

13 That same day Yeshua went out of the house and sat by the lake. ²Such large multitudes gathered around him that he got into a ship and sat, and all the people stood on the shore. ³Then he spoke to them many things in parables, saying: Behold, a farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴As he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸Still, other fell on good soil, and it brought forth fruit—some a hundred, some sixty and some thirty times. ⁹Whoever has ears, let them hear. ¹⁰The disciples came to him and asked, Why do you speak to the people in parables? ¹¹He answered and said to them, Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. ¹²For whoever has, to him will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.

—commentary—

13:1 Yeshua went out of the house – That is, the house of study in which Yeshua was arguing with the Pharisees (*implied in Matthew 12:46*). According to most manuscripts, his mother and brothers were calling him out, and he refused to leave while he was in the middle of his admonition. After he had finished his sermon he left the house, but the crowds gathered around him moved by his words and by the healing miracles which he performed there.

13:2 Such large multitudes – Namely, those who were wondering whether he was the Messiah, and those who were seeking to kill him. This rather hostile environment led him, from then on, to speak to the masses in parables rather than straightforwardly.

13:3 Then he spoke to them many things in parables – For the sake of four types of audience, as the first parable implies. Although the author offers later an interpretation, Yeshua's sayings have various interpretative layers. The mention of four types of ground is meaningful, because four were the people who entered the heavenly "orchard" or "Pardes" (*Hagiga 14b*), and four are the levels of Biblical interpretation, called PaRDeS: Pshat (simple), Remez (allusion), Drash (allegory) and Sod (secret). Four are also the levels of consciousness in one's soul: "nefesh", "ruakh", "neshama" and "Haya". The audience will understand according to their soul, but one type alone, the initiated, will meditate upon these words and receive the deepest secrets which are only for them to receive.

13:9 Whoever has ears, let them hear – This is a common Kabbalistic clause. It means that the saying conceals a deeper meaning than what common people can deduce from it. Nahmanides – a commentator on the Torah who was also a mystic – makes use of the phrase "eyes to see and ears to hear" when his words have more meaning than what he chooses to reveal (cf. *Ramban on Genesis 38:8*). This is derived from a mishnaic saying which in turn is based on a Torah verse. The mishna claims that at the age of forty, one can engage in the secret teachings of the Torah: "Forty years old for understanding, for it is written (*Deut. 29:3*), Hashem did not give you a heart to know, eyes to see and ears to hear until now" (*Pirquei Avot 5:21*). The statement is not to be taken literally, though, as some teachers mistakenly do, for it is a well-documented fact that some of the greatest kabbalists in the story of Judaism have died at ages younger than forty. Forty is a symbol for attaining Hokhmah (wisdom). Yeshua himself refers to this as "the secrets (razim רזים) of the kingdom of heaven" (v. 13:11).

13:12 whoever has, to him will be given more – The initiated, who has filled his vessel with Divine light through the study of the Torah and performance of mitzvot, becomes a receptacle for the light of Gan Eden, and on him are bestowed the secrets of the Creation, the secrets of the Torah and the secrets of the unity with the Creator. The sages thus say: "The Blessed Holy One does not bestow wisdom on anyone except on him who has wisdom, as it says (*Daniel 2:21*), He gives wisdom to the wise" (*Berakhot 55a*).

13:12 Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him – He who does not study Torah and does not perform mitzvot, i.e., does not take care of the seed, eventually forgets what he has learnt and becomes a prisoner of the yetzer hara. Because the bridegroom who has gained the heart of the king enters the canopy and is given the bride and the kingdom, but if a thief enters uninvited into the king's palace, even his freedom will be taken from him. There are other interpretations but this one matches the context.

¹³This is why I speak to them in parables: Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear, nor they understand. ¹⁴In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which says: By hearing you hear but do not understand, seeing you see, but do not perceive. ¹⁵This people's heart is becoming calloused; and their ears are becoming dull of hearing, and their eyes are becoming sealed. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them. ¹⁶But blissful are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. ¹⁷For Amen I tell you, many prophets and tzaddiqim longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

¹⁸Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²²The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces fruit and yields, some a hundred, some sixty and some thirty.

—commentary—

13:14 In them it is fulfilled the prophecy – This form of speech is a peshet. The prophecy – which is found in Isaiah (6:9-10) – refers to those who refused to listen to the warnings of the prophets. The next verse says, “Until cities be desolated”. It means they hear, but do not repent until retribution falls upon them.

13:14 By hearing you hear – The Greek manuscripts copy from a LXX version of the verse. However, the text is not dependent on the LXX at all. “By hearing you hear” is the translation of the Hebrew שמעו שמעו “Shimo Shamo”. In English it would be like saying, “Indeed you do hear, but you do not understand” (cf. *Targum Isaiah*).

13:14 seeing you see, but do not perceive – You see the miracles, still fail to see the hand of Hashem.

13:15 Otherwise – Or “lest”. They do not want to listen and they do not want to accept that the prophet comes from Hashem, because otherwise, they will have to repent and live a pious life.

13:16 But blissful are your eyes – He means his disciples, for they have discernment of Torah.

13:17 longed to see what you see – The prophecies of the prophets were like looking into a blurry mirror. Even they did not understand what they saw, and their understanding of the written Torah was still limited. This is exemplified in an Aggadah: It is stated that when Moses ascended on high, he was given a prophetic vision into the future and saw the school of Rabbi Aqiva. He sat at the study hall and “was sad because did not understand what they were discussing. When a disciple asked Aqiva from where he deduced the teaching, he responded: It is hallakha given to Moses at Sinai” (*Menakhot 29b*). This is to teach that even Moses was unaware of many of the mysteries in the Torah, for they were given to later generations, as it is written: “roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end” (*Daniel 12:4*).

