

THE READING OF THE SCRIPTURES IN THE SYNAGOGUE

ACCORDING TO THE TALMUDIC REPORTS

A Rabbinical Thesis

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CHAPTER ONE
ORIGIN OF THE INSTITUTION

Three kinds of comments or statements are to be found in Talmudic sources about the institution of Scriptural readings in public. First, there are statements about the persons who instituted the custom, the occasions, and the reasons which led to this act. Second, we have descriptions of rituals in Temple times for such days when portions of the Scriptures were read. And finally, there are allusions to historical incidents at which time readings are reported to have taken place.

Whatever may be the historical value of these passages, at any rate they show what the Rabbis thought were the early beginnings of the institution. These passages point to two outstanding conclusions: first, that the Rabbis knew the custom as of immemorial antiquity, and second, that they recognized that from its earliest beginnings to their own day the custom had undergone a series of successive steps in development, an evolution which in their day, had as yet not reached its final stage.

The Rabbis had before them the texts of the Bible itself in which were given commands for the reading of various parts of the Scriptures. They also read the Biblical accounts of historical occasions when portions of the Torah had been read to the people. They may have seen in these statements the germ of the custom, but they were well aware of the fact that these statements did not speak of Scriptural readings as a regular practice, but as an extra-ordinary one for certain special occasions. Thus, for example, Moses commands¹ the reading of "this Torah" before the pilgrims in Jerusalem on the

Succoth festival following the Sabbatical year. And, indeed, they knew the custom of reading parts of the ~~THE TORAH~~ every eighth year as an established institution in Temple times.² King Josiah had read from the ~~THE TORAH~~ before the assembled people.³ Ezra, too had read from the Book of the Law to the returned exiles.⁴ There are other indications⁵ in Scriptures themselves which the Rabbis understood as pointing to periodic and regular meetings with the prophets at which time the latter would expound the word of God.

In addition to the reports or indications in the Scriptures the Rabbis had traditions going back to earlier times about certain occasions when portions of the Torah had been read. They also had rules about the procedures on those occasions.

An important ceremony in Temple days was the ritual for the High Priest on the Day of Atonement and his preparation for that day. The Mishna reports that during the seven days previous he ~~would~~, in order to acquaint himself with the required ritual or to refresh his memory, they would read to him the "order of the day".⁶ Likewise on the night preceding the Day of Atonement certain parts of the Scriptures would be read to him or he would read it himself, if he was "accustomed to read".⁷ On Yom Kippur during the solemn Temple ritual the High Priest himself would read Lev. 16 and Nu. 29. This was followed by prayers and by individual readings by the Temple audience from their own scrolls.⁹

This ritual at the Temple is described in several places in the Mishnah.¹⁰ The almost verbatim repetition points to the authenticity of the tradition, which no doubt came from contemporary sources.

There is a statement by Zachariah B. Kabutal, who had himself experienced the ceremony and who says that he had assisted in reading

to the High Priest from the book of Daniel, during the night of Yom Kippur.¹¹

An occasion, less frequent but equally impressive was the reading by the King on the second day of the Succoth festival following the Sabbatical year.¹² This ceremony came to be called *לְקַח הַסֵּפֶר*¹³ in conformity with the commandment in Deut. 31:10.¹⁴ A special wooden platform was constructed in the Temple court¹⁵ upon which the King sat. ~~and~~ An elaborate ceremony preceded the reading, during which the *הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל*¹⁶ took the scroll, handed it to the *הַכֹּהֵן הַקָּטָן*, who in turn handed it to the *הַלֵּוִי*, thence to the High Priest who gave it to the King. The priests, too, participated by blowing of trumpets.¹⁷

The reading consisted of certain portions of Deuteronomy, viz, 1:1 to 6:3; 6:4-9; 11:13-21; 14:22-29; 17:14-20; 26:12-15; 28:1-29. R. Judah in the Tosefta omits several of these passages and says that only 6:4-9; 11:13-21 and 17:14-20 were read.

In the same Mishna it is recorded that King Agrippa read the Law on one of these occasions and when he reached the verse, "Thou mayest not put a foreigner over thee"¹⁸ he began to weep, because he was of Idumaeen descent, and those present said to him: "Agrippa, do not fear, thou art our brother, thou art our brother."

The description of this historical event which was not the first nor the only one of its kind¹⁹ together with the report²⁰ that R. Tarfon (first century) actually witnessed the ceremony again point to the fact that the Rabbis knew and believed that the readings from Scriptures was an old custom in Israel. Perhaps this ceremony antedated the time of the institution of the synagogue itself.

Still another occasion during Temple times when readings from the Scriptures took place was at the meetings of the *בְּתוּבָה*,²¹ which

later formed the nucleus for a regular daily service. In addition to the sacrifices in care of the priests and the singing by the Levites, the Temple had a special liturgy for the third class—the Israelites. In the Temple the priests and Levites were divided into twenty-four watches, known as *shifot*. The nation as a whole was correspondingly divided into twenty-four sections. As the priests and Levites took their turn at the Temple service twice each year for a period of one week the corresponding division of Israelites sent deputies to Jerusalem, whose duty it was to attend the daily sacrifice. They would fast²² four days of the week (Monday through Thursday) and assemble at the time of the morning and afternoon sacrifice. At home people of their section would congregate in their synagogue and in addition would read each day the appropriate section from the first chapter of Genesis, a chapter suitable for this purpose in that it contains portions for each day of the week.²³

That there is some foundation for this account is shown by the fact that Joshua b. Hananyah, a teacher living in the time of the Temple is mentioned in this connection. We thus have another occasion upon which, according to the Talmud, Scriptural portions were read. It is possible, too, that in these *shifot* to be found the beginnings of the local synagogues in the days of the second Temple. And they at the outset these *shifot* were held twice each year for a period of one week in each locality, the practice might easily have been extended for the whole year.

Talmudic reports indicate other occasions upon which Scriptures had been read. Thus there is the Agadic comment²⁴ on the verse in Neh. 8:8, the occasion of Ezra's reading of the Law, which according to Rav was accompanied by a translation and an exposition of the por-

tions read. There is also the statement by R. Levi reporting the tradition that eight sections had been read on the day the Tabernacle was set up (in the wilderness period).²⁵

In all these, however, the Rabbis saw no definite act which should regularize these readings and establish them as a permanent institution in which not only the king or the priest, but all classes, participated. The Rabbis, sought the origins of this custom in legislation enacted by Israel's foremost law givers.

To Moses they attributed the custom of reading on Sabbaths, festivals, Rosh Chodesh and Chol-HaMoed. Originally Moses had himself propounded "the laws of Pesach on Pesach, the laws of Atzereth (Shovuoth) on Atzereth and the laws of ^{the} Festival (Succoth) on the Festival in the very language in which he had heard them",²⁶ at the same time advising the people to continue to study the laws relating to the festivals.²⁷ He therefore, ordained that each festival be studied in its season, and in order that the laws might be learned at their source, he instituted reading from the Torah on Sabbaths, festivals, Rosh Chodesh and Chol-HaMoed.²⁸

We thus see that in the minds of the Talmudic authorities the earliest reading from the Scriptures took place in connection with the major festivals.²⁹ And though they ascribe the institution as a whole, though not in its full development, to Moses,³⁰ it is quite clear that they were not certain as regards the specific details surrounding the incident of its first introduction.³¹

The extension of the custom to Saturday afternoons as well as to Mondays and Thursdays is attributed to Ezra,³² being two of the ten מִצְוֹת ("institutions") which he had instituted. The Mekilta,³³ however, quotes a Midrash by the מִדְרָשׁ עֲזָרָה³⁴ on Exodus 15:22. The Midrash accounts for the dissatisfaction and rebellion during the wilderness

wanderings as being due to a lack of Torah. And it was to avoid recurrence of such incidents that "the prophets and elders" instituted reading from the Torah on Monday, Thursday and Saturday afternoons, so that "there be not three days without Torah".³⁵ In attempting to reconcile these contradictory reports the Talmud³⁶ seems to grant the antiquity of the custom, relating it back even to the days of Moses. Ezra's innovation consisted in that he changed the number of verses to be read from three (or possibly, nine) to ten, to correspond to the ten *פסוקים*.³⁷

The Midrashic interpretations of the *מדינת שש* need not be taken literally since their deductions, are recognized as homiletic flights of the imagination. Nevertheless, it is clear that they did not intend to attribute the Monday, Thursday, Saturday afternoon readings to the wilderness period. The meaning of *ביום שש* in the Boraitha³⁸ is undoubtedly to be taken as referring not to the contemporaries of Moses, but to the prophets and teachers at various times up to those of Ezra and his school.³⁹ The use of the legend attributing these readings to an earlier age may be due to the fact that the *מדינת שש* felt the need for the support of Ezra's innovation in a Biblical verse. This is further borne out by the fact that the prayer assemblies of market-days on Monday and Thursdays dates from a later period, probably instituted, as the Talmud reports by Ezra.⁴⁰ Yet, we can see that *מדינת שש* were troubled not so much with the Monday-Thursday arrangement as they were with the reading on Saturday afternoons. It seemed hardly possible that these readings were instituted by Ezra *ביום שש*⁴¹ for the sake of the store-keepers who were too busy to come to the market on the other two days for no one came to town on the Sabbath. They were therefore constrained to seek

*... 15.1.1917 as met by ...
but rather down ...*

authority in antiquity, not knowing its true origins.⁴²

The conclusion expressed in Baba Kama which limits Ezra's contribution to a change in the number of verses to be read, from nine to ten, is merely a forced explanation which cannot be accepted even as having been an authoritative tradition. Both the author of the Boraita in Mekilta, as well as the later Amoraic argumentators knew the custom to be an old one, but too, that it was later than the earlier institution of readings on Saturdays and Holy Days. At the same time, they recognized that the personnel of the readers as well the amount of reading had undergone a series of changes, whose exact steps they could not trace, for they were in doubt if originally there was one reader or three, whether originally three verses were read or nine.

...the law is that ...

One more phase of the early origins of the reading ritual is ascribed to Ezra. The Talmud is generally silent about the passages which were assigned for reading on the various occasions in the early period of the institution's development. And aside from the forced explanation mentioned above,⁴³ where Ezra is reported to have changed the number of verses to be read, there is no authoritative statement regarding the number of persons who did the reading when the custom was first established, nor the quantity to be read, nor the passages which were then selected. There is however one Tanaitic statement⁴⁴ reporting the reading of the curses in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, before Shov-uoth and Rosh Hashonoh respectively, to be another of the *שבעה* which Ezra had instituted, though this *שבעה* does not appear in the list of his ten *שבעה*.⁴⁵

It seems, therefore, that they knew that some of the guiding principles for the selection of passages as well as some of the rules governing the manner of reading were very old, and they therefore at-

tributed them to Ezra.⁴⁶

In a similar fashion they report⁴⁷ that upon that famous occasion when Ezra read to the assembled people, the reading was accompanied by a Targum (i.e. translation into the vernacular), and by detailed expositions as to the meaning of the text. But, unlike the institution of reading the curses before the two holidays, they do not intimate that Ezra ordained the practice of Targum and exposition for later generations. In this case they merely report that Ezra's reading was thus accompanied, expecting that precedent rather than legislation will lend sanction to the current practice.

CHAPTER TWO
READINGS FOR VARIOUS OCCASIONS

The oldest lists of appointed passages is to be found in Mishna Megilla III,4-6 and, with a very few minor additions and changes, in Tosefta Megilla IV,1-9, and in Soferim XVII,6-9. Following the order as laid down in the former work, we have here specifications for the precise passages which were to be read on the four special Sabbaths, Passover,¹ Shavuoth, Rosh Hash^{an}ah, Yom Kippur, the entire period of the Succoth festival, Hanukkah, Purim, Rosh Chodesh, Maamadot,² fast days as well as for the more usual readings on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturday afternoons.

THE FOUR SPECIAL SABBATHS

Only four Sabbaths are assigned specific readings. These are the four Sabbaths between ^{the} first day of Adar³ and the first day of Nisan. Since no other Sabbaths are assigned fixed lessons we may conclude that, on all but the four special Sabbaths and those Sabbaths which coincided with festivals, readings were selected at random,⁴ although the Mishna⁵ does set the rule מיום י' בטבת י"ח - not to skip but to read consecutively⁶ from the Pentateuch.

From the readings assigned to them the four special Sabbaths are known by the names of Shekalim, Zakor, Parah and Hachodesh respectively. The Mishna as well as the Tosefta⁷ list these readings; but the latter is more specific as regards the exact Sabbath of the month upon which each reading is to take place.⁸ Thus, while the Mishna states that "when the New Moon of Adar falls on a Sabbath the portion of Shekalim is read; if it falls during the week, the portion

is read earlier on the preceding Sabbath;; on the Second Sabbath, Zakor is read: on the third, the Red Heifer.....etc.", the Tosefta specifies more clearly:-"which is the first Sabbath?"⁹ The one within which the New Moon of Adar falls, even if it (the New Moon) is on Friday.....Which is the second Sabbath? The one within which Purim falls even if it (Purim) is on Friday..etc.". The Tosefta thus obviates a confusion which might arise in the event that the month of Adar has five Saturdays.

It was on the first of Adar that the people were reminded of their duty to contribute their shekels towards the upkeep of the Temple service¹⁰ and it was therefore appropriate to read Shekalim either on the first day of Adar, if it fell on a Sabbath, or on the Sabbath preceding it, if it fell on a week-day. Since neither the Mishna nor the Tosefta specify the exact passage to be read beyond saying that "we read the portion of Shekalim", there was a difference of opinion in Amoraic times: Rav claims the passage to be ^{nah}is in Nu. 28:1-8 while according to Samuel his contemporary, the passage is Ex. 30:11-16.¹¹ It is indeed difficult to understand why Nu. 28:1-8 should be read on this day, and the Talmud does¹² question the sense of it.¹³ A statement by R. Isaac Napacha specifically states ^{הוא}הוא 'D, the Exodus^s passage, as the one read on this day. This has been the practice in the Orthodox Synagogue up to the present day.

The designated portions for the three remaining Sabbaths are Dt. 25:17-19 for Zakor, Nu. 19 for Parah and Ex. 12:1-20 for Hachodesh.¹⁴

It seems that on these special Sabbaths the regular order of readings was interrupted, for the Mishnah continues to say that

"on the fifth Sabbath the regular order of readings is resumed" which is understood by R. Ami to mean "he returns to the regular order of the Pentateuchal sections". In Amoraic times, however, it seems that the custom was developed to make these special readings for the four Sabbaths as additional readings. Hence, the "returning to the regular order" is understood by one Amora, R. Jeremiah, to mean "he returns to the regular order of the Haftaroeth".¹⁵ In another place¹⁶ R. Isaac Napaha states that if Rosh Chodesh Adar falls on a Saturday, three scrolls are taken out (of the Ark), "one for the order of the day, one for the Rosh Chodesh reading, and one for *לְפָנֵי ה' (Ex. 30)*". These differing statements point to a development from a stage where only the four parashiyot were read on these Sabbaths, to one where the special readings were additional to the regular pentateuchal lessons. This later development became the established practice. That the earlier stage persisted for sometime is borne out by the statement of R. Ami as well as by the provision made in the Tosefta for repeating one of the special readings in the event of a fifth Sabbath in Adar, else there would be no reading on that day.¹⁷ And the Mishnah adds a list of days, Rosh Chodesh, Hanukkah, Purim, fasts, festivals and the Day of Atonement, for which the regular order of readings is interrupted for the special readings of the particular occasion.

FESTIVALS AND HOLY DAYS

PASSOVER

The Mishnah¹⁸ assigns a reading for only one day—the first of Passover, possibly because in Mishnaic times the reading on Passover was confined to that day, and the "festival portion from the Law of the priests" (Lev. 23:4) was read. The Tosefta, however, provides that on the remaining days of Passover the portions scattered throughout the Pentateuch dealing with Passover are to be read. In

Talmudic times (in Babylonia) provision had to be made for the second day of the festivals. The Mishnaic passages were therefore enlarged¹⁹ by means of Amoraic interpolations containing the current practice of the day, including the readings for the second through the last days of festivals, as well as the Haftarahs. No reading is given for the second day of Pesach which presumably was to be the same as that of the first day.²⁰ R. Papa there gives a mnemonic by which these readings for Chol HaMoed could best be remembered. According to this mnemonic-- "ששד" --the readings were Ex. 12:21; 22:24; 34:1; Nu. 9:1. Abbai, too, gives a mnemonic of the practice of his day--²¹ ששד ששד ששד ששד ששד ששד ששד ששד. The readings for the eight days of passover are according to Abbai: Ex. 12:21; Lev. 22:26; Ex. 13:1; 22:24; 34:1; Nu. 9:1; Ex. 13:17 and Nu. 15:19.

A simple listing of these assignments will serve to bring out the changes and additions which had been made in the assignments for Passover readings:

	Mishna	Tosefta	Talmudic Additions	R. Papa	Abbai
1st day	Lev.23:4	Lev.23:4	Lev. 23:4		Ex.12:21
2nd day			22		Lev.22:26
3rd day				Ex.12:21	Ex.13:1
4th day		23		Ex.22:24	Ex.22:24
5th day				Ex.34:1	Ex. 34:1
6th day				Nu.9:1	Nu. 9:1
7th day			Ex.13:17		Ex.13:17
8th day			Nu.15:19		Nu. 15:19

SHOVUOTH

In Talmudic times the festival of Shovuoth was called שבוועות. The reading given in the Mishna²⁴ is Deut. 16:9. The Tosefta gives an alternate view, that Ex. 19 and 20 are to be read. The Gemara

quotes both views and providing for the two days of the festival allows one for each day, but in reverse order: viz, Exodus 19 on the first day and Dt. 16 on the second.

ROSH HASHANNAH

The Mishnah gives Lev. 23:23 as the reading, but the Tosefta gives Gen. 21 as the generally recognized reading with the Lev. 23:23 passage as an alternative view. In Talmudic times Gen. 21 was read on the first day and Gen. 22 on the second.

DAY OF ATONEMENT

For Yom Hakipurim the Mishna gives the reading as Lev. 16:1, while the Tosefta adds also Nu. 29:7. The Gemara says that on this day we read וְיָצֵא (Lev. 16) and we close (וְיָצֵא) with the passage from Numbers. In addition the Bavli lists a reading for the Mincha service, Lev. 18:1.

