

Intermediate Talmud

Tractate Berachot: Chapter 7, folio 45b

Lesson Six

With Rabbi Mendel Kaplan

Judah b. Meremar and Mar son of R. Ashi and R. Acha from Difti took a meal with one another. No one of them was superior to the other that he should have the privilege of saying grace. They said: Where the Mishnah learnt that IF THREE PERSONS HAVE EATEN TOGETHER IT IS THEIR DUTY TO INVITE [ONE ANOTHER TO SAY GRACE], this is only where one of them is superior [to the others], but where they are all on a level, perhaps it is better that the blessings should be separate. They thus said [the grace] each one for himself. Thereupon they came before Meremar and he said to them: You have performed the obligation of grace, but you have not performed the obligation of zimmun. Should you say, let us start again with zimmun, zimmun cannot be said out of its place.

If one came and found three persons saying grace, what does he say after them? — R. Zevid says: Blessed and to be blessed [be His Name]. R. Papa said: He answers, Amen. They are not really at variance; the one speaks of the case where he found them saying 'Let us say grace', and the other where he found them saying 'Blessed'. If he found them saying 'Let us say grace', he answers 'Blessed and to be blessed'; if he found them saying 'Blessed', he answers 'Amen'.

One [Baraita] taught: One who answers 'Amen' after his own blessings is to be commended, while another taught that this is reprehensible! — There is no contradiction: the one speaks of the benediction 'who builds Jerusalem', the other of the other benedictions. Abaye used to give the response in a loud voice so that the workmen should hear and rise, since the benediction 'Who is good and does good' is not prescribed by the Torah. R. Ashi gave the response in a low voice, so that they should not come to think lightly of the benediction 'Who is good and does good'.