

Session 4E The Sephardic Community of Seattle  
Cantor Isaac Azose

Cantor Azose will speak on the subject of the Sephardic community of Seattle, focusing on what made them come to Seattle, what they found when they arrived, the community's first religious leaders, interaction between the two distinct Sephardic groups, and relations between Sephardim and Ashkenazim.

**Cantor Isaac Azose** was born in Seattle to parents born in Turkey. He learned while growing up, every word and nuance of the "Tefilah: from the Old Country Hazzanim." As cantor at Congregation Ezra Bessaroth, one of the city's two Sephardic synagogues, he determined to leave a legacy for his congregation and recorded a two-CD set, "The Liturgy of Ezra Bessaroth." He has also published two prayer books: *The Zehut Yosef Daily/Sabbath Prayer Book*, which is used in both Sephardic synagogues in Seattle, as well as other synagogues with Turkish and Rhodes traditions around the world; and *Zihron Rachel*, a machzor for the High Holidays, Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot. He has recently recorded a double CD of Ladino Romances and folksongs, called "Ladino Reflections."

### **The Evolution of the Seattle Sephardic Community**

#### **A talk by Isaac Azose at the AJL Seattle Convention, 7-5-2010**

I called Lisa Kransler of the Washington State Jewish Historical Society for permission and received permission to use its book "Family of Strangers - Building a Jewish Community in Washington State", as the primary source of material for my talk. It was written by Molly Cone, Howard Droker and Jacqueline Williams. I also used a University of Washington Masters Thesis written by Albert Adatto, dated 1939. I knew him well. He was a Colonel in the US Army, retired.

The first Sephardim to come to Seattle, who were the unknowing founders of Seattle's large Sephardic community, were two young men who arrived almost by chance in June 1902. They accompanied a Greek friend who was returning to Seattle after a visit to his family on the Island of Marmara in Turkey. This Greek had told anyone who cared to listen about this wonderful city called Seattle on the West Coast of the

United States and of the exciting opportunities for making a living. Among his listeners were Solomon Calvo and Jacob Policar whose families lived on Marmara. Solomon and Jacob were excited enough that they convinced their families to allow them to accompany their Greek friend back to Seattle. They arrived in Seattle wearing tsitsit (some call it Arba Canfot) under their shirts and carrying their siddurim, prayer books and their tefillin.

Calvo and Policar, whom I knew personally, (Policar died in 1961 and Calvo in 1964), were the first of the third wave of Jews to Washington state, those who arrived in Seattle from Turkey and from the Island of Rhodes. They were obviously unable to speak English and eager to find other Jews. They stood on a waterfront street near a secondhand store saying Yehudi, Yehudi (Jew, Jew). When a curious crowd gathered around them, 13-year-old Jacob Kaplan, who was working in the store, came out to tell them that he, too, was a Jew. He took them to a Rabbi Hirsch Genss, the rabbi at Bikur Cholim synagogue, who introduced them to members of the Orthodox shul.

Both young men were delighted to find other Jews in Seattle. However, Calvo and Policar were not like any Jews the Seattle Jews had known. Their language sounded strange. While the Jews who had previously settled in Seattle spoke German or Yiddish, the Sepharadim spoke Ladino, or more precisely, Judeo-Spanish. Now, you're going to hear me use the term Sepharadim throughout my talk. Notice that I say Sepharadim and not the more common Sephardim. This is one of my pet peeves. If the Jews who originated in Ashkenaz are called Ashkenazim, then the Jews who originated in Sepharad, should be called Sepharadim, not Sephardim. Spain is called Sefarad in Hebrew, not Sefard. Thanks for allowing me to get that off my chest. In an effort to prove themselves Jewish, Calvo and Policar read aloud from their prayer books. However, their pronunciation of the Hebrew words was unfamiliar. The puzzled members of Seattle's Ashkenazic community were not entirely convinced that these newcomers were indeed Jews.

One of the Ashkenazim set about to solve the mystery. He wrote to the Jewish community in New York to inquire about these new arrivals, and the reply set everyone's mind at ease. The two young men were Sepharadim, descendants of Jews who had been expelled from Spain in 1492. The Sepharadim coming to America at the beginning of the 20th century, like Calvo and Policar, came from the lands of the Ottoman Empire, where Jews had been severely affected by rising Turkish and other nationalism in the Balkans. They came to the United States seeking political and religious freedom as well as economic opportunities.

