

The Dead Sea Scrolls

A Sampling of Texts

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1QS = Serekh ha-Yahad (Community Rule)

Col. I (Introduction)

1. [] to live according to [the book of] the *Yahad's* [Ru]le. (He is to teach them) to seek
2. God with [all their heart and with all their soul,] to do that which is good and upright before Him, just as
3. He commanded through Moses and all His servants the prophets. (He is to teach them) to love everything

Col. III (Predetermination)

13. A text belonging to the Instructor, who is to enlighten and teach all the Sons of Light about the character and fate of humankind:
14. all their spiritual varieties with accompanying signs, all their deeds generation by generation, and their visitation for afflictions together with
15. eras of peace. All that is now and ever shall be originates with the God of knowledge. Before things come to be, He has ordered all their designs,
16. so that when they do come to exist—at their appointed times as ordained by His glorious plan—they fulfill their destiny, a destiny impossible to change. He controls

Col. IV (Predetermination)

23. Until now the spirits of truth and perversity have contended within the human heart.
24. All people walk in both wisdom and foolishness. As is a person's endowment of truth and righteousness, so shall he hate perversity; conversely, in proportion to bequest in the lot of evil, one will act wickedly and
25. abominate truth. God has appointed these spirits as equals until the time of decree and renewal. He foreknows the outworking of their deeds for all the ages
26. [of eternity.] He has granted them dominion over humanity, so imparting knowledge of good [and evil, de]ciding the fate of every living being by the measure of which spirit predominates in [] visitation.

Col. V (Sons of Zadok)

1. This is the rule for the men of the *Yahad* who volunteer to repent from all evil and to hold fast to all that He, by His good will, has commanded. They are to separate from the congregation of
2. perverse men. They are to come together as one with respect to Law and wealth. Their discussions shall be under the oversight of the Sons of Zadok—priests and preservers of the covenant—and according to the majority rule of the men of
3. the *Yahad*, who hold fast to the covenant. These men shall guide all decisions on matters of Law, money and judgement. They are to practise truth together with humility,
4. charity, justice, lovingkindness, and modesty in all their ways.

Col. V (Purity)

13. None of the perverse men is to enter purifying waters used by the Men of Holiness and so contact their purity. Indeed, it is impossible to be purified
14. without first repenting of evil, inasmuch as impurity adheres to all who transgress His word.

Col. VI (Communal lifestyle)

1. By these rules
2. they are to govern themselves wherever they dwell, in accordance with each legal finding that bears upon communal life. Inferiors must obey their ranking superiors as regards work and wealth. They shall eat,
3. pray and deliberate communally.

Col. VI (Initiation)

13. If anyone of Israel volunteers
14. for enrollment in the party of the *Yahad*, the man appointed as leader of the general membership shall examine him regarding his understanding and works. If he has the potential for instruction, he is to begin initiation
15. into the Covenant, returning to the truth and repenting of all perversity. He shall be made to understand all the basic precepts of the *Yahad*. Subsequently in the process, he must stand before the general membership and the whole chapter shall interrogate him
16. about his particulars. According to the decision of the Council of the general membership, he shall either proceed or depart. If he does proceed in joining the party of the *Yahad*, he must not touch the pure food
17. of the general membership before they have examined him as to his spiritual fitness and works, and not before a full year has passed. Further, he must not yet admix his property with that of the general membership.
18. When he has passed a full year in the *Yahad*, the general membership shall inquire into the details of his understanding and works of the Law. If it be ordained,

19. in the opinion of the priests and the majority of the men of their Covenant, then he shall be initiated further into the secret teaching of the *Yahad*. They shall also take steps to incorporate his property, putting it under the authority of the
20. Overseer together with that of the general membership, and keeping an account of it—but it shall not yet be disbursed along with that of the general membership. The initiate is not to touch the drink of the general membership prior to
21. passing a second year among the men of the *Yahad*. When that second year has passed, the general membership shall review his case. If it be ordained
22. for him to proceed to full membership in the *Yahad*, they shall enroll him at the appropriate rank among his brothers for discussion of the Law, jurisprudence, participation in pure meals and admixture of property. Thenceforth the *Yahad* may draw upon his counsel and
23. judgement.

