

יום כיפור ON תפלת מנחה DURING הפטרה AND קריאת התורה

Professors Safrai in their פירוש ספראי to משנה ד' פרק שלישי, משנה ד' present the following comment concerning the practice of performing קריאת התורה and the reading of the הפטרה during תפלת מנחה on יום כיפור:

פירוש ספראי-מסכת מגילה פרק שלישי משנה ד': אולם קריאת התורה במנחה של יום הכיפורים אינה נזכרת במקורות התנאים ולא במקורות אר-ישראלים אלא בכרייתא בבבלי (לא ע"א), וכנראה אינה אלא נוהג שהתחדש בבבל בימי האמוראים.

Translation: The practice of reading the Torah at Mincha on Yom Kippur is not mentioned in Mishnaic sources nor is it mentioned in any sources that originated in Eretz Yisroel. It is found only in a Baraisa in the Talmud Bavli (Megila 31a). Apparently it was a practice that was established in Babylonia by the Amoraim living there.

The following represents the reference found in the תלמוד בבלי:

תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה דף לא' עמ' א'-ביום הכפורים קורין אחרי מות ומפטירין כי כה אמר רם ונשא' (ישעיהו נו', טו'), ובמנחה קורין בעריות ומפטירין ביונה.

Translation: On Yom Kippur morning, we read the opening of Parshas Acharei Mos. The Haftorah begins with the words: Ki Ko Amar Rom V'Nisa (Yeshayahu 57, 15). At Mincha on Yom Kippur, we read the section of the Torah that deals with illicit marriages and we read Sefer Yona as the Haftorah.

How should we explain the practice of performing קריאת התורה and reading the הפטרה during תפלת מנחה on יום כיפור? As a rule, we do not perform קריאת התורה during תפלת מנחה on ימים טובים. Therefore, we need to ask: are we mimicking the practice of performing קריאת התורה during שבת on תפלת מנחה or are we following the custom of performing קריאת התורה and הפטרה during תפלת מנחה on fast days? Ismar Elbogen on pages 148-149 in his book: Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History, The Jewish Publication Society, 1993, suggests several theories as to how the custom developed:

(10) The subject of the Haftarot of the Afternoon Service demands further discussion. On the basis of a passage in the Talmud that has already been mentioned ("If it were not for the Sabbath there would be no prophetic reading in the Afternoon Service of a festival," B. Shab. 24a), we must assume that at one time Haftarot were customarily recited at the Afternoon Service of the Sabbath. This report, which cannot be confirmed by concrete evidence, has caused medieval commentators great confusion. The view of the Babylonian academies, which reached Germany, was that on Sabbath afternoons in ancient times chapters of

1. ואמר סלו סלו פנו דרך before that begins פסוק

consolation were read from Isaiah, that is, mainly from the second part of that book, until the Sassanians prohibited it. Others believe that the report refers not to a reading from the Prophets but from the Hagiographa; this is in fact attested elsewhere (see below, §27:3). Yet others claim that the whole text has been corrupted in transmission, but they are unable to suggest an emendation. In fact, only one of two possibilities remains: Either this entire tradition is false, or we must assume that in the most ancient times there was a prophetic reading at the Afternoon Service of the Sabbath, though we find no other trace of it. The only Afternoon Service Haftara that can be proved from the Talmud to have existed is that of the Day of Atonement; by then, as now, the Book of Jonah was read (B. Meg. 31b). Following the example of the Day of Atonement, the afternoon Haftara was transferred also to fast days, but there is no evidence of this custom before the year 1000. Ibn Ghiyath is the first to mention Hos. 14 as a Haftara for the Ninth of Av, but he notes that this reading was completely optional. In fact all the rites except Ashkenaz adopted Hos. 14 as the Haftarot for the afternoon of the Ninth of Av. The afternoon Haftarot for the other fast days seem even later; it is hard to determine exactly when and how they came into being. Sepharad never accepted them, and Romaniot knows but rejects them; only Rome and Ashkenaz read Is. 56:6-57:8 on fast day afternoons, and Ashkenaz reads the same Haftara on the Ninth of Av as well.

