Parsha Management –
Doubling, Halving, Accuracy

By: SHELDON EPSTEIN, BERNARD DICKMAN and YONAH WILAMOWSKY

Introduction: The Current System of Torah Parsha Reading -
Terminology & Characteristics

An integral component of the Shabbos morning prayer service is the
reading of the Torah portion of the week. For the most part, these
weekly Torah portions are the individual parshiyos that collectively
comprise the Chumash. The number of parshiyos, as given in all
standard Chumashim, is 54. The first parsha, Bearishis, is read the
Shabbos after Simchas Torah and thereafter on every Shabbos which is
not also Yom Toch Chol Hamoed, the remaining parshiyos are read
successively. The last parsha, Vezos Habracha, is the lone exception to
the rule and it is read on Simchas Torah, not on Shabbos. Because a
regular Jewish year has either 353, 354 or 355 days, a single reading
cycle has at most 51 available Shabbosim and a Torah cycle cannot be
completed in one year if Shabbos morning readings are limited to a
single parsha. As a result, on several Shabbosim during a regular year
two parshiyos are read. Since at times Yom Toch comes out on Shabbos
and further reduces the number of Shabbosim available for the parsha
readings, the number of parshiyos that are read in tandem throughout
the year varies from year to year. The reading designations that are
currently universally used for Shabbos Torah readings, limit the
parshiyos that can be read in tandem to the following 7 pairs:

יוחנן-פוקודי, חורי-מצורע, אחור מות-קדושים, בהר-בחוקותי, חתק-בלק, טמות-
מסחי-נעבון-ייל

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topics appear in Tradition, Higayon, and Location Sciences.
While the need for “doubling up” on regular years is immediately obvious, leap years which have either 383, 384 or 385 days and up to 55 Shabbosim, for the most part also require “doubling up.” The reason for the leap year doubling is that every year at least one Shabbos will be on Pesach and one on Succos. This leaves at most 53 Shabbosim for the standard Torah readings. If even one additional Shabbos is also Yom Tov (e.g., Rosh Hashanah starts on Shabbos) then again we have more parshiyos than Shabbosim.

Table 1 gives the breakdown of the parshiyos that are read together in the Diaspora for each of the different possible 7 regular year and 7 leap year calendars. Each of these 14 different possible calendars is known as a קביעות. In the scheme used in Table 1, the first letter (ב,ג,ה,ז) represents the day of the week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Shabbos) in which Rosh Hashanah starts, and the second letter (סרה,סדרןכ,מהליש) says how many days (58, 59, 60) in total there are in the months of Marhesvan and Kislev. For example, a leap year with קביעות of ג״ה, starts on Thursday, and Marhesvan and Kislev have 58 days. The 14 קביעות of Table 1 are the only ones possible in our lunar calendar. In terms of the total number of days in the year, ח,כ,ש leap years have 383, 384 and 385 days respectively, while regular years with these designations have 353, 354 and 355 days.¹

The row directly under the קביעות designations in Table 1 lists how many Shabbosim during that yearly cycle have regular parsha readings. All remaining rows under the קביעות designations are filled with 1’s or 2’s, with 1’s indicating that a pair of parshiyos are read together in a single week and 2 indicating that they are read separately over a two week span. As expected, the number of 1’s for regular years far exceed those for leap years. The differences in the 1’s, however, primarily occur for the first 4 double parshiyos (i.e., 0 for leap years and 27 of 28 for regular years) and with only minor differences for the last 3 pairs (i.e., 11 out of 21 for leap years and 13 out of 21 for regular years). This difference reflects the fact that the reading discrepancies between leap years and regular years caused by the added 4 weeks of an extra month of Adar are addressed by the combining of the first 4 sets of possible double parshiyos.

¹ See, תכח סימן טור and ג״ס״ק תכח סימן או״ח. We will discuss the Tables in the טור in detail later.
## Table 1

Number of Weeks it takes to Read the Indicated Parshiyos for each Year Designation in the Diaspora

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Times</th>
<th># of שבת Readings</th>
<th>Leap Year</th>
<th>Regular Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These פְּרַשִּׁיּוֹת are Read Together</td>
<td></td>
<td>הב&quot;ח</td>
<td>הב&quot;ש</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parsha Tandum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יוקלד-פקודי</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>חת綜合-מזרע</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>אַדִּיר מֹתו-קוֹדֵשוֹן</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>בֵּרֵר-מֹתוֹק</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finally, the first column of Table 1 gives the number of times a particular pair of parshiyos are read together across the different types of years. The frequencies vary from a low 4 of 14 cases for חקת-בלק (i.e. rarely read together) to a high of 12 of 14 for the pair of מוותים-מיסעי (i.e., almost always read together).

Table 1 demonstrates that in our 54 parsha system it is possible, but not usual, for all of the parshiyos to be read separately in a given year in the Diaspora. Of the 14 possibleקביעות, only a חקת-בלק leap year has this characteristic (i.e., it is the only column that has only 2’s). The frequency of thisקביעות is rather erratic. The current year 5765 (2004/2005) has thisקביעות. The last time it occurred was 1981, 24 years ago, and the next time it will happen is in 2008, three years from now. The forthcoming three year break is the shortest possible break between such occurrences. After 2008 the next time all of the parshiyos will be read separately in the Diaspora is 2052, i.e., 44 years later. A review of the calendar given byחדשוpri for years 5511 (1751) through 6000 (2240) shows that in the given 490 year period the longest stretch of time between Thursday-חסר leap year occurrences is 44 years and the average time is about 26 years. Thus, it is very likely that the next two occurrences represent the longest and shortest possible waits between years in which everyparsha is read separately and the last 24 year break is close to the norm.

2 Although it is possible to have leap years 2 years apart, it is not possible that both have a Thursday- tasar designation. The reason directly follows from the different types of possibleקביעות. If the first leap year started on Thursday and had 383 days, the next year would start on Tuesday and be regular with 354 days (see Table 1- all years starting on Tuesday areסדרןכ). Thus the third year would have to start on שabbos and could not satisfy our requirement.

3 The last time breaks of 3 and 44 years occurred was 247, 244 and 200 years ago. An analysis of theחדשpri calendar also shows that in the Diaspora for the period between 1751 and 2240 all of the parshiyos are read separately only 19 times with the following frequency for given number of years between occurrences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Between Occurrences</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>24</th>
<th>27</th>
<th>44</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Occurrence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hence:
Probability of this event occurring = 3.9% (i.e. 19/490),
Mean Number of years between occurrences = 26.1
The situation in Eretz Yisrael differs somewhat from that of the Diaspora. Table 2 offers an overview of parsha reading in Eretz Yisrael under our current reading assignment system and shows that in addition to leap year הפסוק, leap years בפסוק and גפסוק also have every parsha read separately. Thus, in Eretz Yisrael each parsha is read separately about three times as often as in the Diaspora.

Note that בפסוק-בראשית are never read together in Eretz Yisrael. These two parshiyos are combined only in the Diaspora and serve to bridge the gap between the Diaspora and Eretz Yisrael when Shemini starts on Friday resulting in the Diaspora having one extra day of Yom Tov on Shabbos than Eretz Yisrael (i.e. the 2nd day of Shemini).

Finally, for our current Shabbos parsha reading system the number of Shabbosim requiring standard non-Yom Tov readings range:

- In the Diaspora from 50 to 53 for leap years and 46 to 49 for regular years.
- In Eretz Yisrael from 51 to 53 for leap years and 47 to 49 for regular years.

We have endeavored in this section to give an overview of the major features of our current parsha reading system and its related calendar terminology. In subsequent sections we will discuss other characteristics of the current reading assignment system as well as the objectives that shaped the particulars of the system. We will also trace the history of the system from the Gemara through Rambam, Tur and Shulchan Aruch and introduce other reading assignment models that utilized different mechanisms and parshiyos combinations to complete the yearly Torah reading cycle.

Median & Mode # of years between occurrences = 27
Since a leap year occurs once in almost every 3 years, this means that on the average the Thursday - בראשית combination occurs once every 9 to 10 leap years.

4 The reason these years are different in the Diaspora, is
- בפסוק - Pesach starts on Shabbos and in the Diaspora this means that the last day of Pesach is also on Shabbos. Thus, the Diaspora has 1 less Shabbos available for a standard Shabbos parsha reading.
- גפסוק – Again Pesach starts on Shabbos and the above reasoning applies.

5 This is under the standard system. In a later section we will mention a custom among some Yemenite groups to always read these parshiyos together.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Times</th>
<th>Leap Years</th>
<th>Regular Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These פרשיות are Read Together</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>קביעות</td>
<td>ביש</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ב״שב״ח</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ח״כ</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ג״כ</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ט״ש</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ז״ח</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ז״ש</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ויקהל-פקודים</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>תזריע-מצורע</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>מות-קדושים</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>בהר-북רא</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>חקת-блок</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>מטות-מסעי</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>מצבי-יוד</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Evolving Rules of Torah Readings; From Gemara to Rambam

Despite the importance of the Torah readings on Shabbos and the requirement that each week we do ( heures לועה) very little concerning these readings is mentioned in the Gemara. In fact, nowhere in the Gemara is it even mentioned that the Torah is partitioned into 54 parshiyos. The only requirement in the Gemara concerning Shabbos Torah readings is limited to the need to read certain portions of the Torah prior to Shavuos and Rosh Hashanah.

The Gemara explains the reason for this is that Shavuos is the New Year for Trees and we would like to dispense with the curses before either the New Year for Trees or the regular New Year begins. Note that the Gemara does not refer to the “curses” by the parsha in which they fall, but rather by the Chumash in which they occur. In addition, the Gemara is also unclear as to whether it means that:

- On the Shabbos immediately prior to the named holidays the particular כללות should be read, or

- We should ensure that by the time the holiday arrives the כללות had been read so that we do not have to start a new year on a down note. This interpretation would allow the כללות to be read two or more weeks before the holidays as well.

Rambam (/commentaria) after quoting the above Gemara almost verbatim, adds:

Although the Mishna does not mention specific parshiyos by name, the Gemara does. See e.g. ל-כט מגילה where two amoraim refer to מצות מגילה כט but a Tosefta discussing the same issue avoids mentioning any reading by name.

