

Hello my name is Becky Behar and I am the photographer of the images you see in front of you today. I wanted to give you a little bit more information about the image of the book you see in front of you which has writings in Ladino and Hebrew.

Ladino, also known as Judeo-Spanish, is the language of Sephardic Jews. It is actually a version of the 15<sup>th</sup> century Castilian spoken in Spain when the Jews were forced to leave in 1492. The exiled Jews, took their language with them. Since they were cut off, their language became ossified and it did not continue developing in the vernacular way that Spanish developed. And while these Jews made their homes in other countries, they introduced words from their adopted countries into their Ladino. Today, you can find bits and pieces of Portuguese, French, Italian, Greek, Arabic, Turkish and Hebrew in Ladino.

Although Ladino is classified as highly endangered today, before WWII, it was the primary language spoken by Jews across the Mediterranean. Ladino was an oral tradition yet it was written down and there still exists newspapers and books in Ladino. Proverbs, or *refranes* as it is said in Ladino, is another survival from the Inquisition. They can be uniquely Jewish, or they can be Spanish 15<sup>th</sup> century sayings that primarily survived through the Ladino language.

My photography portfolio is based on one of these proverbs. *Tu Que Bivas* is actually a blessing.

***Tu que bivas, kreskas, engrandeskas como un pishiko en aguas freskas.***

May you live, grow and thrive like a little fish in fresh water.

Edith Razon a family friend from Turkey, and a native Ladino speaker shares the following proverbs with us below. Listen carefully and if you are a Spanish speaker, you might understand what she is saying before she recites the translation in English.

I hope that these proverbs also give you a glimpse into the Sephardic way of thinking.

***Quien quere á la rosa, non mire al espino.***

If you love a rose, you must ignore the thorns.

**Quien tiene colcha y no se cobija, no es de agedear.**

A person who has a quilt but won't use it deserves no pity.

**Mas vale un asno que me lleva, que un caballo que me echa.**

Better a donkey that carries me than a horse that throws me.

**Mas vale caer en un rio furiente, que en la boca de la jente.**

It is better to fall in a raging river than into gossiping mouths.

**Boca dulce abre puertas de fiero.**

A sweet mouth opens iron doors.

**El gamello ve solo la corcova de otros, y no la suya propia.**

The camel can see others' humped backs, and not his own.

**No hables mal del dia fina que no anochese.**

Don't speak ill of the day until the sun has set.

**Si negra la culpa, mas negra la disculpa.**

The darker the guilt, the darker the excuse.

**El comer y el arrascar, es todo al empezar.**

Eating is like scratching yourself: once you start, you can't stop.

**Camina con buenos, te haceras uno de ellos.**

Walk with good people and you will become one of them.