13:18 what the parable of the sower means – Yeshua here interprets the parable from a moral standpoint, explaining how those who understand these teachings – according to their level – can either grow spiritually or waste that chance.

13:19 seed sown along the path – Yeshua enumerates four types of disciples, thus paralleling one of our sages' sayings: “There are four types of disciples” (*Avot 5:12*). Although they go different routes to define them, probably the two sayings derive from one same source. The seed along the path represents one who does not understand, and the possibility to change his life is wasted – evil snatches the seed away, meaning, his evil inclination. This parallels the disciple about which our sages say: “One who is slow to hear and quick to forget. His portion is evil” (*ibid.*).

13:20 seed falling on rocky ground – This is a man with no root, paralleling the student who “is quick to hear and quick to forget” (*Avot 5:12*).

13:22 seed falling among the thorns – This a man whose seed has become unfruitful with the time. This parallels “one who is slow to hear and slow to forget” (*Avot 5:12*).

13:23 seed falling on good soil – This parallels the disciple who is “quick to hear and slow to forget. He is wise” (*Avot 5:12*).

²⁴Yeshua told them another parable: The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the tares also appeared. ²⁷The owner's servants came to him and said, Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where then did the tares come from? ²⁸He said to them, An enemy did this. The servants asked him, Do you want us to go and pull them up? ²⁹But he said, No, because while you are pulling the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the reapers: First collect the tares and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.

commentary

13:24 The kingdom of heaven – The kingdom of heaven is not something from the future, nor does it “descend from the sky... or arises from the sea”. It is not something observable that we can say, “it is here or it is there” (cf. *Luke 17:21*). “It will not appear by simply waiting for it... The kingdom is spread upon the earth but mankind does not see it” (*Thomas #113*). “The kingdom is within, and all around you” (*Thomas #3*). It is a kingdom of inner transformation and these parables deal with it, as they refer to the sefirah of Malkhut.

13:25 sowed tares among the wheat – This is prohibited, as it is written: “Do not sow your field with two kinds of seed” (*Lev. 19:19*). “Because they will be nourished from each other” (*Ramban on Lev. 19:19*). This means the good seed will be altered by the bad one. These tares, which look like wheat when young, are called zizania זיזניא, from the Hebrew zunin זונין, as a metaphor of the heart “with which you stray, זנימ זנימ” (cf. *Numbers 15:39*). These represent in allegory to the Torah-observant community of Israel; they all appear the same outwardly, but some are saints and some are wicked, and it is not known to the people until their fruit is shown.

13:26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads – When in the end the person produced their fruit according to their hearts. Those who studied Torah and were evil, their Torah study will become a “potion of death” (*Shabbat 88b*).

13:28 An enemy did this – The yetzer hara, the evil inclination, Satan.

13:30 Let both grow together until the harvest – The person who studies Torah and performs both good deeds and evil deeds will be judged accordingly, as it is written: “Every deed God will bring to judgment; every hidden thing, whether good or evil” (*Ecc. 12:14*). His good deeds will be affected by his bad deeds and his bad deeds will be affected by his good deeds in the day of retribution. This was an interpretation on the level of Remez. Later the author will offer another interpretation.

13:30 then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn – In the Sod level, this parable speaks about a human soul. In the beginning, God gave Adam his Divine soul, which is his inclination to do good (*Gen. 2:7*). Then he was placed in Gan Eden to “work it” (*Gen. 2:15*), namely, to plant good seed. But “God caused a deep sleep to fall upon man” (*ibid. 2:21*), and then separation happened in the soul, and this messianic consciousness of the original Adam has been asleep since then in humankind. Therefore, while men slept, his enemy came. His enemy is the serpent, also called Satan; his evil inclination, which causes him to sin and leads him astray. The servants ask, “should we remove the tares?” i.e., should we remove the evil inclination in man while he is still alive? Many of us have asked ourselves this same question: Why was the serpent in the garden? Why don't you remove the evil inclination from me, Hashem? Is it really necessary? But the master responds that by doing so, also the good inclination will be negatively affected. The good inclination was created to produce fruit, and its full potential in this world can only be achieved by growing alongside with the evil inclination. This is how both of them serve God. In this allegory, the wheat and the tares are the same archetype as the two goats of Yom Kippur. The two goats look the same and grow together, so we cannot tell them apart. However, their ending is way different. Rabbi Benyamin David Rabinowitz wrote: “The two goats of Yom Kippur are symbols for the two inclinations in every human being. Similar to the two inclinations, both goats are used in the service of God. One {the evil inclination} was sent off to Azazel to die, and the other one {the good inclination} became a sacrifice to Hashem” (*Ephod Bad on Pesakh Aggadah, Magid, First Fruits Declaration 6:2*). The evil inclination sent to die parallels Yeshua's words: “collect the tares and tie them in bundles to be burned”. The good inclination becoming a sacrifice to Hashem parallels the words: “gather the wheat and bring it into my barn”. In the end, we must serve Hashem with our two inclinations; that is: by subjugating them both to God. This is a secret in the verse “Love Hashem your God with all your heart” (*Deut. 6:5*). Meaning: with the two inclinations in your heart (cf. *Berakhot 54a*).

³¹He told them another parable: The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. ³²It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it grows, it is the largest of all herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of heaven come and nest in its branches.