I.e. he uses כתובות rather than ידועה.
Rambam’s presentation is expansive and informative. Firstly, by putting in an extra parsha between the קולות and Shemos, he decides in favor of our second suggested reading alternative. Secondly, he specifically addresses some Shabbos readings by the first few key words at the beginning of the parsha. Although these names may differ slightly from how we currently refer to them (e.g.iah instead of או בר-נורא, he is undoubtedly referring to same reading. Thirdly, he offers specific examples of parshiyos that are read together, לבר - בחרון - מפורת and לבר - בחרון - מפורת. His choice of examples, is however perplexing. As seen in Table 1 the parshiyos that Rambam chose for his examples are the 2nd and 4th possible pairs of tandem parshiyos. Rambam offers no reason for picking these pairs and ignoring the first set of והי - וידל and the third set of והי - וידל. Finally, Rambam introduces parshiyos that are to be read in proximity to תשעה and פסח. However, by not offering any reason for these choices it is unclear whether they were chosen because:

- They represent the best way of evenly distributing the parshiyos over the year (Parsha Management), or

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8 We will generally use Kappach’s edition of Rambam which is based on old Yemenite manuscripts. For the most part, this text can be accessed on line at www.Mechon-Mamre.org. When there is a significant difference between this edition and the standard text we will point it out. In the case of this quote, the standard Rambam reverses the order of these parshiyos, i.e. והי - וידל. This reversal of placed the later parsha first does not seem to make sense.

9 Tosfos, משלול ולא: די קולות, says that we add an extra week between the curses and the holiday so that we should not go directly into the holiday without a buffer from the curses. רבינא תוסא, cited in Tosfos, suggests that вал נצבים mentioned in the Gemara refers to(rr חנות actually comes immediately after the Shabbos in which the קולות are read.
There is a logical connection between these readings and the holidays/fast days with which they are associated.\footnote{10}

From Rambam’s limited discussion in פסחא ג יב it is not possible to attempt to start a comparative analysis of our current system and his. However, Rambam augments his presentation here with several longer presentations elsewhere. Firstly, in all standard Rambams at the very end of ספר הזהב there is a list of all of the הפטרה of the year where Rambam mentions by name 53 of our standard 54 parshiyos with only וילך being omitted. However, Rambam does not mean to exclude the possibility of וילך being read by itself since Kappach’s edition of Rambam\footnote{11} also includes lists of pesukim that are read on Mondays and Thursdays, as well as where each.aliyah starts and ends on Shabbos. These lists include וילך both when it is read alone as well as when it is read together with נצבים. We thus know that Rambam had all of our 54 parshiyos. The question then is why did he not mention וילך in his list of הפטרה? If indeed Rambam followed our parsha reading system, the answer to this question would be simple. In our system, וילך has no הפטרה of its own. That is to say, each parsha represents a thematic idea which is highlighted in its designated haftara. וילך has no haftara of its own, because when it is read:

- Together with נצבים we read the haftara of נצבים,
- Separately, it is the Shabbos before Yom Kippur and the weekly haftara is ישראל שניה which has nothing to do with וילך but rather, represents the theme of וילך.

\footnote{10 Later commentators do offer reasons why צו and ואתחנן relate to Pesach and Tisha B’Av, e.g. צו discusses kashering כלם and this is appropriate before Pesach. Rambam’s language for והתחנן seems to imply that והתחנן should come after the fast day, but ברורה (ל’authe תכונת, משנת בוריה) says that we want the fast day after דברים. Rambam’s language is inconclusive. We suggest he might have phrased it this way because Tisha B’Av can fall on Shabbos and Rambam’s language is less ambiguous as to what to do in this situation.}

\footnote{11 www.Mechon-Mamre.org does not have these additional sections. Even in Kappach’s edition these sections appear after Rambam’s signature. Nevertheless, Kappach claims that these additions are also the work of Rambam. We will discuss this issue further later in this section.}
Note that this haftara is also read when הוהי is the "Shabbos before Yom Kippur" (Rambam הפתלга ג' נ). Thus, Rambam may agree that יילך is a parsha as is clear from his listings of the Monday-Thursday readings, but omits it when discussing parshiyos that have their own haftaros.

Unfortunately, this explanation for omitting from the list of הפטרות does not seem to suffice. Rambam prefaces his listing of haftaros at the end of ספר אהבה with: הנענתה שנמה רוב חמש לchers המᵇ_eבהמכ…I.e. these haftaros are the ones that are commonly read. But the haftaros he lists for the parshiyos in חומש דברר are not the ones we read. As Rambam explains in הפתלגה ג' נ,

Although Rambam asserts that it was a universal custom to read special haftaros on the three weeks prior to Tisha B’Av, he nevertheless lists different haftaros for each of these weeks at the end of ספר אהבה and never mentions there the special haftaros. Similarly, he says that it was a custom of most places to read haftaros from ישעיה for the 7 weeks after Tisha B’Av and yet for every one of these weeks he offers a different haftara at the end of אהבה and concludes with:וכן נמהרוב חמש לchers המᵇ_eבהמכ…12

12 Standard text reads הנמהרוב חמש לchers המᵇ_eבהמכ… which is somewhat less inclusive.

13 Standard text uses the word is "עירנו" that is, “our city” rather then "עיננו" "our cities.” It would be very difficult to reconcile all of Rambam’s statements according to the standard reading.
Lastly, in יבפרק he mentioned reading ישובה ישראל on the Shabbos before Yom Kippur but offers a different haftara for the end of Ahava without ever mentioning anything about ישובה ישראל. It would appear that the only way to reconcile all of these statements, would be to assume that Rambam meant that the special haftaros readings prior to and after Tisha B’Av, as well as the one on the Shabbos before Yom Kippur are in addition to the standard haftaros which relate to the given parshiyos, the reason he only mentioned the readings of the 7 weeks after Tisha B’Av at the end of Ahava and not the others, was because it is only the 7 after Tisha B’Av that are not necessarily universally practiced. If this is correct, even if ישובה ישראל is read on a Shabbos when ולך is read between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur why would it not also have an haftara of its own like all of the other parshiyos?

We believe that the full explanation for Rambam omitting a haftara for ולך requires one additional piece of information. After listing haftaros for 53 parshiyos Rambam writes:

ובית המophage

14 Kappach, footnote מ ב at the end of Ahava, with respect to the listing of regular haftaros for דברים, מסעי, מטotes writes: כבג תובהר במך וטOutlined reads וטכלם ומשלח יושבע ומשלח פיחלו וה vbז עמכר ומשלח ובמשלחות ... והמשלחות הללו האמורות כאין דבר מראומא אוחט It is not clear if he agrees with us that in Rambam’s times both haftaros were read. Our interpretation also seems to be against Rambam’s times who writes:

ויש אמוריא שאר לאמריא פנמא לברא יישעיהו. However, there is no indication that Rambam agrees with this rule. In commenting on the Tur the ד"כ writes: ודוקא במקומך שלמה להפטיר ב המחזור It would seem that not everyone agrees with the rule.

15 i.e Rambam said the three before Tisha B’Av are a universal custom while those after Tisha B’Av are not. With respect to ישובה ישראל it is not clear what group he puts it into. We are suggesting that it belongs in the universally accepted group.
The rationale behind this rule presumably is that when two parshiyos are read together the haftara associated with the latter parsha is read because it is that theme which was last expressed. If so, then when נצבים-וילך are read together the haftara should be that of וילך. However, our current practice today is to read the haftara of ימים-נכיבים, the first parsha.

There is in fact another situation where the double parsha haftara rule is not applied. Rambam in his list of Monday-Thursday Torah readings presents the possibility of parsha חקת being split in half, and read over a two week period as follows:

כחום אספוקים דוד סים
את חקת אספוקים גל סים
_DIRS:20230304-150841:14491449.png
וסף מקדש אספוקים רבים סים
בלך אספוקים גל סים

i.e. the 87 pesukim of parshas חקתן-וילך are literally split into two halves by stopping the first reading at מקדש ויסעו (כ׃כב במדבר) which is the 44th pasuk. Rambam does not say when חקת is halved but Kappach (footnote 64) explains:

המגניט השחרית מצוות התורה הוא פירוש חקת הקורן והיה פירוש קרה חצי אף פירוש מקדש ומפרשת בלך ואלה הכלי,...

 hvor hen var en fremragende tekst og det var et ord som ble skrevet av Hen elsewhere in the Gemara קורין המאמר במרדיש ויסעו ומפרשת בלך

The breakdown of the Shabbos reading of קרה-חקת-בלך over a two week period is further described in the subsequent section in Rambam dealing with Shabbos parsha readings. As mentioned previously, in Eretz Yisrael and in most years in the Diaspora the parshiyos of קרה (95 pesukim), חקת (87 pesukim) and בלך (104 pesukim) are read separately. However, in any year when Shavuos starts on Friday our standard procedure is to read קרה by itself (95 pesukim) and

We note that both references in Rambam to a קרה-חקת-בלך split are found only in Kappach’s edition of Rambam. However, even then, the first reference appears in brackets i.e. [ ], and the second is prefaced by a comment that appears to have been added by someone other than Rambam. In effect our only evidence that Rambam has a קרה-חקת-בלך breakdown comes from sources of questionable origin. Nevertheless Kappach claims that these are the words of Rambam and we will go along with his assessment.

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combine חקת-בלק into one week’s reading of 191 pesukim. In Rambam’s reading scheme the disproportion in size between the weekly readings was significantly reduced by splitting חקת in half, and reading the first half with קרח (138 pesukim) and the second half with בלק (148 pesukim). Rambam does not say what haftara is read on Shabbosim that חקת is split, but Kappach comments:17

Thus, like יידל, when the first half of חקת is combined with a different parsha it takes the haftara of the other parsha. But why is the rule changed in both of these situations? Kappach’s comment must be understood as a statement of what we do but not why we do it. The mere fact that קרח contributes most of the pesukim of the Shabbos reading (i.e. 95 to 43) is not the reason for reading its haftara. In two of the other double parshiyos we also have the larger parsha coming first, i.e.,

- ויקהל has 122 pesukim and פקודי has 92 pesukim,18
- מות אחריו has 80 pesukim and קדושים has 64 pesukim,

and still we read the haftara of the smaller (second) parsha.19 Although the proportion of the difference is greatest in Rambam’s case (i.e. קרח is more than twice the size of the first half of חקת), there is no indication that relative size is the major determining factor.

