

HALACHIC AND HASHKAFIC ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

SERIES 2: 29 - CALENDAR CONUNDRUMS

PART 3: V'TEN TAL U'MATAR AND DECEMBER 4/5

OU ISRAEL CENTER - SUMMER 2022

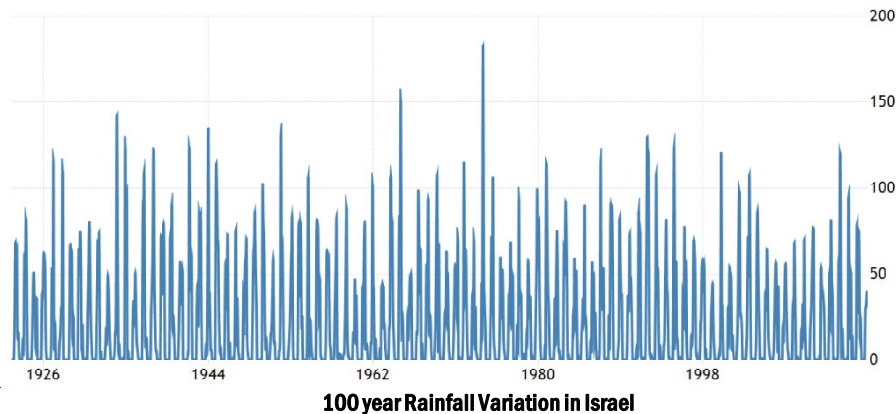
- In Parts 1 and 2 we looked at the astronomical and biblical foundations of the Jewish calendar and the fixing of the calendar. We also looked at some of the tensions between the Jewish calendar and the secular calendar
- In this shiur we will look be'H at the strange conundrum of the use of the secular date December 4/5 to begin asking for rain.

A] ERETZ YISRAEL - A LAND THAT LOOKS TO HEAVEN

1. (ו) כִּי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה בֹאֲשִׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ לֹא כְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הִוא אֲשֶׁר יֵצְאֲתֶם מִשָּׁם אֲשֶׁר תִּזְרַע אֶת-זֶרְעֶךָ וְהִשְׁקִיתָ בְּרַגְלֶךָ כְּגֹן הַיַּרְדֵּן: (יא) וְהָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ אֶרֶץ הָרִים וּבִקְעוֹת לְמִטְרַיִם תִּשְׁתַּחֲמֹס: (יב) אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ דֹרֵשׁ אֹתָהּ תָמִיד עֵינֵי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בָּהּ מִרְשִׁית הַשָּׁנָה וְעַד אַחֲרִית שָׁנָה: ס (יג) וְהָיָה אִם-שָׁמַעַתְּ שָׁמַעוּ אֶל-מִצְוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוֶּה אֲתֶם הַיּוֹם לֵאמֹר אֶת-ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם וּלְעַבְדּוֹ בְּכָל-לְבַבְכֶם וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁכֶם: (יד) וְנִתְּנִי מְטָר-אֲרָצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ יוֹרֵה וּמְלַקֵּשׁ וְאֶסְפָּתָם דְגָנְךָ וְתִירְשֶׁךָ וְיִצְהַרְךָ: (טו) וְנִתְּנִי עֵשֶׂב בְּשִׂדְךָ לְבַהֲמֹתֶיךָ וְאֶכְלֹתָ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ: (טז) הַשָּׁמַיִם לָכֵן פָּנוּ יַפְתָּה לְבַבְכֶם וְסִרְתֶּם וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם: (יז) וְחָרָה אֶפְרָיִם בְּכֶם וְעָצַר אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה מְטָר וְהִאֲדָמָה לֹא תִתֵּן אֶת-יְבוּלָהּ וְאֲבַדְתֶּם מִחַרְבָּהּ מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר ה' נָתַן לָכֶם.

דברים יא-יז

Eretz Yisrael is very different to Egypt, where there is no rain but only the annual flooding of the Nile. In Eretz Yisrael everything depends on the rainfall. To the immediate north, in Turkey there is guaranteed abundant rain¹. To the south, in the desert, there is guaranteed to be no rain². Eretz Yisrael rests in the middle ground where everything depends on weather patterns - tiny variations can mean the difference between abundant rain and wealth or drought and starvation³.



2. יַפְתַּח ה' לָךְ אֶת-אוֹצְרוֹ הַטּוֹב אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם לְתֵת מְטָר-אֲרָצְךָ בְּעֵתוֹ וּלְבַרְךָ אֶת כָּל-מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָךְ וְהִלִּיתָ גּוֹיִם רַבִּים וְאַתָּה לֹא תִלְוָה

דברים כ"ב

The storehouse of God's goodness is represented by the blessing of rain.

3. אמר רבי יוחנן: שלשה מפתחות בידו של הקדוש ברוך הוא שלא נמסרו ביד שליח, ואלו הן: מפתח של גשמים, מפתח של חיה, ומפתח של תחיית המתים. מפתח של גשמים - דכתיב וַיִּפְתַּח ה' לָךְ אֶת-אוֹצְרוֹ הַטּוֹב אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם לְתֵת מְטָר-אֲרָצְךָ בְּעֵתוֹ

תענית ב.

Rain is one of the keys of life itself, which is in the hands of God and not an intermediary angel or other force.

1. Some parts of Turkey receive an average of 1,400 mm of rain per year.
 2. Many parts of Egypt average zero rainfall per year.
 3. Israel received very variable rainfall - around 889 mm in the north and 30 mm in the south. Looking to the skies in the ancient world was rather like looking to the markets today.

4. ואמר רפרם בר פפא אמר רב חסדא: מיום שחרב בית המקדש - אין הגשמים יורדין מאוצר טוב, שנאמר: יפתח ה' לך את אוצרו הטוב. בזמן שישראל עושין רצונו של מקום וישראל שרויין על אדמתם - גשמים יורדין מאוצר טוב. בזמן שאין ישראל שרויין על אדמתם - אין גשמים יורדין מאוצר טוב.

בבא בתרא כה:

Rainfall is also linked closely to our state of redemption. When the Jewish people is in galut their connection to God is weaker and the rain does not come directly from the same level of Hashgacha Pratit.

5. וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַתְּשִׁבֵי מִתְשִׁבֵי גִלְעָד אֶל-אַחַבְיָהוּ חִי-הוּא אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנֹכִי לְפָנָיו אִם-יְהִי הַשָּׁנִים הָאֵלֶּה טַל וּמָטָר כִּי אִם-לִפְנֵי דְבָרֶי.

מלכים א יז:

The expression 'tal u'matar' is taken from the prophesy of Eliyahu to Achav concerning the stopping of the rains.

B] PRAISING AND ASKING FOR RAIN

6. מזכירין גבורות גשמים בתחיית המתים ושואלין הגשמים בברכת השנים ...

משנה מסכת ברכות פרק ה משנה ב

The Mishna rules that we praise God for the rains in the second beracha of the Amida, concerning techiyat hametim. But we request rain in the ninth beracha⁴, concerning our livelihoods.

