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HIDDEN THINGS AND THEIR REVELATION (*)

Summary

The verse 'The hidden things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever that we may do all the words of this law' (Deuteronomy 29:28) is the source of the pivotal concept of *revealed* and *hidden* found in the Qumran literature. The Qumran Community claimed that the *hidden* were reserved to God at the time of the First Temple, but that during the period of the Second Temple the *hidden* were made available to the members of the Community (CD 3:9-20; 5:20-6:11). This claim is based on a double reading of the verse: once with the words 'unto the Lord our God', and once without these words. Moreover, member of the Community believed that Chapters 29 and 30 of *Deuteronomy* referred to them and not to Israel as a whole; indeed, the description of return and redemption found in Chapter 30 are read by them as referring specifically to the Community.

We find a double reading of the verse in Chapter 29 in the writing of the rabbinical Sages, too. The Sages, however, do not specify the time of revelation, nor do they indicate that the revelations will be confined to any restricted group. Despite emphasizing that the revelation of the *hidden* is based on God-given inspiration, members of the Community accepted the decisive contributions of their exegesis of the Biblical verses in the development of *halakha*. The similarity of the view of the Community to the view of the Sages is obvious; both emphasized the centrality of exegesis (*drashah*) in the development of *halakha*. Since the two groups made use of a similar method, the use of *drashah* to derive *halakha*, and since the results were strikingly different, each group was compelled to defend its own approach. Thus, the Community refers to the explanations (*drashot*) of the Sages as slick interpretations, and the Sages accuse the Community of *barefaced defiance* of the Torah.

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his covenant with Israel forever, revealing to them hidden things (חֲסֵדֵי בְרִיתוֹ) in which all Israel had strayed. Rather, they wallowed in human sin and the ways of impurity and said, "For it is ours." But God in his wonderful mysteries atoned for their iniquity and forgave their sin and built them a sure house in Israel. (*CD* 3:9-20). (5)

In this passage, the author attributes the punishment meted out to Israel and the desolation of the land to the sin of "having departed from God's covenant" and "straying after the wantonness of their heart." The parallels to *Deut* 29 need no further elucidation. We note that, according to the description found in *CD*, the revelation of hidden things (חֲסֵדֵי בְרִיתוֹ) is an intrinsic part of the redemption of "those who held fast to God's ordinances", that is, the members of the sect. Nonetheless, in an earlier period, prior to the exile, even the members of the sect "wallowed in human sin and the ways of impurity"; their sin, however, consisted of the failure to comply with the hidden commandments which were unknown to them at that point in time. (6) This contrasts with the rest of Israel who audaciously violated the revealed commandments as well; consequently, not only were they unworthy of the revelation of the hidden commandments, they were deemed culpable for their failure to observe them. The centrality of the revelation of hidden commandments to the process of redemption (7) becomes clear as soon as we recognize that *Deut* 29-30, whose focal point is the verse וְיָדַעְתָּ כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד (29:16), served as the inspiration for the author of *CD*. This verse, however, appears to pose difficulties for the sect's conception. It explicitly states that the hidden matters "belong to the Lord our God," thereby contradicting their claim that these have been revealed to them. This revolution with regard to "hidden things" can be understood only if the verse is read in a twofold manner: that is, initially, the hidden matters belonged to God and even the members of the sect unwittingly transgressed them, but, at a later point, due to their adherence to God's revealed commandments, they were rewarded by their revelation.

Rabbinic tradition sheds light on this twofold sectarian reading of *Deut* 29:28 as the reflection of a historical process, and on its use as the basis for their conception. According to massoretic tradition, this verse is one of ten places in the Pentateuch with dotted words. (8) Used by

(5) Translation cited from D. R. Schwartz, "Damasceus Document," *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1995), 17. (All citations of *CD* in English are from this edition.)

(6) The notion that the members of the sect had sinned in the past is also found in the parallel description in *CD* 1:4-10. See M. Kister, "Concerning the History of the Essenes" (Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 56 (1986-87) 1-18, esp. 10 n. 44.

(7) In all their descriptions of redemption the sect ignores the return from Babylonia and the building of the Second Temple. See *ibid.*, 2 n. 7.
(8) *Sipre Bemidbar* 69 and parallels.

early scribes to signify an erasure, (9) these dots were further understood by the sages to indicate a doubtful reading, and were therefore employed to interpret the verse and to elicit additional meanings from it as well. (10) In the massorah for the verse in question, the words וְיָדַעְתָּ כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד and the letter *ayin* of the word יְהוָה are dotted. (11) The early commentators on the Talmud note that the number of dotted letters, eleven, (12) equals the number of letters in "to the Lord our God," determining on this basis that these are the words which should be erased. Out of divine respect, however, יְהוָה were marked instead. (13) As the erasure was marked but not implemented, the rabbis were then able to read the verse both with and without the dotted words, that is, in its entirety, or alternately, by omitting either the equivalent of the dotted words ("to the Lord our God"), reading the verse: "the hidden matters and the revealed matters belong to us and our children," or the dotted words themselves ("for us and our children"), reading: "the hidden matters belong to the Lord our God and the revealed matters." This dual reading of the verse promotes the understanding that historically a change took place in the status of the "hidden things," that originally they belonged to "the Lord our God" and only at a later stage did they become for "us and our children."

It appears that the Qumran sect shared with the rabbis both the supposition that this verse may be read in a twofold fashion, and that it reflects a historical process. In the sect's view, during the First Temple period the hidden matters were for God, but, at present, due to its adherence to the revealed commandments, "to do all the words of this Torah," these are now revealed to the sect. That is to say, *Deut* 29-30 as

(9) See E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992) 55-57, 213-14; and more recently, his "Correction Procedures in the Texts from the Judean Desert," *Proceedings of the Conference on the DSS, Provo, Utah, July 1996* (forthcoming); *idem*, "Paratextual Elements in the Masoretic Manuscripts of the Bible Compared with the Qumran Evidence," *H. Stegemann Jubilee Volume* (forthcoming).

