

"The Reading of the Law".

A Graduation Thesis.

By Jacob B. Pollak.

March 15, 1912.

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Introduction

This is the first paper of any considerable length, of which the writer is aware, in which an attempt has been made to treat, "The Reading of the Law," from its earliest beginnings to the present day. Various monographs, articles, essays have been written on various phases of this subject, but no one writer has attempted to treat or combine in the subject as a whole, except a few writers who have written short sketches for Encyclopaedia. It is, here, perhaps that this paper may be of value. For it attempts to treat the whole subject, from Biblical days to our own time, at some length. This paper claims very little originality. It is a mere compilation; an attempt has been made to bring together and systematize a great many of the things that have been written on this subject. If the writer has succeeded in doing this, he will be well satisfied.

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The custom of Reading from the Law in public is an old institution, traces of which, are already to be found in the Bible. Like many other customs and institutions it had small beginnings, from which there gradually developed a comprehensive and complex institution, which has, with numerous changes, continued down to our own time.

The only direct reference to the Reading of the Law in the Pentateuch is found in Deuteronomy Chap. 31. verses 9 to 36. Moses writes down the Law and gives it to the priests, the sons of Levi and to the elders of Israel. "And Moses commanded them saying, at the end of seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this Law before all Israel in their hearing." The only other references to a direct reading of the Law in the Bible are found in II Kings Chaps 22+23, and Nehemiah Chaps. 8+9. In II Kings we are informed of the finding and reading of the Book of the Covenant to the assembled people by King Josiah. In Nehemiah, we are told that Ezra, who came back from Babylon with the complete Pentateuch, read from

the same at the request of the people, which event probably occurred on Rosh Hashanah. In the 8th Chapter verse 18. we are further informed that the Law was read during the Feast of Sukkoth "day by day from the first unto the last day." In Chap 9. verses 1 to 3 we are also told of a Reading on the 24th day of the seventh month.

All the above references point to the fact, that as late as Ezra's time there was not, as yet, a definite and fixed institution of Reading the Law in public. The Reading of the Law by Josiah and Ezra were called forth by extraordinary occasions. Whether the injunction laid down in Deuteronomy, Chapter 31. was really carried out we do not know. It has been suggested, that the Deuteronomic precept mentioned above, led to the practice of reading a small chapter from the Pentateuch each Sabbath.[©]

As is usually the case with a custom or an institution the origin of which cannot easily be ascertained, the Reading of the Law has been ascribed to such men as Moses, Ezra, the prophets and the sages. Thus Josephus [©] ascribes it to Moses. "The law giver," he says, showed the Law to be the best and the most necessary means of instruction by

© Law Reading from in J. E. Vol III.

© Contra Apionem II-17.

Josephus, Ant. J. 1. 7. 1.

All the above mentioned traditions point to the antiquity of the institution of the Reading of the Law. When exactly it arose it is difficult to determine. Dr. Adolph Büchler in a learned and ingenious article on the "Triennial Reading of the Law,"^a believes that the institution dates from about 200 B.C. For he points to the fact that Sirach in his preface informs us that already in the second century B.C., the Egyptian Jews had as a permanent institution the Reading of the Law with all its accessory expositions, from which he concludes that the institution was introduced about 200 B.C. But does this inference naturally follow from the statement in Sirach? It is quite possible to argue that the institution ~~was~~ is a great deal older, possibly as old as 300 B.C.

An institution of the complexity of the Reading of the Law is not the product of a day or of the year. It is the result of a long process of evolution and development. To attempt to arrive at some of the stages in the development of this institution will be our next task. Dr. A. Büchler has traced three stages in the history of our institution which deserve careful consideration and attention.^b The first stage in the Reading of the Law was the introduction of readings on the Festivals; the second stage was the introduction of Readings on the four extraordinary Sabbaths; the third stage was the introduction of Readings on Sabbaths, New Moon, and Semi holidays.

^a See Jewish Quarterly Review. Vol. II - 1892-1893. pages 420-468.

^b " " " " " " Page. 425.

^c " " " " " " " 425-8.

The cause for the introduction of the Reading of the Law on the Festivals is traced back by Büchler to the controversy with the Samaritans. The Samaritans differed in many respects from the Rabbinic interpretation of the Festivals. The Samaritans, for example, held that by the term סעודת השבת in Leviticus XXIII 15, is meant the ordinary Sabbath which occurs during the Passover week; while the Pharisees maintained that the second day of Passover is meant. They also differed with regards to the interpretation of the other two festivals, Sukkoth and Passover. To counteract the influence of the Samaritans and to teach their explanation, the Rabbis introduced the Reading of the Law on the Festivals.

The Reading of the Law on the four extraordinary Sabbaths of Shekalim, Zachor, Para and Hachodesh which forms the second stage in the development of our constitution, is traced back by Büchler to the controversy between the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The Pharisees differed from the Sadducees with regards to the manner of bringing the daily offering: the latter maintaining on the basis of Numbers Chap XXVIII 41 "Thou shalt bring each of you a lamb", that the daily offering was a free-will offering to be brought by each individual; while the former maintained

© For the differences between Samaritans and Jews on all these questions, see Geiger. Z. D. M. G. Vol XX page 540 seq.

Ⓢ It has been suggested by Friedman in Beth Talmud Vol III page 6 in a series of articles called חוקי התורה, by Hamburger in his Real Encyclopaedia article Vorlesen, that the expression קראת סדרא קודש used to describe each of the festivals mentioned in Leviticus 23. formed the Biblical warranty for this custom. The words קראת סדרא קודש were translated "holy reading of the Law" by the Rabbis.

that the daily offering was to be brought by general contribution[@]. The ceremony of the Red heifer, the question of the new moon, and Zachar were also subjects of controversy between the two sects[@]. Since we know that these controversies occurred about 79 B.C., we may infer that the Pharisees introduced readings on these four Sabbaths about this time in order to acquaint the people with their opinions on these matters.

The introduction of the Reading of the Law on Sabbath, half holidays and new moon forms the third stage in the development of our institution. Büchler does not assign any especial historical ~~reason~~ origin^{ly} for the introduction of the Reading of the Law on Sabbath; it merely being an extension of the custom of Reading on the Festivals and the four extraordinary Sabbaths. That the institution was already well established before the Christian era is shown by the fact that Josephus and the apostles speak of it as a very ancient institution. Josephus as we have seen above Page 2. ascribes it to Moses. In Luke Chap IV-16 we read, "And he came to Nazareth.... and as his custom was he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up for to read." In Acts Chap XIII 14-15 we read, "But when they departed from Perga they came to Antioch."

@ See Megillath Tuamith page 1 seq.

@ See Geiger's Bruchst page 134

in Pisidia, and went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. And after reading of the Law and the prophets..... Even more significant is the following passage in the same book Chap XV-21. "For Moses of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath ~~morning~~ day." The introduction of the Reading of the Law on half-holidays (חול המועד) and new-moon, seems also to have been merely an extension of the custom of reading the Law on the Festivals and the Four extraordinary Sabbaths. The fact that the Mechilta to Exodus ⁸⁷⁵ XVII 14-17 establishes the conclusion that the middle days of the Festival are ^{also} to be called by the expression סקרא קאדש, thus making them equal with the first and last days of the Festivals in some respects seems to have resulted in the introduction of Readings on half-holidays*. The fact that the New-moon at one time seems to have been a more important day than the Sabbath[©] probably accounts for the introduction of the Reading of the Law on new-moon. (?)

