

---

PART V  
SELECTED  
HAFTAROT

---

---

## CHAPTER 22

### Pesach

---

#### Introductory Note

The choice of texts for most haftarot is a matter of custom, albeit well-established, not *halachah*. However, the haftarot for the *Yamim Tovim*, *Chanukah* and *Rosh Chodesh* are specified in the *Gemara*<sup>1</sup> and in the *Shulchan Aruch*. This chapter and those that follow discuss the reasons for those selections and the special problems that some of those selections present.

#### The First Day

The *Shulchan Aruch* states: On the first day of Pesach, the haftarah is from *Yehoshua*, beginning “בעת ההיא” / “At that time.”<sup>2</sup> This refers to *Yehoshua* 5:2, which is the *Sephardic* custom,<sup>3</sup> and also the custom in Frankfurt am-Main.<sup>4</sup> The reason this section is read is that it describes the first *Korban Pesach* brought by the Jewish people in *Eretz Yisrael*.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Megillah* 31a-b.

<sup>2</sup> *O.C.* 488:3.

<sup>3</sup> *Kaf Hachaim* 488:3.

<sup>4</sup> *The Hirsch Chumash*, Vol. VI, p. 577.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

Many *Ashkenazic* communities start with *Yehoshua* 3:5-7. The *Munkatcher Rebbe* started with 3:5-6, but skipped 3:7.<sup>6</sup> Some communities end with verse 6:1, but many add verse 6:27.<sup>7</sup>

### The Second Day

On the second day of *Pesach*, the haftarah is from *Melachim*, in the section describing *Pesach* in the days of King Yoshiyahu, beginning “וַיִּשְׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ” / “The king sent” and ending “וְאַחֲרָיו לֹא” / “and after him no one arose like him” (i.e., *Melachim II* 23:1 and 23:25, respectively).<sup>8</sup> However, many communities skip verses 10 through 20.<sup>9</sup>

The *Vilna Gaon* writes that these verses should not be skipped, with the exception of verse 13, which is degrading to Shlomo Hamelech.<sup>10</sup> Some communities start with verse 23:4.

### The Last Days

On the seventh day, the haftarah is “וַיְדַבֵּר דָּוִד” / “David spoke,” and on the eighth day, “עוֹד הַיּוֹם בָּנוּב לַעֲמוֹד” / “Yet today he will stand in Nov” (i.e., *Shmuel II* 22:1 and *Yishayah* 10:32, respectively).<sup>11</sup> The selection from *Shmuel* alludes to the Exodus in verse 9, “Smoke rose up in His nostrils. . .,” and parallels the poetic

---

<sup>6</sup> *Darchei Chaim Veshalom* No. 613.

<sup>7</sup> *Chok Yaakov* 488:6; see also *Likutei Maharich* Vol. III, p. 25a.

<sup>8</sup> *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 490:1.

<sup>9</sup> *Avudraham*.

<sup>10</sup> *Ma'aseh Rav* § 192.

<sup>11</sup> *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 490:8.

format of the day's Torah reading.<sup>12</sup> The haftarah for the eighth day alludes to the fall of Sancheirev, which took place on *Pesach*.<sup>13</sup>

### **Shabbat Chol Ha'moed**

On *Shabbat* which falls during *Chol Hamoed* the haftarah is “היתה עלי יד ה'” / “The hand of *Hashem* was upon me.”<sup>14</sup> This reference is to *Yechezkel* 37:1, the prophecy of the dry bones. The reason for this selection is the tradition that תחיית המתים/the Resurrection of the Dead will occur in the month of *Nissan*.<sup>15</sup> Alternatively, this selection relates to *Pesach* in that the dry bones to which *Yechezkel* gave life were those of the Jews who left Egypt before the Exodus, and were killed.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> The Torah reading on the seventh day of *Pesach* is “אז ישיר” / “The Song at the Sea.”

<sup>13</sup> *Rashi, Megillah* 31a דוד מפתירין וידבר דוד ד"ה and עוד היום ד"ה.

<sup>14</sup> *Shulchan Aruch O.C.* 490:9

<sup>15</sup> *Taz* 490:4; *Mishnah Berurah* 490:14.

<sup>16</sup> *Rashi, Megillah* 31a דייה בעצמות היבשות.



---

## CHAPTER 23

### Shavuot

---

#### The First Day

On the first day of *Shavuot*, the haftarah is the “*Merkavah*” of *Yechezkel* (beginning 1:1) until “וַתִּשְׂאֵנִי רוּחַ” / “Then a wind lifted me” (*Yechezkel* 3:12).<sup>1</sup> In practice, many communities read 1:1-28 and then skip to 3:12.

In this section, known as “*Ma'aseh Merkavah*” / “The Description of the Chariot,” the prophet Yechezkel describes his vision of Hashem's “throne” as it leaves Yerushalayim and accompanies *Bnei Yisrael* into exile. Of course, G-d, having no body, does not literally have a throne, and the interpretation of this section of the *Navi* is part of the secrets of the *Kabbalah*.

Why was this section chosen as today's haftarah? R' Mendel Hirsch writes that it is to remind us of what happened to *Bnei Yisrael* when they abandoned the Torah that was given on this holiday. The extent of Israel's folly is alluded to in the opening words of the haftarah: “It was in the thirtieth year ... I saw this vision.” From what event are these thirty years counted? R' Hirsch explains that thirty years had passed since King Yoshiyahu had renewed *Bnei Yisrael's*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 494:1.

covenant with the Torah. So complete had been Israel's abandonment of the Torah that the King could be said to have “rediscovered” it.<sup>2</sup>

*Rashi* to *Megillah* 31a explains that this section was chosen as today's haftarah because the “army” of angels which it describes is similar to the group of angels which “accompanied” *Hashem* to *Har Sinai*. Later commentaries ask: if this is the reason, why was *Yechezkel's* vision chosen? The prophet *Yishayah* saw everything *Yechezkel* saw *and* saw it more regularly!<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the chapter containing *Yishayah's* vision is read as the haftarah for *Parashat Yitro*, when the Torah reading is the same as on the first day of *Shavuot*.

R' Yosef Chaim of Baghdad answers that *Yechezkel's* vision is read because it actually took place on *Shavuot*.<sup>4</sup> This answer is based on the *Zohar Chadash* which teaches that just as *Hashem's* joy at *Matan Torah* has gone unparalleled in history, so *Hashem's* sorrow at abandoning *Yerushalayim*—the subject of *Yechezkel's* vision—has never been matched. Nevertheless, *Hashem* revealed his sorrow to the prophet on *Shavuot*, so that the merit of *Matan Torah* might temper that pain.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> *The Hirsch Chumash* Vol. VI, p. 615. R' Hirsch is referring to an event described in *Melachim II*, 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Chagigah* 13b

<sup>4</sup> *She'eilot U'teshuvot Torah Le'shmah* No. 55; *Mar'ot Yechezkel* p. 4. The haftarah says that *Yechezkel* saw this vision on the fifth day of the month, while our holiday of *Shavuot* falls on the sixth and seventh. However, in the era when the calendar was fixed by the *Sanhedrin* based upon sightings of the new moon, *Shavuot*, which is always 50 days after the first day of *Pesach*, could fall on the fifth of *Sivan* (if both *Nisan* and *Iyar* of that year had 30 days).

<sup>5</sup> *Zohar Chadash, Yitro* 37d-38a.

*Chida* cites the opinion of the *Zohar Chadash*, but questions it, based on the verses of the haftarah themselves.<sup>6</sup>

### The Second Day

On the second day, the haftarah is from *Chabakuk*, from “וְה' בְּהִיכַל קֹדֶשׁ” / “But Hashem is in His holy Sanctuary” until “לְמַנְצֵחַ בְּגִינוֹתַי” / “To the conductor, with my songs” (i.e., *Chabakuk* 2:20-3:19).<sup>7</sup> *Rashi* to *Megilah* 31a writes that the selection of this section for the haftarah of *Shavuot* was made because of the verse in it (3:3), “G-d will come from the south, the Holy One from Mount Paran,” which, he explains, refers to *Matan Torah*. In his commentary on *Chabakuk*, *Rashi* explains further based on *Avodah Zarah* 2b: “When G-d prepared to give the Torah to Yisrael, He offered it first to Esav who resides in the south and to Yishmael who lives in Paran. However, they rejected it.”

*Ibn Ezra* interprets this verse differently, but still in connection with *Matan Torah*. He writes that when Hashem gave the Torah to Israel and when He fought the wars of *Bnei Yisrael*, His glory was seen throughout the world, and especially among Yishmael and Esav, the descendants of Avraham who had rejected the heritage of their fathers.

R' Mendel Hirsch writes that the verse in *Chabakuk*, “G-d will come from the south,” is clearly parallel to the verse in *Devarim* (33:2), “G-d came from Sinai.” However, they may also be contrasted in that one is in past tense while the other speaks of the future. The intention is that the revelation which began at Sinai will be resumed in the future. At that time it will extend, not only to Israel, but also to the world as a whole, to Esav and Yishmael.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> *Birkei Yosef* 494:3.

<sup>7</sup> *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 494:2.

<sup>8</sup> *The Hirsch Chumash* Vol. VI, p. 619.

## "Yetziv Pitgam"

Many communities have the custom that after they read the first verse of the haftarah of the second day of *Shavuot*, the one reading the haftarah recites the poem *Yetziv Pitgam*, in praise of the Giver of the Torah and its students.

What is the origin of this custom? In Chapter 7, we discussed whether reading the haftarah is an honor. We explained there that even if we conclude that reading the haftarah generally is not an honor, it certainly is an honor to be the *maftir* on *Yom Tov*. This is because that *aliyah*—containing a description of the holiday's *korban mussaf*—constitutes the primary reading of the day.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, says R' Reuven Margalit,<sup>10</sup> at one time it was customary that a leading member of the community would read the haftarah on *Yom Tov*.<sup>11</sup> At that time, one of the sages of the community would arise and recite poetry in honor of the *maftir*. (We, of course, know this practice from the *רשות* recited in honor of the *Chatan Torah* and *Chatan Bereishit* on *Simchat Torah*.) *Yetziv Pitgam* is a remnant of the custom.

Why doesn't this reading in the middle of the haftarah constitute a *hefsek*/an improper interruption? *Turei Zahav*<sup>12</sup> explains simply that due to the lesser sanctity of the haftarah, some interruptions are permitted. However, others write that anything that is not directly related to the haftarah is an improper *hefsek*.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> See *She'eilot U'teshuvot Teshuvot V'hanhagot* II:87.

