



LeoBaeckTemple

Bubble Up: 2021-2022/5782

Heart and Soul:

A playful exploration pairing the insight of the podcast **Dolly Parton’s America** with selections from *Songs Ascending: The Book of Psalms in a New Translation* by Rabbi Richard N. Levy, z”l

“Music is the way we accompany ourselves through space and time”

- Jad Abumrad, Co-Producer Dolly Parton’s America Podcast

Heart & Soul created by: Elizabeth Levy & Rabbi Benjamin Ross

Blessing Before Studying Torah

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ-הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסֵּק בְּדִבְרֵי-תוֹרָה

*Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha’olam
asher kid’shanu b’mitzvotav v’tzivanu la’asok b’divre torah.*

Blessed are You, the Eternal our God, Sovereign of the Universe,
who sanctifies us with *mitzvot* and invites us to engage with words of *Torah*.

B'rit/Working Agreement for LBT Small Groups

ACCOUNTABILITY:

I will show up to our agreed upon times: I will let the group leader know the (good) reason I will be absent. I will also be punctual and respect everyone's time.

PRESENCE:

When we're together, I will be present and mindful. I will listen and share. Life (and our mobile devices) offers many distractions, but I will stay present and engaged.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

I will maintain complete confidentiality. What I hear and say stays here.

VULNERABILITY:

I will stretch myself to be as open and honest as possible with my perspectives and experiences in order to create a safe environment that might encourage others to take risks as well.

RESPECT:

I will remember that all of us are here for a common purpose and I will respect and acknowledge everyone in my group.

NO FIXING, ADVISING, SAVING OR SETTING STRAIGHT:

I will give each person the gift of true attention without trying to "solve their problem." No advice unless it's asked.

LISTENING:

I understand that some of us are talkers, while some of us are quieter. I will be aware not to dominate discussions and to balance how much I'm talking with how much I'm listening.

CURIOSITY:

Judaism is a religion of exploration; of big questions more than answers. I will get the most out of my group by being open to our discussions and the people around me.

OWNERSHIP:

This is our LBT Small Group. This is our community to create. While we have guidelines and suggestions, it is ours to shape and form. We will get out of it what we put into it.

**Language graciously borrowed from The Temple in Atlanta, Georgia*

LEO BAECK TEMPLE'S HEART AND SOUL: A BUBBLE UP PRODUCTION

A playful exploration pairing the insights from the "Dolly Parton's America" podcast with selections and commentary from *Songs Ascending: The Book of Psalms in a New Translation* by Rabbi Richard N. Levy, z"l

SESSION I: Sad Ass Songs: Transforming Pain into Power

PARTNER PODCAST: [Episode 1 - Dolly Parton's America](#) (Sad Ass Songs - Oct. 15 2019)

I. READ SUMMARY & QUESTION (10 minutes): Dolly harnesses sadness and struggle, her own and others, as dynamic sources of empowerment. In this episode, we encounter the early voice of Dolly and her narrative precision in excavating the depths of the heart to hold suffering and reaching for the heights of the spirit to elevate us. We find in the Psalms a similar rhythm as found in Dolly's music, of dipping low to soar high, of crying out in anguish and being received by divine grace, shielded by divine safety.

OPENING QUESTION: Is there a song that transports you to your youth?

II. READ ALOUD PSALM AND RABBI RICHARD N. LEVY'S COMMENTARY (5-10 minutes)

<p>Psalm 118:5-7 "From within the narrow space I cried out: Yah!*" The Holy one answered me in Yah's expansive space. I have Adonai, no need to dread-- What can humans have of me? I have Adonai for help, So I can stare down my assailants!"</p> <p style="text-align: right;">*(Yah = God)</p>	<p>"..our assailants are spiritual forces - disease, dis-ease, doubt, hatred, jealousy, arrogance. Upon being given a diagnosis of cancer or other life-threatening illnesses, proclaiming 'I have no need to dread' may be a stronger statement than we can muster, though we would like to. While we might wish to take refuge in God, we may find that circumstances force us to trust the princes of medicine at least as much. But this psalm provides us a script to meet the forces attacking us head-on. It encourages us to write a brief for ourselves: Why do I deserve to be saved from this attacker? Why do I desire assistance in battling the tendencies to arrogance and jealousy in my soul?"</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Rabbi Richard N. Levy, p. 445-446</p>
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(Option to briefly share reactions to the Psalm or commentary)

III. LISTEN TO [COAT OF MANY COLORS](#) (5 minutes) (LYRICS ↓) - CONCLUDE W/ MINUTE OF SILENCE

IV. GROUP QUESTIONS: (30-35 minutes)

- a) Dolly sings about her mom transforming a "box of rags" into a coat she loved, but also making her a target of ridicule. What figurative "torn fabrics" from your youth have you woven into a coat of protection, comfort, and even possibly strength, in adulthood?
- b) What do you think ties together Dolly's "Coat of Many Colors" and Psalm 118?
- c) The Psalmist writes about crying out from a narrow place and being answered in God's expanse. Share a moment of crying out, literally or figuratively, when you struggled deeply and worked your way through it or even integrated it into who you are. What made this possible?

OPTIONAL CONCLUDING SONG: [Min Ha-Meitzar](#) (Psalm 118), by Deborah Sacks Mintz

COAT OF MANY COLORS, BY DOLLY PARTON

Back through the years
I go wonderin' once again
Back to the seasons of my youth
I recall a box of rags that someone gave us
And how my momma put the rags to use
There were rags of many colors
Every piece was small
And I didn't have a coat
And it was way down in the fall
Momma sewed the rags together
Sewin' every piece with love
She made my coat of many colors
That I was so proud of

As she sewed, she told a story
From the Bible, she had read
About a coat of many colors
Joseph wore and then she said
Perhaps this coat will bring you
Good luck and happiness
And I just couldn't wait to wear it
And momma blessed it with a kiss

My coat of many colors
That my momma made for me
Made only from rags
But I wore it so proudly
Although we had no money
I was rich as I could be
In my coat of many colors
My momma made for me

So with patches on my britches
And holes in both my shoes
In my coat of many colors
I hurried off to school
Just to find the others laughing
And making fun of me
In my coat of many colors
My momma made for me

And oh, I couldn't understand it
For I felt I was rich
And I told 'em of the love
My momma sewed in every stitch
And I told 'em all the story
Momma told me while she sewed
And how my coat of many colors
Was worth more than all their clothes

But they didn't understand it
And I tried to make them see
That one is only poor
Only if they choose to be
Now I know we had no money
But I was rich as I could be
In my coat of many colors
My momma made for me
Made just for me