Gen. 6:9 to 11:32 Torah Reading (Parshat Noach)

English version to be sung to the Torah tropes by Len Fellman

Latest version April 15, 2019

6:9 These are the descendants of Noah. [Now Noah was a man of righteousness. Blameless he was, for his time. [In accord with ha Elohim] walked Noah.

10 And begotten by Noah were [three sons]: Shem, Ham, and Yefeth.

11 Corrupt was the earth in the sight of Elohim. Filled was the earth with violence.

12 [When God looked down]—[Elohim saw the world]—and beheld its corruption. [Perverted indeed] [was the life of all flesh] [in its way] upon the earth.

Preparations for the flood

13 Then said Elohim to Noah: “The end of all flesh has come before Me, [since filled indeed] [is the earth] [with violence] [because of them], and behold, I mean to destroy them from the earth.

14 Make for yourself an ark of cypress wood (Heb. gofer). With compartments you will make the ark. Smear a coating on it—both inside and outside—with pitch.

15 [Now this is the manner in which you will build it]: [a total of three hundred cubits will be the length] [of the ark], [and fifty] cubits its width, [thirty cubits] its height.

16 [A skylight or window] you will make for the ark. [Up to a cubit] you will finish it [on the top]. A door to the ark on its side you will make. [With a lower deck] and a second and third deck [you will make it].

17 [And for My part], [here is what I will do]: I will bring a flood of water [upon the earth]: [to make] [an end of all flesh] [that has in it] the breath of life, from under the heaven. Everything on the earth will perish.

18 But I will establish My covenant with you. [You shall go into] the ark, [both you yourself] [and your sons], [and your wives], and the wives of your sons, with you.

19 And from every thing that has life—[indeed, from all flesh]—[two of each] [of every kind] [you must bring into the ark], [to remain alive] with you. Male and female they shall be.
6:20 From birds of every kind, from livestock of every kind, from every creature that crawls on the earth, of every kind.

One pair of creatures of every kind must come to you, to remain alive.

21 As for you, take for yourself from every food that is eaten, and gather it to yourself. It will be for you and for them, for food.”

22 He did it all—Noah. According to all of the things that were commanded to him by Elohim—this did he do.

7:1 Then said YHWH to Noah, “Come, both you and all your household into the ark, because you I have seen to be righteous before Me in this generation.

From every kind of animals—of those that are clean, take for yourself seven pairs, males and their mates,

[and from the animals]—the ones of the kinds that remain—if in fact not clean they should be, take two, a male and its mate.

And from the fowl]—[the birds of the skies], seven pairs, male and female, to keep alive their seed, on the face of the earth.

For indeed, in days that are coming—in seven days [know that I] will make it rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights.

[And I will blot out] all in existence—that which I have made, from off the face of the earth.

He did it all—Noah—according to all that he was commanded by YHWH.

Now Noah was age six hundred years when the flood came: waters upon the earth.

7 Then entered Noah together with his sons, and also his wife, and the wife of his sons—they came with him to the ark ahead of the waters of the deluge.

8 From the animals that are clean, and from the animals—the ones that are not clean,

[and from the fowl], and all that crawls about on the earth.

9 Two of each kind—they all came [there to Noah] into the ark, male and female, just as it was commanded by Elohim to Noah.

10 And it happened when seven days had passed that the waters of the flood appeared on the earth.

11 In year six hundred—this year in the life of Noah—in month the second, on the seventeenth day, of the month,

[there burst open] all the wellsprings of the abyss—the great deep, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened.

12 And there was rain on the earth forty days and forty nights.

13 On the very day that we mentioned entered Noah with Shem, Ham, and Yafe, [Noah’s sons], and with the wife of Noah, and with the three wives of his sons [with them] into the ark.
7:14 [They came] with all wildlife [of every kind], with all cattle [of every kind],
[with all creeping things] that crawl on the earth, [of every kind], and all birds [of every kind]: all fowl, [all things having wings].
15 They came in with Noah into the ark, [there being] two each [of all flesh] [that has in it] the breath of life.
16 [And those that came in]—male and female of all flesh entered, [just as it was] commanded to him, by Elohim.

