## לשבת הגדול

## HAFTARAH FOR SHABBAT HA-GADOL

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mentaliving boar in the enquiring year OA-24 MALACHI 3:4-240

This haftarah contains God's promise to the people in the period after the rebuilding of the Temple in 516-15 B.C.E. The prophet announces that sacrificial offerings will again be favorably received by God, as in ancient times. First, however, God will contend with the nation's breach of ment. Hope lies in repentance and in observance of the Torah. God's call to the people through truth. Malachi, the healing mission of Elijah, and the teaching of Moses all show God's continual concern for reconciliation and human welfare.

Restoration is the recurrent theme of this haftarah: the restoration of acceptable offerings in the Temple (3:4), the repair of the Covenant through repentance (v. 7), the renewal of trust in divine justice (v. 18), and the reconciliation of parents and children (v. 24). Most of these statements include variations of the verb shuv (turn, return). Presumably, a crisis of trust in God's just providence has perverted the people's soul, leading to callous indifference in the moral and cultic culation, to another blue word was a new realms. The haftarah is thus pervaded by a deep things, whether in the family, in society, or in the divine-human relationship.

In a rebuke that precedes the haftarah, the people are quoted as saying that "All who do evil are mockingly jibe, "Where is the God of justice [mishpat]?" (Mal. 2:17). In response, God comes to redress the cause of mishpat (judgment) in verse 3:5, in which the literal "bring to judgment" is understood as "to contend against you." God will also attend to the sense of the God-fearers that "It is useless to serve God" (v. 14). Actions have consequences. If the people repent and serve God fully, they will receive the riches of heavenly blessing. Otherwise, they will be blasted to ash-root and branch. So deep is the people's resistance that God finally announces He will send His prophet

Elijah to renew their hearts. This unilateral act is proof of God's love of Jacob (announced at the beginning of the collected prophecies of Malachi).

their obligations to God and to the poor.

This is Malachi's message of hope. The framers of the biblical canon, placing Malachi as the last moral and ritual law and bring sinners to judg- of the prophets; believed it to be a final prophetic word to those for whom Scripture teaches divine no fear of Mer Mappiner cessivery.

## RELATION OF THE HAFTARAH TO THE CALENDAR DE SELLE

mit adultery, who swear felsely, who cheat

The phrase shabbat ha-gadol (the great Sabbath) is a fixed formulation of rabbinic liturgy, found in the Grace after Meals in the special supplication for Shabbat (beginning r'tzei). In that context, it emphasizes the special holiness of each Shabbat. The term also traditionally designates the Shabbat before Pesah. Its meaning in this setting is uncertain, which has elicited much spec-

One likely explanation for the choice of Mal. sense of estrangement from the right order of 3:4-24 as the haftarah for Shabbat ha-Gadol is the old tradition that the future redemption will occur on Pesah, the prototype of redemption (BT, RH 11a). Because the haftarah could be construed to herald God's great day, it is to be proclaimed good in the sight of the LORD." Indeed, they in hope and in warning before the festival itself. The term shabbat ha-gadol would then simply be a shorthand designation for saying that on this Shabbat the haftarah proclaiming the final "great" (gadol) day is read. This is very much like the formulation Shabbat Shuvah, which is one way to designate the Shabbat before Yom Kippur, when the theme of repentance (t'shuvah) is stressed through a haftarah selection beginning with the word shuvah (repent; Hos. 14:2).

> The haftarah's focus on the tithe obligations would have reinforced the rabbinic selection. Indeed, according to the Mishnah, "on Passover

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(the people) are judged with respect to (their) produce" (M RH I:2). Because the law required tithes from agricultural produce gathered before *Pesah*, recitation of the *haftarah* on the *Shabbat* before the festival would duly warn the people to fulfill their obligations to God and to the poor, and thus merit divine favor in the ensuing year. Our custom of charitable giving (ma-ot hittim) at this time, ini-

tiated so that the needy would have grain for matzah, continues the relationship between philanthropy and piety at the Pesah season. The haftarah thus signals that gifts have a divine dimension. From this perspective, Shabbat ha-Gadol calls attention to an ultimate or "great" accountability that all creatures bear for the resources of the earth and the sacred task of their redistribution.

