Alexandrian Jews. Papyri give evidence, for instance, of the spread of the Jewish Revolt of 115–7 C.E. in Egypt, information which is given by no other source.

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[Alan Keir Bowman]

PAPYRUS. The plant *Cyperus papyrus* grows in the swamps of Israel. It was formerly very widespread in Lower Egypt and in old Egyptian drawings symbolized the region. The use of papyrus was very varied; it was employed for boats, utensils, shoes, and paper, and its soft stalks were also used as food. In the Bible it is called *gomë* (גֹּמֶא) or *eveh* (אֲבֶה), and in the Mishnah *papir* or *neyar*. *Gomë* was used for making the ark of Moses (Ex. 2:3). Boats which sailed beyond the rivers of Ethiopia were made of it (Isa. 18:2). Together with the *reed *(kaneh)* it grew near marshes and swamps, and Isaiah (35:7) prophesied that both would grow in the desert. The Book of Job (8:11–12) notes that papyrus cannot grow without swamp, that it shrivels up in the winter when the grass begins to go green, and that then it is ready for harvesting. The Tosefta speaks of papyrus vessels being more valuable than those made of plaited wicker (Kel. BM 5:15). Papyrus barrels were also made (Kel. 2:5), as well as clothes, "a shirt of papyrus" (Tosef., Kel. BB 5: 2) serving as clothes for the poor (Gen. R. 37:8). The main use of papyrus was in the manufacture of paper, especially in the era of the Mishnah and Talmud. Paper was made from the stalk, which bears the inflorescence, and which was cut into fine strips and stuck together in length and in breadth with glue – the *kolon shel soferim* ("scribes' glue"; Gr. Κὸλλα, glue) which contained leaven and was therefore forbidden on Passover (Pes. 3:1, 42b). The Jerusalem Talmud (Pes. 3:1, 29d) notes that in Alexandria this glue was prepared in large vessels. According to Josephus (Ant., 14:33) there was a place called Papyron near the Jordan. *Gemi* is frequently mentioned in the Mishnah and Talmud as material for the making of baskets, mats, and ropes. It is possible that papyrus (*gomë*) is also included in this name (cf. Rashi to Ex. 2:3), though it seems that it generally also refers to the fibers of other plants. The Bible once mentions *eveh* ships as being light and swift (Job 9:25–26). This word is connected with the Akkadian *apu*, the name of swamp plants used for weaving, including the papyrus.

Nowadays papyrus has almost disappeared from lower Egypt. In Israel it used to grow over the large expanse of the Ḥuleh swamp, where the Arab villagers earned their livelihoods by weaving mats from it. With the draining of these swamps only a few acres of papyrus remain in the local nature reserve. The papyrus is a perennial, growing to a height of up to 15 feet. The triple shaft of the inflorescence is 2½–3½ inches thick at the base and from it the papyrus strips were made. The plant dies in winter, and the stalks rot. The peat in the Ḥuleh is formed from the layers of the rotted plants.

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[Jehuda Feliks]

PARABLE, from the Greek παραβολὴ (lit. "juxtaposition"), the usual Septuagint rendering of Hebrew *mashal* ("comparison," "saying," and "derived meanings"). No distinction is made in biblical usage between parable, allegory, and fable; all are forms of the *mashal* and have the same functions of illustration and instruction. The comparison may be explicit or implied. It may take the form of declarative or interrogative sentences (e.g., Prov. 26:1; 27:4). When developed into a short story, an interpretation or application is usually appended.

The story-parable, often introduced by "like" or "as," is told in terms drawn from ordinary experiences and usually makes one principal point. Some examples are Nathan's parable (II Sam. 12:1–5), and the parables of the Surviving Son (II Sam. 14:5b–7), the Escaped Prisoner (I Kings 20:39–40), the Disappointing Vineyard (Isa. 5:1b–6) and the Farmer's Skill (Isa. 28:24–29). All but the last-named are followed by explicit interpretations. The rhetorical question with which the Book of Jonah ends may suggest that the book was intended as a parable. Ruth, too, may be a parable, with its more subtle point underlined by the appended genealogy.

