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## PART II

## THE MAFTIR

The One Who Reads The  
Haftarah

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## CHAPTER 2

### The Maftir's Qualifications

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*Poskim* write: “If they called someone to read the haftarah who does not know how, someone else may read. However, this should not be done *a priori* (לכתחילה).”<sup>1</sup> Under some circumstances, however, someone may be called to read the haftarah even if he does not know how to read properly.<sup>2</sup>

Some communities have the custom that all the congregants read the haftarah aloud, and the *maftir* reads only the last verse aloud.<sup>3</sup> The *Chatam Sofer* explains that this custom is related to the above *halachah*: since the *maftir* is reading from a *chumash* rather than a *klaf*, no one fulfills his obligation through this reading.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, we permit calling for *maftir* even a person who does not know how

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, *Rema O.C.* 284:4.

<sup>2</sup> For some of these exceptions, see Chapter 1, footnote 7, above.

<sup>3</sup> This writer saw this custom practiced in the Kacinczy Street *shul* in Budapest, Hungary in *minchah* of the 17<sup>th</sup> of *Tammuz* 5759 / 1999. Interestingly, in the same *shul* on the following *Shabbat* (*Parashat Pinchas*), the haftarah was read aloud by only one person.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 38 for a discussion of whether or not the haftarah must be read from a *klaf*.

to read the haftarah properly. Then, everyone reads aloud in order to drown out that *maftir*, thus saving him from embarrassment.<sup>5</sup>

Some authorities write in very strong language against those who mispronounce the words of the haftarah.<sup>6</sup> In the same vein, the Torah commentary *Yalkut Me'am Lo'ez* relates that a certain pious man asked Eliyahu Hanavi: "Why do you not come to herald the arrival of *mashiach*?" Eliyahu answered: "It is because of the sin of those who are not careful to pronounce the words correctly when they lead the prayers or the Torah reading."<sup>7</sup>

### **Must the Maftir Know the Trop?**

May a person who can read the words, but not the *trop*, be called *a priori* (לכתחילה)? At first glance, it can be argued from *Megillah* 32a that such a person may be called to read the haftarah. That *Gemara* says:

*Rav Shefatiah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan, "Anyone who reads without a melody and studies without song--about him it is said (Yechezkel 20:25), 'And also I have given them laws which are not good and ordinances by which they shall not gain life'."*

*Abaye asked: "Because he does not know how to make his voice pleasant you apply to him the verse, '...ordinances by which they shall not gain life'?"*

*Rashi* explains that the "melody" referred to is the *trop*. And, since the *Gemara* does not answer Abaye's question, the *Gemara*

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<sup>5</sup> *She'eilot U'teshuvot Chatam Sofer, O.C. No. 68.*

<sup>6</sup> See page \_\_ below.

<sup>7</sup> *Yalkut Me'am Lo'ez, Parashat Ki Tavo*, citing *Yad Moshe* (quoted in *Sefer Ha'kriah*).

apparently agrees with Abaye.<sup>8</sup> Thus, it appears that one may read without the *trop* “if he does not know how to make his voice pleasant.”

In reality, however, this *Gemara* is not a proof because there is no compelling reason to believe that the *Gemara* is discussing a public reading. Perhaps the *Gemara*'s lesson is that even when reading privately, one must use the *trop*, while Abaye disagrees. However, Abaye is not addressing whether one may read *in public* without the proper *trop*.

R' David Zvi Hoffman rules that a child should not be called as the *maftir* unless he knows the *trop*.<sup>9</sup> R' Joseph B. Soloveitchik related that he was called to *maftir* in the presence of his grandfather, R' Chaim Brisker, on *Shabbat Parashat Lech Lecha* in 1917. R' Chaim told him: “Whether you sing with a nice tune is immaterial, but you must be punctilious about the *trop*.”<sup>10</sup>

In reality, this ruling should be obvious, since without the *trop*, we have no way of knowing what the verses mean. *Kuzari* explains: in conversation, a speaker doesn't always say what he means, and we have to derive his meaning from his gestures and intonations. Similarly, much of our understanding of Torah comes from correct pronunciation and correct reading of the *trop*. The *trop* tells us where to put the commas, periods and question marks, and it tells us the tempo of the verse, i.e., whether to slow down or to speed up.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Nachalat Yaakov* to *Masechet Soferim* 3:11.

<sup>9</sup> *She'eilot U'teshuvot Melamed L'Hoil*, I No. 8.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in *The Rav* §§ 5.15 and 5.16. (R' Soloveitchik was not a minor at that time.)

<sup>11</sup> *Kuzari*, Part II, paragraph 72 (cited by R' Wolf Heidenheim in *Havanat Ha'mikra*, *Bemidbar* 16:22). R' Heidenheim adds that this is the reason for the popular proverb which says that it is better to learn from a teacher than from a book. This is because so much of the meaning is conveyed by the teacher's gestures and intonations, rather than by the words alone.

Based on the foregoing, we can see that the common belief that the congregation should not correct the *ba'al koreh* when he errs in singing the *trop* is a misconception. There are many instances in which even a subtle change in the *trop* changes the meaning of the verse, and in those cases, the *ba'al koreh* must go back and correct his error.<sup>12</sup>

### A Shabbat-Violator as the Maftir

May one who is not a *Shabbat*-observer be called to read the haftarah? R' Ze'ev Slonim of Yerushalayim suggests the following reason why, at first glance, one who is not a *Shabbat*-observer may not be called to read the haftarah: *Chatam Sofer* writes that a person who does not observe *shemittah* cannot be called for an *aliyah* that deals with *shemittah*.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, one could argue that one who is not a *Shabbat*-observer should not recite the haftarah blessing that includes the words, “מקדש השבת” / “Who sanctifies the *Shabbat*.”

On the other hand, R' Slonim writes, one could argue that a *Shabbat*-violate may recite this *berachah* because it does not refer to our sanctifying *Shabbat*. Rather, it is *Hashem* who sanctifies *Shabbat*, and it remains sanctified, whether we keep it or not.<sup>14</sup>

R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook once was asked whether it was proper for a community to sanction a congregation that called for “*Maftir Yonah*” an individual who knowingly transgressed the laws of Yom Kippur. R' Kook replied that it was proper to sanction that congregation.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Mishnah Berurah* 142:4.

<sup>13</sup> *She'eilot U'teshuvot Chatam Sofer*, O.C. No. 15.

<sup>14</sup> *Sha'arei Halachah*. See *Beitzah* 17a.

<sup>15</sup> *She'eilot U'teshuvot Da'at Kohen* No. 193.



