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SESSION 1- Sunday July 4th: *Hevruta* Learning
Learn through the texts on pages 1-4 from Tractate *Gittin*.

I. Kamtza and Bar Kamtza Story

- What do you think of Bar Kamtza's actions?
- Pay attention to the behavior and actions of the Rabbis as you go though the narrative.
- Do you think they are acting appropriately? Why do they behave in that manner- at the feast and afterwards?

II. ענוותנות Excessive Meekness/Humility/:

What is this characteristic exactly? Is it generally good or bad? What is wrong with Rabbi Zekharya ben Avkolas 's behavior? He is not mentioned that often in Rabbinic literature. Read this other text from the Tosefta where his behavior in another very different situation is described. This text has to do with the halakhic question of *muktzeh*, things that cannot be moved on Shabbat as they have no use for the day. Shells and bones are generally considered a form of *nolad*/*muktzeh*, and therefore cannot be moved on Shabbat. Do his actions shed light on his general personality character trait?

Tosefta Shabbat (Lieberman) 16:7	**תוספתא שבת (ליברמן) טז : ז**
Beit Hillel say: They lift off the table bones and peels Beit Shammai say: He removes the tablet [table top] and shakes it Zekharya ben Avkelas did not behave neither like Beit Shammai nor like Beit Hillel Rather he would take and fling [it] behind the bed [like a chaise longue, where they were sitting to eat] R. Yose said: the meekness of Zekharya ben Avkelous burnt the Temple.	בית הלל אומ׳ מגביהין מעל השלחן עצמות וקלפין בית שמיי אומ׳ מסלק את הטבלה כולה ומנערה זכריה בן אבקילס לא היה נוהג לא כדברי בית שמיי ולא כדברי בית הלל אלא נוטל ומשליך לאחר המטה אמ׳ ר׳ יוסה **ענותנותו** של ר׳ זכריה בן אבקילס היא שרפה את ההיכל

<u>תוספתא כפשוטה שבת עמוד 77</u>
זכריה בן אבקולוס לא היה נוהג לא כב״ה ולא כב״ש אלא נוטל ושליך אחר המיטה. ובבלי [שבת] קמ״ג סע״א: אמרו עליו על ר׳ זכריה בן אבקולוס שהיה מחזיר פניו אחורי המטה וזורקן, כלומר, שלא היה מניח את העצמות ואת הקליפין על הטבלה כלל, אלא היה משליכן בשעת האכילה ופולטן מפיו לאחר המטה שהסב עליה. **וכאן הכוונה שר׳ זכריה בן אבקולוס נמנע מלהכריע בין ב״ש ובין ב״ה, ולא רצה לא להגביה את העצמות ולא ללנער את הטבלא, ולפיכך הבריח את עצמו מהנחת העצמות על הטבלא, כדי שלא יבוא לידי מעשה כלל, וענוותנותו זאת היתה שיטתית אצלו ונהג בה אף במעשים אחרים.**

III. Story 2: Nero:

The story about Nero is the only one in the collection that does not have a parallel tradition in another text. That leads scholars to believe that it was composed especially for this collection.

- How might it function independently and in relationship to the previous story?

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- How does Nero's behavior compare to the actions of the Rabbis? Is it viewed positively by the narrative?

IV. Siege in Jerusalem

- Are the Rabbis in a position of leadership?
- Who is in charge?

Extra Credit: Read how Josephus, a first-century Romano-Jewish historian, describes the events. Which parts are similar to the Rabbinic narrative?

I. Josephus, War, II:17.

HOW THE WAR OF THE JEWS WITH THE ROMANS BEGAN, AND CONCERNING MANAHEM.

…2. And at this time it was that some of those that principally excited the people to go to war made an assault upon a certain fortress called Masada. They took it by treachery, and slew the Romans that were there, and put others of their own party to keep it. At the same time **Eleazar, the son of Ananias the high priest, a very bold youth, who was at that time governor of the temple, persuaded those that officiated in the Divine service to receive no gift or sacrifice for any foreigner. And this was the true beginning of our war with the Romans; for they rejected the sacrifice of Caesar on this account; and when many of the high priests and principal men besought them not to omit the sacrifice, which it was customary for them to offer for their princes, they would not be prevailed upon.** These relied much upon their multitude, for the most flourishing part of the innovators assisted them; but they had the chief regard to Eleazar, the governor of the temple.

