



Weekly Torah Readings

Understanding Parashat HaShavua



What are Torah Portions?

Each Saturday morning in synagogues around the world a portion from the Torah (called a *parashah*) is publicly chanted. The Torah is divided into 54 of these *parashiyot* so that in the course of a year (beginning and ending on the holiday of Simchat Torah) the entire scroll has been recited during Shabbat services. We read and study a given Torah portion *before* it will be recited during Shabbat morning services. Note that in addition to the Saturday morning service reading, the beginning of the *following* week's portion is chanted during the Saturday afternoon service and during Monday and Thursday morning services. In either case the public reading of the Torah (called *keriat HaTorah*) is a religious ritual, distinct from the study of Torah, called *talmud Torah*.

A Jewish leap year contains 54 weeks, but a non leap year has only 50 weeks (a leap-year adds an additional month (called Adar II) to the usual 12). On the week of Passover and the week of Sukkot, *different* Torah portions are read, so that leaves 52 weeks for the 54 readings (2 weeks have double portions), and on non leap years only 48 weeks for the 54 (6 weeks have double portions). I hope that makes sense; if you are a bit muddled, always consult a good Jewish Calendar.

The Origin of the Weekly Torah Portion

Jewish tradition states that Ezra the Scribe (and the 120 elders of the Great Assembly [4th century before Mashiach]) was the originator of the weekly Torah reading schedule for *klal Yisrael*. The Great Assembly (which included Mordecai (of the Esther story), Daniel, Nehemiah, Zechariah, and Zerubabel, among other notables) is also said to have instituted other traditional practices such as the recitation of Kiddush (on Shabbat); the idea that prayer should occur three times a day; the structure of the Amidah prayer; the recitation of various blessings before eating, and so on.

The Triennial cycle of readings appears to be older than the yearly cycle (which developed during the Babylonian exile), and was probably used when Yeshua (B"H) was here. This plan reads through the Torah in three years, though the way the readings are arranged is a bit strange, since they skip 2/3 of the yearly portion through every cycle.

The Torah Blessings and Aliyot

The Torah portions themselves are divided into sections, called *aliyot* (literally, "ascent"), and it is customary for a *gabbai* (a synagogue official) to call up people from the congregation to recite a blessing before and after the section. For Shabbat services each *parashah* is divided in seven *aliyot*, with a concluding portion (called the *Maftir*) recited by the person who will also recite the Haftarah blessings. This means that on a given Shabbat, eight people will be called to recite blessings over the Torah.



The Procedure for Making Aliyah

The person assigned aliyah is called up to the *bimah* (Torah reading table) by his Hebrew name. The cantor will point to the first word in the scroll that begins the portion. The person then touches the margin area closest to that point with his *tzitzit* and then touches the *tzitzit* to his lips. Standing directly in front of the scroll with both hands on the handles (*etz chayim*), he recites the *barekhu* and the first Torah blessing. He then releases the *etz chayim* and moves to the right to allow the cantor to read the portion. When the cantor is finished, the person again holds both *etz chayim* and recites the second Torah blessing. After this, the next person is called up to the *bimah* and the process repeats until all seven aliyot and the concluding *maftir* are completed.

What are Haftarah Portions?

The weekly Torah portion is followed by an additional portion from the *Nevi'im* (Prophets) called *Haftarah*. It is thought that the *Haftarah* readings were derived when the Greek Hasmonean Dynasty (late Second Temple period, approx. 200 years B.C.E), ruled over the land of Israel. These Hellenists forbade the public reading of Torah in order to dissipate Jewish solidarity, etc., under their rule. So, instead of the weekly Torah portion, the clever Jewish leadership instituted the weekly reading of a portion from the *Nevi'im* which contained ideas which were similar to the Torah reading of that week.

The Maftir and Haftarah

The *maftir* is the last aliyah of the Torah reading service on Shabbat, which usually comprises the last few verses of the week's Torah portion (on festivals and certain special Sabbaths, the *maftir* is a different reading: see the table below). The person who receives the *maftir* also recites the *haftarah* (a reading from the Prophets) and the *Haftarah* blessings that go with it. The *haftarah* and *maftir* are connected to show that the books of the Prophets must be grounded in the study of the Torah.