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## CHAPTER 3

### A Minor As Maftir

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As far as *halachah* is concerned (מעיקר הדין), a minor may read the haftarah on an ordinary *Shabbat*.<sup>1</sup> Among the *Sephardim* of London and Amsterdam, it was once customary that children began reading the haftarah on a regular basis at age seven.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, some communities never permit a minor to read the haftarah.<sup>3</sup>

Regarding *Yom Tov*, *Rema*<sup>4</sup> writes: “Even a child can read the *maftir* for *Yom Tov* or for the *Arba Parshiyot*, and such is our custom, even though some disagree.” *Rema*’s opinion regarding a minor reading the haftarah on *Yom Tov* is upheld by R’ Yaakov Emden.<sup>5</sup> R’ Yoel Sirkes (the “*Bach*”) writes that when he was a child his father paid a large sum to buy the haftarah for his minor son on the last day of *Pesach*. He adds, “The rabbi of the *shul* was [the

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<sup>1</sup> *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 284:4.

<sup>2</sup> *Keter Shem Tov* p. 390, note 410. This custom was observed on most *Shabbatot* of the year (*ibid.*, p. 403).

<sup>3</sup> *Darchei Chaim Veshalom* § 212.

<sup>4</sup> O.C. 282:4. Those who disagree include *Magen Avraham* (282:12) and *Sha'arei Ephraim* (see Chapter 1, paragraph 3 above).

<sup>5</sup> *Siddur Bet Yaakov* p. 171b, paragraph 24.

renowned *posek*] Rav Shlomo Luria [the “*Maharshal*”], and I think he was present and he did not object.”<sup>6</sup>

According to *Be'er Heitev*,<sup>7</sup> when *Rema* writes that a minor may read the haftarah for the *Arba Parshiyot*, he means except for *Parashat Zachor*. This is the ruling of *Maharil* as well.<sup>8</sup> However, *Taz*<sup>9</sup> disagrees and holds that a minor may be called as the *maftir* even for *Parashat Zachor*.

The *Vilna Gaon*<sup>10</sup> cites *Rabbenu Asher*<sup>11</sup> who holds that a minor may never read the haftarah on a day when the *maftir*'s Torah reading is different from the seventh *aliyah*. This apparently would include *Yom Tov*, *Rosh Chodesh*, and the *Arba Parshiyot*. The reason for this has to do with the difference between the Torah verses read for the *maftir* on an ordinary *Shabbat* and those read on days when two or more *Sifrei Torah* are removed from the *aron kodesh*, as explained in the next paragraph.

There is nearly unanimous agreement among the *poskim* that the weekly Torah reading is a rabbinic *mitzvah*, and not an obligation imposed by the Torah itself. However, some Torah readings are Torah-obligations, most notably *Parashat Zachor*. Also, the custom to read the sacrifices of the day on *Yom Tov* is particularly ancient, whether or not it is actually a Torah-obligation. (Some say it is.) Thus, it is not appropriate for a child to be called as the *maftir* on these occasions, not because the haftarah has any special status, but because the *maftir aliyah* does.

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<sup>6</sup> *She'eilot U'teshuvot Ha'Bach Ha'yeshanot* No. 158. But see *Megillah* 20a.

<sup>7</sup> 282:8.

<sup>8</sup> *Teshuvot Marahril* No. 167.

<sup>9</sup> 282:3.

<sup>10</sup> *Be'ur Ha'Gra siman* 282, שיש חולקין.

<sup>11</sup> *Megilah*, Ch. 3, *siman* 5 (page 35b).

*Bach* disagrees, saying that there is no source in the Talmud for making any distinction. According to *Bach*, *Rabbenu Asher* only prohibits a minor from reading if (1) the child is not old enough to appreciate to Whom the *berachah* is addressed, and (2) if the minor himself reads the Torah.<sup>12</sup>

As already noted, the prevalent Ashkenazic custom is that a minor does not read the haftarah for any of the *Arba Parshiyot*.<sup>13</sup>

Whenever a minor is called, it must of course be one who knows how to pronounce the words properly.<sup>14</sup> However, *Bach* appears to disagree and permits even a very young child to read.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *She'eilot U'teshuvot Ha'Bach Ha'yeshanot*, loc. cit. It should be noted that *Bach's* analysis turns in part on his opinion that all Torah readings are a Torah-ordained *mitzvah* (see *ibid.* and see *Taz* 684:2). Accordingly, if a minor is permitted to be the *maftir* on any occasion, he should be permitted to be the *maftir* on all occasions.

On the other hand, the *Vilna Gaon's* understanding of *Rabbenu Asher* may be based on the view that only those *maftir* readings which are different from the seventh *aliyah* (i.e., those *maftir* readings which describe the sacrifice of the day) are of Torah, rather than Rabbinic, origin. Thus, a minor should be precluded from reading those *maftir* readings and not others. Since *Bach* is alone in his view, his analysis of *Rabbenu Asher's* opinion likely would not be widely accepted.

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter 1, paragraph 3 above; *Aruch Hashulchan* 282:16.

<sup>14</sup> *Magen Avraham* 282:12; *Mishnah Berurah*, 282:23. See also above Chapter 1, footnote 7.

<sup>15</sup> *She'eilot U'teshuvot Ha'Bach Ha'yeshanot*, loc. cit.



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## CHAPTER 4

### A Bar Mitzvah

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#### The Origin of the Custom

There does not appear to be an ancient source for the custom that a boy reads the haftarah on the *Shabbat* after his thirteenth birthday. Indeed, one early twentieth century *halachic* authority states that there is no basis in the *poskim* for this custom, and he comments with some annoyance that a typical *bar mitzvah* is nothing other than a young boy showing off that he knows how to read the haftarah properly when, in fact, he is merely parroting back ("מעשה קוף") what someone spent six months teaching him.<sup>1</sup>

The practice that a boy reads the haftarah on the *Shabbat* after his thirteenth birthday may have evolved from the custom that boys read the haftarah on the *Shabbat before* their thirteenth birthday.<sup>2</sup> The reason why the boy would read the haftarah, rather than receiving some other "honor," is that even a minor may read the haftarah.

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<sup>1</sup> *Mikraei Kodesh* 20:7, note 8. The author of that work, R' Zvi Hirsch Grodzinski, was rabbi in Omaha, Nebraska from 1891 to 1948, and the cited work itself was published in 1936. We therefore know that the custom of *bar mitzvah* boys reading the haftarah was likely prevalent in the United States early in this century. (R' Grodzinski mentions also that this custom was practiced in "נארק" / either "Newark" or "New York.").

<sup>2</sup> This custom is mentioned in *Tzitz Eliezer* Vol. VII, No. 1.

