

## Sephardic and Oriental Jewish Music Program

Music time: 48 min

- Sephardim descend from Jews expelled from Spain in 1492.
  - They settled around the Mediterranean, and also Holland and England.
- Mizrahim (Oriental Jews) never left the Middle East.
- Sephardic and Oriental music is simple, joyful, not plaintive, and is believed to closely approximate the music of Biblical times.
- It has been transmitted mostly orally.

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### Havdalah

- Hamavdil** (sung in Havdalah service)
  - By Isaac ben Yehudah ibn Ghayyat, 11th cent. Spain.

### -**Laner velivesamim**

- By Rabbi Shalom Shabbazi, 17th century Yemen.
- Simple words:
  - Laner velivesamim nafshi meyachella; im titnu li kos yayin le-havdalah***  
My soul longs for the light and spices; if only you'd give me a cup of wine for Havdalah
  - All angels up above pave paths for me, clear the path for the confused, open the gates for me; if only you'd give me a cup of wine for Havdalah
  - I shall raise my eyes to and fro with a worthy heart who provides my life paths for me by day and night; if only you'd give me a cup of wine for Havdalah

\* *Sephardic 01 – Cantor Moshe Tessone - Laner velivesamim*

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### Sukkot

- Sukkah velulav
- By Rabbi Moshe ben Yaakov Adhan, of Meknes, Morocco, 17<sup>th</sup> cent.:

-Builds on the two commandments of Sukkot: "sukkah" and "lulav": To dwell in a sukkah and to wave the four species:

*Sukkah velulav le'am segullah; yachad yaronu yis'u tehillah*

A sukkah and a lulav for a precious nation; together they will sing joyously, they will raise praises.

\* *Sephardic 02 – Cantor Chaim Parchi - Sukkah velulav (Spain)*

-Cantor Chaim Parchi: Born in Yemen, then Israel, then Boston, then Florida

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## Hanukkah

-**Mi zeh yemalel** (Casablanca, Morocco)

*Mi ze yemalel nise yitbonan, Bimei Matityahu ben Yochanan (2)*

*Anochi esmach asis b'Adonai*

*Higdil laasot 'im b'nei Chashmonai*

*Ram hu 'al kol ramim nigla veSinai*

*Rikhbo ribbotayim alphei shinan*

Who will tell of the miracles and contemplate  
The days of Mattathias, son of Yochanan

I will rejoice for God's deeds  
For the sons of the Hasmoneans  
He is raised on high  
In the chariots above Sinai

\**Sephardic 03 - Cantor Chaim Parchi - Mi zeh yemalel (Casablanca)*

-**Ocho kandelikas** (Eight small candles)

-In Ladino, or Judeo-Spanish: Language spoken by Sephardic Jews -- equivalent of Yiddish for Ashkenazim. Very close to 15th century Castilian Spanish, with Hebrew words thrown in. Written in Hebrew script. My father spoke it at home.

\* *Sephardic 04 - Flory Jagoda - Ocho kandelikas*

-By Flory Jagoda . Born in Sarajevo, 1925, came to US as war bride in 1946, leader in revival of Ladino and Sephardic music. She wrote the song herself. Local to DC area.

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## **Siddur**

### **1. Adon Olam.**

- Written by Solomon Ibn Gabirol, 11th cent. Spanish Jewish poet.
- Two parts: Attributes of God and personal relation to God.
- Sephardic original had 16 verses (today's Sephardic siddurim have 16, 14 or 12 verses). Ashkenazim cut it down to 10, "for reasons unknown", according to one historian of Jewish liturgy.
- The extra 6 verses are:
  - And he exists before and after every substance or form
  - Incomparable and like to none, changeless and immutable
  - Neither composite nor separated, great of power and of might
  - He is the healer and the cure, vigilant and helping
  - Let my soul rejoice in his temple, may he speedily dispatch the Messiah
  - Then shall we sing in my holy house, Amen, Amen, O awesome Name

*\* Sephardic 05 - Yehoram Gaon - Adon Olam (Amsterdam)*

- Amsterdam community founded by marranos in 1593, a century after expulsion from Spain
- Yehoram Gaon, Israeli actor and singer, Jerusalem-born, father from Sarajevo, mother from Turkey. Philanthropist. Israel Prize in 2004 for Hebrew song.