[end aliyah] And the door was closed by YHWH [behind him].

The flood
17 [And so it came]—[the deluge continued] for forty days [on the earth].
Increased [were the waters], as they lifted the ark, [so that it was raised] above the earth.
18 And mounted [the waters, and surged], increasing greatly upon the earth, [till they lifted the ark] on the face of the waters.
19 [And the waters] kept growing strong [more and more] on the earth,
[until they submerged] [all the mountains]—[even the highest ones], that are [under the heavens].
20 For a height of fifteen cubits [above them] there swelled the waters, as it covered the mountains.
21 [And they all expired]—[there perished all of flesh] [that moves] [upon the earth]:
birds and cattle [and wild beasts], [all creatures that crawl], those that swarm on the earth, and also [all the humans].
22 [All of the creatures indeed] [in whom there was] the quickening breath of life [in their nostrils]— *according to Robert Alter[
[all these in fact] that were on dry land, died.
23 [They were wiped out]—[all existing things] [all that was alive] [on] the face of the earth, from man to beast [to crawling things],
to the birds of the heavens [they were wiped out] from the earth, [and there remained] [Noah alone] and those that were with him, in the ark.
24 [And surged the waters] over the earth [for fifty and one hundred days].

The flood subsides
8:1 [God remembered]—Elohim [gave heed to Noah], [to all] the beasts [and all the cattle] that were with him, in the ark.
[He made to pass]—Elohim—a wind [across the earth], and there subsided the waters.
2 [Stopped up] were the wellsprings of the deep, and the floodgates of the heavens. Thus held back was the rain, from the heavens.
8:3 [And so they receded]—[the waters returned] from upon the earth, ebbing and flowing.

So diminished the waters at the end of fifty and one hundred days.

4 Then rested the ark in month number seven, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountain of Ararat.

5 [And still the waters] continued to advance and recede, until the tenth month.

[In the tenth month]—[on the first day] of the month, there appeared the tops of the mountains.

6 [And it came to pass] at the end of forty days: Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made.

7 [He sent out] the raven. [It went off]—going to and fro, till there dried up the waters from the earth.

8 He then sent out the dove from himself to see if there had subsided the waters from the face of the earth.

9 [But it found no place to rest]—the dove found no resting place for the soul of its foot, so she returned to him on the ark, since there was still water on the face of the earth. [He sent forth his hand] and he caught her, and he brought her back to himself, into the ark.

10 He waited more time: seven days longer, and once again, he sent out the dove from the ark.

11 [She came back] to him—[the dove returned]—at eventide, and behold! a leaf from an olive tree, freshly plucked, in its beak. [Then he knew]—[Noah could tell] that the water had abated from the earth.

12 He waited still more time: seven days, once again. [He sent out] the dove, but not again did she return to him, any more.

13 [And it came to pass] in year one and six hundred [of the years of his life] (601), [in the first month], on the first of the month, dried up were the waters from the earth, [and so removed] Noah the cover from the ark. [He looked around], and behold! it was getting dry—the surface of the ground.

14 In the second month, [on the seventh] and twentieth day of the month, [end aliyah] [fully dried] was the earth.

They disembark

15 Then spoke Elohim to Noah, saying,

16 Go out of the ark! [You yourself], [along with your wife], your sons and your son’s wives, with you.

17 All living things that are with you—[every creature of flesh]—[including the birds] [and also the cattle], [and all creeping things] that crawl on the land—[take them with you]. Let them swarm on the earth. Let them bear fruit and be many on the earth.

18 [And so he went out]—Noah, [along with his sons], his wife and his son’s wives, with him.
8:19 [All living things]—[all things that crawl] [and all the birds], all that walk on the land, by their families—[they went out] from the ark.