The family of the renowned *posek*, R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, writes that he was opposed to the relatively new custom that a boy reads the *sidrah* and the haftarah on the *Shabbat* after his *bar mitzvah*. The family reports that R' Auerbach prevailed upon the *shul* where he prayed (the “*Gra Shul*” in Yerushalayim) to abolish the newer practice and revert to the older custom that a boy reads the haftarah on the *Shabbat* before his *bar mitzvah*. R' Auerbach waited many years before making his objections known; however, when one of his own relatives became a *bar mitzvah*, R' Auerbach moved to make the change. This particular boy had read the haftarah in public many times and was known to have a nice voice, so R' Auerbach argued: “We need not worry about the boy's honor for everyone knows he can read. We need not worry that the family will be slighted, for it is my family. Therefore, now is the right time to return to the earlier custom that the boy reads on the *Shabbat* before his *bar mitzvah*, and only the haftarah.”<sup>3</sup>

### Two Bnei Mitzvah on One Shabbat

We have already seen that two people should not read the haftarah together.<sup>4</sup> Thus, when there are two *bar mitzvah* boys present in *shul*, some authorities recommend that lots be cast.<sup>5</sup>

One could argue, however, that an exception could be made when there are two *bar mitzvah* boys present. R' Moshe Feinstein suggests<sup>6</sup> that there is a precedent for this: Although we do not permit two people to read from the Torah at the same time, two people may read from *Megillat Esther* at the same time. Why?

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted in *Halichot Shlomo* p. 154.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 1, paragraph 29 above.

<sup>5</sup> *Mikraei Kodesh*, loc. cit.; *Tzitz Eliezer* Vol. VI, No. 36. Alternatively, states the latter work, “It would not be so terrible to require one boy to find another *shul*.”

<sup>6</sup> *Igrot Moshe*, O.C. I, No. 102.

The reason that two people may not read the Torah at once is that it will be difficult to hear the words. However, *Megillat Esther* is so beloved that people listen carefully. Perhaps, also, writes R' Feinstein, when there are two *bar mitzvah* celebrations in *shul*, each will be so beloved to (at least half of) the guests that everyone will hear one reading of the *haftarah* or the other.<sup>7</sup>

In practice, R' Feinstein proposes the following solution when two *bar mitzvah* boys are present. After the *parashah* has been read, but before *maftir*, one of the *bar mitzvah* boys and ten adult men should leave the *shul*. Then, the other boy should be called to the Torah as the *maftir*, and he should read the *haftarah*. The *Sefer Torah* should not be rolled up, as it usually is before the *haftarah*, but it should rather be left on the *shulchan*, covered by a *tallit* or other covering.

Afterwards, the second boy should return with his *minyan* and he should also be called to the Torah as *maftir*. After he reads, the *Sefer Torah* should be rolled up, and then the second boy should read the *haftarah*. Although there is some *tircha d'tzibura* / delaying the congregation involved in this process, R' Feinstein notes, the congregation should forgive its honor in order to prevent a feud from developing between the families of the two boys.<sup>8</sup> It appears from

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<sup>7</sup> However, R' Feinstein remains uncertain as to whether to accept this logic, and he proposes a different solution, as discussed below.

<sup>8</sup> The same solution is cited in the name of R' Isser Yehuda Unterman in *Miyam Hahalachah*, I No. 29. R' Yosef Kanowitz also recommended this solution (*Divrei Yosef* No. 12).

R' Chaim Meir Braun (*She'eilot U'teshuvot Toldot Chaim* No. 3) suggests a slightly different solution. He writes that a *minyan* of men should read the entire *sedrah* (except *maftir*) in another room. This *minyan* should return to the main *shul* after the *haftarah* has been read by one *bar mitzvah* boy and should read *maftir* and the *haftarah* there. In a gloss to *Toldot Chaim*, R' Pinchas Epstein (*Av Bet Din* of Yerushalayim) concurs with this suggestion. He adds that he remembers seeing a journal article addressing this question but that his copy of the journal was destroyed when the Old City was lost in 1948 and he does not remember the article's conclusion.

R' Feinstein's formulation that each *maftir* would recite all of the *berachot* over the haftarah.

R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook writes that two consecutive readings of the haftarah are prohibited, for how can we recite the *berachot* of the haftarah twice if *Chazal* did not instruct us to do so? In this respect, he explains, the haftarah is not comparable to the Torah reading, where we are permitted to add as many *aliyot* as the length of the *parashah* permits. That is permitted because, according to *Rambam*, one is obligated by Torah law to recite a blessing any time the Torah is read in public. Thus, each new *aliyah* actually creates a new obligation to recite a *berachah*. Not so in the case of the haftarah, whose blessing is only a rabbinic *mitzvah*, and may be recited only to the extent permitted by *Chazal*. Nevertheless, it is possible that even R' Kook would agree to permit two readings in a case where one of the boys and a *minyan* of men had left the room prior to *maftir* (as R' Feinstein suggests) because those people then have a true obligation to read the *maftir*.<sup>9</sup>

What if one of the boys is already thirteen years old and the other is not? May an adult (i.e., the 13-year old boy) and a child (i.e., the 12-year old boy) read the haftarah together?

Based upon the reasons discussed above, one would assume that simultaneous readings of the haftarah are prohibited whether the two readers both are adults, both are children, or one of each. If two voices cannot be heard together, it should not matter whose voices they are.

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<sup>9</sup> *Orach Mishpat* No. 59. This is not certain, however, for there are those who view the Torah readings as a communal obligation, not as a personal obligation. Thus, once the community has read the Torah, the obligation of the individual is extinguished even if he missed the reading.

However, R' Moshe Tirani permits an adult and a child to read together, with the adult alone reciting the *berachot*.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps he assumes that the child's voice will be drowned out by the adult's voice.

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<sup>10</sup> *She'eilot U'teshuvot Mabit* I No. 109.



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## CHAPTER 5

### A Yahrzeit

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#### The Origin of the Custom

It is customary that a man who is observing a *yahrzeit* on *Shabbat* or during the coming week is asked to read the haftarah.<sup>1</sup> This custom appears to be a variation on a very ancient practice.

Specifically, the source for reading the haftarah as a merit for the deceased is the *Zohar* (*Midrash Ne'elam, Parashat Acharei Mot*), which relates:

*Come and see how one man went to the mountains of Cardonia, and there were two others with him. [There] he saw holes and crevices filled with fire, and smoke billowed from them, and he heard a man exclaiming, "Oy! Oy!" He [then] said, "This is definitely one of the places in Gehinom."*

*The man fell asleep, and he dreamt that he saw a person carrying a bundle of thorns on his back, and two officers of Gehinom were carrying fire beneath the thorns, and the man [carrying the thorns] was burned. And the two holy angels, who had been sent from the Judge Above Who judged him, said to him, "You abandoned G-d and his*

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter 1, paragraph 42.