³³He told them still another parable: The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and buried in three measures of flour until it was all leavened.

commentary

13:31 The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed – This parable is a somewhat alternative version of a teaching registered in the gospel of Thomas (*Thomas #20*), which, almost certainly, is the original, as it also parallels Mark's rendering (4:30): "The disciples said to Yeshua, Tell us what the kingdom of heaven is like. He said to them: It is like a grain of mustard seed, smaller than all other seeds; but if it falls on plowed ground, it puts forth a great branch and becomes shelter for the birds of heaven". This proves that Yeshua's parables were remembered and retold non-sequentially and unexplained. Probably each community derived different insights from these sayings, some of which Yeshua himself may have revealed to his close disciples.

13:32 but when it grows – The type of mustard plant that Yeshua has in mind is a specific one that grows enormously. Despite the mustard being so small, its root could crack open rocks. This one is mentioned by the sages, for they tell about a man who built a rooftop with the wood that the branch of mustard plant produced (cf. *Ketuvot 111b*).

13:32 it becomes a tree – The Sod talks about Malkhut. Our reality, our physical world, Malkhut (the kingdom), is like a mustard seed. The seed that gave life to the tree of life in Gan Eden. Here in this world Gan Eden seems insignificant, nonexistent even, and the Creator's presence is concealed and imperceptible. Yet, if we plow this world's soil with emunah: that is: with fidelity, with good deeds, with faith, and make it ready for the seed to grow, Malkhut will become like Binah, in other words, this world will become like the Garden of Eden, revealing its aspect of being a sanctuary for the Shekhina. This is the reason we were given the Torah, as it is written: "She is a tree of life to those who grasp her" (*Prov. 3:18*). Then the soul of Messiah, which is like a bird "hovering over the face of the waters" (*Gen. 1:2*) will descend and find rest in this world. The tiny mustard seed, then, becomes like the trees in Gan Eden, a shelter for angels, for the Divine Presence, for the messianic consciousness, for the ruakh haQodesh, for the tzaddiqim.

13:33 The kingdom of heaven is like yeast – Contrary to the mustard seed allegory, this one carries negative connotations. The yeast is usually a symbol for egoism in Jewish thought, and is to be avoided during Passover, that is: during our redemption. Our sages prayed: "Master of the universe, you know that our will is to perform your will, but what is preventing us? The yeast in the dough" (*Berakhot 17a*), meaning, the evil inclination in our hearts. The woman in the parable represents the Shekhina in exile, the sefirah of Malkhut, which is collectively the community of Israel and individually the soul within man, exposed to this materialistic world.

13:33 buried in three measures – This is the same archetype as Noah's descendants. The world was renewed with Noah, but together with him in the ark there were his three sons, and eventually they grew into seventy pagan nations. It is similar with the yeast, when mixed with the mass of the dough it stays unnoticed at first, but then, it causes fermentation and the bread swells up. This is what the evil inclination does: It comes with little temptations and small words, unnoticed, at times we cannot even tell between the good inclination and the bad inclination, but then, almost inadvertently, it takes control over our lives and spoils our spirituality. Therefore, be wise, you who love the Creator, and pray to overcome your evil tendencies so that your soul does not get spoiled. For this is the purpose of our descent.

³⁴All these things Yeshua spoke to the crowd in parables; and without a parable he would not say anything to them. ³⁵So that it would be fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet, who said: I will open my mouth in parables; I will bring out secrets hidden since the creation of the world. ³⁶Then Yeshua left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field. ³⁷He answered and said to them, The one who sowed the good seed is the son of man.

commentary

13:34 without a parable he would not say anything to them – This refers to the crowd, after those Pharisees sought to kill him.

13:35 So that it would be fulfilled – The original verse – from Psalms (78:2) – says: “I will open my mouth with a parable [be’mashal במשל]; I will bring out riddles [Khidot חידות] from ancient times [qedem קדם]”. The Targum Tehilim opens this Psalm with the words: “a teaching of the holy spirit”. In the ancient targumim the “parable” mentioned here is undoubtedly the Torah itself, since it is a text “written in the language of men” and needs to be decoded. But here the author is not dealing with the intended meaning of the Psalm, but using the verse as a peshet for Yeshua. Additionally, he is not quoting the verse verbatim, but paraphrasing it, perhaps because he was citing it by memory, as it was usual back in the day. Notice, however, that the subtle alterations in the verse demonstrate dominion of pharisaic hermeneutics: the word “khidot”, riddles, is interpreted in some targumim as “dark sayings”, and here the author interprets it as “hidden secrets”. Also, the expression “mini-qedem”, from ancient times, is paraphrased as “since the creation of the world”. This has its parallel in the Talmud, for the word “qedem” is the basis to assume that certain things were made before the creation of the world (cf. *Nedarim 39b*).

13:36 Then Yeshua left the crowd – This is the author’s way of saying, in a narrative manner, that Yeshua spoke to the crowds in one manner, but to his closest disciples (symbolized by leaving the crowd and entering the house) he revealed them initiatic secrets.

13:36 Explain to us – This interpretation of the parable is a riddle in itself (As verse 43 implies), therefore, Yeshua makes use of both mashal, parable and khidot, riddles. This refers to the four different levels of interpretation or PaRDeS. The parable itself is like the Peshat level, plain understanding. Those who understand things in this level are failing to understand God’s word at all. The parable being interpreted through allusions is the level of Remez. The parable being interpreted through riddles or allegories is the level of Drash. The deepest stuff is only revealed by deciphering the riddles, and this is the level of Sod, or secret.