34Surely the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of yore and in the years of old. 5But [first] I will step forward to contend against you, and I will act as a relentless accuser against those who have no fear of Me: Who practice sorcery, who commit adultery, who swear falsely, who cheat laborers of their hire, and who subvert [the cause of] the widow, orphan, and stranger, said the LORD of Hosts.

is a fixed formulation of rabbinic liturgy, found

6For I am the LORD—I have not changed; and you are the children of Jacob-you have not ceased to be. 7From the very days of your fathers you have turned away from My laws and have not observed them. Turn back to Me, and I will turn back to you—said the LORD of Hosts. But you ask, "How shall we turn back?" 8Ought man to defraud God? Yet you are defrauding Me. And you ask, "How have we been defrauding You?" In tithe and contribution. 9You are suffering under a curse, yet you go on defrauding Me—the whole nation of you. 10Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, and let there be food in My House, and thus put Me to the test—said the LORD of Hosts. I will surely open the floodgates of the sky for you and pour down blessings on you; 11 and I will banish the locusts from you, so that they will not destroy the yield

יְרְוּשְׁלֶם בִּימֵי עוֹלֶם וּכְשָׁנֶים קַדְמֹנִיּוֹת:
יִרְוּשָׁלֶם בִּימֵי עוֹלֶם וּכְשָׁנֶים קַדְמֹנִיּוֹת:
יְקְבַרְבְּתִּי אֲלֵיכֶם לַמִּשְׁפָּט יְהָיֵיתִי וּ עֵד מְמַהֵּר בַּמְכַשְׁפִים וּבַמְנָאֲפִים וּבַנִּשְׁבָּעִים לַשֶּׁקֶר וּבְעשְׁקֵי שְׂכֵר־שָׁכִיר אַלְמְנָה וְיָתְוֹם וּמַשֵּי־גֵר\* וְלָא יְרֵאוּנִי אָמֶר יְהֹוֶה צְבָאוֹת:

פּני אַנִי יִהנַה לְא שָׁנֶיתִי וְאַתֶּם בְּנֵי־יַעֻקֹבּ לְא כְלִיתֵם: זְלְמִימֵי אֲבֹתֵיכָם סַרְתָּם מְּוֹבּוּ אֵלֵי וְאָשִׁוּבָה אֲלֵיכָם אָמֶר יְהֹנָה צְּבָאוֹת וַאֲמֵרְתָּם פַּנְּה נְשְׁרֵּב בּנְּתְּם בְּמֶּה קְבַעֲנִוּך לְבְעִים אֹתִי וַאֲמֵרְתָּם בַּמֶּה קְבַעֲנִוּך תְּבְעִים אֹתִי וַאֲמֵרְתָּם בַּמֶּה קְבַעֲנִוּך תְּבְּעִים אֹתִי וַאֲמֵרְתָּם בְּמֶּה קְבַעֲנִוּך מַּתְּם בְּמֶּה קְבַעֲנִוּך מַּתְּם בְּמֶּת בְּעִים הַגִּוֹי בְּלְוֹ עִּתְּם וְאַתִים וְאֹתִי אָתֶם לְּבְעִים הַגְּוֹי בְּלְוֹ בְּיִתְּם וְאַרָּיִתְ אָבֶרְתֹּ בְּנִיתְ עָבֶרְ וִיהְיִ עָּעֶרְ בְּיִתְ בְּבְיֹתְוֹ לְבֶם אָת־בְּּרְי הְאֵבְרְמְת לְכֶם אֶת־בְּּרִי הְאֵבְרְמָה וְלָא אֶפְתְח לְכֶם אֶת־בְּרְי הְאֵבְרְמָה וְלָא בְּלְּתְ בְּלֵי הָאֲבְרָמָה וְלָא־ לְכֶם אֶת־בְּרִי הְאֵבְרְמָה וְלָא־ לְכֶם אֶת־בְּרִי הְאֵבְרְמָה וְלָא־ לְכֶם אֶת־בְּרִי הְאֵבְרְמָה וְלֹא־ וֹלְא־ יִשִׁחְת לְכֶם אֶת־בְּרְי הְאֵבְרְמָה וְלֹא־

