

**Tustep Conference**

**VU University**

**Presentation Lieve Teugels, Utrecht University:  
Parables and the Partings of the Ways**

**3-10-2014**

**Handout**

**The mashal of the King, his son and his friend**

**Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael Beshalach 4**

*And the Lord Said unto Moses: 'Wherefore Criest Thou unto Me? Speak unto the Children of Israel that They Go Forward.'*

(A)**R. Joshua says:** The Holy One, blessed be He, said unto Moses: "Moses, all that Israel has to do is to go forward."

(B)**R. Eliezer says:** The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moses: "Moses, My children are in distress, the sea forming a bar and the enemy pursuing, and you stand there reciting long prayers; wherefore criest thou unto Me?" For R. Eliezer used to say: There is a time to be brief in prayer and a time to be lengthy. "Heal her now, O God, I beseech Thee" (Num. 12.13). This is an instance of being brief. "And I fell down before the Lord as at the first time," etc. (Deut. 9.18). This is an instance of being lengthy.

(C) **R. Meir says:** "If for Adam the first man, who was but one individual, I made dry land,—as it is said: 'And God said: "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered,"' etc. (Gen. 1.9)—will I not for this assembly of holy men turn the sea into dry land? Wherefore criest thou unto Me," etc. **R. Ishmael says:** "For the sake of Jerusalem, I will divide the sea for them." For it is said: "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean" (Isa. 52.1). **And it also says:** "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the days of old, the generations of the ancient times. Art thou not it that hewed Rahab in pieces, that pierced the dragon? Art thou not it that dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; that made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over?" (ibid., 51.9–10). **Another Interpretation:** "I will fulfill the promise to divide the sea for them, which I have made to their fathers." For when it was said: "And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east" (Gen. 28.14), it hinted to him: "Break through the sea." **R. Judah the son of Bathyra says:** The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, I have already fulfilled the promise that I made to their fathers. For it is said: "And made *the sea* dry land" (Ex. 16.18); "But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea" (ibid., 14.29). **R. Simon the son of Yohai says:** For a long time already the sun and the moon have been their witnesses. For it says: "Thus saith the Lord, who giveth the sun for a light by day, who stirreth up the sea, that the waves thereof roar, The Lord of hosts is His name: If these ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me for ever" (Jer. 31.35–36). **R. Banaah says:** "Because of the merit of the deed which Abraham their father did, I will divide the sea for them." For it is said: "And he cleaved the wood for the burnt-offering" (Gen. 22.3). And here it is written: "And the waters were cleft." **Simon of Teman says:** "Because of the merit of observing the commandment of circumcision, I will divide the sea for them." For it is said: "Thus saith the Lord: 'If not for My covenant of day and night, I would not have appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth'" (Jer. 33.25). Go and see which covenant obtains by day and by night. You can find none but the commandment of circumcision.

(A')**R. Absalom, the elder, giving a parable, says:** To what is this like? To a man who got angry with his son and drove him out of his house. His friend then came to him, requesting that he allow the son to come back to the house. He said to his friend: You are only asking me on behalf of my own son. I am already reconciled to my son. So also did the Holy One say to Moses: Wherefore criest thou? Is it not on behalf of My own sons? I am already reconciled to My sons. Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.

(B')**Rabbi says:** "Yesterday you were saying 'For since I came to Pharaoh,' etc. (Ex. 5.23). And now you are standing there reciting long prayers. *Wherefore criest thou unto Me?*"

Bar Ilan website versions: **Mashal Mekhilta Beshalah 3, H-R p. 98 = Lauterbach, Beshalach 4, 36-43**


<b>Ms Oxf.</b>	<b>Ms. Munich</b>	<b>Ms. Vatican</b>	<b>T-S C4.8[2 (Geniza fragment)</b>	<b>Const. 1515 (First print)</b>	<b>parallel: Exodus Rabah 21:8 (Soncino)</b>
R. Abtulum/s the elder said:	R. Abshalom the elder said:	R. Abshalom the elder said:	R. Abtulus [the elder] said:	R. Abshalom the elder said:	R. Abtulis, the elder, said
They told a parable, to what is the matter similar?	A parable, to what is the matter similar?	A parable, to what is the matter similar?	They told a parable, to what is the matter similar?	A parable, to what is the matter similar?	It can be compared
To one who was angry at his son and he seized him.	To one who was angry at his son and he drove him away	To one who was angry at his son and he drove him away	To a king who was angry at his son and he drove him away	To one who was angry at his son and he drove him away from his house	to a king who had a son who had provoked him to anger with the result that he sentenced him to a severe punishment.
His administrator (epitropos) came in to ask from him	His friend came in to ask from him	His friend came in to ask from him	His administrator (epitropos) came in to ask from him	His friend came in to ask from him that he take him back in his house	The instructor [of the king's son] sought to appease the king,
He said to him: You do not ask anything of me not on behalf of my son	He said to him: You do not ask anything from him but my son	He said to him: You do not ask anything from me but my son	He said to him: You do not ask anything of me not for the sake of my son	He said to him: You do not ask anything from me but on behalf of my son	but met with the rejoinder: 'Is it not on behalf of my son that you are entreating me?'
I am already satisfied/reconciled (?) with my son	I already discussed with (?) my son	I already discussed with my son	I am already appeased to my son	I am already satisfied/reconciled (?) with my son	Well, I have already become reconciled with my son.'