<sup>10</sup> *Nefesh Chayah* 494:1.

<sup>11</sup> See also *Mishnah Berurah* 285:19.

<sup>12</sup> 494:1.

<sup>13</sup> *Sefer Chaim* (R' Chaim Falagi) 25:25; *Yafeh La'lev* 428:5.





---

## CHAPTER 24

### The Seven Haftarot of Consolation

---

On the seven *Shabbatot* following *Tishah B'Av* we read the so-called “Seven *Haftarot* of Consolation” (“ז' דנחמתא”).<sup>1</sup> Each of these seven *haftarot* contains some form of consolation for the destruction of the *Bet Hamikdash* and the long exile. In fact, *Avudraham* quotes a *midrash* which notes that the opening phrases of these seven selections form a conversation which summarizes our feelings in the weeks following *Tishah B'Av*, as shown below. (Each of the seven paragraphs which follows translates or paraphrases the opening sentence of one of these seven *haftarot*, in order.)

נחמו נחמו -- G-d commands the prophets: “Go console My nation.”

ותאמר ציון עזבני ה' -- Israel answers, “I cannot be consoled [by prophets] for G-d has left me.”

עניה סוערה לא נוחמה -- The prophets tell G-d, “The afflicted one will not be consoled [except by You].”

אנכי אנכי הוא מנחמכם -- G-d responds, “I am your comforter.”

---

<sup>1</sup> *Shulchan Aruch* O.C. 428:8.

רני עקרה -- Furthermore, G-d says, "Rejoice, barren [land] for you will be rebuilt," and

קומי אורי -- "Arise, shine, for the light of G-d will shine on you."

שוש אשיש -- Finally, Israel agrees, "Truly, I will rejoice with G-d."

According to this *midrash*, the consolation offered by the successive *haftarot* becomes greater and greater.<sup>2</sup>

Why are there specifically seven *haftarot* in this series? R' Azaryah Figo writes that the number seven is not random. Before *Tishah B'Av*, we read the *haftarot* known as the "ג' דפרענות" / "Three of Calamity" (The number three parallels the number of weeks between the Fasts of the Seventeenth of *Tammuz* and *Tishah B'Av*.) Because we are taught that the measure of *Hashem's* good exceeds the measure of His retribution, therefore we double the number associated with calamity (i.e., three) when we read the *haftarot* of consolation. This results in six *haftarot* of consolation. As for the seventh haftarah, it represents, and speaks of, *Bnei Yisrael's* acceptance of the promised consolation.

In addition, R' Figo writes, each of the "Three *Haftarot* of Calamity" contains two calamities, and each of the six *haftarot* of consolation "undoes" one of them. The first haftarah after the Seventeenth of *Tammuz* begins: "*Divrei Yirmiyahu*" / "The words of Jeremiah." *Chazal* teach that the verb "*le'daber*" (in contrast to "*laimor*") connotes harsh speech. Paralleling this is the haftarah of *Va'etchanan*, in which the prophet speaks gently, "*Nachamu, nachamu*" / "Be comforted! Be comforted!"

---

<sup>2</sup> R' Ephraim Kanarfogel pointed out as well that with each successive haftarah beginning with the fourth, in which the Jews begin to accept consolation, the *Hashem's* Name moves closer and closer to the beginning of the haftarah. (This is true in the original Hebrew text, though not in translation.)

Also, the first haftarah of calamity states: "See, I have appointed you [i.e., Yirmiyahu] this day . . . to uproot and to smash and to destroy and to raze." The haftarah for *Eikev* responds with verses such as: "Your spoilers and destroyers must depart from you" and "*Hashem* shall comfort Zion; He shall comfort all her ruins."

The second haftarah of calamity rebukes *Bnei Yisrael* for distancing themselves from the Torah: "[E]ven those charged with teaching Torah did not know Me." The haftarah for *Re'eh* counters: "All your children will be students of *Hashem*." And, in response to the calamitous verse (from the second haftarah), "Is Israel a slave? . . . Why has he become prey?" the haftarah for *Shoftim* responds, "Wake up! Wake up! Don your strength . . . for no longer shall there enter into you any uncircumcised or contaminated person." While the haftarah of calamity speaks of Israel as a victim of oppressors, the haftarah of consolation speaks of Israel's strength and glory.

Finally, the third haftarah of calamity informs us that *Hashem* will not accept our prayers because of our sins: "When you spread your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even if you were to increase prayer, I do not hear." The haftarah for *Ki Tetze* promises, however: "For but a slight moment I have forsaken you . . . With a slight wrath I have concealed My countenance." Also, while the third haftarah of calamity speaks of the punishment for misusing our wealth, the haftarah for *Ki Tavo* tells of the great riches that await us: "In place of copper I will bring gold; and in place of iron I will bring silver . . ."

In the last haftarah, *Bnei Yisrael* accept these six consolations: "I will rejoice intensely with *Hashem*."<sup>3</sup>

### **Rosh Chodesh Elul**

If *Rosh Chodesh Elul* falls on Shabbat, it will be the *Shabbat* on which *Parashat Re'eh* is read. In such a case, the *Ashkenazic* custom is to read "השמים כסאי," the haftarah for *Rosh Chodesh* which falls

---

<sup>3</sup> R' Azaryah Figo, *Binah La'ittim: Drush Aleph L'Shabbat Nachamu*.



on *Shabbat*. The haftarah for *Re'eh* ("ענייה סוערה") is superseded even though it is one of the "Seven *Haftarot* of Consolation." Thereafter, on *Shabbat Parashat Ki Tetze*, when the haftarah is "רני עקרה," we read also "ענייה סוערה."<sup>4</sup>

If the *maftir* made a mistake and read "ענייה סוערה" on *Rosh Chodesh*, and he already said the *berachot*, he should read "השמים כסאי" without a *berachah*. If *Rosh Chodesh Elul* falls on Sunday, we read "ענייה סוערה," and the haftarah of "מחר חדש" is set aside.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> "רני עקרה" and "ענייה סוערה" are adjacent sections in the book of *Yishayah*.

<sup>5</sup> For sources for the above *halachot*, see Chapter 1, paragraph 23, above. Additional *halachot* pertaining to the Seven *Haftarot* of Consolation may be found in Chapter 1, paragraph 25.

---

## CHAPTER 25

### Rosh Hashanah

---

#### The First Day

On the first day of *Rosh Hashanah*, the haftarah is “ויהי איש אחד מן הרמתיים” / “There was a certain man from Ramatayim” until “וירם קרן משיחו” / “and raise the pride of his anointed one” (i.e., *Shmuel I* 1:1 through 2:10).<sup>1</sup> One relationship of this haftarah to the day may be found in R' Samson Raphael Hirsch's statement that *Rosh Hashanah* is, in a sense, a holiday which celebrates the righteousness of Jewish women and the lessons which we can learn from them.<sup>2</sup> This is seen in both the Torah reading and the haftarah for the first day of *Rosh Hashanah*. In the Torah, we read of the birth of Yitzchak, of his upbringing, and of the expulsion of Hagar and Yishmael from Avraham and Sarah's home, because of Sarah's desire to shield Yitzchak from anti-Torah influences. (Interestingly, R' S.R. Hirsch lists Hagar among the virtuous women, because during her wanderings she in fact reached a low level of prophecy.) Chana, in the haftarah, is another of the righteous women of *Rosh Hashanah*. Like her ancestress Sarah she was unable to conceive for many years, but finally, on *Rosh Hashanah*, was rewarded by Hashem with a son

---

<sup>1</sup> *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 584:2.

<sup>2</sup> *Collected Writings: Tishrei II*, p. 53.

who was a *tzaddik* and a prophet. Also, Chana, like Sarah, is listed in *Megillah* 14a among the seven prophetesses.

### The Second Day

A fourth virtuous woman, Rachel, is mentioned in the haftarah for the second day of *Rosh Hashanah*, crying over the exile of her children. That haftarah is from *Yirmiyah*, beginning “כה אמר ה' / “Thus said Hashem, ‘This people . . . found favor in the wilderness’” until “הבן יקיר לי אפרים” / “Is Ephraim My favorite son?” (i.e., 31:1-19).<sup>3</sup> The reading of this selection as the haftarah is ordained by *Megillah* 31a. Interestingly, the *Gemara* refers to this chapter by the name “הבן יקיר לי,” i.e., by the first words of the last, rather than the first, verse. The commentators explain that in this way *Chazal* alluded to the reason why this selection was chosen to be read at this time, for the last verse contains the words, “זכור אזכרנו” / “Indeed, I will remember him.” This is reminiscent of the *Musaf* service in which we recite the *berachah* of זכרונות / Remembrances. The holiday of *Rosh Hashanah* itself is known as the “יום זכרון תרועה” / “The day of the shofar's remembrance.”<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, the haftarah describes Hashem's love even for Ephraim, one of the most wayward of all the tribes.<sup>5</sup> This may be taken as a sign that anyone can do *teshuvah*.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 601:1.

<sup>4</sup> *Vayikra* 23:24.

<sup>5</sup> R' Mendel Hirsch, *The Hirsch Chumash* Vol. VI, p. 638.

---

## CHAPTER 26

### The Two Haftarot of Repentance

---

Following the “Seven *Haftarot* of Consolation” and *Rosh Hashanah*, we read the “Two *Haftarot* of Repentance” (“תרתִי דתיובתא”). These are “דרשן” / “Seek,” which is read at *minchah* on *Tzom Gedaliah*, and “שובה” / “Return,” which is read on the Shabbat between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.<sup>1</sup>

The haftarah that is read on *Tzom Gedaliah* is identical to that read on the afternoons of the other two fast days which fell during the past twelve weeks, i.e., the Seventeenth of *Tamuz* and *Tishah B'Av*. Why then is only the haftarah for *Tzom Gadaliah* listed by the *Shulchan Aruch* and earlier sources among the “*Haftarot* of repentance”?

This question was addressed by R' Moshe Feinstein in his *Shabbat Shuvah derashah* in 5688/1927. He explained as follows:

In *Chagigah* 5a we read that when Rabbi Yochanan came upon a certain verse he cried, for he realized how depressed a servant (man) should feel if his master (G-d) rebukes him. “Can such a servant ever make amends?” Rabbi Yochanan wondered.

