



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'divrei 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 VI: Holding Holy Contradictions

PARTNER PODCASTS:

[Episode 7 - Dolly Parton’s America \(Dolly Parton's America - Dec. 3, 2019\)](#)

[Episode 8 - Dolly Parton’s America \(Dixie Disappearance - Dec. 17, 2019\)](#)

I. READ SUMMARY & QUESTION (10 minutes): How do each of us hold the fullness of our own story, the good, the bad, and even the ugly? Dolly seeks to be true to herself as she navigates a world of expectations and projections on who she is and what she stands for. Dolly strives to be responsive to her evolving worldview, knowing that age and experience transform our perspective and our understanding of the world. Psalm 117 seeks to communicate a simple message of covenantal love across all people. Psalm 133’s *Hinei Mah Tov* may be one of the most familiar and beloved melodies in Reform Judaism. What could be more true than how good it feels to be with those you love and those who love you!

OPENING QUESTION: Who in the public sphere do you look to as a role model for your own conduct?

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

<p>Psalm 117:1-2 Sing <i>Hallel</i>* to Adonai, all peoples-- Praise God, all nations!</p> <p>For God’s covenantal love empowers us, The Eternal’s truth immortalizes us, <i>Hall’lu-Yah!</i>**</p> <p>*<i>Hallel</i> = praise **<i>Hall’lu-Yah</i> = praise God</p> <p>Psalm 133:1: <i>Hinei Mah Tov</i> Behold how good and how pleasant Is the dwelling of brothers all together</p>	<p>Psalm 117:1-2 - “This brief psalm [...] suggests, in our time, that we need to understand how the worship of other faiths can be a praise of the One God, that we need to respect the truths that others have found, and seek for ways to we can worship the One God together in different ways. The second verse, emphasizing words like <i>chesed</i>* and ‘us,’ reminds us of those differences even as the first verse urges a common experience of praise.”</p> <p>*<i>Chesed</i> = kindness</p> <p>Psalm 133:1, <i>Hinei Mah Tov</i> - “It is one of the most ‘secular’ of psalms--God is not mentioned, and it is a humanistic value (brotherly companionship) that is celebrated [...]. [I]t commands our attention: Do we recognize good relationships between brothers (and sisters) as important?”</p> <p>- Rabbi Richard N. Levy, p. 442 and 517, respectively</p>
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(Option to briefly share reactions to the Psalm or commentary)

III. [LISTEN TO "THE SEEKER"](#) (5 minutes) (LYRICS ↓) - THEN 1 MIN. OF SILENCE

IV. **GROUP QUESTIONS: (30-35 minutes)**

- a) Share a moment when you were surprised when **someone made you feel deeply welcomed.**
- b) In Hinei Mah Tov, we are asked "to notice how good it is to dwell" with others. **What animates, or restricts, your ability to gather with those who think and act differently than you?**
- c) Dolly sings "I am a seeker" to describe her journey toward truth and justice, even as she makes mistakes along the way. **What is your journey of seeking truth and justice? How has your journey included others in your life?**
- d) What are **two or three secular or religious values** which inform how you engage across differences?

V. **OPTIONAL CONCLUDING SONG (5 minutes):** [Hinei Mah Tov, by Elana Arian](#)

THE SEEKER, BY DOLLY PARTON

*Chorus: I am a seeker, a poor sinful creature
There is no weaker than I am
I am a seeker and you are a teacher
You are a teacher, so reach down
Reach out and lead me, guide me and keep me
In the shelter of your care each day*

*'Cause I am a seeker and you are a keeper
You are a leader, won't you show me the way?*

I am a vessel that's empty and useless
I am a bad seed that fell by the way
I am a loser that wants to be a winner

And you are my last hope, don't turn me away

Chorus

Oh, and you are a mountain
From which there flows a fountain
So let its water wash my sins away

Because I am a seeker, and you are a keeper
You are a teacher, won't you teach me the way?
Reach out and lead me, guide me and keep me
In the shelter of your care each day