

WHY CHANT? THE REASONS FOR TROPES AND CANTILLATION

1. HALAKHA

Anyone who reads Scripture without a melody of him Scripture says, “Moreover I gave them laws that were not good...” (Ezekiel 20:25) Babylonian Talmud 32a

2. HIDDUR MITZVAH

If you have a pleasant voice, chant the blessings before the Shema and go before the ark as hazzan to chant the Amidah] for it is written “Honor the Lord with your wealth” (Proverbs 3:9) that is with the talent which God has endowed you. Midrash Tanhuma Re’eh 9

3. MUSIC AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATING WITH GOD

When the morning stars sang together and all the divine beings shouted for joy” (Job 38:7) The prophet Job is describing the perfect music that exists in Heaven...Truly heavenly music, endowed with the highest degree of harmony, when it touches the ear, is ecstatic. Philo on Genesis 3:3

4. DRAMATIZATION OF THE TEXT

The aim of language is to transmit an idea from the heart of the speaker into the heart of the listener. But the complete intention can be communicated only by means of face to face discourse. Face to face communication is superior to written communication...these are the accents with which the holy text is read. They signify the places where he intended to pause between two thoughts or the place where he sought to connect words together. Judah HaLevi, The Kuzari

5. TO AID THE MEMORY

They would teach the Mishnah using a melody because they learned it from memory and the melody made it easier to memorize. Babylonian Talmud 32a

6. TO MAKE LITURGICAL READING DIFFERENT FROM SECULAR READING

The sanctity of the liturgical service is enhanced by the fact that its texts are chanted , not merely spoken . This dialectic is all the more pronounced now that this musical repertoire is considered “exotic” and “ancient”. Joseph Jacobson, Chanting the Hebrew Bible

DIFFERENT TROPE TRADITIONS/ DIFFERENT LITURGIES

Lithuanian	Torah
German	Haftarah
Iraqi	Esther (read on Purim)
Dutch	Lamentations (read on Tish B'Av)
Syrian	Song of Songs (read on Pesah)
Italian	High Holiday Torah
French	

שמות הטעמים וסימניהן

פֶּשֶׁטָא מִנַּח זֶרְקָא מִנַּח סְגוּלָּה מִנַּח | מִנַּח רְבִיעִי מִהֶפֶךְ
פֶּשֶׁטָא זָקָף קֶטֶן זָקָף-גָּדוֹל מְרַכָּא טַפְחָא מִנַּח אֲתַנְחָתָא
פֶּזֶר תְּלִישָׁא-קֶטְנָה תְּלִישָׁא-גְדוּלָּה קְדָמָא וְאִזְלָא אִזְלָא-
גֵּרֶשׁ גֵּרֵשִׁים דִּרְגָא תְּבִיר יְתִיב פְּסִיק | סוּף-פְּסִיק : שְׁלֵשֶׁת
קֶרְנֵי-פֶרָה מְרַכָּא-כְּפוּלָה יֶרַח-בֶּן-יּוֹמוֹ :

WHAT DO THE TROPES DO? INFLECTION

- ✓ They indicate the melody
- ✓ They indicate which syllable in the words is accented
- ✓ They indicate punctuation

DISJUNCTIVES AND CONJUNCTIVES

woman without her man is nothing

Woman, without her man, is nothing

OR

Woman! Without her, man is nothing

Is it:

וַיֹּאמֶר עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם אֲנִכִּי

Abraham's servant said: It is I

וַיֹּאמֶר עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם אֲנִכִּי

A servant said, I am Abraham

And he said, I am Abraham's servant