Rabbi Yochanan's question is difficult to understand, said R' Feinstein. Don't we know that *Hashem* allows us, even commands

---

<sup>1</sup> *Shulchan Aruch* O.C. 428:8.



us, to repent? The answer is that repentance is a gift from Hashem which really has no logical basis. If a servant constantly sins against his human master, can he easily be forgiven just by apologizing and promising to behave properly in the future? Most likely not. This is what troubled Rabbi Yochanan.

In *Midrash Tanchuma (Nitzavim)* we read that after *Bnei Yisrael* heard the 98 curses of *Parashat Ki Tavo*, they feared that they would not be able to exist as a nation. Therefore, Moshe reassured them, “אתם נצבים” / “You are standing before G-d, and He gives you His covenant.” In other words, because the concept of *Teshuvah* has no rational underpinning (as we just learned from Rabbi Yochanan), therefore when *Bnei Yisrael* heard the *tochachah* they felt certain that they were doomed. Immediately, Moshe was constrained to give *Bnei Yisrael Hashem's* covenant that their repentance would always be accepted.

R' Feinstein continued: *Sukkah* 52a states that the *Yetzer Hara* ("Evil Inclination") has seven names. These parallel the seven stages of a person's life and the seven types of sinners which exist.

There are two *Parashot* in the Torah which contain large blocks of *tochachah*. In *Parashat Bechukotai* there are 49 curses, and in *Parashat Ki Tavo* there are 98 (2x49). We can note several facts about these numbers. First, both are divisible by seven, teaching us that they are brought about when one lets the *Yetzer Hara* (which has seven names) take control of the seven stages of man's life and cause him to commit the seven types of sin.

Second, we note that the total number of curses found in the Torah is 147, the same as the number of years which our ancestor, Yaakov, lived. What does this teach us? That just as (in *Chazal's* words) Yaakov (i.e. his spirit) never died, so too, even if a person has sinned and suffered all 147 curses, he can still repent and renew his spiritual life.

Every year, when we are reminded of the punishments which befell our ancestors and us in the week surrounding *Tishah B'Av*, we think of the 147 curses which were laid upon those who sin against Hashem. We look ahead to *Rosh Hashanah*--the Day of Judgment--which follows closely on the heels of *Tishah B'Av*, and we think, as did Rabbi Yochanan, "How can we ever escape from our just deserts?"

For this reason we read the seven *Haftarot* of Consolation. Each one strengthens us against one of the aspects of the *Yetzer Hara*, one of the stages in our lives, and one of the types of sin. Only after these *haftarot* of consolation have passed can we appreciate the messages of the *Haftarot* of repentance. Thus, although the haftarah for *Tzom Gedaliah* is read on *Tishah B'Av* as well, it cannot be as meaningful on the latter occasion as on the former, after the consolation.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> *Darash Moshe*, Vol. I, *Drush* 5.

---

## CHAPTER 27

### Shabbat Shuvah

---

The second of the “Two *Haftarot* of Repentance” is “שובה” / “Return,” which is read on the Shabbat between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. It is this haftarah which gives *Shabbat Shuvah* its name.<sup>1</sup>

There does not appear to be any community that reads *only* the section beginning “שובה.” One reason for this is that from “שובה” (*Hoshea* 14:2) until the end of the Book of *Hoshea* is only nine verses, fewer than the 21 required for a haftarah.<sup>2</sup> Others say that the number of verses is not important, since those nine verses complete a subject. However, these authorities say that the additional verses should be added because the verses from *Hoshea* have a pessimistic ending: “ופושעים יכשלו בם” / “. . . and the wicked will trip over them.”<sup>3</sup>

What verses should be added? According to *Maharil* and others who are concerned with the number of verses in the haftarah, we add

---

<sup>1</sup> *Mateh Moshe* § 833 (and many other works).

<sup>2</sup> *Maharil*; *Mateh Moshe* § 833.

<sup>3</sup> *Likutei Maharich* in the name of *Avudraham*.

verses from *Yoel* (either 2:15-27 or 2:11-27). According to the other opinion, we add *Michah* 7:18-20.<sup>4</sup>

Today, many communities combine the above customs. However, this practice presents a *halachic* problem. In general, it is prohibited to skip from the book of one prophet to the book of another prophet.<sup>5</sup> Although one may skip among the *תרי עשר*/Twelve “Minor Prophets” (of which *Hoshea*, *Yoel* and *Michah* are a part), this is only so long as one does not skip backward.

However, the haftarah for *Shabbat Shuvah*, as printed in most *chumashim*, appears to violate this *halachah*, i.e., it skips backwards in *תרי עשר*. According to these *chumashim*, we first read *Hoshea* 14:2-10, then *Michah* 7:18-20, and finally, *Yoel* 2:15-27 (or 11-27), whereas in the order of the *תרי עשר*, *Yoel* precedes *Michah*.

There are several resolutions to this question.

(1) According to *Terumat Hadeshen* this case of skipping backward is not prohibited, as today (in the absence of a translator) we may skip as much as we wish.<sup>6</sup> However, most authorities (including, obviously, the *Shulchan Aruch*) do not agree.

(2) *Eliyah Rabbah* writes that these three sections should be read, and with *Michah* (the later book) preceding *Yoel* (the earlier book).<sup>7</sup> This does not violate the prohibition on skipping backwards because the prophets *Yoel* and *Michah* were contemporaries.<sup>8</sup> Why should that matter? Perhaps *Eliyah Rabbah* holds that the prohibition

---

<sup>4</sup> *Likutei Maharich*; R' Yosef Chaim of Baghdad, *Birkat Chaim* p. 257; *Chamishah Chumshei Torah Im Tefilot Le'Shabbat Mi'siddur Yechaveh Da'at* p. 509.

<sup>5</sup> *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 144:1.

<sup>6</sup> *Terumat Hadeshen*, Part I, No. 20.

<sup>7</sup> *Eliyah Rabbah* 603:2.

<sup>8</sup> *Likutei Maharich*.



on skipping is due to the confusion which it will cause, since later prophets built on the teachings of earlier prophets. However, in the case of prophets who were contemporaries, neither is necessary for understanding the other.<sup>9</sup>

(3) *Dagul M'revavah* states that our *chumashim* are confusing two customs. When *Parashat Vayelech* coincides with *Shabbat Shuvah*, the haftarah should be *Hoshea* and *Michah*. However, when *Parashat Ha'azinu* falls on *Shabbat Shuvah*, we should read *Yoel* instead of *Michah*. The reason for this is that both the verses from *Yoel* and those of *Ha'azinu* speak of rainfall. The verses from *Michah*, on the other hand, share the theme of Hashem's anger with *Parashat Vayelech*.

(4) R' Moshe Feinstein does not find the explanation of *Dagul M'Revavah* persuasive. Rav Feinstein also agrees that it is a mistake to read both the verses from *Yoel* and the one from *Michah*, but he explains the origin of the mistaken custom as follows:

As stated above, we do not end the haftarah with the verses from *Hoshea* because of their pessimistic ending. It would make sense, therefore, to add verses which both bear good tidings and which relate to *teshuvah* (repentance). The verses in *Michah* meets this requirement, and has the added benefit of being concise.

The disadvantage of the verses in *Michah*, says R' Feinstein, is its distance from *Hoshea*. When the haftarah is read from a scroll, this would cause a substantial delay. *Chazal* therefore permitted us to read from *Yoel*, which is closer to *Hoshea*. Those who read from a book and not from a scroll should, however, read from *Michah*.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Heard from my *rebbe*, R' Shlomo Naiman.

<sup>10</sup> *Igrot Moshe O.C.* I:174.

Some communities and *yeshivot* follow none of the above opinions. Rather, they read all three sections, but put *Yoel* before *Michah*.

Finally, some communities have entirely different customs. They read the same haftarah on *Shabbat Shuvah* which is read on fast days.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Such a custom is mentioned in Artscroll's *Stone Chumash* (p. 1204), but I have not found its source.



---

## CHAPTER 28

### Yom Kippur

---

#### Yom Kippur Morning

On the morning of Yom Kippur, the haftarah is from *Yishayah*, beginning “ואמר סלו סלו” / “He will say, ‘Pave, pave’” until “כי פי ה' דבר” / “for the mouth of *Hashem* has spoken” (i.e., *Yishayah* 57:14- 58:14).<sup>1</sup> *Megillah* 31a explains the selection of this section as the haftarah for Yom Kippur morning as follows: Although this selection describes G-d's majesty (which we have repeatedly offended during the past year), it teaches also that Hashem loves the humble common-man. It is on that love and mercy that we base our prayers on Yom Kippur. According to *Sotah* 4a, verse 57:14 of the haftarah teaches that a humble person can cause the *Shechinah* to dwell near him.<sup>2</sup>

#### "Maftir Yonah"

In *minchah* of Yom Kippur, the prevalent custom among *Ashkenazim* is that the maftir reads the entire Book of *Yonah*, and concludes with the last three verses of *Michah* beginning, “מי קל” / “Who is a G-d like You?”<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Shulchan Aruch O.C.* 621:1.

<sup>2</sup> See also *Noda Bi'Yehudah* II:20.

<sup>3</sup> *Shulchan Aruch O.C.* 622:2.



Some works record an old custom that only the first three verses of *Yonah* were read and the rest of *Yonah* was recited in the congregation's native language.<sup>4</sup>

Many reasons are given for the reading of *Sefer Yonah* at this time. First, it teaches that repentance can reverse even the harshest decree.<sup>5</sup> Second, the repentance of the people of Nineveh can serve as an example to us.<sup>6</sup> Third, it shows that no person can escape G-d's judgment.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, it calls out, "Why do you slumber? Awaken and call to your G-d!" (*Yonah* 1:6). On *Rosh Hashanah*, we blew the *shofar* to call-out to those Jews who have "dozed-off" and forgotten their responsibilities. Some people, however, "slept" too deeply and did not hear the *Shofar's* call. The afternoon of Yom Kippur might, unfortunately, be their last chance.<sup>8</sup>

As noted, the final verses are from *Michah* 7:18-20. Perhaps these are added here because they allude to *Hashem's* "Thirteen Attributes of Mercy," which figure so prominently in the Yom Kippur prayers.

---

<sup>4</sup> *She'eilot U'teshuvot Maharam Padua*, No. 78; R' Yaakov Lorberbaum of Lissa, *Hagahot L'sefer Maginei Eretz*, siman 284; *Sefer Chaim* 33:7. The latter writes that this custom should be stopped. *Maharam Padua*, on the other hand, writes:

*It is not the correct way to rely on our own understanding to abolish an ancient custom. Rather, we must seek with all our strength to find support for it, and this is what our predecessors did when they encountered a strange custom.*

<sup>5</sup> *Levush* 622:2.