SUCCOTH

The Mishna designates the same reading for the first day of Succoth as it does for the first day of Passover--"the festival portion in Leviticus"--in Chapter 23, and for the remaining days the appropriate sections from Nu. 29:17-39 dealing with the sacrifices to be offered each day. Tosefta specifies the reading for the first day to begin with verse 33 of Lev. 23, and gives also Nu. 29:35-39 as the reading for the eighth day. The Talmud states that the reading for the second day is the same as that of the first, and further specifies Dt. 14:22 for the eighth day ^{and} of Dt. 33 for the ninth (last) day of Succoth.²⁵

CHANUKAH

The appropriate sections for Chanukah is given both in the Mishna²⁶ and in Soferim²⁷ as the וְיָצֵא (Nu. 7:1) which recounts the gifts which the twelve princes brought to the tabernacle in honor

of its dedication. It appears, however, that in Mishnaic times and in early Talmudic times the only reading which took place was on the Sabbath of Chanukah, judging by the simple statement which appears in the two passages just quoted: *ב'שבת חנוכה*, which makes no provision for the other seven days of the feast. The Talmudic interpolation,²⁸ which adds the Haftarahs for Chanukah, takes special pains to provide a Haftarah and a second one in the event there are two Sabbaths during Chanukah, implying that the scriptural prescription in the Mishna applied only to Sabbath readings.

It is only in the later Soferim that provision is made for regular readings during the Chanukah week for all eight days. After the Hallel service for Chanukah, we are told,²⁹ "scrolls are taken out and ~~are~~ read from *ב'שבת* (Nu. 7) beginning with *וְיִסְּדוּ אֶת-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ* (V. 12) on the first day..... and so on until the eighth day," the successive sections in this *ב'שבת* *ב'שבת* describing the offerings for the second, third.....to the eighth days of the Tabernacle's dedication are correspondingly the readings for the second, third.....to the eighth days of Chanukah.³⁰

The New Moon of Tebeth occurs during Chanukah. The conflict of readings raises the question of priority. The question as put to R. Isaac Napaha by R. Isaac Sehora is a two-fold one: first, what if Rosh Chodesh Tebeth is on a week-day, and, second, if Rosh Chodesh Tebeth is on Saturday. In the Babli³¹ only the later^r question is put to him, while in the Jerushalmi only the former is raised. Soferim³² quotes both questions, but Isaac Napacha's reply to the second question is different there, indicating that author of Soferim followed a different custom from that prevalent in Babylon.

When Rosh Chodesh Tebeth falls on a week-day, according to Isaac Napacha,³³ three sections are read from the New Moon passage

and one³⁴ relative to Chanukah. Another authority (R. Dimi³⁵ of Haifa) maintains that since the Rosh Chodesh reading is an irregularity³⁶ during that week it is to be the fourth while the first place should be allotted to the Chanukah readings. Therefore, says he, "we read three sections from Chanukah and one for Rosh Chodesh." Another passage takes cognizance of both views quoting later Amoraim as still being divided on the questions, but finally laying down the rule $\text{חַנּוּכָה בְּיָמֵינוּ יְקָרָה} \text{---}$ "we do not consider Chanukah" as the important occasion of the day. In Soferim³⁷ both views are ascribed to the same Isaac Napacha who effects a compromise. Since there are such years when Rosh Chodesh Tebeth may be two days, on the first day we read three sections from Rosh Chodesh and the fourth from the Chanukah portion; on the second day the order is reversed--three from Chanukah and the fourth for Rosh Chodesh.³⁸

If Rosh Chodesh Tebeth falls on a Sabbath, the reply of Isaac Napacha in Soferim says, "we read $\text{חַנּוּכָה בְּיָמֵינוּ}$ (i.e. Nu. 7) and the last of the readers closes³⁹ with the portions of Sabbath and New Moon (Nu. 28:9-15)".

From all this it appears that, even when readings became customary for all Sabbaths, the regular cycle was discarded on שַׁבָּת חַנּוּכָה . The principle is thus laid down in the Mishna and in Jerushalmi as well as in Soferim.⁴⁰ Yet another statement by the same Isaac Napacha seems to point to the fact that the regular cycle was not omitted on this day; for he says "When Rosh Chodesh Tebeth falls on Sabbath, we bring out three scrolls; from one we read the portion of the day, from the second Rosh Chodesh portion, from the third the Chanukah portion".⁴¹ The omission of the regular weekly portion represents an earlier usage, which even the late M. Soferim followed, though it had already been changed by the time of the redaction of

the Talmud.

In all this there is no mention made of the readings of Mondays and Thursdays--whether they are completely displaced by the Chanukah or Rosh Chodesh readings.

PURIM

The only assignment for Purim is made in Mishna Megilla III,6 and likewise in Soferim XVII,7 and XXI,6 that "on Purim (we read) פָּרָשַׁת אֲחִיזָבַד (Ex. 17:8-16).⁴² The passage was chosen because of the identification of Haman as a descendant of the Amalekites.⁴³ No mention is made whether the reading is prescribed for Sabbath or week-day, but considering that all of the Sabbaths in Adar are taken care of by the four special parshiyot, this Purim lesson must specifically be a week-day reading. Moreover, the interpolation in Bavli merely quotes the Mishna without giving a special Haftarah, as it does in all other cases, nor does it consider the possibility of Purim falling on a Sabbath. It is therefore, difficult to see upon what basis some conclude that originally there was no reading for Purim except if it fell on Saturday, especially since they have previously accepted the theory that the four special portions were among the earliest readings to be fixed.⁴⁴

ROSH CHODESH

The reading for first day of each month is given in the Mishna⁴⁵ as Nu. 28:11-15, a most appropriate section since it describes the Temple ritual for this day. The same assignment is repeated without explanations or qualifications in the parallel passages in the Tosefta, Babli and Soferim.⁴⁶ The latter, however, in a later section,⁴⁷ reverses its previous statement by stipulating that "on the New Moon itself three read in the portion of the daily offering, and goes on to show how these eight verses may be divided

among three readers in such a manner that each may read at least three verses and still comply with the rule *בְּפִי שְׁלֹשָׁה בְּשָׁלוֹשׁ בְּסוּמָה* --that one does not end his reading within three verses from the end of a section. The important thing to note here is that though the reading is here stated as beginning earlier in Nu. 28, it does not extend through the portion which describes the New Moon offerings. In all likelihood the author of this section concerned himself only with the first three out of the four persons who are supposed to read on Rosh Chodesh; it having been previously established that the special reading for that day is the *בְּשָׁלוֹשׁ בְּפִי שְׁלֹשָׁה* passage, beginning with verse II. And although he fails to mention the fourth reader here, the first half of this same section dealing with the readings on Sabbath--Rosh Chodesh concerns itself with the eighth reader who is to read the special Sabbath and Rosh Chodesh portion from Nu. 29:9 on.

Presumably, according to Soferim, the first seven readers did read from the weekly parasha of the cycle. In earlier times, however, this was not the custom: the special holiday sections were read on the corresponding holidays and the current portion of the Pentateuch on the Sabbath. This is the meaning of M. Meg. III,4.... *לְכָל יְמֵי הַשָּׁבָע לֹא יִקְרָא אֶת הַפָּרָשָׁה הַזֹּאת* --"For all these, the regular order of readings is interrupted, on New Moons, on Chanukah, on Purim, on fasts.....". The special readings of the days enumerated displaced the regular portions of the cycle. Later when Chanukah, the New Moon, etc. fell on a Sabbath the usual weekly parasha was also read. But they still used the expression *לְכָל יְמֵי הַשָּׁבָע לֹא יִקְרָא אֶת הַפָּרָשָׁה הַזֹּאת*,⁴⁸ as above, meaning, however, to convey the thought that the continuity of the Torah reading, from one Sabbath to the next,

was interrupted by a holiday section, which was to be read along with the current weekly portion.

FAST DAYS

Three categories of fast-days are differentiated and readings assigned accordingly: (1) the ninth of Ab; (2) the other regular fasts of the calendar year, such as the seventeenth of Tammuz, the tenth of Tebeth and the Fast of Gedaliah,⁴⁹ (3) special fasts for rain. The Mishna prescribes a general rule for all fasts--viz. the blessings and curses found in Lev. 26 and (or?) Dt. 28. The Tosefta⁵⁰ says nothing about readings for general fast-days, mentioning only a reading for the ninth of Ab and giving two conflicting opinions regarding which section is to be read: (1) וְשָׂרָה לְיָמֵינוּ (Dt. 4:25) and (2) וְשָׂרָה לְיָמֵינוּ (Lev. 26 or Dt. 28). Similarly, does the Babli prescribe only for the ninth of Ab quoting four different opinions: (1) the second (דְּרֵיבֵי רַבִּי) authority of the Tosefta, (2) R. Nathan b. Joseph who gives Nu. 14:11, (3) a דְּרֵיבֵי רַבִּי, giving the reading as beginning with Nu. 14:26 and (4) a statement by Abaye to the effect that in his day the custom was to read וְשָׂרָה לְיָמֵינוּ (Dt. 4), the original reading given in the Tosefta.

The fact that readings are given only for the Ninth of Ab suggests that originally the blessings and curses were read on that day only, and that later on this reading was extended to all public fast-days. This reading moreover, was not kept, for we find that Soferim,⁵² which prescribes the reading of blessings and curses for the ninth of Ab and for the seven last days of the rain-fasts, given an entirely new reading for all other fasts, namely וְשָׂרָה לְיָמֵינוּ (Ex. 32:11).

SABBATHS - MORNING AND AFTERNOON -
MONDAYS AND THURSDAYS

The portion selected for the Sabbath afternoon reading com-

menced at the place at which the morning reading had concluded and the same portion was repeated on the following Monday and Thursday mornings. On the following Sabbath morning, too, the same portion was repeated, since it formed part of the larger section which commenced at the point left off on the previous Sabbath. This is the substance of M. Meg. III,6

יד יום י'תק"ב י'תק"ב י'תק"ב י'תק"ב

והנהגה -- "the regular lesson is read, but it is not taken into account". These extra readings on Saturday afternoon and on Monday and Thursday, if taken into account, would have disturbed the (triennial) cycle, with the result that festival readings would have been thrown out of place. Though this seemed to have been the prevailing mode - and the one which was in the end universally adopted, a different custom is also referred to in the Tosefta.⁵³ This differing custom, attributed to R. Meir in Babli,⁵⁴ continues the reading on Sabbath afternoon from the point left off that morning. Monday's reading begins at the end of the Saturday afternoon reading..... etc.....and on the second Sabbath morning the reading begins where Thursday's ended. The Talmud nevertheless cites a final decision (הדין) by R. Zeira which accepts the former view, which is attributed to R. Judah. Soferim,⁵⁵ finally, quotes only R. Judah's opinion.

CHAPTER THREE

PENTATEUCHAL READING PORTIONS

CYCLES

Neither the Mishna nor the Tosefta carries any suggestion of a division of the Pentateuch into Sedarim or Parashiyot. Yet, following the initial stage during which the reading portion could be selected at random, and even before a definite cycle had been established, the Rabbis were eager that the Pentateuch be read in order. The statements by R. Meir and R. Judah quoted in connection with the readings for Mondays, Thursdays and Saturday afternoons,¹ clearly indicate that in their day, consecutive reading was already an established custom, even though the size of the portions and the nature of the sequence was still under discussion. To emphasize the need for continuous reading they laid down the principle מִיָּמִין וְעַד יְמִינָא -- "One may not skip in the reading of the Law",² giving as one of two reasons for this rule מִדְּבַר הַתּוֹרָה וְעַד הַתּוֹרָה -- "because we do not roll (and unroll) the scroll in public".³ In fact the latter principle, too, had the same original motive: namely, that readings at any one session shall be consecutive. From this it was but one step to the principles of R. Meir and R. Judah that the reading on Monday, Thursday and Saturday afternoons shall continue from the point previously left off.

But there is no prescription as to the maximum size of the reading portion, nor to the period during which the entire Pentateuch was covered completely and in order. But some definite order must have been established and, no doubt, when finishing the Torah, they began it again. But we do not know when this happened. At any rate

Handwritten notes:
 ... a definite portion ...
 ... also would ...
 ... the reading ...
 ... a definite portion ...
 ... the reading ...

at the time of Ra^vx and Samuel (Babylon, first half of third century) such an established regular order must have been well known, for in connection with their dispute as to the reading for Sabbath, the principle לפי שיהיה נקרא is introduced into the argument. But they do not tell us what this order was nor how long it took to read thru the entire order.

Such an indication is given in the statement quoted in the name of R. Joshua b. Levi, one of the most prominent Palestinian Amoraim who flourished during the first half of the third century

C.E. "R. Joshua b. Levi said: I have never looked into an Aggadic book (מגילת סוטה). Once I did look and I found there the state-

ment that the 175 sections of the Pentateuch, which are marked א

א (as words, statements or commands of God), correspond to the number of years in Abraham's life". Thus far R. Joshua's statement as given in Jerushalmi and repeated verbatim in Soferim.⁴ But

the latter appends the following: לכך קצרו ק"ה סדרים וכל אחד מהם

לפי שיהיה נקרא --"Therefore, they ordained the 175 Sedarim (orders, portions), where formerly there was the sacrifice". The appended statement is, however, not to be taken as having been made by R. Joshua. It appears, rather to be a copyist's or editor's marginal note which ultimately found its way into the text. And though it is quite possible that the division into 175 reading portions bears no relation to the 175 instances where sections of the Pentateuch are headed by some form of God's commands, directly stated or through Moses,⁵ we are nevertheless told here that at some time before the redaction of Soferim⁶ the Pentateuch had thus been divided.

It would take three and one-half years to read these 175 sections, one each week. According to some scholars, this three and one-half year cycle actually represents one of the customs in vogue

at some time during the development of the institution of Scriptural readings in the Synagogue.⁷

Only one specific allusion is to be found in all Talmudic literature to the length of time it took to complete the reading of Pentateuch text. In b. Meg. 29b, in reply to the question whether it is ever possible that *ix h'w'd* (Nu. 28) could possibly come in the month of Adar, it is said: *h'w'd h'w'd --*"This is possible, according to the custom of the westerners (i.e. in Palestine) who complete the Torah readings in three years." To the Amoraim in Babylonia the triennial cycle of Palestine was therefore well known. Their statement also implies that their custom was different, that they completed the Pentateuch in one year, as has been the custom outside of Palestine ever since.⁹

An intermediary stage between the three-year cycle and the one-year cycle, is, in the opinion of some,¹⁰ represented by the statement of R. Meir that the Sabbath morning readings and those of Sabbath afternoon, Monday and Thursday follow each other consecutively and no part is ever repeated.¹¹ According to this arrangement the Pentateuch is completed in two years.¹²

THE NUMBER OF READERS AND OF READING PORTIONS

Originally one man only read the assigned portion for the day, which was limited to a few verses dealing with the particular occasion, if it was a festival, or to a minimum of three verses on other days. Tradition knew also that very early in the development of synagogue readings the number of readers was increased to three, thus affording the opportunity for a representative of the three sections of the people--Priests, Levites and Israelites--to participate in the reading.¹³ Gradually the size of the reading section was increased and the number of readers was varied in accordance with the

degree of holiness of the particular occasion.

This degree of holiness is with but one exception, uniformly retained in all Talmudic works, though the characterizing feature of this holiness varies. The graduated scale of readers ascends with the degree of sanctity in the following order: (1) Saturday-afternoon, Monday, Thursday and fast-days, (2) Rosh Chodesh and Chol HaMoed, (3) Festival Days, (4) Yom Kippur, (5) Sabbaths. The number of readers increases by one, starting with (1) three readers for Saturday afternoon, Mondays, Thursdays and fast-days, (2) four on Rosh Chodesh and Chol HaMoed, (3) five on festival days, including the first and last days of Pesach, Shovuoeth and Succoth¹⁴ as well as both days of Rosh Hashonnah, (4) six on the Day of Atonement and (5) seven on Sabbaths. This alignment is accepted in all but one quotation of the Talmudic authorities.¹⁵ A statement in the name of R. Akiba, however, reverses the order of the last two groups and specifies six readers for the Sabbath and seven for the Day of Atonement.¹⁶

we have no proof that the number of readers is fixed at 6 to the number of verses

The number of portions designated for the first two groups is definitely fixed: "we may not reduce their number nor add to it". As regards the last three groups the rule is *לֹא יִמְנוּעוּ וְיִשְׁבְּחוּ* -- "We may not reduce their number but we may add to it". R. Akiba maintains that the designated number must not be increased.¹⁷

In distinguishing between the holiness of the various occasions, no one characterizing principle is uniformly advanced throughout the several Talmudic works. The Mishnah stops only to lay down the principle as regards Rosh Chodesh and Chol HaMoed: "This is the general rule: any day on which there is a Musaf but which is not a Festival, four persons read". This reason is again quoted by the author of Soferim and in Bavli. But, apparently, it was felt that a distinc-

tion going back to Temple sacrifices might not be adequate and convincing in post-exilic times. The Talmud¹⁸ therefore gives another principle: "Any day when the reading causes an interruption of labor, as on public fasts and the ninth of Ab, three portions are read; on such days when the reading causes no interruption of labor, as on Rosh Chodesh and Chol HaMoed, four portions are read". The New Moon and the middle days of Passover and Succoth, being half-holidays, the longer reading caused no serious interruption of work. On fast-days which are working days the minimum number, three only, are to be called.

Underlying the differentiations drawn for this purpose, there is the governing principle *אין עושה עבודתו של יום אחר* -- "On a day having a preference over another day, one man more must be called". The nature of this preference, or added degree of holiness finds expression in the penalty gradations for transgressions of the commandment against doing any labor on that day. On Yom Tov there is a definite prohibition against work, the transgression of which comes under the category of *עשה עבודה* for which a sacrifice can be brought in atonement. The prohibition against working on Yom Kippur is of a more serious degree-- *אין עושה עבודה* -- a penalty which the Talmudic authorities understood as *אין עושה עבודה* -- punishment (death) by God. And the punishment for transgression of the commandment on the Sabbath is more severe-- *אין עושה עבודה* -- death by stoning at the hands of human courts.

