



Shekalim: 2 Kings 11:17-11:20¹; 12:1-12:17

On four Shabbatot beginning immediately before Adar, additional Torah readings (the “Four Parashiyot”) are read after the weekly Parashah, reflecting seasonal themes relating to Purim and Passover. Their associated Haftarat also relate to these themes. The first of the Four Parashiyot, Shekalim (Ex. 30:11-16), details a required annual payment to support the Temple. Mishnah Shekalim 1:1 rules that the duty to make this payment is announced ahead of Rosh Chodesh Adar. Similarly, the Haftarah deals with the Temple’s monetary needs.

The power and meaning of the Haftarah’s simple storyline stem from the dramatic, revolutionary events which precede it. God sent the prophet Elisha to anoint a man, Yehu, to overthrow and replace the idolatrous, murderous royal house of Ahab in the Northern Kingdom. During the resulting bloody upheaval, Yehu also put to death evil King Ahaziah of Judah, an ally of Ahab’s house, and many of Ahaziah’s male relatives. In response to Ahaziah’s murder, his evil mother and idolatrous daughter of Ahab, Athaliah, slew all remaining heirs to her son’s Davidic throne and assumed Judah’s royal powers for herself and Ahab’s house.

Ahaziah’s sister, Jehoshebah, plucked her newborn brother, Jehoash, from among the dead of Athaliah’s slaughter, thereby saving the Davidic dynasty and its covenant with God. For six years, she and her husband, High Priest Jehoiadah, hid and raised Jehoash in the Temple. When Jehoash was seven years old, Jehoiadah led a coup against Athaliah in the Temple, and crowned the young prince as king amidst rejoicing. Here the Haftarah begins:

Haftarah Breakdown

Verses 11:17-18: Jehoiadah leads the people and Jehoash to reaffirm the Sinaitic and Davidic covenants with God and one another. Accordingly, they then destroy a Baal temple, kill its priest, and appoint officers for the Temple.

II Kings 11:17	מלכים ב' י"א:י"ז
Jehoiada made the covenant between the Lord, the king, and the people, that they should be the Lord’s people; and also between the king and the people.	וַיִּכְרֹת יְהוֹיָדָע אֶת־הַבְּרִית בֵּין ה' וּבֵין הַמְּלָכָה וּבֵין הָעָם לַיהוָה לְעָם לֵה' וּבֵין הַמְּלָכָה וּבֵין הָעָם:

Verses 11:19-20: Amidst great celebration, Jehoash assumes the throne in the royal palace. Athaliah is executed.

II Kings 11:19	מלכים ב' י"א:י"ט
[Jehoiadah] took the rulers over hundreds, and the Kari ² , and the runners, and all the people of the land. They brought down the king from the Lord’s House and came by the way of the Runners’ Gate to the king’s house. [Jehoash] sat on the kings’ throne.	וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שָׂרֵי הַמְּאוֹת וְאֶת־הַכָּרִי וְאֶת־הַרָּצִים וְאֵת כָּל־עַם הָאָרֶץ וַיְרִידוּ אֶת־הַמְּלָכָה מִבַּיִת ה' וַיָּבֹאוּ דְרֹד־שָׁעַר הַרָּצִים בַּיִת הַמְּלָכָה וַיָּשֶׁב עַל־כִּסֵּא הַמְּלָכִים:

Verses 12:1-4: An overview of Jehoash’s reign of forty years.

II Kings 12:3	מלכים ב' י"ב:ג
Jehoash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all his days that Jehoiadah the priest instructed him.	וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוֹאָשׁ הַיָּשָׁר כְּעֵינֵי ה' כָּל־יְמָיו אֲשֶׁר הוֹרָהוּ יְהוֹיָדָע הַכֹּהֵן:

¹ Ashkenazim omit these verses.

² For the meaning of “Kari”, Da’at Mikra suggests: “messengers”, “archers”, “strongmen”, “mercenaries from Asia Minor”, and more.