<sup>6</sup> *Yesod Ve'shoresh Ha'avodah* (cited in *Siddur Otzar Ha'tefilot* p. 1158).

<sup>7</sup> *Avudraham: Seder Tefilot L'Yom Kippur* [Yerushalayim 5723] p. 287.

<sup>8</sup> R' Shlomo Yosef Zevin, *Letorah U'lemoadim* p. 302.

The *Shulchan Aruch* writes that the one who reads *Yonah* recites the blessings before and after, and if it is *Shabbat*, he mentions *Shabbat* in the blessing and in the conclusion of the blessing. *Rema* argues, holding that the last blessing is omitted.<sup>9</sup>

This dispute reflects a two-part disagreement between the author of the *Shulchan Aruch* and the *Rema*. Since the *Shulchan Aruch* holds that *Shabbat* is mentioned in the haftarah blessings for Yom Kippur afternoon, he necessarily holds that the last *berachah* ("על התורה ועל העבודה") also is recited. That is the only place where *Shabbat* could be mentioned in these blessings.

On the other hand, *Rema* holds that the final blessing is omitted.<sup>10</sup> He necessarily holds that *Shabbat* is not mentioned.

A possible source of their disagreement is the *Gemara* on *Shabbat* 24a, which has two variant readings. In our versions, that *Gemara* states:

*When Yom Tov falls on Shabbat, the maftir in minchah does not mention Yom Tov in the berachah, for were it only Yom Tov and not Shabbat, there would be no haftarah.*

However, *Meiri* writes that an error crept into the text of the *Gemara*. According to *Meiri*, the *Gemara* should say,

*When Yom Kippur falls on Shabbat, the maftir in minchah does not mention Shabbat in the berachah, for were it only Shabbat and not Yom Kippur, there would be no haftarah.*

This reading of the *Gemara* would serve as a source for *Rema's* opinion that *Shabbat* is not mentioned in the haftarah blessings for Yom Kippur *minchah*.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> O.C. 622:2.

<sup>10</sup> This was also the custom of the *Sephardim* in Algeria (*Keter Shem Tov*).

<sup>11</sup> For the reason that *Meiri* suggests this reading, see Chapter 21.

Another explanation for the disagreement between the *Shulchan Aruch* and *Rema* is offered by R' Chanoch Henach Eiges.<sup>12</sup> R' Eiges cites R' Akiva Eiger<sup>13</sup> who asks: Is the Torah reading on Yom Kippur afternoon a *fast day*-like Torah reading or a *Shabbat*-like Torah reading? (A practical difference between the two understandings is whether a person who is not fasting may be given an *aliyah*.) R' Eiges suggests that precisely this is the dispute between the *Shulchan Aruch* and *Rema*: The former holds that the haftarah is a *Shabbat*-like reading, so the last *berachah* is recited, just as on *Shabbat* morning, while the latter holds that the *berachah* is omitted because the reading is a fast day-like reading, and the last *berachah* is not recited on fast days (other than Yom Kippur morning).

The custom in Volozhin (Russia) was that the last *berachah* was recited. It is reported that R' Joseph B. Soloveitchik followed this view in his *minyan* as well.<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, it also is reported in the name of R' Soloveitchik that the haftarah of Yom Kippur *minchah* is akin to that of a fast day and not to that of *Shabbat*.<sup>15</sup> His proof is that the haftarah comes from the books of the *Nevi'im*, as on a fast day, and not from the *Ketuvim* as the haftarah of *Shabbat minchah* did when such an institution existed.<sup>16</sup> When taken together, these two positions suggest that R' Soloveitchik disagreed with R' Eiges's understanding of *Rema*'s reasoning.

*Kol Bo* writes that the last *berachah* is recited on Yom Kippur but not on other fast days. Why? Because Yom Kippur has a name which can be inserted into the *berachah* (i.e., “מקדש ישראל ויום”)

---

<sup>12</sup> *Marcheshet, siman* 14.

<sup>13</sup> *She'eilot U'teshuvot R' Akiva Eiger* No. 24.

<sup>14</sup> *Nefesh HaRav* p.215.

<sup>15</sup> Printed in the journal *Mesorah, Nissan* 5752.

<sup>16</sup> See Chapters 20 and 21.

”הכפורים” / “Who sanctifies Israel and the Day of Atonement”). However, other fast days, *Kol Bo* says, do not have their own proper names which can be inserted into the *berachah*.

The author of *Pri Megadim* wonders how the *berachah* “על התורה ועל העבודה” can be recited in *minchah*, considering the fact that the *avodah* of the day (in the *Bet Hamikdash*) already was concluded by *minchah* time. He leaves this question unanswered.<sup>17</sup> Some answer that the word “*avodah*” in that *berachah* does not refer to the Temple service but to our prayer service, which is also called “*avodah*.”<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> In *Rosh Yosef* to *Shabbat* 24a.

<sup>18</sup> *Keter Shem Tov* p. 385, note 407.



---

## CHAPTER 29

### Sukkot

---

#### The First Day

On the first day of *Sukkot*, the haftarah is from *Zechariah*, beginning “הנה יום בא” / “Behold, a day is coming” (i.e., *Zechariah* 14:1-24).<sup>1</sup> On the simplest level, this choice is due to the words, “. . . to celebrate the holiday of *Sukkot*” (*Zechariah* 14:18 and 19). However, there is also a connection between the haftarah and the *Yom Tov* on a deeper level.

This haftarah, as does the haftarah for *Shabbat Chol Hamoed*, deals with the “War of Gog and Magog” and its aftermath, when mankind—Jew and Gentile—will come to a greater recognition of *Hashem*. The connection between this future event and *Sukkot* is explained by R' Samson Raphael Hirsch<sup>2</sup> as follows: In the name “גוג” we see the root “גג” / “roof.” We are immediately reminded of the stark contrast between the roof on which ordinary man relies for protection and the flimsy *sukkah* in which we live during this week. Those who dwell in the *sukkah* recognize that safety and comfort are not guaranteed by the bricks of our houses, but by *Hashem*, in whose shadow we reside.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 659:1.

<sup>2</sup> *Collected Writings*, Vol. II, p. 119. See also R' Mendel Hirsch, *The Hirsch Chumash*, Vol. VI, p. 673.

The “War of Gog and Magog” will be the final and decisive battle between the “People of the *sukkah*” (i.e. those who have always placed their utmost trust in *Hashem*'s power and kindness) and those who have always counted on their own power to provide for and protect themselves.

After this war, the haftarah tells us, *Hashem* will demand of the survivors that they demonstrate their subjugation by traveling to Yerushalayim for the holiday of *Sukkot*. It is fitting that *Sukkot* should be the time when *Hashem* demands homage from the Gentile nations. *Chazal* say, “The nations of the world do not realize what they lost by destroying the *Bet Hamikdash*”.<sup>3</sup> What our Sages are referring to is the fact that every year *Bnei Yisrael* would sacrifice 70 oxen, requesting of *Hashem* that he grant a good year to the seventy nations of the world. The time when these animals were sacrificed was *Sukkot*.

Interestingly, the *Gemara* (*Avodah Zarah* 2b-3a) says, in the future the Gentile nations will complain to *Hashem*: “If you had given us the Torah, you would now love us as much as you do the Jews.”

*Hashem* will respond: “Here is one Mitzvah—*sukkah*. Let us see how you will keep it.” In order to test them, *Hashem* will bring about a heat wave. Sure enough, the people will leave the *sukkah*, kicking it as they exit.

Why, of all the *mitzvot*, will *Hashem* choose the *sukkah* as the *mitzvah* to give to the nations?

R' Eliyahu Dessler explains, based on that which we have already said above, that the *sukkah* is the symbol of man's understanding that all rewards come from G-d and not from man's own strength. Deep down, writes R' Dessler, every man knows that, left to fend for himself, he would starve. In other words, the message of the *sukkah* is one which every person already holds in his subconscious.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Sukkah* 55b.

*Hashem*, in His kindness, will give the Gentile nations a *mitzvah* which should be easy to perform, since its lesson is already known to them. Nevertheless, *Chazal* tell us (*Avodah Zarah* 3a) most of them will kick the *sukkah* and leave.<sup>4</sup>

### The Second Day

On the second day, the haftarah is from *Melachim*, beginning “ויקהלו” / “They gathered” until “בהוציאנו אותם מארץ מצרים” / “When He took them out of the land of Egypt” (i.e., *Melachim I* 8:2-21),<sup>5</sup> part of the *Navi*'s description of the dedication of the first *Bet Hamikdash*. This passage was chosen because the event which it describes took place on *Sukkot*.

In addition to the historical fact that the *Bet Hamikdash* was dedicated on *Sukkot*, the holiday of *Sukkot* falls when it does primarily because at this time of year construction was begun on the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle), the desert precursor of the *Bet Hamikdash*. As the *Vilna Gaon* explains, the commandment to donate to the *Mishkan* was announced on the 11th of *Tishrei*, the donations arrived for the three days (12th-14th), and on the 15th (the first day of *Sukkot*), *Hashem*'s protective “clouds” encircled Bnei Yisrael, as if forming a *sukkah* over them.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> *Michtav M'Eliyahu II*, p.107.

<sup>5</sup> *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 662:3.

<sup>6</sup> *Kol Eliyahu, Parashat Emor*.

---

## CHAPTER 30

### Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah

---

#### Shemini Atzeret

Outside of *Eretz Yisrael*, the haftarah on *Shemini Atzeret* is from *Melachim*, beginning “וַיְהִי כִכְלוֹת שְׁלֹמֹה” / “And it was when Shlomo had finished” (i.e., *Melachim I* 8:54-9:1).<sup>1</sup>

The haftarah for *Shemini Atzeret* completes the story which was begun in the haftarah for the second day of *Sukkot*.<sup>2</sup> *Shemini Atzeret* was the last day of the dedication of the *Bet Hamikdash*. The haftarah tells us, as well, of the blessing that Shlomo gave his subjects on that occasion.

#### Simchat Torah

The *Gemara*<sup>3</sup> states that the haftarah for *Simchat Torah* is the section from *Melachim* immediately preceding the haftarah for *Shemini Atzeret*, i.e., *Melachim I*, 8:22-53. The reason for this is that this section contains King Shlomo's blessings to the nation, and it therefore parallels the Torah reading which contains Moshe's

---

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, 668:2.