Explaining the differences between R. Akiba and R. Ishmael, particularly the former's reversal of the accepted number of readers for Yom Kippur and Saturday respectively, the Talmud¹⁹ quotes a Boraitha, which implies that the service on the Sabbath should be shorter. "On Sabbath", says the Boraitha "we hasten to the synagogue and we hasten, too, in leaving, while on Yom Kippur we hurry to the synago-

gue, but there is no reason to rush away".²⁰ Hence, it is logical that the reading on the Day of Atonement should be longer than that of the Sabbath.

There may have been, in early times, some specific reason for the division of a day's reading into 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, portions. Later Talmudic authorities tried to find some significance in these numbers. We have already seen²¹ that the original number three was supposed to have been instituted to parallel the three sections of the people-- Priests, Levites and Israelites--probably out of a desire to impress the idea that the Torah was not the exclusive inheritance of the priestly class. This, however, is a later commentary to the custom, and is given by Raba in b. Meg. 21b, in contradicting a previous statement which finds in the number three a parallel to the three parts of Scriptures-- TORAH --Pentateuch, Prophets and Hagigrapha. The three readers were therefore, symbols of the importance of all of Scriptures, an emphasis made necessary to combat those who stressed the exclusive authority of the Pentateuch alone. From the fact that Raba finds it necessary to draw the parallel to the three classes of Jews, we may infer, too, that in his time the custom of calling upon a Kohen, Levi and Israel might not as yet have achieved general acceptance; otherwise, his point is a mere statement of the obvious.

For the purpose of attributing significance to the numbers 5 and 7 as well as the original 3, a passage is lifted from Sanhedrin,²² which when applied here, seems altogether far-fetched. According to the statements of one of two Amoraim (R. Simeon b. Pazi and R. Isaac b. Nachmani) three, five and seven, represent the שלושה שמות, the priestly blessing, which has three words in the first verse, five in the second and seven in the third.²³ According to the other of the two Amoraim they correspond respectively to the three doorkeepers (II

To be read by the women

Kings 25:18), the five men who could come into the king's presence (ibid. 19) and the seven who could see Ahasuerus (Esther 1:14). A similar parallel is adduced for the six who read on Yom Kippur who according to R. Jacob Minaah²⁴ correspond to the six who stood on the right and on the left of Ezra (Neh. 8:4). These statements, remote as may be their bearing upon our question, indicate nevertheless that there had been reasons for these numbers, but these reasons had been forgotten in later times, while the custom still persisted.

Evidently great importance was attached to the rigid observance of the assigned number of divisions for each day. This may be seen from two rules which are prescribed, which though they are mere formalities, nevertheless serve to impress the need for dividing the allotted section into the required number of portions. It was not sufficient that the entire pericope be read; if only one member of the congregation knew how to read he had to pause at proper intervals, take his seat and return to the reading stand, seven times, if necessary.²⁶ If by some oversight less than seven persons were called to read on Sabbath and the error was subsequently detected, the entire reading had to be done all over again, fulfilling the required מִן־הַקְּרִיָּאָה²⁶ number.

TRADITIONAL DIVISIONS OF CERTAIN PERICOPES

Complete freedom is generally permitted in the matter of the sectioning of the Torah portions to be read. Only in the case of one section of the Pentateuch does the Talmud prescribe a set division, stipulating where each reading portion is to begin. The so-called שִׁירֵי לְוִיִּם --song of the Levites (Deut. 32:1-43) has been used as a Psalm in Temple days.²⁷ In the synagogue it was to be read in (no less than) six sections the first verse of each being fixed according to the mnemonic שֶׁבַע יְהוָה and corresponding to the

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thought division of the song: וְיָדַעְתָּ (verse 1), וְיָדַעְתָּ (verse 7), וְיָדַעְתָּ (verse 13), וְיָדַעְתָּ (verse 15), וְיָדַעְתָּ (verse 29),²⁸ and וְיָדַעְתָּ (verse 36).²⁹

Some selections must be read without ^{as a whole and described into more} interruption, particularly the curses in Lev. 26 and Deut. 28 which were to be read on fast-days and on the Sabbath immediately preceding Shavuoth and Rosh Hashannah. וְיָדַעְתָּ וְיָדַעְתָּ וְיָדַעְתָּ וְיָדַעְתָּ וְיָדַעְתָּ וְיָדַעְתָּ --"The

Curses must be read without interruption, one person only reading them all".³⁰ Thus the rule provides on the one hand that in the middle of the curses, even after the required ten verses have been read, the reading should not be completely broken off and concluded, and, second, that one reader read the entire piece. Quite the opposite is prescribed with regard to the blessings in Lev. 26:3-14, where we are specifically told וְיָדַעְתָּ וְיָדַעְתָּ --"We interrupt the reading of the blessings". Three reasons are given by later Amoraim for this insistence upon reading the entire section of the curses without pause. The first, a pun on וְיָדַעְתָּ וְיָדַעְתָּ (Pr. 2:11) suggests that breaking off in the midst of these ominous words would imply that the divine chastisement is despised. The second reason is connected with the question of the blessings before and after the reading. It was felt inappropriate for one man to break off in the middle of the curses and for another man to begin, because each would have to recite the benediction and there was the established rule וְיָדַעְתָּ וְיָדַעְתָּ

"no benediction should be pronounced over chastisement". Hence, they had the rule, corollary to the last, וְיָדַעְתָּ וְיָדַעְתָּ --"He who riseth to read from the Torah must begin and end with a good word", and the person who read the curses commenced with the verse before, and concluded with the verse after the section of the curses. The third ~~per~~

reason given is also connected with the matter of the benedictions. "God says: "It is not just that my sons shall be cursed while I receive the blessing". If the blessing is repeated several times during the reading of the curses, the Rabbis felt, it would accentuate God's separation from His people's troubles, contrary to His own wishes as expressed in Psalm 91:15.³¹

In addition to the above specifications, one further provision is made. As the end of the Pentateuch is reached, the portion which remains for reading on the last day shall be sufficient for the required seven readers, so that it will not be necessary to read from two scrolls on the same day. This provision dating back to the time when the cycles had not been fixed (and before Simchat Torah[†] was designated as the closing day for Pentateuchal readings), and following the principle of *אין קוראין פחות*, is nevertheless significant as one of the earliest efforts to block out the Pentateuch into set reading portions.

THE SIZE OF THE READING PORTIONS

A rule which seems to have been well established even in Mishanic times and which played a considerable role in determining the quantity of reading to be read by one person, thereby laying the basis for the cycle systems, was that which fixed the minimum number of verses to be read by any one person. "He who reads the Law publicly shall read no less than three verses".^{32a} On such days when three read, it should never be less than ten verses in all,^{32b} and on the Sabbath where seven persons are called, "at least twenty-one consecutive verses must be read, three for each reader".³³ In the number of prescribed verses *אין קוראין פחות* "אין קוראין פחות" is to be counted as a verse.³⁴

It has already been pointed out how the Rabbis sought to

connect these various numbers, three, four, etc. with some significant fact or institution that was known to them. That they felt the need keenly is evidenced in their attempt to trace some such connection for the prescription of the minimum three verses to be read by one reader and the total of ten required for three readers. We have seen how they attribute the earliest origins of readings in public to Moses, to the Prophets and to Ezra. With these early origins, too, they connected the early custom of "one man reading three verses, or three persons reading three verses corresponding to Priests, Levites and Israelites". And according to that same account, Ezra affected a change to "three persons reading ten verses corresponding to the עשרה בטלנין".³⁵ Notwithstanding this tradition, there are others which connect the number three with the tri-partite division of the Bible into Law, Prophets and Hagiographa,³⁶ and the required ten verses are variously said to correspond to the ten commandments, to the ten psalms of David and to the ten divine orders by which the world was created.³⁷

Two supplementary rules naturally followed out of the three verse requirement. "Just as one does not commence his part of the reading within less than three verses from the beginning of the section, so should one not stop his part of the reading within three verses from the end of any section". The object of these rules was undoubtedly to so arrange the reading section that no reader would be compelled to read from two separate parashas whose subject matter might be entirely unrelated. It was necessary, therefore, that when one began a new section he should read at least three verses of that section even though he might have read a preceding section which consisted of one or two verses and would thus need but an additional

verse or two to fulfill his quota. Similarly, it would have been awkward to leave one or two verses unread at the end of a parascha. The rabbis, however, assign another reason: וְיִיָּרָא דְשׁוּם הַנּוֹכְחִים וְיִיָּרָא דְשׁוּם הַנּוֹכְחִים -- "a decree made because of those who enter or leave in the middle of the reading" who might get the impression that the preceding reader (in the case of those who came in) had read only two verses, or that the reader who is to follow (in the case of those who leave) will read but two verses.³⁸

The Talmud recognized certain difficulties in applying this three-verse minimum to some of the parashiyot. What is to be done with a parascha of four or five verses?³⁹ How was it to be divided? Shall one reader read it all, and the one who follows is to begin a new section? Or shall the first reader read three verses and the second reader read the last two of the same section and one verse of the succeeding section? Or shall the second reader repeat the middle verse (וְיִיָּרָא or וְיִיָּרָא)? Or shall the middle verse be divided in half (וְיִיָּרָא or וְיִיָּרָא)?⁴⁰

These were no mere hypothetical questions. Certain pericopes did not suffice for complying with the rules laid down regarding the number of readers, the number of verses to be read by each and where one may begin or finish his particular share of the reading portion. Particular difficulty was presented in the case of four reading portions and two of the four special Sabbaths:⁴¹ (1) Gen. 1:1-13 (2) the reading for Puzim - Ex. 17:8-16 (3) the reading for Rosh Chodesh on Nu. 28:11 (4) the individual readings for the different days of Chanukah in Nu. 7.⁴² In all these cases varying procedures are suggested according to the principle of וְיִיָּרָא and וְיִיָּרָא, indicating how, according to the various customs these parashiyot

were made to conform to the general rules. The final decision is however laid down in the case of the Genesis passages וְחִלַּכְתֶּם

וְחִלַּכְתֶּם --it should be repeated by the second reader.

The same procedure was probably followed in all similar difficulties.

The stringency of this regulation is emphasized. In the event a verse had been skipped, it is necessary in some cases to re-read the entire section. Adherence to a strictly consecutive order of the verses is absolutely necessary. If the omitted verse was at either end of a day's reading section and its omission did not disturb the sequence and ten verses had been read, it is not necessary to re-read. However, if the omitted verse was somewhere in between the ten verses, its omission having disturbed the sequence, one is obliged to repeat the reading. On the Sabbath the rule is more stringent. When the omission is discovered, even if it be after the Torah had been returned to the Ark and the Musaf service already begun, the immediate re-reading of the entire section is compulsory.⁴³

PASSAGE NOT TO BE READ

The Mishna⁴⁴ indicates that the בְּרַכַּת הַכֹּהֲנִים -- (Nu. 6:24-26) the priestly benediction is neither to be read nor translated. It is the only portion in the entire Bible which is thus forbidden though, we shall see later, there were prohibitions against the public translation of many verses both in the Pentateuch and in the Prophetic sections. A possible reason for the ban against reading the priestly benediction is found in the words כֹּה תִבְרַכּוּ (v. 23) -- "Thus shall ye bless", which is interpreted לְבִרְכַת נִיחָנָה וְלֹא נִיחָנָה לְקִרְיָאָה -- "The benedictions were given for blessing and not for public reading". If these three verses were actually omitted the Pentateuch would never be completely read in public. It is rather impossible that the Rabbis

should have ordained such an omission. Bavli⁴⁵ has the version, "the priestly benedictions are read but not translated" and gives as a reason lest there should be read into the words of *וְיָסוּר* the meaning that God forgives all even those who are unworthy. The latter version seems therefore more acceptable in the light of the later desire to have the entire Pentateuch covered in the course of the cycle.

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CHAPTER FOUR

ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF THE HAFTARAH

Our Talmudic sources are strangely silent on the question of the earliest beginnings of the custom of reading from the prophets during the synagogue service. They report no traditions describing the circumstances of its innovation or ascribing it to any one of Israel's foremost prophets and teachers. We have seen¹ that in the case of the Pentateuchal readings such traditions were recorded, which sought to explain not only the early origins but also the various changes which took place in the course of the development from an occasional ceremony to a regular prescribed custom and integral part of the synagogue ritual. The absence of such statements for the prophetic portions is the more to be wondered at, especially since the Rabbis might have wished to lend the authority of antiquity to an institution whose introduction might be questioned even more than the readings from the Pentateuch.

This silence may be indicative of a number of conditions which made such traditions unnecessary or impossible. Though the institution is regarded in the Mishna and the Tosefta² as an accepted fact, neither of these two sources enumerates more than a few simple regulations. Thus the Mishna merely states that readings from the prophets are not to take place on Monday, Thursday, Saturday-afternoon, Rosh Chodesh and Chol HaMoed, and do take place on the Festivals, Sabbath and Atonement Day. It does not specify what these readings are to be. The Tosefta specifies readings for the four special Sabbaths alone. In addition to these statements, both Mishna and Tosefta offer us only a few minor rules about (1) the number of worshippers neces-

sary before reading may be begun, (2) the minimum number of verses to be read to the translator at one time, (3) that no definite sequence need be followed, (4) certain sections which are not to be read or translated, (5) certain words which should not be read as written in the text. Thus we see that in Mishnaic times the custom had already reached this definite stage in its development. It may be that the nature of the material generally included in these prophetic readings was not controversial. Hence, the institution itself met with little opposition, and therefore, required no defense or justification, particularly since no legislation or practical outcomes depended upon the interpretation of these prophetic passages.³

These readings, moreover, assumed secondary importance in the service. The Pentateuchal portions were paramount, fixed and inflexible: the prophetic portions were not fixed at this time, could be abridged at will,⁴ and often merely served as a prelude or pre-text for the Deuterosis, or sermon.⁵ "As the Law became the religious center and the focus of the synagogue, the Prophets were given a secondary place and the time or origin of their introduction was forgotten."⁶

The readings from the prophets, also had fulfilled a peculiar need in the lives of the people. In the exile especially, the words of the prophets were comforting, particularly the consolatory portions of Isaiah and the words of rebuke of the others. As long as the prophets themselves or their disciples lived their words had been spoken or read to the people for admonition and consolation at frequent gatherings. The words of the prophets, the people saw, had come true both in the fact of the exile and later in the return. In Palestine they also cherished these prophecies and even after the return they were made the subject of regular readings. With the development

of the synagogue as the regular place of meeting it was but natural that these prophetic utterances should be included in the service. The institution thus came to be accepted as natural and meaningful.

From the attitude of the Mishna and Tosefta and, in the absence of other Talmudic statements, from other contemporary sources⁷ we may designate the first century as the latest possible time when prophetic readings were included in the synagogue service. The earliest possible date must undoubtedly be the time of Ezra to whose period the Talmud ascribes the introduction of Pentateuchal readings, which must of necessity have preceded the introduction of prophetic readings. But we have no evidence from any Talmudic or extra-Talmudic sources as to the extent of the custom in Temple times, whether, for example, the institution had extended to the festivals and extra-ordinary Sabbaths.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the entire institution had undergone a gradual growth from small beginnings before Mishnaic times and that during the four hundred years which elapsed between the time of the redaction of the Mishna and the Tosefta and the redaction of M. Soferim, another series of changes had taken place. By the latter period most of the readings had become specifically fixed, and, as some claim,⁸ definite cycles had been formulated,⁹ the length of sections had been prescribed and the more usually read portions had already, for the sake of convenience, been brought together in a special book or scroll called ספר אכמרתא .¹⁰

Even as early as Mishnaic times the reading from the prophets had a special technical name. The exact intent of the word ק'טבב has been the subject of much conjecture and dispute. Were we able to reach a definite conclusion we could thus determine the original purpose of these prophetic readings. The verb ק'טבב connotes "to make an end".

Thus Tosefta uses it in connection with the closing Pentateuchal portion for the Day of Atonement: **וּמְסִירָן בְּעֶשֶׂר שְׁנֵי חֹמֶשׁ חֲמִיּוֹדִים**, which is to be translated: "And we complete the Pentateuchal reading (from Lev. 16) with Nu. 29:7".¹¹ But as regards its use in connection with the prophetic portion, the question is, what object is to be attributed to the verb **חֲמִיּוֹד**. It has been contended that the prophetic reading was the last thing read at the service.¹² The same author contends that originally there must have been no Musaf service. The service thus came to an end with the **אֲמִירָתָא**, which was thus called because "The congregation was then free (**וְנִסְתְּרִים**) to go home." There seems to be little proof that services ever actually ended with the prophetic readings. Rather, if we are to follow the usage employed in the Tosefta, we can understand the expression **חֲמִיּוֹד בְּנִיבָא** to mean only one thing: to complete or finish the Scriptural reading with a reading from the prophets.

If this meaning of the word is accepted, it may be logical to assume that one of the reasons for the growth of the institution and particularly for its following immediately after the Torah reading was that the Rabbis and, perhaps the Soferim before them, desired further support for their interpretations. The words of the prophets could very well accomplish this end since the Rabbis considered themselves to be the spiritual descendants of the prophets.¹³ It is quite possible that these readings served their purposes, too, in the controversies with the Saducees regarding the festivals, though the latter situation may not have been its primary function, or even the original purpose.¹⁴

Considering all the suggestions and hypotheses offered, it seems that one basic motive is rarely considered. The people, and the Rabbis, felt that the prophetic utterances should, like the Torah, be-

come the "inheritance of the house of Jacob" because of their intrinsic merit. The best medium for spreading the knowledge of the prophecies, and for impressing their significance upon the people, was the synagogue service. It was, therefore, made part of the ritual, given a prominent place immediately following the Torah reading, and made the subject of the discourse.¹⁵

CHAPTER FIVE

PROPHETIC READINGS FOR VARIOUS OCCASIONS

WHEN WERE PROPHETIC PORTIONS READ?

The Mishna merely states that on the following days, when readings from the Torah took place, there is to be no reading from the prophets: (ordinary) Mondays, Thursdays and Saturday-afternoons, Rosh Chodesh and Chol HaMoed.¹ On the following days, the Mishna continues,² readings from the prophets are to take place: festivals, the Day of Atonement, Sabbaths. In none of these cases does the Mishna, here or anywhere else, specify from which books or what parts are to be read. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that in Mishnaic times the reader was allowed to select his own passage, with only one limitation: that certain specified portions were not to be read in public.³ Beyond these few passages he was free to choose from any prophet at all.

