
PART III
THE BERACHOT

CHAPTER 9

Introduction to the Berachot

The Origin of the Berachot

The *berachot* of the haftarah originate from *Masechet Soferim*, one of the so-called *Masechtot Ketanot* / Minor Tractates which date from the Talmudic era but are not part of the *Mishnah* or *Gemara*. Over the years, however, several different versions of the *berachot* have developed.

A recurring theme in the *berachot* is the final redemption, when the throne of David will be restored. According to R' Joseph B. Soloveitchik, we can learn from this theme what is the goal of the haftarah itself. Specifically, the purpose of the Torah reading is to teach us the law, while the purpose of the haftarah is primarily to strengthen our belief in the final redemption and in the coming of *mashiach*.¹

The Number of Berachot

According to *Iyun Tefilah*,² everyone agrees that the *maftir* recites seven *berachot*. However, there is a disagreement about how to reach this number of seven. If we count the two *berachot* which the *maftir* recites over the Torah, then there need to be five additional *berachot*

¹ *Divrei Hashkafah* p.93.

² In *Siddur Otzar Ha'tefilot* p. 709.

for the haftarah (one before and four after). *Etz Yosef*³ writes that these five *berachot* parallel the five books of the Torah. The first *berachah* speaks of Hashem's appointment of prophets to speak His word, just as the *berachah* before the Torah speaks of Hashem's selection of the Jewish people to hear His word at *Har Sinai*.

According to *Machzor Vitry*, however, there are seven *berachot* besides the *berachot* of the Torah. In order to reach this number, *Machzor Vitry* counts the *berachah* before the haftarah as two blessings,⁴ and counts one of the *berachot* after the haftarah as two.

Among *Ashkenazim*, the *berachah* before the haftarah is sung with the *trop* (notes) of the haftarah itself. The blessings after the haftarah have their own unique tune.

Standing During the Berachot

Generally, one stands when reciting the *berachah* on a *mitzvah* (e.g., *lulav*, *shofar*, *tzitzit*, and *megillah*). However, R' Meir Isaacson writes that one need not stand for the *berachot* of the haftarah.⁵ He brings a proof to this from *Masechet Soferim*⁶ which states about one sentence of the *berachot*: "This is one difference between easterners and westerners — that the easterners chant this while sitting and the westerners, while standing". It appears from this statement that everyone sat for the remainder of the *berachot*.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ See also *Kessef Mishneh*, *Hil. Tefilah* 12:15.

⁵ *She'eilot U'teshuvot Mevasser Tov* I No. 22.

⁶ 13:10.

Listening to the Berachot

One must pay attention to the *berachot* recited by those who read the Torah and the haftarah, and one should answer “*Amen*.”⁷ In this way, the blessings will count towards the 100 blessings that a person must recite every day, but whose number is lacking on Shabbat.⁸

Also, every congregant must listen to the *maftir's berachot* and say “*Amen*” because, according to *Arizal*,⁹ each congregant has a personal obligation to read the haftarah (at least quietly¹⁰). If the haftarah were an obligation only of the *maftir*, the *berachot* would be his private affair.¹¹ However, according to *Arizal's* view, the haftarah and the *berachot* are each person's obligation and the *maftir* recites the *berachot* as the agent of each congregant. Therefore, each congregant must pay attention to fulfill his own obligation.¹²

Answering “Amen” During Davening

One who is in the middle of reciting the *berachot* of *Kriat Shma* is permitted to answer “*Amen*” to the *berachot* of the haftarah.¹³

⁷ One should answer “*Amen*” even if the one reciting the haftarah is a child.

⁸ *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 284:3.

⁹ Cited by *Kaf Hachaim* 284:32 and other *poskim*.

¹⁰ See *Ma'aseh Rav* § 136. The question of whether, and how, each member of the congregation should read the haftarah is discussed in detail in Chapter 15. The issue is presented here only insofar as it relates to the *berachot*.

¹¹ According to this view, if the *maftir* could not finish the haftarah, the person who replaced him would begin the *berachot* anew (*Kaf Hachaim* 284:25).

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ However, one may not *read* the haftarah in the middle of the *berachot* of *Kriat Shema* (*Ketzot Hashulchan: Badei Hashulchan*, *siman* 88, n.1).

Since the haftarah, like *kedushah* and like the Torah reading, requires a *minyan*, its *berachot* have the same status as *kedushah*.¹⁴

Saying “Amen” After One's Own Berachot

Chida writes that even the *maftir* should say “Amen” after the *berachot* of the haftarah.¹⁵ R' Ovadiah Yosef reaches the same conclusion.¹⁶ It should be noted that answering “Amen” to one's own blessing is generally more common among *Sephardim* than among *Ashkenazim*. It appears that *Ashkenazim* do not have the custom that the *maftir* says “Amen” after his own *berachot*.