So said the Holy One to Moses:	So said the Holy One Blessed be He to Moses:	So said the Holy One to Moses:	-	So said the Place to him:	
Why do you shout? Not because I am already reconciled with you	Why do you shout? Not on behalf of my sons? I am already reconciled with my sons.	Why do you shout? Not on behalf of my sons? I am already reconciled with my sons.	-	Why do you shout at me? I am already satisfied with them (?)	
Speak to the children (sons) of Israel that they go forward. Speak to the children (sons) of Israel that they go forward.	Speak to the children (sons) of Israel that they go forward.	Speak to the children (sons) of Israel that they go forward.	Speak to the children (sons) of Israel that they go forward.	-	
Yesterday you said: For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name etc.,	R[abbi] said: yes[terday] you(?) said: For since I came to Pharaoh etc.,	R[abbi] said: yesterday you said: For since I came to Pharaoh etc.	Yesterday he said: For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name etc. and you have not delivered your people at all	Rabbi said: yesterday you said: For since I came to Pharaoh etc.	Rabbi said: [God] said to Moses: 'Only the other day, you were complaining, For since I came to Pharaoh, He hath dealt ill with this people; neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all (Ex. V, 23)
and today you stand and multiply prayers. Why do you shout?	and today you stand and multiply prayers. Why do you shout at me?	and today you stand and multiply prayers. Why do you shout at me?	and today you stand and multiply prayers. Why do you shout at me? Speak to the children of Israel.	and today you stand and multiply prayers. Why do you shout at me?	and now you stand pouring out prayers, WHEREFORE CRIEST THOU UNTO ME?


Bar Ilan website versions: Mashal Mekhilta Beshalah 3, p. 98 H-R = Beshalach 4, 36-43 Lauterbach

Ms. Oxf	Ms. Munich	Ms. Vatican	T-S C4.8[2]	Exod. R 21:8	Constant. 1515
ר' אבטלו? מ/ס? הזקן או'	ר' אבשלום הזקן אומ	ר' אבשלום הזקן או'	ר' אבטולס [זקן] או'	רבי אבטוליס הזקן אמר	ר' אבשלום הזקן אומר
מושלו משל למה הדבר דומה לאחד שכעס על בנו וטרפו	משל למה הדבר דומה לאחד שכעס על בנו וטרדו	משל למה הדבר דומה לאחד שכעס על בנו וטרדו	מושלו משל למה הד' דו' למלך שכעס על בנו וטרדו	משל למלך שהיה לו בן והכעיסו וגזר עליו גזירה קשה	משל למה הדבר דומה לאדם שכעס על בנו וטרדו מביתו
נוכנס איפרופו לבקש הימנו	נכנס אוהבו לבקש הימנו	נכנס אוהבו לבקש הימנו	ונכנס אופיטרופו לבקש ממנו	והיה הפדגוג מבקש על ידו	נכנס אוהבו לבקשו המינו ולהחזירו לביתו
א' לו כלום את מבקש ממני לא מפני בני	אמ' לו כלום את מבקש הימנו אלא בניי	אמ' לו כלום את מבקש הימני אלא בני	אמ' לו כלום את מבקש [מ]ני לא מפני בני	אמר לו כלום אתה מבקש ממני אלא על בני	אמר לו כלום אתה מבקש ממני אלא מפני בני
כבר נתרציתי לבני	כבר הרציתי לבניי	כבר הרציתי לבני	כבר נירציתי ליבני	כבר התרציתי לבני	כבר נתרציתי לבני
כך אמ' הק' למשה	כך אמ' הקב"ה למשה	כך אמ' הק' למשה	מה תצעק לא מפני בניי כבר נתרציתי לבניי	כך אמר לו המקום	כך אמר לו המקום
מה תצעק לא מפני נתרציתי לכם	מה תצעק לא מפני בניי כבר נתרציתי לבניי	מה תצעק לא מפני בניי כבר נתרציתי לבניי	דבר אל בני יש' ויסעו	מה תצעק אלי כבר אני מרוצה עליהם	מה תצעק אלי כבר אני מרוצה עליהם
דבר אל בני ישר' ויסעו דבר אל בני ישר' ויסעו	דבר אל בני ישר' ויסעו	דבר אל בני יש' ויסעו	דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו		
אמש הייתה או' מאז באתי אל פרעה לדבר בשמך וג'		ר' או' אמש הייתה או' [ו]מאז באתי אל פרעה וגו'			