7. מאימתי מזכירין גבורת גשמים? רבי אליעזר אומר מיום טוב הראשון של חג, רבי יהושע אומר מיום טוב האחרון של חג. אמר לו רבי יהושע הואיל ואין הגשמים אלא סימן קללה בחג למה מזכיר? אמר לו רבי אליעזר אף אני לא אמרתי לשאול אלא להזכיר 'משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם' בעונתו. אמר לו אם כן לעולם יהא מזכיר.

משנה מסכת תענית פרק א משנה א

The Tannaim debate when to start 'Mashiv Haruach' - at the start or at the end of Succot.

8. ב אין שואלין את הגשמים אלא סמוך לגשמים. ... עד אימתי שואלין את הגשמים? רבי יהודה אומר עד שיעבור הפסח. רבי מאיר אומר עד שיצא ניסן שנאמר (ויאל ב:כג) וַיִּזְרַד לְכֶם גֶשֶׁם מוֹרָה וּמִלְקוֹשׁ בְּרֵאשִׁיטוֹן. ג בשלשה במרחשוון שואלין את הגשמים. רבן גמליאל אומר בשבעה בו - חמשה עשר יום אחר החג כדי שיגיע אחרון שבישראל לנהר פרת.

משנה מסכת תענית פרק א משנה ב-ג

They also discuss the beginning and end of 'v'ten tal u'matar'. All agree that we should start close to the rainy season⁵. The Tana Kama rules that this should be 3 Cheshvan (the beginning of the rains) and Rabban Gamliel rules 7 Cheshvan so that the Olei Regel can get back Bavel before the rains fall, destroying the roads and swelling the rivers making them impassible! Concerning the end of the period for requesting rain, R. Yehuda rules that we stop at the end of Pesach⁶. Rabban Gamliel rules that we continue through the whole of Nissan since we see in Tanach that Nissan is designated as a month of rain⁷.

9. בשלשה במרחשוון שואלין את הגשמים רבן גמליאל אומר בשבעה בו. ואמר רבי אלעזר: הלכה כרבן גמליאל והאמר רבי יוחנן: במקום ששואל מזכיר! כי קאמר רבי יוחנן בזמן שאין בית המקדש קיים ... ולא קשיא: כאן - בזמן שבית המקדש קיים (רש"י - דאיכא עולי רגלים, אינו מזכיר עד שזיטי צמרחשוון), כאן - בזמן שאין בית המקדש קיים.

תענית ד:

The Gemara brings the opinion of R. Elazar who rules like Rabban Gamliel - that we begin v'ten tal u'matar on 7 Cheshvan. However, R. Yochanan rules that we should start v'ten tal u'matar at the same time as we start mashiv haruach - ie on Shemini Atzeret⁸! The Gemara concludes that the ruling of R. Elazar only applies when there is a Temple and there are pilgrims that need to get home before the rains. The ruling of R. Yochanan applies when there is no Temple. Since there are no pilgrims, we can start asking for rain immediately after Shemini Atzret.

4. The Tur (OC 117) notes that this beracha contains 30 words - like the combination of verses ... לך יפתח ה' and ... את ידך

5. There are two views in the Gemara as to whether this is indeed discussing v'ten tal u'matar or is actually a reference to mashiv haruach.

6. The Gemara notes that this conflicts with an earlier position of R. Yehuda that we stop saying mashiv haruach at the beginning of Pesach. The Gemara answers that there are two traditions as to R. Yehuda's position - the beginning of Pesach or the end of Pesach. The halacha follows the first position and we stop v'ten tal u'matar immediately before Pesach.

7. R. Yehuda rejects this opinion since Yoel is dealing with an usually year of drought when the rains came very late.

8. On Yom Tov itself there is no weekday Amida so there can be no mention then. Rather R. Yochanan means that we start asking for rain at the ma'ariv after Shemini Atzeret.

- However, the Rif and the Rambam⁹ rule that even today, when there is no Temple, we start asking for rain in Eretz Yisrael on 7 Cheshvan. How does that fit with the Gemara!?
- Some Rishonim¹⁰ indeed rule that those in Eretz Yisrael should begin *v'ten tal u'matar* immediately after Chag! Others¹¹ explain that, even after the Churban, there are still crowds in Israel for Chag who need to get home.

10. ובארץ ישראל מתחילין לשאול מליל ז' במרחשון. ושואלין עד תפלת המנחה של ערב יום טוב הראשון של פסח, ומשם ואילך פוסקין מלשאול.

שולחן ערוך אורח חיים הלכות תפילה סימן קיז סעיף א

The Shulchan Aruch rules that, in Eretz Yisrael¹², we start asking for rain on 7 Cheshvan.

11. בא"י מתחילין לומר 'ותן טל ומטר' מליל ז' מרחשון מפני שהיא ארץ הרים ובקעות, לכך צריכה מטר תיכף אחר החג. וזה שאין שואלין מיד אחר החג בשביל עולי רגלים שיבואו לביתם. ואף ע"ג דלפ"ז בזמה"ז היה להם לשאול מיד אחר החג מ"מ לא נשתנה התקנה. ויש בגמרא [ד:] עוד טעם משום הפירות המונחים בשדות עד ז' מרחשון ואין לבקש אז גשמים כדי שלא ירקבו הפירות [ער"ן פ"ק דתענית ובי"ז]. והרי"ף לא הביא טעם זה וטעמו נ"ל כדי שלא יאמרו דאם אין פירות בשדה יתחילו מיד דאינו כן דלא פלוג רבנן בתקנתא. [ומה שהביא הך דעולי רגלים משום דטעם זה הוא במשנה שם והביא המשנה כצורתה כדרכו אבל אין הטעם בשביל זה אלא משום שהתקנה לא נשתנית].

ערוך השולחן אורח חיים סימן קיז סעיף ב

The Aruch Hashulchan understands that the psak for Eretz Yisrael is 7 Cheshvan because of 'lo plug' - the Rabbis did not differentiate in their takana in this regard.

C] ASKING FOR RAIN OUTSIDE ISRAEL

12. גמרא. אמר רבי אלעזר: הלכה כרבן גמליאל. תניא, חנניה אומר: ובגולה עד ששים בתקופה. אמר רב הונא בר חייא אמר שמואל: הלכה כחנניה. איני? והא בעו מיניה משמואל: מאימת מדכרינן ותן טל ומטר? אמר להו: מכי מעיילי ציבי לבי טבות רישבא! דילמא אידי ואידי חד שיעורא הוא.

תענית י.

The Gemara brings the position of R. Elazar who rules like Rabban Gamliel - we start saying v'ten tal u'matar in Eretz Yisrael on 7 Cheshvan. However, the Gemara also quotes Chanania who rules that in 'the Gola' we only start asking for rain '60 days from the tekufa'. Shmuel (who rules like Chanania) apparently gives an alternative definition - when they bring the wood into the shed of Tavot the bird hunter. The Gemara suggests that this is the same date as Chanania's.

