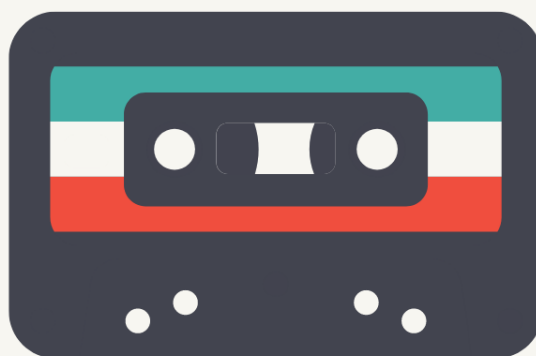
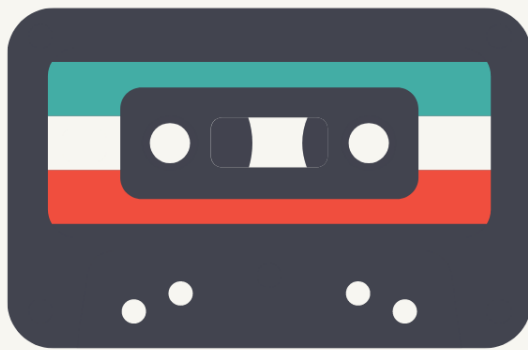




THE REBBE OF MONTREAL: JEWISH THEMES IN THE SONGS OF LEONARD COHEN



Limmud Festival 2019.

STORY OF ISAAC, 1967.

"Story Of Isaac"

The door it opened slowly,
my father he came in,
I was nine years old.
And he stood so tall above me,
his blue eyes they were shining
and his voice was very cold.

He said, "I've had a vision
and you know I'm strong and holy,
I must do what I've been told."
So he started up the mountain,
I was running, he was walking,
and his axe was made of gold.

Well, the trees they got much smaller,
the lake a lady's mirror,
we stopped to drink some wine.
Then he threw the bottle over.
Broke a minute later
and he put his hand on mine.

Thought I saw an eagle
but it might have been a vulture,
I never could decide.
Then my father built an altar,
he looked once behind his shoulder,
he knew I would not hide.

You who build these altars now
to sacrifice these children,
you must not do it anymore.
A scheme is not a vision
and you never have been tempted
by a demon or a god.

You who stand above them now,
your hatchets blunt and bloody,
you were not there before,
when I lay upon a mountain
and my father's hand was trembling
with the beauty of the word.

And if you call me brother now,
forgive me if I inquire,
"Just according to whose plan?"
When it all comes down to dust
I will kill you if I must,
I will help you if I can.

When it all comes down to dust
I will help you if I must,
I will kill you if I can.
And mercy on our uniform,
man of peace or man of war,
the peacock spreads his fan.



בראשית 22 Chapter Genesis

1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him: 'Abraham'; and he said: 'Here am I.' **2** And He said: 'Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.' **3** And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he cleaved the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. **4** On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. **5** And Abraham said unto his young men: 'Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come back to you.' **6** And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife; and they went both of them together. **7** And Isaac spoke unto Abraham his father, and said: 'My father.' And he said: 'Here am I, my son.' And he said: 'Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?' **8** And Abraham said: 'God will provide Himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son.' So they went both of them together. **9** And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. **10** And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. **11** And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said: 'Abraham, Abraham.' And he said: 'Here am I.' **12** And he said: 'Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him; for now I know that thou art a God-fearing man, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me.' **13** And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son. **14** And Abraham called the name of that place Adonai-jireh; as it is said to this day: 'In the mount where the LORD is seen.' **15** And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham a second time out of heaven, **16** and said: 'By Myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, **17** that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; **18** and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast hearkened to My voice.' **19** So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba. {P}

