



# Pride Shabbat



## *In the Israeli Reform Movement*

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### Introduction

Judaism teaches that the differences between humans are a divine act: God created us different and distinct from each other. Every one of us has our own face, opinions, and orientation. Some of us have one sexual orientation, and some have another. We were all created in God's image. Together with our lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender members, we in the Israeli and global Reform movement celebrate the sanctity of every human life and seek to realize the divine image inherent in us all.

The Israeli Reform movement is leading religious discourse that seeks to welcome LGBTQQ members as equals in society at large and in our own communities. A genuine invitation to join our communities requires recognition of the unique value and life stories of LGBTQQ people and celebration of the contribution they make to our communities.

Through such an invitation, our own communities become richer and more diverse, while members of the LGBTQQ community are able to enjoy community life and the additional meaning Reform communities bring to all their members.

In order to expand and celebrate our invitation to the LGBTQQ community, the Israeli Reform movement has established a new tradition of the Pride Shabbat. Throughout the month of June, on various weekends, our communities will mark Pride Shabbat through prayer, study, and experience. Kehilat Kol HaNeshama in Jerusalem played the lead role in this innovation, under the leadership of Rabbi Levi Weiman-Kelman and with the involvement of Rabbi Noa Satat, community director Danny Savitch, and other professional and lay leaders.

This booklet aims to help Reform communities as they reach out to the LGBTQQ community. The Pride Shabbat can help us advance from the stage of accepting the LGBTQQ community to the stage of actively inviting LGBTQQ people to be full partners in our community.

Pride Shabbat is celebrated in June as part of a worldwide program of Pride events commemorating the beginnings of the LGBTQQ liberation movement in June 1969. Since then, Pride Month includes parades, demonstrations – and prayers. Pride Month has been marked in Israel for over 20 years. Many different formats can be chosen for a Pride Shabbat, and it's important to choose the most appropriate format for your community. In the coming pages we offer various suggestions for adaptations and additions to the Shabbat prayers with a distinct Israeli flavor. Some communities may choose to include two or three

additional sections in the regular service, while others may prefer to change the entire structure of the service.

The sermon or Dvar Torah on Pride Shabbat can be devoted to issues that are relevant to the LGBTQQ community (ideally, the Dvar Torah should be given by someone from the community).

You can honor LGBTQQ members with Aliyot on Pride Shabbat to mark significant events over the past year.

We recommend working together with LGBTQQ organizations in your area and planning the Pride Shabbat together from the outset.

## Liturgy

This section offers some liturgical suggestions for Pride Shabbat as practiced in Israeli Reform communities. It is important to plan a service that will be suitable for your community. The format of the Pride Shabbat service need not be fixed – it can change and develop from one year to the next.



### Some suggestions:

- \* *Adapt the standard Shabbat prayers to make them more inviting to the LGBTQQ community.*
- \* *Blessings and prayers that can be added to the service on Pride Shabbat.*
- \* *Readings, songs, and poems that can be included in the service.*
- \* *Blessings for significant lifecycle events of members of the LGBTQQ community (these can be included in the “mi sheberach” prayer for those who receive Aliyot on Shabbat morning, or featured at other points during the service).*
- \* *Adapting the Haftara reading for Shabbat morning. After the Torah reading, an alternative Haftara can be chosen that complements the theme of Pride Shabbat. Examples include the story of David and Jonathan (Samuel I 19:1-4, 20:1-4; Samuel II 1:16-27); the story of Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1:8-19); and the gender-challenging image of God in Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:3-28).*

## Adaptations to the Service

### Adaptation of Six Psalms for Kabbalat Shabbat

Six Psalms, one for each day of the week, are paired with the six colors of the Pride flag that combine to form a single rainbow. Each band in the rainbow celebrates a human quality. The Zohar attributes different colors to the spheres it discusses, and we invite you to reflect on the past week through this colorful prism.



#### Red – the Sphere of Heroism

This sphere represents the virtues of justice, criticism, awe, and self-discipline

למנצח מזמור לדוד שיר  
Psalm 65:1-7

#### Orange – the Sphere of Glory

This sphere represents the virtues of human modesty and gratitude in the face of the wonders of creation

ברכי נפשי את ה'  
Psalm 104 verses 1,2,23,24,33,44,45

#### Yellow – the Sphere of Splendor

This sphere represents the virtue of mercy

בך ה' חסיתי  
Psalm 71:1-8

#### Green – the Sphere of Foundation

This sphere represents the ability to create connections between the ethereal and mundane worlds

תפילה לדוד, הטה ה' אזנך  
Psalm 86:1-8

#### Blue – the Sphere of Mercy

This sphere is full of love and love of good

שאלו שלום ירושלים  
Psalm 122:6-9

#### Purple – the Sphere of Eternity

This sphere represents the virtue of persistence and patience with ourselves and with others

