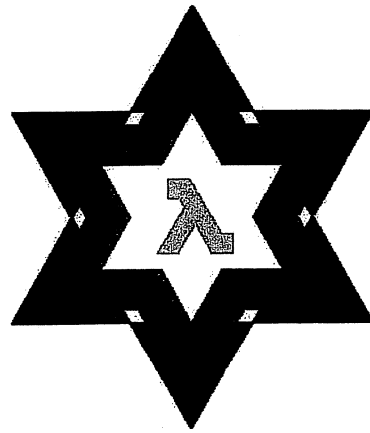


# *Pride Freedom Seder Haggadah*



**Congregation Sha'ar Zahav**

saturday, june 16, 2012

***THE STIRRING OF  
THOSE NOW CHOSEN***

Welcome to Sha'ar Zahav's 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Pride Seder

**Co-sponsors:**

**Nehirim Keshet A Wider Bridge**  
Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice  
at the University of San Francisco

**THIS HAGGADAH IS DEDICATED TO  
THE MEMORY OF**

**PHYLLIS MINTZER**

**1925 – 2004**

**MORAH DERECH  
(MASTER TEACHER)  
AND BELOVED MEMBER OF  
THE SHA'AR ZAHAV COMMUNITY**



For permission to reprint material in this haggadah, please contact:

Congregation Sha'ar Zahav  
290 Dolores Street, San Francisco CA 94103  
(415) 861-6932  
office @ shaarzahav.org

## Kadesh – Sanctification

When people hear that we hold an annual Pride Seder at Sha'ar Zahav, some of them say, "But a seder is for Passover!" That's true, but it's not the whole story. The word "seder" means "order," and in the 17th century the Kabbalists in Safed created a seder to celebrate Tu B'Shevat, the New Year of the Trees. That seder spread to Sephardi communities and then into the Ashkenazi world, and today Tu B'Shevat Seders are becoming more popular as an opportunity to affirm Jewish environmental values.

There's another seder that's even less well known. It says in the Talmud that at Rosh Hashanah we should eat foods that grow abundantly and symbolize prosperity, like pumpkins, beans, leeks, beets, and dates. To this day in some Sephardi and Mizrahi communities, a seder, including those foods and others, is held on the first night of Rosh Hashanah and participants ask God for prosperity and peace in the new year.

But even if there were no other seders in the Jewish world – it would still be entirely appropriate for queer Jews and our allies to create a ritual meal to celebrate our liberation. In fact, we're not the first community to do so. Our celebration is rooted in the Queer Pride Seders held by the Berkeley Queer Minyan in the 1990s. Their Haggadah was adapted by Mark Horn for B'nai Jeshurun, a Conservative congregation in New York City that has many LGBT members. It was their Stonewall Seder and Haggadah that inspired more than twenty members of Sha'ar Zahav to adapt their text for our first Pride Freedom Seder, which was held at the end of Shabbat on June 18, 2005.

Some elements of tonight's seder will be familiar. There's a seder plate, which has different ritual items on it than at Passover. We'll drink several glasses of a ritual beverage – not wine but water, both because it's the source of life and in solidarity with those in recovery. Just as at Passover, we'll tell the story of our continuing Exodus from exclusion and oppression into freedom, a journey that is built upon the work done by the civil rights and feminist activists who went before us. We won't, however, be washing our hands, which is part of the usual order of the meal. We queer Jews have been told for so long that we're impure, so at this meal there will be no hand washing, to remind ourselves that we come to this seder table whole and pure, all of us created in the image of God. And, at a Passover seder, a piece of matzah called the *afikomen* is broken and half of it is hidden. At this seder there will be no *afikomen*. We, our lives, and our stories, were hidden for too long. Tonight we all sit together in community, out, free, and proud.

So come, sit, join us for this Seder of Freedom. *Hag Sameakh!*

שִׁירוּ לַיְיָ שִׁיר חָדָשׁ  
שִׁירוּ לַיְיָ כָּל־הָאָרֶץ:

— Sing to God a new song    Sing to God all the Earth

*Shiru l'Adonai shir chadash    Shiru l'Adonai kol ha'aretz*

- Psalm 96:1



## OPENING THE WAY

Let all whose spirits hungered for acceptance come in;  
let any whose thirst for dignity went unslaked, enter now.

And all our loved ones, of blessed memory,  
who meant so much to us or our community, be with us this night.  
We invite you all to share this space as honored congregants.

Grace us with your presence.

Give of your memories, that we may never forget the past;  
listen to our stories, that you may know those who came after.  
And let our work here tonight help future generations to understand.

May it be so,  
speedily and soon,  
and let us say, Welcome.



## KAVANAH – SETTING OUR INTENTION

Tonight we gather to fulfill a new mitzvah. We are not only, as Jews, celebrating pride in being gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, or in some other way different. Rather we are specifically celebrating our pride in being both Jewish *and* different. So on this night that is different from other nights, let us recite a Shehechyanu, our traditional words of celebration:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמָּנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה.

*Baruch atah Adonai Elohenu melech haolam,  
shehechianu, vekiyimanu, vehigianu, lazman hazeh.*

*Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has kept us in life,  
and preserved us, and enabled us to reach this season.*

## OPENING CHANT OF PRESENCE AND COMMITMENT TO THE WORK OF TIKKUN OLAM

I hereby accept the obligation of fulfilling my Creator's mitzvah in the Torah:

*Love your neighbor as yourself.*



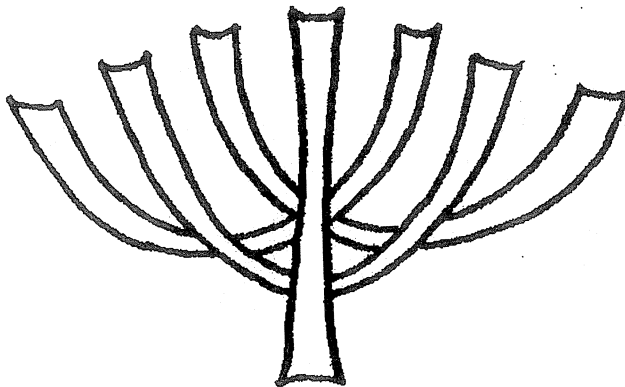
## THE SEVEN CANDLES

Who can look directly into the light? We can only behold a small portion – a fragment of the light. And when that One Light is fragmented, the colors of the rainbow result. So let us give thanks for all the colors that are ours. For those colors we love, and those with which we are not so comfortable. All of them are a part of the One Light we are all bathed in, the One Light that is the fountain of our life. As we bathe in the light of these candles, we remember all the candles that we – both as a varied and colorful LGBT community and as progressive and forward looking Jews – have lit. Shabbat candles. Yahrzeit candles. Candles at AIDS vigils. And at Take Back the Night marches. As we share in the light of these candles, we rededicate the flame each of us carries within, that small reflection of the Creator's Light that is ours to use as a beacon in our work of tikkun olam. We rededicate this small spark, a spark that we can use as a match to give light to the hopes and dreams of all people.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של יום טוב

*Baruch atah Adonai Elohenu melech haolam. Asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav  
Vitsivanu lehadlik ner shel yom-tov*

*Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has hallowed us by Your  
commandments, and commanded us to kindle the Festival lights.*



We're rainbow folk –  
Some black,  
Some white,  
Some yellow,  
Some red,  
Some brown.  
We're rainbow folk reaching for gold pots,  
Waiting like kaleidoscope matches.

