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Curriculum Guide

Sephardic Culture:
Jews from the Ottoman Empire

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Curriculum Rationale

To the dominant American Jewish community, Yiddish, matzah ball soup and gefilte fish are synonymous with Judaism. Stories of shtetl life are enduring memories of a collective family history. Ashkenazic influence defines what Modern Judaism is to most American Jews, including our youth. However, there is also a significant population of Sephardic Jewry in our community. Exposing our students to Sephardic culture broadens their understanding of what it means to be part of *klal Yisrael*. It also celebrates the diversity within our Jewish family and within our community. Learning about a Jewish community different from our own contributes to an appreciation of Jewish peoplehood. Through this curriculum, students will be exposed to a rich, textured Jewish culture with its own history and customs. This curriculum guide is designed for students in a supplementary school who are entering the sixth grade. The guide assumes that students have been learning about Jewish holidays throughout their education and thus attempts to supplement this learning with a richer understanding of the Jewish calendar. At sixth grade, as the students approach their own coming of age, this curriculum guide will prepare them to understand the Jewish community as something broader than the local temple.

Our collective history teaches that the Golden Age in Medieval Spain was a pinnacle of Jewish culture and learning. From great rabbinic scholars to scientists and philosophers, the Jews from Spain made inroads both in the Jewish world and in the secular. In 1492, the Sephardic world changed forever as the Jews of Spain were expelled from Spain and dispersed throughout the world. The Ottoman Empire offered the Sephardim a haven found in few other places, allowing the Sephardim to continue to flourish. It is here in this community where Medieval Spanish evolved into Ladino and where Jewish Spanish culture endured and transformed. It is this community, the Jews from the Ottoman Empire, who form the focus of this curriculum guide. The following four enduring (major) understandings form the basis for this curriculum guide:

1. **Sephardic Judaism expresses itself through its own language, culture and customs that continue to be observed in the Modern Jewish world.**
2. **While Sephardic practice shares much in common with Ashkenazic practice, the differences can bring an added layer of richness to the American Jewish experience.**
3. **The Sephardic community continues to evolve and bring diversity as it interacts with the postmodern world.**

4. Sephardic Jews celebrate the holidays in a way that is thoroughly Jewish and distinctly its own.

Exposure to the Sephardic tradition will provide our students with a deeper understanding of the diversity of Jewish life. While students will primarily be exposed to the Sephardim of Turkish decent, they will gain an understanding of the diversity within the Sephardic world. Learning about the Sephardic experience will raise awareness within our students of the variety of cultures within our own community. Students will have the opportunity to experience Sephardic culture through the lens of the Jewish calendar. They will approach key holidays through culture, simultaneously identifying similarities and differences.

Introducing our students to Sephardic Jewry heightens their awareness of *Klal Yisrael* and broadens their notion of what it means to be a part of the Jewish people. Growing up in a predominantly Ashkenazic culture, learning about Sephardic culture and history will expose them to a new expression of Judaism. This curriculum hopes to foster in our students an appreciation for the rich complexity of the Jewish people.

Goals for the teacher

1. To introduce students to an alternate expression of Judaism
2. To expose students to the vast Jewish diaspora.
3. To provide students with the historical context of the Sephardic experience.
4. To increase students' understanding of the themes behind Jewish holidays.
5. To expose students to the uniquely Sephardic expression of holidays
6. To enable students to experience the cultural richness of the Ladino language
7. To introduce students to the musical aspect of Sephardic Jewry
8. To provide students with the opportunity to discover Sephardic literature.
9. To encourage students to explore their own Jewish identity through the close examination of a Judaism sometimes different from their own

Unit I – Introduction to Sephardic Jewry

Goals:

1. To introduce students to an alternate expression of Judaism..
2. To expose students to the uniquely Sephardic expression of the Jewish calendar.
3. To help students internalize the dilemmas Sephardic Jews faced as they faced expulsion in 1492.
4. To introduce students to traditional foods and customs surrounding Sukkot.
5. To provide students with the opportunity to participate in Sephardic High Holiday rituals.
6. To introduce students to elements of Ladino used on Rosh Hashanah.
7. To encourage students to explore their own Jewish identity through the close examination of a Judaism sometimes different from their own.

Objectives:

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

1. Examine their own expressions of Judaism to determine their own family heritage
2. Identify the geographical area where Sephardim culture flourished
3. Recall key events in Sephardic History
4. Investigate aspects of the Sephardic celebration of Rosh Hashanah and Sukkot

Note to teacher

This unit should take place in one class period. This first lesson is a memorable moment and its purpose is to immerse the students in Sephardic culture right from the beginning of the year. They will learn a general overview of Sephardic history and geography as well as get a taste of Sephardic culture through the lens of Jewish holidays. This initial introduction to Sephardic Jewry should help students jump right into exploring the Sephardic world. This introductory unit will also expose students to some of the other Jewish holidays not covered in the units of this curriculum guide.

Memorable Moment

Several weeks before school begins send out flyers inviting both students and parents to attend the first day of school. Before class, set up booths all around a larger space in the synagogue. Prepare madrichim or parent volunteers to run the various stations.

Before the students break off into the various stations, begin with an introduction to Sephardic Judaism. Include the following points either as a statement or in question format:

- The two most dominant Jewish cultures in the modern world are Sephardic and Ashkenazic
  - Ashkenazic Jews are from Western and Eastern Europe
  - Sepharad is Hebrew for Spain, hence Sephardic Jews came from Spain
- The Sephardic world is diverse and encompasses a large area of the Jewish world
- Many of the Jews that people call Sephardic may more accurately be called Mizrahi Jews (Jews from the Middle East and North Africa who do not trace their ancestry to Spain).
- Sephardic Jews who went from Spain to Turkey, Greece and the Balkans kept the Spanish language and culture.
- This year students are going to learn about the Sephardic Jews who went to Turkey, Greece and the Balkans.

Station 1 – Students will find a pile of blank maps at the station with an assortment of colored markers. With the help of their parents, students will color in:

1. Where their ancestors came from
2. Where the students live today
3. Turkey, Greece and the Balkans
4. Spain

Use the handouts *Ancestor Geography* & *The World Map*

Station 2 – At this station students and their parents will create a profile of their Jewish identity and heritage. Provide the handout included in this unit for students to fill out.
Use the handout *Ancestor Profile*

Station 3 – La Expulsión: Students will find a copy of 'The Spanish Times'[1]. The articles tell the stories of Jews who chose to convert to

[1] Aelion Brooks, Andrée. Out of Spain. Westport: Hitchcock Books, 2003.

remain in Spain and those who chose to flee as Jews. Students read through the articles and answer the questions provided.
Use *Newspaper Headlines*

Station 4 – Where would you go? At this station there will be a poster board with the names of three countries/regions where the Jews of Spain contemplated fleeing to. They will use the handout provided in order to record their findings. They will then answer questions imagining what they would have done if they were in a similar situation.[2]

Station 5 – Rosh Hashanah: Yehi ratzones: Set up slices of apples with bowls of honey on the table. This ceremony follows the Kiddush in Sephardic homes. The person leading this station should walk through each step of the ceremony with the students and parents.

- Each person takes an apple slice
    - Leader explains that the apple represents God's judgment and the honey symbolizes that God will judge with sweetness
- Each person dips the apple in the honey
    - While dipping, they say "*Yehi ratzon … shetitchadesh aleinu shanah tova umetukah*."
- Have students then recite the following prayer in Ladino.
    - *Renova sovre nozotros anyada Buena i dulse del presipio i asta el kavo del anyo*. (Send us again a fruitful year and sweet from beginning to end).

Station 6 – Rosh Hashanah II – cards with Ladino

Station 7 – Sukkot: Sephardic Jews traditionally decorate their sukkot with bizcochos, which are circular baked cookies, as well as with fruit. At this station, an instructor helps students and parents mix the batter and bake the cookies. The instructor should explain that the cookies are used for Sukkot as decorations. Have pre-made cookies available with ribbon to tie to the cookies. The cookies can be used to decorate the temple sukkah, taken home to decorate home sukkot, or eaten, of course!

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[2] Material for the information found in the handout are from:
Gerber, Jane S. The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience. New York: The Free Press, 1992.

Name: _____

Ancestor Geography

Most American Jews trace their ancestry to Eastern Europe. However, Jews come from all over the world. This year we will be learning about Jews from Turkey, Greece and the Balkans, also known as Sephardic Jews. The Sephardim trace their roots to Spain but were expelled from the country in 1492. Many fled to Turkey, Greece and the Balkans where they kept their Spanish language and culture. Sephardic Jews speak Ladino; a medieval form of Spanish mixed with Hebrew and Turkish.

My ancestors came from this/these countries:

_____
_____

My ancestors spoke the following languages when they came to the United States:

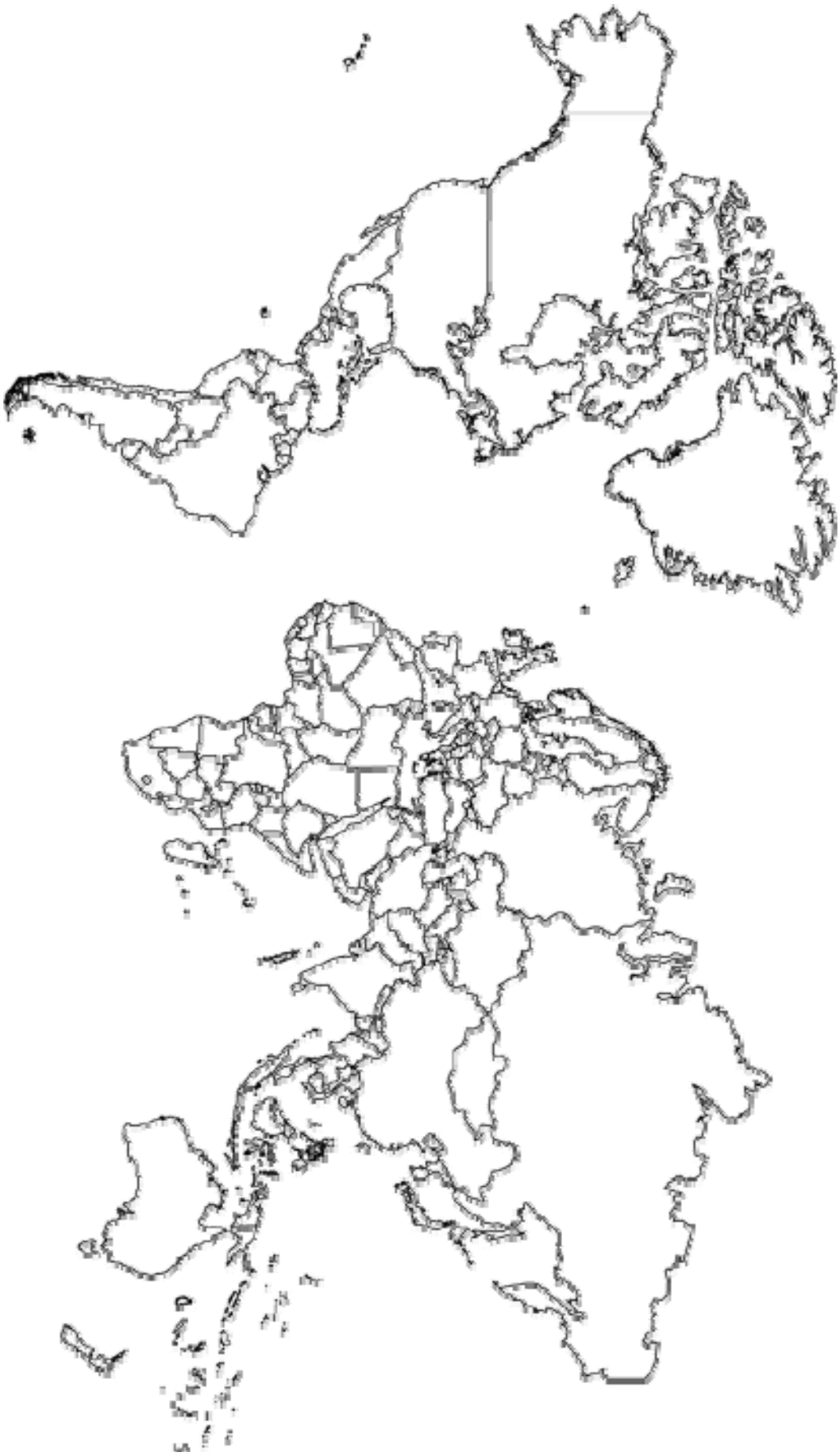
_____

My family now lives here:

_____

On the map, please color in the following:

1. Green: Where your ancestors come from
2. Red: Where you live today
3. Yellow: Spain
4. Blue: Turkey, Greece & the Balkans



Name: _____

Ancestor Profile

Our last name tells us a lot about our ancestry. Many American Jews have last names that come from Yiddish and German. However, Sephardic Jews have names that come from Ladino such as Fernandez, Catalan, Moreno and Varon.

Directions: Below are some questions for students to fill out about their own families. Students and their families should fill out the questions as best as they can.

The last names in my family are:

_____
_____

These names come from:

_____
_____

A story my family shared with me about our ancestors:

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Jews Who Refuse to Convert Prepare for Expulsion

Time is running short and a lot has happened. The Edict of Expulsion signed by Fernando and Isabella in March explicitly stated that "All Jews and Jewesses of whatever age who reside in our domains and territories … must leave with their sons and daughters, their servants and their relatives by the end of July and that they dare not return to our lands. Any Jew who does not comply or returns to our kingdom will incur punishment by death."

Abraham Seneor Converts

Abraham Seneor, the Chief Tax Collector and leader of the Jews, converted yesterday and was baptized at the high altar. Friends say Queen Isabella swore to destroy all Spanish Jews if he refused.

Pirates seen off Africa

Jews making for the port of Cadíz to board boats to North Africa are warned pirates are poised offshore to rob them.

We prefer to convert!

Dozens of Jews are converting to protect their jobs and their wives and children rather than risk losing everything.

Teresa de León's Agony
By our Reporter in Segovia

I watched helplessly as Teresa de León, a Jew in this town noted for her skills as a dressmaker placed her elderly father on the back of a hay cart filled with clothing and food.
Her sick father begged her to leave him behind, but she insisted saying, "all of us go, or we do not go at all." Then she slowly walked up to her front door and took the mezuzah from the doorpost. She reached into her pocket, pulled out a large iron key and locked the door securely. She walked back to the wagon and gave the key to her son-in-law.
"Jacob," she said, "this has been the key to our house for as long as I can remember. We have many beautiful memories of the time we spent here, especially when my husband, Jaimito, of blessed memory, was still alive. I want you to have this key. I want you to keep it and treasure it and save it for your children and your children's children. Let it be a reminder to all the generations that come after us of what we once had in Spain."

Jews Struggle Towards Ports and the Portugal Frontier.

With the boiling hot sun beating down on them, processions of Jews with all their belongings trudge wearily, mile after mile, along the roads to the ports and frontiers. They sleep in fields. Some collapse on the way. Old men die and babies are born under the open skies. Urged on by the rabbis, women and girls sing and play tambourines to keep their spirits up.

Jews' Houses and Vineyards Sold for Price of a Donkey
By Our Reporter in Córdoba

A little boy called Julio from Córdoba was discovered burying his chess pieces and silver star of David in the hope he would come back to Spain. Tearfully, he told how his father had sold his vineyard and said that the money they got for it was only enough to buy a donkey. The Catholics, he explained, had raised their prices when they saw how badly the Jews needed the donkeys.

Many Converted Jews who continue old habits.

Even though Isaac Bravel, a shoemaker from Granada, became a Catholic a month ago, he was still seen closing his stall on Saturdays as if he were still a Jew. "This behavior will not be tolerated," said the King. "Those who are still found to be saying Jewish prayers or observing Jewish rituals will be burnt at the stake in the great plazas of our beloved cities."

Newspaper Headlines

In 1492, the Jews of Spain received the worst news possible. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella had ordered that all of the Jews of Spain be expelled by the end of July. Jews were faced with a difficult choice. They could either convert to Christianity and keep their homes or remain Jewish, leave their possessions behind and leave Spain forever.

Instructions: The articles found in the Spanish Times are based on real life decisions that Sephardic Jews had to make in 1492. Read the articles in the newspaper and answer the questions provided here in this handout.

Questions:

According to the articles, what are some risks that the Jews who fled Spain faced?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Many Jews decided to convert to Catholicism and remain in Spain. Why do you think they decided to do this?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Imagine that you are a Jew from Spain in 1492 and you are forced to make a decision whether to convert or flee. What would you do and why?

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Where Would You Go?

In 1492, the Spanish Jews who chose to remain Jewish and flee their beloved country faced an additional challenge. Where would they go now that they could no longer call Spain their home?

Instructions: Sephardic Jews fled to each of the places listed below. Use the information found on the display to discover how Jews were received in each country/region. Record your findings on this handout.

Portugal:

_____
_____
_____
_____

The Ottoman Empire (includes present day Turkey, The Balkans & Greece):

_____
_____
_____
_____

North Africa:

_____
_____
_____
_____

If you were a Spanish Jew in 1492 and you decided to flee, where would you go? Why?

_____
_____
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_____

What challenges do you think you might face in this new country?

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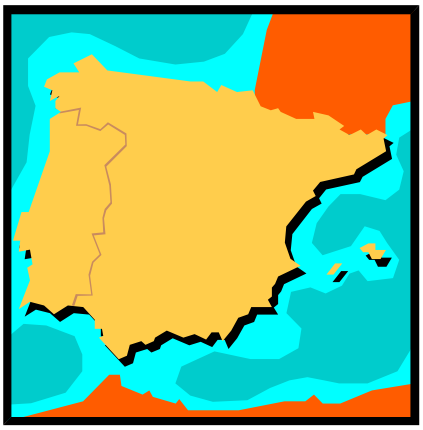

Where Would You Go – Supplementary Materials for teacher

For the teacher: Create a poster board containing information regarding each country listed on the handout. Make the board interactive by attaching index cards to the board. The front of the index card should have the name of the country or region. When the student flips up the card, information about that specific country can be found underneath.

Portugal: In Portugal, King John II opened his borders to the Jews of Spain. For Jews being forced to leave their homes, Portugal was appealing due to proximity and similarity of culture and language. However, King John's successor, Manuel I, in an attempt to ally with Spain, agreed to have the Jews expelled by the end of 1497. He did not want the Jews to leave because of the money they brought to the country to he tried to force all of the Jews to convert.

The Ottoman Empire: The sultan of the Ottoman Empire, Bayezid II, heard of the Expulsion and opened his borders to the Jews of Spain. He reportedly said, "You call Ferdinand a wise king, he who impoverishes his country and enriches our own." The Sephardic Jews who arrived here found the Ottoman Empire to be tolerant, generous and powerful. In the Ottoman Empire, Sephardic Jews maintained their Spanish culture and language for centuries.

North Africa: Thousands of Sephardic Jews fled to North Africa. Many died of the plague, while others found the living conditions so poor that they tried to return to Spain. Many Muslim countries did not wish to take such large numbers of refugees into their ports, although Morocco opened its doors, allowing Jews to settle outside the city walls.

Biscochos[3]

Makes about 48 cookies

Dough
4 large eggs
2/3 to 1 cup sugar (use larger amount for sweeter cookies)
½ cup canola oil
½ to 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
4 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt

Topping
Approx. ½ cup hulled raw sesame seeds

Egg Wash
1 egg beaten with 1 teaspoon water

Directions:

Line 2 large cookie sheets with baking parchment or coat them with nonstick cooking spray.

For the dough, use an electric mixer to beat the 4 eggs with the sugar for several minutes until very light and fluffy; then beat in the oil and vanilla. Stir in the flour, baking powder, and salt until combined. If the dough is still very sticky, add a little more flour. Allow the dough to rest for 5 minutes. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Put the sesame seeds into a small bowl. Prepare the egg wash.

Pinch off a walnut-sized piece of dough and roll it into a rope that is 3/8 inch thick and about 5 inches long, using small amounts of extra flour if necessary to avoid sticking. Pinch the ends of the rope together to form a ring. Repeat until all of the dough has been formed into rings. Some shape the dough into a tziyyon (star of David).

Brush the top surface of each ring with the egg-water mixture; then immediately dip the ring into the sesame seeds. Place the rings on a baking sheet at least 1 inch apart with the seeds facing upward.

Bake at 375 degrees for about 15 to 20 minutes, or until lightly browned. Cool the rings completely before storing in an airtight container.

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[3] Kaufer Green, Gloria. The New Jewish Holiday Cookbook. New York: Random House, 1985, 1999. pp. 81-82.

honey to symbolize that the judgment should be sweetened by the Almighty.[65] The formula is the same as with other Sephardim. However, the *rimon* (pomegranate) is generally reserved for the *Sheheḥeyanu* prayer on the second night, which one has in mind when he recites the *Kiddush*. Therefore, many are careful not to eat pomegranates until Rosh Hashanah. Some do eat the pomegranate on the first night.[66]

In Sefrou it was their custom to include, in the *Yehi raẓon* prayers on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, the eating of lungs (*re'ya*) and to recite: *Re'ei na beanyeinu veriva riveinu umaher legaaleinu geula sheleima ukerova lemaan shimekha vehaer eineinu bemaor toratekha.*[67] In Rabat some said a *Yehi raẓon* prayer over sesame seeds.

At the meal on Rosh Hashanah night, it is the custom to dip the *Hamoẓi* into sugar as a good sign,[68] as they did in Fez. The sugar, considered to be an appropriate substitute for salt, could fulfill the requirement of *Al kol korbankha takriv melaḥ,* and the sugar is, in fact, called *melaḥ berit olam* in Rabbinic sources.[69]

It is the custom to read the entire Book of *Tehillim* twice,[70] since the three hundred chapters (one hundred fifty each time) spell out *kapper* (atone). The *Tehillim* are said in the following fashion: two chapters are recited at night, another three chapters in the morning, and then the reading of the remainder is completed during the course of the day.

For the *Shaḥarit* service, three *ḥazzanim* are sent to the *teva* to officiate. Two serve as *seganim* (associates) in accordance with the custom already described under Syrian customs for Rosh Hashanah.[71]

Some congregants say *Barukh shem kevod* aloud in the *Shema.*

Hashem shamati shimeakha is chanted before the repetition of the *Amida,* followed by *Aleinu.*[72]

In the repetition of the *Amida,* when the *Zakhrenu leḥayyim* is chanted, the congregation would conclude with the words, *Kel ḥay umagen.*[73]

The following *piyutim* are recited before *Nishmat*: *Elokay al tedineni kema'ali, Hashem yom lekha eerokh teḥina, Shofet kol haarez,* and *Shoef kemo eved.*[74] Then *Yedei rashim* and *Kah shimekha aromimekha*[75] are recited before *Yoẓer.* Some recite *Haaderet vehaemun-* just before *Barukh sheamar.*[76]

It is customary to give the *baal tokeya* the fifth *aliyah* (*ḥamishi*) on both the first and second days of Rosh Hashanah,[77]

It is forbidden to sleep during the day of Rosh Hashanah,[78] and the day is instead occupied by the recitation of *Tehillim,* as already described.[79]

The ceremony on the first day in the afternoon is called *Vetashlikh*[80] rather than *Tashlikh,* which designates the actual quotation, *Vetashlikh bimeẓulot.* It takes place on the second day if the first day is Shabbat.[81]

The special foods for Rosh Hashanah are couscous and sweet foods. No salt is used. Instead, sugar is substituted in the foods (and is used for *Hamoẓi*). Care is taken not to eat sharp foods, only sweet ones (*shana tova umetuka,* meaning, "for a good and sweet year").

The *shofar* is blown as follows: thirty blasts before *Musaf,* thirty in both the silent *Amida* and the repetition of the *Amida* (ten at each *berakha* at the conclusion of *Malkhuyot, Zikhronot,* and *Shofarot*), and ten during the *Kaddish* just before *Teanu veteatru,* and a *terua gedola* just before *Adon olam.*[82]

The sound of the *shofar* of the Moroccans is quite different. This is because the *shofar* is made smooth on both the inside and the outside. The *shofar* is also straightened out and bent in a different way than it was in its natural form. The *shofar*'s mouthpiece is formed to make it easy for the blower to emit a good and strong sound. In Sefrou they say *Sheheḥeyanu* for *shofar* on the first day only.[83]

Some congregations sing *Ein K'Elokeinu* in both Hebrew and Arabic. Most congregations say *Pitum haketoret* before *Vearva lashem minḥat Yehuda.*

On the night after Rosh Hashanah, before the *Amida,* the ḥazzan would call out the following reminder of the prayers to be recited in the *Amida* throughout the Ten Days of Penitence: *Zakhrenu, Mi kamokha, Hamelekh hakadosh, Ata ḥonantanu, Hamelekh hamishpat, Anenu, Ukhetov* (for the fast-day), and *Uvesefer haḥayyim.*

As Practiced by Judeo-Spanish Jews

The Jews of Rhodes go to the cemetery on Erev Rosh Hashanah to

visit the resting places of the deceased members of their families and the righteous personalities, to beseech them to intervene with the Almighty that He might grant them a good year.[84] The Jews from Turkey make the visit to the cemetery on Erev Yom Kippur.

It is the custom of the observant Judeo-Spanish Jews to immerse themselves in the *mikveh* on both Erev Rosh Hashanah and Erev Yom Kippur in order to purify themselves during these High Holy Days, also known as the *Yamim Noraim* (Days of Awe).[85]

The *Maḥzor* which is especially popular among Judeo-Spanish *ḥazzanim* for the Rosh Hashanah festival is entitled, *Maḥzor Lerosh Hashanah.*

In Bulgaria many families bought a new garment for every member of the family which they would wear on Rosh Hashanah so that "the whole year would be new."[86]

The *Seliḥot* include the famous *Im afes,* which was written by Rabbi Ephraim bar Rabi Yiẓḥak Ḥazak Mibuna Ashkenazi. Although, in another *Maḥzor,* the author is described as "from theirs," designating that this particular *bakasha* is derived from Ashkenazim, the prayer holds a very important place within the *Seliḥot,* and it is the one to which the *ḥazzanim* attach a great deal of significance in their musical rendition of the *bakashot.* It is the custom to enact *hatarat nedarim* (nullification of vows) on Erev Rosh Hashanah.[87] Some perform this ceremony on Erev Yom Kippur. Similarly, *hatarat kelallot* is recited by some on Erev Rosh Ḥodesh each month, and especially on Erev Rosh Hashanah and Erev Yom Kippur. This ceremony is enacted by the individual standing in front of three people who constitute themselves as a Bet Din (rabbinic court). The Bet Din nullifies his vows or the curses, depending upon which of the nullification ceremonies is being enacted.

For some it is the custom to fast on Erev Rosh Hashanah in order to enact *teshuvah.*[88] For those who did fast, there is a special *Modeh Ani lefanekha* prayer recited after the *Amida* at the *Minḥa* service on Erev Rosh Hashanah.

The *Arvit* service opens with a special *piyut, Aḥot ketana.* The *Arvit* service is followed by *LeDavid mizmor* as a special prayer for *parnasah* (a good livelihood), and the service concludes with *Yigdal.*

When everyone leaves the synagogue, they greet each other with the salutation: *Tizku leshanim rabot.* The answer is: *Tizke vetiḥeye*

vetaarikh yamim or simply *Neimot vetovot.* Some say: *Anyada buena i clara scritos en livros de vida,* meaning, "Happy New Year, let us be inscribed in the Book of Life."[89]

At home, Rosh Hashanah is ushered in with *Kiddush,* followed by the special ceremony of the *Yehi raẓones.*[90] This is done in a much more elaborate fashion than is found among other groups of Jews. The ceremony begins with the dipping of the apple in honey in order to symbolize that the apple, which represents the *Shekhina,* which is now judging man, shall do it with sweetness, which is symbolized by the honey.[91] As the apple is dipped in honey, the recitation of the *Yehi raẓon . . . shetitḥadesh aleinu shanah tova umetukah* is said aloud.[92] In Bulgaria, they served baked apple with honey, and then they would recite the appropriate Hebrew *Yehi raẓon,* followed by this prayer in Ladino, *Renova sovre nozotros anyada buena i dulse del presipio i asta el kavo del anyo* ("Send us again a fruitful year and sweet from beginning to end"). There are variations of the spellings of this greeting.

The *Maḥzor*[93] specifies the additional special symbolic items which are enumerated in both the Aramaic and the Ladino, followed by the appropriate *Yehi raẓon* recitations. It is obvious that the Talmudic dictum for us to see these various food items and to use them as demonstrative symbols to express our prayers for freedom from evil and for a long life, etc., is more fully expressed by Sephardim than by others who only dip the apple in honey. In each instance, the prayer for a good life would play on a Hebrew word similar to the Aramaic word derived from the Talmud. For example, *karti* (leek) is reflected in the *Yehi raẓon*[94] prayer playing on the meaning of the Hebrew word for "to cut off," *Sheyikaretu oyveinu* ("That our enemies should be cut off"). Swiss chard, *salka* in the Aramaic, is reflected in the *Yehi raẓon* words, *Sheyistalek oyveinu* ("That our enemies may disappear"), etc. The ceremony involves the eating of such foods as dates, pomegranates, small pumpkin pies or turnovers, leek patties, and beetroots. Similarly, the head of a fish is on the table to express the hope that we will be like the head and not the tail, meaning that we should move forward in good health in the new year, etc, in which case they will recite the prayer of *Yehi raẓon* over the fish, which represents fruitfulness, so that "our deeds should be fruitful," etc. Some fulfill this by having the head of a sheep on the table. Some follow the custom of reading the *Mishnayot* of *Masekhet Rosh Hashanah* after *Kiddush*

and then *Yehi raẓon* prayers[95] before the meal. This special *limud liseudat Rosh Hashanah* is found in the *Maḥzor.*[96] After the evening meal, some have the custom of reading the entire Book of *Tehillim* twice.[97]

The day of Rosh Hashanah is ushered in with great awe. Following the services, the meal served features such delicacies as moussaka. This is fried eggplant with ground meat and spices. It is a special delicacy for Rosh Hashanah which is enjoyed at other times as well.

It is the custom of the Sephardim in blowing the *shofar* that there be no one to call out the blasts (*makreh*). Indeed, the one who blows the *shofar* (*tokeya*) is fully mindful of the order of the blasts which he must produce from the ram's horn. It is also a custom that the *tokeya* receives an *aliyah* on the first day on which he blows the *shofar.* There is no specific *aliyah* designated, although it is usually an especially honored *aliyah* which is given to him.[98]

Prior to the portion of the *Shaḥarit* service after the Haftarah, when the ḥazzan prepares for the portion of the blowing of the *shofar,* the very famous prayer *Et shaarei raẓon lehipateaḥ*[99] is chanted with great fervor in both Hebrew and Ladino. This beautiful poem, which describes the Binding of Isaac, is the work of Yehuda Shemuel Abbas, who died in 1163. The poem tells of an elderly father prepared, at God's command, to give up his dearest possession, his only son, who had been granted to him in old age. The poet depicts in gripping fashion the moving oneness of the son who is prepared to be sacrificed and the father who is ready to sacrifice him. He allows us to picture the hoary patriarch setting forth on this journey, without any hesitation, to fulfill God's command, even though that command would seem designed to destroy all his cherished expectations. The father's willingness to sacrifice is surpassed only by the son's even greater willingness to be sacrificed.

The chanting of this beautiful poem in Ladino is done with great fervor by the ḥazzan. Nowadays, he expedites his rendition, since not as many people understand the Ladino. On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, the *Et shaarei raẓon* is replaced by the *Im afes rova haken* prayer, which is also translated into the Ladino and sung with great devotion. The subject of this poem similarly depicts the *Akeda,* the Binding of Isaac.

The order of blowing the *shofar* is as follows: thirty blasts before the

Musaf, thirty blasts (ten at a time) during the silent prayer of the *Amida,* thirty blasts in the review of the *Amida,* and ten blasts concluding the total of one hundred blasts at the portion of the service following the *Amida* when the *Kaddish* is recited, just before *Titkabal.*[100] Prior to the *Barekhu,* recited immediately before *Aleinu* at the conclusion of the service, the *terua gedolah*[101] is blasted.

A distinction in the type of *shofar* used by Sephardim that may be noted is that the mouthpiece is made in such a way that the *shofar* goes out and straight up, rather than being bent, as is used by some others. *Hayom harat olam* is sometimes recited in Ladino.

The Judeo-Spanish recite the *Tashlikh* service on the first day of Rosh Hashanah even if it falls on the Sabbath.[102]

The Book of *Tehillim* is read on Rosh Hashanah during the day as well, since it is the specific book of the Bible designated for reading on Rosh Hashanah.[103]

The Judeo-Spanish do not recite the *Unetane tokef* even though it is written in the *Maḥzor.* However, in Yugoslavia this prayer was chanted and was also recited in Ladino.

Avinu Malkenu is recited even on Shabbat by some of the Judeo-Spanish communities.[104]

Many of these communities recite the *hatarat kellalot* on Erev Yom Kippur and not on Erev Rosh Hashanah. It is the custom for Judeo-Spanish Jews to dip their bread into salt,[105] as well as sugar, on Rosh Hashanah. The dipping into sugar is done only on Rosh Hashanah.

It is a custom of the Jews of Rhodes to eat *fijones* (black-eyed peas, known as *rubiya* in Hebrew). On Rosh Hashanah, as part of the *Yehi raẓon* prayers, some say *Sheyirbu zekhuyotenu,* and others say this prayer while eating fish. On the second night the *Sheheḥeyanu* is recited over the pomegranate.[106]

In accordance with the instructions given in the *Siddur Tefilat Haḥodesh,* on Shabbat Teshuvah (the Sabbath of Repentance) one does not recite those sentences in the *Avinu Malkenu* which begin with the words, *Ḥatanu, meḥol, kera, meḥok, meḥe, katvenu besefer meḥila useliḥa vekhaparah.*

In the *Shaḥarit* service, immediately before the Torah is read, after the *Berikh Shmei,* there is the reading of the Kabbalistic prayers in connection with the taking out of the Sefer Torah from the Holy Ark.[107] These prayers were written by Rabbi Shalom Sharabi, of Y[illegible]n, and

they are recited by the Judeo-Spanish Jews. The names of God are intertwined in *shiluv* (combination) with special words like *kera,* meaning "cut away from us the evil decree," which are combined with the name of God. When one looks at God's name, he does not read the name of God but simply says, *Kazeh* ("as this word appears"). These names are known as *Hashemot hanikhtavim veeinam nizkarim* ("Names that are written but not mentioned").

As Practiced by the Spanish and Portuguese Jews

On the eve of Rosh Hashanah, as on a Friday night which is Rosh Ḥodesh, before the *Arbit* service is begun, the ḥazzan announces who will read the *Zemirot* the next day and who will read the Haftarah. This is the procedure which generally takes place before *all* Festivals. On those occasions when the *heikhal* will be opened, the person given that honor is also announced. These announcements are made with the *parnas* standing at the *teba* to add importance to the honors which are being so designated. The same is true for Rosh Hashanah.

It is the procedure that, during all Rosh Hashanah services (except *Minḥa*) and during Kippur, two members of the congregation stand on either side of the ḥazzan (but not during the reading of the *parashiot* and Haftarot).[108] This custom, derived from the Biblical verse Exodus 17:12, has already been described. In other congregations, the task of these *seganim* is to support the ḥazzan, either by chanting some of the prayers (especially the *Seliḥot*) or to correct him, if necessary, or to take his place, should the need arise. However, in the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in New York, the *seganim* do not actively participate in leading the service.

The announcements then continue to indicate who will recite the *Zemirot* the following morning, the sentence *Hashem hu HaElokim* (part of *Zemirot*), and the Haftarah, as well as who will stand on the right side of the ḥazzan during the morning service and who will stand on his left.

The Rosh Hashanah *Arbit* services begin with *Lamenaẓẓeah, al hagitit leAsaf* (Psalm 81),[109] except when the night of Rosh Hashanah falls on the Sabbath, in which case this prayer will be preceded by *Mi[illegible] shir leyom hashabbat* (Psalm 92).[110]

On the first night, the service begins with the moving poem *Aḥot ketana* by Abraham Ḥazzan Girondi.[111] At its conclusion, the Ark is opened and the *seganim* go to take their places at the *teba.* At this point, the ḥazzan covers his head with his *tallit,* and then the *Kaddish* is recited. The service continues with the *Barekhu,* which follows the regular Rosh Hashanah *Arbit* sequence of prayers. If it is Saturday night, before the *Amida,* the ḥazzan announces *Omerim vatodienu.* The *Mizmor leDavid* (Psalm 23) is not recited.[112] The *Halelu Kel bekadsho* (Psalms 150)[113] is recited, and the *LeDavid mizmor* (*Mizmor haparnasah,* Psalm 24) is not recited.[114] The entire congregation then chants the *Kaddish,* which is followed by the concluding *Barekhu* and the first paragraph of *Aleinu.* Immediately after the *Aleinu,* the *seganim* return to their seats, the ḥazzan removes his *tallit,* and the doors of the Ark, which had been open for the entire service, are now closed. The rabbi then recites a prayer, which is followed by the concluding *Yigdal Elohim ḥay,* which is chanted. The service is now over, and the congregants greet one another with the traditional Rosh Hashanah salutation, *"Leshana toba tikateb,"*[115] *"Tizke leshanim rabot neimot vetobot,"* to which the response is, *"Tizke vetiḥeye vetaarikh yamim,"* often abbreviated to *"Tizke vetiḥeye."*

After the recitation of the *Kiddush* in the home observance, the *Hamoẓi* is made and the apple is dipped in honey with the appropriate *Yehi raẓon* prayer recited.[116] The other *Yehi raẓon* prayers over the dates, pomegranates, pumpkin, leeks, beetroot, and head of sheep or fish are not recited by the Spanish and Portuguese Jews.

Salt is used for the *Hamoẓi* on Rosh Hashanah as during the rest of the year.[117]

There is no tradition of reciting *Tehillim* or any other specific books of Jewish learning on Rosh Hashanah.

The Ark is opened before *Barukh sheamar,* and it remains open throughout the *Shaḥarit* service.

On the first day, *Elokay al tedineni kemaali,*[118] is recited immediately before *Nishmat,* rather than after the *Amida,* as is the custom of others, who consider it an interruption to insert this prayer before *Nishmat.* On the second day, in the same manner, *Hashem yom lekha eerokh teḥina*[119] is recited.

In the repetition of the *Shaḥarit Amida,* the *Birkat Kohanim* is recited, if it is not on the Sabbath. *Abinu Malkenu* is no[illegible]ecited on the Sabbath.[120]

and the congregation calls out *"Vayaavor,"* the *shofar* is blown with great fervor. The *Shema Yisrael, Barukh shem kevod,*[98] *Karati bekhol lev aneni,*[99] and *Hashem hu Elokim,*[100] which precede the *Kaddish,* are recited before the open *heikhal* with great intensity. Just before *Titkabal,* the *shofar* is blown for thirty blasts. At the time when the *shofar* is blown, each man covers his head with his *tallit.*

On Moẓaei Yom Kippur, immediately after the fast is broken with a meal, everyone begins to build the *sukkah* to begin the new season with a *miẓvah* and to go from strength to strength.[101]

On the day following Yom Kippur, which was known in Morocco as Yom Simḥat Kohen, the *Kohanim* made a party. This is because of the tradition related in the Talmud *Yoma* (chapter 7:7), "He [the *Kohen Gadol*] would make a festival for all his loved ones at the time when he would successfully emerge from the Holy of Holies."

Some people stand all day long on Yom Kippur to show *teshuvah.* On Moẓaei Yom Kippur, many eat the *dafina* cooked over Yom Kippur to break their fast, although in Sefrou it was forbidden to make *dafina* on Yom Kippur.

On the night after Yom Kippur, they did not recite the blessing over spices, even if Yom Kippur had fallen on Shabbat.[102]

As Practiced by Judeo-Spanish Jews

Erev Yom Kippur

The *Kapparot* ceremony was widely observed in Turkey and elsewhere, and there was hardly a family that did not have four or five chickens slaughtered for *Kapparot.*[103] This was a major source of income for the *shoḥatim* and a heyday for the *pirḥei shoḥatim* (apprentice *shoḥatim*), who had a wonderful opportunity to practice their trade. The *Kapparot* ceremony is enacted by some families in America, although most families no longer abide by the tradition of taking a live rooster for a male and a live hen for a female (the rooster or hen should preferably be white) to swing around their head three times while reciting the declaration, "This is my atonement," etc. Most families today in the Judeo-Spanish communities use money for *ẓedaka[illegible]* in lieu of the chicken.[104] This money is given to the poor, just as the [illegible]e of the chicken used to be given to the poor by families

using the chicken,[105] or, in those instances where they did not have the custom of eating the chicken themselves at the *seudah hamafseket,* they gave the actual chicken to the poor,[106] especially to needy scholars, who would eat it to bolster themselves for the fast. In Salonica, some received the thirty-nine *malkot* (lashes) in a symbolic fashion from the representative of the Bet Din.[107]

On Erev Yom Kippur, before going to synagogue for the *Kal Nidrei,* the parents blessed the children with a very special *Birkat Habanim* for Yom Kippur.[108] It was customary that poor people would be invited to the *seudah hamafseket,* when there were such people available who needed to be given food before the fast. Visiting guests were welcomed to the synagogue as well, and were accorded special hospitality. There was always the possibility that this guest could be a long-missed *ẓaddik* or even Elijah the Prophet himself.

It was customary that one would not eat things which would arouse thirst, such as spices. Simple, bland foods would be eaten which would be satisfying and also foods which would not stimulate the body unduly.[109]

With the approaching sunset, one prepares himself for the five forms of affliction, starting by removing his shoes.[110]

In Bulgaria, some of the extremely pious merchants would give the keys to their shops to non-Jewish acquaintances in order to rid themselves on Yom Kippur day of everything which could remind them of everyday anxiety or material interests.

Before the evening service begins, the *Elokeinu v'Elokei avotenu* is recited. Then the *Akeda* is recited, followed by the *Kaddish.*[111] The special prayer *Lekha Keli teshukati* is recited with a special melody.[112] From the portion of this prayer which begins with the words *Veemod negdekha erom,* the entire congregation stands and remains standing until the conclusion of the prayer. The next special selection recited is *Shema koli.*[113]

Following the *Ane ani shefal kol hashefalim,* the auctioning of the *miẓvot* takes place and it is done in Ladino.[114]

The *petiḥat haheikhal* is a very important honor. Whoever purchases it is also given the honor of opening the Ark after the *Neilah* service, at which time each male worshipper in the congregation comes forward to kiss the Torah Scrolls in the Ark, and then re[illegible]rns to his place to pray the *Arvit* service before going home. It is [illegible]esting to

note that the congregation does not open the Ark *during* the *Neilah*, but *after* it is completed. All of the honors for carrying a Torah in connection with the *Kal Nidrei* ceremonies are auctioned off.[115] After the procession, the Sefer Torah for *Kal Nidrei* is taken to the *teva* accompanied by the *rimonim*. The other Torah Scrolls are replaced in the Ark. Prior to the recitation of the *Kal Nidrei*, the Kabbalistic prayer *Ribon Haolamim* is recited.[116] The *Kal Nidrei*[117] is then chanted with great awe, and is followed by the portion of the Zohar which begins with *Kam Rabi Shimon*. At this portion of the service, the Prayer for the Government is offered (*Hanoten teshua lamelakhim*), followed by a *Mi sheberakh* for the congregation, as well as the *Mi sheberakh* for the newly designated *Ḥatan Torah* and *Ḥatan Bereshit*. All these prayers were chanted by the *paytan* with a very special, sweet voice.[118]

The *Hashkavah* prayers are offered at this solemn juncture in the *Kal Nidrei* service to commemorate the lives of all the male leaders of the congregation who had helped to make congregational life possible.[119] All past presidents and rabbis of the congregation are mentioned. In addition, those who have died in the armed services, in the defense of the United States or the State of Israel, are remembered in the *Hashkavah* prayers at this time. Obviously, individuals also recite the *Hashkavah* prayer for their loved ones as well, when called to the Sefer during the day.

The recessional of the Torah Scrolls to the Ark then follows with the chanting of the *Vehu raḥum* in the same melody as it is chanted when it is recited on the cemetery. It is chanted as many times as necessary to accompany the recessional of the Sifrei Torah to the Holy Ark.

