

Teaching a minor to pray

A minor is also obligated to pray every day. One cannot teach every child who is seven or eight years old to pray three times a day. There are some laymen who pray at *netz* every day, and this is a very praiseworthy thing, but children are generally sleep a little later. It would be better for a father to forgo on praying at *netz*, and instead, he should pray a little later and bring his child along to pray with him. Praying at *netz* is only a *mitzvah min hamuvchar* (*Shulchan Aruch*, beginning of *Siman* 89), and teaching one's child to pray is more important. After the children grow up, then one can go back to praying at *netz* every morning. When I was young, from the time that we knew how to read, Maran zt"l would bring us along to all of the *tefillot*. He would not pray at *netz* every day, even though there was a *netz* minyan in the neighborhood. We would sit next to him during every *tefillah*, and he would show us the place in the siddur. Some people claim that it is better nowadays to allow the child to sleep, even if the child is nine or ten years old. I don't understand this; there is an obligation to teach one's children about the mitzvot, and one should explain to the child the importance of praying every day. One should also encourage him by offering him prizes if he comes to the *tefillot*. It is common in many synagogues to give candies to the children who recite "*Yimloch*" at the beginning of *Shacharit*, and this is a good way of encouraging them to attend the *tefillot*. The *Rambam* also discusses the importance of encouraging the children with sweets and prizes (*Perush Mishnayot, Sanhedrin*, introduction to *Perek Chelek*). One should give the child prizes that are appropriate to his age. When he is young, one should give him candy, and when he gets a little older, one should offer him nice things such as a new suit, or sefarim. By doing it with an incentive, he will eventually learn to pray without any incentive – *mitoch shelo lishma, ba lishma* (*Pesachim* 50b).

Chinuch in Rabbinical mitzvot

*Petach HaDevir*³ (219:6) says that there is no obligation of *chinuch* (teaching one's child to perform mitzvot) in mitzvot that are Rabbinical obligations. The *Rishonim* debate the obligation of *chinuch* regarding Rabbinical prohibitions. According to *Rashba* (*Shabbat* 121a) and *Ran* (Beginning of *Yoma*), one is not obligated to prevent a child from violating a Rabbinical prohibition, but according to the *Rambam* (*Ma'achalot Assurot* 17:27), one is obligated. The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Siman* 343) rules like the *Rambam*.

Magen Avraham (343:2) disagrees with this, and he says that one is obligated to be *mechanech* one's child even in Rabbinical mitzvot. He proves this from the *Gemara* (*Berachot* 20a-20b) that says that children are obligated to pray, and according to the *Ramban* (*Sefer Hamitzvot, Mitzvah* 5) and *Tosafot* (*Berachot* 20b "*Tefillah*"), the obligation of praying is only a Rabbinical obligation, unless one is pained or is in need (*ba'et tzara*), then it is a Biblical obligation to pray. For example, if one hears that soldiers are being attacked or are fighting, this is considered a need, and according to the *Ramban* and *Tosafot*, there is a Biblical obligation to pray for them, as the *pasuk* (*Bamidbar* 10:9) says, "[When you go out to war... against] an enemy who attacks you and you sound the trumpets...." Otherwise, all other daily *tefillot* are only considered a Rabbinical obligation. Nevertheless, we see that the *Mishnah* obligates children to pray every day. Even though the *Rambam* holds that praying once a day is a Biblical obligation, even when there is no war or need, it seems that the *Mishnah* nevertheless implies that a child is obligated to pray all three *tefillot* every day, and not just once a day. *Shulchan Aruch* (106:2) also says children who have reached the age of *chinuch* are obligated to pray, and he does not differentiate between which *tefillot*. Thus, it seems that the *Rishonim* obligated even children to fulfill Rabbinical mitzvot.