We're rainbowfolk –  
One time brown  
One time white,  
One time red,  
One time yellow,  
One time black.  
We're folk of the rainbow –  
One time man.  
One time woman,  
One time genius,  
One time 'retarded',  
And all times originally disabled.

We're of the rainbow folk –  
Many times middling,  
Many times amoeba,  
One time muscle,  
One time starfish,  
One time dolphin,  
Many times zygote,  
Many times few splitting cells,  
Many times foetus,  
And all humans a female foetus first  
And then somehow out of the womb.

Folk rainbow we –  
One time rich,  
One time beggar,  
One time bourgeois,  
One time king,  
One time serf,  
One time saint,  
One time villain  
And all times a stumbling, laughing, crying,  
trying person.

Of rainbow we folk  
And each one is we  
And all ripple into world soul dance.  
We're people of the rainbow in endless  
wonder bowing.  
We're people of the rainbow –  
Sometimes caught in pride before off the  
tower falling,  
Sometimes caught in false humility before  
being,  
And always spontaneously throwing life dice  
Upon the spinning table.

We're many tale living rainfolk bowing  
And we're sometimes het,  
Sometimes bi,  
Sometimes gay,  
And sometimes caught in celibate wonder.  
We're rainbow folk –  
Sometimes happy  
And sometimes sad  
As we go along on our endless journeys.  
We are many.  
We are one.  
We are here.  
We are there.  
We are everywhere.  
Rainbow folk, rainbow folk, rainbow folk,  
rainbow folk,  
Folk, folk, folk, folk, folk...

Jeffrey Lilly

## THE SYMBOLS ON OUR SEDER PLATES

### EXOTIC FRUIT

*People talk about Bible miracles because there are no miracles in their lives.  
Cease to gnaw that crust. There is ripe fruit over your head.*

- Henry David Thoreau

Sometimes we are called “fruit” people and while it is meant as an insult, tonight we take it as a blessing in disguise. A recognition of the sweet breath of God’s creation. And we take it as an opportunity to open up to the sweet, and the tart, in all of us. Tonight we honor strange fruit that is ripe with the possibility of miracles. Tonight we recognize that there is more than just one way to be fruitful and multiply. Tonight, before we taste, we hesitate and remember the fear and hostility many feel when faced with something they think is strange, different – forbidden. Tonight we open to the miracle, and bring to taste the sweet fruits born for the seeds of liberation planted by our gay and lesbian forbears.

פְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

*Baruch ata Adonai Elohenu melech haolam borei pri ha-etz.*

*Blessed are You, our Eternal God, ruler of the Universe,  
Who creates the fruit of the tree.*

### THE PINK TRIANGLE

Under the Nazis, homosexuals wore a pink triangle in the work camps, as Jews wore the yellow star. Today, gay men and lesbians wear this as a symbol of our commitment to justice to all. Rabbi Alexander Schindler has said: “A generation ago, many in this room would have been wearing the pink triangle as a badge of shame and a mark of death. Today, we wear it as a badge of honor and resistance and identity.”

*Blessed are those who have been marked, in all times and all places.  
May they always be remembered, through us and through our lives.*

## THE BUNDLE OF STICKS – THE FAGGOT

To remind us of the men, bound together and burned at the stake for their love – and of the burning of women, called witches, because they chose to live their lives outside the realm of the patriarchy.

*Cursed is the flame that destroys, the flame that kills. May it be snuffed out forever.  
And blessed are all of our sisters and brothers who were martyred in years past.  
O God, remember their sacrifices, and help us bring an end to hate and  
oppression of every kind.*

## BRICKS AND STONES

We remember the bricks of resistance thrown at the police on the night of the Stonewall riot. We meditate on the lines from Psalm 118: “The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone” and we ask what stones have we ourselves rejected. We remember that great Stone Wall, the Western Wall of the Temple, which has stood throughout centuries of triumph and tears. And we ask ourselves: what walls must we build anew, what walls must we tear down.

*In Egypt we made bricks as slaves. At Stonewall we used bricks to free ourselves.  
Blessed is the spirit of freedom and blessed is the One who moves us to free ourselves. Blessed are  
the bricks and stones, of Earth and from Earth, given voice by our actions.*

## AN EMPTY CUP

We recall those who did not live to see this moment, and those who are unable to celebrate openly their identity and connection to God. We are angry with the spiritual emptiness that the overwhelming majority of Jewish institutions offer to Gay and Lesbian Jews. We reflect that our liberation is still incomplete – and know that we are part of a chain of generations who will not complete the work, are still obligated to continue it, and thus help fill the cup, for the generations to come.

*Blessed is the empty cup, full of potential, of possibilities. Blessed is the cup waiting to be filled.  
Blessed is the cup of unfolding. And blessed is the Source of Life, who creates us all in Its image,  
full of love, strength, wisdom, and dreams.*

## COLORED RIBBONS

A symbol of the full Spectrum of our Jewish community, from Orthodox to Reconstructionist, from Ethiopian Jews to Burmese Jews. A reminder of the red and pink ribbons we wear in the hopes of finding cures for AIDS and breast cancer. They evoke visions of the Names Project quilt, the tzitzit we wear, the covenant that God made with Noah. They are the colors of our inner lives, the common threads that bind us all together as charoset reminds us of the mortar that bound together bricks in Egypt. Lastly they are a celebration of the love of gay people for flash and color.

*The blessing upon seeing a rainbow:*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם זֹכֵר הַ  
בְּרִית וְנֹאמֵן בְּבְרִיתוֹ וְקִים בְּמַאֲמָרוֹ.

*Baruch atah Adonai melech haolam, zokair ha-brit veneman brito vekayam bemaamaro.*

*Blessed are You, Eternal our God, ruler of the universe,  
who remembers the covenant, is faithful to Your covenant, and keeps Your promise.*

Please take a length of ribbon from your Seder plate  
and hand it to someone else, as a gift and a blessing.  
Tie this ribbon on somewhere, to a finger, through a button hole, in your hair,  
as a sign of our unity and a token of our night of celebration.