The allegory-*mashal* is a more artificial narrative having individual features which are independently figurative, so that it becomes a kind of riddle. The one of the Eagles and the Vine (Ezek. 17:3–10) is described as both *ḥidah* ("riddle") and *mashal*. The oracular Laments of the Lioness (ibid. 19:2–9) and the Transplanted Vine (ibid. 19:10–14) and the stories of the Harlot Sisters (ibid. 23:2–21) and the Cooking-Pot (ibid. 24:3b–5) are allegorical. A third type of *mashal* is the fable, where animals or inanimate objects are made to speak and act like men. Judges 9:8–15 and II Kings 14: 9–10 are examples; in each case the moral is made explicit.

A riddle (*ḥidah*) is a kind of parable whose point is deliberately obscured so that greater perception is needed to interpret it; Samson's riddle (Judg. 14:14) is an example. *Mashal* and *ḥidah* are used almost synonymously in Ezekiel 17:2; Habakkuk 2:6; Psalms 49:5 and 78:2; and Proverbs 1:6. Certain

proverbs are in effect parable-riddles, e.g., Proverbs 30:15a, 15b–16, 18–19, and 21–31.

Other biblical forms related to the parable type of *mashal* are: prophetic oracles where a metaphor is extended into a lively description, e.g., Isaiah 1:5–6; Hosea 2:2–15; 7:8–9, 11–12; Joel 4:13; and Jeremiah 25:15–29; prophetic oracles proclaimed through symbolic actions, e.g., I Kings 11:29; II Kings 13:15–19, and Isaiah 20:2–6; extended personifications as of Wisdom and Folly in Proverbs 1:20–33; 8:1–36; 9:1–6, 13–18; and revelatory dreams and visions having symbolism which the sequel interprets as allegorical, e.g., Genesis 37:6–11; 40:9–13, 16–19; Zechariah 1:8–11; 2:1–4; and Daniel 2:31–45.

[Robert B.Y. Scott]

IN THE TALMUD AND MIDRASH

The rabbis made extensive use of parables as a definitive method of teaching in the Talmud, and especially in the Midrash. Jesus, in his parables, was employing a well-established rabbinic form of conveying ethical and moral lessons. There are 31 parables in the New Testament, some of which are found in a slightly different version in rabbinical literature (cf. Shab. 153a with Matt. 25:1–12; and TJ, Ber. 2:8, 5c, the parable given by R. Zeira in his funeral oration on the death of R. Avin, the son of R. Ḥiyya, with Matt. 20:1–16), which contains thousands of examples, and a comparison between the parallel parables reveals the greater beauty and detail of the latter. The word *mashal* in rabbinical literature refers nearly always to the parable; only in such phrases as *ha-mashal Omer* or its Aramaic equivalent *matla amra* ("the *mashal* says"; cf. Ex. R. 21:7 and Lev. R. 19:6) and in the phrase *mashal hedyot* ("a folk *mashal*") does it bear the meaning which it does in the Bible of a proverb (see also *Proverbs, Talmudic). The standard formula, however, always introduces a full parable. That the use of parables was a distinct and recognized method of moral instruction is clear from the statements that "fox fables and fuller fables" (see below) were among the attainments of Rabban Johanan b. Zakkai (Suk. 28a; BB 134a), and that R. Meir consistently divided his discourses into three parts, *halakhah, aggadah*, and parables (Sanh. 38b). It is in this context that R. Johanan refers to the 300 animal parables of R. Meir (see *Animal Tales).

The rabbis not only used the parable extensively, they also emphasized its great value in opening a door to an understanding of the spirit of the Torah. Both of these aspects are reflected in a passage in the Midrash. Regarding the word *mashal* in Ecclesiastes 12:9 in the sense of parable, "and Koheleth… taught the people knowledge; yea he pondered and set out many *meshalim*," the Midrash ascribes the first use of parables to Solomon. On this the Midrash gives five parables, to illustrate the manner in which the parable aids the understanding of the Bible. R. Naḥman gives two, one of the "thread of Ariadne," which he applies to a palace of many doors, and the other of a man cutting a path through the jungle. R. Yose compares the parable to a handle with which an otherwise unwieldy basket can be carried; R. Shila gives the parable of a jug of boiling water carried by the same method, while R. Ḥanina of a bucket let down to a well of cold and sweet water. The passage concludes: "Let not the parable be lightly esteemed in thine eyes, since by its means one can master the whole of the words of the Torah." Realizing that the parable may not be the most profound or weighty means of instruction, the passage adds that just as one uses a candle, which is almost worthless, to find a precious stone which has been lost, "a parable should not be lightly esteemed in thine eyes, since by means of it a man arrives at the true meaning of the words of the Torah" (Songs R. 1:1, no. 8).