Also regarding Chanukah, Ashkenazim have the custom that all of the boys in the home light their own menorah. The *Rama* (675:3) and *Levush* state that a child should also light the Chanukah menorah even though it is only a Rabbinical mitzvah. *Shulchan Aruch* (657:1) says that a father is obligated to teach his child how to shake the *Arba Minim*. *Chida* (*Birkei Yosef* 657:3) says that this applies even to Chol HaMoed, when shaking the *Arba Minim* is only

3 Rabbi Chaim Binyamin Pontrimoli, Av Bet Din of Izmir (1800-1873). He sat on the same Bet Din as Rabbi Chaim Palagi. This sefer is a wonderful sefer. He wrote at length, and explains himself thoroughly, this is unlike many Ashkenazic poskim such as the *Gra* or the *Chazon Ish*, who do not explain their rulings at length. This is because he wrote this sefer for regular people to use.

a Rabbinical obligation (see also *Yalkut Yosef, Arbaat HaMinim*, p. 625). This is also the ruling of the *Pri Megadim* (*M.Z.* 657:1). A child is also obligated to recite *Birkat Hamazon* if he ate a *kezayit* of bread, even if he is not fully satiated by it. I remember that when I was a child, Maran zt"l would come home and he would ask us if we prayed *Minchah* or *Arvit*, and if we had forgotten to pray *Minchah*, he would obligate us to pray *Arvit* twice. We see from all of these poskim that one is obligated to train a child to fulfill even Rabbinical mitzvot, and teach them to pray three times a day.

Praying Shacharit until chatzot

In the previous shiur, we mentioned that one is able to pray *Shacharit* until *chatzot*. *Lechatchilah*, one should not pray the *Amidah* later than *zman tefillah* (which is until the fourth halachic hour of the day, calculated from *netz hachamah*). If one accidentally overslept, *Magen Avraham* (63:8) says that one is able to pray until *chatzot*.⁴ If one missed *zman tefillah* out of negligence, then one should pray the *Amidah* with a *tenai nedavah*, but only until *chatzot*. The *Shulchan Aruch* (89:1) says that if one accidentally missed the fourth hour of the day without praying, even though one misses out on the reward of praying at the proper time, nevertheless, one still gets reward for praying. Its almost as if one is "paid" less for praying at a later time. This is the ruling of the *Rif*, *Rambam*, and *Rosh*. It seems from the *Bet Yosef* that if one missed praying at the proper time, it is permitted even *lechatchilah* to pray until *chatzot*. This also implied by the *Rambam*, *Sefer HaMe'orot* (*Berachot* 26a), and *Meiri*.

There is a certain sefer that says if one missed praying *Shacharit* because of negligence, it is prohibited for him to pray after the fourth hour. This is also the ruling of *Siddur Rav Saadya Gaon* (p. 31), *Ra'avan* (*Berachot* 167), *Rashbatz* (*Berachot*, beginning of ch. 4), *Gra* (*Imrei Noam, Berachot* 26a), *Rishon Letzion* (*Berachot* 28a), and *Erech HaShulchan* (89:2). According to these opinions, it seems that it is better to apply *safek berachot lehakel*, even against the ruling of the *Shulchan Aruch*. He also asks why *Yabia Omer* (vol. 9, 108:57), who permits praying until *chatzot*, wasn't stringent for these *Rishonim* as well. This is a strong question!

As a side note, when I said that one should pray a *tefillah nedavah*, I did not mean to exclude Shabbat, since on Shabbat one cannot pray a *tefillah nedavah*. I actually meant that one can also pray until *chatzot* on Shabbat. If this is so, why am I not concerned with *safek berachot lehakel*?

I found that the *Chida* says (*Chayim Sha'al* 2:38) that the *minhag* follows the ruling of the *Shulchan Aruch*, and we do not apply the rule of *safek berachot lehakel* in matters of *minhag*. Furthermore, one who misses praying until *chatzot*, is even obligated to pray *Minchah* twice as *tashlumin* for missing *Shacharit*, and there is no concern of reciting a *berachah levatalah*. This is the case even if one missed praying because of negligence.⁵

Furthermore, the *Gemara* (*Berachot* 21a) says that *Tefillah* is considered "*Rachame*" – asking for mercy, and if it were possible, one should really pray all day since one always needs mercy. The *Chachamim* limited this to praying only three times a day. Therefore, if one did not pray before the fourth hour of the day, he should pray after the fourth hour with a *tenai nedavah*, since it is still incumbent on the person to pray if he did not pray yet.