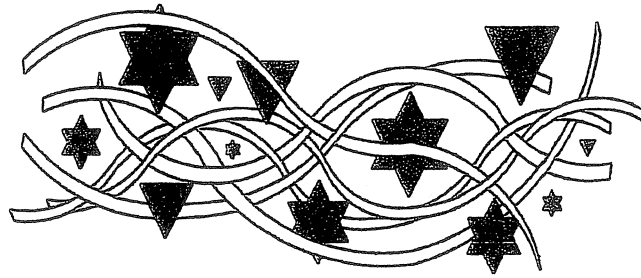
## TWO CHALLOT

The uncovered challot remind us of the sensuous sacredness of our own bodies; that the physical world, which includes our bodies, is holy and nothing to be ashamed of. We acknowledge the deep spiritual nourishment of physical contact.

מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ

*Baruch ata Adonai Elohenu melech haolam hamotsi lechem min haaretz*

*Blessed are You Eternal our God, ruler of the Universe,  
who brings forth bread from the earth.*



One of the ways in which the Seder is unlike other Seders is that we do not have to wait a long time in order to eat. Having said the blessing over the bread, we invite you to get up and fill your plate and come back to the table. When everyone is seated, come back to your seat, and wait for everyone to return to the table before we begin eating and return to our Seder. say a blessing over the first cup and begin eating.

## **WHY ARE WE GATHERED HERE TONIGHT?**

This ritual meal is known as a *Seder*, which means “order” in Hebrew, for the course of the meal is organized around numerous symbols and themes. This Festival of Liberation is adapted from the Seders we hold at Passover. Although Passover originated among the ancient Hebrews, many elements of the ritual we are familiar with come to us from the ancient Greeks, who would gather over a meal to discuss a particular topic. Plato’s *Symposium*, for example, tells the story of a group of friends who came together to investigate the nature of love. Passover was already a thousand-year-old festival when that Greek custom was added to the holiday ritual, brought to us by assimilated Jews who found something of value in another culture. The four questions our ancestors asked at Passover two thousand years ago began with, “*Why is this night different from all other nights?*” Tonight, to honor a different event in history, we ask four different questions.

## **THE FOUR QUESTIONS:**

### **WHY ARE WE DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER PEOPLE?**

We are different from all other people because we come from every other people. Hitler could have killed all the Jews in the world, but if another Hitler were to rise up tomorrow who sought to kill all the LGBT people in the world, his solution would fail, for we are born into every family, every nation, every faith, on every part of the planet. For each one of us killed, another would be born. Always.

## **WHAT IS OUR SACRED ROLE?**

Because we come from all other peoples, we are bridge-builders and connectors, we are ambassadors and weavers between worlds. Because we live our lives in many different ways, between genders and sexes and varied ways of loving, we stand at the doorway of Possibility, and it is from this that we derive our sacred role, as shamans and healers, as holy people dedicated to truth and integrity, even in the face of death.

## **HOW ARE WE THE SAME AS ALL OTHER PEOPLE?**

We bleed as all people bleed, and we love and laugh and cry and sing as do all human beings. We want what everyone wants, peace and prosperity, freedom and equality. We want families and communities and we want to be part of the healing of this world. Before we are transgendered, bisexual, intersexed, lesbian, gay, we are human. Just as the Source of Life has no gender, the human soul too is genderless, is all genders. And this we share with everyone in the world.

## **WHERE DO WE COME FROM AND WHAT IS OUR STORY?**

We are gathered here tonight around this festive table, to tell parts of the story of our people. It is an ancient story, a long one. We cannot tell it all, cannot name all the names of the people who led us out of oppression and into freedom. But for each tale we tell, others shimmer, forgotten. And for each name that we remember to name, other names call out from the past. May all who are hungry for this story come and listen. Tonight we tell the tale of our liberation.

## **TELLING OUR STORIES**

We were once slaves of our own people. No, worse than slaves, we were left out of our people's story, we were unseen, we were hated, called an abomination worthy of death. But with mighty hands and outstretched arms, we have taken control of our destinies. And with clear spirits and open hearts, we are here together to celebrate the liberation of our people from oppression, the oppression of the dominant culture and the oppression of our own people. Had our ancestors at Stonewall and other protests not begun our liberation, we and those who follow us might still be enslaved to the pharaohs of the present, rabbis and ministers, priests and senators, sheiks, mayors, pastors, governors, and even our own families.

Therefore, even if all of us were endowed with wisdom and understanding, and all of us were thoroughly versed in the Torah and in our people's history, it would still be our duty to tell of our collective movement toward rights, inclusion, and freedom from oppression. And to dwell at length on the story of this liberation is indeed praiseworthy.



## THE PAST

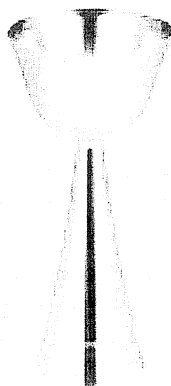
### THE FIRST CUP

This cup is for the past. The water in this cup is clear,  
to remind us of our long historical invisibility.  
We drink tonight to those who were left out of the  
stories of our people. And we drink to those who  
labored to restore their memories.

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת עֵין הַחַיִּים יוֹצֵרֵת הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרְאֵת מַיִם חַיִּים.

Ne-va-rekh et Ein ha-kha-yim  
Yo-tzer-et ha-olam  
Bo-reit ma-yim cha-yim.

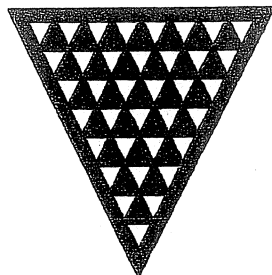
Let us bless the Wellspring of Life  
Creator of the Universe  
Who made living waters



## IN THE BEGINNING

America, I'm putting my queer shoulder  
to the wheel.

-Allen Ginsberg



of all the ones chosen, why were we left out?  
except for infrequent, hateful mention  
Torah's pages are emptied of our lives  
- our struggles, our love, our very existence -  
all painted with invisible ink  
did not God create us, as well?  
was not life made ours with a  
transcendent rush of Divine breath?  
are our longings that different,  
our pain un-human?  
are we not your family, your children,  
your parents and siblings?  
*are we not Jews?*  
surely God did not leave us out –  
surely a human hand erased our names  
surely we were unchosen  
by those whose fear blinded them  
to the common ground we all walk;  
that which came of the One Who Created All  
*created all*



What if Sarai & Hagar went forth  
What if they made their own covenant together & took their sons  
& left Abram to do Adonai's will  
What if it was Adonai's will that they go & seek a separate life to make a new beginning  
Have a tent of their own where they could feel safe  
Their children could feel safe  
What if they traveled together & looked up at the sky at night &  
saw the stars above them & lain together & laughed out loud  
Laughed that they were free to do as they wished without Abram ordering them about  
What if they truly loved 1 another & Sarai wanted to protect Hagar  
& take her to where they could be free to express their love  
What if this was the true story in Torah  
How would it be interpreted  
How would it be read  
The story of 2 women who found 1 another & lived out their lives together  
No 1's son was left to sacrifice  
How would the story have changed  
What would it say in the Talmud

- Randy Blaustein



The Divine Book, the First Book  
Stories profound and powerful  
Each night I search for a hint of me  
But come away empty handed.