(10) S. Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (Texts and Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America 18; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1962) 43-45; A. Shinar, "The Midrashic Interpretations of the Ten Dotted Passages of the Pentateuch" (Hebrew), *The Bible in the Light of Its Interpreters: Sarah Kamin Memorial Volume* (ed. S. Japhet; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1994) 198-214. For the practice of dotting the text and its significance in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see Tov, n. 9 above. See also S. Talmon, prolegomenon to R. Butin, *The Ten Nekudot of the Torah* (New York: Ktav, 1969) xix and n. 26.

(11) Thus it appears in *b. Sanh.* 43b and in the majority of the traditions on the dotted words in this verse. We must note however that in some witnesses the dot over the *ayin* of יְהוָה is missing. For a detailed list, see Butin, *Ten Nekudot*, 100-101. To this list we must add MS. Vatican 32 of *Sipre Bemidbar* where the letter *gimel* of וְיָדַעְתָּ and the words וְיָדַעְתָּ יְהוָה are dotted.

(12) Rashi, *b. Sanh.* 43b, lemma: וְיָדַעְתָּ; Tosafot, *ad loc.*, lemma: וְיָדַעְתָּ.

(13) See also Butin, *Ten Nekudot*, 103.

a whole was read as a *pesher* and applied to the sect, while its focal verse was read: the hidden matters and the revealed matters "belong to us and our children forever."

The Rabbinic View of נגלה and סתומ

We have seen that the massoretic tradition of the dotted words in *Deut* 29:28 opened the door to multiple readings of this verse. In contrast to the mainstream view in rabbinic thought that identifies נגלה and סתומ as sins committed overtly and covertly, we will suggest below that some of the sources represent another tradition, similar in nature to the one found at Qumran. The rabbinic sources relating to *Deut* 29:28 and its alternate readings suggest that these sources represent two categories with regard to their understanding of these concepts. In the context of the first tradition, represented by the *Mekilta* (*BahHodesh parasha 5*), and *b. Sanh.* (43b), נגלה and סתומ are indeed to be interpreted as overt and covert sins, respectively. For what we distinguish as the second tradition (*Sipre Deut* 69 and *Midr Prov.* chap. 26), based on our examination of the related sectarian material, נגלה and סתומ are the revealed commandments and סתומ the hidden ones.

The identification of נגלה and סתומ as sins, either overt or covert, is perhaps best represented by the tannaitic dispute in *b. Sanh.* 43b and by *Mek. BahHodesh 5*. Comparison of the two reveals a development, a process whereby the Israelites were understood as accepting mutual responsibility for covert transgression by individuals at the covenant at the plains of Moab, notwithstanding their earlier refusal to do so at Sinai. We start with the dispute in *b. Sanh.* 43b which pertains to the later situation. This passage discusses Achan's violation of the proscription against taking spoils from Jericho and the failure to capture the town of Ai which followed in its wake. From Achan's confession: "And thus and thus have I done" (*Josh* 7:20), R. Jose b. Hanina and R. Johanan adumbrate that this was not the first time that Achan had violated the proscription against taking spoils, that he had committed this sin in previous battles. Therefore, the Talmud inquires why the Israelites were not punished on these previous occasions. Two tannaitic views are expounded: first, "that God did not punish for transgression committed in secret until the Israelites had crossed the Jordan" (R. Judah); second, that "just as God did not punish [all Israel] for secret transgressions [at any time], so too He did not punish them [cooperatively] for open transgressions until they had crossed the Jordan" (R. Nehemiah). (14)

(14) Translation cited from I. Epstein, ed., *The Babylonian Talmud* (London: Soncino, 1935 [all translations of the Babylonian Talmud are cited from this edition]). In R. Nehemiah's view, the reason that the Israelites were punished for Achan's sin was that his wife and children knew of his acts. For the interpretation of this disagreement according to the different versions, see Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, 43-45.

Each of these views is based on a twofold reading of *Deut* 29:28; first in its entirety, as applying to the situation prior to crossing the Jordan, and then without the dotted words—either "the Lord our God," or "to us and our children"—to explain the new situation after the crossing, disagreeing as to whether, following the Israelites' acceptance of mutual responsibility, there is now collective punishment for the covert sins of individuals, or for overt sins committed by the same.

In the context of this discussion, נגלה and סתומ are clearly sins committed either overtly or covertly. (15) R. Judah's opinion is in harmony with the tradition represented by the *Mekilta* that at Sinai the Israelites not only accepted God's sovereignty, but took upon themselves mutual responsibility for compliance with the pentateuchal laws as well. According to the *Mekilta* the Israelites pledged mutual responsibility for their acts on this occasion, going on to relate that, although God wanted to make a covenant with them regarding covert acts in addition—using our verse as the prooftext, they refrained from accepting this responsibility, arguing "lest one of us commit a sin secretly and the entire community be held responsible." (16) It appears then that we may postulate an inherent link between the *Mekilta* and R. Judah's remarks in the *baraita*. Read in conjunction, the texts represent a historical development: what the Israelites had refused to accept in the Sinai covenant they now took upon themselves at the plains of Moab. Up to the crossing of the Jordan, the hidden sins had belonged to "the Lord our God," henceforth responsibility for such sins belongs to "us and our children." (17)

As we have already noted, we do not believe that this school of thought represents the sole rabbinic interpretation of נגלה and סתומ. Based on *Sipre Num.* 69 and *Midr. Prov.* chap. 26, we elicit a different rabbinic explanation for the twofold reading of *Deut* 29:28, one which is surprisingly close to the sectarian view. The passage from *Sipre* reads as follows:

Along these same lines: "The hidden matters belong to the Lord our God, and the revealed matters to us and to our children forever" (*Deut* 29:28).