The Torah Reading Ceremony

The Torah and *Haftarah* reading ceremonies are performed as follows: the Torah is taken from the Ark and paraded around the room before it is brought to rest on the *bimah* (torah reading podium). The weekly portion (*parashat hashavuah*) is divided up into portions (*pasukim*), and certain members of the congregation are called to recite the blessing over their assigned portion of the week's reading. This honor is referred to as an *aliyah* (literally, ascension or calling up).

The first aliyah of any day's reading is reserved for a *kohen* (that is, someone descended from the priestly line of Aaron, the brother of Moses), the second is reserved for a Levite, and subsequent aliyot are normally given to people celebrating major life events, such as marriage or the birth of a child.

**Traditional Parashah Table**

During leap years, there are 52 weeks for the 54 readings (2 weeks have double portions), but on non leap years there are only 48 weeks for the 54 (6 weeks have double portions).

Portions marked with an asterisk can be added to the following week's readings:

בְּרֵאשִׁית (Genesis)

#	Parashat	Torah	Haftarah	Brit Chadashah
1	Bereshit	Gen 1:1-6:8	Isa 42:5-43:11	John 1:1-14
2	Noach	Gen 6:9-11:32	Isa 54:1-55:5	Mt 24:36-46; 1 Pet 3:18-22
3	Lekh Lekha	Gen 12:1-17:27	Isa 40:27-41:16	Rom 4:1-25
4	Vayera	Gen 18:1-22:24	II Ki 4:1-37	Lk 1:26-38; 24:36-53; 2 Pet. 2:4-11
5	Chayei Sarah	Gen 23:1-25:18	I Ki 1:1-31	Mt 1:1-17; 1 Cor 15:50-57
6	Toldot	Gen 25:19-28:9	Mal 1:1-2:7	Rom 9:1-31
7	Vayetzei	Gen 28:10-32:3	Hos 12:13-14:10	Jn 1:19-51
8	Vayishlach	Gen 32:4-36:43	Hos 11:7-12:12 Obadiah 1:1-21	Heb 11:11-20; Mt 26:36-46
9	Vayeshev	Gen 37:1-40:23	Amos 2:6-3:8	Mt 1:1-6, 16-25
10	Miketz	Gen 41:1-44:17	I Ki 3:15-4:1	Rom 10:1-13
11	Vayigash	Gen 44:18-47:27	Ezek 37:15-37:28	Eph 2:1-10
12	Vayechi	Gen 47:28-50:26	I Ki 2:1-12	1 Pet 1:1-9

שְׁמוֹת (Exodus)

#	Parashat	Torah	Haftarah	Brit Chadashah
13	Shemot	Ex 1:1-6:1	Isa 27:6-28:13; 29:22-23	Acts 7:17-35; 1 Cor 14:18-25
14	Va'era	Ex 6:2-9:35	Ezek 28:25-29:21	Rom 9:14-33
15	Bo	Ex 10:1-13:16	Jer 46:13-46:28	Lk 22:7-30; 1 Cor 11:20-34
16	Beshalach	Ex 13:17-17:16	Judges 4:4-5:31	Jn 6:15-71
17	Yitro	Ex 18:1-20:23	Isa 6:1-7:6; 9:5-9:6	Mt 5:8-20
18	Mishpatim	Ex 21:1-24:18	Jer 34:8-34:22; 33:25-26	Mt 5:38-42; 17:1-11
19	Terumah	Ex 25:1-27:19	I Ki 5:26-6:13	2 Cor 9:1-15; Mt 5:33-37
20	Tetzaveh	Ex 27:20-30:10	Ezek 43:10-43:27	Heb 13:10-17



21	Ki Tisa	Ex 30:11-34:35	I Ki 18:1-18:39	2 Cor 3:1-18
22	Vayakhel *	Ex 35:1-38:20	I Ki 7:40-7:50	2 Cor 9:6-11; 1 Cor 3:11-18
23	Pekudei	Ex 38:21-40:38	I Ki 7:51-8:21	Heb 1:1-14

ויקרא (Leviticus)