א ויהי, אחר הדברים האלה, והאלהים, נסה את-אברהם; ויאמר אליו, אברהם ויאמר הנני. **ב** ויאמר קח-נא את-בנך את-יחידך אשר-אהבת, את-יצחק, ולך-לך, אל-ארץ המרעה; והעלהו שם, לעלה, על אחד ההרים, אשר אמר אליך. **ג** וישכם אברהם בבקר, ויחבל את-חמרו, וישח את-שני נעריו אתו, ואת יצחק בנו; ויבסע, עצי עלה, ויקם וילך, אל-המקום אשר-אמר-לו האלהים. **ד** ביום השלישי, וישא אברהם את-עיניו וירא את-המקום--מרחק. **ה** ויאמר אברהם אל-נעריו, שבו-לכם פה עם-החמור, ואני והנער, נלכה עד-פה; ונשתחווה, ונשובה אליכם. **ו** וישח אברהם את-עצי העלה, וישם על-יצחק בנו, וישח בידו, את-העש ואת-המאכלת; וילכו שניהם, יחדו. **ז** ויאמר יצחק אל-אברהם אביו, ויאמר אבי, ויאמר, הנני בני; ויאמר, הנה האש והעצים, ואיה השא, לעלה. **ח** ויאמר, אברהם, אלהים יראה-לו השא לעלה, בני; וילכו שניהם, יחדו. **ט** ויבאו, אל-המקום אשר אמר-לו האלהים, ויבן שם אברהם את-המזבח, ויערף את-העצים; ויעלד, את-יצחק בנו, וישם אתו על-המזבח, ממעל לעצים. **י** וישלח אברהם את-ידו, וישח את-המאכלת, לשחט, את-בנו. **יא** ויקרא אליו מלאך יהוה, מן-השמים, ויאמר, אברהם אברהם; ויאמר, הנני. **יב** ויאמר, אל-תשלח ידך אל-הנער, ואל-תעש לו, מאומה: כי עתה ידעתי, כי-ירא אלהים אתה, ולא חשכת את-בנך את-יחידך, ממני. **יג** וישא אברהם את-עיניו, וירא והנה-איל, אחר, נאסו בסבך בקרניו; וילך אברהם וישח את-האיל, ויעלהו לעלה פחת בנו. **יד** ויקרא אברהם שם-המקום ההוא, יהוה יראה, אשר יאמר היום, בהר יהוה יראה. **טו** ויקרא מלאך יהוה, אל-אברהם, שנית, מן-השמים. **טז** ויאמר, בי נשבעתי נאם-יהוה: כי, יען אשר עשית את-הדבר הזה, ולא חשכת, את-בנך את-יחידך. **יז** כי-ברוך אברהם, וטהרה אברהם את-ורעף כוכבי השמים, וכוהל, אשר על-שפת הים; וירש ורעה, את שער איביו. **יח** והתברכו בורעה, כל גויי הארץ, עקב, אשר שמעת בקלי. **יט** וישב אברהם אל-נעריו, ונקמו וילכו יחדו אל-באר שבע; וישב אברהם, בבאר שבע. {פ}

WHO BY FIRE, 1973.

Who By Fire

*And who by fire, who by water,
Who in the sunshine, who in the night time,
Who by high ordeal, who by common trial,
Who in your merry merry month of may,
Who by very slow decay,
And who shall I say is calling?*

*And who in her lonely slip, who by barbiturate,
Who in these realms of love, who by something
blunt,
And who by avalanche, who by powder,
Who for his greed, who for his hunger,
And who shall I say is calling?*

*And who by brave assent, who by accident,
Who in solitude, who in this mirror,
Who by his lady's command, who by his own
hand,
Who in mortal chains, who in power,
And who shall I say is calling?*



Unetane Tokef

"Let us now relate the power of this day's holiness, for it is awesome and frightening. On it Your Kingship will be exalted; Your throne will be firmed with kindness and You will sit upon it in truth. It is true that You alone are the One Who judges, proves, knows, and bears witness; Who writes and seals, Who counts and Who calculates. You will remember all that was forgotten. You will open the Book of Remembrances — it will read itself — and each person's signature is there. And the great shofar will be sounded and a still, thin voice will be heard. Angels will be frenzied, a trembling and terror will seize them — and they will say, 'Behold, it is the Day of Judgment, to muster the heavenly host for judgment!' — for even they are not guiltless in Your eyes in judgment."

"All mankind will pass before You like a flock of sheep. Like a shepherd pasturing his flock, making sheep pass under his staff, so shall You cause to pass, count, calculate, and consider the soul of all the living; and You shall apportion the destinies of all Your creatures and inscribe their verdict.

On Rosh Hashanah will be inscribed and on Yom Kippur will be sealed — how many will pass from the earth and how many will be created; who will live and who will die; who will die after a long life and who before his time; who by water and who by fire, who by sword and who by beast, who by famine and who by thirst, who by upheaval and who by plague, who by strangling and who by stoning. Who will rest and who will wander, who will live in harmony and who will be harried, who will enjoy tranquility and who will suffer, who will be impoverished and who will be enriched, who will be degraded and who will be exalted. But Repentance, Prayer, and Charity annul the severe Decree."