Dr. Büchler further believes that the readings on Saturday afternoon, Monday and Thursday mornings probably originated during the time of the Tannaim. With the destruction of the Temple the Rabbis seized upon every possible occasion

© That the new moon was at one time considered of greater importance than the Sabbath is proven by the fact that the word for new moon precedes the word for Sabbath. Ex. חול המועד ויום טוב ויום ראשון

* according to Hamburger Ges. T. 100

of acquainting the people with the Law. As Monday and Thursday had been set aside as court days, ~~when~~^{for the market} the villagers assembled in the towns, these days were found to be good occasions for reading the law. The practice of Reading the Law on Sabbath afternoon probably arose from the desire to have a Torah portion with the usual Saturday afternoon ~~portion~~^{discourse}. The custom of Reading from the Law on Chanukkah, Purim and Fast days seems also to belong to this period.

The Triennial Reading of the Law.

It is a well known fact that the Palestinian Jews completed the Reading of the Law in three years. The Babylonian Talmud speaks explicitly of this custom. "In the west they complete the Torah in three years[Ⓐ]." Although most of the communities adopted the Babylonian custom of completing the Reading of the Law in one year still a great many communities, as late as the 12th century continued the Palestinian custom of completing the Torah in three years. Thus the traveller Benjamin of Tudela[Ⓑ] informs us that as late as 1170 there existed congregations in Egypt, who read through the Law triennially. Shortly after this in 1180 Maimonides[Ⓒ] writes that many congregations followed the triennial custom. Some time later Abraham Maimuni[Ⓓ], the son of Maimonides, informs us in his כפאיה אלעברדי of the same fact. Makrizi[Ⓔ] about 1440 mentions the existence of these synagogues and an Egyptian Joseph Sambari[Ⓕ] in 1672 also speaks of them. From his words it is not clear whether the custom still existed in his time, or whether he merely repeats the account given by Benjamin of Tudela.

Ⓐ B. Megilla 29B.

Ⓑ Benjamin of Tudela (ed. Ascher. Page 98.)

Ⓒ הגלגל תפס (XIII')

Ⓓ Ms. Catalogue Neubauer No 1274 p. 56a. Quoted & translated by Buehler in J. J. R. Vol. 5 Page 421-2.

Ⓔ Schneurer in Z. D. M. G. Vol. XLV p. 298.

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From the above statements it is clear that the Triennial Reading of the Law was practiced by certain communities in Egypt. Gaehtz[©] believes that those who practiced this usage had been driven by the Crusaders from Palestine to Egypt during the first Crusade.

As is well known, the Massora enumerates 154 divisions in the Pentateuch called Sedarim which Rappoport in his Halichot Kedem[©] already recognized as the Sabbath Readings of the triennial system. According to the Massora division Genesis contains 43 Sedarim, Exodus 29, Leviticus 23, Numbers 32, Deut 27. These Sedarim were counted up by Jacob Ben Chayim in the Rabbinic Bible[©]

Only recently a new Sedarim division has come to light. This Sedarim division is found in the ספר חתומים Part II reported from a Yemenite.

© See Gaehtz Geschichte Vol. VII page 285: See also Frankel's Monaschoth 1869 Page 397 where this view is again restated.

© מה חסד הסדרים? ומה זה מספר שלם כמציא לפיכך אין ספק כי הוא הכשר מחלוקת בני מערבא לשלש שנים, וכי כח שב סך הכל מספרי הסדרים של כל ספר וספר כמציא קב"ד והם בעין מספרי השבועה של שלש שנים אך נפל איזה טעות בסדר אחד שבו מספר השבועה של ה' שנים אשר בהן אחת מעוברת יקרה קב"ה לא קב"ד. Halichot Kedem Page 11. Quoted by Dr. Theodor in Gaehtz's Monaschoth 1885 page 358.

© The list begins with the words איין סדרי התורה ע"פי המסורה. By mistake one Seder had dropped out of Genesis. (Genesis 8 ויזכר ד' את כח making only 42 Sedarim for Genesis + thus only 153 Sedarim for the whole Pentateuch.

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כי הוא הכשר מחלוקת בני מערבא לטלש שנים, וכן כחשבון
הכל מספרי הסדרים של כל ספר וספר כמבוא קודם להם בעד
מספרי השבועות של שלש שנים אך נפל איזה טעות בסדר אחד
שבו מספר השבועות של ה' שנים אשר בהן אחת מעוברת

יזכה קצת לא קודם. Halichot Kedem Page 11. Quoted by Dr. Theodor in Grätz's Monatschrift 1885 page 358.

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which Serenbourg has published under the title "Manuel du Lecteur". This Sedarim division contains 67 Sedarim, 45 for Genesis, 23 for Exodus, 25 for Leviticus, 33 for Numbers, 31 for Deuteronomy. It is especially important to note, that in the introductory remarks to this division it is explicitly stated that the Sedarim division is for the purpose of completing the Law in three years.[©]

Another Sedarim division is given by the Massorah, Menachem Meir (died 1306) who in his work סדרי הראשונים under the head קריה ספר reckons 161 divisions which corresponds to the greatest number of Sabbaths possible in three years.

That the Law was read through triennially has been further demonstrated by the fact that the Midrashic works of Palestinian origin originally formed homilies on the Sabbath readings according to the Massorah division.[©]

© See *Journal Asiatique* 1870 II. Geiger is of the opinion that the ספר הראשונים was written not earlier than the middle of the 12th century. See *Zeitschrift* X - 1872 - page 17 seq.

© ויש מקומות שמשלימים את התורה בשלוש שנים וסחלקין את התורה לשנה אחת ויש שנים וארבעה פרשנים זה הכרעין סדרים כדי שיקרא בכל שבת סדר אחד משלימים את התורה בסוף שלש שנים. The mention of the 154 Sedarim is indeed strange in face of the fact that 167 Sedarim are counted up and carefully noted, but the author of the ספר הראשונים has already pointed this out.

© See Dr. Theodor in *Monatschrift* Page 351 seq - 1865. *Monatschrift*.
Happoport, *Ench. Mellin* Article מוסריה
" *Monatschrift* *Soferim* Page 221

~~passage~~ arrived at on a certain day, tradition associated the day with the events narrated. Thus for example, it is asserted, that the Exodus from Egypt occurred on Thursday the 15th of Nisan^②, this date having been arrived at by the fact that this passage was read on this day.

If we examine a year in which the 15th of Nisan falls on a Thursday we will find that the first of Nisan in such a year would be on a Thursday, and the first Sabbath would occur on the 3rd of the month when Exodus Chap XI-1 would be read. In Exodus XI-3 Moses commands that the Passover lamb should be ready on the first of Nisan. In Exodus XI-21 the carrying out of this event is described which is the reading for the second Sabbath, the 10th of Nisan. This likewise would explain the tradition that the Israelites encamped at Ramses on Sabbath the 17th of Nisan^③ on which Exodus Chap XIII-37 would be read. And similarly the tradition that Rachel was remembered on New Year's day^④ is

- ② See Seder Olam Chap I
 " also Michilta (ed. Weiss) page 55
 ③ See Michilta (ed. Weiss) page 31
 ④ See B. Rosh Hashanah 10 b
- אבט"ז בניסן יבא ישראל מסצרים
 ניסן שיצא ישראל מסצרים אירק להיא
 בחמישי בשבת
 יום חמישי כסעו מסצרים וכו' עד יקססס
 אב"א שישי בשבת
 אב"א
 ברה כפקדה שרה, רחל. זמנה

Due to the fact that in the first year of the triennial cycle the *Litra Genesis* XXI 22 beginning "And God remembered Rachel," was read on *Losh Hashanah*. Later, when it was once assumed that Rachel was remembered, the idea broadened out to include Sarah and hence *Genesis Chap. 21* was selected for New Year. As the reading of *Deut. Chap. XXXIV* would occur on the 7th of *Adar*, there would be four remaining Sabbaths to be filled in before the new triennial cycle which began with *Nissan*. These four Sabbaths were filled in with *Shekalim*, *Zachar*, *Parah* and *Hachodesh*, which are still read in *Adar*. Including these, the four festival *Parashyot* and possibly also the special *Seclavim* for *Hanukah* and *Purim* eleven extra divisions would be obtained making up the 166 or 167 divisions of the *Yemen Bible*.

