

Hebrew Texts and Language of the Second Temple Period

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The Word **אמת** in the Dead Sea Scrolls

Steven D. Fraade

1 Introduction

This paper began as a footnote to a published article (in Hebrew) in the journal *Meghillot*,¹ an English version of which subsequently appeared.² To summarize one part of that article, in “rewriting” the biblical pericope of the Deuteronomic high court (Deut 17: 8–13),³ the Temple Scroll rearranges the verses a bit and adds some interesting details, the most significant of which are, in reworking Deut 17:10, that the court’s verdicts derive “from the book of the Teaching (Torah)” (**מספר התורה**) and that “they (the members of the court) declare it to you in truth” (**ויגידו לכה באמת**).⁴ This emphasis on the “truth” of the scripturally

1 Steven D. Fraade, “‘If a Case is Too Baffling for You to Decide ...’ (Deuteronomy 17:8–13): Biblical Interpretation in the Pericope on the High Court—Between the Temple Scroll and Tannaitic Interpretation,” *Meghillot* 11–12 (2014–2015): 199–218 (in Hebrew). See 211 n. 53.

2 Steven D. Fraade, “‘If a Case is Too Baffling for You to Decide ...’ (Deuteronomy 17: 8–13): Between Constraining and Expanding Judicial Autonomy in the Temple Scroll and Early Rabbinic Scriptural Interpretation,” in *Sibyls, Scriptures, and Scrolls: John Collins at Seventy*, ed. Joel Baden, Hindy Najman, and Eibert Tigchelaar, JSJSup 175 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 409–31. See 423 n. 54.

3 I am well aware of the methodological difficulties of employing the term “rewritten Bible” for the Temple Scroll, since we cannot presume that the authors/editors of the Temple Scroll understood themselves to be “rewriting” a canonical scriptural text identical to what would eventually become the Masoretic Text of the Bible. However, in the absence of any Qumran scriptural texts of Deut 17:8–13 with which to compare the Temple Scroll, we are left to draw comparisons with MT (and ancient versions). Note that the only extant fragment of our scriptural passage in the Dead Sea Scrolls (2QDeut^b [2Q11 in DJD 3.61], covering Deut 17:12–15) is identical to MT.

4 11Q19 56:3–4. The word **אמת** here is variously translated: Yigael Yadin (*The Temple Scroll*, 3 vols. and supplement [Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 1983], 2:251): “in sincerity”; James Charlesworth, ed. (*The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations. Volume 7: Temple Scroll and Related Documents* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011], 143): “truthfully”; Geza Vermes (*The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, rev. ed. [London: Penguin, 2004], 213): “in truth”; Florentino García Martínez (*The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English*, 2nd ed. [Leiden: Brill, 1996], 173): “accurately”; and Michael Wise, Martin Abegg, Jr., and Edward Cook (*The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* [San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996], 484): “the truth.” The last would seem to understand the prefix *bet* as introducing a verbal object (“they shall

derived verdict and its trustworthy transmission, is in sharp contrast, I argue and seek to explain, to the interpretation of the Sifre commentary to Deuteronomy 17:11, “You must not deviate from the verdict that they tell you either to the right or the left” (לא תסור מן־הדבר אשר־יגידו לך ימין ושמאל): “Even if they show you that right is left and left is right, obey them” (אפילו מראים בעיניך על ימין שהוא) (שמאל ועל שמאל שהוא ימין שמע להם).⁵ If, as I have previously argued at length, the Temple Scroll seeks to rein in the relative autonomy of the Deuteronomic court (especially if compared to the judicial bodies under Moses’s prophetic authority during the period of wilderness wandering),⁶ the rabbinic midrash seeks to do the opposite: to further expand and loosen it.

My purpose in this paper is to look more closely at the use of the word אמת in other texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls so as to better understand its importance for Qumran communal ideology and self-understanding, especially as it is used in relation to such other judicial nouns as צדק/צדקה and משפט, with which, in the scrolls (but apparently not elsewhere), it is often used in combination, and in some other places apparently inserted.⁷ Yigael Yadin, in his notes to his edition of the Temple Scroll, suggests that אמת here and elsewhere in the scrolls denotes a sectarian (exclusive) claim to (divine) truth.⁸ In a

pronounce to you the truth”). For this use of the prepositional object in Qumran Hebrew, see Jean-Sébastien Rey, “On the Prepositional Object with *Bet* in Qumran Hebrew,” in Steven E. Fassberg, Moshe Bar-Asher, and Ruth A. Clements, eds., *Hebrew in the Second Temple Period: The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and of Other Contemporary Sources*, STDJ 108 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 189–213 (who does not discuss our text).