13:37 The one who sowed the good seed is the son of man – At this point, it is imperative to understand the different ways in which Yeshua uses the term “son of man”. It has been explained in previous chapters that in the Tanakh it simply means “human being” or “mortal”, as opposed to divine beings, the angels. Yeshua uses the term in this sense when talking about Shabbat and other issues. Being this the case, at times Yeshua may use it to talk about himself in a humbly manner. This is found in the Talmud: Rabbi Kahana, speaking about himself in third person to prevent embarrassment, said, “If the son of man is despised by his mother... etc.” (*Yerushalmi Berakhot 5c*). Nevertheless, it is notorious that the mystical and prophetic schools of the first century were highly influenced by the books of Ezekiel and Daniel. The book of Enoch, therefore, builds upon this “something like a son of man” imagery, as we explained in previous chapters. The son of man in Yeshua’s parables conveys this meaning. As explained, the angel who talks to Daniel interprets “this “son of man” as a collective messianic consciousness, and not as one man alone (cf. *Daniel 7:18, 22*). Rashi calls this collective consciousness “the king Messiah”, because “tzaddiq Yesod Olam”, the righteous is the foundation of the world, and the king is the head of his people, the one who represents the entire nation of saints. The son of man is presented in the level of the Ancient of Days, Atiq Yomim (*Dan. 7:13*), which is the head of the head of the Adamic mystical body; we are its members and form its body parts. The Enochian tradition, therefore, addresses Atiq Yomim as “the Head of days”, and Kabbalah calls it “Keter of Keter” the crown of the crown (cf. *Baal haSulam on Zohar, parashat haAzinu 32*). This level is above individual persons, and only represents paradigms in the level of global consciousness, above space and time, as it is written “the son of man was called way before the sun and constellations came into being” (*Hanokh 48:3*); as the Psalm says, “Before the sun, Yinon is his name” (*Psalms 72:17*). This is how we know the “son of man” being mentioned here is a paradigm which represents the awakened messianic spark within every human being; the saints. They represent the awakened Adam, a new humankind, a new Adam. The Merkava tradition teaches: “There was a being whose countenance had the appearance of a son of man... I asked the angel of peace... about the son of man - who he was and whence he was, why he went with the Head of days. He answered and said to me, This is the son of man [or humankind] who has righteousness, [those] with whom dwells righteousness, revealing secrets of that which is hidden” (*Hanokh 46:2*). In the Merkava tradition, through his righteousness and mystical ascensions, Enoch reaches this level of consciousness, parallels these qualities, and as his soul transcends physical

³⁸The field is the world, and the good seed is the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, ³⁹and the enemy who sows them is Satan. The harvest is the end of the era, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰As, therefore, the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the era. ⁴¹The son of man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom all the stumbling blocks and all the doers of iniquity, ⁴²and they will throw them into a furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

—commentary—

reality Hashem tells him: “You are the son of man who was born for righteousness, and righteousness dwells on you, and the righteousness of the Head of Days will not forsake you” (*Hanokh 71:13-14*).

13:38 The field is the world – Malkhut, our physical reality.

13:38 the children of the kingdom – Those who are working on awakening the messianic consciousness.

13:39 Satan – The evil inclination.

13:39 the end of the era – The end of the era which is the great day of judgment, when the wicked will be separated from the righteous and everybody will be judged according to their deeds. This is a macrocosmic aspect of the judgment we receive on Yom Kippur.

13:40 As, therefore, the weeds are pulled up and burned in fire – Here Yeshua is using Enochian vocabulary. “As straw in the fire and as lead in the water, thus they will burn before the face of the holy and the will sink before the face of the righteous, and no trace of them will be found... for they have denied the Lord of spirits and his anointed one” (*Hanokh 48:9-10*). It is written: “Behold, the day comes, it burns as a furnace; and all the proud, and all that work wickedness, shall be stubble; and the day that comes shall set them ablaze, says Hashem Tzevaot, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch” (*Malachi 3:29*). The sages explain: “the Blessed Holy One will bring the sun out of its sheath, so that it is fierce: the wicked will be punished by it and the righteous will healed by it” (*Avoda Zara 3b*). The sun refers to the visible glory of God, Rabbi Hanina said that in the day of judgment “the Blessed Holy One is going to show his glory to all who have come into the world” (*Midrash Tanhuma*), for “Hashem God is sun and shield” (*Psalms 84:12*).

13:41 The son of man will send out his angels – The divine powers that work for the redemption of the world, as written: “Thousands upon thousands were serving him and myriads upon myriads stood before him” (*Daniel 7:10*). Those from the side of mercy are protectors (cf. *Psalms 91:11*), and those from the side of rigor bring judgment (cf. *2Sam. 24:16*). Additionally, these angels also represent the righteous people, as the righteous people are called angels, for it is written (*Gen. 28:12*): “Behold a ladder set upon the earth and its top reaching to heaven, and behold, angels of God ascending and descending”. This refers to the righteous people of Israel, because if they were divine entities they would first descend from heaven and then ascend back, but instead, they first ascend and then descend; they are tzaddiqim (cf. *Drashot Haran 5:14*). The righteous are the body of this mystical messianic figure called the son of man. This means in the final redemption and in the judgment of the world the righteous people will have an active role; it will not be the work of one man alone. The angels are called stars, as it is written: “the stars of the morning sang together”, followed by “all the sons of God shouted” (*Iyov 38:7*). Similarly, the sons of Israel are compared to stars (cf. *Genesis 22:17*), and, therefore, also to heavenly angels. The two are parallel worlds, for the messianic son of man comes “with the clouds of heaven” (*Daniel 7:13*). An aggadah says on this verse, “Fiery seraphim will be sent into the palace and stars will appear like fire in every place during the generation when the son of David comes” (*Beit haMidrash, Pirquei Mashiakh*). Spiritual forces will battle in the upper realms as the righteous battle in the lower realm. The Qumran scrolls say, God will “exalt the authority of Mikhael among the angels and the dominion of Israel among all flesh” (*War Rule*).