I will not give up, I will not give in  
My seeking continues  
Until ageless legends open barred gates  
And I break their code of mystery.

The moment of truth will be exquisite  
When patriarchy yields  
Acknowledging my presence  
Never to pass over my life again.

Then the earth will shine  
The sun will wink  
The moon will laugh  
And we all will be full grown.

- Marjorie Hilsenrad

## CALAMITY – THE HOLOCAUST

How many know that the world's first homosexual rights organization was formed in Berlin – in 1897 – by a prominent Jewish doctor, Magnus Hirschfeld?

That by 1914, this group had presented the Reichstag with the signatures of more than 3,000 doctors urging repeal of the laws criminalizing homosexual relations in Germany?

That in 1919 Hirschfeld opened the Institute of Sexual Science, which housed both clinical and research facilities that were visited by scientists from around the world offering marriage counseling, VD testing and treatment, family planning and sex education.

And that Hirschfeld was assaulted by anti-Semites in October of 1920, causing a Nazi commentator to gleefully note “It is not without charm to know that...Hirschfeld was so beaten that his eloquent mouth could never again be kissed by one of his disciples.”

How many know that the famous photograph of burning books, fed to the flames by Nazi hands – in gruesome parody of things to come – was taken at that very Institute? The year, 1933. The number of books destroyed: over 12,000.

Dr. Hirschfeld was traveling on a lecture tour in France the day the Institute was sacked. He never returned to Germany and in 1938, he died a broken man.

The official SS newspaper announced that there were two million German homosexuals and called for their internment. In the work camps, just as the Jews were forced to wear the yellow star, homosexuals were forced to wear a pink triangle.

When the war ended, homosexuality remained a crime in both East and West Germany, as well as Britain, the U.S., and USSR. Thus, the homosexual inmates of the camps were not considered to have been *unjustly* imprisoned – they remained uncompensated for their suffering. Many remained imprisoned on both sides of the newly divided Germany.

Six thousand years ago, according to the Jewish Haggadah, we were slaves in Egypt. Exodus tells that the Egyptian King was fearful of our growing demographics and power, and ordered us to be put to work with increasing vigor.

In the Nineteen Thirties, the Nazis needed minorities to be persecuted. So in addition to the Jewish population, they singled out Homosexual Men, Gypsies, Seventh Day Adventists, and others.

The Nazis first rooted out the Gays in the S.A., the early Nazi storm troopers, which had a very large gay component to them. Then they went after German gays, and put those men know to be gay in Concentration Camps, using the then existing legal code. And shamefully, those who survived remained Criminals in the eye of the law for many more years. Lesbians, in the Nazi Era, were not acknowledged, and spared persecution.

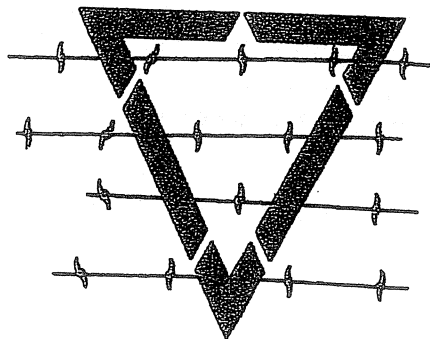
The moral to be drawn, if there is a moral at all: in all periods of history there were evil rulers seeking minorities to be scape goated, and not until Stonewall was there defiance on our part.

- Gerald Rosenstein

Lesbians weren't targeted for extermination.  
Our Wombs, factories for propagating the master race  
So the Nazis took us off the chopping block

But black triangles reserved for deviants  
Managed to send some of us there anyway

- Ali Michael Cannon



bless the ones who told the stories  
    who researched and interviewed and documented  
        and insisted, again and again  
    - if you're going to talk about the holocaust  
        you must not leave this part out -  
even if it made some in the Jewish community nervous  
    because the very idea that gays can be martyrs  
    tends to get stuck going down conservative throats

    and bless all who struggled to hold on to life and did;  
    who somehow made it from one day to the next  
        fighting illness and injury  
    and a mind that threatened to shut down  
who scrounged extra food, a blanket, a coat, shoes that fit  
    who looked down, looked away  
        and desperately tried  
    not to draw the attention of the guards  
        who, deep in their belly,  
    developed a rock hard knot of gumption  
and thought, no matter what, someone has to survive,  
    if for nothing else, to bear witness

    and a blessing to those who lost the race  
        whose bodies gave out,  
        (or hearts gave in)  
    whose minds went blank,  
        who drifted into death  
    or one day caught a guard's eye  
    and dropped from the blow  
        never to rise again  
    may your memories be for a blessing  
    even if no one knows your name

    and bless those who hid someone  
        - a friend, neighbor, lover -  
    who decided that life wasn't worth spit  
    if you wouldn't do what needed to be done  
and so, dangled their own lives over the abyss  
        and offered shelter  
    ...and according to Jewish tradition  
        saved the entire world

        a blessing on you all  
    the blessing above all other blessings:  
that *never again* is not just an empty phrase

## ESA EINAI

### I WILL LIFT UP MY EYES

אֶשָּׂא עֵינַי אֶלְהָרִים מֵאֵין יָבֹא עֲזָרִי: עֲזָרִי מֵעַם יְהוָה עָשָׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ;

*E-sa ei-nai el he-ha-rim  
me-ayin yavo ezri?  
Ez-ri me-im Adonai  
o-sei sha-ma-yim va-aretz.*

I will lift up my eyes unto the hills, from  
where my help comes.  
My help comes from Adonai who made  
heaven and earth.



## THE UPRISING

### THE SECOND CUP

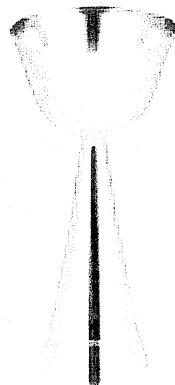
This cup is for those who fought back. The water in this cup is strong, strong enough to carve great canyons from solid rock. The water of this cup gave our people the courage to rise up at Stonewall and other places.

We drink this cup to remember them and be inspired by them. As we drink in this cup we take in its power.

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת עֵין הַחַיִּים יוֹצֵרֶת הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרְאֵת מַיִם חַיִּים.

Ne-va-rekh et Ein ha-kha-yim  
Yo-tzer-et ha-olam  
Bo-reit ma-yim cha-yim.