<sup>2</sup> See the end of the previous chapter.

<sup>3</sup> *Megillah* 31a.

blessings.<sup>4</sup> However, today, most communities read “ויהי אחרי מות משה” / “It happened after the death of Moshe.”<sup>5</sup> This haftarah begins with *Yehoshua* 1:1, the section of *Tanach* which follows immediately after the day's main Torah reading (i.e., *Parashat V'zot Haberachah*). *Sephardim* read through verse 9, and *Ashkenazim* through verse 18.

Some *Sephardim* have the custom that after reading the haftarah for *Simchat Torah*, they read selected verses from “שׁוֹשׁ אֲשִׁישׁ” / “I will rejoice intensely.”<sup>6</sup> Upon reciting the words, “וַיִּמְשׁוּשׁ חֲתָן” / “like a bridegroom’s rejoicing,” the *maftir* bows his head to the *Chatan Torah*. Upon reciting the words, “עַל כֻּלָּהּ” / “over his bride,” the *maftir* bows his head to the *Chatan Torah*'s wife.

On the following *Shabbat*, *Parashat Bereishit*, this custom is repeated except that the *maftir* bows his head to the *Chatan Bereishit* and his wife.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> *Machzor Vitry*.

<sup>5</sup> *Shulchan Aruch* O.C. 669:1. *Tosfot* (*Megillah* 31a למחר ד"ה) writes that R' Hai Gaon (939-1038) introduced the reading of this haftarah, although the reason is not known.

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

<sup>7</sup> *Keter Shem Tov* p. 403.



---

## CHAPTER 31

### Chanukah

---

#### The First Shabbat of Chanukah

The *Gemara*<sup>1</sup> and the *Shulchan Aruch*<sup>2</sup> state that the haftarah for *Chanukah* — for the first *Shabbat*, in years when *Shabbat* comes twice during *Chanukah* — is “נרות זכריה” / “The candles of [the prophet] Zechariah.” The prevailing custom is to begin this reading with “רני ושמחי” (*Zechariah* 2:14; see translation below) and to read until verse 4:7. Although *Chanukah* is not mentioned explicitly in *Tanach*, several commentators understand that this portion from *Zechariah* is a prophecy concerning the *Chashmonaim*, the protagonists of the *Chanukah* miracle.

At first glance, the haftarah appears to contain three distinct parts. The prophet begins: “רני ושמחי” / “‘Jubilate and rejoice, daughter of Zion, for I am coming to dwell in your midst,’ says G-d.” The prophet Zechariah lived at the time when the second *Bet Hamikdash* was built, and we are reminded of his words on *Chanukah* when we commemorate a later rededication of that Temple.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Megillah* 31a.

<sup>2</sup> *Shulchan Aruch*. O.C. 684:2.

<sup>3</sup> See R' Mendel Hirsch, *The Hirsch Chumash* Vol. VI, p. 520-521.

In the second part of the haftarah, Zechariah sees Yehoshua, the *Kohen Gadol*, standing before an angel while wearing unclean garments. What did these clothes represent? *Abarbanel* and *Malbim* explain: These are Yehoshua's descendants, the *Chashmonaim*, who usurped the royal robes of the tribe of Yehudah and anointed themselves as kings. For this they were severely punished, as *Ramban* notes:

*The Chashmonaim were saints before G-d and if not for them, the Torah would have been forgotten from Israel. Nevertheless, they were punished for taking the throne which rightfully belonged to the house of David. [The Chashmonaim were Kohanim.] Their servant, Herod, rebelled against them, and killed all of them except for one girl, whom he married. Therefore, say Chazal, anyone who claims to be a descendant of the Chashmonaim should be considered a slave, for he is a descendant of Herod.*<sup>4</sup>

This ties in to the first part of the haftarah, specifically *pasuk* 2:16: “ונחל ה' את יהודה חלקו.” This verse may be translated in two ways: “G-d will take Yehuda as His share,”<sup>5</sup> or, “G-d will give Yehuda his proper share.”<sup>6</sup> In either case, this reminds us that a time will come when royalty will be returned to the tribe of Yehuda, as Yaakov, our father, promised him.

In the third part of the haftarah, Zechariah sees a seven-branched candelabra flanked by two olive branches. On one plane, this may symbolize the miracle of *Chanukah*.<sup>7</sup> On a deeper level, the *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 24a) interprets this vision as symbolic of the period of Jewish history which began with the second Temple, i.e., the period

---

<sup>4</sup> *Ramban*, Commentary to *B'reishit* 49:10.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibn Ezra*.

<sup>6</sup> *Abarbanel*.

<sup>7</sup> *Mishnah Berurah* 684:7.

when the study of the Oral law became primary. After the death of the last prophets (including Zechariah), there arose the sages of the *Mishnah*. The *menorah* which Zechariah saw represents the Torah, the guiding light of the world. The presence of two olive branches represented the fact that there would be two centers of Torah study, one in *Eretz Yisrael*, the other in Bavel.

This too, relates to *Chanukah*, which, alone among Jewish holidays, is not mentioned in *Tanach*, and therefore is the holiday of the Oral law.

### **The Second Shabbat of Chanukah**

If there are two *Shabbatot* during *Chanukah*, the haftarah on the second *Shabbat* is the section from *Melachim I* (7:40-50) known as “נרות שלמה” / “The lights of Shlomo.”<sup>8</sup> (This is also the haftarah for *Parashat Vayakhel*.) Although this selection is chronologically earlier and should perhaps be given precedence over the section from *Zechariah* which we read on the first *Shabbat* of *Chanukah*, we prefer the selection from *Zechariah* because it alludes to the final redemption.<sup>9</sup>

### **Other Customs**

It appears from *Masechet Soferim*<sup>10</sup> and *Pesikta Rabati*<sup>11</sup> that there was a custom on *Shabbat Chanukah* to read the haftarah “ותשלם כל” / “And all the work was completed.”<sup>12</sup> This is the haftarah for *Parashat Pekudei*, and its theme is the dedication of the First

---

<sup>8</sup> *Megillah* 31a; *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 684:2.

<sup>9</sup> *Be'er Hagolah*, 684:7; *Ketzot Hashulchan*, *siman* 88, note 15.

<sup>10</sup> 20:10.

<sup>11</sup> 6:1.

<sup>12</sup> Beginning with *Melachim I* 7:51.



Temple. This is appropriate for a holiday which commemorates the rededication of the Temple (albeit the Second Temple).<sup>13</sup>

Elsewhere in *Pesikta Rabati*,<sup>14</sup> we find that the haftarah for *Shabbat Chanukah* is the story of Eliyahu Hanavi's challenge to the prophets of idolatry whereby each side built an altar and prayed that a fire come down from heaven and consume his sacrifice.<sup>15</sup> Several suggestions have been offered for a connection between this haftarah and *Chanukah*, including:

- The haftarah refers to Eliyahu's repairing a destroyed altar. *Chanukah* commemorates the repair and rededication of the destroyed altar in the *Bet Hamikdash*.<sup>16</sup>
- Eliyahu Hanavi and the *Chashmonaim* showed the same type of determination when they fought against all odds for what they believed in.<sup>17</sup>
- Eliyahu Hanavi is connected in Jewish thought with the *תורה שבעל פה* / the Oral Law, and *Chanukah* is the holiday of the Oral Law.<sup>18</sup>

To resolve the conflict between the two chapters of the *Pesikta Rabati*, *Zera Avraham* suggests that “ותשלם כל המלאכה” was read on one *Shabbat* of *Chanukah* and the selection about Eliyahu was read on the other *Shabbat* of *Chanukah*. There does not appear to be any evidence as to which was read when *Chanukah* had only one *Shabbat*.

---

<sup>13</sup> As noted above, the *Chanukah* story itself is not mentioned in *Tanach*.

<sup>14</sup> 4:1.

<sup>15</sup> *Melachim I* Chapter 18. This is the haftarah which is commonly read for *Parashat Ki Tissa*. In the commentary *Zera Ephraim* (4:2) to the *Pesikta Rabati* it states that this is the haftarah for *Parashat Vayakhel*, but this is presumably a mistake.

<sup>16</sup> R' Ephraim Zalman Margalioth, *Zera Avraham*.

<sup>17</sup> R' Yisroel Reisman, *Pathways of the Prophets* Tape No. 117.

<sup>18</sup> R' Tzaddok Hakohen, *Pri Tzaddik*, *Bereishit* p. 80a.

---

## CHAPTER 32

### Shabbat Hagadol

---

#### **The Day's Special Name and Its Possible Connection to the Haftarah**

The *Shabbat* before *Pesach* is called “*Shabbat Hagadol*,” although, writes the eleventh century *Machzor Vitry*,<sup>1</sup> no one knows why. A number of theories have been offered to explain this day's name, one of which, we shall see, relates to the haftarah which is commonly read on *Shabbat Hagadol*.

The anonymous thirteenth century work, *Tanya Rabati*,<sup>2</sup> offers two explanations. First, its author writes, citing *Rashi*, the day may take its name from the great (“*gadol*”) miracle which happened in Egypt on the *Shabbat* preceding the Exodus.<sup>3</sup> Alternately, the author of *Tanya Rabati* suggests, the name may come from the fact that the rabbi's *Shabbat Hagadol derashah* causes *Ma'ariv* to be recited late, thus making the *Shabbat* “*gadol*.”

---

<sup>1</sup> *Siman* 259.

<sup>2</sup> *Siman* 42. Some attribute this work to R' Yechiel Anav of Rome.

<sup>3</sup> On that day, the Jewish people set aside sheep for the *Korban Pesach*. The Egyptians worshiped sheep, but they were powerless to stop this public mockery of their deity. This is the popularly taught reason for the name and is cited in the *Shulchan Aruch* (*O.C.* 430:1).

*Mateh Moshe*,<sup>4</sup> a sixteenth century work, suggests that the name “*Shabbat Hagadol*” is taken from a verse in the haftarah (from *Malachi*), “Behold, I will send to you *Eliyahu Hanavi*, before the coming of the *ה' הגדול הנורא* / the great (*'gadol*) and awesome day of G-d.” This is a reference to the day of the final judgment and redemption. By reading this haftarah, we prepare for the celebration of our first redemption from exile by reading of the future, final redemption. The day on which we read of the future “*Yom Hagadol*” is known as “*Shabbat Hagadol*.”