After the flood - the Noachide covenant

20 [Then there was] [built by Noah] an altar to YHWH, [and he took] some [of the animals (ones that were clean)] and some birds that were clean and offered them up as a burnt-offering on the altar.

21 Then smelled YHWH the pleasant fragrance. And said YHWH in His heart: “No, [not one more time] will I curse again the earth on account of man; [because it is true indeed]: the inclination [of the heart] [of humankind] is evil from their youth.

[Never again] [will I ever act] to strike down all living things, as I used to do.

22 [Never more] in all the days of the earth [will the seed-planting time] [or the harvesting time], the cold or the heat, the summertime] [or winter time], the day or the night — these will not cease.”

The new world order

9:1 Then [blessed by God] was Noah and his sons. [He said these words] [unto them]: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.

2 [A fear of you] [and dread of you] [there will be] on all the beasts of the earth and on all the birds of the sky.

3 [As for all] [that crawls or that creeps] [upon the land] and all the fish of the sea, into your hands they are given.

4 [But as for flesh] [with its life blood in it you must not eat it.]

5 However your blood [which belongs to your soul] *[I will demand] from the hand of every beast, [I will demand it]. *Stone Edition Tanach

From the hand [of each human being], even the hand of a man for his brother, I will demand the life of each person.

6 [One who sheds] the blood of a man, by a man his blood will be shed, because in the image of God (Elohim) I made the human.

7 [As for you], [bear fruit] and be many. [end aliyah] Spread over the earth, and hold sway * upon it. *According to Robert Alter

8 Then spoke Elohim to Noah and to his sons that were with him, as follows,

9 “[Know that I hereby] am establishing] My covenant with you [and with your seed] after you, and with all living beings that are [with you]: [with all of the fowl] [and with all of the cattle], [with all beasts of the earth] and with you, with all that came out of the ark, indeed, with all living things on the earth.
9:11 I establish My covenant with you: [There will be not be cut short] [the life of all flesh] again, by the waters of a flood.

There will not be [ever again] a flood to destroy the earth.

12 And further, spoke Elohim, “This is the sign of the covenant that I am providing [between Myself] and with you, [and also with] all living creatures that are [with you], [for all ages] to come:

13[I have set my bow]—my rainbow [I have placed in the clouds]. It shall be a sign of the covenant [between Myself] and the earth.

14 It will happen when I gather the clouds over the earth and there is seen the bow in the clouds,

15[I will remember] [My covenant] [that is] between Me and you [and with every] living creature [that is of flesh]. [It will not happen] again that the waters [become a flood] to destroy all flesh.

16 When there appears the bow in the clouds, [I will look upon it] to remember the covenant of the ages, between Elohim and all living creatures [that are of flesh], that are on the earth.”

17 Then said Elohim to Noah, “[This is the sign] of the covenant that I have established [between Myself] and all flesh [that is on the earth].”

Noah and his sons

18 [Now the sons] of Noah [who came out] [from the ark] were Shem, Ham, and Yefeth. [And as for Ham] [he was] the father of Canaan.

19 These three [were the sons of Noah], [and from these] branched out the whole earth.

20 He was the first one—Noah, this man of the soil—to plant a vineyard. * Cf. Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’

21 When he drank from the wine [he got drunk], and he lay exposed in the tent.

22 [And it was seen] [by Ham], the father of Canaan, namely, the nakedness of his father, and he told his two brothers, outside.

23 [Then took] Shem and Yefeth [a cloak in their hands] [and they placed it] [over the shoulders] [of both of them]. Then, walking backwards, [they covered up] the nakedness of their father. They were facing backwards, so the nakedness of their father, they did not see.

24 [Then woke up Noah] [from his wine], [and he came to know] [what had occurred]—what had been done to him, by his son, the youngest one.

25 [He then said], “Cursed be Canaan. Servant of servants, he will be to his brothers.”

26 [And he then said this], “Blessed be YHWH, the God of Shem. May it be that Canaan is a servant to them.”