3. Hereupon the men of power got together, and conferred with the high priests, as did also the principal of the Pharisees; and thinking all was at stake, and that their calamities were becoming incurable, took counsel what was to be done. Accordingly, they determined to try what they could do with the seditious by words, and assembled the people before the brazen gate, which was that gate of the inner temple [court of the priests] which looked toward the sun-rising. And, in the first place, they showed the great indignation they had at this attempt for a revolt, and for their bringing so great a war upon their country; **after which they confuted their pretense as unjustifiable, and told them that their forefathers had adorned their temple in great part with donations bestowed on them by foreigners, and had always received what had been presented to them from foreign nations; and that they had been so far from rejecting any person's sacrifice (which would be the highest instance of impiety,) that they had themselves placed those donation about the temple which were still visible, and had remained there so long a time; that they did now irritate the Romans to take arms against them, and invited them to make war upon them, and brought up novel rules of a strange Divine worship, and determined to run the hazard of having their city condemned for impiety, while they would not allow any foreigner, but Jews only, either to sacrifice or to worship therein. And if such a law should be introduced in the case of a single private person only, he would have indignation at it, as an instance of inhumanity determined against him; while they have no regard to the Romans or to Caesar, and forbid even their oblations to be received also; that however they cannot but fear, lest, by thus rejecting their sacrifices, they shall not be allowed to offer their own; and that this city will lose its principality, unless they grow wiser quickly, and restore the sacrifices as formerly, and**

indeed amend the injury [they have offered foreigners] before the report of it comes to the ears of those that have been injured. ….

6. Now the next day was the festival of Xylophory; upon which the custom was for every one to bring wood for the altar (that there might never be a want of fuel for that fire which was unquenchable and always burning). Upon that day they excluded the opposite party from the observation of this part of religion. **And when they had joined to themselves many of the Sicarii, who crowded in among the weaker people, (that was the name for such robbers as had under their bosoms swords called Sicae,) they grew bolder, and carried their undertaking further; insomuch that the king's soldiers were overpowered by their multitude and boldness; and so they gave way, and were driven out of the upper city by force. The others then set fire to the house of Ananias the high priest, and to the palaces of Agrippa and Bernice; after which they carried the fire to the place where the archives were reposited, and made haste to burn the contracts belonging to their creditors, and thereby to dissolve their obligations for paying their debts; and this was done in order to gain the multitude of those who had been debtors, and that they might persuade the poorer sort to join in their insurrection with safety against the more wealthy; so the keepers of the records fled away, and the rest set fire to them.**

Josephus: The Wars Of The Jews V: 1:1-5; 1-36 .

CHAPTER 1. CONCERNING THE SEDITIONS AT JERUSALEM AND WHAT TERRIBLE MISERIES AFFLICTED THE CITY BY THEIR MEANS.

4. And now there were three treacherous factions in the city, the one parted from the other. Eleazar and his party, that kept the sacred first-fruits, came against John in their cups. Those that were with John plundered the populace, and went out with zeal against Simon. This Simon had his supply of provisions from the city, in opposition to the seditious. When, therefore, John was assaulted on both sides, he made his men turn about, throwing his darts upon those citizens that came up against him, from the cloisters he had in his possession, while he opposed those that attacked him from the temple by his engines of war. **And if at any time he was freed from those that were above him, which happened frequently, from their being drunk and tired, he sallied out with a great number upon Simon and his party; and this he did always in such parts of the city as he could come at, till he set on fire those houses that were full of corn, and of all other provisions. The same thing was done by Simon, when, upon the other's retreat, he attacked the city also; as if they had, on purpose, done it to serve the Romans, by destroying what the city had laid up against the siege, and by thus cutting off the nerves of their own power. Accordingly, it so came to pass, that all the places that were about the temple were burnt down, and were become an intermediate desert space, ready for fighting on both sides of it; and that almost all that corn was burnt, which would have been sufficient for a siege of many years. So they were taken by the means of the famine, which it was impossible they should have been, unless they had thus prepared the way for it by this procedure.**

5. And now, as the city was engaged in a war on all sides, from these treacherous crowds of wicked men, the people of the city, between them, were like a great body torn in pieces. **The aged men and the women were in such distress by their internal calamities, that they wished for the Romans, and earnestly hoped for an external war, in order to their delivery from their domestical miseries.** The citizens themselves were under a terrible consternation and fear; nor had they any opportunity of taking counsel, and of changing their conduct; nor

were there any hopes of coming to an agreement with their enemies; nor could such as had a mind flee away; for guards were set at all places, and the heads of the robbers, although they were seditious one against another in other respects, yet did they agree in killing those that were for peace with the Romans, or were suspected of an inclination to desert them, as their common enemies. They agreed in nothing but this, to kill those that were innocent.

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SESSION 2- Monday July 5th: *Hevruta* Learning

Learn through the texts on pages 5-10 from Tractate *Gittin*.

I. Marta bat Baitos

- We have seen the actions of servants before in this narrative how does this story compare?
- Who is at fault the servant or Marta?
- How do you understand her final actions and death?
- How does this story compare to the first story of the feast?