However, there is a weakness to this explanation, as the author of *Mateh Moshe* himself points out. If the day were named only for the haftarah it should be called “*Shabbat V'arvah*” after the haftarah's first word (just as the *Shabbat* before *Yom Kippur* is called “*Shabbat Shuvah*” and the *Shabbat* before *Tishah B'Av* is called “*Shabbat Chazon*.”) Accordingly, *Mateh Moshe* writes, the first reason cited by above is needed as well.<sup>5</sup>

There is another weakness with *Mateh Moshe*'s explanation. Specifically, the name “*Shabbat Hagadol*” appears to be much older than the practice of reading “*V'arvah*” (“*וערבה*”) as a special haftarah in honor of *Shabbat Hagadol*. As mentioned above, *Rashi*, who died in 1105, is quoted as calling the *Shabbat* before *Pesach*, “*Shabbat Hagadol*.” On the other hand, the practice of reading “*וערבה*” in honor of this *Shabbat* is not mentioned until the fifteenth century, and even then, the reference is questionable.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> *Siman* 542.

<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, *Mateh Moshe* asserts that the *Shulchan Aruch*'s reason cannot stand alone either because the Jews of old spoke Aramaic, not Hebrew, and would have called the day “*Shabbat Rabbah*.”

<sup>6</sup> Specifically, the custom is mentioned in *Sefer Maharil, Hilchot Dalet Parshiyot* ד"ה מהרא"ק. *Sefer Maharil* records the customs advocated by R' Yaakov Moellin (Segal) (approximately 1365 to 1427), and was extremely influential in the standardization of *Ashkenazic* customs relating to prayer and  
(continued...)

### When Was This Haftarah Read?

Some have suggested that “וערבה” was once the haftarah for *Parashat Tzav*, which, coincidentally, is the *parashah* read on *Shabbat Hagadol* in a non-leap year. The thirteenth century work, *Ohr Zarua*, states the following:

*It is written in the responsa, "Why did they not abolish עולותיכם [the haftarah for Parashat Tzav<sup>7</sup>] and read וערבה? Perhaps the reason is that the end of וערבה refers to the great and awesome judgment; therefore, they did not establish to read וערבה.*

*But I, Menachem, have a different spirit within me. To preserve the custom of our forefathers, which is itself Torah, for they served the great sages, and also, their words appear right to me, I say that when the fourteenth of Nissan [i.e., Erev Pesach] falls on Shabbat, it is impossible to read [עולותיכם, which contains the verse,] "Which I have not commanded and have not contemplated." [This cannot be*

---

<sup>6</sup>(...continued)

the Torah reading. The book itself was not written by R' Yaakov, known as *Maharil*, but by a student, R' Zalman. Over the centuries, others have added their own glosses to the work, sometimes anonymously. Thus, after *Sefer Maharil* mentions that some congregations read “וערבה” on *Shabbat Hagadol*, but some read it only if *Shabbat Hagadol* falls on *Erev Pesach* itself [see below in the text], a note in brackets states: “I, the gatherer after the gatherer, did not see any such distinction in the days of R' Yaakov Segal, for the haftarah on *Shabbat Hagadol* was always the haftarah of whatever *parashah* they read that week.” (See the *Machon Yerushalayim* edition of *Sefer Maharil* p. 417.)

<sup>7</sup> This haftarah is *halachically* problematic because it contains fewer than 21 verses.



*read] on the day when the Korban Pesach is slaughtered.[<sup>8</sup> One also cannot read on the day when the Korban Pesach is slaughtered, "Tear out your hair and throw it away, proclaim lament from the heights; [to read this] on Shabbat which is Erev Pesach would make the Israel's heart fall.*

*I found [support] for my words when there came into my hands the book of Rabbi Moshe the son of Meshullam zatzal which was brought from Babylon, and in the Prophets there were marks showing the haftarot. [There] I saw the notation, "Tzav," next to "עולותיכם" and another notation, "Tzav," next to "וערבה." Therefore, I was on target with the truth that sometimes we read for Tzav, "עולותיכם," and sometimes "וערבה." The rule is that in a non-leap year, when Tzav falls on Shabbat Hagadol before Pesach, they should read "וערבה," and certainly if Erev Pesach falls on Shabbat. If it is a leap year, and Tzav falls in Adar Sheni . . . , then they should read "עולותיכם," unless it is one of the Arba Parshiyot. . . . In a leap year, when Shabbat Hagadol coincides with [Parashat Metzora], our rabbis read, "And four men" [i.e., the regular haftarah for Metzora].<sup>9</sup>*

---

<sup>8</sup> The quoted verse is *Yirmiyah* 7:31. This haftarah (*Yirmiyah* 7:21-8:3, with the addition of 9:22-23) states that what G-d really wants is for us to heed His laws, not to offer Him sacrifices. One might wonder why the writer quoted the above verse rather than the earlier, and seemingly more relevant, verse (7:22), "For I did not speak with your forefathers nor did I command them — on the day I took them out of the land of Egypt — concerning *olah*-offering nor peace-offering."

<sup>9</sup> *Ohr Zarua*, Hil. Kriat Moadim Ve'haftarot § 393. Others explain that both "עולותיכם" and "וערבה" are *haftarot* for *Parashat Tzav* because they remain from the Triennial Cycle whereby some communities completed the Torah only once in three years. Those communities divided our *Parashat Tzav* into two *parashot* and thus had two *haftarot*. (See R' Elchanan Samet, *Shabbat Hagadol*, No. 28, April 13, 2000, distributed by Yeshivat Har Etzion's Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash. My thanks to R' Ari Zivotofsky for bringing this to my attention.)



*Ohr Zarua's* argument has a certain appeal. After all, why should *Shabbat Hagadol* have a special haftarah, given that it does not have a special Torah reading? There is no occasion (except for *the Shabbat* preceding a Sunday *Rosh Chodesh*) when a special haftarah is read without a special Torah reading! Nevertheless, normative *halachic* practice today does not follow *Ohr Zarua's* opinion. Instead, some read *וערבה* on every *Shabbat Hagadol*, some read it only when *Erev Pesach* falls on *Shabbat*, and some only when *Erev Pesach* does not fall on *Shabbat*.

*Levush* offers the following explanation for the custom to read *וערבה* only when *Shabbat Hagadol* falls on *Erev Pesach*:<sup>10</sup> the very reason that *וערבה* is read at all, he contends, is that it contains a reminder to bring *ma'aser*, i.e., the verse, "Bring the entire tithe to the storehouse and let there be food in My house." When was the day when all *ma'aser* had to be separated and given if it had not been done earlier? *Erev Pesach* (of the third and sixth years of the *Shemittah* cycle).

Among the *chassidic rebbes* who read *וערבה* only when *Shabbat Hagadol* fell on *Erev Pesach* were R' Chaim Elazar Shapira (the *Munkatcher Rebbe*) and R' Menachem Mendel of Rimanov.<sup>11</sup> However, R' Mendel gave a different reason for his custom.

As mentioned above, this haftarah refers to the coming of Eliyahu. R' Mendel argued that Eliyahu is most likely to appear on *Erev Pesach* which falls on *Shabbat*. On the one hand, we believe that *mashiach* will come on *Pesach* and Eliyahu will precede *mashiach*. On the other hand, Eliyahu will not come on *Erev Yom Tov* so as not to distract us from holiday preparations.<sup>12</sup> When, then, can he come? asks R' Mendel. Only on *Erev Pesach* which falls on

---

<sup>10</sup> O.C. 430:1.

<sup>11</sup> *Darhei Chaim Veshalom* § 440; *Menachem Zion: Shabbat Hagadol*.

<sup>12</sup> See *Eruvin* 43b.

*Shabbat*, when all of our preparations have been made on the day before.<sup>13</sup>

The *Vilna Gaon's* custom was to read this haftarah only if *Erev Pesach* fell on a weekday.<sup>14</sup> Rav Yissachar Ber of Vilna explains that the *Levush's* explanation is counter-intuitive. There is no purpose to giving a reminder about *ma'aser* on *Erev Pesach* which is *Shabbat*; by then, it already is too late to bring the tithes from home. Only if some weekdays separate the reading of וערבה and *Erev Pesach* is the reminder helpful.<sup>15</sup>

### **Additional Reasons for Reading This Haftarah on Shabbat Hagadol**

R' Yissachar Yaakovson suggests the following additional connection between the haftarah and *Shabbat Hagadol*: *Pesach*, more than any other holiday, is a family-oriented celebration. *Eliyahu Hanavi*, the haftarah tells us, will work to reunite families and “return the hearts of fathers to their sons” (3:24), and vice-versa.<sup>16</sup>

R' Mendel Hirsch writes that, in fact, the verse just quoted should be translated, “He will turn the thoughts of fathers towards their sons, and the thoughts of sons towards their fathers.” The accomplishment of *Eliyahu Hanavi* will be that he will bridge the generation gap which has so divided society.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> *Menachem Zion: Shabbat Hagadol.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ma'aseh Rav* § 176.

<sup>15</sup> In *Peulat Sachir*, notes to *Ma'aseh Rav*. The late Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv, R' Chaim David Halevi, notes that the above explanation is correct only if the deadline for bringing *ma'aser* is *Erev Pesach*. However, some say that it is the sixth day of *Pesach* (*Aseh Lecha Rav*, Vol. II, *siman* 32).

<sup>16</sup> *Chazon Hamikra.*

<sup>17</sup> *The Hirsch Chumash* Vol. VI, p. 575.

### A Bar Mitzvah on Shabbat Hagadol

In many communities, it is customary that the Rabbi reads the haftarah on *Shabbat Hagadol*. The question thus arises: Who should read the haftarah if a *bar mitzvah* falls on *Shabbat Hagadol*?

Opinions on this differ. In the realm of *מעשה רב* (i.e., determining *halachah* based on observations of *gedolim*), this writer was a guest at such a *bar mitzvah* in the year 5747, in the *bet midrash* of R' Levi Yitzchak Horowitz (the "*Bostoner Rebbe*") in Yerushalayim. On that occasion, the *bar mitzvah* received one of the seven *aliyot* and the *Rebbe* himself read the haftarah.<sup>18</sup>

Some authorities reach the opposite conclusion, at least in a case where the *bar mitzvah* has already turned thirteen.<sup>19</sup> (As noted elsewhere, in many communities the *bar mitzvah* reads the haftarah on the *Shabbat* which falls *before* his 13th birthday.) It is generally agreed that a "youth" should not read the haftarah on *Shabbat Hagadol*. However, some say, this "youth" is one who is not yet thirteen; if he has turned thirteen, then this day is a *Yom Tov* for him and that entitles him to precedence.