"For Your Name signifies Your praise: hard to anger and easy to appease, for You do not wish the death of one deserving death, but that he repent from his way and live. Until the day of his death You await him; if he repents You will accept him immediately. It is true that You are their Creator and You know their inclination, for they are flesh and blood. A man's origin is from dust and his destiny is back to dust, at risk of his life he earns his bread; he is likened to a broken shard, withering grass, a fading flower, a passing shade, a dissipating cloud, a blowing wind, flying dust, and a fleeting dream."

"But You are the King, the Living and Enduring God.

There is no set span to Your years and there is no end to the length of Your days. It is impossible to estimate the angelic chariots of Your glory and it is forbidden to pronounce Your Name. Your Name is worthy of You and You are worthy of Your Name, and You have included Your Name in our name."

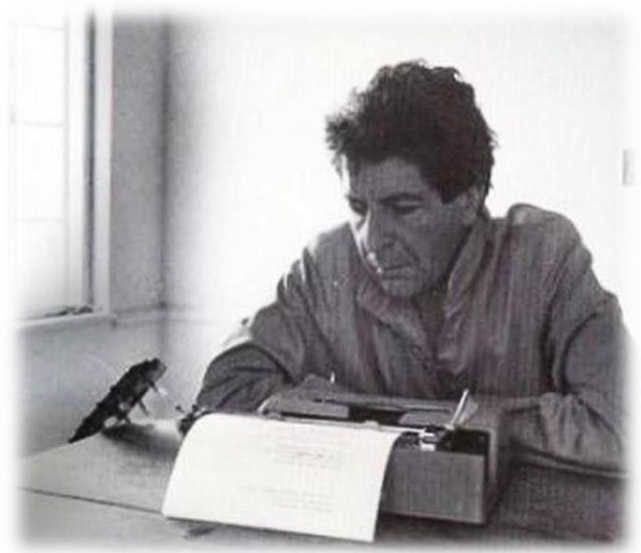
HALLELUJAH, 1984.

Now I've heard there was a secret chord
That David played, and it pleased the Lord
But you don't really care for music, do you?
It goes like this
The fourth, the fifth
The minor fall, the major lift
The baffled king composing Hallelujah

Your faith was strong but you needed proof
You saw her bathing on the roof
Her beauty and the moonlight overthrew you
She tied you to a kitchen chair
She broke your throne, and she cut your hair
And from your lips she drew the Hallelujah

You say I took the name in vain
I don't even know the name
But if I did, well really, what's it to you?
There's a blaze of light
In every word
It doesn't matter which you heard
The holy or the broken Hallelujah

I did my best, it wasn't much
I couldn't feel, so I tried to touch
I've told the truth, I didn't come to fool you
And even though
It all went wrong
I'll stand before the Lord of Song
With nothing on my tongue but Hallelujah



BY THE RIVERS DARK, 2001.

"By The Rivers Dark"

By the rivers dark
I wandered on.
I lived my life
in Babylon.

And I did forget
My holy song:
And I had no strength
In Babylon.

By the rivers dark
Where I could not see
Who was waiting there
Who was hunting me.

And he cut my lip
And he cut my heart.
So I could not drink
From the river dark.

And he covered me,
And I saw within,
My lawless heart
And my wedding ring,

I did not know
And I could not see
Who was waiting there,
Who was hunting me.

By the rivers dark
I panicked on.
I belonged at last
to Babylon.

Then he struck my heart
With a deadly force,
And he said, 'This heart:
It is not yours.'

And he gave the wind
My wedding ring;
And he circled us
With everything.

By the rivers dark,
In a wounded dawn,
I live my life
In Babylon.

Though I take my
song
From a withered
limb,
Both song and tree,
They sing for him.

Be the truth unsaid
And the blessing
gone,
If I forget
My Babylon.

I did not know
And I could not see
Who was waiting
there,
Who was hunting
me.

By the rivers dark,
Where it all goes
on;
By the rivers dark
In Babylon.