(15) It seems logical to assume that the identification of נגלה and סתומ as overt or covert sins emerges from the larger context, from the fact that our verse is the concluding verse of *Deut* 29 which treats the punishment that God will mete out to the people and the land. According to the pericope, this collective punishment is indeed the result of individual sin: "(beware) lest there be among you a man or a woman, a clan or a tribe whose heart faces away today from the Lord our God... and blesses himself in his heart" (*Deut* 29:17-18; Fox translation, slightly revised).

(16) The discussion is based on *Mek. BahHodesh parasha 5*, MS, Oxford 151 (Horowitz-Rabin edition, 219f); the translation relies partially on J. Z. Lauterbach, *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1933) 2: 230-31.

(17) This tradition is also found in *y. Sota 22a*, and contingent upon a different condition, in *t. Sota* 8-5.

There are dots to indicate, "As you observed (עָרַבְתָּ) the revealed [things] so I shall make known to you the hidden [things]. (*Sipre Bemidbar* 69). (18)

This tanna first reads the verse in its entirety. He then reads it without the words עָרַבְתָּ אֵת הַחֲסוּת, arriving at the conclusion that "the hidden matters and the revealed matters belong to us and our children." The use of עָרַבְתָּ, which is derived from the conclusion of the verse ("to do [עָרַבְתָּ] all the words of this Torah"), comprises the basis for the distinction between the first and second stages. A straightforward reading elicits the understanding that, as a reward for having observed the revealed things, God will reveal to them the hidden ones as well. We are unable to ascertain either the timeframe for the revelation of these hidden things, or the homilist's precise intention in placing this promise in God's mouth. While the classic commentators understood עָרַבְתָּ in this homily as divine secrets like cosmogenic speculation and Merkabah mysticism, (19) a different interpretation emerges from its plain meaning. The use of עָרַבְתָּ implies that the revealed things are related to doing, that is, to observance of the commandments. This suggests that the "hidden things" to be revealed in the future are also related to observance of the commandments. The following midrash reflects a tradition which explicitly categorizes the commandments into revealed and hidden ones:

Hidden matters belong to the Lord our God (Deut 29:28)—[Hidden matters is dotted,] which indicates that Israel said to God, "Master of the universe, [we accept the covenant given to us on condition that] we are commanded to observe what has been revealed to us, but not what is hidden." To which God replied, "You will not even be able to [fully] comprehend the revealed [parts of the covenant]!" (*Midr. Prov.*, chap. 26). (20)

(18) Translation partially based on J. Neusner, *Sifra to Numbers: An American Translation and Explanation* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986). (Unless otherwise noted, all translations of *Sipre* are cited from this edition.) For a parallel, see *Nimbers Rabbah* 3:13. See Talmon, prolegomenon to Butin, *Ten Me'ilah*, xvii as compared to D. Weiss Halivni, *Peshat and Derash* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) 140-41. Note also the version in *Abot R. Nat.* B (S. Schechter ed., New York: Feldheim, 1945) 98. See also the discussion in the body of the article below.

(19) See the commentary of Zeev Wolf to *Mun. Rabbah* (Vienna edition) 20, and David Pardo's commentary on *Sipre* (עָרַבְתָּ אֵת הַחֲסוּת עַל יְדוּתֵנוּ) [Jerusalem: Lev Samel, 1990] 1: 309). עָרַבְתָּ in this sense is already found in *Sir* 3:19. This understanding of Ben Sira also arises from the context in which it is cited in *Gen. Rab.* chap. 8. See M. Kister, "A Contribution to the Interpretation of Ben Sira" (Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 59 (1989-90) 314-15. See also *y. Sota* 22a.

(20) Cited from B. L. Visotzky, transl., *The Midrash on Proverbs* (Yale Judaica Series 27; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992) 109, partly revised.

Like the passage from the *Mekilta* discussed above, *Midr. Proverbs* uses *Deut* 29:28 to reconstruct negotiations between God and Israel. Presumably, Israel's reply was preceded by the expression of God's desire to make a covenant with Israel regarding the hidden commandments as well. In response to their disappointing refusal, God taunts them; they will fail even to achieve full comprehension of the covenant's revealed parts! The relationship between *Midrash Proverbs* and the midrash in the *Sipre* bears great similarity to the one we evinced between the *baraita* in *b. Sanhedrin* and the midrash in the *Mekilta*. Just as according to the *baraita* in the Talmud Israel accepted responsibility for covert sins, which it had originally refused to accept as in the *Mekilta*, so too in the *baraita* in *Sipre* God promises that the reward of keeping the revealed laws will be the revelation of the concealed ones which they had refused to accept as in *Midrash Proverbs*. (21)

We can thus isolate two traditions in rabbinic literature with regard to the identification of עָרַבְתָּ and עָרַבְתָּ: either sins committed overtly or covertly, or commandments that have already been revealed as opposed to those that will be revealed in the future. If our analysis is correct, then this second rabbinic tradition preserved a view surprisingly close to that of the Qumran sectarians. According to this rabbinic tradition, the revealed and hidden things are the two parts of the Torah: the commandments explicitly given to the Israelites at Sinai as opposed to the hidden laws that will be revealed in the course of history. Prior to proceeding to further clarification of the sect's view of the process by which these hidden laws are revealed, we must note in passing two important differences between the sectarian and rabbinic views. The sect restricts the revelation of hidden laws to its members alone, whereas rabbinic midrash speaks of the nation as a whole. In addition, sectarian doctrine identified a time for the inception of the revelation of hidden laws—the founding of the sect, whereas rabbinic midrash makes no time specification.