<p>ועכשיו את עומד ומרבה בתפילה מה תצ'</p>	<p><b>ר' אומ'</b> אמ(נם)[ש] היית' אומ' ומאז באתי אל פרעה וגו'  ועכשיו אתה עומד ומרבה בתפלה מה תצעק אלי</p>	<p>ועכשיו אתה עומד ומרבה בתפילה מה תצעק אלי</p>	<p>אמש היה או' ומאז באתי אל פרעה לד' בש' וגו' והצל לא הצלת את עמך ועכשיו את עומד ומרבה בתפלה מה תצ' אלי דב' אל בני ישראל</p>	<p><b>ר' אומר</b> א"ל אמש היית אומר ומאז באתי אל פרעה  ועכשיו אתה עומד ומרבה בתפלה, מה תצעק אלי,</p>	<p><b>רבי אומר</b> אמש היית אומר ומאז באתי אל פרעה וגו'  ועכשו אתה עומד ומרבה בתפלה. מה תצעק אלי</p>
---	--	---	--	--	--



Universiteit Utrecht



NWO  
Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research

## The publication of an annotated edition and translation of tannaïtic meshalim

Lieve Teugels  
Postdoc project "Parables and the partings of the ways"

29 september 2014

### 1. Overall project: Parables and the Partings of the ways

1. Corpus: Parables in Gospels and other Early Christian texts, and in early rabbinic (tannaïtic) literature
2. 3 PhDs (parables about family relations, slaves, and meals)
3. Postdoc project (LT): 'critical' edition of 'all' the tannaïtic parables
4. How do we define tannaïtic parables?
  - Tannaïtic sources?
  - Tradents = known tannaïm?
  - Text presented as tannaïtic (e.g. baraita)
5. Critical edition of texts culled from larger corpora?
  - Some of these corpora have good critical editions; some not
  - there are various textual witnesses for all parables: printed editions, larger manuscripts, geniza fragments

### 2. Practical issues to resolve

1. digital and/ or book presentation
2. delineation of the parable: how much of the literary context (co-text) will be included?(most have exegetical function in midrash).
3. what will we present: transcribed manuscripts? full critical text?
4. translation (which version will be translated)?
5. annotation/commentary?
6. Digital presentation: pop-up windows; vertical or horizontal synoptic; apparatus?
7. which program will we use to generate it?

### 3. Critical editions of rabbinic texts

#### 2.1. The specific problems of editing rabbinic literature (compared to Bible)

- many texts
- very long and fluid transmission history
- further oral transmission after writing down (cf. M. Jaffee; Elman and Gershoni)
- creative additions by scribes (cf. Beit-Arie)
- fragmentary texts
- Texts only known because they survived in Medieval *yalkut* (e.g. Midrash Hagadol)
- many lost mss.
- often several recensions
- sometimes impossible to pick one 'base manuscript'
- stemmatic is impossible; no 'Urtext'
- outdated 'critical' editions made in 19th-20th cent. still used as standard texts
- [Biblio](#)

### 2.2. Various kinds of scholarly editions – the discussion

- full critical editions
  - diplomatic
  - eclectic
- vs. 'transcriptional editions' (Milikowsky)
  - vertical or horizontal synopsis
  - diplomatic transcriptions
- [Milikowsky-Schäfer discussion](#)
- Milikowsky-Ulmer discussion

### 4. Case study : Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael Beshallah 4: 35 ff The father, the son, and the friend

#### 4.1 The function of the meshal in context (see full text on handout)

(A) Interpretation 1. R. Joshua: all they have to do is [to go forward](#)

(B) Interpretation 2 R. Eliezer. God says: Don't use so many words; [this is no time for long prayers](#) (this refers to v. 13-14), they only have to go forward now, fast; I will divide [the sea](#) for them

(C) Interpretations 3-8: excursion on the merit of the division of [the sea](#)

(A') Interpretation 9: [mashal + nimshal](#) (continuous line of thought of Interpretation 12): [All they have to do is to go forward](#)

Meshal:  
Man = God  
son = Israel  
friend = Moses

Nimshal. God says to Moses (v. 15): You do not have to shout at me (which he did not, yet it says so in Ex. 14:15). I am not angry anymore at the people (even though I was for a while because they complained). Therefore let them go forward (and I will open the sea for them).