The *Arvit* service for the evening of Yom Kippur is then recited in the special Yom Kippur liturgical melody. A very popular *pizmon* chanted in a very catchy tune which is extremely popular, is *Ana bekareenu lekol shavenu*.[120] Toward the conclusion of the service, a special prayer, *Yehi razon milfanekha*, is recited followed by the seven-time recitation of *Vehaya pi rosho betokho*.[121]

It is the custom to then learn the entire book of *Tehillim* (Psalms), which is considered to be a special *segula* for atonement.[122] Therefore, sections of the *Tehillim* are read, followed by the *Kaddish* and the special *Yehi razon* for *parnasah* (livelihood).[123] This is followed by *Kaddish* and *Aleinu*, and the service concludes with the *Yigdal*.

In some congregations, the *Keter Malkhut* is read after the *Arvit* service, and in some others, at the beginning of the *Shaḥarit* service.[124]

In the Yom Kippur morning service, all of the *piyutim* are recited after the *Shaḥarit* service, immediately before taking out the Torah. These *pizmonim* are *Shofet kol haarez*,[125] *Hashem negdekha kol taavati*,[126] and *Shinanim*[127] (by Rabbi Shelomo ben Yehuda ibn Gabirol).[128] The special song *Vehakohanim* is chanted four times during the *Avoda*.[129]

The *Avinu Malkenu* and the *Kah shema evionekha*, are sung in Ladino as well as in Hebrew.[130] The *La uma presiada* is chanted in Ladino at the conclusion of *Kah shema evionekha*.

During the course of the day, the *shamash* would walk about the synagogue and pour a little rose water into the hands of the worshippers to enable them to make a blessing and to lift their spirits, especially at *Neilah*.[131] Sometimes they would sniff tobacco.

The *Neilah* service is chanted by the rabbi as his special honor and privilege. The introductory prayer for *Neilah*, *Kel nora alila*,[132] is chanted in a very catchy, popular tune. It is perhaps one of the best-known tunes among Sephardim. The chanting of this prayer is extremely similar among all Sephardic groups. Following the *Neilah* service, the *shofar* is blown (ten *kolot*), and a *terua gedolah* is blasted at the end.[133] *Arvit* is prayed, followed by *Birkat halevanah*[134] to start the season with a *mizvah*.

After the *Arvit* service, everyone goes home to "break the fast" (*para cortar taanit*).[135] In some families, the fast is broken with a light dairy meal. They then wash out their mouths and partake of a special heavy meat soup with a mixture of vegetables, which is very satisfying.

Between the two meals, they would go out to knock in the first nail of the *sukkah*.[136] After the meal, they go to the grandfather to bless them for the New Year.[137] Some visit the rabbis on the day after Kippur.

It is the custom of the Jews from Turkey to go to *Kever Avot* on Erev Yom Kippur, and for the Jews from Rhodes to go to *Kever Avot* on Erev Rosh Hashanah. Wherever possible, this is done on the Sunday before, so as to allow for the widest participation.

In some communities, the rabbi and ḥazzan wear white on the High Holy Days.[138] None of the members of the congregation wear white nor do they wear a *kittel*. The idea of the *kittel* is generally

unknown among Sephardim. In some congregations, it is a custom to give the *petiḥa* for that portion of the service where they memorialize those who died during the Holocaust to someone who was in the Holocaust. All other *petiḥot* and honors are auctioned.

As Practiced by the Spanish and Portuguese Jews

The ceremony of *Kapparot* was not observed in Holland and is not followed by the Spanish and Portuguese in America.[139]

The *Minḥa* service before Kippur (as Yom Kippur is referred to by the Spanish and Portuguese Jews) is prayed at 1:30 in the afternoon. Following the *Minḥa,* some of the worshippers rekindle the lights on the *teba* in the synagogue.[140]

While in Holland it was the custom to recite *hatarat nedarim,*[141] it is not recited in America as a part of the tradition.

Following the *seudah hamafseket,*[142] the lights are kindled in the home, as on the Sabbath with the appropriate blessing for Yom Kippur.

At the conclusion of the *seudah hamafseket,* it is the tradition for the father of the household to bless his children with the traditional blessing for boys and girls[143] followed by the Priestly Benedictions.

The evening service opens with the chanting of the *Shema koli.*[144]

A number of special *Hashkabah* prayers are then recited for brethren of congregations throughout the world who have passed away, and for prominent individuals who helped in the development of the congregation.[145] Until 1978, it was a custom in Congregation Shearith Israel in New York City to recite the names of one-third of the Perpetual List at this point, but that has now been changed, and these names are instead read during the day of Yom Kippur.

The *parnas* then ascends the *teba.* Special *Mi sheberakh* prayers are recited to announce the names of those who will be receiving the special honors.[146] These are: those who will carry the Sifrei Torah for the *Kal Nidrei;* the one who will accompany the Sifrei Torah on the next day when they are taken from the Ark; the *seganim* who will stand alongside the ḥazzan at *Arbit*;[147] the one who will chant *Zemirot* the following morning; the one who will recite the *Hashem hu ha-Elokim*; the *seganim* to stand alongside the ḥazzan at the *Shaḥarit* the next morning; the one who will chant the Haftarah at *Shaḥarit;* and the one who will recite the Haftarah at *Minḥa.*

The ḥazzan continues with *Kohanekha,*[148] and then the members of the congregation who have been designated for the special honor of carrying the Torah Scrolls from the Ark to the *teba* remove the Holy Scrolls from the *heikhal* and begin their dignified procession. The first Sefer is always carried by the *Ḥatan Torah,* and the second by the *Ḥatan Bereshit.* The Torah procession concludes at the *teba,* where all those holding the scrolls (which are dressed in bright white mantles)[149] stand throughout the recitation of the *Kal Nidrei.* Each of those carrying a Torah is dressed in formal evening wear with a high silk hat.[150]

After the *Kal Nidrei* has been recited three times, special prayers are offered for the government, the congregation, the *Ḥatan Torah,* the *Ḥatan Bereshit,*[151] for those congregations who helped to found America's first synagogue (namely, Congregation Talmud Torah in Amsterdam, Congregation Shaar Hashamaim in London, Congregation Mikveh Israel in Curaçao, Congregation Berakha Ve-shalom in Surinam, and other communities whose help assured the completion of the Mill Street Synagogue of 1730), for the Holy City of Jerusalem, for those who are held in captivity, for those who are journeying; for the sick, and a special prayer for the women. This prayer, which is unique, is offered on behalf of *Kol hanashim haḥashubot vehaznuot: nesuot, betulot, vealmanot.* Both the prayer for the sick and the prayer for the women are not found among other Sephardic rituals. The prayer for the women was probably initiated in 1730. The Portuguese language in which it was originally written describes the merit of the women "for the *mizvah* which they did in presenting to the synagogue the white decorations for the Holy Scroll of the Torah of the congregation and the curtain of the Holy Ark for use on the High Holy Days."[152]

The *Yimlokh* is chanted twice, and the procession begins to return the Sefarim to the Ark to the chanting of Psalm 29, *Mizmor LeDavid habu lashem benei elim.*[153]

It should be noted that the *Kal Nidrei* is recited in a different fashion than that of other groups. Whereas the entire prayer is recited three times, the first half until *Sheba aleinu leshalom* is recited by the ḥazzan, and the congregation continues with *Nidreina la nidrei* until the end of *Ki lekhol haam bishegaga.* At the conclusion of the third recitation, the ḥazzan recites the *Sheheḥeyanu.*[154]

they finish reading his portion, Genesis 2:1–3, they begin anew to read from the beginning of *Bereshit,* and the whole *parashah* is read to the very end.[65]

As Practiced by Judeo-Spanish Jews

Among the decorations for the *sukkah* is the hanging of *biscochos,* which are circular baked pastries, as well as fruits hanging from the *sekhakh.* The walls are decorated according to the taste of the individual.[66] Some bake *biscochos* in the shape of a *ẓiyyon* (six-cornered Star of David).

The *arba'ah minim* (four kinds of vegetation) appear different because there are no holders on the *lulav.* Instead, the three *hadassim* (myrtle twigs) and the two *aravot* (weeping willows) are tied directly to the *lulav* with a strip of the palm branch which has been peeled from the *lulav.* It, therefore, looks different from those *lulavim* which have a handle made out of woven palm strips with receptacles on each side for the insertion of the *hadassim* and *aravot.* In addition, on the top third of the *lulav* there are seven knots of date palm strands tied so that they can be removed at each of the seven circuits during the Hoshaana Rabba processional. These are placed on the *lulav* prior to the beginning of the festival.[67]

Immediately after Sukkot is concluded, the remaining *hadassim* and *aravot* of the *lulav* and the five *badei aravah* (bunches of willows) which were used for *ḥibut aravah* (the beating of the *Hoshaanot*) are taken to the home, where they are placed on the top of the lintel of the door (usually in the back of the house) where they are kept until Passover. Prior to Pesaḥ, they are used for *bedikat ḥameẓ* (search for the leaven), and they are used as a symbolic broom to scoop up or sweep up the ten pieces of *ḥameẓ* to be found in the ceremony, which have been placed around the house by the housewife. Symbolically, this connects the festival of Sukkot to Pesaḥ. By retaining the *hadassim* and the *aravot* to be used for the search for the leaven, we make a direct connection between the two festivals. This is actually in fulfillment of the Biblical statement *Ulekaḥtem agudat ezov utevaltem badam,* meaning, "and you shall take a cluster of hyssop and use it to dip the blood of the Passover sacrifice on the door" (Exodus 12:22).

The *etrog* was retained to be used for making the blessing over the *Havdalah, Barukh . . . hanoten reiaḥ tov bepeirot,* as long as it was fresh and aromatic. When it was dried up, they returned to using lemons for *Havdalah.*[68]

Before the *Arvit* service (when Sukkot falls on a weekday), they auction off the special honor of providing the *etrog* and *lulav,* upon which the congregation recites the blessing. This is called *Por seer mezake a manyana.* In some communities, a set of *etrog* and *lulav* was also purchased for the ladies to use.

The evening service for Sukkot begins with the special prayer designating the festival, as is the custom for all special evening services among the Sephardim. This *Mizmor leSukkot* is, *Lamenaẓẓeaḥ, maskil livnei Koraḥ.*[69] The festival *Arvit* is recited, and there is the special *Shir hamaalot leDavid samaḥti beomrim li beit Hashem nelekh* after *Kaddish* at the conclusion of the service, immediately before *Aleinu.*[70]

After going home, there is a special prayer recited for sitting in the *sukkah.* Then there is the invitation extended to one of the *Ushpizin* (special guests) on each of the seven nights, followed by the recitation of the *Kiddush.*[71]

The morning service is the regular Sukkot festival service, which includes the recitation of the *Hoshaanot* immediately after *Musaf.* They auction off the special honor of carrying the Torah (which is called *Sefer Hoshaanot*) during the *Hoshaanot.* The one who acquires this honor is privileged to carry the Sefer Torah to the *teva,* where the Sefer is held during the processional.

On the Sabbath, the *Hoshaanot* are recited immediately prior to *Musaf* when the Sifrei Torah are being returned to the *heikhal.*[72]

The night of Hoshaana Rabba is a special one. Many stay up all night studying *Tikkun Leil Hoshaana Rabba.* The *Tehillim* are divided into seven parts. The short *Seliḥot* are recited after each of the five books of *Tehillim,* and *Kaddish* is recited. The *Alfa Beta* (Psalm 119) is also recited. This is called *Temanya Apeih.*[73]

The custom regarding making *Kiddush* and eating in the *sukkah* on the eighth day of the festival (Shemini Ḥag Haaẓeret) is observed differently by various groups in the community. Some recite the *Kiddush* in the *sukkah* and do not eat in the *sukkah.* Others do both, while yet another group of Judeo-Spanish Jews neither recites *Kid-*

dush nor sits in the *sukkah.* The latter group has a special ceremony which is enacted late in the afternoon of Hoshaana Rabba (the seventh day of Sukkot) wherein they gather in the *sukkah* for a special party. Macaroni and cheese are served (*macaron con queso*). Following this meal, one of the canvas walls of the *sukkah* is lifted so as to declare the *sukkah* as *pasul* (unfit) and therefore no longer usable for ritual purposes. Thus, the *sukkah* is not used on Shemini Ḥag Haaẓeret by those who follow this particular tradition.[74]

Simḥat Torah

Simḥat Torah is celebrated with special joy. The children are all invited to the synagogue and are given candies and cakes. After the *Arvit* service, all the Torah Scrolls are taken from the Ark and marched around during the seven *hakkafot* with the rabbi and with congregants carrying the scrolls of the law. Each of the seven circuits is in honor of one of these seven ancestors in whose merit we pray that God will remember us: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, David, and Solomon. These same *hakkafot* are made the next morning in a similar manner.[75]

There are three *ḥatanim* on the morning of Simḥat Torah, namely, *Ḥatan meona, Ḥatan mesayem* (another name for *Ḥatan Torah*), and *Ḥatan Bereshit.*[76]

In some synagogues the *ḥatanim* sit in special chairs and they are showered with candies (sugar coated almonds). The *ḥatan* would generally invite everyone to his home for a lavish party after the services on Simḥat Torah day.[77]

Every male who has children is individually called to read in the Torah. The rabbi takes the *tallit* and wraps it around the father and the child at the portion of *Ul'Asher amar,* which is the counterpart of the *Kol hanearim* observed by other groups.

The one who is called to read the last portion of the Torah is called *Ḥatan mesayem.* For the *Ḥatan mesayem,* the entire Torah section from *Vezot haberakha* is read until the very end. After the Torah reading has been completed, the rabbi chants, together with the congregation, *Hadran alakh oreita kaddisha,* just as in a *siyum.* As the Sefer Torah is returned to its place, the congregation sings *Lekh leshalom bimk[illegible]ha.*

Before the *Ḥatan Bereshit* (also referred to as *Ḥatan maṯḥil*) has his portion read, the ḥazzan opens with the words *besimana tava.* The *pizmonim* chanted during the *hakkafot* begin with *Seu shearim rasheikhem.*[78] A special *pizmon* chanted on each of the days of Sukkot as the Torah is taken from the *heikhal* to the *teva* is *Ẓamea nafshi l'Elokim.*

The special honors for the *ḥatanim* are not auctioned off for Simḥat Torah. Instead, these honors are given to three men who were recently engaged to become married, or to three men who were recently married, or to three individuals who recently celebrated a fiftieth wedding anniversary, etc. The *Ḥatan mesayem* honor is not usually given to the rabbi.[79]

The greeting for the Sukkot festival is, *Moadim lesimḥa,* and the answer is, *Ḥagim uzemanim lesason.* During the week, for Ḥol Hamoed, the greeting is *Buen moed.* At the conclusion of Yom Tov, they greet each other with the declaration, *Buenos anios.* These greetings apply to all festivals.

It was the custom in Salonika, which may be recalled by some who came to America from that city, to refer to their synagogue and other synagogues by their nicknames, a privilege allowed only on Simḥat Torah. Each synagogue had a nickname which identified it either with a vegetable, an animal, or some object such as a chair, horn, etc. Thus, when congregants would meet one another in the street, they would jokingly refer to their own synagogue or their friend's synagogue by its nickname. In various synagogues they would also do something demonstrative to identify with the nickname of the synagogue. For example, the nickname of the Eibora Synagogue was "the rice synagogue." Therefore, on the morning of Simḥat Torah, they would cook a lot of rice, and, during the *hakkafot,* they would give each congregant a couple of spoons of rice to taste. In another synagogue, whose nickname was "Arak," they would distribute drinks of arak (raki) during the *hakkafot.* In yet another synagogue, which was nicknamed "the chair," they would sit the *ḥatan* who was holding the Torah on a chair, and they would tie his feet to the chair with rope.[80] All of the foregoing ceremonies were enacted to display the spirit of joy, fun, and frolic which Simḥat Torah evoked amongst the people. In some synagogues this same spirit of special joy is still an important part of the celebration of Simḥat Torah.

They also had special public games which were played on the night of Moẓaei Simḥat Torah at the party which was held in the courtyard of the home of the *Ḥatan mesayem*. The various charade-type games included one in which the treasurer of the congregation plays the role of the teacher, and the guests act out the role of the students who are being taught special songs by the teacher, and they repeat the songs verse by verse. Other traditional themes for the charades are a scene in the tailor shop where one goes to order a suit made to measure, a mock trial, etc. All of these games were followed by a banquet featuring cheeses, fruits, liquor (especially white wine), and specially prepared onions. Neither coffee nor anything boiled was served at this *seudah*.[81]

As Practiced by Spanish and Portuguese Jews

In preparation for the Sukkot festival, "on the day before Sukkot, children as young as seven or eight years of age hasten from school to string cranberry festoons and help make a giant cluster of deep blue plums. Hung at the entrance to the *sukkah* (of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue), these seem as though they might have been grapes gathered from the vines by the brook of Eshkol, which had to be strung from a pole to be carried on the shoulders of two men."[82]

Special decorations in the congregational *sukkah*, which has won wide acclaim for its classic expression of the harvest joy, are such familiar decorative objects as "the Damascene lamp once hanging in a home in Aleppo, the multi-colored maize that came from the fireside of an Indian cliff-dweller in New Mexico, the west-wall cover of bright red jute velour woven under water, the fresh orchids set in the handsome crystal vase which graced a stately dining table a century ago, and all the other appurtenances of the *sukkah* ceremonial's living testimonies of faith. A special exhibit which is enjoyed are the four dozen plates made for the *sukkah* depicting the emblems of the Festival. On them, the palm branch, willow, myrtle, and *etrog* (citron) of Sukkot are drawn like a garland around the central seal of the congregation, which proclaims that the world stands upon the pillars of Justice, Righteousness, and Truth. Choice fruits hang from the *Sekhakh*"[83] (foliage which covers the *sukkah* roof). It is a tradition that t[illegible]ughout the eight days of the Festival, congregants gather in

the *sukkah* for a simple breakfast after each morning service. Hospitality is extended by the congregation to all those who wish to bring their own food and to enjoy the use of the *sukkah*. The walls of the *sukkah*, which are bedecked with the ancient *parokhet* of a faraway congregation and with all the other special hangings, are truly impressive.

The blessing for *Hallel* is *Ligmor et Hahallel* on Sukkot, as on all Festivals except during the last six days of Pesaḥ when *Likro et Hahallel* is said.[84]

At the Sukkot morning services, the *arba'ah minim* (four kinds of vegetation) are passed around in the women's gallery for each woman to have the opportunity to recite the blessing over the *etrog* and *lulab*. A special honor is conferred upon two men who stand to the right and to the left of the *teba* offering the *lulab* and *etrog* to all the men and boys who wish to come forward to make the blessing. This is done immediately *after* the *Hallel*.[85]

The *lulab* is waved once in the *Hallel* at the section of *Hodu lashem*, once at the section of *Ana Hashem*, and in the last, *Hodu lashem*, only once. This makes for a total of only three times that the *lulab* is waved during the *Hallel*, which differs from the customs of all the other groups.[86]

However, the general procedure for waving the *lulab* is similar to other groups. The waving takes place in all four directions, beginning with the east, south, west, and north, upwards and downwards, turning the body around completely in each of these directions, while enacting the wavings.[87]

Following the *Hallel*, the Prayer for the Government and the Blessings for the Congregation and for Israel are recited.[88]

An interesting addition is the recitation of a special prayer on the Festivals, *Shalosh peamim bashana*, which is found in the Torah reading for the Festivals (Deuteronomy 16:16–17).

The *Hoshaanot* are recited *after* the *Musaf*. This is different from some other Sephardic traditions.[89]

The *hakkafah* begins with the taking out of the Sefer, which is brought to the *teba* and stays there until the end of the *Hoshaanah*. While the recitation by the ḥazzan and the congregation of *Ana Kel eḥad* takes place, the *hakkafah* is made from the *teba* to the Ark and around the *teba* and then back to the *teba*.[90]

monds to pay off their losses. Late afternoon, on Shabbat, the men left for the synagogue for "Minha," the afternoon service, and "Arvit," the evening service. After "Arvit" everyone was anxious to return home for Havdalah, the closing service for the Sabbath. This was followed by a party with the neighbors, for playing games and socializing. One of the most popular games was called "jouar a los filjanes" which is a game played with 12 demi-tasse cups and a ring. The ring was placed under a cup and there was a guessing game as to which cup it was under. It was played by two teams and the losing team had to buy something for the winners. In the middle 1920's I remember having to go to the only merchant who sold Halvah and "Burmuelos" (a sort of popover dipped in honey). The winners were paid off, believe it or not, with Halvah and Burmuelos!

This socializing time was also a time for "kontando konsejas," telling fairy tales, and these stories continued from week to week. I believe we were the originators of the "Sephardic Soap Opera."

By 10:00 pm, everyone was in bed as the men had to rise early for the Tefillah at 6:00 am. After the Tefillah on Sunday, they reverted back to the ordinary daily breakfast consisting of toasted French bread or their homemade bread, dipped in olive oil, and sprinkled with cheese or eaten with a piece of Feta cheese and coffee.

You will note that milk has never been mentioned. The reason is that milk was reserved for the sickly, or sometimes for use in cooking, since it was very expensive. However, from the 1930's on, milk became more plentiful and then became part of our diet. On cold evenings, it was customary to boil milk, pour in blanched ground almonds for a very delicious and nutritious drink called "Almandrada."

Rosh Hashanah

During the month before Rosh Hashanah, Selihoth (prayers asking for forgiveness) were recited, generally in the homes of those in mourning. On the day before Rosh

Hashanah, the men went to the cemetery to visit the graves of their dear ones.

The evening meals included the "yehi ratsones," blessings over several symbolic foods. It was customary to place sugar on the table instead of salt symbolizing a sweet year. This sugar was kept apart to be used throughout the year for any time when the solution of sugar and water was called for (see Superstitions).

It was also a custom to save the tablecloth we used the first night with all the crumbs folded inside. When dawn broke on Rosh Hashanah we took the tablecloth with the crumbs to the sea with someone who had been ill. If no one in our family was ill we could loan it to a family that needed it. The tablecloth was shaken over the head of the sick person with prayers. This was called "olas a la mar," or making waves in the ocean, and was supposed to cure the sick. Another custom was to avoid wearing anything new on the foot, such as shoes, stockings or slippers on Rosh Hashanah.

Yom Kippur and Kaparoth

A day or two before Yom Kippur a slaughterer, (shohet) and the caretaker (shamash) of the Synagogue, would go from house to house to perform the kaparoth. We all had chickens tied-up in a large pan with ashes so when the chicken's neck was cut, the blood would run onto the ashes and not stain the pot.

On these days engaged couples exchanged gifts. The bride sent a white rooster with its head sprinkled with gold leaf and sweets and the bridegroom sent a white chicken and sweets.

Each family donated a chicken to a poorer family. Generally one chicken per family member was slaughtered, that is if the family could afford it. If not, one chicken would do for 3-4 children. The children were given a small white chicken about a week in advance to care for, until it was slaughtered.

The day before Yom Kippur at noon, we ate a very rich,

leisurely meal. It consisted of fish, pastelikos (meat pies), chicken, fruit and coffee. In the late afternoon we ate chicken cooked with fresh tomatoes, vegetables, noodles toasted and baked with tomato sauce, fresh fruit and coffee.

To break the Fast after Kippur, we washed out our mouths and then had a glass of pipitada, a drink made from the seeds of any melon, except watermelons. It is made by first drying the seeds, grinding them and placing them in water all night and letting them drain. The result is a milky substance served with rose water and sugar. The table was set. Bread was dunked into olive oil and eaten with salt. Cheese, fried fish, and spinach or tomato soufle were served. We did not serve boyos or borekas because it was too heavy after the fast. Many fruits and sweets were served. One or two hours after breaking the fast we served a rice soup with chicken and vegetables.

Festival of Sukkot

Five days after Yom Kippur, the festival of Sukkot was celebrated. The street vendors would come to the Juderia a few days before Sukkot to sell myrtle and palm leaves for the festival. The Sukkah was like a booth, and myrtle and palm leaves were used to cover it as a roof.

The children looked forward to decorating the Sukkah. They made colored-paper lanterns and paper mache chains. They helped with the hanging of the fruit and "roskitas." The walls consisted of white sheets, decorated with oriental rugs and chevres (shawls, embroidered with metallic threads), tapestries made of velvet and also embroidered with gold threads. The doors were framed with palm branches and decorated with fresh flowers.

We ate all our meals in the Sukkah for eight days. Everyone in the Juderia at one time or another would stop in at a Sukkah for the blessing (beraha) of the Lulav and Etrog. These two items were symbols of the harvest season. At night, a chair was placed on a table, and a covered glass of water and a Bible were placed on the chair. We were told

that Eliyahu Anavi would come down from the sky to drink the water.

The seventh night was the Vilada de Oshana Raba (a night dedicated to study). The sacred texts were read either at the synagogue or at the home of a mourner, and lasted all night. The next morning, it was a tradition to eat "al-itrea," plain spaghetti with grated cheese, served with a beverage made with water, cinnamon and sugar. This was served only at the home of the mourners.

On Simhat Torah, everyone went to the synagogue, and all the Torah scrolls were brought out and carried from one synagogue to another with much jubilation and singing. At this time, several men were honored as "hatanim."

Tubishevat

Tubishevat is a Jewish holiday that falls on the 15th day of the month of Shevat. This is the holiday celebrating the planting of the trees. On Tubishevat, it was the custom in Rhodes to exchange plates filled with fruit, sweets, and wine throughout the community.

The children were the bearers of the exchange. If they delivered water, for instance, the recipients would exchange it with wine and other types of sweets. The children would carry a little hand-made satchel called "tallega" around their neck. As they stopped at each home, they would be given a treat of some kind of sweets, which they would accumulate in their satchel.

Tisha B'ab

Aside from the fast observed on Yom Kippur, the next most important fast day is Tisha B'ab which occurs in the summer. This day commemorates the destruction of the "Beth-a-Mikdash," (the Temples of Jerusalem). The period of fasting was from sunset to sunset.

The men spent the morning in the "Kal" seated on the floor, with the lights dimmed, reading and lamenting until noon. After noon, the mood changed from "limunio a dia

Unit II – Shabbat

Enduring Understandings:

1. Sephardic culture expresses itself through its own language, culture and customs that continue to be observed in the Modern Jewish world.
2. While Sephardic practice shares much in common with Ashkenazic practice, its differences can bring an added layer of richness to the American Jewish experience.
3. The Sephardic community continues to evolve and bring diversity as it interacts with the postmodern world.
4. Sephardic Jews celebrate the holidays in a way that is thoroughly Jewish and distinctly its own.

Goals:

1. To introduce students to an alternate expression of Judaism.
2. To increase student understanding of the themes behind Jewish holidays.
3. To expose students to the uniquely Sephardic expression of holidays.
4. To enable students to experience the cultural richness of the Ladino language.
5. To introduce students to the musical aspect of Sephardic Jewry.
6. To provide students with the opportunity to discover Sephardic folktales.
7. To encourage students to explore their own Jewish identity through the close examination of a Judaism sometimes different from their own.

Objectives:

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

1. Compare and contrast their own Shabbat observance to the observances learned in this unit
2. Identify common themes of Shabbat: making Shabbat special, beautifying Shabbat, family
3. Analyze Sephardic Shabbat observance through careful reading of folktales
4. Produce elements of Sephardic Shabbat cuisine through baking
5. Model a Sephardic Torah auction using basic Ladino vocabulary
6. Perform a Sephardic version of *Adon Olam*
7. Identify and explain the layout of a typical Sephardic synagogue

Sample Lesson Plan

"The Magic of Saffron – bring a very small sample of saffron to class and have students discuss what they think it is. Then have the students read the folktale The Magic of Saffron. Explain to the students what saffron is and show the saffron pictures included in the CD. Serve each student a sample of Arroz de Sabato. Discuss the significance of using an expensive spice on Shabbat."

Enduring Understandings:

1. While Sephardic practice shares much in common with Ashkenazic practice, its differences bring an added layer of richness to the American Jewish experience.

Goals:

1. To introduce students to an alternate expression of Judaism.
2. To expose students to the uniquely Sephardic expression of Shabbat.
3. To provide students with the opportunity to discover Sephardic folktales.
4. To encourage students to explore their own Jewish identity through the close examination of a Judaism sometimes different from their own.

Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Hypothesize regarding the significance of saffron
2. Identify common themes of Shabbat: making Shabbat special
3. Analyze Sephardic Shabbat observance through careful reading of folktales
4. Explain the importance of saffron in Sephardic Shabbat cooking

Set Induction:

Pass around a sample of saffron to the class, having them examine it. Ask them:

- What they think it is
- What they think it's used for

Briefly tell students that saffron comes from the stamens of a particular flower.

- How much they think it costs
- How they'd feel if someone gave it to them as a gift.

Explain to them that the Sultan of Turkey was once given the same gift, not knowing what it is.

Middle Activity:

Have the students read the story out loud.

After the first three paragraphs, ask:

- How does the Sultan react to the King of Greece's gift?
- Do you think you would feel the same way as him?

Finish the story and then ask:

- Why does the rabbi say that the gift is precious?
- After the saffron saves him, do you think the Sultan thought the King of Greece's gift was equal to his own?
- According to this story, why do the Jews of Turkey use saffron in their rice?

Pass around images of a saffron flower from the CD. Make sure students can see how few stamens are on each flower. Also show the pictures of the people gathering saffron on a field and separating each stamen. Explain to students that saffron is one of the most expensive spices we can buy, even today. Saffron is highly prized and is used in Mediterranean cooking. Sephardic Jews use Saffron on Shabbat in a special rice dish.

- Serve each student some Arroz de Sabato and show them the color of the rice. Hold up the saffron bottle again, showing how much saffron is in the rice and how much that costs in modern money. Have students try the rice.

Closing activity:

Ask students:

- Why do Sephardic Jews use saffron on Shabbat?
- Are there special customs your family does only on Shabbat?

Materials:

- Saffron
- Copies of *The Magic of Saffron*
- Pictures of saffron flower/process
- *Arroz de Sabato* (see attached recipe)

The Magic of Saffron[1]

Once a peace treaty was made between the Sultan of Turkey and the King of Greece. The Sultan sent beautiful gifts to the King as part of the treaty. There were all kinds of precious jewels, silks and satins, expensive carpets, gold and silver objects, and other luxurious things. When the messenger of the Sultan brought these gifts to the King, he sent a small box back, which was doubly sealed and wrapped. He commanded that no one but the Sultan open the box.

After the messenger returned to Turkey with the box, the Sultan looked at it with a sour expression on his face. "This gift certainly is small," he said. "But maybe it contains something so precious that there are only a few of them in the world. He opened the box and found that all it contained was a small bag with a handful of saffron threads.

"Look how that pig makes fun of me?" huffed the Sultan. "I send him all kinds of expensive things from my palace – precious jewels and cloth and carpets and gold and silver and look at what he sends me! A handful of flower stamens!"

The Sultan was ready to call out his fleet of ships and sail to Greece to wage war again when an old rabbi, one of his advisers, came up to him and said, "Your Excellency, you are a very wise and lucky man. I heard about the gift that the King of Greece sent you. This gift is very precious. It can protect you from evil."

"How do you know that?" bellowed the Sultan.

"Tomorrow, travel to the north of the kingdom, where the wild bears live, and you will see. When you show them the package, they will run away."

So the Sultan did as the rabbi suggested. He went to a place where many wild bears lived. And as soon as he showed them the saffron, they ran away. So the Sultan proclaimed the wisdom of the rabbi and because of it, he praised and honored all the Jewish people who lived in Turkey. And that is why the Jews consider saffron a magical plant and cook their Shabbat rice with it.

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[1] Sternberg, Rabbi Robert. The Sephardic Kitchen. New York: HarperCollins Publishing, 1996.

Arroz de Sabato[2]

Arroz de Sabato is the classic saffron rice that has been served for centuries by Sephardic Jews for the Sabbath.

DRYING TIME (RICE): 20 minutes
PREPARATION TIME: 1 hour
YIELD: 4 cups cooked rice
SERVINGS: 6-8

2 cups long grain white or brown rice
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 scant teaspoon salt
4-5 cups chicken stock or Vegetable Stock
1 bay leaf
¼ teaspoon saffron threads
¼ cup water

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees
2. If using white rice you will need 4 cups stock. If using brown rice, you will use 5 cups stock.
3. If using white rice, place the rice in a colander and rinse it in the sink in cold water until the water runs clear. Allow the rice to drain and dry for 20 minutes. If using brown rice skip this step.
4. Over medium heat, heat the olive oil in a casserole with a tight-fitting lid. Sauté the rice in the oil until it starts to brown.
5. Sprinkle the salt over the rice and pour in the stock. Add 1 bay leaf and ¼ teaspoon saffron threads dissolved in ¼ cup boiling water to the rice together. Cover tightly and place in the oven. Bake for 30-40 minutes (white rice) to 1 hour (brown rice). When the pilaf is done, all of the liquid will have been absorbed. The rice gets a beautiful yellow color and a heady aroma from the saffron and bay leaf. The bay leaf will be resting on top of the rice at the end of cooking. Remove and discard it before serving.

[2] Sternberg, Robert. The Sephardic Kitchen. HarperCollins, New York: 1996.

Activities:

1. Have students keep a journal in a three-ring binder, which enables them to articulate their own holiday observance and also compare and contrast it to Sephardic observance. Use the handout included in this unit. Have students write at the beginning and the end of the unit and encourage them to share their thoughts with the rest of the class.

2. The Sabbath Walking Stick – Students begin the lesson by creating their own visual representation of a Shabbat table, including food, Judaica etc. Have students read the story *The Sabbath Walking Stick*. Then have students examine the text closely in order to identify the Sephardic Shabbat meal (rice, sweet bread, chicken, fish). Have students point out other messages from the story and why they are also an important part of Shabbat (helping those who are hungry, helping those in need, not thinking only of oneself).
   Ask students the following questions:
   - What is included on your own Shabbat table?
     i. What is similar/different to this story?
   - Why is this story a Sephardic story?

3. Synagogue Layout – Print out the diagram of a Sephardic synagogue and accompanying photos from the CD. Show students where the Torah reading takes place in a Sephardic service and ask how this might change the relationship between the congregation and the service. Have students compare a Sephardic and Ashkenazic Torah scroll. If the synagogue has access to both, take the students to the sanctuary. If not, then use the images found in the CD.
   Ask students the following:
   - Where would you want to sit?
   - How would you feel about having the Torah in the middle of the room?

4. Aliyot Auction – Begin this activity by teaching the students basic numbers in Ladino (see accompanying handout with unit). Many students may already know Spanish. Explain to the students that Ladino is similar to Spanish but there are some differences. Next, describe a Sephardic Torah service to the students, explaining that congregants bid on the aliyot in the service. Recreate the following on a large poster board: "… dar por meldar la haftorah" (insert number at beginning of

sentence) and teach students to use this phrase. Play audio clip from the following website of a Torah auction, having students listen for the phrase they just learned.
http://www.rhodesjewishmuseum.org/waves/auction.ra

5. *Adon Olam* – Have students find *Adon Olam* in their own siddurim. See how many students know a version of the song already. Then, explain to students that Sephardic Jews also have many versions of this text. Have a song leader teach the students a Sephardic version (see CD). In turn, have students perform the song in front of the school or during a family service.

6. Invited guest – Invite a Sephardic Jew from your own community to come speak to the class about how they celebrate Shabbat in their home. Prompt the guest speaker ahead of time to describe Sephardic differences.
   Possible questions to ask speaker:
   - What languages are spoken at your synagogue?
   - What do you usually eat for Shabbat?
   - Describe a typical Shabbat evening/day.
   - Which songs do you sing for Shabbat?
   - What is your favorite Shabbat memory?
   - Do you sing any Shabbat songs in Ladino?

   Encourage students ahead of time to formulate questions to ask their guest.

How I Celebrate Shabbat

BEGINNING OF UNIT

- When we celebrate Shabbat in my community, we usually eat

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

- We do the following blessings on Shabbat evening
  - Candle Lighting
  - Kiddush
  - HaMotzi
  - Parent blessings
  - Hand washing
  - Birkat Hamazon

- We also have our own traditions on Shabbat. For example, we

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

END OF UNIT

- Compare how what you've learned this unit is the same as what you've experienced in the past

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

- Compare how what you've learned this unit is different from what you've experienced in the past

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- Some of the most interesting things I learned about Sephardic Jews and Shabbat are

  _____
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  _____
  _____

- Additional thoughts I have about how Sephardic Jews celebrate Shabbat

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The Sabbath Walking Stick[3]

Long ago, in the faraway land of Turkey, three brothers lived together in a tiny house. The eldest was very strong and could leap all the way to the top of a tree. The second loved to eat and stuffed his pockets with every wild fruit and nut he found in the forest. The third was both clever and kind, sharing his food with anyone he met and caring for animals that were hurt.

Now, the brothers were orphans, so they had to take care of themselves. All week long they worked hard, collecting wood to sell in the village and doing their chores at home. They saved their pennies, and on the eve of the Sabbath, they bought bread and fish for a festive dinner.

One Friday, the brothers were gathering wood deep in the forest, when they suddenly remembered that it was almost time for the Sabbath, and they had not made any preparations. They started to hurry home, but before long realized they were lost – and the sun was about to set!

The boys ran this way and that, searching for the way home. They were terrified that they might have to spend the night in the forest, with wild beasts lurking about.

Then the brothers spotted a little cottage almost hidden by trees. They knocked at the door, and it was opened by an old woman dressed in rags. When they told her they were lost, she invited them in. "You are welcome to stay the night," she said, and her voice was kind.

The boys were very grateful to have found a place to stay, but still they looked sad. And when the old woman asked them why, they said it was because they missed celebrating the Sabbath. "Oh, I was about to do that myself," she said. "Won't you join me?" The boys said that yes, of course they would. But where, they wondered, were the Sabbath candles and the other preparations for the Sabbath meal?

Just then the old woman picked up her walking stick and waved it three times. A white linen cloth appeared out of the air and spread itself upon the table. And before their very eyes, two silver candlesticks appeared holding white candles, along with a challah, a silver cup, and a flask of wine. The rags she was wearing turned into a beautiful Sabbath dress. The boys looked at one another in amazement, and they discovered that they too were dressed in the finest Sabbath clothes.

The old woman lit the candles and said the Sabbath blessings. The boys watched in wonder as she waved the walking stick three more times, and all sorts of good things to eat appeared on the table: fish, chicken and rice, and sweet honey cakes for dessert.

So it was that the brothers spent a wonderful Sabbath in the old woman's cottage, listening to the tales she told and eating to their hearts' content. When

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[3] Schwartz, Howard. A Coat for the Moon & Other Jewish Tales. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1999.

the Sabbath was over, she waved the walking stick in the air, and all the things that had appeared vanished like smoke.

The old woman saw how amazed the boys were. "Would you like to have a magic walking stick of your own?" she asked.

"Oh, yes," they answered.

"Indeed, you may have mine," she said, "but only if you do as I ask." The boys quickly promised that they would.

"There is a stream not far from my hut," said the old woman, "and on the far side stands a large apple tree. Just bring me an apple from that tree and you shall have the magic stick." That seemed simple enough to the boys, but then the old woman added: "But it must be the right apple." Yet when the boys asked which one that might be, the old woman refused to say any more about it.

The next morning, the first brother strode across the stream and found the apple tree. Its branches were heavy with the most beautiful red apples he had ever seen. "Which is the right one?" he asked himself. "Probably the one that is hardest to get." So in one leap he jumped to the uppermost branch of the tree, and picked the apple right on top. Then he hurried back to the stream where he noticed a lovely butterfly flapping its wings. "Give me the apple," it fluttered.

"An apple? What would you do with an apple?" asked the first brother. He waved the butterfly away and crossed the stream. When he reached the old woman's house, he proudly handed her the apple.

"I'm sorry," she said. "This is not the right apple." She mumbled a magic spell and suddenly the first brother found himself back at home, frozen to one spot, unable to move.

Then the second brother set out, and after he crossed the stream and found the tree, he, too, asked himself, "Which is the right apple?" They all looked so good that he decided to pick as many as he could carry, and he stuffed his pockets until they were full. Now those apples were very fine, and he couldn't resist eating one after another, and by the time he reached the stream, there was only one left.

As he waded across, a butterfly flapped its wings and fluttered, "Give me your apple."

"Don't be silly," said the second brother. "I need it." Soon he was back at the old woman's house and he handed the last apple to her. But she refused to take it. "I'm sorry," she said. "This is not the right apple." Again she mumbled the magic spell, and the second brother found himself back at home, frozen to one spot, unable to move hand or foot – just like his elder brother.

It was time for the third brother to try his luck. He, too, crossed the stream and found the apple tree. "Which is the right one?" he asked himself. He finally chose a large red apple that had fallen from the tree, because he didn't want to pick one that was still growing.

When he returned to the stream, a butterfly flapped its wings and fluttered, "Give me your apple." The third brother thought the butterfly looked

hungry and sad, so he said, “If you need the apple, take it.” And he held out the apple for the butterfly.

All at once, to the boy’s amazement, the butterfly vanished, and in its place stood the old woman. “That is the right apple,” she said with a gleam in her eye, and held out the Sabbath walking stick. Then the old woman pronounced another spell, and the third brother found himself standing in front of his own hut.

At that very moment his two brothers were released from the spell and ran out to greet him. They had learned their lesson and vowed never to be greedy again. So too did they all celebrate the old woman’s gift, for they knew that the Sabbath walking stick was precious indeed.

From then on, the three brothers used the stick each week, bringing forth a fine Sabbath table filled with tasty food. They always invited others who were poor and hungry to share in their Sabbath meals, and they never forgot the old woman who had given them such a wonderful gift.

Counting in Ladino

1	uno	one
2	dos	two
3	tres	three
4	kuatro	four
5	sintyu	five
6	sej	six
7	siete	seven
8	ocho	eight
9	nuebe	nine
10	diez	ten

SIMIOU STREET
DOSSIADOU STREET
1
2
3
4
5

Synagogue Layout[4]

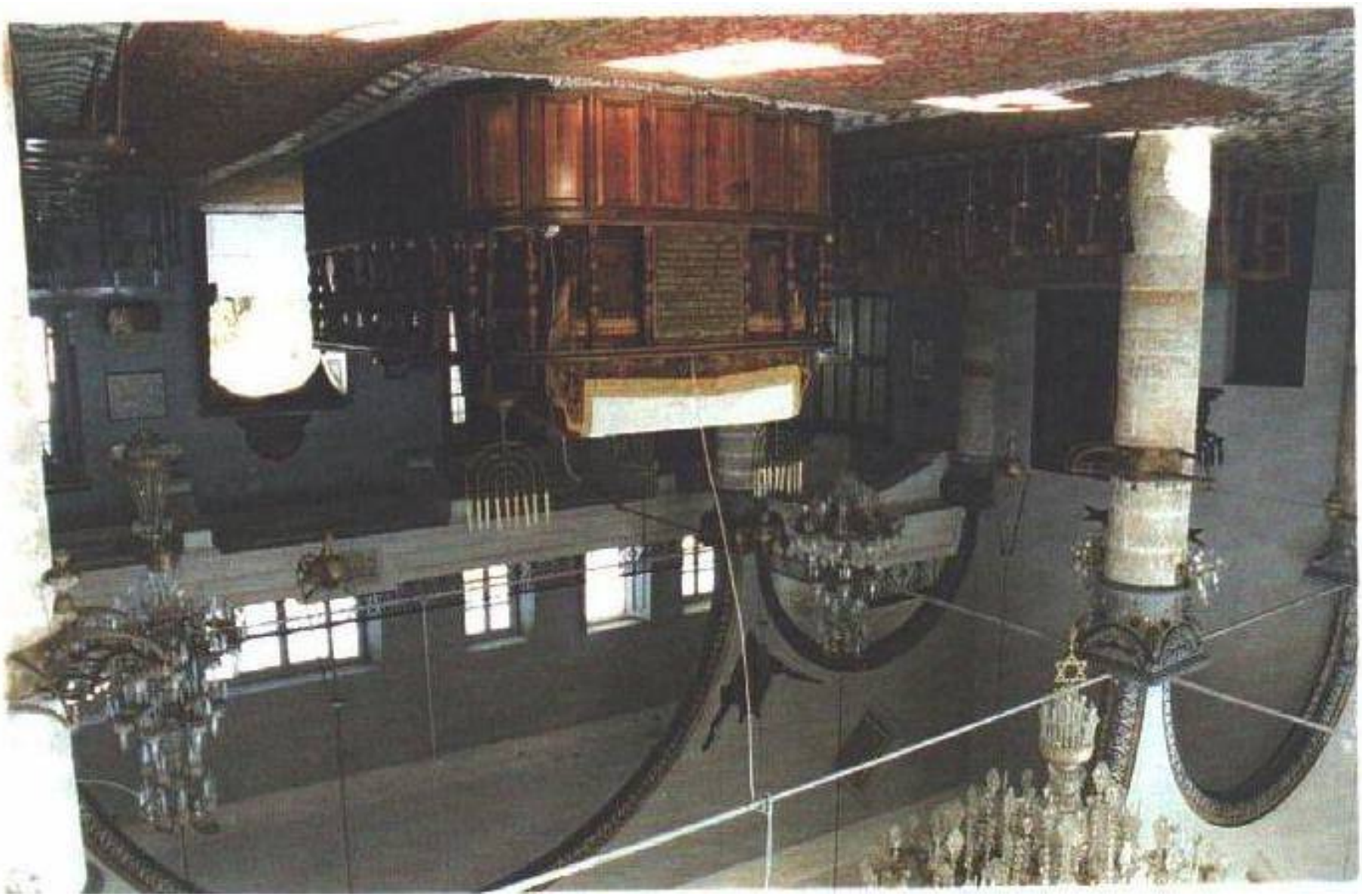
The *Kahal Shalom* is the oldest synagogue in Greece, and the sole remaining Jewish synagogue on Rhodes used for services. There was once six synagogues in the Jewish Quarter (called "La Judería"). The *Kahal Shalom* is located on Dossiadou and Simiou Streets and was built in the year 1577. The full name of the building is *Kahal Kadosh Shalom* (Holy Congregation of Peace). It is used for prayer services when visitors or former residents and their families visit the island for Friday night services, High Holiday services and for special occasions.

