

MORID HATAL & V'TEIN BRACHA

Last time we ask for TAL U'MATAR this year is at Mincha on Erev Pesach.

We continue to say MASHIV HARU'ACH UMORID HAGESHEM (henceforth called MHUH) in Maariv and Shacharit of the first day of Pesach. Then we say T'FILAT TAL and from Musaf of the first day of Pesach on, we will be saying MORID HATAL. And at Maariv following Shabbat/Yom Tov, we will begin saying V'TEIN BRACHA in the weekday Amida.

Note that many congregations in Israel say T'FILAT TAL when they finish putting away the Torahs right before closing the Aron. Others follow the common practice of Chutz LaAretz and say TAL as part of the beginning of the Chazan's repetition of Musaf.

When TAL is said before the silent Amida of Musaf, then it - T'FILAT TAL, constitutes the announcement to the congregation to stop saying MHUH and to commence saying Morid HaTal.

However, when TAL is said after the silent Amida, an announcement - in the form of a gabbai (or anyone) "klopping" on the shulchan and stating aloud "Morid HaTal" is required. Technically, if no one announces Morid HaTal, then we continue saying MHUH one more Amida (Musaf) and begin Morid HaTal at Mincha (which, of course, is after T'filat Tal). This will not usually happen in large congregations with knowledgeable members, but it can happen in a small minyan with a gabbai that falls asleep at the switch. Anyone can call out Morid HaTal (and usually, several people do) and that "authorizes" the change for the kahal.

If one mistakenly says MHUH once we stop saying it, the Amida is considered invalid and must be repeated. Catching oneself within the second bracha of the Amida, requires backtracking to the beginning of that bracha and saying from there - ATA GIBOR...

Forgetting MORID HATAL (but not saying MHUH either) does not require repeating or even returning to say it.

Asking for TAL UMATAR once we stop, also invalidates the Amida and requires repeating it. Catching the error while still in the Amida requires going back to BAREICH ALEINU and repeating from that bracha.

If one finishes the Amida and is immediately struck with a doubt as to whether he said Morid HaTal or nothing (which is good) or said G by mistake (which is bad) - and the same for V'EIN B'RACHA (good) or TAL UMATAR (problem), then the situation is resolved based on habit (HERGEIL). Generally, when something has been said 90 times, it is considered to have become habitual, but before that, one must assume

that he said the wrong thing and repeat the Amida.

If the doubt came in later - not right after the Amida was finished, it can usually be dismissed as not being a real doubt.

This is a tricky subject because the person in question either said it right or not. If he said it right, then he does not repeat. And if he didn't say it correctly, then he must repeat. The problem, of course, is that he isn't sure. Error on one side results in b'rachot in vain. Error on the other side results in not really having said the Amida.

This would be a paralyzing dilemma if not for the halachic guidelines of SAFEIK (doubt). When in doubt about the doubt - meaning that you are not sure which way to resolve the doubt, ask a Rav.

Remember to express your gratitude and appreciation to Hashem for the plentiful rain we received this winter.