II. RYBZ Leaves Jerusalem

- Why does he finally decide to act?
- Why does his nephew agree to help him?
- Who is in charge in Jerusalem?
- How does the moment at the gates of Jerusalem mirror earlier events?

III. RYBZ Meets Vespasian

- What are the challenges/critiques Vespasian has of RYBZ behavior?
- How do you understand the parable of the snake and the jar of honey?
- What do the later rabbis think of RYBZ answer and of his actions?
- What do they think of his final request from Vespasian? What do you think? Did he make the right choice?
- What does R. Tzadok represent in this narrative?

What to you think is the overall message or theme of this entire narrative story?

Extra Credit: Parallels to the R. Yohanan b. Zakkai Story

There are two other versions of RYBZ encounter with Vespasian. How do the texts differ and how are they similar to our account in the Talmud? How are RYBZ's actions viewed- positively or negatively?

***Midrash Rab*bah - Lamentations I:31**	**איכה רבה (וילנא) פרשה א**
31. HER ADVERSARIES ARE BECOME THE HEAD (I, 5):… this refers to Vespasian; HER ENEMIES ARE AT EASE, this refers to Titus. For three and a half years Vespasian surrounded Jerusalem, having four generals with him: the general of Arabia, of Africa, of Alexandria, and of Palestine. With regard to the general of Arabia two teachers differ as to his name, one declaring that it was Killus and the other Pangar.	... ד״א היו צריה לראש, זה אספסיאנוס, אויביה שלו, זה טיטוס, שלש שנים ומחצה הקיף אספסיאנוס את ירושלם והיו עמו ארבעה דוכסין, דוכס דערביא, דוכס דאפריקא, דוכוס דאלכסנדריא, דוכוס דפלסטיני, דוכוס דערבייא תרין אמורין חד אמר קילוס שמיה, וחד אמר פנגר שמיה,
In Jerusalem there were four councillors, viz. Ben Zizit, Ben Gorion, Ben Nakdimon, and Ben	והוון בירושלם ארבעה בוליטין בן ציצית ובן גוריון

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KalbaShabua'.2 Each of them was capable of supplying food for the city for ten years.3	ובן נקדימון ובן כלבא שבוע, וכל אחד ואחד יכול לספק מזונות של מדינה י' שנים,
There was also there Ben Battiah,4 the nephew of R. Johanan b. Zakkai, who was appointed in charge of the stores, all of which he burnt.5 When R. Johanan b. Zakkai heard of this he exclaimed, 'Woe!'	והיה שם בן בטיח בן אחותו של רבן יוחנן בן זכאי שהיה ממונה על האוצרות ואוקיד כל אוצרייא, שמע רבן יוחנן בן זכאי אמר ווי,
It was reported to Ben Battiah., 'Your uncle exclaimed "woe!"' He sent and had him brought before him and asked, 'Why did you exclaim "woe!"?' He replied, 'I did not exclaim"woe!" but "wah!"'6 He said to him, ' You exclaimed "wah!"? Why did you make that exclamation?' He answered, 'Because you burnt all the stores, and I thought that so long as the stores were intact the people would not expose themselves to the dangers of battle.' Through the difference between 'woe' and 'wah' R. Johanan b. Zakkai escaped death7; and the verse was applied to him, The excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom preserveth the life of him that hath it (Eccl. VII, 12).	אזלין אמרון לבן בטיח, אמר חביבך ווי, שלח ואתייה אמר לו למה אמרת ווי, אמר לו לא אמרתי ווי אלא וה אמרי, אמר לו וה אמרת, ולמה אמרת וה, אמר ליה דאוקדת כל אוצרייא, ואמרתי דכל זמן דאוצרייא קיימין לא יהיבין נשמיהון למיעבד קרבא, בין ווי לוח נמלט רבן יוחנן בן זכאי, וקרא עליו (קהלת ז') ויתרון דעת החכמה תחיה בעליה,
Three days later R. Johanan b. Zakkai went out to walk in the market-place and saw how people seethed straw and drank its water8; and he said [to himself], 'Can men who seethe straw and drink its water withstand the armies of Vespasian?'	לאחר ג' ימים, יצא רבן יוחנן בן זכאי לטייל בשוק, וראה אותם ששולקין תבן ושותין מימיו, אמר בני אדם ששולקין תבן ושותין מימיו, יכולין לעמוד בחיילותיו של אספסיאנוס?
He added, 'I have come to the conclusion that I must get out of here.' He sent a message to Ben Battiah, 'Get me out of here.' He replied, 'We have made an agreement among ourselves that nobody shall leave the city except the dead.' He said, ' Carry me out in the guise of a corpse.'	אמר כל סמא דמילתא ניפוק לי מהכא, שלח ואמר לבן בטיח אפקוני מהכא אמר ליה עבדינן בינינן דלא יפוק בר נש מהכא אלא דמית, אמר אפקוני בדמות דמית,
R. Eliezer carried him by the head, R. Joshua by the feet, and Ben Battiah. walked in front.	טען רבי אליעזר ברישיה, ורבי יהושע ברגליה, ובן בטיח מהלך קומוי,
When they reached [the city gates, the guards] wanted to stab him. Ben Battiah said to them, ' Do you wish people to say that when our teacher died his body was stabbed! ' On his speaking to them in this manner, they allowed him to pass. After going through the gates, they carried him to a cemetery and left him there and returned to the city.	מן דמטון בעון מודקריניה, אמר להון בן בטיח כך אתם רוצים, שיהיו אומרין מת רבן ודקרוהו, כיון דאמר להו כך שבקוניה, מן דנפקין מן פילי, טענוניה ויהבוניה בחד בית עולם וחזרו למדינה,
R. Johanan b. Zakkai came out and went among the soldiers of Vespasian. He said to them, 'Where is the king?' They went and told Vespasian, 'A Jew is asking	נפק רבן יוחנן בן זכאי לטייל בחיילותיו של אספסיאנוס, אמר לון אן הוא מלכא, אזלון ואמרו