The first specified list appears in the Tosefta, for the four special Sabbaths.⁴ But beyond these four occasions the Tosefta fails to mention that the prophets are to be read at all at any other service. This is however no proof that the compilers of the Tosefta did not customarily read from the prophets. We find here, too, prescriptions against certain portions which are not to be read as well as definite allowance for certain others which had been forbidden by various Rabbis. These prohibitions would not have been necessary if readings from the prophets had been limited to the four special Sabbaths. We find, too, that the Tosefta prohibits the reading of certain words and phrases as they appear in the text (כִּנְיָ). Evidently the passages in which these words occur, since they are not identical with anything ⁱⁿ the Tosefta's listing for the four Sabbaths, must have

These must be some of the words of the prophets which were not to be read in public.

been read at some time and these forbidden phrases would have been read as they stood in the text.

By the close of the Talmudic period many more Haftarahs had become fixed. The Babylonian Talmud lists specific readings for (1) all festivals, (2) Rosh Hashannah, (3) Yom Kippur, (4) Sabbaths which happen also to be (a) Rosh Chodesh or (b) Chol HaMoed or (c) Chanukah or (d) the day before Rosh Chodesh, and (5) the 9th of Av. In the meantime, another interesting development seems to have taken place, for the Babli states that prophetic readings are included at the afternoon service of the Sabbath. In the Mishna this is definitely interdicted. We shall discuss this contradiction in due time.

It is important to note at this point that the Palestinian Gemara contains no statement whatever about the occasions when the prophets were read. Even in those sections of the Jerushalmi which comment on the Mishnaic passages quoted above, there is no amplification of the Mishnaic statement or any attempt to describe the custom prevailing in Palestine during the Amoraic period. The comments which do occur are limited to five (really four) short quotations and deal with such questions as the size of the reading portion,⁶ the need for a quorum of ten,⁷ the number of persons who read the prophetic portion,⁸ and ~~that~~ ^{the} freedom to skip about in the prophets,⁹ the latter being a direct quotation from the Mishnah itself.

The development of the institution of prophetic readings from the original stages, as represented by the Mishna, as given in Babli, to the definite fixing of the readings for the major days of the Jewish calendar, seems to have taken place only in Babylon. We shall see, too, that M. Soferim, which dates from the Gaonic period in Palestine, differs from the Babli in many of the assignments for

the various days, and omits the mention of readings for certain other days. The development in Palestine, then, followed the Babylonian in time only, unless we are to accept the view that by the close of the Talmudic period a triennial cycle of readings from the prophets had already been worked out to parallel the triennial cycle of readings from the Pentateuch.

Soferim repeats the text of the Mishna indicating on which days Haftarahs are not read and on which days they are read.¹⁰ In addition, it specifies the portions to be read on (1) Sabbath of Chanukah¹¹ (2) Sabbath which is also Rosh Chodesh¹² (3) Sabbath which is immediately followed by a Sunday which is Rosh Chodesh¹² and (4) Ninth of Ab.¹³ There is no mention of readings for the festivals or Holy Days or for the four special Sabbaths.

The table on page 41 presents the reading assignments for the different days as given in these Talmudic sources. We see at a glance what has been said above with regard to the complete absence of any mention in Talmud Jerushalmi of the days when prophetic readings took place or of the passages which were customarily read. We note, too, that Tosefta designates readings only for the four special Sabbaths and makes no reference whatsoever to readings on any other day. We see, too, wherein Soferim differs from Babli in its assignments.

The one outstanding fact is that no one source offers us a complete picture. Even if we are to take the account in the Talmud Babli, we shall still miss information with regard to Sabbath during the Chanukah week, if it happens also to be Rosh Chodesh, and what is of greater significance, we are left to speculate as to what actually took place on ordinary Sabbaths.

We proceed to a consideration of the passages which are designated in our sources as customary readings for the various occasions.

HAFTARAH READINGS AS GIVEN IN TALMUDIC SOURCES

	Mishna	Tosefta	Babli	Jeru- shalmi	Soferim
Four Special Sabbaths					
Shekalim					
Zakor		IIK1.11:17	IIK1.11:17		
Parah		ISam.15:2	ISam.15:2		
Hachodesh		Ez.36:25	Ez.36:25		
		Ez.45:18	Ez.45:18		
Passover	Yes				Yes
1st day			Jos.5:10		
2nd day			IIK1.23:21		
7th day			IISam.22		
8th day			Isa.10:32		
Shovuoeth	Yes				Yes
1st day			Hab.3:1		
2nd day			Ez. 1		
Succoth	Yes				Yes
1st day			Zach.14		
2nd day			IK1.8:2		
8th day			IK1.9:1		
9th day			IK1.8:22		
Rosh Hashannah	Yes				Yes
1st day			ISam.2		
2nd day			Jer.31:20		
Yom Ha-Kippurim	Yes				Yes
Morning			Isa.57:15		
Afternoon			Jonah		
Sabbaths	Yes				Yes
Combination: Sabbath					
-and Rosh Chodesh			Isa.66:23		Ez.46:1
-preceding Rosh Chodesh			ISam.20:18		ISam.20:18
-Rosh Chodesh Tebeth					Ez.46:1
-Rosh Chodesh Ab			Isa.1:14		
-and Chanukah			Zach.3		IK1.7:51
(2nd Sabbath)			IK1.7:51		
-Chol HaMoed - Pesach			Ez.37		
- " " Succoth			Ez.38		
Ninth of Ab			Isa.1:21		Isa.55:6
			#Jer.8:13		#None
Monday	No				No
Thursday	No				No
Sat. Mincha	No		Yes		No
Rosh Chodesh	No				No

Yes - Statement that we do read from prophets on that day
 No - Statement that we do not read from prophets on that day
 # - Opinion of another authority who differs from the first

THE FOUR SPECIAL SABBATHS

For Shekalim the portion **וְחֹיֵדֶךָ חֶכְחֵן** is assigned in the Tosefta¹⁴ and repeated in Babli.¹⁵ It is not clear where the passage begins, as the story of **יְחֹוִיֶדֶךָ** appears both in II Kings 11:17 and in II Kings 12:3. The reason for the selection of this passage is to be found in 12:5, **אִישׁ כֶּסֶף נִפְשׁוֹת עָרְבוּ**. The payments made to the Temple as ordained by King Joash form a fitting supplement to the reading of the day, as the Talmud points out, only if **כִּי חֲשָׂא** (Exodus 30:11) is the Torah portion read. In like manner, the Haftarah portions for the remaining three special Sabbaths are particularly suitable. For Zakor, I Sam. 15:2 relating the story of Saul's battle with the Amalekites. Haman was identified in tradition with Amalek. Thus both the Pentateuchal reading as well as the prophetic portion were designated for the Sabbath preceding Purim.¹⁶ For Parah the selection of Ez. 36:25¹⁷ is appropriate, since **וְזִרְקָתִי** **עֲלֵיכֶם מֵיִם מְחַוְרִים**, the pouring of cleansing waters was the exact purpose of the Red Heifer rite. And Ez. 45:18¹⁸ is a direct parallel to the Passover legislation in the Pentateuch. Its reading on the Sabbath preceding Rosh Chodesh Nissan is in line with the custom of beginning the study of the rules and regulations about the Passover as early as the first day of Nissan.

When we compare this Tosefta passage with the Mishna we clearly see that the specifications for the different readings were inserted into what appears to be, in all other respects, the same passage as in the Mishna. As The Boraitha is quoted verbatim in Babli it, rather than the Mishna, must have become an accepted version. It is therefore difficult to understand why R. Judah Hanasi accepted the less specific version, inasmuch as the fuller one was known, unless he desired to retain the flexibility of the Haftarah readings and the

freedom of selection characteristic of the early stages of both institutions of Torah and prophet readings.

FESTIVALS AND HOLY DAYS

Tho, as we have just pointed out, the Tosefta elaborated on the Mishna by including the reading passages for the four special Sabbaths, such is not the case with the festival and Holy Day readings. The Mishna's directions for the Pentateuchal readings are amplified but no mention is made of the prophetic portions.¹⁹ The Gemara, however, found it necessary to include not only specifications for Haftarah readings but also similar specifications for the second days of the festivals, which came to be observed as full holidays in Babylon.²⁰

PASSOVER

These interpolations into the Mishna and Tosefta thus consist of two parts which were undoubtedly added at different times. The first addition included a statement of the prophetic readings for each occasion not specified either in Mishna or in the Tosefta. The original passage plus this first interpolation may well have comprised a version formulated in the early Amoraic times and possibly, too, in Palestine. On top of this version the Babylonians added the regulations for the second days of the holidays. The text as finally given in b. Meg. 31a-b consists of a long passage covering over one full folio page in which these various strands, plus further Amoraic comments, are interwoven, each statement requiring careful analysis if we should seek to identify their respective sources.

Thus, for example, to the original Mishnaic statement for Passover is "On Pass-
over, we read from the Festival portion in Leviticus", was first added "We conclude with the Passover at
Gilgal", described in Joshua 5. Later the following was appended:
וְחַאֲדִנְא דְאִיכָא חֲרִי יוֹסִי יוֹסֵא קִמָּא בְּפִסְחָא וְלִסְחָר בְּפִסְחָא יֵאשְׁחֻ

*How old is this version
And it was added by
Amoraim?*

- "Today, when we observe two days, the first day (we read) the Passover at Gilgal, and on the following day (we read) in the Passover of King Josiah (II Kings 23:21)". The particular suitability of these two passages, following a Torah reading from Lev. 23:4 is obvious.

II Sam. 22 was thought to be especially appropriate for the seventh day. The שִׁיר דָּוִד - "David's song "on the day when God delivered him out of the hands of all his enemies" is a fitting parallel to the שִׁיר מֹשֶׁה, the Song of Moses at the Red Sea, which was the Torah reading for that day.²¹

The Messianic vision of Chapter II of Isaiah forms the major part of the Haftarah for the eighth day. It begins, however, in the very midst of the preceding prophecy, with 10:32- וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל הָעַמִּים בְּיָמָיו לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, ²² which describes the hurried march of an army invading Judah from the north. The connection with the Pentateuchal reading may be contained in the similarly hurried march of the Israelites at the Exodus described in Exodus 13 and which is read on that day, or it may be the reference to וְצִיָּאָה דְעָרִים in the last verse of Isaiah, Chapter 11.

SHOVUOTH

According to the Tosefta there were two alternate views or customs as to the Torah reading for עֲצֵרֶת (Shovuoth). The Haftarahs which followed Deuteronomy 16 is given in the Talmud as Habakuk 3: the one which followed Exodus 19 was Ezekiel 1. As both Torah portions contain the story of the revelation at Sinai and include the Ten commandments, such Haftarah portions were selected which describe the appearance of God. Habakuk 3 depicts the theophony, God's motives for His appearance and its effect. The first chapter of Ezekiel is the prophet's vision of consecration and of God's revelation to him²³

It is astonishing to find this difference of opinion, or practice, at such an early stage in the history of these prophetic readings. It merely points to an even earlier condition when there was no fixed custom and each reader or each community was free to select the section to be read. Thus the alternate view given by the פ' אומר' is merely a report of another custom which was known to prevail.²⁴

When a reading was needed for the second day of the festival, this alternate view was accepted as the prophetic portion as such an alternate custom had been similarly adopted as Torah readings for the second day. The Amoraic interpolations into the earlier Boraitha, however, reverses the order, accepts the alternate custom for the first day and the original citation for the second day.

ROSH HASHANNAH

Here, too, prevailing selections had given rise to two different views which the Talmud quotes and accepts, one for each day. With the alternate view set for the first day. We thus have the Haftarah for the first day, I Samuel 2, which describes the visitation of Hannah and is similar in context to Genesis 21 which was the Torah reading according to the חבן יקיר - Jeremiah 31:20 .²⁵ יש אומר' .

contains the prophecy of salvation and remembrance - לי אפרים , יום הזכרון , and is an appropriate reading for זכור אזכרנו עוד , particularly since it originally followed a Torah reading from Lev. 23:23 in which the first day of the seventh month is called יום זכרון חרוץ .

DAY OF ATONEMENT

An illustration of the contention that the Haftarah was often read on its own merits²⁶ is to be found in the prophetic portion assigned in the Boraitha's interpolation for Yom Kippur morning. Ac-

tually the portion intended for reading was Chapter 58 of Isaiah, altho the Talmud alludes to the passage by the first words of 57:15 - כִּי כַח אֲמַר לִי וְנִשְׂא .²⁷ Isaiah 58 speaks of fast and repentance but reflects an entirely different trend of thought, than did the Torah portion read from Lev. 16:1 and Nu. 29:7 in that it condemns as mere ritual, the fasting and sacrifices which are not accompanied by moral living.

Our passage in Babli lists also a Haftarah for the Mincha service on the Day of Atonement. It is the only Mincha Haftarah specified in the Talmud altho we are told that portions from the prophets were read on Sabbath afternoons (see later discussion, page 57). The book of Jonah is read, because "it teaches that there is no escape from God's judgment, which, however, may be influenced by repentance".²⁸

SUCCOTH

To the Mishna's listing of the Torah portions for the first day of the זמן (Succoth) and "for the remaining days of the Festival" and to the Toseftas specification of the beginning verse for each of the eight days, the first interpolation had added the Maf-tir for the first day as Zach. 14 and I Kings 9:1 for the eighth day. The Babylonian Amoraim added the readings for the second and ninth day (now שְׂמַחַת תּוֹרָה) and as the Haftarahs for these days they specified I Kings 8:2 and I Kings 8:22 respectively. Zachariah is read because towards the end of the prophecy (verse 16) he speaks of the future celebration of the Succoth festival. The passages in Kings deal with the dedication of Solomon's Temple which according to the Biblical account took place during Succoth. Behind the selection of these readings there probably lurked the unexpressed hope that the Temple will be restored.²⁹

SABBATHS

The only Sabbaths for which Haftarah readings are designated are those Sabbaths which may be classed as half-holidays because they also happen to be Rosh Chodesh, Chanukah, or Chol HaMoed. We shall consider these first before proceeding to discuss the question of Haftarah readings on ordinary Sabbaths of the year.

When Rosh Chodesh falls on a week-day there is no Haftarah. This principle is laid down in the statement, שאילולא שנת אין נביא - ³⁰ "Were it not for the Sabbath, there would be no reading from the prophets on the New Moon". The identical Rosh Chodesh Haftarah is designated for ten months of the year if Rosh Chodesh happens to be on Saturday; for Rosh Chodesh Tebeth and Ab there are special readings. The Talmud³¹ specifies Isaiah 66:23 while Soferim³² gives Ezekiel 46:1 for the ten months. On Sabbath - Rosh Chodesh Tebeth the Maftir is given in Soferim as Ezekiel 46:1, which tho set for the Sabbath - New-Moon, yet its contents is related to the Chanukah-feast in that it refers to the מ'ש'א and to the temple of the future.³³ If Rosh Chodesh Ab is on a Saturday the Haftarah is read, according to Rav Huna,³⁴ from Isaiah 1:14.

When Rosh Chodesh is on Sunday the Maftir on the Sabbath immediately preceding it is read from I Sam. 20:8 - וידבר לו יחונתו - סתר חרש . In this both Soferim and Babli concur.

For the Sabbath of Chanukah the Haftarah, according to Bavli is Zachariah 3, alluded to as נרות דזכריה . When there are two Sabbaths during the Chanukah week, that is when the first day of Chanukah is on Saturday - and so is the eighth - the Haftarah ends with (I Kings 7:51 - ^{אין} נהג שלם).³⁵ וחשלם כל חסלאכח

Chol HaMoed Pesach and Succoth have, according to Rav Huna who quotes Rav, Haftarah readings on Sabbath only. The special read-

ings are from Ezekiel 37 and Ezekiel 38 respectively.³⁶

None of the other Sabbaths of the year are designated for definite Haftarah portions. This could hardly be construed to mean that in Talmudic times they would not read Haftarahs on every Sabbath. A number of statements in the Talmud itself indicate that they must have read on Sabbaths. Thus in one of the benedictions following the Haftarah reading

בְּיָמֵינוּ מִן הַקִּדְשִׁים שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִי"ם מִן הַקִּדְשִׁים, special provision is made for the Sabbath when the benediction is simply קִדְשֵׁי חֹדֶשׁ.³⁷

From the fact, too, that if Rosh Chodesh is on a Sabbath there is a special Haftarah, we must infer that they read a Haftarah on ordinary Sabbaths, else what sense is there to Rav's principle

לֹא יֵשֶׁתּוּף לְרֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ בְּיָמֵינוּ אֵין נִכְיָא בְּר"ח³⁸ There was no Haftarah for Rosh Chodesh on week-days; why should Sabbath-Rosh Chodesh be different, if not for the reason that even on ordinary Sabbaths there were such readings? Furthermore the prohibition of reading on Sabbaths from a

סֵפֶר אֲפֻסְתָּתָא would have no purpose otherwise.³⁹ The mere fact that a collection of Haftarahs was ever made from which one should wish to read, and the reason for the prohibition - that it might be carried on the Sabbath - all point to the fact that such a book was actually used. In the Mishna, Tosefta and also in the later sources there is reference to passages in the prophets which may or may not be read, which may or may not be translated.⁴⁰ There are passages, too, which are mentioned by way of illustrating certain procedures with regard to the reading.⁴¹ These passages must have been read at some time. The only other occasions which are not provided for are the regular Sabbaths, since we know that no prophetic readings were held on week-days.⁴²

Yet we have no information as to what was read on ordinary Sabbaths and we are therefore led to believe that by the end of the Talmudic period Haftarahs were not fixed for the regular Sabbaths.

However, this does not seem to be entirely so.