The parable is usually introduced by the phrase, *Mashal; le-mah ha-davar domeh le…* "A parable; to what can this matter be compared to…"), but so characteristic a picture is it of rabbinical teaching that the phrase is often omitted and the parable is introduced merely with the prefix *le* ("to").

The material is so vast that only some of the most salient features and the most striking parables can be given.

King Parables

One of the most frequent motifs is the king (i.e., God), of which there are many permutations.

THE KING AS RULER, WITH MANKIND AS HIS SUBJECTS. This, for instance, is the basis of the parable of R. Johanan b. Zakkai to illustrate the verse "at all times let thy garments be white, and let not thy head lack ointment" (Eccles. 9:8), which he interprets to mean that man should ever be prepared to meet his Maker. It is the parable of a king who announced a forthcoming banquet without stating the time. Those who were prescient dressed for the occasion and waited; those who were foolish went about their ordinary work, confident that they would be informed of the time. Suddenly the summons came. The wise entered properly dressed, while the fools had to come in their soiled garments. The king was pleased with the former, but was angry with the latter (Shab. 153a).

THE KING AS FATHER, WITH ISRAEL AS THE SOMETIMES WAYWARD BUT BELOVED SON. A king left his wife before her child was born and went overseas, remaining there many years. The queen bore a son who grew up. When the king returned she brought the son into his presence. The son looked at a duke, and then at a provincial governor and said successively of them, "This is my father." The king said, "Why do you gaze at them? From them you will have no benefit. You are my son, and I am your father." (PR 21:104). Many of these parables have the same theme as the New Testament parable of the prodigal son.

THE KING AS THE HUSBAND AND ISRAEL AS THE WIFE. To emphasize the honor due to God, the Midrash tells the parable of the king who had a number of children with a *matrona* ("a noble lady" – the term usually used in these parables for the king's consort). She was undutiful to him, and he announced his intention of divorcing her and remarrying. When she discovered the name of the woman whom he intended to marry, she called her children together and told them, hoping that

they would intercede with their father because they found her objectionable. When they answered that they did not mind, she said, "I appeal to you in the name of the honor of your father" (Deut. R. 3:11). One of these "family" parables calls for special mention. R. Simeon b. Yoḥai asked R. Eleazar b. Yose ha-Gelili whether his father, a noted aggadist, had ever explained to him the verse: "(and gaze upon Solomon) even upon the crown wherewith his mother hath crowned him" (Song 3:11). Eleazar answered in the affirmative with a parable of a king who had an especially beloved daughter. At first he called her "my daughter," but as his affection for her increased he called her "sister," and finally he used to refer to her as "mother." So Israel is referred to as a daughter (Ps. 45:11), then as a sister (Song 5:2), and then as a mother (reading *le'ummi*; "my nation," in Isa. 51:4 as *le'immi*, "to my mother"). On hearing this explanation, R. Simeon b. Yoḥai arose and kissed him on his head (Ex. R. 52:5). The reason for R. Simeon's enthusiasm is probably to be found in the fact that the rabbis found themselves in a grave theological quandary. If the king of the Song of Songs is the Almighty, how can his mother be referred to, and his parable answered it by explaining that "mother" was but an endearing term for "daughter."

THE KING AND HIS SUBJECTS, OF WHOM ISRAEL IS THE FAVORITE. Thus the Midrash explains the striking difference between the 70 bullocks offered during the first seven days of Sukkot (Num. 29:12–34), which are regarded as expiations for the seventy *nations, and the single bullock offered on the eighth day (v. 36), which represents Israel with the parable of a king who made a banquet for seven days to which all the people were invited. At the conclusion of the seven days he said to his close intimate, "We have now done our duty to all the people; let us both have an intimate meal with whatever comes to hand, a piece of meat, or fish, or even vegetables" (Num. R. 21:24).

