

## Intermediate Talmud

Tractate Berachot: Chapter 7, folio 47b-48a

Lesson Seventeen

With Rabbi Mendel Kaplan

**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.

**R. Yochanan said:** A boy [who has reached puberty] before his years may be counted for zimmun. It has been taught similarly: A boy who has grown two hairs may be counted for zimmun, but if he has not grown two hairs he may not be counted; and we are not particular about a boy. Now this seems to contain a contradiction. You first say that if he has grown two hairs he may count and if not he may not, and then you say, We are not particular with a boy. What case does this include? Is it not to include a boy who shows signs of puberty before his years? The law, however, is not as laid down in all these statements, but as in this statement of R. Nachman: A boy who knows to whom the benediction is addressed may be counted for zimmun. Abaye and Raba [when boys] were once sitting in the presence of Rabbah. Said Rabbah to them: To whom do we address the benedictions? They replied: To the All-Merciful. And where does the All-Merciful abide? Raba pointed to the roof; Abaye went outside and pointed to the sky. Said Rabbah to them: Both of you will become Rabbis. This accords with the popular saying: Every pumpkin can be told from its stalk.