In all likelihood a regular cycle of fixed Haftarahs existed by the middle of the fourth century C.E. The mere fact that in an attempt to explain two contradictory statements an Amora should say "he returns to the regular order of the Haftarahs" shows that some such fixed order was known to him, an order^{which} was only temporarily superseded by the special Haftarahs of the four special Sabbaths in Adar.⁴³ R. Jeremiah to whom the statement is attributed was a Palestinian Amora who lived between 320-359. Hence, by the first century there was known in Palestine a fixed order of Haftarahs. We have no information about the nature of this cycle from sources which date before the close of the Talmudic period.⁴⁴

A shorter cycle seems to have developed for the Sabbaths between the seventeenth of Tammuz and the ninth of Ab. Tho here, too, we have no evidence as to its early origins, when it was introduced, whether in Babylonia or in Palestine, we find one reference to a special Haftarah for the first of Ab, if on a Sabbath, and also for the ninth of Ab itself. It was Rav who first introduced the prophetic portion before the ninth of Ab that had no contextual contact with their respective Torah Sedarim, as the Haftarah for the ninth is offered in his name and the Haftarah for the first of Ab is quoted by Rav Huna, who generally quotes his teacher, Rav. This must have been the forerunner of what later came to be called הלל דפורתא - a series of three Haftarot of Punishment one of which was read on each of the three Sabbaths preceding Tisha B'Ab. There followed the שבעה דנחמה - a series of seven consolation Haftarot read on the seven Sabbaths between Tisha B'Ab and Succoth.⁴⁵

What, then, determined the Haftarah reading for an ordinary Sabbath in Talmudic times? Indirectly we are told of two guid-

ing principles. The first is summed up in the brief phrase ליה ליה, i.e. that a certain similarity in content should exist between the Torah pericope and the portion read from the prophets.⁴⁶ We have seen how this was carried out in connection with the festival Haftarahs, where the Pentateuchal readings had originally been selected with a view to its being appropriate for the particular day. But in the case of the Sabbath Haftarahs as we have them today the connection is often very loose, sometimes merely a word. This can easily be understood where we realize that, in the three year cycle particularly, more than 150 Haftarahs were necessary. The מוסף, who also read, or repeated the last Torah portion of that day, was therefore, free to select any passage as long as it conformed with this principle of ליה ליה.

A second principle enunciated in the Talmud which must have had direct bearing on the selection of passages from the prophets is the one already found in the Mishnah⁴⁷ סדלן בנביא ואין סדלן סדלן - "In the reading of the prophetic lesson one may skip....." the Mishna continues ועד כמה סדלן על כדו שלא יפסוק מחורגין - "How much may one skip? Only so much that the Translator will not have to pause." Tosefta elaborates on the former statement: "One may not skip from prophet to prophet. In the Twelve Minor Prophets one may skip. One may skip from prophet to prophet, provided he does not skip from the end of the book (ספר) to the beginning."⁴⁸ One of the reasons given by the Rabbis in this connection for the prohibition of skipping in the Torah is their desire to have Israel hear the Law in its entirety. Evidently such a motive was not present in the prophetic readings. We must therefore conclude first of all that the prophetic reading on any one occasion need not follow consecutively the portion read at the preceding service as was required in the Torah readings.⁴⁹

The statement *דלילין בנביא*, altho repeated in many places, is never definitely made clear. Obviously it means that during any one reading it is permissible to skip about. This may be seen from the reasons given for the prohibition of skipping in the Torah. We note, too, that the Tosefta insists that the permission to skip is limited to the contents of one book, excepting in the case of the twelve minor prophets which together were considered as comprising a single book.

Beyond these few provisions, there is no further specification for the selection of Haftarah readings on ordinary Sabbaths, as given in the Talmudic sources.⁵⁰

SABBATH MINCHA

Originally, according to the Mishnah there was to be no Haftarah reading following the Torah portion on Saturday afternoon. Our latest source, Soferim, repeats the same regulation.⁵¹ Apparently such a lesson was introduced as may be inferred from this passage in the Babylonian Talmud:⁵² *שאלמלא שנת אין נביא בסנהא כיום טוב* - "If not for (the festival falling on) Sabbath, there would not be a prophetic lesson at the afternoon service of festivals." On the ground of this Talmudic report it must be accepted that a prophetic reading was customary in Babylon by the middle of the third century C.E. for our statement is attributed to Rav who arrived from Palestine about 219 C.E. It is indeed strange that this custom should have developed in direct contradiction to the Mishnah, and that it should have developed independently in Babylon and not in Palestine. "It must therefore have been in vogue in Babylon long before the Mishnah became there the accepted code, or else it would have been abolished by reason of its contradiction with the proscription in the Mishnah."⁵³

This report, which from the Talmud alone, could not be con-

sidered as authoritative is however corroborated in Gaonic responsa, where the reasons for its abolition are also given. The basis for doubting the report is to be found in a misreading of another passage, from which it was concluded that not the prophets but the Hagiographa were read on Saturday afternoon.

בבית המדרש קוראין

בבית המדרש קוראין refers rather to the study at the Beth Hamidrash and not to the Divine service in the synagogue.⁵⁴

From the one Talmudic source, then, we can gather only the one fact that Haftarah readings did take place in Babylon on Saturday afternoon. But we are again not told what passages were read, not whether the custom held for every Sabbath.

FAST - DAYS

The Talmud related how the community that used to assemble for the fast days would spend the day. Says Abaye: "From morning to mid-day they consider communal affairs, from mid-day to evening one quarter of the day is spent in reading the portions from the Pentateuch and the prophets and the other quarter in prayer asking for mercy."⁵⁵ Reading from the prophets, according to this report was an integral part of the synagogue procedure on fast-days, and the reading took place during the early part of the afternoon. Tho Abaye does not specify that this reading was part of the Divine service we may presume that we have here a reference to the beginnings of an afternoon Haftarah which has the custom even to the present day. This afternoon Haftarah for other fast-days probably found its origin by following the example of the

בבית המדרש קוראין read on the Day of the Great Fast.

Yet, when the Talmud specifies the prophetic readings for fast-days it undoubtedly had reference to a morning reading. We have already mentioned Rav's statement for the Ninth of Ab which, by reason of the fact that all other Haftarahs listed in that passage deal

with morning services, must bear only on the morning service.⁵⁶ Soferim, too, speaks in one Halacha about the readings for Chanukah, Purim, Rosh Chodesh and fasts of the Ninth of Ab. Since the first three never had Mincha readings - Pentateuchal or prophetic - it is logical to reason that the time of the fast readings were similarly understood.⁵⁷ Furthermore, a distinction is drawn between the procedure if it should be on a Tuesday or a Wednesday. In the former case, three men are called up to read the Torah, the last one of whom reads also the Haftarah. In the latter case, one man reads both the Torah and the Haftarah.⁵⁸ This differentiation would be without purpose if thought to apply to afternoon readings, since the basis for such distinction would be the original custom of reading three portions during the morning service on Monday and Thursday and none on Tuesday and Wednesday.

In two of these sources the Haftarah portions are specified. Rav, in Babli, had listed Isaiah 1:21 which begins with **נִדְּבָר**, which is also the first word of Lamentations. Abaye, in the same passage, relates that in his day the custom was to read from Jeremiah 8:13 - **דְּבַר הַדָּבָר**. An entirely different reading must have prevailed in Palestine for M. Soferim specifies Isaiah 55:6.

WHEN TORAH AND NO HAFTARAH

There remains but to record those occasions when readings from the Torah were not accompanied by readings from the prophets. These are given in the Mishnah and listed in an identical passage in M. Soferim.⁵⁹ There is to be no Haftarah on Monday, Thursday, Saturday afternoon,⁶⁰ Rosh Chodesh and Chol HaMoed. The absence of Haftarah on Rosh Chodesh, except on Sabbath, is emphasized by Rav when he says that the "Maftir on Sabbath - Rosh Chodesh need not mention Rosh Chodesh (i.e. the final benedictions) for, were it not for the Sabbath, there would be no Haftarah on Rosh Chodesh."⁶¹

CHAPTER SIX
HAFTARAH. READING PORTIONS

THE READER

The fear that the prophetic readings might be regarded equally with, or higher than, the Torah readings led to the custom that the prophets be read after the Torah. Thus the man who read from the prophets had to read first from the Pentateuch כבוד תורה -- "in order to show honor to the Torah",¹ and he could not begin his prophetic portion until the Torah scroll had been rolled up.²

Also this differentiation was made between the Torah and the Prophets. Only one person read from the prophets while the Torah portion was divided among three to seven persons. The principle is laid down: שנים קורין בתורה ואין שנים ספסירין בנביא.³ According to the explanation given by R. Ula - קבילות בתורה ואין קריות בנביא - "Several persons are called to read from the Law successively but not to read from the prophets" - the principle that two may not read from the prophets seems to refer to a successive division of the reading portion; the use of שנים is not specific, indicating "more than one". The difficulty with this interpretation, however, lies in the fact that the discussion, in which connection these principles are adduced, deals with the simultaneous reading of a portion by two or more persons. The Boraitha lists all the possible combinations: (a) one reader and one translator, (b) one reader and two translators, (c) two readers and one translator (d) two readers and two translators.⁴ The reason given for the prohibition is that it is difficult to listen to two voices at the same time. Yet ~~the~~ they may read or translate from the Megillah because the Megillah is dear to the people, and even if ten read they will give

their attention. These several passages not only contradict the principle that two may read from the prophets but also definitely point to a different interpretation from that implied in R. Ula's statement.

The ר'טבד was however not always considered to be an additional reader, who read from the Torah merely as a formality in order to show honor to the Law. In fact, in some instances he was one of the original number of Torah readers. The Talmud raises the question as to whether the ר'טבד is included in the (number) seven readers, and opinions are divided between two Amoraim, one of whom says that the ר'טבד is included in the seven, while the other Amora maintains that the number seven is exclusive of the Haftarah reader.⁵ The latter opinion is upheld in Soferim where the eighth reader (on Sabbaths) is to conclude the reading from the Torah. The same regulation is laid down in Jerushalmi: שבע חוץ סן חטפטר .⁶ The matter does not seem to be settled in the Talmud at all and though subsequent custom has retained the principle for the Sabbath, for the Ninth of Ab the Maftir, even in the Talmud, is one of the original three Torah readers if the Tisha B'Ab was on a Monday or Thursday, while on Tuesday or Wednesday only one person read from the Torah and the same reader would also read from the prophets.

SIZE OF THE HAFTARAH READINGS

The Haftarahs were extended in a similar manner to that adopted in the enlargement of the Pentateuchal portions. From the original Haftarah of three verses the reading was extended so that from twenty to twenty-four verses were required.

Tosefta speaks of Haftarahs which contain only three, four or five verses, and even quotes the case of one Haftarah with one verse, Isaiah 52:3, which the Tosefta allows as a complete reading by itself.⁸

In Amoraic times the length of the Haftarah was set at twenty-one verses corresponding to the minimum number read from the Torah. The question is raised that the required number of verses should be set at twenty-four, for the ג'טוּד is an eighth reader; but evidently, since he merely reads or repeats what has once been read "for the honor of the Law", there need be no prophetic verses to correspond to his Torah reading.⁹ This number of verses was at first entirely theoretical, for in cases where the subject-matter ended before twenty-one verses and could not possibly be lengthened without introducing irrelevant material the shorter ~~the~~ Haftarah was allowed. Thus, when Rava raised the objection that Jeremiah 7:21 has less than twenty-one verses¹⁰ the principle is established that אֲדָנָא אֲנִי יְיָ בְלִבִּי --where the subject matter is concluded--there the Haftarah may end, even tho less than twenty-one verses had been read. Yet even this principle is not followed consistently.

Samuel bar Abba relates that often when he had been reading from the Prophets in the presence of R. Jochanon, the latter had told him to stop after ten verses. The Talmud explains that where there is a מְדַבֵּר , the required number may be reduced, and that the prescription of twenty-one verses is to be followed only where there is no interpreter.

Similarly, we meet this variation in Soferim. In one case the rule is laid down that "he who reads from the prophets must not read less than twenty-one verses".¹¹ In another Halacha, where we are told that these twenty-one verses correspond to the $\text{שְׁנַעַת קְרוֹאִים}$ שְׁנַעַת קְרוֹאִים .¹² But a twenty-second verse is added in honor of the מְדַבֵּר בְּיָמֵינוּ .¹² But the number may be reduced for the convenience of the public to three, five or seven when there is a translator or a preacher.¹³

The same divergence is to be found in the Talmud Jerushalmi. While on the one hand¹⁴ the twenty-one verse rule is adduced to prove a point, one of the Rabbis in another connection argues that the minimum number of prophetic verses should be twenty-three; since readers always paired in threes reading together ten verses, there should be ten verses to correspond to each of two pairs of threes and three verses for the seventh.¹⁵ But the condition is also stipulated that where the reading is followed by translation or sermon three verses suffice. The story of Rabbi Jochanan is also mentioned with the comment that R. Jochanan, who most likely preached, should be given at least the same consideration as the ידין.¹⁶

We can see by all these quotations that by this time it had become a general rule to read from twenty-one to twenty-three verses. Abbreviations were permitted since the Haftarah was not an end in itself but served as a text for the exposition, or the sermon.

As to the method of reading these verses the Mishnah¹⁷ already stipulated that in the presence of the translator three verses of the prophets may be read at one time. (In the Torah only one verse at a time). But in the event that the three verses of one Haftarah constitute three different thoughts, then they are to be read singly and to be recited by the translator individually. Isaiah 52:3 is given as an example. There 52:3 constitutes a separate section in itself. Likewise v. 4. Verse 5 and 6 again are a separate section.¹⁸

PASSAGES NOT TO BE READ

Our source list six passages in the Prophets which may not serve as Haftarah portions.¹⁹ Albeit, on three of the six the sources are not agreed, showing again that the Haftarahs had undergone change in the course of time. A brief table will serve to demonstrate this fact. #

	Mishnah	Tosefta	Babli	Soferim
Judges Ch. 19-21		b	b	
II Sam. 11:12-17	a	a	a	a
II Sam. 13:1-9	a	b	b	a
II Sam. 16:20-24		b		
Ezekiel 1	c	d		c d
Ezekiel 16	c	b	b	c

The Benjamin Scandal recorded in the book of Judges is permitted both in the Tosefta and in Babli. Since these passages were specially singled out and their reading allowed it is to be inferred that some would not read them because of the disgrace reflected therein upon Benjamin and all of Israel.

According to Tosefta the story of David with Bath Sheba may neither be read nor translated. The Mishnah and the citation in Babli Gemara list the same prohibition. (The Mishnah text in Babylonian Talmud has נקראי'ן ולא תתרוםי'ן - due to a scribal error.) The reason for banning this passage as well as the story of Amnon and the story Absalom is given in a Bible interpretation into the Boraitha, to spare the honor of David. We note, too, that Babli and Tosefta permit the reading of the last two selections.

Most important of all these prohibitions are those directed against two chapters in Ezekiel. The controversy around Ezekiel had raged for a long time, and the book was nearly excluded from the canon because certain chapters had lent themselves to theosophic-philosophic expositions by the Jewish mystics of the

The following symbols are usedⁱⁿ the above tables:-

- a = may not be read or translated
- b = may be read and translated
- c = may not be read as Maftir
- d = may be read in public.

first and second centuries in Palestine resulting in no small amount of apostasy.²⁰ Consequently the מרכבת - the Chariot Chapter was not generally taught and was forbidden as a prophetic lesson. But R. Judah permits it and the version in Tosefta agrees with him. This opposing opinion of R. Judah remained authoritative and became the Haftarah for the first day of Shavuoth.

Chapter 16 of Ezekiel was also banned because it contains many accusations against Israel by R. Eleazar who, we are told, was exceedingly indignant when it was read in his presence. But to some of the Rabbis this denunciation of Israel's apostasy was permissible reading.

In addition to the above passages whose reading, translation, or both, were not permitted, there are a number of word changes which are prescribed because the language was considered improper. In these cases the מ' is disregarded for the 'ק. The phrases so barred are given in Tosefta, Babli and Soferim: II Kings 6:25, II Kings 10:27, II Kings 18:27 and Isaiah 36:12.²¹

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE READING OF MEGILLATH ESTHER

Only six of the twelve books included in the Hagiographa (כְּתוּבִים) are represented in the synagogue liturgy. Many of the Psalms had been recited or sung in connection with the Temple ritual and were naturally taken over as prayers. But for the purposes of Scriptural reading only the "Five Scrolls" are used. That the inclusion of Ruth, Canticles and Lamentations is of a much later period than Esther is to be seen from the fact that the reading of the former three is mentioned only in the late Soferim, while already in the Mishnah the large part of a tractate is devoted to the detailed regulations for the reading of Esther. Ecclesiastes is not mentioned as Scriptural reading either in the Mishna or Talmud, and its omission from the passage in Soferim which mentions the three others cannot be attributed to chance, since in another Halacha where Ruth, Shir Hashirim and Esther are discussed, Ecclesiastes again fails to be mentioned.¹

Thus, our sources concern themselves chiefly with the reading of Esther, or "the Megillah" as it came to be called. Our discussion here must therefore be limited in the main to the custom of reading that scroll and its development from its early stages to the close of the Talmudic period as reflected in our Talmudic sources.

ORIGIN OF MEGILLAH READING.

As in the case of the Haftarah we are not told directly who it was that instituted the custom, when it was introduced or what purposes it was expected to achieve. Whatever evidence we find as regards the origin of the Megillah reading, must necessarily be based

on deductions made from such statements in the Mishnah and the Talmuds as do not at all purport to trace its historical development.

Tradition relates that Esther had sent for the scholars of her day and had requested them: "קבעוני לדורות" - Establish me for all time. Tradition had interpreted this as a request by Esther that her memory (i.e. the events recorded in Esther) be kept alive by the reading of the Megillah and the celebration of Purim.² According to this tradition Esther herself was responsible for the introduction of the Megillah as part of the regular ritual for the celebration of Purim.

Another tradition attributes the introduction of Megillah reading to the "forty-eight prophets and seven prophetesses". The Talmud says: "Forty-eight prophets and seven prophetesses spoke prophecies for Israel and they neither deducted nor added to what was written in the Torah, with the exception of the law to read the Book of Esther on the Feast of Purim."³ Of course this tradition is of no historical value but it serves to point out that they sought authority for this Megillah reading in the early prophets.