*angels who had guarded you in this world and in the World-to-come . . . [therefore,] may the thorns burn you."*

*The man [who was dreaming] asked the one who was being punished, "Who are you?"*

*"I am a Jew, but I do not remember my name," he answered. "They judge me three times every day, and twice at night."*

*"Do you remember from where you come?" the man asked.*

*"From the Upper Galilee."*

*"Did you leave a son behind?" [the man asked.]*

*"I left a young son," he answered, and he continued, "I was a butcher, and for my great sins, they judge [for the sins I committed] with my mouth, [for the sins I committed] with my legs, [and for the sins I committed] with my hands. The angel who is appointed over the graves says to me while I am being punished, 'Woe to the one who swore to uphold the Torah, [but] who swore falsely. Woe to the head which never laid tefilin. Woe to the hands which touched all of the vanities of this world. Woe to the legs which went to the vanities of this world. . . ."*

*The man awoke and he went to the Upper Galilee. He said to one man, "Have you seen a boy who is the son of a butcher who died at such-and-such a time?"*

*The [other man] said to him, "This boy, about whom you ask, wanders in the slaughterhouses, and he is wicked like his father. . . ."*

*The man went to the slaughterhouse and he found the boy playing with other boys in the slaughterhouse. He told the boy, "Come with me," and [the boy] came. He dressed the*

*boy and turned him over to a teacher, who taught him Torah until the boy grew up. He taught [the boy] to read the haftarah in shul and to pray. He read and he reviewed and became very wise, so-much-so, that they called him "Rebbe."*

*The deceased who had been punished in Gehinom, the father of this boy, appeared to the man in a dream and said, "My teacher, as you have consoled me, may Hashem console you. At the moment when my son read the haftarah in public, they removed me from the [place of] punishment. When he went before [the lectern] in prayer and recited kaddish, they tore up the decree against me entirely. When he became wise, they gave me a portion in Gan Eden.*

Based on this passage in the *Zohar*, it became customary for mourners to read the haftarah on every *Shabbat* for the full twelve months of mourning. This custom is mentioned by numerous *poskim* as recently as the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

At some point, however, the earlier custom evolved into our present custom that one reads the haftarah on, or on the *Shabbat* preceding, a parent's *yahrzeit*. It is not clear why this happened; some suggest that there were too many fights as mourners competed for the

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<sup>2</sup> *She'eilot U'teshuvot Rivash*, No. 115; *Bet Yosef, Yoreh Deah, siman 376; Rema, Y.D. 376:4; Mateh Ephraim, Dinei Kaddish Yatom 4:2*. In the twentieth century, R' Yosef Chaim of Baghdad mentions the great benefit to the deceased if his (or her) child reads the haftarah during the twelve months of mourning, but he does not say that it should be done every week (*Ben Ish Chai*, Second Year, *Parashat Toldot*, paragraph 21).

The contemporary *posek*, R' Eliezer Waldenberg writes that one is not obligated to make a special effort to observe this custom (*Tzitz Eliezer* Vol. XVI, No. 38). See also *Nitei Gavriel: Aveilut* 65:8-10.

haftarah or that congregations attempted to increase their revenues by auctioning the haftarah to the highest bidder, be he a mourner or not.<sup>3</sup>

Some have the custom to read the haftarah upon completing the eleven months of reciting *kaddish*.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, some say that such a person takes precedence over a person observing a *yahrzeit* during the coming week.<sup>5</sup> On the opposite extreme, some do not read the haftarah even in observance of a *yahrzeit*. For example, the *rebbe*s of Vizhnitz do not do so, although the reason is no longer known.<sup>6</sup> The *Satmar Rebbe* did not read the haftarah on the *Shabbat* preceding his mother's *yahrzeit*.<sup>7</sup> Instead, these *rebbe*s received an *aliyah* — usually *shishi* — on the *Shabbat* before the *yahrzeit*.

Because of the connection between the *haftarah* and mourning, some *Sephardim* do not read the haftarah while their parents are living.<sup>8</sup>

### Why the Haftarah?

Why, of all *mitzvot*, was the haftarah chosen as the one to perform in memory of the deceased? One reason offered<sup>9</sup> is that even a child may read the haftarah, and, unfortunately, children too must sometimes commemorate the loss of a parent. It may be that reading

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<sup>3</sup> *Nishmat Yisrael* p. 639.

<sup>4</sup> *Kol Bo Aveilut* p. 400; *Nitei Gavriel: Aveilut* 52:2.

<sup>5</sup> *Nishmat Yisrael* p. 639.

<sup>6</sup> Related to the author by R' Natan Elya Roth *shlita*, prominent *chassid* and biographer of the *Vizhnitzer Rebbes*. In *Nitei Gavriel (Aveilut* 69, note 12) the list of *chassidic rebbes* who do not read the haftarah in observance of their parents' *yahrzeits* includes: Chernobyl, Belz, Sanz and Vizhnitz.

<sup>7</sup> *Nishmat Yisrael* p. 766.

<sup>8</sup> *Keter Shem Tov* p. 390.

<sup>9</sup> *Nishmat Yisrael* p. 638 (citing *Nimukei Orach Chaim*); *Tzitz Eliezer*, Vol. XVI, No. 38.



the haftarah is not an end in itself; rather, a man observing a *yahrzeit* reads the haftarah so that he will be entitled to lead *mussaf*.<sup>10</sup>

Alternatively, the reason for reading the haftarah may be as follows: *Maharil* writes that young orphans should read “many *haftarot*” in order to recite “*Barchu*” as often as possible. The implication of this statement is that the primary benefit to the soul of a deceased comes from the *Barchu* that is recited by the child, but the only way that a child can recite *Barchu* (according to our custom of not giving children *aliyot*) is for the child to receive the *maftir aliyah*.

The *midrash Tanna D'vei Eliyahu Zuta* (ch. 7) likewise implies that the primary benefit to the soul comes from the recitation of *Barchu*. R' Akiva Yosef Schlesinger,<sup>11</sup> notes that the recitation of *Barchu* is the common element which joins the mourner's *kaddish* (recited on a *yahrzeit*) and the haftarah. (In both the *Sephardic* ritual and among many *Ashkenazim* in *Eretz Yisrael*, one of the last recitations of the *kaddish* in the morning service is followed by a “Mourner's *Borchu*.”<sup>12</sup>)

Another reason for a mourner to read the haftarah is that the words in the *berachah* following the haftarah, “צור כל העולמים” / “Rock of all eternities, Righteous in all

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<sup>10</sup> *Tzitz Eliezer*, *ibid.* See *Megillah* 24a. (The combination of reading the haftarah and leading *mussaf* is a greater merit for one's parent than simply receiving one *aliyah*.)

<sup>11</sup> *Tosfot Ben Yechiel*.

