

קריאת התורה והפטרות לימי חג הפסח

TORAH READINGS AND HAFTORAHS FOR THE YOM TOV OF PESSACH

1. The Yom Tov of Pessach is the celebration of our Deliverance by HaShem from our slavery in Egypt and this is obviously going to be the subject of the public Torah Readings of this Yom Tov.
2. On each day of the Yom Tov of Pessach, two Sifrei Torah are taken from the Orron HaKodesh as there are two different Torah readings, with the second reading being the Maftir. Each day's first Torah reading is different and the order of these various readings is given in the Gemorroh. In broad terms, all the readings are topical in that they include the laws of the Yom Tov of Pessach (or of Pessach Shayni) but the section that is earlier in the Chumash is read earlier in the Yom Tov (with some understandable exceptions — as will be explained). *(See Chart)*
3. On the **FIRST DAY OF PESSACH**, the Torah reading is taken from Sidra **בא** (which is in Sefer **שמות**) and is from Possuk 21 of Chapter 12 till Possuk 51 of that Chapter. It tells of how on the day preceding our Deliverance from Egypt, Mosheh our Teacher calls the Elders of the Jewish People together and tells them to instruct each family group to take the lamb that each family had prepared for their Korban Pessach and to slaughter it and to roast it and to eat it that night. He instructs us further that none of us are to leave our houses until the next morning. This first Torah reading also describes the Tenth Plague, the Smiting of the Firstborn, which happens that night, and how we leave Egypt in the brightness and openness of the next morning — the event which, of course, the first day of the Yom Tov of Pessach commemorates.
4. For the **SECOND DAY OF PESSACH**, the Torah reading is from Sidra **אמור**, in Sefer **ויקרא**. It is the section which teaches of all the Yommim Tovim generally, not only Pessach, and is the usual reading of the Second Day of Yom Tov. In the case of Pessach (and Sukkos, too) outside of Eretz Yisroel this second day is a proper Yom Tov while in Eretz Yisroel this second day is the first day of Chol HaMo'ed. The reading on this second day of Pessach, however, is the same for both, except that in Eretz Yisroel the reading is divided up into three Aliyos as for a weekday Torah reading and for outside of Eretz Yisroel the reading is divided up into five Aliyos, for a Yom Tov reading. The reading starts from Possuk 26 of Chapter 22 and continues till the end of Chapter 23. Besides being a comprehensive digest of the laws of all the Yommim Tovim, the reading also contains the Mitzvah of Counting the Omer which is another reason that it is suited to be this day's Reading as the second day of Pessach is the first day of the Omer.
5. On the **THIRD DAY OF PESSACH** (in Eretz Yisroel this is the second day of Chol HaMo'ed and in Chutz Lo'Oretz it's the first day of Chol HaMo'ed) which falls on any day but Shabbos, the Torah reading is taken from the last part of Sidra **בא**, following on from the reading of the First Day of Pessach and is from the first Possuk of Chapter 13 till Possuk 16 of that Chapter (thus reverting to the general pattern mentioned in Paragraph 2, namely, that that Torah reading that appears earlier in the Chumash is