A simpler answer for the first half of חקת is that these 43 pesukim never are read on their own on any Shabbos, are not a

17 Kappach edition, footnote 55 at the end of אהבה ספר.
18 In most Chumashim the number of pesukim in all parshiyos are listed with the single exception of מלבים. Pesukim chumash has a number, 92, and a סימן, אצא.
19 וכشورים של פרשיות מפרשים בהמות בהלב בחרות רמה אראיה חכוה: שחר וקדושים מפרשים של כל ברכי שדות מפרשים איים. It is a matter of coincidence that this issues occurs on one of few double parshiyos where the first parsha is the larger of the two. The reason for the switch in this case has to do with the material in both haftaras and not with the length of each parsha. In fact, Rambam lists what we read on קדושים as the haftara for מות and does not have כושיים כבניך תושבי for either parsha. Regardless, Rambam stated the rule and offered no exceptions.
parsha and thus have no designated haftara of their own. While the first half of חקח has an haftara on Shabbosim when read together with the 2nd half of חקח, that haftara is more significantly related to the latter part of the parsha and the latter half is the majority of the parsha (i.e. 44 pesukim to 43 pesukim). Thus, when the first half of חקח is read with קרח it is preferable to assign it the haftara of a parsha just read (even if it is the first parsha) rather than creating a new haftara that would never be read in any other situation. In effect, the double parsha haftara rule was created for situations when two parshiyos are read together, and not when one parsha is read with the smaller fragment of another parsha.

To complete the answer to our original question we now suggest that just as we have explained that the first half of חקח is not a parsha but the smaller segment of another parsha, so וילך is not a parsha but the smaller half of a parsha that encompasses both נצבים and קרח. This idea that נצבים and קרח, which have only a combined 70 pesukim (i.e. 40 pesukim and 30 pesukim respectively) are really only one parsha that is sometimes split to be read over a two week period, was expressed by Saadia Gaon in an early 10th century work (סדור שסד עמק רס״ג) as follows:

This point of view is also expressed by Rishonim a century after Rambam. Meiri writes:

20 Although the haftara is related to some pesukim in the first half as well, the greater relationship seems to be with the second half of the parsha.
21 Whether this parsha would ever be read at all in Eretz Yisrael is discussed later.
22 Note that there is a סימן at the end of each parsha which is the numerical equivalent to the number of pesukim in the parsha. The סימן for נצבים is numerically 40 while the סימן at the end of וילך is numerically equivalent to 70.
23 This may also be the view of Tosfos, who says:
Accordingly, we suggest that neither הנצבים וילך nor חקת-בקלא follows the general rule outlined by Rambam for Torah readings that involve multiple parshiyos because neither חקת וילך nor half of חקת is a parsha. Moreover, if הנצבים וילך is really one parsha then he holds there are only 53 parshiyos and Rambam may therefore have decided that it does not require any haftara other than ישראל שובה.

Our assumption about Rambam’s agreeing with Saadia Gaon that הנצבים-וילך is one parsha still has one potential problem. In תפילת הנצבים-וילך Rambam mentioned only that parshiyos can be combined in order to meet the yearly cycle. If הנצבים-וילך is indeed one parsha why did Rambam not mention that sometimes it is necessary to split a parsha (like Saadia Gaon did)? We suggest that Rambam was not interested in giving exhaustive details on what the system entails. He was merely highlighting “doubling-up” as a common mechanism that would undoubtedly be necessary in creating a parsha reading system. He did not, however, mean to imply that other mechanisms such as “halving a parsha” could/would not also be employed. As evidence of his not intending to be exhaustive, note that we have previously cited Rambam’s presentation at the end of Ahava where the three בלק-חקת-ברקל are read in a two week period. This possibility, which also requires cutting a parsha in half, is not mentioned or implied in Hilchos Tefillah.

Another proof that Rambam accepts the idea of halving a parsha is:

Note that הנצבים וילך is referred to in the singular, while הנצבים-וילך takes the plural.

24 If there are only 53 parshiyos then the only קביעה in which every parsha is read in its entirety by itself is דישון on a Leap Year in both the Diaspora and Erets Yisrael.
In our system, Parshat Shkeles is never read with Parshas Tzohah or Tshawa, but precedes Tzohah by one or two weeks on a regular year and follows Tshawa on a leap year. Whether on a leap year or not, there are six Shabbosim between Shkeles and Pesach. Since there are only five Parshiyos after Tzohah up to and including Tzohah, it is therefore impossible on a regular year to have Shkeles be read with either Parshas Tzohah or Tshawa and still have to be read on the Shabbos before Pesach (as required in Tefillah Gevil). Similarly, on a leap year, where Rambam did not mention anything about the reading on the Shabbos before Pesach, it is not possible for Shkeles to be read with Parshas Tzohah or Tshawa unless one and more of the Parshiyos before Tzohah are halved. Thus, while Rambam never mentioned anything about splitting Parshiyos in the text of the Yad nor made any listing of such a practice in his end additions to Ahavah, he included a Halacha which is possible only if splitting is allowed. It would seem that in Rambam’s own reading system the situation described in targum never actually happened, but he was not averse to a system where it could happen.

In fact, even Saadia Gaon’s presentation which is far more detailed than Rambam’s is also not exhaustive. Saadia Gaon’s previously cited review of the 53 Parshiyos mentions:

- 4 doubles, i.e. זאלו פקדון, אשת אשת מות, ארון מות, קדושת, that may be read separately or together,
- 3 Parshiyos that can be read separately or over 2 weeks,
- 1 Parsha which is sometimes read over a two week period.

Note that there is no mention of מות-מסעי. Since, Saadia Gaon began by saying there are 53 Parshiyos, he must be counting מות-מסעי as two. However, from Table 1 we see that in a regular year with קיבוץ ויכל or some other Parshiyos not previously mentioned as a “doubling-up” possibility, together (i.e. everything
else is already being doubled). Thus, we have no other choice but to say that Saadia Gaon’s “doubling-up” list is also not exhaustive.  

In conclusion, Rambam appears to agree with Saadia Gaon with respect to:

- The number of parshiyos in the Torah, 53,
- Combining and halving parshiyos in order to complete a cycle,
- Sometimes reading קרית-תקה-باك over a two week period.

However, unlike Rambam, Saadia Gaon gives a detailed list of what to read on every leap yearキュישת, Table 3, and it is significantly different from our current reading system. The nomenclature in Table 3 is the same as in Tables 1 and 2 except for 2’s and 3’s (rather than 1’s and 2’s) appearing in the קרית-תקה-باك row (rather than a הכה-מקל row). Note how the קרית-תקה-باك combined readings (i.e. 2) for the most part replace our מסות-מסעי couplings. In addition, for leap years withキュישת of ב״ח or ז״ש, because קרית-תקה-باك are combined anyway, the coupling of מסות-מסעי is shifted to ויקהל-פקודי. As a result, the parshiyos of מסות-מסעי are almost never read together.

Because Rambam makes no direct comment on when or why certain parshiyos are connected it would appear that Rambam has no specific preference for Saadia Gaon’s parsha reading system in its totality. However, there is certainly nothing in Rambam to indicate that he would find anything wrong in following Saadia Gaon’s recommendations.

Defining A Parsha

Saadia Gaon asserts that there are 53 parshiyos and identifies those that are sometimes joined with others and those that are sometimes split. How does he determine whether something is a parsha, or only

25 See Kappach, Fußnoten

26 Saadia Gaon’s comments that it has to be shifted to one of the first 4 sets of parshiyos and whoever does it at ויקהל-פקודי is demonstrating הבנתו טוב.

27 Table 3 has מסות-מסעי being read together on two types of regular years. Saadia Gaon does not say it is this pair that is read together. Any pair would suffice.
part of a parsha? For example, did he arbitrarily designate תזריע-מצורע as two parshiyos and נצבים-וילך as one? Or is there something inherent in the pesukim of each which give them their respective designations?

Secondly, if a parsha may be split or coupled, what is the difference if something is designated as a portion of a parsha or a complete parsha? If תזריע-מצורע are considered two parshiyos they can still be read in one week, and if they are one parsha they can be split to be read over two weeks. Why then is it important to identify them as being one or two parshiyos?

According to some, parsha designations are part of the מסורה. זוהר in ויקהל פרשת says: אמור למאן דקרע באוריה למסקנ בפרשת אלא אם מלתו אמא אלו بطח תומך משם פרשת' למשה לאرسلיה מסקנ. אלו מסקנ מליין דשבה הוריה בשמה אלא (מנה אבראה אתיה טומי רפב) בירי פורט זמה בא מסקנ סדרה שלמה. מסורת, אמור.

The meaning of בפרשת in the Zohar is unclear. Magen Avraham proves that it cannot refer to סקנות or סקנות תומך, and concludes it must refer to a הדור דריה read on Shabbos. If מ"א is correct, the concept of a parsha dates backs to Moshe’s time and is part of the מסורה. However, Magen Avraham challenges this possibility from כטמגילה: which discusses a Triennial Shabbos reading system where the Torah was completed once every 3 years. The מקנה (קדושין ל) המנקה tries to resolve the difficulty by explaining that in the Triennial system all28 of our parshiyos were divided into three and read over a three week period, and suggests that the Zohar only meant that parshiyos were set, but the exact weekly reading of the parshiyos were not. Thus, he asserts that we need not read an entire parsha in any שבוע or can even combine two parshiyos in one Shabbos, but we cannot start reading on Shabbos in one parsha and complete the reading in the middle of another one. Hamakne’s explanation, however, does not seem to be consistent with the custom of Saadia Gaon and Rambam who break חקתי into two parts that are read with different parshiyos.