One who is unsure if he prayed

A similar halachah is found regarding one who is unsure if he prayed *Minchah* or not. For example, if a person generally prays at *Minchah Gedolah*, and then as a result of some disturbance in his schedule, he forgot if he prayed or not. The *Shulchan Aruch* (107:1) says that if one is unsure if he prayed, he is obligated to pray again and he does not need to add any new request in his prayers. However, if one is sure that he prayed, and wants to pray again, he must add an extra request in his prayers (such as adding an extra prayer for a

4 After *zman tefillah*, one cannot recite *Birchot Keriat Shema*. In such a case, one should only recite *Birchot hashachar*, *Birchot haTorah*, *Baruch She'amar*, *pesukei d'zimra*, *Yishtabach*, the paragraphs of *Shema*, and then the *Amidah*. I originally asked Maran zt"l if it was permitted to recite the *berachot* of *Baruch she'amar* and *Yishtabach* after *zman tefillah*, and he was unsure. Later, I wrote in *Yalkut Yosef* (89:5) that it is permitted to recite these *berachot* until *chatzot*.

5 *Ohr LeTzion* (vol. 2, p. 72) says that one who prays after the fourth hour is considered like he is praying a form of "*tashlumin*," and in such a case, if one is praying with a minyan, one should omit the *chazarat hashatz*. However, *Yabia Omer* argues on this, and he says that it is considered a regular obligation until *chatzot*.

need in *Shema Kolenu*). The *Shulchan Aruch* did not specify which *tefillah* he is discussing. It could be that he is referring to a person who had prayed *Shacharit* that day, and has fulfilled his Biblical obligation of praying, and then he is unsure if he also prayed *Minchah*, which is only a Rabbinical obligation. If so, why don't we apply the rule of *safek d'rabbanan lekulah* – we should rule leniently in a case of a doubtful Rabbinical obligation? According to what I explained, this makes sense; the *Gemara* says that *Tefillah* is considered *rachamei* (asking for mercy), and technically, if it would be practical, one should pray all day since we always need Heavenly mercy. The Chachamim came along and limited the times of praying, and obligated one to pray only three times a day since it is impractical to obligate a person to pray all day long. Therefore, in a case where one is unsure if he prayed or not, it would be better to pray again and not assume that he prayed already, and revert back to the original notion of the *Gemara* that ideally one should really be praying all day. We see from here, that we do not apply the rule of *safek berachot lehakel* regarding one who is unsure if he prayed, and this should also be case when one missed praying after the fourth hour, and we should allow to pray until *chatzot*.

Reciting a tefillah nedavah

Nowadays, one should not pray a *tefillah nedavah* for no specific reason. The *pasuk* (*Yeshaya* 1:11) says, "Why do I need most of your sacrifices?" which is referring to people who donate many *korbanot*, but do not have any intention to do *teshuvah* for their sins. As we know, our *tefillot* are said in place of bringing a *korban*, and reciting a *tefillah nedavah* is like one brought a *korban nedavah*. Therefore, if one does not have proper *kavanah* when he is praying his *tefillah nedavah*, it would have been better not to pray at all. Thus, since it is very difficult to have complete concentration when one is praying, it is better not to pray a *tefillah nedavah* for no reason.⁶ If only we could succeed in concentrating on our regular *tefillot*!

Chayei Adam (27:17) says that nowadays, one should not even pray a *tefillah nedavah* if he is unsure if he prayed or not. He explains that because of all of the different distractions that there are nowadays, it is impossible for one to have proper *kavanah* when he is praying.