- 5 Sifre Deut §154 (ed. Finkelstein, 207, checked against MS Vatican 32). This is a most notable example of rabbinic “nominalism,” in contrast to sectarian “realism.” See my aforementioned articles, in Hebrew, 208–209 n. 44; English, n. 46, including citation of those who have sought to dilute this radicalness. More recently, see the collection of essays in Suzanne Last Stone, Yair Lorberbaum, and Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, eds., *Nominalism and Realism in Halakhah Revisited: Studies in the Philosophy of Halakha*; special issue of *Diné Israel: Studies in Halakha and Jewish Law* 30 (2015), esp. Rubenstein, “Nominalism and Realism Again” (79*–120*); Christine Hayes, *What’s Divine about Divine Law: Early Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), esp. 169–245 (but without reference to our texts). For the biblical metaphor of “right and/or left,” or approximations thereto, see Deut 2:27; 5:29; 28:14; Josh 1:7; 23:6; Jonah 4:11; Isa 30:21.
- 6 See Exod 18:13–27; Num 11:10–17, 24–25; Deut 1:9–18; and my discussion in the introductions to my aforementioned articles.
- 7 The noun משפט appears twice in the pericope of the high court: Deut 17:9, 11. Although צדק/צדקה does not appear in this immediate context, it is emphasized in the preceding chapter, in Deut 16:18 and 20, to which I shall return.
- 8 Yigael Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 2:251 in note to line 4. For previous treatments of אמת in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see Devorah Dimant, “The Vocabulary of the Qumran Sectarian Texts,” in *History, Ideology and Bible Interpretation in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Collected Studies*, FAT 90 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 57–100 (83); eadem, “Criteria for the Identification of Qumran Sectarian

sense, I am expanding Yadin's note as well. Before doing so, however, attention should be paid to 1QS 1:15, "And do not deviate from *the laws of his truth* (that is, his true laws) by going either right or left" (ולוא לסור מחוקי אמתו ללכת ימין) (ושמאול), which immediately follows an admonition to members not to deviate, either early or late, from the proper festival calendar. The language of 1QS 1:15 is so close to that of Deut 17:11, but with the substitution of "from his true laws" (מחוקי אמתו) for "from the verdict that they tell you" (מן-הדבר אשר-יגידו לך), as to suggest its deliberate re-formulation. However, the same could be said of its relation to Deut 28:14, "And do not deviate from any of the commandments that I enjoin upon you this day, whether to the right or to the left" (ולא תסור) (מכל-הדברים אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום ימין ושמאול). Although we might say that both verses were in mind in the formulation of 1QS 1:15, I would favor Deut 17:11 as having the greater resonance. In any case, the received judgements (Deut 17:11) and commandments (Deut 28:14), according to the formulations of the Temple Scroll and Community Rule, are not so much those received from human intermediaries such as Moses, as those containing absolute divine (that is, sectarian) truth. We shall have an opportunity to expand upon this after completing our textual tour.

However, first some raw (and imprecise) numbers: the noun אמת, in its various forms, appears 192 times in the Hebrew Bible (but unevenly distributed, e.g., with 39 of those in Psalms). It appears not once in the Hebrew manuscripts of Ben Sira. By contrast, in the non-biblical scrolls from Qumran it appears 310 times, with a particularly strong presence in so-called sectarian scrolls, plus 34 times in the Qumran biblical scrolls.⁹ It appears 242 times in tannaitic corpora (with 158 of those in the tannaitic midrashim). I have not adjusted these numbers for proportionality per corpus size, but my initial impression is that the word אמת certainly has an outsized presence in Qumran texts compared to its antecedents and successors. But more importantly for our present purposes,

