Sources & Notes

1. General Sources

The first sefer I created a guide sheet for was Shemuel, both because I had to prepare my students for a bekiut exam that included the entire book, and also because I came across Shimon Bar-Efrat's wonderful commentary (Mikra le-Yisra'el series, Jerusalem: Magnes, 5756). Bar-Efrat's careful division of Sefer Shemuel into coherent narrative units with thoughtful titles is what initially gave me the idea to create this type of a review sheet. In my Shemuel page, the "micro" division (plus titles) is mostly based on Bar-Efrat, though I have made many changes. The "macro" division into larger units is from M. Z. Segal's "Sifrei Shemuel" (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1987).

In other narrative books I tried to create titles for the smaller units similar to those that Bar-Efrat used in Shemuel, though I am aware that I have been only partially successful. In terms of dividing the other books of Nevi'im and Ketuvim into coherent thematic units, I made eclectic use of three types of sources:

1. First and foremost were the *parashiyot petuhot* and *setumot*, as they appear in the important biblical codices. I relied heavily (but not slavishly) on the parashah divisions. On the one hand, I did not create a new section every time there is a *parashah petuhah* or *setumah*. But on the other hand, whenever I did mark off a new section it nearly always coincides with a *petuhah* or a *setumah*.

The masoretic codices agree among themselves on *parashiyot petuhot* and *setumot* the large majority of the time. Nevertheless, there are some significant differences between them (even among the codices in the tradition of the Allepo Codex). On the rare occasions where my own division is based on a parashah division that appears in one (but not all) of the codices, I noted this in square brackets. Also: in certain books (Mishlei, Kohelet, Ruth, and the last part of Yehezkel) there are unusually long sections without any parashah divisions at all. In these cases I noted the parashah divisions in square brackets whenever they do occur. In Mishlei specifically, because the division of large parts of the book is necessarily arbitrary, I based it on parashah divisions where possible, and noted them whenever they do occur throughout the book (in square brackets).

2. Secondly, I made use of the "macro" and "micro" divisions by those of the classic exegetes who were concerned with carefully dividing the books, such as: Ralbag, Abravanel, Meiri (on Mishlei), Sa`adia Gaon, and others.

3. For my third and final group of sources, I checked various popular modern commentaries (e.g. Hartom, Da`at Mikra, Segal, Tanakh La-Am, Olam ha-Tanakh) to see where they divided the *sefarim* and how they entitled the units. I found that they often recycle each other's work when it comes to this, but sometimes do have interesting insights into the structure and arrangement of the books.

Though I made eclectic use of all these sources, what ultimately decided the divisions and titles were my own impressions as a reader, and I added many elements entirely on my own. Responsibility for errors thus lies entirely with me.

2. Notes on Specific Books

Yehoshua and Shofetim: Besides Shemuel, I also worked on Yehoshua and Shofetim early on because of my students' *bekiut* test. I tried to make the pages for Yehoshua and Shofetim especially clear, useful and easy to use, because I assume that these are the very first books of Nakh that many people read. Since beginnings are always hard, I tried to turn these first two pages into light introductions to my concept of Guide-Sheets for *bekiut* in Nakh. Because each of these two short books has its own separate page, there was enough space to accomplish this. In Yehoshua, I made a special effort to present the long, difficult section on the *nahalot* of the tribes (13-19) in a clear way that would make it much easier to read in its entirety. On the Shofetim page I had a lot of space left, so I added an explanation of the structure of *Shirat Devorah*. The initial idea came from a chart found in *Olam ha-Tanakh* (p. 51). But I made sweeping changes to it, which I think make mine a far more useful chart.

Melakhim: Here I added symbols so that – at a glance – the reader can identify Malkhei Beit David (Magen David) and Malkhei Yisrael (banner).

Yeshayahu: Shadal was very helpful at some difficult points. The *nehamot* were broken up into daily readings coinciding with *parashiyot* (see below).

Yirmiyahu: The individual nevu'ot in Yirmiyahu are divided as Abravanel proposed, according to introductory formulas. (Segal later followed Abravanel with one exception.) I wanted to adapt Abravanel's summaries of the individual nevu'ot as well, but it proved impractical so I made my own (which still need more work). The "macro" division of Yirmiyahu with titles from the phrases in verse 1:10 is mine.

The summaries of the individual nevu'ot, plus the "macro" division, resulted in the need to present Yirmiyahu on *two* pages. Thus, in order to be able to take in the structure of the entire book in a single glance, the layout of the Guide Sheets should present the two Yirmiyahu pages facing each other side-by-side.

Trei Asar: Though there was enough "room" to do so, I decided not to divide Yonah in two. *Not* dividing Yonah meant the following for Nahum, Habbakuk, Zephaniah and Malachi: three of these four books could be divided in two to make reading them easier. In the end I decided to divide Habbakuk, Zephaniah, and Malachi. Nahum, the shortest and most cohesive of the four short books, is thus read in a single sitting.