Regarding a *tefillah nedavah*, the *Teshuvot HaRosh* (4:9) says that according to the *Rif*, one should pray a *tefillah nedavah* if he is doing so fulfill a doubtful obligation, such as if he is unsure if he prayed or not, but one should not pray an extra prayer just for the reason that one wants to pray again. Therefore, the *Rosh* says that when praying a *tefillah nedavah*, he should add something to his prayers, so that it is different than his original prayer, and one can only do so if he knows for a fact that he will be able to have proper *kavanah* throughout the entire prayer.⁷ Even though the *Chayei Adam* says that one should not recite a *tefillah nedavah* even in a case of doubt, our custom follows the ruling of the *Shulchan Aruch* who says that one should pray a *tefillah nedavah* in such a situation. When praying a *tefillah nedavah*, one should try his best to concentrate at least during the first *berachah* of the *Amidah*.

Kedushah

There are some people who skip the *chazarat hashatz*, and they only recite *Kedushah*. Meaning to say that one person recites the *Amidah* out loud until the *berachah* of *Mechayeh Metim*, and then the minyan says *Kedushah* together, and then the *chazzan* continues out loud until after the *berachah* of *Atah Kadosh*. After this, the rest of the minyan continues to pray the rest of the *Amidah* quietly. The custom of Ashkenazim is that the *chazzan* starts the *Amidah* by himself, and the minyan only begins praying their personal *Amidah* after the *chazzan* finishes the *berachah* of *HaE-I haKadosh*, and they answer *Baruch Hu u'baruch Shemo* and amen to his *berachot*. Sephardim, on the other hand, begin the *Amidah* along with the *chazzan*, and read along with him quietly, without answering *Baruch Hu...* or amen to the *berachot* of the *chazzan*. If one does like

6 There is a certain "tzaddeket," who decided to pray at netz every morning, and then she would wait for the next minyan and pray again with a *tefillah nedavah*. Her husband asked me what he should do since his wife neglects her obligations to him at home every morning, and he would much rather her prepare him breakfast so that he can eat something before going to Kollel. I told him that he should take her to a psychiatrist since this is not normal.

7 There are many great siddurim available that have explanations of the *kavanah* that one needs to have when praying, such as what I wrote in *Siddur Chazon Ovadia*, on *Arvit*, which I wrote with Rabbi Mansour Ben-Shimon. One can also use a *Siddur Kavanat HaLev*, which also has a very nice commentary.

the Ashkenazim, then the *chazzan* essentially loses out on praying the *Amidah* along with the minyan, since he started before them. This is why Sephardim begin along with the *chazzan*, and for this reason, it seems that our custom is preferable.

Answering to the chazarat hashatz

Answering amen to the *chazarat hashatz* is not a requirement to validate the *chazarat hashatz*. The *Shulchan Aruch* (124:4) says that if there are not nine people who are answering to the *berachot* of the *chazzan*, "it is close to be being considered like the *berachot* have been made in vain." He says that "it is close," but does not say that the *berachot* have actually been made in vain. *Shulchan Aruch* (55:6) also says regarding *Kaddish* that one can include someone who is praying or sleeping to be part of the minyan, provided that most of the minyan are answering amen to the *Kaddish*. Therefore, on the night of *Shavuot*, if one sees that some of the people are sleeping when one is reciting *Kaddish*, it is permitted to continue reciting *Kaddish* even though not everyone is answering. Some poskim draw a distinction between the obligation of *Kaddish* and that of the *Chazarat haShatz*, but it seems that the *Shulchan Aruch* did not hold of this distinction since he implies that the *berachot* are not considered *levatalah* even if nine people are not answering. Rather, the *Shulchan Aruch* is simply stressing the importance of paying attention to the *Chazarat haShatz*.

When reciting a *Kedushah* without a *chazarat hashatz*, there is no need to have anyone answer amen to the *chazzan* since everyone is reciting the *Amidah* along with him, and it is still considered *tefillah betzibbur*.

