



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 V: Jolene: Walking the Winding Path of Life

PARTNER PODCASTS:

[Episode 6 - Dolly Parton's America \(The Only One For Me, Jolene - Nov. 19, 2019\)](#)

I. READ SUMMARY & QUESTION (10 minutes): How do we confront those who seemingly seek to harm us? Dolly flips the script in her song "Jolene," pleading directly to the woman having an affair with her beloved. Instead of turning to violence or toxic accusations, she remains true to her inner calling, refusing to let hurt and anger contort her. In Psalm 4, we see a similar call--a call to the divine for personal strength instead of animosity toward the enemy. There is a sense of finding inner peace instead of projecting outward hostility.

OPENING QUESTION: Who in your life has modeled taking the higher ground? What have you learned from them?

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

Psalm 4:2-9

When I call out,
Answer me, God of my vindication!
When I was confined,
You opened broad vistas for me--
Show me Your grace,
Listen to my prayer.

You people--how long will my honor be humiliated?

You are in love--with emptiness!

You chase after falsehood--*Selah!**

But know that Adonai has set apart the righteous one as God's own--

Adonai listens when I call out.

So tremble, and do not sin;

Speak with your heart upon your own bed,

And be silent--*Selah!**

Offer offerings of justice, which will gain you vindication,

And trust in Adonai.

Many will say: "Who will show us what is good?"

Show us the light of Your presence, Adonai!

You have placed a joy in my heart

Greater than the seasons

Who grain and oil pour out in profusion.

In peace I lie down, I am one with sleep,

For You alone, Adonai, let me dwell in safety. ****Selah* = my rock!**

"What begins as a complaint against those who humiliate us turns into counsel that those same scoffers might learn from the faithfulness of the poet how to fill their own empty lives with peacefulness and joy. The early tone of rebuke turns midway (see v. 5) into a generous desire to bring light into the lives of those who have tried to humiliate the poet. This is difficult to do."

- Rabbi Richard N. Levy, p. 12

(Option to briefly share reactions to the Psalm or commentary)

III. LISTEN TO "JOLENE" (5 minutes) (LYRICS ↓) - THEN 1 MIN. OF SILENCE

IV. GROUP QUESTIONS: (30-35 minutes)

- a) In another's eye, **have you ever gone from foe to friend?** If so, how did that impact you?
- b) The Psalmist calls on the "God of my vindication" for strength. **What strategies do you employ so hurt and anger do not contort you?**
- c) What do you see in Psalm 4 and "Jolene" about **dealing with adversaries?**
- d) There is a trope to Dolly's music about **harnessing inner strength**. Is this what resonates across political divides? Is harnessing (or the aspiration to harness) inner strength an American quality in practice or only in myth?

V. OPTIONAL CONCLUDING EXERCISE: (5 minutes) Take 30 seconds to consider what you are taking away from this gathering. In 1-2 sentences, share your thoughts with your Bubble.

JOLENE, BY DOLLY PARTON

Jolene, Jolene, Jolene, Jolene
I'm begging of you please don't take my man
Jolene, Jolene, Jolene, Jolene
Please don't take him just because you can

Your beauty is beyond compare
With flaming locks of auburn hair
With ivory skin and eyes of emerald green

Your smile is like a breath of spring
Your voice is soft like summer rain
And I cannot compete with you, Jolene

He talks about you in his sleep
There's nothing I can do to keep
From crying when he calls your name, Jolene
And I can easily understand

How you could easily take my man
But you don't know what he means to me,
Jolene

Chorus

You could have your choice of men
But I could never love again
He's the only one for me, Jolene

I had to have this talk with you
My happiness depends on you
And whatever you decide to do, Jolene

Chorus