So standard is the motif of the king in parables that it is frequently used without any connotation of royalty, and it could be substituted for the word "man" without affecting the parable. Thus the above-mentioned parable of searching for a precious stone with a candle is made to refer to a king. Similarly there is the parable of R. Judah ha-Nasi in which he explained to Antoninus the responsibility shared by body and soul for transgressions – to the effect that a king had a beautiful orchard bearing choice fruit. In order to prevent pilfering of the fruit by the watchmen, he appointed one who was lame, and thus could not climb the tree, and one who was blind, who could not see it. The lame watchman, however, arranged for the blind one to carry him to the fruit. When the theft was discovered each pleaded physical inability to steal the fruit, but the king, realizing how they had acted, placed the blind man on the shoulders of the lame and punished them as one man. "So will the Holy One, blessed be He, replace the soul in the body and punish both for their sins" (Sanh. 91a/b). It is obvious that in this passage the word "king" is a mere literary device.

Animal Parables

Parables taken from the animal world, especially fox fables, are very popular (see *Animal Tales). R. Akiva explained to Pappus b. Judah why he continued to teach Torah at the risk of his life by the parable of the fox who invited the fish to leave the water to avoid being caught in the fishermen's nets. The fish replied that, while in the water it was in its natural element where it might die but might also live, whereas out of its element it would surely die (Ber. 61b). R. Joshua b. Hananiah dissuaded the Jews from breaking out in revolt against the Romans by telling them the parable of the crane which extracted a thorn from the tongue of a lion, and when it asked for its reward, was told that it had been sufficiently rewarded by the lion not closing its jaws on it after it had extracted the thorn (Gen. R. 64:10). The doctrine that later and greater troubles cause the former and lesser ones to be forgotten is illustrated by the parable of the man who, saved from a wolf, told all his friends about his escape. Subsequently avoiding a similar fate from a lion, he made this escape the subject of his story, until he was delivered from the poisonous sting of a snake, and then told the story of that deliverance (Ber. 13a). Many of the fables have their origin or parallel in the fables of other ancient peoples.

It is not certain what are the "parables of *kovesim*" which are mentioned together with fox fables among the accomplishments of Johanan ben Zakkai. It is usually rendered "fables of launderers" ("fullers") and, in fact, the launderer is a well-known figure in Roman comedy. No such parables, however, exist in rabbinic literature.

Parables from Nature

Every phenomenon of nature or of plants is made the subject of parables. The rabbis point out that there is hardly a fruit which is not regarded as a parable of Israel (Ex. R. 36:1), and the most sustained and extensive parables in the Midrash are on the vine, the palm (cf. Num R. 3:1), the cedar, etc. One of the most beautiful in this class is the blessing which R. Isaac of Palestine invoked upon his host R. Naḥman in Babylon when he took leave of him. When Naḥman asked for his blessing, R. Isaac claimed that it was difficult to think of a subject for a blessing, since Naḥman had been blessed with all the blessings of this world, wealth, health, honor, and children, and he continued: "Let me tell you a parable. A man was journeying in the wilderness. He was hungry, thirsty, and weary, and he lighted on a tree which had sweet fruits, pleasant shade, and a stream of water flowing beneath it. He ate of the fruit, drank of the water, and rested under its shade. When about to resume his journey he said, "O Tree, with what shall I bless thee? With the blessing of sweet fruit? Thou already hast it. That thy shade be pleasant? It already is. That water shall flow by thee? It does. May it be God's will that all the shoots taken from thee be like thee," and he proceeded to explain, "May all thy children be like thee" (Ta'an, 5b–6a).

Many of the parables are taken from daily life, and are a rich source for social history. R. Levi gives a parable to explain