.5. א י במקום ה' asso attend to the sense of the God

Malachi 3:5. Who practice sorcery. Condemnation of witches and false oaths and of the abuse of widows, orphans, and strangers finds echoes in Exod. 22:17,19-21.

7. Turn back to Me, and I will turn back to you Malachi's exhortation assumes the people's ability to respond to God's initiative.

God finally announces He will send His propher

"It is useless to serve God" (v. 14).

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of your soil; and your vines in the field shall no longer miscarry—said the LORD of Hosts. 12And all the nations shall account you happy, for you shall be the most desired of lands-said the LORD of Hosts.

STOR YEMPE

13You have spoken hard words against Me-said the LORD. But you ask, "What have we been saying among ourselves against You?" 14You have said, "It is useless to serve God. What have we gained by keeping His charge and walking in abject awe of the LORD of Hosts? 15And so, we account the arrogant happy: they have indeed done evil and endured; they have indeed dared God and escaped." 16In this vein have those who revere the LORD been talking to one another. The LORD has heard and noted it, and a scroll of remembrance has been written at His behest concerning those who revere the LORD and esteem His name. 17And on the day that I am preparing, said the LORD of Hosts, they shall be My treasured possession; I will be tender toward them as a man is tender toward a son who ministers to him. 18And you shall come to see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him who has served God and him who has not served Him.

19For lo! That day is at hand, burning like an oven. All the arrogant and all the doers of evil shall be straw, and the day that is coming—said the LORD of Hosts-shall burn them to ashes and leave of them neither stock nor boughs.

תשַבּּל לָבֶם הַנָּפָן בַשְּיָה אָמֵר יִהוָה יצָבָאִוֹת: 12 וְאִשְׁרָוּ אֶתְכֶם כָּל־הַגּוֹיֵם כֵּי־ תהיו אַתֶּם אֶרֶץ חַפֶּץ אָמֶר יְהֹוֶה ith your feet on the day that I am

preparing said the Lord of Hosts L.

נו חָוְקּוּ עָלֵי דּבְרֵיכֶם אָמַר יְהֹנֶה וַאֲמַרְהָּם מַה־נִּדְבַּרָנוּ עָלֶיף: וּי אֲמִרְתָּם שָׁוָא עֲבָד אֶלהֹרֵים וּמַה־בָּצע בִי שָׁמַרְנוּ מִשְׁמַרְהוֹ וְכֵי הָלַבְנוּ קְדַרַנִּית מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה צְבְאִוֹת: יו וְעַתָּה אַנַחָנוּ מִאַשְׁרִים זְדֵים גם־נבנוּ זְיַם גם־נבנוּ עשַׁי רִשְּׁלֶה גַּם בְּחֲנָוּ אֱלֹהַים וַיִּמְלֵטוּ: -16 אַז בָדְבָּרָוּ יִרְאֵי יִהוָה איש אל רַעָהוּ וַיִּקְשֵׁב יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמָע וְיָבָּתֵב סֵפֵר וָבָּרָוֹן לְפָנָיוֹ לְיִרְאֵי יְהֹוָה וּלְחֹשְׁבֵי שִׁמְוֹ: יוְדָיוּ לִי אָמֵר יְהוֶה צְבָאוֹת לַיּוֹם אֲשֵׁר יּהוָה בִּיוֹם אֲשֵׁר סגלה אני עשה וחמלתי עליהם :אַשֶּׁר יַחִמְל אִישׁ עַל־בְּנָוֹ הָעֹבֵד אֹתְוֹ וּ וִשַּׁבְתָּם וּרְאִילֶם בֵּין צַדֶּיק לְרְשֶׁע בַּין יּ עֹבֵד אֵלהִים לַאֲשֵׁר לְא עַבְדוֹ: ס יו בֵּי־הָנֵה הַיּוֹם בָּא בֹעֵר כַּתַּנָּוּר וְהָיֹּוּ

