

箴言における אֱמוּנָה と שֶׁקֶר

公文光

ABSTRACT Hikaru KUMON, “אֱמוּנָה and שֶׁקֶר in the Book of Proverbs.” In the Book of Proverbs, the antonym of אֱמוּנָה is שֶׁקֶר. This contrast between the two words is puzzling from the point of view of some modern languages, since the translations of these terms, ‘faithfulness’ and ‘lie’ are not antonyms. The present paper explores this problem from a lexical semantic perspective. First, I show that the meaning of אֱמוּנָה is similar to, but not the same as ‘faithfulness.’ As its central meaning אֱמוּנָה has the idea of keeping to an initial commitment. But אֱמוּנָה is also defined by how one keeps the commitment. This aspect of the definition specifies that one who has אֱמוּנָה does not scheme for immediate gratification. By contrasting this definition with שֶׁקֶר, I show that the present definition of אֱמוּנָה is opposite in meaning to שֶׁקֶר in the aspect of scheming. Whereas שֶׁקֶר is defined as one who utters words to fulfil one’s own agenda, אֱמוּנָה is defined by a lack of such scheming. Such a contrast is crucial in understanding Proverbs 12:17 and Proverbs 12:22. These proverbs contrast one who utters according to one’s agenda with one who is uncalculating in his utterances. Such a witness of אֱמוּנָה has no agenda and has the unique ability to say things as they are. A significant result of this analysis is the relationship between ‘faith’ and ‘lies.’ אֱמוּנָה means something akin to ‘faith’ in contexts where one commits to God’s command. Such a person is at peace and does not scheme to gain immediate gratification. On the other hand, by definition, a witness of שֶׁקֶר does not have faith, since he depends on his own schemes to gain immediate gratification. Therefore, in Biblical thought, a person of ‘faith’ has the opposite quality of a person of ‘lies.’ In regards to the ninth commandment, it is possible to say that in order to follow the commandment, one needs faith. Such a person is a person who has stopped scheming, since he has lost all confidence in his own ego.