28 Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky, אמת ליעקב, goes through all of the parshiyos and discusses how those that are too small to be broken into three parts are handled.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Times These Parshiyos are Read Together</th>
<th>Parsha Tandem</th>
<th># of שבת Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>יתקול-פקודית</td>
<td>50 52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                                                 |تورני-
|                                                 |מצורע       | 52 52             |
|                                                 |אתאיה-
|                                                 |בריה       | 53 52             |
|                                                 |בקריה-
|                                                 | CHKת         | 51 50             |
|                                                 |מט첩-
|                                                 |בריה       | 51 50             |
| 4                                                |קריה-
|                                                 |ثلاث         | 51 50             |
|                                                 |нятиיב-
|                                                 |בריה       | 51 50             |
|                                                 |בלק-חקת-
|                                                 |בריה       | 51 50             |
|                                                 |קריח-בריה   | 51 50             |
|                                                 |מט첩-
|                                                 |בריה       | 51 50             |
|                                                 |נטיב-
|                                                 |בריה       | 51 50             |

### Leap Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Weeks it takes to Read the Indicated Parshiyos for Each Year Designation According to Saadia Gaon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Times These Parshiyos are Read Together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 7                                                |تورני-
|                                                |מצורע       | 46 46             |
| 7                                                |אתאיה-
|                                                |בריה       | 48 49             |
| 7                                                |בקריה-
|                                                |CHKת         | 48 47             |
| 2                                                |קריה-
|                                                | الثلاثاء     | 48 47             |
| 2                                                |מות-
|                                                |בריה       | 48 47             |
| 4                                                |נטיב-
|                                                |בריה       | 48 47             |

### Regular Year
For the rest of this paper we assume that the designation of the *parshiyos* is not Masoretic, but rather determined by a set of rational criteria that we will attempt to identify. We have already discussed two operational Torah reading systems and will discuss another in a later section. These systems will be our guidelines and we will add additional intuitively reasonable rules as needed.

In the absence of definitive guidelines it is reasonable to assume that to decompose the Torah into *parshiyos* we seek to group the text into units that contain a common theme and are of “appropriate size.” The need for a common theme is obvious and seems to be satisfied by each *Shabbos* reading in our current 54 *parshiyos* system (i.e., assuming *נצבים וילך* are two *parshiyos*) whether we read individual *parshiyos* or our designated paired *parshiyos*. The question we are addressing in this section is how to differentiate:

- A large *parsha* with a common theme that was broken into two *Shabbos* readings with common and related themes, from

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29 The concept of “appropriate size” appears in a wide range of sorting and decomposition problems. For example, Twersky, *Mishna Torah of Maimonides*, Yale University Press, discusses why Rambam divided the [*י* into 14 books. He claims that it was a matter of balancing the number of books and the number of topics per book. Had Rambam chosen books with very broad themes, he would have had few books with many topics in each. On the other hand, had he chosen books with narrow themes, he would have had many books with few topics in each. Twersky says Rambam felt both of these extremes were undesirable and settled on a reasonable number of themes that allowed a significant and manageable number of topics in each.

30 Bar Ilan’s *Daf Shevu’i* no. 139, says attributes a different Yemenite custom of separating *מטות-מסעי* but combining *בלק-חקת* to...

While we give credence here to the desirability of *parshiyos* having a common theme we will argue that this is not the primary reason for Saadia Gaon’s choice.

31 See, for example, Buchman, *Bedibur Echoda*, 1990.
Two parshiyos with separate common themes that were combined to be read together on a single Shabbos because the material covered in each was similar enough to be viewed as a common theme?

The need for parshiyos of “appropriate size” is meant to smooth out the Shabbos readings and avoid readings that are overly long or brief. With respect to length, Table 4 lists the number of pesukim in each of the 54 entities and demonstrates that:

- parsha size ranges from a low of 30 pesukim (וילך) to a high of 176 (నשא),
- The average parsha size is 108 pesukim,
- 28 parshiyos have greater than average size, and 26 are below average size,

These numbers are consistent with a system of parshiyos of appropriate length. However, for the most part the parshiyos that we have discussed in this paper as sometimes being read together (shaded in Table 4) are, in terms of size, in the bottom 25% of the list, i.e. אהרי מתי-קו捨て (48th and 42nd), והית-פּוֹשַׁר (45th and 49th), נצבים-וילך (53rd and 54th). Given an objective set of parshiyos of disparate size we would assume that the small and large parshiyos are randomly distributed throughout the Torah. That does not seem to be the case here, where a succession of short individual parshiyos seem to appear in close proximity. The more likely interpretation would seem to be that these pairs are each a large parsha that has been split to be read over a two week period. Yet Saadia Gaon insists that all of these parshiyos with the exception of נצבים-וילך are individual parshiyos. What criteria is he using to differentiate נצבים-וילך from the other pairs?

32 Two key descriptive statistics of a list of numbers is its mean, $\mu$, (a measure of central tendency) and its standard deviation, $\sigma$ (a measure of dispersion). In this case $\mu=108$ and $\sigma=32$. In general, all of the data will lie within $3\sigma$ of its $\mu$. For the 54 parshiyos the data ranges from 2.1$\sigma$ below the mean to 2.4 $\sigma$ above it. This indicates a well behaved set of numbers with no statistical “outliers”.
Table 4

Number of Pesukim\(^{33}\) in Standard 54 Parshiyos System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Our System</th>
<th>Parsha</th>
<th>Pesukin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Our System</td>
<td>נשא</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Our System</td>
<td>פנחס</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Our System</td>
<td>בבמדבר</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Our System</td>
<td>נח</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Our System</td>
<td>וירשה</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Our System</td>
<td>ויצא</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Our System</td>
<td>ויאו</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Our System</td>
<td>בראשית</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Our System</td>
<td>מך</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Our System</td>
<td>יך נשב</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Our System</td>
<td>בנותננה</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Our System</td>
<td>משני</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Our System</td>
<td>כל-ך</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Our System</td>
<td>ראה</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Our System</td>
<td>שמות</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Our System</td>
<td>אפר</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Our System</td>
<td>ויתק</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Our System</td>
<td>狨והנה</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chart is based on the actual number of pesukim in these parshiyos. It is slightly different from the number listed at the end of each parsha in standard Chumashim.

We have shaded all parshiyos that are sometimes read together with another parsha. Eleven of the 15 shaded parshiyos are amongst the 15 smallest parshiyos in the Torah.
The most logical explanation is that Saadia Gaon considers any 2 parshiyos that are more frequently than not read together on the same Shabbos in regular years as well as leap years as one parsha, while if they are more often than not read separately they are considered two parshiyos. Based on Table 1 this means נצבים-וילך is one parsha and based on Saadia Gaon’s reading scheme this means מות-מסעי are two parshiyos exactly as Saadia Gaon asserts. However, this would still not explain why Saadia Gaon classifies ויקהל-פקודי, תזריע-מצורע, מות-אחרי-קדושים, בהר-בחוקותי as two parshiyos since for the most part they are each read together in regular years and read apart in leap years. If parsha designation was determined based simply on overall frequency of being read separately or together, since regular years occur about twice as often as leap years (i.e. 12 for every 7), we would designate each of these pairs as a single parsha. Saadia Gaon’s designations thus imply that he determined whether something was 1 or 2 parshiyos based on the percentage of time they were read together on a leap year, i.e., parshiyos are designated to primarily meet the needs of leap years and in regular years parshiyos are combined to compensate for the missing

35 Whenever we use this phrase we are referring to all readings other than V’z’os Habracha which is not read on Shabbos.
36 We would point out that based on our current reading system מות-מסעי are almost always read together and should be considered 1 parsha.
37 Only בלק-חקת-קרח being considered three parshiyos remains unexplained. With only two exceptions, קרח and the first half of חקַת are always read together, as are the second half of חקַת and בלק. Based on the frequency of occurrence criterion, קרח, חקַת and the first half of חקַת should then be deemed one parsha, and the second half of חקַת and בלק another. However, if we viewed the parshiyos this way, it would mean that on those years that חקַת is read by itself, we would be joining part of one parsha with part of another parsha to create a weekly reading. The idea that we use parts of two parshiyos to make a Shabbos reading may not be considered palatable. Thus, קרח-חקת-בלק were designated as three parshiyos though they are only read this way in two out of fourteen קיבוץ. We should point out that we do find the combining of parts of two different chapters in הנבót to form a single Shabbos haftara. However, chapters in הנבót are in no way comparable to Torah parsha designation.
Shabbosim. His readjustment to a 53 parsha system slightly alters and improves parsha size uniformity, i.e.:

- parsha size ranges from a low of 41 pesukim (חֲזַּרְחָא בְּרֶחֶם) to a high of 176 (נַשְׁא),
- The average parsha size is 110 pesukim,
- 27 parshiyos have greater than average size, and 26 are below average size.

Finally, note that Saadia Gaon’s decomposition of the Chumash into 53 parshiyos, results in 5 Chumashim with 12, 11, 10, 10, and 10 parshiyos respectively. This means, that for the most part, during leap years each Chumash will be read almost the same number of Shabbosim, while on regular years the numbers of weekly readings for each Chumash is approximately 12, 10, 7, 9, and 10 respectively. Thus, while the size of each week’s reading follows one distribution pattern, the frequency of weeks each Chumash is read is at times quite uniform while at other times quite disparate.

Our definition of parsha may also explain why Saadia Gaon’s parsha system hardly ever doubled מֵטָא-מָסֵעי while our system almost always does. Since בֵּיתֹר precedes Shevuos and Tisha B’Av is before ואֵתָחָנָן it is necessary that some reading flexibility be built into the system for the parshiyos between בֵּיתֹר and ואֵתָחָנָן. The two most likely candidates in terms of commonality of theme are מֵטָא-מָסֵעי or חֲקָת-בָּלָק. Both of these, however, are fairly large, i.e., מֵטָא - 112 pesukim (25th largest), מָסֵעי - 132 pesukim (12th largest), חֲקָת - 87 pesukim (43rd largest) and בָּלָק - 104 pesukim (34th largest). Either pair that is combined would far exceed what is currently the largest parsha, but by our rule whichever we choose to be read together would be deemed a single parsha. Our current solution is to assign the major doubling up

38 I.e. $\sigma=30$, and data size ranges from 2.2$\sigma$ below $\mu$ to 2.3$\sigma$ above it. See Chart 1 at the end of the paper.

39 Although Bamidbar has 10 parshiyos it is almost always read in 9 weeks. However, for each of those weeks the average size of the reading is much larger than usual. Bareishis is read the most weeks of all Chumashim but it has by far the largest number of pesukim of all of the Chumashim, i.e. the Chumashim respectively have 1,533; 1,210; 859; 1,288 and 955 pesukim.
Pursha Management: Doubling, Halving, Accuracy

Saadia Gaon avoids this problem by throwing a third *parsha*, הרפ, into the mix. Both of these solutions have their own difficulties.