Verses 12:5-6: The Temple lay in disrepair after standing for 150 years, in part due to abuse under idolaters such as Athaliah and Ahaziah. Jehoash commands the priests to use required (half-shekel) and voluntary contributions³, as well as their own and their patrons' money, to repair the Temple.

II Kings 12:6	מלכים ב י"ב:ו
Let the priests - every man from his acquaintance - take [money]. They will repair the breaches of the house, wherever any breach shall be found.	יִקְחוּ לָהֶם הַכֹּהֲנִים אִישׁ מֵאֵת מִכְרוֹ וְהֵם יִתְקְרוּ אֶת-בְּדָק הַבַּיִת לְכָל אֲשֶׁר-יִמָּצֵא שָׁם בְּדָק: (פ)

Verses 12:7-9: After 23 years, Jehoash terminates this system with the priests' consent since it no longer provides enough money to repair the Temple.

II Kings 12:8	מלכים ב י"ב:ח
King Jehoash called for Jehoiadah the priest, and the priests. He said to them, "Why do you not repair the breaches of the house? Now take no more money from your acquaintances, but give [what you nonetheless receive] to [repair] breaches of the house."	וַיִּקְרָא הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוֹאָשׁ לַיהוֹאָדָע הַכֹּהֵן וְלַכֹּהֲנִים וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם מִדְּוֵעַ אֵינְכֶם מְחַזְקִים אֶת-בְּדָק הַבַּיִת וְעַתָּה אֲלֹ-תִקְחוּ-כֶסֶף מֵאֵת מִכְרֵיכֶם כִּי-לִבְדָק הַבַּיִת תִּתְּנֶהוּ:

Verses 12:10-11: Instead, Jehoiadah collects money directly from those coming to the Temple.

II Kings 12:10	מלכים ב י"ב:י
Jehoiadah the priest took a chest, bored a hole in its lid, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one enters the Lord's house. The priests who guarded the door put there all the money that was brought to the Lord's house.	וַיֵּלֶחַ הַיְהוֹאָדָע הַכֹּהֵן אַרְזוֹן אֶתְד וַיִּקַּב חֹר בְּדַלְתּוֹ וַיִּתֵּן אֹתוֹ אֶצְלַת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בַּיְמִין [מִיְמִין] בְּכוּא-אִישׁ בַּיִת ה' וַנְתַּנּוּ-שָׁמָּה הַכֹּהֲנִים שְׁמֵרֵי הַסֹּף אֶת-כָּל-הַכֶּסֶף הַמוֹבָא בַּיִת-ה':

Verses 12:12-17: The priests and Jehoash's "accountant" track this money and use it to pay for supplies and workers needed for Temple repairs, although it does not suffice for the Temple's vessels.

II Kings 12:12	מלכים ב י"ב:י"ב
They gave the money that was counted into the hands to those who did the work that had the oversight of the Lord's house. They disbursed it to the carpenters and builders who worked upon the Lord's house.	וַנְתַּנוּ אֶת-הַכֶּסֶף הַמְתֻּכָּן עַל-יַד [יְדֵי] עֹשֵׂי הַמְּלָאכָה הַפְּקָדִים [הַמְּפַקְדִים] בַּיִת ה' וַיּוֹצִיאוּהוּ לְחַרְשֵׁי הָעֵץ וְלַבְנָיִם הַעֹשִׂים בַּיִת ה':

Connection

The Talmud derives **financial advice** from the Haftarah.

Bava Batra 9a	בבא בתרא ט עמוד א
Rabbi Elazar said: "Even though a person has a trusted treasurer in his house, he should [nonetheless] tie up [his money] and count [it], as Scripture states, "The king's scribe and the High Priest came up, and they tied it in bags and counted the money..." (II Kings 12:11–12)	אמר רבי אלעזר אף על פי שיש לו לאדם גזבר נאמן בתוך ביתו יצור וימנה שניאמר ויצרו וימנו

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³ Including "erachin" vows described in Lev. 27:1-8. Apparently, such vows provided important funds for the First Temple.