The Haftara of the Afternoon Service can be recognized as a late institution also through the fact that the one who reads it is one of the three called to the Torah. The rule that the third serves also as Haftara reader led in the Middle Ages to a renewal of the incorrect view, already rejected by the Talmud, that "the Haftara reader counts as one of the seven," -- that is, that at the Sabbath Morning Service, for example, only six others have to be called to the Torah. In fact, the contradiction can be resolved only by acknowledging that, historically, the Haftara of the Afternoon Service is a later institution, and that when it was introduced no attention was paid to the old rule that the one who reads the Haftara must also read in the Torah.

On page 150-151, Elbogen provides further information:

(3) Were there also readings from other books of the Hagiographa (apart, of course, from the many psalms incorporated into the daily services)? Soferim 14:4 cites a special benediction for the reading of the Hagiographa, but it seems intended only for individual reading. During the most ancient period it was prohibited to read the Hagiographa before the Sabbath Afternoon Service; but such a reading seems to have been held in connection with that service. From Nehardea it is explicitly attested (B. Shab. 116b); despite the obscurity of the statement **בנהרדעא פסקי סידרא בכתובים בשבתא דמנחה**, there can be no doubt that a regular reading of

the Hagiographa is what is meant. It is not clear in what way this was done; probably a commentary was attached to each individual verse. Rapoport pointed to the surprising fact that the proem verses of the midrashim on the Torah (see below, §29) are almost all taken from the Hagiographa; he concluded from this that it was the custom to offer edifying homilies on the books of the Hagiographa at the Sabbath Afternoon Service, and that the midrashim that have come down to us are derived from those homilies. True, the midrashim are of Palestinian origin, while the testimony of the reading of the Hagiographa comes to us from Nehardea; but probably this city was the only one in Babylonia to observe this custom, while in Palestine it was universal. To this must be connected also the fact that the midrashic collection Agadat bereshit contains for every Sabbath not only comments on the Torah reading and the Haftara, but also for a passage from the Hagiographa.

On pages 137-138 Elbogen provides the following:

On the second day of the Eighth Day of Assembly the Babylonian Talmud designates Deut. 33; it cannot be determined whether they meant to include chapter 34, also. Likewise, we do not know whether Deut. 33 and 34 served also as a regular Sabbath reading; since the geonic period it has been an exception unto itself, the only festival pericope not read also on one of the Sabbaths of the year. It was assigned to the Eighth Day of Assembly so that the annual cycle might be completed on the last day of the festival. In this way the day came to be called "The Joy of the Torah," which, to be sure, is not attested before the year 1000. The conclusion of the cycle of readings was celebrated in the synagogue with homilies and prayers (see §30). To this was added another custom, that of following the conclusion of the Torah immediately with its beginning. R. Judah of Barcelona, the first to report on it, says that Gen. 1:1-5 is often recited from memory and expounded or elaborated in poetic form. This custom, too, has its own history, for in the Babylonian academies the beginning of Genesis was recited from memory at the Afternoon Service on the Day of Atonement. Saadia even tells us that the Torah was read again at the Closing Service, and the verses read were again the first ones of Genesis; but after his time this custom was eliminated. It seems that underlying these customs is a different kind of cycle, to which the Talmud may allude. It may be that originally the end of the Torah, followed by its beginning, was read at the Afternoon Service of the Day of Atonement. When, later, the festival of the Joy of the Torah was moved to the Eighth Day of Assembly, Gen. 1 was added to the end of Deuteronomy as a new reading. Though originally the verses were recited only from memory, afterward they were actually read from the scroll, and though originally it was only the first few verses (in Rome only Gen. 1:1-5 are still read [from memory] as in ancient times), soon it became the entire story of creation down to Gen. 2:3. From the twelfth century on this custom gradually took root, again, apparently, earlier in France and Germany than in the other countries. It was a great honor to be allowed to read the end or beginning of the Torah; the two men, usually the most distinguished and

learned in the community, who were accorded this honor were given the titles "חתן", "bridegroom of the Torah," and "חתן בראשית" the bridegroom of Genesis."