Dr. Sieckler further intimates that the triennial cycle seems to have been established in New Testament times. In *John Chap VII-4* the following statement occurs: "And the Passover, a feast of the Jews was nigh; and in *John VII-2*

the statement occurs." Now the two feast of Tabernacles was at hand. In Chap VI-59 between the two feasts reference is made to a sermon on the manna delivered in the Synagogue at Capernaum. And indeed, in the second year of the Triennial cycle between Passover and Shethoth in the first or second Sabbath of Ayar, Exodus VII 1 to XVII 1, was reached, where the account of the manna is given, to which reading the account in John have reference. So too at the season of Pentecost the cycle of readings in the first year would reach Genesis XI which deals with the story of Babel and the confusion of tongues, so that in Acts II, Pentecost is associated with the gift of the spirit which led to a confusion of tongues.

Similarly the Decalogue was read on Pentecost in the second year of the cycle, whence came according to Bickler the traditional association of the giving of the Law with Pentecost. Exodus XXXIV which contains a second Decalogue was read on the last Sabbath of the month of Ab

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with which opinion Tradition is in accord,
inasmuch as we are informed that Moses ascended
Mt. Sinai with the tablets of stone on the 29th of Ab,[©]
which occurrence is related in Exodus XXXIV.

Besides these examples, Professor Büchler gives
the following sections of the Pentateuch read on
various Sabbaths, in the different years of the cycle,
basing his identification on certain Hagadic
associations of the Sabbath with the events to
which they refer. The four Sedarim of Nisan in
the first year of the cycle appear to have been,
Genesis I through II³ for the first Sabbath; Chap.
II-4 to III²¹ for the second Sabbath; Chap. III²² to
II-26 for the third Sabbath; Chap. IV¹ to VI-8 for
the fourth Sabbath. On the second Sabbath of Iyyar
Genesis II-9 to VII-24 was read.

In the second year of the cycle the readings
for Nisan were Exodus XII, XIII, XIV, XV; Exodus
XIV being read on Passover. During Iyyar Exodus
XVI-28; XVII-1; XVIII-1 and XIX-6 were read there
usually being five Sabbaths in that month.

© See Seder Olam Chap. 6.

ועלה בעשרים והטקה באב ואטתיה כל הורה פנים שניה...

Two of the portions for Siwan are identified as Exodus Chap XX and XXII-4. At the end of Elul Leviticus Chap I was read, while on the first day of Tishri Leviticus IV-1 to V and VI-12 were read, and on the tenth, Yom Kippur, Leviticus XXIII-1 was read.

In the third year of the cycle, besides the account of the death of Moses already referred to, which was read on the 7th of Adar or Shebath, there were read in Nissan, Numbers VII-22, VI-48, XXIII-1 and IX-1. On the third Sabbath of Nisan, Numbers XV was read; while Numbers XXXVI was read on the third Sabbath of Ab.

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The Reading through of the Torah in $3\frac{1}{2}$ years.

In Massecheth Sopherim XVI-10[©] Rabbi Joshua Ben Levi infers from the 175 years of Abraham that the Torah was divided into 175 portions. From this reference Solomon Algazi[©] and R. Jacob Naumberg[©] infer that this enumeration corresponds to the number of Sabbaths in $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, and that the Law was, therefore, read through twice in seven years. Against this view it must be stated, that there is no mention of this custom in the ancient sources. As we have seen above[©] the Talmud states explicitly that the Torah was read through in three years in Palestine. M. Steinschneider[©] calls attention to the fact that the words הַיֵּכָךְ קָבַעַל קִעָה סְדָרִים do not appear in the Jerushalmi Sabbath, and therefore, concludes

[©] Massecheth Sopherim XVI-10

אמר ר' יואלץ ב"ר אבהו מן ימיו לא איסתכליה בא ספר דאגדתא
עלה חד דתן מספכליה ואשכחיה כתיב וצאה ושבעים וחמשה פרשיות
(שנאבין) בתורה דבאר אדבא דמורה אצילי כנגד שאלתו של אברהם
אבינו דכתיב עליה לעולם שביע שבי לקחה מהלך בחדש... היכך
קבוע קע"ה סדרים בתורה וכל שבת (בכל שבת ולבית) קאלה תמיד

See also J. Megilla Chap 16 paragraph 1.

[©] introduction - שמע שולמ

[©] 15 כח"ה יעקב

[©] See page 9.

[©] See Frankel's Monastchift 1844 Page 357.

that these words are an interpolation: Rabbi Joshua Ben Levi, holds, Steinschneider, is speaking of the number of verses which begin with the words זכר, אשר, וזה , of which 175 occur in the Pentateuch, 12 in Genesis, 54 in Exodus, 35 in Leviticus, 61 in Numbers + 13 in Deuteronomy. Rappoport² declares that the words $\text{הסך קכ"ט קל"ה סדרים}$ is an addition of a pupil of a later time. We must, therefore, conclude on the basis of the above facts that there did not exist a custom of reading through the Law in three and a half years.

² See Rappoport Halichot Kedem, Page 14.

The Biennial Reading of the Law.

The Reading through of the Law in two years is mentioned by the teachers of the twelfth century as existing in many communities. "In all places they read through the Torah in one, two, or three years."[©]

In the older sources there is no explicit mention of this custom. Dr. Hamburger[®] infers from the following statement in the Talmud that the practice of reading through the Law biennially is very old. "From the place in the Pentateuch where the Sabbath lesson ^{in the morning} was ended, is read on Sabbath afternoon, and from ^{place} there we leave off on Sabbath afternoon from there we read Monday morning; where we leave off Monday morning we begin Thursday morning; and where we leave off Thursday morning we read the following Sabbath. So Rabbi Meyer said. Since at least 27 verses were read

© See Quoted by Hamburger Real Encyclopaedia. 2!!

הנה בכל מקום קראים סת בשבוע אחת א' בשנים א' בשלוש

® See B Megilla 31b.

מקום שפסקים בשבת שחרית שם קרין בסנחה, בסנחה שם קרין בשני, בשני שם קרין בחמישי, בחמישי שם קרין ל' שבח הכה דברי ר' מאיר

See also Josephite Megilla Chap 35

מקום שפסקין בשבת בשחרית משם מתחילין בסנחה, בסנחה משם מתחילין בשני, בשני משם מתחילין בחמישי, בחמישי משם מתחילין בשבת הבא

were read on Saturday morning, and at least 9 verses each on Monday, Thursday and Saturday afternoon^c or if we hold as Rav Simi^d held that at least ten verses should be read from the Pentateuch at each reading then 48 or 51 verses would be read during the week. According to the Masorah there are 5845 verses in the Pentateuch. The Law would, therefore, be read through in 123 or 114 weeks if only the minimum number of verses were read. Since some of the portions were probably longer than the minimum number of verses specified the Torah was read through in two years.

^c According to the Mishna ruling everyone called to the Torah should read at least three verses. See Mishna Megilla Chap 4^e.

הקריא בארבע ב' יפסח משלשה פסוקים

According to the Mishna at least 7 people had to be called to the Torah on Saturday, Megilla 4². ע'ליהן

On Monday & Thursday morning and Saturday afternoon three people read from the Law. See Mishna Megilla 4¹

בשני אבותישי אבשה בסנחה קריא ב' אין פארהין אין ס'סיפין ע'ליהן.

^d See B Megilla 21b.

הא דתני רב שימי אין פארהין מעשה פסוקים

The Annual Cycle.