- read earlier in the Yom Tov). The subject matter is again the laws of Pessach and there are three Aliyos. However, if this third day of Pessach falls to be on a Shabbos, then the Torah reading is from Sidra **כִּי תִשָּׂא** (*about which see Paragraph 8*).
6. When the **FOURTH DAY OF PESSACH** (that is, the third day of Chol HaMo'ed in Eretz Yisroel and the second day of Chol HaMo'ed in Chutz Lo'Oretz) falls to be on a Tuesday, a Wednesday or a Friday, the first Torah reading is taken from Sidra **מִשְׁפָּטִים** (which is further on in the Sefer **שְׁמוֹת**, after yesterday's Torah reading if yesterday was a weekday) and is from Possuk 24 of Chapter 22 till Possuk 19 of Chapter 23. Like the readings taken from Sidra **אֲמֹר** and from Sidra **רֵאָה**, this section, too, contains the general laws of the Yommim Tovim, starting with the laws of the Yom Tov of Pessach. However, if this fourth day of Pessach falls to be on a Sunday, then the Torah reading for this fourth day is from Sidra **בֹּא** (*about which see Paragraph 8*).
 7. When the **FIFTH DAY OF PESSACH** falls to be on a Wednesday or a Thursday, the Torah reading is from Sidra **כִּי תִשָּׂא**, starting from Possuk 1 of Chapter 34 till Possuk 26 and it is divided into three Aliyos. However, if that fifth day of Pessach is a Shabbos, the Torah reading will be that same Torah reading taken from Sidra **כִּי תִשָּׂא** only that it starts earlier, at Possuk 12 of Chapter 33, so as to accommodate the seven Aliyos of Shabbos. However, if this fifth day of Pessach falls to be on a Monday, then the Torah reading for this fifth day is from Sidra **מִשְׁפָּטִים** (*about which see the next Paragraph*).
 8. When Shabbos Chol HaMo'ed is the third day of Pessach, of course the fourth day will be a Sunday and the fifth day will be a Monday. The Torah reading of the Shabbos Chol HaMo'ed is the section from **כִּי תִשָּׂא** for the simple reason that it contains the repeated commandment to observe the Shabbos and is thus well suited to Shabbos Chol HaMo'ed. Now, because of the rule that no Torah reading is repeated on any other day of the same Yom Tov, this section from **כִּי תִשָּׂא**, which was read on the Shabbos, cannot now be read on its usual day (the fifth day of Pessach) and therefore the Torah readings of days three and four are moved to days four and five.
 9. For the **SIXTH DAY OF PESSACH** (that is, the fifth day of Chol HaMo'ed in Eretz Yisroel and the fourth day of Chol HaMo'ed in Chutz Lo'Oretz) the first Torah reading is taken from Sidra **בְּהַעֲלֹתְךָ** (which is in Sefer **בְּמִדְבָר**) and is from the first Possuk of Chapter 9 till Possuk 14 of that Chapter. Although we had been commanded that we are to celebrate the Korban Pessach "when we come to the Land which HaShem is giving to us," this section tells of HaShem's command to us to celebrate the Korban Pessach while we were indeed on our journey through the wilderness to that Land. It also tells of those good people who complained to Mosheh our Teacher that they were most unhappy that they could not bring the Korban Pessach as just commanded because they were *Tomay*. As a result of their eagerness to do HaShem's command, the Mitzvah of **פֶּסַח שֵׁנִי** ("the Second Korban Pessach") is taught to the whole Nation for then and for all time, too.
 10. The **SEVENTH DAY OF PESSACH** is a full Yom Tov which marks the end of Pessach. Being a Yom Tov, we are commanded to cease from all Melochoh (except those necessary for the preparation of Yom Tov food and carrying things needed on that day of Yom Tov). Together with the Yom Tov at the beginning of Pessach, this Seventh Day Yom Tov of Pessach makes the days between them into the "Intermediate Days of the Festival" (what we call **חֹל הַמִּוֵּעַד**, Chol HaMo'ed). Outside Eretz Yisroel, this Yom Tov

of the Seventh Day of Pessach is repeated as the usual Second Day Yom Tov of the Diaspora, often referred to as “the Last Day of Pessach.” (Some people call it “the Eighth Day of Pessach” but in fact, since the Torah clearly refers to Pessach as being for seven days, there cannot really be such a thing as a formally-named eighth day of Pessach: “Last Day,” yes; “Eighth Day,” no!) On the Seventh Day of Pessach, the Torah reading from the first Sefer Torah describes how HaShem took us out from Egypt and culminates with the Splitting of the Reed Sea and the drowning of the pursuing Egyptians who were intent on destroying the Jewish People. Because this all happened on the seventh day after we left Egypt, it is eminently suited as today’s reading: this day is the anniversary of those events and indeed this will be the Torah reading on this day even if it falls to be a Shabbos, too. The reading is taken from the Sidra בשלח (in Sefer שמות) and starts at the beginning of that Sidra (Possuk 17 of Chapter 13) and ends with Possuk 26 of Chapter 15.