Texts," in Menahem Kister, ed., *The Qumran Scrolls and Their World*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2009), 1:49–86 (73) (in Hebrew); Stephen Hultgren "אמת," in *Theologisches Wörterbuch zu den Qumrantexten*, ed. Heinz-Josef Fabry and Ulrich Dahmen, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2011), 227–37; Ian W. Scott, "Sectarian Truth: The Meaning of אמת in the Community Rule," in *Celebrating the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Canadian Collection*, ed. Peter W. Flint, Jean Duhaime, and Kyung S. Baek, EJL 30 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 303–43; Paul N. W. Swarup, *The Self-Understanding of the Dead Sea Scrolls Community: An Eternal Planting, A House of Holiness*, LSTS 59 (London: T&T Clark International, 2006), 60–62. I do not treat here the Aramaic word קושטה in the Dead Sea Scrolls, which incorporates the meanings of both "truth" and "righteousness."

9 These numbers, and those that follow for the Dead Sea Scrolls, are for total appearances counting all scrolls, allowing for multiple appearances in multiple copies of the same compositions (e.g., all copies of the Community Rule).

I could find very few biblical (6)¹⁰ or early (tannaitic) rabbinic (5) cases (the latter being mainly scriptural citations) in which the noun אמת appears in such close combination with either משפט or צדקה/צדק, and most commonly with both, as it does some 50 times in the Dead Sea Scrolls, a number of which we shall examine shortly.

2 צדקה/צדק or משפט צדק in the Hebrew Bible

In the Hebrew Bible the nouns משפט and צדקה/צדק often appear in combination such as צדקה/צדק ומשפט and משפט צדק. For example: Gen 18:19, “For I have singled him (Abraham) out that he may enjoin upon his children and his posterity to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is just and right” (כי ידעתיו למען) (אשר יצוה את־בניו ואת־ביתו אחריו ושמרו דרך ה' לעשות צדקה ומשפט ושפטו את־העם); Deut 16:18, “And they (the judges) shall judge the people with true justice” (משפט־צדק); Isa 1:21, “Alas, she has become a harlot, the faithful city that was filled with justice, where righteousness dwelt, but now murderers” (איכה היתה) (לזונה קריה נאמנה מלאתי משפט צדק ילין בה ועתה מרצחים אהב צדקה ומשפט חסד); Ps 33:5, “He loves righteousness and justice; the Lord’s mercy fills the earth” (ענו וערפל סביביו צדק ומשפט מכון כסאו); Ps 99:4, “Mighty king who loves justice, it was you who established equity, you who worked righteous judgment in Jacob” (ועז מלך משפט אהב אתה כוננת מישרים) (משפט וצדקה ביעקב אתה עשית עשה צדקה ומשפט נבחר לה' מזבח). And, of course, there are others.

3 אמת + משפט צדק or צדקה ומשפט in the Dead Sea Scrolls

As mentioned, there are some 50 occurrences in the Dead Sea Scrolls in which this biblical idiom, or a slight variant thereof, is adjusted so as to include the noun אמת or אמתו (“his [=God’s] truth”). That is, the twosome idiom has become a frequent threesome. I provide here just a sampling. To begin with, the opening of the Community Rule (1QS 1:4–6) includes in its description of proper conduct of the members of the Yahad, the following requirement:

10 One of them, Ps 89:15, will be discussed below in conjunction with 11Q5 (11QPs^a) 26:10–11. For a good example, see Jer 4:2.

11 Although משפט and צדק do not here constitute a phrase, they are poetically linked.

“To distance oneself from all evil and to hold fast to all good deeds; to practice *truth*, justice and righteousness upon the earth” (לרחוק מכול רע ולדבוק בכול) (מעשי טוב ולעשות אמת וצדקה ומשפט בארץ).

Similarly, in the Community Rule (1QS 8:2), speaking of the conduct of the Council of the Community (עצת היחד), we find, “To do *truth*, righteousness, justice, loving kindness, and humility, one with another” (לעשות אמת וצדקה) (ומשפט ואהבת חסד והצנע לכת איש אם רעהו).

