

A Comparative Study of the Penitential Poem *Adon Haselihot*, Sung in the Babylonian- Jewish Tradition in Four Communities *

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This article presents a comparative study and analysis of a single melody, *Adon Haselihot*,¹ as it is remembered and performed in four Jewish communities separated by time and distance. I have chosen to focus on the musical tradition of the liturgical repertoire of Jews of Baghdadi descent who maintain the 'Babylonian custom' (*minhagh bavli*), and have selected these four versions for comparative study and analysis with the intention of observing stability and variation within that tradition and one of its offshoots.

Adon Haselihot (Master of Forgiveness) is probably one of the more renowned penitential poems among the various *Sepharadi* Jewish communities.² It is recited during the ten days of penitence preceding the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), and four times during the Day itself. This simple and unassuming *piyyut* has accompanied the Jewish *Sepharadi* congregations for centuries, and has achieved the status of a statutory prayer in the *Sepharadi siddur* (prayer book).

While searching for recordings of *Adon Haselihot*, I came across a number of versions sung by different *Sepharadi* communities, such as the Syrian (Aleppo), Persian, Bukharan, Moroccan, *Yerushalmi* (a style developed in Jerusalem), Singaporean, Calcuttan and Baghdadi.³ Before

* I would like to thank Professor Margaret Kartomi of the School of Music-Conservatorium at Monash University for supervising my Honours Thesis on this topic, for her initial reading of the draft of this essay and for providing access to her recording of the Singapore version of *Adon Haselihot*. A number of other people have been very helpful to me: I thank Professor Amnon Shiloah (Jerusalem) for advice and for permission to reproduce his transcription of *Adon Haselihot*; Rabbi Sassoon Ezra of the Kahal Yosef Synagogue, Los Angeles; Dalia and Yossi Eli; Sara Manasseh; Bronia Kornhauser and Yuval Shaked. I am grateful to Kay Dreyfus for her guidance and for critical readings of my drafts.

¹ A decision has been made to use 't' rather than 'th' at the end of '*Adon Haselihot*,' because that is what is heard. It is worth noting that any transliteration is a construct; it is an 'artificial' representation of the language and as such is contentious and often subjective.

² The word *Sepharadi* is derived from the Hebrew word *Sefarad* meaning Spain. Initially, Jews who came from the Iberian Peninsula were referred to as '*Sepharadi* Jews;' however, in Israel today, the term also includes Jewish communities from North Africa, Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Greece. See <http://www.orthohelp.com/geneal/SEPH_who.HTM#sephardim> (1999).

³ Baghdadi Jews migrated and brought their liturgical style to Calcutta, Singapore and other Southeast Asian and Asian cities from the nineteenth century. See Margaret Kartomi, 'Singapore, a South-East Asian Haven: The Sephardi-Singaporean Liturgical Music of its Jewish Community, 1841 to the Present,' *Musicology Australia* 22 (1999): 3-4.

listening to each version of *Adon Haselihot* for the first time, I asked myself whether I would recognise the melody, and I always did. Despite variations and reinterpretation in some cases, a common melodic structure was clearly audible. The text has remained identical in all versions, surviving without change over more than a thousand years in many different communities.

The Four Versions

The first of the four versions to be discussed below was recorded and transcribed by Amnon Shiloah of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1976 (see Transcription 1). This version was sung by a performer named Ezra Barukh Abdalah, and represents the style and repertoire of the Jews of Iraqi descent in Israel, which developed from the time of their mass migration from Iraq to Israel in 1950–51. Shiloah's transcription of *Adon Haselihot* includes the introductory refrain (normally sung or spoken by the cantor alone) and the first verse of the poem only.⁴

The second version of *Adon Haselihot* was performed and recorded in 2000 by Cantor Sassoon Ezra of the Kahal Yosef synagogue in Los Angeles, California (see Transcription 2). Cantor Ezra was born in Calcutta and his style is basically from the Baghdadi diaspora. His father, Cantor Albert Morris, emigrated from Baghdad to Calcutta in the early years of the twentieth century. Cantor Albert Morris served as the *hazzan* (Cantor) of the Magen David Synagogue, which was built in 1884.⁵

Religious representatives from Baghdad constantly visited the Jewish community in Calcutta. Rabbis and teachers were sent to make sure that the Baghdadi tradition was kept alive. Despite social interaction with the local people, Cantor Ezra is certain that no external influence penetrated or affected the performance of this traditional liturgical Baghdadi tune.

Professor Margaret Kartomi recorded the third version of *Adon Haselihot* in Singapore in 1995, one of two versions by the same singer that she recorded (see Transcription 3). The recording was made during the *selihot* service at the Maghain Aboth Synagogue in Singapore, led by the community's Cantor Charlie Daniel.⁶ According to Cantor Charlie Daniel and his congregation, the community in Singapore managed to preserve the ancient Babylonian style, and unlike the Iraqi community in Israel (who took to the pan-*Sepharadi* style developed in Israel), succeeded in avoiding external musical influences.⁷

The fourth and last version of *Adon Haselihot* to be discussed in this paper was recorded and transcribed by Abraham Zvi Idelsohn in Jerusalem during the 1920s (see Transcription

⁴ Amnon Shiloah, *The Musical Tradition of Iraqi Jews* (Israel: Publications of Iraqi Jews Traditional Culture Center, Institute for Research on Iraqi Jewry, 1983): [84] (melody no. 34).

⁵ The Iraqi Arabic accent can be detected in the transliteration that accompanies transcription 2 (and also in the transcription by Shiloah and the recording by Kartomi), for the Baghdadi Jews maintained Arabic as their spoken language. The accent of Cantor Sassoon Ezra (born in Calcutta) is especially noticeable when pronouncing words such as *vatic* ('constant') and *tsedakot* ('righteousness'). *Vatic* is pronounced *watic*, the use of the sound of the letter 'w' instead of the letter 'v' is clearly due to the influence of the Arabic language. The same applies to the word *tsedakot*; the letters 't' and 's' when sounding together produce the sound of the eighteenth Hebrew letter, *Tsadik* [צ]. Since the sound of the 'ts' combination has no equivalence in the Arabic language the sound of the letter 's' is used instead. In making transliterations of the text in performance, the author has made every effort to capture the pronunciations of the individual singers, with all their inconsistencies, and variations resulting from the external influences of other languages spoken. The author prepared transcriptions 2 and 3.

⁶ A transcription of the other version is published in Margaret J. Kartomi, 'Singapore, a South-East Asian Haven' 11.

⁷ Kartomi, 'Singapore, a South-East Asian Haven' 7.

