

Chavruta: From Prophets to Sages: John Hyrcanus and a Heavenly Voice

Vered Noam

1. Tosefta Sota 13:5

יוחנן כהן גדול שמע דבר מבית קדש הקדשים ,
נצחון טליא דאזלון לאגחא קרבא באנטכיא ,
וכתבו אותה שעה ואותו היום, וכיונו ואותה שעה היתה שנצחו

Johanan the High Priest heard a *davar* (word) from within the Holy of Holies: “The young men (lit.: children) who went to wage in Antioch have been victorious,” and they wrote down the time and the day, and it tallied with the hour they were victorious.

2. Josephus, *Ant.* 13.282-283

(282) Now about the high priest (ἀρχιερέως) Hyrcanus an extraordinary story is told (λέγεται) how the Deity communicated with him, for they say (φασὶν γάρ) that on the very day on which his sons fought with Cyzicenus, Hyrcanus, who was alone in the temple, burning incense as a high priest, heard a voice saying that his children had just defeated Antiochus (οἱ παῖδες αὐτοῦ νενικαήκασιν ἀπίως τὸν Ἀντίοχον). (283) And on coming out of the temple he revealed this to the entire multitude, and so it actually happened. This, then, was how the affairs of Hyrcanus were going.

3. Tosefta Sota 13.3-4

משמתו נביאים האחרונים חגי זכריה ומלאכי, פסקה רוח הקודש מישראל, ואע"פ כן היו משמיעין להן על בת קול.	After the latter prophets Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi had died, the Holy Spirit ceased from Israel; nevertheless, they communicated with them by means of a <i>bat qol</i> .
מעשה שנתכנסו חכמים לעליית בית גוריה ביריחו, ויצתה בת קול ואמרה להן: יש כן אדם בניכם שראוי לרוח הקודש אלא שאין דורו זכיי לכך. נתנו עיניהם בהלל הזקן. ..	On one occasion some Sages had gathered in the upper chamber of Gurya's house in Jericho; a <i>bat qol</i> went out and said to them, “There is a man among you who is worthy to receive the Holy Spirit but his generation is unworthy of it.” They all looked at Hillel the Elder.
שוב פעם אחת היו יושבין ביבנה, ושמעו בת קול אומרת: יש כאן אדם שראוי לרוח הקודש אלא שאין הדור זכיי. ונתנו עיניהם בשמואל הקטן...	On another occasion they were sitting in Yavneh; And they heard a <i>bat qol</i> saying, “There is in your midst a person who is deserving of <i>ruah ha-qodesh</i> , but his generation is unworthy of it”. They all looked at Samuel the Small...
יוחנן כהן גדול שמע דבר מבית קדש הקדשים: נצחון (מרא) טליא דאזלון לאגחא קרבא באנטכיא. וכתבו אותה שעה ואותו היום וכיונו ואותה שעה היתה שנצחו.	John the High Priest heard a <i>davar</i> issue from within the Holy of Holies announcing, “ The young men who went to wage war against Antioch have been victorious. ” They noted down the time and the day and it tallied with the hour they were victorious.
שמעון הצדיק שמע דבר מבית קדש הקדשים: בטילת עבידתא די אמר סנאה לאיתאה להיכלא, ונהרג גסקלגס ובטלו גזרותיו ובלשון ארמי שמע.	Simon the Just heard a <i>davar</i> issue from within the Holy of Holies announcing, “ the (pagan) cult which the enemy ordered to bring into the Temple was cancelled. ” Then was Caius Caligula slain and his decrees were annulled. Now it was in Aramaic that he heard.

דרישה
DRISHA

Winter Week of Learning
-Tuesday, December 22, 2015-

1. Compare the accounts of the Tosefta and of Josephus. What is similar in content? Can you detect linguistic similarities as well? Are there any differences?
2. Is Josephus himself the author of the story? How do you know? If not, what kind of source did he use?
3. How would you define the purpose of this legend? To which Jewish faction or circle would you ascribe it?
4. Read the entire Toseftan context (num. 3). Divide the 4 stories into two groups. What are the differences between these two groups? What is the message of each group of stories? To which Jewish faction would you ascribe each group? Would you date them differently?