But elsewhere, the attribute of truth, combined with those of righteousness and justice, is attributed directly to God, as in the following from the “Hymn to the Creator” (11Q5 [11QP^s]^a 26:10–11): “Mercy and *truth* surround his presence; *truth*, and justice, and righteousness are the base of his throne” (חסד וְאֵמֶת סָבִיב פְּנֵי אֵמֶת וּמִשְׁפָּט וְצֶדֶק מְכוֹן כְּסֵאוֹ). Compare this to the very similar Ps 97:2, where צדק ומשפט appear, *but without* אמת: “Dense clouds are around him; righteousness and justice are the base of his throne” (עַנְנֵי וְעֶרְפָּל סָבִיבוֹ צֶדֶק) (ומשפט מכוון כסאו). However, compare Ps 89:15, where אמת does appear, but less directly with צדק ומשפט and in direct parallelism with חסד (“mercy”), a significantly more frequent biblical and early rabbinic combination.¹² Similarly, for the association of divine truth with divine righteousness and justice, see the Community Rule (1QS) 11:4–5: “For the *truth of God* is the rock of my footstep, and his strength is the staff of my right hand. From the fountain of his righteousness is my justice” (כִּי אֵמֶת אֵל הִיאָה סֵלַע פְּעָמַי וּגְבוּרָתוֹ מִשְׁעֵנַת יְמִינִי וּמִמְקוֹר) (אתה אל¹³ אמת), see 1QH^a 7:25.

In several other cases, God’s אמת is invoked in direct support of his justice and judgments against Israel. Thus, in Community Rule (1QS) 1:24–26, this justification of divine justice as אמת is uttered in the context of confession: “We have perverted ourselves, we have rebel[led], we [have sin]ned, we have acted wickedly, we [and] our [fath]ers before us, by our walking [...] *True* and righte[ous] is the [Go]d of [Israel and] his judgement against us and [our] fathers” (נַעֲוִינוּ [פ]שְׁעֵנוּ [חַט] אֲנוּ הִרְשַׁעְנוּ אֲנוּ [וְא]בֹתֵינוּ מִלְּפָנֵינוּ בְּלִהֹתֵנוּ [אֵמֶת] [א]לֵינוּ [וְצִדִּיק] [א]לֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל [וּ] מִשְׁפָּטוֹ בָנוּ וּבְאֲבוֹתֵנוּ [נֹ] [חַטָּאנוּ רִשְׁעָנוּ גָם אֲנַחְנוּ גַם אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּלִכְתָּנוּ קָרִי בַחֲקֵי הַבְּרִית צֶדֶק [ק] וְאֵמֶת מִשְׁפָּטֵינוּ בָנוּ).¹⁴ Or from the parallel confession in Damascus Document (CD [MS B] 20:28–30), “We have sinned, we have acted wickedly, both we and our fathers, in our walking contrarily with respect to the laws of the covenant. Righteousness and *truth* are your judgements against us” (חַטָּאנוּ רִשְׁעָנוּ גַם אֲנַחְנוּ גַם אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּלִכְתָּנוּ קָרִי בַחֲקֵי הַבְּרִית צֶדֶק [ק] וְאֵמֶת מִשְׁפָּטֵינוּ בָנוּ).

¹² Compare also Ps 85:11, where אמת appears, but in a different construction.

¹³ The word אל (“God”) is written in paleo-Hebrew script.

¹⁴ See *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations. Volume 2: Damascus Document, War Scroll, and Related Documents*, ed. James H. Charlesworth

The laws by which the community lived, and thereby sought to differentiate itself from the rest of Israel, are undergirded by the claim that they are divinely true, and hence not to be spurned. See Damascus Document (CD [MS B] 20:30–31): “And they are not to lift a hand against his holy statutes and his righteous precepts and his *true testimonies*” ([לא ירימו יד על חקי קדשו ומשפט]י). (צדקו ועדויות אמתו). According to 1QS 9:17–18, members themselves are to channel (divine) truth and righteous justice in their reproving of one another: “(One must) reprove—(with) *true* knowledge and righteous judgement—(only) those who have chosen the way” (להוכיח דעת אמת ומשפט צדק לביחריי¹⁵ דרך).¹⁶ These two aspects of אמת, its being divine and its being manifest in the laws by which the community conducts its life, are, of course, deeply complementary, but also profoundly self-confirming for the community’s members, as we shall continue to see.

