

ROSH HASHANAH TORAH READINGS

Chantable English version with tropes

by Len Fellman August 18, 2018

The trope melodies I used are from the book by Joshua R. Jacobson: CHANTING THE HEBREW BIBLE.

Day 1 (Bereishit 21:1-34)

R.H. Day 1 - 1st reading

21:1 [Now Adonai] remembered Sara, [as he had] said. [Thus did] Adonai for Sara [what He had promised].

2 [She became pregnant], [and then bore] Sara [to Abraham] a son in his old age,
[at the appointed time] which had been mentioned to him by God.

3 [And gave Abraham] a name to his son, [who was born to him], [whom Sara had borne him] [—this name: Isaac].

4 And circumcised Abraham [Isaac his son] at eight days old, [just as it was] [final melody:] [commanded to him] by God.

R.H. Day 1 - 2nd reading

5 Abraham was a hundred years old when there was born to him this one: Isaac his son.

6 Then said Sara: Laughter [God has made] for me; [all who hear of it] [will laugh about me].

7 [And she said]: [Who would have] declared [to Abraham], “[She will nurse children— Sara?]”

[For I have borne him a son] in his old age!

8 [The child grew] and was weaned. [and prepared] Abraham a great drinking-feast on the day on which was weaned Isaac.

9 [Once Sara saw] [the son of Hagar] [the Egyptian woman], [whom Hagar had borne to Abraham], laughing.

10 She said to Abraham: [You must drive away] [this slave together] with her son.

By no means shall inherit the son [of this slave woman] with my son, with Isaac!

11 [And it was bad]—[this incident]—in the extreme in the eyes of Abraham because it involved his son.

12 [And said God] [to Abraham]: [Do not let it be bad] in your eyes concerning the lad [and your slave woman];

in all that is said [to you] by Sara: hearken [to her voice],

for it is [through Isaac] [final melody:] that will be accredited to you [generations that are to come].

R.H. Day 1 - 3rd reading

13 But also the son of the slave-woman—a nation [will I make of him], for your seed [he is too].

14 So awoke Abraham [early in the morning]. [He took some bread] and a skin of water and gave them [to Hagar]—
[placing them] [on her shoulder]—[along with the child], [and sent her away].

[She went off] [and roamed aimlessly] in the wilderness of Be'er Sheva.

15 When she used up the water in the skin, she cast off the child under one of the bushes,

16 She went and sat herself down [facing him], at a distance, as far away as a bowshot,

for she said to herself: “[Let me not see] the death of the child!” So she sat nearby, lifted up her voice and wept.

17 But then heard God the voice of the lad. [Then called] an angel of God to Hagar from heaven and said to her,

“[What’s wrong with you], Hagar? Do not be afraid, [since God heard,] [yes, God has heard] the voice of the lad, there where he is.”

18 Arise, lift up the lad and keep your hand strong upon him. Into a great nation, [I will make him]!

19 And opened by God were her eyes, and she saw a well of water; [she went over], filled up the skin [with water], and gave [the lad to drink].

20 [And it came to pass] [that God was with] the lad [as he grew up]. He settled in the desert and became an expert archer.

21 He settled in the wilderness of Paran, [where was taken for him] [by his mother] [final melody:] a wife from the land of Egypt.

R.H. Day 1 - 4th reading

22 It happened at about that time that spoke Avimelekh, together with Pikhōl, [the commander of his army], to Abraham, saying, “God is [with you] in all that you [engage in].

23 [And so now], swear to me by God right here: [You will not deal falsely] [with me], my progeny and my posterity. [As with kindness] [I have dealt] with you, so deal [with me], and with the land in which you have sojourned.”

24 Then said Abraham: “I do so swear”.

25 But rebuked by Abraham was Avimelekh on account of a well of water that had been seized by the servants of Avimelekh.

26 Then said Avimelekh: “I do [not know] who could have done this thing, [nor have you] ever [told me], [and in fact] [I myself] have not heard it until today.”

27 Then took Abraham sheep and oxen [and gave them] to Avimelekh, [final melody:] and they made, the two of them, [a binding treaty].

R.H. Day 1 - 5th reading

28 Then took Abraham [seven of the lambs]—ewe-lambs of the flock, [and set them aside].

29 Then said Avimelekh to Abraham: “What [is the meaning] of the seven ewe-lambs [right here] that you have just set aside?”

30 [Abraham said]: “Indeed, these seven ewe-lambs you should take from my hand, so that they may be a for me a witness that I dug this well.

31 [For this reason] [they give the name] of the place that this happened, Be’er-Sheva [well of the seven or swearing]. [For indeed] [there they swore an oath]—[the two of them].

32 Thus they cut a covenant in Be’er-Sheva.

Then arose Avimelekh and Pikhōl the commander of his army, and returned to the land of the Philistines.

33 And he planted a tamarisk in Be’er-Sheva, [and he called out there] the name YHWH, God of the Ages.

34 Thus sojourned Abraham [final melody:] in the land of the Philistines, for many days.

Day 2 (Bereishit 22:1-24)

R.H. Day 2 - 1st reading

22:1 [Now it happened] after these events, [none other than] God tested Abraham and said to him: “Abraham!” And he said: “Here I am.”
2 [And this is what God said]: “[I do command you to take] your son, [your favorite one], [whom you love], Isaac,
[and go you forth] to the land of Moriya [=seeing] [and give him up] there as an offering upon one of the mountains [that I] will point out to you.
3 Abraham awoke early in the morning. He saddled his donkey, [and he took along] [his two] [young men] [with him]; also Isaac his son.
He split some wood for the offering, and arose and set out [final melody:] for the place which was told to him by God.