“Baruch Hu U'varuch Shemo”

One should not recite “ברוך הוא וברוך שמו” in the middle of a *berachah* if he intends to fulfill his obligation with that recitation.¹⁷ For example, one who intends to hear the *shofar*-blowing or *megillah*-reading and fulfill his obligation thereby should not recite “ברוך הוא וברוך שמו” when he hears the *berachah* on that *mitzvah*. Thus, according to the view (above) that the *berachot* of the haftarah are every person's obligation, it would appear that one should not say “ברוך הוא וברוך שמו.”

R' Meir Isaacson writes that one should say “ברוך הוא וברוך שמו” during the *berachot* of the haftarah. He argues that, although every person is obligated to pay attention to the blessings, only listening to the blessings, but not reciting them, is a personal obligation.¹⁸

¹⁴ *Ketzot Hashulchan* 88, note 6.

¹⁵ *Kesher Gadol* 9:21.

¹⁶ *Yechaveh Da'at* II:23.

¹⁷ *Mishnah Berurah* 124:21 (citing *Dagul Mervavah*).

¹⁸ *She'eilot Uteshuvot Mevasser Tov* I No. 23.

CHAPTER 10

The Berachah Before the Haftarah

The *berachah* before the haftarah is:

בִּאֲיֵי אֱלֹקֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בְּנְבִיאִים טוֹבִים וּרְצָה
בְּדִבְרֵיהֶם הַנֶּאֱמָרִים בְּאֵמֶת. בִּאֲיֵי הַבּוֹחֵר בַּתּוֹרָה וּבַמִּשְׁנָה
עֲבָדוֹ וּבִישְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ וּבְנְבִיאֵי הָאֵמֶת וְצֶדֶק.

*Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the universe,
Who has chosen good prophets and was pleased with their
words that were uttered with truth. Blessed are You,
Hashem, Who chooses the Torah; Moshe, His servant;
Israel, His nation; and the prophets of truth and
righteousness.*¹

Sha'arei Ephraim writes:² The meaning of this *berachah* is as follows: The phrase, “וּרְצָה בְּדִבְרֵיהֶם הַנֶּאֱמָרִים בְּאֵמֶת” / “He was pleased with their words that were uttered with truth,” means that all the words of the prophets are based on the Torah, which is called “Truth.”³ The phrase, “בְּנְבִיאֵי הָאֵמֶת וְצֶדֶק” / “the prophets of truth

¹ Both the text and the translation of the *berachot* in this and the following chapters are from the *Artscroll Siddur*. As was already noted, and as discussed in detail below, there are several different versions of the *berachot*.

² A large part of the *Sha'arei Ephraim's* interpretation of this *berachah* is taken from *Kessef Mishneh, Hil. Tefilah* 13:15.

³ See the quotation from R' Samson Raphael Hirsch in the Introduction.

and righteousness,” refers to the fact that all of the prophets warned *Yisrael* to observe the Torah, which is truth and righteousness. The reason that we say, “ורצה בדבריהם” / “He was pleased with their words,” before, “הבוחר בתורה” / “Who chooses the Torah,” is that first the *berachah* praises the historical portion of the *Nevi'im* (i.e., the stories found in *Tanach*), as if to say that even for that part we must praise The One Who has chosen the prophets.⁴ Then, before the *berachah* mentions the prophetic parts of the *Nevi'im*, it mentions Moshe, from whom the prophetic part of the Prophets originates.⁵ The word, “וצדק” / “and righteousness (or justice),” means that the words of the Prophets are righteous (or just) and that the prophets themselves were just. Their prophecy did not cause them to become haughty, nor did they use their status to take advantage of people.⁶ They did not seek to fulfill their own desires, only what *Hashem* desires, which is certainly just.⁷

*Iyun Tefilah*⁸ offers the following interpretation for this *berachah*: “אשר בחר בנביאים טובים” / “Who has chosen good prophets,” i.e., he chose representatives who were worthy of their roles. Specifically, they were wise, brave, wealthy and tall so that people would listen to them. They also spoke well and were humble. In addition, this

⁴ *Kessef Mishneh* points out that when the *berachah* refers to the historical parts of the Prophets it says, “אשר בחר בנביאים טובים” / “Who has chosen -- in past tense -- good prophets.” However, when the *berachah* refers to the Torah and to the lessons that the prophets taught, it says, “הבוחר בתורה” / “Who chooses the Torah . . . and the prophets of truth and righteousness.” This is consistent with our obligation to view the Torah as being received anew every day.

⁵ All the words of the prophets are based on the Torah. For a discussion of this concept see e.g. *Be'er Moshe Al Nevi'im*, pp. 3-14 and *She'eilot U'teshuvot Shevut Yaakov*, III, No. 182.

⁶ See *Bemidbar* 16:15; *Shmuel I* 12:3.

⁷ *Sha'arei Ephraim* 9:13.