4 The Yahad and אמת

In the passages to be considered next, the link between righteousness, justice, and truth continues to be expressed, but in a more sectarian vein, identifying the “laws of truth” (or, “true laws”) and truth more broadly with the life and members of the community, identified as the “sons of truth” (בני אמת) or “sons of his (God’s) truth” (בני אמתו), or, “his truthful sons”).¹⁷ Consider the following two texts, which are part of the same larger context. In 4Q266 (4QD^a) 11 5–7¹⁸ we read: “And anyone who rejects these regulations, (which are) in accordance with all the statutes found¹⁹ in the law of Moses, shall not be reckoned among all the *sons of his (God’s) truth*; for his soul has despised righteous instruction” (וכול המואס במשפטים האלה על פי כול החוקים הנמצאים בתורת מושה (לו) [לא] יחשב

(Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 37 n. 124, for antecedents with language of confession, but with none of them including אמת.

15 4QS^d (4Q258) viii (frags. 4a ii, 4c–f) 2) here has לביחירי. For the chosen ones, see below, n. 34.

16 For reproof within the community alone, see CD 9:2–3. For the “way” of the community being האמת דרך (“the way of truth” or “the true way”), see 1QS 4:17; 4Q259 (4QS^e) iii (frags. 2a ii, 3a–c) 4.

17 Note as well the single occurrence of אמת בת (“daughter of truth”) in the fragmentary 4Q502 (4QpapRitual of Marriage) 2 6.

18 // 4Q270 (4QD^e) 7 i 19–21.

19 The verb “to find” (מצא) is used in the scrolls to denote revealed sectarian legal interpretations of the Torah. See CD 6:19; 15:10; 1QS 8:11–12; 9:13; 4QMMT C 30. See Steven D. Fraade, *Legal Fictions: Studies of Law and Narrative in the Discursive Worlds of Ancient Jewish Sectarials and Sages*, JSJSup 147 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 80–81.

(בכול בני אמתו כי געלה נפשו ביסורי הצדק).²⁰ The context clearly indicates that the rules referred to here are sectarian interpretations of Scripture.

For the designation “sons of truth,” as the implied equivalent of “sons of light,” see also the Community Rule (1QS) 4:6 (as part of the so-called “Treatise of the Two Spirits”): “These are the principles of the spirit for the *sons of truth* [in the] world” (אלה סודי רוח לבני אמת תבל).²¹ A few lines later in 4Q266 (4QD^a) 11 11–12) we read: “But our ancestors you chose and to their descendants you gave *the statutes of your truth* (or, your truthful statutes) and your holy laws, which if a man does them, he shall live” (ובאבותינו בחרתה לזרעם נתתה חוקי) (אמתכה ומשפטי קודשכה אשר יעשה האדם וחיה).²² The “sons of truth” (alone) are in possession of God’s (who himself is truth) “statutes of truth” (or, truthful statutes). In another text (4Q416 [4QInstruction^b] 1 10) we read: “From heaven he shall pronounce judgement upon the work of wickedness, but all the children of his truth (or, his faithful children) will be accepted with favor by [him]” (מְשִׁמִּים ישפוט על עבודת רשעה וכל בני אמתו ירצו לו²³).

With regard to this identification of the “sons of light” with the “sons of truth,” it is noteworthy that the “Treatise of the Two Spirits” (1QS 3:3–4:26), concludes as follows (1QS 4:24–25): “According to a man’s share in *truth* shall he be righteous and thus hate *deceit*, and according to his inheritance in the lot of *deceit* he shall be evil through it, and thus loathe *truth*” (וכפי נחלת איש באמת) (יצדק²³ וכן ישנא עילה וכירשתו בגורל עול ירשע בו וכן יתעב אמת). The Sons of Light embody truth whereas the Sons of Darkness loathe it. Conversely, the Sons of Light hate deceit, whereas deceit is the lot of the Sons of Darkness, just as truth is lot of the Sons of Light. The predestined lots of light and darkness, truth and deceit, are polar opposites with no gradations in between.²⁴

The identification of the community members themselves with *אמת* is further evidenced in the expression *אנשי אמת* or *אנשי האמת*, “men of (the) truth” (see Exod 18:21), as expressed in the following passage from Peshar Habakkuk (1QpHab 7:9–14: “If it delays, wait for it; for it will surely come and will not be late” [Hab 2:3b]. (vacat) Its interpretation concerns *the men of truth*, who observe the Torah, whose hands do not slacken *in the service of truth* (or, true service) when the last time is drawn out for them” (אם יתמהמה חכה לו כיא בוא).