<sup>12</sup> One objection to this argument is that it is not at all clear that the *maftir* did say “*Borchu*” at the historical era referred to in the *Tanna D'vei Eliyahu*. It was once customary that the *berachah* before the Torah reading was recited only by the *kohen* and the *berachah* after the Torah reading was recited only by the last *oleh*.



generations,” is a form of צדוק הדין / acceptance of Hashem's judgment.<sup>13</sup>

The simplest interpretation for the story quoted above from the *Zohar* is that the boy's father was punished in *Gehinnom* for not teaching his son Torah, and was then redeemed when his son finally did learn how to read the words of the Torah. This fact led several authorities to caution that reading the haftarah poorly is worse than not reading it at all. Thus, one work states in strong language:<sup>14</sup>

*If the maftir does not know how to read the written haftarah, then the blessings are in vain and the congregation does not fulfill its obligation. It is too bad that there are to be found foolish people who make a mockery of the language, who want to recite the haftarah so that their parents will rest in peace, and they read the blessings and the haftarah in half-words, with who knows how many mistakes. Although it says in the midrash<sup>15</sup> that one deceased person was not saved from Gehinnom until his son recited kaddish and read the haftarah, and from this the custom evolved to recite kaddish for twelve months and to read the haftarah from the Prophets, and likewise on the Shabbat preceding the yahrzeit; nevertheless, it is obvious that it does no good unless one reads in a clear, pleasant voice, letter-by-letter. This is not accomplished by those who make mistakes and skip [words]. They turn that which should be an “ענג” / pleasure [for the soul] into a “נגע” / blemish. It would be preferable to Hashem and to one's*

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<sup>13</sup> R' Reuven Margalio, *Nitzotzei Zohar* (on the above-quoted *Zohar*), No. 11 and *Sha'arei Zohar*, Megillah 23a.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in *Sha'arei Rachamim*. This is also the ruling of R' Chaim Falagi in *Sefer Chaim* 25:23 and of the work *Eleph Hamagen* and is cited by R' Ovadiah Yosef in *Yechaveh Da'at*, Vol. V, No. 59.

<sup>15</sup> I.e., the *Zohar* quoted above.

[deceased] parents if he would give the money that he wishes to spend on buying the haftarah to poor Torah scholars.

### Which Mourners Should Read?

Despite the origin of the custom being tied to the redemption of a wicked man, it is customary to recite *kaddish* and read the haftarah in memory of a righteous person as well. There are a number of reasons for this, including that: (1) nobody is perfect, and the reading can therefore benefit the soul of a righteous person as well; (2) *Hashem* is more exacting with the righteous, and they therefore need the extra merits; and (3) every *mitzvah* that is done in a person's memory benefits that person. According to R' Yonatan Eyebchutz, the customs observed in connection with a *yahrzeit* benefit the souls of the living as well.<sup>16</sup>

R' Yosef Chaim of Baghdad<sup>17</sup> writes that if two congregants are observing *yahrzeits*, one for his mother and one for his father, the latter should be given precedence in reading the haftarah. One reason for this is that a man is more likely to require atonement than is a woman, because he is charged with a greater number of *mitzvot*. Also, a man is more likely to sin towards the congregation as a whole than is a woman, and it is therefore more necessary for the man's soul to receive the merit of the haftarah's being read before the congregation.

However, *Chida* cites opinions that disagree, and states that neither has precedence until they work out a compromise.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Quoted in *Eleph Ha'magen*, citing *Sdei Chemed*.

<sup>17</sup> *She'eilot U'teshuvot Torah Lishmah* No. 55; see also *Ketzot Hashulchan* Ch. 88, note 4; *Kaf Hachaim* 284:6.

<sup>18</sup> *Birkei Yosef* 284:5.

*Chida* also writes that if a Torah scholar and an unlearned person are observing *yahrzeits*, perhaps the latter should be given precedence. The reason is that the Torah scholar doesn't need the haftarah to bring merit to his parents; he can do so through his Torah study. However, *Kaf Hachaim* rules the opposite.<sup>19</sup>

One who is observing two *yahrzeits* has precedence over one who is observing one *yahrzeit*.<sup>20</sup>

Some say that one who is observing a *yahrzeit* earlier in the week takes precedence over someone who is observing a *yahrzeit* later in the week.<sup>21</sup>

### Reading for Grandparents

Is there any basis for reading the haftarah in memory of a grandparent? I have not seen this question addressed by the *poskim*.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps the answer depends upon whether one is obligated by the Torah to honor grandparents.<sup>23</sup> Also, there is an argument for reading the haftarah in memory of one's grandfather. As related at the beginning of this chapter, the entire custom of reading the haftarah for a parent's *yahrzeit* originated to rectify the soul of a father who failed to teach his son Torah. Since a grandfather is obligated to teach

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<sup>19</sup> 284:6.

<sup>20</sup> *Kol Bo Aveilut* p.400.

<sup>21</sup> *Kaf Hachaim* 284:6.

<sup>22</sup> Perhaps an analogy can be drawn from the following ruling attributed to R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach: If a deceased has a daughter but no sons (or if he has a son, but the son cannot lead the prayers, for example on *chol ha'moed*), a grandson may demand to lead the prayers as if he were technically a mourner, even if there are other men in the congregation who are technically in mourning (*Halichot Shlomo* p. 226).

<sup>23</sup> See *Rema*, *Y.D.* 240:24; *Be'ur HaGra* there.

Torah to his grandchildren,<sup>24</sup> one can speculate that a grandfather's soul is likewise rectified by a grandson's reading of the haftarah.

### **On Which Shabbat Should the Yahrzeit Be Commemorated?**

If the *yahrzeit* itself falls on Shabbat, some have the custom to read the haftarah one week in advance, not on the day of the *yahrzeit* itself.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps the reason is that, as *Chazal* teach, the soul is elevated to a higher level of *Gan Eden* on each *yahrzeit*, and we wish to provide the deceased's soul with the additional merit that the haftarah brings, even before the *yahrzeit* arrives (rather than waiting until the morning of the *yahrzeit*).

However, it was the custom of the *Minchat Elazar* (the *Munkatcher Rebbe* and a leading *posek*) that if his parents' *yahrzeits* fell on *Shabbat* he read the haftarah only on that day itself.<sup>26</sup>

R' Chaim Falagi writes that the haftarah should be read on both *Shabbatot*, but that the *Shabbat* preceding the *yahrzeit* is the more important of the two.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, R' Ovadiah Yosef concludes that the *Shabbat* on which the *yahrzeit* falls is more important, but that one should read on both *Shabbatot* if he is able.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> See *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 245:3. Regarding whether this obligation applies to a maternal grandfather also, see *She'eilot U'teshuvot Divrei Moshe* (R' Moshe Halberstam), No. 71.

<sup>25</sup> *Ta'amei Ha'minhagim* p. 480.

<sup>26</sup> *Darchei Chaim Veshalom* § 210.

<sup>27</sup> *Sefer Chaim* 25:19.

<sup>28</sup> *Yechaveh Da'at*, Vol. V., No. 59.

If a *yahrzeit* falls late in the week and *Yom Tov* falls earlier in the week, the haftarah should be read on the preceding *Shabbat* rather than on *Yom Tov*.<sup>29</sup>

### A Yahrzeit and a Bar Mitzvah

The *Minchat Elazar* held that if a *bar mitzvah* boy—even one whose birthday falls on *Shabbat*—and an individual observing a *yahrzeit* are present in *shul*, the latter has precedence to read the haftarah.<sup>30</sup> His reason may be the antiquity of the custom of reading the haftarah in the merit of the deceased. However, this does not appear to be the prevalent custom, and some rule expressly that a *bar mitzvah* takes precedence.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *Halichot Shlomo* p. 229 (in the name of R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach).

