

HALOCHOSCOPE

Congregation Shaaray Tefilah, Pittsburgh, PA

This week's (!) question:

If the date for the beginning of *She'ayla*, mentioning Vesayn Tal Umatar in Shemone Esrei, is on Motzoei Shabbos, may one "practice" saying it on Shabbos?

The issues:

- (A) *She'ayla*, saying Vesayn Tal Umatar, and when it begins.
- (B) How does one "practice" and how does this help?
- (C) *Hachana*, *Dibur Chol*, *Innu*, preparation, mundane talk, self-affliction.

(A) Vesayn Tal Umatar

The ninth Brocha of Shemone Esrei, Bareich Aleynu, is a prayer for material abundance, specifically the success of the crops, our food-source. For the true success of their growth, the rain must come at the right time. We, therefore, ask Hashem for rain in the rainy season, but not during the rest of the year. In Eretz Yisroel, where there are not that many rivers, the primary water source is the rainfall during the winter months. Therefore, as soon as the harvest is in and there is no risk of any harm to the crop, we may begin asking for rain. Since the harvest season ends with Succos, and those who had gone to Yerushalayim for the pilgrimage when the Bais-Hamikdosh stood needed time to get home before the roads were waterlogged, this was delayed for two weeks until the seventh of Cheshvan. In Bavel, which was on a lower elevation and could therefore be sustained for a longer period by the collected water in its rivers, they only began praying for rain later in the season. The time given in the Talmud is the sixtieth day of the Tekufa. The *Tekufa*, season, begins at the autumnal equinox, and is dated according to the sun's cycle rather than that of the moon. This means that even regarding Halacha, one does not use the Jewish calendar to determine the Tekufa, but the secular. Each season lasts for a quarter of a year- about ninety-one days and four hours. Sixty full days are counted from the beginning of the fall season, Tekufas Tishrei, and on day sixty we begin saying Vesayn Tal Umatar in Bareich Aleynu. Using our present-day Gregorian calendar, this always falls on the fifth or sixth of December, this century. We begin mentioning, *Vesayn Tal Umatar*, "And Please provide rain", in Bareich Aleynu, at Ma'ariv, the evening before.

Although today there is sadly no Succos pilgrimage to a Bais Hamikdosh, neither do we live in Bavel, these dates are observed, both the seventh of Cheshvan in Israel and the fifth or sixth of December in the whole Galus. [See Taanis 10a Rashi, Rosh, Ran, commentaries Poskim Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 117.]

If one mentions Tal Umatar at the wrong time of year, or omits it during the rain season, he has not fulfilled his Shemone Esrei obligation. Unless he is still able to rectify the situation, which depends on various factors, he must repeat Shemone Esrei. If, at the beginning of the rain season, one is unsure whether or not he mentioned Tal Umatar, we assume that he did not mention it, since he probably had not yet settled into saying it habitually. However, later in the season, when he is already used to saying it, we give him the benefit of the doubt and assume that he probably said it.

(B) "Practice"

Although the case of *Sofeik*, a doubt, about having mentioned Tal Umatar is not addressed directly by the Poskim, it is comparable to the mention of Mashiv Haruach Umorid Hageshem earlier in the Shemone Esrei. This phrase is mentioned during the winter beginning on Shemini Atzeres in the Brocha of Mechalkel Chaim. There, the time that must elapse before one may assume that he is used to saying it the "new" way is thirty days. There are two ways to understand this: One could say that a thirty day period is enough time to settle into a routine. Or one could say that over a thirty day period one repeats these words so many times that it becomes habitual. According to the second view, one must repeat Mashiv Haruach ninety times, which is the number of Shemone Esreis over a thirty day period (or ninety-five if we count the Musaf Shemone Esrei of Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh). (Applying this to Tal Umatar would mean that thirty-four days must elapse in order to be sure that one is saying it automatically because on the four Shabbosos Tal Umatar is not mentioned in Shemone Esrei [See Darkei Moshe O.C. 114:2])

In accordance with the second view, one could practice saying Tal Umatar by repeating part of the Brocha Mechalkel Chaim including these words, ninety times. One would start with the words Rav Lehoshia... Mashiv Haruach etc. Thus, whenever one finds oneself saying Rav Lehoshia, one automatically continues with Mashiv Haruach. This can be done before the thirty days are up, even on the first day of the change-over, Shemini Atzeres. [See Yerushalmi Taanis 1:1. Tur and Sh. Ar. O.C. 114:8-9. commentaries.]

Similarly, one could practice saying Tal Umatar by repeating part of Bareich Aleynu beginning with Ve'es Kol Minei Sevuasa... Vesayn Tal Umatar. [See Mishne Berurah 114:40.]

The consensus of most Poskim is to follow the second view, that practicing these words does help eliminate the *Sofeik* before the thirty days are up. [See Biur Halacha end 114.]