20 For a close parallel to the last clause of this citation, see 1QS 2:26–31.

21 For *בני אמתו* (“sons of his truth”) see also 1QM 17:8. For the expression *אמת תבל* (“truth [in the] world”), see 1QS 4:19.

22 For the very end, see Lev 18:5; Ezek 20:11, 13, 21.

23 Some read this as *וצדק*.

24 For the “spirit of truth” (רוח האמת) being opposite to the “spirit of deceit” (רוח העול), as light is to darkness, see 1QS 3:18–19. Similarly, “the angel of his truth” (מלאך אמתו) rules over the domain of truth in 1QS 3:24; 4Q177 (4QCatenana A) 12–13 i 7.

יבוא ולוא יאחר () פשרו על אנשי האמת עושי התורה אשר לוא ירפו ידיהם מעבודת האמת (בהמשך עליהם הקץ האחרון). Thus, the men of truth observe the Torah and serve God in truth. Likewise, in the Words of the Maskil (4Q298 [4Qcrypt-A Words Maskil] 3–4 ii 6–7), the Maskil addresses the community as follows: ואנשי אמת: [רדפנו צדק] (“and men of truth, pur[sue righteousness]”).²⁵

Similarly, the community is referred as a בית האמת (“the house of truth” [or, true house]) in the Community Rule (1QS) 5:5–6: “They shall lay a *foundation of truth* for Israel, for the *Community* of the eternal covenant. They shall atone for all those who willingly offer themselves to holiness in Aaron and to the *house of truth* in Israel, and for those who join them in *Community*” (ליסד מוסד אמת) לישראל ליחד ברית עולם לכפר לכול המתנדבים לקודש באהרון ולבית האמת בישראל (והנלוים עליהם ליחד). But note the briefer version, which lacks the words, “of the eternal covenant. They shall atone,” in 4Q258 (4QS^d) i (frags. 1a i, 1b) 4–5.²⁶ Note as well the close association (especially in the shorter version) between the words אמת and יחד in the sequence, אמת לישראל ליחד, “truth for Israel, for the *Community*,” to which we now turn.

Although the association of אמת with יחד, of truth with the *Community*, has been implicit in many of the preceding examples, it becomes even closer with the direct linking of the two words in immediate or near-immediate sequence. In several places in the scrolls, we find the expression יחד אמת or יחד אמתו, a “*Community of truth*” or “a *Community of his truth*” (or, his true community), with the pronominal suffix in the latter referring to God. For example, in the Community Rule (1QS) 2:24–25, we read, “For they shall all comprise a *Community of truth*, genuine humility, love of mercy, and righteous intent, each for his fellow, within a holy council, members in an eternal assembly” (כיא הכול יהיו ביחד אמת וענות טוב ואהבת חסד ומחשבת צדק איש לרעהו בעצת קודש) (ובני סוד עולמים). The inclusion of truth as first among the attributes of the community signals its relative importance. Similarly, emphasizing the exclusive nature of the *Community of truth*, see the Community Rule (1QS) 2:25–3:1:²⁷ “And whoever refuses to enter [into the covenant of G]od, (preferring) to walk in the stubbornness of his heart, shall not [enter into the *Com*]munity of his truth (or, his true *Community*), inasmuch as his soul has rejected the instructions of knowledge of the precepts of righteousness. He has not succeeded in transforming his life, and he is not to be reckoned among the upright”

25 For the supplying of צדק here, see DJD 20.26. The phrase אנשי אמת appears in one other place in the scrolls, in the Temple Scroll (11Q19 57:8) to designate the king’s body guard.

26 For “willingly offering” oneself, see 1QS 5:10, to be treated below. Compare the expression בית התורה as a designation for the community in CD (MS B) 20:10, 13.

27 // 4Q257 (4QpapS^c) iii (frags. 1a iii, 2a–g) 1.