Marriage Laws from Damascus Document

(CD A-text from Cairo Geniza)

Col. IV

20. . . . they are caught in two: fornication, by taking
21. two wives in their lifetimes although the principle of creation is '*male and female He created them*' (Gen 1:27)

Col. V

1. and those who went into the ark '*went into the ark two by two*' (Gen 7:9). *vacat* Concerning the Leader it is written
2. '*he shall not multiply wives to himself*' (Deut 17:17); but David had not read the sealed book of the Law
3. in the Ark; for it was not { } opened in Israel from the day of the death of Eleazar
4. and Joshua and the elders who served the goddess Ashtoret. It lay buried
5. (and was not) revealed until the appearance of Zadok. Nevertheless the deeds of David were all excellent, except the murder of Uriah
6. and God forgave him for that. They also defile the sanctuary, for they do not
7. separate clean from unclean according to the Law, and lie with a woman during her menstrual period. Furthermore they marry
8. each man the daughter of his brothers and the daughter of his sister, *vacat* although Moses said, '*Unto*
9. *the sister of your mother you shall not draw near; she is the flesh of your mother*' (cf. Lev 18:13). But the law of consanguinity is written for males
10. and females alike, so if the brother's daughter uncovers the nakedness of the brother of
11. her father, she is the flesh (of her father).

Sabbath Laws from Damascus Document

(CD A-text from Cairo Geniza)

Col. X

14. About the Sa[bb]ath, how to keep it properly. *vacat* A man may not work on the
15. { } sixth day from the time that the solar orb
16. is above the horizon by its diameter, because this is what is meant by the passage, ‘*Observe the Sabbath*
17. *day to keep it holy*’ (Deut 5:12). On the Sabbath day, one may not speak any
18. coarse or empty word. One is not to seek repayment of any loan from his fellow. One may not go to court about property or wealth.
19. One may not discuss business or work to be done the next day.
20. *vacat* A man may not go about in the field to do his desired activity on
21. the Sabbath. [cp. M. Shabbat 23:3] One may not travel outside his city { } more than a thousand cubits. [cp. M. ‘Eruvin 4:3, 4:5, 4:7, etc.]
22. *vacat* A man may not eat anything on the Sabbath day except food already prepared. [cf. Josephus, War 8:9; cp. rabbinic view] From whatever was lost
23. in the field *vacat* he may not eat, and he may not drink unless he was in the camp.

Col. XI

1. If he was on a journey and went down to bathe, he may drink where he stands, *vac* but he may not draw water into any
2. <vessel>. One may not send a Gentile to do his business on the Sabbath day. [cp. M. Shabbat 1:8-9]
3. *vacat* A man may not put on filthy clothes or clothes kept in wool unless
4. he washes it in water or if they scrub it with spice. *vacat* A man may not voluntarily cross Sabbath borders
5. on the Sabbath day. *vacat* A man may walk behind an animal to graze it outside his city
6. up to two thousand cubits. *vacat* One may not raise his hand to hit it with a fist. *vacat* If it is
7. uncooperative, he should leave it inside. *vacat* A man may not carry anything outside his house, nor should he
8. carry anything in. [cp. M. Shabbat 1:1 / ‘Eruvin] If he is in a temporary shelter, he should not take anything out of it
9. or bring anything in. No one should open a sealed vessel on the Sabbath. *vacat* No one should carry
10. medicine on his person, either going out or <coming in>, on the Sabbath. *vacat* No one should pick up stone and dust
11. in an inhabited place. *vacat* No caregiver should carry a baby on the Sabbath, either going out or coming in. [cp. M. Shabbat 18:2]
12. *vacat* No one should provoke his servant, his maid, or his <employee> on the Sabbath.
13. { } No one should help an animal give birth on the Sabbath; [cp. M. Shabbat 18:3] *vacat* and if it <falls> into a well
14. or a pit, he may not lift it out on the Sabbath. *vacat* No one should <rest> in a place near
15. to Gentiles on the Sabbath. *vacat* No one should profane the Sabbath for wealth or spoil on the Sabbath.