Transcription 1. *Adon Haselihot*, Shiloah: Iraq/Jerusalem

$\text{♩} = 132$

הָ - טַא - נוּ לִ - פְּ - נֵי - הַ - נְ - חַם
 Ḥā - tā - nu le - fā - ne - khā ra - ḥēm

עֲ - לֵי - נוּ אֲ - דוֹן הַ - סֵ - לִי - חוֹת
 'ā - lē - nu 'a - don ha - se - li - ḥot

בוּ - חֵן לִ - בּוֹחַ גוֹ - לֵה
 bo - ḥēn le - vā - vot go - leh

עֲ - מוֹ - קוֹת דוֹ - בֵּרֶךְ יְ - קוֹת
 'a - mu - qot do - vēr - še - dā - qot

רחום ורחמן חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
 אדון השליחות בוחן לבבות. גולה עמוקות. דובר צדקות.
 חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו.
 הדור בנפלאות. נתיק בנחמות. זוכר ברית אבות. חזקר כליות
 חלר"ע
 טוב ומטיב לבריות. יודע כל נסתרות. פובש עונות. לובש צדקות
 חלר"ע
 מלא זכיות. נורא תהלות. סולח עונות. עונה בעת צרות
 חלר"ע
 פועל ישועות. צופה עתידות. קורא הדורות.
 חלר"ע
 רוכב ערבות. שומע תפלות. תמים דעות
 חלר"ע

4).⁸ According to Idelsohn, this version of *Adon Haselihot* was most likely taken over by the Persian Jews from the Babylonian or Syrian traditions, where it was widespread and characteristically sung in metre, with a rhythmic melody. As taken over by the Persian Jews, the melody remained substantially unchanged, except that the Persians turned it into a recitative-like version without regular rhythm.⁹

⁸ A.Z. Idelsohn, *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies*, 10 vols (Jerusalem: Ktav Publishing House Inc, 1922, repr. 1973), vol. 3, *Songs of the Persian, Bukharan and Daghestan Jews*: 41. Abraham Zvi Idelsohn was a German-Jewish ethnomusicologist who studied music in Berlin and Leipzig and was trained as a cantor since childhood. Idelsohn immigrated to Israel in 1905 where he served as a cantor in the city of Jerusalem. In 1910, Idelsohn founded the institute for Jewish music in Jerusalem where he studied the music of the *Sephardi* communities in Jerusalem. The *Thesaurus*, compiled between 1914 and 1932, is the first substantial comparative study of Jewish biblical cantillation.

⁹ For the Persian version of *Adon Haselihot*, see Idelsohn, *Thesaurus* vol. 3, 16 (melody 37).

Transcription 2. *Adon Haselipot, Calcutta*

♩ = 74

Voice

Introduction Verse 1

Ra-hum Hu we-ha-nun ha-ta-nu le-fa-nei-'cha ra-hem a-lei - nu a - don ha-se-li-hot

5

bo - hen le - ba - bot go - le â - mu - qot do - ber se - da - qot

8 Refrain Verse 2

ha - ta - nu le - fa - nei - 'cha ra - hem â - lei - nu ha - dur - be - nif - la - ot

11

wa - tiq be - ne - ha - mot zo - 'cher be - rit a - vot ho - qer ke - la - yot

14 Refrain Verse 3

ha - ta - nu le - fa - nei - 'cha ra - hem a - lei - nu tov - u - mei - tib la - be - ri - yot yo - de - ya kol ha - nis - ta - rot

18

ko - besh a - wo - not lo - besh se - da - qot ha - ta - nu le - fa - nei - 'cha ra - hem â - lei - nu

22 Verse 4

ma - le za - ki - yot no - ra te - hi - lot so - le - ya a - wo - not o - ne be - êt sa - rot

26 Refrain Verse 5

ha - ta - nu le - fa - nei - 'cha ra - hem â - lei - nu po - el le - ye - shu - ot so - fe a - ti - dot

30

qo - re ha - do - rot ro - 'chev a - ra - vot sho - me - ya te - fi - lot

33 Refrain

te - - - mim de - ot ha - ta - nu le - fa - nei - 'cha ra - hem â - lei - nu

rit.

Transcription 3. Adon Haselihot, Singapore

♩ = 102

Introduction

Voice

Ra - hum we - ha - nun a - ta - nu le - fa - nei - 'cha ra - hem a - lei - nu

4 Verse 1

a - don ha - se - li - hot bo - hen le - ba - bot go - le â - mu - kot

7 Refrain

do - ber se - da - qot ha - ta - nu le - fa - nei - 'cha ra - hem â - lei - nu

10 Verse 2

ha - dur be - nif - la - ot wa - tik be - ne - ha - mot zo - 'cher be - rit a - vot ho - ker ke - la - yot

14 Refrain Verse 3

ha - ta - nu le - fa - nei - 'cha ra - hem â - lei - nu tov u - mei - tiv la - be - ri - yot

17

yo - de - yâ kol nis - ta - rot ko - besh a - vo - not lo - besh se - da - qot

20 Refrain Verse 4

ha - ta - nu le - fa - nei - 'cha ra - hem â - lei - nu ma - le za - ki - yot

23

no - ra te - hi - lot so - le - yah â - vo - not ô - ne be - êt sa - rot

26 Refrain Verse 5

ha - ta - nu le - fa - nei - 'cha ra - hem â - lei - nu po - êl ye - shu - ot

29

so - fe â - ti - dot ko - re ha - do - rot ro - 'chev â - ra - bot sho - meâ te - fi - lot

33 Refrain

te - mim de - ôt ha - ta - nu le - fa - nei - 'cha ra - hem â - lei - nu

Transcription 4. *Adon Haselihot*, Idelsohn: Syrian/Babylonian in Jerusalem

Za Nr. 37.

ā - don ha - se - li - hot, bo - - hem lē - ra - vot, ha - ta - nu
go - le - 'a - mu - qot, do - ver se - da - qot

lē - fa - ne - ha, ra - hem 'a - le - nu.

The use of metre and simple rhythmic structure in this version of *Adon Haselihot* is seen as an identifying feature of the Babylonian and Syrian traditions, since Persian song was generally unmetred. Although not now sung by Baghdadi Jews or their descendants, this version of *Adon Haselihot* provides a significant source for further comparison of the melody, since it is strongly identified with the Babylonian or Syrian tradition.

Unlike words or music printed on paper, the music of the Babylonian Jews was only transmitted orally from one generation to the next. The reliability of such a method of transmission and the perceived success in maintaining traditional practices has depended on a variety of continuously changing social and political conditions. Religious freedom or the lack of it, the tendency of a community, or part of it, to adopt a relatively secular lifestyle, and the presence or absence of a Cantor or a Rabbi who is familiar with the liturgical repertoire, may have challenged the transmission process and survival rate of the melodies.