for you.' He said to them, 'Let him come.' On his arrival he exclaimed, 'Vive domine Imperator!'9 Vespasian remarked, 'You give me a royal greeting but I am not king; and should the king hear of it he will put me to death.' He said to him, 'If you are not the king you will be eventually, because the Temple will only be destroyed by a king's hand'; as it is said, And Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one (Isa. X, 34).	לאספסיאנוס, חד יהודי בעי למישאל בשלמך, אמר להון ייתי, מן דאתא, אמר ליה וביבא מארי אפלטור, אמר ליה שאילא דמלך שאילת בי, ואנא לית אנא מליך, וכדו שמע מלכא וקטיל להההוא גברא, אמר ליה אם לית את מלך סוף את מליך, דלית הדין ביתא חריב אלא על ידי מלך, שנא' (ישעיה י') והלבנון באדיר יפול,
They took and placed him in the innermost of seven chambers10 and asked him what hour of the night it was and he told them. They subsequently asked him what hour of the day it was and he told them. How did R. Johanan b. Zakkai know it? From his study.11 Three days later Vespasian went to take a bath at Gophna.12 After he had bathed and put on one of his shoes, a message arrived and it was announced to him that Nero had died and the Romans had proclaimed him king. He wished to put on the other shoe but it would not go on his foot. He sent for R. Johanan and asked, 'Will you not explain to me why all these days I wore two shoes which fitted me, but now one fits and the other does not?' He answered, ' You have been informed of good news,' because it is written, A good report maketh the bones fat (Prov. XV, 30). He inquired, ' What must I do to get it on? ' He replied, 'Is there anybody whom you hate or who has done you wrong? Let him pass in front of you and your flesh will shrink,' because it is written, A broken spirit drieth the bones (ib. XVII, 22).	נסבוניה ויהבוניה לגיו מן שבעה קנקלין, והוון שאילין ליה כמה שעין בליליא, ואמר להון, כמה שעין ביממא, ואמר להון, מנן הוה ידע רבן יוחנן בן זכאי מפשוטיה, לבתר תלתא יומין אזל אספסיאנוס מסחי בהדא גפנא, מן דסחא ולבש חד מסן דידיה, אתת בשורה ובשרוהו מית נירון ואמליכוניה בני רומי, בעי למילבש חד מסן חורן ולא עליל, שלח ואתיוה לרבן יוחנן בן זכאי, וא"ל לית את אמר לי כל אילין יומיא הוינא לביש תרין מסאני, והוון עללין בי, וכדו חד עליל וחד לא עליל, א"ל בשורתא טבתא איתבשרת דכתיב (משלי ט"ו) ושמועה טובה תדשן עצם, אמר לו מה נעביד דאיעיל, אמר לו מי אית לך בר נש דסנאית ליה או דחב לך, יעברוניה קמך ובשרך שחי, דכתיב (שם /משלי/ י"ז) ורוח נכאה תיבש גרם,
Then they began to speak to him in parables.13 'If a snake nested in a cask, what is to be done with it?'14 He answered, 'Bring a charmer and charm the snake, and leave the cask intact.' Pangar said, 'Kill the snake and break the cask.' [Then they asked,] ' If a snake nested in a tower, what is to be done with it?' He answered, 'Bring a charmer and charm the snake, and leave the tower intact.' Pangar said, ' Kill the snake and burn the tower.' R. Johanan said to Pangar, 'All neighbours who do harm, do it to their neighbours15; instead of putting in a plea for the defence you argue for the prosecution against us! ' He replied, ' I seek your welfare; so long as the Temple exists, the heathen kingdoms will attack you, but if it is destroyed they will not attack you. R. Johanan said to him, ' The heart knows whether it is for 'akkel or 'akalkaloth.'16	התחילו מושלין לפניו משלות, חבית שקינן נחש בתוכה כיצד עושין לו, אמר להם מביאין חובר וחוברין את הנחש ומניחין את החבית, אמר פנגר הורגין את הנחש ושוברין את החבית, מגדל שקינן בו נחש כיצד עושין, אמר להם מביאין חובר וחוברין את הנחש ומניחין את המגדל, אמר פנגר הורגין את הנחש ושורפין את המגדל, אמר לו רבן יוחנן בן זכאי לפנגר כל מגירייא דעבדין בישא למגיריהון עבדין עד דלית את מליף סניגוריא את מליף עלן קטיגוריא, אמר ליה לטיבותכון אנא בעי, דכל זמן דהדין ביתא קיים מלכוותא מתגרין בכון, אין איחרוב הדין ביתא לית מלכוותא מתגרין בכון, אמר לו רבן יוחנן הלב יודע אם לעקל אם לעקלקלות,