Satisfied that the two young men from Marmara were as Jewish as himself, Rabbi Genss found a place for Calvo and Policar to live, and work for them to do. Late in the fall of 1903, David Levy, another Sephardic Jew from Marmara, arrived. The first thing he did was go to the waterfront and take a deep breath of the salty Puget Sound air which was, he said, "just like Marmara."

The three Sephardic young men, uncomfortable because their lack of Yiddish cut them off from many of their Jewish neighbors, spent much of their spare time at a Greek coffeehouse, chatting with newly-made Greek acquaintances, eating Greek food, and drinking Turkish coffee. It was at this coffeehouse, in 1904, that Calvo, Policar, and Levy met Nissim Alhadeff, the first immigrant to Seattle from the Greek Island of Rhodes.

By 1906, there were 18 Sepharadim in Seattle - 17 bachelors and Dora Levy, the first young Sephardic woman to arrive. She was from Istanbul. The arrival of 18-year-old Dora Levy bewildered Rabbi Genss. Muttering in Yiddish to his wife, he wondered what they were going to do with a young Sephardic girl among all those Sephardic men. Dora listened to the rabbi speaking to his wife and, speaking in a Yiddish that was as clear as Rabbi Genss's, Dora interrupted. She wanted to get a job, she said. She had no intention of depending on other Sepharadim, and she planned to live in a hotel until she could find a permanent residence. The Rabbi and his wife listened to the flood of Yiddish in astonishment. Dora's knowledge of Yiddish was certainly unusual for a Sephardic Jew, particularly a young girl. The book does not indicate how or why Dora's family would let an 18 year old girl make a trans-Atlantic voyage and a 3,000 mile cross-country train journey on her own.

Be that as it may, this young group of Seattle immigrants became the nucleus of Seattle's Sepharadim. Among them now were Turkish Sepharadim from Istanbul, Marmara and Tekirdag, which was also known as Rodosto for a time, plus the Sephadic Jews from the Island of Rhodes.

Fortuna Calvo, the first Sephardic girl born in Seattle in 1908, remembered her father standing with her on the shore of Lake Washington when she was a small child and pointing eastward toward Mercer Island. "See across there?" he said. "That's Marmara!"

It was the Alhadeffs from Rhodes who soon constituted the largest family unit in the Sephardic community. Nissim Alhadeff worked for awhile for his Greek friends in their small fruit, vegetable, and fish stalls, then he himself created a delivery business, delivering fresh fish to restaurants from Everett to Renton. He opened the Palace Market in about 1907. One by one, he brought his seven brothers, a sister, and his mother

and father to Seattle, and brought Rose Israel from Rhodes to Seattle as his bride. Nissim provided work for everyone he helped bring to Seattle.

Within a few years after the first arrivals, about 40 Sephardic families had settled in Seattle. The early Sepharadim in Seattle were added to in 1909 when 70 young Sepharadim fleeing conscription into the Turkish army arrived, primarily from the town of Tekirdag.

The Ashkenazim in Seattle didn't know what to make of this fast-growing group of Jews who smoked water pipes, drank Turkish coffee, and were so different from them.

By 1913, 600 Sepharadim constituted Seattle's Judeo-Spanish colony, the largest number of Sepharadim in any US city outside of New York. Los Angeles would overtake Seattle as second largest in later years. The end of World War I brought hundreds more to Seattle until the change in US immigration rules in 1924 cut off all immigration from southern and eastern Europe. By the time the post World War I immigration laws of the United States went into effect, the Seattle Sephardic community had grown to over 3000.

Like Nessim Alhadeff, Seattle's Sepharadim quickly gravitated to the fish and produce trade, although there is little evidence that any of them had experience in these fields in Turkey or Rhodes. Solomon Calvo peddled fish from a cart for several years before opening Waterfront Fish and Oyster Company. Many of them worked in the Pike Place Public Market, opening produce stalls, fish markets, and restaurants. Many worked as bootblacks, shoe repairmen and barbers. Generally, this immigrant generation of Sepharadim labored long hours for little pay, and many families lived in poverty through the Great Depression.

One of the exceptional Sephardic entrepreneurs was Sam Israel, who arrived in Seattle from Rhodes in 1919 at age 20, never married, and accumulated a fortune by putting his earnings into buying buildings and land. Described as short, stout, excitable, and intolerant of anything bureaucratic, Sam Israel bought his first building in the 1930s with savings earned from making and repairing shoes. After World War II, with profits made on a boot-repair contract with the US Army, he started to buy real estate. During the next 50 years, this immigrant shoemaker from the Island of Rhodes accumulated more than 500 properties. They ranged over the entire state including Seattle and included commercial buildings, home sites, wheat fields, orchards, ranches, and timber stands.