Praying along with the chazzan

According to the *Chattam Sofer* (*Likutei Chattam Sofer, Siman* 4), one fulfills *tefillah betzibbur* if he prays along with the *chazzan*. He learns this from the *Rambam* (*Tefillah* 8:4). There is a certain person who I know who always prays along with the *chazzan* since he generally prays very slowly and only reaches the *Amidah* once the *chazzan* starts the *chazarat hashatz*.⁸ If the *chazzan* prays very quickly, one does not need to follow with him for the entire *Amidah*, and it suffices to begin with the *chazzan* until after *HaE-I haKadosh*. Preferably, one should try to recite the entire *Amidah* with the *chazzan*, and should only do this if one is late.

Starting the chazarat hashatz

How many people are required to begin the *chazarat hashatz*? If there are six people who have finished praying (other than the *chazzan*), and there are three others who have not yet finished praying,⁹ one is not obligated to wait for them to finish praying (assuming that there are no others who will be imminently finishing) it is permitted to begin the *chazarat hashatz*. In cases of need, this can be done even *lechatchilah*, since the halachah follows the *Shulchan Aruch* who implies that it is permitted to have less than nine people answering to the *chazarat hashatz*. The halachah is similar to *Kaddish*, where at least six people answering is required.

Reciting a tefillah nedavah when one is very disturbed

As I mentioned, nowadays we generally do not recite a *tefillah nedavah* without any reason. Only in cases such as if one is unsure if he prayed or not, then he should pray a *tefillah nedavah*.

Starting next week we will begin discussing the laws of Chanukah. One of the halachot pertaining to Chanukah is that one who forgot to recite *Al HaNissim* in the *Amidah*, does not have to repeat the *Amidah*. However, if a person is very disturbed by this, since he feels like his *tefillah* was incomplete, and he really wants to pray a *tefillah nedavah*, then he can. Likewise, one who forgot to say *Yaaleh veyavo* on the night of *Rosh Chodesh*, he is permitted to repeat the *Amidah* again with a *tefillah nedavah*, even though he is not obligated to do so. In this case, it is not considered like one is praying a *tefillah nedavah* for no reason, even though he has no obligation to do so.

Having kavanah

8 This person doesn't skip anything, and he say all of the *Korbanot*. Especially now, it is very important to recite all of the *Korbanot*, particularly the *Ketoret*, which is a *segulah* for protection.

9 There some people who think that they are some sort of Chassidic Rebbe and they read lists and lists of people who they are praying for in *Shema Kolenu*. I know someone who reads the entire *Tehillim* before finishing *Elokai Netzor*. *Kol Hakavod* to him, but this is not a reason to keep the entire minyan waiting.

A person who does not have any kavanah when he is praying is like one who has a body without a soul (see *Chovot HaLevavot*, *Cheshbon HaNefesh* 3:9). The *Rambam* (*Tefillah* 4:15) says: "Any prayer that is not [recited] with proper intention is not prayer. If one prays without proper intention, he must repeat his prayers with proper intention." Nowadays, there are many different distractions and things that can disturb a person's concentration. These things were not prevalent in the previous generations.¹⁰ If not having *kavanah* for one's prayer is considered like one has not prayed at all, wouldn't it be better not to pray at all, and avoid reciting a possible *berachah levatalah*?

Rabbi Chaim Soleveichik discusses this question, and he points out that it seems like there is a contradiction in the *Rambam*. From this *Rambam* it seems that one who does not have *kavanah* throughout the entire *Amidah* does not fulfill his obligation, but later on, in Chapter 10:1, the *Rambam* says: "A person who prayed without concentrating [on his prayers] must pray a second time with concentration. However, if he had concentrated during the first blessing, nothing more is necessary." This implies that having *kavanah* is only a requirement for the first part of the *Amidah* and not the entire thing.