Vespasian said to R. Johanan b. Zakkai, ' Make a request of me and I will grant it' He answered, 'I beg that you abandon this city of Jerusalem and depart.' He said to him, ' Did the Romans proclaim me king that I should abandon this city? Make another request of me and I will grant it.' He answered, ' I beg that you leave the western gate which leads to Lydda,17 and everyone who departs up to the fourth hour shall be spared.' After Vespasian had conquered the city he asked him, ' Have you any friend or relative there? Send and bring him out before the troops enter.	אמר ליה אספסיאנוס לרבן יוחנן בן זכאי שאל לי שאלה ואנא עביד א״ל אנא בעי דתירפי הדא מדינתא ותיזיל לך, א״ל כלום אמליכוני בני רומי דנרפי להדא מדינתא, שאל לי שאלתא ואנא עביד, אמר לו בעי אנא דתירפי לפילי מערבאה דהיא אזלא ללוד, דכל בר דנפיק עד ארבעה שעין יהא לשיזבא, מן דכבשה אמר לו אי אית לך דרחים לך, או בר נש דאת קריב ליה, שלח ואיתיה עד דלא ייעלון אוכלוסיא,
He sent R. Eliezer and R. Joshua to bring out R. Zadok. They went and found him in the city gate. When he arrived R. Johanan stood up before him. Vespasian asked, 'You stand up before this emaciated old man?' He answered, ' By your life, if there had been [in Jerusalem] one more like him, though you had double your army, you would have been unable to conquer it.' He asked, 'What is his power?' He replied, ' He eats one fig and on the strength of it teaches at one hundred sessions in the academy.' 'Why is he so lean? ' he inquired. He answered, ' On account of his numerous abstinences and fasts.'	שלח לר׳ אליעזר ולר׳ יהושע לאפוקי לר׳ צדוק אזלין ואשכחוניה בבבא דמדינה מן דאתא קם מן קומוי רבן יוחנן, אמר ליה אספסיאנוס מן קדם הדין סבא צותרא את קאים, אמר לך חייך אי הוה חד דכוותיה, והוה עמך אוכלוסין בכיפלא לא הוית יכיל כביש, אמר לו מה חייליה, א״ל דאכיל חד גמזוז ופשיט עלוהי מאה פרקין, אמר ליה למה חשיך כן, א״ל מן חייליהון דצומייא ותענייתא,
Vespasian sent and brought physicians who fed him on small portions of food and doses of liquid until his physical powers returned to him.	שלח ואייתי אסוותא והוו מוכלין ליה ציבחר ציבחר, ומשקין ליה ציבחר ציבחר, עד דהדר גופיה עלוי,
His son Eleazar said to him, ' Father, give them their reward in this world so that they should have no merit with respect to you in the world to come.'18 He gave them calculation by fingers19 and scales for weighing.	אמר ליה אלעזר בריה אבא הב להו אגרייהו בעלמא הדין, דלא תיהוי להו זכותא עמך בעלמא דאתי, ויהב להו הדין חושבנא דאצבע,
When Vespasian had subdued the city, he assigned the destruction of the four ramparts to the four generals, and the western gate was allotted to Pangar. Now it had been decreed by Heaven that this should never be destroyed because the Shechinah abode in the west. The others demolished their sections but he did not demolish his.	והדין קרצטיונא, מן דכבשה פליג ארבע טכסייא לארבעה דוכסייא, וסליק פילי מערבאה לפנגר, וגזרו מן שמיא דלא יחרב לעולם למה ששכינה במערב, אינון אחרובו דידהון, הוא לא אחריב דידיה,
Vespasian sent for him and asked, ' Why did you not destroy your section?' He replied, 'By your life, I acted so for the honour of the kingdom; for if I had demolished it, nobody would [in time to come] know what it was you destroyed; hut when people look [at the western wall], they will exclaim, "Perceive the might of Vespasian from what he destroyed!	שלח ואתייה, אמר לו למה לא אחרבת דידך, אמר ליה חייך לשבחא דמלכותא עבדית, דאילו חרבתיה לא הות ידעת ברייה מה חרבת, וכדו יחזיין בריאתא, אמרין חזו חייליה דאספסיאנוס מה אחרב,
He said to him, 'Enough, you have spoken well, but since you disobeyed my command, you shall ascend to	אמר לו דייך דטבאות אמרת, אלא מן בגין דעברת על קלווניו דידי, יסק ההוא גברא לרישיה דאיגרה ויטרוף