It is a little more than two centuries ago that Baghdadi Jews migrated to India, 170 years ago since they settled in Singapore and fifty years ago since they were evacuated from Baghdad to Israel. Were they successful in isolating their sacred music from the influence of their new neighbours? Since the music of the Baghdadi community was not documented except in the memory of generations of its people, conclusions can only be drawn from available transcriptions made from twentieth century recordings.

Of course, the four versions discussed here are but a drop in the ocean. They can hardly serve as data from which answers can be given to the many questions that arose during my investigation. For example, what did *Adon Haselihot* sound like in Baghdad two hundred years ago? Was there more than one version in use within the Baghdadi community? Definite answers cannot be given to these questions. However, findings based on the analysis of the four versions may be indicative of the effort made by the Baghdadi Jews to preserve their liturgical repertoire.

The History of the *Piyyut*

The history of the poetic tradition known as *piyyut* began in *Erez Israel* in the early centuries of the Common Era (5-6 CE).¹⁰ The *piyyut* was used as an adornment to the obligatory prayers and contributed variety to the services in the synagogue, especially those held during the *Shabbat* (Sabbath) and the annual festivals. It is not known whether the *piyyut* evolved as a

¹⁰ The Hebrew word *paytan*, meaning a poet of liturgical poems, was derived from the Greek word ποιητής, which means poet. The term *piyyut* (liturgical poem) was yet another derivation of the Greek word. The adoption of the Greek term took place since no appropriate term for the new type of poetry was found within the Hebrew language. See Aharon Mirsky, *Reshit ha-Piyyut* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Hasochnut ha-Yehudit le-Erez Israel, 1925) [61]. The singular/plural forms are: *Piyyut/piyyutim; paytan/paytanim*.

result of persecutions, such as resulted from the decree of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I in 553 AD, who forbade the teachings of the Talmud and Torah in *Erez Israel*, or whether it evolved as a form of religious expression.¹¹ As the *piyyut* became increasingly popular, its function expanded beyond the services of the synagogue. The *piyyut* was composed to suit occasions such as circumcisions, weddings, mourning days and the regular weekday prayers.

In the tenth century, Spain became a creative centre of Hebrew liturgical poetry. As a result, some drastic changes took place in the form and language of the *piyyut*. The more familiar biblical Hebrew replaced the elevated language used in the ancient and classical *piyyut*. The introduction of biblical language,¹² strophic form, metre (both in text and music) and a refrain in the text of the *piyyut* were some of the measures taken by the Spanish *paytanim* in order to make the congregation an active participant in the singing of the *piyyutim*. During the period of the ancient and classical *piyyut*, the participation of the congregation was limited to the response of single words such as 'Amen' and 'Halleluiah', while the Cantor sang most of the *piyyut*. The change towards collective participation in the synagogue services greatly contributed to the longevity and success of the *piyyut*.

The *piyyutim* are divided into a number of categories, each according to its content and purpose. One of the categories contains the *selihot* (forgivenesses). A *seliha* (singular) is recited during the month of *Elul*, which starts before *Rosh Ha-Shana* (Jewish New Year) and ends on *Yom Kippur*. The subject of the *seliha* is generally the confession of sins and the plea for forgiveness.

The text of *Adon Haselihot* appeared for the first time in a written form in the *siddur* of Rabbi Amram Hagoan of Babylon (also known as Seder Rav Amram Hagoan or Amram Bar Sheshna), who lived in Sura in Babylon around the ninth century. He was the first Jewish authority to produce a complete *siddur* for the Sabbath and the High Holydays. The *Seder Rav Amram* was first published, in two parts, in Warsaw in 1865. The second part contains liturgical poems for the month of *Elul*.¹³ *Adon Haselihot* has since acquired the status of an obligatory prayer within most *Sepharadi* communities.

Acrostic poetry

The text of *Adon Haselihot* was written in the alphabet acrostic form where the initial letter of each line follows the sequence of the Hebrew alphabet (see Figure 1). The acrostic technique was used more often in the *piyyutim* than in prayers, and is found in various forms and styles. Acrostic techniques included the natural and reverse order of the alphabet, and sometimes words are formed that are independent of the meaning of the text itself. The acrostic technique was employed for two important reasons, the first of which, as in this case, was to assist in memorising the text and avoiding additions or omissions. The second was to incorporate the author's name in the text so as to serve as a signature.¹⁴

¹¹ 'Piyyut,' *Encyclopedia Britannica* <<http://www.britannica.com/bcom/eb/article/4/0,5716,61784+1+60255,00.html>> (1999). No author given.

¹² The ancient *piyyut* was generally written in a style of language that was difficult for most people to understand. However, the use of the biblical language, that was known to the majority of people, together with a repeating refrain, made the *piyyut* attractive and popular from about the tenth century onwards. See Amnon Shiloah, *Jewish Musical Traditions* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992) 111-112.

¹³ 'Amram Bar Sheshna,' *Encyclopedia Britannica* <<http://www.britannica.com/bcom/eb/article/3/0,5716,7353+1+7268,00.html>> (1999). No author given.

¹⁴ Raphael Posner, Uri Kaploun, Shalom Cohen, eds, *Jewish Liturgy: Prayer and Synagogue Service Through the Ages* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Jerusalem, 1975) 29.

The poem consists of five stanzas, each of four lines (except for the last, which consists of six lines, as the Hebrew alphabet has 22 letters). A trans-literation and translation of the text is given in Figure 2. Each line in the verses contains two words of which the second has a similar ending, for example: *selihot*, *levavot*, *amukot*, etc. The text begins with an introduction (referred to as an introductory refrain in the musical analysis), which is usually sung or recited by the *hazzan*: '*Rahum vehanun hatanu lefanei'cha rahem aleinu*' ('Merciful and gracious God, we have sinned before [against] You, Have mercy on us').¹⁵ The words *rahum vehanun* ('merciful and gracious'), which are sometimes used as the title of the poem (as in version 1), are borrowed from the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy.¹⁶ A four-word refrain appears at the end of each stanza, the first two words of which comprise a general admission of sins, '*hatanu lefanei'cha*' ('We have sinned against You') and the other two words are a plea for forgiveness, '*rahem aleinu*' ('Have mercy on us'). The text is written in biblical language, which is simple, straightforward and able to be easily understood by the congregation. The short phrases in the stanzas consist of words of praise to the Almighty. Some of them are borrowed from various prayers in the Bible.¹⁷

¹⁵ This can be clearly heard in the Singapore version (transcription 3). Another example, transcribed by Idelsohn (melody no. 37, *Thesaurus*, vol. 3, 16), has the word *hazan* [sic] above the first note of the introduction and the word *qahal* (congregation) above the first note of the first verse.