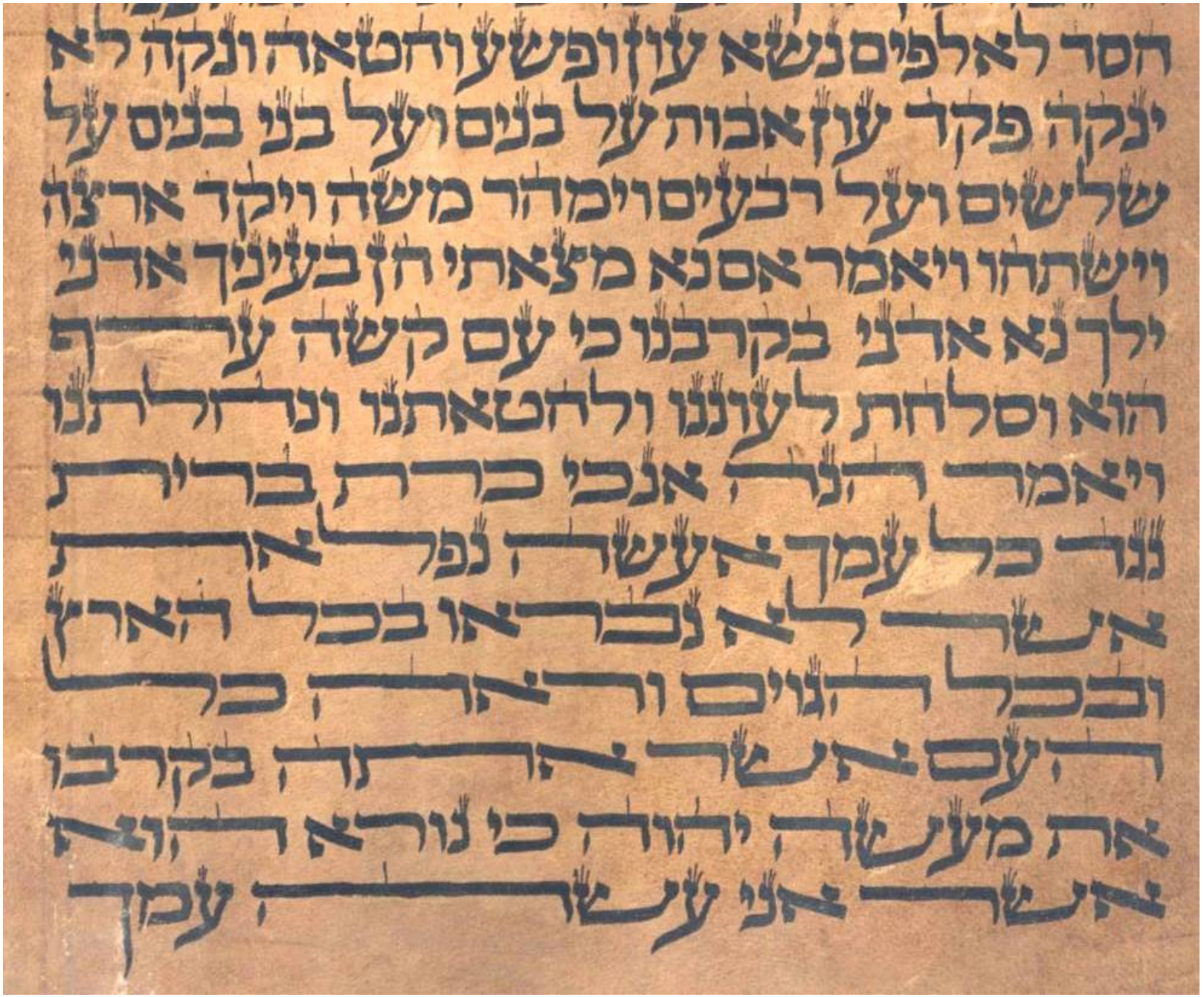
The Jewish community of Rhodes has an historical background dating back to ancient times. More recently, and during it's height in the 1920's, the Jewish community had a population of approximately 4,000 people. During the past five hundred years, the background of the Jewish people was made up principally of the Jews who were forced to leave Spain at the time of the Spanish Inquisition of 1492. Large numbers of Sephardim had traveled across the Mediterranean Sea to the Island of Rhodes, as well as other cities such as Salonica, Istanbul and Izmir. The descendants of the Jewish people from Spain are known as "Sephardic" Jews, because the Hebrew word for Spain is "Sepharad". Since the large migration of Jewish refugees after the Spanish Inquisition, the Jewish community on the Island of Rhodes spoke a language similar to modern day Spanish, called "Ladino".

This is an architectural layout and floor plan of the Kahal Shalom synagogue and the Jewish Museum of Rhodes:

1. Entry and courtyard (purple).
2. Kahal Shalom synagogue (blue).
3. Courtyard (yellow).
4. Jewish Museum of Rhodes (red).
5. Vacant rooms formerly used as the women's prayer rooms (green).

[4] http://www.rhodesjewishmuseum.org/kahal.htm





As Practiced by Judeo-Spanish Jews

The shopping and cooking for Shabbat is usually done on Thursday and Thursday evening and, if necessary, on Friday morning.

The specific role enacted by men in preparing for Shabbat was their shopping for the food. Today many women do this as well.

The wife's role in preparing for the Sabbath is expressed by her cleaning of the house for the Sabbath and by the cooking and baking of all the special foods for Shabbat.

Today people buy their wine and do not make their own for Shabbat. However, in those times when they did make their own wine for the Sabbath, it was always grape wine. Raisins were reserved for the making of raki.[97]

The study of the weekly *parashah* is done over the six days of the week according to the portions designated by the *Ḥok LeYisrael.* The remaining portion is studied on Friday. On each of the days, the Biblical passages designated for the day are read twice, and the *Targum* is read once.

On a short Friday, in order to preserve the appetite for the Shabbat meal, the Judeo-Spanish refrain from eating lunch. However, during the summer months, when the days are long, a regular lunch is eaten.

There is no program of distributing *ẓedakah* on Erev Shabbat in this country. In Israel, there are congregations where they give two *ḥallot* to the poor on Fridays. In Rhodes, too, the poor were given food for Shabbat.[98]

The distribution of food and charity for the poor is not a common need in America today. For any individuals who need help, the congregations do provide charity for them. Often they are invited to spend Shabbat at the home of different congregational members on a rotating basis.[99]

In some Judeo-Spanish families the women still light wicks and oil known as *lampara.*

Many families have the custom of lighting three candles (or at least two). Some communities follow the custom of kindling seven oil wicks in honor of the seven days of the week.[100]

Candles are normally lit eighteen minutes before sunset on Friday afternoon. During the summer, when the *Minḥa* is prayed early, candles are lit ten minutes before services.

The girls of the house stand next to the mother while she lights the candles, but they do not recite a blessing with her.

The *Minḥa* service on Friday afternoon is prayed ten minutes before sunset. During the summer months, when the day is very long, *Minḥa* is prayed one and one-half hours before sunset.

When a festival falls on Erev Shabbat, the Judeo-Spanish begin with *Mizmor leDavid,* followed by *Lekha dodi* and *Mizmor shir leyom hashabbat,* and then the *Arvit* of Yom Tov.[101]

Friday night services are always prayed in the synagogue.

The ḥazzan recites the middle portion of the Friday evening *Amida* aloud only up to *"Barukh . . . mekadesh Hashabbat,"* and then the remainder is recited in silent devotion.

The Judeo-Spanish do not recite the selected verses of *Shir hashirim* after *Lekha dodi.*[102]

For the six-week period between Pesaḥ and Shavuot, the *Shir hashirim* is read on Erev Shabbat after *Kabbalat Shabbat.*

During the six-week period when the *Shir hashirim* is recited, this is done after *Mizmor shir leyom hashabbat* and before *Hashem malakh geut lavesh.*

The procedure when the family arrives home is to sing *Shalom aleikhem,* and *Eshet ḥayil,* followed by *Atkinu seudata. Bar Yoḥai* is chanted as a part of the *Zemirot* during the meal.[103]

Kiddush is not recited in most of the synagogues on Friday evening.

Lemons are passed around at the conclusion of the Friday evening service, or spices are passed around to enable the worshippers to make either the blessing *Hanoten reaḥ tov baperot* or *Bore minei besamim.*

The ḥazzan does not wear a *tallit* for services on Friday evening.

Food prepared for the Shabbat is cooked before the Sabbath and served hot on Friday night. For Shabbat morning, *desayuno* (breakfast) pastries filled with either cheese or vegetables called *borekas,*[104] *boyos,* and *bulemas* (all of which are dry foods) are heated on the stove on top of a metal sheet which covers the flame. This practice is permitted since the food is not liquid. Generally, warm foods are used; cold foods are not considered to be as desirable to fulfill *kevod Shabbat.*[105]

Most people do not mix water into the wine (*meziga*) since it is bottled wine and not *yayin ḥay* (natural wine), which requires dilu-

tion. However, some still do this today, even though the wine is bottled professionally. They do so simply because it had long been their family tradition to do so.

Children are blessed after the *Kiddush* and they kiss the hand of their grandparents or parents. They are then blessed with the Priestly Benediction as well as *Yesimkha Elokim*. An additional blessing personalized to the situation of the child being blessed is then conferred. For example, if the child is unmarried, the father will bless the girl so that she should be married, or the boy that he should be married, etc.

Two *ḥallot* are used for each meal in fulfillment of *leḥem mishne*.

Bread is distributed by placing it in front of each person, or it sometimes may be tossed if the person is far away.

Special fish dishes are prepared in honor of Friday evening. Fish with lemon and egg sauce, known as *pescado con huevo y limon*, is a specialty.[106] Other special sauces are *tomat* (tomato) and the sauce known as *avram-mila* (which is made of green plums). This name is derived from the Biblical commentary which tells that the tree under which Abraham sat during the period following his circumcision was a plum tree. These fish dishes are also served on the evening of Yom Tov.

The *Hamoẓi* is either cut by a knife or broken off by hand.[107]

There are no blessings on food recited between the *Kiddush* and the *Hamoẓi*.

The Judeo-Spanish custom is to remove the knife from the table during the recitation of *Birkat hamazon* during the week only, and not on the Sabbath, although some communities removed it on the Sabbath as well. The weekday removal is in fulfillment of the Biblical dictum, "And if you make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stones; for if you lift up your iron tool upon it, you have profaned it" (Exodus 20:22). Since the table in Jewish tradition is considered as an altar, one therefore removes the knife, which is symbolic of the *ḥerev* (sword), before reciting the *Birkat hamazon*, as already explained.[108]

The *Zemirot* sung on Friday evening are in both Hebrew and Ladino. *Yom hashabbat ein kamohu* is sung in Hebrew, and the refrain is repeated in Ladino, *No hay como El. Yodukha rayonay* is chanted. *Kah ribbon alam vealmaya* is chanted in the Aramaic, followed by a Ladino repetition, *Ya señor del mundo. Siman ani Abraham* [illegible]*k* would be chanted beginning with the last portion, *Hem*

madlikin hamenorah, in both Hebrew and Ladino. *Ẓur mishelo* is also sung regularly.

Some observe the reading of the Mishna on Friday evening after the singing of *Shalom aleikhem* and before *Kiddush*.

Usually, the honor of leading the *Birkat hamazon* is given to a *Kohen* (Priest) or to a visiting guest.[109]

Generally, there is no early morning *Hashkamah* service on Saturdays.

Psalms are recited before *Barukh Sheamar* in the *Shaḥarit* service.[110]

Miẓvot (Torah honors) are auctioned at the conclusion of the Shabbat *Shaḥarit* service after the *Kaddish* and just before the taking out of the Sefer Torah.[111]

The Haftarah is read directly from the *Ḥumash* and not from a special scroll. In some congregations, it was read from the *Sefer Haftarot*, in which case only the ḥazzan could read the Haftarah.

A boy under Bar Miẓvah age may be honored with carrying a Sefer Torah.

The *hakamah* (lifting of the Torah) takes place before the Torah reading. A seam of the parchment (sewn portion) and three columns of script have to be shown as the Torah is raised.

They permit *mosifim* (additional *aliyot* for the reading of the Torah) at the Sabbath services, and there is no restriction on the number of *aliyot*, which are distributed as needed.

A special *Mi sheberakh* prayer is made and charitable contributions are announced.

The *Hashkavah* is recited on the Shabbat preceding the annual anniversary of the death of the deceased parent during the Torah reading. At this portion of the service, the *Hashkavah* is recited, and a contribution is made in memory of the deceased.[112]

In some synagogues, the Prayer for the Government is omitted.

The *Musaf Amida* is said aloud by the ḥazzan and is not repeated except on Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Shabbat Teshuva.

The full *Pitum haketoret* is said at the end of the service, following the *Kaddish* of *Musaf*.[113]

Ein K'Elokeinu is often said in Ladino as well as in Hebrew. First, the Hebrew verse is chanted, followed by the Ladino, *Non como muestro Dio*.

Adon olam is chanted at the conclusion of the morning service.

The entire *Aleinu* (including *Al ken nekaveh*) is recited. The congregation bows at *Vaanaḥnu mishtaḥavim.*[114]

The service is not concluded with the declaration *Tekubal beraḥamim uverazon et tefilatenu.*[115]

Before the noon meal, the *Kiddush* is recited, beginning with the words, *Im tashiv.*[116]

The *Kiddush* is recited *standing up* on Friday night, and it is recited over wine. In the morning, it is recited *sitting down* over whiskey or wine.[117]

Fish is served on Friday night. In the morning of the Sabbath, as mentioned, a *desayuno* (breakfast) is served; this is normally dairy or fish.[118]

Both Hebrew and Ladino are used in the chanting of *Zemirot* at the Sabbath meals.

It is the custom to drink wine after *Birkat hamazon* as a part of the fulfillment of *kos* for *zimun* (blessing over wine when three or more join in reciting the Grace after Meals together). Some of the other Sephardim use wine if a *minyan* is present.[119]

Pirkei Avot is chanted before *Minḥa* between Pesaḥ and Shavuot.

Hashkavah is recited throughout the whole year of mourning every time the mourner is called to the Torah.

They do not read the three verses of the following week's *parashah* and Haftarah after *Minḥa.*

Zemirot and "learning" are traditionally part of the *seudah shelishit,* as they are among the other groups, except the Spanish and Portuguese.

For the beginning of the Mozaei Shabbat service, they chant *Lamenazzeaḥ al tashḥet* and *Mikhtam leDavid.* Sometimes, this is chanted after the *seudah shelishit.*[120]

On Rosh Ḥodesh they recite *LeDavid barukh* and then *Barekhi nafshi.* On regular Saturday nights, they recite only *LeDavid barukh.*[121]

Hashem Zevakot is recited only once.[122]

No announcement of *Ata ḥonantanu* is made, but when the ḥazzan comes to that portion, he says the whole blessing aloud, not just the first two words. *Ata Kadosh* is recited silently.

Havdalah is said in the synagogue, even though *Kiddush* was not said in the synagogue.

Spices or lemons are used for *Havdalah.* During the summer, myrtle twigs (*hadassim*) or mint were often used. They use one candle for *Havdalah.* They look into the wine to see their face in it as a *segula* for good fortune. They chant *Hamavdil* after *Havdalah.*[123]

As Practiced by the Spanish and Portuguese Jews

The housewife in the Spanish and Portuguese family prepares for the Shabbat by ordering her food early in the week to have it ready for preparation on Friday. There is no specific role that the men enact in order to help in the preparation of Shabbat, although some men undertake to do some special act in order to be a part of the preparation for the occasion.

The wine used is commercial wine, and is always grape wine. They do not enact *meziga* (by pouring water into the wine to dilute it). Raisin wine is never used for *Kiddush* by the Spanish and Portuguese.

The *Minḥa* service is usually prayed shortly before the time set for *Kabbalat Shabbat* and *Arbit* services. In New York, they currently hold Friday *Minḥa* services at 6:45 P.M. during those months when the sun sets late, in order to welcome the Sabbath at an earlier hour.

Two candles are kindled before sunset at the time set for Friday evening services.

When a festival falls on Friday evening, the service begins with *Mizmor shir leyom hashabbat,* followed by the special *mizmor* for the particular holiday, and then by the *Kaddish le'eila* and the *Arbit* service for the Sabbath and Festival.

On a regular Friday night, the *Kabbalat Shabbat* is followed by the regular Shabbat *Arbit.*[124]

It is not the custom to say *Ana bekoaḥ* prior to *Bameh madlikin* (as this was a Kabbalistic custom). *Bameh madlikin* is recited between *Mizmor leDavid* (Psalm 29) and *Lekha dodi.*[125]

The *Lekha dodi* is chanted while the congregation sits. They stand only for the last stanza, *Boi beshalom.* The custom is to bend to the north and to the south in the recitation of the last stanza of *Lekha dodi*

4

Sabbath and Holidays

The preparation for Shabbat

I remember in the early 1920's how Shabbat was celebrated. The word itself, Shabbat, is synonomous with the word rest. It was a very sacred time and was expressed by saying "MIL MUET . . . MIL MUET . . . MA NO . . . Komo Shabbat." It means "Thousands and thousands of holidays . . . but none can compare with Shabbat."

The preparation of Shabbat started on Thursday, with the changing of the linens and the bedding, the thorough cleaning of the house, followed by the making of the bread, the reshikas (a bread dough made in the form of a pretzel) and the biskochos (sort of a shortbread cookie). Then the women washed and cleaned the vegetables for their "Komida," their main course. This was followed by the cleaning of the spinach and preparing for the *kuashado* (resembling a souffle) and the *boyos* (resembling a pie).

Friday was a very busy day for the Sephardic housewife. Friday morning, she would start making the kuashados and boyos which had to be sent to the public ovens in the Turkish neighborhood for baking. Once this was out of the way, she then concentrated on the meals for Shabbat.

Interestingly enough, during the week everyone ate simple and inexpensive meals such as "avas kon aros," beans with rice, or "lentejas," cooked lentils, or vegetables cooked with or without a small piece of meat. (Meat was very costly). Perhaps you have wondered where the "avas kon aros" originated. The use of beans stems, of course,

from our Spanish background. When the Sephardim fled to the Mediterranean area, rice was plentiful and economical, so they combined the two and found it to be nourishing and filling. Another example: The Sephardim often prepare their *yaprakis*, stuffed grape leaves, and then place them over beans.

The Shabbat meal was more elaborate, consisting of at least a four course dinner: salad, fish, Sevoyas Reinadas (stuffed onions), Tomates Reinadas (stuffed tomatoes), aros (rice), fideos (a fine type of pasta) or Makaron Reinado (a macaroni and meat casserole). Everyone, even the poorer families had a four course dinner for Shabbat. If a family could not afford fresh fish, they would have a dried and salted cod called Bacalao, followed by vegetables cooked with a small piece of meat, and always aros or fideo. All meals ended with fresh fruit and Turkish coffee.

The coffee for the Shabbat morning was prepared on Friday and preserved in a very heavy container made of pottery called ginevra. This served as sort of a thermos. Then came the lighting of the "Haminero," which will be explained in detail.

Kerosene used in those days came in a tin container that resembled the old square five-gallon can of oil. After all the kerosene had been used up, the container was taken to the tinsmith to reshape. He would cut a hole on the top the size of a burner, and cut away one complete section of one side of the can making an opening to place the lamp of kerosene inside, there was enough kerosene to last twenty-four hours. This was then used to warm the meals for Friday night and Shabbat. The "Haminero" was lit on Friday evening before the Shabbat Candles. Eggs were then placed in a pan of water and salt and left cooking overnight in the "Haminero." From this procedure was derived the term "Huevos Haminados."

Late Friday afternoon, after all the cooking and cleaning was done, the mother and children took their baths. Since bathing in the public bath was so expensive, they could only go there about once a month. Every Friday in be-

tween, the mother would bathe the children in large earthenware containers called a Barrignon, or in an aluminum container called a "Paila." After the children were bathed the mother would bathe herself. These same containers were used for their family laundry.

The children were sent to buy the wine for the Kiddush and Havdalah. They also bought raki which was used as an aperitif with the *Mezeh* (appetizers). (It was also used for medicinal purposes. A handkerchief soaked with raki was used to cure a stomach ache.)

The daughters prepared the table for Shabbat, using white tablecloths, white napkins, their better dishes and water glasses. Mid-afternoon on Friday, the men closed shop and started home. They would stop at the entrance of the Juderia (or Jewish Quarter) and buy flowers, have their shoes shined, buy dried fruits and give *sedaka* (charity) to the beggars. With arms overflowing with goodies, the father would arrive home where his bath water in the *barignon* was awaiting him. After washing, cleaning and dressing up, the father prepared for the Sabbath prayers.

Everyone gathered together for the lighting of the Candela di Shabbat. The mother, with covered head, would say the Beraha and finished always with the following phrases, "Habarim Buenos . . . di los alishados" meaning "Good news from those away from us," and in Hebrew "Besorot Tovot," which meant the same thing. This was said both in Hebrew and in Ladino. After the Shabbat prayers, everyone gathered around the dinner table for Kiddush.

After Kiddush, the children kissed the hands of their parents and received a benediction, such as "Mazal Bueno" (good luck); or "Eliao Anavi ki ti vijite" (may Elijah, The Prophet, protect you) and naturally the old standby, "Novios" (we hope to see you all married).

After dinner, everyone joined in the closing prayer, the "birkat amazon" and the chanting of the song Bar Yohai.

On Shabbat morning, the father and sons went to synagogue and the daughters prepared the table for breakfast.

They would alternate "Pastilikos" (meat pies), "Kuashado di Spinaka" (spinach souffle) or "Borekas di Aros or Patata kon Keso" (sort of a potato or rice and cheese turnover), plus the "Huevos Haminados" (hardboiled eggs) or the "sutlach" (a powdered rice pudding flavored with cinnamon and orange blossom extract), fresh fruit, coffee and sweets. Their most popular fruits were grapes and melon. During the summer months, they would simplify the menu to include just a piece of cheese, the reshikas, grapes or melon, the sutlach and coffee.

After breakfast, the father rested for a bit. Then it was time to visit the people who were sick. I used to accompany my father and asked him: "why do we always go to visit the sick people on the Sabbath?" His explanation to me was: "the Bible says that when Abraham was circumcized, God went to visit him, and it eased his pain; so we must follow His example. By visiting the sick we are easing their pain."

While the men were visiting, the women gathered in front of their homes to exchange the local gossip, to eat "Fistokes" (peanuts), "Bilibeses" (dried garbanzo beans), and "Pepitas" (toasted pumpkin and watermelon seeds). Some boys went bicycle riding and the young girls formed a group and went hiking to Zimboule (now called Rodini Park), to its famous Garden di Limones (meaning Lemons), or Chimilik Park which was close to Mandraki Harbor. But no matter where anyone went, the youngsters had to be home by 12:00 noon for lunch. If anyone was late getting home, they were punished by getting NO LUNCH, so they learned very early in life to be obedient.

After lunch, the parents took a nap. When they awoke, they washed and it was time for the "afternoon kaveh," a "Turkish Coffee Break." The men gathered to discuss the "perasha," the portion of the Torah for that day, politics, or the very important subject "Erets Israel" (the hope that someday we would have a land of our own). The young girls would pass the time playing cards. Naturally they were not allowed to use money, so they would use al-

monds to pay off their losses. Late afternoon, on Shabbat, the men left for the synagogue for "Minha," the afternoon service, and "Arvit," the evening service. After "Arvit" everyone was anxious to return home for Havdalah, the closing service for the Sabbath. This was followed by a party with the neighbors, for playing games and socializing. One of the most popular games was called "jouar a los filjanes" which is a game played with 12 demi-tasse cups and a ring. The ring was placed under a cup and there was a guessing game as to which cup it was under. It was played by two teams and the losing team had to buy something for the winners. In the middle 1920's I remember having to go to the only merchant who sold Halvah and "Burmuelos" (a sort of popover dipped in honey). The winners were paid off, believe it or not, with Halvah and Burmuelos!

This socializing time was also a time for "kontando konsejas," telling fairy tales, and these stories continued from week to week. I believe we were the originators of the "Sephardic Soap Opera."

By 10:00 pm, everyone was in bed as the men had to rise early for the Tefillah at 6:00 am. After the Tefillah on Sunday, they reverted back to the ordinary daily breakfast consisting of toasted French bread or their homemade bread, dipped in olive oil, and sprinkled with cheese or eaten with a piece of Feta cheese and coffee.

You will note that milk has never been mentioned. The reason is that milk was reserved for the sickly, or sometimes for use in cooking, since it was very expensive. However, from the 1930's on, milk became more plentiful and then became part of our diet. On cold evenings, it was customary to boil milk, pour in blanched ground almonds for a very delicious and nutritious drink called "Almandrada."

Rosh Hashanah

During the month before Rosh Hashanah, Selihoth (prayers asking for forgiveness) were recited, generally in the homes of those in mourning. On the day before Rosh

Hashanah, the men went to the cemetery to visit the graves of their dear ones.

The evening meals included the "yehi ratsones," blessings over several symbolic foods. It was customary to place sugar on the table instead of salt symbolizing a sweet year. This sugar was kept apart to be used throughout the year for any time when the solution of sugar and water was called for (see Superstitions).

It was also a custom to save the tablecloth we used the first night with all the crumbs folded inside. When dawn broke on Rosh Hashanah we took the tablecloth with the crumbs to the sea with someone who had been ill. If no one in our family was ill we could loan it to a family that needed it. The tablecloth was shaken over the head of the sick person with prayers. This was called "olas a la mar," or making waves in the ocean, and was supposed to cure the sick. Another custom was to avoid wearing anything new on the foot, such as shoes, stockings or slippers on Rosh Hashanah.

Yom Kippur and Kaparoth

A day or two before Yom Kippur a slaughterer, (shohet) and the caretaker (shamash) of the Synagogue, would go from house to house to perform the kaparoth. We all had chickens tied-up in a large pan with ashes so when the chicken's neck was cut, the blood would run onto the ashes and not stain the pot.

On these days engaged couples exchanged gifts. The bride sent a white rooster with its head sprinkled with gold leaf and sweets and the bridegroom sent a white chicken and sweets.

Each family donated a chicken to a poorer family. Generally one chicken per family member was slaughtered, that is if the family could afford it. If not, one chicken would do for 3-4 children. The children were given a small white chicken about a week in advance to care for, until it was slaughtered.

The day before Yom Kippur at noon, we ate a very rich,

Unit III – Hanukkah

Enduring Understandings:

1. Sephardic culture expresses itself through its own language, culture and customs that continue to be observed in the Modern Jewish world.
2. While Sephardic practice shares much in common with Ashkenazic practice, its differences can bring an added layer of richness to the American Jewish experience.
3. The Sephardic community continues to evolve and bring diversity as it interacts with the postmodern world.
4. Sephardic Jews celebrate the holidays in a way that is thoroughly Jewish and distinctly its own.

Goals:

1. To introduce students to an alternate expression of Judaism.
2. To expose students to the uniquely Sephardic expression of holidays.
3. To enable students to experience the cultural richness of the Ladino language.
4. To introduce students to the musical aspect of Sephardic Jewry.
5. To show students other interpretations of Hanukkah such as gathering clothing for the poor
6. To encourage students to explore their own Jewish identity through the close examination of a Judaism sometimes different from their own.

Objectives:

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

1. Compare and contrast their own Hanukkah observance to the observances learned in this unit
2. Perform a Ladino Hanukkah melody
3. Produce elements of Sephardic Hanukkah cuisine through baking
4. Compare and contrast the Sephardic and Askenazic candle blessing and hanukkiot
5. Construct a Sephardic Hanukkiah
6. Define Shabbat Halbasha and gather clothing for the poor
7. Create their own rhyming lyrics based on recitation of Mizmor shir hanukkat habayit.

Sample Lesson Plan

Hanukkiot – Hand out the Sephardic blessing over the Hanukkah candles and have students compare the blessing to the Ashkenazic version. Ask them to see if they can find the difference (the word shel is omitted from the Sephardic version). Explain to students that Sephardic Jews do not traditionally use candles, but rather oil and wicks for their hanukkiot. Have students make a Sephardic Hanukkiah.

Enduring Understandings:

1. Sephardic Jews celebrate the holidays in a way that is thoroughly Jewish and distinctly its own.

Goals:

1. To introduce students to an alternate expression of the Hanukkiah and its blessings
2. To expose students to the uniquely Sephardic expression of Hanukkah.

Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Recite the Sephardic blessing over the Hanukkah candles
2. Distinguish between the Askenazic and Sephardic versions of the Hanukkah candle blessing
3. Create a Hanukkiah that holds oil instead of candles
4. Contrast between traditionally Askenazic and Sephardic hanukkiot.

Set Induction:

Set out a hanukkiah that holds candles and place two candles in it (one for the shamash and one for the first night). Allow students to volunteer to recite the first candle blessing and write the blessing on the board.

Middle Activity:

Set out another hanukkiah, this time one that holds oil.
Pass out the Sephardic blessing over the Hanukkah candles.
Have students compare their handout to the blessing on the board.
Ask them to look for the difference between the two blessings.

- *The Sephardic version omits the word 'shel'*
- *'Shel' is used only when one is permitted to use the light of the candle. Since one is not permitted to use the Hanukkah lights, 'shel' is forbidden*

Explain to students that Sephardic Jews use an oil Hanukkiah instead of a wax candle Hanukkiah. After having students read the blessing, they will then recite the Sephardic blessing over the candles. Light the Hanukkiah.

- **Note:** Sephardic Jews only omit 'shel' over the Hanukkah blessing. On Yom Tov and Shabbat, 'shel' is said.

Explain to students that they too will create an oil Hanukkiah. Walk through the steps, demonstrating what the students will do. Then hand out materials and help students to create the Hanukkiot.

Closing activity:

Ask students:

- What are some differences between Sephardic and Ashkenazic Hanukkiot and their blessings?
    - Sephardic Jews don't say "shel"
    - Sephardic Jews do not use candles
    - The melody is different

Materials:

- Menorah with oil
- Matches
- CD from guide
- Hand out of Sephardic Hanukkah candle blessings
- One 4" x 16" block of wood for each student
- Eight bottle caps per student
- Absorbent cotton twisted into strings
- Olive oil
- Hammer and nails
- Sand paper

Lamp with Oil[1]

Sand paper a 4”x16” block of wood. Mark eight circles on the flat wood where bottle caps will be placed to serve as the oil containers. If available, students can decorate the wood with a non-flammable paint. Cement or nail bottle caps on the base. Demonstrate the next step to the students so they can replicate it at home: Insert wicks and pour olive oil in the bottle caps that will be lit each night. Wicks can be made from absorbent cotton twisted into strings.

[1] Goodman, Philip. The Hanukkah Anthology. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1992.

Sephardic Hanukkah Blessings

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר חֲנֻכָּה.

Blessed are You Adonai, our God, Ruler of the universe, who made us holy through Your commandments and commanded us to light the Hanukkah Light.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בַּזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

Blessed are You Adonai, our God, Ruler of the universe, who made miracles for our ancestors in those days at this same season.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שֶׁהֶחֱיָנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

Blessed are You Adonai, our God, Ruler of the universe, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.

Activities:

1. Journal – Using the journal created in the Shabbat unit, have students record their thoughts and observations about Hanukkah. Use the handout included in this unit.

2. Ocho Kandelikas – Hand out the lyrics to Ocho Kandelikas. Ask students to identify the language. If they cannot guess, explain to them:
   - Ladino is the language spoken by Sephardic Jews
   - Ladino is close to Spanish but not exactly the same
   - Ladino has Spanish, Turkish and Hebrew elements

   Read the lyrics out loud with the students before teaching them the song. If students in the class speak Spanish, have them point out the differences between Ladino and Spanish. Sing the song for the students and then sing it with them.

3. Bumuelos – Show students a bottle of cooking oil and ask them what oil has to do with Hanukkah.
   - Story of the cruse of oil
   - Latkes, sufganiot

   Tell students that Sephardic Jews also celebrate Hanukkah with a special food cooked in oil. Have students mix the ingredients to make bumuelo batter. Follow the recipe and cook the bumuelos in oil.

4. Shabbat Halbasha – (The Shabbat of Clothing the Poor). Sephardim have traditionally gathered clothing for the poor over Hanukkah. The clothing is brought to the synagogue and distributed to the poor. Introduce students to this tradition and have them organize and collect clothing over Hanukkah to be distributed.

   Ask students the following questions:
   - Why is Shabbat Halbasha done at this time of year?
   - What are some similar tzedakah projects to Shabbat Halbasha that occur at this time of year in this community?
   - If you could add a custom similar to this to your own family celebration, what would it look like?

5. Mizmor shir hanukkat habayit – Hand out copies of Psalm 30. Explain that this psalm is sung after the candle blessings. Have students read the last verse of the psalm. Its final word *odeka* rhymes with the pastry 'boreka' and in Sephardic homes, the custom is to rhyme the final verse of the psalm using a child's

name. For example, *l'olam odeka, Michael se la comyo la boreka*.

Ask students the following questions:

- What do you think the Psalm is about?
- Why do you think this Psalm is recited during Hanukkah?
- Which Hanukkah song do we sing that rhymes?
    - I have a little dreidel

Help each student to come up with their own English ditty using their own name. Compile these ditties into a booklet.

How I Celebrate Hanukkah

BEGINNING OF UNIT

- When we celebrate Hanukkah in my community, we usually eat

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

- We do the following activities during Hanukkah

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

END OF UNIT

- Compare how what you've learned this unit is the same as what you've experienced in the past

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

- Contrast how what you've learned this unit is different from what you've experienced in the past

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

- Some of the most interesting things I learned about Sephardic Jews and Hanukkah are

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

- Additional thoughts I have about how Sephardic Jews celebrate Hanukkah

  _____
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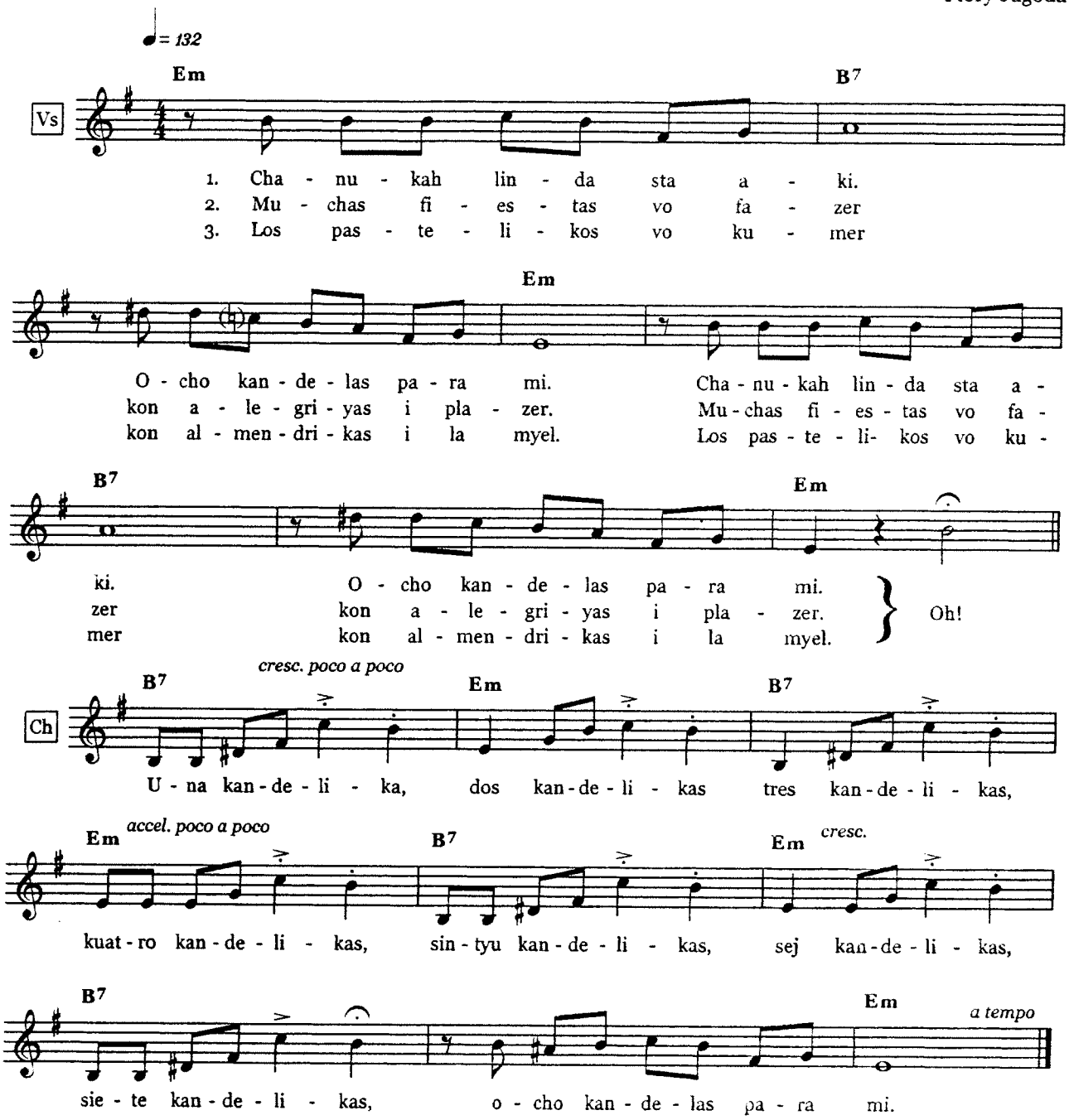
Ocho Kandelikas

Flory Jagoda



Beautiful Chanukah is here. Eight candles for me.

One candle, two candles, ... eight candles for me.

Many parties I will have with happiness and pleasure.

The little pastries I will eat filled with almonds and honey.

(Original language: Ladino)

Recipe for 25-30 Bumuelos[2]

Ingredients for the syrup:
1 cup sugar
2 cups water
Juice of ½ lemon
1 tablespoon rose or orange blossom water (may be found at a health food store)
**You can also use commercially-prepared syrup*

Ingredients for the batter:
2 teaspoons of active dry yeast
1 teaspoon of sugar
2 ½ cups of warm water (about 1 part boiling to 2 parts cold)
2 cups flour
½ teaspoon salt *Caution! Use only the lightest vegetable oil for deep frying*

Preparing the syrup:
To make your own syrup, put the sugar, water and lemon juice in a pan and simmer for 15 minutes, or until thick enough to coat a spoon. Add the rose or orange blossom water; simmer a few seconds longer. Cover and chill.

Preparing the batter:
Dissolve the yeast and sugar in about 4oz. of the warm water, and let stand 10-15 minutes or until it froths. Put the flour in a large bowl, mix in the salt and the yeast mixture. Gradually stir in the remaining water and beat vigorously for about 10 minutes, until smooth and elastic. Cover with a damp cloth and leave to rise in a warm place for at least one hour, then beat the batter once more and let it rise again.

Make the fritters in batches. Pour little balls of batter by the teaspoon or tablespoon into 1 ½ inches of sizzling (but not too hot) oil and fry until puffed up, crisp and golden, turning them to brown them all over. You may find it easier if you dip the spoon in oil so that the batter rolls off easily. Lower the heat a little to give the fritters time to get done inside before they are too brown. The batter is light and produces irregular round shapes.

Lift the fritters out with a slotted spoon, drain on kitchen paper, and dip them in the cold syrup for a few seconds. You may prefer to use honey or syrup or just sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon.

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[2] Aelion Brooks, Andrée. Out of Spain. Westport: Hitchcock Books, 2003.