(21) The homily in *Sipre* nowhere states that the Israelites took the hidden things upon themselves in the covenant made at the plains of Moab. Rather, it simply states that God promised them that the reward of observing the overt laws will be the revelation of the covert ones. The tradition that the Israelites took upon themselves to observe additional laws that had not been revealed to them at Sinai is found in a different tannaitic source. See *t. Sotah* 7:4-6 which contains a midrash on *Deut* 29:9-14, which is the beginning of the pericope that ends with our verse. While this homily makes no mention of עָרַבְתָּ and עָרַבְתָּ, it assumes that at the plains of Moab the Israelites accepted additional obligations above and beyond those they accepted at Sinai. These are the commandments that will be renewed. See the parallel passage in *b. Sevu* 39a. In contrast to the other homilies cited in this section, the proof-text for the Israelites' assumption of the obligation to observe future commandments is not from the deuteronomic pericope but from *Esther* 9:27. On what basis then did the homilist assume that this willingness to observe future commandments took place at the plains of Moab? We can perhaps adduce that the background to this homily is the one on *Deut* 29:28, where the rabbis learned that the Israelites accepted the hidden laws that they had refused to accept at Sinai at the plains of Moab.

The Role of Exegetical Activity in the Revelation of Hidden Things: The Sectarian View

We now proceed to a closer consideration of the sectarian view of the revelation of hidden things, identified as concealed laws. As we have already seen, the sect believed this was a divine privilege granted only to those who rigorously observe the revealed laws. This creates the impression that the sect viewed this revelation as occurring in a prophetic vein. God reveals himself to the sect's leader or its authorities, imparting the correct interpretation of the pentateuchal commandments in the process. If correct, this reading of the sectarian view diverges sharply from the rabbinic one. The rabbinic view of the role of human cognition in the creation and development of the halakhah has been summed up by Jonah Fraenkel as follows: "There is no evidence in rabbinic literature—not even in the earliest tannaitic homilies in our possession—of any human or societal limitation on the understanding of the Torah. There is, however, in rabbinic opinion, a clear distinction between homily and halakhic derivation on the one hand and prophecy on the other." (22)

Closer examination of the sect's descriptions of the nature of this revelation divulges a more nuanced picture. While the source of the revelation is indeed divine inspiration, its crux lies primarily in human intellectual activity. In other words, the sect's members were well aware that they approached the derivation of halakhic details and textual interpretation through a "midrashic" method essentially similar to that of rabbinic midrash. By asserting that this midrash was divinely inspired, the sect's aim was to stress the authoritative nature of its interpretation as opposed to that of others.

We begin the investigation of this point by re-examining the passage from *CD* cited above (*CD* 3: 12ff).

But out of those who held fast to God's ordinances, who remained of them, God established his covenant with Israel forever, revealing to them hidden things (הַסְתֵּרָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִשְׁכַּח) in which all Israel had strayed: his holy sabbaths, the glorious appointed times, his righteous testimonies, his true ways, and the desires of his will, which a person shall do and live by them. (These) he opened before them and they dug (וַיִּפְתַּח) a well of abundant water. But those who scorn them will not live.

Although the phrase הַסְתֵּרָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִשְׁכַּח found in the opening sentence seems to imply that humans are passive recipients of the divine act of revelation, the conclusion of the passage proves otherwise. It alludes to a parable which stands for the vehicle of revelation: "he opened before them and they dug a well of abundant water." The process of revelation is then more complex; while God indeed "opened before

them" it is the sect's members who must dig in order to extract the well's water. Further elucidation of this metaphor for the study of Torah is found elsewhere in *CD*, where the activity of digging a well appears as one of investigative inquiry.

And God recalled the covenant with the first ones, and he raised up from Aaron men of discernment (בְּרִירָה) and from Israel wise men (חֲכָמִים) and he allowed them to hear. And they dug the well (וַיִּחְדְּדוּ) and excavated by the which it is written) "the well was dug by the prince and excavated by the nobles of the people, with a ruler" (*Mim* 21:18). The "well" is the Torah and those who "dig" it are the penitents of Israel who depart from the land of Judah and dwell in the land of Damascus. God called them all "princes," (חֲכָמִים) for they sought him (וַיִּשְׁאוּ) (23) and their honor was not rejected by anyone's mouth. And the "ruler" (מֶלֶךְ) is the interpreter of the Torah (וְהַמְדַבֵּר), of whom *Isaiah* said, "He takes out a tool for his work" (*Isa* 54:16). And the "nobles of the people" (גִּבּוֹרֵי הָעָם) are those who come to excavate the well with the statutes (חֻקֵּי) which were ordained by the ruler to walk in them in the entire time of evil, and (who) will obtain no others until the rise of one who will teach righteousness in the end of days. (*CD* 6:2-11)

Jonah Fraenkel has ably demonstrated how the author of this passage endowed *Mim* 21:18 with a contemporary-allegorical interpretation. (24) This interpretation, which belongs to the category of *peshet* on this count, also closely resembles rabbinic midrash from the point of view of the techniques utilized. Each of the seven words in the verse is expounded: the "well" is the Torah, its "excavators" are the penitents of Israel, that is the sect members themselves, who are also the "chieftains" and the "nobles" who come to "excavate" the well with the "statutes" ordained by the "ruler" who is the interpreter of the Torah. Clearly, the interpretive burden the homilist faced was to explicate the role of the interpreter of the Torah (וְהַמְדַבֵּר) in relation to that of the sect's members (גִּבּוֹרֵי הָעָם), who, according to the verse, are the ones who dig and excavate the well. With an eye to elucidating this relationship, the author of *CD* cites *Isa* 54:16: "It is I who created the smith to fan the charcoal fire and produce the tools for his work." According to a straightforward reading of this verse, God created the smith who fans the fire and produces the tools which enable him and others to create new things.