The reading through of the Law annually is a later institution which was adopted almost entirely by the Jews of Babylon and a few communities in Palestine. Before we take up a consideration of this cycle it will be interesting to attempt to ascertain the cause of the change from the Triennial to the Annual Cycle. Büchler² suggests that it was Rab, who ~~although a Palestinian~~, brought about this change. He suggests that Rab instituted this change because of the smallness of the pericopes according to the Triennial cycle, and because he believed that the commands in the Torah apply to each year, and it was, therefore proper to read the same portions year after year, when the passages were appropriate. Grätz attempts to explain this change by the fact that there existed alongside of the Triennial cycle, what he calls a "variable Modus", which almost approximated the Annual cycle, ~~later perhaps in the time of the Geonim~~, without coinciding with it. ~~This custom seems to have~~

@ See J. L. R. "Triennial Reading of the Law and Prophets Vol. 5: 1192-3. Page 466 seq. Büchler ascribes the change to Rab because the final readings for the festivals and minor holidays which have continued down to our own time are quoted in his name.

@ See Frankel's Monatschrift 1869. Page 367 "Ueber Entwicklung der Pentateuch-Perikopen Vorlesung."

Gradually this "Variable Modus" became fixed and resulted in the Annual Cycle.

The remark of the Palestinian teacher R. Simon ben Eleazar of the third century points to the Annual Cycle. "Ezra instituted the reading of the curses in Leviticus Chapter XXVI before Pentecost, and Deuteronomy Chap XXVIII before New Year." This statement not only gives the date when these two divisions Sedarim are to be read but also when the Torah is to be begun and finished according to the Annual Cycle.

According to this cycle the Torah was divided into 54 sections called Parshiyot. The division of the Pentateuch into 54 sections is to provide a lesson for each Sabbath of those years which have 54 Sabbaths. Besides the Sabbath lessons, special portions of the Law were read on every Festival and Fast of the year. Everyone of the 54 sections has a special title which it derives from the first or second word with which it commences and by which it is known. For the intercalary year

① See B Megilla 31b

עזרה הקן להם לישראל שיהיו קליין קליל שבתות כהנים
קדם עזרה ושבתות תורה קדם ר"ה

(טכ"ה סעבר"ה) in which New Year falls on a Thursday and the months Cheshvan and Kislev have 29 days, has 54 Sabbaths which require special lessons. But as the ordinary years (פסאלי) have not so many Sabbaths, and those years in which New Year falls on a Monday and the months of Cheshvan and Kislev have 30 days, or New Year falls on a Saturday, and the said months are regular (i.e. Cheshvan having 29 and Kislev 30 days) have only 47 Sabbaths 14 of the 54 sections have been appointed to be read in pairs either wholly or in part, according to the varying number of Sabbaths in the current year.[ⓐ] Thus the whole Pentateuch is read through each year.

The reading in the Annual cycle is begun on the first Sabbath after the Feast of Tabernacles which occurs in Tishri and is concluded on the last day of the Festival which is called the Rejoicing of the Law. (שמחה בארה) (when first

ⓐ The 14 sections which are combined are as follows.

ויקהל - פקודי ; תזריע - מצורע ; אחרי מטה - קדושים ; בקר בחקאי
חקה בכלק ; מטות מסעי ; נזבים - וילך

The Reading of the Law on the Festivals.

The Mishna[ⓐ] gives a list of the following Readings for the holidays; for Passover Leviticus Chap. XXIII 1 to 22; for Pentecost Deuteronomy Chap. 16-9; for New Year Leviticus Chap 23-23; for the Day of Atonement Leviticus Chap 16'; for the Feast of Tabernacles Leviticus Chap 23³³. The same Readings are assigned by ~~the~~ Massecheth Sopherim[ⓑ]. The Tosephta[ⓒ] assigns the same portions except for Pentecost and New Year when Exodus 19 (חג המולד) and Genesis 21 (אד פקד את שרה) are assigned as alternatives respectively. The Boranutha[ⓓ]; the Jerushalmi[ⓔ] and both Pesqta's give the same alternatives. Büchler, moreover, says that "the some say" which introduces the alternative reading is the original reading.

ⓐ See Mishna Megilla Chap 3. paragraph 5.

בפסח קורין בפרשה מעדא של חגה כהנים, בעצרה שבקה
שבאעלה. ברה' בחדש השביעי באחד לחדש, ביום הכפאים
אחרי מלה. ביום טוב הראשון של חג קורין בפרשה מעדא
שבחורה כהנים. ובשאר כל ימיה חגה בקרבנות חגה

ⓑ See Massecheth Sopherim Chap 17 paragraph 6.

ⓒ See Tosephta Chap 3. paragraph 4. ^{ויש אומרים בחדש קטלישי} ^{הכפאים} ^{הטכה; ויש אומרים} ^{אד פקד את שרה} ^{הכפאים}

ⓓ See B. Megilla 31a.

ⓔ See J. Megilla III 7

When we examine our Babylonian sources we come across still further changes. Thus in the Babylonian Talmud⁶, Exodus Chap 12^{21 to 51} is introduced as a reading for the first day of Passover instead of Leviticus 23^{1 to 22}.

If we inquire into the cause of this change in the order of Readings we must turn to the Triennial Reading of the Law for an explanation. For with the introduction of this system of reading some of the passages reached in the course of the regular Triennial reading took the place of those portions assigned by the Mishna. This occurred in the case of the Passover Readings, Exodus Chap XII 29 being reached on the first day and Exodus Chap 13:7 on the seventh day of the second year of the cycle. When it was seen that these portions were suited for Passover they were retained even after the three year cycle was no longer in vogue.

On Shabuoath the Decalogue in Exodus Chap 20 was reached in the ordinary course of readings in the second year, which explains why this portion was later always chosen for this Festival. ? //

⁶ See B. Megilla 31^a

(Exodus) א.מ.ר. א.ב.י. ו.ה.א.ד.נ.א. כ.ה.א. ע.ל.מ.א. ל.מ.י.ק.י. ע.ט.ך

Büchler states that in the first year of the Triennial Reading Genesis Chap. XXI²² was reached. This portion commences with the words, "God remembered Rachel," and is in agreement with the declaration of the Haggadah that Rachel was remembered on New Year's day.[©] This idea soon broadened to include ^{the} idea that Sarah was remembered on Rosh Hashanah, which accounts for the reading of Genesis XXI^{17, 34} on New Year.[©]

As no portion appropriate for Sukkoth was reached in the regular Triennial cycle of readings Leviticus VIII³³ was retained as the reading for the Festival.

Where the Mishna does not assign readings as on the 7th day of Passover and ד' סדרה, ~~or where it allows a choice~~ other Palestinian sources assign readings. Thus a Baraita[©] assigns Exodus XIII¹⁷ as the reading for the 7th day of Passover. The Babylon Talmud goes much further. Readings are assigned by it for all occasions,

© See B. Rosh Hashanah 10b.

ברך נפקדה שרה רחל ורחל

© Büchler does not attempt to explain why idea broadened to include idea that Sarah was also remembered on New Year. Is it not possible that Genesis XXI was chosen for the Reading on Rosh Hashanah because of some other reason?

© See A. Megilla 31a

where no readings have been provided for. Alaya[©] gives the following passage as the readings for Passover which have remained the readings until the day.

For the first day of Passover he assigns Exodus XII²; for the second day Leviticus XXII²⁷; for the third day Exodus XIII²; for the fourth day Exodus XXII²⁴; for the fifth Exodus 34; for the sixth Numbers IX¹; for the seventh Exodus XIII¹⁷ and for the eighth day Deuteronomy XV¹⁹.