(B) Interpretation 10: Rabbi says (in H-R: "another interpretation"; in some mss. such as the geniza fragment no introduction but apparent continuation of the meshal): [Why do you stand reciting long prayers](#). Link is laid to Ex. 5:22-23 where Moses *did* complain to (shout at) God:

4.2.1 Synopsis Mekhilta RI Beshalach 4:35 ff. translation

Ms. Oxf.	Ms. Munich	Ms. Vatican	T-S C4.8/2 (Geniza fragment)	Const. 1555 (First print)	parallel: Exodus Rabbah 21:8 (Soncino)
R. Abtulum/s the elder said:	R. Abshalom the elder said:	R. Abshalom the elder said:	R. Abtulus [the elder] said:	R. Abshalom the elder said:	R. Abtulus, the elder, said
They told a parable, to what is the matter similar?	A parable, to what is the matter similar?	A parable, to what is the matter similar?	They told a parable, to what is the matter similar?	A parable, to what is the matter similar?	It can be compared
To one who was angry at his son and he seized him.	To one who was angry at his son and he drove him away	To one who was angry at his son and he drove him away	To a king who was angry at his son and he drove him away	To one who was angry at his son and he drove him away from his house	to a king who had a son who had provoked him to anger with the result that he sentenced him to a severe punishment.
His administrator (epitropos) came in to ask from him	His friend came in to ask from him	His friend came in to ask from him	His administrator (epitropos) came in to ask from him	His friend came in to ask from him	The instructor [of the king's son] sought to appease the king.
He said to him: You do not ask anything of me not on behalf of my son	He said to him: You do not ask anything from him but my son	He said to him: You do not ask anything from me but my son	He said to him: You do not ask anything of me not for the sake of my son	He said to him: You do not ask anything from me but on behalf of my son	but met with the rejoinder: 'Is it not on behalf of my son that you are entreating me?'
I am already satisfied/reconciled (?) with my son	I already discussed with (?) my son	I already discussed with my son	I am already appeased to my son	I am already satisfied/reconciled (?) with my son	Well, I have already become reconciled with my son.'

Ms. Oxf.	Ms. Munich	Ms. Vatican	T-S C4.8/2 (Geniza fragment)	Const. 1515 (First print)	parallel: Exodus Rabbah 21:8 (Soncino)
So said the Holy One to Moses:	So said the Holy One Blessed be He to Moses:	So said the Holy One to Moses:	-	So said the Place to him:	
Why do you shout? Not because I am already reconciled with you	Why do you shout? Not on behalf of my sons? I am already reconciled with my sons.	Why do you shout? Not on behalf of my sons? I am already reconciled with my sons.	-	Why do you shout at me? I am already satisfied with them (?)	
Speak to the children (sons) of Israel that they go forward.	Speak to the children (sons) of Israel that they go forward.	Speak to the children (sons) of Israel that they go forward.	Speak to the children (sons) of Israel that they go forward.	-	
Speak to the children (sons) of Israel that they go forward.	Speak to the children (sons) of Israel that they go forward.	Speak to the children (sons) of Israel that they go forward.	Speak to the children (sons) of Israel that they go forward.	-	
Yesterday you said: For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name etc.,	R[abb] said: yes[terday] you[?] said: For since I came to Pharaoh etc.,	R[abb] said: yesterday you said: For since I came to Pharaoh etc.	Yesterday he said: For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name etc. and you have not delivered your people at all	Rabbi said: yesterday you said: For since I came to Pharaoh etc.	Rabbi said: [God] said to Moses: 'Only the other day, you were complaining, For since I came to Pharaoh, He hath dealt ill with this people; neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all [Ex. V, 23]
and today you stand and multiply prayers. Why do you shout?	and today you stand and multiply prayers. Why do you shout at me?	and today you stand and multiply prayers. Why do you shout at me?	and today you stand and multiply prayers. Why do you shout at me? Speak to the children of Israel.	and today you stand and multiply prayers. Why do you shout at me?	and now you stand pouring out prayers, WHEREFORE CRIEST THOU UNTO ME?

4.2 [synoptic comparison of the textual witnesses \(Hebrew\)](#)

The geniza fragment



5. Thomas Kollatz's "Parables lab"