Iyyov: The material divided easily into 28 days, the division being pretty much dictated by the separate *ma`anot* upon which the book's structure is based. To reach 29, it was possible to: (A) Divide chaps. 9-10 (57 pesukim) into 2 parts, or else chaps. 36-37 (57 pesukim) into 2 parts. [I lean towards the former in order to make things easier at the beginning of the month.] (B) Not combine chaps. 18-19 or not combine chaps. 34-35. The choice I made in the Guide Sheet is obviously arbitrary, and can easily be changed if people feel it should be.

Mishlei: I broke the text up into daily readings at *parashiyot petuhot* or *setumot* whenever possible, and they are indicated on the Guide-Sheet (see below).

Eikhah: The titles of the five kinnot are from *Daat Mikra*, with one small change.

Kohelet: The text is highly ambiguous, containing very few clear organizational signals. Thus, its division into daily readings is mostly based on quantity (see below).

Shir ha-Shirim: Here too the text is highly ambiguous. It has been broken up into daily readings at points coinciding with *parashiyot*.

Daniel: The division of Daniel is more or less dictated by the book's contents. The earliest authority to point out the book's parts explicitly was, to the best of my knowledge, Saadia Gaon.

Ezra-Nehemiah: In order to make the structure clearerI quoted a number of verses relating to dating and context within the outline.

Divrei ha-Yamim: I tried to make the titles of large and small sections reflect the book's own structure and purposes (as I understood them). Thus, even when sections of Divrei ha-Yamim have parallels in Melakhim, the titles in Divrei ha-Yamim are often different.

Arbitrary divisions (Mishlei, Kohelet, Shir ha-Shirim, end of Yeshayahu): In general, I did my best to divide and entitle the parts of each book thematically, according to organizational signals present in the text itself, and to try to make the division into daily readings coincide with such signals. But in certain poetic books this was impossible to achieve, because "organizational signals" are either highly ambiguous or entirely absent. In such cases I divided the text into daily readings based largely on quantity, and quoted the initial verse instead of giving a concrete (and probably misleading) title.

Fortunately, for *Shir ha-Shirim* and for the *nehamot* at the end of Yeshayahu, it was possible to choose the exact starting point for each daily reading by having it coincide with a *parashah petuhah* or *setumah*. These *parashiyot* are noted on the Guide Sheets.

For Mishlei and Kohelet the problem was more severe: Even the *parashiyot* could not always serve as guides because they are rare in a major portion of Mishlei (10-24) and most of Kohelet. Thus, the points where the text is broken up in these two places are almost entirely arbitrary and based almost enirely upon quantity (though I did try to avoid starting new readings in the middle of a single thought).

Tehillim: A Jew needs to feel "at home" in Sefer Tehillim. There is nothing else like it for bringing home the personal, human side of avodat Hashem.

However, I never liked the idea of reading Sefer Tehillim once a week or even once a month. Reading many mizmorim in a row is, it seems to me, a sure recipe for rote reading, and I don't believe there is any value to the rote recitation of Tehillim (though I am fully aware that others do). Instead, I prefer the idea of one mizmor per day, which allows the reader to reflect upon the meaning and mood of that particular mizmor alone.

The basic idea for the six-month chart is simple: There are 150 mizmorim in printed editions (though Hazal didn't count them exactly this way). Six Hebrew months are 177 days. That means one mizmor per day, with longer mizmorim being subdivided.

Figuring out how best to subdivide the longest mizmorim was a tedious and technical process that involved a lot of counting. In general, I tried to divide long mizmorim where there seem to be pauses, or where a new thought seems to begin. In the end I decided to occasionally combine some of the shortest mizmorim as well, in order to allow some longer ones to be reduced to even smaller sections.

I tried to achieve a good balance, but in the end, here too, much is arbitrary. I will gratefully accept advise on where and how to shift the combinations and divisions in the chart.

3. Notes on the Overall Reading Schedule (the 12 Month-Units)

The overall scheme, based on twelve months-units as presented in the Guide Sheets, is just one possible way to create a schedule for reading *Nevi'im* and *Ketuvim*. I initially experimented with a number of other options before settling on the current scheme, which I consider the most sensible and flexible way to organize a system of study and review. (Its flexibility is part of what makes it so sensible!) Nevertheless, different organizational schemes may work better for others, and if someone wants to rearrange what I have done it order to facilitate the study of Torah, that is fine.

