

הפטרת פרשת שקלים

HAFTORAH OF 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 and is in fact the first paragraph of Sidra כ"י תשא.

***The Haftorah is from the Second Book of Kings,
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.***

Much of the following is adapted from the introductory note to the Haftorah by Chief Rabbi Dr J H Hertz and also incorporates some of the comments by Dayyan Berel Berkovits, ז"ל.

1. For the Maftir of Shabbos Porroshas Shekollim we read about the Mitzvah of giving the Half-Shekel for the communal Korbannos and the upkeep of the Mishkan. The Haftorah, similarly, is the report of how King Yeho'ash of the Southern Kingdom of Yehudah set about renovating the Beis HaMikdash and his proclamation that the people should bring their Shekollim for that purpose.
2. The opening sentences of the Haftorah gives us the concluding scenes of the only revolution in the history of the Kingdom of Yehudah during the 347 years of its existence. That revolution was directed against a foreign princess who had attempted to kill out the Royal House of David.
3. Some background information: Achov ben Omri, the king of the breakaway Northern Kingdom of Israel, had married the Phœnician princess Izevvel and together with her had brought idol-worship into the Holy Land. Probably in an attempt to bring peace between the two Kingdoms, their daughter, Assalia, was married to the crown prince Yehoram of Yehudah but because of this marriage, tragically the idol-worship was now spread into the Southern Kingdom, too. When Yehoram, Assalia's husband, died their son Achaziah became king. He was dominated by his mother Assalia and as Queen Mother she wielded great power in the land. When her son Achaziah was assassinated by Yehu, rather than giving up her power, this true daughter of the evil Izevvel proceeded to murder all her own grandchildren so as to ascend the throne herself. Only one baby grandchild, Yeho'ash ben Achaziah, was saved from the carnage in the palace

by the baby's aunt Yehosheva (daughter of Yehoram) who was married to Yehoyodoh HaKohen and he was concealed for six years within the precincts of the Beis HaMikdash, during which time his righteous uncle instructed him in the ways of the Torah. (This episode is hinted at in Tehillim 27 : 5, when Dovid HaMelech prophetically prays concerning his dynasty: "... HaShem will hide me in His Sanctuary on the day of calamity; He will conceal me in His tent but He will eventually again establish my royal house, solid as a rock.")

4. For six years, Assalia usurped the throne in Yerushalaim. But then, in the seventh year, Yehoyodoh HaKohen brought Yeho'ash out of his hiding place and the royal bodyguard and the men who formed the National Council greeted the legitimate ruler with great enthusiasm. The evil Assalia met the retribution she deserved and the young Yeho'ash was crowned and confirmed as worthy to be king.
5. Although Yeho'ash reigned for forty years, we are told very little about his reign except for the events that form this Haftorah. Clearly, then, the repair of the Beis HaMikdash and the reintroduction of the collection of the Shekollim mark the high points of his reign.
6. Another thing: from reading this Haftorah, one gains the impression that Yeho'ash was a righteous king who was loyal to HaShem and His Torah all through his life. Sadly, this is not so. Towards the end of his life, he, too, following the spirit of those times, went off the path to idolatry and violence. The commentaries point out that although it says in the Possuk that Yeho'ash did that which is right in the eyes of HaShem, this was only so long as his Torah-teacher Yehoyodoh HaKohen was alive and guided him. Once he died, Yeho'ash forsook the path of righteousness and stooped even so low as to arrange the killing — even in the gates of the Beis HaMikdash itself! — of the Novvi Zechariah ben Yehoyodoh HaKohen when he rebuked the king for trying to bring an idol into the Beis HaMikdash and tried to stop this sacrilege. (This Zechariah is not to be confused with the Zechariah whose Sefer is one of the Twelve Shorter Books of the Prophets and who lived some two hundred and fifty years later, in the time of the second Beis HaMikdash.)
7. We learn a number of lessons from the events of this Haftorah. One is that if one wants to put away one's evil ways and turn back to HaShem, the break with the evil must be clean and final. Yeho'ash did stop idolatry in the land — but not completely. For he allowed the high places of the Baal-worship to remain and sacrifices to be brought there. But in these matters there cannot be any compromise, as if to say that one can allow just a little bit of the bad to remain. For after the initial firmness of the resolution to do good has worn off, that remnant of bad will become the new root of the bad and will grow again. Indeed, when Yehoyodoh HaKohen was no longer alive and his influence therefore waned, the old idolworship reasserted itself again.
8. Another of the lessons that all this goes to show is how important it is to have a Torah teacher to guide one all through one's life (not only in one's younger years) especially if one is in a position of authority and power and one's good friends are understandably hesitant to offer advice. As we see: after the death of Yehoyodoh, Yeho'ash fell badly.