כָל־זֵדִים וְכָל־עֹשֵׂה רְשִׁעָה לָשׁ וְלְהַט

אֹתָם הַיָּוֹם הַבָּא אַמֵר יהוה צבאות

אַשֶר לא־יַעַזָב לָהָם שֹׁרָשׁ וְעַנַף: 10 ווַרְחַה

16. those who revere the LORD Hebrew: yir-ei YHVH. Used as a technical designation for those who revere God's name (3:20), in contradistinction to those who despise it (1:6). They shall be vindicated on the day of judgment (3:20-21). Presumably, this refers to a group of particularly pious people.

19. the day that is coming References to the future "day" of judgment punctuate the prophet's speech (3:2,17,19,21,22,23). A complex scenario is envisaged, dominated by the advent of an angelic messenger, the admonition of sins, the interventions of Elijah, the fiery purgation of sinners, the vindication of the pious, and the visible distinction between the righteous and evildoers. This scenario was variously explicated and ordered by medieval Jewish commentators, in light of other biblical and Rabbinic evidence. In turn, the images were understood in either literal or figurative terms. The prophet Malachi was himself the heir to a long tradition of this rhetoric, produced in a period of more than 300 years and in various patterns.

20But for you who revere My name a sun of victory shall rise to bring healing. You shall go forth and stamp like stall-fed calves, 21 and you shall trample the wicked to a pulp, for they shall be dust beneath your feet on the day that I am preparing-said the LORD of Hosts.

22Be mindful of the Teaching of My servant Moses, whom I charged at Horeb with laws and rules for all Israel.

23Lo, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before the coming of the awesome, fearful day of the LORD. 24He shall reconcile parents with children and children with their parents, so that, when I come, I do not strike the whole land with utter destruction.

meril Carri Corne with windows Lo, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before the coming of the awesome, fearful day of the MC LORD. IT COST INCIGE

באשר נחבול ארש על בנו העבר אחו:

לָבֶם יִרְאֵי שִׁמִי שֵׁמֵשׁ צְדָלֶה וּמַרְפַּא בְּכְנָפֶיהָ וִיצָאתֵם וּפִשְׁתֵּם בִּעָגְלֵי מַרְבֵּק: חַחַת רְשַׁעִים כּי־יהיוּ אָפֵר חַחַת 21 בַּפָּוֹת רַגְלֵיכֶם בִּיּוֹם אֲשֵׁר אֲנֵי עֹשֶׁה אָמֵר יָהוֶה צְבָאוֹת: פ

יתי צוֹרָת משה עברי אשר צוֹיתי 22 אוֹתְוֹ בְחֹרֵב עַל־כָּל־יִשְׁרָאֵל חֻקִּים

23 הָנָה אָנֹכִי שׁלֵח לָכֶּם אֵת אַלֹיָה הַנְּבֵיא לְפְנֵי בַּוֹא יִוֹם יִהוָֹה הַגַּרוֹל וְהַנוֹרֵא: ים ולב בנים על־בּנִים ולב בּנִים 24 על־אַבוֹתַם פַּן־אבֿוֹא וָהַכִּיתֵי אַת־הַאָרֵץ resent the Box boan callaing to one

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19, the day that is coming References to the framewile in Midght regulateraterie problet's

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se particulation and principal and second and second 24. He shall reconcile parents with children The language is difficult. The act of reconciliation here is literally "restore the heart" (heshiv lev). Different meanings of the preposition translated "with" (al), however, make it an open question whether the prophet envisions the reconciliation

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of parents "with" their children or "along with" them. In the first case, divine wrath will be forestalled by intergenerational reconciliation; in the other, both generations together will return to the difference between the rightcous and the bod