Psalm 30 - Hanukkah

פרק ל

(א) מִזְמֹור שִׁיר חֲנֻכַּת הַבַּיִת לְדָוִד׃
(ב) אֲרוֹמִמְךָ יְהוָה כִּי דִלִּיתָנִי וְלֹא־שִׂמַּחְתָּ אֹיְבַי לִי׃
(ג) יְהוָה אֱלֹהָי שִׁוַּעְתִּי אֵלֶיךָ וַתִּרְפָּאֵנִי׃
(ד) יְהוָה הֶעֱלִיתָ מִן־שְׁאוֹל נַפְשִׁי חִיִּיתַנִי מִיָּרְדִי־ [מִיֶּרֶד] בֹור׃
(ה) זַמְּרוּ לַיהוָה חֲסִידָיו וְהֹודוּ לְזֵכֶר קָדְשֹׁו׃
(ו) כִּי רֶגַע בְּאַפֹּו חַיִּים בִּרְצֹונֹו בָּעֶרֶב יָלִין בֶּכִי וְלַבֹּקֶר רִנָּה׃
(ז) וַאֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי בְשַׁלְוִי בַּל־אֶמֹוט לְעֹולָם׃
(ח) יְהוָה בִּרְצֹונְךָ הָעֱמַדְתָּה לְהָרְרִי עֹז הִסְתַּרְתָּ פָּנֶיךָ הָיִיתִי נִבְהָל׃
(ט) אֵלֶיךָ יְהוָה אֶקְרָא וְאֶל־אֲדֹנָי אֶתְחַנָּן׃
(י) מַה־בֶּצַע בְּדָמִי בְּרִדְתִּי אֶל־שָׁחַת הֲיֹודְךָ עָפָר הֲיַגִּיד אֲמִתֶּךָ׃
(יא) שְׁמַע־יְהוָה וְחָנֵּנִי יְהוָה הֱיֵה עֹזֵר לִי׃
(יב) הָפַכְתָּ מִסְפְּדִי לְמָחֹול לִי פִּתַּחְתָּ שַׂקִּי וַתְּאַזְּרֵנִי שִׂמְחָה׃
(יג) לְמַעַן | יְזַמֶּרְךָ כָבֹוד וְלֹא יִדֹּם יְהוָה אֱלֹהַי לְעֹולָם אֹודֶךָּ׃

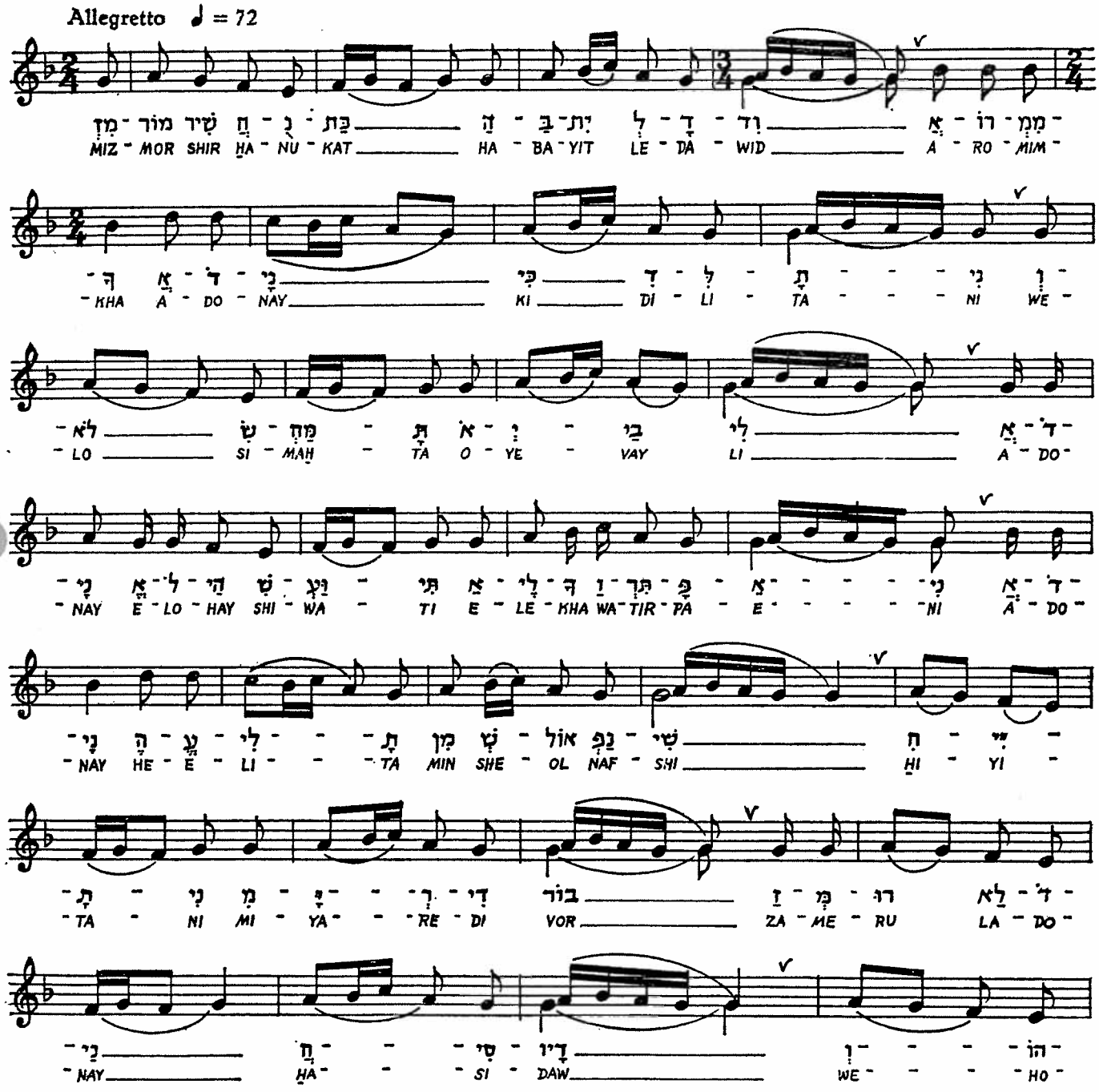
A psalm of David. A song for the dedication of the House. I extol You, O Adonai, for You have lifted me up, and not let my enemies rejoice over me. O Adonai, my God, I cried out to You, and You healed me. O Adonai, You brought me up from Sheol, preserved me from going down into the pit. O you faithful of Adonai, sing to God, and praise God's holy name. For God is angry but a moment, and when God is pleased there is life. One may lie down weeping at nightfall; but at dawn there are shouts of joy. When I was untroubled, I thought, "I shall never be shaken," for You, O Adonai, when You were pleased, made me firm as a mighty mountain. When You hid Your face, I was terrified. I called to You, O Adonai; to my Adonai I made appeal, "What is to be gained from my death, from my descent into the pit? Can dust praise You? Can it declare Your faithfulness? Hear, O Adonai, and have mercy on me; O Adonai, be my help!" You turned my lament into dancing, you undid my sackcloth and girded me with joy, that my whole being might sing hymns to You endlessly; O Adonai my God, I will praise You forever.

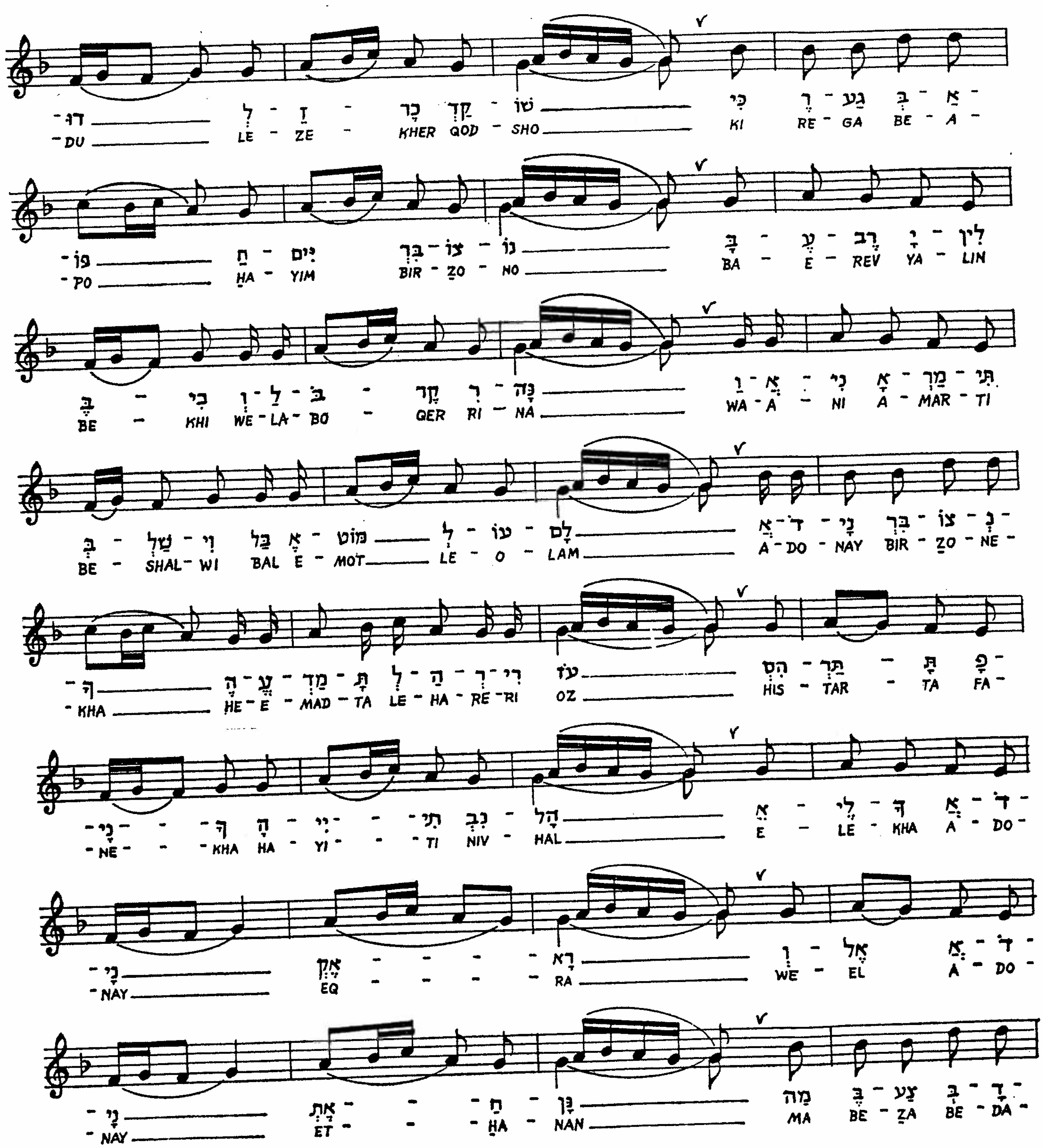
MIZMÓR XIR HANUCAT HABAYIT LEDAVID

Salónica

14. מזמור שיר חנוכת הבית לדוד

סלוניקי

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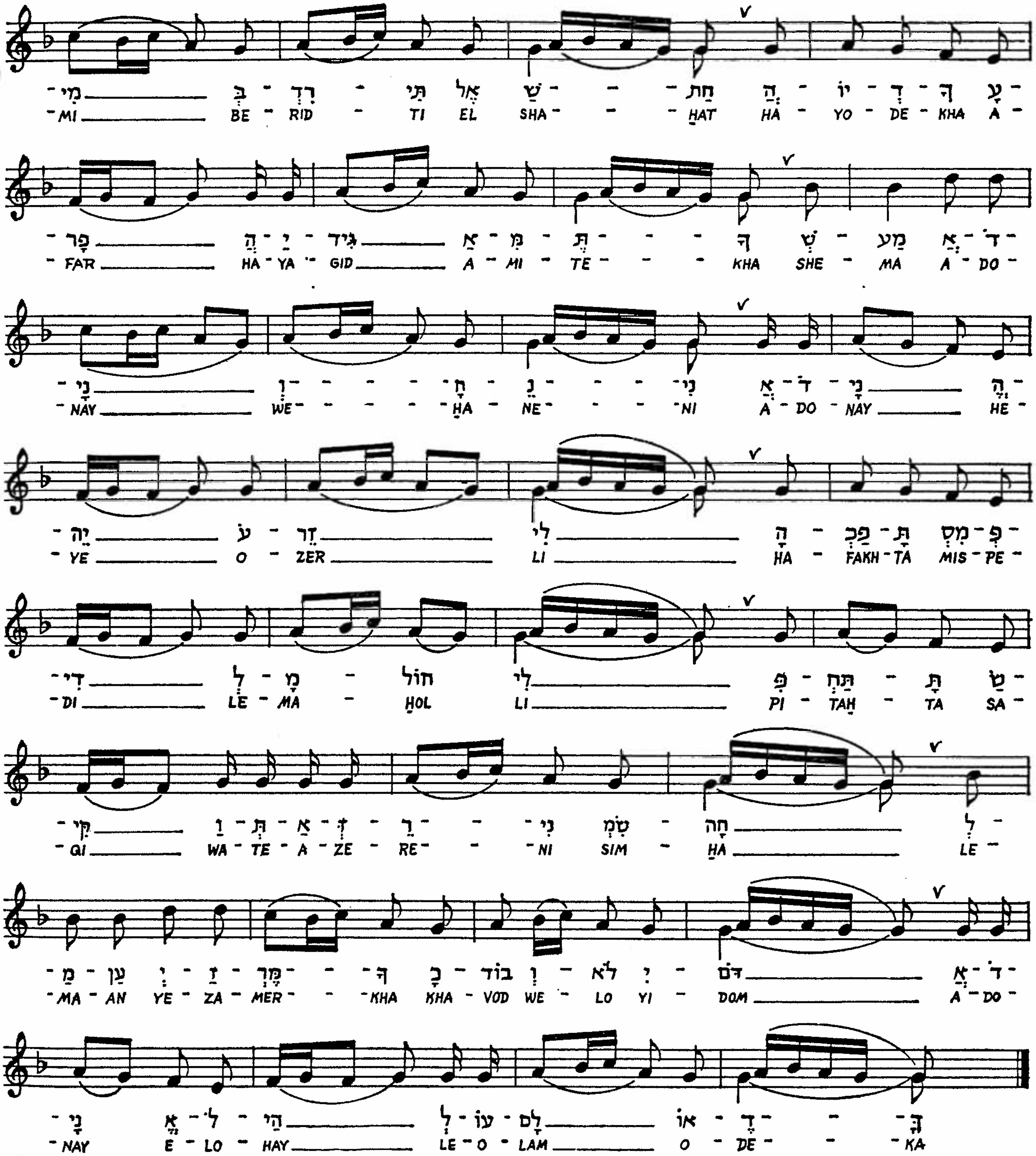
- PO HA - YIM BIR - ZO - NO BA - E - REV YA - LIN
BE - KHI WE - LA - BO - QER RI - NA WA - A - NI A - MAR - TI
BE - SHAL - WI BAL E - MOT LE - O - LAM A - DO - NAY BIR - ZO - NE -
- KHA HE - E - MAD - TA LE - HA - RE - RI OZ HIS - TAR - TA FA -
- NE - - KHA HA - YI - - TI NIV - HAL E - LE - KHA A - DO -
- NAY EQ - - - - RA WE - EL A - DO -
- NAY ET - - HA - NAN MA BE - ZA BE - DA -


- MI ___ BE - RID - TI EL SHA - - - HAT HA - YO - DE - KHA A -
- FAR ___ HA - YA - GID ___ A - MI - TE - - - KHA SHE - MA A - DO -
- NAY ___ WE - - - - - HA - NE - - - NI A - DO - NAY ___ HE -
- YE ___ O - ZER ___ LI ___ HA - FAKH - TA MIS - PE -
- DI ___ LE - MA - HOL LI ___ PI - TAH - TA SA -
- QI ___ WA - TE - A - ZE - RE - - NI SIM - HA ___ LE -
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מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר־חֲנֻכַּת הַבַּיִת לְדָוִד

Salmo cantar de estrenamiento de la caza a David

אֲרוֹמִמְךָ אֲדֹנָי כִּי דִלִּיתָנִי
וְלֹא־שִׂמַּחְתָּ אֹיְבַי לִי

Enaltecértehe Adonáy que me enaltecistes
Y non hizistes alegrar mis enemigos por mí

אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהָי
שִׁוַּעְתִּי אֵלֶיךָ וַתִּרְפָּאֵנִי

Adonáy mi Dió
Esclamí a tí y me melezinastes

אֲדֹנָי הֶעֱלִיתָ מִן־שְׁאוֹל נַפְשִׁי
חִיִּיתַנִי מִיּוֹרְדִי־בוֹר

Adonáy hizistes suvir de foya mi alma
Me abediguastes de descender a fuesa

זַמְּרוּ לַאדֹנָי חֲסִידָיו
וְהוֹדוּ לְזֵכֶר קָדְשׁוֹ

Salmead a Adonáy sus buenos
Y load a membración de su santidad

כִּי רֶגַע בְּאַפּוֹ חַיִּים בִּרְצוֹנוֹ
בָּעֶרֶב יָלִין בֶּכִי
וְלַבֹּקֶר רִנָּה

Que punto con su folor vidas en su veluntad
Por la tadre duerme lloro
Y por la mañana cantar

וַאֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי בְשַׁלְוִי
בַּל־אֶמּוֹט לְעוֹלָם

Y yo dixe en mi pas
Non me resfuiré para siempre

אֲדֹנָי בִּרְצוֹנְךָ הֶעֱמַדְתָּה לְהַרְרִי עֹז
הִסְתַּרְתָּ פָּנֶיךָ הָיִיתִי נִבְהָל

Adonáy con tu veluntad hizistes parar a mi monte foraleza
Encuvristes tus faces fuí aturvado

אֵלֶיךָ אֲדֹנָי אֶקְרָא
וְאֶל־אֲדֹנָי אֶתְחַנָּן

A tí Adonáy llamo
Y a Adonáy me apiado

מַה־בֶּצַע בְּדָמִי בְּרִדְתִּי אֶל שָׁחַת
הֲיוֹדְךָ עָפָר
הֲיַגִּיד אֲמִתֶּךָ

Qué provecho en mi tajar en mi descender a fuesa
Se te loará polvo
Se denunciará tu verdad

שְׁמַע־אֲדֹנָי וְחָנֵּנִי
אֲדֹנָי הֱיֵה־עֹזֵר לִי

Oye Adonáy y apiádame
Adonáy see ayudán a mí

הָפַכְתָּ מִסְפְּדִי לְמָחוֹל לִי
פִּתַּחְתָּ שַׂקִּי
וַתְּאַזְּרֵנִי שִׂמְחָה

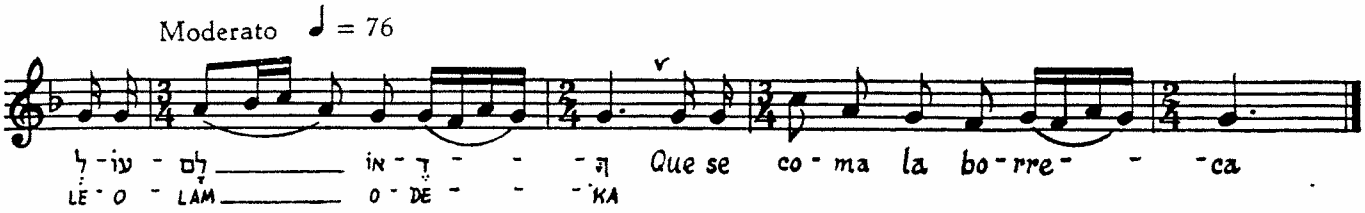
Trastornastes mi endecha por dança a mí
Soltastes mi saco
Y señístesme de alegría

Por que te salmee honra y non se calle
Adonáy mi Dió para siempre te loaré

(*S.T.C.P.*)

לְמַעַן יְזַמֶּרְךָ כָבוֹד וְלֹא יִדֹּם
אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהַי לְעוֹלָם אוֹדֶךָּ

והילדים מוסיפים



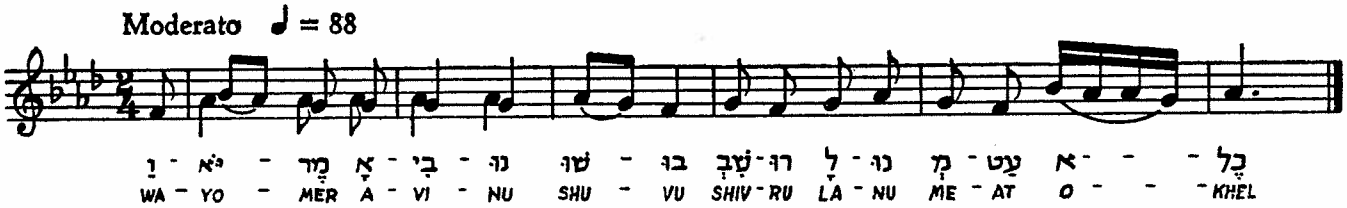
לְעוֹלָם אוֹדֶךָּ

Que se coma la borreca

Abediguastes = dísteme vida; pas = paz

VAYOMER AVINU
Jerusalén

15· ויאמר אבינו
ירושלים



Y dixo nuestro padre
Tornad compradnos un poco de comida

(*B.C.*)

וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִינוּ
שֻׁבוּ שִׁבְרוּ־לָנוּ מְעַט־אֹכֶל

בשנת בצורת, בשבת פרשת "ויגש", היו מעניים את הילדים, כמו בזמן תענית אסתר, ומחייבים אותם לאמר פסוק זה 319 פעם (בגימטריה "ויגש" =319), כדי שהקדוש ברוך הוא ירחם ויוריד גשם, ואח"כ היו אומרים:

Dió poderozo
Mándanos luvia
Avre tus cielos
Arrega tus campos
Grandes y pequeños
Todos pan queremos

luvia = lluvia; arrega = irriga, rega

LeDavid Hashem ori veyishi mimi ira Hashem maoz ḥayay mimi efḥad (Psalm 27:1)
Kumi ori ki va orekh ukhevod Hashem aleiyikh zarah (Isaiah 60:1)
Meein kamokha Hashem gadol ata vegadol shimekha bigevura (Jeremiah 10:6).

There are some who use a silver *ḥanukkiyya* for *hidur miẓvah* (fulfilling the commandment with embellishment). There were some who used both ends of the wick so that they used only four cups to have eight lights.[18]

There were *ḥanukkiyot* which were made of metal, and they had a protective glass to protect the wicks from the wind.[19]

The *ḥanukkiyyah* was placed on the inner portion of the doorway or entrance, on the side opposite the *mezuzah* (which is on the outer portion).[20]

It is the custom to eat jelly doughnuts (*sufganiyot*) several times during Ḥanukkah.

They eat couscous and a rooster in honor of Ḥanukkah.[21]

On the Sabbaths, when we read the *Parashiot Tikkun hashovevim* (a mnemonic for the weeks on which the following *parashiot* are read: *Shemot, Vaera, Bo, Beshalaḥ, Yitro, Mishpatim*), it is considered to be a special time for *teshuvah.* This period was a difficult time for our people, because during this period many righteous persons died. Thus, on the second or third of Shevat, it is customary to fast for the *taanit hadibur.* On this "day of silence" when we repent for the sin of *lashon harah* (slander), we also read the Book of Psalms three times as a means of seeking atonement for our sins during this period of harsh judgment.

As Practiced by Judeo-Spanish Jews

In the morning service, instead of the *Shir shel yom,* the *Mizmor shir ḥanukkat habayit* is recited. This is done right after the Sefer has been returned to the Ark.

Oil is always used in the *ḥanukkiyya,* which is placed in the window for the *pirsumei nisa* (proclamation of the miracle).[22]

It is the custom of the Judeo-Spanish Jews to eat *buermuelos,*

which are puffy fritters deep-fried in oil. Some spell the nam *bimeulos.* Some Judeo-Spanish groups fry these puff-dough fritters o a griddle and make them flat like pancakes.[23] The Turkish Jews appl the name *buermuelos* to a deep-fried puffed-dough confection re sembling raised doughnuts dipped in honey syrup or sprinkled wit powdered sugar or cinnamon and served warm.[24]

On the last day of Ḥanukkah, the Sephardim of Turkey observ what is known as the *merenda,* or "pot luck" picnic or dinner. Rela tives and close friends visit one another, and each brings with him part of the meal to be served. At the conclusion of this *merenda* meal the children receive money as gifts for Ḥanukkah. It was the custom among the Turkish community to have no more than one *ḥanukkiyyc* for the entire family. Nowadays, individual members of the family are permitted to kindle their own *ḥanukkiyya* in order to be able to make the blessings themselves.[25]

The blessing made is *Lehadlik ner Ḥanukkah,* not *shel Ḥanukkah.* Since the word *shel* is used only when the light is permitted to be used, and it is forbidden to use the light of the Ḥanukkah candle, the blessing excludes the word *shel.* The blessings are followed by the chanting of *Hanerot halalu* and *Mizmor shir ḥanukkat habayit.*[26]

There is an interesting old custom in connection with the recitation of the above prayer. Its final word, *odekha,* rhymes with the word *boreka,* meaning a unique pastry filled with either cheese or vegetables. The custom is to call the name of the smallest child present and sing this little ditty, *Leolam odekha* (which are the concluding words of the *Mizmor shir ḥanukkat habayit*), and to say, *Michael se la comyo la boreka.* It means that the child ate the *boreka.* Some say, *Manteka fresca* ("He ate the fresh butter"). Similarly, this is repeated naming a different child each of the eight nights of Ḥanukkah. Another ditty is *Vayi miquez(I), Piticas con miel. Paro (Faraon) las fazia. Yuse (Jose) las comia. Ḥanuquia baila tu tia, Ḥanuca baila tu vava.*[27]

In the olden times, the Sabbath of Ḥanukkah was known as Shabbat Halbasha (the Sabbath of clothing the poor).[28] The rabbi's remarks directed the people to the importance of providing raiment for the poor. Subsequently, clothing was brought to the synagogue and the garments were distributed on Rosh Ḥodesh Tevet, which is during Ḥanukkah. In current times, since there are, thank God, few poor, this custom has been discontinued. It is nice to note, however, that on the

Festival of Lights, which represented joy and warmth, the Judeo-Spanish Jews thought of those who would have to face the cold winter months and endeavored to provide them with garments to meet the season's rigors.

During the Ḥanukkah festival, the poor would receive charity from whomever they approached. They would quote from Genesis 43:2, *Shuvu shivru lanu meat okhel* ("Go again, buy us a little food"). Upon the recitation of this request, the needy individual would be given either food or money to purchase food.

As Practiced by Spanish and Portuguese Jews

The *berakha* over the oil (which is preferred) or wax candles is *Lehadlik ner* SHEL *Ḥanukkah.*[29] A candle is used to light the *shamash* and the regular Ḥanukkah lights, since these are oil and the *shamash* could not be used to light another oil wick with ease.

For purposes of *pirsumei nisa* (proclamation of the miracle), the Ḥanukkah lights are placed in, or near, a window.[30] This is the procedure followed in America and in Holland. The longer version of *Hanerot halalu* is recited. This is followed by the recitation of Psalm 30, *Mizmor shir ḥanukkat habayit leDavid.*[31]

In the *Shaḥarit* service, the words *Mizmor shir ḥanukkat habayit leDavid* of Psalm 30, which are left out all year, are added to the *Aromimkha Hashem.*[32]

Although the *Maoz ẓur* prayer is not known as a part of the Ḥanukkah ceremony for kindling the lights, its melody is used in the chanting of *Ein K'Elokeinu* in the synagogue service. This is a tradition which has long been observed in America, but it was not known in Holland, even though it appeared first in the *Birkat hamazon,* Etias edition, Amsterdam, 1702, by Mordecai.[33]

In synagogue, at the first *Amida* of Ḥanukkah in the *Arbit,* the ḥazzan announces, *"Omerim al hanisim,"* to signal the congregants to include this special prayer of thanksgiving in their silent recitation of the *Amida.*[34]

The Ḥanukkah lamp used in the synagogue is of beaten brass and originated in Holland a few hundred years ago.[35]

The blessing over the *Hallel* on Ḥanukkah is *Ligmor et hahallel.*[36] There is a difference in the way the Torah reading from *Parashat Naso* is allocated on each of the days of Ḥanukkah. For example, on the second day, the Spanish and Portuguese will read *Bayom hasheni* until *zahav melea ketoret* (Numbers 7:18–20). For the second person called on that day, the ḥazzan will continue with *Par eḥad* until the end of *Netaneel ben Ẓuar* (Numbers 7:21–23). Then for the third person called, the entire section for the day, Numbers 7:18–23, is read. This general procedure followed by all Sephardim is different from the manner in which the Ashkenazim allocate the *aliyot* during the days of Ḥanukkah.[37]

bueno." This meant from a sad day to a happy day, or from sadness to happiness.

Since the women were not supposed to do any housework, they would spend some of their time making "kulikas minudas," or pigtails with their daughters' hair, or neighbors' daughters' hair. On the evening before Tisha B'ab, the women would gather in the courtyard and would pass the time singing, trying to stay awake as long as possible. The belief was that this was the night that snakes and insects would invade the house. To ward off this possibility, they would place a head of garlic on the pillow.

It seemed like many of the disasters on Rhodes happened around Tisha B'ab, the last being the deportation of Jews from the Island in 1944.

Lag Ba-omer

The Festival of Lag Ba-omer was known in Rhodes as the marriage of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai. On the night of this festival the synagogues were well-lit. Vases were filled with Calla Lillies, the flower appropriate for this holiday.

It was during this time that we would bury old holy books that were not in use. Men would go about the streets proclaiming this event. The books and materials were placed in sacks and everyone gathered in the Wide Street at the home of Joseph Shemaria. He would gather the children and give us each two stones which we proceeded to knock together to accompany the following chant, sung in Hebrew:

Shiru lo	Sing to Him
Zameru lo	Praise Him
Gayo mayiko	Sing like a rooster
Mayo mayiko	Little Mayo

As we approached the cemetery, the gates were already open. People were paying respect to their dead relatives. The sacks filled with the old books were buried.

After the burial, we placed tablecloths on the grass over the graves and we had a picnic right there in the cemetery

with music and drinks, raki being the most popular beverage among the men.

Hanukah

In the 1920's in Rhodes, the Hanukiah or Menorah was made by the tinsmith. The candles were wicks placed in a small container of oil. Youngsters received no gifts, but did not have to go to school on one day during the Hanukah week. On that particular day, relatives, friends and parents would give a little money to the children and they would celebrate by buying whatever they wanted for lunch. Then, all gathered together for a picnic. This was called "el dia di la Miranda."

They made *burmuelos*, deep-fried dough, covered with *tahine* (a sesame dip) and/or honey.

La Fiesta de Purim-Purim

The festival of Purim was celebrated with much enthusiasm and festivity on Rhodes. The first reason was to celebrate the victory of the Jews, led by Mordecai and Esther, over Haman. The second reason was that God saved the Jews of Rhodes during the incident of the "little Greek."

This incident took place in 1840 on Rhodes during a period of much anti-Semitism and fanaticism. The Greeks at the time of Pesah accused the Jews of Rhodes of kidnapping and killing a boy and using his blood to make matsot.

This scandal was so evil that even the leaders of the community, including the Chief Rabbi were imprisoned. The Jewish community, however, tried every means to have the prisoners released. They contacted the powerful Jewish community of London and Paris. A committee was formed, led by the famous English philanthropist, Moses Montefiore. This committee set sail for Istanbul and succeeded in obtaining an audience with the Turkish Sultan where they pleaded clemency for the Jews who were unjustly imprisoned.

They demonstrated to the Sultan that according to Jew-

Unit IV – Tu Bishevat (Festival of Frutikas)

Enduring Understandings:

1. Sephardic culture expresses itself through its own language, culture and customs that continue to be observed in the Modern Jewish world.
2. While Sephardic practice shares much in common with Ashkenazic practice, its differences can bring an added layer of richness to the American Jewish experience.
3. The Sephardic community continues to evolve and bring diversity as it interacts with the postmodern world.
4. Sephardic Jews celebrate the holidays in a way that is thoroughly Jewish and distinctly its own.

Goals:

1. To introduce students to an alternate expression of Judaism.
2. To increase student understanding of the themes behind Jewish holidays.
3. To expose students to the uniquely Sephardic expression of holidays.
4. To enable students to experience the cultural richness of the Ladino language.
5. To introduce students to the musical aspect of Sephardic Jewry.
6. To provide students with the opportunity to discover Sephardic folktales.
7. To encourage students to explore their own Jewish identity through the close examination of a Judaism sometimes different from their own.

Objectives:

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

1. Compare and contrast their own Tu Bishevat observance to the observances learned in this unit
2. Create a tallega and be able to explain its significance
3. Produce their own interpretation of a portion of Psalm 104
4. Recite the blessings over the fruit and nuts of Tu Bishevat
5. Analyze a Sephardic Joha folktale with a Tu Bishevat theme

Sample Lesson Plan

Enduring Understandings:

1. Sephardic Jews celebrate the holidays in a way that is thoroughly Jewish and distinctly its own.

Goals:

1. To expose students to the uniquely Sephardic expression of Tu Bishevat.
2. To help students make a connection between the flora of Israel and the holiday of Tu Bishevat.

Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Connect foods from the seder with their appropriate blessing
2. Identify fruits and nuts from the seder they may be unfamiliar with
3. Recite the blessings for different fruits and nuts
4. Identify the blue boxes of the JNF and describe what the organization does

Set Induction:

Pass around the JNF tzedakah box. Ask students the following questions:

- What is this box?
- What goes in it?
- What does the blue design on the box mean?
- Have you seen this box before? Where?

The subsequent discussion should cover the following points:

1. The JNF is an organization that plants trees in Israel.
2. Whenever students see this blue box on a counter, the money is going towards tree planting.
3. Sephardic Jews donate money on Tu Bishevat that goes towards tree planting in Israel (as do Ashkenazic Jews).

Ask students the following questions:

- Why is it important to plant trees in Israel?
- Which kinds of trees get planted in Israel?
- What grows in Israel?
- Do we say the same blessing for all plants?

Middle Activity:

Ask students to name the blessings over different foods. List them on the board.

- Hamotzi lechem min haaretz
- Borei p'ri ha-eitz
- Borei p'ri ha-adamah
- Borei p'ri ha-gafen
    - Point out that Sephardic Jews do not pronounce the final word the same as Ashkenazic Jews. Sephardic Jews say "hagefen". Have students say the blessing with a Sephardic pronunciation.

Be sure to explain to students that the Tu Bishevat Seder had its orgins with Sephardic mystic Jews in Tzfat, Israel. The celebration of the Tu Bishevat Seder has been a Sephardic customs since then. Askenazic Jews have recently adopted the custom. Ask students if they have ever participated in a Tu Bishevat seder. Have them describe the seder (four glasses of wine/grape juice, different types of fruits and nuts etc.).

Hand out copies of the blessings over the fruits and nuts from the Sefer Peri Eitz Hadar to each student. Have students go through the list and identify the fruits and nuts they are not familiar with. Pass around the fruits and nuts the students mention and explain how they are grown (from a tree, a vine etc.).

Pass out small plates for each student and place enough pieces of fruits and nuts so that each student may try a small amount of everything. Go through the list of fruits and nuts with the students, having students volunteer to lead the class in the various blessings. At this time, the JNF tzedakah box should be passed around with the explanation that in Sephardic seders, the person who receives the honor of reciting a blessing adds tzedakah to the box. Also point out that by collecting money for tree planting in Israel, Sephardic Jews make a connection between the holiday of Frutikas and the land of Israel. Allow students to do the same if they wish, but giving tzedakah should not be a requirement for reciting the blessings. The student leading the blessing should hold the tzedakah box, however. Encourage students to try unfamiliar fruits but do not push the issue if students are resistant. Go through the list until every fruit and nut available has been blessed.

Closing activity:

Send students home with their own JNF tzedakah can and encourage them to continue collecting tzedakah after saying blessings over food in their own homes with their families.

Materials:

- Copies of blessings over the fruits and nuts of the Sefer Peri Eitz Hadar – see materials for this unit
- JNF box for each student – call local JNF branch ahead of time
- Plates for each student
- Fruits and nuts from list of blessings
- Printed out images of potentially unfamiliar plants

Fruits and Nuts from The Pri Eitz Hadar

Wheat (use pastry or dessert):

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מִינֵי מְזוֹנוֹת.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of many kinds of food.

Olive

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Dates

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Grapes

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Figs

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Pomegranate

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Citron

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Apple

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Walnut

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Chestnuts, Almonds or Hazelnuts

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Carobs

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Pears

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Medlar

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Quince

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Hackberry

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Jujube

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Pistachio

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Cherry

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Nishpolas (Type of Medlar fruit)

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Activities:

1. Journal - Using the journal begun in the Shabbat unit, have students record their thoughts and observations about Shavuot. Use the handout included in this unit.

3. Tallega - Have each student make a 'tallega', a small satchel with a strap that can be worn around a person's neck. Explain to students about the Sephardic custom on Tu Bishevat of children wearing their satchels and going door to door, where neighbors fill them with dried fruits and sweets. Provide students with various dried fruits that they can snack on and put into their satchels.

4. Psalm 104 - Divide up Psalm 104 so that each student receives a different part of the text. Explain to the students that this Psalm from the Tanakh is read on Tu Bishevat. Have each student relate their verses to Tu Bishevat either through art or writing.

5. The Nut and the Pumpkin – introduce students to Joha the Jewish Trickster from Sephardic legend. Have students then read the story The Nut and the Pumpkin. Ask students the following questions:
    - What is Joha marveling at when he sees the tree and pumpkin?
        - *Such small acorns on a large tree and a huge pumpkin on a thin vine*
    - Based on what happens in the story, what would Joha's conclusion be as to why pumpkins don't grow on trees?
        - *They'd cause a lot of damage if they fell on your head*
    - Joha is often portrayed as a buffoon in Sephardic tradition. Can you name the infamous buffoon(s) in Eastern European tradition?
        - *The wise men of Chelm*
    - Which plant is more important; the acorn or the pumpkin?
        - *Neither. They're both important*
    - Which fruits do you eat that are like the pumpkin? The acorn?
    - How is this story related to Tu Bishevat?

    Have students then create their own Tu Bishevat story.

How I Celebrate Tu Bishevat

BEGINNING OF UNIT

- When we celebrate Tu Bishevat in my community, we usually eat

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

- We do the following activities during Tu Bishevat

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

END OF UNIT

- Compare how what you've learned this unit is the same as what you've experienced in the past

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

- Contrast how what you've learned this unit is different from what you've experienced in the past

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

- Some of the most interesting things I learned about Sephardic Jews and Tu Bishevat are

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- Additional thoughts I have about how Sephardic Jews celebrate Tu Bishevat

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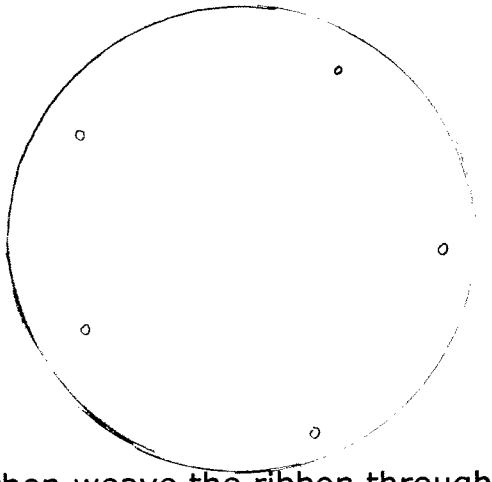
Tallega

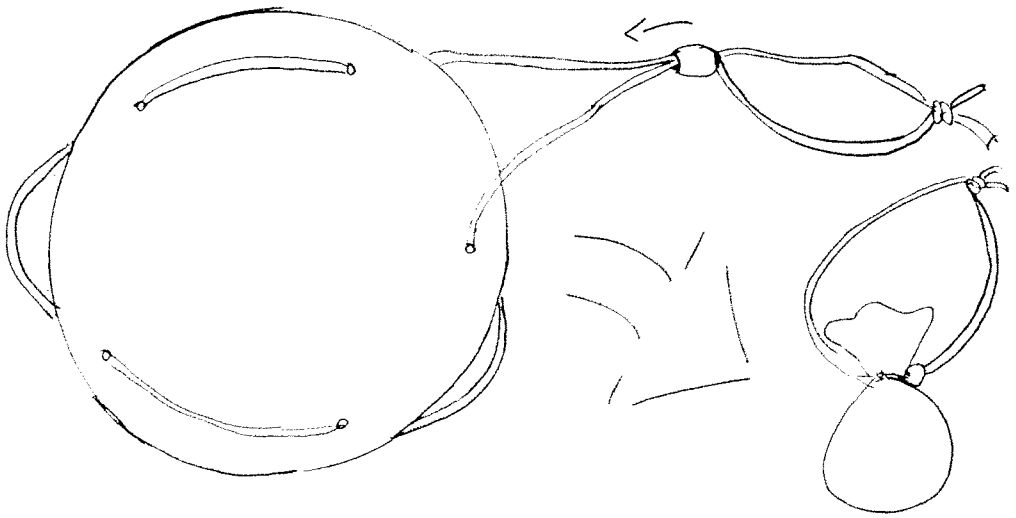
Sephardic children would wear a tallega, a small cloth satchel, around their necks as they wandered door to door on Tu Bishevat. They would then collect treats from their neighbors and put their treasures inside their tallegas.

Materials (for each tallega):
Round piece of cloth 10 inches in diameter
Approx. four feet ribbon
Bead
Hole punch

Have students punch fives holes 1 inch from edge of cloth approx. 4 inches apart from each other.



Have students then weave the ribbon through the holes. Thread the bead through both ends of ribbon then tie off the ends of the ribbon.



Psalm 104

(1) Bless Adonai, O my soul;
O Adonai, my God, You are very great;
You are clothed in glory and majesty,
(2) Wrapped in a robe of light;
You spread the heavens like a tent cloth.
(3) You set the rafters of Your lofts in the waters,
Make the clouds Your chariot,
Move on the wings of the wind,
(4) You make the winds Your messenger,
Fiery flames Your servants.
(5) You established the earth on its foundations,
So that it shall never totter.
(6) You made the deep cover it as a garment;
The waters stood above the mountains.
(7) They fled at Your blast,
Rushed away at the sound of Your thunder,
(8) Mountains raising, valleys sinking
To the place You established for them.
(9) You set bounds they must not pass
So that they never again cover the earth.

(10) You make springs gush forth in torrents;
They make their way between the hills,
(11) Giving drink to all the wild beasts;
The wild asses slake their thirst.
(12) The birds of the sky dwell beside them
And sing among the foliage.
(13) You water the mountains from Your lofts;
The earth is sated from the fruit of Your work,
(14) You make the grass grow for the cattle,
And herbage for man's labor
That he may get food out of the earth
(15) Wine that cheers the hearts of men
Oil that makes the face shine,
And bread that sustains man's life.
(16) The trees of Adonai drink their fill,
The cedars of Lebanon, God's own planting,
(17) Where birds make their nests;
The stork has her home in the junipers,
(18) The high mountains are for wild goats;
The crags are a refuge for rock-badgers.

(19) You made the moon to mark the seasons;
The sun knows when to set.
(20) You bring on darkness and it is night,
When all the beasts of the forest stir.
(21) The lions roar for prey,
Seeking their food from God.
(22) When the sun rises, they come home
And couch in their dens.
(23) Man then goes out to his work,
To his labor until the evening.
(24) How many are the things You have made, O Adonai;
You have made them all with wisdom;
The earth is full of Your creations.
(25) There is the sea, vast and wide,
With its creatures beyond number,
Living things, small and great.
(26) There go the ships,
And Leviathan that You formed to sport with.
(27) All of them look to You
To give them their food when it is due.
(28) Give it to them, they gather it up;
Open Your hand, they are well satisfied;
(29) Hide Your face, they are terrified;
Take away their breath, they perish
And turn again into dust;
(30) Send back Your breath, they are created,
And You renew the face of the earth.

(31) May the glory of Adonai endure forever;
May Adonai rejoice in God's works!
(32) You look at the earth and it trembles;
You touch the mountains and they smoke.
(33) I will sing to Adonai as long as I live;
All my life I will chant hymns to my God.
(34) May my prayer be pleasing to You;
I will rejoice in Adonai.
(35) May sinners disappear from the earth,
and the wicked be no more.
(36) Bless Adonai, O my soul.
Hallelujah.

The Nut and the Pumpkin[1]

Joha was walking in a garden one day. It was terribly hot. Joha's head was boiling, when suddenly he saw a nut tree and decided to sit under it, to refresh himself in its shade. He took off his fez, raised his eyes, and gazed at this great tree.

"Just look!" he said. "What a curious thing: such a big and strong tree, and such small nuts!" To his right, he noticed a very big pumpkin growing from a plant as thin as a string. He was amazed and said: "What a curious thing: such a thin plant, and such a big pumpkin!"

But while he was resting, nature played a game with him: a nut fell off the tree and hit him on the head, making him dizzy, and he saw stars during the daytime!

Joha picked up his fez, put it on his head, and raised his hands to thank God for His wisdom, as he imagined what could have happened to him if a pumpkin instead of a nut had fallen from the tree.

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[1] Koén-Sarano, Matilda, ed. Folktales of Joha. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003.

the first or last letters of each word spell out that specific variation of God's Holy Name.[9]

Over the olive: YKVK (first letters)
Yismeḥu hashamayim vetagel haarez (Psalm 96:11)

Over the date: YKKV (first letters)
Yithalel hamithalel haskel veyadoa (Jeremiah 9:23)

Over the grape: YVKK (first letters)
Yedotav ulezela hamishkan hashenit (Exodus 26:19–20)

Over the fig: KVKY (last letters)
Ze einenu shove li (Esther 5:13)

Over the pomegranate: KYYK (first letters)
Ushema Yisrael hayom hazeh (Deuteronomy 27:9)

Over the *etrog:* KKYV (last letters)
Iro velasoreka beni atono (Genesis 49:11)

Over the apple: VKYK (last letters)
Vayiru oto sarei faro (Genesis 12:15)

Over the walnut: VKKY (first letters)
Udevash hayom haze Hashem (Deuteronomy 26:15, 16)

Over the hazelnut: VYKK (first letters)
Vayar yoshev haarez hakenaani (Genesis 50:11)

Over the carob: KKVY (last letters)
Uzedaka tihiye lanu ki (Deuteronomy 6:25)

Over wine: KYKV (last letters)
Hashem iti uneromema shemo (Psalms 34:4)

Over the crabapple (Azarole): KYVK (first letters)
Hamer yemirenu vehaya hu (Leviticus 27:33)

As Practiced by Judeo-Spanish Jews

On Shabbat Shira, there is a very special chanting of *Az yashir Moshe,* which is rendered in a unique melody.

The fifteenth of Shevat, known as Tu BiShevat (commonly known as Jewish Arbor Day), is called the Festival of Fruticas. The book *Sefer Peri Ez Hadar,* with its special order of how the fruits are to be eaten, is followed. Special prayers are recited for the different fruits in a fashion similar to the *Yehi razon* prayers which are recited on Rosh Hashanah night. The fruits of the "seven types" are taken, plus carob fruit, apples, and walnuts. With the eating of each of these fruits, an appropriate Biblical phrase, which makes mention of the fruit, is chanted in a traditional manner.[10]

This celebration which takes place on the evening of Tu BiShevat is preceded by the chanting of the fifteen *Shir hamaalot* prayers from the Book of Psalms (*Tehillim*).