<sup>30</sup> *Darchei Chaim Veshalom* § 212 (quoting *Nimukei Orach Chaim*).

<sup>31</sup> *Nitei Gavriel: Aveilut* 65:11. *Be'ur Halachah* (siman 136 בשי"ה) states that a *bar mitzvah* takes precedence over someone observing a *yahrzeit* when it comes to receiving an *aliyah*. However, the discussion there refers to *aliyot* in general and not to *maftir*.



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## CHAPTER 6

### A Bridegroom

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#### The Origin of the Custom

The custom that a bridegroom reads the haftarah on the *Shabbat* before his wedding is mentioned in *Mishnah Berurah*, but only in passing.<sup>1</sup> In many *chassidic* circles, the custom is that a bridegroom receives any *aliyah* except *maftir*.<sup>2</sup>

I could not find a written source for the custom mentioned by *Mishnah Berurah*. However, it is said in the name of the *Vilna Gaon* that the haftarah which is read at each *aufruf* contains a prophecy for the couple's future.<sup>3</sup> Alternatively, perhaps the popular custom is a remnant of the ancient custom whereby a special haftarah was read in honor of a bridegroom. That haftarah was “שׁוֹשׁ אִשִּׁישׁ” (beginning *Yeshayah* 61:10.)

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<sup>1</sup> *Mishnah Berurah* (171:21) writes: “There are some places where they have the custom today to throw raisins in front of the bridegroom when he is called for *maftir* on the *Shabbat* before his wedding, and this is not proper because raisins are soft and become unappetizing as a result.”

<sup>2</sup> See the sources cited in *Nitei Gavriel: Hilchot Nisuin* 2:1; *Erchei Yehoshua: Perach Shoshanim* paragraph 265.

<sup>3</sup> Heard from R' Mordechai Shuchatowitz in the name of R' Bakst of Detroit.

This selection is appropriate for a bridegroom because it includes verses such as --

<i>I will rejoice intensely</i>	שׁוֹשׁ אֲשִׁישׁ בְּה'
<i>with Hashem,</i>	
<i>my soul will exult with my</i>	תִּגַּל נַפְשִׁי בְּאֱלֹקֵי
<i>God,</i>	
<i>for He has dressed me in</i>	כִּי הִלְבִּישָׁנִי בְּגָדֵי יֵשַׁע
<i>the raiment of salvation,</i>	
<i>in a robe of righteousness</i>	מֵעֵיל צְדָקָה יַעֲטֵנִי
<i>He has cloaked me,</i>	
<i>like a bridegroom who</i>	כַּחַתָּן יִכְהֶן פֶּאֶר
<i>dons priestly glory,</i>	
<i>and like a bride who</i>	וּכְכַלָּה תַעֲדָה כְּלִיה
<i>bedecks herself in jewelry.</i>	

### The Different Customs

In the times and places when this haftarah was read, a number of different customs surrounded it. The *Shulchan Aruch* writes:

*It is customary on a Shabbat when a bridegroom is present that after the regular haftarah we read two or three verses from the haftarah known as "שׁוֹשׁ אֲשִׁישׁ".*<sup>4</sup>

While the *Shulchan Aruch* apparently reflects the practice of some Sephardic communities, the Ashkenazic custom during the Middle Ages was that the *entire chapter* was read in honor of the bridegroom. The regular haftarah of the week in which the wedding fell was not read at all.

The *Ashkenazic* custom can be inferred from *Rema's* statement<sup>5</sup> that certain haftarot cannot be superseded because of a wedding. If

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<sup>4</sup> O.C. 144:2.

<sup>5</sup> O.C. 428:8.

the entire custom consists only of reading two or three verses *in addition* to the regular haftarah, there would be no discussion of superseding a haftarah! It also is evident from *Terumat Hadeshen*,<sup>6</sup> who discusses which haftarah one should review before *Shabbat* if one knows that a bridegroom will be present in *shul* on the following day.

### Objections to the Custom

Some objected to the custom mentioned by the *Shulchan Aruch* because it required skipping between the regular haftarah and שוש אשיש.<sup>7</sup> Others avoided this concern by suggesting that these verses are not to be viewed as part of the haftarah, but only as a זמר / serenade.<sup>8</sup> However, this explanation itself raises a number of difficulties.

The first difficulty is the prohibition found at *Sanhedrin* 101a. That *Gemara* states:

*If one reads a verse from Shir Hashirim and makes it into a song. . . , he brings evil into the world. This is because the Torah goes before G-d and states, "Master of the Universe, Your children have made me like the harp which scoffers play."*

*Rashi* explains:

*This refers to reading with a tune other than indicated by the trop (cantillation). Even though Shir Hashirim is a song, it is prohibited to sing it other than with its trop.*

R' Moshe Feinstein understands from *Rashi*'s statement, "Even though *Shir Hashirim* is a song," that this prohibition applies a

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<sup>6</sup> Part II, No. 101.

<sup>7</sup> *Be'er Sheva* to *Sotah* 41a. See Chapter 1, paragraph 28.

<sup>8</sup> *Bet Yosef* and *Pri Megadim* citing *Mahari ibn Chaviv*.

*fortiori* to the other books of *Tanach*, which are not songs.<sup>9</sup> How then can the custom cited by *Bet Yosef* be justified?

One possible answer is that the verses sung in honor of the bridegroom are in fact sung with the *trop*. Another possible answer is that *Rashi's* interpretation of the *Gemara* is only a minority opinion.<sup>10</sup> In fact, we might say, the *Gemara* was referring specifically to *Shir Hashirim*, and not to other books.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the singing of verses from *Yeshayah* (as in our case) would be permitted.

Another suggestion is that the prohibition cited by the *Gemara* refers only to frivolous singing.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Igrot Moshe*, O.C. II:142. R' Feinstein was addressing a different question, i.e., whether the recording of music drawn from verses is *halachically* permitted.

<sup>10</sup> This is the answer that R' Feinstein proposes in order to answer the question described in the previous footnote.

<sup>11</sup> See *Avot DeRabbi Natan*, ch. 37 and *Margaliot HaYam*, *Sanhedrin* 101a.

<sup>12</sup> This position is advanced by *Yad Ramah* (quoted in *Margaliot Hayam*) but it presents contextual difficulties.

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## CHAPTER 7

### Is It an Honor to Read the Haftarah?

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Today, many people view the haftarah as the most honorable of all the *aliyot*. These people would be surprised to learn that in the hierarchy of *aliyot* described in *Megillah* 30a, the biggest honor is *hagba'ah / gelilah* — lifting and rolling the *Sefer Torah*. In contrast, being asked to read the haftarah seems to be treated by the *Gemara* as an insult, as will be discussed below.