---

<sup>18</sup> This was not by chance; the *bar mitzvah's* father told me that he discussed the matter with the *Rebbe's* son before-hand.

<sup>19</sup> R' Yonah Metzger, *She'eilot U'teshuvot Miyam Ha'halachah*, Vol. III, *siman* 71.

---

## CHAPTER 33

### Erev Rosh Chodesh

---

#### The Haftarah

When *Rosh Chodesh* falls on Sunday, then the haftarah on *Shabbat* is “ויאמר לו יהונתן מחר חדש” / “Yehonatan said to [David], ‘Tomorrow is the New Moon’.”<sup>1</sup> On a superficial level, the connection between this haftarah and the day is obvious: the first verse of this selection contains the words “מחר חדש” / “tomorrow is the new moon.”

However, the connection goes much deeper than that, writes R' Shimon Schwab. Why did Yonatan tell David not to flee until after King Shaul's *Rosh Chodesh* feast? Because *Rosh Chodesh* is a time of renewal; maybe Shaul too would change, and would stop chasing David. This teaches us what our “goal” on *Rosh Chodesh* should be: renewal.

Also, in *mussaf* of *Rosh Chodesh* we pray for the redemption and the rebuilding of the *Bet Hamikdash*; *Rosh Chodesh* itself is a propitious time for redemption. This is alluded to in Shaul's question, “Why has the son of Yishai (a reference to *mashiach*) not come, neither yesterday nor today?” The haftarah also notes that David's place was checked, and it was found to be empty; David (also a reference to *mashiach*) is missing.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Shulchan Aruch O.C.* 425:2. This haftarah comes from *Shmuel I* 20:18.



Why? Because of pointless hatred. This too is alluded to in the haftarah, for that was Shaul's attitude towards David.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Uniqueness of the Day**

Why is a special haftarah read on the *Shabbat* which precedes a Sunday *Rosh Chodesh*, but not on the *Shabbat* which precedes any other holiday which falls on Sunday?<sup>3</sup>

I heard from my *rebbe*, R' Shlomo Naiman in the name of R' Mordechai Shuchatowitz (of Baltimore) that *Rosh Chodesh* is different from all other holidays. Some holidays (e.g. *Pesach*) mark events which happened on a specific day. In that case, the holiday falls on the same day as the event which is commemorated. Other holidays (e.g. *Sukkot*) commemorate an event which was ongoing and did not occur at any specific time. In that case, the Torah set a time for the holiday.

*Rosh Chodesh* is unique. True, it marks a specific event, the *molad* ("birth") of the new moon. That event, however, rarely occurs on *Rosh Chodesh*. Rather, it is likely to take place the day before the holiday. For this reason, when the day before *Rosh Chodesh* falls on *Shabbat*, we honor it with a special haftarah. Although, following this logic, the haftarah should be read on every *Erev Rosh Chodesh*, it is forbidden to draw out the weekday services with a haftarah, lest the congregants be delayed from reaching work. Thus, this haftarah is read only when *Rosh Chodesh* falls on Sunday.

### **A Two-Day Rosh Chodesh**

The *Shulchan Aruch* writes: Some have the custom that when *Rosh Chodesh* falls on *Shabbat* and Sunday, then after reading the haftarah on *Shabbat*, we read the first and last verses of the haftarah

---

<sup>2</sup> *Ma'ayan Beit Ha'sho'eivah* p. 459.

<sup>3</sup> With the possible exception of *Erev Pesach* which falls on *Shabbat* — see Chapter 32.



of “ויאמר לו יהונתן מחר חדש,” the haftarah which is ordinarily read when Rosh Chodesh falls on Sunday. These people should not be rebuked.<sup>4</sup>

This custom presents the problem of skipping.<sup>5</sup> The prevalent *Ashkenazic* custom appears to be not to read verses from מחר חדש when *Shabbat* is the first day of *Rosh Chodesh*.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Shulchan Aruch O.C.* 144:2.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 18.

---

## CHAPTER 34

### Fast Days

---

#### The Ashkenazic Custom

On a fast day, the haftarah for *Ashkenazim* is “דרשו” / “Seek” (*Yeshayah* 55:6-56:8).<sup>1</sup> This haftarah is read in *minchah*. There is no haftarah in *shacharit*, except on *Tishah B'Av*. The Torah and the haftarah are read in *minchah* even on Friday afternoon.

Why is it the custom that a haftarah is read in *minchah*--and, on most fast days, not in the morning? *Rabbenu Tam* explains that this custom is derived from a *pasuk* in the haftarah for a fast day: “Protect justice and perform acts of charity.”<sup>2</sup> This is best read in the evening because it is then that the day's major acts of charity are taking place.<sup>3</sup>

Why is this so? *Rashi* explains that toward evening food is given to the poor so that they may break their fasts.<sup>4</sup> *Maharal* comments that one is particularly required to give charity at this time because the poor person, ordinarily weak from malnutrition, may now be

---

<sup>1</sup> *Rema*, *O.C.* 566:1.

<sup>2</sup> *Yishayah* 56:1.

<sup>3</sup> *Megillah* 21a, *Tosfot* הקורא ד"ה.

<sup>4</sup> *Berachot* 6b.

imperiled even further by the fast.<sup>5</sup> We see then, that the primary observance of the fast day--giving charity--is in the afternoon, and this is when we read the day's haftarah.

### Sephardic Customs

Some *Sephardic* communities do not read a haftarah on a fast day.<sup>6</sup> R' Chaim David Halevi writes: The custom of Yerushalayim, followed by most *Sephardim*, is to not read a haftarah on fast days, except *Tishah B'Av*. Then they read “שובה ישראל” / “Return, Israel.” Jews from Morocco and Yemen also read a haftarah at *minchah* of *Tzom Gedaliah*, the same haftarah that *Ashkenazim* read on that occasion.<sup>7</sup> This was also the custom in Algeria.<sup>8</sup>

In a mixed congregation (in Yerushalayim), says R' Halevi, the “custom of Yerushalayim” should be followed. R' Moshe Sternbuch writes that an *Ashkenazic* congregation should not read the haftarah on a fast day unless ten *Ashkenazim* are present. Since *Sephardim* do not read a haftarah on a fast day, they cannot be counted towards a *minyan* for that purpose.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> *Chiddushei Aggadot, Sanhedrin 35a. Maharsha (Berachot 6b)* puts a slightly different twist on the obligation to give charity at this hour: in order to refrain completely from physical pleasure on a fast day, we not only do not eat, but we take the grocery money which we have thus saved and disperse it to charity.

<sup>6</sup> *Bet Yosef, siman 574* אחר כיצד משייכ סוף דייה משייכ כיצד אחר (citing *Rambam, Hil. Tefilah 12:2*); *Minhagei Ha'Chida 43:16*. On the other hand, see *Rambam, Hil. Ta'anit 1:7* and *Lechem Mishneh* there ומפטירין דייה.

<sup>7</sup> *Aseh Lecha Rav* Vol. V, No. 61.

<sup>8</sup> *Keter Shem Tov* p. 383, note 404.

<sup>9</sup> *Moadim U'zmanim, Likutei He'arot*, ch. 334.

---

## CHAPTER 35

### Acharei Mot and Kedoshim

---

#### A Rarely Read Haftarah

As explained in Chapter 17, there is some controversy regarding the appropriateness of reading the haftarah usually associated with *Parashat Kedoshim* because of the verse, “הַתְּשִׁיט אֶת עִיר הַדְּמִים” / “וְהוֹדַעְתָּהּ אֵת כָּל תּוֹעֲבוֹתֶיהָ” / “Now you, son of man, won't you rebuke? Won't you rebuke the city of bloodshed, and inform her of all her abominations?”<sup>1</sup> Although we rule that this haftarah may be read, in fact, it rarely is.<sup>2</sup> The reason for this is as follows:

There are four sets of calendrical circumstances which can prevent us from reading this haftarah. First, in many years, the *parashot Acharei Mot* and *Kedoshim* are combined as one, causing us to lose a haftarah. If that does not happen, it is likely *either* that the *Shabbat* on which *Kedoshim* is read will be *Rosh Chodesh* or the day before *Rosh Chodesh*, or that *Acharei Mot* will be read on *Shabbat Hagadol*. In all of those cases, a special haftarah is read, again

---

<sup>1</sup> *Yechezkel* 22:2.

<sup>2</sup> In the last hundred years, it was read only in the years 5662/1902, 5679/1919, 5703/1943, 5706/1946, 5730/1970 and 5757/1997. So rare is this haftarah, that in 1943, R' Yechiel Michel Tikochinski, author of the well-known calendar listing the customs of Yerushalayim, was forced to advertise in the newspaper seeking citizens of Yerushalayim old enough to reliably report on the custom of the city.

causing us to lose one haftarah. In any of these circumstances, the *Shabbat* of *Acharei Mot* or *Kedoshim* which is left “free” is given the haftarah usually associated with *Acharei Mot* (“הלא כבני כושיים”<sup>3</sup>), and the haftarah usually associated with *Kedoshim* is not read. Why? Many *poskim* explain that given the questionable appropriateness of “התשפט,” we avoid reading it whenever we can.<sup>4</sup>

This is the generally accepted explanation. However, *Levush* strongly disagrees with it and writes that the reason that “התשפט” is rarely read is because of a printer's or scribe's error. Whenever we read a “double *parashah*,” the haftarah is the one for the second *parashah*.<sup>5</sup> However, *Levush* writes, there were *chumashim* in circulation in the Middle Ages which listed “הלא כבני כושיים” as the haftarah for *Kedoshim* and listed “התשפט” as the haftarah for *Acharei Mot* (i.e., the reverse of the correct order).<sup>6</sup> This led the early scholars who kept track of *Ashkenazic* customs to write that when *Acharei Mot* and *Kedoshim* are combined, the correct haftarah is the one for *Acharei Mot*. Those writers meant that the correct haftarah is the one for the second *parashah*, *Kedoshim*, which was mistakenly printed after *Acharei Mot*, but later generations, who had corrected *chumashim*, followed the printers' instructions literally and thus ended up reading the wrong haftarah. *Levush* concludes, “If I had the power, I would abolish the prevailing custom.”<sup>7</sup>

According to the prevailing custom, the only time that “התשפט” might be read is in a year known by the Hebrew mnemonic זח"ג. This signifies that *Rosh Hashanah* falls on *Shabbat*, the months of

---

<sup>3</sup> *Amos* 9:7-15.

