

## S'lichah

Reb Zalman writes:

"The following love poem is one of the *S'lichot* recited between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Ibn Gayat (b. 1038 - 1089) was not timid about using the most intimate symbols in asking God to become reconciled with us."

The translation by Reb Zalman may be used for heartfelt prayer in English. [Click here for Hebrew/English Version.](#)

*S'lichah* by Isaac b"r Judah Ibn Gayyat. (b. 1038 - 1089)

*Davvenen* Translation by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi

I must return to my very first lover,  
Like an eye's pupil He kept me safe,  
Tall is my beloved like a cedar,  
I can't sleep when I think of Him.

How He rescued me from vile hands,  
How He wed me in all new robes,  
Speaking to me in holy words,  
Honoring me with sacred pact.

Endowing me with ample boon,  
Amidst many joys, delights supreme,  
Our [tryst](#) He stocked for intimacy,  
Countless lasses in waiting He set to serve me.

The choicest foods to fulfill His pledge,  
In His inner chambers He cleaved to me,  
While in the courtyards they spiced the air,  
My Royal Lover took me into His chambers.

And I, bathed,  
To purity my scent arousing,  
He mounted our couch and between my breasts,  
He laid, embraced me and held me...

And in the wink of an eye it happened,  
All broken - betrayed -  
As I went off with attitude defiant,  
Mocking, and dazed, My Lover, now disengaged, was gone.

My guts wrenched, keening for my Dear One,  
What was it that I upset? What drove Him away?  
He is gone now and no comfort left me,  
How I sought Him to no avail, called Him to no response.

"Do turn back, My Lord," I wailed,  
He had gone and I waited in vain hope,  
While my heart cried like a sad [violin](#),  
My eyes in tears that do not dry.

I lost my dignity, I felt degraded,  
Besmirched and defiled, foul and dirty,  
Thrown, tossed about  
And despised, like a young widow.

I hoped for the day of comfort,  
My vulnerable need has turned to frustration,  
Flames of longing have become a wall,  
O mercy, please, for one not pitied.

\*~\*

Come back, come back, O Shulamit, freed from your hurt,  
From your desolation, your Maker seeks to behold you,  
Come quick lift your feet and swiftly come from Lebanon  
We are reconciled, arouse your love again your Lover will restore you,

\*~\*

You shall know clearly the face of Your flock  
Zion, the glorious, [grant](#) her the goodness of Your desire  
Your devotees will sing and acclaim the adventure  
Yes You heard my voice! You did not avert Your Ear.