יִסְתַּהֲלֵךְ Psalms Chapter 137

- א** 1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.
- ב** 2 Upon the willows in the midst thereof we hanged up our harps.
- ג** 3 For there they that led us captive asked of us words of song, and our tormentors asked of us mirth: {N}
'Sing us one of the songs of Zion.'
- ד** 4 How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a foreign land?
- ה** 5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.
- ו** 6 Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember thee not; {N}
if I set not Jerusalem above my chiefest joy.
- ז** 7 Remember, O LORD, against the children of Edom the day of Jerusalem; {N}
who said: 'Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.'
- ח** 8 O daughter of Babylon, that art to be destroyed; {N}
happy shall he be, that repayeth thee as thou hast served us.
- ט** 9 Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the rock.



YOU WANT IT DARKER, 2016.

If you are the dealer
I'm out of the game
If you are the healer
I'm broken and lame
If thine is the glory
Then mine must be the shame
You want it darker
We kill the flame

Magnified and sanctified
Be Thy Holy Name
Vilified and crucified
In the human frame
A million candles burning
For the help that never came
You want it darker
We kill the flame

Hineni Hineni
I'm ready, my Lord

There's a lover in the story
But the story is still the same
There's an lullaby for suffering
And a paradox to blame
But it's written in the scriptures
And it's not some idle claim
You want it darker
We kill the flame

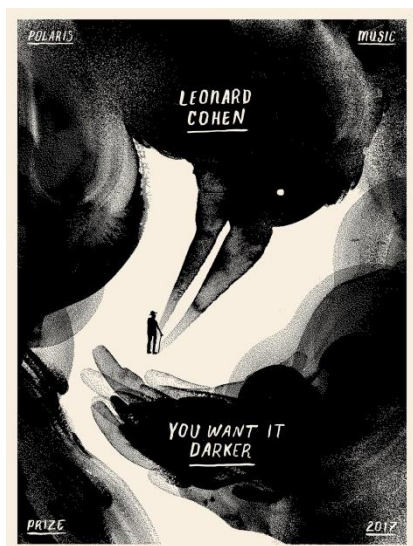
They're lining up the prisoners now
The guards are taking aim
I struggled with some demons
They were middle-class and tame
Didn't know I had permission
To murder and to maim
You want it darker
We kill the flame

Hineni Hineni
I'm ready, my Lord

Magnified and sanctified
Be Thy Holy Name
Vilified and crucified
In the human frame
A million candles burning
For the love that never came
You want it darker
We kill the flame

If you are the dealer
I'm out of the game
If you are the healer
I'm broken and lame
If thine is the glory
Then mine must be the shame
You want it darker
We kill the flame

Hineni Hineni
I'm ready, my Lord



Mourner's Kadish

Glorified and sanctified be God's great name throughout the world
which He has created according to His will.

May He establish His kingdom in your lifetime and during your days,
and within the life of the entire House of Israel, speedily and soon;
and say, Amen.

May His great name be blessed forever and to all eternity.

Blessed and praised, glorified and exalted, extolled and honored,
adored and lauded be the name of the Holy One, blessed be He,
beyond all the blessings and hymns, praises and consolations that
are ever spoken in the world; and say, Amen.

May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life, for us
and for all Israel; and say, Amen.

He who creates peace in His celestial heights,
may He create peace for us and for all Israel;
and say, Amen.

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא. בְּעָלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְרַעוּתֵיהּ, וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתֵיהּ בְּחַיֵּינוּ
וּבְיוֹמֵינוּ וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעִגְלָא וּבְזִמְנוֹ קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא.

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ
דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא, לְעָלְמָא מִן כָּל בִּרְכָתָא וְשִׁירָתָא תְּשֻׁבָּחָתָא וְנִחְמָתָא, דְּאָמְרוּ
בְּעָלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא, וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרְוֵמֵינוּ, הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

*Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'mei raba. B'alma di v'ra chirutei, v'yamlich malchutei, b'chayeichon
uv'yomeichon uv'chayei d'chol beit Yisrael, baagala uviz'man kariv. V'im'ru: Amen.*

Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varach l'alam ul'almei almaya.

*Yitbarach v'yishtabach v'yitpaar v'yitromam v'yitnasei, v'yit'hadar v'yitaleh v'yit'halal sh'mei d'Kud'sha
B'rich Hu, l'eila min kol birchata v'shirata, tushb'chata v'nechemata, daamiran b'alma. V'imru: Amen.*

Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya, v'chayim aleinu v'al kol Yisrael. V'imru: Amen.

Oseh shalom bimromav, Hu yaaseh shalom aleinu, v'al kol Yisrael. V'imru: Amen.