13:41 stumbling blocks and all the doers of iniquity – Taken partly from Zephaniah (*1:3*), “I will totally destroy... the stumbling blocks with the wicked”.

13:43 the righteous will shine like the sun – This is another paraphrasis from Daniel: “The wise will shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who bring the multitudes to righteousness like stars forever and ever” (*Daniel 12:3*). Upon the departure from Egypt [i.e., this current world], Israel merely received the moon [i.e., the Shekhina], whereas in the messianic era they will shine like the sun, as explained in Daniel 12 (cf. *Aqedat Yitzhaq 37:1*; cf. *Shnei Lukhot haBrit*). Because in the World to Come the righteous will become attached to God’s supernal light, “to be enlightened with the light of the living” (*Iyov 33:30*). This period, as explains Daniel, is the aftermath of the war of Gog u’Magog, a “time of distress like there has never been since there are nations until that day” (*ibid. 12:1*). This war, which is a war against unbelief, will end with the triumph of spirituality over egoism. Humanity will be conquered by “the son of man” consciousness; the materialistic world will be taken over by godliness, and this will be the end of our current era. This is the state of earth called Mashiakh, in which God’s kingdom is visible all over the earth through a new, rectified, state of humankind. This is a secret in the words of the sages, “If they are worthy, he will come with the clouds” (*Sanhedrin 98a*);

⁴⁴Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field which a man found, and he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

—relevant quotes—

“Yeshua said, The kingdom is like a man who had a treasure in his field and he did not know about it, and when he died he left it to his son. The son did not know either. He inherited the field and sold it. The one who bought it went plowing and found the treasure. He began to lend money at interest to whomever he wished” (*Thomas #109*)

—commentary—

meaning, when they become righteous they will awaken the messianic consciousness. The angels, thus, proclaim, “I bring you good news: at the judgment you have been proclaimed victors over the [pagan] nations” (*Midrash Tehilim 17:5*).

13:44 the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure – In the way both parables are presented here, the treasure and the pearl have the same interpretation. However, in the gospel of Thomas the two sayings are independent from each other, and are quite longer as well (cf. *Thomas 109 and 76*). In the case of the treasure story, it includes the concept of inheritance which is also found in a Jerusalem legend and other Oral Torah sources. If the Thomas’ version is the original, perhaps Mattai ended up merging the parables and reducing them to one sentence. If the Mattai’s version is the original, then Thomas expanded it, perhaps inspired by other traditions. Both versions tackle the same concept. In the Jerusalem legend above mentioned, two men came for litigation to the king of Katzia: “The first one said: My master the king! I purchased a ruin from my friend. I demolished it and found a hidden treasure in it, so I told him to take his treasure, since I purchased a ruin, not a treasure. The other one responded: I sold you the ruin and everything in it, from the depths of the earth to the heights of heaven! The king asked them: Do you have a son? Said the first: Yes. He then asked the other: Do you have a daughter? And he said yes. The king then decreed: Let them marry each other, and the treasure and the ruin shall belong to the two of them” (*Yerushalmi Bava Metzia 8a*).

13:44 a treasure hidden – Jewish literature uses consistently the hidden treasure as a metaphor for God’s wisdom, also known as the primordial Torah, the light of wisdom, before the Torah of Moses was given at Sinai, before the sin of Adam, before this current world was created even: “The Torah is a hidden treasure **חֲמֻדָּה גְנוּזָה** that was concealed 974 generations before the creation of the current world... as it is stated (*Psalms 105:8*): “The word which he commanded to the thousandth generation” (*Shabbat 88b*). Moses said to God, “You have a hidden treasure in which you delight every day, as it says (*Prov. 8:30*): I was his delight every day” (*Shabbat 89a*). This primordial Torah is the wisdom which lies within a man’s heart, as Bahya Ibn Pekuda wrote: “There is wisdom which lies hidden in the hearts of the wise, like a secret treasure” (*Duties of the heart, Introduction*). This is based on the verse: “Wisdom in the heart of man is like deep water, and the man with understanding draws it out” (*Prov. 20:5*). This primordial wisdom is the basis for all the world’s ethics and morals, the source from which the written Torah and Kabbalah came from. The Tanya explains how this Primordial Torah descended world after world and was filtered into our physical reality thus becoming the written Torah (cf. *Liqutei Amarim 1:4*). In Mattai’s version the field is not his; he needs to acquire it. He has heard about God, about Torah and mitzvot, but hearing alone is not enough. Since the field does not belong to him, he cannot claim the treasure and so he buries it back. He sells everything else, meaning, he offers the egoistic matters of this world in sacrifice, only then he acquires the field and reveals the hidden treasure of wisdom, thus revealing the kingdom of God on earth through Torah and mitzvot. This is the meaning of Mattai’s parable.