27 [And lived Noah] after the flood [for three] hundred years, [plus another fifty] years.
9:28 [And they were—all the days of Noah]: [a full nine|hundred years,|plus fifty|years. And he died.

The peopling of the earth

10:1 Now these are the descendants[of Noah’s sons]: Shem, Ham, and Yefeth. [There were] [born to them] sons, after the flood.
2 The sons of Yefeth were Gomer and Magog, and Madai, Yavan, and Tuval, and Meshekh and Tirars.
3 Now the sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz and Riphat, and Togarmah.
4 The sons of Yavan were Elishah and Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim.
5 [And from these there came]—[and were dispersed]—the maritime nations[into their lands], each[with its own language],
[by their families],[in their nations].
6 Now the sons of Ham: Cush and Mtzr, Put and Canaan.
7 Now[ the sons of Cush]: S'bah and Chavilah, Sabtha and Raamah, and Sabht'ka. The sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.
8 Now Cush was the father of Nimrod. He was the first|to be a man of power|on the earth.
9 He was a mighty hunter|in the sight of YHWH. Because of this|the saying goes|, “[Just like Nimrod] a mighty hunter|in the sight of YHWH.
10 [Now it was] that the mainstay|of his kingdom was Bablyon,[along with Erek], Akhad, and Calkh, in the land of Shinar.
11 From that land went forth Asshur, and he built Nineveh, and Rechovoth Ir, and Calach, *Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’
12 as well as Resen, between Neneveh and Calach. That is the great city.
13 [And Mitzr] [was the father of] [the Ludim and] [the Anamim], the Lehahvim, and the Naftuchim,
14 [and the Pathrusim] [and the Casluchim]—of whom there came forth from them|the Philistines and the Caphtorim.
15 [As for Canaan],[he was the father] of Sidon (his firstborn), and Cheth,
16 as well as the Jebusites and the Amorites, and also the Gergashites,
17 the Chivites and the Arkites, and the Sinites,
18 the Arvadites and the Tzamarites, and the Chamathites. Later|were dispersed|the families of the Canaanites.
19 [And it was] that the borders of the Canaanites|went from Sidon|going toward Gerar, [as far as Gaza],
[and also going toward] Sodom|and Gemorrah, Admah and Tzevoym, up to Lasha.
20 These|are the children of Ham|by their families|and by their languages|, in their lands|and in their nations].
10:21 To Shem were born children, [to him also]. [He was the father] of all the sons of Eber, and the brother of Yefeth the elder.

22 The sons of Shem were Elam and Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud and Aram.

23 And the sons of Aram: Utz, Chul, Gether, and Mash.

24 Arpachshad was the father of Shelach. And Shelach was father of Eber.

25 To Eber were born two sons.

The name of the first was Peleg ("splitting"), because in his day was divided the earth. The name of his brother was Yoktan.

26 Now Yoktan fathered Almodad and Shelef, Chatzarmayeth, and Yerach,

27 Hodoram and Uzaal and Diklah,

28 Obhal and Abhimael and Sh’bha,

29 Ophir and Chavila, and Yovav. All these were the sons of Yoktan.

30 There extended their settlement from Mesha going as far as Sepher, the hill country to the east.

31 Thus were the children of Shem by their families, and by their languages, in their lands, by their nations:

32 And these are the families of the children of Noah, by their generations, in their nations.

And from these were dispersed all of the nations on the earth, after the deluge.

The tower of Babel

11:1 There was in all the earth one language—just one—their words all the same.

2 While people were travelling to the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar, and settled there.

3 And they said—[each man] to his neighbor, “Come on! Let’s make bricks and bake them with fire.”

It was for them—the brick—as building-stone, and the asphalt was to them like mortar.

4 And they said, “[Come, let us go], and build for ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and make for ourselves a name, lest we be scattered over the face of the earth.”

