

Summary of Havurah Shalom Book Discussion Group Annual Meeting, 3/14/23

The year's discussion (2023) confirmed general satisfaction with how the book group functions, including the criteria for membership, book selection, the meeting time, and whether to invite participation from authors.

The following changes were agreed upon:

Access to books: the group was reminded that copies of each book can be found in the Havurah library on the shelf labelled (Havurah Book Group). This last year, a number of people, including those who typically don't participate in Book Group, borrowed those titles. Also, when you are offering a book, please indicate whether the book is available on Kindle and in audio format.

Balancing the selected reading list: The group affirmed the current practice of balancing fiction and non-fiction offerings. Lots of discussion about whether more of the offerings should be Jewish-themed or by Jewish authors. Group decided that offerings could also focus on topics of interest to the congregation, including environmental and social justice, and similar topics. The group noted that there are other groups at Havurah who are reading and discussing these types of books. The group also recognized that offerings have included (and should continue to include) different Jewish perspectives from around the world.

Hybrid meetings including both Zoom and in person at Havurah. Discussion leaders for March and April 2023 agreed to try hybrid meetings. Starting in May 2023, hybrid will be the default format, with the discussion leader having the option to choose in person or Zoom only.

Diversify discussion leaders. A number of people want to expand the diversity of who is leading book discussions. A number of suggestions were made, including, soliciting from the Google group co-leadership for each discussion and training for people who would like to lead. It was also noted that the webpage contains resources on how to lead a discussion. Book Group leaders will encourage co-leadership for next year's discussion. No decision was made about training.

Visit the HS Book Discussion Group webpage:

<https://www.havurahshalom.org/book-group> Please consider this as a resource for answering your questions. People appreciated the webpage and also support provided to leaders, including reminders that their discussion was coming up and follow-up afterwards seeking feedback.