

a

A half-starved fox, who saw in the hollow of an oak-tree some bread and meat left there by shepherds, crept in and ate it. With his stomach distended he could not get out again. Another fox, passing by and hearing his cries and lamentations, came up and asked what was the matter. On being told, he said: 'Well, stay there till you are as thin as you were when you went in; then you'll get out quite easily.'

¶ This tale shows how time solves difficult problems.

Fables of Aesop, trans. by
S. A. Handford, Penguin Books,
1954, p. 3.

c

"Well, good-bye, if you're sure you won't have any more."

"Is there any more?" asked Pooh quickly.

Rabbit took the covers off the dishes, and said, "No, there wasn't."

"I thought not," said Pooh, nodding to himself. "Well, good-bye. I must be going on."

So he started to climb out of the hole. He pulled with his front paws, and pushed with his back paws, and in a little while his nose was out in the open again . . . and then his ears . . . and then his front paws . . . and then his shoulders . . . and then —

"Oh, help!" said Pooh. "I'd better go back."

"Oh, bother!" said Pooh. "I shall have to go on."

"I can't do either!" said Pooh. "Oh, help *and* bother!"

Now, by this time Rabbit wanted to go for a walk too, and finding the front door full, he went out by the back door, and came round to Pooh, and looked at him.

"It all comes," said Rabbit sternly, "of eating too much. I thought at the time," said Rabbit, "only I didn't like to say anything," said Rabbit, "that one of us was eating too much," said Rabbit, "and I knew it wasn't *me*," he said. "Well, well I shall go and fetch Christopher Robin."



Example I E

29

b

It is like a fox who found a vineyard which was fenced in on all sides. There was one hole through which he wanted to enter, but he was unable to do so. What did he do? He fasted for three days until he became lean and frail, and so got through the hole. Then he ate [of the grapes] and became fat again, so that when he wished to go out he could not pass through at all. He again fasted another three days until he became lean and frail, returning to his former condition, and went out. When he was outside, he turned his face and gazing at the vineyard, said, 'O vineyard, O vineyard, how good are you and the fruits inside! All that is inside is beautiful and commendable, but what enjoyment has one from you? As one enters you so he comes out.'

Kohelet Rabbah V.14,1.
(Soncino Midrash, p. 154)

Christopher Robin nodded.

"Then there's only one thing to be done," he said. "We shall have to wait for you to get thin again."

"How long does getting thin take?" asked Pooh anxiously. "About a week, I should think."

And at the end of the week

Christopher Robin said, "Now!"

So he took hold of Pooh's front paws and Rabbit took hold of Christopher Robin, and all Rabbit's friends and relations took hold of Rabbit, and they all pulled together....

And for a long time Pooh only said "Owl" . . .

And "Oh!" . . .

And then, all of a sudden, he said "Pop!" just as if a cork were coming out of a bottle.

And Christopher Robin and

Rabbit and all Rabbit's friends and relations went head-over-heels backwards . . . and on the top of them came Winnie-the-Pooh — free!

A. A. Milne, The World of Pooh.
London: Methuen, 1926, 1970.
pp. 37-43.

Example I H

b

יִי־ שׁוֹעֵל מֵצֵא כְּרֶם וְהָיָה מְסִיג מְכַל־פְּנוּתוֹ. וְהָיָה שֶׁם נָקָב אֶחָד, וּבָקֵשׁ לִכְנֹס בּוֹ וְלֹא הָיָה יָכוֹל. מַה־עָשָׂה? עָם שְׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים עַד שֶׁקָּחַשׁ וְחָשׁ וְנִכְנַס בְּאֹתוֹ נָקָב, וְאָכַל וְשָׁמַן. בָּקֵשׁ לְצֵאת וְלֹא יָכַל לְצֵבֵר. חֹזֵר וְעָם שְׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים אַחֲרֵים עַד שֶׁקָּחַשׁ וְחָשׁ וְחֹזֵר לְמַה שֶׁהָיָה וְיִצָּא. כְּשִׁיצָא הִפְךָ פָּנָיו וְנִסְתַּכֵּל בּוֹ: אָמַר: כְּרֶם, כְּרֶם! מַה טוֹב אֵתָּה וְמַה טוֹבִים הַפְּרוֹת שֶׁבְּתוֹכָךְ, וְכָל־מַה שִׁישׁ בָּךְ נָאָה וּמִשְׁבָּח: כְּרֶם, מַה הִנָּאָה מִמֶּךָ? כְּשֶׁם שֶׁנִּכְנַסְתָּ לְתוֹכָךְ כִּךָ יוֹצֵאִי!... (קוֹרֵא ה.)