The Mishna and Tosephta did not make special provision for the 7th day of Sukkoth. The 3 Meqilla[©] assigns, "All your first born" as the reading for the 7th day. For the intervening days between the first and last day of Sukkoth readings dealing with the offerings brought on these days were to be read.[©]

As 2 days were celebrated as holidays in Babylon, ~~same~~ readings were assigned for these occasions. The readings for Passover on the second and eighth days were Leviticus XXII²⁷ and Deut. XV¹⁹ as we saw above. For the second day of Sukkoth the same reading that was provided on the first day was reread i.e. Leviticus 23.[©]

© See B. Meqilla 31a
אמר רבי יהודה כהן עולם לסיקרי מטר גידא קדש בכספא
פסל בסדברא שלח בוכרא
© See B. Meqilla 31a
יטס האחרון קרין כל הבכור מלות ואוקים ובכור

© See B. Meqilla 31a
אמר כל יטס החק קרין בקרבנות החק
האידכא דאיל ב יוס לסמר סיקרס דכ קריכל

On the eighth day Deuteronomy Chap. XXVIII was assigned. For the second day of Shebuoth Deut. XVI-9 which was read on the first day was reread.®

The one called up to read from the Prophets, first read a small portion from the Torah. In the portion read by the High Priest® we have a reading which seems to correspond to the later Maphtar readings. After the High Priest had completed the Reading from Leviticus XVI 1-34, he recited Numbers XXIX 7-16 by heart, which portion became the Maphtar reading for Yom Kippur morning in the Synagogue. All the Palestinian sources as well as the Babylonian Talmud do not assign Maphtar readings. It would seem from the fact that none of the Palestinian sources as well as the Babylonian Talmud assign Maphtar readings that this custom must have originated quite late. The Halachoth Gedoloth gives a complete list of the Maphtar readings for each of the holidays.

® See B. Megilla 31^a בסמי קריין וזאת הבכח

להתידבב דאזיכר ררי ימי עבדין כהנא ויהיה

® See B. Megilla 23^a ספסיר בבית שיקרא בתורה תורה ספסיר כבוד תורה

® See Mishna Yoma Chap 7 Paragraph 1.

An examination of the Mafket readings assigned for the holidays reveals the fact that they all deal with the sacrifices appropriate for those days. The Rabbis, undoubtedly, took these opportunities of recalling to the people the Temple with its sacrificial cult.

Chanukka and Purim were reckoned amongst the days when ^{the} regular reading of the Law was to be interrupted for the special festival portion[©]. The Mishna[©] assigns Parashat Nissim as the reading for Chanukka. Whether the whole of Chapter VII which deals with the offerings brought by the princes at the time of the erection of the Tabernacle is not clear from this statement in the Mishna. It would further seem that the reading of a portion of Chap VII on each day of Chanukka was a later custom no mention of this being found in the Mishna or B. Talmud. Büchler believes that there was a time when there was only a Chanukka Reading on Sabbath, or perhaps on the eighth day. The Masseketh Sopherim goes

© See Mishna Me gilla Chap 3 paragraph 4.

לכל ספסיקין בראשי חדשים בחסכה ובפורים

© See Mishna Megilla Chap 3 paragraph 6. בחסכה בכשימים

into greater detail. For the first day of Chanuka Numbers VII 12 to 18, for the second day Numbers VII 18 to 24, for the third VII 24 to 30, for the fourth day Numbers VII 30 to 36, for the fifth VII 36 to 42, for the seventh VII 42-53, for the intervening Sabbath and the eighth day Numbers VII' to VIII⁴ was read. The Halachoth Gedoloth[©] gives the following division which is still retained in the Orthodox synagogues. On the first day of Chanuka Numbers VII 1-17 is read, on the second VII-18-29, on third Numbers II 24-35; on fourth Numbers VII 30-41, on fifth Numbers VII 36-47, on sixth Numbers VII 42-53, on seventh Numbers II 48-59; on eighth day Numbers VII 54-59. On Sabbath

© See Maaseh Sopherim Chap. XX paragraph 10

ואח"כ מוציאין ס"ה (ספר) וקריין בכשיצאים איהי הסקריב ביום הראשון אביום השני אביום השלישי אביום רביעי לכל יום יום עד יום השמיני אבשבת שבתך (שבתא) קריא איהי ביום כלל ששה עד כן עשה את הסכרה אביום השמיני עד אזה מקשה כל הסכרה כל הפסוק...

© See Maaseh Sopherim Chap. XX paragraph 10 ed. by Dr. J. H. Hildesheimer Page 620.

ביום הראשון דמסכה קריא תלתה גברי סן (בסדר זא"ה) איהי ביום כלל ששה (עד) איהי הסקריב. יום ב' קריין (שם יח-כג) אביום השלישי יום ג' אביום השלישי (שם כ-ל) אביום הרביעי. יום ד' אביום הרביעי (שם לא-טז) אביום החמישי. ביום ה' אביום החמישי (שם טז-טז) אביום השישי. יום ו' אביום השישי (שם טז-כג) אביום השביעי. יום ז' אביום השביעי (שם כד-כט) אביום השמיני. יום ח' קריין סן (שם ס-פס) אביום השמיני עד אידבר אליו.

The Four Special Sabbaths.

As we have already seen above tradition refers the Reading of the Law on the four special Sabbaths to Moses[©]

The Mishna[©] lays down the rule that when the first of Adar falls on a Sabbath Shekalim is read; if it falls during the week Shekalim is read the preceding Sabbath. On the second Sabbath Zacher is read, on the third Para and on the fourth Hachodesh.

As we have before seen the Triennial Reading of the Law came to an end on the first Sabbath of Adar. Four Sabbaths thus remained unprovided with Readings. Parascath Hachodesh, Zacher, Para and Shekalim were thus prescribed as readings for these Sabbaths by the Mishna, thus providing reading for those Sabbaths which were otherwise unprovided for. That Parascath Hachodesh, which deals with the

© See Page 3. of this paper. Also J. Lophrim Chap 21 paragraph 4.

© See Mishna Megilla Chap III paragraph 4.

ראש חדש אדר שחל להיות בשבת קריין בפרשת שקלים.
חל להיות בתוך השבוע מקדימין לשעבר. ומפסיקין לשבת
אחרת. בשבת זכר בשלישית ~~פרה~~ פרה אדומה ברביעית
החדש הזה יכנס.

first of Nisan should be read on the Sabbath before the New-moon, or on the new-moon itself when it fell on a Sabbath was quite appropriate. And that Parashat Zachar should be placed in immediate proximity to Purim is especially appropriate for this passage bids Israel remember its enemy Amalek. The Agada that Haman sprang from the stock of the Amalekites, probably had its origin in this juxtaposition of Zachar to Purim. With reference to Para and Shekalim it is not so simple to attempt to explain the position assigned to them by the Mishna. With reference to Para the Sifre^c remarks that the Red Heifer was on the first occasion prepared on the second of Nisan. In the J. Talmud^d an Amora declares that the section dealing with this sacrifice must be read before Parashath Hachodesh. Büchler believes that this statement points to a time when Hachodesh was read on the first Sabbath of Nisan. This was the

^c See Sifre to Numbers VIII-1

בראש חודש הקסם הסשן בשני כשרפה הפרה

^d See J. Megilla III-5

רבי לוי בשם רבי חמא בר חנינה בדין הוא
שהקדים החודש לספרה שבאחד במסן הקסם הסשן ובשני
כשרפה הפרה ולספרה קודמת שהיא שהיה של כל ישראל

case before the Triennial Reading of the Law had been introduced, when Para could be read on the first Sabbath of Nissan when Hachodesh was read the Sabbath before. With the introduction of the regular Sabbatic readings, the first Sabbath in Nissan was supplied with its Seder; so that Para had to be transposed before Hachodesh: The above mentioned Amara⁶ explains the transposition to the fact that the Israelites might have their attention called to the laws concerning the purifying of the unclean. The opening of Megillath Taanith states that the controversy between the Sadducees and the Pharisees with regards to the manner in which the Shekalim should be collected for the daily offering lasted from the first to the eighth of Nissan. In commemoration of this controversy the days between the 1st and 8th of Nissan were declared holidays. Büchler believes that this points