⁸ *Siddur Otzar Ha'tefilot* p. 709.

phrase alludes to the verse (*Shemot* 2:1), “She [Moshe's mother] saw that he [Moshe] was good.” The *midrash* interprets this to mean that Moshe was fit from birth to be a prophet. We read similarly about the prophet Yirmiyahu (1:5), “Before I formed you in the belly I knew you, and before you left the womb I sanctified you; I established you as a prophet to the nations.”

Iyun Tefilah continues: “ורצה בדבריהם הנאמרים באמת” / “He was pleased with their words that were uttered with truth,” refers to the fact that *Hashem* approves after the fact when His prophets make decrees or issue rebuke on their own. More simply, the phrase means that He was pleased with the way in which the prophets delivered His message, neither adding nor detracting from it.

It is generally accepted that the second “ברוך אתה” merely begins a long conclusion, and no “Amen” is recited before it.⁹ *Aruch Hashulchan* explains that first we bless *Hashem* who chooses “טובים נביאים” / “good prophets” and not false prophets. Then we note that the words of the prophets are not mere stories. Rather, “He desires their words which are spoken in truth.” Next we wish to pay our respects to the Torah, and, because the Torah is superior to the Prophets, we repeat the phrase “ברוך אתה.” Then we mention the Torah, as well as Moshe, who gave us the Torah.¹⁰

However, according to *Machzor Vitry*, the second “ברוך אתה” begins a separate *berachah*.

There is a difference of opinion whether to say, “בנביאי האמת” or “בנביאי האמת וצדק.”¹¹ *Iyun Tefilah* writes that the

⁹ *Maharil* cites an opinion that “Amen” should not be recited even at the end of this *berachah*, but he writes that this opinion is in error (*She'eilot U'teshuvot Maharil* No. 16).

¹⁰ 284:9.

¹¹ See *Sha'arei Ephraim* and see the early sources cited in *Iyun Tefilah* (in *Siddur Otzar Ha'tefilot* p. 710).

meaning is the same either way, since the letter “*heh*” before “האמת” can service the word “וצדק” as well.

R' Yaakov Emden notes that this *berachah* has 26 words, paralleling the *gematria* of Hashem's Name.¹²

The Berachah on Ketuvim

In Chapter 20, we will discuss whether the haftarah may be taken from the *Ketuvim*. *Masechet Soferim*¹³ states that when one reads from the *Ketuvim* instead of the *Nevi'im*, one recites:

בא"י אלקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לקרות
בכתבי הקודש.

*Blessed are you, Hashem... Who commanded us to read
from the Holy Writings.*

While we do not have any *haftarot* from the *Ketuvim*, some have the custom to recite this *berachah* when reading *Shir Hashirim*, *Kohelet* and *Ruth*.¹⁴

Why does the *berachah* for *Ketuvim* focus on the writings themselves, while the *berachah* for *Nevi'im* focuses on the people who created the writings, i.e., the prophets? The following explanation is offered in the name of R' Chaim Soloveitchik:¹⁵ The difference in blessings relates to the essential difference between those books of *Tanach* which are known as “*Nevi'im*” and those which are known as “*Ketuvim*.” The former are revelations spoken to a prophet and only later written down, hence the focus on the

¹² *Siddur Bet Yaakov* p. 172a

¹³ 14:4.

¹⁴ See *Mishnah Berurah* 490:19.

¹⁵ *Commentators' Gift of the Torah* p.90. See also *Chiddushei Hagrach Al Hashas* p.2, where this idea is brought in the name of R' Chaim's son, R' Velvel Soloveitchik.

prophet, not on the writing. The *Ketuvim*, on the other hand were first written down by Divine command, and later read from the written word.

CHAPTER 11

The First Berachah After the Haftarah

Before the Berachah

The eleventh century French work, *Machzor Vitry*,¹ records a custom that before the *maftir* begins the *berachot* after the haftarah, the translator states:

על דא יתברך וישתבח שמייה כולא דאתרעי בנבייא צדיקייא
ויהב לנא אורייתא על ידי משה רבנא לשבוחי ולברוכי בריך
שמייה דקודשא ואמרו אמן.

*For this may His Name be blessed and praised, for He was pleased with righteous prophets and He gave us the Torah at the hands of Moshe, our teacher — to praise and bless the Name of the Holy One, and say, "Amen."*²

This custom does not appear to have survived, perhaps because we no longer have translators.

Some *Sephardim* have a similar custom, i.e., to say the phrase, "גואלינו ה' צבאות" / "Our Redeemer, *Hashem*, Master of Legions," before beginning the *berachot* after the haftarah. R' Chaim Falagi writes that this is an improper interruption between the haftarah and

¹ *Siman* 167 and also *siman* 189.