16. *vacat* Any living human who falls into {water} a body of water or a cistern
17. shall not be helped out with ladder, rope, or instrument. *vacat* No one should offer any sacrifice on the Sabbath
18. except the Sabbath whole-burnt-offering, for so it is written, '*besides your Sabbaths*' (Lev 23:28). [cf. **Numbers 28:10**]

Temple Scroll (11QT 46:13-16)

Col. XLVI

13. And you shall make them a place for a 'hand', outside the city, to which they shall go
14. out, to the northwest of the city – roofed houses with pits within them,
15. into which the excrement will descend, ^{so that} it will ^{not} be visible at any distance
16. from the city, three thousand cubits. [cf. **Josephus, War 8:9**]

Josephus, Jewish War 8:9

Moreover, they are stricter than any other of the Jews in resting on their labors on the seventh day. For they not only get their food ready the day before, that they may not be obliged to kindle a fire on that day, but they will not remove any vessel out of its place – nor do they defecate thereon. Indeed, on other days they dig a small pit, a foot deep, with a paddle (which kind of hatchet is given to them when they are first admitted among them); and covering themselves round with their garment, that they may not affront the Divine rays of light, they ease themselves into that pit, after which they put the earth that was dug out again into that pit; and even this they do only in the more lonely places, which they choose out for that purpose; and although this easement of the body be natural, yet it is a rule with them to wash themselves after it, as if it were a defilement to them.

Miscellaneous Laws from Damascus Document (CD A-text from Cairo Geniza)

Col. XII

1. A man may not lay with a woman in the city of the Temple, defiling
2. the city of the Temple by their uncleanness.

8. No one may sell a clean animal
9. or bird to the Gentiles, lest they sacrifice them to idols; *vacat* neither from his threshing-floor
10. nor from his winepress shall he sell to them,

13. and the fish may not be eaten unless they are split open
14. while living and their blood poured out. [Cf. **Jacob of Kefar Nevoiraia in Genesis Rabba 7:3**]

**4QMMT Miqzat Ma‘ase ha-Torah “Some Precepts of the Torah”
(with parallels from 11QT Temple Scroll)**

4QMMT

18. [concerning] the hides of cattle [and sheep that they from]
19. their [hides] vessels [... .. to]
20. [bring] them to the sanctuary [... ..]
21. [... ..] And concerning the hi[des and the bones of unclean animals: it is forbidden to make]
22. handles of [vessels from their bones] and hides. [And concerning] the hide of the carcass
23. of a clean [animal]: he who carries such a carcass [shall not] have access to the sacred food

11QT col. XLVII

7. All skin of clean animals that will be slaughtered
8. within their cities, they shall not bring into it; but in their cities they may do
9. with them their work for all their needs; and into the city of my temple they shall not bring (them),
10. for their (degree of) cleanness is according to (the degree of cleanness of) their flesh. And you shall not defile the city in which
11. I settle my name and my temple; but in the skins (of the animals) that they will slaughter
12. in the temple, in them they shall bring their wine and their oil and all
13. their foodstuffs to my temple city. And they shall not defile my temple with the skins of
14. their abominable offerings which they will sacrifice in their land. And you shall not purify a city
15. of your cities to (the degree of) my city; for according to the (degree of) cleanness of its flesh is the (degree of) cleanness of the skins. If
16. you slaughter it in my temple, it (the skin) will be clean for my temple; but if you will slaughter it in your cities, it will be clean
17. for your cities. And all the purity (clean stuff) of the temple you shall bring in the temple skins, and you shall not defile
18. my temple and my city in which I dwell with the skins of your abominations.

