

Intermediate Talmud

Tractate Berachot: Chapter 7, folio 47b

Lesson Sixteen

With Rabbi Mendel Kaplan

R. Yosi said: An infant in the cradle may be counted for zimmun. But we have learnt: WOMEN SLAVES AND CHILDREN MAY NOT BE COUNTED? — He adopts the view of R. Yehoshua b. Levi. For R. Yehoshua b. Levi said: Although it was laid down that an infant in a cradle cannot be counted for zimmun, yet he can be counted to make up ten. R. Yehoshua b. Levi also said: Nine and a slave may be joined [to make up ten]. The following was cited in objection: Once R. Eliezer entered a synagogue and not finding there ten he liberated his slave and used him to complete the ten. This was because he liberated him, otherwise he could not have done so? — He really required two, and he liberated one and one he used to make up the ten. But how could he act so seeing that R. Yehudah has said: If one liberates his slave he transgresses a positive precept, since it says, they shall be your bondmen forever? — If it is for a religious purpose. It is different. But this is a religious act which is carried out by means of a transgression? — A religious act which affects a whole company is different.

R. Yehoshua b. Levi also said: A man should always rise early to go to synagogue so that he may have the merit of being counted in the first ten; since if even a hundred come after him he receives the reward of all of them. 'The reward of all of them', say you? — Say rather: He is given a reward equal to that of all of them.

R. Huna said: Nine and the Ark join together [to be counted as ten]. Said R. Nachman to him: Is the Ark a man? I mean, said R. Huna, that when nine look like ten, they may be joined together. Some say [this means] when they are all close together, others say when they are scattered. R. Ammi said: Two and the Sabbath may be joined together. Said R. Nachman to him: Is the Sabbath a man? What R. Ammi really said was that two scholars who sharpen one another in the knowledge of the *halachah* may count as three [for zimmun]. R. Chisda gave an example: For instance, I and R. Sheshet. R. Sheshet gave an example: For instance, I and R. Chisda.