After World War II, he moved into a house on ranch property he owned overlooking Soap Lake. It included a vinyl sofa, a plastic table, and a few kitchen chairs. Although Israel could afford to live in luxurious style, he saw little need to augment his furnishings. I would say he was more than a little eccentric. 20 years later he was still living in the house and still buying land, renting out the buildings he owned, and seldom selling anything. He made headlines at his death in 1994 at age 95, bequeathing the greater part of his hundred million-dollar estate to causes that have to do with ecology, Jewish life, and Jewish education.

Most of the immigrant generation of Sepharadim lacked the skills or resources to achieve more than a fair subsistence. It was the children of these Sephardic immigrants, sustained by the sacrifices of their parents, who would gain economic success in Washington.

During the early years, differences between Ashkenazim and Sepharadim went beyond both language and religious practices. While the content of the religion was the same for Ashkenazim and Sepharadim, their liturgies and sacred tunes, as well as the pronunciation of Hebrew, were not. In addition, their customs differed, as did their cuisine. Ashkenazim cooked in the style of Germany, Poland or Russia, and the Sepharadim in the style of Mediterranean countries. While such foods as gefilte fish, tzimmes or kreplach were “Jewish” to the Ashkenazim, such foods as borekas, bulemas and wevos haminados were “Jewish” to the Sepharadim. Ashkenazim prepared cholent, and Sepharadim prepared hamin, a vegetable stew with whole eggs roasted inside. Rather than meat, the Sephardic Sabbath lunch was dairy. I was told by my father and uncles that in Turkey, men went to the synagogue very early on Shabbat morning, around 7:00. The services took about two hours because there was no derasha by the rabbi. They were home by around 9:30. They would have their dairy meal at that time, and later in the afternoon, their major meal of the day, which was a meat meal. That all changed when they came to the U.S. and had their own synagogue. Services started at 8:30 and, depending on the length of the perasha and the rabbi’s sermon, they might not be home till noon. The meat meal was done away with and most Sephardic homes had dairy meals consisting of borekas, bulemas, salmon, yoghurt, various cheeses and salads.

In Seattle, where Washington Sepharadim were concentrated, many young Sephardic Jews grew up in an essentially Ashkenazic environment while remaining totally Sephardic at home and in their synagogues. Rabbi Marc Angel, rabbi emeritus of the Spanish-Portugese synagogue in New York City, who was born and raised in Seattle, once said of Sepharadim: Being a Jew, he is a minority among Americans, Being a Sepharadi, he is a minority among Jews.”

Cultural prejudices existed not only between Ashkenazim and Sepharadim, but also within the Sephardic community itself. Sepharadim from Turkey and those from Rhodes remained divided when they arrived in Seattle. A union between a Sephardic Jew from Rhodes and one from Turkey was considered intermarriage. The Sepharadim from Turkey and those from Rhodes represented two patterns of culture, differing in some degree in liturgical practices, language and customs. Until they met in Seattle, the Sepharadim from Rhodes had probably seldom had any contact with Sephardic Jews from Turkey. In Seattle, they continued to maintain their differences, each group feeling “more comfortable” with their own people. I, personally, have been witness to at least three attempts to merge the two synagogues, without success. I believe that day is coming within 20 years or less. If any of you would like to ask me about it later, I can expand on it.

Sepharadim from Rhodes, Tekirdag and Marmara, recognizing divisions in liturgy and language, started thinking about separate congregations. In a short time, each group decided they needed their own synagogue, and the Sepharadim split into three synagogues; Sephardic Bikur Holim (Tekirdag/Rodosto), Ahavath Ahim (Marmara) and Ezra Bessaroth (Rhodes).

### **Sephardic Bikur Holim**

In 1916, members of the Tekirdag/Rodosto group, which had been using three small rooms adjacent to the Ashkenazic Bikur Cholim on S. Washington St., negotiated the purchase of the old Bikur Cholim since the Ashkenazim were building a much bigger edifice on 17<sup>th</sup> and Yesler Way. Rabbi Shelomo Azose, who came to Seattle in 1911, (Family of Strangers lists it as 1910, but I looked up his Ellis Island record) conducted services, read the weekly Torah portion, chanted prayers and officiated at special events. When he died in 1919, his brother, Rabbi Isaac Azose, my paternal grandfather, took his place.