With respect to the significance of designating something a *parsha* rather than part of a *parsha*, we have up until this point identified at least two differences:

- The *haftara*: If an entire *parsha* is read with an entire other *parsha* then the *haftara* of the second *parsha* is read. If a part of a *parsha* is read with another entire *parsha* then the *haftara* is that of the entire *parsha*.
- Combining different *pesukim* to form a Shabbos Torah reading: On Shabbos it is permissible to read: part of a *parsha*, or one or more *parshiyos*. It is not permissible to read fragments of two different *parshiyos*.

40 We are not addressing why we double מטות-מסעי more frequently than בלק-חקת. Either pair yields a large Shabbos reading. Presumably מטות-מסעי, the larger of the two, is doubled up more frequently because they fit together better. This, of course, directly conflicts with the מהרי״ץ quoted in a previous footnote. Our discussion here concentrates more on why Saadia Gaon avoided the frequent doubling up of either of these pairs of *parshiyos* by interjecting another option.

41 In our system, assuming that we agree with Saadia Gaon that נצבים-וילך are one *parsha*, we would then have 52 *parshiyos* with:

- *parsha* size ranging from a low of 41 *pesukim* (ברכה בורה) to a high of 244 (מטות-מסעי),
- The average *parsha* size being 112 *pesukim*,
- 23 *parshiyos* having greater than average size, and 29 below average size,
- $\sigma=35$, and data size ranging from $2.0\sigma$ below $\mu$ to $3.7\sigma$ above it.

This distribution worsens *parsha* size uniformity and introduces a statistical “outlier”. See Chart 2 at the end of the paper.

42 The concept of dividing fixed units of texts for reading or reciting purposes appears in situations other than *Shabbos* Torah readings. For example, we find in תפילה that at times partial Chapters in תהלים are read (e.g., the latter half of פרק קxa on days when only half is recited) while at other times the two halves of the Chapter are read
We suggest that these differences have practical halachic ramifications. As we have seen, even Saadia Gaon’s readings were meant as general guidelines and not as requirements to be precisely followed. Thus, Rambam mentions only those parts of Saadia Gaon’s system that he feels must be followed and is silent on the rest. According to Rambam it is then possible to follow Saadia Gaon’s reading scheme directly or modify it by, for example, doubling up ויקהל-פקודי and reading משלות-משלות separately. The key, however, is that those who choose to follow Saadia Gaon’s general system can only make changes that conform to parsha readings based on what he identified as a whole parsha or as part of a parsha. As we will see in the next chapter there are other systems that were put forward that identified parshiyos differently. Anyone adopting another system would then be limited in changing readings based on the rules as applied to the parshiyos in that system.

An Alternate Reading Schedule Based on Dividing Parshiyos

As we have seen, Rambam extended the Gemara’s list of preferred readings to include parshas צ on before Pesach on a regular year. Rambam said nothing about what is read before Pesach on a leap year which requires 4 or 5 more Shabbos readings before the arrival of the holiday. Rambam was certainly not the first to mention the צ requirement. About a century earlier than Rambam we find the consecutively (e.g. Chapter 116 on days when full Hallel is recited). This halving of the text is such that even when both halves are recited they are done so separately rather than together (i.e., on a day when full Hallel is recited and all of Chapter 116 is read, it is not read as one unit but rather it is read sequentially just like the other separate Chapters). We also find in תפילה instances where an entire Chapter of Tehillim is read with one or several sentences of other Chapters (e.g., אשרי, רביעי יום של שיר). There is some question as to whether Chapters 92 and 93 of Tehillim are recited at שבת קבלת ברכה with a pause between the two chapters. If there is no pause this is the only example we can think of doubling, i.e. two full chapters are merged to be read together, in an analogous way that we sometimes read two full parshiyos on Shabbos.

Is it possible that it is something like this that Zohar had in mind?
following quote in מנחיר וזרחי (written by רבי נון שמחה, a disciple of רashi):

לעשות קורין פרשת זו את אחורי. קודם הפסק: ורשה וידבר. במדבר סיני. שיאווה חורית ספר קודם עצרת ... כל סופנים ההלל אחד ואין ומתחין מוקומן לא בשנה מנשה ולא בשנה מעוברת.

ויטרי מחזור goes beyond Rambam and requires that ברו precede Pesach even on a leap year. The way our reading system is currently set up and the way Rambam lists שבעת readings at the end of Ahava this requirement cannot be met. ויטרי מחזור does not specifically say how this is to be accomplished but השלבמה ללות ו諮ר supplies the details that are reproduced in Table 5. The numbers in the boxes in this Table indicate over how many weeks the particular parsha or parshiyos are read, e.g.:

- 2 in a תצוה row means that this parsha was read over a 2 week period,
- 2 in a חק-בלק row means that each parsha was read on a separate week,
- 4 in a ויקהל-פוסדי row means that it took 4 weeks to complete these readings (2 weeks each for ויקהל and פסוד.

44 מנחיר וזרחי
45 Rashi and the author of ויטרי both died in 1105. Rambam wrote the Yad about 1171.
46 Ibid pages 803-806. From names and events mentioned in this supplement the Editor suggests that it was written sometime between 1142 and 1210.
47 In this presentation almost all of the parshiyos are referred to by the current names that we know them. The exceptions are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Name</th>
<th>Previous Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>תרומה</td>
<td>תרומת</td>
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<tr>
<td>תשא</td>
<td>çıktא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>איתרי</td>
<td>יתורי</td>
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<td>חצת</td>
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<tr>
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<td>תוכא</td>
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</table>
### Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Assignments For Each Year Type Designation</th>
</tr>
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</table>

#### The Diaspora

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<tr>
<th>Number of Times These Leap Years Are Read In One Week</th>
<th>י”ח</th>
<th>י”ש</th>
<th>ג”כ</th>
<th>ה”ח</th>
<th>ה”ש</th>
<th>ז”ח</th>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ג”כ 51</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ה”ש 52</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Regular Years

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Number of Times These Regular Years Are Read In One Week</th>
<th>י”ח</th>
<th>י”ש</th>
<th>ג”כ</th>
<th>ה”כ</th>
<th>ה”ש</th>
<th>ז”ח</th>
<th>ז”ש</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ה”כ 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>ה”ש 2</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

48 Details on 8 of the 14 possible קבעות are given in ויטריהשלמה למחזור. The data for the missing 6 is easily reconstructed. All קבעות discussed in ויטריהשלמה למחזור appear in this Table in black. All inferred information appears in this Table as shaded.

49 When י”ח is read over a 2 week period, the first week’s reading is from the beginning of י”ח (שמות כז:כ through חכ:מג שמות) - 45 pesukim. The second week’s readings is the rest of the parsha - 56 pesukim.

50 When י”ש is read over a 2 week period, the first reading is from the beginning of י”ש (שמות לד:לא שמות) - 60 pesukim, and the second reading is the rest of the parsha - 79 pesukim. One other interesting point in the ויטריה system is that on certain leap years the שבזוס on which י”ש is read can be Parshas Shekalim (see previous section).

51 However, it can never come out on י”ח.

52 When י”כ is read over a 2 week period, י”כ says the first week’s reading is from the beginning of י”כ (שמות לד:לא שמות) - 42 pesukim. The second week’s reading is the rest of the parsha - 50 pesukim.
The most striking item in Table 5 is that all three double sets of parshiyos listed in Tables 1 and 2 for Chumash Vayikra, i.e. תזריע - מצורע, מות - אחריו - קדושים, בהר - בחוקות, אבר - מנה - קונור, do not appear anywhere because according to ויטרי מחזור they are always read together. As discussed in the previous section, because of their relatively small size it is reasonable that each of the pairs from Vayikra is considered a single parsha. מנה - קונור, however, is different. Its 244 pesukim - 68 more than the largest current single parsha (נשא) - would seem to indicate that it is 2 parshiyos, but the fact that it is always read together must mean that it is 1 parsha. If, however, someone felt that this size is too large then they would be forced to reject the reading system of ויטרי מחזור. Indeed, a variation of this objection was raised by מאיר רבنا בן יעקבי, i.e. תמסעי - מטעים, אךיו - יוהור, page 806. ר״ת complains that if you always read קדושים - מצורע ל:notch וקולה - נא לא תפרשו, ... לא מפריש פסוקים מפורשי notch וקולה לאותה ידע כרחויות ו🏼 חלדוק וויתלך loading חקיה - בלק l from Shabbos before Pesach, והם מהלאה הפטרות אימתי עכשיו לא ואם? אם וויתלך - פסקייה מעון לשוב וספבי גודלי מהנסות תנקני לזרעבפמאיר רבון בן יעקבי, page 806.

Focusing now on the pairs in ויטרי מחזור that are sometimes read separately, based on the initial rule offered in the previous section, נצבים - וילך and תשא כי are each one parsha andحكה - בלק are two. The status of מצורע - פסוקים ע değer and ויקהל - פקודי are less clear. With a single exception, both are always read together in a regular year and partitioned in a leap year. But the entire מצורע has only 101 pesukim, which is less than an average sized parsha. If we consider מצורע as two parshiyos they would be the 2nd and 4th smallest parshiyos. The issue with respect to ויקהל - פקודי is similar but somewhat different. Since neither ויקהל nor פקודי are ever read in their entirety by themselves, the choice is not whether ויקהל - פקודי is one large parsha or two average sized parshiyos, but whether it is 1 large parsha or 4 very small parshiyos. We have no evidence as to whether ויטרי מחזור agrees with Saadia Gaon that frequency of occurrence in leap years is the

53 מנה - קונור
54 The breakpoint in מנה - קונור says reading would stop on a leap year.
55 It would however be smaller than מנה -Konor - פקודי which we are currently considering one parsha.
56 Two of the 4 would be the 2nd and 3rd smallest parshiyos.
determining factor in whether something is a *parsha*. Viewing the distribution of *parsha* lengths from both perspectives (i.e. * dataSet הרה and * dataSet פקודא are each one *parsha* or are a total of 6 *parshiyos*) the more compact distribution occurs if we assume that * dataSet פקודא holds that overall frequency of occurrence is the key factor and in this system the entire * dataSet הרה as well as * dataSet פקודא are each one *parsha*. This then yields a total number of 48 *parshiyos* and the *parsha* size distribution has the following characteristics:

- *parsha* size ranges from a low of 41 *pesukim* (ברכה זְעָה) to a high of 244 *pesukim*.
- The average *parsha* size is 122 *pesukim*.
- 21 *parshiyos* have greater than average size, and 27 are below average size.