A Midrashic interpretation of a verse in Esther attempts also to attribute the law to the authors of the Megillah itself, who were none other than Mordecai and Esther.⁴ R. Chelbo commenting on the words "והימים האלה נזכרים ונעשים" -⁵ "These days shall be remembered and observed" - says that the implication here is that they should be remembered by the reading of the Megillah and observed by the holding of a festive meal.⁶

But Rabbinic tradition goes back even farther than Mordecai, Esther or the prophets. The Mitzvah of reading the Megillah was originally accepted at Sinai. A Midrashic interpretation of Deut. 29:14b relates: "They had accepted at Sinai even such commandments as would

in the future be ordained, as the reading of the Megillah". The latter is substantiated by Esther 9:27 $\text{וְכִּי־לִפְנֵי־כָּל־יְהוּדָאִים־וְכִּי־לִפְנֵי־כָּל־יְהוּדָאִים־וְכִי־לִפְנֵי־כָּל־יְהוּדָאִים}$

$\text{וְכִי־לִפְנֵי־כָּל־יְהוּדָאִים}$ - which is interpreted "They (in Esther's day) merely carried out what they had already a long time before accepted."⁷

The institution of Megillah reading had also received confirmation from heaven. R. Joshua b. Levi tells that it was one of three things which the "court below" ordained and which the "court above" confirmed.⁸

Thus, we see that our Rabbis attributed the origins of this custom and the authority for it to Mordecai and Esther, to the prophets, to their ancestors who stood at Sinai, and to the Heavenly Court itself. Yet, since these are mere traditions, often cloaked in legendary form, they offer no real information as to when the Megillah had actually become a regular feature of the service.

The oldest references to the reading of the Megillah are contained in (a) a statement reported in the name of R. Zechariah ben HaKassob⁹ and in (b) a statement attributed to Rab.¹⁰ In the Tosefta we read that R. Eleazar ben Yose reports a decision regarding the reading of Esther in a leap year in the name of R. Zecharia who lived before the destruction of the second Temple. The statement of Rav prescribes that the priests should interrupt their service in the Temple, the Levites their singing, to go to hear the reading of the Megillah. The first statement shows clearly that in the minds of those who made it, the reading of the Megillah was a well-established institution during late Temple times. The second statement could be adduced to prove the same as regards its author, were it not for the fact that it is one of a group of statements seemingly designated to impress upon the people the importance of observing the custom. Thus, for example, the statement which immediately follows makes the point that even study

should be put aside for the purpose of going to hear the Megillah. Since הלכות תורה was to them even more important than Temple sacrifices, we may have here nothing more than a cumulative structure of comparative Mitzvoth emphasizing the supreme importance of the Megillah reading. For the sake of this emphasis they permitted themselves such fanciful exaggerations as the one that in years past the priests would leave their Temple functions to hear the Megillah.

Most of the Rabbis mentioned in connection with the rules about the reading of the Megillah belong to the second century. Yet this does not detract from the assertion that the custom must be older than the destruction of the Temple. This is further proved from the fact that R. Tarfon who in his youth officiated at the Temple, knew of the custom. Judah b. Ilai while yet a minor read it before him in Lod.¹¹

Again the story related in Tanaitic sources about R. Hanina ben Tradyon confirms the fact that the collection of money for the poor constituted already prior to the time of Bar Kochba a recognized feature of the Purim celebration.¹²

In addition to these indications as to the time of origin of the Megillah reading, we must consider above all the fact that a special tractate is devoted in the Mishnah to the regulations for reading and writing of the Megillah. Most of these laws are anonymous and go back to the Mishnah of R. Akiba. Since the latter, in turn, drew an older sources for his material, the antiquity of these customs cannot be doubted.¹³

WHEN WAS THE MEGILLAH READ?

The day for the reading of מילה אסתר remained unsettled for a long time. The Mishna first designates the fifteenth of Adar for reading the Megillah "in the walled cities".¹⁴ This earlier cus-

tom, which seems to fix the day definitely was modified yet in Mishnaic times. Mishnah Megillah enumerates the various dates in Adar on which, according to circumstances, the reading of the Megillah took place. The particular date was governed by two considerations: (a) the residence of the Jew concerned, whether in a walled city, large town, or village; (b) the day of the week on which the 14th of Adar fell. Accordingly, the reading might take place between the 11th and the 15th, thus giving the villagers who had no synagogue in their villages an opportunity to hear the Megillah on the marker-day.¹⁵

According to an old Boraitha quoted in the name of R. Nathan, it could be read at any time during the month of Adar.¹⁶ This may have been a concession to the villagers who, unable to read for themselves, might arrange with an experienced reader to visit them during the Month of Adar and read it to them. Such a reader would take the opportunity to visit as many villages as possible during the Month of Adar.¹⁷

As further evidence that the day for reading had remained unsettled for a long time there is a Boraitha quoted in Jerushalmi¹⁸ and in Soferim¹⁹ to the effect that in those places where it was so customary, the Megillah would be read on two days, probably the 14th and the 15th. הכל כסנהו חסדינה . The Local custom was the deciding factor at all times, since no rigid ruling had as yet been effected.

There was also a custom in some places of reading part of the Megillah on the two Saturday evenings in Adar preceding the 15th. This, in fact, was intended as a kind of rehearsal, during which the congregation would read in chorus. For this purpose the scroll was divided into two parts: chapters one to five to be read on the first Saturday evening, and chapter six to the end was read on the second

Saturday evening. The Halacha in Soferim is interrupted with a story concerning R. Meir who, upon passing the synagogue had heard the voice of the director, who discontinued his reading in the middle of the roll. Upon inquiry he was informed that this reading was merely a rehearsal.²⁰

Originally the Megillah was read once, and in the daytime. So the Mishna explicitly ordains that "the whole day is valid for the reading of the Megillah", and "it is not permitted to read the Megillah.....until the sun has risen"²¹ But in later times we find the custom established of reading it in the evening as well as in the daytime. R. Joshua ben Levi says: "A man is duty-bound to read the Megillah in the evening and to repeat it in the daytime."²² And Jerushalmi implies the same when it says that "an experienced person must read it at night and repeat in the daytime".²³ Similarly, Soferim repeats the statement of R. Joshua ben Levi²⁴ that it is one's duty to read the Megillah in the evening and again during the following day.

In leap years the Megillah is to be read only in the second month of Adar. But, if the intercalation had been made after the fifteenth of the first Adar, and the Megillah had already been read, it must be read again in the second Adar.²⁵

No reading of the Megillah is to take place on the Sabbath. The reason as given by Rab^h is that since not everyone is well acquainted with the Megillah, there is the danger that someone might transport the scroll on the Sabbath. A more interesting reason, is, however, given by R. Josef. He says that the poor look forward to the reading of the Megillah, for the gifts which are usually distributed to the poor on Purim. Since this could not be done on the Sabbath it were best not to disappoint the poor. Instead of reading from the Megillah when Purim happens to fall on a Sabbath, |'ל'א'ו
ו'ד'ר'ש'י | בע'נ'י'נו של י'ו it was customary to discuss or to

preach a sermon on the subject of the day.²⁶

HOW MUCH OF THE MEGILLAH WAS READ.

In Mishnaic times the practice in this regard was not at all uniform. The Mishna gives three differing opinions as to what parts of the Megillah should be read. These three opinions variously set the beginning of the reading at (1) the very opening of the Book of Esther, (2) at chapter 2, verse 5 and, (3) at chapter 3 verse 1. Tosefta adds a fourth: (4) chapter 6 verse 1. Though the Mishna does not say so specifically we infer that there is implied what Tosefta does add: אכל חכל סודים שצוותה לומר "All are agreed that the Mitzvah requires its completion". Thus, at whatever point the reading is begun, according to all of the four differing opinions, the requirement is not fulfilled until the entire scroll is completed.²⁷

From this early stage where, according to some, only part of the Megillah was read, we turn to the later custom where the practice of reading the entire Megillah was made compulsory by a decision of Rab: חלכה כר "The final decision is according to R. Meir who says that the whole book must be read".²⁸ From that time on the entire book has been read both in the evening and in the morning of Purim.

CHAPTER EIGHT
CANTICLES, RUTH, ECCLESIASTES AND LAMENTATIONS

Our Talmudic sources are almost entirely lacking in information as regards the other four scrolls which are to-day read in the synagogue during Passover, Shovuos, Sukkos and on the 9th of Ab respectively. In the Talmud itself we find one reference to the reading of Shir Hashirim תקורא פסוק של שיר השירים ועושה אותו כסמן

לעולם - "Whoever intones Scriptures in the manner of secular song.....brings evil to the world".¹ From this single statement we might infer that the reading of Canticles was customary in Talmudic times. By the end of the Talmudic period the readings from Canticles are known to have taken place on the two last nights of Pesach, the entire Song of Songs having been divided into two parts for this purpose. Similarly was the Book of Ruth divided for reading on Shovuos.²

Lamentations formed no part of the synagogue service in Talmudic times. But it was undoubtedly read on the ninth of Ab, for a Boraitha tells us that "Scriptures may not be read on the ninth of Ab, nor the tradition studied: but we read from Job, Lamentations and Jeremiah which deal with calamity".³ Later Lamentations became known as ספר הקינות, when it already formed a part of the synagogue service. It was read in the evening (according to some Rabbis, not until the following morning, after קריאת החורח). Soferim describes the details of the performance; tearing the clothes, covering the head with ashes, reading in a sad and wailing tone. It was important that all mourn on that day. Hence, for the sake of the women and children, the book was to be translated into "whatever langu-

age they can understand".⁴

Soferim also prescribes the prayer על מקרא מולח for Ruth, Shir Hashirim, Lamentations and Esther, even when they are read not from one single roll, containing only the one book - but even when they are read from a scroll which contains other holy writings.⁵

We have already noted the complete absence of any mention of Ecclesiastes from our sources, even from the late Tractate Soferim. This omission, we have pointed out cannot be accidental. The regular reading of Koheleth was not known to the Rabbis of the Talmud or to the editors of Soferim.⁶

CHAPTER NINE

READERS

WHO DID THE READING?

The professional reader, or Kore, is a later innovation. During the very early stages, the priest or prophet - or the king - had done the reading. As the tendency grew to democratize the synagogue service, various "honors" were distributed to the different worshippers. The privilege to read from the Torah was one of these honors. Originally only one person read the whole portion, which generally consisted of but three verses. As the size of the pericopes increased as a result of the various plans to complete the reading of the entire Pentateuch during a definite period, and particularly as it was thus possible to offer participation in the service to more of the worshippers, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7 persons were called, each one to read one of the sections of the day's קריאה . The persons called would themselves read the portion assigned.¹ There were synagogues, however, where the requisite number of persons could not be found who knew how to read. It was often necessary, therefore, that the person called to read had to be assisted or prompted by someone who stood by his side. Eventually, to avoid embarrassment to those who did not know how to read, and also because there developed the custom of chanting the Torah, a professional reader was retained who would do the reading while those honored with an קריאה would stand nearby and listen. They were, however, allowed to recite the benedictions before and after the reading of their particular sections. In some cases, perhaps for reasons of economy, the קריאה בית ,² also

assumed the duties of קרי .

We thus recognize five stages in the development of our institution as regards the persons who actually did the reading:

1--Priest, prophet, or king read.

2--One lay member of the congregation reads.

3--Three to seven members of the congregation read in turn.

4--Some of these three to seven members of the congregation called to read were assisted by promptings.

5--A professional reader, sometimes the קרי , read the entire portion.

We have already noted, in our discussion of the origin of the institution,³ those cases mentioned in Talmudic sources where either priest, prophet or king was supposed to read, or actually had read, from the Scriptures. In connection with the reading by the High Priest the Mishna⁴ tells us that "if he (the High Priest) is accustomed to read (the Scriptures) he reads himself, if not they read to him". Thus it often happened, as one Rabbi recounts, that the Scriptural lesson had to be read to the High Priest. But we may regard such cases of illiteracy among the priesthood as rather unusual.

Tradition further reports that at the original fixing of the custom by the prophets "they instituted that one person read three verses or that three persons read three verses".⁵ Evidently there was some ground to believe that in earlier times the entire reading, which consisted only of three verses, was done by one man.

The Mishna, however, does not state clearly who was to do the reading, or whether the reading was to be done by one person. When in M. Meg. IV,⁶ the rule is laid down that "he who reads the Law may not read less than three verses; he may not read more than one verse to the translator", it is quite possible that the Mishna here fixes the

minimum reading portion for any one occasion. And it is equally possible that when the Mishna further stipulated the number of reading portions for Sabbaths, holidays etc. the original custom did not provide for that many persons to take turns in the reading, but rather that the one person who reads, should divide his reading into that many sections.⁸

The change must have ^{taken} ~~took~~ place still in Mishnaic times, for both the Mishnah and Tosefta passages carry statements indicating that more than one person participated in the reading. Thus the same Mishnas which enumerated the number of portions for the various occasions repeat several times: "He who begins and he who concludes the lesson from the Law recited a benediction before it and after it (respectively)". The position of this statement, as well as the fact that the Mishnah itself does not deal with benedictions at all, point to a possibility that the statement might have been a later addition to the original Mishnah. In fact, the Tosefta, in the parallel passages,⁹ does not have it.

Yet, despite this apparent lack of clarity in the Mishna there is no doubt that the apportioning of reading sections was well established by the close of the Mishnaic period. This can be seen from the numerous statements regarding the order of "olim",¹⁰ the fixing that precedence should be given to Priests, Levites and Scholars.¹¹ The Tosefta,¹¹ too, specifically mentions a succession of readers, when it discusses the partition of a reading section which consists of four or five verses: "He who rises to read after him (i.e. after the first reader who read three of the four or five verses) is to read the remaining....."

It is quite evident that the persons called to the Torah did

their own reading. This was possible when all knew how to read. Yet, not in all synagogues was there the necessary number of persons who were proficient in the reading of the unvocalized text. In such cases, even where there was only one such person, those who could read would go through all the assigned sections, taking their seats between sections, even seven times, and returning to the reading stand each time.¹ It happened most often in those communities whose members did not speak Hebrew as their mother-tongue (ארמיא). There it was the general practice to read the beginning and the end of the pericope in Hebrew and the rest in their native tongue and usually only one person did the reading of the entire pericope. But in order to permit participation on the part of as many as could read if there were seven persons who could, each read a verse, they were all given an opportunity even if they all knew the same verse. Similarly, if only one person knew how to read, but he knew only three verses, he was to repeat these three verses even seven times (i.e. on a Sabbath). We see, therefore, that whenever possible, the principle of having each one read his piece was retained.

The Mishnah records a similar difficulty in the situation where the reading of Hebrew was required of those who brought the Bikurim. "At first those who knew how to read would read, and those who could not read would be prompted. People stopped bringing the sacrifice. They therefore ordained that both those who could and could not read should be prompted."¹³ The purpose seems clear. In order to avoid the embarrassment to which an illiterate was subjected, the service was dictated, or prompted, to all alike.

It is very likely that in connection with the Torah readings the same problem had to be faced. When one called to the Torah could not read, the קריא would in all probability, either prompt him,

or would read his portion for him. Such a practice served to accentuate the demarcation between those who could and those who could not read. The latter would therefore refuse to have themselves called to the Torah. And since the Rabbis were particularly desirous of including all people into the service, some method had to be found to do away with this embarrassing situation. Thus rose the custom of having one of the worshippers, or a professional reader, read for the literates as well as those who did not know how to read.

Several passages in the Talmud indicate that this was a prevalent practice. Thus, the Mishna forbids reading on the Sabbath by the light of the candle, except for the גבאי who is permitted to "see how the children are reading, but he may not read himself". The Amoraic discussion points out that he is permitted to look over the beginning of the reading portion but not the entire portion, from which we may infer that the גבאי was required to know not only how the portions began but the body of each portion as well, because he had to be able to assist the readers throughout the entire portion.¹⁴

Some explanation can now be found for the repeated insistence that "in the Torah only one should do the reading, and not two",¹⁵ because "two voices cannot enter one ear".¹⁶ Evidently, a prohibition was necessary against the simultaneous reading of a passage by two persons, which may have been the case when the prompter's voice would be heard. This prohibition may therefore have given rise to the elimination of reading by the מגיד , who merely said the prayers before and after, while the actual reading was done by one, designated and official, reader.¹⁷ The גבאי thus became an important functionary in connection with the reading from the Scriptures, it having now become his duty to apportion the reading sections properly, and when necessary

to read himself.¹⁸ If he did read he was obliged to transfer his other functions to someone else.¹⁹

ORDER OF SUCCESSION

As long as one person did the reading it was usually the הַכֹּהֵן עֹמֵר ²⁰ or some other dignitary who was honored with the privilege. When more members of the congregation were permitted to participate a definite order of priority had to be determined. The prerogative given to the Kohen to read first and to the Levi to read second, before an ordinary Israelite is, however, not an acknowledged right but "for the sake of peace".²¹ Even though this principle was established in Mishnaic times, we find in the beginning of the Amoraic period leading scholars such as R. Huna could read in place of the הַכֹּהֵן on Sabbaths and Festivals.²² But this practice was later stopped and instead it was ruled that "an ignorant Aaronite has precedence over a scholarly Israelite",²³ a direct reversal of the earlier principle that a scholar who was a bastard deserved precedence over an ignorant high priest.²⁴

Following the Kohen and the Levi the privilege of being called to the Torah is to be given to various worthies in the order of rank. The scholar was first. There were, too, various ranks of scholars: those officiating as "parnas"; those who are eligible for the office of "parnas" etc. Following the scholar, the sons of scholars are honored, provided, they too hold positions of esteem in the community. Then came the הַכֹּהֵן עֹמֵר and the general public.

The order as laid down here applied only in the event a Kohen was present. If there was no Kohen among those worshipping at that time "the bond is served", and any member of the congregation may be called without reference to the prescribed order; that is, a Levi need

not be called second, nor need the order of scholars and officials be followed. Yet, if there happens to be no Levi the order is not disturbed; the same Kohen, reads also in place of the Levi. But the Kohen could not voluntarily resign his priority rights under any circumstances; he was obliged to read at all events.

WHO WAS QUALIFIED TO READ?