(23) Ostensibly this connotes seeking of God. However, it seems that the seeking of God is directly related to the study and interpretation of the Torah as explained in the continuation of the passage; thus the rest of the sentence can be interpreted as explained in n. 29 below.

(24) For prior treatments of the parable of the well in this passage, see Fraenkel, *וְהַמְדַבֵּר הַחֲכָמִים וְהַמְדַבֵּר הַחֲכָמִים* 2: 477-80; M. Fishbane, "The Well of Living Water: A Biblical Motif and Its Ancient Transformations," *Sh'arei Talmud* (ed. M. Fishbane and E. Tov with W. W. Fields, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1992) 3-16.

Within the context of this parable, we believe [and here we amplify Fraenkel's view (25)] that it is to be understood as follows: God created the interpreter of the Torah, who is the smith who produces the tools (מְבַרְבֵּר הַכְּלִי), the principles that fashion how the entire membership of the sect participates in the digging of the well, that is, the study and interpretation of the Torah. The digging and excavation of the well should therefore be read as a metaphor for uncovering the hidden laws in the Torah.

By means of this parable, the author of *CD* creates a conception of revelation of hidden laws which integrates divine inspiration and human intellectual creativity. The aspect of divine inspiration is realized in the figure of the interpreter of the Torah sent by God to provide the tools for its interpretation—the rules and principles of interpretation, similar in principle to the hermeneutic principles in rabbinic tradition—while the actual process of interpretation is carried out by the membership of the sect as a whole in their *discernment* and their *wisdom*; in and of itself, prophecy does not require wisdom.

A second metaphor for the revelation of hidden things is found in *IQS* 8:11-16:

And the interpreter (מְבַרְבֵּר הַכְּלִי) shall not conceal from them, out of fear of the spirit of apostasy, any of those things hidden from Israel which have been discovered by him. And when these become members of the Community in Israel according to all these rules, they shall separate from the habitation of ungodly men and shall go into the wilderness to prepare the way of Him; as it is written, *Prepare in the wilderness the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a path for our God* (Isa. xl. 3). This (path) is the study of the Law (תּוֹרַת הַדֵּבָר) which He commanded by the hand of Moses, that they may do according to all that has been revealed (לְעֵשֶׂה מִכָּל הַדְּבָרִים הַנִּגְלִיּוֹת) from age to age, and as the Prophets have revealed by His Holy Spirit (כִּי הַנְּבִיאִים בָּרַחוּ וְהִיאִים קִדְשָׁא). (26)

In this passage, the link between תּוֹרַת הַדֵּבָר and the revelation of concealed things appears twice: in the injunction that the interpreter not conceal his discoveries, and in the application of the prooftext with *Isaiah* to the study of the Law in order to enable the sect to comply with what is revealed from time to time. What is the nature of this "study of the Law" (תּוֹרַת הַדֵּבָר) mentioned here, and who is the "interpreter" (מְבַרְבֵּר הַכְּלִי)? Some scholars adduced that this is a process of revelation which occurs in a prophetic vein, basing their argument on the use of the verb שָׁרַר which they understand as "one who seeks." Thus, the interpreter is one who seeks God, (27) and, based on the concluding statement, "as the Prophets have revealed by his Holy Spirit," the מְבַרְבֵּר

(25) Fraenkel, שְׂרָרָה (מְבַרְבֵּר) דְּבָרֵי תְּנַיִן 2:477-80.

(26) Translation cited from G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987) 73. All translations of *IQS* are cited from this edition.

(27) J. Licht, *The Rule Scroll* (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1965) 177.

תּוֹרַת revealed from time to time is prophetic in nature. We maintain, however, that the מְבַרְבֵּר הַכְּלִי referred to in this passage is the exegetical study of the Torah. In our opinion, the reliance on a verse from *Isaiah* (40:3) once again provides the key to the correct understanding of the passage, highlighting the focal human role in this investigative activity. For *IQS*'s author, the sect's seclusion and relocation in the wilderness represent the fulfillment of this biblical injunction, whose purpose is to prepare the way of the Lord. The activity of preparing the way, of making the way level, is a metaphor for the sect's exegesis of the Torah in the desert, whose ultimate result will be divine revelation: "The Presence of the Lord shall appear, and all flesh, as one, shall behold—For the Lord Himself has spoken" (*Isa* 40:5, which is not cited in the passage). Just as the previous passage compared the interpretation of the Torah to the digging of the well, to the excavation of its subterranean waters, the sectarian midrash under consideration compares this activity to clearing the way, to making it level. Through this active study and exegesis of the Torah—described in the imagery of smoothing bumps and straightening curves—the glory of God as embodied in the proper understanding of the Torah, its true and just laws, will be revealed. (28)

What emerges from this imagery is the sect's conception of the revelation of concealed law. This is perceived as taking place via the divine inspiration granted to the sect's leaders; under their tutelage the entire membership of the sect engages in the study and interpretation of the Torah. This exegetical process is a manifestly intensive *human* activity, compared to the excavation of a well in one passage and to roadwork in another. The gap between the sectarian and rabbinic conceptions of the development of halakha is then seemingly smaller than at first glance, with the sectarian view admitting the decisive contribution of human intellectual activity. This area of contact calls for the investigation of each group's attitude towards the other's exegetical activity.

