

Haftarah - Parshat Mishpatim (Jeremiah 34:8-22 and 33:25-26)

based on the translations of

Robert Alter, Aryeh Kaplan, Stone Edition Tanach, JPS, Jerusalem Bible, New King James Bible
modeled after the recording in *Navigating the Bible II*:

<https://bible.ort.org/books/haftarotd4.asp?action=displaypage&book=2&chapter=34&verse=8&portion=20>

34:8 [Now this is the word] that came to Jeremiah from YHWH [after the time] [that there had been sealed]—
by King Zedekiah—[a pact, or a covenant] [with all the people] that were in Jerusalem, to proclaim for them liberty,
9 [that they should release]—[each man]—[his male slaves], [and also each man] [his female slaves]:

[Hebrew men and women], [setting them free],

[so one should not make] [a slave of them] of a Judahite brother—anyone.

10 [And they did hearken]: all the nobles and all the people [who had entered] [into the covenant], [that they would release]—
[each one] [his male slave] [and each one] [his slavegirl], [setting them free], so as not to enslave them again.

[Indeed they hearkened] [and set them free].

11 [But they reverted back] afterward, [and in fact they brought back]

[the male slaves] [and the slavegirls] whom they had released, [to be free],

and they forced them to be slaves and slavegirls.

12 [And so came] [the word of YHWH] to Jeremiah—[from YHWH], [came these words].

13 Thus says YHWH, the God of Israel:

[I Myself] [did seal] a covenant with your fathers on the day [I brought you] out [from the land] of Egypt,
[from the house of bondage], [when I said],

14 At the end of every [seven years] [you shall release]—[each man shall release]—his fellow Hebrew—
[any person] [who has been] [sold to you] [and has served] for [six years].

You must set him free, [from yourself]. [But they did not listen]—your fathers—to Me; they did they incline, [their ear to Me].

15 And you should turn back [on this very day], [and do that] [which is right] [in My eyes]: to proclaim a release, [each man] [of his fellow],
and seal a covenant [before Me] [right in the house] of which is called My name upon it.

34:16 [But you turned back] and profaned My name, [and you brought back]—[each man]—[his male slave] [and each man] his slavegirl, [whom you had set free] ([as was their desire]) and you [subjected them] to be [for you] [male slaves] and slavegirls.

17 [Because of all of this], thus says YHWH. You have not [obeyed Me], to proclaim a release, [each man to his brother], and each man [to his fellow],

[so know now]: [I am about to proclaim] for you a release—so speaks YHWH—to the sword and to pestilence and to famine, [and I will make] [of you] a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth.

18 [And I will make] [of the men] [who have transgressed] My covenant, [that have not] fulfilled the words of the covenant [that they made] in My presence—[I will make them like the calf] that they [cut in two], [of which they passed] between its parts,

19 [the nobles of Judah] and the nobles [of Jerusalem], the officers and the priests, and all the people [of the land]—those who passed between the parts of the calf,

20 [I will even] [give them] into the hand of their enemies [and into the hand] of those [who seek their life], [and there shall serve] [their dead bodies] as food for the birds of the heavens, and for the beasts of the earth.

21 [And Zedekiah king of Judah] [as well as his nobles]: [I will give them] into the hand of their enemies [and into the hand] of those [who seek their life],

[and into the hand] [of the army] of the king of Babylon [that is withdrawing] [from you].

22 [I hereby give a command]—[thus says YHWH]—[and I will bring them back] to this city, [and they will fight] [against it].

[They will take it] and burn it with fire, [and all of the cities] [that are in Judah], [I will make a desolation], with no inhabitant.

33:25 Thus says YHWH, [If I did not make My covenant] with [day and night], [and if the laws] of heaven and earth [I did not appoint],

26 [then too], [the seed of Jacob] and David My servant [I might cast away],

[so as not to take] of his seed as rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,

[end melody] for I will bring back their captives [and I will show them mercy].

Len Fellman's English readings with tropes

The purpose of this project is to translate *THE SONG OF THE TORAH* into English.

I work by comparing as many as ten English translations of a *pasuk* and creating a cantillated English sentence that sounds as much as possible like the Hebrew. They follow the Hebrew as closely as possible, word for word and trope by trope. The English language has an amazing flexibility, making it possible to make the English word order match that of the Hebrew quite well, allowing for some “poetic licence”, and some willingness on the part of the listener to be “carried” by the melody more than by the English syntax. The translation needs to sound good when *chanted*, but not necessarily when *spoken or read*.