All the readings discussed till now belong to the Morning Service. The Mishnah knows of an afternoon reading only for the Sabbath, and the Talmud knows of one for the Day of Atonement, Lev. 18. What about the rest of the festivals? We have no evidence for such readings, which can be inferred only from one vague reference in the Talmud. The only source that claims that such an afternoon reading existed is Soferim 11:5, but it is of very doubtful reliability. Only when a festival coincides with the Sabbath is the Torah read in the Afternoon Service, and then just as on any ordinary Sabbath, without any special attention being given to the festival. Fast days also have an afternoon reading, apparently the latest of all, for its existence cannot be proven before the geonic period.

Professor Elbogen lays out for us several theories that explain the practice of performing קריאת התורה and the הפטרה during תפלת מנחה on יום כיפור. Let us begin with his reference to a further practice of performing קריאת התורה before תפלת נעילה on יום כיפור as described in the סידור of רב סעדיה גאון:

Translation: After Shacharis on Yom Kippur, we read from the opening of Parshas Acharei Mos and then the Maftir of Esor L'Chodesh Shvi'I and the Haftorah of Rom V'Nisa. Before Tefilas Mincha we read from the end of Parshas Acharei Mos; K'Ma'Asei Eretz Mitzrayim. The third one called to the Torah reads the Haftorah, Sefer Yona. Some add one additional Torah reading before Tefilas Ne'Eilah which is read from a different Torah scroll and begins with the opening verses of Parshas Bereishis. They add to that a Haftorah that begins Kumi Ori. This practice has no basis.

ה' מצא חן במדבר. – ובשחרית של יום הכפורים אחרי מות ומפטיר ובעשור לחדש השביעי, כי כה אמר רם ונשא ובמנחה כמעשה ארץ מצרים והשלישי מפטיר ויהי דבר ה' אל יונה. ויש מוסיפים ומוציאים עוד ספר וקוראים לפני נעילה בראשית. ומפטירים קומי אורי ואין לזה עיקר. –

Can we explain the practice to read the opening to פרישת בראשית before נעילה begin?

The following source provides the reason for the custom:

ספר שבולי הלקט סדר ראש השנה סימן שא' – ותקיעה דמעומד אינה אלא כדי לערבב את השמן דאמר ר' יצחק למה תוקעין ומריעין כשהן יושבין ותוקעין ומריעין כשהן עומדין כדי לערבב השמן ולשתקו לפי שכבר יצאו ידי חובתן ועדיין מחבבין את המצות ושונין עליה. ועוד שעדיין לא הגיעו לסדר הברכות והשלימו מצות שופר וכיוצא בהן מצינו באגדה עשרת ימי תשובה השמן מקטרג שהרי סיימו התורה ואינן שונין ולפיכך נהגו לקרות בראשית במנחה ביום הכיפורים ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום אחד ואמר ליה הקדוש ברוך הוא הרי ישראל זריזין שהרי עדיין לא השלימו הסדר ומתחילין בראשית. וכן נוהגין בשתי ישיבות.

Translation: The sounding of the Shofar that takes place while standing before Tefilas Mussaf on Rosh Hashonah is performed for the sole purpose of confusing Satan as R. Yitzchok said: why do we sound the Shofar both while the congregation is sitting and while the congregation is standing? In order to confuse the Satan and to stop him from advocating against the Jewish People. That is accomplished by the Jewish People fulfilling their obligation to sound the Shofar before Satan begins his argument against the Jewish People. By proceeding to sound the Shofar a second time, the Jewish People demonstrate how beloved the Mitzvah is to them and despite not yet having reached the Brachos of Mussaf Shemona Esrei, the Jewish People have already fulfilled their obligation to sound the Shofar. We learn of a similar practice in the following Aggadah: during the Ten Days Of Repentance, the Satan argues against the Jewish People. As part of his prosecution, Satan points out that the Jewish People finish reading from the Torah but do not begin to read it again. For that reason, the practice began to read from the opening of Sefer Bereishis until the end of the first day of creation during Mincha on Yom Kippur. Because of that practice, G-d can respond to Satan by saying that the Jewish People do not wait until they have completed the yearly cycle of the Torah reading before beginning the cycle anew. That is the practice in the two Yeshivos.