Let us bless the Wellspring of Life  
Creator of the Universe  
Who made living waters





Judy Garland was buried on Friday, June 27, 1969.  
That night, the New York City Police set out to close a gay bar, the Stonewall Inn.  
The raid did not go as planned.  
The clientele of the Stonewall not only occupied ground outside of mainstream American culture, but gay society itself: transvestites, effeminate men, butch women. Runaways, hustlers and outsiders; those who no longer cared what anyone thought of them.  
As patrons of the bar were led to the waiting police wagons a crowd gathered and began to boo the cops. How the actual fight started depends on who you talk to,  
but the crucial part is this:  
bottles, beer cans and rocks began sailing out of the crowd, aimed at the police.  
The onslaught was so ferocious that the cops took shelter in the bar and called for help.  
For three nights street battles raged. Few knew it then, but it was the start of a new chapter in the modern movement for human rights. The very word Stonewall became a part of the gay vocabulary and meant, quite simply: uprising.  
It does not compare to Masada or Warsaw (*thanks be to God!*),  
but the impact was enormous and the movement it sparked is alive and well today.

On Friday, the 27<sup>th</sup> of June, Judy Garland was buried. And a new human movement – with an astonishing vigor and strength – was born. Nothing would ever be the same again.

The gun had a silencer on it  
but they heard it anyway.  
It moved across the dark alley  
past their faces in the thick Southern night.  
They moved on through the dark  
and the pickup truck drove away.  
They went through the door with no number  
into the dark basement bar that held their friends,  
that held their fragile freedom.  
They danced and kissed in the dark  
but they always watched the door.

And just like that, everything was different.  
In a sunset and a sunrise.  
In newspapers scattered across a breakfast table.  
In a voice on the radio telling a story in short sentences,  
a story of something seemingly small that happened  
a long way away.  
Then they kissed in restaurants  
and walked several abreast down a busy sidewalk  
talking too loudly and singing freedom songs.  
Then they bought lesbian novels  
and took them to their literature classes.  
And then they kissed in restaurants.

- Sandra Marilyn

## TIME PASSAGES

In 8 May 1945, Great Uncle Mendel died on VE Day, blowing up trains in Italy.

*In February 13, 2004, Sharon and Ilana performed an act of civil disobedience  
as they waited hours in the rain to be legally married.*

In 1985, Paul was diagnosed with the HIV virus.

*In December, 2001, he, along with 5 members of Team CSZ, crossed the finish  
line in Honolulu, raising money to fight the global pandemic.*

On Friday evening, June 27, 1969, the New York City Police Department raided the  
Stonewall Inn and that night the street erupted into violent protest as the crowds in  
the bar fought back.

*Tonight, we are free, as Queer Jews, to tell our stories.*

Learn about the Past. Make a difference in your Communities. Celebrate your Life.

- Mendel Naftoli Hertz ben Teva v' Tova  
Marc Wernick

we all tried to belong  
to their team  
our team knew Dorothy  
Glynda and yes the wicked witch

which way to go?  
outside those closets  
their team always  
took everything

we take all right –  
from each other  
everything  
shame, fear, danger  
damaged goods

LBJ and the YMCA  
married Catholic  
disgrace, damage  
not Village People

Mattachine Society  
mixed with  
muscle mags  
is there hope

our team / pride  
we want  
just like  
their team

- Placido Lucca

Does Gay Pride Include Me?

That trans woman whose name  
you do not know who got beat  
up at Stonewall, gendered  
different, those lesbians who  
picked up bricks, are they all  
included in Gay Freedom?  
Between the lines of Gay are L,  
B, T - too often unseen.

As a Jewish feminist transman,  
who lived a lesbian life for 20  
years, I'm moving my seat to  
the head of the table. Who will  
join me? And who will move  
their seat a little closer to the  
back, because they've perhaps  
articulated freedom a bit  
longer?

- Ali Michael Cannon

## Born on a Crescent Moon Reflecting

Manly manly-womanly  
Chinese characters coupling  
in a Grant street bungalow,  
Cyril and Methodius Monks  
fish mouth fluting  
Cyrillic through centuries  
to the uncurtained ear  
of a winged poet  
singing *Alexandrian Songs*,  
haunting bisexuals  
clasping monogamously  
in Tai Chi rhythmic dance  
and telling tales to and fro  
while speaking of Sappho  
and Michelangelo,  
men and women  
decrying lepidopterists'  
pinning needles  
and speaking the warming words  
of homosapiens in birthing love.  
Androgynous persons listening,  
listening by seashells  
to the Kabala's flashing Sefiroth  
announcing out of dungeon release,  
and Kundalini rising to form  
a head resting crown.  
Will it be man-woman man  
or woman-man woman?  
Let's hear laughter  
in rising crescendos  
offering irony's answer  
while witnessing  
the emblazoned wedding,  
the world egg conjunctio,  
of accent "grave" to accent "aigu"  
in two treed east-west paradiso.

- Jeffrey Lily -

bless all those who refused to back off,  
    who would neither cave in nor give up,  
but resisted the fear (*the blacklist, the jail cell*)  
    and the pressure (*it's too soon, too much!*)  
    who said, if it's unjust and unbearable,  
        then it must be changed  
    and it might as well start with me

        a blessing on the founders of SIR,  
the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis –  
    you didn't wait until the time was right,  
        you just did the right thing:  
    provided a place to gather, talk and organize  
    and bless you for putting out the magazines  
        (in plain brown wrapping)  
mailed to those convinced that they were the only ones,  
    but when they read *The Ladder, Vector or One*,  
        suddenly there was a connection  
    there were brothers and sisters out there and,  
        just possibly,  
    a different life waited down the road,  
    maybe even one shared with a beloved

bless those who put on suits and ties, heels and dresses,  
    and walked picket lines  
with signs that talked of homosexual rights  
    who said, we're people, too  
    and the constitution belongs to all of us  
        bless them for breaking the trail,  
coming out long before it was fashionable  
    when the risks were real and personal

    and bless the ones who finally fought  
        the relentless street fight  
    who pushed the police back  
    and made them call for help,  
        who ignited a nation  
    and made it clear to their tribe  
    that we didn't have to take this anymore  
    who gave us a name to rally around,  
        *Stonewall*  
    and laid the groundwork  
for an unimaginable national day of gay pride

bless them with the gift that truly matters:  
    adding our hands to the struggle

# THE PLAGUE

## THE THIRD CUP

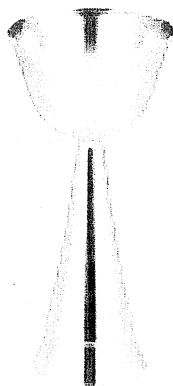
This cup is for those who fell, and for those who tended the sick in our years of plague. Life began in water, and this cup contains the gift of life.

We take this water into our own bodies to remember and honor and become them, to preserve and perpetuate their names and their journeys.