Unlike most translations, these “transtropilations” are not intended to be a substitute for the Hebrew. On the contrary, they are meant to provide a “window” into the Hebrew text and its musical expression. My ideal listener knows enough Hebrew and has enough interest to follow the Hebrew in a bilingual text while the *leyner* is chanting the English version, to bring the Hebrew text to life, both *verbally* and *musically*. For this purpose I use *exactly* the same tropes in the English as in the Hebrew (almost always on the corresponding English word).

The texts can be used to do **consecutive translation**, i.e. leyning a phrase in Hebrew, followed by the corresponding phrase sung in English. Some of my recordings demonstrate this. I do this frequently when leyning for groups that either know little Hebrew, or that don't have a *chumash* in front of them.

I favor literal translations (e.g. “cut a covenant”) to call attention to Hebrew idioms, and towards simpler (even if less accurate) words (e.g. Ex. 12:7 “beam above the door” rather than “lintel”) to be easier to follow. If my readings provoke a discussion of the Hebrew, I consider that as justification for using less-than-idiomatic English. I try to find just the right balance between “literalness” and “listenable-ness”. A primary goal is throwing light on the Hebrew syntax.

In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the trope symbols:

mercha tipcha munach tevir mapakh *or* yetiv kadma *or* pashta gersh gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

(Generally speaking the *conjunctive tropes* such as mercha, munach, mapakh, kadma, and telisha katana “lean toward” the words they “conjoin” to, while the *disjunctive tropes* such as tipcha, gersh, gershayim, and telisha gedola “lean away” from the words that follow, so as to create a sense of separation.)

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 phrase) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word or phrase).

The Hebrew text frequently puts a *makkeph* (which is like a hyphen) between words in order to treat them as a single word to be chanted. I use a different system for English: If an entire English phrase is to be chanted to a single trope melody, I place it between grey brackets, as in this phrase from the Book of Lamentations:

[clings to her skirts]

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

As a variant of the “grey bracket” device, I indicate pairs of tropes by “wrapping them around” the phrase which have the combined melody:

mercha/tipcha	kadma/geresh (<i>or</i> : azla, etc.)	mercha siluk
(Renew our days)	(She weeps bitterly).	(a fire-offering to God)

Again, the *leyner* should decide on the most natural way to fit the phrase to the combined trope melody.

I put words in gray which I consider essential but which don’t strictly match the Hebrew. I also “pad” some phrases with extra words in gray to fill out a musical phrase nicely. Different trope systems vary widely in the length of the musical phrase used, so the words in gray may or not be used depending on the *leyner*’s cantillation system. In particular, the tropes *telisha g’dola* (ר), *legarmeh*, *metigah-zakef*, and *pazer* vary widely in the musical phrases used for chanting. (And please indulge me in my whimsical treatments of *shalshelet*.)

“*Metigah-zakef*” is a special trope combination which can be recognized by a kadma and a zakef katon appearing on the same Hebrew word (again, a *makkeph* makes two words into one). (There are several examples in Genesis 18 & 19, beginning with 18:16). I indicate this by placing the corresponding English phrase in grey brackets:

[Take heed—take care for yourself]

In some trope systems (viz. cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a distinctive melody—I add extra syllables to fill out the musical phrase (as in “take care” in this example). Haschel’s system also chants the trope *munach* as *legarmeh* more often than other systems do.

I don’t write a single word of translation without first hearing the melody of the phrase in my mind, following one of two trope systems: The one by Portnoy and Wolff (*The Art of Cantillation*) or the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

I transcribe the name יהוה as YHWH (in small caps). I almost always chant this as *yud-hey-vav-hey*, which I have discovered fits marvelously into several of the trope melodies. But of course the *leyner* can choose to pronounce it as “*God*” or “*Adonai*”.

Warning on the Hebrew text: The text I use for the English trope system is from Aryeh Kaplan; the Hebrew text I display is from Wikisource. Occasionally (but rarely) a phrase will use different tropes in the two systems.

The English translations I mostly use (besides several scholarly commentaries) are the following:

Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (1981) (also my source for proper names & transliterations)
Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’ (2003)
Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (1997)
The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’ (1996)
JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2nd Ed. 2000), *along with* Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’ (1969)
Robert Alter, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (2004)
Commentaries in the ‘Anchor Bible’ series
Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (1902)
The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)
The New King James Bible (1982)