וכול המואס לבוא [בברית א] ל ללכת בשרירות לבו לוא [יעבור ביחד אמתו כיא געלה] (נפשו ביסורי דעת משפטי צדק לוא חזק למשוב חיו ועם ישרים לוא יתחשב).

Again from the “Treatise of the Two Spirits,” we see the atoning and purifying force of the spiritual truth of the Community for its members (Community Rule [1QS] 3:6–8):²⁸ “For it is through the spirit of the *council of truth of God* that the ways of a person, all of his iniquities, are atoned for, so he can behold the light of life. And it is by the holy spirit (belonging) to the *Community through his truth* that he shall be purified from all his iniquities” (כיא ברוח עינת) אמת אל דרכי איש יכופרו כול עוונותו להביט באור החיים וברוח קדושה ליחד באמתו (יטהר מכול עוונותו).²⁹ Although יחד in the following passage (1QS 5:9–10) may be adverbial (“together”), I would suggest the following translation, given the close connection between joining the community and “willingly offering” oneself (מתנדב) that we have seen previously:³⁰ “the multitude of the men of their covenant who willingly offer themselves (as a) Community for his truth” (ולרוב) (אנשי בריתם המתנדבים יחד לאמתו).

Finally, we have at least one instance (1QS 5:3–4) of the order אמת יחד being reversed: יחד אמת, meaning either “the truth of the Community” or “the truth together” (which are essentially the same): “To do *the truth of the Community*, humility, righteousness, justice, love of mercy, modestly walking in all of their ways” (לעשות אמת יחד וענוה צדקה ומשפט ואהבת חסד והצנע לכת בכול דרכיהם). Once again, אמת takes first place among the communal attributes. However, note carefully that the parallel in 4QS^d (4Q258) i (frags. 1a i, 1b) 3 lacks the words יחד אמת altogether. While it is impossible to know with certainty whether those words represent an insertion in 1QS or a deletion in 4QS^d (and without going into the larger much-debated question of the chronological relation of 1QS to the 4QS fragments), in this specific case it would seem that an insertion in 1QS would be the more plausible, especially as we saw, at the very beginning of our tour, the word באמת added in the Temple Scroll (11Q19) 56:3–4, to which we have now come full circle.

Before concluding, however, let us look at one final passage in which אמת precedes, but not immediately, יחד, that being 1QS 9:18–19,³¹ which recounts the teaching of the Maskil: “He shall guide them with knowledge, and instruct them in the mysteries of wonder and truth among the men of the Community” (להנחותם בדעה וכן להשכילם ברזי פלא ואמת בתוך אנשי היחד). Once again what distinguishes the members of the יחד is (among other attributes and practices)

28 // 4Q255 (4QS^a) 2 1–2; 4Q257 (4QpapS^c) iii (frgs. 1a iii, 2a–g) 9–11.

29 4Q255 (4QS^a) has “his holy spirit” instead of “the holy spirit.”

30 See 1QS 5:5–6.

31 // 4Q258 (4QS^d) viii (frags. 4a ii, 4c–f) 3.

their being instructed in (and in possession of) the divine truth by which they conduct their lives.

5 Conclusions

How shall we explain the apparent insertions of אמת into contexts that stress righteousness and justice, whether in the reworking of the Deuteronomic pericope on the high court, a reworking of an earlier version of the Community Rule, or much more widely the inclusion of אמת in the biblical idioms of /צדק/ ומשפט צדקה and משפט צדק? To answer this question let me return briefly to my earlier study comparing the Temple Scroll's reworking of the biblical pericope on the high court with that of our earliest midrashic commentary thereto. The Deuteronomic description of the central high court, *unlike* its predecessors of ad hoc courts or councils to assist Moses in judging the people, is remarkable for its human autonomy from either direct or indirect, royal, prophetic, or oracular oversight or confirmation.³² While the Deuteronomic text is emphatic in its insistence that the verdicts of the court be followed without exception or wavering (Deut 17:10–13), Deuteronomy elsewhere (1:16–17; 16:18–20) is well aware of the possible corruptibility and hence fallibility of human judges, and by implication, of their rulings. The Temple Scroll TS (11Q19 51:15–18) not only recognizes this risk of judicial fallibility, but goes even further in explicitly legislating the death penalty for judges who fail to live up to the standards of judicial impartiality.³³

Even the biblical emphatic requirement that the judges doubly “pursue”³⁴ justice, צדק תרדוף, (“Justice, justice shall you pursue” [Deut 16:20]), implies

32 See above, nn. 1–2, and texts there. On Deuteronomy's radical removal of the judicial role of the king, see Bernard M. Levinson, “The Reconceptualization of Kingship in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History's Transformation of Torah,” *VT* 51 (2001): 51–34.

