

Take Us to the Mountain - Annotated

By Alden Solovy

<p>Lead us to the river, To cast our sins upon the waters. The world may go mad. We must stay sane.</p>	<p>Indirect reference to Psalm 36:9-10. Allusion to the <i>tashlich</i> ceremony. Indirect reference to the prophecy of redemption in Ezekiel 47, generally, and Ez 47:6-12, in particular.</p>
<p>Take us to the mountain, To cast our eyes toward the heavens. The world may go mad. We must have hope.</p>	<p>Allusion to revelation at Sinai. Allusion to Psalm 121:1-2.</p>
<p>יְהוָה, אֹרֵי וְיִשְׁעִי, מִמִּי אֵירָא? <i>Adonai ori v'yishi, mimi ira?</i> God is my light and my refuge secure, Whom shall I fear?</p>	<p>First of two quotes from Psalm 27. These two quotes surround the stanza that begins “Hate has come calling...” The ‘hate’ stanza is bracketed with these two lines as the spiritual antidote to fear. Translation and transliteration from <i>Mishkan Halev</i> (p.108) and <i>Mishkan Hanefesh</i> (Rosh Hashanah, p. 92).</p> <p>Note: if used as a responsive reading, the Hebrew is placed so that – if clergy begins the prayer – each instance of Hebrew will be recited by clergy.</p>
<p>Hate has come calling, To consume the heart of justice, To consume the heart of mercy, To challenge our lives and our ideals.</p>	<p>Allusion to the current context of the prayer. The first instance of two sets of stanzas with parallel structure but opposite messages: i) “Hate has come calling...” and ii) “Love has come calling...”</p>
<p>יְהוָה מְעוֹז-חַיִּי, מִמִּי אֶפְחָד. <i>Adonai maoz-chayai, mimi efchad?</i> God is the stronghold of my life, Of whom shall I be afraid?</p>	<p>Second of two quotes from Psalm 27 bracketing “Hate has come calling...” Translation and transliteration from <i>Mishkan Halev</i> (p.108) and <i>Mishkan Hanefesh</i> (Rosh Hashanah, p. 92).</p>
<p>Love, too, has come calling, To enliven the heart of righteousness, To enliven the heart of rejoicing, To fulfill our hopes and our dreams.</p>	<p>The beginning of a three-stanza response to the rise of violence and hatred. Response 1: See the love in the world as a sustaining source in difficult times.</p>
<p>We need not be prophets of doom, To see that anger stalks the night And threatens our days.</p>	<p>Response 2: A prelude to the call to action: clear vision and a clean heart. We know the situation, but dwelling in fear and dread saps our power to rise, resist, renew.</p>
<p>Arise, awaken, Let us be the prophets of blessing, Bringing kindness as our message, And <i>tikkun olam</i> as the work of our hands.</p>	<p>Response 3: The call to social action, <i>tikkun olam</i>, as a core value of the Reform Movement.</p>

<p>Let us repent our own offenses. Let us repair our own wrongs. Let us be upright of thought and deed.</p>	<p>Allusion to the theme of <i>t'shuva</i>. Allusion to <i>Vidui</i>. Get our emotional and spiritual houses to prepare for the work of <i>tikkum olam</i>.</p>
<p>Fountain of Life, Bring us to the river of Your blessings. Lead us to the mountain of your salvation. Bring Your light to the nations. Bring Your healing to the world.</p>	<p>A refrain of the first two stanzas, noting God as the Source of blessings, salvation and light</p>
<p>אָשאַ עיני, אַל-הַהַרִים, מֵאֵין יְבֵא עֲזָרִי? עֲזָרִי, מֵעַם יְהוָה, עֲשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ. <i>Esa einai el-heharim, mei-ayin yavo ezri?</i> <i>Ezri mei-im Adonai, oseh shamayim vaaretz.</i> I lift my eyes to the mountains, For where will my help come? My help comes from the Eternal, Maker of heaven and earth.</p>	<p>A reminder of the human-Divine partnership. A reminder that we are not alone, but that the One God is our Source and Shelter. Quote from Psalm 121. Translation and transliteration from <i>Mishkan Halev</i> (p.108) and <i>Mishkan Hanefesh</i> (Rosh Hashanah, p. 92).</p>
<p>God of All, Let Your <i>sukkat shalom</i>, Your shelter of peace, Descend from the highest heavens To bless us and all creation On this New Year.</p>	<p>Closing with the reminder that it's our New Year, a time for new blessings, and that heavenly peace is our universal and enduring dream. Although the Hebrew selection suggests <i>Esa Einai</i> as a song after this prayer, the reference in this stanza to <i>sukkat shalom</i> offers some flexibility to use a song of shalom.</p>

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