מכתם לדוד שמרני אל כי חסיתי בך  
Psalm 16:1-11

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The rainbow we have painted in our minds stands as a covenant between God and every living creature on Earth:

**“I have set my rainbow in the clouds... This is the sign of the covenant I have established.”**  
(Genesis 9:12,17)

Rabbinical students Efrat Rotem and Alona Nir

### **Adaptation of Lecha Dodi**

In the traditional version of Lecha Dodi, the ending of the seventh verse excludes members of the LGBTQQ community. We suggest the following ending to the verse, replacing the traditional text כְּמִשׁוֹשׁ חַתָּן עַל כַּלָּה (“as a groom rejoices on a bride”) :

יְשִׁישׁ עָלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ  
כְּמִשׁוֹשׁ לֵב בְּאַהֲבָה

“Your God will rejoice in you, as the heart rejoices in love”

### **“Tefilat HaDerech” (Traveler’s Prayer) for the Pride March in Jerusalem**

- *Psalm 122*

- May it be your will, God of our mothers and fathers, to lead us in peace and to march us in pride and peace, that we may reach our destination in life, joy, and peace. Save us from any enemy or ill-wisher, from a bad or inciting neighbor, and from any kind of mishap along the way.

May we see our dear ones, our partners and our lovers marching with us and accompanying us in our deeds.

May this parade be a symbol of the paths of our lives. May our eyes be open,

our hearts attentive, and our steps well-placed. Bless the actions of our hands and may our work be rewarded. As it is written: “Then your light will break forth like the dawn... and your righteousness shall go before you” (Isaiah 58:8). May we find grace, mercy, and honor in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who see us, so that we may remember the divine image within us. And plant love and peace in our hearts.

Blessed are You, God, who hears prayer.



*Rabbi Gili Tzidkiyahu*

### **“Al Hanisim” Prayer for Pride Shabbat**

The prayer featured on the following page was developed in *Kehilat Kol HaNeshama* in Jerusalem, under the leadership of *Rabbi Levi Weiman-Kelman*. It draws in part on versions from Reform congregations in the United States and elsewhere.

שכינה ששָׁקָךְ אהבה, האל שבראתָ אותנו בצלמך: אנו מודים לך היום על הגאווה והכוח שנתת לנו לחיות את חיינו, איש על פי דרכו ואישה על פי דרכה, כחברים שווים בקהילתנו ובחברת האדם.

אנו זוכרים חלוצים וחלוצות שקראו תיגר על הידוע והמקובל, ותבעו את זכותם לחדש את הישן ולקדש את החדש. הומוסקסואלים ולסביות, ביסקסואלים, טרנסג'נדרים ותומכיהם שמאסו בתוויות ובהתוויות הביאו לנו כברכת קשת בענן שלל דרכים להבין ולממש את עצתך: לא טוב היות האדם לבדו.

בבואנו לחיות את חיינו לפי הטבע שנטעת בלבנו, קמו מחללי שְׁקָךְ, בטענתם שהם שונאים בשְׁקָךְ, ועמדו נגד כְּנִיךְ ובנותיך להשפילם ולאסרם, להשמידם ולמחקם. ואת ברחמיך הרבים עמדת להם בעת צרתם וחזקת את לבם לעמוד ביחד, לפקוח את עיניהם ואת עיני העולם, להבין שהחרות והזכות לאהוב שייכות לכל יציריך. אף היום חזקי-נא אותנו למען נוכל לראות נפלאות ולחולל נסים, להיות אשר נהיה ולאהוב את מי שנאהב, לא בצל אלא באור החיים, לחיות כיהודים בחיק הקהילה, לקדש את איחודנו ולשיש עלינו ועליך.

אבן מאסו הבונים היתה לראש פינה. ולא נבוש ולא נכלם לעולם ועד. ונאמר: אמן.

Shekhina whose name is Love, God who created us in Your image: We thank You today for the pride and strength You have given us to live our lives, each of us in our own way, as equal members of our community and of society.

We honor the memory of pioneers who challenged received wisdom and demanded their right to renew the old and to sanctify the new. Gay men and lesbians, bisexuals, transgenders and their supporters tired of labels and diagnoses and brought upon us, like the blessing of the rainbow, countless ways to understand and realize Your counsel: It is not good for a human to be alone.

As we sought to live our life faithful to the nature You implanted in us, those who profane Your name, claiming that they hate in Your name of God, rose up to humiliate and criminalize us, to brutalize us and erase us. In Your great mercy, You stood with us in our time of trouble and gave us the courage to stand together, to open our eyes and the eyes of the world around us, to see that all Your creations deserve the freedom and the right to love. Today, too, strengthen us that we might witness and create wonders, be who we are and love whom we love – not in the shade, but in the light of life; that we might live as Jews in the embrace of community, sanctifying our unions and celebrating before each other and before You.