² The translation is mine.

its blessings and that the practice should be stopped.³ R' Ovadiah Yosef defends the custom.⁴ Putting aside whether this custom is proper, it is interesting in that it suggests some connection between reading the haftarah and our hope for the redemption.⁵

The Berachah

The first *berachah* after the haftarah is:

בא"י אלקינו מלך העולם צור כל העולמים צדיק בכל הדורות
הקל הנאמן האומר ועשה המדבר ומקים שכל דבריו אמת
וצדק. נאמן אתה הוא ה' אלקינו ונאמנים דבריך ודבר אחד
מדבריך אחור לא ישוב ריקם כי קל מלך נאמן (ורחמן)
אתה. בא"י הקל הנאמן בכל דבריו.

*Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the universe,
Rock of all eternities, Righteous in all generations, the
trustworthy G-d, Who says and does, Who speaks and
fulfills, all of Whose words are true and righteous.
Trustworthy are You Hashem, our G-d, and trustworthy are
Your words, not one of Your words is turned back to its
origin unfulfilled, for You are G-d, trustworthy (and
compassionate) King. Blessed are You, Hashem, the G-d
Who is trustworthy in all His words.*

According to the general principle that a *berachah* which follows another *berachah* does not begin with "Baruch" this *berachah* also should not begin with "Baruch." (Even though the haftarah was read between the previous *berachah* and this *berachah*, that is not considered to be an interruption between the two *berachot*, just as the recitation of *Shema* is not considered to be an interruption between

³ *Sefer Chaim* 25:25.

⁴ *She'eilot U'teshuvot Yabia Omer* I, O.C. No. 9, and VIII, O.C. No. 15.

⁵ See the Introduction. A similar suggestion is made in *Keter Shem Tov* p. 401, note 423.

the *berachah* before *Shema* and the *berachah* after *Shema*.⁶) However, perhaps in order that the *berachot* of the haftarah should parallel the *berachot* of the Torah, the *berachah* afterwards also begins with “*Baruch*.”

R' Yaakov Emden notes: The first part of this *berachah* has 22 words, paralleling the 22 letters of the *Aleph-bet*. The second part has 26 words, again paralleling the *gematria* of *Hashem's* Name.⁷

Masechet Soferim has the following differences from the common version: not, “המדבר,” but “מדבר,” and not, “שכל דבריו,” but “כי כל דבריו.”

“צדיק בכל הדורות” / “Righteous in all generations”

R' Baruch Halevi Epstein suggests that the words of this *berachah* lend support to the view that the haftarah was first read in response to a decree against the Jews.⁸ Specifically, when we say, “צדיק בכל הדורות” / “Righteous in all generations,” it is as if we are saying, “Do not wonder why *Hashem* would allow decrees to be made against us — He is 'Righteous in all generations'.”⁹

R' Yitzchak Eliyahu Landau interprets “צור כל העולמים צדיק בכל הדורות” as follows: We frequently wonder why the righteous seem to suffer and the wicked seem to prosper. The answer is that G-d is the “צור כל העולמים” — “צור” as in “יוצר” / “Creator” and “עולמים” meaning “worlds.” *Hashem* is the creator of the worlds, specifically, two worlds — our physical world and the World-to-Come. In addition, he is “צדיק בכל הדורות” / “Righteous in all generations.” These two statements reassure us that every person will

⁶ See *Shulchan Aruch O.C.* 54:1 and *Mishnah Berurah* there.

⁷ There are mystical allusions in the number of words in the other *berachot* as well.

⁸ See the Introduction.

⁹ *Baruch She'amar*.

get his due eventually, though sometimes *Hashem's* justice does not become evident until several generations have passed.¹⁰

"נאמן אתה" / "Trustworthy are You"

Although the words "Trustworthy are You" are not the beginning of a blessing—thus no "*Amen*" is recited after the preceding words—the *trop* suggests that they are. R' Reuven Margaliot explains that in ancient times it was customary to stop at this point so that the congregation could chant the words "Trustworthy are You."¹¹ R' Yaakov Emden writes that the entire succeeding phrase was chanted, and he adds:

*I don't know why they became lax and stopped [this custom], while for all kinds of silliness which our ancestors never contemplated people risk their lives. The customs of our sages—the pillars of our faith, the repairers of the breaches, the supporters of the order of our places of prayer—we throw behind our backs, although those customs are beautiful and praiseworthy, and although they are not burdensome like the long hymns (piyutim) which mistaken people chant.*¹²

Regarding the ancient custom referred to by R' Yaakov Emden, *Masechet Soferim* states: "This is one difference between easterners and westerners—that the easterners chant this while sitting and the westerners, while standing."¹³

The tenth century *Siddur Rav Amram Gaon* reads "ונאמן אתה" / "And, trustworthy are You." The presence of the conjunction "and"

¹⁰ *Dover Shalom* (in *Siddur Otzar Ha'tefilot* p. 710).

¹¹ *Nefesh Chayah* 284:1; see *Tosfot, Pesachim* 104b כל ד"ה.