⁶ See opening of Megillath Taanith

אֵין יוֹמֵינוּ דְּכֹא לְהַעֲכֹא בְּחַן. וְסִפְּרָהּ דְּלֹא לְסִפְּרָהּ בְּחַן
 מִן רִישׁ יְרֵחָא דְנִיסָן וְעַד תְּמִינָא בֵּיהּ אֵיהִיקָם תְּמִידָא דְכֹא
 לְסִפְּרָהּ שְׁהִי צְדָקִין אֲסִיחִים מְבִיָּאִים תְּמִידִין מִשְׁכֵּי יְחִיד...
 אֲמַל לָהֶם חֲכָמִים אֵין אֲהֵם רִשְׁעִים לְעִשָּׂא כֵן כְּפִי שְׁעִין קִרְבָּן
 צָרָה בָּא אֲמַר מִשְׁכֵּי כֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל... וְכִשְׁחָבְהָ עֲלֵיהֶם וְכִצְחָם קִתְּקִיבָא
 שִׁיבָא שְׁלֵמָא שְׁלֵמָא מִכִּתְלֵיהֶם אֲמַר בְּלִשְׁכָּה אֵלֵין תְּמִידִין הָרִיבָא מִשְׁכֵּי צָרָה

to the fact that Shekalim was, at the time of its introduction read on the second Sabbath of Nissan. With the introduction of the Triennial cycle, Parashat Shekalim was found to interfere with the regular Sabbatic readings, so that it was removed to the first Sabbath of Adar. The Mishna Shekalim which reads "that on the first of Adar the people are informed concerning Shekalim",[©] undoubtedly refers to the custom of reading Parashat Shekalim on this Sabbath so as to remind the people to bring their contributions for the daily offering fund.

The Mishna Megilla[©] merely mentions the readings for these four Sabbaths without defining the exact portions to be read. With regard to Para, Zachor and Hachodesh no differences of opinion seem to have arisen as to what portions were meant. Everybody was agreed that by Parashat Hachodesh Exodus XII 1-20, for by Parashat Zachor Deut. 25-17-19, and by Para Numbers XIX was meant.[©] Which portion, however, was to be read, on Sabbath Shekalim was a controverted point until 200 C.E. Rab held

[©] See Mishna Shekalim, Chap I paragraph 1.

באחד באדר שמיניין על השקלים

[©] See Mishna Megilla Chap III paragraph IV

[©] See Tosefta Megilla Chap II (Zuckerman ed.)

that Numbers XXVIII was the reading for Shekalim; Samuel that Exodus XXX". In the Talmudic discussion which follows it is explained why these two teachers differ. Samuel holds that Exodus XXX-21 should be read because this portion speaks expressly of Shekalim; while Rab is of the opinion that Numbers XXVIII should be read because the daily offerings must be brought from the new Shekalim. It would seem from the fact that the Shekalim were collected in order to provide means for the daily offering that Numbers XXVIII would have been the more appropriate passage to be read. Exodus XXX" was chosen as the reading for Sabbath Shekalim later because there is contained an explicit mention of Shekalim in this passage.

With the introduction of the Annual cycle these four portions were retained as Maftir readings for the four Sabbaths in Adar. As such they have continued in the Synagogue until this day.

© See B. Megilla 29B

ע"י פרשת שקלים. רב אמר צא את בני ישראל וצא את
אליהם את קרבני לחם; ושמאל אמר כי השא בשלמא כסן
כסא דאמר כי השא היינו דקני לה פרשה שקלים דכתיב בה שקלים
אלה כסא דאמר את קרבני לחם מדי שקלים כהיבי הים...

The Reading of the Law on Monday, Thursday + Sabbath Afternoon.

The introduction of the reading of the Law on Monday, Thursday and Sabbath afternoon is ascribed to Ezra: These readings were instituted with the object of giving instruction to the villagers who came to town on these days. The Sabbath afternoon Reading was probably instituted in order to have a Torah portion read with the usual Saturday-afternoon discourse.

The readings for these occasions were a subject of controversy as late as the second century of the Christian era. The Mishna states the following with regards to the readings on M. T. and Sat. afternoon "On Monday, Thursday and Saturday afternoon we read according to their order and we do not

Rabbi Meir and ^{Mishnah} Joseph disagree as to the meaning of the words אין קאין לרם מן החשבון. Rabbi Meir holds that the readings on M. T. and Saturday afternoon

See Rappoport Ezech Mullin. Article אכסרה

See Mishna Megilla III-6.

בשני ובהמיטי ובשבה במטה קאין כסדרן ואין קאין לרם מן החשבון

should be begun where we left off ~~on~~ Saturday afternoon and the following Sabbath morning the reading should be begun where we left off the preceding Sabbath afternoon; while Rabbi Judah holds that we should again repeat the portions read on Th. Thurs. and Saturday afternoon the following Sabbath morning. The opinion of Rabbi Judah is declared to be the authoritative ~~one~~ by R. Zera.®

® See B. Megilla 31a.

ה"ר מקום שפסיקין שבת שחרית שם קאין בסנחה. בסנחה
 שם קאין בב' בב' שם קאין בה' בה' שם קאין לשבת הבא
 ד' סעיר ר"י אסר מקום שפסיקין בשבת שחרית שם קאין
 בסנחה אב' אב' ולשבת הבאה. א"ל הלכה מקום שפסיקין
 בשבת שחרית שם קאין בסנחה אב' אב' ולשבת הבאה.

The Manner of Reading from the Law etc. etc.

From our oldest sources it appears that the king or Priest read from the Law to the people. This is the case in II Kings Chap 23² where we are informed that Josiah read the newly discovered Book of the Covenant to the people. Similarly Ezra reads to the assembled people, while the elders and the Levites stand on his side and interpret the Law to the assembly. Philo also reports that the Reading was done by a Priest or an Elder.⁶ The Mishna also informs us that the High Priest himself read the appropriate portion for the Day of Atonement.⁷ It is also told of King Agrippa that he read himself on Sukkoth.⁸ We are also informed that in later times the custom prevailed in the synagogues outside of Palestine for one person to read the Law. The later Halacha laid down the rule that in case

⑥ Philo II 630

⑦ See Yoma 64 b. אגף קל ... דלף בלף דלף. See also Sota 40 b.

⑧ See Sota 41 a

only one could read the Law he should read the whole section[©]. It was only in case the reader became tired that some one took his place.

The law of the Mishna[©] which enumerates the number of people who are to read on Monday, Thursday and Saturday afternoon as three; on New-moons and semi-holidays as four; on Festivals as five; on Yom Kippur as six; and on Saturday seven or more seems to be a later custom. The difference in the number of people who read from the Law on different occasions was to inform the people with regards to the degree of sanctity of the various holidays[©].

The custom of having the various classes such as the Priests, Levites and Israelites, represented at the Reading of the Law seems to have its biblical basis in Nehemiah Chap VIII 7-9 where the three classes are mentioned. The Mishna Megilla Chap 4 1+2

© See J. Megilla Chap IV. 57a.

הַפְּעֻלָּה לֹא כִהְיָא בִּן אֶלֶּה אֶחָד קָרָא אֶת כָּלֶה

© See Mishna Megilla Chap IV paragraph 1+2.

