in the “sons of light.”

As a part of this restoration, we are told that God “will sprinkle over him [the son of light] the spirit of truth (רוח אמת) like lustral water (in order to cleanse him) from all the abhorrences of deceit (תועבות שקר)” (4:20–21). Here we find an opposition, unusual in IQS, between “truth” and “deceit” (שקר). The latter is not the same word used to designate the “spirit of deceit” throughout the “Treatise on the Two Spirits.” In contrast to that עולה, this שקר is intellectual and cognitive in focus, a “deceit” that usually involves misleading someone else, pawning off false words as if they were accurate.⁹⁹ The contrast between אמת and שקר is so conspicuous here, however, precisely because it is atypical. Such “deceit” is mentioned only four times in IQS (4:9, 21; 5:15; 6:24), and only here is it used as the opposite of “truth.”¹⁰⁰ This suggests that it is not meant to stand as a full counterpart or mirror image of “truth,” but only as one kind of unfaithful act among others. This is, after all, how שקר is used in 4:9, where it appears near the end of a list of vices that fall under the umbrella term עולה. Why would the “spirit of truth” act as an antidote to the practice of deception? Likely because the “reliable faithfulness” of אמת is incompatible with the treacherous and self-centered lifestyle that gives rise to “deceit” (שקר).

We must keep this context in mind in coming to 4:22, where God’s purifying of the “sons of light” includes substantive teaching. After sprinkling humanity with this purifying spirit, God moves on “to instruct the upright ones with knowledge of the Most High (להבין ישרים בדעת עליון) and to give understanding of the wisdom of the sons of heaven to those of perfect behavior (והכמת בני שמים להשכיל תמימי דרך)” (4:21–22).¹⁰¹ This is the closest we come in the “Treatise on the Two Spirits” to an explicit statement that the “spirit of truth” teaches or reveals knowledge. Yet even here the spirit of truth is probably not the one teaching. Since God is the one who “will sprinkle” (ויו) the spirit in

98. באמתו may also identify God’s faithful behavior as the *instrument* of purification. The distinction in sense between this and the adverbial reading of באמתו, however, is minimal.

99. See HALOT 2:1648–50, s.v. שקר.

100. The more specific noun כזב, “lie,” appears nowhere in the “Treatise on the Two Spirits.” And only in the *Community Rule* at 10:22. As we saw above, שקר appears in 4:9 as one among many kinds of unfaithful conduct.

101. The DSSSE translation is awkward: “to make understand the wisdom of the sons of heaven to those of perfect behaviour” (4:22). I have adjusted the translation of להשכיל to yield more natural English.

4:21, and reappears in the following clause as the one who “chose” (בחר) the “perfect” (4:22), the infinitive clause in between (4:22) most likely expresses God’s own purpose or objective.¹⁰² The question then becomes how God’s purification of humanity with the “spirit of truth” furthers his task of “instructing” and “teaching” those who exhibit “perfect behavior.” Since this spirit’s role is not spelled out in the text, we must look in the surrounding context for clues. We find that the “spirit of truth” has been God’s instrument not only to purge humanity of “deception” (שקר) but also to “cleanse” humanity “from all wicked deeds” (מכול עלילות רשעה) (4:21).¹⁰³ Earlier in the treatise we saw that the “spirit of truth” encouraged an attitude of receptivity and humility toward Torah. Instead of actually teaching, then, the “spirit of truth” is likely assigned a preparatory and supporting role in the instruction of 4:21–22. God “sprinkles” the sons of light with this spirit, thereby removing any residual stiff necks, and ensures that his revelation will be faithfully received.

Whatever the role played by the “spirit of truth” in the teaching of 4:22, we must beware of assuming that “truth” is identical to the content of that teaching. The whole thrust and goal of this spirit’s eschatological work is humanity’s moral regeneration, and this is also the focus at the outset of the section in 4:18–19. After the instruction of 4:22, we are once more reminded that all this activity is geared to reestablish “truth” throughout the world, so that “there will be no more injustice (עולה) and all the deeds of trickery will be a dishonor (והיה לבושת כול מעשי רמיה)” (4:23). It is to this end that God performs the moral surgery of 4:20–22. Our modern biases about “truth” language may tempt us to seize on the one mention of revealed doctrine in the midst of this process and assume that אמת denotes this revelation. Yet we have seen above how the sectarian authors understand Torah to point toward a lifestyle of אמת. Such revealed teaching would encourage a lifestyle of “truth” that goes beyond any collection of written stipulations, any set of doctrines or halakic rules. The emergent “truth” in this eschatological scenario is thus, once again, a pattern of “faithful” human behavior.

