

Rabbi David Wolpe's

Off The Pulpit

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Music (Dis)Solves The Riddle

The Psalmist tells us that he will solve a riddle with his harp (Psalm 49:5). What sort of riddle can be solved with a harp?

We are accustomed to thinking of problems as puzzles requiring a single analyzable solution. Can my car fit into this parking space and should I marry this person seem to us in some essential way similar — there is a right and wrong answer, and we need to weigh the factors and arrive at the proper response. The Psalmist is reminding us that some problems are not answered, but dissolved or transcended.

When we feel sad or puzzled or hurt, the harp

may be the answer. Music has the power to move beyond words. It offers us access to a realm that can be felt better than it can be understood. I could describe a song to you all day long, but a moments listening will tell you far more than any description.

King David played a harp (or its ancient equivalent, the lyre) and found in its notes the answers to some of the urgent questions of his life. Sometimes when the music begins, our questioning grows quiet and the air swells with a meaning far beyond words.

Egotism Is a Necessary Evil of Generous Donations

Rabbi Wolpe's new book *David: The Divided Heart* is available now.