¹² *Siddur Bet Yaakov* p.172a, paragraph 35.

¹³ 13:10.

may suggest that the practice of interrupting the *berachah* with a public recitation may have been discontinued by R' Amram's time.¹⁴

“ודבר אחד מדברך אחור לא ישוב ריקם” /
“not one of Your words is turned back to its
origin unfulfilled”

These words seem to present a redundancy. How would the meaning be different if it had said simply “ודבר אחד מדברך אחור” / “not one of Your words will be turned back” or “ודבר אחד לא ישוב ריקם” / “not one of Your words will be unfulfilled”?

R' Joseph B. Soloveitchik explained that the proper translation of “אחור” is “in the past.” Thus, the correct translation of the phrase is: “. . . not one of Your words *which You spoke in the past* will be unfulfilled.”¹⁵ Based on this explanation, one should pause between the words “אחור” and “לא.”¹⁶

Another explanation for the word “אחור” (“in the past”) is that it answers the question: Of course we believe in the prophecies which have not yet been fulfilled, but why is it important for us to read of events that have already occurred? The answer is that even the past will not go unfulfilled. Just as a person is obligated on *Pesach* to see himself as if he is now leaving Egypt, so all of the past events described in *Tanach* will continue to play out in the future as well.¹⁷

In fact, however, *Masechet Soferim* does not have the word “אחור.” R' Baruch Halevi Epstein believes that this is the correct version (i.e., without “אחור”), suggesting that this *berachah* is modeled on the verse (*Yishayah* 55:11): “כן יהיה דברי אשר יצא מפי”

¹⁴ *Keter Shem Tov* p. 397.

¹⁵ Quoted in *Nefesh HaRav* p.161-162.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Aruch Hashulchan* 284:10.

לא ישוב אלי ריקם / "So shall be My word that emanates from My mouth, it will not return to Me unfulfilled."¹⁸

"ורחמן" / "and compassionate"

Sha'arei Ephraim recommends omitting this word.¹⁹ Likewise, the *Munkatcher Rebbe*²⁰ and R' Soloveitchik,²¹ among others, used to omit the word "ורחמן" / "and compassionate" because of the rule that the conclusion of the blessing (here, "the G-d Who is trustworthy in all His words") should parallel the penultimate phrase. If the word "compassionate" is inserted, that flow is broken.

Others leave in the word "compassionate." R' David Cohen explains that this entire *berachah* discusses how *Hashem* can be trusted to fulfill His word. He is a "נאמן" / "trustworthy Being." However, sometimes *Hashem* retracts a prophecy, i.e., when He has promised to do harm, but the Jewish people have repented. This is because *Hashem* is also a "רחמן" / "compassionate one." Whenever we mention that *Hashem* is trustworthy, we also must mention that He is merciful.²²

R' Yechezkel Halberstam (the *Shiniver Rebbe*) offers a similar explanation: *Hashem* is "trustworthy" to bring the redemption, but "compassionate" to bring it gradually, so that the "birthpangs of *mashiach*" do not overwhelm us. This is similar to the way *Hashem* mercifully places breathing space between a laboring woman's contractions. However, adds R' Halberstam, it is better to omit

¹⁸ *Baruch She'amar* p. 259. This origin is implied in *Avudraham*.

¹⁹ See above, Chapter One, paragraph 36.

²⁰ *Darchei Chaim Veshalom* § 441.

²¹ *Nefesh HaRav*, p.162.

²² *Masat Kapi* Vol. I.

“compassionate”; we prefer to be redeemed quickly, even if it's painful.²³

Alternatively, this phrase tells us that *Hashem* speaks to the prophets in ways that are susceptible of several interpretations. Thus, *Hashem* is “trustworthy” to keep His word, but He is also “compassionate” to interpret His word in a merciful way if the Jewish people repent.²⁴

²³ *Divrei Yechezkel Hachadash* p. 26.

²⁴ *Masat Kapi* Vol II.

CHAPTER 12

The Second Berachah After the Haftarah

The second *berachah* after the haftarah is:

רחם על ציון כי היא בית חיינו ולעלובת נפש תושיע
במהרה בימינו. בא"י משמח ציון בבניה.

Have mercy on Zion for it is the source of our life; to the one who is deeply humiliated bring salvation speedily, in our days. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who gladdens Zion through her children.

Masechet Soferim has, not “רחם” / “Have mercy,” but “נחם” / “Console.” Based on this reading, some conclude the *berachah*: “מנחם ציון בבניה” / “Who consoles Zion through her children.”¹

Rambam concluded this *berachah*: “בונה ירושלים” / “Who builds Yerushalayim.”²

Masechet Soferim also inserts “ה' אלקינו” after the first word of the *berachah*.

“Have mercy on Zion” is an appropriate theme for the *berachot* over the haftarah because so much of the Prophets deal with the

¹ *Hagahot Hagriv* to *Masechet Soferim* 13:12.