*\* Sephardic 06 - Aliza Azikri - Adon Olam (Bulgarian)*

- Bulgarian community rescued from Nazis by Bulgarian authorities
- Elias Canetti, Nobel prize in literature 1981
- Community mostly emigrated during communism
- Aliza Azikri, Israeli singer

### **2. Sephardic Kaddish, also longer.**

- At first, adds: "*V'yatzmach purkaneh vikarev m'shiheh*". Thus:

May his kingdom soon prevail in our own day, our own lives, and the life of all Israel, and let us say, Amen

becomes

May his kingdom soon prevail and may he cause his salvation to flower, and may he hasten the coming of his anointed Messiah, in our own day, our own lives, and the life of all Israel, and let us say, Amen

-Near end, Ashkenazic Kaddish asks God for two things: Peace and life:

*Yehe shlama rabba min shmaya vechayyim*

Sephardic Kaddish asks God for twelve things. (We figure, as long as we have God on the phone, might as well.) The extra ten things are:

*Sava3 vishu3ah ve-nechamah ve-shezavah u-rfu'a u-g'ulla u-slichah v'khapparah ve-revach ve-hatzala.*

So

May peace abundant descend from heaven, together with life for us and for all Israel, and let us say, Amen.

becomes

May peace abundant descend from heaven, together with life, satisfaction, help, comfort, refuge, healing, redemption, forgiveness, atonement, relief and salvation for us and for all Israel, and let us say, Amen.

*\* Sephardic 07 - Cong Shearith Israel choir - Kaddish*

-Congregation Shearith Israel in New York City ("The Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue"), one of the oldest in the US, founded 1654 by 23 Jews fleeing Portuguese Inquisition in Brazil

-Choir with Rabbi A. Lopes Cardozo, Hazzan soloist

### **3. Yigdal.**

-Means "Magnify". Sephardic in origin, written in 1404 by Italian poet Daniel ben Yehudah.

-Reflects Maimonides' 13 principles of faith, one verse per principle.

-Sephardim add a 14th verse to accommodate melodies:

*Elleh shelosh 'esreh l'ikkarim, hinnam y'sod dat el v'torato*

These are the 13 principles and the tenets of the Torah

*\* Sephardic 08 - Yehoram Gaon - Yigdal (Constantinople)*

-We always sang it at the end of services in Egypt

-In deference to Maimonides who spent most of his life in Egypt?

-We had one melody for Shabbat and one for the holidays.

\* *Sephardic 09 - Maurice Mizrahi - Yigdal (Egypt, Shabbat)*

#### 4. En Kelohenu

-Written to add 20 blessings to the Shabbat service, because Talmud says [Menachot 43b]\*: A Jew must recite 100 blessings a day. Not hard on a weekday, as Amidah has 19 blessings and is said at the 3 daily services. With other blessings in the service, morning blessings, and blessings before and after meals, we can easily get to 100. But on Shabbat, Amidah has only 7 blessings. So to increase the count, En Kelohenu was written, adding 20 blessings.

-Author and date unknown; oldest siddur that has it is from 9th century.