13:44 hidden in a field – In Thomas’ parable, which is in the level of Sod, the field is Malkhut, this world. The treasure is the light of the Shekhina, the light of the world-to-come hidden in this world. The sparks of holiness of the primordial worlds of chaos became trapped in this physical world, and they remain unknown to mankind. There are those who look at the world and only see evil and corruption, because holiness is captive in our reality. A man, though, has this deep desire to connect with Heaven, the inherent desire to do good, but the world affairs and their evil inclination prevent him from walking towards this path and his moral values are a mixture of good and evil. He is compared to a man who has a hidden treasure but knows nothing about it. “There is the man who does have the wisdom to recognize what is right and has also the desire to walk in good paths, but he has never been in the presence of the sages to hear from them instruction concerning wisdom and the righteous path and, because of this, he walks in the darkness, and he is like a man who has a hidden treasure in his house and does not know about the hidden treasure, and he sells the house to another” (*Orkhot Tzaddiqim, Introduction 20*). Generation after generation, the sparks of holiness remain trapped in the world, waiting for a tzaddiq to redeem them through the performance of a mitzva. An upright person begins to plow the soil; that is, to work the earth through the study of Torah and mysticism, and through his merits he redeems the trapped sparks of holiness. He acquires the kingdom of Heaven, and reveals it for everyone else. Everything he does is for the sake of revealing the World to Come. Hassidut teaches: “The hidden level of Israel’s spirituality refers to the need to reveal and set free sparks of holiness trapped amongst the nations” (*Ohr haHayim on Bamidbar 29:13; cf. Pri Etz*

⁴⁵Also, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶When he found a pearl of great price, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

—relevant quotes—

“Yeshua said, The kingdom of the Father is like a merchant who had a consignment of merchandise and discovered a pearl. That merchant was shrewd. He sold the merchandise and bought the pearl alone for himself. You too, seek his unfailing and enduring treasure where no moth comes near to devour and no worm destroys.”
(*Thomas #76*)

—commentary—

haDar 1:5). This is the secret in the mitzva of redeeming a beautiful woman who is captive among the enemies (cf. *Deut. 21:10-14*). Sharing Torah with others is called “lend money at interest” because in truth, those who learn Torah are meant to put it into practice and do something with it, make the holiness in the world grow. In Mattai, this point is exemplified with the parable of the talents (*Matt. 25:14-30*). Eventually, all the mitzvot that people will perform because of this man who shared Torah, will be counted among own his merits, and that is why Thomas calls it “at interest”.

13:45 like a merchant looking for fine pearls – If you check the Thomas’ version, its ending clause, which encourages us to seek the enduring treasure, has its parallel in Mattai’s saying: “Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (6:20).

13:46 When he found a pearl of great price – A pearl resembles wisdom. In Jewish literature the pearl has shiny qualities. It is said that Yona was able to see in the belly of the fish because a pearl emitted light as radiant as the sun (cf. *Pirqei d’Rabbi Eliezer 10:1*). A pearl is still a pearl, whether the owner loses it or finds it (*Megillah 15a*). This is the primordial wisdom that is trapped in this material world. The godly light concealed within a man’s soul. A man looks for the meaning of life in this world and tries to understand his purpose. When he finds the primordial wisdom, the light of the Shekhina, he realizes this is the most precious treasure this human existence has to offer. What is the price required to acquire this pearl? Everything you own, as it is written “with all your heart, with all your soul and will everything you own” (*Deut. 6:5*). If you want to own the kingdom of heaven, you need to sell everything else for the sake of it. “Avraham had to show complete submission to God in order to be designated as the father of Israel... Israel are the descendants of he who was willing to give up everything for the sake of God” (*Francis Nataf, Redeeming relevance on Bereshit 2:15 and 3:39*).

⁴⁷Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and from every kind it collected. ⁴⁸When it was full, they pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and selected the good ones in baskets, but the bad they threw away. ⁴⁹This is how it will be at the end of the era. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

—relevant quotes—

“And he said, The man is like a wise fisherman who cast his net into the sea and drew it up from the sea full of small fish. Among them the wise fisherman found a fine large fish. He threw all of the small fish back into the sea and chose the large fish without difficulty. Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear.” (*Thomas #8*)

—commentary—

13:47 a net that was thrown into the sea – A similar parable appears, once again, in Thomas; the two versions clearly deriving from one same source. A fish is a typical symbol for a tzaddiq, for the righteous Yehoshua is called “ben Nun”; son of the fish. The greatest souls are called Nunei Yama; the fish of the sea (cf. *Orot haEmunah* p 26). A net thrown into the sea usually carries a negative meaning. In Rabbi Aqiva’s parable: “a net is spread out over all the living” (*Avot* 3:16), the net refers to affliction and death in this world (*Ovadia of Bartenura on Pirqei Avot* 3:16). Every soul, whether good or bad, has a spark of the primordial holiness, and all of them are equally affected by affliction and death in this world. “The same fate is for everybody; the same occurrence is for the righteous and for the wicked” (*Eccl.* 9:2).

13:48 When it was full – When the great judgment day came, when the guf (the treasury of souls which forms the primordial man) was emptied, as it is written (*Avoda Zara* 5a): “The son of David will not come until the all the souls in the guf have been exhausted, as it is said (*Isaiah* 57:16): I will not contend forever nor I will always be wroth, for the spirit before me will fall, and the souls which I have made”. When the net of this material world completes its capture of souls, then the big fish, namely, the tzaddiqim, will be kept in a basket and the small souls, namely, the wicked, those whose spirit did not grow enough in this world, will be thrown away into the fire of Gehenna.