The Sectarian Attitude Towards Its Opponents

In the context of their defense of the view that the sect alone merits the revelation of the hidden laws, we find its authors accusing their opponents of dereliction:

(28) We understand the phrase קִדְשָׁא בְּרַחוּ וְהִיאִים קִדְשָׁא as: the words of the prophets are included in the corpus to be studied; indeed, we find that for the sectarian statements comprised an authoritative source for the derivation of laws. For example, *CD* 10:19: "Ye shall not talk about the work and the task to be done the next morning" whose phraseology is derived from *Isa* 58:13. See Schiffman, *Halakhah at Qumran*, 96 and n. 53. The verse from *Isaiah* was also used by the rabbis to derive laws relating to the Sabbath. See *b. Sabb.* 113a. For a general treatment of the use of prophetic material for the derivation of *halakha* by the rabbis, see E. E. Urbach, "תּוֹרַת הַדֵּבָר", *Tarbiz* 18 (1947) 1-27 (=The World of the Sages: Collected Studies [Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988] 21-47).

And he shall undertake by the Covenant to separate from all the men of falsehood who walk in the way of wickedness. For they are not reckoned in His covenant. They have neither inquired (בָּקַשׁ) בָּרָא (בָּרָא) nor sought after Him concerning His laws (לְמִצְוֹת) בְּחִיבָה (בְּחִיבָה) (29) that they might know the hidden things (לְדַעְתָּהֶם) בְּחִיבָה (בְּחִיבָה) in which they have sinfully erred; and matters revealed they have treated with insolence (לְבַלְבָּלֵתָם) בְּחִיבָה (בְּחִיבָה). Therefore Wrath shall rise up to condemn, and Vengeance shall be executed by the curses of the Covenant, and great chastisements of eternal destruction shall be visited on them, leaving no remnant. (QS 5:10-13)

The author levels two accusations against the sect's antagonists: (1) they do not seek or inquire in God's statutes in order to uncover the hidden laws; (2) they arrogantly trespass the revealed laws. The phrase *לְמִצְוֹת* used by the sect to describe a willful transgression (30) comes from *Mishnah* 15:30-31 where the punishment for acting defiantly (lit. "with upraised hand"), for spurning the word of God and his commandments, is *קַרְבָּן* or excision. Evidently, the severe punishment with which the passage concludes was based on the scriptural punishment of excision.

Anyone the least bit familiar with rabbinic thought is aware that the rabbis also engaged in exegesis of the Torah. Certainly, the members of the Qumran sect were conscious of this fact. In *CD* 1:18-21, we find the following condemnation voiced concerning their opponents' exegetical methods:

For they sought smooth things (קִרְיָהּ) בְּרִיבָה (בְּרִיבָה) and chose delusions and sought out loopholes and chose the fair neck (31) and justified the evil man and condemned the righteous man and caused the covenant to be broken and the statute to be violated; and they ganged up on those of righteous soul and all those who walk perfectly their own soul(s) despised.

CD's author imputes to the sect's opponents an exegetical approach to the Torah which proceeds not from pure motives but with the aim of ruling leniently. He accuses them of seeking loopholes and facile inter-

(29) Licht (*Rule Scroll*, 132) reads the text as if it included the word *לֵא*. According to this reading, the search and inquiry are for God; this, in order to discover the true halakhah. If we do not read *לֵא* then the search and inquiry are directed at the statutes themselves and the *he* of *לְמִצְוֹת* is superfluous; that is, the wicked did not seek or inquire in his statutes; thus the verb *לְמִצְוֹת* must be seen as a technical term denoting the study of the Torah. Note that the text reads *לְמִצְוֹת* (and not *לְמִצְוֹתָם*), therefore it may be read as *לְמִצְוֹת*.

(30) See Qimron, "Terminology for Intention," 103-10.

(31) That is, they choose the good life. See E. Estel, "4Q477: The Rebukes by the Overseer," *JJS* 45 (1994) 118 (commentary to l. 9). In *The Commentary on Psalms* (DJD 5) London: Oxford University Press, 1986) 43) the author accuses the sect's opponents *לְמִצְוֹת* בְּחִיבָה (they chose worthless things). See also Y. Sussmann, "The History of *Hriakha* and the Dead Sea Scrolls—A Preliminary to the Publication of 4QMMT" (Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 59 (1989-90) 63-65.

pretations; he therefore terms their exegesis smooth things (קִרְיָהּ) בְּרִיבָה (בְּרִיבָה), which he equates with choosing "delusion." Joseph Baumgarten has even suggested that the use of *לְמִצְוֹת* בְּחִיבָה (for the sect's opponents' homilies is a derisive pun on *לְמִצְוֹת* בְּחִיבָה (interpreters of halakho). (32)

The behavior of the sect's antagonists is again criticized in *CD* 4:16-5:13. The author singles out three areas in which the sect's antagonists err: unchastity, arrogance, and defilement of the sanctuary (4:17-18). Regarding unchastity, the scroll's author takes issue with the rabbinic interpretation of *Lev* 18:13, accusing his antagonists of transgressing by marrying "each one his brother's daughter or sister's daughter" (5:7-8) in direct opposition to the sectarian reading of the scriptural injunction. They adduce: "... the precept of incest is written from the point of view of males, but the same (law) applies to women, so if a brother's daughter uncovers the nakedness of a brother of her father, she is a (forbidden) close relationship" (5:9-11). (33) This contrasts with the rabbinic view, which permitted a man to marry his niece based on the interpretation of Scripture as only prohibiting marriage between a nephew and an aunt. In the sect's eyes, this rabbinic distinction (*midrash*) was an example of *קִרְיָהּ* בְּרִיבָה (בְּרִיבָה). This activity is further termed *לְמִצְוֹת* (arrogance), (34) and described thus: "They also polluted their holy spirits, and with a tongue of blasphemies (בְּלִשׁוֹן) בְּרִיבָה (בְּרִיבָה) opened (their) mouth against the statutes of God's covenant, saying, 'They are not right'" (5:11-12). The derogatory expression *לְמִצְוֹת* בְּחִיבָה (like *בְּרִיבָה* used by the sect to denote flagrant transgression of the revealed law, is derived from *Mishnah* 15:30-31. In the sect's view, its antagonists sin by defiantly interpreting the Torah's revealed commandments with "smooth words." In so doing, they spurn God and violate his commandments.