The following were some of the considerations that led me to the present scheme for the Guide Sheets:

Starting Point – Nevi'im: I began with the simple fact each of the books of *Nevi'im* is a cohesive unit of roughly the same standard length. The only true exceptions are Yehoshua and Shofetim, but luckily these two books combine easily to form a single standard unit as well. The direct result is seven clear units for reading Nevi'im, namely: (1) Yehoshua and Shofetim, (2) Shemuel, (3) Melakhim, (4) Yeshayahu, (5) Yirmiyahu, (6) Yehezkel, (7) Trei Asar.[1] This simple quantitative fact is the reason that publishers usually print Mikraot Gedolot on Nevi'im in seven volumes.

Ketuvim: Ketuvim is more problematic: Divrei ha-Yamim is unusually long, while Tehillim is the longest book in all of Tanakh by far, and its text is often quite hard to read. Alongside these two books, each of which is too long to be a single unit, there are many short books: Five Megillot, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah. Mishlei is longer, but still too short to be a unit of its own. So how should these books be combined?

Iyyov: The only "easy" part of Ketuvim was Iyyov, which automatically fits a single clear month-unit, similar to the books in Nevi'im. Iyyov is somewhat short (like Trei Asar), but its language is notoriously difficult, so it was reasonable to make its average daily readings a bit shorter. Thus, Iyyov easily became one month-unit.

For the other books of Ketuvim, I juggled a number of options, as follows:

*Should Tehillim be part of the regular bekiut program, or a separate study-cycle? In the end I settled for the latter option, because the structure of Sefer Tehillim is radically different than the rest of Nakh, and also because this very structure (a collection of roughly[2] 150 independent units) lent itself so nicely to a 6-month cycle.[3]

Megillot? Should the Five Megillot be a regular part of the bekiut program at all, since they are read anyways over the course of the year? In the end I decided that they should be, for two reasons:

(1) A public reading does not really mean that the book has been read and digested on an individual level, especially because the Megillot are too long to be read as one "daily dose". Rather, they should be subdivided.

(2) It is true that the entire Jewish People reads Esther on Purim and Eikhah on Tisha be-Av. But many communities (including most Israeli communities!) do *not*

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[1]Trei Asar is the shortest of these seven units, but as a combination of twelve small and diverse books it is also more difficult to read, so I thought it worth devoting slightly more time to each short book. In any case, the books of Trei Asar naturally divide into about 29-30 days (as shown on the Guide Sheet). Thus, we begin with seven clear reading units in Nevi'im.

[2]Roughly, but not exactly, since the number 150 is based on the chapter divisions. There are actually slightly fewer than 150 mizmorim since several pairs of mizmorim may originally have been one together (see the Guide Sheet). Hazal spoke of "the 147 mizmorim in Sefer Tehillim."

[3]Also see comments above on why Tehillim needs a separate study-cycle.

have any public reading of the three megillot on the *shalosh regalim*.[4]   And even Esther and Eikhah would benefit from being subdivided into several daily readings. So in the end I included the Five Megillot, and even paid them special attention by creating relatively short daily readings for the harder ones.

*Perhaps Kohelet should be combined with Mishlei, putting the two related "Wisdom Books" together in the same reading unit? In the end I decided to do this, even though it meant separating Kohelet from the rest of the Megillot. Reading Mishlei and Kohelet together has thematic value, and they also combine very well in terms of length and difficulty.

*Perhaps the books focusing on the Persian period (Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah) should be combined as a single unit? Or perhaps the prophets of the Return to Zion (the last three nevi'im of Trei Asar) should be combined with the book of Ezra-Nehemia as a single unit? These are both attractive options for thematic reasons, and some people may justifiably want to read them this way. In the end I didn't divide the month-units this way because it created problems in combining other books. If someone creates a reading cycle based on these types of combinations, it would be wonderful.

*Perhaps Daniel and Ezra-Nehemiah should be combined? Both are books about the Persian period, and both have Aramaic parts, and they also combine well into one Month-Unit in terms of length. Or perhaps Daniel, which is a relatively short narrative, should be combined with the megillot, while Ezra should be combined with Divrei ha-Yamim as its natural continuation? In the end I chose the latter option, but I encourage others to combine the books the first way it it facilitates their study, and perhaps even contribute a new Guide-Sheet.

My final decision for Keuvim was: Iyyov as one unit, Mishlei & Kohelet as one unit, the four remaining Megillot plus Daniel as one unit, and Divrei ha-Yamim followed by Ezra-Nehemiah as a *double* month-unit.[5]

The system I finally settled upon is more or less balanced, gives relatively more time to individual small books, and also remains quite close to the common order of the books in printed editions of Tanakh. Nevertheless, I encourage those who want to modify this scheme in order to facilitate their own study to do so.

4. A Note on the function of *Parashiyot*

According to the rabbinic tradition recorded in *Sifra*, the purpose of the *parashiyot* is to indicate a pause between different sections and topics within the biblical books. Casual familiarity with the *parashiyot* backs up this impression, and my own attempt to "map" the biblical books while paying careful attention to the *parashiyot* has convinced me that this is indeed their primary purpose.