13. חנניה בן אחי ר' יהושע אומר - בגולה לא נהגו כן אלא עד ששים יום בתקופה. שמואל אמר הלכה כחנניה בן אחי ר' יהושע.

תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת תענית פרק א הלכה א

In the Yerushalmi is it clear that Chanania was reporting the practice in Bavel¹³ and that Shmuel¹⁴ rules like him.

14. מאי גולה? אמר רב יוסף: זו פומבדיתא.

ראש השנה כג:

The Gola means the Jewish community in Pumbedita, in Babylon.

15. ובגולה ששים - ובגולה אין שואלין עד ששים בתקופה לפי שהוא מקום נמוך ואין לריכים מטר כל כך. תנאי לא בעו מים - ובבבל בגולה מתוך שאין לריכין לגשמים אין שואלין עד ששים לתקופת תשרי. וכן אנו נוהגים, שכל מנהגינו אחר בני בבל.

רש"י תענית י.

Rashi explains that Bavel is in a valley and does not need as much rain since water collects there. On the hills, water runs off and more rain is required to fill the cisterns. He also notes that the custom in France was to follow Bavel.

9. Hilchot Tefilla 2:16.

10. See Ritva Ta'anit 10a. The Ritva rules that, in today's post-Temple reality, 7 Cheshvan is an irrelevant date and that there are now two halachic options. In Eretz Yisrael they should start immediately after Shemini Atzeret. In chu'l they have, at least in theory, a choice. If their climate is like that of Eretz Yisrael, and they do not leave fruits out to dry in the fields, they could start immediately after Chag. If not, they should start 60 days after the equinox - see below. In practice, he rules that communities in chu'l should follow the Babylonian custom - see below.

11. Ran Ta'anit 2a s.v. ika lemeidak

12. There are different views as to what travellers to and from Eretz Yisrael should do in the period from 7 Cheshvan to Dec 4 (see below). The rules are highly complex and would take us too far from the focus of this shiur.

13. Chanania was a 2nd Century Tanna who moved to Bavel.

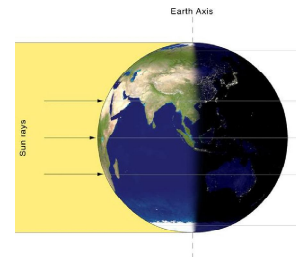
14. As we saw in the previous shiur, Shmuel was an expert astronomer and was nicknamed 'Yarchinai' - the moon watcher!

- This clearly raises an important question. There are countries other than Bavel which require more rain at different times. So should they start asking for rain earlier? What about countries which need rain in the summer months (see below)?

D] 60 DAYS AFTER THE TEKUFA - THE SCIENCE AND THE HISTORY

D1] WHAT IS THE THE TEKUFA

- As we saw in Part 1, the tekufa is a reference to the moment of the equinoxes (Spring and Autumn) and the solstices (Summer and Winter). It is clear that we are dealing here with the Autumnal Equinox.
- The expression 'tekufa' can also be a reference to the period following that astronomic event. As such *shishim batekufa* could mean 'the sixtieth day from the autumnal equinox' or 'the sixtieth day of the autumn season'.



D2] ARE THE FIRST AND LAST DAYS OF THE '60' INCLUDED OR EXCLUDED?

16. יום תקופה גומר - דברי רבי יהודה. רבי יוסי אומר: יום תקופה מתחיל.

סנהדרין יג.

There is a general debate as to whether the day on which the equinox/solstice occurs is the last day of the previous season or the first day of the following season. The halacha follows R. Yosef¹⁵ that the day of the tekufa is considered the first day of the following season (ie is included in the 60).

17. איבעיא להו: יום ששים כלפני ששים, או כלאחר ששים? תא שמע; רב אמר: יום ששים כלאחר ששים, ושמואל אמר: יום ששים כלפני ששים. אמר רב פפא: הלכתא - יום ששים כלאחר ששים.

תענית ג.

As to the 60th day, there is a debate between Rav and Shmuel. Rav rules that the request begins on the 60th day and Shmuel rules that the request begins on the 61st day. The halacha follows Rav¹⁶ and the last day is included in the 60.

18. ברכת השנים צריך לומר בימות הגשמים 'ותן טל ומטר'. ומתחילין לשאול מטר בחוצה לארץ בתפלת ערבית של יום ס' אחר תקופת תשרי (ויום התקופה הוא בכלל הס').

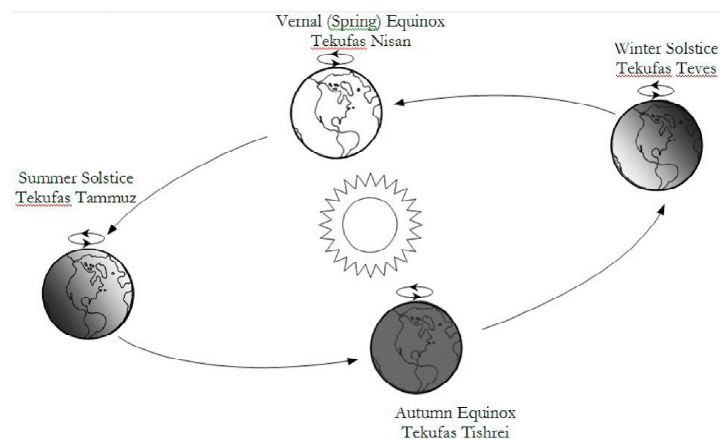
שולחן ערוך אורח חיים הלכות תפילה סימן קיז סעיף א

The Shulchan Aruch rules this way.

- As such, it appears that we need to identify the time of the autumn equinox, count that day as Day 1 then count 59 more days and start saying *v'ten tal u'matar* on the ma'ariv of that halachic day¹⁷. Sound simple?

D3] THE HALACHIC TEKUFA vs THE ASTRONOMICAL TEKUFA

- The astronomic autumnal equinox is one of the two moments in the year when the Sun is exactly above the Equator and day and night are of equal length. It is also one of the two points in the sky where the ecliptic (the Sun's annual pathway) and the celestial equator intersect. In the Northern Hemisphere the autumnal equinox falls around September 22 or 23, as the Sun crosses the celestial equator moving south.
- The astronomic autumnal equinox this year is on Friday, September 23, 2022 at 04:03 AM (Israel time).
- 60 days after Sept 23 is Nov 21. So why don't we start saying *v'ten tal u'matar* on the evening on Nov 20?



15. See Tosafot Ta'anit 10a s.v. hilchata and Ran of Rif Ta'anit 2a s.c. ad shishim.

16. The mefarshim debate why Rav Papa needs to state this when we have a general rule that the halacha always follows Rav against Shmuel in ritual matters. Note that the Aruch and Rabbeinu Chananel have a different girsa where the opinions are reversed, so the halacha is being ruled here like Shmuel according to that girsa.