¹⁶ The Thirteen Divine Attributes of Mercy (also referred to as 'the order of *selihot*') are believed to have been first communicated to Moses by the Almighty Himself on Mount Sinai (Posner, et al, *Jewish Liturgy* 25). 'Merciful' and 'Gracious' are the fourth and fifth Attributes.

¹⁷ For example, the Hazon Yehezkel *siddur* offers an interpretation of and reference to some of the phrases found in the text of *Adon Haselihat*, as follows: The phrase 'Speaker of righteousness' (*dover tsedakot*), is assumed to be borrowed from Isa [Isaiah] 63: 1, 'I will speak in righteousness, mighty to save;' the phrase 'Suppressor of Iniquities' (*kovesh avonot*), is assumed to be borrowed from Micha 7:19, 'He [God] will again have mercy on us; He will suppress all our iniquities;' the phrase 'Caller of Generations' (*kore ha-dorot*) is assumed to be borrowed from Isa 41:4. 'He that called the generations from the beginning; He determines destiny in advance and calls on each person at the appropriate time,' and so on. See Earl Klein and Rabbi Moises Benzaquen, *Mahzor Hazon Yeheskel: A Prayerbook for Yom Kippur According to Oriental Sephardic Rite*, English trans. and comm., 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Kahal Yosef Sephardic Congregation, 1995): 348-49.

Figure 1. Initial letters forming the complete Hebrew Alphabet

א דון הסליחות
 ב וחקן לבבות
 ג ולה עמוקות
 ד ובר צדקות
 חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
 ה דור בנפלאות
 ו תיק בנחמות
 ז וזכר ברית אבות
 ח וקר כליות
 חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
 ט וב ומטיב לבריות
 י ודע כל נסתרות
 כ ובש עונות
 ל ובש צדקות
 חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
 מ לא זכיות
 נ ורא תהילות
 ס ולה עונות
 ע ונה בעת צרות
 חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
 פ ועל ישועות
 צ ופה עתידות
 ק ורא הרורות
 ר וכב ערבות
 ש ומע תפילות
 ת מים דעות
 חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו

Figure 2. Adon Haselīhot: transliteration and translation *

Introduction:	<i>Raḥum vehanun ḥatanu</i> <i>lefonei'cha</i> <i>rahēm âleinu</i>	Merciful and gracious God, we have sinned before [against] You, have mercy on us
Verse 1.	<i>Adon haselīhot</i> (V1) <i>Boḥen levavot</i> (V2) <i>Golē âmukot</i> (V1) <i>Dover tsedakot</i> (V2)	Master of forgiveness, Searcher of hearts, Discoverer of profundities, Speaker of righteousness
Refrain:	<i>Ḥatanu lefonei'cha</i> (R1) <i>rahēm âleinu</i> (R2)	℣. We have sinned against You, have mercy on us
Verse 2.	<i>Hadur beniflaot</i> <i>Vatik beneḥamot</i> <i>Zo'cher berit avot</i> <i>Ḥoker kelayot</i>	Glorious in wondrous works, Constant in comfort, Rememberers of the covenant of the Patriarchs, Searcher of inner beings,
Refrain	<i>Ḥatanu lefonei'cha rahēm âleinu</i>	℣. We have sinned ...
Verse 3.	<i>Tov umeitiv laberiot</i> <i>Yodeâ kol nistarot</i> <i>Kovesh âvonot</i> <i>Lovesh tsedakot</i>	Good and beneficent to all creatures, Knower of all secrets, Suppressor of iniquities, One clothed in righteousness
Refrain:	<i>Ḥatanu lefonei'cha rahēm âleinu</i>	℣. We have sinned ...
Verse 4.	<i>Malē zakiut</i> <i>Nora tehilot</i> <i>Solēaḥ âvonot</i> <i>Ônē be'ēt tsarot</i>	Full of purity, Revered in praises, Forgiver of iniquities, Answerer in time of troubles
Refrain:	<i>Ḥatanu lefonei'cha rahēm âleinu</i>	℣. We have sinned ...
Verse 5.	<i>Poël yeshuôt</i> <i>Tsofē âtidot</i> <i>Korē hadorot</i> <i>Ro'chev âravot</i> <i>Shomeâ tefilot</i> <i>Temim deôt</i>	Worker of salvation, Foreseer of the future, Caller of generations, Rider upon the heavens, Hearkener of prayers, Perfect in knowledge,
Refrain:	<i>Ḥatanu lefonei'cha rahēm âleinu</i>	℣. We have sinned ...

* Translated from Hebrew by Earl Klein and Rabbi Moises Benzaquen (*Maḥzor Hazon Yehezkel* 348-349). The vowels shown with a caret (^) above them and the underlined 'h' indicate the guttural letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The sounds of the eighth letter, *Ḥet* [ח], and the sixteenth, *Āin* [ע], are enunciated at the back of the throat and have no equivalence in the English language. The appropriate sound of *Ḥet* and *Āin* can generally be heard in the variants of Hebrew spoken by the *Sepharadi* Jews, as these letters are part of the Arabic alphabet too. The three letters 'â,' 'ê' and 'ô' are all used here to represent the Hebrew letter *Āin*, while an underlined 'h' is used here to represent *Ḥet*. The Hebrew letter *chaf* [כ], which is pronounced with a similar sound to that of *Ḥet*, is represented by the letters 'ch,' as in *lefonei'cha*. *Chaf* is, however, not a guttural letter, and is produced with the soft palate as opposed to the back throat. The text in Figure 2 was transliterated from the *maḥzor* (literally a cycle, meaning a book containing the order of prayers) of *Yom Kippur*. The pronunciation implied by the above transliteration is similar to that of the Hebrew spoken in Israel today; comparison with the transliterations given in the transcriptions highlights the Arabic influence in the latter.

Unfortunately not much is known about the origins of this particular *piyyut*. However, its language and form, and the fact that it appears in the *siddur* of Rabbi Amram Hagoan (d. 875?) might give us an idea of its antiquity.¹⁸ An attribution of similar type of poetry to the *paytanic* period (the tenth to seventeenth centuries CE) is made by Idelsohn in his chapter on ‘The Folk Song of the Oriental Jews,’ in which he identifies the type of songs that survived from this era.¹⁹ All of these songs, which were created in Babylon and Palestine and spread throughout the Diasporas of Europe and North Africa, were written in Hebrew. Most were in the alphabet acrostic form, and some were structured in the form of verse and refrain.²⁰

The Music

Since at least three of the four performers in this study claim to have preserved the *piyyut* according to Baghdadi tradition, it was necessary to make a comparative analysis of the melody in order to trace common musical features. As the four communities in this study are geographically dispersed, common musical elements found, such as melodic contour and the style of singing for example, may represent musical characteristics developed in Baghdad long before the dispersion to the Asian continent.

