

## V'tein Tal u'Matar Livracha

### וְתֵין טַל וּמָטָר לְבִרְכָה

Beginning Monday night, the eve of the 7th of Marcheshvan, October 15th, and until Pesach, we (in Eretz Yisrael) ask for rain in the **BAREICH ALEINU** bracha of every weekday Amida, with the words **V'tein Tal U'matar Livracha** [hereafter, **T&M**].

A weekday Amida without **T&M** (from 7 Marcheshvan until 14 Nissan inclusive) is invalid and must be repeated. This means that if you finish an Amida and realize that you forgot **T&M**, you must say the Amida again.

If you remember your omission of **T&M** in the Shacharit Amida, for example, anytime during the morning (not just right after the Amida or when you are still davening), then you have to repeat the Amida. And if it is in the middle of the afternoon that you remember your omission from the morning, then you say a second Mincha Amida as TASHLUMIN for Shacharit (as if you didn't say it in the first place). This is referring to being sure that **T&M** was omitted - see note below for cases of doubt.

If you catch your omission when you are still in the Amida, the following rules apply:

If one is still in the **BAREICH ALEINU** bracha (not having yet said G-d's name at the end of the bracha), then back up and say **V'TEIN TAL U'MATAR LIVRACHA**, and continue from there.

If you already said G-d's name of **M'VAREICH HASHANIM**, then continue (without going back) and when you get to the **SH'MA KOLEINU** bracha, say **T&M** as follows:

שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ, ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ, חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ, וְקַבֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרַצוֹן אֶת תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ, כִּי אֵל שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלוֹת וְתַחֲנוּנִים אַתָּה, וּמְלַפְנֵיךָ, מְלַכְנוּ, רִיקָם אֵל תְּשִׁיבֵנוּ. וְתֵין טַל וּמָטָר לְבִרְכָה, כִּי אַתָּה שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלַּת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרַחֲמִים. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה.

Because **Sh'ma Koleinu** is an appropriate b'racha for requests (as we know from other prayers that are inserted into this b'racha), saying **T&M** here is preferable to repeating (and thereby nullifying) one or more b'rachot, which is what would happen if we had to go back to **BAREICH ALEINU**.

If you pass the point of insertion in **Sh'ma Koleinu**, but haven't said G-d's name in the end of the bracha, then say **T&M** and continue with **KI ATA SHOMEI'A...**

If you finish **Sh'ma Koleinu** but haven't said the word **R'TZEI** yet, you can say **V'tein Tal U'matar Livracha** after **SHOMEI'A T'FILA** and before **R'TZEI**. Since you have not yet begun **R'TZEI**, it is still considered being in the "brachot of request" section of the Amida, and **T&M** fits.

Once you say the word **R'TZEI** (and you haven't asked for **T&M** yet), you must go back to **BAREICH ALEINU** (not just **SH'MA KOLEINU**) and say the Amida straight from there. Although this involves repeating brachot you have already said, this is what must be done.

This rule applies from **R'TZEI** until you finish the Amida. That point is either when you finish **יְהִי לְרִצּוֹן אִמְרֵי פִי וְהִגִּיוֹן** **ה' צוּרֵי וְגוֹאֲלֵי**. **לְבִי לְפָנֶיךָ**, or when you begin taking your first step back. If it is only then that you realize that you have not said **T&M**, then you must say the entire Amida from the beginning.

One should be impressed by the fact that 19 brachot are declared invalid when one omits **T&M**. After all, the person said **V'TEIN B'RACHA**, "Give a blessing". That's not so bad. Is it? Halacha tells us that without **T&M**, it is like asking for the opposite of a bracha. And that must be remedied.

If one is unsure whether he said **T&M** or not, halacha goes by habit. If **T&M** has not been mentioned 90 times, we assume a habit has not been formed and consider **T&M** not to have been said. After 90 times, we may assume it was said (unless you are certain it was omitted). Furthermore, one must deal with a doubt only if it enters his mind immediately, not "sometime later".