17. The opinion of the Ra'avya (2:848) in the name of the Yerushalmi is that we actually count 60 x 24 hours periods from the exact moment of the tekufa and then start *v'ten tal u'matar* in the Amida immediately following that moment (or the next evening if it is on Shabbat). The halacha does NOT follow this opinion - see below. See also Rosh Ta'anit 1:4.

19. אמר שמואל: ואין תקופת תשרי נופלת אלא או בשלש שעות או בתשע שעות, בין ביום ובין בלילה ... ואין בין תקופה לתקופה אלא תשעים ואחד יום ושבע שעות ומחצה.

עירובין נ.

Shmuel rules that each tekufa is an EXACT period of 91 days 7.5 hours and the 4 tekufot together add up to 365 days and 6 hours. This is based on the Julian calendar of the time.

20. ואמר שמואל: נהירין לי שבילי דשמיא כשבילי דנהרדעא

ברכות נח:

As mentioned above, Shmuel was an astronomer and knew the paths of the heavens better than the paths of his own town of Neharda¹⁸!

- This is the HALACHIC definition of the tekufot and is used for fixing when to ask for rain and also for Bircat HaChama
- However, this is actually a little too long. The accurate number of days in the year is 365.2422, making a difference of 0.0078 days (or around 11 min 14 secs per year).
- In fact, there is another Talmudic calculation of the year - that of Rav Adda - as being exactly one nineteenth of the 19 year lunisolar cycle. This calculates a year to be approx 4½ minutes shorter than Shmuel's year which is significantly more accurate than Shmuel's calculation. The two calculations of the solar year are therefore:-

Astronomical Year:	365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 46 seconds
Rav Adda:	365 days, 5 hours, 55 minutes and 25 seconds (6 minutes 39 seconds too long)
Shmuel:	365 days, 6 hours (11 minutes 14 seconds too long)

- Rav Adda's more accurate calculation is used for all halachic calendrical issue other than *v'ten tal u'matar* and Bircat HaChama¹⁹.
- Based on this, the halachic tekufot are in sync with the Julian calendar. As such, tekufat Tishrei ALWAYS falls on September 24 according to the Julian calendar²⁰.
- That means that we should always start *v'ten tal u'matar* on the 60th day after that, which is November 22.

21. וכתב ה"ר דוד אבודרהם (עמ' ק) ויום ס' יבוא צכ"ג מנוצמזרי אם היה אותו פיזרי"ר מכ"ח יום. אזל אם היה פיזרי"ר מכ"ט יום תהיה השאלה צכ"ג נוצמזרי כי תקופת תשרי לעולם שצעה ימים קודם אקטוברי.

בית יוסף אורח חיים סימן קיז

This is indeed the psak of the Beit Yosef who writes explicitly that Tekufa Tishrei always falls 7 days before the beginning of October, so we always start asking for rain on November 22. If the following²¹ secular year will be a secular leap year, then we start asking for rain on November 23.

- Of course, since the Jewish day starts the night before, this means we start asking for rain on the evening of November 21 (or November 22 if a leap year follows).

D4] POPE GREGORY STRIKES AGAIN

- The Beit Yosef was written (in 1542) before the introduction of the Gregorian Calendar (in 1582).
- As we saw in Part 1, Pope Gregory noted that, due to the inaccuracy of the Julian calendar and the excessive length of the Julian year, the Spring equinox had backtracked through the calendar to March 11 by 1582. In order to correct this problem Pope Gregory XIII decided to delete the 10 days between October 5th and October 14th in order to correct the error. Consequently, the spring equinox that was due to fall on March 11 the following year would fall instead on March 21.

18. Neharda was actually an important town for the Jewish calendar. When R. Akiva was exiled to Bavel he was able to continue the process of kiddush hachodesh from there.

19. According to the Chazon Ish, the calculation of Shmuel was based on an oral tradition and not the result of a mathematical formula like Rav Adda's. Measurements which the Torah intends for public use by ordinary people are purposefully less accurate, in the interests of simplicity. For example, the Tanach uses 3 as the figure for pi. The Torah does not require one to be a mathematician and to have numbers expanded to many decimal places. Similarly, the Torah does not require one to have a portable lab to keep halacha. *Noten ta'am* for the purposes of kashrut is 1/60 even if an electronic instrument could test meat in milk at far lower concentrations. Invisible insects are kosher, even if they could be seen under a microscope. The new moon is only valid when it can be seen with the naked eye, even though a thinner moon could be detected with a telescope. However the complex calculation of the new moon was undertaken only by the experts on the Sanhedrin, so a more accurate and complex calculation was used. Also, for the purposes of Bircat Hachama, according to the calculation of Rav Adda, the sun would almost NEVER be at the same point as it was in creation. It has certainly never happened in the last 5782 years. Clearly, this is not intended to be the calculation for Bircat Hachama.

20. The Christian Nicene Council, in 325, correctly fixed March 21 (the vernal equinox) as the date which would determine the Easter holiday.

21. We will see below why it is the following year that matters.

- Since *v'ten tal u'matar* works according to the Julian Calendar and Pope Gregory deleted 10 days, the Jewish calendar had to put them back in! So from the calendar change in 1582 it move to DECEMBER 2!²²
- Furthermore, in order to prevent the problem from recurring, the Gregorian calendar changed the rules about adding a leap day every four years. The correction would have to account for the fact that the Julian calendar was slightly longer than the true solar year, adding an extra day every 128 years. Simply removing one day every 128 years would have over-complicated the calendar, so Pope Gregory decreed that 3 days should be removed every 400 years, which is still very close to the true solar year²³.
- In the new system, leap years would still occur every 4 years, except 3 out of four centenary years. The rule of thumb is that if the year is divisible by 100 it is not a leap year, unless it is also divisible by 400. So 1600 was a leap year. As such, 1700, 1800 and 1900 were NOT leap years whereas 2000 WAS a leap year.
- Since the Gregorian calendar now deducts an extra day in most centuries relative to the Julian calendar (since 3 out of 4 the centenary years are not leap years) the date for starting *v'ten tal u'matar* will get 3 days later every 400 years, ie one day later in most centuries.²⁴
- 1600 in the Gregorian calendar WAS a leap year so the date for *v'ten tal u'matar* remained at Dec 2. But it then moved: 1700s - Dec 3, 1800s - Dec 4, 1900s - Dec 5. 2000 WAS a leap year so the Jewish calendar did not need to adjust

D5] THE BOTTOM LINE

- As such, the date of saying *v'ten tal u'matar* remains on Dec 5 (Dec 6 if a leap year follows) ie ma'ariv the night before. From 2100 this will shift to Dec 6 and Dec 7²⁵.
- The reason that the day clicks forwards BEFORE a civil leap year is as follow. By year 3 into the 4 year cycle the ¼ day differential each year has already added up to ¾ of a day, which has already pushed the halachic equinox into the next calendar day. So the day for starting *v'ten tal u'matar* goes forward one day. The next calendar year corrects for this by adding a February 29, so the tekufa and *v'ten tal u'matar* revert to the regular day²⁶.