The musical setting of *Adon Haselihot* contains two sets of opening and closing motives, whereby one set is assigned to the verse (motives V1 and V2) and the other to the refrain (motives R1 and R2). The two sets used in the verse and refrain do not differ greatly but rather present a slight variation. Figure 3a illustrates the basic structure of motive V1 with its variations as they occur with the text ‘*Adon Haselihot*’ in the four versions, while Figure 3b shows the variations of motive V2 with the text ‘*Bohen levavot*’.²¹

Generally, the motives are constructed in an antecedent consequent form, whereby the opening motive leads away from scale step 1, usually to scale step 2, while the closing motive, after extending the melody to scale step 4—which functions as a structurally dominant tone²²—returns the melody to scale step 1. Motives V1 and V2 appear twice in each stanza in a consecutive order, motives R1 and R2 appear once only in each of the refrains (see Figure 2).

Figure 4 shows that similarities in the melodic shape exist in all four versions, despite the difference in the time of performance (1920s to the year 2000) and geographical location. The focal points discussed in this section will assist in sketching the basic shape (based on the elements common to all four versions) of the melody. The graph highlights three points about motive V1 (*‘adon haselihot*’). The first is the function of scale step 2 at the start of the motive, which is contained in the first syllable ‘a’ of the word ‘a-don’ (‘Master’). In all four versions this syllable is sung melismatically, either commencing on scale step 2 or arriving on it in the course of ornamentation (see Figure 4, V1, arrow A). The second point is represented by the syllable ‘ha’ (meaning ‘of’) of the word ‘haselihot’, where the melody descends to scale step 7

¹⁸ ‘Amram Bar Sheshna,’ *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

¹⁹ A.Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music in its Historical Development* (New York: Tudor Publishing, 1948) 360f.

²⁰ Idelsohn, *Jewish Music* 360.

²¹ For ease of comparison, the melodies are transposed to a common pitch, centred on the tone of C as scale step 1.

²² According to Idelsohn, scale step 4 assumed ‘the classical importance of the dominant [scale step 5]’ before the introduction of scale step 5 to the song of the orient as a structurally important melodic tone (*Jewish Music* 479). This may well be a sign of antiquity, although it is also a consequence of the tetrachordal form of the modes (see below). See also Kartomi, ‘Singapore, a South-East Asian Haven’ 13.

Figure 3a. Motive V1 and variants

Basic structure of motive V1
a - - - don ha - se - li - hot

version 1
♩ = 132
a - - - don ha - se - li - hot

version 2
♩ = 74
a - - - don ha - se - li - hot

version 3
♩ = 102
a - - - don ha - se - li - hot

version 4
♩ = unknown
a - - - don ha - se - li - hot

Figure 3b. Motive V2 and variants

Basic structure of motive V2
bo - - - hen le - va - vot

version 1
♩ = 132
bo - - - hen le - va - vot

version 2
♩ = 74
bo - - - hen le - va - vot

version 3
♩ = 102
bo - - - hen le - va - vot

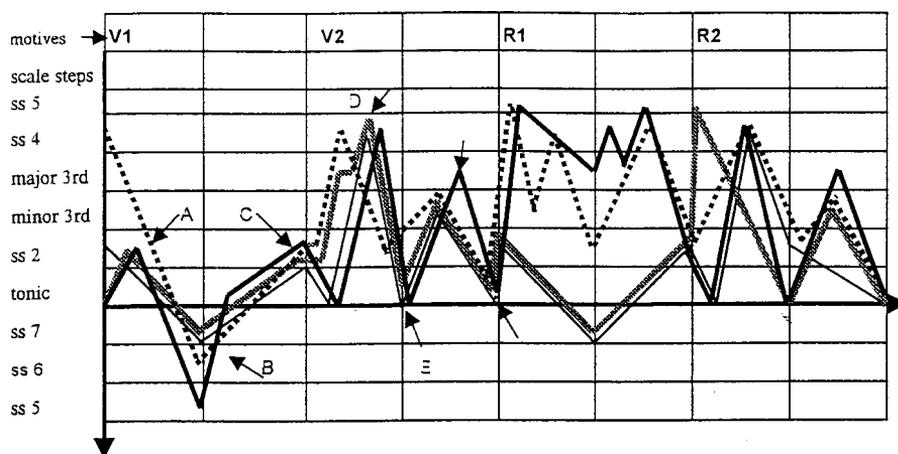
version 4
♩ = unknown
bo - - - hen le - va - vot

in versions 1 and 2, to scale step 6 in version 3, and scale step 5 in version 4 (see Figure 4, V1, arrow B). All four versions descend via scale step 1, which is sung to the syllable ‘-don’ of ‘adon’. Although it is possible to view all the tones in motive V1 as a melodic decoration of scale step 1, it is a feature of the motive that structural emphasis of scale step 1 is avoided. Scale step 1 is treated almost as a passing tone both in the descending and ascending motion of motive V1. The third and concluding point in V1 is the return to scale step 2. The symmetrical construction of the motive (2 -1 -[7\6\5] -1-2—this forms the shape of a downward-pointing ‘V’ on the graph) provides scale step 2 with the stability of a temporary ‘tonic’, or central organising tone.²³ The return to scale step 2 is accomplished by all four versions unexceptionally.

Motive V2 (*Bohen levavot*) presents five points that are common to all four versions. The first concerns scale step 2, which, as a repetition of the final pitch of motive V1, serves as a transitional pitch from motive V1 to motive V2 in all four versions (arrow C). The next melodic

²³ Scale step 2 appears to be the most frequently used pitch in *Adon Haselihot*. Analysis of the statistics of recurring scale degrees shows that its occurrence averages about forty per cent of the total pitches.

Figure 4. Graph of Melodic Contour. Thin black line = version 1 (Baghdadi in Jerusalem); thick gray line = version 2 (Baghdadi in Calcutta/Los Angeles); dotted line = version 3 (Baghdadi in Singapore); thick black line = version 4 (Syrian/Babylonian in Jerusalem).



goal in motive V2 is scale step 4 (see Figure 4, V2, arrow D), which is sung to the syllable 'hen' of *bohen* (meaning 'Searcher') in all four versions. A descending motion leads the melismatic singing of the syllable 'hen' towards scale step 1 in versions 1, 2, and 4, and to scale step 2 in version 3 (see Figure 4, V2, arrow E).

