

We titled this album *Shalhevet*—which means flame or blaze in Hebrew—because we hope that our music's strong emphasis on the commonality between Middle Eastern cultures and religions serves as a flaming bonfire for the sometimes darker world we find ourselves in today.

Thank you to our families and fans who have supported us all of these years.
To Ruby Namdar for helping with piyyut translation and suggesting the Persian translations for Isaiah; to Yossi Ohana, Roni Ish-Ran, and Maimon Cohen for introducing us to some of these piyyutim; to Gaida, Zafer Tawil, Ari Ariel and Yasmine for help with the Arabic; to Jessica Kenney for Persian music advice; to Farid Dardashti for help with the Persian, and for teaching Galeet El Nora Alila.



divahn

שלהבת SHALHEVET

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1

ya'alah ya'alah

LYRICS Rabbi Yisrael Najara, 16th century Tzfat

MELODY From the Arabic song *Ya Tira Tiri*

The beautiful Hebrew poem *Ya'alah Ya'alah* draws from the language and themes of the Song of Songs. Its author, the prolific bohemian 16th century Rabbi Yisrael Najara, is believed to have begun the practice of composing Hebrew lyrics to the popular Arabic, Turkish, and Greek secular songs of the day. Twentieth century Syrian Jews set the poem to the popular melody of *Ya Tira Tiri*, a tortured Syrian love song in Arabic; this would have pleased Najara. Our arrangement includes one verse in the original Arabic:

*Oh bird, fly down to me
Bring me a token of love
A watch or a diamond ring
Enough of my suffering, by God
You've made me crazy*

*Join me in the garden, lovely spirit.
The pomegranate is budding.
My vine is blossoming too.*

יעלה יעלה בואי לגני הרמון פרחי גפני



2

oseh shalom

TEXTS AND MELODY adapted by Galeet Dardashti

The Hebrew lyrics of this piece combine meditations on peace found in several beautiful Jewish prayers, while the Persian lyrics are from the Book of Isaiah. The melody draws from a haunting Kurdish folk song, *Yavaran*.

*May the one who creates peace on
high bring peace to us, to all Israel,
and to all those who dwell on earth.
Grant peace to the world with
goodness and blessing.
May wars and bloodshed be
abolished from the world.*

עושה שלום במרומיו
הוא יעשה שלום עלינו
ועל כל ישראל ועל יושבי תבל
שים שלום בעולם
טובה וברכה
שתבטל מלחמות ושפיכות דמים מן העולם

Isaiah 2:4 in Persian

مردم از شمشیرهای خود گواهن... قومی به روی قوم دیگر شمشیر نمی‌کشد و برای جنگ و خونریزی آماده نمی‌شود.

*They shall beat their swords into plowshares...nation shall not lift up sword
against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*

3

am ne'emanay

LYRICS Rabbi David Buzaglo, 20th century Morocco and Israel

MELODY From *Ya um Alabaya*, "The girl who wore an abaya",
made famous by Iraqi singer Badria Anwer

Written by the most renowned Moroccan *paytan* of his generation, this is one of the most popular Chanukah songs among North African Jews. A *paytan* is a composer and/or performer of *piyyutim*, sacred songs.

*My faithful nation, seed of the believers
Praise God, for His benevolence
triumphed.*

*In the days of Matityah, ally of God,
The Almighty remembered his flock.
His children, who sprang from his loins
Went in his ways, donned his
priestly garb.*

עם נאמני זרע אמוני
הודו לה' כי גבר חסדו

בימי מתתיה זקן ידיד יה
רב עליליה פקד צאן ידו
בניו חניכיו יוצאי ירכיו
הלכו בדרכיו לבשו את מדו

4

ayni tzofiah

LYRICS Moshe Eliyahu, 20th century Syria and Israel

The melody for the piyyut comes from the popular Arabic song of love and longing *Il-Arasiya*. Fittingly, the renowned Syrian musician Moshe Eliyahu composed this Hebrew poem to it as a love song of yearning for Jerusalem. It is usually sung at celebrations.

*My eye longs for You,
Oh Merciful One.
With a mellifluous voice,
I will sing to you.
Restore Your holy city,
without delay,
Oh God of the heights*

*To the Maker of the Heavens
—my eye longs for you
To the Creator of the Earth
—my eye longs for you*

עיני צופיה לך חונן. בקול נעים שיר ארנן
עיר קדשך מהר כונן. יה צורי שוכן עלייה

לענושה שמיים – עיני צופיה
לרוקע הארץ – עיני צופיה

5

lecha dodi

LYRICS Shlomo HaLevi Alkabetz, 16th century Tzfat

MELODY Based on a Moroccan folk song

Sung at the climax of Kabbalat Shabbat services on Friday night, this well-known mystical poem depicts Shabbat as both bride and queen.