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the roof and throw yourself down. If you live, you will live; and if you die, you will die.' He ascended, threw himself down and died. Thus the curse of R. Johanan b. Zakkai alighted upon him.	גרמיה, אי חיי חיי ואי מות ימות, סליק וטרף גרמיה, ומית ופגעה בו קללה של רבן יוחנן בן זכאי.

(2) In Git. 56a the number is three, two names being read as one, viz. Nakdimon ben Gorion.
(3) They were extremely wealthy.
(4) He was a leader of the Zealot party.
(5) To induce the men to go out to fight and obtain food.
(6) An exclamation denoting approval.
(7) The Zealot would have had his uncle put to death if he had expressed disapproval.
(8) They were reduced to such straits to escape starvation.
(9) 'Live, O lord Emperor.' The reading in the 'Ar. has the actual Latin he used.
(10) From which all light was excluded.
(11) He was accustomed to rehearse his studies and knew how long they took. When placed in the chamber, he spent the time in this way and so was able to fix the hour.
(12) The modem Jifna, about 15 miles N.W. of Jerusalem.
(13) For the purpose of trapping him.
(14) The 'snake' is Israel who had rebelled against Rome, the 'cask' is Jerusalem, and in the next question the 'tower' is the Temple. The Rabbi's answer was a plea for lenient treatment so that the Jews might be won over.
(15) The Arabs were neighbours of Israel; and if, as their general suggested a harsh policy was followed by Vespasian, his own people would in due course meet with a like fate.
(16) V. Sanh. 26a (Sonc. ed., p. 151). It is a proverbial expression. The root of both words is 'bend' or 'twist', i.e. either woven or crooked. The meaning is: your heart knows what your real intention is.
(17) A town to the S.E. of Jaffa.
(18) The remark was inspired by bitter feeling because of the way the Romans had dealt with Jerusalem.
(19) A kind of game (Levi).

***Avot DeRabbi Natan* 1:4**	**אבות דרבי נתן נוסחא א פרק ד**
Now, when Vespasian came to destroy Jerusalem he said to them: "Idiots! Why do you want to destroy this city and [why do] you want to burn the temple? What do I want of you except that you send me one bow or one arrow and I will go from you?" They said to him, "just as we went forth against your two predecessors and killed them, so we will go forth against you and kill you."	וכשבא אספסיינוס להחריב את ירושלים אמר להם שוטים מפני מה אתם מבקשים להחריב את העיר הזאת ואתם מבקשים לשרוף את בית המקדש וכי מה אני מבקש מכם אלא שתשגרו לי קשת אחת או חץ אחת ואלך לי מכם. אמרו לו כשם שיצאנו על שנים ראשונים שהם לפניך והרגנום כך נצא לפניך ונהרגך.
When RYBZ heard this he sent for the men of Jerusalem and said to them, "my sons: why are you destroying this city and [why] do you want to burn the temple? What does he ask of you except one bow or one arrow and he will go form you?" They said to him, "just as we went forth against his two	כיון ששמע רבן יוחנן בן זכאי שלח וקרא לאנשי ירושלים ואמר להם בני מפני מה אתם מחריבין את העיר הזאת ואתם מבקשים לשרוף את בית המקדש וכי מהו מבקש מכם הא אינו מבקש מכם אלא קשת אחת או חץ אחת וילך לו מכם. אמרו לו כשם