The fourth point common to all four versions of this phrase is the inclusion of scale step 3: versions 1 and 3 employ a minor third and version 4 a major third (version 4 is sung in the mode of Job and will be discussed below). The cadence in the closing motive (V2) shows similarity in the treatment of the three syllables of the word '*levavot*' ('hearts'). Versions 1, 2 and 4 present an identical motion towards scale step 1, 'le' is sung to scale step 2, 'va' is sung to scale steps 3-2 and 'vot' is sung to scale step 1. Version 3 is purely syllabic and is sung with 'le' on scale step 3, 'va' on scale step 2, and 'vot' on scale step 1.

An important feature of the melody in version 2 is the alternation between the raised and lowered forms of scale step 3 that occurs between the antecedent and consequent parts of the motive. Kartomi, in discussing this feature, finds in it a possible influence of an Arabic mode.²⁴ It is more likely to be the result of an improvisation. According to Idelsohn, improvisation and the alternation of modes were commonly practiced among the Oriental musicians.²⁵ This alternating third is a strong feature of the Bombay-Baghdadi versions of *Adon Haselilot* as collected and transcribed by Sara Manasseh.²⁶ It is possible to note at this stage that, despite the difference in modality between the three Baghdadi versions and the Syrian/Babylonian one (as will be explained below), a similarity exists in the shape and structure of the melody.

²⁴ Kartomi, 'Singapore, A South-East Asian Haven,' 13. Manasseh suggests that the alternating flat and natural tones may signal the disappearance of an original quarter-tone (personal communication to Margaret Kartomi, 1999) and that this and other features—such as factors influencing the pronunciation of Hebrew—may be attributable to the degree of generational distance from Baghdad.

²⁵ Idelsohn, *Jewish Music* 26.

²⁶ Sara Manasseh, *Sabbath and Festival Songs in the Jewish Babylonian Tradition. A Study of Variation and Stability: Baghdad to Bombay and Beyond*, MMus thesis, London University, 2 vols, 1985. For her discussion of the melody (under the title *Rahum wehanun*), see vol. 1: 45-8. For her transcription of four performances, see vol. 2: 26-40.

Motive R1, '*hatanu lefanei'cha rahem âleinu*', presents a more complex environment. The graph indicates that the four versions have split into two groups, with versions 1 and 2 forming one group and versions 3 and 4 another. Versions 1 and 2 are identical. However, it must be noted that the refrain of version 1 (Shiloah's Baghdadi-Jerusalem melody) is an introductory refrain, as it appears before the first verse of the poem as part of the introduction: '[*Rahum vehanun*] *hatanu lefanei'cha rahem âleinu*'.²⁷

Versions 1 and 2 present motive R1 as a repetition of motive V1 with the same three focal points, scale step 2 down to the scale step 7 and back to scale step 2. Versions 3 and 4, on the other hand, introduce a new motive. Both versions begin motive R1 on scale step 5 and descend towards scale step 2, which marks the closure of the motive. The two focal points in this group are scale step 5, which is sung to the syllable '*ha*' (of *hatanu*, 'we have sinned') and scale step 2, which is sung to both syllables '*nei*' and '*cha*' (of *lefanei'cha*, 'against You') in both versions.

The data given in Figure 3 suggest the existence of two options in regard to the number of motives used in *Adon Haselihot* in Baghdad. It is possible, given the simplicity of the text, the tune and the available data, that *Adon Haselihot* was constructed from two motives only, which served for both the verse and refrain. It is also possible that motives R1 and R2 are simply a variation on motives V1 and V2, and the existing differences are a result of an improvisation, which became an integral part of the melody. A second, preferred analysis suggests the existence of three different motives, V1, V2 and R1 (as V2 and R2 are identical in versions 1, 3, and 4). The third motive, R1, contains a leap to scale step 5 in versions 3 and 4 followed by a stepwise descent to scale step 2, which is followed again by the closing motive R2.

The leap to scale step 5 in motive R1 introduces a new melodic element, corresponding with the modal change in the text of the refrain (R1). Scale step 5 possesses expressive significance in the melodic shape of *Adon Haselihot*, as it marks the furthest point of the melody and is arrived at by a leap of a fifth. The text in the verses is constructed from words of praise to the Almighty, however, a sudden change to a mode of confession occurs in the refrain (R1): '*hatanu lefanei'cha*' ('we have sinned against You'). Since most of the tune is dominated by scale steps 1, 2, 3 and 4 and a predominantly stepwise movement between these tones, this leap up to scale step 5 stands out. It is likely that the confession of sins would have been represented by a new motive, as the act of confession is extremely significant in the Jewish religion. It is impossible to arrive at a conclusive explanation for this motivic variation. However, Shiloah notes that the oral transmission of tunes encouraged some freedom of creativity among the Cantors in the oriental synagogues, and the improvisation and alteration of motives were not uncommon.²⁸

Further detailed comparative analysis of the musical features of the four settings of *Adon Haselihot* enables the identification of the following common characteristics:

1. The melody is constructed from a single tetrachord, which serves as its foundation. Figure 5 shows the basic tetrachord (scale steps 1 to 4) of each of the four versions, at the pitch at which it was sung and transcribed. Scale step 1 is shown inside a square and scale step 4 is

²⁷ The Cantor generally sings this introduction line alone, as can be clearly heard in the recording of version 3 (Kartomi, 1995), thus allowing him to freely express himself, improvising and choosing his own motives, as he desires, as he 'greet the Almighty' in the name of the congregation. Versions 2 and 3 are the two that include the introductory refrain, however no new motivic material is introduced.

²⁸ Amnon Shiloah, *Jewish Musical Traditions* (1992) 36.

in round brackets. The crotchets represent the more frequently sung pitches whereas the white note-heads represent pitches that occur once or twice throughout the tune.

Figure 5. The basic tetrachord



Most of the modes and motives in the Jewish liturgical song are constructed from tetrachords.²⁹ Modes forming eight-note scales (for example, Pentateuch or Prophets) are generally a combination of two tetrachords.

2. Scale step 4 functions as the principal subordinate structural tone, despite the presence of scale step 5, which may be related to the melody having been constructed from a tetrachord in the first place.

3. All four versions of *Adon Haselihat* are constructed from a small range of pitches, the total number of pitches used is most often no more than 5 or 6 and the most distant pitch from scale step 1 is generally scale step 5. Scale step 7, whenever in use (versions 1 and 2 only), is always located below scale step 1 and is never used to arrive at the octave above.