(C) Hachana

Preparations may not be made on Shabbos for after Shabbos; this is called *Hachana*. In addition, one may not speak about weekday activities on Shabbos; this is learnt from the passuk, *Mimtzo Cheftzecha Vedaber Davar*, ..from seeking your affairs and talking [about the mundane]... [See Halochosepe Vol. 1 Nos 7, 18, 30. for references.] Accordingly, may one practice saying Tal Umatar on Shabbos when the fifth or sixth of December is on the following day? Since one does not need to say it on Shabbos, does this constitute Hachana? Furthermore, since we do not say this part of Shemone Esrei on Shabbos, but it is part of the weekday Tefilah, *She'aylas Tzrochav*, which concerns mundane matters, may one spend his time on Shabbos saying Tal Umatar? To further complicate matters, since the time has not yet arrived to say Tal Umatar, if one would mention it in his Shemone Esrei on Shabbos, he would probably have to repeat Shemoneh Esrei. Normally, if one said part of the weekday Shemone Esrei on Shabbos he need not go back to the beginning, but continues with the Shabbos one in the middle. This is because there is nothing about the weekday Tefilah that is contrary to Shabbos, only Chazal decided that on Shabbos we say the shorter version. Thus, it is not like saying the wrong thing, which obligates one to repeat it correctly. However, if one mentions Tal Umatar before its time, he must repeat Shemone Esrei. [This is not universally agreed and a Rav should be consulted if it occurs. (See Rosh Taanis 1:4. Tur, Sh. Ar. O.C. 117:2. Beis Yosef, Bach, commentaries.) *Magen Avot 2, Baat HaLevi 7.*]

It would appear that mentioning Tal Umatar alone, not as part of the Tefilah, is not considered *She'aylas Tzrochav*, and therefore not forbidden as such. Moreover, this concerns Cheftzei Sharnayim, the type of weekday talk that is permissible because it is not a personal business matter, but a matter of Mitzvah observance.

However, in terms of Hachana, we do find that one may not prepare, even for a Mitzvah, which will become obligatory after Shabbos. One may not prepare wine for Havdalah before Shabbos is over, nor may one roll the Sefer-Torah for the next day's Krias-Hatorah. It appears, however, that merely speaking, although often forbidden because of *Mimtzo Cheftzecha Vedaber Davar*, is not necessarily considered Hachana. We find that one who is leaving on an urgent Mitzvah-mission immediately following Shabbos may recite Maariv (after Plag-Hamincha) before Shabbos is over, so that he is ready to leave the moment that Shabbos is out. This, however, only applies to special cases and might not be relevant here. [See Berachos 27b Tur and Sh. Ar. O.C. 293:3.]

In addition to Hachana and *Vedaber Davar* there is an issue of *Innuy* -one may not afflict oneself on Shabbos. This contradicts the Mitzvah of Oneg, to enjoy oneself on Shabbos. We find an exception to the prohibition against fasting on Shabbos, for one who is used to fasting every day, the *Shinuy Veset*, change in his routine, is considered *Innuy* for him. This is based on the Halacha that one

should not teach children fresh material on Shabbos because their routine has already been upset and this will add more pressure. It follows that, although one must do many things differently on Shabbos, one should not apply extra pressure on oneself to change a habit. In our case it has been suggested that "practicing" Tal Umatar to change one's habit is not Oneg Shabbos. Since it is not necessary for Shabbos (unlike Mashiv Haruach on Shemini Atzeres), one should not do it on Shabbos. [See Tur, Sh. Ar. O.C. 288:2,7. Nedarim 37a. Sh. Ar. Y.D. 245:14 commentaries.]

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

SCHEDULE:

SHABBOS SHACHARIS	9:00 am
SHABBOS MINCHA	4:30 pm
<i>Remember Tal Umatar at Maariv</i>	
SHACHARIS SUNDAY	8:00 am
SHACHARIS MON - FRI	7:00 am
MINCHA SUN - THURS	4:43 pm
<i>Chanukah begins wednesday-night</i>	
CANDLE-LIGHTING MIKETZ	4:35 pm
MINCHA EREV SHABBOS	4:45 pm

SHIURIM:

GEMORO Makos-	SUNDAY 7:15 am
HALACHA B'Iyun-	MONDAY 8:30 pm
HILCHOS Shabbos	SHABBOS 8:15 am

-There will be a Junior Minyan for boys on the third floor beginning at 9:00. Kiddush and refreshments sponsored by Meir Pfeffer.

-There will be a playgroup with refreshments for preschoolers and first-grade girls on the second floor.

This issue of HALOCHOSCOPE has been sponsored by Meir and Rochel Pfeffer in honor of Rabbi and Mrs. Nachman Jaeger for their selfless dedication to the Kollel and the community.

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Comments and suggestions are welcome and can be addressed to :

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