

קריאת התורה לחג השבועות

THE TORAH READINGS OF THE YOM TOV OF SHOVIOS

1. Shovuos is the Yom Tov on which we celebrate Receiving the Torah from HaShem at Mount Sinai. The Torah Reading of the First Day of Shovuos is therefore taken from the Sidra Yisro (which is in Sefer Shemos) from Chapter 19, verse 1 till Chapter 20 verse 23 which describes that momentous event. Thus for the explanation of this day's Torah Reading, please see **SIDRA OF THE WEEK : יתרו**.
2. The Torah Reading for the Second Day of Shovuos (as observed outside Eretz Yisroel) is taken from the Sidra **ראה**, from Sefer Devorrim. (See **SIDRA OF THE WEEK : ראה**.) Nowadays, we have the fixed calendar and the first day of Shovuos cannot fall to be on a Shabbos, but the Second Day Yom Tov can and in those years when this occurs, this will mean that there needs to be more men called to the Torah than on a Yom Tov ordinary. This is because on a Shabbos, at least seven men must be called up and each man called up must have at least three Pessukim for his Aliyoh. Thus, on Yom Tov which falls to be on a Shabbos, the Torah Reading will start from Possuk 22 of Chapter 14 whereas if it's a weekday, the Reading starts later, from Possuk 19 of Chapter 15.
3. On any Yom Tov, five men are called up to the public Torah Reading of the morning (six on Yom Kippur) plus the Maftir (the word Maftir means "the Valedictorian" or "End Reader") making six men altogether. On a Yom Tov which falls to be on a Shabbos, either the same Torah Reading is divided up differently or (as we have just seen) the Torah Reading is extended somewhat so that the mandatory seven men can be called up plus the eighth, who is the Maftir.
4. The Maftir of the Yommim Tovim is invariably taken from the Sidra Pinchos and describes the particular Korban Mussaf of the Yom Tov. The Maftir of the First Day of Shovuos is taken from the Sidra Pinchos (in Sefer Bemidbor) from Chapter 28, verses 26 till 31. The man called up to Maftir is honoured with also reading the Haftorah of the day which on the first Day of Shovuos is taken from the Sefer Yechezkel, Chapter 1 verse 1 till verse 28 and then ends with verse 12 of Chapter 3. The Maftir of the Second Day of Shovuos is the same as the first day (obviously really, as the Second Day of Shovuos is a re-run of the first day) and the Haftorah of the Second Day is taken from Sefer Chabakkuk (one of the

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shorter Books of the Prophets making up “The Twelve”) from Possuk 20 of Chapter 2 till Possuk 19 of Chapter 3.

5. Although we have just said that the man called up to Maftir is honoured with also reading the Haftorah of the day, 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 (which was not included in the government ban). Even after the evil decree was rescinded, the practice of reading the Haftorah was retained but 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, he was also honoured with repeating the last section of the mandatory Torah Reading. That way, he was honoured with a Torah Reading, too. In other words, the Maftir was a sort of consolation prize for the one who was called to read the Haftorah. On a Yom Tov and on some special Shabbosos, 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, as, in fact, is the case with the Maftir of today, which is the description of the Korban Mussaf of the Yom Tov of Shovuos.
6. The Torah Reading of the First Day of Shovuos is unique in that it is the only Torah Reading which has before it a poem recited by the Torah Reader and the Congregation responsively before the actual Reading itself. This poem, written in Aramaic and called “Akdomos” (from its first word) portrays in beautiful word-paintings the holiness of HaShem, the precious Divine gift that the Torah is and the selection of the Jewish Nation by HaShem to be His People, the People of the Torah. Akdomos describes how the Jewish People have remained faithful as HaShem's message-bearers to the world despite threats and enticements to desert the Torah or their holy mission to the world to spread the knowledge of HaShem among all humanity.

**For the explanation of the Haftorah of the Yom Tov Torah Readings,
please go to HAFTORAHS.**