Teshuvot Yad Elyahu (*Pesakim* 8:3) says that according to this *Rambam*, if one did not have proper intention during the first *berachah* of the *Amidah*, he should finish the entire *Amidah*, so that all of his subsequent *berachot* are not considered *berachot levatalah*, and then recite the *Amidah* again. This seems strange, since if one is concerned that he did not fulfill his obligation of the first *berachah*, then it will make all of his subsequent *berachot* be considered to be *levatalah* as well since they are all connected?

Therefore, Rav Chaim Soleveichik explains that there are two types of *kavanah*: The first *kavanah* must be done even before praying, which entails thinking that one is standing before Hashem. This *kavanah* is required, and without this *kavanah*, ones *Amidah* is considered invalid. This is what the *Rambam* is referring to in 4:16, when he says, "What is meant by [proper] intention? One should clear his mind from all thoughts and envision himself as standing before the Divine Presence." The second type of "*kavanah*" is referring to understanding the meaning of the words, and this is only required during the first *berachah* and not for the rest of the *Amidah*.

Maran zt"l did not agree with this reasoning,¹¹ and he writes (*Yabia Omer*, vol. 3, O.C. 8:1) that the *kavanah* of thinking that one is standing in front of Hashem is not a requirement throughout the entire *tefillah*. He says that the *Talmud Yerushalmi* (*Berachot* 2:4) says that there were Amora'im who claimed that they did not have proper *kavanah* when they were praying. He explains that it could

10 When Maran zt"l would hear that a person was ill, he would sit with the person and cry with him. Not everyone is as sensitive as Maran zt"l was, but hearing bad news can seriously disturb one's concentration.

11 Maran zt"l cites Rabbi Chaim of Brisk many times throughout *Yabia Omer* (vol. 1, O.C. 21:3; vol. 3, O.C. 23:3, and others), and we see that he had learned this sefer. It is very important to learn sefarim that speak about "lamdut", such as *Ketzot HaChoshen*, *Netivot HaMishpat*, or *Chiddushei Rav Chaim HaLevi*. I have mentioned many times that Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank (*Shevivei Ohr*, p. 52-54) says that every person who is still learning how to learn Torah should study the *Ketzot HaChoshen*, *Netivot*, and *Bet HaLevi*. Even though Rabbi Frank was a posek, he still felt that learning the sefarim that teach analytical skill were crucial for one's growth in Torah learning. A person needs to learn b'iyun. I see many sefarim who only cite different opinions, and it is clear that these people have never learned sefarim such as the *Ketzot ha-Choshen* and exercised their minds to think analytically.

When I was a young yeshiva student, about 17-18 years old, Rabbi Rachamim Nehori (the Av Bet Din of Paris) came to visit the Yeshiva, and I was asked to deliver a *devar Torah* during a breakfast that was made in his honor. I told over this *Rav Chaim*, and he told me that he disagrees, and he brought many proofs against *Rav Chaim*. I was a young bachur, and I didn't comprehend how someone could so brazenly argue on *Rav Chaim*. I tried arguing with him, and as we were speaking he said, "You know what? Why don't you call your father, and ask him if he agrees with me?" I wasn't left with any choice, so I picked up the phone and called Maran zt"l to ask him what his opinion was. Immediately upon hearing about the *Rav Chaim* that I was speaking about, Maran zt"l said, "Tell Rabbi Nehori that he is right! I wrote a lengthy teshuvah about this that I have not yet published, and I came to the same conclusion." I later saw that the *Chazon Ish* argues on *Rav Chaim* on this point as well.

It is permitted to argue in matters of halachah, as long as one does so with respect and with proper research. One should not argue with ulterior motives. If one does things *leshem Shamayim*, then he will have *Siata DiShmaya*.

not be possible for Amora'im to not have fulfilled their obligation of praying,¹² and they must have been referring to not having *kavanah* throughout the rest of the *Amidah*, but it is obvious that they had *kavanah* for the first *berachah*. Some *Rishonim* say that this was referring to the entire *Amidah*, but the *Charedim* (commentary to *Yerushalmi*) explains that there is no doubt that such holy *Chachamim* always had *kavanah* when they were praying. The *Gemara* means to say that they would have thoughts of other Torah subject as they were praying since they were always so immersed in their learning. In such as case, it would be considered something that was beyond their control, and they were not held liable for thinking about Torah while they were praying.

