THE “HEART” IN THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS: 
NEGOTIATING BETWEEN THE PROBLEM OF HYPOCRISY
AND CONFLICT WITHIN THE HUMAN BEING

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Introduction

Since the discoveries of documents from Cave 1, readers and students of the Dead Sea Scrolls have noted dualistic features in many of the texts. Not infrequently, the writers and first readers of the materials defined themselves in relation to dualistic oppositions such as those between light and darkness, good and evil, God and Belial, spirits of truth and iniquity, and the present age of wickedness and future age of salvation. These contrasts are all the more interesting because they do not, strictly speaking, correspond to the more conventional socio-religious distinction between those who are righteous and those who are wicked. This may come as a surprise especially in documents that *prime facie* appear to draw unmistakable boundaries between insiders and outsiders.

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It is in the *Treatise of the Two Spirits* that most of these stark contrasts converge into a complex of interwoven ideas. While “the sons of light” (1QS III:24, 25; or “of righteousness” III:20, 22; “of truth” IV:6) and “the sons of iniquity” (III:19, 21) are referred to as distinct groups, the remaining dualistic categories are more profound. The Prince of Lights and Angel of Darkness each have dominion over separate spheres in the cosmos; the Angel of Darkness, however, is the one whose influence lies behind the sins, iniquities, guilt and deeds of transgression committed by “the sons of righteousness” (III:23–24). Thus the catalogue of virtues and vices in 1QS IV:2–8 and 9–14 does not actually describe the sons of light and the sons of darkness per se, but rather the “paths” or “ways” (IV:2, 10, 11; cf. IV:17, 19) in which they walk when engaged in corresponding activities.

Now this instruction about the two paths is given “to illuminate the heart of man” (IV:2) and to “establish fear in his heart for the judgements of God” (IV:2–3). Indeed, in the present world order the battleground of conflict between truth and iniquity does not so much lie between definable communities of the righteous and wicked; instead, it is “the heart of man”—that is, the heart of all human beings—in which the spirits of truth and iniquity contend against one another (IV:23), and it is here where the separation of outsiders from insiders will, at the visitation of God (IV:18–19), ultimately take place.

The discussion to follow shall return to this same *Treatise of the Two Spirits*, though after what shall first be a brief survey of the “heart” in the Dead Sea Scrolls and a brief consideration of the use of this term in relation to both biblical tradition and evolved usage in the later texts. Second, and in particular, I shall examine several texts which refer to activity “with a double heart.” By exploring this motif, we shall be in a better position to understand how “the heart” functions in two contemporary, yet very different, modes of discourse and to see what this means for the theological anthropologies adopted by the writers of the texts.

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2 Only the contrast between God and Belial, which dominates the discourse in 1QS I–III (I:16–19, 21–24; II:4–9, 19–26), is not upheld. In the *Treatise* God is portrayed as transcendent. He is posed above the opposition between “the Angel of Darkness” and “the Prince of Lights” (1QS III:20–25), though it is God—as well as “the Angel of Truth”—who comes to the aid of the sons of light when they stumble because of the malevolent influence of the Angel of Darkness.

3 Translations in the present contribution are my own, unless otherwise indicated.