

Esa Eynay

Psalm 121,

*I lift my eyes up to the hills,
from where does my help come?
My help comes from The Unseen One,
Maker of the heavens and earth.*

Kol Hanesamah Shabbat Vehagim p. 214-15

Ed Towbin-Issur haLevi

At B'nai Havurah*, the Denver Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation, located in the shadow of the Rocky Mountains, we consider this psalm a local favorite. Psalm 121, described as a Song for the Ascents, traditionally looks to the heights, where godly powers were believed to reside, such as Mt. Sinai, or the Acropolis, to find divine help, in the person of God or The Unseen One.

My proposal is a variation that adjusts our focus to this world, away from the supernatural, to acknowledge our responsibility for the well-being of ourselves and the environment. Whatever deeds and actions that may need to be taken for repair and preservation of our world, we are responsible for. To look for others to do the work for us, or to postpone acting until divine help comes, may turn out to be the height of recklessness for our own, as well as our children's future.

First we acknowledge what is here and real, then we commit to do what we can to solve problems and make things better.

This variation is designed to allow it to be sung, with some adjustments, in community with others who are singing the traditional version in Hebrew and English.

<i>Esa eynay el makom-hazeh me'ayin yavo ezri</i>	אֲשָׁא עֵינַי אֶל מְקוֹם-הַזֶּה מֵאֵין יָבֵא עֲזָרִי	I lift my eyes up to this place, from where does my help come?
<i>Esa eynay el ha'olam me'ayin yavo ezri.</i>	אֲשָׁא עֵינַי אֶל הָעוֹלָם מֵאֵין יָבֵא עֲזָרִי	I lift my eyes up to the world, from where does my help come?
<i>Ezri bema'asim sheli Letakein shamayim va'aretz.</i>	עֲזָרִי בְּמַעֲשֵׂים שְׁלִי לְתַקֵּן שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ.	My help comes in my deeds to repair heaven and earth.
<i>Ezri bema'asim tovim Leshameyr shamayim va'aretz.</i>	עֲזָרִי בְּמַעֲשֵׂים טוֹבִים לְשַׁמֵּר שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ	My help comes in (our) good deeds to preserve heaven and earth.

* This variation is one of a number of personal adaptations from Kol Hanesamah Shabbat Vehagim, various pages. They are not to be taken as an expression of the Reconstructionist Movement or B'nai Havurah. (4/24/2018)