<sup>4</sup> *Mateh Moshe* § 454; *Mishnah Berurah* 428:26; *Igrot Moshe*, O.C. I, No. 36.

<sup>5</sup> See above, Chapter 1, paragraph 17.

<sup>6</sup> There are still such *chumashim* in circulation.

<sup>7</sup> *Levush* 493:4.



*Cheshvan* and *Kislev* (which are of variable length) both have 29 days, and *Pesach* falls on Tuesday. But some congregations never read this haftarah. According to R' Joseph B. Soloveitchik, the custom in Lithuania was that “התשפט” was never read. Instead, the selection from the Book of *Amos* which most *chumashim* list as the haftarah for *Acharei Mot* was read on both weeks.

The reason for this, says R' Soloveitchik, is that both *Parashat Acharei Mot* and *Parashat Kedoshim* are potentially very depressing. Both of them lay down many laws, particular laws relating to morality, and both warn that the Land of Israel will not tolerate any immorality. True, says the haftarah, but be assured that there is hope:

*"I shall bring back the captivity of My people Israel and they will rebuild desolate cities; they will return and plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I shall implant them upon their Land; they will not be uprooted again from upon their Land that I have given them, says Hashem your G-d."*<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, *Amos* addressed this subject even before *Yishayah*, *Yirmiyah*, and *Yechezkel* (the three prophets from whose works most *haftarot* are drawn), says R' Soloveitchik. Thus it is appropriate to read his prophecy, even two weeks in a row.<sup>9</sup>

The custom in *Yerushalayim*, according to R' Yechiel Michel Tikochinski, is that when *Acharei Mot* and *Kedoshim* are read separately, the haftarah for *Acharei Mot* is the haftarah that most communities read for *Kedoshim* (i.e., from *Yechezkel*), and the one for *Kedoshim* is the haftarah that most communities read for *Acharei Mot* (i.e., from *Amos*).<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> *Amos* 9:14-15.

<sup>9</sup> *Divrei Hashkafah* p. 90.

<sup>10</sup> *Ir Hakodesh Vehamikdash* Vol. III, p. 350. This appears to be consistent with *Levush's* view discussed above.

In a place that has the custom to not read “התשפט,” if the *maftir* opened to that section and then recited the *berachot*, R' Moshe Feinstein rules as follows: If the haftarah is read from a *klaf*, “התשפט” should be read because it would be necessary to bring a different scroll in order to read the correct haftarah. However, if a *chumash* or a haftarah book is used, the correct haftarah should be read.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> *Igrot Moshe*, O.C. I, No. 36.

---

## CHAPTER 36

### Other Rarely-Read Haftarot

---

#### **Parashat Miketz**

The haftarah printed after *Parashat Miketz* in most *chumashim* is *Melachim I* 3:15-4:1. Most of this haftarah deals with the very famous story of King Shlomo and the two women who were fighting over a baby. The most obvious connection between this haftarah and the *parashah* is that both begin with a king's dream — Pharaoh in the *parashah*, Shlomo in the haftarah.

However, in 222 of the 247 years in the Jewish calendar cycle, *Parashat Miketz* will be read during *Chanukah* and, therefore, will “lose” its haftarah. Instead, the special haftarah for *Chanukah* will be read. However, in the remaining years, *Parashat Miketz* will fall on the day after *Chanukah*, and its haftarah is read. (It never falls before *Chanukah*.)

*Miketz* will fall after *Chanukah* in any year in which *Rosh Hashanah* falls on *Shabbat* and the months of *Cheshvan* and *Kislev* both have only 29 days. (Both of these months can have either 29 or 30 days.) It makes no difference whether the year is a leap year (e.g., 5757) or is not (such as 5737).

### Parashat Pekudei

In many years, *Parashat Pekudei* will not have its own haftarah because:

- It coincides with *Parashat Hachodesh*; or
- *Vayakhel* and *Pekudei* are joined and coincide with *Parashat Parah*; or
- *Vayakhel* and *Pekudei* are joined and coincide with *Parashat Hachodesh*.

In each of these cases, a special haftarah is read, and the haftarah for *Pekudei* is set aside. Also, in some communities, the haftarah for *Vayakhel* is read for *Parashat Pekudei* when *Vayakhel* and *Pekudei* are separate and *Vayakhel* coincides with *Parashat Shekalim*.<sup>1</sup>

The “Breuer’s” community follows the custom mentioned in the last sentence, except in a year that had two *Shabbatot* during *Chanukah*.<sup>2</sup> The reason is that the haftarah for *Vayakhel* is read on the second *Shabbat* of *Chanukah*, and therefore does not need to be “made up” on *Shabbat Parashat Pekudei*.

### Parashat Tzav

The haftarah for *Parashat Tzav*: “עלותכם ספו על זבחיכם” / “Pile your burnt-offerings upon your peace-offerings,” also is rarely read. In non-leap years, *Parashat Tzav* always coincides with *Shabbat Hagadol*. In leap years, *Parashat Tzav* frequently coincides with either *Parashat Zachor* or *Parashat Parah*. Each of these three occasions has its own special haftarah. Ironically, this is one of the few *haftarot* that is mentioned in the *Gemara*.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Hirsch Chumash* Vol. VI, pp. 217 & 220; *Chumash Derech Mesilah* Vol. II, p. 344 (Fürth 5611/1851). Other communities read the haftarah for *Pekudei* in this case (see the *Ezras Torah Luach* 5760).

<sup>2</sup> *K'hal Adath Jeshurun Newsletter*, Vol. 30, No. 9, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> See *Megillah* 23b and see Chapter 32 above.



---

## CHAPTER 37

### "Sos Asis"

---

We have already discussed previously that several *haftarot* present the problem of skipping between two sections of the **נביאים**. Another such problem is presented by the following custom recorded in the *Shulchan Aruch*: "It is customary that on a *Shabbat* when a bridegroom is present, after the regular haftarah we read two or three verses from the haftarah known as "שׁוֹשׁ אֲשִׁישׁ" / "I will rejoice intensely."<sup>1</sup> The verses in question begin with *Yishayah* 61:10.

Some object to this custom because it requires skipping.<sup>2</sup> However, others defend the custom if the haftarah is read from a book rather than from a scroll or if the verses are recited by heart.<sup>3</sup>

It is not clear from the *Shulchan Aruch* whether these verses are added after the haftarah, but before the *berachot*, or only after the *berachot*. However, *Kol Bo* states expressly that the verse were added after the *berachot*.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *O.C.* 144:2. See Chapter 6 above.

<sup>2</sup> *Be'er Sheva* to *Sotah* 41a.

<sup>3</sup> Skipping is not objectionable if we read from a book rather than a scroll because that enables the reader to mark the place with a bookmark and to turn there without delaying the congregation (*Mishnah Berurah* 144:10).

<sup>4</sup> *Kol Bo*, *siman* 20.



However, some do understand the *Shulchan Aruch* to mean that the additional verses should be recited before the *berachot*. Why then is this not a *hefsek*, since the verses are not really part of the haftarah?

One answer is the same as that given above for the custom of reading “*Yetziv Pitgam*” on *Shavuot*, i.e., that due to the lesser sanctity of the haftarah, some interruptions are permitted.<sup>5</sup>

Others answer as follows: regarding the custom in some places that, whenever two *haftarot* are appropriate,<sup>6</sup> one haftarah is read in its entirety together with several verses from the other haftarah, R' Yitzchak Falagi writes that this is not an interruption because both *haftarot* are in fact appropriate. On the other hand, he writes, those communities that recite the phrase “גואלינו ה' צבאות” / “Our Redeemer, *Hashem*, Master of Legions”<sup>7</sup> are acting improperly because that verse has nothing to do with the haftarah. Applying this rule, reading several verses from “שׁוֹשׁ אִשִּׁישׁ” may be permitted if we argue that the entire haftarah of “שׁוֹשׁ אִשִּׁישׁ” (i.e., the haftarah for *Parashat Nitzavim*) is appropriate for this occasion. Indeed, in some places, the entire haftarah is read in honor of a bridegroom.<sup>8</sup>

*Aruch Hashulchan*<sup>9</sup> writes that in his time (the 1890's), this custom was no longer observed in any place. Today it is customary in many *Ashkenazic* congregations that a bridegroom is called on the *Shabbat* before his wedding to read the regularly scheduled haftarah.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> *Turei Zahav* 494:1.

<sup>6</sup> For example, when *Shabbat* is *Rosh Chodesh* and the next day, Sunday, also is *Rosh Chodesh*.

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 11 above.

<sup>8</sup> This was the custom in parts of Morocco in this century (Heard from R' Raphael Malka).

<sup>9</sup> *O.C.* 285:13.

<sup>10</sup> See *Mishnah Berurah* 171:21.

### When was this haftarah read?

There is no clear indication in the *poskim*, books of *minhagim* or historical references whether the haftarah of “שׁוֹשׁ אִשִּׁישׁ” is associated with what *Ashkenazim* know as an *aufruf* or whether this reading takes place on the *Shabbat* which falls during *sheva berachot*.

Some communities have, or once had, the custom of reading a special Torah reading (*Bereishit*, Chapter 24) in honor of a bridegroom. This custom clearly was practiced only after the wedding, not before it.<sup>11</sup> If we assume that “שׁוֹשׁ אִשִּׁישׁ” was the haftarah associated with that special Torah reading, then presumably it too was read on the *Shabbat* after a wedding.<sup>12</sup>

The custom of rejoicing with a bridegroom in *shul* appears to derive from the following *midrash*:

*King Shlomo saw the importance of practicing acts of kindness. Therefore, when he built the Bet Hamikdash, he built two gates — one for bridegrooms and one for mourners. On Shabbat the Jews would sit between these two gates; when they saw someone enter through one of the gates, they would know that they should rejoice with him or mourn with him [as appropriate].*

*When the Temple was destroyed, the Sages ordained that bridegrooms and mourners should go to shul on Shabbat and the congregation will rejoice with them or mourn with them as appropriate.*<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> *Sdei Chemed: Ma'arechet Chatan V'kallah.*

<sup>12</sup> See also *Nit'ei Gavriel: Hilchot Nisuin* 73:1.

<sup>13</sup> *Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer*, Ch. 17.