בְּשָׁנִי אֲבַחֲשִׁי אֶבְשָׁבָה בְּמִנְחָה קָרִין ה'. בְּרֵאשִׁי חֲדָשִׁים אֲבַחֲבֵל שֶׁל
מֵאֲדָר קָרִין אַרְבַּעָה אֵין פֹּאחֲתִין אֵין מֵאֲסִיפִין עֲלֵיהֶן ... זֶה הַכֹּל
כָּל שִׁישׁ בֹּא מֵאֲסָף אֵין קָרִין אַרְבַּעָה. בֵּיט חֲמִשָּׁה. בִּיאֵם
הַכֹּפָרִים שֶׁהָא. בְּשָׁבָה שֶׁבַעָה. אֵין פֹּאחֲתִין מֵהֶן אֲבָל מֵאֲסִיפִין עֲלֵיהֶן

© See B. Megilla 22b. Also Müller Maccabett Topherin Page 145.

does not mention anything about the three classes being represented at the Reading of the Law. From this it would seem that either Priest, Levite or Israelite could be called to the Law on any occasion; and that it was only later that it was thought necessary to have all the classes represented at the Reading. The reason assigned for having the three classes represented in a certain order was to insure peace." These things were instituted for the sake of peace, the Priest shall read first; then the Levite, and then the Israelite."⁶

On Saturday and Festivals when more than three people read from the Law the following order was followed. After the Levite the Parnas of the Congregation read; after him he who is able to fill his office follows; then the sons of Rabbin and then the heads of the Synagogue ~~follow~~ or any person follow.

⁶ See B. Gittin 59^a

אלו דברים אסא מרבי שלום. כהן קורא ראשון ואחריו לוי
~~ואחריו ישראל~~

⁶ See B. Gittin 60^a

אמר ושלילה לרבי יצחק כפחל ~~איל~~: אחריהן
קראין ה"ח הסמכין פונסים על הציבור ואחריהן ה"ח הובאין
למלגם פונסים על הציבור ואחריהן בני תלמידי חכמים
שאבאיהם סמכים פונסים על הציבור ואחריהן ראשי פנסיה
וכל אדם

This order was not strictly adhered to in Talmudic times as the following incidents prove. Rab Huna^① and Rav^② read before the priest. Rav Jochanan^③ asserts that a learned person who allows an ignorant priest to precede him in the reading of the Law deserves death. As late as the 12th century protests were raised against the above mentioned custom mentioned in *Gittin* 59^a. Meimonedes and R. Salomo ben Aderet were opposed to it. Meimonedes^④ raises his voice in indignation against this custom and wonders how it had become established. R. Salomo ben Aderet^⑤ decides with R. Jochanan that a scholar who allows an unlearned priest to precede him deserves death. Despite these protests however, the custom prevails in the Synagogue until the present day.

At the time when the Triennial Reading of the Law was in vogue the portions to be read does not seem to have been so carefully divided into

① See B. Megilla 22a

יב האב קרי בכהן

② See B. Megilla 22a

③ B. Megilla 28a והאמר ר' יוחנן כל הלעיד חכם שמכיר לפניה
אפילו כהן עם הארץ ואלו הלעיד חכם חייב סירה שחומר (שם)

④ See Meimonedes' Commentary on the Mishna *Gittin* Chap II.

⑤ Quoted by Dr. Friedländer Page 13 "Zur Geschichte der wichtigsten Rituale des Synagogalen Gottesdienstes."

sections as to day. According to the Mishna ruling^① at least three verses had to be read by each person. When the portion did not contain a sufficient number of verses, ^{either} the last verse of the preceding reader was reread by the next reader or the verse was divided into two parts: In case only five verses were left for the last two readers one verse of the following section is read.^②

According to the Talmudic Law every one, even a woman and a minor are eligible to be counted amongst those who may read from the Law.^③ Everyone had to read his portion himself. In order to read one's passage easily it was customary to prepare in advance. Boys in the schools were often appointed to prepare their readings.^④ The preparation of one's

① See Mishna Megilla Chap IV paragraph 4.

תקורא בהיום. לא יפחא טעניה פסוקים.

② See B Megilla 22a.

③ B Megilla 23a

הכל קאלין לשמין שבעה ואפילו קטן ואפילו אשה אכלא חסדים אשה לא תקרא בהורה מפני כבוד ציבור.

④ See Josephus Sallust I.

לשמעון בן הסטריאס אשר הניקח את הניקחין פושטין בלילה שם לאור הכר.

Also-Balli Sallust

ההניקח של ביה רבן הן מסדרן פושטין אקלין לאור הכר.

reading was later carried to extremes. Rabbi Akiba who was called upon to read from the law refused to do so because he had not reread the portion two or three times.⁶ That each one should read himself prevailed as late as the 12th century. "Every one of the readers opens the Torah recites the benediction and then reads."⁷ Sadya however makes an exception in the case of a priest or a Levite if there were no other priests or Levites in the community. In such a case, however, they had to be able to repeat the words of the Chazan if not they could not be called up to the Law.⁸

A departure from this custom seems to have first occurred in France and perhaps in Germany. R' Isaac Lam speaks of a prompter who assisted those

⁶ See Midrash Tanchuma Section ויהי

מעשה ב' עקיבא שקרא החזן ברבים לקרוא בספר תורה ולא רצה לעלות. אמרו לו הלמדיו... ולמה נסמך מלפניו? א"ל העבודה לא נסמכת לקרא אלא על שלא סדירי אלה פושט ב' ה' פעמים שאין אדם נשאי לאסידברי תורה לפני הצבור עד שיפוט (שיפוט) אלה ב' ה' פעמים ביט לבין עמל.

⁷ See Sadya, Section של חל

וכתב י' סעדיה שם שם הם צריכין לזה האיש שאינו יודע לקרוא שיעלה לפי שהוא כהן. או לאי ואין שם אחר חלול. וראה שליח צבור אם שיקרא לו מלה בטלה ידע לאסרה יכל לקרוא. ואם לאו לא יעלה.

⁸ See Maimonides הלכה הפלג

כל אחד אחד מן הקאין פאה ספר תורה אטביט... אסברך ואמר קרא

who could not read fluently. He justifies this usage by the fact that those who cannot read from the Law should thereby not be put to shame. Ascheri explains the change differently. According to him the ignorant ones deserve no pity; on the contrary it will spur them on to become acquainted with the Law. The change of the ancient custom is due rather to the fact that not everyone could read the Law with the *כהנה*. And so important is the reading of the Law with the *כהנה* that the congregation does not fulfill its duty unless it is read *po*.

Whatever reason may be the correct one, the fact remains that the *בצל קורא* became quite common in a great many congregations: As late as the 16th century, however, it seems to have been a common practice in some congregations for everyone to read himself

אמר שמהגדים קרה לקרוא שניים בכל הארץ אמר ר"ה כדי
שלא שלח יהביש מי שמיא יודע לקרוא בעצמו כענין
שסביב במס' בלורים. נשקל על הביא בלורים ההקיסה שהיא
מקדון את מי שידע לקרוא ואת מי שמיא לקרוא
החזן מסדר ראשי פשוט ומריצין בפני שטחך שראש הפרשה שהוא
בפני האזנה... ומסייע את שבעה הקליין ביקודיה ומעמיד בלש
אלה צינה הטעם... שיקרא עליה צבור לפי שיש הכל בקיאות
בטעמי הקריאה אין הצבור יוצאין בקריאתו והוא בעיניו הידע
לכך להקיסה שיקרא עליה צבור שהוא בקי בקריאתה.

Thus Joseph Caro[©] makes provision in his code for both usages: The reading of the Law with the *כריכה* did not take such a firm hold upon the Portuguese and Italian Jews. They still have an easy and simple method of reading from the Law. The German communities, however, laid a great deal of stress upon the *כריכה*. The *Sepher Chasidim* holds that the reading of the Law in this way was ordained by Moses from Sinai[©]

In Talmudic times a benediction was pronounced by the first and last readers only.[©] Later the custom was introduced by the Rabbis that each one should recite a benediction before and after the reading for the benefit of those who came late or who departed before the completion of the reading.[©]

The following description of the manner of reading from the Law given by Maimonides is still the custom in many Synagogues. The reading, however, is done by a *בצל קורא* instead of each individual.[©] Every one called to the reading of the

[©] See *Schulchen Aruch Orach Chayim* No. 139.