Overall this distribution is more disparate than that of Saadia Gaon.

From the perspective of number of *Shabbos* readings for each of the 5 *Chumashim*, for regular years the * dataSet פקודא system results in 5 *Chumashim* with 12, 10, 7, 9, and 10 readings respectively, while leap years have a 12, 14, 7, 9 and 10 pattern. Thus, at no time does this system attempt to level off the number of *Shabbosim* readings for each *Chumash*. The major benefit of * dataSet פקודא system seems limited to the fact that every year the same *parshiyos* are read on the *Shabbosim* immediately prior to a *Yom Tov*. (See Table 6 at the end of this paper for a summary of the strengths, weaknesses and characteristics of each of the *parsha* reading systems we have discussed.)

If we are correct in assuming that * dataSet פקודא employed a 48 *parshiyos* system, the only time that each *parsha* will be read separately

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57 I.e. $\sigma=36$, and data size ranges from 2.2$\sigma$ below $\mu$ to 3.4$\sigma$ above it. See Chart 3 at the end of the paper.

58 Is it coincidental that Mishnayos is divided into 6 *Sedarim*, with the number of *מסכתות* in each Seder respectively: 11, 12, 7, 10, 11, and 12? This number pattern is very similar to the breakdown of the 5 *Chumashim* according to * dataSet פقودא*. It is also interesting that the 4th value, i.e. 10, represents נזיקין and if the three *בבא*’s are counted as one (because the three *משנה* and *מכות* are considered one (see, for example, *A Guide to the Jerusalem Talmud*, pp. 23, 28) to get to the traditional count of 60 *מסכתות*, then the breakdown in *Mishnayos* is 11, 12, 7, 7, 11, and 12.
is a regular year with a **קבעות** of **ב״ח** or **ז״ש**. As a result, where Rambam had enough **parshiyos** to basically accommodate leap years but too many for regular years, **Mahonior רינייר** has the reverse situation. This then resulted in Rambam primarily using the merging of **parshiyos** (with the exception of **נצבים-ילל** which is split) to control the cycle while **Mahonior רינייר** needed to split **parshiyos** (with the exception of **תקח** - **בלק** which he doubled) in order to address leap years.

Opposition to the reading scheme of **Mahonior רינייר** is already noted by **Mahonior רינייר** himself. After giving his view that **צו** is always read before **Pesach** on both regular and leap years, he concludes:

> ובצרפת אין משתנה כל הסימנין הללו … איננו נהוג ב enumerator Pháp ... והיא מתו העברת שניים מתכלה קורין
> והיא מתו קורין פסח … וב**ב״ח** מתו קורין פסח.

While Rambam did not state what happens on a leap year, he presumably follows some variation of the **فرنسا** position. He therefore has no need for halving **תצוה** or cutting **ויקהל** - **פקודי** into four. Assuming Rambam was aware of the **Mahonior רינייר** position\(^{59}\) which primarily based its reading scheme on dividing a **parsa**, he might have only mentioned the idea of combining **parshiyos** in **תפילה** and omitted mention of breaking up a **parsa**, because it is around the former mechanism which he felt the system should primarily rest. Moreover, since in his scheme it is easy to see why **ויקהל** - **פקודי** are considered two **parshiyos** but more difficult to assert that **תזריע** - **מצורע** are two (i.e. they are both relatively short), he gave **תזריע** - **מצורע** as his first example of doubling up\(^{60}\).

Some final thoughts now on the objection of **ר״ת** to the reading scheme of **Mahonior רינייר**. Rabbenu Tam objects on the grounds that the splitting of **parshiyos** should consider length equalization, commonality of material contained in the split parts, and the historical reality that we have designated **haftaros** for **מטות** and **מסעי**. He argues that if you follow the reading schedule of **Mahonior רינייר** these

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59 As noted in a previous footnote on Table 5, in this system it is possible that **כ** on **תשא** כשולם **שקלים**. Rambam mentioned this possibility but in his system it cannot happen. He must thus have been familiar with other systems where it could happen.

60 We would still be left with the question of why Rambam mentioned only the first and last pairs of double **parshiyos** in **יקרא**.
haftara will never be read. This argument is as interesting for what it says as for what it does not say. Firstly, like Rambam, says that during the three weeks before Tisha B’Av we read haftaros from . Although we argued that Rambam holds that two sets of haftaros are read on these Shabbosim in general this is not customarily done. Thus even if מָסָע מַטָּה are read separately their individual haftaros would not be read. If an argument is to be made for a haftara reading, it should be made for the haftara of Parshas Pinchus which precedes מָסָע מַטָּה, i.e. if מָסָע מַטָּה are always read together then the 3rd Shabbos before Tisha B’Av is always Pinchus and thus the haftara of Pinchus will never be read. This is an interesting argument but not Rabbenu Tam’s.

Secondly, Table 5 shows that is split in system only in the years that מָסָע מַטָּה are currently split in our system. Thus, if we eliminate the מָסָע מַטָּה split in system, we can restore equilibrium by splitting on those same years. This, of course, will come at the expense of not coming the שָבָбоֹס before Pesach on leap years with a הקינועה. However, the revised Torah reading assignment of Rabbenu Tam is very similar to that of Rambam and in no leap year does מָסָע מַטָּה precede Pesach by one week. Thus, Rabbenu Tam could have addressed at least his need for sometimes reading the haftaros of מָסָע מַטָּה with only a minor change in the splitting of מָסָע מַטָּה. If the question as he posed it was the driving force in his objection to מָסָע מַטָּה system why did he replace the entire system instead of making minor corrections?

Finally, Rabbenu Tam is strangely silent on whether we have a tradition on haftaros for each of תָּזִּיעָה, מוֹתָאָה, והרֵוָה. Does this indicate that in fact no such tradition exists?

**From Rambam to Shulchan Aruch**

As we have seen, Rambam modified the Gemara’s requirement that the הָלְלָה of Vayikra precede Shemose to the parsha of Bamidbar precede Shemose, and also mentioned that וְיָבִא precede Pesach on a regular year. Although Rambam is silent on what happens before Pesach on a leap year, the natural progression of one week parsha

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61 Ibid, page 223.
readings for the extra Shabbosim generated by a leap year generally results in Pesach following מערין i.e. 3 parshiyos later. This situation has already been introduced in the last section as being the custom of מערין and is reflected in the following מערין איהו חַכָּם:

לעילו קראנו צא את אחרון קודה פסח בפששהת ומזרע נוספים ומזרע
מהבר שקורין אחרון מהבר פסח.

The exception that the Mechaber adds is a year with a קביעה ה’י, e.g. 5765. Such a year has one extra Shabbos and thus requires an additional parsha, ויאמר ראה חיות מתים. The Mechaber adds, "יהיו שבועות" i.e., any שבועות מתים also has one extra Shabbos reading before Pesach. Again, these exceptions were already cited in ромורים והרי מזרע as being the custom of מזרע and it is not clear why the מחבר left out this case since it is exactly the same as the one he mentions.

In comparing and contrasting the presentation of Rambam יוסף בית and we perhaps can understand why the former did not mention the reading that precedes Pesach on a leap year. It is possible that Rambam felt that there was no significance in whether מצורע or מותר were read before Pesach. However, why would neither he nor יוסף בית ויסקם discuss the difference of what precedes Shevuos on a leap

62 In general the extra month adds 4 more Shabbosim. By reading ויקהל and פקודיו separately (instead of together as is done in almost all regular years) and going three parshiyos beyond צא the extra 4 Shabbosim are accommodated.

63 I.e. Adar Bais has 5 Shabbosim as it starts and ends on Shabbos.

64 In this case the first Adar has 5 Shabbosim. The קביעה ראה also causes an extra Shabbos in a regular year. See Table 1 where only שבועות השם כי ייסקון ייסקון פקודיו be read separately so that צא is on the Shabbos before Pesach.

65 Some explain מזרע is preferred because it, like צא, discusses the washing of כלים.
year? Doesn’t the Thursday leap yearקביעות contradicts Rambam’s
statement that parshas Bamidbar is read before Shemunos? We may
perhaps infer from this that Rambam felt that it made no difference
whether ישאר ישרא or ישאר ישרא precede שומע. The main thing was
that it not be directly preceded by theקללות. Hence, Rambam’s
words שיריו גוריאי מובאר סטי קיים קיים simply means that under all
circumstances at least ישאר ישרא must precede שומע, and that is always
ture. This understanding, however, would mean that Rambam’s
phrases:

המגנה הפוסת שיריו גוריאי מובאר סטי

... use the word קיים differently. In the first phrase קיים means prior but
not necessarily immediately before, but in the second case it means
directly before.66

The issue of what to read on רביעי and רביעי leap years is,
however, more complex. The following quote appears as a footnote
in the 67:

The misses a word.

66 I.e. if it means “prior” in the second, Rambam did not need the
qualification that it refers to a regular year since ישאר ישרא is read prior to
Pesach on leap years as well.
68 This is given in a three letter format. The first two letters mean
the same as before. The third letter refers to the day of the week on
which רוסח חסידופ ניסון occurs. Thus רביעי means: רוסח חסידופ starts
on Thursday, the year is חסידופ and the first day of Nison (or equivalently
the first day of Pesach) is Sunday.
69 This splits the parsha into 60 pesukim and 58 pesukim. The regular baftara
was said with the first parsha and התבהה בשהל פסח and לאהל כליל
יירמה (This is our best guess. It is not clear from the footnote if it starts
at this verse or at התבהה בשהל כליל or התבהה בשהל -all it says is that it starts with the
words ירימה היינו באהב and then continues from התבהה בשהל כליל-ולא.)
In Barcelona, the idea expressed by the Mechaber that מוצער come before Pesach was not understood as something which naturally occurs, but as something that was desirable. On leap years that began on Thursday, where מוצער was not going to be the Shabbos before Pesach, a parsha was therefore split to induce the desired result. This split also resulted in Bamidbar always being read the week before Shevuos.71

If Rambam agreed with manslaughter in the splitting of Mishpatim, it would answer our question as to why he did not mention exceptions to the reading of Bamidbar before Shevuos. It would also explain why the Mechaber mentioned the Pesach exception but not the one for Shevuos, i.e. with respect to Shevuos he basically quoted Rambam. Since Rambam makes no distinction on the year (because he holds like the מחבר with respect to splitting מיספטים) neither does מחבר (even though he does not agree with מחבר). With respect to what to read on a leap year before פסח, Rambam is silent but מחבר holds it should be מוצער. It is here then that מחבר can state the distinction between the years. All this would be plausible except for the fact that Rambam in his list of mid-week and Shabbos Torah readings never mentions the possibility of splitting Mishpatim. We are thus left with several questions on both the presentation of Rambam and Mechaber.