4. The musical setting consists of two main motives (with a possible third one) formed as antecedent consequent phrases, which correspond to the structure of the text.

5. The leap to scale step 5 corresponds with the change in context to a mode of confession and therefore it is possible that a third motive existed.

6. *Adon Haselihat* is generally sung syllabically and the small number of melismas is derived from the setting of an originally unmetred text to a metred melody (see below). Individuals of course may introduce elements of personal variation, ornamentation and improvisation.

7. The progression is mainly in stepwise motion, with leaps kept to a minimum.

The basic melodic structure is maintained despite the fact that three of the four versions of *Adon Haselihat* are sung in a minor mode, and the fourth is sung in a major mode. These minor and major modes are not made up of the eight-tone scale with which we are familiar, but rather a scale of four or five tones in which scale step 3 defines the modal quality.³⁰

²⁹ Idelsohn, *Jewish Music* 479 and Chapter 2.

³⁰ Modern scholars such as Kartomi and Manasseh prefer to use the Arabic names of the modes (also identified by Idelsohn) when discussing melodies of Baghdadi-Jewish origin. On this point, however, Kartomi comments that while her Iraqi-Singaporean informants understood and applied the principles behind the modes, they did not use the names, nor were they consciously aware of the modal rules (see Kartomi, 'Singapore, A South-East Asian Haven' 8).

Recurrent Stylistic and Structural Components

In addition to the parallel display of notated examples, which allowed the comparison of melodic and rhythmic motives (see discussion below), basic tetrachords, range, tempo, and other stylistic features as noted above, a second method of comparison allowed the calculation of the rate at which the various components of the melody occur. Elements such as directional change in the melody, the number of syllabics and melismatics and the motion in steps or leaps were calculated in the following manner:

1. The total sum of pitches in each version was counted, e.g. version 1= total of 54 pitches.
2. The number of syllabics was then counted, multiplied by 100 and then divided by the total sum of pitches, e.g. $(33 \times 100)/54 = 61.1\%$. The same method was applied to calculate melismatics, direction change, step motion, leaps and stasis.
3. The data collected from all four versions was then transformed into the table given at Figure 6.³¹

The figure shows a remarkable resemblance in the various elements, which relate to both the style of singing and the melodic shape in the four versions of *Adon Haselihot*.

Figure 6. Statistics of recurring stylistic and structural components

	Vocal Style			Melodic Construction			
	Syllabics %	Melismatics %	Vibrato and/or ornamentation	Direction change %	Step motion %	Leaps %	Stasis %
V-1	61.1	37.0	No indication *	38.8	75.9	5.5	12.9
V-2	64.4	35.2	Vibrato used frequently	36.2	71.0	5.4	18.5
V-3	74.0	17.6	No vibrato	50.2	55.0	24.2	14.4
V-4	56.0	43.9	No indication	36.0	78.0	10.0	10.0
Ave.	63.8	33.4	None in group/ apparent in solo	40.3	69.9	11.3	13.9

* The transcriptions of versions 1 and 4 do not show any form of vibrato or ornamentation (no audio recording was available). Versions 2 and 3 (accompanied by audio recordings) differ substantially in their degree of ornamentation.

Some features, such as syllabic and melismatic singing, for example, are generally attributed to the personal style of the performer. However, a distinction between the group and the individual's performance must be made according to the research undertaken by Hanoch Avenary.³² Avenary identifies a number of parameters as 'interfering factors'; these parameters

³¹ I am indebted to Professor Margaret Kartomi of Monash University for introducing me to this method of comparative analysis. Although the same person has not carried out all the transcriptions, I have assumed a common purpose of rendering the character of the recorded performance as faithfully as possible.

³² Hanoch Avenary, *Persistence and Transformation of a Sepharadi Penitential Hymn under Changing Environmental Conditions*, Studies of the Jewish Music Research Centre 5 (Yuval: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1982) 181–237. Avenary's study is similarly concerned with a comparison of a *seliha* sung on *Yom Kippur*, although on a much larger scale. Based on the comparison of sixty versions of the same *seliha*, from both the Orient and Europe, Avenary sets out to identify a central version for each region.

either distort or highlight the tonal character of the orally transmitted tune and perhaps even determine its life expectancy. In the process of 'Choral Performance,' as Avenary says, the congregation as a unified body, when required to sing together, tends to be less inventive or improvisatory than the solo performer. The rate of melismatic singing drops considerably, and instead simplicity and uniformity dictate the manner in which the song is performed. The individual generally makes the necessary adjustments (if required) in order to interact smoothly with the rest of the congregation. Hence, choral performance has a unifying effect, which shapes the form and structure of the tune.³³ The variation in tempo between versions 2 and 3 could also be explained by this distinction: the singing by the Singaporean congregation maintains a steadier tempo than the singing of Rabbi Ezra, who allows himself some flexibility of tempo and phrasing in ornamentation and melismas.

The Singapore version records the lowest percentage of melismatic singing (17.6%), which strengthens the notion that group performance causes it to be reduced. On the other hand, the other three versions record an average of 38.7% of melismatic singing, twice as much as the Singapore version. Since versions 1 and 2 are known to be solo performances and have a similar ratio of melismatic singing to that of version 4, it is quite possible that the latter is also a solo performance. Cantor Ezra's frequent use of semiquavers and vibrato as a means of embellishment represents his own personal style of singing and not necessarily that of his community. His displacement of scale step 5 to the second half of the refrain could be the result of an unrestricted solo performance style.

The Singapore version provides further examples of the tendency of choral or congregational singing. The first example is found in bar 7 (transcription 3), where Cantor Daniel leaps up to the note C while the congregation resolves the end of the phrase to scale step 1 (F), leading into the refrain. This difference in the direction of the melodic motion may be a revealing trace of an earlier form of performance of *Adon Haselihot*, for the structure of the text suggests that it was probably sung in a manner of call and response, whereby the Cantor sang the verses by himself and the congregation joined in with the refrain. The second example is found in bar 4, where Cantor Daniel begins motive V1 with scale step 4 while the congregation begins with scale step 2. Since Cantor Daniel and his congregation begin most of the V1 motives with scale step 2, the occasional leap from scale step 4 by the Cantor stresses his individualistic tendencies.

Questions of Antiquity

Although I did not attempt to determine the age of the melody of *Adon Haselihot*, as no notated or recorded examples exist prior to Idelsohn's transcriptions from the early 1920s, it is quite possible that some of the melodic features identified above are signs of antiquity. Particularly in his study *Jewish Music in its Historical Development*, Idelsohn speculates on the antiquity of Jewish biblical and liturgical melodies by examining certain characteristic features such as the modes, the use of tetrachords and of metred and non-metred rhythm.