² *Hil. Tefilah* 12:15.

theme of the redemption of Zion and the restoration of the House of David.³

Instead of “ולעלובת נפש” / “to the one who is deeply humiliated,” *Avudraham* had: “ולעגומת נפש” / “to the one who is deeply grieved.” This was also *Rambam*'s version.⁴ R' Baruch Halevi Epstein notes that the combination of the root “עגמ” and the word “נפש” is not uncommon in the Talmud, whereas the combination of the root “עלב” and the word “נפש” is not found.⁵

R' Epstein further suggests that the phrase “ולעגומת נפש” / “to the one who is deeply grieved” is more correct because it contrasts with the word “ותשמח” / “and bring gladness” which is found in some versions. In fact, however, neither *Rambam*'s version of the *berachot* nor *Avudraham*'s contains the word “ותשמח” although they both have “ולעגומת נפש.”

As just noted, some say, “to the one who is deeply humiliated bring salvation *and gladness* (‘ותשמח’) speedily, in our days,” so that the penultimate phrase would parallel the conclusion “Who gladdens Zion through her children.” This version was recited by R' Joseph B. Soloveitchik,⁶ and it is found in the *Lubavitcher siddur, Torah Ohr*.⁷ According to *Aruch Hashulchan*, this is a Sephardic custom.⁸

³ *Etz Yosef*.

⁴ *Seder Tefilot L'chol Hashanah* printed at the end of *Sefer Ahavah*.

⁵ *Baruch She'amar* p. 259-260. See also *Tikkun Tefilah* (in *Siddur Otzar Ha'tefilot* p. 712).

⁶ *Nefesh HaRav* p.162.

⁷ Vilna 1924. See also *Perach Shoshanim* [Customs of R' Yehoshua Heschel Rabinowitz, the *Manestricher Rebbe*] § 75.

⁸ 284:10.

Some versions of *Rambam's siddur* contain the following version of this *berachah*:

רחם על ציון כי היא בית חיינו ולעגומת נפש תנקום
נקם מהרה בימינו ותבנה מהרה. בא"י בונה ירושלים

Have mercy on Zion for it is the source of our life; for the one who is deeply grieved avenge vengeance speedily, in our days. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who builds Jerusalem.

Avudraham also has the phrase “תנקום נקם” / “avenge vengeance.”⁹

⁹ See also *Tikkun Tefilah* (in *Siddur Otzar Ha'tefilot* p. 712).

CHAPTER 13

The Third Berachah After the Haftarah

The third *berachah* after the haftarah is:

שמחנו ה' אלקינו באליהו הנביא עבדך ובמלכות בית דוד
משיחך במהרה יבא ויגל לבנו על כסאו לא ישב זר
ולא ינחלו עוד אחרים את כבודו כי בשם קדשך נשבעת לו
שלא יכבה נרו לעולם ועד. בא"י מגן דוד.

*Gladden us, Hashem, our G-d, with Eliyahu the prophet,
Your servant, and with the kingdom of the House of David,
Your anointed, may he come speedily and cause our heart
to exult. On his throne let no stranger sit nor let others
continue to inherit his honor, for by Your holy Name You
swore to him that his lamp will not be extinguished forever
and ever. Blessed are You, Hashem, Shield of David.*

There is a difference of opinion whether to say “שלא יכבה נרו”
or “שלא תכבה נרו”.¹

The first *berachah* of *Shemoneh Esrei* mentions the Patriarchs and concludes “מגן אברהם” / “Shield of Avraham.” The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 117b) relates that the prophet Natan promised David (*Shmuel* II 7:9), “ועשיתי לך שם גדול כשם הגדולים” / “I shall make for you a great name like the names of the great ones,” i.e., the Patriarchs. Thus, David was honored with a *berachah* similar to

¹ See above, Chapter One, paragraph 36.

Avraham's. *Maharsha* suggests that David was “given” a *berachah* of the haftarah because the haftarah comes from the Prophets and the promise to David was made by a prophet.

This promise to David was made at the time that *Hashem* prohibited him from building the *Bet Hamikdash*. Thus, another reason for alluding to this promise following the haftarah may be that the *berachot* of the haftarah refer to the final redemption (as mentioned above) and thus to the rebuilding of the *Bet Hamikdash*.

Midrash Shocher Tov relates the following about the origin of this blessing:

David said before the Holy One, Blessed Is He: “Why do we say [in Shemoneh Esrei], ‘מגן אברהם’/‘Shield of Avraham’ and not ‘מגן דוד’/‘Shield of David’?”