However, my grandfather apparently was not a strong leader, and in 1924, members who had known Rabbi Abraham Maimon, my maternal grandfather, in Tekirdag, Turkey, arranged to bring him to Seattle. He arrived in Seattle the day before Erev Yom Kippur. He had to leave his two oldest children behind, my mother Louise and her older sister Fannie, because of quota restrictions. They came three years later via Canada. Under his guidance, which lasted for a little over six years, until his death at age 56 in January, 1931, many Sepharadim, who had neglected going to services, returned to the synagogue. In 1929, Sephardic Bikur Holim moved into a new building at 20th Ave. and E. Fir St.

## **Ahavath Ahim**

Marmara Jews, including the first Sephardic pioneers Jacob Policar and Solomon Calvo, began meeting informally for prayers in 1906 and formed congregation Ahavath Ahim (Brotherly Love) in 1909. In 1922, the Seattle group built a synagogue on 17th Ave and East Fir Street. But dissatisfaction, characteristic of the very individualistic Sephardim, who suffered from disorganization and a lack of communal direction, soon developed. In the early 1940's, most of the members left and joined Bikur Holim, since they would be merging with other Turkish Jews, while a few joined the Ezra Bessaroth.

## **Ezra Bessaroth**

In 1909, Sephardim from Rhodes, formed the Koupa Ozer Dalim Anshe Rhodes (Fund for the aid of Poor People in Rhodes) and later Koupa Ezra Bessaroth of Rhodes. Five years later, on June 19, 1914, the congregation incorporated. An increase in membership prompted the congregation to make plans to erect a large sanctuary. The new Ezra Bessaroth, the first new Sephardic synagogue to be constructed in Seattle, dedicated its building on 15th and East Fir street on June 9, 1918.

Despite the fact that Jews never constituted a majority, the Yesler Way-Cherry Street neighborhood had a distinctively Jewish flavor. During that decade after World War I, a visitor to Yesler Way would have encountered the impressive Bikur Cholim sanctuary looming large at 17th Ave. Three more synagogues lay to the north within a block or two of Yesler Way: Herzl, Ezra Bessaroth, and Sephardic Bikur Holim. By 1930, Machazikay Hadath's little sanctuary appeared at the corner of 26th Ave and East Fir Street.

In the early years, there were three small Sephardic-owned grocery stores serving the community. Dozens of other businesses, Jewish and Gentile, could be found scattered along or near Yesler Way. The people who frequented the stores lived nearby. Yiddish, Ladino, broken English, and American slang, mingled as people conversed. Young men met at a Sephardic restaurant and coffeehouse, sipped Turkish coffee, and played backgammon.

The religious life of the Yesler Way-Cherry Street area was outwardly Orthodox, at least until Herzl Congregation switched affiliation to the Conservative movement in 1932. However, the necessities of making a living often impinged on Sabbath observance. Closing their doors to business every Saturday was difficult for family heads, barely making a living.

The social life of the adult community, centered mainly around homes and synagogues. Most families were too poor to eat in restaurants or take vacations. Men worked long hours to earn money. Women, lacking modern conveniences such as washing machines and refrigerators, had little leisure time. For many, the extended family served as the focus of social life. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins gathered together, not only for religious celebrations, but also for entertainment and mutual support. The Sepharadim held what were called 'nochadas', social nights with dancing, eating and drinking. I personally remember being taken by my parents to a friends' home on many a Saturday night, and watching as the adults sang and danced to tunes being played on the phonograph with 78rpm Turkish records.

First-generation Ashkenazim and Sepharadim rarely mixed socially. Differences in language and custom were barriers that only the Americanization of the next generation would lower. The Ashkenazim looked down on the Sepharadim as any group looks down on the next wave.

In the early years, each of Seattle's Sephardic congregation's had its own school where older men taught a smattering of Hebrew so children could participate in the service. "I used to go to the Ezra Bessaroth Talmud Torah," one member recalled. "They taught us how to read Hebrew fluently, but we didn't understand what we were reading." Albert Adatto, in his 1939 Thesis wrote "When any student created an unnecessary disturbance, he would get slapped on the back of his hands with a ruler. On a rare occasion, the teacher would grab the 'problem child,' taking his shoes off and beat the bottom of his feet with a ruler. They called this punishment, 'falaka', a Turkish word.