Kohelet Rabbah V.14,1. In Sefer HaAggadah, H. N. Bialik, Dvir, 1943, No. 14, p. 646.



כְּרִיסְטוֹף רוֹבִין הֵנִיד בְּרֹאשׁוֹ וְאָמַר:
— אִם כֵּן, אֵין לָנוּ בְּרִיָּה אַחֶרֶת אֲלֵא לִסְכוּת עַד שְׁשׁוֹב תְּרֹנָה.
כִּמָּה עֲלִינוּ לִסְכוּת עַד שְׁאֲרֵנָה? — שָׁאַל פּוֹ בְּחֶרֶף.
— שְׁבִיעַ יָמִים, בְּעֶרְף.
וְכַתֵּם
הִשְׁבִּיעַ אֶמֶר כְּרִיסְטוֹף רוֹבִין:
— כֹּא גֵד!
אֲזַי נִאֲחַז בְּכַפּוֹתָיו הַקְּדָמִיּוֹת שֶׁל פּוֹ. וְהִשְׁפִּין נִאֲחַז הַיָּטֵב בְּכְרִיסְטוֹף רוֹבִין וְכָל יְרִידוֹ וְקִרְבּוֹ שֶׁל הִשְׁפִּין נִאֲחַזוּ בְּשִׁפְן וּמִשְׁכּוֹ שָׁכַם אֶחָד...
וְשָׁעָה אַרְבָּעָה לֹא אֶמֶר פּוֹ אֲלֵא:
אִיוֹ וְאַחֵר: הוּא!

וּלְפִתְעַ פְּתָאם נִשְׁמַע קוֹל: פִּקִּי. בָּאֵלוּ שִׁקָּק נִחְלַץ מִתּוֹךְ בִּקְבוּק.
וּכְרִיסְטוֹף רוֹבִין וְהִשְׁפִּין וְכָל יְרִידוֹ וְקִרְבּוֹ שֶׁל הִשְׁפִּין נִתְּגַלְּגְלוּ אַחוֹרָנִית, עֲלִינוּ לְמִטָּה וּמִחֲתוּנִים לְמַעֲלָה... וּמִצְלִיחֵם הוֹפִיעַ וִיגִי פּוֹ, — בִּן־חֹרִין!

A. A. Milne, Pooh HaDov. trans. by V. Israelit and A. D. Shapira. Leon Epstein, 1971, pp. 31-38.

שׁוֹעֵל רָעֵב רָאָה בְּתוֹךְ גֹּזַע חֲלוּל שֶׁל אֵילָן לֶחֶם וּבָשָׂר, סֶהֱשִׁאֲרוּ שָׁם רוֹעִים. נִכְנַס וְאָכַל אֶת מַה שֶׁמָּצָא. מֵאֲחֵר שֶׁהִתְנַפְּחָה בְּטֶנוֹ וְלֹא יָכַל לְצֵאת, הִתְחִיל גֹּזַח וּמִלִּיל. שׁוֹעֵל אַחֵר שֶׁעָבַר בְּמָקוֹם שָׁמַע אֶת גִּיחֹתָיו, נָגַשׁ אֵלָיו וּשְׁאֲלוֹ לְסִבַּת הַדְּבָר, וְכֹאשֶׁר נִדְרַע לוֹ מַה שֶׁנִּתְרַחַשׁ, אָמַר לוֹ: 'הִשְׁאָר בְּמָקוֹם, עַד שֶׁתָּשׁוּב לְהִיּוֹת כְּמוֹ שֶׁהָיִיתָ בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁנִּכְנַסְתָּ לָשֶׁם. אֲזַי תוּכַל לְצֵאת בְּלִי קִשִּׁי'.

הַמֶּשֶׁל מְלַמֵּד, כִּי הַזְמָן מִתִּיר אֶת הָעוֹנִיָּים הַקָּשִׁים.