Originally all were considered eligible for participation in the Torah reading, including minors and women. But the Rabbis said that it was not respectful to the congregation to have women read in public.²⁵ A minor was considered eligible to read (and translate) but he may not recite the Shema.²⁶ "Minor" is defined for this purpose as one who has not yet reached the age of twelve.²⁷

A נניב, "one dressed in torn garments may translate, but he may not read the Law....." Soferim repeats this statement, and adds an explanation of נניב: "whose knees are exposed, whose garments are torn, or whose head is uncovered". Thus he who is bareheaded is classed with the half-naked, who may translate but not read from the Torah. The basis for excluding the bareheaded is specifically given as the oriental custom not to mention the Tetragrammaton when the head is uncovered. The ill-clad person was permitted to recite in public those services which he could render from his seat without exhibiting his torn garments. Evidently, the translation might be done from one's seat, although the translator usually stood by the side of the person reading from the scroll. The נניב was therefore not permitted to read the Law out of respect for the congregation, for the same reason that a naked person was not allowed to appear before the congregation.²⁸

A blind man was not permitted to read, but he was allowed to translate, since at all events it was forbidden for the translator to read from a text, while the reading must never be done from memory.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. Deut. 31:10-13.
2. See below pg. 3 and notes 12-17.
3. II Kings 23:2.
4. Neh. 8:1-18.
5. II Kings 4:23.
6. Yoma I, 3, Bartinoro and other commentators. The "order of the day" is understood to refer to Lev. 16.
7. Yoma I, 6.
8. Yoma VII, 1; Sotah VII, 7
9. b. Sotah 41a
10. Yomah I; VII, 1 and Sotah VII, 7.
11. Yoma I, 6. The High Priest would not sleep during the night of Yom Kippur. It was therefore necessary for him to occupy his time and attention lest he fall asleep. Readings from the Scriptures was one way of passing the time.
12. Sotah VII, 8; Tos. Sotah VII, 13-17.
13. Meg. I, 3.
14. The reading was known as *qron melek* - the portion of the King.
15. Another tradition in Tos. Sotah VII, 13: Elizier b. Jacob claims that it was constated *...*
16. Tos. Sotah VII:14.
17. For a discussion of the duties of these various officials in Temple times and in the synagogue see G. F. Moore, "Judaism", Volume I, page 289; Idelsohn: *...* Hatoren, Volume X, nos. 3 and 7; art. "Kantoren" in Encyclopedia Judaica; and Elbogen, "Der Judische Gottesdienst", page 482.
18. Dt. 17:15.
19. Perhaps the last, if Agrippa mentioned here is the Agrippa of the time of the destruction.
20. Tos. Sotah VII, 16.
21. Taanith IV, 3; Meg. III, 6, Tos. Taanith IV, 3.
22. J. Taanith 68b.
23. The Talmud (b. Taan. 26b; b. Meg. 31b) gives an Agaddic reason for the choice of this chapter: "Were it not for the Maamadot, heaven and earth could not endure."
24. b. Meg. 3a.
25. B. Gitin 60a.
26. b. Meg. 4a, 32a; Sifra on Lev. 23:44 (ed. Weiss 103a).
27. Sifre Deut. 127 to Deut. 16:1.
28. Soferim X, 1, 10; J. Meg. 75a.
29. Scriptures are called *qron*. In Neh. 8:8 *...* *qron* is called *qron*. Therefore it is possible that Holy Days were called *qron* because they gathered to hear Scriptures read. (A suggestion by M. Friedman in *...*, Vol. III, page 101.)
30. Probably with the purpose of establishing authority for the custom.
31. Accepting this Talmudic tradition which connects the first regular readings with the festivals, Dr. Buechler suggests that systematic readings developed from the special festival readings ordained by the Rabbis out of their strong opposition to the Samaritan interpretation of the Biblical commands with regard to the observance of the festivals. The Samaritans and the Saducees did not accept the

Pharisaic interpretation of the phrase *מִן־הַלֵּל* and likewise of the command regarding the Lulab on Succoth and the date of Passover. The Rabbis, in order to make their followers better acquainted with their own interpretations, ordained that the particular portions in dispute should be read on the festivals concerned, especially since the readings would be expounded to the assembled people. It was these festival readings which in time developed into regular readings on Sabbaths, minor feasts and special occasions.

Kohler, "Origins of Synagogue and Church", Chapter XIX, maintains that the mere legal necessity of impressing upon the people the Pharisaic view of the festival calendar and the festival laws could not have provided the impetus for "such a mighty institution". Rather was it the desire on the part of the Rabbis to make the Torah "the inheritance of the house of Jacob", to wrest it from the monopoly of the priests that created this institution. Witness the fact that reading was later taken from the priests and distributed among the various members of the congregation. Witness, too, that Ezra's reading and the commandment in Deuteronomy show that it must have been a custom before it became a permanent institution.

32. Soferim X, 2: J. Meg. 75a; b. Baba Kama 82a.
33. *מִן־הַלֵּל*, *מִן־הַלֵּל* (Ed. Weiss p.53).
34. Translate: Allegarists. Their interpretations were based on the three methods of *פֶּסֶק*, *מִן־הַלֵּל*, *מִן־הַלֵּל*.
35. The deduction.....*מִן־הַלֵּל* connecting the wilderness experience with the origins of readings is a later addition to the original Boraitha.
36. b. Baba Kama, 82a
37. Incidentally, the emphasis here and elsewhere that certain details of the procedure were planned with reference to the ten *מִן־הַלֵּל* to those who would come to town on market days, seems to support Kohlen's view that the underlying motive in Scriptural reading was the democratization of Torah. Herford, "The Pharisees" pp. 92-99, also holds this view.
38. Mekilta *ibid*.
39. See Mekilta, *ibid*, note, where Weiss points out that the reading of Torah could not have been instituted before the Torah itself had been given.
40. Weiss quotes a similar problem in connection with the reading of the Megilla on Purim. When the Mishna reports that Mordecai and Esther set the reading of the Megilla in advance on the gathering (market) day before Purim, the question rises as to how could Mordecai and Esther introduce a custom when the very institution of market days on Monday and Thursday was an innovation, introduced by Ezra who lived much later. In explaining this contradiction the Talmud (J. Meg.) remarks that the author of the Mishna was merely trying to discover in the text of the Megilla supporting authority for the institution of court-days, which was a later innovation, and for the readings on these days.
41. b. Baba Kame, *Ibid*.
42. The readings on Saturday afternoon may have had their origins, as precludes to the usual Saturday afternoon discourse. Buechler suggests this as the origin of Haftarah readings. It is likely that they read from Scriptures *מִן־הַלֵּל* or to corroborate the prophetic passages.

43. Page 6 and 7
44. b. Meg. 31b.
45. B. Baba Kama 82a.
46. In line with his theory Dr. Buechler suggests that the reading of the curses was directed against the Samaritans who had falsified verse 4 of Dt. 27 and incorporated it into the Decalogue.
47. Meg. 3a; J. Meg. 74d.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. Mishnah Megillah gives a reading for only the first day of Passover.
2. See above, pages 3 and 4.
3. If it happens to be on Saturday; otherwise, the Saturday preceding the first day of Adar.
4. Altho Beuchler has shown that, in the triennial cycle, the section for each year of the cycle came to an end on the last Sabbath before Adar and the new section was not commenced until the first Sabbath of Nissan. Thus there remained four Sabbaths unprovided with Scriptural readings. The Rabbis utilized these Sabbaths for polemical purposes, and ordained on them such Scriptural readings as would impress upon the people their own interpretation of certain biblical passages on which they were in dispute with the Saducees.
5. Meg. IV,4; Sof. XI,2.
6. Two reasons are given: (1) That Israel may hear the law in its entirety and (2) To avoid the tedium of rolling and unrolling the scroll in the presence of the congregation. J. Meg. 75b. Some, however, contend that the rule applies only to the reading at one service which must be continuous; but the readings from week to week need not be.
7. Meg. III,4; Tos. Meg. IV,1-4. It may be observed that the oldest Halakhic Midrashim, the Mekilta, Sifra and Sifre, contain no reference to the extra-ordinary readings on these four special Sabbaths. Nor does M. Soferim.
8. Tosefta also lists the Haftarah readings. See page 42.
9. i.e. week.
10. Shekalim I,1; Soferim XXI,4; b. Meg. 13b. Soferim explains that "God knew that Haman was destined to weigh out (שקל) money for the right to persecute Israel, hence Moses anticipated by commanding that the Temple Shekalim should be paid before the festival celebrating Haman's downfall.
11. b. Meg. 29b.
12. Ibid.
13. Buechler suggests that originally the reading of Shekalim was instituted in commemoration of the victory of the Pharisees over the Saducees over the question of the Tamid offering (see Meg. Taam. IV or b. Taam. 17b, or b. Menachoth 65a). Nu. 28 was, therefore, appropriate. Originally Shekalim was read on the second Sabbath of Nissan, but when the cycles were fixed and no readings were set for the month of Adar, Shekalim was shifted.
14. In each case Buechler suggests that the special readings may have had their origin in the dispute of the two religious sects.
15. b. Meg. 30b.
16. b. Meg. 29b.
17. Which seems to support Buechler's contention that the cycle ended before the first of Adar and that, after the four Parashiyot, the cycle was resumed.
18. Meg. III,5.
19. b. Meg. 31a.
20. See Rashi ad loc.
21. The order given by Abbai is the one in use today in reading the

Ashkenazic synagogue. In addition to these readings however, a portion of Nu. 28 is read from a second scroll.

- 22. See ref. to Rashi above.
- 23. Tosefta merely says: הוּרְבֵי הַיְיָוָה נֶחְדָּשׁ יְיָוָה.
- 24. Meg. III,5.
- 25. Simchat Torah is not mentioned in the Talmud.
- 26. Meg. III,6.
- 27. Soferim XVII,7; XX,10 adds that the Sabbath reading extends as far as Nu. 8:4.
- 28. b. Meg. 31a.
- 29. Soferim XX,10.
- 30. Since the several sections rarely consist of ten verses, Sof. XX,11 adds that one should not begin above the designated section for the day for the sake of fulfilling the required ten verses.
- 31. b. Meg. 29b.
- 32. J. Meg. 74b.
- 33. J. Meg. 74b.
- 34. i.e. three persons are called to read, one person is called to read, etc.
- 35. Also called R. Avdimi (J. Meg. 74b).
- 36. Napaha's tradition is based on the principle of יְיָוָה נֶחְדָּשׁ יְיָוָה. Rosh Chodesh according to him is a more frequent occurrence than Chanukah.
- 37. XII,7 and XX,12 where יְיָוָה נֶחְדָּשׁ יְיָוָה should be read יְיָוָה נֶחְדָּשׁ יְיָוָה (Mueller, ibid. note 39, page 292).
- 38. The procedure on the second day is explained on the ground that the preference to the (יְיָוָה) permanent had already been shown on the previous day.
- 39. This is the meaning of יְיָוָה נֶחְדָּשׁ יְיָוָה according to Mueller, although he admits that יְיָוָה נֶחְדָּשׁ יְיָוָה in Soferim is generally used for the reading of the prophetic portions.
- 40. Meg. III,5: J. Meg. 74b; Sof. XX,12.
- 41. b. Meg. 29b.
- 42. Tosefta gives no reading for Purim.
- 43. Buechler, here, too, maintains that this reading of the Amalek passage, instituted by the Rabbis as a warning against the dangers from Hellenism, gave rise to the legend linking Haman with the Amalekites.
- 44. Rabbinowitz, Joseph, "Mishnah Megillah", page 105.
- 45. Meg. III,6.
- 46. Tos. Meg. IV,9; b. Meg. 31a; Sof. XVIII,9.
- 47. XVII,9.
- 48. Sof. XVII,2,3,8.
- 49. The fast of Esther was not known in Talmudic times.
- 50. Tos. Meg. IV,9.
- 51. b. Meg. 31a.
- 52. XVII,7.
- 53. Tos. Meg. IV,10.
- 54. b. Meg. 31a.
- 55. Sof. X,4.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. See page 19 .
2. M. Meg. IV,4; Sof. XI,2; b. Meg. 24a; b. Yoma, 69b; b. Sota 41a.
3. i.e. to avoid the waste of time and the tedium. See also note *of chapter II*
4. J. Shabbos 15c; Sof. XVI,10.
5. Mueller, M. Soferim, page 220, note 34.
6. See page 19 .
7. It has been suggested that the Deuteronomic precept may have led to a seven year cycle, which in turn led to two three and one half cycles. *reference*
8. In connection with the dispute over the reading on Sabbath Shekalim, see above page 19 .
9. The Palestinian cycle is the basis in such Midrashic works as the Rabbas and Tanhuma. Esther Rabba enumerates 155 Sedarim.
10. Graetz.
11. See above page 19 .
12. Accepting the same basis of computation and following the order prescribed by R. Judah, one would then arrive at a five and one-half cycle.
13. b. Baba Kama 82a.
14. In Palestine; in Babylon and elsewhere the first two days and the last two days of the three festivals.
15. Meg. IV,1-2; Tos. Meg. IV,11; Sof. X,5,6,7.
16. b. Meg. 23a; JMeg. 75a.
17. Tosefta ibid. The reports of this dispute between R. Akiba and R. Ishmael are at variance, and Bavli, Meg. 23a struggles to reconcile them. Thus while the Tosefta reports Akiba as favoring six on Sabbaths and seven on Atonement, and that he would permit no additions, another version reports Ishmael to be opposed to additions and Akiba favoring them. The Talmud finally admits both Mishna and Tosefta to be the tradition of the School of Ishmael (תנא דבני ר' ישמעאל) and that the differing versions are those of two Tanaim both quoting in the name of R. Ishmael.
18. b. Meg. 22b.
19. b. Meg. 23a; J. Meg. 75a.
20. On the Sabbath we hurry home to enjoy the Sabbath meal (עוננו) has for Sabbaths we remain "to hear the explanation of the weekly portion". On the basis of this Meg. passage Mueller suggests that originally the Boraita read *בשבת וכו' וכו' וכו'* .
21. b. Baba Kama 82a. See page 19 .
22. 10b, where it is brought in to explain the same numbers in connection with the 3, 5 or 7 judges required for the various types of courts.
23. b. Meg. 23a: see Rashi.
24. Name of a city or, according to some, he was one of the Minim.
25. Tos. Meg. IV,12.
26. Sof. XI,4. Those invited to read are called *קראים* and *קריאים* .
27. b. Rosh Hashanna 31a.
28. The fourth and fifth sections are also given as beginning with *וי' וכו' וכו'* (verse 19) and *וי' וכו' וכו'* (verse 27) respectively.

See Rashi, b. Rosh Hashanna 31a.

- 29. Soferim XII,8; J. Meg. 74b.
- 30. M. Meg. III,6; Tos. Meg. IV:31.
- 31. Soferim XII,1-2; J. Meg. 74b; b. Meg. 31b. See also Deut. Rabba 4,1 and Koheleth Rabba 8,7. Abaye and R. Huna in b. Meg. state that the rule applied only to the curses in Leviticus but not to those in Deuteronomy.
- 32a. Meg. IV,4; Sof. XI,1; Tos. Meg. IV,17; b. Meg. 21b-22a.
- 32b. Sof. XXI,7; J. Meg. 75a.
- 33. It does not, however, follow that on such days where four, five or six are called, the number of verses must necessarily be limited to a corresponding multiple of three.
- 34. J. Meg. 75a; b. Meg. 21b.
- 35. Ten unemployed men in the synagogue.
- 36. b. Meg. 24a.
- 37. b. Meg. 21b; Sof. XXI,7; J. Taan. 68a; J. Meg. 75a.
- 38. b. Meg. 22a. Some authorities insisted only on the rule re not beginning the reading within three verses, because they argue that occasionally people will enter the synagogue later but rarely do they leave during the service.
- 39. Sof. XI,5; Tos. Meg. IV,17; b. Meg. 22a.
- 40. b. Meg. 22a; b. Taanith 27b. Rav who holds לליל cannot accept פביל because he argues that the versification of the Pentateuch had been arranged by Moses. Hence we may not make a new one. Samuel does not accept לליל because of those who leave or enter during the reading. See page . Thus, for example, according to the principle of ג' ח' ט' ז' ט"ו, Gen. 1:5b, 8b ו' ח' ג' ב' א' ו' ח' ג' ב' א' is considered a new verse.
- 41. Shekalim and ZaKor. The four special parashiyot become Maftir readings because these two parashas could not meet the requirement of ten verses.
- 42. b. Meg. 21b; J. Taan. 68a; J. Meg. 75c; Sof. XX,11; XXI,6-7.
- 43. Sof. XI:6; XXI,7.
- 44. Meg. IV,10. The same passage appears also in Tos. Meg. IV,31-38 and in Sof. IX,9-10.
- 45. b. Meg. 25a.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. See Chapter I.
2. M. Meg. IV,1-4,10; Tos. Meg. IV,1-4, 31-41.
3. Buechler, JQR, vol. 6, does contend that the readings from the prophets were inaugurated as a regular institution by the Pharisees when they noticed that numerous passages in the prophets supported their explanations of the Pentateuch in their arguments with the Saducees. In this connection, see Kohler's counter-argument expressed against a similar contention with regard to the Pentateuchal readings, in note 31 to Chapter I, above.
4. Sof. XII,7 and XIV,2 give rules for the abbreviation of the Haftarah if a sermon is to be based on it. Cf. b. Meg. 23b.
5. The origin of Haftarah readings has been given by Elijah Levita (quoted in Elbogen, P. 175) and by Abudraham (p. 52b, ed. Prague) as a substitute for the reading from the Pentateuch which had been proscribed by Antiochus Epiphanes. There is no proof for this assumption. It is similarly logical that the Syrians should likewise prohibit reading from the Prophets. Elbogen, *ibid.* and J. Mann in H.U.C. Annual vol. LV, p. 282. These theories, moreover pay no attention to the fact that the prophets must have been read during the exile and hence their reading must be dated since then. See Freehof, S.B., "Origin and Development of the Haftarah", in H.U.C. Monthly, Dec. 1914. Moreover in the persecution of Antiochus the whole existence of Judaism was involved and not a mere item of the service, such as the reading from the Torah.
6. Kohler, *Origins of Synagogue and Church*, p. 94.
7. Jesus read from the prophets in the synagogue. (Luke 4:17).
8. Buechler, A, "Reading of Prophets in Triennial Cycle" - JQR vol. 6, 1894.
9. The present Massoretic arrangement is, of course, later than the Talmudic period.
10. b. Gitin, 60a.
11. Tos. Meg. IV,7.
12. S. Rappaport in ערך סילין, S.V. אמתא.
13. Lauterbach, Jacob Z., "The Pharisees and their Teachings", page 10.
14. See note 3, above.
15. That the prophets formed the basis for the synagogal discourse is to be seen from the fact that the Targumin contain, in addition to the translation elaborate homilies at many points. Also from the fact that Midrashim such as Pesikta Rabbati, are based on prophetic portions.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. M. Meg. IV,1.
2. M. Meg. IV,2.
3. These passages are discussed below. See pages 55ff.
4. Tosefta Meg. IV,1-4. The reading for Shekalim is given also in a quotation from the Tosefta in b. Meg. 29b. The entire Boraitha is quoted without comment in b. Meg. 30a.
5. i.e. When Rosh Chodesh is observed on the following day, Sunday.
6. J. Meg. 75a (two passages there).
7. ibid.
8. J. Meg. 74d.
9. J. Meg. 75b and repeated in J. Yoma 44a and in J. Sotah 22a.
10. Soferim X,5-7.
11. ibid. XX,10.
12. ibid. XVII,9.
13. ibid. XVII,7.
14. Tos. Meg. IV,2; b. Meg. 30a.
15. b. Meg. 29b, 30a.
16. Tos. Meg. IV,2; b. Meg. 30a. Whether the tradition linking Homan with the Amalekites preceded the fixing of the Amalek readings for the Sabbath before Purim, or the readings for that day reached in the ordinary course of the cycle to the Amalek passage and thus gave birth to the tradition, is of course difficult to determine. Buechler seems to think that in this and in all similar cases (e.g. that the crossing of the Red Sea took place on the seventh day of Adar) the reading preceded and was thus the origin of the tradition.
17. Tos. Meg. IV,3; b. Meg. 30a.
18. Tos. Meg. IV,4; b. Meg. 30a.
19. The word וְכָל־הַיּוֹם in Tos. Meg. IV,7 is misleading. Here the literal meaning of וְכָל־הַיּוֹם is intended, i.e. "we conclude the Pentateuchal reading for the Day of Atonement with Nu. 29:7, which is to be read from memory (not out of the scroll)". Incidentally, we must observe that Yom Kippur alone is singled out in this list of festival readings with a reading from the קָרְבָּנוֹת - sacrificial offerings in Nu. 29. Since too, our present וְכָל־הַיּוֹם readings from that chapter were not yet known in Talmudic times, this וְכָל־הַיּוֹם appears to be a later interpolation. These words do not appear in the identical passage in Soferim XVII,6.
20. b. Meg. 31a.
21. Note 16 above.
22. Tradition places the attack on Jerusalem by Sennacherib on the night of Pesach. He had arrived at Nob during the day and waited for the night of Pesach to make his attack. Since Pesach night is לַיְלַת פֶּסַח for Israel he was repulsed. This tradition is embodied in a stanza of Kallir's poem וְכָל־הַיּוֹם וְכָל־הַיּוֹם, which is included in the piyut for the second day of Passover, and in the Haggadah.
23. Re the reading of Ez. I which is forbidden in the Mishna see later discussion, page 59.
24. Or, as Buechler maintains; the two opinions represent readings for the same day in different years of the cycle. If this is so it is surprising that only two of the three years are mentioned. Why not a third opinion based on the third year of the cycle? They again, since the Babylonian Amoraim were prim-