Rabbi Abraham Maimon had stimulated a renewed interest in studying Hebrew at the Sephardic Bikur Holim. Three sons of Rabbi Maimon, Sam Bension, Jack and Isaac, taught the classes in the rooms adjacent to the synagogue, but it was difficult for the brothers to keep discipline.

On the passing of my maternal grandfather, Rabbi Abraham Maimon in January, 1931, my paternal grandfather, Rabbi Isaac Azose, after whom I am named, who had served as the spiritual leader of the Bikur Holim until 1924 after his brother, Rabbi Shelomo passed on, served once again until his passing in 1935. The Bikur Holim was now left rudderless, spiritually speaking. The youngest son of Rabbi Maimon, Solomon, had graduated from Garfield High School here in Seattle and was sent to Yeshiva University in New York. While there, he was deeply involved in both secular and Talmudic studies. In his last year or two at YU, he tells me that he had the famous Rabbi Yosheh Bear Soloveitchik as his rebbi. Since all the Talmud classes were in Yiddish, he was forced to learn it so that he could participate in the shiurim. Once, when

questioned by his rebbe on a point of Gemara, the rebbe told him that he spoke like a Turk. Rabbi Maimon answered him in his accented Yiddish, 'Maybe that's because I am'. He received his Semicha, ordination as a rabbi, the first Sephardi in the United States to be so ordained. He returned to Seattle in 1944 and was immediately hired by the synagogue as its religious leader, and served the congregation with distinction for forty years.

In 1931, realizing the urgent need of a modern religious education, representatives from Bikur Holim and Ezra Bessaroth tried to consolidate their Talmud Torahs. The school, called the Sephardic Talmud Torah, had its own organization independent of any congregation. To improve the curriculum, the members brought in Albert Levy from New York as educational director. Levy was an experienced Hebrew teacher and editor of La Vara, a Ladino newspaper published in New York. He greatly improved Hebrew teaching in the Sephardic community by offering a curriculum of Hebrew language, history, Bible study, and Sephardic liturgy. With the rise in unemployment during the Great Depression, financial support for the school lagged. Finally, disagreements between Albert Levy and Ezra Bessaroth caused Mr. Levy to return to New York. Once again, the Sephardim studied Hebrew in two synagogue schools plus a small private school. When Levy returned to Seattle in 1938, he accepted a position at the Sephardic Bikur Holim. There, he offered free night classes and taught Ladino or Judeo-Spanish along with Hebrew. No one really was completely satisfied with the level of education, although I, as a student of Mr. Levy's, absorbed everything he had to teach, and I enjoyed it immensely. I thought the world of him, and he considered me one of his prize pupils. He was so erudite that many people, including myself, called him Professor Levy.

The Seattle Sephardic Brotherhood was created from various fraternities. They initially intended to unite all three Sephardic congregations, but failed to do so. However, the Brotherhood continued the charitable work continued by the societies that they replaced and made it possible for the Sephardim to agree on one cemetery for the community. In 1917, 110 burial plots were purchased from Bikur Cholim. In 1929, the smallest of the three Sephardic congregations, Ahavat Ahim, purchased a few cemetery plots from Bikur Cholim. These are in what is currently referred to as "The Old Cemetery". In 1933, Ezra Bessaroth, along with Ashkenazic Congregation Machazikay Hadath, purchased a huge plot of land approximately 50 blocks north of the "Old Cemetery". It is known as "The New Cemetery". In the book, "Family of Strangers", it indicates that Machazikay Hadath retained ¼ of the total cemetery land at the new cemetery. As Hazzan Emeritus of Ezra Bessaroth, I have been to the cemetery many, many times over the years, and I would say that sounds about right. A couple of years later, in 1935, the Seattle Sephardic Brotherhood took over the jurisdiction of their portion of the cemetery.

Besides managing the cemetery, which is what they are primarily known for, the Brotherhood has also set up a scholarship fund, raised funds for schools in Israel, provided social functions for its members such as a fishing tourney and a golf tournament, as well as providing charity to some of its members with a high degree of secrecy so that the recipients would not be embarrassed.