\*It was taught: R. Meir used to say, A man must say 100 blessings a day, as it is written, And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you? ["What", "ma", can be read "Me'a", or "100"] On Sabbaths and on Festivals [when the Amidah has 7 blessings onstead of 19] R. Hiyya the son of R. Awia endeavored to make up this number by the use of spices and delicacies [for which a blessing is required before use].[Menachot 43b]

-The Sephardic line at the end differs from the Ashkenazic line:

*Atta toshi'enu, atta takum trachem tziyyon, ki 'et l'chennena ki va mo'ed*

You will save us. Rise up and have mercy on Zion, for the time is to be gracious to her, for the appointed season is coming [Psalms 102:14]

\* *Sephardic 10 - Yehoram Gaon - En kelohenu (Jerusalem)*

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#### Ki Eshmera Shabbat

-Shabbat table song, R. Avraham Ibn Ezra, 12th-century Spain:

*-Ki eshmera Shabbat, El yishmereni, ot hi l'olmei 'ad beno uveni*

-Because I keep Shabbat, God keeps me. It is a sign forever between God and me.

-Note: 'Ki' means 'because' most of the time: BECAUSE I keep the Sabbath, God keeps me. But Talmud says 'ki' can also mean 'if', 'but' and 'perhaps' [Rosh Hashanah 3a]. So most non-Orthodox siddurim translate "if".

They also omit second part:

It is forbidden to work, conduct business or commercial matters, or politics, or even talk about them. I only study God's Torah, which will make me wise.

\* *Sephardic 11 - Children's Choir of the Hebrew Academy of Greater Washington - Ki eshmera Shabbat*

-Yemenite melody

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## **Mi Pi El (En Adir)**

-Sephardic piyyut (Jewish liturgical poem), sung on Shabbat or Simchat Torah, unknown author:

From the mouth of God, may all Israel be blessed  
There is none so mighty as the Lord  
None so blessed as ben Amram (Moses)  
None so great as the Torah  
None so precious as Israel

\* *Sephardic 12 - Geula Gill - Mi pi El (Yemenite)*

-Geula Gill, Israeli-born singer and actress (50s and 60s)

-Note: Elohim used, not Adonai

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## **Taam Ha-man**

-"Taste of manna"

-Sensuous love song from Bukhara (today, part of Uzbekistan):

Daughter of my song so lovely  
Fly like a dove  
Shaped like a beautiful robe  
With a golden halo about you

(C) Taste of manna, taste of manna  
If you tried to describe it  
You would not be believed

Your sweetness is like milk and honey  
It will not leave me hungry  
I long for the fever of your lips  
And the roundness of your youth (C)

Your face seems sad  
Your scent is like spices from a spicebox

Your lips are purple  
and call forth the memory of the taste of manna (C)

\* *Sephardic 13 - Geula Gill - Taam HaMan (Bukharan)*

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## **Los Bilbilicos (The nightingales)**

-Ladino love song, from Spain:

The rose blooms in the month of May  
My soul darkens, suffering from love  
The nightingales sing with sighs of love  
My soul darkens, suffering from love

Go more quickly, dove, go more quickly and come with me  
Go more quickly, my beloved, run and save me

\* *Sephardic 14 - Yehoram Gaon - Los bilbilicos (Ladino)*

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## **Tzur Mishelo**

-Part of the Sephardic Grace after Meals, unknown poet:

Let us bless the Lord whose food we ate  
Let us thank him with our lips chanting:  
There is no one as holy as our Lord

\* *Sephardic 15 - Yehoram Gaon - Tzur Mishelo (Jerusalem and Turkey)*

-Same tune as *Los Bilbilicos* above, but in Hebrew

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## **Cuando el Rey Nimrod**

-Ladino, from medieval Spain:

*Quando el Rey Nimrod al campo salía*

*mirava en el cielo y en la estrellería  
vido una luz santa en la Djudería  
que había de nascer Avraham Avinu.  
Chorus: Avram Avinu, Padre querido, Padre bendicho, luz de Yisrael*

When King Nimrod was going out to the fields  
He was looking at the heavens and at the stars  
He saw a holy light above the Jewish quarter  
[A sign] that Abraham, our father, must have been born.  
Chorus: Abraham our Father, dear father, Blessed Father, Light of Israel.