Anyone who wishes the honor of reciting the blessing over any one of the fruits has to pledge to donate money for the Land of Israel. In this way, the connection is made between Erez Yisrael and the seven types of fruit which are foremost in the Holy Land, and the celebration of this special day of Fruticas.

Prior to the reading of the Torah on Shabbat Shira, the special *piyut* entitled *Az yashir* is chanted.[11]

The children called Tu BiShevat by the name *Hamishoshi.* A teasing game for the children was to tell them to wait up until midnight, when the trees would kiss each other and the angels would come down from heaven to determine the fate of every tree. The children would, however, always fall asleep before midnight. Children also used to beat nuts as a game on *Hamishoshi.*[12]

The Turkish Jews sing the *Complas de las frutas* by Rabbi Yehuda bar Leon Kelayi, who lived in Salonica at the end of the nineteenth century.[13]

As Practiced by Spanish and Portuguese Jews

Tu BiShebat is called Hamisha Asar BiShebat by the Spanish and Portuguese.

The children in the religious school are given the different kinds of fruits and recite the blessings over them—either on the actual day or on the nearest school day prior to the holiday.

leisurely meal. It consisted of fish, pastelikos (meat pies), chicken, fruit and coffee. In the late afternoon we ate chicken cooked with fresh tomatoes, vegetables, noodles toasted and baked with tomato sauce, fresh fruit and coffee.

To break the Fast after Kippur, we washed out our mouths and then had a glass of pipitada, a drink made from the seeds of any melon, except watermelons. It is made by first drying the seeds, grinding them and placing them in water all night and letting them drain. The result is a milky substance served with rose water and sugar. The table was set. Bread was dunked into olive oil and eaten with salt. Cheese, fried fish, and spinach or tomato soufle were served. We did not serve boyos or borekas because it was too heavy after the fast. Many fruits and sweets were served. One or two hours after breaking the fast we served a rice soup with chicken and vegetables.

Festival of Sukkot

Five days after Yom Kippur, the festival of Sukkot was celebrated. The street vendors would come to the Juderia a few days before Sukkot to sell myrtle and palm leaves for the festival. The Sukkah was like a booth, and myrtle and palm leaves were used to cover it as a roof.

The children looked forward to decorating the Sukkah. They made colored-paper lanterns and paper mache chains. They helped with the hanging of the fruit and "roskitas." The walls consisted of white sheets, decorated with oriental rugs and chevres (shawls, embroidered with metallic threads), tapestries made of velvet and also embroidered with gold threads. The doors were framed with palm branches and decorated with fresh flowers.

We ate all our meals in the Sukkah for eight days. Everyone in the Juderia at one time or another would stop in at a Sukkah for the blessing (beraha) of the Lulav and Etrog. These two items were symbols of the harvest season. At night, a chair was placed on a table, and a covered glass of water and a Bible were placed on the chair. We were told

that Eliyahu Anavi would come down from the sky to drink the water.

The seventh night was the Vilada de Oshana Raba (a night dedicated to study). The sacred texts were read either at the synagogue or at the home of a mourner, and lasted all night. The next morning, it was a tradition to eat "al-itrea," plain spaghetti with grated cheese, served with a beverage made with water, cinnamon and sugar. This was served only at the home of the mourners.

On Simhat Torah, everyone went to the synagogue, and all the Torah scrolls were brought out and carried from one synagogue to another with much jubilation and singing. At this time, several men were honored as "hatanim."

Tubishevat

Tubishevat is a Jewish holiday that falls on the 15th day of the month of Shevat. This is the holiday celebrating the planting of the trees. On Tubishevat, it was the custom in Rhodes to exchange plates filled with fruit, sweets, and wine throughout the community.

The children were the bearers of the exchange. If they delivered water, for instance, the recipients would exchange it with wine and other types of sweets. The children would carry a little hand-made satchel called "tallega" around their neck. As they stopped at each home, they would be given a treat of some kind of sweets, which they would accumulate in their satchel.

Tisha B'ab

Aside from the fast observed on Yom Kippur, the next most important fast day is Tisha B'ab which occurs in the summer. This day commemorates the destruction of the "Beth-a-Mikdash," (the Temples of Jerusalem). The period of fasting was from sunset to sunset.

The men spent the morning in the "Kal" seated on the floor, with the lights dimmed, reading and lamenting until noon. After noon, the mood changed from "limunio a dia

Hackberry

The hackberry grows to an average height of about 15 metres, but it can reach 45 metres in more southern regions. Its life span also ranges from 150 to 500 years.

It grows on various soils but prefers deep moist soils. It is found in southern Quebec and Ontario and as far south as Pennsylvania and Kansas. It occurs in Canada because birds on their northward migration bring the nuts in their excrement.

The hackberry can regenerate by stump shoots and seed dispersion. In fact, because birds and small animals adore the hackberry fruit, the seed is widely dispersed.

Its fruit is a berry-like drupe, with a pitted stone.

Its wood is heavy but weak, and is therefore not used in carpentry. The hackberry is often used in landscape planting as a substitute for elm, which is subject to Dutch elm disease.

Leaf

Leaves, alternate, very pointed at tip, and asymmetrical at base.

Fruit

Fruits, redish drupes (stone fruits) on long stalk.

http://www.domtar.com/arbre/english/p_miocc.htm

JUJUBE

Ziziphus jujuba Mill.

Rhamnaceae

Common Names: Jujube, Chinese Date, Tsao.

Related Specie: Indian Jujube (*Ziziphus mauritiana*).

Distant Affinity: Purple Haw (*Colubrina texensis*), Raisin Tree (*Hovenia dulcis*).

Origin: The jujube originated in China where they have been cultivated for more than 4,000 years and where there are over 400 cultivars. The plants traveled beyond Asia centuries ago and today are grown to some extent in Russia, northern Africa, southern Europe, the Middle East and the southwestern United States. Jujube seedlings, inferior to the Chinese cultivars, were introduced into Europe at the beginning of the Christian era and carried to the U. S. in 1837. It wasn't until 1908 that improved Chinese selections were introduced by the USDA.

Adaptation: The jujube can withstand a wide range of temperatures; virtually no temperature seems to be too high in summertime. Winter dormancy allows it to withstand temperatures to about -28° F, yet it requires only a small amount of winter chill in order for it to set fruit. The plant revels in summer sun and heat, with the lack of either limiting fruit production more than winter cold. Yet jujubes have fruited in the Puget Sound and low Cascade regions of Washington State as well as in Pennsylvania. Fruiting of some cultivars has also been reported in northern Florida.The Indian jujube, which is more sensitive to frost, is grown in Florida, but the fruit is considered inferior. Jujube trees are not particularly suitable for container culture, but can be grown in this manner in a large container.

DESCRIPTION

Growth Habit: The jujube is a small, deciduous tree, growing to 40 feet tall in Florida, but smaller in size in California. The naturally drooping tree is graceful, ornamental and often thorny with branches growing in a zig-zag pattern. The wood is very hard and strong. Jujube cultivars vary in size and conformation, with some being very narrow in habit and others being more widespread. One cultivar, the So, seems to be fairly dwarfing in habit. After 30 years of growth in an average site, trees can be 30 feet tall with a crown diameter of up to 15 feet. Plants send up suckers (often with intimidating spines) from their roots, and these suckers can appear many feet from the mother plant. Currently, these root suckers must be controlled by mowing or hoeing.

Foliage: The small, ovate or oval leaves are 1-2 inches long and a shiny bright green. In the autumn, the leaves turn bright yellow before falling. There are usually two spines at the base of each leaf. Some spines may be hooked while others are long daggers. Virtually thornless cultivars are known. As the growing season commences, each node of a woody branch produces one to ten branchlets. Most of these are deciduous, falling from the plant in autumn.

Flowers: The inconspicuous, 1/5 inch diameter, white to greenish-yellow flowers are somewhat fragrant and produced in large numbers in the leaf axils. The flowering period extends over several months from late spring into summer. However, individual flowers are receptive to pollen for only one day or less. Pollination needs of the jujube are not clearly defined, but appear to be done by ants or other insects and possibly by the wind. Most jujube cultivars produce fruit without cross-pollination . The jujube is well protected from late spring frosts by delayed budding until all chance of cold weather has passed.

Fruit: The fruit is a drupe, varying from round to elongate and from cherry-size to plum-size depending on cultivar. It has a thin, edible skin surrounding whitish flesh of sweet, agreeable flavor. The single hard stone contains two seeds. The immature fruit is green in color, but as it ripens it goes through a yellow-green stage with mahogany-colored spots appearing on the skin as the fruit ripens further. The fully mature fruit is entirely red. Shortly after becoming fully red, the fruit begins to soften and wrinkle. The fruit can be eaten after it becomes wrinkled, but most people prefer them during the interval between the yellow-green stage and the full red stage. At this stage the flesh is crisp and sweet, reminiscent of an apple. Under dry conditions jujubes lose moisture, shrivel and become spongy inside. Tests in Russia indicate a very high vitamin C content. The fruit has been used medicinally for millennia by many cultures. One of its most popular uses is as a tea for sore throat

CULTURE

Location: Jujubes should be given a warm, sunny location, but are otherwise relatively undemanding. Given adequate heat and sun, the trees will thrive without any special care. They should not be planted in the shade of other trees

Soils: Jujubes tolerate many types of soils, but prefer a sandy, well-drained soils and do less well in heavy, poorly drained soil. They are able to grow in soils with high salinity or high alkalinity.

Irrigation: One of the outstanding qualities of the jujube tree are its tolerance of drought conditions. Regular watering, though, is important to assure a quality fruit crop.

Fertilization: Fertilizer requirements have not been studied, but jujubes appear to do well with little or no fertilization. Light broadcast applications of a balanced fertilizer such as 8-8-8 NPK at two-month intervals during the growing season would probably

speed growth. Do not fertilize until the newly planted tree has several months to get established.

Pruning: Unpruned trees produce as well as trees that have been pruned. Extensive winter pruning, however, will keep the plants in better health and produce more easily obtainable fruit.

Propagation: Most Chinese cultivars in the U.S. are grafted or budded onto a thorny rootstalk which produces many suckers from the roots. There is evidence that jujube cultivars will root on hard or soft wood cuttings. However, successes have been limited to date with this process of plant reproduction. Jujubes also can be propagated from seed, although they do not come true. Most jujube cultivars produce fruit without cross-pollination, but seeds from such self-pollination are usually not viable (such as from the Li or Lang cultivars)

Jujubes should be set out 10 to 15 feet apart since they require high light intensities for good production. Upon setting out new, bare root trees, top the plant to 3 or 4 feet and remove all side branches to leave only a whip. New, stronger branches will emerge from each bud just below the point where the old branches were pruned.

Pests and diseases: The Chinese jujube appears to have no serious disease, insect, or nematode pests in the U.S., hence, no spraying is necessary. Only the pocket gopher has shown a liking for the roots. One disease, witches broom, is prevalent in China and Korea and could be destructive to a new industry if allowed to enter into non-endemic areas.

Harvest: The crop ripens non-simultaneously, and fruit can be picked for several weeks from a single tree. If picked green, jujubes will not ripen. Ripe fruits may be stored at room temperature for about a week.The fruit may be eaten fresh, dried or candied. Fresh fruit is much prized by certain cultures and is easily sold in Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Indian markets. Tree dried fruit stores indefinitely and may have good marketing potential as it dries on the tree without the use of a sulfur preservative.

http://www.crfg.org/pubs/ff/jujube.html

Medlar

The medlar is native to the eastern part of the Mediterranean and the eastern part of Turkey, the western part of Iran and around the Caucasus. The medlar came to Greece around 700 BC. Archilochos of Paros already mentioned the fruit. After the Macedonian Wars about 200 BC, it cam to Rome. Theophrastus and later Pliny already described three different types of medlars. It is found wild in Austria, mostly in Niederosterreich, up to 1100 meters, in Switzerland, France, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands. It is depicted in mosaics in Pompeii. Charlemagne (768-841) mentioned the medlar as one of the trees which should be planted in the orchards of the Imperial Gardens. It also figures on the famous list of the St. Galler Klostergardens of 820. Under the influence of English garden architecture, park-like gardens came into fashion and in those gardens picturesque trees like the medlar were very welcome. The medlar is a fairly low tree, between 3 and 6 meters high, with a broad crown and heavy foliage which turns a beautiful reddish-brown in fall. Branches, and often even the trunk, are contorted. The leaves are long and pointed, about 12cm. long, hairy on the underside. And a mass of white, scentless flowers appear during the second half of May. The fruit is greenish-yellow when unripe; it looks a bit like an apple, but with an indentation on the top, surrounded by the calyces. Uses of the Medlar The most obvious use of a fruit-bearing tree is of course the consumption of the fruit. The medlar can be eaten raw, but only once it is bletted. Fruit is picked in late autumn and at that stage it is still very hard and greenish-yellow in color. When kept in a cool place,e.g. in layers of straw or sawdust, it will keep for many weeks, even months. During this time a process of fermentation will take place which changes the consistency of the fruit. It becomes soft to touch and brownish in color. At this stage it can be sucked empty, leaving the skin and stones behind. The consistency of the flesh is rather coarse with a very special taste to it, difficult to describe. Someone described it to me as eating coarse apple sauce with a large amount of cinnamon in it. Eaten when they are still hard they will pucker up your mouth, due to the tannic acid which is present in the fruit. In addition to being eaten raw, the fruit can also be used to make harvest wine or a cider. People also use to add it to their wine to give the wine the special medlar taste. Medlars could also be sugared. And of course they can be cooked and made into jelly very easily due to the high concentration of pectin in them. Since enzyme rich foods are becoming very popular, medlar may get some special attention. Of course it is not only the fruit which can be used. The medlar is a relatively slow-growing tree, which means that the wood is rather hard. In earlier days, this wood was used to make spearpoints, clubs and fighting sticks for the hunt and for warfare. Later on the wood was used for making parts of windmills, especially some of the turning wheels.

http://www.eat-it.com/CareGuides/medlar.html

Unit V – Pesach

Enduring Understandings:

1. Sephardic culture expresses itself through its own language, culture and customs that continue to be observed in the Modern Jewish world.
2. While Sephardic practice shares much in common with Ashkenazic practice, its differences can bring an added layer of richness to the American Jewish experience.
3. The Sephardic community continues to evolve and bring diversity as it interacts with the postmodern world.
4. Sephardic Jews celebrate the holidays in a way that is thoroughly Jewish and distinctly its own.

Goals:

1. To introduce students to an alternate expression of Judaism.
2. To expose students to the uniquely Sephardic expression of Pesach.
3. To enable students to experience the cultural richness of the Ladino language.
4. To introduce students to the musical aspect of Sephardic Jewry.
5. To provide students with the opportunity to discover Sephardic folktales.
6. To encourage students to explore their own Jewish identity through the close examination of a Judaism sometimes different from their own.

Objectives:

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

1. Compare and contrast their own Pesach observance to the observances learned in this unit
2. Analyze Sephardic Pesach observance through careful reading of folktales
3. Produce elements of Sephardic Pesach cuisine through baking
4. Perform a Sephardic Pesach melody
5. Utilize a limited Ladino vocabulary through music and art

Notes to teacher

If the meal occurs during Passover, families should be aware that Sephardic food restrictions are different from Ashkenazic and some Ashkenazic families may object to certain foods being served.

Sample Lesson Plan:

Sephardic Seder – Have students plan, prepare and participate in a Sephardic Seder. Incorporate the elements included in the handout in this guide in order to run the seder. This activity is a memorable moment.

Note to the teacher:

This lesson is highly experiential. In order to facilitate cognitive learning, it is suggested that questions be posed by the teacher throughout the duration of the seder highlighting the elements which are uniquely Sephardic. For example:

- Here on the seder plate the maror is romaine lettuce. Do you have romaine lettuce on your seder plate? If not, what do you use? (many will likely answer horseradish).

Goals:

1. To expose students to the uniquely Sephardic expression of Pesach.
2. To encourage students to explore their own Jewish identity through the close examination of a Judaism sometimes different from their own.

Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Prepare a portion of a Sephardic seder
2. Lead a portion of a Sephardic seder
3. Compare and contrast the Sephardic seder with traditions from their own community
4. Produce Sephardic foods that can be eaten at a Sephardic seder

Seder Preparation:

A few weeks before the seder, send home a flyer to the parents informing them of the upcoming Sephardic seder. Implement the elements included in this guide into a standard Haggadah the synagogue is familiar with. Assign each student a part in the seder to practice at home and assign each student to bring an item; food, plates, cups, juice etc.

Middle Activity:
Assign each student roles for setting up beforehand as well as for cleaning up afterwards. Have the students set the table, prepare the seder plate(s), set out the Haggadot and everything else they will need at the seder. When set up is complete, have the students take a seat and begin the seder.

Students should already have their roles assigned ahead of time. The teacher should orchestrate the seder, prompting students when appropriate and posing questions found in the teacher's copy of the Haggadah.

If possible, include a Sephardic Passover meal during the seder. Families can bring in Sephardic dishes for the students to share.

After the completion of the seder, put up a chart on the board and have students reflect on their experience. Students should point out parts of the seder that differ from their own observances. The chart should have a column for their own observances and for Sephardic observance as well.

Closing activity:
Remind students of their assigned clean up roles and clean up the room.

Materials:

- Flyers home to families
- Sephardic Passover recipes
- Cups – at least 4 per student
- Plates – at least 2 per student
- Seder plate
- Haggadot
- Silver ware
- Napkins
- Matzah
- Sephardic Charoset
- Romaine lettuce (maror, chazeret)
- Roasted chicken leg (zeroa)
- Roasted egg (beitzah)
- Parsley (karpas)
- Sack (to put afikomen into during seder)
- Large basin
- Pitcher of water
- Grape juice

- 2 Candles
- Matches
- Candle sticks
- Belt
- Cane or stick

Sephardic Passover Seder – Differences

Sephardic	**Ashkenazic**
Zeroa - roasted chicken leg	Zeroa – roasted lamb shank
Kitniyyot okay except for rice. The reason rice is not eaten is because one must first check through all of the rice to make certain that there is no grain mixed into it.	No kitniyyot (rice, corn, millet and legumes)
Maror – Romaine lettuce	Maror – horseradish
Open the door – Sephardic Jews open the door towards the beginning of the seder during "kol Dikhfin." The door is opened to symbolize inviting all the poor who may wish to join in the seder. They do NOT open the door for Elijah, nor is there a fifth cup for Elijah.	Open the door – Ashkenazic Jews open the door for Elijah at the end of the seder and have a fifth cup for Elijah.
All participants recite the four questions, not just the youngest child present.	The youngest child present recites the four questions.
The four questions are asked in the same order that the seder follows (see below)	The four questions are asked in a different order.
The word v'shotin (to drink) is added to the last question	V'shotin is omitted.
Afikomen is not hidden. It is used as an amulet in the home and is replaced each Erev Pesach.	Afikomen is hidden or stolen.
Drops of wine poured into a basin in the center of the table by the leader of the seder. No one is permitted to look at the drops of wine. The diminishing of the wine represents diminished happiness because of God's killing of the Egyptians.	Drops of wine placed on each person's plate.
The blessing over the wine is said only 2 times during the seder; once for the Kiddush and once at the end of the Birkot Hamazon.	The blessing over the wine is said for all four glasses of wine.
Sephardic Jews say "borei p'ri hag**e**fen."	Ashkenazic Jews say "borei p'ri hag**a**fen."

- The Judeo-Spanish tradition follows the seder plate arrangement of the Ari (Rabbi Issac Luria). There is a mystical tradition that says that the items of the seder plate must be set out in order (show students the formation of the six-pointed star):
  1. Three matzot placed at top
  2. To the right: zeroa (chicken leg)
  3. To the left: beitzah (egg)
  4. Bottom right: Charoset
  5. Bottom left: Karpas (parsley)
  6. At the bottom: Chazeret (romaine lettuce)
  7. Middle of plate: Maror (romaine lettuce)
- The seder plate is held for one moment over the head of everyone present at the table.
  - During this point in the seder everyone says: *"Este el pan de la afrisyan ke comyeron maestros padres en tierra de Ayifto. Todo el ke tiene amber venga y coma. Todo el ke tiene de menester venga y paskue. Este anyo aki, a el anyo el vinien en Tierra de Yisrael. Este anyo aki siervos, a el anyo el vinien en Tierra de Yisrael ijos foros."*
  - *This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat; let all who are in need come and celebrate Passover with us. Now we are here. In the year to come may we be in the land of Israel. Now we are here enslaved. In the year to come may we be in the land of Israel, free people.*
- The four questions in the Sephardic tradition:

  שֶׁבְּכָל הַלֵּילוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מַטְבִּילִין אֲפִלּוּ פַּעַם אֶחָת
  הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פְּעָמִים.
  - On all other nights we don't dip vegetables even once; and on this night we do it twice.

  שֶׁבְּכָל הַלֵּילוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חָמֵץ וּמַצָּה
  הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כֻּלּוֹ מַצָּה.
  - On all other nights we may eat leavened bread or matzot; and on this night only matzot.

  שֶׁבְּכָל הַלֵּילוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׁאָר יְרָקוֹת
  הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מָרוֹר.
  - On all other nights we eat vegetables of any kind; tonight we eat bitter herbs.

  שֶׁבְּכָל הַלֵּילוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין וְשׁוֹתִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבִין וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין
  הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כֻּלָּנוּ מְסֻבִּין.
  - On all other nights we eat and drink either sitting up or reclining; and on this night we all recline.

        - Note: the Sephardic edition adds v'shotin (we drink) to the fourth question
- The seder plate is removed from the table before the four questions are asked. When the questions have been asked the seder plate is returned to the table.
- At *"B'chol dor vador chayav adam lirot et atzmo k'ilu hu atzmo yatza mimitzrayim,"* (In every generation it is one's duty to see him/herself as though s/he has personally gone out from Egypt). The leader throws the napkin containing the afikomen over his or her shoulder and walks out of the room. The leader then returns with his or her belt tightened, carrying a cane and a sack containing the afikomen.
        - This demonstrates how our ancestors went out of Egypt
    - The leader returns and says, "Kakha asu Yisrael kesheyatzu mimitzrayim. Mishearotam tzerurot besimlotam al shikhman … uvenai Yisrael asu kidvar Moshe." (Like Israel did when it went out from Egypt … having their kneading bowls bound up in their clothes on their shoulders … and the Children of Israel did as Moses said).
    - Everyone responds: "Where do you come from?"
    - Leader: "I have come from Egypt."
    - Everyone: "To where are you going?"
    - Leader: "I am going to Jerusalem."
    - Everyone: "Leshanah habaah biYerushalayim."
        - This stimulates the curiosity of the children and encourages them to ask questions about the exodus from Egypt.
    - Everyone present takes turns carrying the afikomen in the sack.

Sephardic Charoset – Turkey[1]

1 sweet apple (peeled, cored and sliced in four)
1 cup of peeled and stoned dates, chopped
½ cup of raisins (soaked in hot water for 15 mins., then strained)
½ cup of peeled and chopped walnuts
½ teaspoon of cinnamon
½ cup fresh orange juice

Mix the apple, dates and raisins together in a food processor. Add just enough orange juice to form a stiff, cement-like mixture. Add the cinnamon and the nuts and mix again for a few seconds.

[1] Aelion Brooks, Andrée. "Out of Spain" Westport: Hitchcock Books, 2003.

Activities:

1. Journal - Using the journal created in the Shabbat unit, have students record their thoughts and observations about Passover. Use the handout included in this unit.

2. Folktale – Have the students read the folktale "Two Donkeys at the Seder". Traditionally, Sephardic seders are lead by the man. In this story, the husband cannot read Hebrew, while the woman can. Lead a discussion of the story including the following questions:
    - Why does the wife suggest the husband invite a guest?
        - She wants someone to lead the seder
    - What does the wife do when it turns out the guest can't read Hebrew either?
        - She changes the words of the Haggadah to show what she thinks of their lack of Hebrew
    - Which part of the Haggadah does she change?
        - The Four Questions
    - In which language does your family read the Haggadah?
    - Do you think it makes a difference in which language the Haggadah is read? Why or why not?
    - What are the advantages to reading the Haggadah in your native language?

3. Chad Gadya – Hand out the lyrics to the Ladino version of Chad Gadya as well as a vocabulary sheet. Go over the words of the song and sing the song with a Sephardic melody. Have the students then learn the melody.

4. Masa Tiganitas – Ask students to describe some special foods they eat during Passover (i.e. Matzah Brei). Tell them that Sephardic Jews have special meals for Passover as well. Have students then make masa tiganitas.

5. Invite a guest – Invite a Sephardic Jew from your own community to come speak to the class about how they celebrate Pesach in their home. Prompt the guest speaker ahead of time to describe Sephardic differences. For example, what languages are spoken used in the seder (English, Hebrew, Spanish, Ladino) or perhaps which foods that person traditionally eats on Pesach. Encourage students ahead of time to formulate questions to ask their guest.

How I Celebrate Pesach

BEGINNING OF UNIT

- When we celebrate Pesach in my community, we usually eat

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

- We do the following activities during our Pesach seder

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

END OF UNIT

- Compare how what you've learned this unit is the same as what you've experienced in the past

  _____
  _____
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  _____
  _____

- Contrast how what you've learned this unit is different from what you've experienced in the past

  _____
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- Some of the most interesting things I learned about Sephardic Jews and Pesach are

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

- Additional thoughts I have about how Sephardic Jews celebrate Pesach

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Two donkeys at the Seder[2]

Once there was a well-educated woman who married an illiterate but very wealthy man. When Passover came, her husband, being illiterate, was unable to read the *Haggadah*. The woman was very sad about this. A year passed and the woman, concerned that the Passover *seder* would not be celebrated properly during her second year of marriage, asked her husband to bring home a guest from the synagogue to share their *seder*. The guest would then be able to lead in the recitation of the *Haggadah*. So the husband went to the synagogue and, after services were over, came home with a handsome young man who was in the town on business and needed somewhere to celebrate Passover.

The husband and his wife and their guest sat down to a beautifully set table. The husband began by chanting the Kiddush over the wine, which he knew by heart. Then he turned to his guest and said, "*B'kavod* …" inviting his guest to begin the recitation of the *Haggadah*.

The guest responded, "Oh no. You are the baal habayit. You should begin."

The husband looked sheepishly at his guest and said, "I wish I could but I cannot read or write."

"Neither can I," said the guest, looking just as sheepish.

"Very well," said the mistress of the house, with a disgusted look on her face. "I will recite the *Haggadah* for all of us." With this she began:

"*Mah nishtanah halailah hazeh mikol haleylot?*

Why is this night different from all other nights?

Sheb'chol haleylot yesh li hamor echad.

On all other nights I only have one donkey.

Halaila hazeh shney hamorim.

On this night, two donkeys.

"So much for the seder! We can now begin to eat! Let's enjoy our meal!"

---

[2] Sternberg, Rabbi Robert. The Sephardic Kitchen. New York: HarperCollins Publishing, 1996.

Chad Gadya in Ladino:

Un cavritico
Que lo mercó mi padre
Por dos aspricos
Por dos levanicos
Chad gadiá chad gadía.

Vino el gato
Y se comió al cavritico
Que lo mercó mi padre
Por dos aspricos
Por dos levanicos
Chad gadiá chad gadía.

Vino el perro
Y modrió al gato
Que se comió al cavritico
Que lo mercó mi padre
Por dos aspricos
Por dos levanicos
Chad gadiá chad gadía.

Vino el palo
Y akharvó al perro
Que modrió al gato
Que se comió al cavritico
Que lo mercó mi padre
Por dos aspricos
Por dos levanicos
Chad gadiá chad gadía.

Vino el fuego
Y quemó al palo
Que akharvó al perro
Que modrió al gato
Que se comió al cavritico
Que lo mercó mi padre
Por dos aspricos
Por dos levanicos
Chad gadiá chad gadía.

Vino la agua
Y amató al fuego
Que quemó al palo
Que akharvó al perro
Que modrió al gato
Que se comió al cavritico
Que lo mercó mi padre
Por dos aspricos
Por dos levanicos
Chad gadiá chad gadía.

Vino el buey
Y se bevió la agua
Que amató al fuego
Que quemó al palo
Que akharvó al perro
Que modrió al gato
Que se comió al cavritico
Que lo mercó mi padre
Por dos aspricos
Por dos levanicos
Chad gadiá chad gadía.

Vino el shohét
Y degolló al buey
Que se bevió la agua
Que amató al fuego
Que quemó al palo
Que akharvó al perro
Que modrió al gato
Que se comió al cavritico
Que lo mercó mi padre
Por dos aspricos
Por dos levanicos
Chad gadiá chad gadía.

Vino el malákh hamavet
Y degolló al shohét
Que degolló al buey
Que se bevió la agua
Que amató al fuego
Que quemó al palo
Que akharvó al perro
Que modrió al gato
Que se comió al cavritico
Que lo mercó mi padre
Por dos aspricos
Por dos levanicos
Chad gadiá chad gadía.

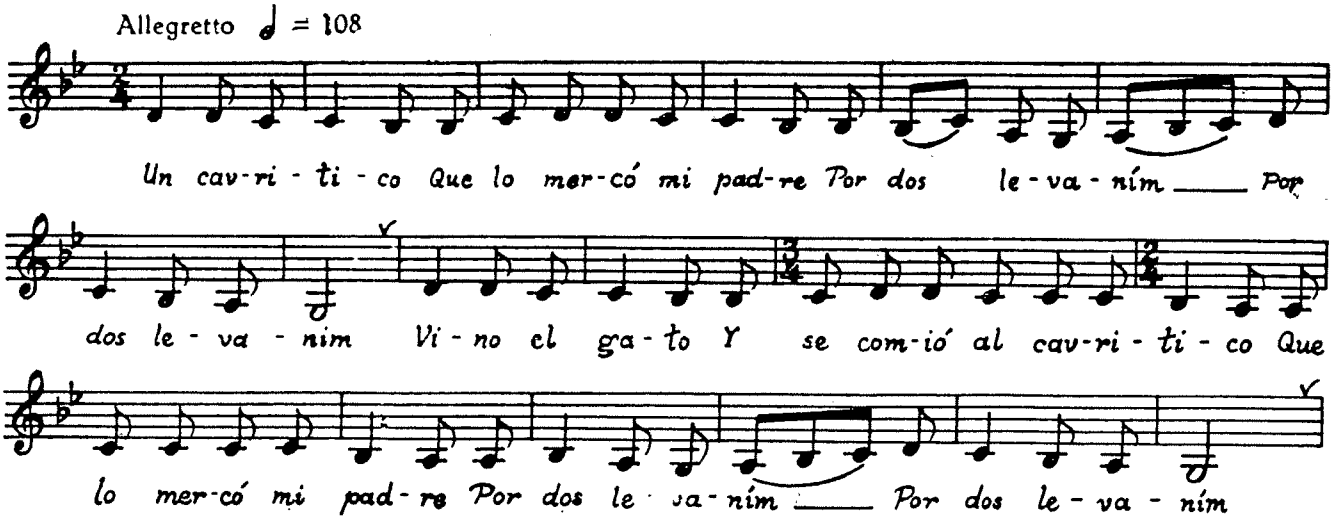
Vino el santo bendicho él
Y degolló al malákh hamavet
Que degolló al shohét
Que degolló al buey
Que se bevió la agua
Que amató al fuego
Que quemó al palo
Que akharvó al perro
Que modrió al gato
Que se comió al cavritico
Que lo mercó mi padre
Por dos aspricos
Por dos levanicos
Chad gadiá chad gadía.

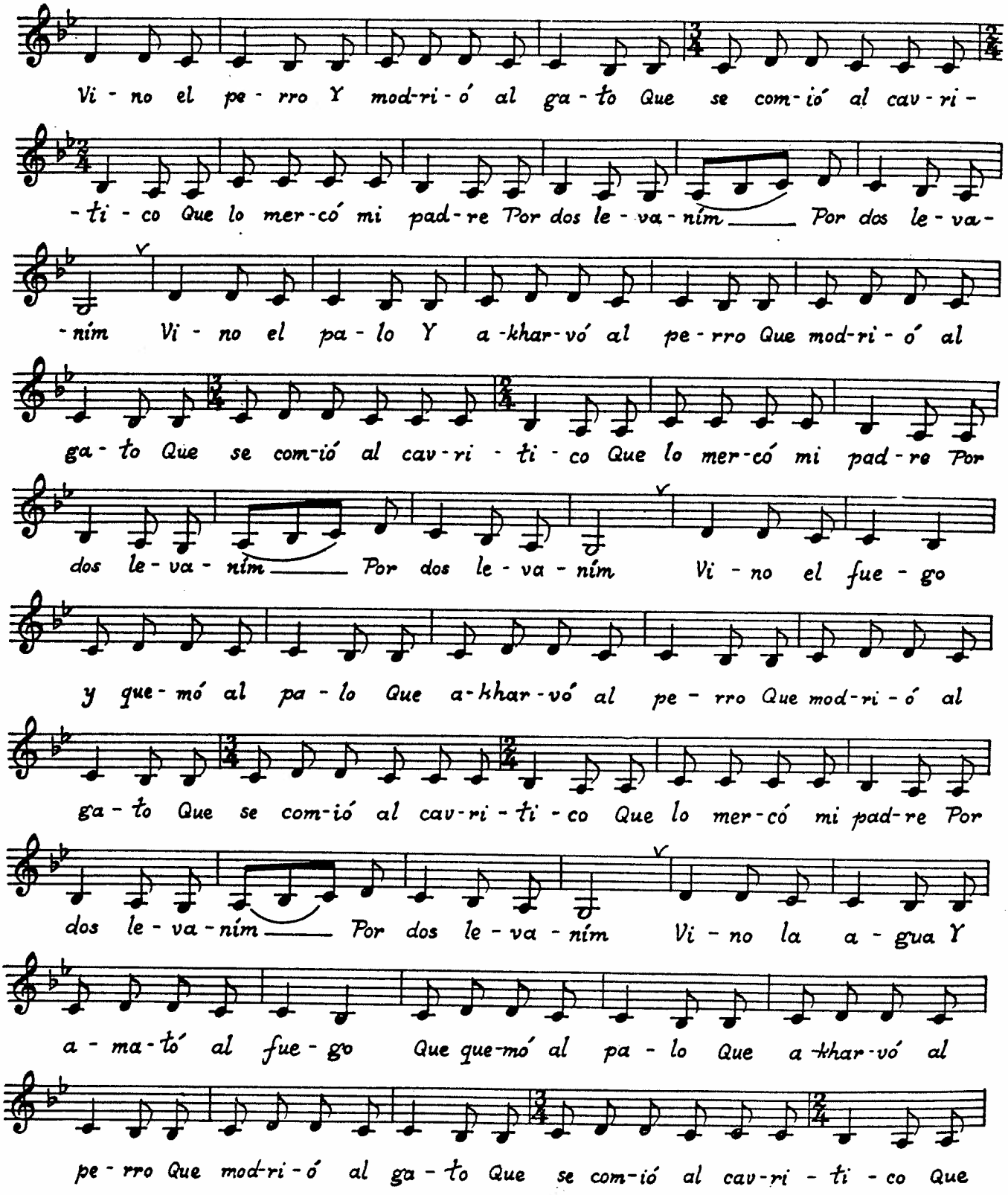
Que degolló al buey	דְּשָׁחַט לְתוֹרָא
Que se bevió la agua	דְּשָׁתָה לְמַיָּא
Que amató al fuego	דְּכָבָה לְנוּרָא
Que quemó al palo	דְּשָׂרַף לְחוּטְרָא
Que akharvó al perro	דְּהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא
Que madrió al gato	דְּנָשַׁךְ לְשׁוּנְרָא
Que se comió al cavritico	דְּאָכְלָה לְגַדְיָא
Que lo mercó mi padre	דְּזַבִּין אַבָּא
Por dos aspricos	בִּתְרֵי זוּזֵי
Por dos levanicos	בִּתְרֵי זוּזֵי
Had gadiá had gadiá	חַד גַּדְיָא חַד גַּדְיָא

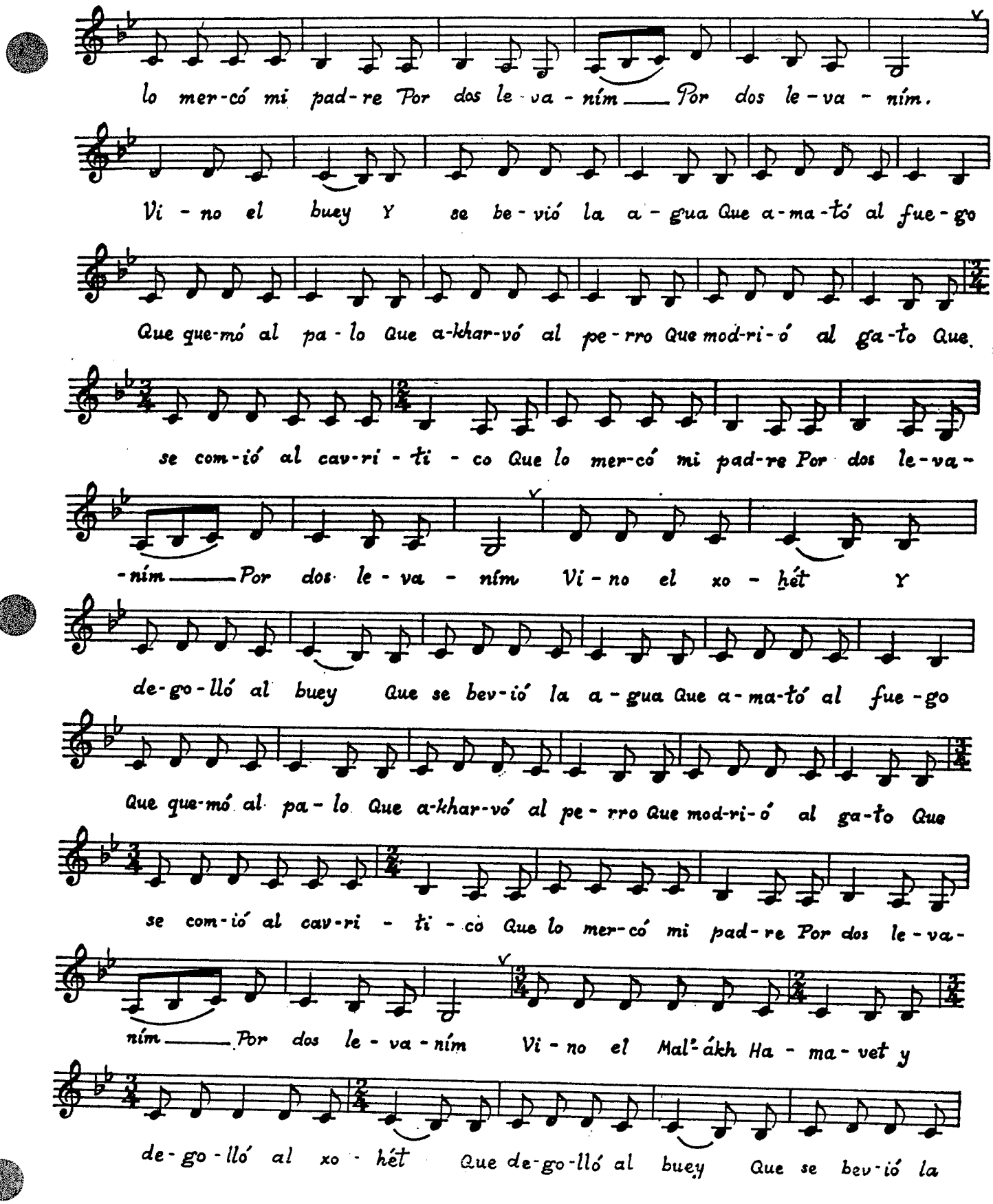
had gadiá, *aram.* = un cavritillo
akharvó, *heb.* = pegó, golpeó
malákh hamavet, *heb.* = ángel de la muerte
aspricos, levanicos = céntimos
xohét, *heb.* = degollador

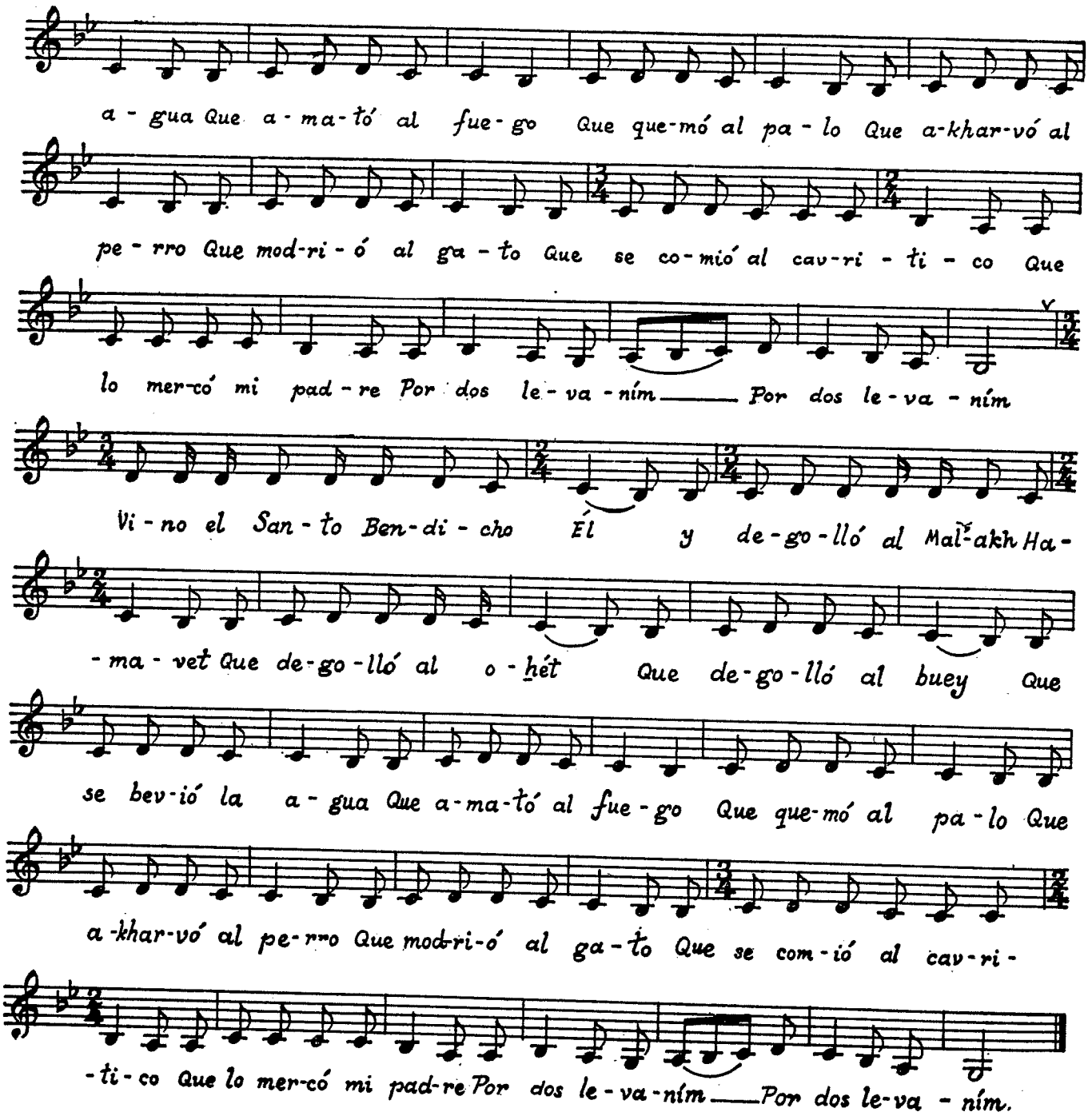
UN CAVRITICO
Esmirna

292. חד גדיא — בלדינו
איזמיר




Vi - no el pe - rro Y mod-ri - ó al ga - to Que se com-ió al cav - ri -
- ti - co Que lo mer-có mi pad-re Por dos le - va - nim Por dos le - va -
- nim Vi - no el pa - lo Y a - khar-vó al pe - rro Que mod-ri - ó al
ga - to Que se com-ió al cav-ri - ti - co Que lo mer-có mi pad - re Por
dos le - va - nim Por dos le - va - nim Vi - no el fue - go
y que - mó al pa - lo Que a-khar-vó al pe - rro Que mod-ri - ó al
ga - to Que se com-ió al cav-ri - ti - co Que lo mer-có mi pad-re Por
dos le - va - nim Por dos le - va - nim Vi - no la a - gua Y
a - ma - tó al fue - go Que que-mó al pa - lo Que a - khar-vó al
pe - rro Que mod-ri - ó al ga - to Que se com-ió al cav-ri - ti - co Que


lo mer-có mi pad-re Por dos le-va-nim ___ Por dos le-va-nim.
Vi-no el buey Y se be-vió la a-gua Que a-ma-tó al fue-go
Que que-mó al pa-lo Que a-khar-vó al pe-rro Que mod-ri-ó al ga-to Que
se com-ió al cav-ri-ti-co Que lo mer-có mi pad-re Por dos le-va-
-nim ___ Por dos le-va-nim Vi-no el xo-hét Y
de-go-lló al buey Que se bev-ió la a-gua Que a-ma-tó al fue-go
Que que-mó al pa-lo Que a-khar-vó al pe-rro Que mod-ri-ó al ga-to Que
se com-ió al cav-ri-ti-co Que lo mer-có mi pad-re Por dos le-va-
nim ___ Por dos le-va-nim Vi-no el Mal'ákh Ha-ma-vet y
de-go-lló al xo-hét Que de-go-lló al buey Que se bev-ió la


a - gua Que a - ma - ṭó al fue - go Que que-mó al pa - lo Que a-khar-vó al
pe - rro Que mod-ri - ó al ga - ṭo Que se co - mió al cav-ri - ṭi - co Que
lo mer-có mi pad - re Por dos le - va - nim ____ Por dos le - va - nim
Vi - no el San - ṭo Ben-di - cho Él y de - go - lló al Mal-akh Ha -
- ma - vet Que de-go - lló al o - ḥét Que de-go - lló al buey Que
se bev-ió la a - gua Que a-ma-ṭó al fue - go Que que-mó al pa - lo Que
a-khar-vó al pe-rro Que mod-ri-ó al ga - ṭo Que se com - ió al cav - ri -
- ṭi - co Que lo mer-có mi pad-re Por dos le - va - nim ____ Por dos le-va - nim.