#	Parashat	Torah	Haftarah	Brit Chadashah
24	Vayikra	Lev 1:1-6:7[e]	Isa 43:21-44:23	Heb 10:1-18
25	Tzav	Lev 6:8-8:36	Jer 7:21-8:3; 9:22-23	Heb 7:24-8:6
26	Shmini	Lev 9:1-11:47	II Sam 6:1-7:17	Heb 7:1-19; 8:1-6
27	Tazria *	Lev 12:1-13:59	II Ki 4:42-5:19	John 6:8-13; Mt 8:1-4
28	Metzora	Lev 14:1-15:33	II Ki 7:3-7:20	Matt 8:1-17
29	Acharei Mot *	Lev 16:1-18:30	Ezek 22:1-22:19	Heb 9:11-28
30	Kedoshim	Lev 19:1-20:27	Amos 9:7-9:15	1 Cor 6:9-20; 1 Pet 1:13-16
31	Emor	Lev 21:1-24:23	Ezek 44:15-44:31	1 Pet 2:4-10
32	Behar *	Lev 25:1-26:2	Jer 32:6-32:27	Lk 4:16-21
33	Bechukotai	Lev 26:3-27:34	Jer 16:19-17:14	Mt. 21:33-46; 2 Cor 6:14-18

בְּמִדְבָּר (Numbers)

#	Parashat	Torah	Haftarah	Brit Chadashah
34	Bemidbar	Num 1:1-4:20	Hos 2:1-2:23	Rom 9:22-33;
35	Naso	Num 4:21-7:89	Judges 13:2-13:25	Acts 21:17-26
36	Beha'alotkha	Num 8:1-12:16	Zech 2:14-4:7	1 Cor 10:6-13; Rev 11:1-19
37	Shelach Lekha	Num 13:1-15:41	Josh 2:1-2:24	Heb 3:7-4:1
38	Korach	Num 16:1-18:32	I Sam 11:14-12:22	Rom 13:1-7
39	Chukat *	Num 19:1-22:1	Judges 11:1-33	Hebrews 9:11-28; John 3:10-21
40	Balak	Num 22:2-25:9	Micah 5:6-6:8	Rom 11:25-32
41	Pinchas	Num 25:10-30:1	I Ki 18:46-19:21	Rom 11:2-32
42	Mattot *	Num 30:2-32:42	Jer 1:1-2:3	Matt 5:33-37
43	Masei	Num 33:1-36:13	Jer 2:4-28; 3:4	James 4:1-12

**דְּבָרִים (Deuteronomy)**

#	Parashat	Torah	Haftarah	Brit Chadashah
44	Devarim	Deut 1:1-3:22	Isa 1:1-1:27	Acts 9:1-21; 1 Tim 3:1-7
45	Vaetchanan	Deut 3:23-7:11	Isa 40:1-40:26	Mt 23:31-39; Mk 12:28-34
46	Eikev	Deut 7:12-11:25	Isa 49:14-51:3	Heb 11:8-13; Rom 8:31-39
47	Re'eh	Deut 11:26-16:17	Isa 54:11-55:5	Jn 7:37-52; 1 Jn 4:1-6
48	Shoftim	Deut 16:18-21:9	Isa 51:12-52:12	Jn 1:19-27; Acts 3:22-23
49	Ki Teitzei	Deut 21:10-25:19	Isa 54:1-54:10	Mt 5:27-30; 1 Cor 5:1-5
50	Ki Tavo	Deut 26:1-29:8	Isa 60:1-60:22	Eph 1:3-6; Rev 21:10-27
51	Nitzavim *	Deut 29:10-30:20	Isa 61:10-63:9	Rom 10:1-12
52	Vayeilech	Deut 31:1-31:30	Isa 55:6-56:8	Rom 10:14-18
53	Ha'azinu	Deut 32:1-32:52	II Sam 22:1-51	Rom 10:14-11:12
54	Vezot Haberakhah	Deut 33:1-34:12	Josh 1:1-18	Rev 22:1-5

* Portions marked with an asterisk can be added to the following week's readings.

