

# LADINO (Israeli-Sephardic)

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Better Instructions  
(Ralph Pratt)

**Source:** Choreographed by Moshiko Halevy as "Hitahavti Bezemer" (I fell in love with a song), the dance was renamed after several later adaptations. The music is from the Sephardic Jewish tradition, and the singing is in Ladino, a Sephardic dialect based on Spanish. The Sephardic Jews fled the Spanish Inquisition to settle in other Mediterranean countries.

**Formation:** The dance is done with couples spread throughout the room, men all facing the same side of the room. The instructions below assume this formation. The dance can also be done in a Circle, men facing out.

Waltz Rhythm. Start facing partner with arms down. Same footwork for both. Partners remain close to each other, but only touch on measures 3 & 4, 17 & 18.

Measures:

Steps:

| PART I, INTRODUCTION |   |
|----------------------|---|
| 1                    | Step R across L with slight knee bend, back on L in place, step R slightly to right.  |
| 2                    | Both partners pass their partner on the left in three steps (LRL), turning counterclockwise to end face to face, positions reversed from the start.   |
| 3-4                  | Join right hands, move toward each other (RLR) and back (LRL).  |
| 5-6                  | Drop joined hands, and starting R, both waltz-walk a full circle counterclockwise around each other to end in the same position but facing to the right, with left shoulders close to and opposite. Toward end of measure 6, extend arms level with shoulders, left arms in front of partner. (Each looks at the other through measure 14). |
| PART I, TRAVELING    |   |
| 7                    | With arms extended, man travels forward and woman back, RLR. (If using the circular formation, travel is in LOD)  |
| 8                    | Still traveling and with arms extended, each makes ½ turn counterclockwise (toward partner), LRL. End with right shoulders close together and opposite each other, right arms now in front of partner.  |
| 9-10                 | With arms still extended, continue in same direction (man now backing), RLR, LRL.   |
| 11-14                | Repeat measures 7-10 in opposite direction, lowering arms and facing partner toward end of measure 14. Positions are now opposite the starting positions of the dance.  |

| PART II INTRODUCTION  |   |
|---|---|
| 15-18   | Repeat measures 1-4 from the new positions, starting with R.  |
| 19-20   | Repeat measures 5 & 6, RLR-LRL, both circling counterclockwise around each other to end with left shoulders close to and opposite each other,. As measure 20 ends, raise left arms extended at shoulder height in front of partner (as in Part I), but place right hands in front of chest, palm down, with elbow out in line with left arm. (Each looks at the other, through measure 28.) |
| PART II CIRCLING  |   |
| 21  | Circle counterclockwise around each other as a couple (RLR), keeping same distance apart, both going forward. The circling should be done without advancing in location; the only travel is around the partner.   |
| 22  | Turn individually counterclockwise (toward partner) (LRL), switching arm & head positions, so that right arm is now in front of partner at shoulder height.   |
| 23-24   | Back counterclockwise around each other (RLR-LRL).  |
| 25-28   | Repeat measures 21-24 in opposite directions and circling clockwise. In measure 25 both go forward clockwise around each other; in measure 26 both turn individually toward partner; in measures 27 & 28 both back clockwise around partner. Toward end of measure 28, lower arms and face each other. Partners are now in the dance's starting position.                                   |
| 29-30   | Yemeni right (RLR), Yemeni left, (LRL).   |
| <i>Repeat parts I and II two more times, then do the ending steps, below:</i> |   |
| ENDING  |   |
| 31-33   | Starting on R, circle clockwise individually away from and back toward partner with three two-steps. On third two-step start turning back-to-back.  |
| 34  | Step left so that partners are back-to-back as music slows. While stepping left, join hands so that man's right and woman's left hands are joined and raised about 45 degrees and the other joined hands are lowered to a similar angle.  |