70 emanah bratzelot even on years like 5765 once again has one more reading than Shabbosim and needs to double up on one of the later parshiyos. Thus, in Barcelona there never was a year in which every parsha was read separately. The footnote does not mention what parshiyos would have been doubled up on in years that מיספטים was split. Assuming, as we are, that it was important to keep Bamidbar on the Shabbos before Shevuos, the only parshiyos that would be available to double are -חקת-בלק or -מטות-מסעי. Although in our system there is a general reluctance to double -חקת-בלק we would probably to do it rather than merge -מטות-מסעי on the only two situations that they are read separately.

71 The footnote attributes the splitting of Mishpatim to wanting מוצער before Pesach. How do they know the reason was not to keep Bamidbar immediately before Shevuos?

72 The question of why מחבר left out the gloss of the רמה מחבר would still remain.
A Question of Accuracy

Our study of parsha readings:

- Started with a statement in a ברייתא by a 2nd century Tanna,
- Went to aהלכה in the יד written by Rambam in the latter part of the 12th century, and
- Ended in a שולה בם in the ערוך שלחן written by Rabbi Yosef Cairo in the latter part of the 16th century.

The most important Halachic work of the period between Rambam and ערוך שלחן is the early 14th century טור.

In תכח או״ח the Tur writes:

לעילם קוראים בין אסתר קרוס פמחהسفורה במעברת עץ וסיכוייו
משכחו קוראים אחרון מחוד מב Pradesh פירשת והדר שלום המופיע הטור
קרוס עצרת והודיה מנוברת ובו שלום מועברת נשא קדוש עצרת.

Unlike Rambam and מחבר, טור makes the distinction for both Pesach and Shervos. With respect to Shervos, Tur correctly identifies the leap years of ה״ח and ה״ש mentioned by מחבר and הרמא with respect to Pesach. However, with respect to Pesach he identifies a קביעה that does not have the property he attributes to it, i.e. a leap year with קביעה ז״ח. For a leap year that starts on Shabbos and is מוברג טמר הפסח is indeed read the Shabbos before Pesach. It does not seem possible to attribute the Tur’s comment to his use of a Shabbos parsha reading system different than ours because at the end of this סימן he offers two explanatory Tables and in the second one his schedule of parshas that are doubled is identical to ours 73 (see Table 1). How then do we understand Tur’s reference to ז״ח?

The recently published critical edition of Tur, מפעל שלם, addresses the problem of the questionable letters ז״ח by putting these letters in parenthesis and adding brackets with the letters ה״ח in place of ז״ח, and second brackets with the letters ה״ש.

The introduction 74 to this edition says that whenever the editors found a

73 For the sake of completeness we mention that Tur also discusses what to read when parsha Shekalim falls on תצוה or תשא כי orCas and concludes by saying that in our parsha reading system this can never happen.

74 Section entitled “עולה באהלך יד…” Pages יד-טו. הרא תשוכבmAhו (“אלא תמך באהלך乌הל” Pages יד-טו).
manuscript with better language than that in the standard Tur they inserted the “correct” language without brackets.\footnote{One example of this may be in the section entitled הלוחות that immediately precedes the two explanatory Tables. The standard Tur text reads: 

uidoءן בות רכזת לארש שנות השממה אלפים והא לברארationToken ... ונח תברור ל

שנת השממה אלפים והא שך שינכית למחזור רכש

ול א in the first line makes no sense and it is clear from the rest of the statement that Tur is referring to year 5100. מפעל ויתור התשע has this without parenthesis,

uidoءן בות אכ רכזת לארש שנות ה אלפים והא לברארationToken ... ונח תברור ל

שנת השממה אלפים והא שך שינכית למחזור רכש}

The use of brackets was limited to situations where they had no manuscript with the new words but did have writings from reliable אחרונים indicating that a change was warranted. Unfortunately, the editors do not mention who the person(s) are upon whom they relied on to add these parenthesis. While the corrections in this case may conform to what we read, it seems difficult to assume that they are what the originally wrote. Firstly, with respect to Pesach, our Tur mentions only a single incorrect exception but with respect to Shevuos he correctly mentions both exceptions. If a printer’s error had occurred with respect to Pesach, it would then have been to both change the first term and completely omit the second one. The chance of a double error, involving two different mistakes, seems unlikely. Secondly, if originally the wording was as מפעל ויתור התשע suggests and at some point in time there was an error in transcription, which text did the Mehaber have? If he had the original correct version with והא יש והא and written out for both Pesach and Shevuos, it seems implausible that in the Shulchan Aruch he would have mentioned only one of the two exceptions with respect to Pesach and neither with respect to Shevuos. On the other hand, if Mehaber’s Tur had a reading of only והא, like we have, then why did he not mention in his יוסיbeth commentary on the Tur that this is not correct in our reading system? It would, therefore, seem clear that the Mehaber had neither our wording nor that suggested by מפעל ויתור התשע. What then was his wording?

We do not offer here a solution to all of our above questions, but suggest that before an answer can be developed the accuracy of Tables in the Tur must be verified. Our problem with והא is predicated on the fact that the second Table in the Tur concerning
parsha readings precisely describes our system and in our system לֹא מָאתָּרִיר מַהֲרִיר before Pesach. However, we have already shown that many other parsha systems besides ours were used,76 and we also know that there are definite challenges to the authenticity of the first table in the Tur. As it commonly appears in all standard Turim, the first Table offers an almost 1,000 year calendar that starts in 5055 (1295 CE) and ends in 6042 (2282 CE). This Table assumes that our Lunar Calendar cycles every 247 years77 and its authorship is generally attributed to הלוי עזרא who was Gaon from 872 CE until his death in 890. The Tur’s Table covers 4 of these cycles or 988 years (4*247).78 It is easily demonstrated that the 247 year repeating cycle assumption is in error. While for the most part two years that are 247 years apart are identical, the molad99 of the later year is 905 belakim earlier, with a probability of approximately 80.

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76 Other reading systems besides ours that we have previously mentioned are: Rambam splitting of חקֶת, Saadia Gaon, Chinuch splitting of מָאתָּרִיר, and the more radical system of ויטרי מחזר. But this list is not exhaustive. Other systems existed as well. For example, Sar Shalom וירא (1984, Netanya, p. 112) mentions places where וירא or מקץ were split and places where תרומה and תצוה were always read together so as never to have a parsha where Moshe was not mentioned. See also “The Torah Reading Cycle: Past and Present” by Norman Bloom, Journal of Jewish Music and Liturgy, Vol. XVIII, (1995-1996), pp. 37-58.

77 I.e. years that are 247 years apart have identical קביעה.

78 Details on this system and its history can be found in Sar-Shalom, p 51.

79 The molad is an approximation of the time of conjunction, and the conjunction of Tishrei determines the lunar calendar. There are 1080 belakim in an hour. Generally speaking, if the molad of Tishrei is:

- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Shabbos before noon- Rosh Hashanah starts on that day.
- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Shabbos after noon- Rosh Hashanah is respectively on Tuesday, Thursday, Shabbos, Monday,
- Any time on Sunday, Wednesday or Friday- Rosh Hashanah respectively starts Monday, Thursday, Shabbos.

80 Two years that are 247 years apart will have a different קביעה only if the first molad was between 12 and 12:50 pm (905 belakim ≈ 50 minutes) on a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Shabbos. The probability of this is (4/7)*905/(1080*24).
2% that the change will affect the calendar. This means about 5 changes every 247 year cycle, or about 20 (4*5) errors in the Tur's 1000 year calendar. Because of these mistakes composed his own calendar (that we have previously mentioned) for the period 1694 through 2240.

The question is whether the Tur mistakenly assumed the 247 year cycle was correct and used it? brings the standard Table in the Tur, then gives a revised Table designed and published by R’ Refael Gordon in “המילני”, 1902. R’ Gordon says:

and claims that the Table usually found in the Tur was not the one in the original Tur but was mistakenly put in by a later publisher of the Tur. He surmises that a mistake like this occurred because the 1522 Venetian edition of the Tur and some other older editions were published without the Table, and when the Table was later reinserted, it was the wrong one. R’ Gordon proceeded to devise a calendar

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81 We are discussing the starting day of a year. However, if the starting day of a year change then the קביעה of the previous year changes as well. Thus, when we say 5 changes in 247 years we mean at least 10 changes in קביעה, and an equivalent multiple in the Tur's 1000 year calendar. These changes are also cumulative, i.e. the changes from one 247 to the next carry over into future 247 year multiples as well. Thus, in 1000 years there will be far more than 20 errors.

82 R’ Refael himself says he is starting from year 1694, but by the time the calendars were printed in the Shulchan Aruch, years had elapsed and the publisher decided not to include calendars for years that were in the past.

83 One of the proofs offered to corroborate R’ Gordon’s assertions, is the citation we previously mentioned that the Tur was originally published in 5090 and 5091 and that its designations in the Tur’s Table were -ה ש. The molad for Tishrei 5091 (1330) was Thursday 12:29 pm and according to the standard rules presented in a previous footnote, Rosh Hashanah should be deferred to Shabbos. Yet the Tur’s Table designates it ש, i.e. Rosh Hashanah is Thursday. It is argued that there is no way that the Tur made a mistake on the year in which he published his work. We are not convinced by this argument and present here a brief outline of a way of explaining why the Tur may have written ש.
that he suggested was the one that appeared in the original Tur, and claimed that in 1905, three years after he published his revised calendar, he found very similar ones in two old Tur manuscripts.84

The presentation in מפעל הטור השלים only discusses R’ Gordon critique of the first Table in the Tur. It does not mention anything about whether the second Table was also left out of the 1522 Venetian Tur and later reinserted. It is certainly evident that the second Table in the מפעל הטור השלים edition is not the one found in the standard Tur. Although no mention is made to that affect anywhere in the text, the second Table in this edition has an extra row at the bottom which describes the parsha readings in Eretz Yisrael.