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת עֵין הַחַיִּים יוֹצֵרֵת הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרְאֵת מַיִם חַיִּים.

Ne-va-rekh et Ein ha-kha-yim  
Yo-tzer-et ha-olam  
Bo-reit ma-yim cha-yim.

Let us bless the Wellspring of Life  
Creator of the Universe  
Who made living waters



## THE MODERN LAMENT

*The dead should not be excluded from any celebration.*

– Tony Kushner, *The Dybbuk*

there came a time when thousands perished  
- men, women, children, elders -  
with much of the world turning its back  
and, *no*  
it wasn't horror camps  
furnished with smokestacks  
and German accents  
it was our own age  
our modern, enlightened age  
(but then, Germany was enlightened, wasn't it?)  
and even some of those  
who had said *never again*  
turned away

On what day did God create bacteria and viruses,  
planning in advance for all kinds of horrible diseases?  
Were they created on the third day, along with the  
vegetation, the seed-bearing plants, and the trees? Or  
were they created on the sixth day, along with all the  
creeping things of the earth?

On what day did God create bacteria and viruses?  
The landscape is tortured. Everywhere we go we  
encounter the ghosts of friends and lovers, family,  
neighbors, some of them named and many of them  
nameless. Truly this world is haunted, and no  
amount of wine or drugs can help us to forget.

- Andrew Ramer

## A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

In July, 1981 the New York Times reports that 12 gay men in the San Francisco area have died of a mysterious illness, and others are experiencing symptoms that doctors can't explain. Within months people are calling it GRID – Gay Related Immune Deficiency. A year later the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention establishes the term Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. Who could have imagined all the ways in which a virus first isolated in 1985 would change our lives, change the world? With no government support in the early years of the crisis, amazing organizations spring up in queer communities all over the planet, bringing people together in the face of death and despair. By the year 2002 HIV has become the leading cause of death worldwide among those between the ages of 15 and 59. By 2007, more than 925,000 Americans and 25 million people worldwide have died of AIDS. An estimated 40 million people are living with HIV/AIDS, including 2 million children. Africa alone has 11 million AIDS orphans. In developing countries 9 million people are in need of AIDS drugs, only 3 million are receiving them, and clinical trials on AIDS vaccines continue, thus far with no success.

bless all those who spoke up  
    long before it became acceptable,  
    warning of danger and urging change  
    when many in the community covered their ears  
    bless all who held the leaders to account  
    demanding to know why a popular president  
could not even say the *word*, let alone begin government action  
    a blessing for the ones who sat in, who marched,  
    who did research and educated,  
    who made quilt panels and took them to Washington

    bless all those in the medical world  
    who toiled in hospital wings that others would not enter,  
    who fought for funding, brought in community activists,  
    refuted the lies that one could become ill by shaking hands,  
    and quietly helped patients ease out of an impossible life

    and bless the women  
    who took this cause as their own  
who raised money, prepared and served meals, who said early on:  
    it may be men dying, but we are all in this together  
    and who were among the first to rally  
    when the plague poked its gruesome face  
    into other communities – people caught on the bottom,  
    because of skin color, because of drugs

    and a blessing on those who toiled quietly  
    to make the lives of the dying easier  
    who cleaned house, walked dogs, fetched medicine,  
    provided transportation, massages, a sense of humor  
    who sat holding hands, holding bedpans,  
    wiping brows, cleaning up, praying  
    and most important – listening

    bless the ones who planned the funerals,  
    held the memorials, said kaddish, wrote the obituaries,  
    talked to the relatives, then talked to each other,  
    to try and heal  
    *and then started up all over again*  
    *with another ill person*

**bless all in our community who gave of themselves:**  
    **bless them with the certain knowledge**  
    **that in a time of tribulation and grief,**  
    **of fear and prejudice,**  
    **they did not turn away**

# THE TIME OF CHANGE

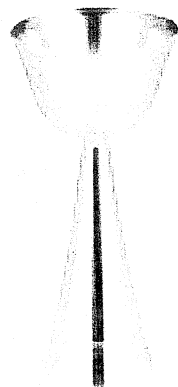
## THE FOURTH CUP

This cup is for those who refused to stand still. Minorities, women, queers, the founders of this community. Like rain, like streams, like rivers flowing toward the sea, the water of this cup is about change, about movement, about transformation. We take it into ourselves and merge with its fluid creativity, we who are mostly water ourselves.

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת עֵין הַחַיִּים יוֹצֵרֵת הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרְאֵת מַיִם חַיִּים.

Ne-va-rekh et Ein ha-kha-yim  
Yo-tzer-et ha-olam  
Bo-reit ma-yim cha-yim.

Let us bless the Wellspring of Life  
Creator of the Universe  
Who made living waters





## THE THREAD THAT RUNS THROUGH IT

The explosion of social change and protest that took hold in America in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century didn't happen in a vacuum. Trace the precedence: the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire, organizer Clara Lemlich, and the International Ladies Garment Workers Union to the United Farm Workers and Cesar Chavez; the abolition groups agitating before the Revolution to the Montgomery bus boycott; seventy years of suffragette activity to the modern women's movement.

Anti-war uproar? Nothing new – check out the headlines during the Civil War. And perhaps the oldest resistance thread in this country weaves right through from the time of the pilgrims to AIM - the American Indian Movement of the 1970's.

Today's on-going work to reconcile the Jewish and LGBT communities owes a ton of debt to many other struggles down the decades; truly, we are both influenced and inspired by the sweat of those who went before.

Remember: no one fights alone.

## WADE IN THE WATER

Chorus:

Wade in the water,  
wade in the water, children,  
wade in the water.  
God's gonna trouble the water.

Verses:

See those people dressed in white,  
*God's gonna trouble the water - (Congregation)*

They must be the children of the Israelites.  
*God's gonna trouble the water - (Congregation)*

See those people dressed in black,  
*God's gonna trouble the water - (Congregation)*  
They come a long way and they ain't turning back.  
*God's gonna trouble the water - (Congregation)*

See those people dressed in blue,  
*God's gonna trouble the water - (Congregation)*  
They look like my people coming through.  
*God's gonna trouble the water - (Congregation)*

See those people dressed in red,  
*God's gonna trouble the water - (Congregation)*  
They must be the children that Miriam led.  
*God's gonna trouble the water - (Congregation)*

*Text and Music: African-American spiritual*

## THE RISING OF THE WOMEN

Rabbi Hillel teaches us the core of Jewish thought: "What is hateful to you, do not do unto others." Knowing this, how could I not be a feminist?

I remember being a young girl walking around the Seder table, carrying a bowl of water, so the men could wash their hands. I remember sitting in the Conservative synagogue where I grew up, as our rabbi explained that women could not be on the bimah, because we distracted men from prayer. It's been 30-35 years since then, but I could walk into that sanctuary today and show you where I was sitting when my Jewish heart was cut out of me.