Mishlei Aesonos, trans. by Shlomo Span. Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1984, p. 99.

c

— שְׁלוֹם רַב! אִם בָּאֵמֶת בְּטוֹט אֵתָּה, שְׁאִינָךְ רוֹצֵה לְטַעוֹם מִשְׁהוּ.
— וְכִי יֵשׁ עוֹד מִשְׁהוּ? — שָׁאַל פּוֹ בְּחֶסֶד.
הִשְׁפִּין גִּלְהָ אֶת הַקְּצָרוֹת וְאָמַר:
— לֹא. לֹא נִשְׁאָר דְּבָר.
— יִדְעָתִי — אָמַר פּוֹ וְהֵנִיד בְּרֹאשׁוֹ. — אִם כֵּן, שְׁלוֹם! עֲלִי לְלִכְתָּ.
אֲזַי הִתְחִיל זֹחֵל וְיוֹצֵא מִתּוֹךְ הַמֵּאִירָה, נִאֲחַז בְּכַפּוֹת כְּגִלְיוֹ הַקְּדָמִיּוֹת וְרוֹחֵק בְּכַפּוֹת כְּגִלְיוֹ הָאֲחֵרִיּוֹת. עַד שֶׁנִּשְׁמַרְבֵּב קִצָּה חֲסָמוֹ הַחוּצָה... וְאַחֲרָיו אֲוִנִי... וְאַחֲרֵיהֶן כַּפּוֹת כְּגִלְיוֹ הַקְּדָמִיּוֹת... וְאַחֲרֵיהֶן כְּתִשְׁי... וּלְבִסוּף —
— הוּא, הִצִּילוּ! — קָרָא פּוֹ — מוֹטֵב שְׁאֲחֹזֵר.
— עֶסֶק בִּישׁ! — קָרָא פּוֹ. — עֲלִי לְצֵאת מִכָּאן.
וְהָיָה מָה.
גַּם זֹאת וְגַם זֹאת לֹא אוֹכַל — אָמַר פּוֹ — הוּא.
עָרָה: הִצִּילוּ!
אֵתָּה שָׁעָה רָצָה אִף הִשְׁפִּין לְצֵאת לְטִיּוֹל, וּבְרֹאשׁוֹ שֶׁהִפְתָּח הַקְּדָמִי חֲתוּם, יָצָא בְּעַד הַפְּתַח הָאֲחֵרִי וְכֹא סְחוֹר־סְחוֹר אֵל פּוֹ וְצָמַד וְהִסְתַּכֵּל בּוֹ.
— אֵין זֶה כֹּא — אָמַר הִשְׁפִּין בְּקִנִּים וְעוֹפּוֹת — אֲלֵא מִשּׁוֹם אֲכִילָה גָּסָה. עוֹד קָדַם לָכֵן חֲשַׁבְתִּי — אֶמֶר הִשְׁפִּין — שְׁאֲחֹד מִשְׁנִינִי מִרְבָּה בְּאִכִּילָה, אֲלֵא שֶׁלֹּא רָצִיתִי לוֹמַר לָךְ — אֶמֶר הִשְׁפִּין יִדְעָתִי שֶׁלֹּא אֲנִי הוּא הַמִּרְבָּה בְּאִכִּילָה — אָמַר. — אִם כֵּן אֵלֶּךְ וְאַקְרָא לְכְּרִיסְטוֹף רוֹבִין.

MATTHEW 20

a→

Example II E

"The kingdom of Heaven is like this. There was once a landowner who went out early one morning to hire labourers for his vineyard; and after agreeing to pay them the usual day's wage^a he sent them off to work. Going out three hours later he saw some more men standing idle in the marketplace. "Go and join the others in the vineyard," he said, "and I will pay you a fair wage"; so off they went. At midday he went out again, and at three in the afternoon, and made the same arrangement as before. An hour before sunset he went out and found another group standing there; so he said to them, "Why are you standing about like this all day with nothing to do?" "Because no one has hired us", they replied; so he told them, "Go and join the others in the vineyard." When evening fell, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, "Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with those who came last and ending with the first." Those who had started work an hour before sunset came forward, and were paid the full day's wage.^b When it was the turn of the men who had come first, they expected something extra, but were paid the same amount as the others. As they took it, they grumbled at their employer: "These late-comers have done only one hour's work, yet you have put them on a level with us, who have sweated the whole day long in the blazing sun!" The owner turned to one of them and said, "My friend, I am not being unfair to you. You agreed on the usual wage for the day,^c did you not? Take your pay and go home. I choose to pay the last man the same as you. Surely I am free to do what I like with my own money. Why be jealous because I am kind?" Thus will the last be first, and the first last.'