13:49 This is how it will be – While Mattai’s version emphasizes the judgment in Gehenna, the Thomas’ version deepens on how the judgment happens. In Thomas, the focus is not on the net itself, but on a wise fisherman. He represents the messianic consciousness, the “son of man”, the global consciousness of all mankind. When messianic consciousness descends into this physical world, it finds lots of small fish; namely, souls which are still growing, who have a tiny light. But it also finds a fine large fish; a soul which has grown to the Heaven’s desired size. Then the man eats it. This big fish, the one full of light, is consumed by the messianic consciousness and becomes part of its mystical body, they become one and the same. What does he do with the small fish? He throws them back into the sea. In other words, since they have not grown yet, he sends them back to mature. Messianic consciousness is gained through spiritual growth. There is even a deeper layer into it: Come and see, Jewish mysticism teaches that the average soul is sent back to the wheel of suffering and pain to mature. A soul that needs to correct certain attributes or sins is passed down from one generation to the next, as it is written: “Hashem... visits the iniquities of parents on children, even to the third and fourth generations” (*Num.* 14:18). That is, to see if such iniquity is corrected within three generations (cf. *Sforno on Numbers* 14:18). Another way a “fish” is sent back is by a literal returning of the soul into this world, which is called “Gilgul haNeshama” (the cycle of the soul). The Zohar says, “As long as a man is unsuccessful {in his purpose} in this world, the Blessed Holy One uproots him and replants him over and over again” (*Zohar I* 186b). This is seen in Iyov’s words: “naked I left my mother’s womb and naked I will return there” (*Iyov* 1:21). How can a soul return to a womb unless it is sent back in a rebirth? These two concepts appear in the mystical gospel of Yohanan: inquiring about a man who was born blind the disciples ask: “Who sinned, his parents (i.e., a previous generation) or he (in a previous life)?” (*John* 9:2). The last way to “purge” a soul from its imperfections is the fire of Gehenna, as discussed in previous chapters. These “judgments” are not the final eschatological end that Judaism envisions. These are means to purify and rectify the sparks of Adam’s primordial soul within the period of time encompassing someone’s death and the judgment after final resurrection of the dead.

13:50 furnace of fire – It makes sense that in the synoptic gospels Yeshua emphasizes the final judgment for the wicked, the total destruction in Gehenna, whereas in the mystical gospel of Thomas Yeshua teaches to the initiated the different purging processes that a soul undergoes in this era. This is because the details of how God redeems the light are only to be taught to the initiated who would not go astray with erroneous ideas, whereas for the masses, it is proper to implant fear of Heaven in their hearts, as it is written “The beginning of wisdom is the fear of Hashem” (*Prov.* 9:10). This is a deeper understanding of what the sages taught, that people will approach God first Lo-Lishma; i.e., because they want something in return, i.e., they fear hell and want to escape from the final judgment, but those who are grown will approach Lishma; i.e., because they want to honor God and there is no other ulterior motive (*Sotah* 47a).

⁵¹Yeshua asked them, Have you understood all these things? They responded, Yes, master. ⁵²He said to them, Therefore, every scribe who is a scholar in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his treasures, both the new and the old.

commentary

13:51 Have you understood all these things? – Mattai offers explanation for some of the parables, and for some others he does not. Yeshua's question involves the two groups, the explained ones and the unexplained ones.

13:52 who brings out of his treasures, both the new and the old – This is what we have been explaining throughout this chapter. A good teacher of the Torah will teach the parable according to the given explanation, that is, an explanation that has been in the "family" for a long time and is therefore called "old treasure". But a scribe who is a scholar in the kingdom of heaven will derive deeper interpretations from these teachings, beyond the received explanation. These are called "new treasures". Not only these parables, but the Torah itself has many layers and many levels of interpretation. The Hassidic author Rev Reichman explained this through the parable of a man who begins digging. At first he finds copper. With a better instrument digs deeper and finds silver. He goes lower and finds gold. Afterwards he reaches the depths and discovers diamonds, yet the field was the same all the time. The Rabbi explains: "Torah is the field... The secret meanings of Torah verses are gold and diamonds... Some tzaddikim have a grasp on the secrets of sod; others do not comprehend the depths of sod. They focus on the literal truth, such as peshat and the knowledge of halakha, Jewish law" (*Flame of faith*, 10:16, 18). The mystic sages taught about the Torah, "Turn it over and turn it over, for everything is in it" (*Avot* 5:22), as the Psalmist said: "Uncover my eyes and I will see the wonders of your Torah" (*Psalms* 119:18). The most profound level of understanding will come with the final correction of the world; the sages call it "The Torah of Messiah" (*Berakhot* 57a). Messiah means "anointed with oil" and when he comes, "his feet will stand upon the mount of Olives" (*Zech.* 14:2). What does the olive oil represent? "It is an allusion to the deepest secrets of the Torah" (*Berakhot* 57a). When a man is unified with the Messianic consciousness and reveals godliness into this world, his understanding of the Torah will also be refined in a more godly level, and if he digs deeper, he will have access to the Torah of Messiah, the deepest understanding of the Torah that mankind has ever reached; the secret within the secret; sod b'sod. It is, thus, written, "A [new] Torah will issue out of me" (*Isaiah* 51:4). It will be like a new Torah in the perspective of that generation, a new treasure. But from Divine perspective it will be the most ancient understanding of it. This is the secret in: "Hashem acquired me at the beginning of his way, before his works of old" (*Prov.* 8:22).