11. Very rarely are there two consecutive days on which the Torah reading is the same. The Torah reading of the **LAST DAY OF PESSACH** is not therefore a repeat of yesterday’s reading of the Splitting of the Reed Sea but is instead the general Yom Tov Reading. Furthermore, as this selection contains the exhortation to us to “rejoice on your Yommim Tovim,” this is applied to all those days that are Yommim Tovim, including this יום טוב שני של גלויות, the “Second Day of Yom Tov of the Diaspora” instituted by our Chachommim, of blessed memory. This reading is taken from the Sidra ראה from Sefer דברים and in fact is read on this Last Day of Pessach as well as on the second day of Shovuos (another “re-run” day of Yom Tov) and also on Sheminni Atserres. If these “second days” of the Yommim Tovim of Pessach and Shovuos should fall to be on weekdays, this reading starts with Possuk 19 of Chapter 15 and ends at the end of the Sidra ראה, with Possuk 17 of Chapter 16. (But if this last day of the Yom Tov falls to be on a Shabbos, the reading starts earlier, with Possuk 22 of Chapter 14, so as to easier accommodate the seven Aliyos which are mandatory on Shabbos.) On Sheminni Atserres, however, this Torah reading always begins with Possuk 22 of Chapter 14, even if it is not a Shabbos because the first section speaks of the Mitzvah of Tithes and this is topical for Sheminni Atserres, being the time of year when the tithes are separated and given away. Thus this reading is a timely reminder to the farmer to make sure that he remembers his duty to the Kohanim and Levi'im and separates the portions that are due to them.
12. At least five men are called up to the public Torah reading on any Yom Tov morning (six on Yom Kippur) plus the Maftir. (The word Maftir means “the Valedictorian” or “End Reader.”) On a Yom Tov which falls to be on a Shabbos, either the same Torah reading is divided up differently or the Torah reading is extended somewhat so that seven men can be called up, plus the eighth, who is the Maftir, because, as said, on Shabbos there must be at least seven men called up to the Torah reading, plus the Maftir. The Maftir of the Yommim Tovim is always taken from the Sidra Pinchos and describes the Korban Mussaf of the particular Yom Tov. The Maftir throughout Pessach is from Chapter 28, verses 19 till 25 except that on the first day of Pessach (and in Chutz Lo'Oretz, on the second day, too) the Maftir starts from Possuk 16 for the simple reason that these three extra Pessukim speak of the First Day of Pessach. Throughout Pessach, because the Korban Mussaf is the same every day, therefore the Maftir is the same. This is in marked contrast to the Korban Mussaf of the Yom Tov of Sukkos on

which each day there is a different Korban Mussaf and which all together make up the series of the פְּרֵי הַחֵג, the Korbannos of Sukkos.

13. During Chol HaMo'ed, even though there is a Maftir, nevertheless, except for Shabbos Chol HaMo'ed, there is no Haftorah. The Seventh Day of Pessach, and the last day, being Yom Tov, each also have a Haftorah and the man called to Maftir is honoured with also reading the Haftorah of the day.
14. The Haftorah of the first day of Pessach is taken from the Sefer Yehoshua, and starts with verses 5 to 7 of Chapter 3 followed by verse 2 of Chapter 5 till the first verse of Chapter 6, ending with verse 27 of that Chapter 6. In Chutz Lo'Oretz, the Haftorah of the second day is taken from the Second Book of Melochim, starting with verse 1 till verse 9 of Chapter 23 and then continues with verses 21 till verse 25 of that Chapter. Just as the Torah reading on the Seventh Day of Pessach includes the Song of the Sea, so too is the Haftorah of the Seventh Day of Pessach a song, this one, the song that Dovid HaMelech composed after being saved from his enemies. (It is taken from the Second Book of Shmuel and is from the first Possuk of Chapter 22 till Possuk 51.) On the last day of Pessach, the Haftorah is taken from Sefer Yeshayohu, from Possuk 32 of Chapter 10 till Possuk 6 of Chapter 12. It alludes to the great deliverance of the Jewish People from another tyrant, Sancheriv of Assyria who, like Par'o of Egypt, threatened to destroy the Jewish People. Sancheriv besieged Yerushalaim but his vast armies were miraculously destroyed in one night — it was Pessach night — by the angel of HaShem at the gates of the Holy City. The Haftorah then goes on to speak of the great deliverance in the future and of the idyllic peace of the time of Moshiach. The Haftorah of Shabbos Chol HaMo'ed is the famous vision of Yechezkel HaNovvi and the Valley of the Bones. It is taken from Sefer Yechezkel and consists of the first fourteen Pesukim of Chapter 37.
15. We speak of the Maftir being honoured with also reading the Haftorah but as a matter of fact, really it's the other way round, as follows: When the public Torah Reading was proscribed by the anti-Jewish government, the Rabbis of the day instituted instead a public Reading from the Books of the Prophets. Even after that evil decree was rescinded, the practice of reading the Haftorah was retained and the Haftorah was read after the Torah Reading. (See **INTRODUCTION TO THE HAFTORAH.**) However, so as to compensate the one who was called up for the Haftorah which is “only” a reading taken from the Books of the Prophets, the man was honoured also with repeating the last section of the mandatory Torah reading and this way, he merited a Torah reading, too. In other words, the Torah reading of the Maftir was originally a sort of consolation prize for the one who was called to read the Haftorah. On a Yom Tov and on a special Shabbos, instead of the Maftir being merely a repeat of the last section of the day's Torah reading or of the Sidra of the Week, there is a specific short Torah reading which is topical of the day which in the case of Yommim Tovim, as said before, is a description of the Korban Mussaf of the Yom Tov, as is the case with today's Maftir.

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