E] THE 'GOLA' - WHAT ABOUT LOCATIONS OUTSIDE BAVEL?

- As we saw above, the Gemara fixed the date for *v'ten tal u'matar* in Bavel, because of its particular climate and less need for rain.
- But what about other countries that need rain at different times?

E1] THE NINVEH PRECEDENT

22. שלחו ליה בני יננה לרבי: כגון אנן, דאפילו בתקופת תמוז בעינן מטרא, היכי נעביד? כיחידים דמינן או כרבים דמינן? כיחידים דמינן - ובשומע תפלה, או כרבים דמינן ובברכת השנים? שלח להו: כיחידים דמינתו, ובשומע תפלה. מיתביב, אמר רבי יהודה: אימתו - בזמן שהשנים כתיקנן וישראל שרוין על אדמתן. אבל בזמן הזה - הכל לפי השנים, הכל לפי המקומות, הכל לפי הזמן! אמר ליה: מתניתא רמית עליה דרבי? רבי תנא הוא ופליג. מאי הוי עלה? רב נחמן אמר: בברכת השנים, רב ששת אמר: בשומע תפלה. והלכתא: בשומע תפלה.

תענית יד:

*The Jews of Ninveh*²⁷ asked a question to Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi since they needed rain in the summer months. How should they ask for this in the Amida - by adding *v'ten tal u'matar* into *Barech Aleinu* (as does the community) or by adding it into *Shema Koleinu* (as do individuals with any personal request)? He responded²⁸ that they should act as individuals and this is ruled as the halacha²⁹.

22. Again, this means ma'ariv the night before.

23. The Gregorian year is only 26 seconds longer than the true astronomical year and will only create an extra full day every 3326 years.

24. The same is also true for Bircat Hachama. As such, the dates for Bircat hachama fall as follows:- 1600s - April 5; 1700s - April 6; 1800s - April 7; 1900s - April 8; 2000s - April 8 (since 2000 was a leap year); 2100s - April 9; 2200s - April 10 etc. The next Bircat Hachama will be at dawn on April 8, 2037.

25. This pattern repeats itself so that every 400 years *v'ten tal u'matar* will be said three days later. This means that, as the centuries progress, it will slip past Chanuka more and more. This has already happened twice in history - once in 1899 when Chanuka fell very early and a second time in 1975 which was the year before a leap year so *v'ten tal u'matar* started on Dec 5, which was Shabbat. By the night of Dec 6 Chanuka was over. The next time this will happen is 2146 and it will then happen more and more frequently in the subsequent centuries. Of course, if there are no Jews outside Israel this will be irrelevant. In theory, around 25,000 years from now, the date for *v'ten tal u'matar* will reach Pesach which means that it would not be said at all. Clearly, Mashiach will be here long before and we will have a different calendar arrangement by then!

26. While the tekufa always falls on October 7, each year it begins 6 hours later according to Shmuel's calculation, which assumes an exact 365¼ day year. So in each 4-year cycle, the tekufa begins, sequentially, at 3 AM, 9 AM, 3 PM and finally 9 PM, which is later than tzet hakochavim.

27. Present day Mosul, Iraq. Some academics suggest that this should be Nawe, Iraq (close to the Iranian border) since there was no Jewish community in Ninveh at that time.

28. It is not clear from the Gemara if the reason for his response was (i) because Ninveh was a small town, but he would have agreed to the change in the case of a larger country that needed rain; or (ii) in order to maintain uniformity in tefilla between communities, which would apply in all cases. It is also not clear if the change suggested for *Barach Aleinu* was simply the addition of the words *v'ten tal u'matar* (as in the Ashkenaz custom) or an entirely different beracha (as in the Sefardic custom).

29. Nevertheless, as can be seen in the Gemara, there are apparently opinions in the Tannaim and Amoraim who ruled that it should be inserted in *Barech Aleinu*. 'Apparently', since there is a debate between Rashi and Tosafot as to whether Rabbi Yehuda's opinion is talking about inserting *v'ten tal u'matar* (Tosafot) or declaring public fast days (Rashi).

• The ruling of the Gemara for Ninveh is clear. But other questions remains, including:

(i) Ninveh is a specific city. Would this ruling be the same if an entire country needed rain at a different time.

(ii) It seems clear from the ruling that *v'ten tal u'matar* can only be said in Barech Aleinu in the winter. But do other countries outside Israel follow the position of Bavel and start 60 days after the Tekufa, or Eretz Yisrael and start on 7 Cheshvan. Should they even start immediately after Shemini Atzeret, since there was never an issue of Olei Regel (and their produce may not be out in the fields at those times). Or is there a 'lo plug' for all communities which says there are only two date options - Dec 4 or 7 Cheshvan?

(iii) What about the Southern Hemisphere where the year is inverted!? Should they be asking for rain in the middle of their summer³⁰?

E2] THE POSITION OF THE RAMBAM

23. טז משבעה ימים במרחשון שואלין את הגשמים בברכת שנים כל זמן שמזכיר הגשם. במה דברים אמורים? בארץ ישראל. אבל בשנער ובסוריא ובמצרים ובמקומות הסמוכות לאלו והדומין להן שואלין את הגשמים ביום ששים אחר תקופת תשרי. יז מקומות שהן צריכין לגשמים בימות החמה כגון איי הים הרחוקים שואלין את הגשמים בעת שהן צריכין להן בשומע תפלה

רמב"ם הלכות תפילה ונשיאת כפים פרק ב הלכה טז-יז

The Rambam³¹ in Mishne Torah applies the standard halacha to Bavel (Shinar), Syria, Egypt and other locations which are either close to them or have similar needs for rain³². In other places which need rain at other times, he rules that people should insert a private request in the beracha of Shomea Tefilla, and not in Barech Aleinu.

24. והלכה כרצון גמליאל. וכל זה בארץ ישראל וכל שהוא דומה לה. אבל בשאר הארצות הרי תהיה השאלה בזמן הראוי לגשמים באותו המקום, והרי אותו הזמן כאלו הוא שבעה במרחשון. לפי שיש ארצות שאין זמן הגשמים מתחיל אלא מניסן, ויש ארצות שבמרחשון יהיה זהם קיץ, ואין הגשמים צו לצרכה אלא מאבד ומשמיד. ואיך ישאלו אנשי אותו המקום גשמים במרחשון, האם אין זה שקרא? זה דבר נכון וצדוק.

פירוש המשנה לרמב"ם מסכת תענית פרק א משנה ג

However, in his earlier commentary on the Mishna, the Rambam is very clear that locales which need rain at other times of the year - even May, June etc - should insert v'ten tal u'matar at the times that suit them!

• Is there a contradiction between these two sources? Did the Rambam change his view? Or can they be harmonized³³?

