

Palestinian Popular Songs

Sounds of Folksongs

All occasions in the Palestinian life have their own songs.

Weddings are the most popular times when people sing and dance on the tunes of the popular songs. Usually there are certain singers (*Zajjaleen*) who lead the singing and the audience repeats after them. However, one can find people singing popular songs while working in the land or the factory.

As any other form of poetry, popular songs treat different aspects: love, patriotism, wisdom, and others. In addition, there are different forms of songs which differ in the tune and the way of singing as will be seen below. Most of the songs introduced in this section are men's songs in addition to the most popular women's song (*Zaghareet*). However, this does not mean that women do not contribute to the Palestinian folklore. Mr. Sa'ood Al-Asadi said, "The Palestinian folklore is a common excellence of women and men."

There are several popular bands and singers (*Zajjaleen*) who are the main source of energy for the revival of our popular songs. To list some: [El-Funoun](#) (Palestinian Popular Dance Troupe) in Ramallah, Ghassan Kanafani's Band for Dabka in Bethlehem University, Jafra Band in Ramallah, and JuThoor (Roots) Band in Bir Zeit University. There are also Islamic Art bands who introduced the Islamic concepts to the popular songs, such as: Yarmouk Band (Jordan), AS-Sakhra Band (USA), and Ar-rawaby Band (Jordan). As far as popular singers, one can find at least one in every village or town in Palestine. To list

some: Rajeh As-salfeety (died in 1990), Hammoudeh Al-farkhaawy (Abu Bashir), Ibrahim Al-'arrany (Abu Bassam), Awni Barghouthi, Amjad Arar, Mousa Hafeth, Mithqal Al-jayyousy, and Muhareb Theeb (*Rababah* singer).

Few points must be added before going through the examples and forms of songs:

1. Eventhough these are men's songs, women may also use the same forms where they may change the tune or the contents of the songs.
2. The samples are written in the Palestinian dialect where I used (.gif) files for the Arabic script. I also added transliteration and translation of most of the samples.

Forms of Songs:

'Ataba	Dal'ona	Zareef eT-Tool
Sahja/Saamir	Zajal	Zaghareet

References:

1. Abu Hadba, A.: Interview with Sa'ood Al-Asadi, *Society & Heritage*, 24: 192, al-Bireh, Palestine (July 1994).
2. Barghouthi, A.: *Arabic Popular Songs in Palestine and Jordan*, Bir Zeit University, Bir Zeit, Palestine (1979).
3. Barghouthi, A.: *Chronicle of Palestinian 'Ataba*, Bir Zeit University, Bir Zeit, Palestine (1986).
4. Barghouthi, A.: *Chronicle of Palestinian Dal'ona*, Bir Zeit University, Bir Zeit, Palestine (1990).

'Ataba

'Ataba is the most popular song in Palestine. You can hear farmers, workers, and shepherds singing 'ataba while they are doing their jobs.

However, weddings are the main environment for the songs.

As with the other forms of songs, 'ataba deals with all the subjects of poetry. Usually, the singer starts with the long sound of (*Ooaaaff*) then the verses of 'ataba follow. 'Ataba is composed of four verses of poetry. The first three end with the same word in sound but different meanings. The fourth verse ends with a word that usually ends with a sound like (*aab, awa...*)

Samples:

[Sample #1](#), [Sample #2](#), [Sample #3](#), [Sample #4](#), [Sample #5](#)

Dal'ona

Second to 'ataba, dal'ona is the most popular song. It is easier to compose a dal'ona song than 'ataba because it does not require the similar sound of the ends of the first three verses. However, like 'ataba, dal'ona has four verses of poetry where the first three have similar endings and the fourth usually ends with a sound like (*oana*).

Dal'ona is the song of the Palestinian popular dance, *dabka*, where the dancers sing it along with the sound of *shubbabah* (flute), *yarghool*, or *mijwiz*.

Samples:

[Sample #1](#), [Sample #2](#)

Zareef eT-Tool

Zareef eT-Tool has a fair popularity and it is also used in *dabka*. Of course, the tune is differet from dal'ona.

Sample

Sahja/Saamir

This is a popular song in weddings where people stand in two lines facing each other and sing. One line of people sings a verse and the other line repeats the same verse. Sometimes, the second line starts a new verse and changes the order of the flow of the song.

Sample

Zajal

Zajal is usually performed by a singer who makes up the song on the spot. Those singers (one is *zajjal*) are professionals in singing and people invite them to sing in weddings and most of them get paid for singing. The audience will follow the *zajjal* with whatever songs he sings.

Sample

Zaghareet

Zaghareet (one is *zaghrout*) are the most popular women songs which can be compared to the men's 'ataba. The way a woman sings this form is that she starts with a loud (*heey eeeh*) or (*Aweeha*) sound, then the words follow. When the woman says the last word the rest of the women join with a loud (*lolololololeeeeey*) sound. There are other forms of women songs, but the lack of resources caused me to only mention this type.

Samples:

Sample #1, Sample #2