b

It is as if a king hired for himself labourers and brought them straight into his garden without disclosing what he intended to pay for the various kinds of work in the garden, lest they should neglect the work for which the pay was little for work for which the pay was high. In the evening he called each one in turn and asked him: 'At which tree have you worked?' He replied: 'At this one.' Thereupon the king said to him: 'This is a pepper tree and the pay for working at it is one golden piece.' He then called another and asked him: 'At which tree have you worked?' And he replied: 'Under this tree.' The king thereupon said: 'This is a white-blossom tree and the pay for working at it is a half a golden piece.' He then called yet another, and asked him: 'At which tree have you worked?' And he replied: 'At this one.' Whereupon the king exclaimed: 'This is an olive tree and the pay for working at it is two hundred zuz.' Said the labourers to the king: 'You should have informed us from the outset which tree had the greater pay attached to it, so that we might have worked at it.' Thereupon the king replied: 'Had I done this, how would the whole of my garden have been worked?' So God did not reveal the reward of the precepts, except of two, the weightiest and the least weighty.

Deuteronomy Rabbah VI.2
(Soncino Midrash, pp. 121-122)

e

And so, too, Solomon said to the Holy One, blessed be He: Master of the universe! When a king hires diligent workmen, and they do their work well, and he gives them their pay, should the king be praised? When is he to be praised? When he hires slothful workers, but gives them their pay in full. And Solomon went on to say: Our fathers worked diligently and received good pay. What kindness of Thine was in this, that they worked and were paid? Slothful workers, we! Yet give us good pay, and that would be Thy great kindness!

Midrash Tehillim to Ps. 26:3
(trans. Braude, p. 359)

c

To whom was R. Bun b. R. Hiyya like? To a king who possessed a vineyard and hired many labourers to work it. Among them was one labourer far more skilful in his work than the rest; so what did the king do? He took him by the hand and walked with him up and down. Towards evening the labourers came to receive their wages and this labourer came with them, and he gave him the full amount. The others began to grumble, saying, 'We toiled all the day, whereas this man toiled for two hours, and yet the king has given him his full wage!' The king said to them, 'What cause have you for grumbling? This man in two hours did more good work than you in a whole day.' Similarly did R. Bun b. R. Hiyya learn in twenty-eight years¹ more Torah than an eminent scholar could learn in a hundred years.

Kohelet Rabbah V.11,5
(Soncino Midrash p. 153)

d

"Be not like slaves who minister unto (their) lord on condition of receiving a reward; but be like unto slaves who minister unto (their) lord without (expecting) to receive a reward; and let the fear of Heaven be upon you."

Mishnah Avot I.3

f

Midrash to Ps. 4.7: 'And that was David like? To a labourer who all his life was working with the king, who had not yet given him his wages. And the labourer was very grieved, saying, "Perhaps I shall receive nothing." The king then hired another labourer. He had only worked with him one day and the king gave him food and drink and his wages in full. Then the life-time labourer said, "If this is done for him who has worked for one day only, how much more will be done for me, who have worked all the days of my life." Even so said David. . . .'

Socher Tob 37:3
(in Goulder, p. 408)

II E (cont.)

9

"And I shall be free for you." (וּפְנִיתִי אֵלֵיכֶם) To make a comparison, what is this like? It is like a king who hired many laborers, and there was there one laborer who worked for him a long while. The laborers came in to get their pay, and that laborer came in with them. The king said to him, "My son, I shall be free for you (in a moment). (בְּנִי אֶפְנֶה לָּךְ) These many (laborers) are those who did little work for me, and I am giving them little pay, but as for you, I have a large account to settle with you." So Israel were asking their pay of God and the gentiles also were asking their pay of God. And God says to Israel, "My children, I shall be free for you (in a moment). These gentiles did little work for me, and I am giving them little pay, but as for you, I have a large account to settle with you." Therefore it is said, "And I shall be free for you."

h

Sifra 26.9
(Morton Smith, Tannaitic Parallels,
Philadelphia, 1951. p. 51)

A parable: to what can this be compared? To a king who hired many laborers, and there was among them one lazy person and one slow person. And when it came time to pay them their wages, he paid them all equally. But the Holy One, blessed be He, is not like this, but rather to each person is given recompense according to his own deeds.