predecessors and killed them, so we will go forth against him and kill him."	שיצאנו על שנים שלפניו והרגנום כך נצא עליו ונהרגהו.
Vespasian had men positioned with in the walls of Jerusalem. They wrote down every single word the heard on arrows and shot them beyond the walls, saying that RYBZ was among the friends of the emperor.	היו לאספסיינוס אנשים שרויין כנגד חומותיה של ירושלים וכל דבר ודבר שהיו שומעין היו כותבין על החצי וזורקין חוץ לחומה לומר שרבן יוחנן בן זכאי מאוהבי קיסר הוא.
When RYBZ had spoken to them one day, then a second and a third, but they did not accept [his words], he sent for his students, for R. Eliezer and R. Yehoshua. He said to them, "My sons: arise and take me out of here. Make a coffin for me and I will lie down in it," R. Eliezer grasped its front and R. Yehoshua grasped its back. At twilight they carried him until they reached of Jerusalem. The gatekeepers said to him, "what is this?" they said to them, "it is a corpse. Do you not know that one does not leave a corpse overnight in Jerusalem?" They said to him, "if it is a corpse take it out."	וכיון שאמר להם רבן יוחנן בן זכאי יום אחד ושנים ושלשה ולא קבלו ממנו שלח וקרא לתלמידיו לרבי אליעזר ורבי יהושע אמר להם בני עמדו והוציאוני מכאן עשו לי ארון ואישן בתוכו. רבי אליעזר אחז בראשו רבי יהושע אחז ברגליו והיו מוליכין אותו עד שקיעת החמה עד שהגיעו אצל שערי ירושלים. אמרו להם השוערים מי הוא זה. אמרו להן מת הוא וכי אין אתם יודעין שאין מלינים את המת בירושלים. אמרו להן אם מת הוא הוציאוהו.
They took him out and carried him until they reached Vespasian. They opened the coffin and he stood before him. He [Vespasian] said to him, "are you Yohanan ben Zakkai? Ask, what shall I give you?" he said to him, "I ask nothing of you except that I may go to Yavneh and study with my disciples, and institute prayer there, and preform all the commandments." He said to him, "go and do everything that you wish." He [RYBZ] said to him, "would you like me to tell you something?" he said to him, "speak." He said to him, "behold you are about to become emperor." He said to him, "how do you know?" he said to him, " it is our tradition that the temple will not be delivered to the hand of a commoner but to the hand of a king, as it says, *the thickness of the forest shall be hacked away with iron, and Lebanon shall fall to the mighty one.* (Isa. 10:34)"	והוציאוהו והיו מוליכין אותו (עד שקיעת החמה) עד שהגיעו אצל אספסיינוס. פתחו הארון ועמד לפניו. אמר לו אתה הוא רבן יוחנן בן זכאי שאל מה אתן לך. אמר לו איני מבקש ממך אלא יבנה שאלך ואשנה בה לתלמידי ואקבע בה תפלה ואעשה בה כל מצות. אמר לו לך וכל מה שאתה רוצה לעשות עשה. אמר לו רצונך שאומר לפניך דבר אחד. אמר לו אמור. אמר לו הרי את עומד במלכות. [א״ל] מנין אתה יודע. אמר לו כך מסור לנו שאין בית המקדש נמסר ביד הדיוט אלא ביד מלך שנאמר ונקף סבכי היער בברזל והלבנון באדיר יפול (ישעי׳ י׳ ל״ד).
It was said: no more than one, two, or three days past before there came to him a messenger from his city that the emperor died and they voted him to be emperor.	אמרו לא היה יום אחד שנים ושלשה ימים עד שבא אליו דיופלא מעירו שמת קיסר ונמנו עליו לעמוד במלכות.
They brought him [Vespasian] a catapult and drew it up against the wall of Jerusalem. They brought him boards of cedar and he placed them in the catapult and he struck against the wall until he broke through. They brought him the head of a pig and put it in the catapult and he shot it towards the	הביאו לו קשת של זירים ותיפ״א כנגד החומה של ירושלים. הביאו לו נסרים של ארז ונתן לתוך קשת של זירים והיה מכה בהן על החומה עד שפרץ בה פירצה. הביאו ראש חזיר ונתנו לתוך קשת של זירים והיה

entrails that were on the alter. At that time Jerusalem was captured.	משליך אותו כלפי אברים שע״ג המזבח. באותה שעה נלכדה ירושלים
RYBZ was sitting and looking and shaking just as Eli sat and looked, as it says, *He found Eli sitting on a seat, waiting beside the road- his heart trembling for the ark of God* (1 Sam.4:13). When RYBZ heard that Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple burned, he tore his clothes, and his students tore their clothes, and they were sitting crying, yelling and mourning.	והיה רבן יוחנן בן זכאי יושב ומצפה וחרד כדרך שהיה עלי יושב ומצפה שנאמר והנה עלי יושב על הכסא יד דרך מצפה כי היה לבו חרד על ארון האלהים (שמואל א׳ ד׳ י״ג). כיון ששמע רבן יוחנן בן זכאי שהחריב את ירושלים ושרף את בית המקדש באש קרע בגדיו וקרעו תלמידיו את בגדיהם והיו בוכין וצועקין וסופדין:

Interestingly Josephus presents a similar motif of meeting Vespasian with himself as the protagonist:

Josephus, War III: 8.6-9

6. Now these and many the like motives did Josephus use to these men to prevent their murdering themselves; but desperation had shut their ears, as having long ago devoted themselves to die, and they were irritated at Josephus. They then ran upon him with their swords in their hands, one from one quarter, and another from another, and called him a coward, and everyone of them appeared openly as if he were ready to smite him; but he calling to one of them by name, and looking like a general to another, and taking a third by the hand, and making a fourth ashamed of himself, by praying him to forbear, and being in this condition distracted with various passions, (as he well might in the great distress he was then in,) he kept off every one of their swords from killing him, and was forced to do like such wild beasts as are encompassed about on every side, who always turn themselves against those that last touched them. Nay, some of their right hands were debilitated by the reverence they bare to their general in these his fatal calamities, and their swords dropped out of their hands; and not a few of them there were, who, when they aimed to smite him with their swords, they were not thoroughly either willing or able to do it.

7. However, in this extreme distress, he was not destitute of his usual sagacity; but trusting himself to the providence of God, he put his life into hazard [in the manner following]: "And now," said he, "since it is resolved among you that you will die, come on, let us commit our mutual deaths to determination by lot. He whom the lot falls to first, let him be killed by him that hath the second lot, and thus fortune shall make its progress through us all; nor shall any of us perish by his own right hand, for it would be unfair if, when the rest are gone, somebody should repent and save himself." This proposal appeared to them to be very just; and when he had prevailed with them to determine this matter by lots, he drew one of the lots for himself also. He who had the first lot laid his neck bare to him that had the next, as supposing that the general would die among them immediately; for they thought death, if Josephus might but die with them, was sweeter than life; yet was he with another left to the last, whether we must say it happened so by chance, or whether by the providence of God. And as he was very desirous neither to be condemned by the lot, nor, if he had been left to the last, to imbrue his right hand in the blood of his countrymen, he persuaded him to trust his fidelity to him, and to live as well as himself.

8. Thus Josephus escaped in the war with the Romans, and in this his own war with his friends, and was led by Nicanor to Vespasian. But now all the Romans ran together to see him; and as the multitude pressed one upon another about their general, there was a tumult of a various

kind; while some rejoiced that Josephus was taken, and some threatened him, and some crowded to see him very near; but those that were more remote cried out to have this their enemy put to death, while those that were near called to mind the actions he had done, and a deep concern appeared at the change of his fortune. Nor were there any of the Roman commanders, how much soever they had been enraged at him before, but relented when they came to the sight of him. Above all the rest, Titus's own valor, and Josephus's own patience under his afflictions, made him pity him, as did also the commiseration of his age, when he recalled to mind that but a little while ago he was fighting, but lay now in the hands of his enemies, which made him consider the power of fortune, and how quick is the turn of affairs in war, and how no state of men is sure; for which reason he then made a great many more to be of the same pitiful temper with himself, and induced them to commiserate Josephus. He was also of great weight in persuading his father to preserve him. However, Vespasian gave strict orders that he should be kept with great caution, as though he would in a very little time send him to Nero.

9. When Josephus heard him give those orders, he said that he had somewhat in his mind that he would willingly say to himself alone. When therefore they were all ordered to withdraw, excepting Titus and two of their friends, he said, "Thou, O Vespasian, thinkest no more than that thou hast taken Josephus himself captive; but I come to thee as a messenger of greater tidings; for had not I been sent by God to thee, I knew what was the law of the Jews in this case? and how it becomes generals to die. Dost thou send me to Nero? For why? Are Nero's successors till they come to thee still alive? Thou, O Vespasian, art Caesar and emperor, thou, and this thy son. Bind me now still faster, and keep me for thyself, for thou, O Caesar, are not only lord over me, but over the land and the sea, and all mankind; and certainly I deserve to be kept in closer custody than I now am in, in order to be punished, if I rashly affirm anything of God." When he had said this, Vespasian at present did not believe him, but supposed that Josephus said this as a cunning trick, in order to his own preservation; but in a little time he was convinced, and believed what he said to be true, God himself erecting his expectations, so as to think of obtaining the empire, and by other signs fore-showing his advancement. He also found Josephus to have spoken truth on other occasions; for one of those friends that were present at that secret conference said to Josephus, "I cannot but wonder how thou couldst not foretell to the people of Jotapata that they should be taken, nor couldst foretell this captivity which hath happened to thyself, unless what thou now sayest be a vain thing, in order to avoid the rage that is risen against thyself." To which Josephus replied, "I did foretell to the people of Jotapata that they would be taken on the forty-seventh day, and that I should be caught alive by the Romans." Now when Vespasian had inquired of the captives privately about these predictions, he found them to be true, and then he began to believe those that concerned himself. Yet did he not set Josephus at liberty from his hands, but bestowed on him suits of clothes, and other precious gifts; he treated him also in a very obliging manner, and continued so to do, Titus still joining his interest ill the honors that were done him.

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