*Come, my beloved, to welcome the bride;
Let us greet Shabbat as she arrives*

לכה דודי לקראת כלה
פני שבת נקבלה

*Rouse yourself, rouse yourself
For your lamp is lit; let the flame rise up and glow
Awake awake, utter songs of praise,
For God's glory is revealed in your gaze*

6

khazan (autumn)

Instrumental piece by Parviz (Ostad) Meshkatian, 20th century Iran

Meshkatian was an Iranian santur virtuoso, composer, and researcher of Persian classical music. He was on the faculty at Tehran University and was a founding member of the Chavosh Artistic and Cultural Foundation. His collaboration with Mohammed Reza Shajarian, a master singer of Persian classical music, produced some of the most cherished recordings in the canon of Persian classical music.

7

hamavdil

LYRICS Attributed to Isaac Judah ibn Ghiyyat, 11th century Spain

MELODY Traditional Sephardic

This *piyyut*, only excerpted in our rendition, is recited in a ritual that marks the end of Shabbat, called *havdalah*. The melody in our version was sung by the Dardashti family throughout Galeet's childhood.

*May the one who separates the holy and
the everyday, forgive any sins and slights
May our families and our fortunes be as
many as the grains of sand, or the stars in
the sky at night*

המבדיל בין קדש לחול
חטאתינו הוא ימחול
זרענו וכספנו ירבה כחול
וכוכבים בלילה

8

banu choshech

LYRICS Sara Levi-Tanai

MELODY Emanuel Amiran, 20th century Israel

Banu Choshech is a familiar children's Chanukah song sung throughout the world. Though its lyrics are simple, they strongly resonated with us as we searched for a song of hope and strength following the 2016 US presidential election. Our unique version adds quarter tones, rooted in Divahn's Middle Eastern musical vocabulary. Galeet added Biblical texts to reflect the urgency of the moment, as the US closed its borders to immigrants from many Middle Eastern, African, and Latin American countries:

ואהבת לרעך כמוך

Love your neighbor as yourself. –Leviticus 19:18

וגר לא תונה ולא תלחצנו כי גרים הייתם בארץ מצרים

*You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in
the land of Egypt.* –Exodus 22:20

Watch our music video for Banu Choshech: <https://bit.ly/30toK8L>

*We've come to chase away the darkness
We bear light and fire
Each glimmer is small
But together, our blaze is fierce
Flee, darkness, go away, night
Flee, before the light*

באנו חושך לגרש
בידינו אור ואש
כל אחד הוא אור קטן
וכלנו אור איתן
סורה חושך הלאה שחור
סורה מפני האור

9

el nora alilah

LYRICS Moshe Ibn Ezra, 11th century Spain

MELODY Persian rendition

Traditionally chanted during the *Neilah* service—the dramatic and climactic service of Yom Kippur—this *piyyut* expresses the urgency of the moment, as worshippers utter their final prayers. The *piyyut* is particularly powerful for our band because it comes from Galeet’s own family’s Persian tradition. Galeet grew up hearing her father, Hazzan Farid Dardashti, chanting it.

*God of awe, God of might,
God of awe, God of might,
Grant us pardon in this hour, as
Your gates are closed this night.*

*Our ancestors—strong in faith
—walked in Your light.
As of old, renew our days, as
Your gates are closed this night.*

אל מרא עלילה אל מרא עלילה
המציא לנו מחילה בשעת הנעילה

MUSICAL PERFORMANCES BY DIVAHN

Galeet Dardashti
lead vocals, mountain dulcimer

Megan Gould
violin, viola, kemanche,
background vocals

Eleanor Norton
cello, background vocals

Elizabeth Pupo-Walker
cajon, congas, percussion,
background vocals

Sejal Kukadia
tabla, background vocals

SPECIAL GUESTS

Ya’alah Ya’alah
Shanir Blumenkranz, oud and bass
Philip Mayer, riqq

Ayni Tzofiah
Philip Mayer, percussion
Zafer Tawil, oud

Am Ne’emanay
Philip Mayer, percussion

Banu Choshech
Eli Walker, bass

Oseh Shalom
Zafer Tawil, frame drum

Album Liner Notes
Galeet Dardashti

Arrangements of Ya’alah Ya’alah, Oseh Shalom, Am Ne’emanay, Lecha Dodi, Banu Choshech, and Khazan
Galeet Dardashti, Megan Gould, Eleanor Norton, Elizabeth Pupo-Walker, and Sejal Kukadia

Arrangements of El Nora Alilah, Hamavdil, and Ayni Tzofiah
Galeet Dardashti, Lauren Checchio, Michal Raizen, and Emily Pinkerton

String Arrangements for Banu Choshech, Oseh Shalom & Lecha Dodi
Megan Gould

String arrangement for Am Ne’emanay
Megan Gould and Eleanor Norton

String arrangement for Ya’alah Ya’alah
Galeet Dardashti and Megan Gould

Mixing, Mastering and Editing
Yaron Fuchs

Recording Engineers
Eli Walker, Tony Maimone,
and Duff Harris

Overdub Engineers
Eli Walker and Arun Pandian

Mixing and Editing of Banu Choshech
Eli Walker

Children’s Chorus on Banu Choshech
Adin, Yaniv, Shai, Amira, and Lyla

Photography
Tré

Album artwork and graphic design
Kate Levy