

פרשת שקלים
PORROSHAS SHEKOLLIM

Shabbos Porroshas Shekollim is the Shabbos before Rosh Chodesh Addar, unless Rosh Chodesh Addar falls to be on Shabbos, in which case that Shabbos becomes Shabbos Porroshas Shekollim.

If Rosh Chodesh Addar falls to be on Shabbos, three Sifrei Torah are taken out. From the first, we read the Sidra of the Week; from the second, we read the special reading for Shabbos Rosh Chodesh (from Sidra Pinchos, in Sefer BeMidbor, Chapter 28, Pessukim 9 — 15 inclusive) and from the third, we read the special Torah-reading, which is Porroshas Shekollim. Otherwise, that is, if Shabbos is not also Rosh Chodesh, only two Sifrei Torah are taken out, from the first, we read the Sidra of the Week, and from the second we read the special Torah-reading for Shabbos Porroshas Shekollim. This is taken from Sefer Shemos, Chapter 30, Pessukim 11 — 16 inclusive (the first paragraph of Sidra כִּי תִשָּׂא) and the Haftorah is from the Second Sefer of Melochim, Chapter 11, from Possuk 17 to Chapter 12, Possuk 17, inclusive (Sefaraddim). (Ashkenazzim start at Possuk 1 of Chapter 12, but end the same as Sefaraddim.)

1. Our Chachommim, of blessed memory, instituted that we commemorate certain events or Mitzvos by means of special public readings from the Sefer Torah and special Haftorahs (readings from the נְבִיאִים, the Books of the Prophets). This week, the Shabbos is called Shabbos Porroshas Shekollim, taking its name from the special Maftir and Haftorah read on Shabbos morning, and it commemorates the Mitzvah of the giving of the half-Shekel.
2. There are four specific Shabbossos in the year when special public Torah-readings take the place of the regular Maftir (after the Sidra of the Week has been read) and special Haftorahs are read in the place of the regular Haftorahs. Collectively, they are called the Arba Parshios (the special readings of the Four Sections) and Porroshas Shekollim is the first of the four. The others are: Shabbos Porroshas “Zochoir” (which takes its name from the first word of the special Torah-reading); Shabbos Porroshas Porroh (which takes its name from the subject of its special Torah-reading, as does this week’s Shabbos) and Shabbos Porroshas “HaChodesh” (again, taking its name from the first word of the command concerning the Mitzvah of that Parrashah). In some years, there can be a “vacant” Shabbos, called a Hafsokkoh, (that is, there is an “interruption” in the Arba Parshios) between Shabbos Porroshas Shekollim and Shabbos Porroshas “Zochoir” or between Shabbos Porroshas “Zochoir” and Shabbos Porroshas Porroh, or indeed there can be two Shabbossos Hafsokkoh (but there can never be a Shabbos Hafsokkoh

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between Shabbos Porroshas Porroh and Shabbos Porroshas “HaChodesh.”) It all depends on which day of the week Rosh Chodesh Addar falls to be.

3. There are other occasions when a special Maftir is read instead of the regular Maftir: when Rosh Chodesh falls to be on Shabbos, for example, or indeed if Yom Tov falls to be on Shabbos (when not only is the Maftir changed, but the Yom Tov Torah-reading takes the place of the regular Sidra of the Week). But unlike those cases, when it is the specialty of the day that calls for its own Torah-reading, these Arba Parshios were fixed by our Chachommim, of blessed memory, to be read at certain times of the year in addition to the regular weekly reading so as to recall or commemorate certain events or Mitzvos. These Arba Parshios are usually read in Addar (or, in a leap year, in Addar II) though in some years they can start on the Shabbos before Addar or be extended to Shabbos Rosh Chodesh Nissan.
4. Porroshas Shekollim is read to recall the Mitzvah of the Half-Shekel. In the time of the Beis HaMikdash, every man of the Jewish Nation gave a half-Shekel each year to pay for the communal Korbannos brought on behalf of the whole Nation. In this way, each and every Jewish household was represented in the Korbannos that were brought in the Beis HaMikdash and had a share in its upkeep and function, this, even if they did not live in Eretz Yisroel. Our Chachommim, of blessed memory, ordered that the public announcement concerning the collection of the half-Shekel should be made on the first of Addar so that the people had one month's notice. (The money has to be in by the first of Nissan because the Torah stipulates that, starting from that day, the communal Korbannos have to be purchased from “new” money.)
5. By reading Porroshas Shekollim at this time of year, we give expression to the hope that we should once again, and soon, be able to fulfil the Mitzvah of the half-Shekel, that we should merit to see the Beis HaMikdash rebuilt, with the re-instatement of the holy Korbannos, as commanded by the Torah.

For the explanation of the Haftorah of פרשת שקלים please go to HAFTORAHS.