This source reflects the practice referred to by Elbogen of completing the yearly cycle of קריאת התורה on יום כיפור and commencing the new yearly cycle by reading from the opening chapter of ספר בראשית. Another possible source for the practice of reading the opening to ספר בראשית on יום כיפור may be to mimic the practices of the אנשי מעמד during the מעמדות. Those days represented fast days as well:

ר' עובדיה מברטנורא (עמר נקא) במדבר פרק כח-ותקנו מעמדות פי' אנשים מובדלים לכך והן נקראין אנשי מעמד והן מתעניין ד' ימים בשבוע וקורין בתורה בכל יום במעשה בראשית ומתפללין תפלת נעילה וכו' כדאיתא התם במסכת תענית:

Translation: They instituted the practice of Ma'Amados². This is a reference to a group of distinguished members of the community. They were called the people of the Ma'Amad. They would fast four days of the week in which they met. Each day they would read from the Torah a portion that described a day of creation. They would also add an additional prayer at Ne'Eilah that is described in Maseches Ta'Anis.

Perhaps we can suggest an additional explanation; that they had a practice of performing קריאת התורה and then reading a הפטרה between each of the תפילות of יום כיפור.

Professor Elbogen also refers to a practice of reading a הפטרה at תפלת מנחה on שבת. That custom is described in the following:

תשובות רב נטרונאי גאון - ברודי (אופק) תשובות פרשניות סימן תו-וששאלתם מהו המפטיר בנביא במנחה בשבת (שבת כד ע"א). בדורות ראשונים כשהיו קורין במנחה בשבת היו מפטירין בישעיה נביא וכולן בנחמות שבישעיה, ולא היו מוסיפין על י' פסוקין. וגזרו פרסיים שמדא שלא להפטיר, וכיון שסילקו סילקוהו.

2. During the Second Temple era, Eretz Yisroel was divided into twenty-four geographic districts. כהנים from each of those districts would serve for a week at a time in the בית המקדש. During that week, several distinguished members of the district would meet at a central location within their district. They would fast and read from the תורה as described below.

Translation: You asked about the practice to read a Haftorah from a Book of Prophets during Mincha on Shabbos (Shabbos 24a). In earlier generations, after the Torah reading on Shabbos at Mincha, they would read a Haftorah from the book of Yeshayahu but only prophecies of comfort and they would not read more than ten verses. That practice continued until the Persians issued a decree banning the practice. Once the practice was banned, it was never restored.

The following source describes the practice as still being active in his era:

ספר העיתים³ סימן קפא—שמנהג היה בתחלה במקומות הרבה שמפטירין במנחה בשבת. ועדיין יש ספרי אפטרותא שיש בהם ענין למנחה לכל שנה וקורין לה נחמתא. אחר אפטרותא שחרית כותבין נחמתא בישעיה נחמתא בירמיה. ויש מקומות בארץ עילם ואיי הים של פרס שרגילין בה עד עכשו.

Translation: It was the custom in many locations to read a Haftorah at Mincha on Shabbos. You can still find Haftorah books that were written just for this purpose and provide a Haftorah for each Shabbos to be recited at Mincha. The Haftorah was called a Nechemta (prophecy of comfort). Those who would read books of Haftorahs would first write one for the Haftorahs of Shabbos Shacharis and then they would collect prophecies of comfort from the books of Yeshayahu and Yirmiyahu. There are places in Iran and the islands of Persia which currently follow this practice.

3. R. Judah ben Barzilai of Barcelona flourished at the close of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth centuries. He authored many books, most of which were lost due to their great length. His halakhic writings are based primarily on geonic responsa, the Halakhot of R. Samuel Ha-Nagid, and the rulings and responsa of R. Isaac Alfasi. (Bar Ilan Digital Library)