E3] THE POSITION OF THE RITVA

25. ויש מקומות שנהגו לשאול בט"ו במרחשון³⁴ כר"ג וזה ודאי אינו מנהג יפה כלל לפי מה שזיררנו למעלה שאין לנו זמן שלישי. ויש מקומות שנהגו לשאול מיד למוצאי יום טוב כבני ארץ ישראל והיינו סביר דתלמודא ... משום דלאחר חורבן כל שאר ארצות לצד מצבל גופיה דינס כבני ארץ ישראל, ולפירי דדברא לא היישין וליכא למיחש אלא לעולי רגלים או לחג שאין הגשמים סימן צרכה צו לעולם לכל ישראל. אבל חששא דפירי אינה חששא כל כך כדי לאחר השאלה זמן ארוך שצריכין לגשמים להתעכב עד ס' בתקופה. וגם זה בודאי מנהג יפה ושיטה נכונה, אלא שאין לשנות זה מפני המנהג שהוא כדרך הגאונים ז"ל.

חדושי הריטב"א מסכת תענית דף י עמוד א

The Ritva rules (as we saw above) that communities in Eretz Yisrael these days should start asking for rain immediately after Chag. He supports this in principle³⁵ as a 'minhag yafe veshita nechona' for communities in chu'l with similar climates, but acknowledges that the correct approach today is that all communities should follow the psak of the Geonim and start 60 days after the equinox.

30. Many locations on and around the equator have rain cycles which are no related at all to summer and winter.

31. Before the Rambam, the Rif (Ta'anit 2a, 5a) simply records the psak of Shmuel that the Gola should start 60 days after the equinox and the psak of R. Yehuda HaNasi about individual request as per the people of Ninveh.

32. In truth, Egypt has a totally different climate to Bavel and does not receive much rain at all. So the issue appears to depend more on location.

33. As a side issue, how did the Rambam know that the seasons were reversed in some locales? Is he speaking about the Southern Hemisphere, or specific microclimates in the Northern Hemisphere? Although the Southern Hemisphere was only properly explored in the 16th century, it is likely the Ancient World had an understanding of some locations south of the equator, especially in Africa. According to Herodotus, writing in the 5th century BCE, about 150 years earlier Pharaoh Necho had commissioned Phoenicians to circumnavigate Africa, setting off down the Red Sea. Apparently, they eventually succeeded, sailing back through the Strait of Gibraltar & returning to Egypt three years after setting off. Also, the Tropic of Capricorn (in the Southern Hemisphere) was named 2000 years ago, so the science of the time understood the north-south movement of the Sun relative to the Earth and should have been able to work out that the seasons would be reversed.

34. This seems to be an error and should read 15 days after the Chag ie 7 Cheshvan.

35. There is no direct evidence that this position (to start *v'ten tal u'matar* immediately after Chag) was practiced by any community. The Ritva lived in 14C Spain where the custom followed the Geonim, as he acknowledged. However, other Rishonim, such as the Ran and his student, the Nimukei Yosef, support his theoretical position. The Ran also acknowledges that there were communities in chu'l in his time who started asking for rain on 7 Cheshvan. However, the Ran also agrees that the weight of custom is to follow the Geonim and start 60 days after the equinox.

E4] THE PROVENCE PRECEDENT AND THE ROSH

- In the Middle Ages, the custom of most communities outside Israel - Spain, France, Germany etc - was to begin *v'ten tal u'matar* 60 days after the Tekufa in accordance with the psak for Bavel (as extended by the Rambam).
- However, the community in Provence³⁶ (and possibly that in Kairouan, Tunisia³⁷) followed the custom of Eretz Yisrael and started *v'ten tal u'matar* 7 Cheshvan!

26. ותמה אני למה אנו נוהגין כבני גולה בהא. נהי דהש"ס שלנו בבלי מ"מ דבר התלוי בארץ אם בבל היתה מצולת מים ולא היו צריכות למים כל הארצות צריכין למים במרחשוון! למה נאחר השאלה עד ששים לתקופה? והדבר ידוע אם לא היה מטר יורד עד ששים לתקופה היה הזרע אבד (קרצן נתחלל - לשון רזינו צתשובה שהעופות והעכברים יאכלוהו) ולמה לא נעשה כמשנתנו. ובפרובינצא ראיתי שהיו שואלין את הגשמים במרחשוון וישר מאד בעיני! (קרצן נתחלל - מ"מ צכל מדינות כללו לא נהיגין כוותיה. ולא עוד אס שאל אדם עד ס' בתקופה מחזירין אותו).

רא"ש תענית פרק א סימן ז

The Rosh (13C Germany) feels strongly³⁸ that countries should be able to ask for rain when THEY need it and not when it is needed in Bavel. In Germany, the rains were needed well before December, otherwise the newly sown grain would be destroyed by birds and mice³⁹. He cites with approval the custom in Provence to begin v'ten tal u'matar on 7 Cheshvan. However, the Rosh was a lone voice and other opinions rejected his approach.

27. והדבר ידוע שבאשכנז שהיא ארץ גדולה מאד וצרפת וכל הארצות שמאשכנז עד הארץ הזאת וזאת בכלל כלם צריכות מטר בין פסח לעצרת, ובודאי רבים הם ויכולים לשאול בברכת השנים ולהזכיר הגשמים כבני ארץ ישראל בחורף. ובראותי כי הטו את לב הקהל לבלתי קבל ממני דברי אלקים חיים גם אני חזרתי בי מלשאול ולהזכיר בבית הכנסת שאני מתפלל בו אף על פי שהייתי יכול לשאול אף על פי שאני יחיד כיון שצורך רבים הוא מכל מקום לא רציתי לעשות אגודות אגודות.. ולא הייתי כותב בחול המועד כי לא הורגלתי בכך אלא שצורך שעה הוא מפני חלול שם שמים וגם יש בדבר הזה קצת מצורך המועד. אשר בן הר"ר חיאל ז"ל.

שו"ת הרא"ש כלל ז סימן י

The Rosh wrote his teshuvot after he had already arrived in Spain⁴⁰. Even though he wanted to rule that European countries did NOT have follow the practice of Bavel and could insert v'ten tal u'matar when their country needed rain (even in the summer!), he was overruled and his psak was not accepted. Because of this, and to avoid factionalism and dispute, he withdrew the psak and reverted to the standard approach where all countries outside Israel start together 60 days after the tekufa⁴¹.

28. ומתחילין לשאול ס' יום אחר תקופת תשרי ותניא חנניא אומר ובגולה (פירוש בבבל) אין שואלין עד ס' יום אחר התקופה ואנן בתר בני בבל גרירין..... וא"א ז"ל כתב תמהני למה אנו נוהגין כבני גולה וישר מאוד בעיני ע"כ. ויחידים הצריכין למטר אחר כך שואלין אותו בשומע תפלה אפילו בעיר אחת גדולה כנינוה כיחידים דמו ושואלין אותו בשומע תפלה. אבל ארץ אחת כולה כמו ספרד בכללה או אשכנז בכללה אם צריכין למטר אחר כך כתב א"א הרא"ש ז"ל בתשובת שאלה שיכולין לשאול אחר כך בברכת השנים כפי הצורך להם. (דרישה - ... ויש לתמוה על רזינו למה הציא דבריו לפסק הלכה מאחר שלא קבלו דבריו ולריך עיון).