Masa Tiganitas[3]

This Sephardic variation of matzoh brei is much richer and creamier than the Ashkenazic dish. The method is also totally different. Masa tiganitas is a little like French toast made out of matzah.

SERVINGS: 4-6

6 whole matzot
Whole milk to soak matzot (about 4 cups)
4 large eggs
¼ cup yogurt
Sunflower oil for sautéing
Honey
Finely chopped walnuts

1. Place the whole matzot into a wide, deep mixing bowl or a square baking pan that can accommodate them all without breaking them. Pour the milk over them to cover. Soak the matzot in the milk until they soften enough so that they can be cut but are not so soft that they will disintegrate (about 2-2 ½ minutes).
2. While the matzot are soaking, beat the eggs in a mixing bowl together with the ¼ cup yogurt.
3. When the matzot are soft enough, gently remove them, one at a time and lay them on paper towels. Cut each matzah into four quarters. Stack the squares on top of one another on paper towels or on a plate.
4. Pour enough oil into a 12-ince skillet to come up the sides ¼ inch. Heat the oil over medium-high heat until it is sizzling but not smoking.
5. Dip one square of matzah from each stack into the beaten egg. Allow the excess to drip back into the mixing bowl. Place the square in the skillet. A 12-inch skillet will hold 2-3 tiganitas (squares) while they are frying. Fry the tiganitas until golden brown on both sides. Keep the tiganitas warm in a 250-degree oven until all are ready. Apportion the tiganitas onto serving plates. Serve with honey poured over the tiganitas and sprinkle with chopped walnuts.

SERVING SUGGESTIONS:
Serve masa tiganitas with thick yogurt, fresh fruit, and coffee for a very special breakfast.

[3] Sternberg, Rabbi Robert. The Sephardic Kitchen. New York: HarperCollins Publishing, 1996.

On Lag LaOmer a major celebration and weddinglike occasion known as Hilula deRabi Shimon (Bar Yoḥai) is held after the *Arvit* service. They study some Zohar (*Idra Zuta*), sing *pizmonim*, and then memorial candles are sold in memory of Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai, Rabbi Meir Baal Hanes, the *Tannaim*, *Amoraim*, and the various rabbis and *ẓaddikim* buried in Morocco. This candle-lighting ceremony is *Leilui nishmot haẓaddikim*. On Lag LaOmer day, everyone went to visit the local cemeteries to pray at the graves of their sainted leaders and to make a *hilula* (celebration) at their graveside, just as it is the custom to go to Meron in Israel to the grave of Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai. Thus, in Morocco, many made the cemetery the main location of their picnic on Lag LaOmer.[84]

On the six Shabbatot between Pesaḥ and Shavuot, before *Minḥa*, they read *Pirkei Avot* (*Ethics of the Fathers*) and *Pirkei Mishlei* (Proverbs). Each Shabbat, after *Minḥa*, they read the verses for four letters of the alphabet from the *Alfa Beta* (Psalm 119).[85]

In some communities they counted the *Omer* each morning in synagogue without the *berakha* immediately at the end of *Shaḥarit* as a reminder to anyone who may have forgotten to count on the night before.[86]

Women do not work while the *Sefira* is being counted. This is because the offering of the *sota* (wanton woman) was a tenth of an *epha* of flour from wheat, which is the same amount as the offering of the *Omer*. Thus, our righteous women were distinguished from the others by abstaining from work at this specific time.[87]

It is the custom to study the *Tikkun Karet* on the sixth day of the sixth week during the period of *Sefirat HaOmer*, just as during the month of Elul.

As Practiced by Judeo-Spanish Jews

Preparations for Pesaḥ begin one month before the holiday, immediately after Purim. The Judeo-Spanish used to say, *"Purim Purim lanu Pesaḥ en la manu,"* meaning, "Purim is come, and before you turn around, Passover is here." The women begin to clean their houses, room by room, in preparation for the removal of all *ḥameẓ*. The children begin to study the Haggadah in the schools.[88]

In some communities the privilege of baking *maẓẓot* for the whole community was given to the one who would provide *maẓẓot* at the lowest price. Two types of *maẓẓot* were prepared: "thick" (*boyo*) and "thin" (*maniuo*) used for cooking and soaking in water.[89]

On Shabbat Hagadol (the Great Sabbath), which precedes Pesaḥ, the children of the Talmud Torah, in such places as Salonika, would receive new clothes to mark the spring season. For them, this was known as *ḥag hahalbasha* (The Festival of New Clothes). A large gathering which featured the singing of *piyutim* and special plays in honor of the contributors, was held each year.[90]

In Turkey there was no enactment of *mekhirat ḥameẓ*. However, nowadays since people do not use up all their *ḥamez* before the holiday season, the congregations do follow the tradition of having a special document to sell the leaven to a non-Jew. For many Judeo-Spanish communities, this is a relatively new procedure to which they were not at all accustomed in the old country.[91]

The usual preparation of special vessels and dishes for Passover prevails. There is preference for the individual family to have special Passover dishes (*la loẓa Paskual*). However, when this is not possible, the family is permitted to kasher their regular metal vessels in the usual fashion, which requires leaving them clean (in a state of disuse) for twenty-four hours and submitting them to either *hagala* (dipping in boiling water) or *libun* (being cleansed by a direct flame of fire).[92]

Maẓẓah Shemurah

Maẓẓah shemurah is used for at least the first two nights of Pesaḥ, by everyone. This is in keeping with the declaration made in the Haggadah, *"Tomaran las tres maẓẓot shemurot . . ."*

The *bedikat ḥameẓ* is helped by the wife, who prepares a special plate with ten pieces of bread on it (as well as a scraping knife), the remains of the *hadassim*, and the *aravot*, which had been put away at the conclusion of Sukkot for the purpose of sweeping up the *ḥameẓ*. These are hidden, and the men of the family who come home in the evening recite the blessing over the *bedikat ḥameẓ*, take a candle, and search throughout the household until they find the plate with the *ḥameẓ*. They then set it aside for the following morning, when it will

be burned in the traditional *biur ḥamez*. The cleaning of the house of all *ḥamez* is called *kal ḥamira*.[93]

On the fourteenth of Nisan, when the eating of *ḥamez* is forbidden, the traditional food eaten is *buermelos de mazzah* (deep-fried *mazzah*). These are accompanied by eggs and vegetables.[94]

Plain *mazzah* is not eaten for a complete month prior to Pesaḥ in order to preserve it as something special for the Passover holiday.

On Erev Pesaḥ the housewife washes all of the vegetables very carefully to remove all insects, especially the romaine lettuce which is used for *maror* (bitter herb). The *ḥaroset*, which is made from apples, nuts, figs, dates, and black raisins with seeds which are ground and mixed together with wine, is also prepared before the evening.[95] Each of the aforementioned fruits of the *ḥaroset* has a Biblical connection with the people of Israel.[96]

The *zeroa* is symbolized by a roasted chicken wing.

There is no prohibition among the Judeo-Spanish from eating *zeli* (broiled meat), although many refrain from doing so. Similarly, there is no restriction on eating *mazzah* which is soaked in water (*manura*). The delicacies of Passover include *mazzah mojada* and *buermuelos*, which are soaked in eggs and water and salt, etc. *Prasa fuchi* or *sungato* (leek patties) and *megina* or *meyina* (*mazzah* meat pie) are also special main dishes of the Passover holiday. Among the special beverages for Passover is raki (liqueur distilled from dried raisins). Today, many other beverages are used as well.[97] There is no prohibition against *kitniyyot* among the Judeo-Spanish. However, they do not eat rice on Passover because of the necessity of checking through the rice to make sure there is no grain mixed into it. All vegetables which grow are used for Passover.[98]

The *Arvit* service begins with the singing of *Hodu*, which is the *Mizmor shel Pesaḥ*. At the conclusion of the regular *Arvit* service, the entire congregation chants the complete *Hallel* with the blessings being recited both before and at the conclusion of the *Hallel*.[99] This is in fulfillment of *Leil hitkadesh ḥag* also, because at home in the Seder service, the *Hallel* is split into two sections; therefore, the recitation of the entire *Hallel* at once at the evening service gives fulfillment to the concept of *Leil hitkadesh ḥag*.

The *Yigdal*, chanted at the conclusion of the *Arvit* service, is sung in the same melody as the *Kadesh urehatz* of the Seder.

When everyone comes home from services, the woman of the house has all of the required foods for the *keara* (Passover special plate) prepared. It is the obligation of the husband to place them on the plate in the proper order. The tradition of the Judeo-Spanish Jews is to place the items on the Passover plate according to the tradition of the Ari (Rabbi Isaac Luria), and not the way it is stated in the *Shulḥan Arukh*.[100] The Judeo-Spanish tradition regarding the plate is the same as the Syrians.

The order of the *keara* (Passover plate) is as follows with the items being laid out as if it were a *ziyyon* (a six-pointed Star of David) with the *maror* (bitter herb) in the middle, according to the Ari.

The three *mazzot* are placed at the top. These symbolize *Keter*, *ḥokhma*, and *bina*, according to the ten *Sefirot* of the Kabbalah. To the right is *zeroa* (the roasted chicken wing), which represents *ḥesed*, according to the Kabbalah. Opposite it to the left is the *beizah* (roasted egg), which represents *gevurah*, according to the Kabbalah. Below the *zeroa* on the right is *ḥaroset* (the admixture of black raisins with wine), which represents *nezah*, according to the Kabbalah. Directly opposite it, to the left, is *karpas* (parsley), which represents the spring, which, according to the Kabbalah, is symbolic of *hod*. Directly at the bottom, below the *mazzot*, is the *ḥazeret*, a form of Romaine lettuce, which symbolizes *yesod*, according to the Kabbalah. In the middle is the *maror* (bitter herb), which represents *tiferet*, according to the Kabbalah. Romaine lettuce is always used for the bitter herbs.[101]

The plate itself is the tenth item, which represents *malkhut*, and it completes the ten *Sefirot* of the Kabbalah, according to the teaching of the Ari.

The door of the house is opened at *Kol Dikhfin*[102] to symbolically invite all the poor who may wish to join in the Seder.[103]

The three *mazzot* are "bedecked" with a special embroidered cover[104] The middle mazzah is broken in half, and one half is placed into a special napkin, as the *Afikoman*. This is to be used in a special way to arouse the curiosity and questions of the children as a part of the Seder ceremony.

The Seder plate is held for a moment over the head of each one at the table.

Parts of the Seder are said in both Hebrew and Ladino nowadays, although in earlier times the whole Seder was rendered in both lan-

guages. Each set of instructions preceding the enactment of a particular ceremony, such as *Kaddish* or *Ureḥaẓ* or *Karpas,* also provides instructions in Ladino which are sung in a chant by everyone present.[105]

It is not necessary in the Judeo-Spanish tradition for a *child* to ask the Four Questions. In fact, the entire Haggadah is said in unison by everyone around the table. Some, however, have adopted the custom of having a child ask the Four Questions, because it is such a popular notion today.

It should be noted that the *Mah nishtanah* is in a different order and follows a more correct chronological order as reflected in the actual observances at the Seder. (See above, p. 256, for the English translation of the Four Questions.) The first question, therefore, is *Ein anu metabelin afilu paam aḥat.* The second question is, *Anu okhelin ḥameẓ umaẓẓah.* The third question is, *Anu okhelin shear yerakot,* and the last question has a difference in text, which is, *Anu okhelin* VESHOTIN [We eat and WE DRINK] *bein yoshevin uvein mesubin vehalayla hazeh kulanu mesubin.* In order to arouse curiosity before the recitation of the *Ma nishtanah,* the entire Seder plate is removed from the room, which arouses the children to ask, "Why is it being done?" And at this point the Four Questions are asked. Before the answer, *Avadim hayinu,* the plate is replaced on the table.[106]

After the Seder is under way, at the portion in the Haggadah where we read, *"Bekhol dor vador ḥayav adam lirot et aẓmo ke'ilu hu aẓmo yaẓa mimiẓrayim,"* the head of the household who is conducting the Seder throws the napkin containing the *Afikoman* over this shoulder and he walks out of the room, returning with a belt which is tightened, a cane in his hand, and this sack containing the *Afikoman* over his shoulder. This charade is to demonstrate how our ancestors went out of Egypt. When he walks back into the dining room with the special outfit, he makes the declaration, *"Kakha asu Yisrael kesheyaẓu mimiẓrayim. Mishearotam ẓerurot besimlotam al shikhman . . . uvenai Yisrael asu kidvar Moshe"* (paraphrasing Exodus 12:34–35). Everyone present then asks, "Where do you come from?" to which he answers, "I have come from Egypt." They then ask, "To where are you going?" and he responds, "I am going to Jerusalem." Then everyone declares in unison, *"Leshanah habaah biYerushalayim habenuya,"* which means, "May we celebrate next year in the rebuilt city of Jerusalem." This dramatic reenactment of the exodus from Egypt is to stimulate the curiosity of the children and to encourage them to ask questions about the exodus from Egypt.[107]

Each member of the family then takes the opportunity to carry the *Afikoman* over his shoulder in the enactment of the ceremony showing that the Jews were traveling from Egypt to Jerusalem. There is no tradition of hiding or stealing the *Afikoman.* The *Afikoman* was regarded as a *segula* and was coupled together with a piece of *maẓẓah yayin* (*maẓẓah* made from flour and wine, or eggs), and this would be kept as a protector of the house against evil from year to year. Each Erev Pesaḥ, they would change the pieces of *maẓẓah* and replace them that night with the new *maẓẓot,* which would be kept for the whole year until the next Erev Pesaḥ. This resembles the procedure for maintaining the *maẓẓot* in the synagogue for *eruvei ḥaẓerot* (which permits one to carry within the designated boundary on the Sabbath).[108]

The portion of the *Eser makot* (Ten Plagues) is recited in both Hebrew and Ladino. The wine is poured into a large *legen* (special basin), and the wife brings in a pitcher of water for the head of the household to wash his hands after pouring the wine for the Ten Plagues and for *Deẓakh, Adash,* and *Be'aḥav.* The pouring out shows the sadness of the Jews at the Almighty's killing of the Egyptians in order to get Pharaoh to free the Jews, and depicts how with each drop of wine our happiness (which wine symbolizes) is diminished. No one is permitted to look at these drops of wine,[109] which have been poured into a basin.[110]

The chant for the *Hallel* is different from the regular chant for the rest of the Haggadah.

The Judeo-Spanish, like all other Sephardim, recite the *Bore peri hagefen* blessing only *twice* over the Four Cups of wine. The first time is for the *Kiddush,* and the second time is at the completion of the *Birkat hamazon* (Grace after Meals).[111]

After the conclusion of the Seder, the family says the *Eḥad mi yodeya,* found in the last portion of the Haggadah, in Spanish and possibly even in Turkish and Greek.[112] Many also say the *Ḥad gadya* in Ladino as well as Hebrew.[113]

At the conclusion of the Haggadah, it is permitted, according to the Judeo-Spanish tradition, to drink Turkish coffee. This is in order to keep the individual awake so that he can recite the chapters of

Shir hashirim which are distributed to the various members of the household for recitation that night.

There is no *Kos shel Eliyahu hanavi* (Fifth Cup for Elijah the Prophet) among the Judeo-Spanish,[114] nor is it their custom to open the door for Elijah at the portion of *Shefokh ḥamatekha al hagoyim*.[115]

On the eve of Shevii shel Pesaḥ, there is a special *Tikkun Leil Shevii shel Pesaḥ*, which is found in *Keriei Moed* (which is recited at home). This is a special *limud* in which all the males get together in the home to recite and read this special portion for the *limud*. They then go to the synagogue to pray the morning service.[116]

The special *piyut, Az yashir Moshe,* is recited before the Sefer Torah is taken from the Ark on the seventh day of Pesaḥ (as on Shabbat Shira).

There are beautiful customs enacted by the grandfather (or the father) at the conclusion of the last night of Pesaḥ. They pick some fresh grass and bring it home. Some then throw the grass, money, and wrapped candy on the floor for the children to pick up. This ceremony is called *Prasa-in-agua levadura,* to which there is a special ditty.[117] This ceremony symbolizes that one may now eat the wheat of *ḥameẓ* and expresses the hope for a good summer and "a green [productive] year."[118] In some communities the grandfather or father holds the grass over the heads of his wife and children and recites, *"Keẓemaḥ hasade netatikh vatirbi vatigdeli,"* meaning, "May you grow as sound and healthy as the grass in the meadow!" (Ezekiel 16:7).[119] Some retain a piece of *maẓẓah* because of its alleged power to stop a hail or storm. Before going abroad, they would take the piece of *maẓẓah* and place it in their pocket to help safeguard them as they cross the seas. This piece of *maẓẓah* represents the guardianship of the Almighty, Who had watched over the Jews as they were liberated from Egypt as He brought them through the Red Sea which He split for them. This is considered a *segula* for a safe trip.[120]

The Judeo-Spanish do not in any way celebrate the Maimuna.

Sefirat HaOmer

The *Sefirat HaOmer* is counted beginning on the second night of Pesaḥ. There is a special *Leshem yiḥud* which is recited by the Judeo-Spanish Jews.[121]

The formula for the blessing for the counting of the *Omer* is, . . . *Veẓivanu al Sefirat haOmer. Hayom* [thirty-third day] *shelosha usheloshim yom laOmer shehem arba'ah shavuot veḥamisha yamim.* On the second night of Pesaḥ (the first night of the *Omer*), salt (in a little bag) is held by the head of the family as a *segula* against the evil eye. This is observed by other groups as well.

After the counting, the *Haraḥaman hu yaḥazir avodat beit hamikdash limkoma bimhera beyameinu* is recited. *Sefira* marks a period of semimourning, which precludes participation in any form of *semaḥot,* weddings, taking of haircuts, and shaving, etc. On the six Sabbaths between Pesaḥ and Shavuot, the *Pirkei Avot* are sung, a chapter each week, by the *ḥazzanim,* who sometimes compete in the singing of the special tunes for the pleasure of the congregants. This is followed by the *derasha* of the rabbi on *Il perek* (the chapter of the *Ethics of the Fathers* being studied). The period of mourning marked by *Sefirat HaOmer* begins immediately after Passover and extends through the thirty-third day (Lag LaOmer), which is included in the time when happy events are prohibited. From the thirty-fourth day until Shavuot, all festivities are permitted which had been prohibited during *Sefira.* However, in some communities, to avoid conflict with Ashkenazi congregations, the holding of weddings, etc., is deferred until the *Sheloshet Yemei Hagbalah* (three days prior to Shavuot).[122]

On the fourteenth of Iyar, the congregation is instructed to have their families eat a piece of *maẓẓah* on this day to mark the occasion of Pesaḥ Sheni (Second Passover). This was jokingly referred to as *Pesaḥ de loz tinyosoz* (for the sick), since it was originally instituted for those who could not observe the real Pesaḥ at its appointed time on the fourteenth of Nisan.[123]

Lag LaOmer (the thirty-third day of the *Omer*) is marked by a special *Hilula deRabi Shimon bar Yoḥai. Hilula* means "wedding." The term symbolizes the joy of complying with the request of Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai that everyone rejoice on the night of his *Yahrẓeit.* He died a happy man because he had completed his work on the Zohar. The Midrash compares him to Moshe. He was reasonably assured that, because of the kind of life he had led, he would be accepted into the celestial abode, which made him happy.[124] He wanted everyone else to share the happiness he experienced as he died, so he commanded that they observe a *hilula* to mark his passing.[125]

Everyone is, therefore, invited to come to the synagogue, where a candle is prepared for each one to light in memory of the sainted Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai, for which honor each person contributes money. (There is a special *limud* of the Zohar with the reading of the *Idra Zuta* recited completely, by different members of the congregation who are qualified to read this portion. The service is chanted with its traditional melody for this night, and the counting of the Omer for the thirty-third day of the *Omer* is chanted in a special rendition to mark the occasion.) As the candles are kindled in memory of Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai, a *hilula* is enacted. They sing a special song entitled *Bar Yoḥai nimshaḥta ashrekha shemen sason meḥaveirekha.*[126] There were also communities where they sang a song of longing for Tiberias in Ladino.[127] The *hilula* would conclude with the distribution of special candles and cakes prepared for the occasion.

It is the custom in some Judeo-Spanish congregations to bury on the day of Lag LaOmer all items which have to be put in the *geniza* in the cemetery. This custom is probably intended to induce people to go to the cemetery, so that while there they can visit the graves of their special *ẓaddikim* and pray for their own well-being. The burial of the remnants in the *geniza* is followed by a *seudah shel miẓvah* (banquet) in the special chapel house at the cemetery.

In Bulgaria, Lag LaOmer was called *Yom hashekel* by the Zionists, since this was the day on which they collected dues for the International Zionist Organization.[128] In Israel it is a widely observed custom to visit the grave of Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai in Meron on Lag LaOmer.[129]

As Practiced by the Spanish and Portuguese Jews

A full month before Passover, preparations for the Festival begin. Children in the school are taught the Four Questions and become familiar with the Haggadah. Right after Purim, the women begin the tedious job of cleaning the house for Passover and the traditional spring cleaning.[130]

The Spanish and Portuguese Jews follow the tradition of refraining from [illegible]ing *maẓẓah* from Purim until Passover.[131]

The standard procedure for *mekhirat ḥameẓ* is observed. The rabbi serves as the agent to sell all leaven on behalf of the congregants to a non-Jew.[132]

The Seder is known as the *Haggadah* by Spanish and Portuguese Jews.[133]

Maẓẓah shemurah is used for the first two days of Pesaḥ, at least for the *Haggadot* (home evening services).[134]

The Shabbat Hagadol *derasha* (halakhic lecture) is not part of the tradition of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews. The rabbi's sermon is usually devoted to a Passover topic on the Sabbath preceding Pesaḥ (Shabbat Hagadol), but it is not the kind of highly technical dissertation for which the Shabbat Hagadol *derasha* has come to be known in other communities.[135]

The *siyum* for the Fast of the First-Born takes place on Ereb Pesaḥ. Wine and cake are served to all the first-born who are present. In the case of a minor *bekhor* (first-born), the father should fast for the child. (Girls who are first-born were not required to fast, nor is their father required to fast for them.) The father of a minor can avoid fasting by coming to the *siyum* on behalf of his minor son.[136]

In Amsterdam it had been their custom to fast on Ereb Pesaḥ and not to free themselves from this obligation by participating in a *siyum*. They would read *Vayḥal* at *Minḥa* in a special service for the first-born.[137]

The food eaten on Erev Pesaḥ is usually limited to cooked vegetables, fresh fruit, and eggs.[138]

Bedikat ḥameẓ is conducted in a simple fashion by searching for some *ḥameẓ* (some is always prepared in advance to avoid a blessing in vain, but there is no need for ten pieces of bread to be hidden, according to their tradition). The search is conducted with a candle and a feather. The *ḥameẓ* is burned the next morning (*biur ḥameẓ*).[139]

On Pesaḥ there is no prohibition against putting *maẓẓah* and water together, as among extremely observant Ashkenazim.[140]

The Spanish and Portuguese Jews are permitted to eat rice on Pesaḥ by tradition. However, many refrain from doing so in this country in order to be able to invite others who abstain from eating rice to their homes during the Passover period. *Kitniyyot* (beans) were not eaten in Holland or Surinam, and they are not eaten in the Spanish and Portuguese traditions.[141]

ish law we are forbidden to eat human blood, and that even animal meat must be salted to remove the blood. The Sultan realized that the Jews could not have killed the Greek boy and that the imprisoned were falsely accused. He ordered that messengers be sent to Rhodes to release the prisoners.

From this time onward the Jews of Rhodes celebrated Purim with an especially grand celebration. There was a continual fair for two days and two nights in the Wide Street, La Kay Ancha.

In my time I remember the food vendors, with their booths of shish kebab, bourekas, olives, cheese, sweets, fruits, lemonade, syrup drinks and snow cones.

Games of fortune were played, their tables filled with prizes of sweets and money, their owners barking out, "look, here you can win, there you will lose. Win a section of sweets, a diamond-shaped piece of sweet." "Mira ke es ganar por aki, mira ke es perder por aiya, un kashon, una kupeta."

A line of horse and buggies, decorated with flowers and adornments would take us for a ride to the Puerta de la Mar (one of the seven gates leading to the ocean.) The drivers would cry out, "Ir i venir un grosh," (to go and return for one grosh). Other buggies went as far as Zimbouli in the Greek quarter to drink their famous water. Others went to the Garden of Lemons "Guerta de los Limones" in the Turkish quarter to buy lemons. These two parks were open solely for the Jews on their religious holidays.

The children, dressed in their costumes and masks, collected money ("paras") from their parents, relatives and neighbors and ran to the Wide Street to spend it.

The custom on Rhodes for Purim was to serve desayuno de keso, (a fila dough filled with cheese) and hardboiled eggs. For the children, the hardboiled egg was covered with strips of dough, symbolizing the hanging of Haman and was called a "fullar."

As in other Sephardic communities, some Rhodeslis exchanged plates of sweets.

We, however, reserved these plates of "sweets" for Tubishevat. It is interesting to note that although we did not send plates of sweets for Purim, we still used the proverb, "Despues de Purim, platikos," which means "after Purim, little plates." This proverb is used in conjunction with a sentence, and implies "after the fact."

It was the custom on the first day of Purim to eat an additional important meal called "Seuda de Purim." It commenced at lunch time and sometimes lasted until dinner. It consisted of various types of foods, but it had to include charcoal broiled meat and wine. They would eat and sing and drink. One of the favorite Purim songs was "Kuando Haman se Emboracho," meaning "When Haman got drunk."

Passover

For the Sephardim of Rhodes, Pesah was a holiday filled with happiness, a gathering of family and friends and a time when no one in the Jewish Quarter or Juderia was left alone or hungry. The expression, "todo el ke tiene hambre . . . venga y koma." meaning, "anyone who is hungry . . . come in and eat with us" . . . was a truism. Everyone's door was open to anyone.

The word pesah had a special definition to the people of Rhodes. The first letter, the P, stood for "Paras" (money) . . . the S, stood for the word "Sin" (without) and the H at the end represented the word "Heshbon" (count.) Putting it together the interpretation was that so much money was spent on Pesah, you lost count.

The preparation began six to eight weeks prior to the Passover holiday. The first phase consisted of a thorough cleaning of the house. The interior of the house was washed with hot water and soap. For the deep scrubbing, they used what was called "barro y arena." Barro was sort of a clay and arena was sand from the sea. They were mixed to form an abrasive. Whatever woodwork was in the house was polished with a mixture of kerosene and oil and this made the woodwork really shine.

The *tapeties* (oriental throw rugs) were picked up off the floor, taken to the seashore, immersed in the salt water and then scrubbed with stiff brushes and spread out on the rocks to dry. Because this was an all-day process, many families would get together, help each other; and then they would picnic on the beach the rest of the day while they waited for the rugs to dry.

Once a room was cleaned, it was used as little as possible. All the bedding had to be taken out, shaken and aired thoroughly. Any of the bedding that needed fixing or replacing was done at this time. It was a time for "kapleyando kolchas" which meant covering the quilts.

The interior walls in the homes of the Juderia had a whitewash finish. Every Pesah, the families would whitewash these walls as well as the exterior of the house. The floors consisted of small smooth pebbles called "sheshicos" and these were scrubbed with a brush, then scrubbed again with short brooms until they were absolutely clean and shiny. After the kitchen cupboards were cleaned, they were sealed by tying the knobs together with a white rag. None of the cupboards were opened until two days before Passover. The sidewalk right outside the entrance was scrubbed and the "kortijo" (courtyard) was used for all the meals before Pesah. Everyone in the family helped clean for the holiday and many families helped each other.

Naturally, water was almost a luxury and was used sparingly. During these weeks of cleaning, it was necessary to use more than the average amount of water and there was more waste to dispose of, as tubs of hot water mixed with cleaning agents were used continuously.

In the early 1900's, waste water was merely thrown out in the streets in front of the homes. The city officials on the Island of Rhodes eventually put a stop to this; however, during the week of Passover, the Jews were allowed to dispose of their waste water by throwing it out in the street in front of their homes. The homes had what they called a "posa" or cesspool for the disposal of dirty water, and

these were emptied and cleaned out about twice a year.

Starting from about Purim, the custom was to start washing the "losa" or Passover cookwear and housewares. It is interesting to note that the word "losa" in Castilian Spanish means pottery. The washing began with the pots and pans, the dishes, the glasses and the silverware. All of the Passover "losa" was kept in a special cupboard and was brought out only once a year to be used strictly for this holiday. Whereas the everyday housewares were chipped, bent, and dented, the "losa" de Pesah was always new-looking, shiny and beautiful. There were two items from the everyday housewares that were also used during Pesah. One was the drinking glasses, which had to be washed in boiling water; and the other was the knives. Since knives were few, they were allowed to be koshered for Passover use. As you entered the gates of the Juderia during the weeks prior to Pesah, you could almost smell the cleanliness.

About a month prior to Passover, the community leaders would rent one of the public ovens for the Passover baking. The leaders hired people to tend the ovens and help with the baking of the matsoth. All of the matsoth were baked in these ovens and then sold to the families. The Passover flour used for the masas de vino, the mulipitas, gateau, etc. was purchased from the leaders. Whatever profit was derived from this was used to buy food for the underprivileged.

It was very common during the whole week of Pesah to see a potful of potatoes on the "hornaya," a small built-in charcoal grate, just boiling away. Since bread was not allowed and matsah oftentimes did not satisfy the children's hunger, they were given boiled potatoes with salt and pepper as an in-between snack.

The weeks before Pesah were filled with hard work and, as mentioned earlier, everyone pitched in. The young girls were required to do all the grinding, using the "mortero," mortar and pestle. This included the salt, pepper, cinnamon, cloves, matsoth, and nuts. They had a favorite ex-

pression that went . . . "De Purim a Pesah . . . mejor ke mi madre no me pariera," meaning: from Purim to Passover, I wish I'd never been born!

A few days before Pesah, the women started the cooking. The assortment of foods consisted of "ava fresca" (horse beans); "kashkarikas reinades" (outer shell of the horse beans with a hamburger stuffing); "tomates reinados" (tomatoes with a hamburger stuffing); "keftes de prasa" (leek patties); "kuashado or meginah di Pesah" (a meat/egg souffle); and "huevos haminados" (eggs boiled all day in water with onion skins, salt and pepper); and "karne kebab" (small pieces of meat slowly cooked in its own juice). Then there was "haroset" (made of dates, nuts, wine and a touch of vinegar). This was made the day before the holiday.

The Hagadah tray included celery, lettuce, matsoth, hardboiled egg, lamb shank and the haroset. In addition to all the baked goods mentioned, there were "dulces," sweets, such as "sharopi," a white smooth confection, sometimes made with marzipan; candied pears and apricots; and "bembriyo," quince.

One question that always arises is whether "aroz," rice was allowed during Passover. During World War I, the Chief Rabbi of Rhodes did allow the Jews to eat rice after the first two nights of Passover, the reason being that since almost all the foods at that time were imported into Rhodes (which included the Passover flour, etc.), and since the ships stopped docking at Rhodes during the war, there was a limited supply of food on the island, so the Rabbi made a concession. There were many, however, who refused to eat rice.

A week before Pesah, everyone went to the public bath to get ready for the holiday. Everyone had to be thoroughly clean. Spread out on the "kanape," couch, were completely new outfits for everyone. I remember the excitement I felt knowing I was going to get a new "chamashir," set of lingerie (lace-trimmed panties and slip), a new dress, new [illegible]kings, new shoes (worn during the day only) and

new slippers (worn the night of Passover). We youngsters would count the days before the holiday and could hardly wait to "estraner" (put on for the first time) the new clothes; and the "pièce de resistance" for me was to put the beautiful ribbons in my hair that matched my dress.

And now came the time for the "Kalhamira" where every nook and cranny was checked to make sure the house was free of anything "hamets." The night before Pesah, the man of the house would light a candle, hold it in one hand, and in the other hold a dish to hold any hamets he might find.

The next morning, the lady of the house would take the dish of the "Kalhamira" and go outside and burn the pieces of bread. All the "hamets" groceries, housewares, etc. were gathered and placed in a special storage area and locked with a key. The custom was to sell the key to a non-Jew (most of the time it was to a Turk rather than a Greek.) The key was kept by the Turk for the week and as soon as the Passover holiday was over, he would return it.

No one spent Passover alone in the Juderia in Rhodes. We used to be with aunts, uncles and their families, never less than 20 at the table. All the children would sit around the "sofah" (a raised platform which served as a bed at night and was used for whatever it was needed during the day). The reading of the Hagadah took so long that up until I was 10 years old I never heard the end of it, because I fell asleep. I remember vividly that my mother bribed me by offering me a whole hard-boiled egg as a reward if I would stay awake through the entire Hagadah. You must understand that getting an egg was quite a treat, as the most we were ever given was a half.

In the middle of the Hagadah during the asking of the traditional questions of Passover, "mezze," snacks, were passed around to curb appetites, because the Hagadah lasted so long. Afterwards, everyone sang the beautiful traditional songs such as "Un Kabretico" and "Kien su piese y entendieze." Walking home through the Juderia, one could still hear the singing, the laughter, the joy and hap-

piness echoing throughout the homes, and this warm feeling of "togetherness" is a memory never to be forgotten.

During the holiday, children's entertainment consisted of playing games with unshelled almonds. Almonds were also used as money for paying each other off when playing games.

On the last day of Passover in the morning, many would pack picnic lunches and start off in a group walking the several miles to "Zimboule" (or Rodini Park). To get to Rodini, you had to pass through the Greek neighborhood. It was the season of Easter, and Greeks awaited the arrival of the Sephardim and attacked them with stones and sticks. The Sephardim, expecting trouble, brought their own sticks and stones. It was common to have boys return home with their heads split open; but they knew that many of the Greek boys had been hurt also. It never stopped them from going back each year. After Rhodes was taken over by the Italians, the Italian police always provided protection on the last day of Passover during this walk to Rodini Park, and eventually the fighting stopped.

Since Pesah comes in springtime, when all the greenery is particularly beautiful and the flowers are in bloom, on the way back from Rodini, everyone would gather armsfull of greenery and flowers to bring to their homes. They would place them throughout the house and in the doorway, and they would particularly bring in a type of herb called "Arava." The placing of the "Arava" in the home signified the ending of Pesah.

Non-Jewish holidays that we celebrated

The panayiri, a Greek religious holiday, was followed by a week-long fair held in Kremasto, a Greek village; I remember, although it was far, we would go by bus for a one-day excursion.

The Turks always finished their religious holidays with a fair in the Chimilikes (a plaza). What Rhodesli Jew does not remember riding the merry-go-round at the Chimilikes?

The Italians had military parades during the day and religious processions at night. Among the other religions or nationalities, the Jews were prominent by their attendance. I believe, because of this we were well treated by the Italian Government.

I remember, when Mussolini came into power, there were attempts made on his life. We, as school children, were forced to leave school, and go to the Catholic Church to assist at the mass and to give thanks that Mussolini was safe.

Unit VI – Shavuot

Enduring Understandings:

1. Sephardic culture expresses itself through its own language, culture and customs that continue to be observed in the Modern Jewish world.
2. While Sephardic practice shares much in common with Ashkenazic practice, its differences can bring an added layer of richness to the American Jewish experience.
3. The Sephardic community continues to evolve and bring diversity as it interacts with the postmodern world.
4. Sephardic Jews celebrate the holidays in a way that is thoroughly Jewish and distinctly its own.

Goals:

1. To introduce students to an alternate expression of Judaism.
2. To increase student understanding of the themes behind Jewish holidays.
3. To expose students to the uniquely Sephardic expression of holidays.
4. To encourage students to explore their own Jewish identity through the close examination of a Judaism sometimes different from their own.

Objectives:

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

1. Compare and contrast their own Shavuot observance to the observances learned in this unit
2. Relate Shavuot to the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai
3. Identify the various components of *Los siete cielos*
4. Create a portion of a Los siete cielos bread

Sample Lesson Plan:

Mystery Guests – A Sephardic custom is to hear the Book of Ruth in Ladino. Since it will likely be difficult to find two fluent speakers of Ladino, for the purpose of this lesson Spanish will suffice. Have an adult fluent in Spanish and familiar with the Book of Ruth come in dressed up as either Ruth or Boaz. Another adult fluent in Spanish should also come in and serve as a translator. Have students interview their guest via the translator to find out who they are and what their story is. Through their interview questions, students should get a sense of what the Book of Ruth is all about. Students will then work in groups to create a newspaper article about their interview.

Goals:

1. To increase student understanding of the connection between the Book of Ruth and Shavuot.
2. To encourage students to explore their own Jewish identity through the close examination of a Judaism sometimes different from their own.
3. To provide students with a means of discovering the Book of Ruth as a book that carries relevance today.
4. To expose students to a variation of the linguistic expression of the Sephardim.

Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Recall basic facts about a key figure in the Book of Ruth.
2. Associate Ladino/Spanish with the telling of the Book of Ruth.
3. Create a newspaper article about a key figure.

Set Induction:

Have the Spanish speaking adult dressed up as Ruth or Boaz walk into the classroom without the translator. The guest should begin speaking to the class in Spanish. Introduce the guest as their character and explain to the students that Sephardic children learn about the Book of Ruth in Ladino. The translator can come in at this time so that the teacher can explain to the guest that the class needs 10 more minutes. The guest and translator should step back outside.

Middle Activity:
At this time, tell the students that they are going to interview their guest via the translator. They need to find out who this person was, where they lived and what they did. Help students to brainstorm questions to put on the board. Prompt them if necessary. Assign several students to be recorders while the interview takes place to write down what the guest says. Invite the guest and translator back into the classroom and have the students interview their guest for at least ten to fifteen minutes. After the interview, students should break into groups and compile the information they recorded into a newspaper article.

Closing activity:
The groups should each give a short presentation to the class about key facts that they learned about their guest. The articles should then be collected by the teacher and typed up to be distributed to the class the following session.

Materials:
Costume for the guest
Paper
Pens/pencils

Activities:

1. Journal - Using the journal created in the Shabbat unit, have students record their thoughts and observations about Shavuot. Use the handout included in this unit.

2. Receiving the Torah – Bring the students into the sanctuary and show them where the 10 commandments is found in the Torah. If possible, have an adult chant the Torah portion while the students are seated.
    a. Point out to students that Sephardic Jews do not stand for the chanting of the Ten Commandments, while Ashkenazic Jews do.
    b. Ask the students:
        - Why they think Ashkenazic Jews stand for the recitation of the 10 Commandments. Then ask them why they think Sephardic Jews don't.
        - How many commandments Jews follow (613)
        - Why did the Rabbis forbid the recitation of the 10 Commandments in the service?
            - *They didn't want to put more importance on them over the 613 Commandments.*

3. Tikkun Leil Shavuot – Provide students with the opportunity to stay overnight in the Synagogue in celebration of Shavuot. Have students bring dairy dishes and tell them that Jews all over the world traditionally eat milk dishes on Shavuot. There are three symbolic reasons for dairy dishes:
    a. To liken the Torah to milk and honey
    b. To commemorate that no shechita had been permitted before the Torah was given and it took too much time to prepare meat meals
    c. To remember Abraham who gave milk and curds to the visiting angels

    Students should study the Book of Ruth while at the Tikkun Leil Shavuot. Traditionally, Sephardic children would read the Scroll of Ruth and would be rewarded with sweets. Lead a text study of the Book of Ruth with the students.
    Highlight:
        - Connection between Ruth and Shavuot
            - Ruth was a convert
            - Her descendant, David, became King of Israel

4. Los siete cielos – On Shavuot, Sephardic Jews create an elaborate bread representing Mt. Sinai. Have students mix ingredients and divide them into groups. Have each group be responsible for a different section of the bread (see recipe for the different portions). Have students then assemble the pieces into one piece and bake the bread. While the bread bakes, each group should give a short presentation on what their portion of the bread represents based on the information given on the recipe.

How I Celebrate Shavuot

BEGINNING OF UNIT

- When we celebrate Shavuot in my community, we usually eat

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

- We do the following activities during Shavuot

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

END OF UNIT

- Compare how what you've learned this unit is the same as what you've experienced in the past

  _____
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- Contrast how what you've learned this unit is different from what you've experienced in the past

  _____
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- Some of the most interesting things I learned about Sephardic Jews and Shavuot are

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- Additional thoughts I have about how Sephardic Jews celebrate Shavuot

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writings for burial in the *genizah* at the cemetery at a gala public occasion amidst singing and musical accompaniment. This custom is believed to have developed on this particular day since it marked the date of the burial of the martyrs of Betar, in whose behalf the *berakha, Hatov vehametiv* was decreed (Talmud *Berakhot* 48b).[35] Therefore, the Torah Scrolls as well as holy printed matter were buried in a joyous manner to commemorate those whose bravery had saved the Torah from shame.[36]

In *Parashat Naso,* which is generally read right after Shavuot, the distribution of the *aliyot* is changed as follows: The *Kohen* receives the first *aliyah* through the Priestly Benediction until *Naḥshon ben Aminadav* (Numbers 4:21–7:17). The portion for *Levi* is read from Numbers 7:18–7:23. The *shelishi* is called for the portion which begins with *Bayom hashelishi nasi* (Numbers 7:24–7:30). The other *aliyot* follow in this pattern, *revii* for *Bayom harevii,* etc.[37]

As Practiced by Judeo-Spanish Jews

Yom Haazmaut

The observances of Israel Independence Day on the fifth day of the Hebrew month Iyar differ in the various Judeo-Spanish synagogues.

Some congregations do not recite *Hallel,* while others do recite *Hallel* without a *berakha.*

Some congregations open the *heikhal,* sing *Ki Miẓiyyon* to the melody of *Hatikvah,* the Jewish national anthem, and recite the Prayer for the State of Israel. Others also chant the *Kedushah, Nakdishakh* to the tune of Hatikvah or some other melody strongly identified with the State of Israel. Often the rabbi will devote his sermon or some special words to the importance of the State of Israel.

In Judeo-Spanish congregations, Yom Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Day) is not observed in any special way.

Shavuot

The synagogue is decorated with flowers, especially roses, which also adorn the Torah Scrolls.

The *Arvit* service begins with the *Mizmor shel Shavuot, Lamenaẓẓeaḥ leDavid mizmor shir; yakum Elokim* (Psalm 68).[38]

A special bread was baked called *el monte,* referring to Mount Sinai. The top of the bread had the shape of a mountain. In some communities, for celebrating Shavuot, women made bread in different forms: *siete sielos* (seven heavens), *skalera* (stairs), *livro* (book), *pashariko* (bird), and *lampa* (lamp).[39]

In some homes they read the Scroll of Ruth at the conclusion of the meal on the first night of Shavuot in both Hebrew and Ladino.[40]

After the *Amida* they say *Kaddish titkabal* and Psalm 122, *Samaḥti.*

Following the joyous festival meal at home, all the men return to the synagogue to study the *Tikkun Leil Shavuot,* which includes *Idra Rabba* of the Zohar. During the course of the night, the men and children would be served Turkish coffee and *biscochicos* (biscuits).