5 Then descended YHVH to see the city and the tower, which had been built by the children of Adam.

6 And said YHWH, “Behold, the people is one, and the language is one for all of them, and like this they have begun to act. And now nothing will restrain them, [from all of the things] that they are planning to do.
11:7 Come, let us go down and confuse there their speech,
so that no one will understand—any person—the speech of his neighbor.
8 Then scattered YHWH—[them, and he sent them] from there, over the face of the earth, and they stopped building the city.
9 On account of this it was called [by its name] “Babel” because it was there that was baffled by YHWH, the speech of all the earth.
From there they were scattered by YHWH [end aliya] over the face of all the earth.

The patriarchs after the flood

10 These are the descendents of Shem: Shem was age a hundred years when he fathered Arpachshad two years after the flood.
11 Then lived Shem—after giving birth to Arpachshad—five hundred years. And he begot sons and daughters.
12 Arpachshad lived for five and thirty years, and he fathered Shelach.
13 Then lived Arpachshad—after begetting Shelach—three years and four hundred years. And he begot sons and daughters.
14 And Shelach had lived thirty years when he begot Eber.
15 Then lived Shelach after begetting Eber—three years and four hundred years. And he begot sons and daughters.
16 Eber had lived four and thirty years, when he fathered Peleg.
17 Then lived Eber—after giving birth to Peleg—thirty years and four hundred years. And he begot sons and daughters.
18 Peleg had lived thirty years when he begot Re’u.
19 Then lived Peleg after begetting Eber—nine years and two hundred years. And he begot sons and daughters.
20 Re’u was age two and thirty years, when he fathered Serug.
21 Then lived Re’u—after giving birth to Serug—seven years and two hundred years. And he begot sons and daughters.
22 Serug had lived thirty years when he begot Nachor.
23 Then lived Serug—after the time that he fathered Nachor—two hundred years. And he begot sons and daughters.
24 Nachor had lived nine and twenty years, when he fathered Terach.
25 Then lived Nachor—after giving birth to Terach—nineteen years and one hundred years. And he begot sons and daughters.
26 Terach was age seventy years, when he fathered Avram, Nachor and Haran.
The descendants of Terach

11:27 These are the descendants of Terach: Terach begot Avram, Nachor, and Haran. And Haran gave birth to Lot.

28 Then died Haran in the presence of Terach his father, in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans.

29 And took Avram and Nachor to themselves wives. The name of the wife of Avram was Sarai. The name of the wife of Nachor was Milcah—the daughter of Haran (who was father of Milcah and father of Yiscah).

30 Now Sarai was barren. She had no children.

31 Then took Terach one of his sons, and Lot—son of Haran—Terach’s grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, wife of Avram his son, and set out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans, to go to the land of Canaan, but when they got as far as Charan, they settled there.

32 These were the days of Terach: five years and two hundred years, [end of aliyah] and Terach died in Charan.
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” or 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).

If one examines the authoritative translations, it becomes clear that there are many passages of whose meaning the experts are unsure or disagree with each other. In those situations I attempt to choose a reading which scans well with the melody, and which agrees with at least one of the authoritative renderings. I also pay attention what the commentaries have to say. 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, gersesh, 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.

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

\[
\text{mercha/tipcha} \quad \text{kadma/geresh (or: azla, etc.)} \quad \text{mercha siluk}
\]

Renew our days \quad \text{She weeps bitterly} \quad \text{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* (ק), *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:

\[
\text{[Take heed—take care for yourself]}
\]

In some trope systems (notably cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a very distinctive melody—for which purpose extra syllables 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*) and the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

Normally I transcribe the name יְהֹוָה as YHWH (in small caps), so the leyner can choose how to pronounce it in English (depending in part on the musical phrase). I usually chant it as yud-hey-vav-hey, but occasionally as “God” or “Adonai”.

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

- Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (also my source for proper names & transliterations)
- Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’
- Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’
- The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’
- JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2nd Ed. 2000), *along with* Orlinsky ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’
- The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)
- The New King James Bible
- *For Megillot, I also use* H.L. Ginsberg, ‘The Five Megillot and Jonah’