There are 54 Torah portions, one for each week of a leap year, so that in the course of a year, beginning and ending on the Simchat Torah, we read the entire Torah in our services. During non-leap years, there are 50 weeks, so some of the shorter portions are doubled up (a leap-year adds an additional month (4 weeks) to the usual 12 (called Adar II); a Jewish calendar will indicate if a year is a leap year).

On the week of Passover and the week of Sukkot, different Torah portions are read, so on leap years that leaves 52 weeks for the 54 readings (2 weeks have double portions), and on non leap years that leaves 48 weeks for the 54 (6 weeks have double portions).



Additional Parashiot for Holidays

Below are additional readings for holidays and special shabbats. Note that on holidays, the *maftir* portion is different than the usual Torah reading:

Parashat	Torah	Haftarah	Brit Chadashah
Rosh Hashanah Day 1	Gen 21:1-34 Num 29:1-6	I Sam 1:1-2:10	1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:51-54
Rosh Hashanah Day 2	Gen 21:1-34 Num 29:1-6	Jer 31:1-19	1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:51-54
Shabbat Shuvah	Deut 32:1-32:52	Hosea 14:1-9(h); Joel 2:15-27; Micah 7:18-20	Rom 10:14-11:12
Yom Kippur (shacharit)	Lev 16:1-34 Num 29:7-11	Isa 57:14-58:14	Rom 3:21-26; 2 Cor 5:10-21
Yom Kippur (minchah)	Lev 18:1-30	Jonah 1:1-4:11; Micah 7:18-20	Rom 3:21-26; 2 Cor 5:10-21
Sukkot 1	Lev 22:26-23:44 Num 29:12-16	Zech 14:1-21	Jn 1:10-14; Rev 7:1-10; 21:1-4
Sukkot 2	Lev 22:26-23:44 Num 29:12-16	I Ki 8:2-21	Jn 1:10-14; Rev 7:1-10; 21:1-4
Sukkot CH" M 1	Num 29:17-22		Jn 1:10-14; Rev 7:1-10; 21:1-4
Sukkot CH" M 2	Num 29:20-25		Jn 1:10-14; Rev 7:1-10; 21:1-4
Sukkot CH" M 3	Num 29:23-28		Jn 1:10-14; Rev 7:1-10; 21:1-4
Sukkot CH" M 4	Num 29:26-31		Jn 1:10-14; Rev 7:1-10; 21:1-4
Sukkot Shabbat	Lev 22:26-23:44; Num 29:12-29:16	Zech 14:1-21; Ecclesiastes (K)	Jn 1:10-14; Rev 7:1-10; 21:1-4
Sukkot Shabbat CH" M	Ex 33:12-34:26	Ezek 38:18-39:16; Ecclesiastes (K)	Jn 7:37-44
Hoshana Rabbah	Num 29:26-34		Jn 7:1-2, 37-44
Shemini Atzeret	Deut 14:22-16:17 Num 29:35-30:1	I Ki 8:54-9:1	Mt 17:1-9; Mk 12:28-33
Simchat Torah	Deut 33:1-34:12 Gen 1:1-2:3 Num 29:35-30:1	Josh 1:1-18	Mt 5:17-48; Rom 7:21-25
Chanukah 1	Num 7:1-17		Jn 9:1-7 Jn 10:22-39
Chanukah 2	Num 7:18-29		Jn 9:1-7 Jn 10:22-39
Chanukah 3	Num 7:24-35		Jn 9:1-7 Jn 10:22-39
Chanukah 4	Num 7:30-41		Jn 9:1-7 Jn 10:22-39
Chanukah 5	Num 7:36-47		Jn 9:1-7 Jn 10:22-39