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[4]Most Hasidim, Sefaradim, and Temanim (Baladi) do not read Shir ha-Shirim publicly on Shabbat Hol ha-Moed Pesah. (They often, however, do read it at home at the end of the Pesah seder. Furthermore, Sefaradim *do* read it publicly every *Erev Shabbat* before *Kabbalat Shabbat*.) These same groups do not publicly read Ruth on Shavuot (though they may read it during the *Tikkun*), and some have no custom at all associating Kohelet with Sukkot.

[5]I also tried but abandoned some setups which would have involved books being read in *specific* months, especially based on the Five Megillot. For instance: Eikhah and Yirmiyahu in Av, Kohelet and Mishlei in Tishrei, Esther and Daniel (plus Ezra-Nehemiah) in Adar, Shivat Zion books in Iyyar (Yom ha-Atzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim) along with Ruth (towards Sivan). I also briefly thought about attaching Ruth to Yehoshua & Shofetim (Sivan). Nevertheless, it seems to me that the flexibility allowed by the current scheme is far better than any of these arrangements.

But while I am quite sure that this is generally the case, I have also noticed other features. Sometimes one finds a *parashah* indicated in the middle of a topic, whose purpose is unclear. Alternatively, sometimes finds a *parashah* where a new topic does *not* begin, but its purpose may be surmised: usually to emphasize the previous verse by pausing after it (or else some entirely different reason). On the opposite extreme, sometimes there are very long sections that cry out for "paragraphing" but have no *parashiyot* at all. In short, the *parashiyot* often reflect a clear exegetical tradition, but not always. They are worthy of further study.

There is a natural inclination to ascribe more "stopping power" to a *parashah petuhah* than to a *setumah*. My own reading has led me to doubt this, however, because the exceptions are so numerous.

One particular feature I noticed in dozens of places, which seems to be almost a systematic rule, is that when a narrative text moves from one situation to another within the same story, thus calling for a *parashah*, the break is inevitably placed *after* the verse which sets the stage for the new situation. In other words, the tradition of the *parashiyot* seems read such verses as the closing elements of the previous section, rather than introductions to the next section. A "scene" is properly finished only after the elements for the next situation have been introduced. It is my impression that this is a general rule for the *parashah* tradition, though only a systematic study could prove it to be so.

5. Layout:

In order to print the *Guide to Reading Nevi'im and Ketuvim*, the following is a suggested layout for use within **a booklet using both sides of each page**. By printing on both sides of each page it is possible to present certain pages facing each other side-by-side (such as the two pages of Yirmiyahu).

The suggested layout is for the *Hebrew* portion of the booklet. The English explanatory material can easily be placed in order from left to right beginning at the facing left cover of the booklet.

<u>שמאל</u>	<u>ימין</u>
(1א) תוכן	X
(2א) מבוא עמ׳ 1	(1ב) מדרש
(3א) מבוא עמ׳ 3	(2ב) מבוא עמ׳ 2
(4א) מבוא עמ׳ 5	(3ב) מבוא עמ׳ 4
(5א) מבוא עמ׳ 7	(4ב) מבוא עמ׳ 6
(6א) כיצד להשתמש בדפי ההדרכה	(5ב) מבוא עמ׳ 8
(7א) שופטים	(6ב) יהושע
(8א) מלכים	(7ב) שמואל
(9א) ישעיהו	(8ב) X
(10א) ירמיהו עמ׳ ב	(9ב) ירמיהו עמ׳ א
(11א) יחזקאל	(10ב) X
(12א) תרי עשר עמ׳ ב	(11ב) תרי עשר עמ׳ א
(13א) איוב	(12ב) X
(14א) מגילות ודניאל	(13ב) משלי וקהלת
(15א) דברי הימים עמ׳ ב	(14ב) דברי הימים עמ׳ א
(16א) עזרא-נחמיה	(15ב) X
(17א) תהלים (בששה חודשים)	(16ב) X
	(17ב) תהלים (מעוברת)

סה״כ : 17 דפים.

הצעה: מאמרים קצרים למילוי דפים ריקים:

לפני ישעיהו : אולי "סדרן של נביאים" או "בין נביאים ראשונים לנביאים אחרונים"

לפני יחזקאל : "מה כלה זו מתקשטת בעשרין וארבעה תכשיטין..."

לאחר נביאים ולפני איוב : "סדרן של כתובים" או משהו על "בין נביאים לכתובים" (או שניהם).

לפני עזרא : משהו על שיבת ציון או סוף נבואה, או על ארמית מקראית, או דרשת חז"ל על הפסוק בנחמיה "ויבינו במקרא".

לפני לוח תהלים : משהו על קריאת תהלים או על המבנה של ספר תהלים.