Cp. M. Hullin 9:1 (lenient opinion – all hides, bones, etc., are permissible for all uses)

4QMMT

36. [And concerning pregnant (animals)] we are of the opin[ion that] the mother and its fetus [may not be sacrificed] on the same day
37. [.....And concerning] eating (a fetus): we are of the opinion that the fetus [found in its (dead) mother's womb may be eaten (only) after it has been ritually slaughtered. And you know that is is] so, namely that the ruling refers (to) a pregnant animal.

11QT col. LII

5. And you shall not sacrifice to me an ox or a sheep or a goat that is pregnant, for they are an abomination to me.
6. And you shall not kill an ox or a sheep, it and its young, in one day; and you shall not slay the mother
7. with her young.

Cp. M. Hullin 4:5 (sages with lenient opinion; R. Meir with stricter opinion)

4QMMT

55. And concerning liquid streams: we are of the opinion that they are not
56. pure, and that these streams do not act as a separative between impure
57. and pure (liquids). For the liquid of streams and (that) of (the vessel) which receives them are alike, (being)
58. a single liquid.

Cf. M. Yadayim 4:7, where this position is associated with the Sadducees

1QpHab = Peshar Habakkuk

Col. VII

17. ['But the righteous man by his faith will live] (2:4b)

Col. VIII

1. This refers to all those who obey the Law among the Jews whom
2. God will rescue from among those doomed to judgement, because of their suffering and their loyalty
3. to the Teacher of Righteousness.

Cf. Galatians 3:11, Romans 1:17, Hebrews 10:38 – Habakkuk 2:4 quoted in all three passages

Col. XI

2. 'Woe to the one who gets his friend drunk, pouring out
3. his anger, making him drink, just to get a look at their holy days.' (2:15)
4. *vacat* This refers to the Wicked Priest, who
5. pursued the Teacher of Righteousness to destroy him in the heat
6. of his anger at his place of exile. At the time set aside for the repose of
7. the Day of Atonement he appeared to them to destroy them
8. and to bring them to ruin on the fast-day, the Sabbath intended for their repose.

Essenes (Josephus)

fate

celibacy

no toileting on the Sabbath

[Pliny's location]

communal life

strict observance of the Law

initiation rites

no sacrifice

DSS

fate

no toileting on the Sabbath

no divorce/polygamy

Qumran

communal life

apocalyptic

dualistic

strict observance of the Law

Pesher system of interpretation

interpretation of Hab 2:4

initiation rites

no sacrifice

Christianity

celibacy

no divorce/polygamy

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communal life

apocalyptic

dualistic

[laxness towards the Law]

Pesher system of interpretation

interpretation of Hab 2:4

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Sadducees

- Led by priests, with support from the nobility and aristocracy
- Approach to Judaism is essentially biblical
- Sacrifices in the Temple is the sole manner of worship
- Deny the existence of angels
- Deny the immortality of the soul
- Deny the existence of the Oral Law
- Believe in free will only
- Deny resurrection of the dead (Mark 12:18)

Pharisees

- Led by proto-rabbis, with the support of a broader population
- Developed customs and practices not found in the Bible, with emphasis on study of Torah and communal prayer as acts of worship
- Many customs associated with the Temple transferred to the home
- Believe in the existence of angels
- Adhere to the concept of the immortality of the soul
- Develop the concept of the Oral Law
- Middle ground on the question of fate vs. free will
- Mentioned several times in the New Testament as (overly) concerned with laws and ritual (usually in a negative way)

Essenes

- Separatists, living more to themselves, apart from society at large
- Lived communally, with no private wealth
- Series of initiation rites in order to enter the group
- Stricter approach to Jewish law than the others sects
- Believe that all is predetermined or predestinated
- Some are celibate (noted by Philo as well)
- Mentioned by Pliny the Elder as living without women, dwelling near the Dead Sea “above Ein Gedi”