To be sure, even though reading the haftarah was once considered degrading, it might be argued that today it is an honor. Honor is, so-to-speak, in the eyes of the beholder, and the fact that people view the haftarah as an honor, and are willing to pay substantial sums of money to be called as the *maftir*, makes it honorable.

The conflicting views of the haftarah's worth are recorded in the sixteenth century *halachic* work, *Seder Hayom*. There we find:

*It would seem to be appropriate that no one read the haftarah other than one of the greatest members of the congregation, to whom people listen. I do not know where the custom came from that the maftir is a child or a lesser member of the congregation. G-d knows that this is bad in my eyes, and it has been my practice for many years to take*



*the haftarah and read it myself in order to be zealous about that which is bad in my eyes.*<sup>1</sup>

Other *gedolim* who used to read the haftarah on a regular basis include R' Yom Tov Lipmann Heller (the "*Tosfot Yom Tov*"), R' Natan Adler (the teacher of *Chatam Sofer*) and R' Menachem Mendel (the third *Lubavitcher Rebbe*; known as the "*Tzemach Tzedek*").<sup>2</sup>

What do the primary sources say about the honor associated with reading the haftarah?

### Appeasing the Maftir

In *Megillah* 24a, we find the following *Mishnah* and accompanying *Gemara*:

*Mishnah: The individual who reads the haftarah also leads the congregation in shema and in the Shemoneh Esrei, and, if he is a kohen, he blesses the people. If he is a minor, his father should take his place.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Seder Hayom* [New York 1954] p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> It is recorded that around the year 5660 / 1900, the *Belzer Rebbe*, R' Yissachar Dov Rokeach, used to honor R' Moshe Grunwald (the "*Arugas Habosem*") with the reading of the haftarah. The *Belzer Rebbe* explained that Hungarians — which R' Grunwald was — think that reading the haftarah is an honor. (Of course, this implies that non-Hungarians did not consider it to be an honor.) The *Belzer Rebbe* also said that since it was such a pleasure to hear R' Grunwald say the *berachot* over the Torah with such holiness, why not hear him recite the additional blessings of the haftarah? (*Toldot Arugas Habosem*)

It is recorded also that the *Belzer Rebbe* honored R' Yekutiel Yehuda Halberstam z"l, later the *Klausenberger Rebbe*, with reading the *haftarah* (*Lapid Esh* p. 57 note 39). This occurred in 1922, when the *Belzer Rebbe* lived in the home of my wife's great-grandfather, R' Yisroel Vogel זי"ע, in Oleszyce.

Gemara: *Why [should the person who will read the haftarah perform all these roles]? R' Papa said, "Because of honor."*

What is the honor referred to?

The *Rishonim*<sup>3</sup> interpret this *Mishnah* to mean that the person who was *dishonored* by being called to the haftarah should be appeased by being allowed to lead the congregation in other parts of the services.<sup>4</sup> Why must the person who reads the haftarah be appeased? Why was the haftarah looked down upon?

*Rabbenu Nissim*<sup>5</sup> explains that the haftarah was looked down upon because even a minor can be called to read it or because it is only a custom.<sup>6</sup>

The fact that reading the haftarah may not be such a great honor is reflected in the ruling of R' Shimon Gruenfeld upholding the claim of the *levi'im* in a certain community that the haftarah should be reserved for them. R' Gruenfeld states that since the *yisraelim* have more *aliyot* available to them, *and more honorable ones*, they should agree to forego the haftarah.<sup>7</sup>

The same estimation of the haftarah apparently is reflected in the custom of some communities not to call the *maftir* to the Torah by

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<sup>3</sup> *Rashi, Ritva, Bartenura.*

<sup>4</sup> Some say that this refers to the *shema* recited when the *Sefer Torah* is removed from the *aron kodesh* (*Masechet Soferim* 14:8; *Machzor Vitry*). Others say this refers to the *shema* recited in *shacharit* (see the sources cited in *Nachalat Yaakov* to *Masechet Soferim*).

<sup>5</sup> *Megillah* מדף טו ע"א בדפי הרמ"ף ד"ה מתניי.

<sup>6</sup> *She'eilot U'teshuvot Tashbetz*, Part I, No. 131.

<sup>7</sup> *She'ilot U'teshuvot Maharshag* No. 46. The specific dispute involved the haftarah for the first day of *Rosh HaShanah* and was between a *levi* and a man named Shmuel. The latter claimed that since the haftarah speaks of the birth of the prophet Shmuel, he should have the right to read it.

name. Among the *Sephardim* of London and Amsterdam, the *maftir* was called simply: “וגם המפטיר יעמוד בכבוד” / “And also the *maftir* should arise with due honor.” The fact that the *maftir* is not called by name appears to be an attempt to distinguish *maftir* from the other *aliyot*.<sup>8</sup> The custom of calling the *maftir* to arise “with due honor” appears to be an attempt to appease the *maftir*.

### A Remnant of An Earlier Custom

Various attempts have been made to explain the view popular today that reading the haftarah is an honor. Some say that it is indeed a mistake, but a mistake with a reasonable explanation.<sup>9</sup> Specifically, according to this theory, treating the haftarah as an honor derives from the following ruling of *Rambam*:

*In every one of the above-mentioned [Torah] readings, a kohen reads first, then a levi, then a yisrael. The widespread custom is that even a kohen who is unlearned precedes a great scholar who is a yisrael. [Otherwise,] whomever is greater precedes his friend to read. The last one, who rolls-up the Sefer Torah, receives reward equal to all of them; therefore even the greatest member of the congregation can be the one who concludes [the parashah].*<sup>10</sup>

There are several thoughts contained within *Rambam*'s ruling: First, because the one who rolls-up the *sefer Torah* receives reward equal to all of the *olim*, “even the greatest member of the congregation” can receive that *aliyah*. Second, the person who performs *gelilah* is the same person as the last *oleh*, i.e., the one who

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<sup>8</sup> *Keter Shem Tov* p. 398.

<sup>9</sup> I do not remember where I saw this explanation.

<sup>10</sup> *Hil. Tefilah* 12:18. *Rambam*'s statement, “The last one, who rolls-up the *sefer Torah* receives reward equal to all of them,” is from *Megillah* 32a.

will read the haftarah.<sup>11</sup> A wholly incidental consequence of *Rambam's* ruling was that, in a congregation which followed *Rambam*, the leading member of the congregation would be called to read the last *aliyah* and the haftarah.

*Ashkenazic* practice today differs from *Rambam's* ruling in several respects. First, we do not combine the last *aliyah* and *gelilah* into one honor. Second, we do not call up the leading member of the congregation for *gelilah*. Perhaps, says this theory, when these customs changed, the honor which formerly had been associated with *gelilah* was mistakenly attached to the haftarah.