Chanukah 6	Num 7:42-47		Jn 9:1-7 Jn 10:22-39
Chanukah 7	Num 7:48-59		Jn 9:1-7 Jn 10:22-39
Chanukah 8	Num 7:54-8:4		Jn 9:1-7 Jn 10:22-39
Asarah B'Tevet	Ex 32:11-34:10		
Tu B'Shevat	Ps 104:16-17; Psalms 120-134		Mt 7:13-24, 28-29
Shekalim	Ex 30:11-16	II Ki 11:17-12:17	
Ta'anit Esther	Ex 32:11-34:10	Esther (K)	Mt 6:16-18; Lk 2:36-37
Zakhor (Purim)	Deut 25:17-19	I Sam 15:1-34	
Purim	Ex 17:8-16	Esther (K)	Heb 11
Parah	Num 19:1-22	Ezek 36:16-38	
Ha-Chodesh	Ex 12:1-20	Ezek 45:16-46:18	
Shabbat Ha-Gadol		Mal 3:4-24	
Passover Day 1	Ex 12:21-51 Num 28:16-25	Josh 3:5-7; 5:2-6:1; 6:27	Lk 22:7-20; Jn 1:29-31; 1 Cor 15:20-28
Passover Day 2	Lev 22:26-23:44 Num 28:16-25	II Ki 23:1-9; 21-25	
Passover CH"M 1	Ex 13:1-16; Num 28:19-25		
Passover CH"M 2	Ex 22:24-23:19; Num 28:19-25		
Passover CH"M 3	Ex 34:1-26; Num 28:19-25		
Passover CH"M 4	Ex 9:1-14; Num 28:19-25		
Passover (shabbat)	Ex 33:12-34:26 Num 28:19-25	Ezek 37:1-37:14 Song of Songs (K)	Rev 15:1-4
Passover Day 7	Ex 13:17-15:26 Num 28:19-25	II Sam 22:1-51	
Passover Day 8	Deut 15:19-16:17 Num 28:19-25	Isa 10:32-12:6	
Firstfruits (Habbikurim)	Ex 23:19; Deut 26:1-11		Rev 15:1-4
Yom HaShoah	Deut 4:30-40		Rev 6:9-11
Yom Hazikaron			
Yom Ha'atmaut	Deut 11:8-21	Isa 10:32-11:12	Mt 24:29-44
Lag Ba'Omer			
Yom Yerushalayim			



Shavuot Day 1	Ex 19:1-20:23 Num 28:26-31	Ezek 1:1-28; 3:12; Ruth (K)	Jn 1:32-34; Mt 3:11-17; Acts 2:1-21, 37-41
Shavuot Day 2	Deut 15:19-16:17	Hab 2:20-3:19	Acts 2:1-13
Tisha B'Av (shacharit)	Deut 4:25-40	Jer 8:13-9:23	Mt 3:11-17
Tisha B'Av (Minchah)	Ex 32:11-14, 34:1-10	Isa 55:6-56:8; Lam (K)	Mt 23:16-23;24:1-2
Rosh Chodesh (weekday)	Num 28:1-15		
Rosh Chodesh (shabbat)	Num 28:9-15	Isa 66:1-24	

Perek Yomi Tehillim

There are two ways Orthodox Jews read through the book of Psalms (*Tehillim*). One way is to read through the entire Tehillim every week. Using this method, each day of the week is assigned a specific portion of the whole, as follows:

Sun	Mon	Teu	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1-29	30-50	51-72	73-89	90-106	107-119	120-150

For example, on Sundays you would recite Psalm 1 (*Mizmor Aleph*) through Psalm 29 (*Mizmor Kaf-Tet*), on Mondays you would recite Psalm 30 (*Mizmor Lamed*) through Psalm 50 (*Mizmor Nun*), and so on, until the entire book is read through on Shabbat. The process repeats the following Sunday with the same portions.

The other method is to read through Tehillim every month. Using this method, each day of the Hebrew month is assigned a (smaller) portion of the whole, as follows:

First Week

Day	Psalms
01	1-9
02	10-17
03	18-22
04	23-28
05	29-34
06	35-38
07	39-43



Second Week

Day	Psalms
08	44-48
09	49-54
10	55-59
11	60-65
12	66-68
13	69-71
14	72-76

Third Week

Day	Psalms
15	77-78
16	79-82
17	83-87
18	88-89
19	90-96
20	97-103
21	104-105

Fourth Week

Day	Psalms
22	106-107
23	108-112
24	113-118
25	119:1-96
26	119:97-176
27	120-134
28	125-139

Fifth Week

Day	Psalms
29* (see note, below)	140-144
30	145-150

Note: Since the Hebrew calendar alternates between a short month (29 days) and a long month (30 days), during a short month, psalms 145-150 are recited on the twenty-ninth day of the month.