the verse, "Better the day of death than the day of one's birth" (Eccles. 7:1). It is the parable of two ships sailing in the Mediterranean. One was leaving the harbor and the other coming in. Everyone was happy at the ship which was leaving, while the ship which had completed its journey slipped in without incident. There was an intelligent man there, who said, "I see something topsy-turvy. There is no point in rejoicing at the ship which is leaving, since they know not what conditions she may meet, what seas she may encounter, and what wind she may have to face, whereas all should rejoice for this ship which has successfully completed its voyage" (Ex. R. 48:1). An essentially earthy parable is given to explain the fact that the 70 bullocks sacrificed on the seven days of Sukkot are made up of 13 the first day, decreasing in number by one each day. "It is to teach you the way of the world (*derekh erez*, usually meaning "etiquette," but here obviously to be translated literally). "A man is given hospitality by a friend. On the first day he gives him poultry, on the second meat, on the third fish, on the fourth vegetables. So daily he gives him less luxurious food, until in the end he feeds him on pulse" (Num. R. 21:25). An almost daring example of this type of parable is the one in which R. Huna, in the name of R. Johanan, interprets Exodus 32:11, "thy people that thou hast brought out of the Land of Egypt," as the retort of Moses to God that He was to blame for the idolatrous tendencies of the children of Israel. The parable says: "A wise man opened a cosmetic shop for his son in the street of the harlots. The site played its part, the trade played its part, and the young man – in his prime – played his part. He got into evil ways, and his father came and caught him with a harlot. His father began to shout at him, saying 'I'll kill you!' But a friend who was with him, said to him, 'You have ruined him and yet you shout at him! You disregarded all occupations and taught him only to be a cosmetician. You abandoned all other sites and opened a shop for him only in the street of the harlots.' So said Moses, 'Lord of the Universe, thou didst disregard the whole world and enslaved thy children in Egypt, where they worship lambs, and thus thy children learned from them and made a golden calf'" (Ex. R. 43:7).

[Louis Isaac Rabinowitz]

POST-TALMUDIC PERIOD

Medieval writers also had frequent recourse to *meshalim* (parables, *fables, or *allegories) in their works. Parables and allegories could be for them an instrument for interpreting the Bible or other holy books (like the *remez*, allegorical interpretation of biblical texts), a philosophical way of explaining metaphysical realities, or a rhetorical means on the literary level. Philosophical parables can be found in the *Ḥovot ha-Levavot* of *Baḥya ibn Paquda, in the *Kuzari* of *Judah Halevi (both of whom use the standard formula of the parable of the king, and both of a "king in India," *Ḥovot ha-Levavot* 3:9; *Kuzari* 1:109; cf. also Ḥovot 2:6), or in Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* (see his "Parable of the Royal Palace" in Guide III, 51). In spite of its name, Samuel ha-Nagid's *Ben Mishlei* is more a collection of ethical aphorisms or moral remarks, continuing the biblical book of Proverbs, than a book of parables. Literary parables and fables are particularly frequent in many prose writings, above all in **maqāma* or *maqāma*-like compositions from the classical and the post-classical period. Joseph *Ibn Zabara, Judah *Al-Ḥarizi, *Jacob ben Eleazar, *Kalonymus ben Kalonymus, Vidal Benvenist, *Mattathias, etc., are among the best-known medieval authors of rhymed narratives including parables. Fables are abundant in the *Mishlei Shu'alim* of *Berechiah ha-Nakdan, in the Hebrew versions of the *Calila e Dimna*, and in the *Meshal ha-Kadmoni* by Isaac *Ibn Sahula. While the function of these parables could be in many cases a purely literary one, sometimes they were used as a way of cautiously articulating certain feelings of the members of a minority that could not be freely expressed, or simply with a pedagogic purpose.

In ḥasidic literature the most striking parables are the tales in *Naḥman of Bratzlav's *Sefer Ma'asiyyot*. Parables, most of them popular, and all striking, were especially characteristic of the method of preaching of Jacob *Krantz, the *Maggid* of Dubnow.

[Louis Isaac Rabinowitz / Angel Saenz-Badillos (2nd ed.)]

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PARADISE, the English derivative of Παράδεισος, Greek for "garden" in the Eden narrative of Genesis 2:4b–3:24 (see *Garden of Eden). One of the best-known and most widely interpreted pericopes in the Bible, this narrative is at the same time one of the most problematic. While on the surface the narrative unfolds smoothly, its deeper meaning, its composition and literary affinities, and many of its allusions, assumptions, and implications raise questions that are presently insoluble.

CONTENTS OF THE NARRATIVE

The pericope divides naturally into two sections, one relating God's beneficent acts in creating man and placing him in a paradise; the other, man's disobedience and consequent banishment from paradise. The masoretic *parashah* division