The Rabbinic View of Their Opponents

The sectarians were not alone in criticizing their opponents. The rabbis were by no means indifferent to the "exegetical methods" of their opponents, commonly termed Sadducees or Boethusians. Not only is precise identification of these two groups problematic, in the context of certain disputes their appellations are switched. In general, however, it seems that these two groups shared a similar approach to halakhah. While no explicit references to the Qumran sect are found in rabbinic

(32) Baumgarten, *Studies in Qumran Law*, 32 n. 78. The expression *לְמִצְוֹת* בְּחִיבָה is found in *IQH* 2:15, 32. See A. Baumgarten, "The Name of the Pharisees," *JBL* 102 (1983) 420-22.

(33) That the sect viewed this prohibition as explicit in Scripture is seen from the fact that *IQH Temple* 66:15-17 includes this prohibition in its list of proscribed marriages.

(34) As correctly interpreted by Schwartz, "Damascus Document," 19 n. 38.

literature, based upon the present state of our knowledge, Qumranic halakhah may be subsumed under the rubric of Sadducean halakhah. (35) In the following example of a rabbinic critique of Sadducean homilies, we find the rabbis, like the sect, utilizing *Num* 15:30-31 to censure their opponents' exegesis.

"But the person who does anything with an upraised hand..." (*Num* 15:27-31) "...because he has spurned the word of the Lord (וַאֲנִי בְרַבְרָא וְהוֹרֵהוּ אֶת הַלֵּל וְהוֹרֵהוּ אֶת הַלֵּל):" this refers to a Sadducee. "...and broken his commandment (וְהוֹרֵהוּ אֶת הַלֵּל):" this refers to an Epicurean [unbeliever]. Another interpretation of "...because he has spurned the word of the Lord:" "...and has broken his commandment:" this refers to one who removes the covenant of the flesh. (*Sipre Num* 112:3-4; translation slightly revised)

This midrash offers two explanations for בְרַבְרָא וְהוֹרֵהוּ אֶת הַלֵּל. First the rabbis identify a person who despises the word of the Lord as a Sadducee. But the midrash does not simply establish that the Sadducees despise the word of God and therefore merit the punishment of excision, it goes on to provide another interpretation of the verse. We propose that these two exegeses are alternative statements of a single position. The midrash equates "he who has spurned the word of the Lord" with the Sadducee who "finds an aspect in the Torah," and he who has "broken his commandment" with the unbeliever who removes the mark of circumcision. Let us test this hypothesis. בְרַבְרָא וְהוֹרֵהוּ אֶת הַלֵּל is certainly an appropriate designation for the Epicurean who neither believes in God nor accepts the yoke of heaven (36); it is, however, not applicable to the Sadducees, whom the rabbis recognized as stringent in their performance of the commandments according to their interpretation.

The question then arises, what is the meaning of בְרַבְרָא וְהוֹרֵהוּ אֶת הַלֵּל? Does this phrase fit the rabbinic perception of the Sadducees? Much ink has been spilled in the attempt to explain this expression. (37) Most commentators and scholars understand it as interpreted by both Tal-munds, in the sense of impudence and derision. (38) But, to our mind, the most likely explanation is that tendered by Urbach based on the addition

(35) See M. Broshi, "Anti-Qumranic Polemics in the Talmud," *The Madrid Qumran Congress* (ed. J. Trebolle Barrera and L. Vegas Montaner; STDJ 11, 2; Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1992) 589 n. 2; Sussemann, "History of Halakha and the Dead Sea Scrolls," 40-53.

(36) See *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s.v. "Apirkoros"; E. E. Urbach, *The Sages* (trans. I. Abraham; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1975) 30-31; J. Geiger, "To the History of the Term *Apirkoros*" (Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 42 (1972-73) 499.

(37) See the literature cited by A. Büchler, *Sin and Atonement (The Library of Biblical Studies)*, ed. H. M. Orlinsky; New York: Ktav, 1967) 103 n. 2, and the additions in Urbach, *The Sages* 2:818 n. 34.

(38) See *y. Pe'ea* 16b, b. *Sanh.* 99b.

of בְרַבְרָא וְהוֹרֵהוּ אֶת הַלֵּל to this phrase found in several sources. (39) It is then more correctly understood as one who gives a wrong interpretation of the Torah (lit. discloses a face=aspect, meaning in the Torah) which is not according to the halakhah. (40) Can we adduce that the rabbis deliberately used the phrase בְרַבְרָא וְהוֹרֵהוּ אֶת הַלֵּל to describe Sadducee homily because they knew that among their opponents there were those who called their interpretation of the Torah בְרַבְרָא וְהוֹרֵהוּ אֶת הַלֵּל? We have no way of ascertaining whether this was indeed the case. Nonetheless, in support of this supposition we note that although the expression בְרַבְרָא וְהוֹרֵהוּ אֶת הַלֵּל could be applied to proper interpretation, in rabbinic parlance it always carries a negative connotation. It appears that as a result of sectarian controversy, the rabbis refrained from applying this intrinsically neutral phrase to their own exegesis.

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In this article we examined the Qumran sect's description of the development of its halakhah as seen through the key terms בְרַבְרָא וְהוֹרֵהוּ אֶת הַלֵּל, comparing its view to one stream of rabbinic thought. Based on the twofold interpretation of *Deut* 29:28, the development of the halakhah was grasped as intimately linked to the revelation of the hidden aspect of the Torah. Despite the emphasis on the element of divine inspiration in this revelation, the sect recognized the decisive impact of human intellectual scrutiny on the process of shaping the halakhah. Seen in this light, the similarity between the sectarian view and that of the rabbis is striking. Both stressed the power of exegesis as a tool for the development of the oral law. Each side engaged in exegesis, and neither denied the essential contribution of human intellectual involvement to the process of interpreting the Torah in order to uncover its hidden laws. Consequently, the question of the validity of the interpretive process loomed large in the interrelationship between the groups, leading to derogatory exchanges, often based on the same prooftexts. For the Qumran sectarians rabbinic interpretation exemplified "smooth things," that is lenient, facile interpretations, while in the rabbinic view, their opponents interpreted "the Torah improperly."