The melody of *Adon Haselihot* contains some of the ancient musical elements discussed by Idelsohn and other writers. All four versions are founded on a single tetrachord where scale step 4 functions as the principal structural relationship to scale step 1 and scale step 3 determines

³³ Avenary, *Persistence and Transformation* 186.

the quality of the mode. Version 4 may be identified with the so-called mode of Job, one of the thirteen biblical modes identified by Idelsohn as having been used in the songs and prayers of the Babylonian Jews.³⁴ It is quite possible that the use of a small collection of pitches in *Adon Haselihot* could also be a sign of antiquity, as these melodies may have been invented before the introduction of the eight-note scale.³⁵

The Metred Song

Prior to the eleventh century, unmetred song was considered by both the Jews and the Arabs to be superior to metred song. The metred song was mainly used to accompany functions such as dancing or marching, whereas the former was regarded as art music. Since its introduction to the *Sepharadi* synagogues, metred song gained much popularity and gradually replaced the unmetred song.³⁶

The introduction of the metred song may have marked the beginning of a new era in the musical life of the Babylonian Jews. Unlike improvisatory modal song, the metred song was more accessible and perhaps more appealing to most members of the community because of its fixed structure and form. Metred song enabled the congregation to participate actively in the performance of a song and even more so it enabled the people to memorise the tunes. The introduction of fixed melodies and metred songs to the *Sepharadi* synagogue must have had some kind of an impact on oral tradition. Since popular tunes were becoming the property of the community as a whole, their chance of surviving from one generation to the next would have been enhanced.

The melody of *Adon Haselihot* is a metred one and, as performed in these examples, assumes the character of quadruple metre. It is not known whether its text was set to a popular tune or whether both the music and words were composed together. It is also quite difficult to determine whether the rhythmic organisation of *Adon Haselihot* reflects the influence of Arabic song or that of its text. However, this regularly metred melody is set to a text in which the number of syllables is irregularly variable (although within a narrow range). It is therefore the task of the performer to fit the uneven number of syllables into the metred bar. The basic rhythmic structure in Example 4 is modelled on the Singaporean version of *Adon Haselihot* (version 3), as it possesses the highest percentage of syllabic singing and is therefore best suited to display the most basic rhythmic organisation of the setting. Motive V1 (version 3) shows that four out of the six syllables are sung as quavers. In order to stretch the six syllables to a length of eight quavers (a 4/4 bar), new rhythms or time values must be introduced (see Figure 7).

³⁴ For Idelsohn's discussion of the thirteen biblical modes, see his *Jewish Music* 39–68. The mode of Job is described on pages 56–8. The mode of Job is based on a tetrachord (f, g, a, bf) with a major third defining its modal quality. The motivic character of version 4 fits the description given by Idelsohn for the mode of Job: '[The Oriental version] consists of two motives, one ending on the second (g), marking the first part of the period, and the other concluding on the tonic (f) and indicating the ending of the second part of the period and of the whole melodic line' (p. 58). The short two-part phrases of the text, common to the Book of Job and *Adon Haselihot*, shaped the form of the mode by moulding melodic structure into a two-part, antecedent-consequent form.

³⁵ Shiloah, *Jewish Musical Traditions* (1992) 24.

³⁶ Idelsohn *Jewish Music* 111–12.

Figure 7. Basic rhythmic structure of motive V1

Basic rhythmic structure

a - - - don ha - se - li - hot

version 1
♩ = 132

a - - - don ha - se - li - hot

version 2
♩ = 74

a - - - don ha - se - li - hot

version 3
♩ = 102

a - - - don ha - se - li - hot

version 4
♩ = unknown

a - - - don ha - se - li - hot

The similarity in rhythmic treatment in all four versions can be seen in the symmetry of motive V1. Both the first and last syllables of motive V1 ('a' and 'hot') are prolonged in order to fit the four-beat bar.

Figure 8 shows a very similar, almost identical manipulation of the five syllables in motive V2. The first two syllables ('bo' and 'hen') are stretched to a length of half or a whole bar respectively, whereas the other three syllables ('le-va-vot') make up the second half of the motive. Figures 7 and 8 show that the sequence of rhythms employed by the performers in both motives V1 and V2 is not a random one, but rather a sequence that became an integral part of the *seliha*.

Figure 8. Basic rhythmic structure of motive V2

Basic rhythmic structure

bo - - - hen le - ba - vot

version 1
♩ = 132

bo - - - hen le - va - vot

version 2
♩ = 74

bo - - - hen le - ba - vot

version 3
♩ = 102

bo - - - hen le - ba - vot

version 4
♩ = unknown

bo - - - hen le - va - vot

Conclusion

Internal investigation of the four transcriptions of *Adon Haselihot* links the four communities in this study to one common source, the long-lasting tradition of the Babylonian Jews. The comparative analysis of the various musical elements goes some way to support claims made by at least three of the performers that their communities have faithfully preserved the Babylonian musical tradition. Particularly fascinating is the influence of the Babylonian tradition on the liturgical repertoire of the Syrian and the Persian Jews in this case.

Many *Sepharadi* communities other than the Baghdadi community sing *Adon Haselihot*. Although stylistically different, the melody is almost identical everywhere. There may be a number of reasons why the same melody circulates among the various *Sepharadi* communities. One recent reason could be the interaction of these communities with Israel since the early twentieth century, when different cultures merged into the one synagogue. The many years of living together in Israel may have had a homogenizing effect on the liturgical repertoire of the *Sepharadi* Jews in Israel, but unique musical characteristics may still be identified. Still, much comparative study needs to be made as communities' liturgies are recorded. These musicological investigations should not be postponed, for it will probably not be long before the total uniformity of a pan-*Sepharadic* style takes over.

In this instance, as in many others, it is the melody that brings back memories.³⁷ For me, it is the image of a crowded synagogue full of men who, despite long hours of praying and fasting, managed somehow to find the energy to sing *Adon Haselihot* with remarkable passion and desire. It is perhaps only now that I have come to realize the meaning of the melody of *Adon Haselihot*. The melody functions as the spirit of the song, it enables the words to penetrate the hearts of the people. And maybe it is the body-and-soul-like relationship that exists between the words and the music that drove the Jewish people to cherish and preserve their melodies.

³⁷ The interconnection of memory and melody in the *pizmon* tradition of the Syrian Jews is explored by Kay Kaufman Shelemay in her book *Let Jasmine Rain Down. Song and Remembrance among Syrian Jews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). This interconnection in the tradition of Iraqi Jews has also been noted by Shiloah, *Jewish Musical Traditions* (1992) 234.