

Maqam of the Week

Book of Deuteronomy - Summer 2009

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Each Shabbat our community has a beautiful tradition of applying a different *maqam* (Arabic: melody type) in order to express the mood throughout the prayers (relating to the theme of the Torah portion or upcoming holidays). Please allow me to tell you when and explain why some of the *maqamat* will be used for the remaining weeks of this summer 2009 season—specifically during the weeks of the Book of Deuteronomy (Sefer Debarim).

On *Shabbat Hazon* (Shabbat of vision), which is the Shabbat prior to Tisha B'Av, the prayers are conducted in Maqam Hijaz (Hijaz refers to the location on the Arabian Peninsula), because we mourn the destruction of the Holy Temple of Jerusalem and other major national tragedies that took place throughout Jewish history. This is one of the only occurrences in which all Sephardic communities agree to apply Hijaz.

On *Shabbat Nahamu* (Shabbat of comfort), the Shabbat after Tisha B'Av, the prayers are conducted in Maqam Hoseni. The highlight of this parashah is the retelling of the story of *Matan Torah* (receiving the law at Mount Sinai). Hoseni, the *maqam* that means beautiful in Arabic, is applied alluding to the Torah's beauty. Hoseni, which is described as a high version of Maqam Bayat, is also applied in association with Shavuot, the festival that commemorates receiving the Torah. The tune of Da'at Umzimah (a pizmon about Matan Torah) is traditionally applied for Naqdishach. This Shabbat takes its name from the haftarah from Isaiah in the Book of Isaiah 40:1-26 that speaks of comforting the Jewish people for their suffering. It is the first of seven haftarahs of consol-

The screenshot shows the website interface for the Sephardic Pizmonim Project. At the top, there is a header with the title 'Sephardic Pizmonim Project' and a navigation menu. The main content area is titled 'SEPHARDIC PIZMONIM PROJECT' and includes a table of contents with links to various sections like Preface, Weekly Maqam, Pizmonim, Prayers, Cantillations, Festivals, Raphael Tabbush, Moshe Ashear, Gabriel A. Shrem, and Archives. There is a central image of a harp and a table listing different Maqamat and their associated Pizmonim. The page also includes a visitor count and a footer with the Sephardic Heritage Foundation logo.

Maqam	Pizmonim	Count
Balaq	Mahour	299-1
Pinehas	Saba	480
Masot	Navah	171
Masei	Hijaz	II
Debarim	Hoseni	487
Va'ethanan	Hoseni	180
Eqeb	Sigah	31
	Rast	

tion leading up to Rosh Hashana.

For Shabbat Eikev, the prayers are conducted in Maqam Sigah. Being that this is the *maqam* used for reading the Torah, it is applied when we encounter a special reading—in this case, *Vehaya Eem Shamoah* (the second paragraph of Qeriat Shema). Also, it may or may not be a coincidence that Sigah, a word that means third in Persian, is used for the third parashah of Sefer Debarim.

For Shabbat Re'eh, there are those who conduct the prayers in Maqam Rast and there are others who conduct the prayers in Maqam Bayat. Maqam Rast would be used because as we begin the month of Elul, we will also begin with recitation of the Selihot season each morning before sunrise. Maqam Bayat would be used because Rosh Hodesh Elul falls in the upcoming week, and Maqam Bayat is associated with Rosh Hodesh. Being that this is the first Shabbat associated

with the Selihot season (month of Elul), it is traditional to apply the Bayat Selihot melody of Elecha Hashem for Semehim Besetam.

For Shabbat Shoftim, all traditional sources agree that the prayers should be conducted in Maqam Ajam. This *maqam* is used to express joy and happy occasions, and it is used here to mark the joyous event of electing a new king in Israel. The melody of the pizmon Ya'arich Yamim Al Mamlachto, which is based on the words in this parashah, is traditionally applied for Nishmat. Being that this is the second Shabbat associated with the Selihot season (Month of Elul), it is traditional to apply the Ajam Selihot melody of Elecha Hashem for Semehim Besetam.

For Shabbat Ki Tetze, the prayers are conducted in Maqam Saba. Saba is used for either covenants, a multitude of laws or the mention of an army (Hebrew: saba)

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within the parashah. In this case, we have three explanations to why Saba should be applied. One reason is because the army goes out to war. Another reason is because there are strict laws regarding *arayot* (forbidden relations) in the case of taking a woman captive in a war. The third reason is that there are a multitude of laws in this parashah. Being that this is the third Shabbat associated with the Selihot season, it is traditional to apply the Saba Selihot melody of Elecha Hashem for Semehim Besetam.

For Shabbat Ki Tavo, the prayers are conducted in Maqam Sigah. Being that this is the maqam used for reading the Torah, it is applied when we encounter a special reading in the parashah. Ki Tavo discusses the reading of a special portion of the Torah when entering the new land for the first time and bringing the first fruits to the centralized established temple. Being that this is the fourth Shabbat associated with the Selihot season, it is traditional to apply the Sigah Selihot melody of Mahei U'Masei for Semehim Besetam.

For the last Shabbat of the year, the prayers are conducted in Maqam Nawah or Nahwand. Nawah is traditionally applied for ending a Humash, but in this case, we are ending the year. A reason to apply Nahwand, the maqam associated with unpleasant things, such as controversy or rebuke, is because this is the time of year where self-introspection is required to fix and change your ways (rebuking yourself to change). This Shabbat, we read the seventh haftarah of consolation leading up to Rosh Hashana. Being that this is the Shabbat prior to Rosh Hashana, it is appropriate to apply the Rosh Hashana Nawah melody of Ahot Qetana for Semehim Besetam.

On Shabbat Shuva, the prayers are conducted in Maqam Mehayar Bayat. This Shabbat is named after the first word of the haftarah (Hosea 14:2-10) and literally means return. Being that this is the Shabbat prior to Yom Kippur, it is appropriate to apply the melody of Lecha Eli for Semehim Besetam. It is also appropriate to apply other Selihot tunes to pieces of prayers.

On the joyous festival of Simchat Torah (second day of Shemini Atzseret), Vezhot Haberacha is read from the Torah, and Maqam Ajam is applied.□

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Assistance for the Maqam of the Week series has been provided by Haham Mordechai Nadaf, Mr. Joseph Mosseri, and Mr. Isaac Cabasso, who quoted their teachers Hazzan Gabriel A. Shrem A"H and Hakham Moshe Ashear A"H.

The official list of which maqams can be used for which weeks is found on page 565 of the pizmonim book. You can learn about these topics and more by visiting www.pizmonim.com.