בסוקם שנהא שהעלה בעצם קורא בקול רם אם לאחד הפרשה
ב' א' פעמים בינו לבין עצם לא יעלה. ובסוקם שהחזן קורא ~~בבט~~
הוא צריך לסדי קהילה.

לא תסיה גבול רעך אשר גבול רעאנים של[©] *Sepher Chasidim* No. 101
הורה לנביאים וכתובים, ושל נביאים לתורה ולכתובים, ושל כתובים
לתורה ולנביאים אלה כן נהאן שהוא עמאן שהכל הליכה למטה מסע
מכאן שנתמר: יענה בקול.

הכא הפאה סברך לפיכה והחוגם סברך לאחריה. 24 *Megilla* ב' ©
והאידנא דגולה מבכר לפיכה ולחמיה הייב טעמא 21 *Megilla* ©
דהקינו רבין הגרה טעם הכנסין ומשום הוציאו

of the Law must unroll the scroll and having found the place where he is to begin to read, pronounces the following benediction: 'Blessed art Thou, Oh Lord, our God, King of the Universe who hast chosen us from among all nations, and hast given us Thy Law. Blessed art Thou, Oh, God, giver of the Law;' to which the congregation responds Amen. He then reads the seventh portion of the lesson and when he has finished rolls up the scroll and pronounces again the following benediction; 'Blessed art Thou, Oh Lord, King of the Universe, who hast given Thy Law, the Law of Truth and hast planted among us everlasting life. Blessed art Thou Oh Lord, giver of the Law?' The other six or more who are called in rotation to the reading of the other six portions have to go through the same formularies. The Maphet reads the few concluding verses of the lesson and passes through the same formularies as the other seven and then reads the appointed section from the prophets.

The Reading of the Law in Modern Congregations

Our study of the custom of Reading from the Law has revealed to us from what small beginnings there gradually evolved a comprehensive and intricate institution. During the centuries there accumulated around this practice a mass of forms and details which burdened the institution. Thus for example, the Torah was read in a sing-song fashion, often by men who had no singing-voices, with the result that that the Reading sounded peculiar. And instead of the *דברים קה צעו*, a great number of people were called up to the Torah. During the Reading the congregation was often in the greatest disorder paying little attention to the Reading.

It was quite natural, therefore, that some attempts of reforming and modernizing our institution should have been attempted in the early days of the Reform movement. At the Rabbinical Conference held in Brunswick June 12-14, 1844 the question as to how the Liturgy could be reformed came up. A motion of Dr. Joseph Maurer of Stuttgart, the president of the Conference,

that a commission be appointed to report on six questions concerning the Liturgy, at the next Conference was acted upon favorably. The fourth question dealt with the problem as to how the קריאת הכוהן, and the שבועה קלאים could be arranged so as to cause less disturbance, and to further congregational devotion and edification. After a long discussion the following committee was appointed, Joseph Mair, Levi Herzfeld, Levi Bodenheimer, Samuel Holdheim, and Gotthold Salomon.^a

At the second Conference of Rabbis of Germany held at Frankfurt-on-the-Main, July 15-28, the commission appointed at Brunswick reported through its chairman J. Mair of Stuttgart. In answer to the first of the six questions, whether ~~and~~ the Hebrew language was necessary for the public religious services, the commission reported that there was no objective necessity for Hebrew throughout the service. But since Hebrew still existed as a subjective necessity among a great portion of German Jewry, the commission deemed it advisable to retain the Hebrew in the typical parts of the Liturgy, viz: ברכה, the שמונה עשרה,

the first and last three benedictions of the *Shema* and *Shema Yisroel*; the remainder of the service to be in German. The report on this question aroused a great deal of discussion; almost all the Rabbis present participating. With regards to the fourth question which bears directly on the Reading of the Law the commission made the following recommendations.

The reintroduction of the Triennial instead of the Annual cycle; ① the abolition of the "Aufrufen"; (the referee Naier however, declared for the retention of the "Aufrufen")

by name in place of of which people are to be called up by number. The *Shema* was also to be done away with.

② In place of the Haftarah a portion from the prophets or Hagiographa was to be read in German by the Rabbi or religious teacher. ③ The triennial cycle received all the votes but five. All voted that the a section from the Prophets be read in German.

The majority also were in favor of celebrating *Simchat Torah* triennially instead of annually as it was shown that this Festival was of late origin. The majority, however, voted for the retention of the "Aufrufen", but against the repetition of the Megillah.

① See Protokolle und Aktenstücke der zweiten Rabbinerversammlung abgehalten in Frankfurt am Main vom 10^{ten} bis zum 20^{ten} Juli 1845 page 18.

② See same page 314 & 315

At the Breslau Conference which met Aug 11-13 1868, the question of the Reading of the Law again came up for consideration. Ludwig Philippson submitted thirty points touching the Liturgy. Only a few of the points were acted upon. In reference to the Reading of the Law, resolutions were adopted recommending to Congregations the Triennial Cycle; that the Haftara be read in the vernacular; and that the Commission on Liturgy make a new selection of Haftarothe agreeably to the Torah readings arranged for the triennial cycle, in which selections passages from Hagiographa were to be included[©]

The Leipzig Synod which convened June 29, 1869, again addressed itself to the question of the Liturgy. For the Conferences of Brunswick, Frankfurt and Breslau had only passed a number of pronouncements, which had remained largely paper resolutions. The Synod resolved that all readings from the Torah be in Hebrew. The Annual Cycle was again reintroduced.

© See A. Z. d. J. ^{Vol.} 22 (189) where the minutes of the Conference ^{are} published as a supplement

On the afternoon of the Day of Atonement Leviticus XIX 1-23 should be read in place of Leviticus XVIII. The trop or cantillation was to be displaced by intelligible reading. Haftarothe were to read in the vernacular. Portions of the Hagiographa may also be used for this purpose.

The resolutions adopted at the various Conferences and the Leipzig Synod could not be enforced. Each Congregation decided whether it would accept its resolutions. In some cases, certain of the changes suggested in the Reading of the Law were accepted. Thus certain Congregations introduced the Triennial Cycle.

② See Verhandlungen der ersten Synode Page 126-170

In Orthodox Congregations in this country the Reading from the Law has continued with few changes. The Torah is completed annually; the Reading is done by a "Reader," who reads with the *trop*. At least seven people are called to the Law either by name or number on Sabbaths and three on week days and Sabbath afternoon.

In the Reform Congregations, however, no particular order seems to be followed. In some congregations the first Parasha of the Sidra is read year after year; in others the Parasha from which the Rabbi has taken his text for his sermon. It is a pity that Reform Congregations have cut themselves asunder from the rest of the House of Israel where they could stand on common grounds. The "Selections from the Scriptures" compiled in the Union Prayer Book seem to have been arranged without a knowledge of the history of the ^{institution of the} Reading of the Law. Selections from the

© See Union Prayer Book Pages 297-416.

Pentateuch and the Prophets follow one another without any system. Dr. M. H. Harris' paper[©] on "A proposed change in the Readings as arranged in the Hebrew Union Prayer Book", shows that the Rabbis have begun to realize that the Readings should be arranged in accordance with tradition. He suggests that the name of each Sedrah should be placed in Hebrew and English at the head of each portion with or without the Haftarah, for example פ' פ' "Get thee forth.... If the Portion contains more than one suitable reading there should be indicated by numbers 1, 2, 3". Where the Sedrah's do not contain readings suitable for public reading as in פ' פ' 130 etc. readings should be taken from adjacent portions, or at least from a portion in the same book which contain more than one appropriate selection. Nothing has as yet resulted from these suggestions. This scheme or some system such as suggested by Dr. Einhorn in his Prayer Book[©] ought to be adopted by Reform Congregations.

© See G. L. A. R. Vol XIV 1904. Pages 263-6.

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