Beit Midrash V.91
(Quoted in Flusser, 180)

i

Rabbi Shimon ben Eleizer taught this parable: To what can it be compared? To a king who hired two laborers. One worked the entire day and received a dinar, and the other worked one hour and received a dinar. Which one of them is more favored? Is it not the one who worked one hour and received a dinar? But Moshe Rabbeinu served Israel one hundred and twenty years, and Samuel served fifty two years, yet both are equal in the sight of God, as it is said (Jer. 15:1): "Though Moses and Samuel stood before Me..."

Beit Midrash V.91
(Quoted in Flusser, 176)

j

'Then it was that God showed him all the treasures in which the rewards of the righteous are stored away. Moses asked: 'To whom does all this treasure belong?' and He replied: 'To those who fulfil My commandments.' 'And to whom does this treasure belong?' 'To those who bring up orphans.' So it was with every treasure. Later he saw a huge treasure and inquired: 'Whose is this great treasure?' The Divine rejoinder was: 'Unto him that hath [such things to his credit] I give of his reward, but unto him who hath not, I have to supply freely and I help him from this great pile,' as it says, AND I WILL BE GRACIOUS TO WHOM I WILL BE GRACIOUS, namely, unto him to whom I wish to be gracious.¹ Similarly, AND I WILL SHOW MERCY ON WHOM I WILL SHOW MERCY (*ib.*).

Exodus Rabbah XLV.6
(Soncino, p. 524)

a

Example III E

28 'But what do you think about this? A man had two sons. He went to the
29 first, and said, "My boy, go and work today in the vineyard." "I will, sir",
30 the boy replied; but he never went. The father came to the second and said
the same. "I will not", he replied, but afterwards he changed his mind
31 and went. Which of these two did as his father wished?" 'The second', they
said. Then Jesus answered, 'I tell you this: tax-gatherers and prostitutes
32 are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.'

For when John came to show you the right way to live, you did not believe him, but the tax-gatherers and prostitutes did; and even when you had seen that, you did not change your minds and believe him.

b

R. Samuel Pargrita² said in the name of R. Meir: This can be compared to the son of a king who took to evil ways. The king sent a tutor to him who appealed to him saying, 'Repent, my son.' The son, however, sent him back to his father [with the message], 'How can I have the effrontery to return? I am ashamed to come before you.' Thereupon his father sent back word, 'My son, is a son ever ashamed to return to his father? And is it not to your father that you will be returning?' Similarly, the Holy One, blessed be He, sent Jeremiah to Israel when they sinned, and said to him: 'Go, say to My children, "Return."'

Deuteronomy Rabbah II.24
(Soncino Midrash, p. 53)

d

The following parable is reported in the name of R. Gamaliel. What do the thief and the robber resemble? Two people who dwelt in one town and made banquets. One invited the townspeople and did not invite the royal family, the other invited neither the townspeople nor the royal family.¹² Which deserves the heavier punishment? Surely the one who invited the townspeople but did not invite the royal family.

Baba Kamma 79^b
(Soncino, p. 452)

f

For example, there was a king who had two sons, one grown up, and the other a little one. The grown-up one was scrubbed clean, and the little one was covered with dirt, but the king loved the little one more than he loved the grown-up one.

Midrash Tehillim to Ps. 9:1
(Braude trans, p. 131)

Two slaveboys were sent to seek out and fetch Plato from the Academy. One of them searched in every nook and cranny and passed by all sorts of places hoping to find him, and at last went home exhausted and without success. The other one sat down among the nearby shopkeepers and then strolled over to join some other slaveboys in order to play with them, and found Plato as he happened to pass by, though he made no effort to look for him. Praiseworthy is the slaveboy who did what he had been commanded to do, to the very best of his ability, and blameworthy is the indolent one who succeeded.

Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum*, I.
#579, p. 131 (In Flusser, p. 179)

e In the eyes of Him at whose word the world came into being, the present time is to be compared with a householder who hired workmen and kept his eye on them to see which of them did their work faithfully, as is said, *The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, [to show Himself strong in the behalf of him whose heart is faithful toward Him]* (2 Chron. 16:9).³⁰ The one who did his work faithfully and the one who did not do his work faithfully—what each one has coming to him will be ready at "the feast."

Seder Eliyahu Rabbah I, p. 5
(Braude-Kapstein, p. 46-47)

g

When God was about to give the Torah, no other nation but Israel would accept it. It can be compared to a man who had a field which he wished to entrust to métayers. Calling the first of these, he inquired: 'Will you take over this field?' He replied: 'I have no strength; the work is too hard for me.' In the same way the second, third, and fourth declined to undertake the work.⁴ He called the fifth and asked him: 'Will you take over this field?' He replied 'Yes'. 'On the condition that you will till it?' The reply was again 'Yes'. But as soon as he took possession of it, he let it lie fallow. With whom is the king angry? With those who declared: 'We cannot undertake it,' or with him who did undertake it, but no sooner undertook it than he left it lying fallow? Surely, with him who undertook it. Similarly, when God revealed Himself on Sinai, there was not a nation at whose doors He did not knock, but they would not undertake to keep it; as soon as He came to Israel, they exclaimed: *All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and obey* (Ex. xxiv, 7).

Exodus Rabbah XXVII.9
(Soncino Midrash p. 329)

Example IV E

33 'Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vine-
yard; he put a wall round it, hewed out a winepress, and built a watch-
tower; then he let it out to vine-growers and went abroad. When the
vintage season approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect
the produce due to him. But they took his servants and thrashed one,
killed another, and stoned a third. Again, he sent other servants, this time
a larger number; and they did the same to them. At last he sent to them his
son. "They will respect my son", he said. But when they saw the son the
tenants said to one another, "This is the heir; come on, let us kill him, and
get his inheritance." And they took him, flung him out of the vineyard,
and killed him. When the owner of the vineyard comes, how do you think
he will deal with those tenants?" "He will bring those bad men to a bad end",
they answered, 'and hand the vineyard over to other tenants, who will let
him have his share of the crop when the season comes.'

42 Then Jesus said
to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures: "The stone which the
builders rejected has become the main corner-stone. This is the Lord's
doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes"? Therefore, I tell you, the kingdom
of God will be taken away from you, and given to a nation that yields the
proper fruit.'^a

b

'But the Lord's share was his own people; (Jacob is the lot of his inheritance)' (Deut. xxxii. 9). This is like a king who owned a field and consigned it to tenant-farmers.² The tenant-farmers began to steal (from) it. He took it away from them and gave it to their sons. These then began to be worse than the first. *He took it from their sons and gave it to the sons of those sons. They, in their turn, were worse than the previous.* A son was born to him. He said to them, Go out from that which is mine: you can no longer remain in it. Give me my share, so that I may acknowledge (and look after) it!

"Thus when Abraham our father came into the world there arose from him unworthy (offspring), Ishmael and all the sons of Qetura. Isaac came into the world. There arose from him unworthy (offspring), Esau and all the princes of Edom. They began to be worse than the first. And when Jacob came there did not arise unworthy (offspring) from him: but all the sons born to him were fit, like himself, as it is said, "Jacob was a simple man and dwelt among tents" (Gen. xxv. 27). Whence did the Omnipresent recognise his share? From Jacob, as it is said, "The Lord's share was his own people . . ." (Deut. xxxii. 9), "For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, (Israel for his peculiar treasure)" (Ps. cxxxv. 4) . . .'

Sifre Deuteronomy 32.9
(Heb. Finkelstein, p. 353)

d

It is usual for an earthly king to bestow gifts on his subjects and furnish supplies for them, as long as they are loyal to him, being then obliged to support them; but as soon as they rebel against him, God forbid, he has no obligation whatsoever towards them, and he immediately cuts off their supplies as a penalty for denying his royal authority. With God, however, it is not so; for while they were busy provoking Him to anger on earth, He was occupied in heaven with bestowing upon them a Torah that is instinct with life—

Exodus Rabbah XLI.4
(Soncino Midrash p. 473)

c

R. Simon in the name of R. Hanina said: It can be compared to a king who had before him a well-laid table with all kinds of dishes thereon. When his first servant entered, he gave him a slice [of meat]; to the second he gave an egg, to the third some vegetable, and so a portion to each one separately. When his son came in, he gave him all that was before him, saying to him, 'To the others I gave only single portions, but to you I give all.' So also God gave to the heathen only some odd commandments, but when Israel arose, He said to them, 'Behold the whole Torah is yours.'