Wasn't this "hateful to you?" Would you have willingly been a second-class Jew? Was the Judaism of my childhood really what it meant to be a Jew?

Jewish feminism said no. Jewish feminism showed me that women were not second-class Jews. Jewish feminism taught me that I belong at the heart of my people. Women – lesbian, bisexual or straight, we could bring our whole selves to Judaism, to feminism. We belonged, we participated, we are making Judaism whole.

- Karen Schiller

Daughters now cannot conceive  
Of the anguish and despair  
Of a child born female in a time of darkness  
Her innocence lost to injustice.

I remember how it was before  
The disdain that we endured  
Laughable and expendable we were  
Before we found our voices.

I used to recoil at the unfairness  
My mother offering no solace  
Until overnight women found their souls  
And the past and the future divided.

Today shadows still remain  
Of that time of shame and doubt  
They fade slowly, I do not look back  
Only forward to a healed tomorrow.

- Marjorie Hilsenrad

Equal rights for women have been bywords of justice-seekers for centuries, but a burst of progress occurred in the 1970s along with the increasingly visible battle for LGBT rights. Maybe all of these should be called Pride Rights because that's what they are world-wide.

CSZ has played a significant role in increasing awareness of these issues within Reform Judaism starting with the congregation itself. Much remains to be accomplished but we have the right to feel "pride" as we look back at our 28 years of diverse membership, inclusive presence on the bimah, in leadership roles and in our liturgy.

Let's keep moving!

- Batya Kalis

## A LITTLE LOCAL COLOR

It's an odd thing, but everyone who disappears is said to be  
seen in San Francisco. It must be a delightful city, and  
possess all the attractions of the next world.

- Oscar Wilde

1955 – The Daughters of Bilitis, the first lesbian rights organization in the US is founded in San Francisco by Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon

1961 – Drag queen and political activist José Sarria becomes the first openly gay person to run for public office in this country, for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

1964 – Life Magazine, in a groundbreaking article, "Homosexuality in America," declares San Francisco to be the "gay capital" of the United States.

1966 – the Compton's Cafeteria Riot in the Tenderloin is the first recorded transgender riot.

1972 – The first pride parade, called Christopher Street West, is held here. It's now the largest GLBTQ public event in the world, with half a million people attending.

1975 – Santa Cruz is the first US county to ban discrimination against lesbians and gay men.

1977 – The San Francisco LGBT Film Festival starts, which has become the longest running, largest, and most widely recognized queer film event in the world.

1978 – Gilbert Baker hand-dyes and sews the first Rainbow Flag with eight colors including pink and turquoise, which flies in the Gay Freedom Parade that year.

1979 – The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence are founded by three men in nun's habits who wandered out into the Castro on a moonlit night.

1982 – The first Gay Games are held in San Francisco. Over 1,300 gay and lesbian athletes from 28 states and 10 nations participate.

1984 – Berkeley becomes the first US city to extend domestic partnership benefits to lesbian and gay city employees.

1985 – The AIDS Memorial Quilt is founded by Cleve Jones. It now has more 50,000 panels celebrating the lives of those lost to this pandemic.

1990 – The first national Bisexual Conference is held in San Francisco.

how do we mark this astonishing time in our history?  
is it possible to truly appreciate the giant strides  
setting our age apart from the abyss of the past?  
there are young ones now who take for granted  
a level of acceptance that so many could never have imagined  
and that makes some of us nervous

Shakespeare said we owe God a death -  
we say we owe the dead remembrance  
it is our task to keep the memory of persecution alive  
(not to mention recent bad news)  
freedom is infinitely more precious  
when you know it was wrested from slavery's grasp,  
and you can count on historical amnesia setting the stage  
for oppression's tiresome encore

What I remember about Harvey Milk:

I remember the pride I felt the day he was elected, the first out gay man to be elected to anything. In an instant, there were new possibilities.

I remember the night I met him, he kissed me full on the mouth, after I introduced him to an audience of about a thousand at Stanford University. In an instant, I was "out" in some brand new, wonderful way.

I remember the day, six months later, when he was assassinated. In an instant, amid a sea of candles and tears, a community was reborn.

- Arthur Slepian

In 1977 Harvey Milk is elected supervisor in San Francisco. After he takes the oath of office he tells the crowd, *"This is not my swearing-in, this is your swearing-in. You can stand around and throw bricks at Silly Hall or you can take it over. Well, here we are."*


After less than a year in office, Harvey and Mayor George Moscone lie dead in City Hall, slain by a disgruntled fellow supervisor, Dan White. That night, November 27, 1978, thousands march to City Hall, bringing their pain, outrage, and tribute. They remember his words in a speech he made while organizing against Anita Bryant's anti-gay campaign:

"... if I've found one overriding thing about my personal election, it's the fact that if a gay person can be elected, it's a green light. And you and you and you, you have to give people hope..."

When Dan White is convicted of mere manslaughter and sentenced to seven years in prison, thousands of people stream to City Hall to protest and riots break out.

In 1999 *Time Magazine* names Milk as one of the most influential figures of the century.

Harvey – not long in office, no big bills or legislation wearing his name. But a legacy that is *huge*. He was one of the first: a major office-holder, in a large city, absolutely, openly, one hundred percent queer as a three dollar bill. And, in case anyone's interested, Jewish.



Can't you see how  
important it is for us to love  
openly, without hiding  
and without guilt?  
- Larry Kramer

how do you measure acceptance?  
the number of people who show up for the funeral?  
how many come for the riot?  
or maybe it's that the issue no longer is  
whether or not we are represented  
on the Board of Supervisors  
- nowadays, that goes without saying –  
no, it's the legality of the *thousands*  
of marriage licenses issued to us so recently  
in that very building where you died  
I wish you'd seen it, Harvey  
but, then, I expect you did  
- Joss Eldredge

## BIGOTRY — THE BREAD OF AFFLICTION

here am I, says Abraham  
when God comes calling with ferocious demand  
- the akedah, the binding —  
a child's sacrifice  
the father then was willing  
but we are not  
*or are we?*

Matthew Shepard's blood  
surely does not stain our hands  
but we know that there is guilt  
enough to spread around

why must these lessons be learned  
with horror and shed life?  
cannot eyes be opened by less than murder?  
what good is the word progress  
if hearts cannot be moved without  
the loss of a young man's decades?  
the people of Laramie  
can teach us a thing or two about that

we remember you, Matthew  
but we would rather remember you  
with an accomplished and full human life  
not a youngster cut down so soon

and what of the mother  
who fought with tenacity and strength  
for the simple dignity of two words  
*my daughter*  
bad enough she was taken from life;  
grief enough that young lives were ruined in her murder;  
the least we can do now is get the pronouns right

born Eddie, but you can call her Gwen  
and why must these lessons be taught  
in such bloody fashion?  
why couldn't a community celebrate her life  
instead of coming together to mourn her death?  
we remember you, Gwen Araujo  
but we would rather have you with us tonight  
a lively and striking girl  
growing into her mature womanhood  
and not a young one taken so soon

When I see a rainbow  
The flag flying  
From the lamp-post  
Fluttering in the Pacific breeze

I know that God  
Made a Covenant  
Between us.