In a recently published article entitled “A 5765 Anomaly” (Tradition, 38:3 Fall 2004) we discussed a dispute between Saadia Gaon and Ben Meir in the year 923. The molad of Tishrei that year was Shabbos 12:13 pm and Ben Meir insisted, without supporting reasons, that the molad cut-off point to defer Rosh Hashanah was 12:36 (not 12:00) and ruled that Rosh Hashanah start on Shabbos. Saadia Gaon disagreed and said that the noon cut-off was fixed and insisted Rosh Hashanah start on Monday. In our article we argued that this dispute was about the inaccuracy of the molad calculations and that over time the 36 minute “buffer” Ben Meir offered would grow larger. As a recent application of this dispute, we demonstrated that in 5765 the molad of Tishrei was Tuesday 1:16 pm and Rosh Hashanah began on Thursday. However, the inaccuracy in the molad had grown to over 1 and a half hours and according to Ben Meir Rosh Hashanah would have started on Tuesday. Finally, we showed that early in the history of fixed calendars the molad inaccuracy was small and seldom led to significant differences in the start of Rosh Hashanah. We posited that the first 4 times that this issue could have been raised was 923, 927, 1145 and 1330. Thus, if the Tur went along with our interpretation of Ben Meir, his designation of 1330 as ובשנים would have been correct, as would have been his designations for:

- 1333,1334 and 1335 (molad 1334- Tuesday 12:28 pm),
- 1375 (molad- Monday 12:44 pm),
- 1513, 1514, 1515 (molad 1515- Shabbos 12:28 pm)
- 1519 (molad- Thursday 12:27 pm).

Accordingly, the first error in the Tur would not have occurred until the middle of the 17th century, or more than 300 years after his lifetime.

84 The editor of מפעל הטור השלים points out, that R’ Gordon’s revised Table is different from almost all known תנים of Tur.
for each קביעה. Moreover, in order for this row to make any sense it is necessary to know that哙ת בול is never read together in *Eretz Yisrael*; but nowhere in the Table is this stated. Although this Table does reflect what we do today, it is unclear if המשלーム השולות is claiming that this is the original Table that was somehow shortened in later editions of the Tur, or they are simply trying to make the Table complete.

Because of all of the problems we have mentioned with the Tur in this סימן, without verification that at least the upper half of the second Table in the Tur is in fact a copy of the Tur's original Table it is very difficult to use the Tur, as we have it, to shed any light on the Tur's *parsha* reading pattern.

**A Review and Commentary**

The material we have presented suggests that originally the assigning of *Shabbos* Torah readings was fluid with only a minimum set of rules that had to be satisfied. Communities could and did individually choose whatever reading pattern they wanted as long as it conformed to the basic rules. We thus find Rambam, יג׃א תפילה, mentioning that although there was an ancient custom of completing one cycle of Torah readings in 3 years (Triennial system) the generally accepted method was to complete the readings in one year. The system Rambam refers to is mentioned in כט׃ מגילה as having been practiced in *Eretz Yisrael* in the times of the Tanaim. The wording of Rambam in *Hilchos Tefillah* makes it sound as if the Triennial System was still practiced in his time, albeit not commonly, perhaps 1000 years later. This is indeed confirmed by the writing of Benjamin of Tudela in 1170 about the Cairo Community:

“Two large synagogues are there, one belonging to the land of Israel and one belonging to the men of the land of Babylon… Their usage with regard to the portions and sections of the law is not alike; for the men of Babylon are accustomed to read a portion every week, as is done in Spain, and is our custom, and to finish the law each year; while the men

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85 We mentioned this previously in an earlier section.
of Palestine do not do so but divide each portion into three sections and finish the law at the end of three years.” (Encyclopedia Judaica, Vol. 15, p 1247.)

A system that was robust enough to accept a Triennial and an Annual Torah reading cycle coexisting in one community, would obviously also tolerate a variety of different Yearly systems as long as all of the systems satisfied the basic rules.

With the initial rules in place, it appears that as time passed certain non mandatory reading patterns received wide acceptance (e.g. Rambam’s addition of ז’ beforePesach on a regular year) and were then incorporated by the leading Halachic authorities of the generation as part of the new set of minimum requirements. These rules, in turn, then stayed until another round of additional practices became universally accepted (e.g. Shulchan Aruch adding that מצוריע immediately precede Pesach on most leap years). Our currently employed universally accepted parsha reading system is then of relatively recent vintage. Sar Shalom (page 110) makes the following interesting comment about our custom of referring to a week by the name of its parsha reading:

כל שנה רוחות מנעננים نيوزים בחרבות פרשות התלקחות לא נוהגים)==ותחלקן פרשיות בחיבור שונים מנהיגים רחמים יפרשו על שם הפרשה שככ בדין קהל וא 관한 שם פרשרא פרשיה תורמה יהו אחיםו שקדרא את פרשיה על מחtica ספורטיאה של דרים יוסק קרא על פרושי חפשותיה התלקחות ואת מה קורא המנהג המקיים יותר בכל תפוצות ישראליות ובתי משנה נוספים פרשיות נשתתפע זכויות רחמים בכל הנוגנים האורחים ובוחק הקשישים יככ ביה דולקתי ותפשות להות השגה תרמי רבוד

86 Note that according to his reporting it was only people stemming from Eretz Yisrael who practiced the triennial cycle.
87 Rav Tzadok Hacohen asks how מנית לא: מפרשים זה is consistent with the Triennial system? Rav Tzadok Hacohen suggests that, in the Triennial system these pieces would be read on the Shabbosim before Shemos and Rosh Hashanah regardless of where they were up to in the Torah. Sar Shalom (Sinai, Vol 123-124, pp 620-641, "הקריאם baraמ ישראל בחפשות התלקחות","הקריאם באראמ ישראל בחפשות התלקחות") argues that the custom of reading the Torah in some sort of cycle, yearly or triennially, arose after the destruction of the second Bais Hamikdash whereas the custom of reading the words of the תכשח prior to Shemos and Rosh Hashanah was suspended with the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash.
Sar Shalom dates the common use of designating a week by its פרשה השבアウ to the period after the publication of the *Shulchan Aruch*. It was the dissemination and acceptance of the *Shulchan Aruch* that galvanized the acceptance of a universal *parsha* reading system. Our current system has then been in place for only about 400 years.88

In viewing other situations involving Torah readings, it would seem that flexibility in allowing individual community discretion is the norm. For example, in case– the Gemara presents a discussion of how to assign עליהות on Rosh Hodesh. The Gemara explains that the number of pesukim in the relevant sections of *Parshas Pinchus* does not allow four aliyos without violating a rule of Torah reading that disallows starting or ending an aliyah two pesukim or less from a פ or ס. The Gemara offers two solutions. Shmuel says פסוק, i.e. the first aliyah gets the first two and a half pesukim, and the second aliyah gets the next two and a half pesukim. Rav רבי rejects this solution because כל פסוק דא אלא פסוקה שלשה машин לא פסוק שעון כל פסוקה.

Shmuel responds that this is a general principle meant to be employed when there are alternatives. However, in cases like Rosh Hodesh where there are no alternatives, the rule may be ignored.89 Rav רבי disagrees and recommends דולג. There is the following disagreement as to what this means:

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88 As we have previously explained, even in our system when the first day of *Pesach* is Shabbos or the first day of *Shemwin* is Friday, there will be a period of time when the Diaspora and *Eretz Yisrael* are reading different *parshiyos*. This nevertheless should not upset the system since everyone knows the reason for these differences and when told where one community is reading will immediately know what the other one is reading.

89 Note the similarity between this dispute and the one we mentioned previously about whether it is preferable to split a *parsha* or double up two *parshiyos*. Note also the similarity between the objection mentioned here not to split a Pasuk in half and the comment of *Zohar* mentioned previously.

Shmuel’s response here in the Gemara may also be the answer to our question on Hamakne’s answer to Magen Avraham’s question.
Rashi, and Rambam (11th and 12th century) - The 2nd aliyah rereads the last pasuk that the first aliyah read (this is what we do),

Ramban (13th century) – Each person reads his required allotment of pesukim and we do not worry that someone is ending two pesukim before a ב or ס because we have no alternative.

Gra (18th century) - The first person reads the first 3 pesukim, the second person reads pesukim 4-8 and the 3rd person reads pesukim 6-10.

Gra bases his decision on what he considered to be the best solution and that this solution is given in סופרים מסכת. He concludes with:

וכנוו דבייח לא א❖מסקא ב❖נפיו ריינא ד❖לי מ❖סכת טפי ל„הג כ❖מו ש❖מסכת הב❖מרר טפי
ב❖לי מח❖לקה ב❖לי ש❖מע ש„מ tekst בב„מי ת„ב פ„מי ת„בק ת„ב קוסי ל„הג ש„מ תמרא
וד❖_wf אם מ❖י כ„מ.

Despite the long history of practical Halacha from the times of the Rishonim more than 500 years before him that disagreed with him, Gra had no difficulty instituting a Torah reading system that he felt superior. ☛
# Table 6

**Summary of System Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System</th>
<th>Parsha Size</th>
<th>Readings Per Uniformity</th>
<th>Shabbos/Yom Tov Reading Relationship</th>
<th>Idiosyncrasies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current</td>
<td>1 Outlier</td>
<td>In Leap Years</td>
<td>Some⁹²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saadia Gaon</td>
<td>Normal Type Distribution</td>
<td>In Leap Years</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>מıldığı-בכל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>מנוחו וצריר</td>
<td>1 Outlier, wide dispersion</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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⁹⁰ I.e. How many Shabbosim is each Chumash read?

⁹¹ I.e. Are the Shabbos readings that precede Yom Tov each year always the same?

⁹² I.e. On regular years it is always the same.
Chart 1

Parsha Size Distribution

Saadia Gaon

Number of Pesukim

Frequency
Chart 2

Parsha Size Distribution

**Our System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Pesukim</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 - 62</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63 - 85</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86 - 108</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109 - 131</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132 - 154</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155 - 177</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>201 - 223</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>224 - 246</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 3

Parsha Size Distribution

Machzor Vitri

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Number of Pesukim</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 - 51</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52 - 79</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - 107</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108 - 135</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136 - 163</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>164 - 191</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>192 - 219</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>220 - 247</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>