Reciting chazarat hashatz in Yeshivah

There are some yeshivot who do not recite a full *chazarat hashatz* during *Minchah*, since the *bachurim* and the *rabbanim* are too involved in their learning, it is too difficult for them to properly concentrate on the *chazzan's berachot*. Maran zt"l (*Yechaveh Daat* 3:16) was against this, and he writes that even Yeshivot should recite the *chazarat hashatz* and everyone should pay close attention to the *chazzan*, as the *Shulchan Aruch* (124:4) states.

Donning one's tefillin Rabbenu Tam during the chazarat hashatz

There are some people who put on the *tefillin* of Rabbenu Tam while the *chazzan* is reciting the *chazarat hashatz*. This is not proper for several reasons. Firstly, one should preferably remain standing throughout the *chazarat hashatz*. Only someone who is weak, who finds it difficult to remain standing, can sit down. Since Sephardim are particular to sit when donning the *tefillin shel yad*, this should not be done during the *chazarat hashatz*. Furthermore, when one is involved in putting on his *tefillin*, it is difficult to concentrate on answering amen to the *berachot* of the *chazzan*. Another issue is that even though it is permitted to answer amen to a *berachah* that one hears as one is putting on his *tefillin* of Rabbenu Tam, this should not be done *lechatchilah*. *Pri Megadim* (*M.Z.* 34:2) decries the custom of those who take off their *Rashi tefillin* and then put on *Rabbenu Tam tefillin* during the *chazarat hashatz*, and he says that those who do so are not acting in accordance with halachah. (See *Yabia Omer*, vol. 3, O.C. 4)

Learning during the chazarat hashatz

A person should not learn Torah during the *chazarat hashatz*. Maran zt"l was constantly learning Torah, and when he was told that it was time to pray *Minchah*, he would sigh and begrudgingly close his sefarim and go down to *Minchah*. Even on his way down to *Minchah*, I could see how he was still thinking about what he was learning, and I could not speak to him about anything else. Nevertheless, when he would begin praying, he would completely focus on praying, and he would never skip the *chazarat hashatz*. There were times when he would open the cover of a book to see what it was about or to see who wrote it, but other than that, he would never open and learn a sefer during the *chazarat hashatz*. This is especially true when a *talmid chacham* is praying with laymen; he needs to serve as an example, and pay close attention to the *chazarat hashatz* and answer amen.

Keep praying!

We have to keep praying for the situation in Israel. If saying *Avinu Malkenu* every day is difficult for the *tzibbur*, they can skip it now since it has already been more than a month and a half since the war has begun. However, one should not stop saying *Tehillim* every day and praying. The soldiers are risking their lives for us and we have to pray for them! Before learning, one should accept upon himself that he will not interrupt his learning, and one should learn from 9 – 1 o'clock without interruption. This should be done for the merit and protection of all of the soldiers and people who have been injured and kidnapped. We have to care and share in the pain of others. This merit of this shiur should also be a merit for the soldiers and the security forces so that they should all return healthy and safely. *Amen ve'amen!*

12 The *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 65b) says that Rava made a Golem. This is similar to the story of Golem of Prague. Some say that it never happened, but I wrote in *Shulchan HaMaarechet* (*Alef*, 39) that it really happened. The *Gemara* also says that Rabbi Chanina and Rav Oshiya would create a calf every erev Shabbat. They did this by using the *Sefer Yetzira*. Just imagine if someone would do this in Binyanei HaUma, and show everyone how he created a real calf out of dirt! It would make everyone do teshuvah! It is hard to imagine the great level of spirituality that the Amora'im were on.