Issues still to be presented: Visitors and students in Israel; Jews in the Southern Hemisphere...

Let's say that when you finished the Amida, you aren't sure whether you said **T&M** or not. The doubt enters you right away.

In this case, our Sages say that if you have not developed a habit to say **T&M** (defined as 90 times), then you probably did NOT say it, and you must repeat the Amida, just like someone who is sure they forgot it.

After a habit develops, you may assume you said **T&M**, even if you are not sure.

If when you finished the Amida you did not have a feeling of doubt, but it came to you later, then you can ignore the feeling and assume that you said **T&M** correctly.

Also, if you remember thinking about saying **T&M** while you were in the beginning of the Amida, but you now are not sure whether you said it or not, you may assume that you said it.

The halachic rules for SAFEK (doubt) are a bit tricky. In the examples we have mentioned, the person did or didn't say **T&M**. If he did, fine. If he didn't, then he has to repeat. The problem is that he doesn't know or remember whether he did or not. Halacha therefore tries to maximize the probability that the assumption is as close to the reality as possible. Short of an audio replay, we cannot know for sure. So we must follow the halachic guidelines for cases of doubt.

If you are in doubt as to what to do if you are in doubt, ask a Rav.

**THE GOAL** is to follow halacha, avoid bracha l'vatala, avoid invoking the opposite of a blessing. Our prayers are REAL. We should take them seriously. Prayer is an important task and challenge of the Jew. And we each should "pull our weight" by davening with proper care and KAVANA.

As to the situation of a Jew from abroad being in Eretz Yisrael when we begin saying **T&M** (and the Jews from where

he comes do not yet say **T&M**, until the beginning of December), there are different opinions. Here is one approach.

A CHULNIK (person who lives outside of Israel) who is in Israel for less than a year, asks for **T&M** like where he comes from, and not from 7 Marcheshvan. In other words, a visitor to Israel on a two-week trip, should continue saying V'TEIN BRACHA in Bareich Aleinu, even though we start **T&M** on the eve of 7 Marcheshvan. He should avoid being Chazzan, but if he is, then he must say **T&M** in the repetition of the Amida.

If a CHULNIK did start saying **T&M** (which he should not have done according to this opinion), then he should continue saying it. Some say, even when he returns "home". This is disputed.

People who are in Israel for a year of learning (which often is actually less than a year) should ask their Rav (or Rosh Yeshiva).

A person who is going to be in Israel for the entire period of 7 Marcheshvan through Pesach, even though it is less than a year, might be told that he/she can say **T&M** like a local. Again, ask your Rav.

Others are told to say **V'TEIN BRACHA** in Bareich Aleinu until December, and to say **T&M** in Sh'ma Koleinu (similar to one who forgot to say **T&M**).

Of course, after December 5th or 6th, **T&M** is said in Bareich Aleinu by everyone.

An Israeli traveling abroad (with intention of returning in less than a year), asks for **T&M** according to the Israel schedule. He too should avoid the Amud (being Chazzan). If he cannot avoid it, then he must follow local practice in the repetition of the Amida.

A few words about our fellow Jews in the Southern Hemisphere. A community "down under" (where seasons are reversed) that gets rain around the year and will not suffer from rain during its summer, asks for **T&M** just like all other Chutz LaAretz communities.

But if there is a place where rain is harmful during their summer (damages crops, breeds mosquitoes, spreads disease), the Jews there have halachic permission NOT to say **T&M** from Dec. 4/5 until Pesach.

However, during their rainy season, when we are not saying **T&M**, they may not either. I.e. in **Bareich Aleinu**. The result of this is that they say **V'TEIN B'RACHA** the whole year round.

Some opinions allow them to ask for **T&M** in Shma Koleinu, if they desperately need rain during our summer.

It's a complicated topic which points to the seriousness of davening and the seriousness of rainfall.

**May all our prayers be answered favorably and may we be blessed with plentiful, helpful rainfall this winter (and all others).**