The stone that the builders rejected has become a cornerstone. May we never know shame again. And let us say: Amen.

## Poems and Readings

**Four Kinds** / Gilad Meiri

I gathered four kinds in a bundle,  
Straights,  
Gays,  
Lesbians,  
Bisexuals  
And I held them close to my heart  
I shook three times in each direction:  
Forward, right, backward, left, up, down  
And I rejoiced before God in one human kind.

From: **A Progressive Search**, Carmel, 2010

**אַרְבַּעַת הַמִּינִים** / גלעד מאירי

וְנִטְלֵתִי אֶת אַרְבַּעַת הַמִּינִים בְּצֶרֶר,  
סְטְרַיִטִים,  
הוֹמוֹאִים,  
לְסִבִּיּוֹת,  
בִּיֶסֶקְסוּאָלִים  
וְהִצְמַדְתִּי אוֹתָם קְרוֹב לְלִבִּי  
וְנִעַנְעֵתִי שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמַיִם לְכָל כּוּוֹן :  
קְדִימָה, יְמִינָה, אַחֲרָה, שְׂמאלָה, לְמַעַלָּה, לְמַטָּה  
וְשָׂמַחְתִּי לְפָנַי ה' אֱלֹהֵי בְּמִין  
הָאִנוּשִׁי.

מתוך : **חיפוש מתקדם**, כרמל, 2010

### **It's Been My Privilege To Love**

Lyrics and melody: Ivri Lider

When the sun is blotted out of the sky  
And my heart drips through my brown eyes  
I remember there are hands that want me close  
I know that it's been my privilege to love

And when the afternoon breeze  
Scatters small branches, still pleasant  
I remember there are eyes that see me up close  
And I know that it's been my privilege to love  
I know that it's been my privilege to love

And when the sun comes out over the water  
And another gray day begins, so far without  
reason  
I remember there are lips that want me close  
I know that it's been my privilege to love  
I remember there are lips that want me close  
And I know that it's been my privilege to love

### **זכיתי לאהוב**

מילים ולחן : עברי לידר

וכשהשמש נמחקת בשמיים  
והלב מטפטף לי דרך העיניים החומות  
אז אני זוכר שיש ידיים שרוצות אותי קרוב  
אני יודע שזכיתי לאהוב

וכשהרוח אחרי הצהריים  
היא מפזרת ענפים קטנים ובינתיים זה נעים  
אז אני זוכר שיש עיניים שרואות אותי קרוב  
ואני יודע שזכיתי לאהוב  
אני יודע שזכיתי לאהוב

וכשהשמש יוצאת מעל המים  
ומתחיל עוד יום אפור ובינתיים אין סיבה  
אז אני זוכר שיש שפתיים שרוצות אותי קרוב  
אני יודע שזכיתי לאהוב  
אני זוכר שיש שפתיים שרוצות אותי קרוב  
ואני יודע שזכיתי לאהוב

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQuT1K2X51c>

## My Shadow and I

Lyrics and melody: Yehuda Poliker

My shadow and I went out to the road  
the sun stood so, approximately  
at times I lead  
and at times the shadow's on the trail.  
Clouds assembled in the sky,  
drops of water started to come down,  
my shadow assembled within me,  
I continued alone on my way.

The wind moved about  
the fear seeped and dripped  
my shadow in me made me shake  
made me scared more than ever  
it asks where are you taking (me)  
I take you back to where you're escaping  
why always defensive walls  
why a shadow when the light is within.

Let's fly far  
you'll be my wings  
to the imaginary story  
that wasn't possible until now  
let's jump, take off, fly  
to the connection of the shadow and body  
enough continuing to run away  
to what we always wanted to forget.

To forget the doors of confusion  
the kid that awakes through the lock-hole  
let's pass the limit  
to the freedom that was chained up  
and only melodies remind  
that outside it's possible to be  
liberated from all fear  
only when my shadow and I are together.

Let's fly far...

## הצל ואני

מילים וחלן: יהודה פוליקר

הצל שלי ואני יצאנו לדרך  
השמש עמדה כך בערך  
פעם אני מוביל  
ופעם צל על השביל  
עננים התכנסו בשמיים  
התחילו לרדת טיפות מים  
צילי התכנס בתוכי  
המשכתי לבדי בדרכי

הרוח טלטל  
הפחד טפטף וחלחל  
צילי בתוכי מרעיד  
מפחיד יותר מתמיד  
הוא שואל לאן אתה לוקח  
אני משיב לאן אתה בורח  
למה תמיד קירות מוגנים  
למה צל כשאור בפנים

בוא נעוף רחוק  
אתה תהיה לי כנפיים  
אל חיבור דמיוני  
שהיה עד עכשיו בלתי אפשרי  
בוא נקפוץ, נמריא, נעוף  
אל קשר הצל והגוף  
די להמשיך לברוח  
אל מה שתמיד רצינו לשכוח

לשכוח את דלתות הבלבול  
את הילד שמציץ דרך חור המנעול  
בוא נעבור את הגבול  
אל החופש שהיה כבול  
ורק מנגינות מזכירות  
שבחוץ אפשר להיות  
משוחרר מכל פחד  
רק כשהצל ואני ביחד

בוא נעוף רחוק..