If this reading of the “Treatise on the Two Spirits” is correct, we discover again a very different notion of “truth” from the one often described in scholarship. As in the rest of the *Community Rule*, אמת is not a body of teaching in 3:13–4:26. “Truth” is identified neither with Torah nor with the “mysteries” revealed to the sect’s teachers.¹⁰⁴ Even in this section of IQS we find אמת used consistently for a “reliability” or “faithfulness” demonstrated actively in a person’s relationships, whether those relationships are “vertical” or “horizontal” in

102. This syntax is obscured somewhat by DSSSE.

103. I assume here that the “spirit of holiness” (רוח קודש) in 4:21 is identical with the “spirit of truth.” Note that DSSSE has “every wicked deed” for כול עלילות רשעה in 4:21; the plural עלילות is captured more clearly with “all wicked deeds.”

104. Contra Walck, “Truth,” 951.

orientation. My reading of the term runs so counter to the first impressions of many readers that some may suspect I have missed the proverbial forest for the trees and accounted for each individual appearance of אמת without attending to the overall impression of the role played by the “spirit of truth.” I suggest, however, that this close attention to the details of each passage is necessary precisely because our instincts, as modern readers, easily lead us astray. Our own intuitive sense of what “truth” is too easily pollutes our reading of the text. Only as we pay close attention to the role of “truth” in these passages can the text exercise its corrective force, pushing us to the realization that אמת means something quite different in the *Community Rule* than “truth” usually does in our own parlance.

9. CONCLUSIONS: A FOUNDATION FOR TRUTH

What have we learned about the use of אמת in the *Community Rule*? At the very least, the term does not stand for “Torah.” Nowhere in the document is אמת merely a label for the group’s teaching or for “true religion” in general, nor is it a matter of “correspondence” or “reality.” Rather, אמת consistently retains the sense of “faithfulness” or “reliability.” This “truth” is something one “practices,” a pattern of personal action toward others, whether human or divine. Not only does God himself demonstrate such fidelity toward the faithful in Israel, but the sect’s own pattern of אמת is likely understood as a repetition or reenactment of that divine faithfulness. All of this raises questions for future translators of the *Community Rule*. We must at least reevaluate Walck’s easy affirmation that אמת is “best translated” by “truth,” since the word’s sense in this document is much better aligned with English terms like “faithfulness” or “fidelity.”¹⁰⁵

The authors of the *Community Rule* claim that their group is marked by that lifestyle of reliable fidelity, and claim to be the *only* site where אמת has been recovered in Israel. This rhetoric of “truth” plays a significant role in helping to define the group’s identity over against mainstream Judaism, and אמת seems to evoke intertextual links with the royal ideology and prophetic expectations of the Tanak. The prominent use of “truth” in the *Community Rule* thus seems to form a significant support in the community’s “plausibility structure,” the network of symbols and metanarratives that counterbalance the constant social pressure for its members to reassimilate into society at large. If the last two decades have seen a (needed) shift in Qumran scholarship toward greater interest in the group’s halakah, this connection with the prophets serves as a reminder that the community’s enormous exegetical and ritual efforts were motivated and framed by a deeply apocalyptic story about their place in God’s plan.

This clearer understanding of “truth” in the *Community Rule* also offers a corrective to a sometimes over-intellectualized picture of the Qumran sect. To be

105. *Ibid.*, 950.

sure, the group was a hive of intellectual activity, and the intensity of its textual production (both copying and composition) attests to the members' constant preoccupation with ideas. Yet the "truth" that here defines them is not, at bottom, a set of doctrines or a theology but a pattern of action. This helps us to remember how much Jews were concerned, even at Qumran, with orthopraxy above all else. It also helps challenge the stereotypes that easily creep into Qumran scholarship and make the group's life appear so alien. While their intense focus on rules, on ordering the minutiae of daily life, runs counter to the whole tenor of modern life in the global North, we are reminded that at the best of times the sectarians at Qumran did not forget the larger purpose of it all. What mattered was not merely a punctilious attention to purity and sacred time. What they believed defined them as true Israel was their *faithfulness*. This focus on members' faithfulness to one another also reminds us that their rigid and hierarchical discipline may have coexisted with real mutual affection. As with many religious subcommunities today, some members may have remained less because of an intellectual satisfaction with the sect's exegesis than because inside the group's boundaries they actually experienced *אמת*. Likewise, the concern in the *Community Rule* with faithfulness to God reminds us that the group's attention to the details of Torah need not have always deteriorated into mere hollow formalism. In defiance of our romantic myth of freedom, the Qumran sectarians may often have found their practices to enliven and express a very real devotion to God.

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