*Hashem answered: “Because I tested him ten times.”*²

*[David] said before Him (Tehilim 26:2) “Examine me, Hashem, and test me.” After David was tested through Bat Sheva and he did not withstand the test, he immediately prayed that we should say “מגן דוד” in the blessings of the haftarah.*³

Masechet Soferim has a longer version of this *berachah*, as follows:

שמחנו ה' אלקינו כו' שלא תכבה נרו לעולם.
בימינו תושע יהודה וישראל ישכון לבטח וזה שמו אשר
יקראו ה' צדקנו. בא"י מצמיח קרן ישועה לעמו ישראל.

Gladden us, Hashem, our G-d, . . . You swore to him that his lamp will not be extinguished forever. In his days Judea will be saved and Israel will dwell securely. This is the

² Note that *Hashem* gave David a direct answer and did not appear to consider the question impertinent or haughty.

³ *Midrash Shocher Tov* to *Tehilim*, Chapter 18.

*name people will call him: Hashem is our righteousness.[⁴]
Blessed are You, Hashem, Who causes the pride of
salvation to flourish for His nation, Israel.*

⁴ Based on *Yirmiyah* 23:6.

CHAPTER 14

The Final Berachah After the Haftarah

The final *berachah* after the haftarah is:

על התורה ועל העבודה ועל הנביאים ועל יום השבת הזה
שנתת לנו ה' אלקינו לקדושה ולמנוחה לכבוד ולתפארת. על
הכל ה' אלקינו אנחנו מודים לך ומברכים אותך יתברך
שמך בפי כל חי תמיד לעולם ועד. בא"י מקדש השבת.

*For the Torah reading, for the prayer service, for the
reading from the Prophets and for this Shabbat day that
You, Hashem, our G-d, have given us for holiness and
contentment, for glory and splendor — for all this, Hashem,
our G-d, we gratefully thank You and bless You. May Your
Name be blessed by the mouth of all the living always, for
all eternity. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who sanctifies the
Shabbat.*

This *berachah* has different endings for different occasions: On
Yom Tov of *Pesach*, *Shavuot*, and *Sukkot* it concludes, “מקדש ישראל” / “Who sanctifies Israel and the festival seasons.”

On *Shabbat Chol Hamoed Pesach*, the *berachah* concludes as on
a regular *Shabbat*, with no reference to the holiday. In contrast, on
Shabbat Chol Hamoed Sukkot, it concludes, “מקדש השבת וישראל” / “Who sanctifies the *Shabbat*, Israel and the festival
seasons.” The reason is that *Shabbat Chol Hamoed Sukkot* is

different than *Shabbat Chol Hamoed Pesach*. Specifically, every day of *Sukkot* has its own significance, i.e., a separate sacrificial service, which is not true of the days of *Pesach*.¹ However, some have the custom that even *Sukkot* is not mentioned on *Shabbat Chol Hamoed*.²

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

There is a difference of opinion whether one should say the words “לקדושה ולמנוחה” on *Rosh Hashanah*.³ *Sdei Chemed* writes that these words should not be said, but he adds that it is not a serious error if they were said, because *Rosh Hashanah* is, after all, a day of קדושה / sanctity and מנוחה / rest from labor. Also, he writes, the day is “sanctified” because Yitzchak, who was sanctified by the *Akeidah*, was born on *Rosh Hashanah*. It is a day of “rest” because the mother of one of the greatest prophets (i.e., Shmuel) was answered on this day, “מנוחה” / “rest” being used in *Tanach* to refer to prophecy.⁴

On *Rosh Hashanah*, the *berachah* concludes, “מקדש ישראל ויום הזכרון” / “Who sanctifies Israel and the day of remembrance.” If it is *Shabbat*, it concludes, “מקדש השבת וישראל ויום הזכרון” / “Who sanctifies the *Shabbat* and Israel and the day of remembrance.”

On Yom Kippur, the *berachah* concludes:

מלך מוחל וסולח לעונותינו ולעונות עמו בית ישראל ומעביר
אשמותנו בכל שנה ושנה, מלך על כל הארץ מקדש (השבת)
וישראל ויום הכפורים.

*The King Who pardons and forgives our iniquities and the
iniquities of His people, the House of Israel, and removes*

¹ *Mishnah Berurah* 490:16.

² See *Birkei Yosef* 425; *Ma'aseh Rav* § 226; *Sha'ar Hatziyun* 663:6.

³ *Sha'arei Rachamim*.

⁴ *Sdei Chemed: Ma'arechet Rosh Hashanah* 14:27.

*our sins every single year, King over all the world, Who sanctifies (the Shabbat), Israel and the Day of Atonement.*⁵

*Machzor Vitry*⁶ contends that the words, "Who pardons and forgives . . . every single year," have no place in this *berachah*, for, he asks, "What does forgiveness have to do with a *Sefer Torah*?" Rather, *Machzor Vitry* states, the *berachah* should conclude simply, "King over all the world, Who sanctifies (the *Shabbat*), Israel and the Day of Atonement."

"מקדש ישראל והזמנים"/

"Who sanctifies Israel and the festival seasons"

Why are some holidays mentioned in the last *berachah* by name and others only by the generic term "festivals"?