- arily interested in setting down the prevailing custom and were not actuated by motives of historical research, they did not find it necessary to include a reference to the third year's reading, since it had been previously dropped in Babylon.
25. According to Buechler, Gen. 30:22 formed originally the Torah reading for the New Year. The selection of I Sam. 2 was because it was similar in context to the visitation of Rachel. That Gen. 30:22 was the original reading may follow from Buechler's calculations of the triennial cycle, but that the Haftarah in Samuel was selected to fit it is no more reasonable than its selection to fit the visitation of Sarah. (JQR vol. 6, page 20).
 26. See above chapter 5, end.
 27. Before the Massoretic divisions of the Bible into chapters and verses, Scriptural passages could be referred to only by describing its contents or by the first words of the passage. These two methods consistently employed in Talmudic sources often leads to ambiguity and confusion. From these references, too, we are unable to tell at what point any reading was supposed to end.
 28. Idelsohn, A.Z. - "Jewish Liturgy", page 233. Buechler argues that the *דפטיך יונת* began with Jonah 3:8, and that not all the four chapters of Jonah were read. As proof he quotes M. Taan. II,1 and J. Taan. *ibid*, where in connection with the fast Jonah 3:8 is mentioned. Elbogen considers the assignment in b. Meg. 31a for Mincha on Yom Kippur as a very late gloss. (p. 542).
 29. Cf. the prayer. *הרחמן הוא יקים לנו את סוכת דוד הנפלה*.
 30. b. Meg. 31a; M. Meg. IV,2 and Sof. X,6.
 31. b. Meg. *ibid*.
 32. XVII,9. This is an older custom, which was changed in Babylonia by Rav.
 33. XVII,7 and XX,12 - This is how Mueller (page 166 note 20) interprets *והדפטיך בשל שנה וראש חודש*. He rejects the possible interpretation that the last person (*דפטיך*) should read from the Torah about Chanukah and the New Moon on the grounds that *בגדי* in Soferim is used for prophetic readings only.
 34. b. Meg. 31b. Re the origin of the special readings before and after the 9th of Ab, see later discussion page 52.
 35. Sof. XX, 10 and b. Meg. 31a. The Haftarah begins with verse 40, *וכן ביום השמיני ער* according to Mueller, page 245, note 36. *וזה קעטת חסנורת* is a gloss which denotes the reading for the eighth day.
 36. According to the Midrash the resurrection of the dead will take place in Nissan and the war with the nations on Tishre.
 37. b. Pesachim 117b.
 38. b. Shabbos 24a.
 39. b. Gitin 60a.
 40. M. Meg. IV,10; Tos. Meg. IV,32-4, 39-41; b. Meg. 25a; Sof. IX,8.
 41. b. Meg. 23a; Sof. XI,1.
 42. M. Meg. IV,1 and Sof. X,5.
 43. b. Meg. 30a. See above chapter II, page .
 44. In the Bodelian library there is a manuscript of a three-year seder of Haftarahs which was found in Cairo probably belonging to a congregation of Palestinian Jews. Buechler, JQR, vol. 6, mentions another manuscripts, all of which date from a later period. An analysis of the various Midrashim (e.g. Pesikta) shows that they are based on some Haftarah cycle. A study too, of the Karaite cycles show evidence of an early cycle development.

45. Buechler (pp. 65-72) contends that these three, and seven, Haftarat are of Palestinian origin. Rab had brought the custom of he returned to Babylon in 210 C.E. But, since the Babylonian Talmud makes no mention of these Punishment Haftarat as such, nor of the Consolation Haftarat at all, he concludes that they were unknown in Babylon and that they had originated in Palestine. He reasons thus particularly from the circumstance that only the first or the ninth could fall on a Sabbath in the same year. As no Haftarahs were read on week-days, Rav's assignment for the ninth must have applied to the Sabbath. Thus it came about that they read both these passages on the first and second Sabbaths of Ab. Buechler's argument "e silentio" is self-contradictory. We have pointed out above that the Jerusalem Talmud mentions no Haftarat at all. Furthermore, is he not mistaken when he says that no Haftarat were read on the ninth of Ab if on a week-day? b. Meg. 22b and b. Taan 29b both have the same passage: קורין שלשה ומפסיר אחד חל להיות בשני ונחמישי קורין שלשה ומפסיר אחד חל להיות בשני ונחמישי ונרביעי קורא אחד ומפסיר אחד J. Mann, H.U.C. Annual IV, 287 proves by the correspondence of these Haftarahs with the consolatory portions and the earlier parts of Baruch, that these Haftarat must have originated in Palestine. He places them much earlier than the date suggested by Buechler, viz, earlier than the Post-Talmudic times.
46. b. Meg. 29b.
47. M. Meg. IV,4.
48. Tos. Meg. IV,18+19. Quoted also in b. Meg. 24a; b. Yoma 69b; b. Sotah 41a; J. Yomah 44a; J. Sotah 22a; Sof. XI,2 and XXI,7. See also above, Chapter III, page 20.
49. An illustration where a Haftarah was selected simply because it followed a passage which was read at the preceding service is given by Buechler. Isaiah 58:3, he maintains, was originally selected as the Haftarah for Yom Kippur Mincha because the morning Haftarah had been Isaiah 57 (JQR vol. 6, p. 25). His claim that Is. 58:3 was a Haftarah is based on the fact that in J. Taanith 65b that verse is mentioned in connection with the fast.
50. Much controversy centers about the question as to whether Jesus was permitted to select his own passage or whether he read a previously assigned passage. Scholars are equally divided in their interpretation of the story in Luke 4:17.
51. M. Meg. IV,1: Sof. X,5.
52. b. Shabbos 24a; Rashi a.l.
53. A detailed analysis of the entire problem is to be found in an article, "Changes in the Divine Service of the Synagogue due to Religious Persecution" by Dr. J. Mann in H.U.C. Annual, vol. IV, pp. 241-310. The Sabbath afternoon Haftarah is treated in pp. 282-287. In addition to the conclusion which we have quoted Dr. Mann points out (1) that these readings had to be abolished on account of a proscription of the Persian government towards the end of the fifth century and the beginning of the sixth, (2) that the Haftarahs which were customarily read in Babylon on Saturday afternoons-and which the Mazdaks proscribed-were the consolation Haftarahs of Deuter - Isaiah, (3) that these Sunday afternoon readings were not re-introduced after the intolerance had ceased and the Sassanids were overthrown, evidently because it was against the Mishnaic proscription, (4) the cycle of seven consolation Haftarahs was then adopted in Babylon for the seven weeks following the ninth of Ab in accordance with the Pal-

estinian custom.

- 54. b. Shabbos 116b. That מִלְּפָנֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם in the Talmud ^{refers} to study and not to service may be seen from b. Yomah 87a - 'פְּסִקְתָּ דִּי לְפָנֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלִפְנֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים וְלִפְנֵי הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרַחֲמֵי שְׁמַיָּהּ וְלִפְנֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים וְלִפְנֵי הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרַחֲמֵי שְׁמַיָּהּ ---etc.'" The story goes on to relate that while Rav was reading in the presence of Rabbi (Judah Ha-Nasi) R. Hiya entered and Rav started his reading over again. Two others walked in at intervals and Rav started over again each time. Finally, when a fourth entered he refused to begin again. It is hardly possible that a Divine service should be thus repeatedly begun every time a new personage enters, even though they be such great scholars as are listed in the account. I offer this comment with apologies to S. Buber who in his introduction to Pesikta de Rav Kahana maintains that the passage in b. Shabbos 24a should be understood as stating that in Nehardea they would read from the Hagigropha on Saturday afternoons, and that the very composition of the Pesikta as a פְּסִקְתָּ דִּי לְפָנֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם points conclusively to that meaning of the expression פְּסִקְתָּ דִּי לְפָנֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם .
- 55. b. Meg. 30b; b. Taan. 12b.
- 56. b. Meg. 31b.
- 57. XVII, 7.
- 58. b. Meg. 22b; b. Taan 29b.
- 59. M. Meg. IV, 1-2; M. Soferim X, 5-6.
- 60. See discussion above page 38 .
- 61. b. Shabbos 24a.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

1. b. Meg. 23a.
2. b. Sorah 39b.
3. J. Ber. 9c; Tos. Meg. IV,20; b. Meg. 21b; J. Meg. 74d.
4. ibid. In the Torah only (a) is permitted. In the prophets (a) and (b) are permitted. In reading of the Megillah all are permitted - even ten may read and ten translate. Emend in J. Meg. 74d: לא שנים קוראין ואחד מתורגמין ואחד קורא, as in Tosefta. Situation (c) for the prophets and Megillah is missing from Tosefta.
5. b. Meg. 23a.
6. J. Meg. 75a.
7. b. Meg. 23a; b. Taan. 29b. R. Jose in these passages insists that three persons read from the Torah even on Tuesday and Thursday, but the Mofrir is one of the three.
8. Tos. Meg. IV,18.
9. b. Meg. 23a. I find that Freehoff has mistaken the passage:
 וְאִם אֵתָּא עֶשְׂרִים וָאַרְבַּע קוּיִין . He translates: "If the paragraph has twenty-four verses he may read it". וְאִם אֵתָּא is a question, referring to the previous statement in connection with the discussion on סַחֲךָ שִׁיעֵלָה לְסַנֵּיין שְׁבַע. It is an argument against the one who holds that the Maftir is not one of the seven. If he is an eighth reader, the question asserts, the Haftarah portion should consist of twenty-four verses. See Rashi a.1.
10. It is our Haftarah for 13, consisting of Jer. 7:21-34, 8:1-3 and 9:22-23 -- seventeen verses in all. It is possible that at one time the Haftarah was shorter, for vs. 23- כִּי אִם אֵתָּא חֲדָשׁ has the Massoretic Sidrah points, and perhaps closed the Haftarah (Mueller, p. 187, note 3).
11. M. Soferim XXI,7.
12. ibid. Xiv,1. Probably the ראש חכונסת is thus honored with a verse from the prophetic reading. Or, possibly, the additional verse was for the חַיִּים who by this period was already the official Kore.
13. ibid XII,7 and XIV,2 where אַבְל תְּרִנּוֹן וְדַרְשׁוּ תְּרִנּוֹן should read אֵין דַּרְשׁוּ.
14. J. Taan. 68a.
15. J. Meg. 75a (middle of the page).
16. ibid. (bottom).
17. M. Meg. IV,4.
18. M. Soferim XI,1.
19. M. Meg. IV,10; Tos. Meg. IV,31-38; Sof. IX,9-11; b. Meg. 25a. These banned passages are discussed seritim by M. Friedman in *בֵּית הַלְלוֹךְ*, vol. III, pp. 139-143.
20. b. Chagigah 13a, 14b; b. Shabbos 13b.
21. Tos. Meg. IV,39-41; Sof. IX,8; b. Meg. 25b.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Soferim XIV,3 and 8.
2. b. Meg. 7a, and Rashi ^{a.l.} A.F.
3. b. Meg. 14a.
4. So it appears from Esther 9:20 and 29. Tradition even went further. "R. Meir said: The Book of Esther was dictated by the Holy Spirit". (b. Meg. 7a.)
5. Esther 9:28.
6. J. Meg. 70a.
7. b. Shovouth 39a.
8. B. Meg. 7a; b. Maccoth 23b; ^{לפי הדין} - (Esther 9:27)
^{אשר נכתב} Also J. Meg. 14c.
9. Tos. Meg. I,6.
10. b. Meg. 20a; J. Meg. 73b. Cf. Tos. Meg. II,8.
11. b. Abodah Zarah 17b - 18a.
12. Rabbinowitz, page 17.
13. M. Shekalim I,1.
14. M. Meg. I,1-2. The Mishnah lists in elaborate detail when the Megillah should be read in each of the three types of settlements: i.e. villages, cities and walled cities, depending upon what day of the week the 14th happened to be.
15. J. Meg. 70a.
16. Rabbinowitz, page 19.
17. J. Meg. 70b; J. Shekalim 46a.
18. Soferim XXI,8.
19. ibid. XIV,18.
20. M. Meg. II,4-5.
21. b. Meg. 4a.
22. J. Meg. 73b.
23. ibid.
24. Sof. XIV,18.
25. M. Meg. I,4.
26. b. Meg. 4b, 4a.
27. M. Meg. II,3.
28. J. Meg. 73b.

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NOTES TO CHAPTER EIGHT

1. b. San. 101a.
2. Soferim XIV,18.
3. b. Taanith 30a.
4. Soferim XVIII,4 and 7.
5. Soferim XIV,3.
6. See Chapter VII, above. Interesting to note is the fact that one mss. of M. Soferim does have $\eta\lambda\eta\rho$ in XIV,3. (Mueller, p. 187, note 8).

NOTES TO CHAPTER NINE

1. See note 26 of chapter III .
2. See note 17 of chapter I .
3. See Chapter I, page .
4. Yoma I,6.
5. b. Raba Kama 82a, See page 6 above.
6. Also b. Meg. 22a.
7. M. Meg. IV,1-2.
8. The expressions קורין ארבעה...קורין חמשה etc. are ambiguous: they may be translated either "we read four sections" or "four persons read---five persons read---". The same ambiguity is to be found in the Tosefta: ש"י כ"ד שיקראו שנעה וקראו where, too, the subject of the verb can be taken both ways (Tos. Meg. IV,18). The fact that the same passage continues קורין חמשה וקורא שנעה strengthens the contention that the Boraitha had in mind a single reader who read all the portions.
9. Tos. Meg. IV,11.
10. Those called to come up to the Torah.
11. Tos. Meg. IV,17. Also J. Meg. 75a.
12. Tos. Meg. IV,12.
13. N. Bikkurim III,7.
14. b. Sabb. 12b, and Rashi a. l. Also Mueller: חז"ל מנחמים --No. 47
15. Tos. Meg. IV,20; b. Meg. 21b; J. Ber. 9c; J. Meg. 74d.
16. J. Meg. ibid.
17. To appease the readers who thus felt that they might not be complying with the Mitzvah, the reading by one person and the saying of the benediction by another, was justified on the principle אמר על ידי (J. Meg. 74c: b. Succoh 38b).
18. Sof. XI,4.
19. Tos. Meg. IV,21. Change מנחם to מנחין. (Zuckerman, a. l; Moore I, 290.) Similarly, if the chazan did the translating he was obliged to appoint someone in his place. J. Meg. 74d, where the reason is given: כשם שניתנה תורה על ידי סמוך כך אנו צריכין לנחון בה על ידי סמוך --"As the Law was given thru an agent (Moses) so it must be taught through an agent."
20. See note 17, chapter I .
21. M. Gitin V,8. If we are to follow the theory the custom of reading from the Scriptures was originally planned by the Rabbis to combat the allegation that the Torah was the exclusive possession of the priveleged priests, we can see why they found it necessary to appease the priest by special priveleges "for the sake of peace". Yet there are many other situations where priority is given to the Kohen. (b. Gitin 59a; M. Horaiot III,8 and b. Haraiot, 3a.
22. b. Gitin 59b.
- 23.
24. M. Horaiot III,8.
25. Tos. Meg. IV,11; b. Meg. 23a.
26. M. Meg. IV,6; Sof. XIV,15.
27. Sof. XIV,17 defines a "minor" who may recite the Shema" as one who is above twelve years of age. Hence, a minor who may not recite the Shema is one who has not reached that age.
28. b. Meg. 24b.

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