Exodus Rabbah XXX.9
(Soncino Midrash p. 356)

e

And it came to pass in the days of the judging of the judges (Ruth 1, 1).¹ Now what misfortune was there in that instance?—There was a famine in the land (ib.) This may be compared to the case of a province which owed tax arrears to the king who sent a collector of the [king's] treasury to collect [the debt]. What did the people of the province do?—They rose and mulcted him and hanged him. People said: 'Woe to us, should the king become aware of these things. That which the king's emissary sought to do to us, we did to him.' So, too, it was that when an Israelite had committed an unseemly act, they led him to the judge; but that which the judge should have done to the prisoner, the prisoner used to do to the judge. Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to them 'You treat your judges with contempt; I will therefore bring upon you something which you will not be able to endure.' And what was that?—Famine, as it is said 'There was a famine in the land.'

Leviticus Rabbah XI.7
(Soncino Midrash pp. 146-147)

FOOTNOTES

1. Charlesworth, pp. 113-115.
2. Berkeley, New Haven; California Divinity School of the Pacific; Episcopal Divinity School; General Theological Seminary; Nashotah House; University of the South; Virginia Theological Seminary.
3. Charlesworth, pp. 113-114.
4. Charlesworth, p. 114.
5. Goulder, p. 64.
6. Wild, p. 105-124.
7. Wild, pp. 115-117.
8. Wild, pp. 119-121.
9. Wild, p. 113.
10. See Culbertson, ATR 1982.
11. See Culbertson, CC 1985.
12. Charlesworth, p. 103.
13. Charlesworth, p. 100.
14. Linnemann, p. 35.
15. Baeck, pp. 99-100.
16. Mark 4:11-12a.
17. Jeremias, p. 20. See also Petuchowski, p. 76.
18. Matthew 7:29. On the traditional mistranslation of "moshel," see Lapidé.
19. Maimonides at 6b-7a, pp. 11-12.
20. See Kohelet Rabbah I.1,8 for another image, in which a parable is likened to a handle by which a full jug of boiling water can be grasped (Soncino Midrash, p. 10).
21. Maimonides at 8b, p. 14
22. Ibn Ezra, in his commentary in Miqraot Gedolot to Genesis 28:13 suggests that a parable is a "ladder" (using a wordplay between semel and soolam) by which one can ascend from human

- reality to Divine Truth, and descend again. The parallels to Plato's Parable of the Cave are interesting, but cannot be explored here in depth.
23. See rabbinic commentaries to Jeremiah 31:28-29 and Ezekiel 18:2-3.
 24. Scott, pp. 49-50. See also Goulder, p. 55.
 25. The reference is to only three of Rabbi Meir's, since there are many fox parables scattered throughout the Talmud and Midrash. Sanhedrin 38b (Soncino p. 246). See also Baba Batra 134a (Soncino p. 563) in which it is recorded that the study of the fox fables was an integral part of the education of Johanan ben Zakkai along with Scripture and Halakhah. See also Leviticus Rabbah XXVIII.2 (Soncino Midrash p. 360), and David Flusser, Jewish Sources, p. 160
 26. Mishnah Avot I.1. See also Isaiah 5:5, particularly in relation to a vineyard.
 27. Cave, p. 376.
 28. See Townsend and Vermes.
 29. Feliks, pp. 17-23.
 30. Evans, pp. 464-468.
 31. Goulder, p. 50.
 32. Drury, p. 374.
 33. Ezekiel 17:2.
 34. On the levels of redaction in Matthew, see the interesting article by Lowe and Flusser, NT Studies.
 35. Goulder, p. 35.
 36. See note 20.
 37. See note 22.
 38. Barclay, p. 198.
 39. Maimonides, loc. cit.

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