טור אורח חיים הלכות תפילה סימן קיז

The Tur rules against his father and says that we start v'ten tal u'matar 60 days after the equinox, in accordance with the Babylonian custom. Nevertheless, the Tur also quotes his fathers original psak, without writing that it was withdrawn, and later commentators⁴² ask how the Tur could do so.

36. Most of the evidence for this custom is from Narbonne - see Sefer HaManhig p90. The rainy season in Provence is from September to January, so it seems logical that they would want to ask for rain earlier rather than later. The Meiri (from 13C Provence) also notes this custom and writes that the communities in Provence started on 7 Cheshvan. He is presumably aware of the theoretical position of the Ritva - to start immediately after Chag - but he rules that this should be delayed to 7 Cheshvan because of the fruit in the fields. The Provençal community came to an end in the 14C after the French expulsions and their custom died with them.
37. The evidence for this is unclear and is based on variant readings of the Behag and later reports of the Rashbatz (15C Algiers) and the Radvaz (16C Egypt). There is some evidence of the communities in Tunis and Djerba continuing this into the 19C. See the Lasker article for more details.
38. The Rosh understands that the Rambam would also support this psak. He resolves the apparent contradiction in the Rambam's position by explaining that there is a difference between a city and a region. A city with exceptional needs should recite *v'ten tal u'matar* only in Shomea Tefilla. However, an entire region or country, such as Spain or Germany, should recite *v'ten tal u'matar* in Bircat Hashanim during the time of year that the region requires rain.
39. Some later poskim quote this as the reason that the German communities did NOT agree with the Rosh! Since the concern was practical - mice and birds - they could find other logistic solutions, such as scarecrows! The rains were not actually needed for their intrinsic life-giving properties (see R. Shimon Sofer in shu't Chatam Sofer Vol 7 p87a).
40. This teshuva is dated to 1313.
41. His note that he felt the need to write this teshuva on Chol HaMoed because of its pressing nature shows some of the the tension in the issues at that time.
42. Most later commentators rejected the position of the Rosh. They contend that the Rambam should not be read the way that the Rosh suggests, since the Rambam should have made the distinction between towns and countries more explicitly if he had meant it. Also, many other Rishonim (Rabbeinu Yona, Brachot 19b; Ritva, Ta'anit 3b) rule that local conditions do NOT determine when one recites *v'ten tal u'matar* in Bircat Hashanim, arguing that if one does so after Pesach one must repeat the Amida, even in a locale where there is a need for rain at that time of year.

29. ב יחידים הצריכים למטר בימות החמה, אין שואלין אותו בברכת השנים אלא בשומע תפלה. ואפילו עיר גדולה כנינוה או ארץ אחת כולה כמו ספרד בכללה או אשכנז בכללה, כיחידים דמו בשומע תפלה. ומיהו אם בארץ אחת כולה הצריכים מטר בימות החמה, טעה בה יחיד ושאל מטר בברכת השנים, (אם רולף) חוזר ומתפלל בתורת נדבה בלא שאלה בברכת השנים. (חזל אינו מחויב לחזור כלל).
ג אם שאל מטר בימות החמה מחזירין אותו.

שולחן ערוך אורח חיים הלכות תפילה סימן קיז סעיף ב-ג

The Shulchan Aruch rules against the Rosh. All countries outside Eretz Yisrael must follow the minhag of Bavel and start v'ten tal u'matar on Dec 4. They may not even follow the minhag of Eretz Yisrael and start on 7 Cheshvan, even if their country needs rain⁴³. However, if they recited v'ten tal u'matar at the wrong time of year, but their country did actually need rain at that time, they do not need to repeat the Amida but could daven a tefilat nedava (voluntary tefilla)⁴⁴.

30. ואנן בני חו"ל בתר בני בבל גררינן כמו בכל הדינים. ואף ע"ג דלכאורה אין זה ענין לדינים וכבר כתב הרמב"ם בפ"י המשנה בתענית שם דהדבר תלוי במדינות בהזמן שצריכין למטר וא"כ ברוב מדינות אייראפא שזורעין אחר הפסח היה לנו לומר טל ומטר בקיץ והרי בחורף אין אנו צריכים למטר כלל. וכבר האריך הרא"ש בתשו' בזה ולא דמי ליחידים הצריכים למטר שאומרים בשומע תפלה כמו שיתבאר, דלאו יחידים אנן אלא מדינות גדולות. מ"מ כתב הרא"ש בעצמו שלא נתקבלו דבריו כלל ע"ש וכאלו יצא בת קול לעשות כבני בבל. וכן מבואר מדברי הרמב"ם בחיבורו בפ"ב שלא כתב כמ"ש בפ"י המשנה ע"ש וכך סתמו רבותינו בעלי הש"ע וכן הלכה. וכל המפקפק בזה ראוי לעונש

ערוך השולחן אורח חיים סימן קיז סעיף ד

The Aruch Hashulchan writes very strongly that all countries must follow the psak relating to Bavel, that it was almost as if a bat kol had proclaimed it, and that anyone who breached it deserves punishment.

• What was he so concerned about? In fact, Abraham Geiger and the early Reform movement had ruled that the German Jews could say *v'ten tal u'matar* all year round!

F] THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

F1] RECIFE, BRAZIL

- There are Jewish communities in the following countries south of the equator⁴⁵: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, New Zealand, South Africa and Uruguay, and, to a lesser extent, in Ecuador and Bolivia. All of these countries were largely unknown to the European and Middle Eastern world until the 15th century era of exploration⁴⁶.
- The first ever halachic question to come from the New World actually related to saying *v'ten tal u'matar*. It was sent in 1647 by the Jewish community in Recife, Brazil to a prominent posek in Salonica, R. Chayim Shabtai⁴⁷. The questioner assumes that rain during their summer months (November-March) would be very harmful in that locale. Therefore, they wanted to say *v'ten tal u'matar* (and also *mashiv haruach umorid hagashem*) between Pesach and Succot and not between Succot and Pesach.
- R. Shabtai responded that the people may NOT follow the psak of the Rosh and ruled that they should never recite *mashiv haruach umorid hagashem* at all⁴⁸. During the months that the Brazilians needed rain⁴⁹, he ruled that they should recite *v'ten tal u'matar* in Shomea Tefilla, like the practice of the city of Ninveh.

F2] MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

- In the 1890s, R. Avraham Hirschowitz⁵⁰ from Lithuania became the Rav of Melbourne. On his arrival, he found that the community was following the practice of the Torat Chayim⁵¹ - not reciting *mashiv haruach* at all, reciting *v'ten tal u'matar* in Shomea Tefilla during the Australian winter between Pesach and Succot, and not reciting it at all from December to Pesach.