(39) Urbach, *The Sages* 1:295-96; 2:818 n. 33. For the sake of clarity, we note Urbach's precise language: "because its simple meaning is 'one who discloses (=gives) an interpretation of (a passage of) the Torah.'" For a full listing of the textual variants, see the Hebrew edition (תלמוד בבלי) פירוש לפרקי אבות; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975) 263 n. 32.

(40) See n. 39 above.

APPENDIX

Let us examine one further example of a dispute between the rabbis and their opponents which reflects the use of a rhetoric similar to the one we examined in the context of the Qumran sect-rabbinic schism. The scholion to *Megillat Ta'anit* and the talmudic parallels have preserved several anecdotes concerning R. Johanan b. Zakkai's debates with the Sadducees and the Boethusians on halakhic issues. (41) The most famous is cited below:

For the Boethusians held that the Feast of Weeks must always be on the day after the Sabbath (שבתות זמנות). But R. Johanan b. Zakkai entered into discussion with them saying, 'Fools that you are! whence do you derive it?' Not one of them was able to answer him, save one old man who commenced to babble and said, 'Moses our teacher was a great lover of Israel, and knowing full well that the Feast of Weeks lasted only one day he therefore fixed it on the day after the Sabbath so that Israel might enjoy themselves for two successive days'. [R. Johanan b. Zakkai] then quoted to himself the following verse, 'It is eleven days' journey from Horeb unto Kadesh-Barnea by the way of mount Seir [Deut 1:2]. If Moses was a great lover of Israel, why then did he detain them in the wilderness for forty years?' 'Master', said the other, 'is it thus that you would dismiss me?' 'Fool', he answered, 'should not our perfect Torah be as convincing as your idle talk! Now one verse says, *Ye shall number fifty days* [Lev 23:16], while the other verse says, *Seven weeks shall there be complete* [Lev 23:15]. How are they to be reconciled? The latter verse refers to the time when the [first day of the] Festival [of Passover] falls on the Sabbath, while the former to the time when the [first day of the] Festival falls on a weekday. (b. *Menah.* 65a-b) (42)

In light of the discussion in the body of the article concerning the consanguinity in attitude between the opposing groups towards the other's homilies, it is interesting to note the rhetoric shared by this anecdote and the Qumranic descriptions of rabbinic exegesis. First, we must note that only near the anecdote's conclusion is there any direct consideration of the Boethusians' interpretation of the key phrase *למחרת* (43) Indeed, in the first place, they are presented in a derogatory light—"not one of them was able to answer him," and the sole participant willing to enter into debate was an "old man who commenced to babble." This rhetoric of deliberately dismissing their opponents' ability to reply to rabbinic arguments, indeed calling the very veracity of their interpretation into question, mirrors the attitude displayed by the Qumran sect towards its opponents. Where the rabbis asserted "not one of them was able to answer him," we find the author of *CD* praising the members of the sect who were all called "princes for they sought him and their honor was not rejected by anyone's mouth (*לפניהם לא יושבו אף פיהם* 6:6-7). The meaning of this difficult expression is elucidated in light of rabbinic tradition. Like the rabbis, the sect's members also argued that their opponents could not effectively counter their interpretations, their means of revealing the secret aspect of the Torah.

Further comparison elicits another similarity. As opposed to the rabbinic arguments, those of the old man who represents the Boethusians are described as babbling, while a ridiculous argument is placed in his mouth. Later on in the anecdote, the Boethusian doctrine are even described as "idle talk." This parallels the rhetoric employed by the author of *CD* in describing the sect's antagonists: "For they sought smooth things and chose delusions" (1:18-19). While the sect viewed its exegesis as the divine truth revealed through the Torah, it dismissed rabbinic interpretation as no more than smooth talk and delusion.

Aharon SHEMESH and Cana WERMAN.

(41) See b. *Menah.* 65a-b; scholion to *Megillat Ta'anit* for the 8th of Nisan (H. Liechtenstein, "מגילת תענית" כרך ב' עמ' 107-108), *HUCA* 8-9 [1931-32] 324) for the argument with the Boethusians regarding the date for the holiday of *Aseret*; b. *Bat.* 115b-116a and *Megillat Ta'anit* for the 24th of Av (334) for the debate with the Sadducees concerning inheritance by a daughter and a son's daughter; *Megillat Ta'anit* for the 27th of Heshvan (338) for the question of eating an animal offered as a *minchah*—Sadducees or Boethusians.

(42) MS. Parma, De Rossi 117 of the scholion to *Megillat Ta'anit* has the identical reading with the exception of the opening which reads: "מגילת תענית היא שבתות זמנות". This debate was ascribed to the Boethusians in the Mishnah and the Tosefta. Regarding the problem of the versions and historical reliability of scholion, see Sussman, "History of *Halakha* and the Dead Sea Scrolls," 41 n. 139, and recently, V. Noam, "The Scholion to the *Megillat Ta'anit*: Towards and Understanding of Its Stemma" (Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 62 (1992-93) 57-58 and nn. 11-13.

(43) For the interpretation of the disagreement between the Pharisees and the Boethusians regarding this verse, see S. Naeh, "Did the Tannaim Interpret the Script of the Torah Differently From the Authorized Reading?" (Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 61 (1991-92) 424-39.