33 Perhaps under the influence of Deut 17:12. See Yadin, *The Temple Scroll*, 1:383–85; 2:227–29; Jeffrey Stackert, “Before and After Scripture: Narrative Chronology in the Revision of Torah Texts,” *JAJ* 4 (2013): 168–85 (175–81).

34 For the combination of the verb ררף and the noun צדק, see 4Q298 (4Qcrypt-A Words Maskil) 3–4 ii 6–7, treated above, with the comment in DJD 20.26. See Deut 16:20; Isa 51:1; Prov 11:9; 25:9; 4Q298 (4Qcrypt-A Words Maskil) 1 2; 4Q418 (4QInstruction^d) 69 2:10, restored and following אמת בחירי ואתם (“But you are the chosen ones of truth [or, the truly chosen ones]”). For the chosen ones, see above, n. 15. It might be that similar uncertainty is implied by the verb דרש with respect to the human pursuit of משפט as in Deut 17:9, where some ancient versions (Samaritan Pentateuch, LXX, Qimron's restoration of the Temple Scroll [11Q19 56:1]) have or presume ודרשו. Note that the nightly study activity

that this is an aspirational rather than a necessary outcome. Note in this regard Sifre Deuteronomy's interpretation of Deut 16:20,³⁵ closely attuned to its repetition of the noun צדק: "If a person is convicted (of a capital crime), from whence do we learn that he can be retried (upon the discovery of new evidence) and found innocent? As it is said, 'Justice, justice shall you shall pursue' (יצא חייב) (מנין שמחזירים אותו לזכות שנאמר צדק צדק תרדוף) (מנין שמחזירים אותו לזכות שנאמר צדק צדק תרדוף).³⁶ The assumption here is that the capital guilty verdict of a court may be subsequently reversed upon the discovery of new evidence, rendering the former of the two verdicts false, thereby requiring two acts of justice for justice to be fully and finally served.

To the members of the Qumran community, by contrast, the pursuit of *צדק/צדקה ומשפט* needed to be *underwritten*, as it were, by *אמת*, and *not* to be contingent on fallible human judgment. In terms of the passages with which we began, left and right are truly left and right, with nothing relative or fictive about them, as the idiom of "left and right" is unambiguously employed multiple times elsewhere in the scrolls.³⁷

From the passages of the Dead Sea Scrolls that we have examined we have seen that the word *אמת*, whether functioning as a noun or an adjective, is not only ubiquitous, but is strategically placed, and, in at least two cases that we have seen, inserted in close relation not only to *צדק* and *משפט*, but also to *יחד* and other communal terms. The word *אמת* denotes a cardinal attribute of both God and the members of the community. The latter are largely defined by their practice and teaching of the *true* ritual and communal laws that, on the one hand, absolutely *differentiate* them with self-assured certainty from the rest of Israel, and, on the other, eternally *bond* them in truth both to one another and to the covenantal divine source of non-contingent righteousness and justice.

at Qumran (1QS 6:6–8) that includes *לדרוש משפט*, usually understood as some form of legal study ("to study law"), could just as easily refer to some form of judicial proceeding ("to seek justice").

35 Sifre Deut §144 (ed. Finkelstein, 199, checked against MS Vatican 32).

36 For parallels, employing different verses, see Mek. R. Ishmael Mishpaṭim 20 (ed. Horowitz-Rabin, 327–28); Mek. R. Shim'on bar Yoḥai Exod 23:7 (ed. Epstein-Melamed, 216); b. Sanh. 33b.

37 For the use of the biblical metaphor of "right and/or left" in the scrolls, see 1QS 1:15; 3:10 (=4Q257 1 iii 14); 4Q266 (4QD^a) 11 17–18; 4Q504 (4QDibHama) 1–2 ii 14 (restored); CD (MS B) 20:29b–30a, 30b–31a.