### **Reading the Haftarah Is An Honor!**

The work *Minhag Yisrael Torah*<sup>12</sup> defends the current estimation of the haftarah. The author infers from the language of the commentaries to *Megillah* 24a that reading the haftarah *should* be treated as an honor. Why then must the *maftir* be appeased? Because people foolishly think it is not an honor, since even a child may read the haftarah.<sup>13</sup>

Why *should* reading the haftarah be considered an honor? Perhaps because of the many *berachot* which accompany it.<sup>14</sup> Whereas the typical *oleh* recites only two blessings, the *maftir* recites the same two, plus those on the haftarah.

*Siddur Otzar Hatefillot* quotes *Sefer Chemdat Hayamim*, which says the following about reading the haftarah and its *berachot*:

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<sup>11</sup> Incidentally, *Rambam* holds that the *shevi'i* is the *maftir*, not like our custom of calling an eighth person.

<sup>12</sup> Page 250.

<sup>13</sup> This is implied in *She'eilot U'teshuvot Tashbetz* I, No. 131; *Meiri* to *Megillah* 24a; and other commentaries.

<sup>14</sup> *Yosef Ometz (Minhagei Frankfurt)* § 628 (citing *Seder Hayom*). See also *Pri Megadim, Eshel Avraham* 147:11 (דייה מי שנותנין)



*The secret of the haftarah is to give the Nevi'im a share with the Torah. Thus, we should take care that it is not relegated to less distinguished members of the congregation. Also the berachot--because they are counted among the 100 berachot which we say each day, and every person must pay attention to them--we should take care that they are read by one whose voice is heeded by the congregation. If you look into this, you will see that it is a great mitzvah, because it joins the Torah with the Nevi'im.*

While it is difficult to understand the more esoteric aspects of this quotation, it clearly attributes importance to both the haftarah and its *berachot*.

### **"Because of Honor"**

R' Yissachar Yaakovson writes that reading the haftarah is particularly honorable because of the *berachot* which the *maftir* recites. He explains the "honor" referred to by R' Papa in the *Gemara* as follows.

The concept is found in several places in the *Mishnah* that a person who honored the congregation by leading it once, is himself honored by being asked to lead it again (see, for example, *Berachot* 6:6). This may be the interpretation of our *Mishnah* also, meaning that it is an honor to read the haftarah.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Yom Tov Haftarah**

Even if reading the haftarah generally is not an honor, it certainly is an honor to be the *maftir* on *Yom Tov*. That *aliyah*, containing a description of the holiday's *korban mussaf*, constitutes the primary reading of the day.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Chazon Hamikra* p. 27.

<sup>16</sup> *She'eilot U'teshuvot Tashbetz* I, No. 131; *She'eilot U'teshuvot Teshuvot V'hanhagot* Vol. II, No. 87.



R' Yosef Chaim of Baghdad was asked the following question: Four partners had purchased the right to read the *haftarot* of the entire year, and they divided the *haftarot* among themselves. However, when *Yom Tov* came, the partners fought amongst themselves. The ones who would have read on *Yom Tov* based on the established rotation argued that the rotation should continue, while the others argued that the partners should draw lots for the *Yom Tov haftarot*. R' Yosef Chaim ruled that because the honor of the *Yom Tov haftarot* is so much greater, for the reason explained above, the partners should draw lots.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *She'eilot U'teshuvot Torah Le'shmah*, No. 94.

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## CHAPTER 8

### Reviewing the Haftarah

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#### Reviewing the Week's Haftarah

One is not required to review the haftarah “שנים מקרא ואחד תרגום” / “twice in Hebrew and once in translation,” as one would review the *parashah* during the week. However, it is customary to do so.<sup>1</sup>

*Terumat haDeshen*<sup>2</sup> explains that the purpose of this review is to know what the haftarah says. According to *Mishnah Berurah*<sup>3</sup>, the reason for reviewing the haftarah is so that one will know how to read it properly if he is called upon to do so on *Shabbat*.

*Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchatah*<sup>4</sup> points out some practical differences between these reasons. For example, what if one did not review the haftarah before it was read? According to the first reason above, he should review the haftarah later, just as one who does not review the *parashah* must make it up. Also, in a *shul* where the haftarah is read from a parchment and the same person reads every week (with the *maftir* only reciting the blessings), *Mishnah Berurah*

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<sup>1</sup> *Rema* 285:7.

<sup>2</sup> Part II, No. 101.

<sup>3</sup> 285:20.

<sup>4</sup> 42:60, note 233.

presumably would not require that the haftarah be reviewed, while *Terumat Hadeshen* presumably would.

### When a special haftarah is read

*Rema*<sup>5</sup> writes that in a week when there is a wedding, one should review the regular haftarah and not “שׁוּשׁ אִשׁוּשׁ.”<sup>6</sup> *Rema* appears to accept the reason offered by *Terumat Hadeshen* regarding why one should review the haftarah.

The late sixteenth century sage, R' Yosef Yozpa Han Norlingen, writes:

*I am uncertain of what to do regarding the haftarot of the Arba Parshiyot [i.e., whether to review them or to review the haftarot of those weeks' sidrot]. I have been accustomed to review the haftarah of the week's sidrah because otherwise it would be abandoned in a corner. However, I do not insist that you accept my opinion.*<sup>7</sup>

Whether or not one does accept R' Yosef Yozpa's opinion would depend on which of the above views one accepts. Among those who did accept R' Yosef Yozpa's practice were *Chida*,<sup>8</sup> the *Chatam Sofer*<sup>9</sup> and R' Chaim Meir Hager (the *Vizhnitzer Rebbe*).<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, *Mishnah Berurah* states that one should review the haftarot of the *Arba Parshiyot*.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> 285:7.

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 6.

<sup>7</sup> *Yosef Ometz* § 561.

<sup>8</sup> *Avodat Hakodesh: Moreh B'etzba* § 132.

<sup>9</sup> *Minhagei Chatam Sofer* 4:2.

<sup>10</sup> *Edut B'Yehosef: Chanukah* p. 107.

<sup>11</sup> 285:20. This is consistent with his reason given above.

Some have written that one should review the *sidrah's* haftarah if one is doing so before *Shabbat*, and the haftarah that is actually read if one does so on *Shabbat*.<sup>12</sup> The reason for this is not clear.

### **How should one review the haftarah?**

According to *Magen Avraham*, one should read the Aramaic translation of the haftarah as well. However, this is not customary.<sup>13</sup>

When one reviews the haftarah, he should use the *trop* if he knows how.<sup>14</sup>

Whenever one reads portions of the Prophets which involve defiance of G-d's will, one should be very sad. When one reads of G-d's will being done, he should be intensely happy. When one reads of G-d's wonders, one should rejoice that His Name has been sanctified throughout the world. Finally, when one reads sections dealing with consolation, one should thank G-d and pray that the prophecies are fulfilled.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Tehilah L'David* 285.

<sup>13</sup> *Sha'ar Hatziyun* 285:20.

<sup>14</sup> See *Megillah* 32a, discussed in Chapter 2 above.

<sup>15</sup> *Olat Shabbat* quoting *Yesod V'shoresh Ha'avodah*.