

Cantorial Message

November 2018

Cantillation is the ritual chanting of sacred text from the Tanakh, Hebrew Bible. This is done with special markings called trope or in Hebrew, Ta-amei Hamikra, which means “taste” or “sense” of the writing. I learned to chant Torah in preparation for becoming a Bat Mitzvah in May 1989. Learning to read Hebrew, chanting prayers, and writing my D’var Torah were all very fulfilling, but, as I have told many of my students, chanting Torah is the icing on the cake. Opening this sacred scroll, chanting its ancient text, like so many before me, was humbling and awe inspiring. I loved it so much that I came back to chant whenever I could.

The mention of chanting Torah goes back about 2,000 years. The creation of a notated system, known as trope, or cantillation marks, goes back to the 9th or 10th centuries, C.E., with the most important being written by the Masorites. You may have noticed these trope marks when you’ve chanted the V’ahavta prayer in the siddur. You’ve already been chanting Torah and didn’t know it! Since the Torah is a sacred text, we are not supposed to change one word, lest we change the meaning of the text. The trope marks help us do this by accenting the words correctly and serving as punctuation, which help preserve the interpretation of the text that has been accepted. Now that you have had a ta’am, a taste, of what chanting Torah is about, I hope you will join my class on **Tuesday, Nov. 6, at 6:30**. We will be working on Torah, Haftarah, Megillat Esther, and High Holy Day Torah trope, with a goal of chanting Torah on Shabbat, and a few sentences of Megillat Esther for Purim. Knowledge of reading Hebrew is necessary.

So, have you decided to participate this year in our 6th Annual Cabaret on Feb. 2? You still have time to decide; I’m just watering the seed I planted last month. ;)

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving! May your tables be filled with good food, the love of family and friends, and abundant blessings.

B’shir,

Sherry