On the first night of Shavuot, which is known as the *Velada,* some people also read the *Ketubbah de la ley,* a beautiful *pizmon* written in Hebrew and Ladino by the famous Rabbi David Pardo, which describes the marriage contract between the Torah and the Jewish people. It is repeated again in the morning service on the first day immediately after *Shaḥarit* before the Torah is taken from the Ark.[41] It is sung in the synagogue in a special melody in Ladino. This *Ketubbah de la ley* is one of the most popular *pizmonim* among the Judeo-Spanish Jews. The words of this poem give the year in which the Torah was conferred as 2446 (which is to be corrected to 2248, a reminder of how many years ago we received the Law at Mount Sinai). It should be noted that, although the *Ketubbah de la ley* is written in the *Maḥzor* for the second day of Shavuot, it is recited by the Judeo-Spanish only on the first day of Shavuot. In some communities, however, they chant it in the Hebrew on the first day and in Ladino on the second day. In some communities, they would conduct *hakkafot* just as on Simḥat Torah. The custom was to throw candies at the time of *hagbahat Hatorah* (lifting of the Torah) to those who are called to the Torah just as they had done on Simḥat Torah.[42]

Prior to the afternoon service, on the first day of the festival of Shavuot, the positive commandments of the *Azharot* are recited in Hebrew and Ladino.[43]

These *piyutim,* as described elsewhere, are composed of the 613 commandments of the Torah, which are divided into two halves; the first, expressing the positive commandments, and the second, expressing the negative commandments. The *Azharot,* recited in a chanting form, are very popular among the Judeo-Spanish as well as among other Sephardic Jews.

The *Azharot* are followed by the recitation of the first half of the Scroll of Ruth (in Hebrew and also in Ladino), line by line.[44] The Scroll of Ruth is followed by the recitation of the *Kaddish* and the *Minḥa* service. *Minḥa* is followed by the regular festival *Arvit* service. In most eastern communities, the Scroll of Ruth was read by the children of the *meldar* (school), whose rendition was rewarded with delicious sweets to remind them of the sweetness of the Torah.

On the second day in the afternoon, the negative commandments of the Torah are chanted in the *Azharot,* followed by the second half of the Scroll of Ruth.[45] In both instances, they are chanted in the Hebrew and Ladino, sentence by sentence.[46]

It is the custom of the Judeo-Spanish to eat special cheese-filled pastries for Shavuot,[47] while not limiting themselves to dairy meals, for, although it is the custom to eat dairy meals on Shavuot, they do eat meat meals as well.[48] The reason for the attachment to the customs relating to dairy on Shavuot is threefold:[49] to liken the Torah to the milk and honey; to commemorate that no *sheḥita* had been permitted before the Torah was given and it took too much time to prepare meat meals, therefore, the dairy meal is still popular on Shavuot; and to remember Abraham, who gave the visiting angels, who came to see him while he was healing from his circumcision, curd and milk (*ḥemeah veḥalav*—Genesis 18:8).[50]

The ḥakham, or any rabbi who is present, or the ḥazzan reads the Ten Commandments in the *taam haelyon* (the special cantillation for the *Aseret hadiberot,* which is sung three times: on Shavuot, on Shabbat Yitro, and on Shabbat Vaeṭḥanan) while the congregation sits.

The *Birkat halevana* (blessing of the moon) is recited at the conclusion of the Shavuot festival immediately after *Arvit.*

It is a custom among the Judeo-Spanish Jews that when they read *Parashat Naso,* the *Kohen* is given the section which begins with Numbers 4:21, *Vayedaber Hashem el Moshe lemor . . . naso et rosh ben Gershon,* until the end of Numbers 6:27, which is the conclusion

of the Priestly Benediction. This is at the point of *ḥamishi,* making it a very long *parashah.* This gave rise to the Ladino proverb, *"Naso mekanso,"* meaning "*Naso* made me tired!"

There is one other time during the year when a very long portion is given to one person called up, namely, at the portion of *Ki tisa,* where the reading begins at Exodus 30:11 and runs right through the end of *sheni,* which is Exodus 31:18. The one who is called to that portion must be a *shomer Shabbat* (Sabbath observer), since the portion which concludes that section of the reading describes the laws relating to the observance of the Sabbath.

As Practiced by Spanish and Portuguese Jews

Yom Haaẓmaut

In recent years, Congregation Shearith Israel has instituted Israel Independence Day celebrations. The procedure for the observances is as follows:

At the *Minḥa* service on the eve of the fifth of Iyar (Israel Independence Day), there are no *Taḥanunim* recited.

In the *Arbit,* the Psalm *Beẓet Yisrael mimiẓrayim* (Psalm 114) replaces the *Shir hamaalot.*

In the *Shaḥarit* service, they sing the complete *Shira* and the complete *Hallel with* the blessing.

No *Taḥanunim* are said. *Ein K'Elokeinu* is sung.

Shabuot

The synagogue is adorned for the Shabuot festival with beautiful floral decorations around the *heikhal* and the *teba.*[51] There is an abundance of plants as well as freshly cut flowers and greens.[52]

Many families have dairy for their evening meal on Shabuot. Some have dairy during the day on Shabuot as well. Others partake of meat for their festive meals.[53]

In Holland, the regular *Tikkun Leil Shabuot* would be studied all through the night by some members of the congregation. Here in America, this custom has not been widely observed. *Adra Zuta*

7. Brush the pastries with the egg wash and bake for 20–25 minutes or until they are golden in color. Remove from the oven and cool on wire racks. Dust with confectioners' sugar before serving.

Los Siete Cielos

BREAD OF THE SEVEN HEAVENS

This exquisitely crafted bread for the holiday of Shevuot is the most elaborate bread recipe found in any Jewish cuisine. It is heavily laden with religious symbols.

In order to appreciate how this bread came to be created, it is necessary to understand a fundamental Jewish belief about the meaning of life and death. Jews have a strong belief in life after death. They also believe that there is a strong connection between life on earth and life after death. According to Jewish tradition, every human being is a union of body and soul. Human beings are born to live short lifetimes on earth and, while there, do things that will make the world a better and more spiritual place. When a person dies, the body and soul separate. The body returns to earth but the soul does not die. It begins a journey toward eternal life, which can last over several lifetimes. A soul can also return to earth again if God requires it.

Los siete cielos is a symbolic representation, through bread, of the connection between this world and the world-to-come for Jewish people. The centerpiece of the bread is a round, braided loaf called *el monte* ("the mountain"), said to represent Mount Sinai. Seven rings of dough, the *siete cielos* ("seven heavens"), surround *el monte*. The rings of dough around the mountain are decorated with various folkloric and religious symbols shaped out of dough.

The "seven heavens" refers to the "seven holy living spaces through which the soul ascends to heaven." There are seven "living spaces" between heaven and earth through which the soul passes on its journey back to the Creator. Each "living space" is endowed with special characteristics. The soul, as it passes through each of these spaces, gains spiritual knowledge that helps it move closer and closer to its final resting place with God.

The holiday of Shevuot is one of the most spiritual occasions of the Jewish calendar year. On this holiday, Jews celebrate the birth of the Jewish religion. Judaism was a gift given by God to the Jewish people to help them live their lives on earth in a moral and godly way. The way life is to be lived on earth is recorded in the *Torah*. The *Torah* contains Judaism's most important religious teachings. By living their lives according to the *Torah*, Jews prepare their souls for their journey back through the seven heavenly spheres to eternal life with God.

The *Torah* was given to Moses, and through him to the Jewish people, on Mount Sinai, hence the symbol of *el monte* on the Shevuot bread. The *Torah* consists of three parts: a "written tradition," represented by the Hebrew Scriptures, an "oral tradition," represented by the *Talmud* and the codes of Jewish law, and the mystical tradition, represented by the *Kabbalah*. All of the symbols created on the *los siete cielos* bread come from these three traditions. So, by celebrating the giving of the *Torah* on Mount Sinai, the Jews thank God for giving them the gift that will help them live good lives on earth and connect them with the passage of the soul into eternal life. And by eating *los siete cielos* on Shevuot, they take in the spiritual lessons of the holiday and give their lives extra meaning.

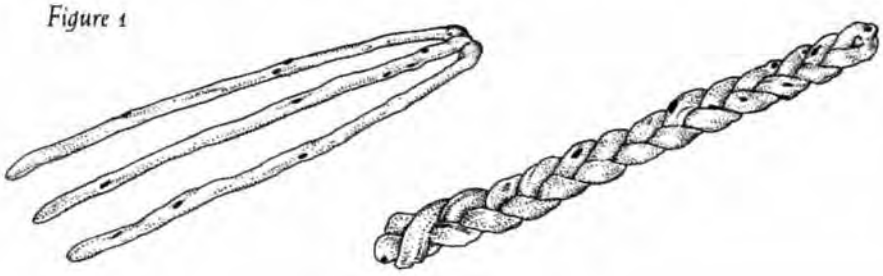
PREPARATION TIME (SPONGE): **1 hour**
PREPARATION TIME (BREAD): **$2\frac{1}{2}$–$2\frac{3}{4}$ hours**
SHAPING TIME: **45 minutes**
YIELD: **makes 1 *siete cielos* bread**

1 teaspoon plus $1^1/_2$ cups sugar
$^1/_2$ cup lukewarm water
1 tablespoon active dry yeast
7–8 cups unbleached white bread flour
5 tablespoons sesame oil
$^1/_2$ cup whole milk
4 large eggs, beaten
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon anise-flavored liqueur (ouzo, arak, raki, Pernod, anisette)
$^1/_4$ cup dark raisins
1 egg yolk mixed with 1 tablespoon cold water (egg wash)

1. Dissolve the teaspoon sugar in the lukewarm water. Stir in the yeast and set aside in a draft-free place to proof (about 10 minutes). The yeast will be ready when it is bubbly.
2. While waiting for the yeast to proof, put 3 cups flour into a mixing bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour.
3. Add the yeast mixture to the flour and stir in well. The mixture will be somewhat liquid, thicker than pancake batter, but not stiff enough to shape into a dough by hand. Cover the mixing bowl with plastic wrap and set aside for 45 minutes in a draft-free place. The flour mixture will bubble up and begin to rise. This is called the sponge.
4. After 45 minutes have passed, add 4 tablespoons oil, milk, beaten eggs, $1^1/_2$ cups sugar, salt, and anise liqueur to the sponge. Begin to knead in the remaining flour. Mix and knead steadily until the dough has achieved a soft, moist, but not sticky consistency. You will use more or less flour depending on the quality of the flour and the humidity of the day. Practice will give you a feel for the correct consistency.
5. After the dough has the right consistency, knead in the raisins. Knead the dough and roll it into a ball.
6. Place the remaining tablespoon oil in a mixing bowl and put the ball of dough into this. Roll it over and over to make sure the dough is covered with oil. Cover with a damp cloth and let rise until doubled in bulk (about $1^1/_2$–2 hours). Dough prepared by the sponge method takes less time to rise than dough prepared by regular mixing and kneading.

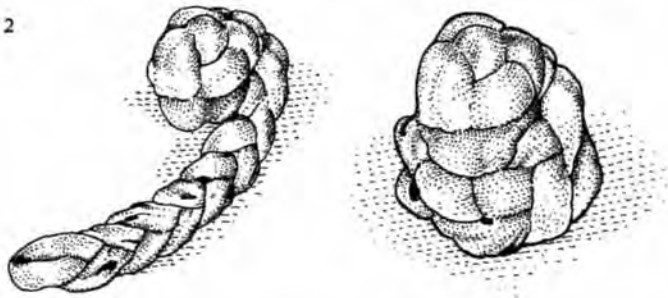
7. Take one fourth of the dough and set it aside. Divide the remaining dough into two parts. Set one of the halves aside. Cover this and the other quarter of the dough with a damp towel.
8. Divide the piece of dough you are working with into three pieces. Roll each into a 24-inch-long rope.
9. Pinch the ends of the ropes together and braid them into a three-braid loaf (see figure 1).

Figure 1



10. Coil the loaf into an ascending spiral (see figure 2). Lay it on the center of a well-oiled baking sheet. This is your *el monte,* representing Mount Sinai. Cover *el monte* with a damp cloth after you finish.

Figure 2



11. Take the second large piece of dough and separate it into seven pieces of varying sizes. These are going to be the "seven heavens" and they will be coiled around the *el monte.* As they coil, they will need to be larger in size. Roll the smallest piece of dough into a rope that will fit snugly around the *el monte* (see figure 3). Repeat with the remaining pieces (see figures 4–6). Cover this with a damp cloth after you finish.

(continued from front flap)

array of mouthwatering appetizers and salads." Ra
Sternberg also explains Jewish holiday traditions

Figure 3

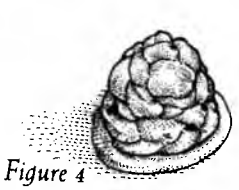
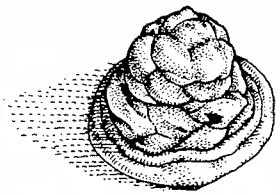


Figure 4



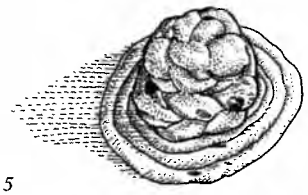
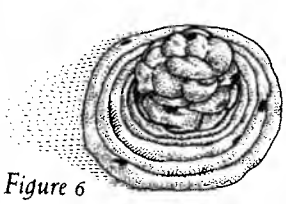
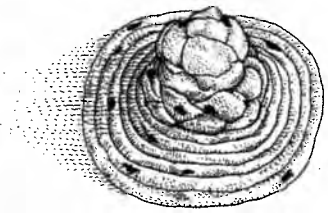


Figure 5





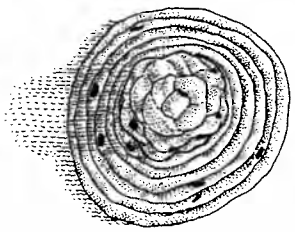
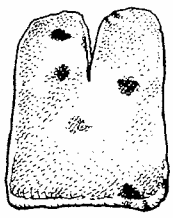
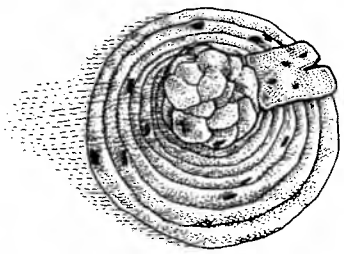


Figure 6

12. The remaining piece of dough will be used to make the various Shevuot symbols that will be placed on the "seven heavens." Divide this piece of dough into five equal pieces. Take one piece and set the other pieces aside, covered with the damp cloth, while you work on the first piece.
13. The first piece of dough will be used to make the *luchot habrit* (the two tablets of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written). Divide it in half and shape each half into an oblong tablet. Set it on top of the "seven heavens" as shown in figure 7.

Figure 7





14. Take the second piece of dough. This piece will be shaped into a hand, called a *yad*. The hand in Sephardic folkloric tradition is a symbol of good luck. It contains the number five, symbolizing the five books of Moses (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible). Shape it into a hand and set it down on the "seven heavens" as shown in figure 8.

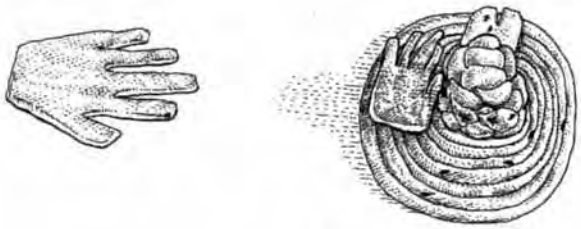


Figure 8

15. Take the third piece of dough and shape it into a fish. The fish is another symbol of good luck to Sephardic Jews, because, unlike other animals, fish were not destroyed by God during the great flood of Noah's time. Fish also symbolize the Messiah and the Messianic era of peace on earth. Lay the fish down on the "seven heavens," as shown in figure 9.

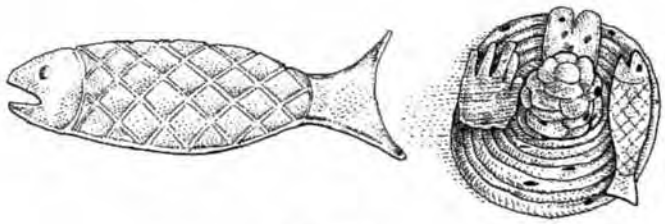


Figure 9

16. Take the fourth piece of dough and shape it into a bird. Birds are a symbol of peace for Sephardic Jews because the dove brought back an olive branch to Noah, which told him that the great flood was

over and that a great peace would now be coming to the earth. Birds are also a symbol of ascendance—the ascendance of the soul into the "seven heavens." Lay the bird onto the "seven heavens," as shown in figure 10.

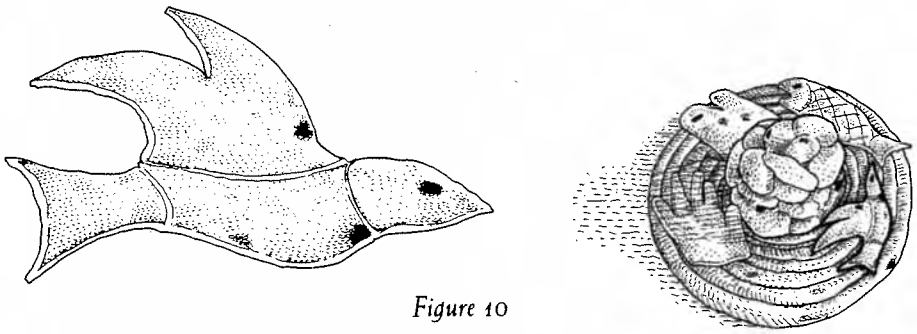


Figure 10

17. The last piece of dough will be used to make Jacob's ladder. Jacob's ladder symbolizes the connection between earth and the "seven heavens" and, ultimately, God's world. This represents the story told in the book of Genesis about the dream Jacob had of angels moving up and down a ladder between heaven and earth. To make Jacob's ladder, divide the piece of dough into three parts. Roll two parts into thin pencils and lay them down on the "seven heavens," as shown in figure 11.

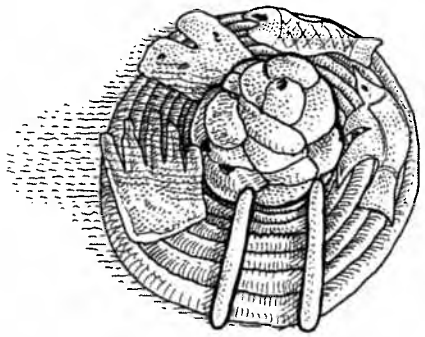
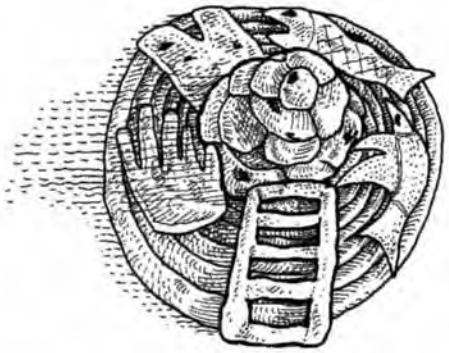


Figure 11

18. Divide the remaining piece of dough into five pieces and roll them into short pencils. These will serve as the steps of the ladder. Lay them in between the "poles" of the ladder as shown in figure 12.

Figure 12



19. Cover the bread with the damp towel and let it rise until doubled in bulk (about 1 hour).
20. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
21. Brush the bread with egg wash and bake 40–45 minutes. The bread will be golden brown in color when it is done baking. To test for doneness, gently lift the bread from the baking sheet and tap the bottom. If it sounds hollow, it is done. Set on a rack to cool.

Some versions of the recipe for *los siete cielos* also call for a shape of an oil lamp, called *lampara,* which symbolizes eternity—the eternal flame that burns in the synagogue and that also burned in the ancient Hebrew Temple. Some recipes include a book shape, called *livro,* which symbolizes the various Rabbinic writings including the *Talmud,* the *Kabbalah,* and the codes of Jewish law.

It is always easier to make *los siete cielos* working with a partner in the kitchen so that there will be less waiting time and, more importantly, less time for the already shaped pieces of dough to rise while you are working on the later pieces. It is a good idea to minimize this amount of time so that the dough will not rise too high before you finish shaping it. If you need to work alone, I recommend putting the shaped pieces, beginning with the *el monte,* in the refrigerator, covered by a damp cloth. The dough will not rise while you are working on shaping the last pieces. Then you can take it out of the refrigerator for its final rising before baking.

SERVING SUGGESTIONS:

Los siete cielos is not an ordinary bread and it is not served as part of an ordinary meal. In Sephardic homes, it is placed in the center of the table during the Shevuot dinner for decoration and left there throughout the meal. Following dinner on the night of Shevuot there is a tradition among Jews to return to the synagogue for a *mishmar,* an all-night study session in which holy books (Bible, *Talmud,* and other Rabbinic texts) are read and studied throughout the night. A special collection of readings called *Tikkun Layl Shevuot* (anthology for the evening of Shevuot) is very popular in some Jewish communities and forms the basis for the all-night study session. Midway through the evening, shortly after midnight, people take a break from studying and go home to have something to eat. It is then that *los siete cielos* is eaten, with coffee or tea, as a midnight snack. After this, people return to the synagogue to complete the all-night *Torah* study session. At sunrise the morning services are recited. Then people go home to sleep, their minds filled with the holy words of the *Torah* and their spirits strengthened and uplifted by spending an entire evening immersed in the study of religious texts. In this way, the Jewish community thanks God for the gift of the *Torah* and for the spiritually enriching way of life contained in observance of the Jewish religion.

Unit VII – Conclusion

Enduring Understandings:

1. Sephardic culture expresses itself through its own language, culture and customs that continue to be observed in the Modern Jewish world.
2. While Sephardic practice shares much in common with Ashkenazic practice, its differences can bring an added layer of richness to the American Jewish experience.
3. The Sephardic community continues to evolve and bring diversity as it interacts with the postmodern world.
4. Sephardic Jews celebrate the holidays in a way that is thoroughly Jewish and distinctly its own.

Goals:

1. To encourage students to explore their own Jewish identity through the close examination of a Judaism sometimes different from their own.
2. To synthesize the learning from the previous units into a cohesive whole

Objectives:

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

1. Compare and contrast their own Jewish traditions to those learned throughout the school year
2. Demonstrate their understanding of Sephardic holiday observance through drama
3. Identify elements of Sephardic traditions related to the five senses

Note to teacher

This unit should take place in one class period. This final unit was created in order for students to apply what they have learned thus far to their own Jewish identity and understanding of the Jewish world. The curriculum ends with students and teacher sharing challah with sugar to conclude a sweet year of learning. This is a Sephardic custom that is done during Rosh Hashanah in order to sweeten the coming year.

Activities

1. Decorate Journal - Have students decorate the folders they have been compiling all year. Provide them with materials with which to decorate their folders. Have students then read through their journals. They will then have the opportunity for a free write reflecting on what they have learned this year. Possible writing suggestions are: their favorite Sephardic customs, what they remember the most, how Sephardic Jewry differs from their own or how it compares.

2. Skit – divide students up into five groups, each group responsible for a different Sephardic holiday studied this year. Students will then create a skit about each holiday, highlighting the Sephardic customs they learned all year.

3. Sephardic Senses – Throughout the year, students have experienced Sephardic Jewry through all five senses. Have students brainstorm sensory experiences they have had during the school year. For example, taste: Saffron Rice, Biscochos. Hearing: Aliyah Auction, etc.

4. Challah – bring a challah into the classroom with sugar. Recite hamotzi over the bread with the students and have them dip the challah into the sugar. Explain to them that the Sephardic custom of dipping challah into sugar is done over Rosh Hashanah in the hopes of a sweet new year. In this case, the challah in sugar is eaten in celebration of a sweet year and in hope of sweet years to come.

REFERENCES

Aelion Brooks, Andrée. Out of Spain. Westport: Hitchcock Books, 2003.

This is a curriculum that brings the learner through Sephardic History from the Golden Age in Spain up to modern Sephardic communities throughout the Diaspora. It encompasses more Sephardic communities than this guide but gives an overview of Sephardic History and culture.

Dobrinsky, Herbert C. A Treasury of Sephardic Laws and Customs. New York: Yeshiva University, 1986.

Dobrinsky provides the reader with detailed descriptions of Sephardic and Mizrahi customs in several different communities. The book is organized by life cycle events and holidays and is a tremendous resource for specific Sephardic customs. Much of this curriculum guide comes from the information in Dobrinsky's book.

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A recent and varied collection of Chanukkah songs although limited in Sephardic arrangements. Features over eighty songs from various Jewish traditions.

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An accessible and informative summary of Sephardic History from the early settlement of Jews in Spain up until modern times. After the Expulsion from Spain, the chapters are divided into the different areas of the world where the Sephardim settled.

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Part of a larger series of anthologies pertaining to Jewish holidays, the Hanukkah Anthology gives a diverse compilation of Jewish customs, laws and traditions. Most information in the book pertains to Ashkenazic Judaism.

Gubbay, Lucien & Abraham Levy. The Sephardim. London: Carnell Limited, 1992.

This book is organized by country and gives multiple illustrations of Sephardic life as well as many maps of Jewish dispersion. This book gives a short summary of the history of the Sephardim in different countries. Portions of this book can be found in the final section of this curriculum guide.

JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh: The Traditional Hebrew Text and the New JPS Translation. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1999.

The New JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh lays out the Hebrew and English texts side by side. The English is stylized for easy reading and is highly accessible to the reader. Translations used in the curriculum guide rely on this translation of the Bible.

Kaufer Green, Gloria. The New Jewish Holiday Cookbook. New York: Random House, 1985, 1999.

This cookbook is a compilation of Jewish cooking from around the world. There are quite a few Sephardic recipes as well as many Ashkenazic. This is a valuable resource for Jewish cooking.

Koén-Sarano, Matilda, ed. Folktales of Joha. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003.

Joha is a central figure in Sephardic folklore and this book brings the mischievous Joha to life. The editor organizes the Joha stories by theme for easy access. Koén-Sarano credits each story to its source, making each story more personal to the reader.

Levy, Isaac. Liturgia Judeo-Español, Tomo Cuarto. Jerusalem: Marán Book Mfg.

A multi-volume, rare collection of melodies from all over the Sephardic world. Many texts contain multiple versions and list the country of origin. The book is in Spanish and Hebrew. Volume four focuses on holidays such as Hanukkah.

------ Liturgia Judeo-Español, Tomo Tercero. Jerusalem: Marán Book Mfg.

A multi-volume, rare collection of melodies from all over the Sephardic world. Many texts contain multiple versions and list the country of origin. The book is in Spanish and Hebrew. Volume three focuses on the festival holidays Pesach, Sukkot and Shavuot.

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A personal account of Rebecca Amato Levy's own memories of growing up on the Island of Rhodes as a young girl. The book is divided into two versions; Ladino and English. Jewish holidays and life cycle events are reflected upon and many proverbs, riddles and folktales are included.

Pascual Recuero, Pascual. Diccionario básico Ladino-Español. Barcelona: Ameller Ediciones, 1977.

This small dictionary translates Ladino words into Spanish. The dictionary is intended for Spanish speakers so only words and spellings unique to Ladino are listed.

Schwartz, Howard. A Coat for the Moon & Other Jewish Tales. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1999.

This collection of Jewish folktales is geared towards a younger audience but the stories can be enjoyed by readers of all ages. Schwartz indicates the country of origin for each story and provides an explanation of the stories in an index in the back.

Sternberg, Rabbi Robert. The Sephardic Kitchen. New York: HarperCollins Publishing, 1996.

While this is primarily a cookbook, Rabbi Sternberg provides many rich cultural experiences throughout the book. The introduction to the book, found here in the final section of this curriculum guide, gives a clear and straightforward history of Sephardic Jewry. He begins and ends each chapter with a Sephardic folktale and notes the significance of each recipe to the Sephardim. His focus is primarily the Sephardim from the Ottoman Empire.

Websites:

http://www.rhodesjewishmuseum.org/kahal.htm

This website provides many opportunities to experience Jewish life in Rhodes. There are multiple pictures of the synagogue, people and traditions of Rhodesian Jewry as well as sound clips of Jewish life. The aliyah sound clip found in this guide as well as a picture of the Synagogue of Rhodes come from this site.

www.edwardvictor.com/Images/Salonika2.jpg

This website provided the picture of the Salonika Synagogue used in this curriculum guide. This site has limited usefulness for further information on Sephardic culture.

http://scheinerman.net/judaism/synagogue/torah-seph.html

This website provided the pictures of the Sephardic Torah scroll case. This is primarily a site for Ashkenazic Judaism but there are Sephardic elements as well.

http://www.domtar.com/arbre/english/p_miocc.htm
http://www.crfg.org/pubs/ff/jujube.html
http://www.eat-it.com/CareGuides/medlar.html

These three websites were used to obtain information about trees for Tu Bishevat. They are not Jewish websites, but rather sites that focus specifically on plants.

Music:

Hazzan Isaac Azose, “The Liturgy of Ezra Bessaroth,” rec. 1999. Isaac Azose, Seattle.

The Sephardic Kitchen

The Healthful Food and Rich Culture of the Mediterranean Jews

RABBI ROBERT STERNBERG

HarperCollins*Publishers*

A Short History of Sephardic Jewry

Until the first century of the Common Era, most of the world's Jews lived in or in proximity to Jerusalem. This was because the Hebrew Temple, built on top of the mountain on which the spirit of the Creator was believed to dwell, was located in Jerusalem. The Jews of this period worshiped only at this Temple. The Temple was both a gathering place and a house of worship. Business and trade were conducted there as well as prayer. The entire spiritual, social, economic, and cultural life of the Jewish people was centered strictly on the Temple, its daily rituals, and its seasonal festivals. Jerusalem was also the capital city of the Roman province of Judea.

The people of Judea suffered greatly under Roman rule. The Jewish leadership rejected the worship of pagan gods and goddesses in the Temple and, because of this, earned the enmity of the Roman governors. Many attempts were made to overthrow Roman rule in Judea. In the year 70 C.E., the Roman army laid siege to Jerusalem and in the summer of that year, on the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av, Jerusalem was captured and the Temple destroyed. Throughout the Roman Empire thousands of Jews were murdered and thousands more sent into exile, some as slaves. The Sanhedrin, a body of seventy-one Rabbinic scholars appointed by Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai with permission from the Roman General Vespasian, became the leadership of the Jewish community after the destruction of the Temple. One of the steps taken by the Sanhedrin to ensure the survival of the Jewish community was the reorganization of Jewish life around studying, codifying the Hebrew Bible

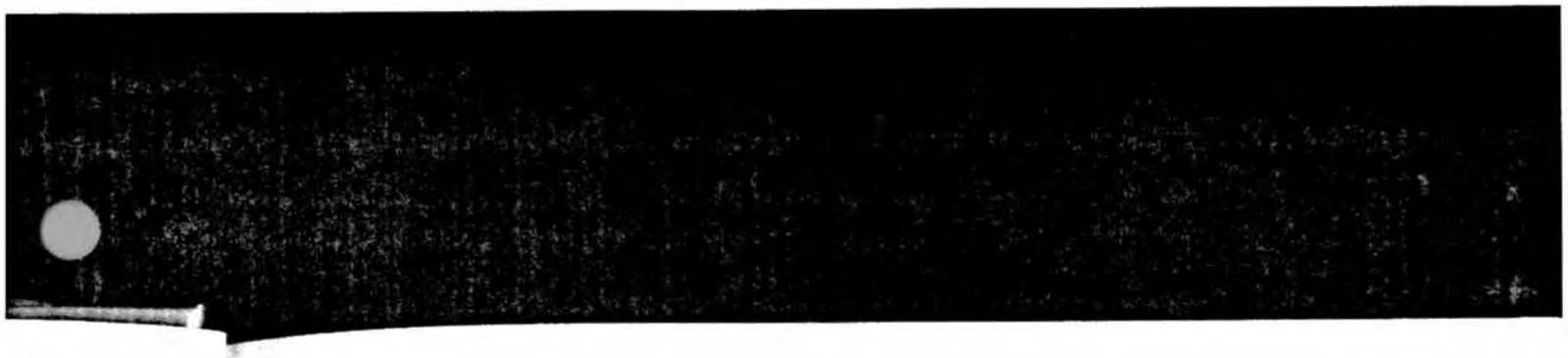
and oral tradition, and the creation of new houses of worship called synagogues. The synagogue, called in Hebrew *bet knesset* (which means "house of gathering") or *bet hamidrash* (which means "house of study"), came to serve a similar function to the Temple. Because of the foresight of the Sanhedrin, the Jews of Judea and other places, unlike their pagan neighbors, did not assimilate into the Roman world. The majority of them continued to live according to the laws of the Jewish religion and remained a part of cohesive, well-organized Jewish communities throughout the Roman Empire.

In 313 C.E. the Roman Emperor Constantine I adopted Christianity as his personal religion and embarked on a campaign to make Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. Most Christians by this time considered their religion to be separate from Judaism. Over the next several centuries, paganism would disappear from Europe and would be replaced by Christianity.

In the early part of the seventh century C.E., Muhammad of Arabia developed another monotheistic religion, Islam, based on what he had learned of the principles of Judaism and Christianity—belief in one God and a body of moral, ethical, and spiritual laws to create a just and good society. Islam became the religion favored over paganism in the Middle East and North Africa just as Christianity was favored in Europe. In time, only Judaism remained as a separate minority religion in the countries of the Mediterranean region.

During this period of history the largest Jewish populations in the world were in Babylonia, Persia, and the lands of the Middle East. Smaller numbers of Jews lived in North Africa and Iberia and even smaller numbers lived in France, Italy, Sicily, Germany, and Byzantium (today Greece, Bulgaria, and the Balkan republics).

It is believed that the first Jewish settlers came to Spain in the days of the First Hebrew Temple (953–586 B.C.E.). By the fourth century C.E. there were well-established Jewish communities all over Iberia. In 711 C.E., Tarik, the general of the Muslim Moors of North Africa, crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and within four years, all of Spain was under Muslim control.



Overall, Jewish life prospered under Muslim rule more than it did under Christian rule. The Muslim rulers of Spain were especially tolerant. Though the official language of Muslim Spain was Arabic, and Islam the official religion of the court, all people in Muslim Spain enjoyed equal opportunities regardless of ethnic background or religion. The Jews of Muslim Spain worked in many occupations. They were farmers, vintners, tailors, goldsmiths and silversmiths, businessmen, scientists, physicians, mathematicians, astronomers, poets, and philosophers. Many Jews served as diplomats and interpreters for the Spanish government. This "Golden Age" in Spain lasted almost five hundred years and produced some of the greatest thinkers, scholars, writers, and leaders in Jewish history. Among them were the physician/diplomat Hasdai Ibn Shaprut (915–970 C.E.), the poet/philosopher Solomon Ibn Gabirol (1021–1058 C.E.), the *Talmud* commentator Isaac Alfasi (1013–1103 C.E.), the philosopher/poet Yehuda Halevi (1075–1148 C.E.), and Maimonides (1135–1204 C.E.), philosopher, physician to the Spanish court, and codifier of Rabbinic law.

Jews in Christian Europe did not live as comfortably as those in Islamic countries. In some parts of Europe, the practice of Judaism was outlawed by the Church, or Jews were subject to special restrictions concerning where they could live or what work they could do. These restrictions were designed to make the Jews uncomfortable and ultimately encourage them to abandon their Jewish faith and become Christians.

The twelfth century was also the beginning of the end of the "Golden Age of Spanish Jewry." As Christian kings slowly gained control of the various provinces of Spain, efforts to convert Jews and Muslims increased. In 1391, a massive outbreak of persecutions led to wholesale conversions by Jews to Christianity. The conversions were made under duress and many Jewish converts practiced Judaism in secret and taught their children to do likewise. Much criticism was levied against these *conversos* for not behaving as "true proselytes." When Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon married, the two great Christian kingdoms of Spain became one. Queen Isabella set out on a campaign to make all of Spain a Christian land. She created an

Inquisition to deal with the "scandal" of "New Christians" relapsing into Judaism. The "work" of the Inquisition was hampered because it had no authority over the large numbers of Jews who never accepted conversion. The Spanish Inquisition became increasingly brutal, subjecting people under its control to unspeakable tortures and burning them at the stake for committing heresy against the Church.

On August 2, 1492, all the Jews of Spain were given the choice of converting to Christianity or going into exile. The Jews who chose exile had to abandon all their property and possessions, which were then confiscated by the King and Queen. The voyage of Christopher Columbus, which took place on August 3, 1492, one day after the exile of Spanish Jewry, was financed by the confiscated Jewish assets. It is estimated that as many as 250,000 Jews left Spain in 1492. Most Spanish Jews fled to Muslim countries in North Africa and the Ottoman Empire, where they were welcomed by leaders like Sultan Beyazit II of Turkey. Salonika (Thessaloniki, Greece) became a particularly important center of Sephardic Jewry. All of the Spanish towns that had large Jewish communities before the exile were represented in Salonika by their own congregations. Smaller numbers of exiled Spanish Jews went to Italy and the Netherlands. Not all of the Jewish exiles fared well. Many died in poverty or were robbed and killed by greedy ship captains before they ever arrived at their intended destinations.

Many of the Jews who accepted forced conversion to Christianity and remained in Spain were persecuted even more intensely by the Inquisition. Large numbers went to Portugal, where the Inquisition was less brutal and where many continued to practice Judaism in secret. Eventually, these Jews slipped out of Portugal, in smaller numbers than those who went openly in 1492 and in 1496 with the exiles. Some moved to the Spanish and Portuguese colonies of North, Central, and South America, where the terror of the Inquisition was not as oppressive. Holland, especially Amsterdam, became the largest center for Jewish emigrés from Portugal. This migration of "secret" Jews occurred over two centuries and many of the Jews who settled in reestablished

Sephardic Jewish communities in Western Europe and the Americas were not well educated about the Jewish religion.

The Edict of Expulsion remained officially in force until 1968, when it was formally rescinded by the Spanish government.

The descendants of Spanish and Portuguese Jews are called *Sephardim,* after *Sepharad,* the Hebrew word for Spain. Sephardic Jews still preserve the synagogue rituals and liturgies of Spain and Portugal. Many of the descendants of Spanish Jews still speak Ladino.

Ladino, also called Latino, Judezmo, and Judeo-Spanish, is composed of ancient Spanish dialects intermingled with Hebrew, Arabic, Turkish, Greek, and medieval French words. Until recent years, Ladino was written in Hebrew rather than in Roman characters. There is no sufficient historical evidence to confirm that Ladino originated as a Jewish language. More likely, it was a dialect or several dialects of medieval Spanish. However, after Jews were expelled from Spain, Ladino evolved as a specifically Jewish language because the exiled Spanish Jews were the only Spanish-speaking people in the world to preserve words in their Spanish, which had become archaic. Ladino was spoken in Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, North Africa, southern France, Eretz Israel, and, to a lesser extent, the United States and Latin America.

The Jews who emigrated from Portugal between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries spoke primarily Portuguese rather than Ladino and they wrote their language in Roman rather than Hebrew characters. They also used Spanish, mostly for business and as a semisacred language for Bible translation.

The nineteenth century marked the beginning of the end of Sephardic Jewry in Europe. After World War I, the Ottoman Empire was dissolved. Unstable governments in many countries led to massive immigration from Greece and Turkey to Western Europe, America, and especially Latin America. Before quotas were put on immigration in the United States, fifty to sixty thousand Sephardic Jews emigrated to the United States, especially after the Young Turk Rebellion in 1908.

The Holocaust decimated the remaining populations of Sephardic

Jews. In Holland, the Sephardim were the last to be deported by the Nazis to death camps but their number was reduced to one-tenth its original size. In the Balkans, victimization of Jews was carried out on a large scale, particularly in Yugoslavia. The Bulgarian government played a heroic role in saving almost its entire Jewish population, but it did nothing to protect the approximately eleven thousand Jews of Thrace and Macedonia, which were put under its jurisdiction by the Nazis. In Greece, most of the Jewish community was concentrated in Salonika. The small Jewish community in Athens was saved by its Greek Orthodox patriarch Damascenes, but Jews in other parts of Greece did not fare as well. Of the seventy-three thousand pre–World War II Jewish population of Greece, over sixty-five thousand were murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators. Only the Sephardic Jewish communities of North Africa, the Middle East, and Turkey were untouched by the Holocaust.

Today there are living Sephardic Jewish communities in Israel, France, Latin America, South Africa, and the United States. The largest community in the United States is in New York City with sizable populations in Los Angeles, Seattle, Portland, Miami, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Atlanta.

The Sephardic Jews pronounce the Hebrew language itself according to a specifically Sephardic dialect known as *Havarah Sephardit* (the Sephardic pronunciation).

The Jews of Central and Eastern Europe are called *Ashkenazim,* after the Hebrew word *Ashkenaz,* which means "Germany." Most, but not all, Ashkenazic Jews trace their ancestors back to Germany or to other parts of Central Europe. Ashkenazic Jews have their own synagogue rituals and liturgies and their own way of pronouncing the Hebrew language, called *Havarah Ashkenazis* (the Ashkenazic pronunciation). Many Asheknazic Jews also speak Yiddish, a mixture of medieval German and Hebrew with some Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian words mixed in.

Jews native to the countries of the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa are called in Hebrew *Edot Hamizrach* ("the Ethnic Communities of the East" or "the Ethnic Communities of the Orient").

Included in the *Edot Hamizrach* are the Jews of Iran, Iraq, Kurdistan, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Bukhara, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Yemen, Aden, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. The *Edot Hamizrach,* or "Oriental" Jews, are very diverse. Synagogue rituals and liturgies are many and varied but the pronunciation of the Hebrew language among these communities resembles the Sephardic rather than the Ashkenazic.

The Israeli government appoints an official Chief Rabbinate to deal with matters of religious law in the State of Israel. Because large numbers of Sephardic Jews settled in Middle Eastern and North African countries, their religious practices, over time, have become somewhat blended with those of the Oriental Jews in the countries where they settled. The Israeli government designates two Chief Rabbis, one to serve the Jews of Ashkenazic descent and the other to serve the Sephardic and Oriental Jewish communities. These two rabbis are called by the Israelis the Ashkenazic and the Sephardic Chief Rabbis. The Chief Rabbi of the Sephardic and Oriental Jews is also called the *Rishon L'Tzion* ("First" or "Head" in Zion). For these reasons, Jews whose ancestors came from the *Edot Hamizrach* have often been mislabeled "Sephardic."

Because the government of Israel also chose the *Havarah Sephardit* over the Ashkenazic pronunciation of Hebrew as its official standard, confusion over who should properly be called Sephardic is further exacerbated.

Sephardic, Oriental, and Ashkenazic Jews have both similarities and differences where foods and food rituals are concerned. Generally speaking, the foods eaten by all Jews are dictated by the climates, the growing seasons, and the produce available where they live and are adapted to conform to the laws of *kashrut.* Some similarities are found in the bread (*challa*) baked for the Sabbath and festivals and in the preparation of the slow-cooked Sabbath stews called *hamin.* Differences lie mainly in what is put into the recipes. In the case of *hamin,* Sephardic and Oriental Jews use rice, chick-peas, and spices like saffron whereas Ashkenazic Jews use potatoes, barley, and sweet paprika.

The food rituals in each community relate much more to ethnic culture, folklore, folk beliefs, and lifestyles. The Sephardic world embraced

the mystical teachings of Judaism and made them central to the practice of the Jewish religion. Therefore it is not surprising to find Kabbalistic customs like *Yehi Ratsones* on Rosh Hashono, "making *brochot*" at the Friday night Sabbath meal, and the Tu B'Shevat *Seder* ceremony called *Las Frutas* common practice among Sephardim. Ashkenazic Jewish life revolved primarily around *Talmudic* and Rabbinic scholarship, so the religious rituals of the Jewish mystics are less prevalent.

This poem was written when Yehuda Halevi left Spain due to the intense persecution of Jews and attempted to move to Eretz Israel. The poet journeyed to Egypt and is believed to have died there, never reaching the Holy Land.