43. See MB 117:11 and Biur Halacha s.v. u'mihu.

44. This is based on the psak of R. Yitzchak Abuhav, who ruled that one should not repeat the Amida out of respect for the Rosh's positions. Although the Beit Yosef was initially inclined to reject the Rosh's position entirely, he modified this out of respect of the psak of R. Abuhav. R. Yosef Karo indicates that one should daven a tefilat nedava but the Rema rules that this is optional. For many reasons, the poskim today recommend against davening a tefilat nedava in most situations.

45. For two shiurim on halachic issues in the Southern Hemisphere by R. Yirmiyahu Kagenoff see <http://rabbikaganoff.com/davening-for-rain-in-the-southern-hemisphere/> and <https://rabbikaganoff.com/tag/vesein-tal-u-matar/>. Some of the material in this section was taken from his articles.

46. The first discovered was probably South Africa, discovered by Vasco da Gama during his voyage that began in 1497, and then Brazil, discovered in 1500 by Pedro Cabral.

47. Shu't Torat Chayim.

48. This follows the view that one does not recite either *mashiv haruach* or *v'ten tal u'matar* when it is detrimental to local needs.

49. The rainy season in Recife is from March to August.

50. Shu't Beit Avraham. R. Hirschowitz left Melbourne in 1894 and published his sefer in 1908, when he was a Rav in Toledo, Ohio.

51. They followed this practice based on a psak they had received from the British Chief Rabbi, R. Shlomo Hirschell, who died in 1842. R. Nathan Marcus Adler gave the same psak in 1846 to the Jews of Hobart, Australia. The same question was also asked to Rabbi Adler by the Melbourne community in 1848 but his answer is not recorded.

- R. Hirschowitz felt that this practice was mistaken⁵² and wrote to several senior poskim on the matter⁵³. He argued that, in Australia (unlike Brazil) rain in the summer (Nov-Mar) is NOT detrimental. He therefore ruled that Australia should follow the practice of everywhere else outside Eretz Yisrael and recite *mashiv haruach* from Succot to Pesach, and *v'ten tal u'matar* in Bircat Hashanim from Dec 4.
- Most later poskim supported the ruling of R. Hirschowitz's^{54 55}, although he was not successful in changing the Australian custom of the time.⁵⁶ The custom in Australia was later successfully changed to match the standard (Babylonian) practice.

F3] MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY

- One major authority disagreed strongly with the Melbourne psak. R. Shmuel Wosner wrote a teshuva⁵⁷ to R. Avraham Leitner of the Adat Yerei'im community in Montevideo, Uruguay. R. Wosner rules that the discussions in the Gemara and Rishonim were only relevant to the Northern Hemisphere, where the basic needs are for rain in the winter, and that some places might require rain even in the spring and summer. However, in the Southern Hemisphere, where the seasons are reversed, davening for rain between Succot and Pesach is tantamount to asking God to change the climate completely, which would be catastrophic. Therefore, he ruled that, in the Southern Hemisphere, one should recite *mashiv haruach* from Pesach until Succot, and insert *v'ten tal u'matar* in Bircat Hashanim when it is appropriate there⁵⁸.

F4] SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE - BOTTOM LINE

- In practice, the standard custom in the Southern Hemisphere is to follow the Babylonian approach of the Northern Hemisphere and insert *mashiv haruach* and *v'ten tal u'matar* when they do.⁵⁹
- It seems that some communities omit them⁶⁰ during the local summer^{61 62}.

G] DO WE ACTUALLY PRAY FOR RAIN IN ERETZ YISRAEL?

- Some commentators on tefilla⁶³ have suggested that our prayer for rain are really for rain in Eretz Yisrael! This could explain why it could be appropriate for communities to daven for rain, even when that does not make local sense. However, halachically, this is not the approach of the Gemara, Rishonim and poskim, who clearly understand that the prayer for rain in chutz leAretz is relevant to the local needs.
- Ironically, by adopting the Babylonian practice, communities in chu'l are in effect praying for the rain in Bavel!⁶⁴ Some have suggested⁶⁵ that this focus should be restored now to Eretz Yisrael, perhaps with a restoration of the Provence custom for all communities to start on 7 Cheshvan, as in Eretz Yisrael.
- Better still, the Jews of chu'l should be'H move to Israel and the Temple should be rebuilt and the olei regel return. Then we can all start *v'ten tal u'matar* on 7 Cheshvan according to ALL opinions!

52. He claimed that the Melbourne climate did not support the earlier psak (from Brazil) since rain was needed all year round, and that Rabbis Hirschell and Adler had been misled.

53. These included R. Yitzchak Elchanan Spector, who supported R. Hirschowitz's ruling. R. Shmuel Salant originally supported him but then changed his psak to the previous position of R. Hirschell.

54. Rav Kook (shu't Orach Mishpat, OC 24), R. Tzvi Pesach Frank (shu't Har Tzvi, OC 56), Dayan Yitzchak Weiss (shu't Minchat Yitzchak 6:171), and R. Betzael Stern (shu't Betzeil Hachochma 6:85), all accepted this approach.

55. Rabbi Kagenoff suggests that, where rain is actually detrimental (as it was in Brazil), all poskim would rule that one should not recite *mashiv haruach* or *v'ten tal u'matar* at all.

56. Chief Rabbi Herman Adler supported the psak of his father and previous British Chief Rabbis and R. Hirschowitz set up a break away minyan and ruled that congregants may not pray in the other minyan or say Amen to their berachot. After other controversies, R. Hirschowitz left Australia only two years later for a rabbinic career in the US.

57. Shu't Shevet Halevi 1:21 in 1961. R. Shmuel's son, R. Benzion Wosner, served as a Rav in Sydney, Australia for six years and includes a detailed teshuva expanding, explaining and supporting his father's position (shu't Shevet Halevi 9:148).

58. Rabbi Kagenoff suggests that the prayers of Tefilat Geshem and Tefilat Tal should also be reversed – geshem on Pesach and tal on Succot.

59. This is the practice in South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.. In Johannesburg it actually rains in their summer, which matches the Dec-March months. In New Zealand I am reliably informed that it rains all year round!

60. According to the discussion above, this should only apply in a place and season where rain is detrimental.

61. Rabbi Kagenoff notes another approach which is not quoted in any halachic work. There are apparently some individuals who say *morid hatal* in the second beracha of Amida all year long. They also say *v'ten tal u'matar* in Shomea Tefilla whenever there is an opinion that one should recite *v'ten tal u'matar*. The advantage of this approach is that one would not create a situation in which the Amida must be repeated.

62. For a detailed more academic review of the issues see *The Jewish Prayer for Rain in the Post-Talmudic Diaspora*, Arnold A. Lasker and Daniel J. Lasker, AJS Review Autumn 1984 Vol 9 No 2 pp 141-174.

63. See *The World of Prayer*, R. Elie Munk Vol 1 p 139 and Baruch She'amar p 138.

64. Compare the wording of the prayer *Yekum Purkan* on Shabbat when we pray for the welfare of the rabbinate of Bavel, although that may simply represent the Jews of chu'l.

65. See R. Shlomo Min Hahar, Techumin 1 p 148.