Then he was telling all the midwives  
That every pregnant woman  
Who did not give birth at once was going to be killed  
Because Abraham our father was going to be born.

-Fictional story blending the Midrash (where God rescues Abraham from Nimrod's wrath) and the Torah story of Moses (Pharaoh ordering midwives to kill Jewish babies):

**Midrash, Genesis Rabbah 38:13:**

[Abraham] was given over to Nimrod.  
[Nimrod] told him: Worship the Fire!  
Abraham said to him: Shall I then worship the water, which puts off the fire!  
Nimrod told him: Worship the water!  
[Abraham] said to him: If so, shall I worship the cloud, which carries the water?  
[Nimrod] told him: Worship the cloud!  
[Abraham] said to him: If so, shall I worship the wind, which scatters the clouds?  
[Nimrod] said to him: Worship the wind!  
[Abraham] said to him: And shall we worship the human, who withstands the wind?  
Said [Nimrod] to him: You pile words upon words, I bow to none but the fire. I shall throw you in the fire, and let the God to whom you bow come and save you from it!...  
[Then] Abraham went into the furnace and survived...

*\* Sephardic 16 - Yehoram Gaon - Cuando el rey Nimrod (Ladino)*

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## **Shabbat**

### **1. Shalom Alechem**

-Traditional song welcoming Shabbat, sung before Kiddush.



Written by Tzfat kabbalists in late 16th century.

\* *Sephardic 17 - Rabbi Benhaim [Brooklyn] - Shalom alechem (Cuando el rey Nimrod tune)*

-Same tune as *Cuando el Rey Nimrod*, above

## 2. Yoducha ra'yonai

-By Rabbi Yisrael ben Moshe Najara, 16<sup>th</sup>-century kabbalist, born in Damascus, Syria, and died as Chief Rabbi of Gaza:

-*Yoducha Ra'yonai Adonai ro'i, beyom Shabbat kodesh, yom hash'vi'i*  
My thoughts praise You, God, my shepherd, on this holy Shabbat  
On the day on which you finished all of your work,  
I say that you rule over everything around you.  
The deeds you performed can never pale,  
Rush to comfort me, the son of your maidservant.

\* *Sephardic 18 - Cantor Ramon Tasat - Yoducha rayonai (Turkey)*

-Cantor local to DC area

## 3. El Adon

-Song of creation, recited every Shabbat morning before the Shema, probably composed in the Gaonic era (8th century)

\* *Sephardic 19 - Cantor Ramon Tasat - El Adon (Turkey)*

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## Yom Kippur

**-Adon haselichot** (Lord of mercies)

-Author unknown. Text found in Cairo Geniza. Probably dates back to 11th century or so.

-Calls God by 22 different names: One for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, as an acrostic:

From Adon HaSelichot (Master of forgiveness -- Alef)

To Temim De'Ot (Complete in knowledge -- Tav).

Each name ends with "ot" - the feminine plural.

-Congregational response:

*Chatanu lefanecha rachem 'allenu*  
We have sinned before You, have mercy on us

\* *Sephardic 20 - Cantor Chaim Parchi - Adon haselichot*

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## **Birkat Kohanim (Priestly blessing)**

-*Duchaning* done every Shabbat for Sephardim, not just on holidays:

May the Lord bless you and keep you

May the Lord make the light of his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you

May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace

[Numbers 6:24-26]

Response: *Ken yehi ratzon* -- May it be His will

-Congregation must not look at Kohanim blessing, and fathers cover their children's heads with their tallitot.

-Torah continues:

-*V'samu et shemi 'al Bnei Yisrael va'ani avarchem*

-So they [the priests] will put My name on the Children of Israel, and I will bless them [Numbers 6:27]

Sephardim always include that line, to emphasize that it is not the priests who bless, but God through them.

\* *Sephardic 21 - Cong Shearith Israel choir - Birkat Kohanim*