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dxt\\_UAkzor4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dxt_UAkzor4)

## Rainbow

Every time I see  
A rainbow flag  
Waving on a lamp pole  
In the Holy City of Jerusalem

I remember that God made a covenant  
With us.

If we lived our lives in black and white  
We would never be privileged to see  
That divine promise.

When I see all the colors together  
I remember that God is there  
For you and for me.

## קשת בענן

בכל פעם שאני רואה  
דגל קשת בענן  
מתנוסס על עמוד תאורה  
בירושלים עיר הקודש

אני יודע שאלוהים כרת ברית  
עמנו.

אילו חיינו את חיינו בשחור ובלבן  
מעולם לא היינו זוכים לראות  
אותה הבטחה אלוהית.

כשאני רואה את כל הצבעים יחדיו  
אני זוכר שאלוהים נמצא שם  
למענך ולמעני.

## Homophobia as I'll Explain it to My Daughter

Orna Kazin, *Ha'aretz*, 7 August 2009

(Written just after the murder of two young people at Bar Noar, an LGBTQQ club on Nachmani St. in Tel Aviv)

I'm a lesbian. My partner and I have a five-month-old baby girl. She's adorable. When she grows up, I'll want to explain to her what homophobia means. I imagine her at the age of ten, like Taher Ben Jelloun's daughter in his book "Racism as Explained to My Daughter." That girl asks naïve questions, such as, "Tell me, Dad – what is racism?" or "Could I also become a racist?" When our daughter asks us about homophobia, I'd like to be ready with the answers. This week, after all that's been said about the murder at the Lesbian and Gay Association in Tel Aviv – I realized that the task is far from simple.

Homophobia is a strange psychological and social phenomenon, I'll tell me daughter. Like racism, it is pretty common. By "homophobia," we mean "irrational fear and disdain for homosexuality and for homosexuals and lesbians." Homophobia is everywhere – in the government, in businesses, in the academic world and the press, among left- and right-wingers, Jews and Muslims, in Haredi society and in secular Tel Aviv.

In most cases, I'll make sure to point out to my daughter, homophobia doesn't lead people to commit murder. But even in its everyday form it is cruel and causes considerable suffering. Parents reject their children because of it (and this week we heard that if children are injured in a terror attack connected to gays, their parents prefer not to visit them in hospital – that's how scared they are). Young people harass their peers. Children are ashamed and scared. Adults feel a sense of guilt and lie to themselves and to others. People deny themselves and others liberty, friendship, and love because of this strange anxiety.

"Why?" my daughter will ask. That's a good question, I'll reply. For men, the possibility to desire their own kind threatens their very identity as men, which includes the element of conquering women. Manifestations of sexuality that are not directed at women undermine

the foundations of their gender identity. Okay, I won't explain it that way to a ten-year-old girl. I need to work on my wording a bit.

Women and men fear non-heterosexual desire (I try to rephrase myself) because people taught them that only one kind of sex is normal. Any other type of passion is prohibited. They are supposed to replicate their parents' imagined sex lives and relationships, regardless of whether these were good or bad. It all stems from the ancient fear that homosexuality means surrendering to sexual pleasure that does not lead to human reproduction. Something of this anachronistic fear seems to remain with us today, in the age of birth control, sperm donors, and a whole range of new forms of parenthood. I was also homophobic once, I will admit to my daughter. For many years I was scared to be a lesbian. I preferred loneliness. Now I will try to smile at her, to compensate a little for the heavy discussion...

There is this idea that there is a normal society out there that considers whether or not to accept those who are unusual. To non-homophobic eyes, there is no normal majority in society that accepts others. Society is comprised of a whole range of different people with all kinds of social and sexual tastes that may be in a state of constant flux. "There is no danger to the residents of Tel Aviv," the newspapers quoted the police as saying on the day after the murder – despite the fact that the murderer is still at large. "This is only a localized incident (of the lesbian and gay community." Here is another apparently innocent remark that is dripping with homophobia. It's hard to explain it. It's a strange phenomenon. I'm glad that my daughter is still a little baby. I've got a few years left to prepare.



This collection is dedicated in loving memory of **Shira Banki z"l**, who was murdered in the LGBTQ Pride Parade in Jerusalem, *Tu B'Av* 5775, 31.7.2015