



Yemenite Jewry is not only an ethnic group — it is a phenomenon. The culture they preserved for so many years is rare in its richness in every field. The Yemenite dance is unique and impressing in its beauty and delicacy. It is a functional dance, as it is danced in familial or religious events as part of the whole event and as a "Mitzvah" and not for fun. The dance is a chamber one, being danced in closed places with a very few number of dancers. The dance is an inseparable part of the singing, which is mostly taken from the "Diwan" — a collection of poems, most of them of Rabbi Shalom Shabazi, the greatest of Yemenite Jewry's poets. Yemenite Jewry is not one group. Jews lived in various regions in Yemen and every region has its typical songs, dances and customs. The members of Amka are mostly from the region of Achduf, which is closed to Taz, the second biggest town in Yemen, placed in the south-west of the country. The group is composed of the Israeli born second generation, who try to renew the tradition of their parents. The group is working within the framework of Gaaton Regional Council, which includes cooperative villages, kibbutzes and arab-villages in Western Galilee. The group presents dances whose origin is in Achduf region in Yemen as well as dances that were created in Israel, in which the Yemenite Dances influence on Israeli dances is seen.

Yaniv Shoshi



Gaaton Regional Council Western Galilee

Includes 16 settlements: 8 kibbutzes, 1 cooperative village, 4 villages, 2 Arab villages and a cooperative christian village. The sustance of the settlements is of industry, agriculture and services. The population of the council is above 9000 people and it includes people from the four continents: Asia, Africa, Europe, North and South America. In the council there are a variety at educational and cultural activities: Youth Clubs, a school for modern dance, a school of Music and Folklor singing and dancing groups. The Yemenite group of Amka is part of this cultural project.



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The Yemenite Group of Amka Israel



The Programme

The group will present to us a scheme of a wedding in Yemen. Actually, a wedding in Yemen lasted for several days and the group will show typical songs and dances from the wedding's days :

1. "Zafe" to the bride and "Zafe" to the groom — these are the ceremonial processions, in which the bride and the groom are brought in dancing, songs and lights.
2. The ceremony of spreading the "Chena" on the girls' hands. This ceremony is followed with a song: "Kumi, rikdi" (Stand up and dance).
3. The ceremony of "Yichud" (communion) — This ceremony of bringing the bride and groom together is unique to jews from the region of Achdof and it is followed with the song: "Chatan, tna hodcha ale kala" (groom, bring your glory on the bride).
4. The uncovering of the bride's face with a song, calling the bride to show her beauty.
5. A song of preparation for the groom: "Yom ezkera" (a day I will remember).
6. A song for seating the bride.
7. Nashid: "Chus elohigh" (Spare me Lord).
8. The wedding poem — Dances of the men with the song: "Sei yona veshimeini, bekinor hitroneni".
9. A girls' dance.
10. A men's song: "Eim ninalu".
11. A dance of the girls: I went down to the well.
12. Amusements: joy of the end of the wedding.

The group presents as well a dance cycle of Israeli folk dances, in some of them one can see the influence of the Yemenite Dance.

The dances in this cycle are :

Ahavat Hadasa, Ez Vakeves, El Ginat Egoz, Al Tira.



MANAGER:
NOI ISRAEL

Instructors:
DAVID MOSHE
YANIV SHOSHI

Members of the group :

DAVID MOSHE	ULI SARA
DAUS SHMUEL	DUGMA YAFA
CHASON YOSEF	DAMTI YONA
YEHUDA REUVEN	YEHUDA RONIT
OVED AMNON	YOSEF TZDAKA
OVED MOSHE	SULIMAN ESTER
SHLOMI TZIYON	SAID LEVANA
SHALOM ISRAEL	SHAPIRA GILA

"The Ethnic Dance Project" was established on the ground of Gurit Kadman's work of collecting and encouraging the dances of the ethnic groups for years.

The purposes of this project are :

A. Revival and preservice of the traditional ethnic dance with participation of the Department of Folk Dances in the Histadrut.

B. Collecting, documenting and researching these dances in cooperation with the Folklore Study Center of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

The Project includes jewish and unjewish groups who live in Israel: Kurds, Yemenites, Indians, North Africans, Arabs, Druze and more.

The Yemenite group of Amka is one of the prominent groups in our Project and succeeds to display the origins with the new.

We wish the group good luck in this tour.

Ruth Ashkenazi

Organizer of the Ethnic Dance Project

