

Queer Shabbat and *Mizmor Shir!* Service

May 20, 2022

READINGS AND ADDITIONS



ART BY BETH BOURLAND

Why a Queer Shabbat

Helen Smiler



Responsive Reading before L'cha Dodi

ON HOLINESS

Siddur Sha'ar Zahav, Pg. 19

Leader: Helen Smiler

We are your gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender children:

You must not seek vengeance, nor bear a grudge against the children of your people. (Leviticus 19:18)

We are your bi, trans, lesbian, and gay parents:

Revere your mother and father, each one of you. (Leviticus 19:3)

We are elderly lesbians, bisexuals, gay men, and transgender people:

You shall rise before the aged and show deference to the old. (Leviticus 19:32)

We are the stranger:

You must not oppress the stranger.

You shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. (Leviticus 19:34)

We are lesbian, gay, trans, and bi Jews:

You must not go about slandering your kin. (Leviticus 19:16)

We are your trans, gay, bi, and lesbian siblings:

You shall not hate your brother or sister in your heart. (Leviticus 19:17)

We are lesbian, gay, trans, and bi victims of gay-bashing and murder:

You may not stand idly when your neighbor's blood is being shed. (Leviticus 19:16)

We are your bi, gay, trans, and lesbian neighbors:

You must not oppress your neighbor. (Leviticus 19:13)

You must judge your neighbor justly. (Leviticus 19:15)

You shall love your neighbor as you love yourself. (Leviticus 19:18)



Reading before Barchu

FOR LGBTQIQ PEOPLE

Siddur Sha'ar Zahav, Pg. 88

Reader: Kate Lucas

Our people came out of Egypt a mixed multitude, the spray of dividing waters sparkling diamonds all around them.

We stood together at Sinai, all of us — future, present, past — amid the rumble of thunder and the crack of bright lightning, to enter into covenant with the One who loves us, in whose shining image we are all created, over and over again.

We have wandered bleak landscapes, built flimsy tents of skins and then houses of stone. We have planted orchards and vineyards, seen two Temples rise and then go down in surging flames, forcing us into exile. We have loved and lost, grieved and danced, transgressed and celebrated. Hidden, suffered, thrived.

And we gather here this day, in the community of our people, a mixed multitude, and we sing out: Hear O Israel, we stand together, all of us, descendants of the single first human created on the sixth day, and of our myriad parents down through the generations, too numerous to name. We stand together, link arms, and pray.

Blessed are You, God of the universe, who sanctifies us with the commandment to love ourselves and one another — in all our varied ways — and blesses us with a diamond-bright radiance that still ripples out from Your first spoken words of creation.



Reading before Shema/V'ahavta

OTHER VOICES

Siddur Sha'ar Zahav, Pg. 155

Reader: Portia Carryer

"Listen Israel! Adonai is God. Adonai is One." We are taught to inscribe this commandment to listen on the doorposts of our homes and at the gates of our communities. As queer Jews we know what it is like to live silently at the doorways and border-lands of Judaism. Today let us each lift up our own unique, quirky voice and ask to be heard within the center of the sanctuary.

And let us listen to the other voices at the margins of our tradition, voices that are fighting to be heard. The Hebrew word "Israel" can be translated into English as "anyone who struggles with God" — all of us who are wrestling with God and other people to create the space in the universe for more types of desire, more ways to live in our bodies, more room for our souls to expand and our voices to be heard. May the ancient words of Sh'ma help us break through the walls that have been built in our society and the ones that have been erected around our own hearts; may we be granted the courage to speak out and the strength to listen to each other's voices.



Reading before Mi Chamocha

The Crossing by Dan Bellm

<https://www.rac.org/pride-shabbat-selected-liturgy-readings-and-poems>

Reader: Ruth Hurvitz

God did not lead us by the nearer way
when Pharaoh let the people go at last,
but roundabout, by way of the wilderness —
pillars of fire and cloud marking night and day —
to the edge of the flood-tide — uncrossable and vast.
If God had led us by the nearer way,
we cried, we wouldn't die here; let Egypt oppress
us as it will; let us return to the past.
But we have come out, by way of the wilderness,
in fear; on faith; free now, because we say
we are free; no longer the unchosen, the outcast.
God did not lead us by the nearer way,
but into rising waters, which do not part unless,
with an outstretched arm, we step forward, and stand fast.
Roundabout, by way of the wilderness
we have come, blessed with love, lesbian, gay
or sanctified in ways of our own, to bless
our God, who did not lead us by the nearer way,
but roundabout, by way of the wilderness.



Reading before Veshamru

DISCOVERY

Siddur Sha'ar Zahav, pg. 166

No one ever told me the coming of the Messiah could be an inward thing;
no one ever told me a change of heart
may be as quiet as new-fallen snow.

No one ever told me that redemption
was as simple as springtime and was as wonderful
as birds returning after a long winter,
rose-breasted grosbeaks singing in the swaying branches of a newly budded tree.

No one ever told me that salvation
might be like a fresh spring wind
blowing away the dried withered leaves of another year, carrying the scent of flowers, the promise of fruition.

What I found for myself I try to tell you: redemption and salvation are very near, and the taste of them is in the world that God created and laid before us.

Drash

Jessica Furer

Thoughts before Kaddish

Elouise Epstein



