

רפא צירי - Refa Tziri

R. Refael Antebi

About the Piyut

In this Piyut we feel the pain of the poet and the people of Israel. He speaks of pain, suffering and affliction and pleads for mercy, healing and consolation. The request is not in the physical sense only but in the spiritual as well - give strength to my soul.

The poet addresses God in a rather uncommon term - expert healer - and thus emphasizes the dependence of the individual and the nation God to heal the wounds of the exile and of the personal suffering. God is described as faithful, following the verse in Deuteronomy: "Know, therefore, that only the Lord your God is God, the steadfast God who keeps His covenant faithfully".

The Aram Tzuba tradition attributes this Piyut to R. Refael Antebi, the greatest poet among the Jews of Aram Tzuba whereas the Moroccan tradition claims it was written by the poet R. Refael Edrei, who lived in Morocco in the 20th century.

Hebrew Text

<i>Refa tziri El ne'eman / ki ata rofeh uman</i>	כי אתה רופא אמן	רפא צירי אל נאמן
<i>At roshi shur chal'shi / v'-ten koach l'-nafshi</i>	ותן כח לנפשי	את ראשי שור חלשי
<i>P'tach sha'ar ha-rachamim / ram shochan ba-m'romim</i>	רם שוכן במרומים	פתח שער הרחמים
<i>Al avdach sim chasdach / eyn m'rachem biladach</i>	אין מרחם בלעדך	על עבדך שים חסדך
<i>El chai t'filati / v'-chusha l'-ezrati</i>	וחושה לעזרתי	אל חי רצה תפלתי
<i>Bi-m'hera d'ror k'ra / l'am ben ha-g'vira</i>	לעם בן הגבירה	במהרה דרור קרא

English Translation

Heal my pain O Loyal God	for you are a skilled healer
You lead me, You see my weakness	and grant strength to my soul
Open the gate of mercy	High dweller of the heavens
Upon your servant bestow your grace	there would be no mercy if not for You
Oh Living God desire my prayer	and hasten to my aid
And speedily call for the redemption	of the nation born to the Lady [Sara]