

CURRENT TALMUD PASSAGE

"A TALMUD TALE" PREMIERED FEBRUARY IN HOUSTON, TX!

The musical was an enormous hit! If you'd like a dvd of the show, please send a [contribution](#) of \$18 for an enjoyable, entertaining and inspiring look at the world of the Talmud!

Posted February 8, 2008, by Rabbi Judy Abrams. Please refer to Maqom's home page for information about previous passages.

BH

NON-JEWISH LEADERS WHO LIKE JEWS

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As we continue our year of Yerushalmi, we find in our passage that some non-Jewish authorities actually had respect, understanding and admiration for Jews.

Rabbi Yochanan was sitting and reciting before a congregation of Babylonians in Sepphoris. An secular official passed by but Rabbi Yochanan did not stand up for him. The official's guards made to strike Rabbi Yochanan, but the official said, "Let him be! He is busy paying homage to his creator"²

Rabbi Chaninah and Rabbi Joshua ben Levi went before the proconsul of Caesarea. When he saw them he stood up. His courtiers said to him, "Why do you stand up for these Jews?" He said to them, "I saw in them the faces of angels."

Rabbi Jonah and Rabbi Yose went before the governor in Antioch. When he saw them he stood up. His courtiers said to him, "Why do you stand up for these Jews?" He said, "I see their faces in a vision when I go out to battle and on account of that vision I am victorious." (Y. Berachot 5:1)

These vignettes are particularly interesting because we are generally taught that the secular (Roman) leaders of the land of Israel hated the Jews. Yet here, we find evidence that they respected Jewish religion and individuals and attributed victory to them!

Discussion Questions:

1. Who do you imagine this congregation of Babylonians in Sepphoris was? Tourists? Olim? And who do you imagine was this secular official who respected Jews' prayers?
2. Why do you think the non-Jews saw the faces of angels and victory in battle?