⁵³And it was that when Yeshua had finished these parables, he departed from there. ⁵⁴Coming to his own town, he taught them in their synagogue, in such a way that they were amazed and said, Where did this man get this wisdom and these wonders? ⁵⁵Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother's name Miriam and are not his brothers Yaaqov, Yosei, Shimon and Yehuda? ⁵⁶Are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man receive all these things? ⁵⁷And they took offense at him, but Yeshua said to them, A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home.

commentary

13:53 he departed from there – Like in the sermon of the mount, this is Mattai's way to organize Yeshua's teachings and works in a narrative manner, in this case, his parables.

13:54 Coming to his own town – to Nazareth.

13:55 Is not this the carpenter's son? – Since it was his hometown, people knew him and his family. Yosef was known in the synagogue as "the carpenter". Rabbi Avin Nagara was also known as "Avin the carpenter" because he would work as a carpenter during the day and study Torah at night (cf. *Shabbat 23b*). Apart from building furniture, a carpenter would fix objects such as chests, boxes or cabinets (*Bava Qama 98b*). There are some variants between Mattai and Mark. Here they ask "Is not this the carpenter's son?" but in Mark (*Mark 6:3*) they ask "Is not this the carpenter?" Some may think that perhaps Mark's version, which ignores Yeshua's father, was a late edition because of a later theology, just like some manuscripts edited Luke. However, the fact that Yosef is Yeshua's father is acknowledged in all the synoptics. Notice how early manuscripts of Luke chapter 2 consistently refer to Yosef as his father in verses like: "the child's father and mother marveled" (*Luke 2:33*), "His parents" (*Luke 2:43*), "Your father and I have been searching for you" (*Luke 2:48*). What makes more sense is that people said both things during the incident and each gospel registered a different expression. The two versions serve to emphasize that, while Yeshua's family were assiduous to their local synagogue, Yeshua did not appear to have attempted to become an official scribe or a Rabbi. Rather, he was known as a carpenter just like his father. Yosef had made him his apprentice and taught him this trade.

13:55 Yaaqov, Yosei, Shimon and Yehuda – Yaaqov is Yaaqov haTzaddiq, who is attested to be Yeshua's biological brother and the head of the Nazarenes after him in three different sources: The book of Acts (*15:13*), Paul's letter to the Galatians (*1:19, 2:9*) and the gospel of Thomas (*#12; see also Josephus, Antiquities 20:9:1*). He also wrote the letter that is known in English as the epistle of James. Yosei is a nickname. In the manuscripts and throughout the text, he is sometimes called Yosei and sometimes Yosef, which was his actual name. Probably the people in the town called him Yosei, similar to calling someone "Yosef Junior". Yehuda is probably the author of the epistle of Jude (*1:1*). Shimon is a very common name among the Israelites, so it is scholarly impossible to identify him with exactitude. Although several theories have been postulated, I consider them either erroneous or lacking evidence, therefore, I will not attempt to associate this Shimon with the many others who appear in the texts.

13:57 they took offense at him – Because they knew him from childhood as a carpenter, it was difficult for them to accept him as a teacher of the Torah. They said, "Perform here what we have heard you performed in Kefar-Nahum" (*Luke 4:23*). In truth, the more we know a person from his childhood, the less likely we are to accept him as someone carrying a genuine message from God.

13:57 A prophet is not without honor – As it is written: "Your sword devoured your prophets" (*Jeremiah 2:30*). This saying of Yeshua is one of the most well-preserved ones among his genuine phrases. It has been registered in all the Gospels: the four canonicals and Thomas, the Markan version being probably the closest to the original. Similar to Yeshua's proverb, the "Yosef-tzaddiq" tradition mentions a type of righteous person who is not accepted by his own household. The Vilna Gaon says: "Yosef recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him — This is one of the traits of Yosef not only in his own generation, but in every generation, i.e., that Messiah ben Yosef recognizes his brothers, but they do not recognize him" (*Qol haTor 2:39*). The brothers of Yosef remembered a young boy who always stayed beside his father and was sold as a slave; they could not recognize him as a grown man and ruler of Egypt. Come and see, after a man is filled with ruakh haQodesh, he is like a new being within, a soul that transcends Egypt – by the prophetic sefirah of Daat – but the people of the land will only see the projection they have imprinted upon him because they are still functioning under the qlipot. A deeper teaching there is to disclose, if one is willing to accept it: The proverbial prophet represents the holy soul connected to the higher worlds. In Mattai, the town represents the visible world and the house is one's physical body. The merits and achievements of one's divine soul are not perceived neither honored by the material world. Nevertheless, even though in this physical reality we may not perceive any benefits for doing good deeds, observing Torah or trying to make a better world, this is only because Godliness is completely concealed to us, but know that in truth, every good deed, even if small, is elevating the sparks of holiness and moving us towards the World to Come.

⁵⁸And he did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.

commentary

13:58 because of their unbelief – Since they did not believe in the messenger, they also rejected the owner of the message. This proves that the miracles that Yeshua performed occurred because of people's absolute trust in the tzaddiq. If there is no trust in the messenger of Hashem, the miracle cannot occur, as it is written: "they believed in Hashem and in Moses his servant" (*Exodus 14:31*). Rabbenu Bahya wrote: "He who has faith will be credited with many merits... and ...anyone who does not believe in such cornerstones of Judaism [i.e., having faith in the prophets] belongs to the group about which Eliphaz said (*Iyov 15:22*): he is never sure he will come back from darkness" (*Rabbenu Bahya on Shemot 14:31*). In other words, since they do not trust the tool that the Creator has brought to redeem them, they do not experience redemption.