Some say that this is a mistake; indeed, *Masechet Soferim* states that the blessing should conclude by mentioning the specific holiday.⁷ R' Baruch Halevi Epstein suggests that at some point before the invention of printing, a scribe noted in shorthand that one should conclude by mentioning "the festivals," meaning "the appropriate festival." Over time, the origin and meaning of the shorthand notation was lost. Perhaps that *siddur* with the shorthand notation was even used by a printer as a model, thus making the confusion permanent.⁸

Rosh chodesh is not mentioned in the last *berachah* even when it falls on *Shabbat*. However, some mention it in the middle of the blessing with the words, ". . .this day of rest and this *Rosh Chodesh*."⁹

⁵ On other fast days, this *berachah* is not recited.

⁶ *Siman* 352.

⁷ 13:14.

⁸ *Baruch She'amar*.

⁹ *Shulchan Aruch O.C.* 284:2.

CHAPTER 15

Listening to the Haftarah

Talking During the Haftarah

Talking is prohibited during the entire haftarah, just as it is during the Torah reading.¹ The reason is that the *mitzvah* of the haftarah is not for the reader only; it is incumbent upon all of the congregants.² Rav Yaakov Emden seeks to prove that everyone must hear the haftarah from the *halachah* that the *maftir* must wait until *gelilah* is completed.³

Several *poskim* note that the above appears to disagree with the opinion of Rabbenu Tam,⁴ who explains that the word “haftarah” comes from the word meaning “to open,” just as a woman's first child is called “*בֶּטֶר רָחֵם*” / “the one who opens the womb.” Why? Because during the Torah reading all talking is forbidden, while during the haftarah our mouths may open partially, for one is permitted to discuss certain Torah subjects.

¹ *Shulchan Aruch O.C.* 146:3.

² *Bet Yosef, siman* 146 (citing *Rabbenu Yerucham*).

³ *Siddur Bet Yaakov* p. 172a, paragraph 31 (“The *maftir* may not begin until the *gelilah* is finished. This is a clear proof from the Talmud that everyone must hear the haftarah.”)

⁴ See Introduction p. 13.

Reading Versus Listening

Arizal taught that it is insufficient for one to hear the haftarah. Rather, each congregant must read the haftarah for himself.⁵

How may *Arizal*'s teaching be reconciled with the *Gemara*'s statement that two people may not read the haftarah simultaneously because "two voices cannot be heard"?⁶ *Pri Megadim* suggests that so long as the congregants read silently, they will still be able to hear the reader. Thus, it will not be objectionable if each person reads the haftarah himself.⁷

The *Vilna Gaon* answers this question by distinguishing between a congregation where the *maftir* reads from a *klaf* and a congregation where the *maftir* reads from a *chumash*. In the former case, the *Vilna Gaon* says, a congregation that reads the haftarah aloud with the *maftir* does not fulfill its obligation, and, further, causes the *maftir*'s *berachot* to be in vain. In the latter case, however, it is not objectionable if the congregation reads aloud, and it was only to such a congregation that *Arizal*'s instruction was directed.⁸

What is the reason for such a distinction? *Poskim* explain that the *maftir* cannot discharge the congregation's obligation unless he is using a *klaf*.⁹ In congregations that do not use a *klaf*, each person must fulfill the *mitzvah* on his own.

The *Chatam Sofer* used the above *halachah* to defend the custom in communities where all the congregants read the haftarah aloud, and the *maftir* reads only the last verse aloud. Since the *maftir* is reading from a *chumash* and no one fulfills his obligation through that

⁵ Cited in *Magen Avraham* 284:5.

⁶ *Megillah* 21b.

⁷ *Pri Megadim*, *Eishel Avraham* 284:5.

⁸ *Ma'aseh Rav* § 136

⁹ See Chapter 38.

reading, these communities feel free to call a *maftir* who does not know how to read properly and everyone reads aloud in order to drown him out and save him from embarrassment.¹⁰ It should be noted, however, that although the *Chatam Sofer* defended the above practice, he did not follow it personally.¹¹

Standing During the Haftarah

It is written in the name of R' Chaim "Brisker" Soloveitchik that one must remain standing as long as the *Sefer Torah* is in a vertical position, even if the person holding it is sitting.¹² According to this view, the Torah should be laid on the *shulchan* during the haftarah so that the congregation may sit.

This is not the prevalent custom.¹³

¹⁰ *She'eilot U'teshuvot Chatam Sofer*, O.C. No. 68.

¹¹ *Minhagei Chatam Sofer* 5:23.

¹² *Nefesh HaRav* p. 142.

¹³ *Sha'arei Rachamim* 9:12. Some say that one must stand during the haftarah on the first day of *Shavuot* (*ibid.* citing *Pri Megadim*; see *Mishnah Berurah* 494:4).