In Remembrance of Home

I will not weep for the garden I have planted
and watered, so flowers may grow there . . .
I will almost forget the synagogue
where in the classroom I studied my scripture.
I will forget the joys of all the Sabbaths,
the pleasures of the holidays, the wonderful Passovers,
As for the tributes I would have paid to others,
I bequeath my own praises to those less fortunate than I.
I have exchanged my orchards and vineyards for the shadows of the briars.
And the strength of my trellises for the protection of the thorns.
My soul, filled with the aroma of the most delectable spices,
is now satisfied with the scent of thistles.
I now no longer walk on my hands and knees,
but have placed myself in the bosom of the sea,
until I find the footstool of my God. . . .

YEHUDA HALEVI (1075–1148 C.E.)

The Sephardim

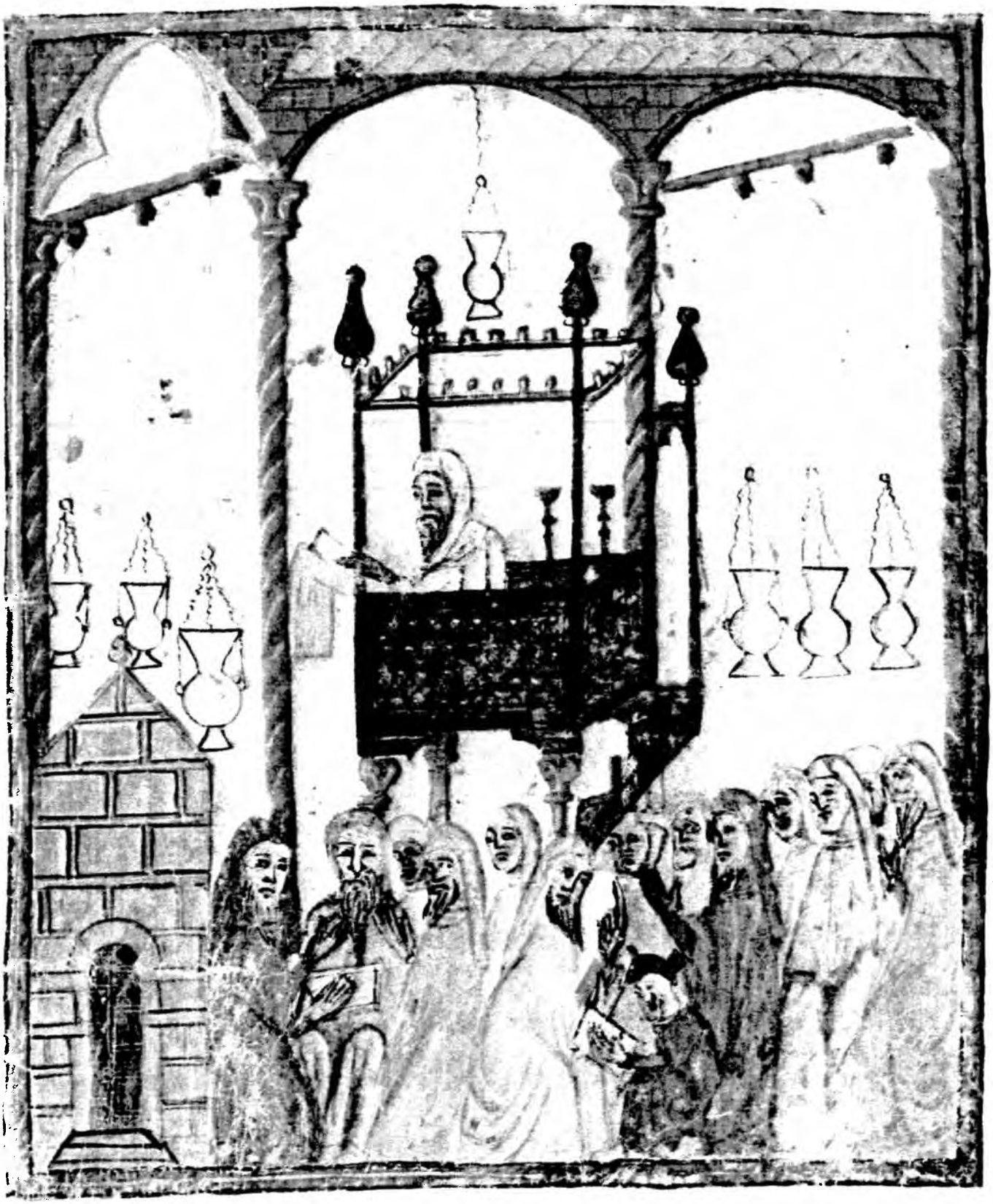
THEIR GLORIOUS TRADITION FROM THE BABYLONIAN EXILE TO THE PRESENT DAY

Lucien Gubbay

Abraham Levy

CARNELL LIMITED

LONDON



Spain

The Jewish communities of North Africa, Spain and Christian Europe gradually assumed the mantle of leadership that slipped from that of Mesopotamia.

But it was in Spain that Jewish experience of exile acquired a new dimension. Jews had first come to Spain with the Romans. Some thought themselves descended from captives taken by Titus in his sack of Jerusalem in the year 70; but others ascribed the origin of their community to very much earlier settlement. The Jews continued to live in peace under the Visigoths, who succeeded the Romans, until after their conversion from the Arian to the Roman Catholic form of Christianity early in the seventh century.

The beginning of what later historians described as 'The First Evil' occurred in 616, when all Jews were ordered to become Christians or submit to the confiscation of their property and expulsion from the country. Many thousands succumbed and accepted baptism — but they became Christians in name only and lost no opportunity to revert openly to Judaism as soon as circumstances allowed.

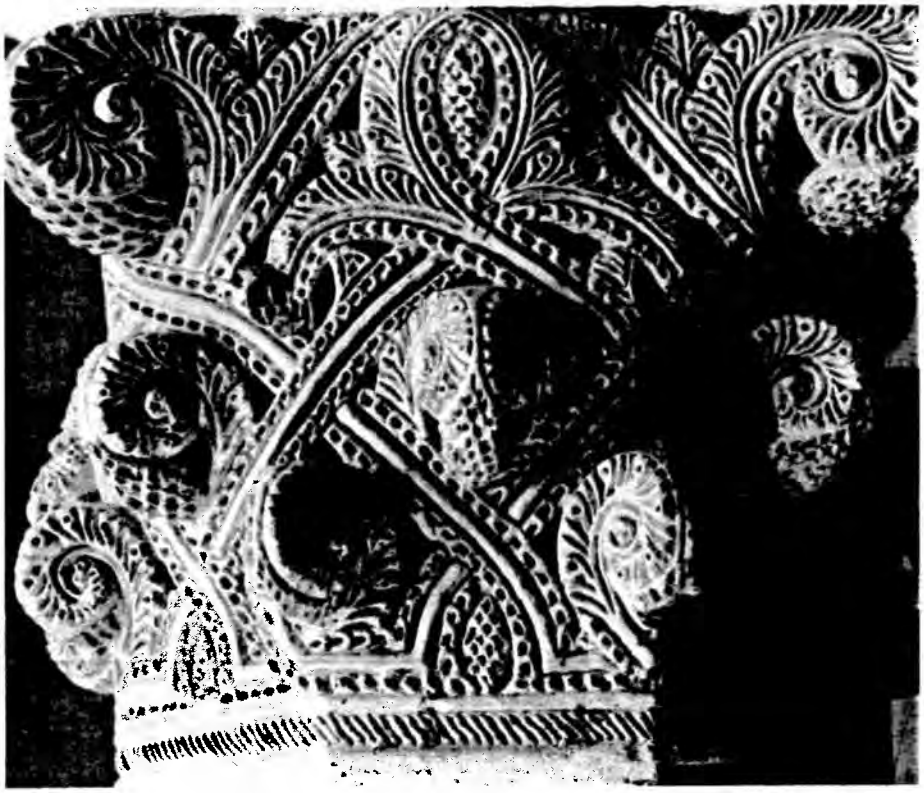
It was not surprising therefore that the Jews warmly welcomed the Arab invaders who crossed into Spain in 711. They helped them wrest control of the cities from the Christians, and held them safe for the Arabs afterwards.

Once Spain was securely incorporated into the Islamic world, it did not take long for its Jews to establish close contact with their brethren in Baghdad. Books and scholars, ideas and inspiration, all rapidly flowed into Jewish Spain as they had already into North Africa. Spain soon became an integral branch of the Babylonian tradition, then still under the direction of the Geonim.

The Legend of the Four Captives, which circulated in the Middle Ages, illustrates well the transfer of scholars from Baghdad to North Africa and Spain. According to this story, four rabbis on a mission to collect funds for the Babylonian academies were captured by pirates after their ship had set sail from Bari in Southern Italy on one leg of their voyage. The rabbis were ransomed by the Jewish communities of Alexandria (Egypt), Kairouan (Tunisia) and Cordova (Spain) — where each became the respected head of the community. (The identity of the fourth rabbi and his place of ransom was not related).

Spanish Jews participated to the full in the flowering of Arabic learning and culture that followed the conquest; and the Jewish community of Mohammedan Spain became the largest and most influential in Europe. Its leaders contributed much to the government and prosperity of the state; and its scholars, renowned for their piety and learning, took over the leadership of the Jewish world. It was indeed a Golden Age.

The very basis of Jewish life changed dramatically for the worse in 1148 when fanatical rulers from North Africa, who had been invited into Spain to check Christian attempts to re-conquer the North of the country, reversed the previous attitude of tolerance and offered all non-believers the stark choice of Islam or the sword. Large numbers were massacred or sold as



12 **Detail**
A capital in the Toledo Synagogue (founded in 1203).

slaves. Others escaped by accepting Islam, by moving elsewhere in the peninsula, or by leaving for Algeria and other places overseas.

Like their forbears in Visigothic Spain, the new converts mostly cast off their assumed Islamic disguise as soon as they could, and were re-admitted to the Jewish fold. The most famous of these Anusim (Compelled Ones) was Rabbi Maimon ben Yusef, father of Maimonides, who fled from Cordova to Morocco with his family, where they were compelled to live for a time as outward Mohammedans.

The Christians, in their gradual re-conquest of Spain, did not at first differentiate between Arabs and Jews. They treated them both as enemies and burned down mosques and synagogues with equal enthusiasm. However, experience soon tempered the initial distrust as the rough, uneducated Christian rulers came to appreciate the valuable contribution that talented and learned Jews could make to their kingdoms.

The Jewish communities of Christian Spain then entered into a second, though lesser, Golden Age — a period that was looked back to with aching nostalgia in the centuries that followed, and which is still remembered today.

The Jews continued to govern themselves in separate communities under Chief Rabbis and Chief Justices appointed by the Spanish kings; and devoted much energy to developing their own religion and culture. None of this however inhibited them from entering wholeheartedly into the secular life around them. Their leaders served as courtiers, financiers, administrators, diplomats and physicians to the kings of the states into which Christian Spain was divided. The Jewish middle class earned its

living from the land, from commerce and from manufacture; and lower down the social scale, Jews worked as skilled craftsmen and artisans.

The crowning glory of the Jewish community in its Golden Age was the contribution of its rabbis, scholars, philosophers and poets. Proficient in Arabic and other languages, Jewish scholars served as a channel through which the civilisation of the Arabs and that of the classical world before them, was transmitted to Christian Europe, just emerging from the Dark Ages.

The superb secular work of the Spanish Hebrew poets never lost its fascination for later generations; and is still being translated and published in other languages. Also their sublime liturgical compositions, many of which are now incorporated in Sephardi prayer books, remain unsurpassed.

Jewish philosophy too reached its zenith in the Spanish Golden Age. The leaders of the school — Solomon ibn Gabirol, Bahya ibn Paquda, Moses and Abraham ben Ezra, Moses Maimonides, Hasdai Crescas and Joseph Albo — were universal men, well versed in most branches of secular and religious knowledge. The philosophical method they developed, with its systematic approach to the codification of Jewish law and practice, enhanced the understanding of Judaism. However, philosophy had little direct long-term influence; and its masters are now remembered and admired more for their work in the field of Halacha (the laws and observances of Judaism), and for their poetry and Bible commentaries, than for mighty edifices of logical thought.

The same cannot be said for the task of codifying the Talmud, which is second in authority only to the Bible. The Talmud is a vast rambling compendium of human wisdom and knowledge, embracing subjects as diverse as religion, civil and criminal law, morals, medicine and astronomy. The Babylonian sages who compiled it had not been exposed to Greek influence; and they set little value on logical order or on clarity of expression. As a result, the Talmud is unsystematic in its arrangement, lacking ordered sequence. The same subject, for example, can be referred to in several different and sometimes unexpected places, and without cross-reference. Moreover it contains a bewildering welter of conflicting opinions — which the reader is left to sort out for himself without guidance. To make understanding more difficult, the deliberations of its many authors are expressed with extreme brevity, almost in a kind of shorthand. The Talmud cannot be mastered without the help of skilled teachers, and even then not before years of devoted study.

The process of attempting to summarise the contents of the Talmud for practical application started in the Baghdad of the Geonim. The first complete Code to appear outside Mesopotamia was written in Morocco by Rabbi Isaac of Fez (1013-1103), known as Alfasi. He simplified the Talmud by eliminating all argument and opinions with which he disagreed, and managed to produce a succinct summary of the law.

The work of codification was taken up eagerly by Jewish scholars in Spain, whose approach was dictated by the principles of reason. Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, known as the 'Rambam' to the Jews and Maimonides to the

outside world, was the outstanding codifier of the time and one of the most brilliant men of his age. He fled with his family from persecution in Spain and finally settled in Cairo, where he became a famous physician and the head of its Jewish Community. An account of his life in Cairo is contained in the chapter on Egypt in Part Two of this book. Maimonides's monumental code, the Mishneh Torah, one thousand chapters long, was completed before 1184. Written with deep religious feeling and a clarity unusual for the period, it offered its readers an authoritative summary of developed Jewish law.

Another influential code was written by Rabbi Asher ben Yehiel (1250–1327), known as the 'Rosh' and also as Asheri — an Ashkenazi scholar who had escaped from Germany and settled in Toledo. His son, Rabbi Jacob ben Asher, also produced a valuable code called the Tur, after the rows of gems on the breastplate of the High Priest.

The most influential code of all was the Shulhan Aruch (The Prepared Table), first printed in Venice in 1565. Its author, Joseph Caro, was one of those forced to leave Spain in 1492. He finally settled in Safed in the Holy Land, where he wrote his masterwork, Beth Yosef, after twenty years of intensive study and comparison of previous codes. The Shulhan Aruch was written as a precis of that book. An Ashkenazi rabbi, Moses Isserles of Cracow, then prepared a Mappah (Tablecloth) for the Prepared Table, setting out all the Ashkenazi variations to Caro's rulings. The Mappah was printed alongside Caro's original text; and this modified version very soon became the definitive guide to Jewish law and practice that it still remains.

Kabbalah, or Jewish mysticism, was another activity which flourished in the heady religious and intellectual atmosphere of Spain. Comparatively few Jews indulged in actual mystical practice aimed at direct personal contact with God; and the main thrust of the movement was directed to attempting to explain the mystery of the hidden nature of the Divine and its relationship to man.

Kabbalah struck deep roots in the minds of Sephardi religious thinkers; and Kabbalistic theories rapidly developed new profundity and coherence. They came to encompass the very nature of existence and sought to explain how the hidden, unknown and unknowable God manifests himself in the world of creation — how the gulf is bridged between the Infinite and the finite. In these new theories, the imperfections of this world are attributed to a fundamental 'flaw' that followed the last act of the creative process, shattering the unity of God in his creation. Man's primary task is to correct that 'flaw'.

A view of existence is advanced in which each individual and the whole community of Israel are protagonists in a cosmic struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. Every Jew, through his actions and prayers, has a part to play in the divine purpose of hastening the advent of the Messianic Age and restoring the original harmony of creation.

The appearance of the Zohar (Book of Splendour) at the end of the thirteenth century was the greatest achievement of Spanish Kabbalah. Copies of the text were first distributed by Moses de Leon of Castile, who

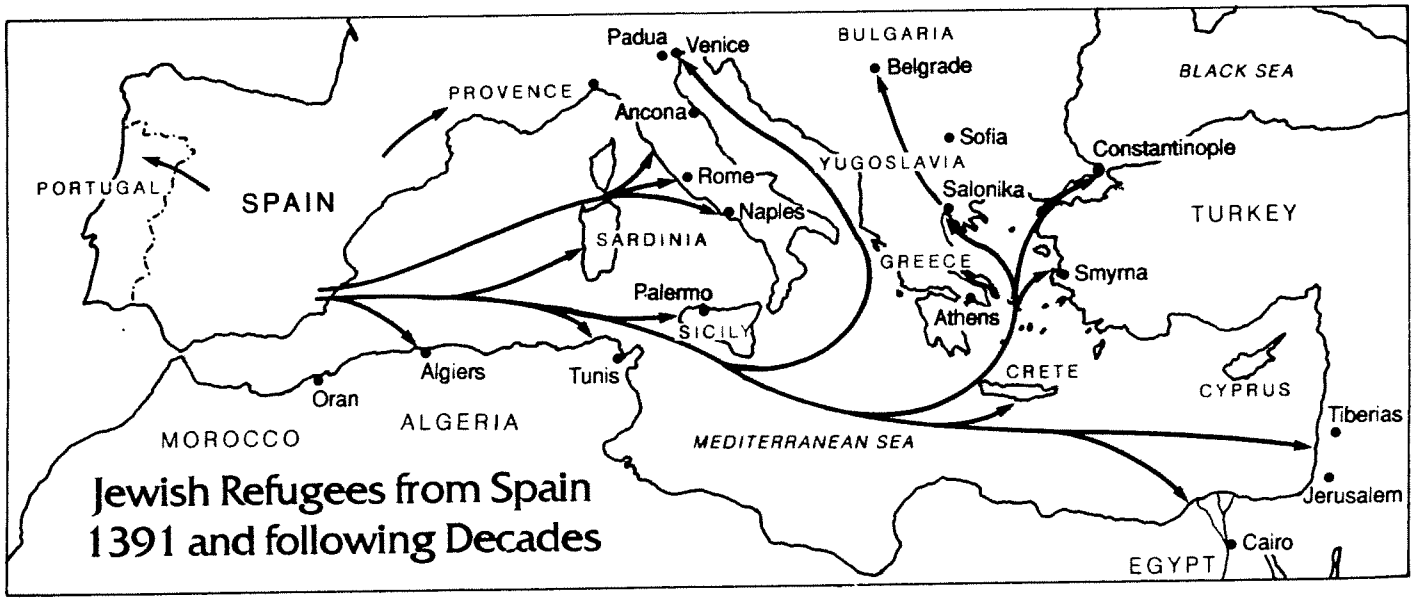
claimed to have discovered an original manuscript written by Simon bar Yochai in the second century. Some modern scholars believe that Moses de Leon wrote the book himself; others that he compiled it from a variety of more ancient sources. The traditional view however traces the substance and ideas of the work back to mystical doctrines revealed to Simon bar Yochai.

The Zohar takes the form of commentaries on parts of the Torah, the Song of Songs and the Book of Ruth. It deals with the nature of the Divine, with man's soul, with the problem of good and evil, and with the final Redemption. Knowledge of the Zohar spread steadily throughout the entire Jewish world during the three hundred years after its first appearance, until it came to occupy an unique position, ranking close to the Talmud in its influence and authority.

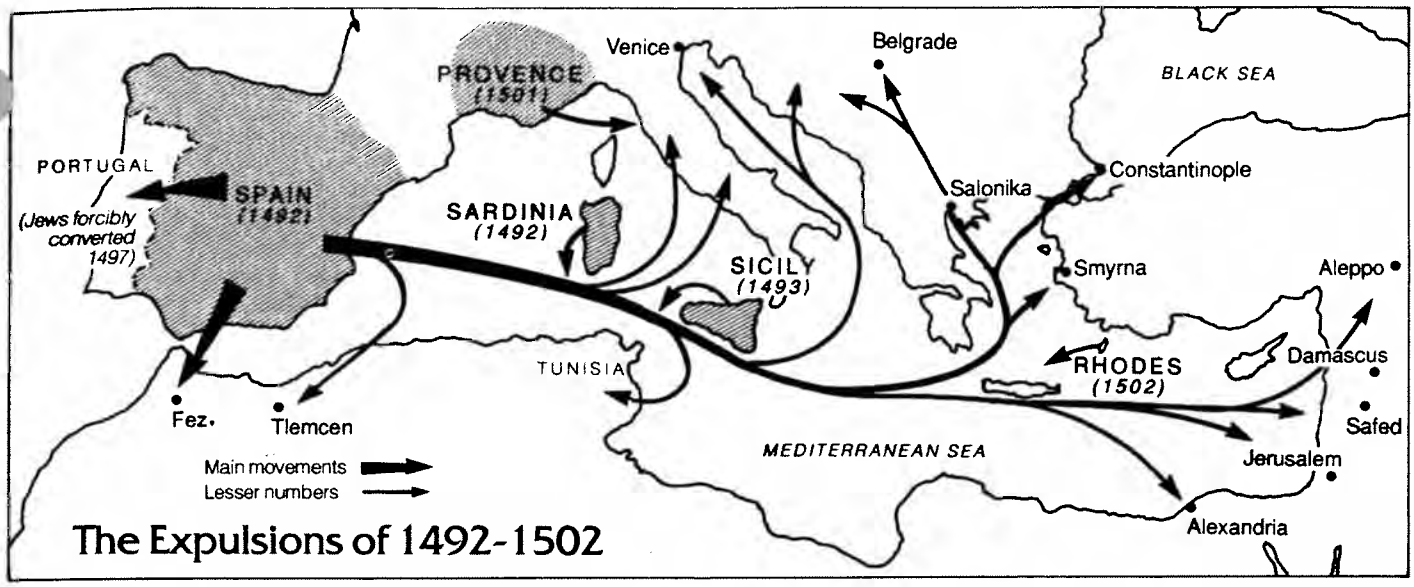
In Spain — both Mohammedan and Christian — Jews, for the first time in their history, managed to develop a genuine synthesis between their own religiously-based culture and the outside world around them. That synthesis was unique in the history of their exile. But the very success of the endeavour to live in both worlds nourished the seeds of its own destruction. The sight of Jews enjoying all the fruits of secular Spanish life, whilst at the same time maintaining a separate identity as resident aliens living under their own law, excited the envy of the less fortunate of their Christian fellow subjects. And for many Jews, peace and prosperity had lessened their sense of exile and their attachment to the faith of their ancestors.

The disturbance of the Crusades in France and the rest of Europe had its repercussions in Spain, especially in the North. Sporadic outbreaks of popular violence took place with increasing frequency and severity; and in 1328, for example, many Jewish communities in Navarre were massacred.

The Golden Age ended finally in 1391 when the pent-up jealousy of Christian mobs, whipped to fever pitch by determined priests, expressed itself in an outburst of public fury that at a stroke nullified the progress of



Jewish Refugees from Spain
1391 and following Decades



centuries. The first pogrom broke out in Seville where, to quote a contemporary chronicler —

> On 4th June thirteen hundred and ninety one, the Lord bent his bow like an enemy against the community of Seville... They set fire to the gates of the Jewish quarter and killed many of its people; and some of the women and children were sold as slaves... Some died to sanctify God's name... but many others violated the holy covenant and changed their religion to escape.

Jews were then massacred throughout Christian Spain and, one by one, their centres of population were destroyed.

Their persecutors offered the Jews the choice of baptism or death; and very large numbers chose to accept the Cross in preference to dying as martyrs — a few willingly, some with reluctance and most in sheer desperation. One third of all Spanish Jews perished or fled overseas in the decades that followed the first pogrom of 1391. A further third converted to Christianity; and only one third survived as openly professing Jews.

The glory and pride of the community departed, never to return. But the remaining Jews of the Iberian peninsula struggled on after the catastrophe, sustaining further losses through massacre and conversion, and also experiencing minor successes from time to time.

Finally, all openly professing Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492. At the end many opted for the Cross rather than leave their adopted homeland. It is estimated that fewer than two hundred thousand Jews actually quit Spain in 1492 — the remaining survivors of that once great community being lost to the sword or to the Cross.

Typical perhaps was the behaviour of the two most prominent leaders of the community, one secular and the other religious. Don Abraham Señeor, Chief Justice of the Jews of Castile, was the courtier who had helped arrange the marriage between Ferdinand and Isabella which united Aragon and Castile and precipitated the decree of expulsion. Señeor accepted baptism — with the King, the Queen and the Cardinal of Spain standing as his godparents. On the other hand, his deeply religious and learned colleague

13 **Crown Prince Don Felipe**
The Crown Prince presenting Spain's most prestigious award to Sephardi leaders in 1990.

in government, the great financier Don Isaac Abrabanel, had no hesitation in turning his back on Spain and going into exile.

It would be hard to exaggerate the impact on the entire Jewish people of the expulsion from Spain. The sudden end of the greatest, the best established and the most culturally assimilated Jewish community of Europe in the Middle Ages was a tragedy that seemed comparable only to the loss of their original homeland. In 1492, on the very anniversary of the destruction of the Temple by the Romans, the shattered and bewildered Spanish Jews entered into a further and deeper exile. Most found refuge in Portugal, only to meet an even worse fate in that country five years later. At roughly the same time, Jews were also expelled from Sicily, Sardinia and Provence.

A few exiles found temporary refuge in Naples and Venice. Others fled to Morocco, to other parts of North Africa, to Venetian colonies such as Crete and Cyprus, and above all to Turkey and the Ottoman Empire.

The refugees carried the culture of their beloved Spain with them into exile. They and their descendants long continued to cherish its customs, its music and its food. Proudly bearing Spanish or Portuguese family names, they carefully preserved the medieval Spanish language of their forbears and transformed it into Ladino — which still survives as a spoken language, though now only to a rather limited extent.

An epilogue. In October 1990 Crown Prince Don Felipe, son of King Juan Carlos of Spain, presented the Concorde Prize of the Prince of Asturias Foundation to a delegation of world Sephardi leaders. In his address, the prince expressed his deep regret and apologies for the actions of his ancestors in expelling the Jews from Spain. He praised the Sephardim for having spread Spanish culture in all the generations since the Expulsion; and voiced the hope that Spain would once again become a meeting place of the Spanish and Jewish traditions.

Though Spain had done much to protect Sephardi Jews from Hitler's clutches during the Second World War of 1939-45, as indeed had Portugal, almost five hundred years had passed before those royal words of apology and reconciliation. There is however no mistaking the genuiness of the retraction, nor the very real warmth of the resulting reconciliation.

The Ottoman Empire

Sephardi Jews fleeing from Spain and Portugal were welcomed with open arms by the Turks, who found it hard to believe their good fortune in acquiring so many talented, cultivated and useful subjects. Indeed Sultan Bayazid II even sent two of his own ships into Lisbon harbour to take off Jewish refugees in 1497.

The Ottoman Turks, it should be remembered, were a highly successful nation of warriors. It was beneath their dignity to engage in occupations other than the army, the government or the Mosque; and they despised commerce and crafts. They also disdained to colonise their far-flung empire or settle in its cities.

The Jews provided the Ottoman Empire with the nucleus of a new middle class — one that was free from political ambition and on which the Turks could rely for a degree of loyalty they were unable to obtain from the newly conquered subject peoples of their huge empire. To the Turks, the Jews were by far the most productive and stable non-Turkish minority in their domains.

As followers of the religion of Abraham, the People of the Book, Jews and Christians were accorded the status of dhimmis (protected persons) in all Islamic lands. This ensured state protection for their lives and property, freedom for them to follow their own religion on condition they did not insult Islam or attempt to convert Mohammedans, and exemption from military service. In return, dhimmis had to accept restrictions and humiliations as second-class subjects. They had to pay a special poll tax, wear distinctive clothes and refrain from building new synagogues and churches without permission. Their evidence in court was not accepted against that of a Mohammedan; nor could a Mohammedan be put to death for killing a dhimmi. Fortunately many of the restrictions, except for the paying of the tax, were not always imposed — or if they were, not strictly. They served mainly to preserve the subservient status of the dhimmi in Islamic society. On occasion though, and in bad times, they were applied with rigour; and then they could be humiliating in the extreme.

As dhimmis, communities of Jews and Christians formed many separate millets (nations) in the Ottoman Empire. Each millet was largely self-governing, with its own laws and administration. It levied and collected its own taxes; and was ruled by a Chief Rabbi or Patriarch directly responsible to the Sultan. This system suited the Jews very well, especially in the early days when humiliating restrictions were not imposed on their lives.

Rabbi Moses Capsali was first to be appointed head of the Jews of Constantinople in 1461; and it was reported that he and the Christian Patriarch occupied seats of honour in the presence of the Sultan. However the post of Chief Rabbi of Constantinople lapsed in 1527 because of discord between the different Jewish communities of the capital; and it was not filled again until 1837 when the first Haham Bashi was appointed as the result of Turkish government reforms.

In the interval of over three hundred years, the special interests of the Jews were represented at court by the great Jewish merchants of the day such as Dõna Gracia Mendes, Don Joseph Nasi (Duke of Naxos) and

Solomon ibn Yaish (Duke of Mitelene). Moses Hamon, personal physician to Suleiman the Magnificent, must also have wielded powerful influence — for it was he who obtained the firman of 1553 in which the Sultan forbad the bringing of blood-libel accusations against Jews.

Under the benevolent sway of the Grand Turk, the Iberian Sephardim joined existing Jewish communities all over the Ottoman Empire. They settled around the shores of the Mediterranean, penetrating up through the Balkans towards central Europe, and eventually across Turkey to Baghdad and beyond. Usually superior in education and culture to the local Jews in whose midst they settled, the Sephardim at first jealously preserved their separate identity, forming themselves into a kind of aristocracy. In time though, they either succeeded in absorbing the older-established resident Jews or else merged into them.

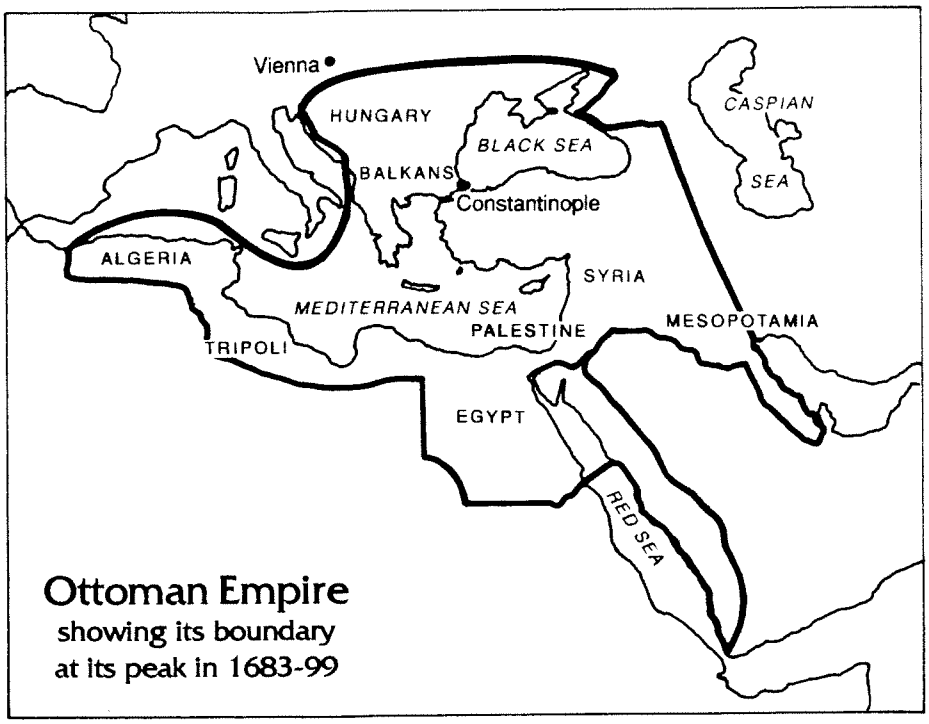
The Sephardi Jews who found their way to the Land of Israel transformed that country's Jewish community. They soon became a majority in Jerusalem. In Tiberias, sponsored by Doña Gracia Mendes and Don Joseph Nasi of Constantinople, they participated in a grand venture to rebuild the town as a refuge for oppressed Jews. Under the influence of the Sephardi rabbis, mystics and poets who settled there, Safed (in Galilee) became a spiritual centre of world Jewry — and, in particular, the focus of the Kabbalistic (mystical) movement which came to dominate Jewish thought after the Expulsion from Spain.

Turkey was then approaching the peak of its power as the leader of a vast Islamic civilisation. The Turks' kindly treatment of their own Jewish populations and their warm welcome to the refugees ensured that, from that time on, the fate of most Sephardim would be closely bound to that of their Islamic hosts. As Turkey prospered, so did its Jews. And Ottoman Jews soon became the financiers, the tax farmers, the merchants, the diplomats, the interpreters and the physicians of the Empire.

Nor did the Jews neglect industry and the crafts. Indeed the Christians of Europe were soon to complain bitterly that Spanish Jews had introduced the manufacture of cannon and gunpowder into Turkey and had taught the Turks the art of modern warfare. The textile industry in all its aspects, from raw materials to the making of garments, became a Jewish speciality — and, in places, a near monopoly. As in Europe, the great Jewish commercial houses, run as close family businesses with widespread networks of trusted contacts all over the world, dominated international trade to an extent difficult to visualise today.

However the comparatively backward Christian countries of Europe were not asleep. Their tiny sailing ships managed to round the Cape of Good Hope to reach India, while others crossed the Atlantic to discover the Americas. By means of sea power and advanced technology, the Christian West gradually succeeded in outflanking the serene, land-bound world of Islam. Eventually it came to dominate the globe; and, what is more, to impose its own values upon it.

Turkey itself began to decay from within. The sultans who succeeded Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–1566) generally lacked the ability of their



brilliant predecessors. Spoilt by the wealth that seemed so effortlessly to flow in their direction, they grew increasingly decadent and devoted far more of their energies to court and harem intrigue than to governing their empire. Their grip on government relaxed. Some of its important posts became hereditary; and others were openly sold to the highest bidder. Corruption and nepotism flourished as the huge bureaucracy became increasingly inefficient.

Taxation was increased to ruinous levels. Economic troubles and inflation followed, with large price increases. Crop yields fell sharply as more and more peasants moved into the towns from the countryside. Greater competition from Christian Europe, particularly in textiles, had a bad effect on trade. Military reverses lead to a progressive crumbling of the edges of the Empire; while within it, chaos and lawlessness gradually became usual.

In time not only did Turkey decline in wealth and power, but the relatively privileged position of its Jews was also eroded. This was partly the result of the weakening of central Ottoman control over the far-flung provinces of the Empire — which led to an increasing degree of autonomy for the local governors, who often proved lazy, greedy and corrupt. Another important factor was the failure of the Jews to maintain their own formerly high standards of education and culture in the decaying Islamic environment.

The Jews somehow seemed to lose the will to rise above the torpor that progressively paralysed a society that had lost confidence in its own worth. Eastern Sephardim shared in the decline of the Islamic world just as they had previously shared in its success; but they did even worse.

Eventually the Jews were forced to yield their prominent position in Ottoman affairs to another but more thrusting minority, the Christians.

These Christians — Italians, Greeks and Armenians — became far better educated in European ways and languages than the Jews. They were able to maintain many more trading and diplomatic contacts in the increasingly dominant Christian countries of Europe, and could rely on sympathetic Christian powers for protection. Increasingly isolated from Europe, the Jews lost the ability to compete.

In 1826 the Sultan moved to reassert his direct control of affairs. In an action that proved terminal for the dwindling Jewish influence in Constantinople, he massacred his entire corps of Janissaries. The Janissaries had effectively ruled Turkey in the Sultan's name; and in their fall from power they dragged down with them the last few prominent Jewish families in the city.

The condition of the Jews of the Ottoman Empire deteriorated steadily until its lowest point was reached in the first half of the nineteenth century, when their degradation was movingly described in many accounts written by European travellers to the Near East. Paradoxically, it was the Sultan's destruction of the Janissaries that turned the tide; for his subsequent reforms resulted in a tightening of central control over the provinces, with consequent benefit to their Jews.

Another very important factor in the improvement of the Jewish condition was the establishment in 1860 in Paris of the Alliance Isráelite Universelle. The Alliance created a network of European-type Jewish schools throughout the Near East. It was those schools that enabled Jews to acquire the rudiments of a secular education for the first time, as well as some knowledge of French and English. Once again they were able to start competing with their Christian rivals; and for the first time they began to look to the West, not just with nostalgia but as the key to survival and worldly success.

Despite its splendid work, the Alliance was criticised in some religious quarters for alienating its pupils from their Jewish roots. In its enthusiasm for all things French and European, for the new world ahead, it was accused of failing to foster appreciation for the old, of tending to diminish respect for religion and of opening a gulf between secularly educated children and their more pious parents.

The Alliance schools certainly were very different from the traditional religious schools of the poverty-stricken Jewish areas of North Africa and the Middle East. But it must be said that, as well as secular subjects, the study of Judaism and Jewish history always constituted an important part of the curriculum, both at local level and at the college for teachers established in Paris.

However part of the inevitable price paid for the Alliance's tremendous achievement in liberating so many Ottoman Jews from obscurity and poverty was that some of its graduates became vulnerable to assimilationist pressure when removed from their closely-knit communities.

A similar dilemma was faced by Shneur Zalman of Lyady, founder of the Lubavich Movement (Habad), when asked to support Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. Zalman accepted that the French would bring

27 **Teachers and Rabbis of the Alliance's School,Tunis 1886**
The teachers are wearing European dress. The number of rabbis, wearing turbans, illustrates the prominence of religious instruction in the school's curriculum.

emancipation and great material improvement to the oppressed and poverty-stricken Jews of Russia; but for the sake of religion, he opposed emancipation for the Jews and brought all his influence to bear in favour of the Czar and against Napoleon.

Not only did the Alliance schools help to bring the long isolated Sephardim of the Near East back within sight of the mainstream of European life, but its European-trained teachers and inspectors ensured that Jews could no longer be oppressed by local Turkish governors in secret. From the date of the Alliance's foundation in 1860, the full glare of international publicity was brought to bear on cases of wrong-doing, with beneficial result.

By that time, the Islamic world had started to open embassies in the capitals of Europe; and through those embassies, pressure by prominent European Jews and Christians could more easily be brought to bear on the Turkish authorities to counter anti-Jewish excesses.

England, partly because of genuine Old Testament sympathies, and partly as a lever to exert influence in the declining Ottoman Empire, began to interest itself in the plight of Turkey's Jews. Sir Moses Montefiore's visit to Palestine in 1843 and its influence on its Jews was noted with approval

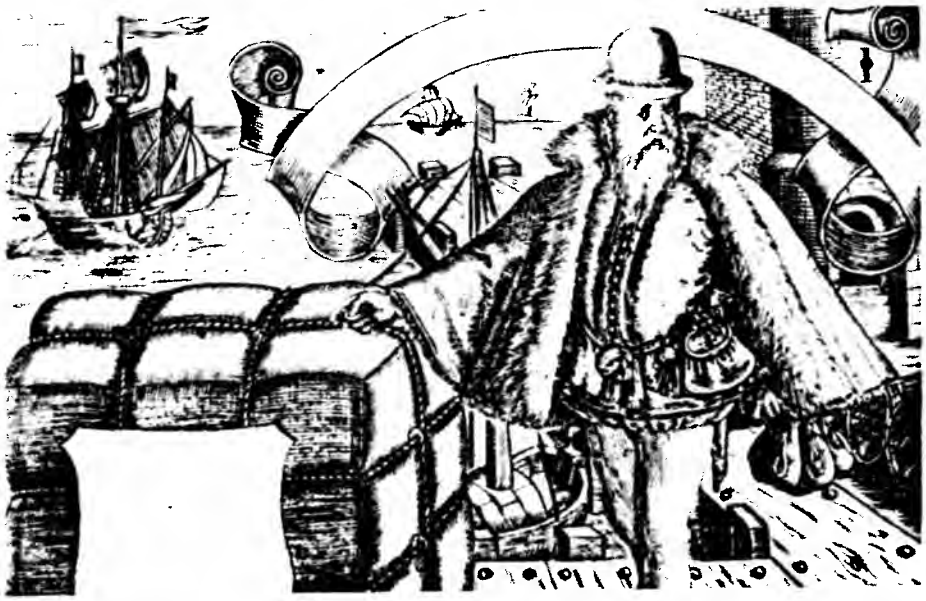
by the British government. At about the same time, Lord Shaftesbury's proposal to repatriate the Jews, so that they could build themselves a National Home in Palestine under British protection, found favour with Lord Palmerston and the government. Not surprisingly, it was rejected out of hand by the Sultan.

As far back as the year 1580, a British envoy to Constantinople had won a grant of Capitulations from the Sultan, governing the conditions in which British subjects could trade in the Turkish Empire. These Capitulations, modelled on those granted to France some years previously, protected British subjects and their goods from molestation by the Turks, except for lawful customs. They also provided for the appointment of consuls to regulate the relationship of the British merchants with the Ottoman authorities.

Taking full advantage of this system of Capitulations, the European powers wielded considerable influence in Turkish affairs. They gained trade advantages by extending 'protection' to members of Christian minority groups within the Ottoman Empire. Thus Russia protected Orthodox Christians, while France and Austria extended their patronage to Roman Catholics and Maronites. Such 'protected' persons were no longer subject to Ottoman law; and could only be brought to justice in courts held in the consulates of their protecting power.

Britain was at a disadvantage here, for there were few Protestants to whom protection could be extended. Some Jews therefore were adopted as British-protected subjects in the nineteenth century; and if justification was needed, the Turks were told that the families in question had originated in British India — as indeed was the case for a few. Other European powers also adopted Jews, but to a lesser extent.

Just how far the fiction of Indian descent was believed by the local British consular officials is hard to determine. But study of the correspondence of the British consulate in Aleppo, Syria, for example, indicates that by the



28 A Turkey merchant
One of the first European traders in the Ottoman Empire is shown in this 1593 engraving by de Bry.

end of the nineteenth century its records were in such confusion that all attempts to regulate them on a rational basis had been abandoned. The Consul was well aware that many of the so-called British Jews had in fact lived in Aleppo since time immemorial. Thus Consul Jago, writing to his ambassador in Constantinople in 1890, reported that:

> There are more than four hundred Europeans in Aleppo, leaving out large numbers of native Arab Jews ... who by some means or other have acquired British nationality... The vast majority of persons enjoying (British) consular protection are Arab Jews of an alleged Indian origin ....

It was therefore through secular European-style education and increasing contact with merchants from Europe — for whom Jews often acted as agents — that Sephardim of the Ottoman Empire began to trade and travel to the West. Some few of the leading families were helped by acquiring European nationality, but by no means all. The more energetic started moving to countries such as British India and cosmopolitan Egypt, where European influence was strong. Others migrated directly to Western Europe and to North, Central and South America.

It must be remembered that only a proportion of the Jews of the Ottoman Empire was exposed to the European influence of the Alliance schools; and even then, most parents were not able to afford to keep their children there for more than three or four years of elementary education. A small minority only of the children was able to proceed from the Alliance to higher French or other European schools, or else was educated wholly in foreign (usually Christian) schools — and it largely constituted the Jewish upper class.

The remainder, trained only in traditional religious schools (Talmud Torah), emerged with little secular knowledge and no command at all of French or of English. Unfortunately, as the chapter on New York in Part Three of this book will describe, they were very ill-equipped to face the great migrations to which they were subjected after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the later thrust of modern Arab nationalism. On the positive side though, it must be said that however poor and however ignorant in a secular sense they may have been, they were mostly people of genuine piety untinged with fanaticism — modest folk, God-fearing and with a high standard of morality. Their like may not be seen again.

In the middle decades of the twentieth century the earlier emigrants were followed to Europe, to Israel and to the Americas by the remainder of their brethren, fleeing from the rising tide of Arab nationalism which culminated in the total destruction of their ancient communities. There are now very few Jews left in the Arab world; and the story of their subsequent wanderings is told later in this book.

Unfortunately those Sephardi Jews who remained in the European part of the former Ottoman Empire — mainly Salonika, Rhodes and the Balkans — fared far worse. They suffered horribly in Hitler's Holocaust during the Second World War of 1939-45. They were not allowed to emigrate; and their communities were destroyed by deportation and mass-murder on a scale that even surpassed that endured by their ancestors in Spain and Portugal. It is a tragic story.