R.H. Day 2 – 2nd reading

4 [On day the third] [lifted up] Abraham [his eyes whereupon] he saw the place from afar.
5 [And said Abraham] [to his young men]: “[You stay] here [with the donkey], and I and the lad will go [to that place].
[We will worship], and return to you.”
6 [So took Abraham] the wood [for the offering]. [He placed it] upon Isaac his son. [He took] in his hand the fire and the slaughter-knife.
[Then walked off the two] together.
7 [Then spoke Isaac] to Abraham his father. He said: “[My father]!” He replied” “[Here I am], my son.”
[Isaac then said]: “[Here I see] the fire and here is the wood, but where is the lamb for the offering?”
8 And said Abraham: “[God Himself] will provide the lamb for the offering, my son.”
[final melody:] [Thus they walked off, the two of them]—they went off together.

R.H. Day 2 – 3rd reading

9 [And they came] [to the place] [that was] [spoken of] [by God]. Then built Abraham there [the altar], [and arranged there] the wood, and bound Isaac his son, [and proceeded] [to place him] on the altar on top of the wood.

10 [And stretched out] Abraham his hand. He took the slaughter-knife to slay his son.

11 [But there called out to him] an angel of God from heaven, and said: “Abraham, Abraham!” [He said: “Here] I am”.

12 [And the angel said]: “[Do not stretch out] your hand [toward the lad]. Do not do anything to him! [For indeed] | now [I do know] [that a God-fearing] man [are you]. [Inasmuch as you] [have surely not withheld] your son, your favored one, [from me].

13 [Then lifted up Abraham] [his eyes, at which time] he saw: [there, a ram], after [it had been caught in a thicket] [by its horns].

[And so went] Abraham, [and he took] the ram [and brought it as an offering] in place of his son.

14 [Then called] Abraham the name of that place: Adonai Yireh (“Yahweh sees”).

Just as it is said [this day]: [final melody:] “On the mountain of YHWH, God is seen.”

R.H. Day 2 – 4th reading

15 [Then there called] the angel of God to Abraham [a second time] from heaven

16 [The angel said]: “By myself I swear, [declares Adonai], [indeed I declare it], because [you have] done this [very thing], and have not withheld] your son, your favored one,

17 I will bestow [my blessing upon you]. I will greatly increase your seed like the stars of the heavens [and like the sand] that is found [on the shore] [of the sea]. And inherited [by your seed] will be the very gate of their enemies,

18 [Then shall enjoy blessing] [through your seed], all the nations [of the earth], [all this because] you have obeyed my voice.

19 [Then returned] Abraham [to his young men]. [They then arose] and went off together to Be'er-Sheva.

[final melody:] And remained—Abraham—in Be'er-Sheva.

R.H. Day 2 – 5th reading

20 [And it happened] after these events that it was told to Abraham, saying:

[You must be aware:], [she has borne]—Milca, [even she]—sons to Nachor your brother:

21 Utz his firstborn, and Buz his brother, Kemuel, father of Aram,

22 and Kesed and Chazo, Pildash, Yidlaf, [and also] Betuel.

23 Now Betuel begot Rivka. These eight bore Milca to Nachor, brother of Abraham.

24 And his concubine, her name was Re'uma, [she also bore] children, Tevach and Gacham, [final melody:] and Tachash, and Ma'akha.

R.H. both days - Maftir (BaMidbar 29:1-6)

1 [And in New Moon the seventh, [on the first] [day of the New Moon], [a proclamation of holiness] there is to be [for you].

[Any kind of servile work, you are not to do]. A day to blow the shofar, it shall be for you.

2 [You are to make an offering-up] [as a soothing] savor [for Adonai]: [one bull], [a young one of the herd], just one, plus one ram,

[and also lambs] [that are a year in age], seven, [whole and sound],

3 [and their grain-gift], flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of a measure per bull, two-tenths measure per ram,

4 [one-tenth] measure [for each] [one lamb], for the seven lambs,

5 and one male goat [for a sin offering], to atone for you,

6 [all this besides] the New Moon offering [and its grain-gift], and the regular offering and its grain-gift and their libations, [according to law],

as a soothing savor, [final melody:] a fire-offering to YHWH.

*This translation of the High Holyday Torah readings is based on
 Everett Fox THE FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES
 with modifications based on the following translations: Aryeh Kaplan's LIVING TORAH,
 The Stone Edition Tanach, the Artscroll machzors, Gunther Plaut THE TORAH – A Modern Commentary*

The goal was to create an English reading that can be sung to the traditional tropes that are used for the Hebrew, but which follows the Hebrew with its tropes as closely as possible.

The trope melodies I used were taken from the book CHANTING THE HEBREW BIBLE by Joshua R. Jacobson. In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the following trope symbols:



 mercha tip'cha munach tevir kadma/pashta gersh gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

The trope symbol is normally placed under the accented syllable, unless it is a *pre-positive* accent (telisha gedola, placed *at the beginning* of the word) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word).

However, I indicate a mercha/tipcha pair or a kadma/geresh pair by “wrapping it around” the phrase which will have the combined melody, as in:

(voice of the lad) (And Abraham gave)

I do something similar with mercha siluk:

(it involved his son)

I frequently use grey brackets to indicate an entire English phrase to be chanted to a single trope melody, as in:

[facing him]

The *leyner* is invited to fit this phrase to the High Holyday “rivi’i” melody in whatever way seems most natural.