

## Singable English Haftarah for Rosh Hashanah Day 1

I'll tell you of Chanah: We hear her story every Rosh Hashanah.

Chanah lived long ago with her husband Elkanah, but her womb was closed up:

Chanah bore no children.

So Elkanah married another, Peninah, and Peninah's womb was fruitful:

She bore many sons.

Every year when they went up to sacrifice at Shiloh,

Elkanah would make an offering, and the meat would be apportioned:

some for the priests, some for Peninah, and some for Elkanah;

Most would go to their sons, and the last little bit was for Chanah.

Peninah acted superior, and her pride was a thorn in Chanah's heart.

Elkanah said to Chanah: "Why do you grieve? Don't you know,  
(spoken)

I would rather have you than ten more sons!"

But Chanah's tears would not be soothed.

It came to pass when they went up to Shiloh,

Chanah stood alone before God and poured out her heart.

She begged God to open her womb and bless her with a child:

She cried out with all her yearning.

She promised, if God lent her a son she'd return the boy to God in sacred service.

Then Eli, the priest, came upon her and he was angry:

He said "Woman, for shame! Do you come here now drunk?"

She said "No, my lord; I am pouring my heart out to God."

And he was chastened.

When Chanah went home, she was hopeful,  
And in the fullness of time she conceived a son.  
She named him Shmuel, because she asked for him, and God heard her cry.

When he was weaned, she took him to Shiloh. She said to Eli the priest:  
"You may not remember, but I was here before: I emptied myself in silent prayer  
and God heard my cry, and gave me this boy.  
Therefore I bring him to you, that he may spend his life in sacred service."  
And Eli and Chanah bowed down together.

Why on this day of all days, does Chanah visit to tell us this story?  
Maybe to teach us to pour our hearts to the One Who Hears all prayer.  
We may not always get what we seek in a form we understand,  
But here is what Chanah learned, and what we can learn from her:

When our heart yearns, we can't begin to see ourselves whole  
Until we see ourselves stand in the truth of our yearning.  
Only then can we see ourselves as truly seen by the Holy One,  
Who already sees us for all we are and all we can be.

Chanah, named for *chen* ("Grace" in Hebrew), teaches that grace can come to us  
In seeing the possibility of miracles, in our courage to speak out, in our courage to be  
Who we really are. And in that merit, may the truth of our yearning strengthen us for  
a good a sweet new year