### **The Breakup of the Old Jewish Neighborhood**

Seattle's Jewish Community, like all of American society, was profoundly changed by World War II. The war brought the Great Depression to an abrupt end. The Jewish neighborhood in the old Central Area felt the pressure of an overflowing African-American community. De facto racial segregation confined them to the Central Area. The Jewish neighborhood thus also became the black neighborhood. Following the war, the upwardly mobile children of Sephardic Jewish immigrants, who were Americanized in public schools and on city streets, moved from the Central Area to more desirable neighborhoods in Mount Baker and Seward Park primarily. In 1956, the Ezra Bessaroth purchased a huge lot in the Seward Park neighborhood, with the intention of building an All-Purpose Social Hall to take care of a forum for prayers, as well as a venue for their weddings, wedding receptions, Bar Mitzvahs and other social affairs. They fully intended to build a sanctuary in a second stage process, which actually occurred in November, 1970. The Social Hall was dedicated in 1958. In 1962, they hired Rabbi William Greenberg, an Ashkenazi rabbi, who became a beloved figure at Ezra Bessaroth. In 1965, I was asked to try out on the High Holidays for the position of hazzan at the Ezra Bessaroth, as Reverend David Behar, was getting ready to retire. He had been the hazzan at Ezra Bessaroth since the early 1920's. I was actually hired the first week of March, 1966.

In the early 1960's, the growing assertiveness of the African-American population in the Central Area, along with incidents of vandalism against Jewish institutions and businesses, made the neighborhood increasingly uncomfortable for Jews. Sephardic Bikur Holim could see the handwriting on the wall and in 1962, purchased the two lots on which the synagogue currently stands. The synagogue building was completed in 1965. Bikur Cholim was the last Orthodox synagogue to move from the Central Area. Many of their members had moved to the Seward Park area. Finally, in 1970, the building on Yesler Way was sold and its last services held in October. It is now the Langston Huges Center. Groundbreaking for the new Bikur Cholim took place in February, 1971. In November of that year, Bikur Cholim merged with the last Orthodox shul in the Central Area, Machazikay Hadath, a very small building, headed by a very pious and beloved leader, Rabbi Baruch Shapiro. In the merger, the eighty year old Bikur Cholim changed its name to Bikur Cholim-Machazikay Hadath.

I mentioned that Rabbi Solomon Maimon retired from Sephardic Bikur Holim in 1984. That same year, they hired Rabbi Simon Benzaquen, who is still with them.

Rabbi William Greenberg was rabbi at Ezra Bessasroth from 1962 thru 1989. Upon his retirement in 1989, Rabbi Yamin Levy was hired and stayed for ten years. Rabbi Salomon Cohen-Scali was hired in September 2000 and stayed till the end of 2009. Ezra Bessaroth has a rabbi search currently under way.

Apart from the very early years of the Sephardic presence in Seattle, relations between Ashkenazim and Sepharadim have been excellent. There hasn't been a great deal of "intermarriage" between the two groups, but today, we feel comfortable in each others' presence. On Simhat Torah, evening and morning, because they are no more than 100 feet from each other, the Sephardic Bikur Holim and Bikur Cholim-Mahazikay Hadath, go to each others' synagogues with a Sefer Torah singing and dancing. Ashkenazim feel comfortable with borekas, panezikos, biskochos and panderikas, and Sepharadim feel comfortable with gefilte fish, hrein, lox and herring.

Each of the major Orthodox educational institutions, the Northwest Yeshiva High School, the Seattle Hebrew Academy, the Jewish Metropolitan Day School, the Torah Day School and the Chabad School, has a major fund-raising dinner every year at which the Sepharadim are well represented. As regards relations between the Turks, i.e. the people at Sephardic Bikur Holim and the people from Rhodes, relations could not be better. There has been a lot of "intermarriage" between the two groups. The children go to the same schools together and they feel very comfortable as visitors at each others' synagogues. As a matter of fact, I have taught Sephardic Tefilah to 4<sup>th</sup> grade Sephardic students, boys and girls, at the Seattle Hebrew Academy for the past several years.

I'm going to close with a little story about one of my classes a few years ago. When I start off the school year, I tell my students, "We are Sepharadim. When we read Hebrew, I want you to know that the accent on every word is on the last syllable, UNLESS, there is a TA'AM, a musical note, (Ashkenazim would call it 'trope') which determines the accent, or a GAYA, a little vertical line". I believe Ashkenazim call it a METEG. "In other words, we don't say **TO**rah, we say' and the children exclaim "**ToRAH**". "We don't say **GeMO**rah, we say" and they respond '**GemaRAH**'. We don't say **TAL**mud, we say", and in unison, they exclaim "**TalMUD**. One little wise guy in the back raises his hand and asks "Hazzan" and I say "Yes,

Calev”. And he answers back “We don’t say Maca**RO**ni, we say Macaro**NI**”. It took a little while for the class to quiet down after that.

Thank you all for your kind attention.