If we lived our lives  
In black and white  
We would never see  
That promise  
God made.

To see all those colors together  
It reminds me  
That God is there  
For you and me.

- Kevin Johnson

We have come so far, but our work is not done. In 2011, the United Nations passed its first resolution recognizing LGBT rights, and the list of countries around the world that support full non-discrimination is growing, but the death penalty for homosexuality still exists in countries around the world, and discrimination and violence against LGBT people continues.

In this county we have seen an increase in rights for our communities. It has become legal for us to serve openly in the military, and every year, same-sex marriage becomes legal in more states. On May 9, 2012 Barak Obama became the first sitting US president to come out in support of same-sex marriage. Our presence is increasingly reflected in the media in positive ways, and together with our families and friends, we continue to fight, using the electoral process, the legislatures and the courts, and by taking to the streets of the United States and around the world, for full civil rights for all LGBT peoples,.

Bless all those who lived lives of desperation  
Bless all those who struggled against the confines of their closets  
Bless all those who broke free  
Bless all those who inspired others  
Bless all those who are free because of the work that was done before them  
Bless all who are alive today  
And bless all of those, holy queer, who have yet to be born.

## HALLEL

On festival days, we sing *Hallel* – Psalms of praise. At this Mishkan, Pride Day is considered a time of special and unique celebration. As we commemorate the Stonewall uprising and the amazing events of our recent history, let us sing praise – loud and proud, with these words from Psalm 118.

Hear the gay shouts of liberation  
in the tents of the just:

"God's might is triumphant;"

"God's power is supreme."

Pit-chu li sha-arey tsedek  
Avo vam odeh Yah, odeh Yah.  
Zeh ha-sha-ar-L'Adonai  
Tsadikim yavo-u-vo.

פָּתְחוּ לִי שַׁעַר צֶדֶק  
אֲבֹא בָם אֲוֹכֶה יְהוָה.  
זֶה הַשַּׁעַר לִי  
צְדִיקִים יָבֹאוּ בּוֹ.

Open the gates of righteousness for me,  
that I might enter and praise God.  
This is the gateway of the Almighty  
the righteous shall enter it.

I will give thanks to You, O God,  
for You have answered me with liberation.

The stone which the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone.  
This is God's doing,  
what a wonderful sight it is!  
This is the day God made,  
let us rejoice and celebrate in it!



## WHY IS THIS COMMUNITY DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER COMMUNITIES?

The world's first openly gay and lesbian Jewish organizations come into existence in the early seventies. In 1972, *Achvah Chutzpah*, the first gay Jewish organization in this country is founded in San Francisco, and *Beth Chaim Chadashim* of Los Angeles becomes the first American synagogue with special outreach to the gay community. This is followed in 1973 by *Congregation Beth Simchat Torah* of New York, *Beth Ahavah* of Philadelphia in 1975 and Chicago's *Or Chadash* in 1976.

In 1976, the first worldwide meeting of LGBT Jews takes place in Washington, DC.

In 1977, San Francisco's *Congregation Sha'ar Zahav* is born, and the second International Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews is held in New York. Over 200 people attend.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4th International Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews are held in 1978 and 1979.

In 1980, the World Congress of GLBT Jews is formed; it currently is comprised of over 65 organizations from several countries throughout the world.

In 1984 the Reconstructionist Movement begins to accept lesbian and gay students to its rabbinical school.

In 1990, at the 101<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of American Rabbis, a decision is made to begin accepting gay men and lesbians as Reform rabbis.

In 2003, Reuben Zellman was accepted as the first out transgender rabbinic student in the Reform Movement.

In 2006, Elliot Kukla was ordained as the first out, transgender rabbi.

In 2007 the Conservative Movement accepts lesbians and gay men to its rabbinical school the Union College, and Sha'ar Zahav celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

In 2010, the Reform Movement ordains Reuben Zellman as its second transgender rabbi.

on Passover we ask –  
why is this night different from all other nights?  
tonight we ask another question –  
*what makes this community different, singular, special?*  
in what manner can  
this partnership of such diverse souls  
be described?  
how do you find the very heart of it?  
  
you tell the stories...



Almost every day I drive past our shul on my way to work and find myself smiling and nodding fondly toward it. The building sits solidly on that holy corner of 16<sup>th</sup> and Dolores as if it had always been so – Congregation Sha’ar Zahav” it proudly pronounces to locals and tourists alike.

But it hasn’t always been so. When I moved to San Francisco in 1969 and began the search for people like myself I didn’t realize what a difficult task that was to be. It took a full 10 years before I found CSZ and the search was complete. My membership and service as President and board member at CSZ over these 26 years has offered me a deepening of my Jewish life, given me a sense of ‘home’ and the confidence to serve on other community boards. I own a plot at CSZ’s cemetery at Hills of Eternity and plan to rest there eternally with my partner and my sisters and brothers from CSZ.

I remember my father, alav hashalom, a barber in the East End of London who worked at a barbershop on the same street as his shul. He prayed there every day for a year after his mother died. He loved his temple in his community – and I love CSZ in mine.

- Irene Ogus

LGBT Freedom season is like Passover. We gather with friends and extended family, conducting rituals recounting our history. We retell a story that we pretty much already know, but it has fresh application to our lives, and there's always more to learn. Even if we become jaded, we remember the obligation to teach the story to new members of our community. If we're lucky, the newer members teach us where we should be headed. Each year, we recommit to our own exodus from oppression, and to the liberation of others who have not yet reached the promised land of freedom.

In 1991, Governor Wilson vetoed AB 101, which would have added sexual orientation to the Fair Employment and Housing Act. Queer rights supporters marched in the streets in protest. Some folks vandalized state offices. The City responded with curfews and police helicopters. On Erev Shabbat – curfew notwithstanding – we gathered at CSZ on Danvers. As part of the service, we sat in pews circled together and discussed what was going on. It was a source of joy and strength to be in this community, sharing different views about violence against government buildings, and government violence against us.

- Ray Bernstein

We came to San Francisco for a weekend in 1971 and never left. From the beginning we wanted to hook up with a shul. We visited many synagogues looking for a place to pray. We felt no connection to any of those that we visited. Then in 1986 we went to CSZ Kol Nidre services at the Unitarian Center. Neither of us had ever used a machzor (prayer book) written specifically by a congregation for the congregation. The service was meaningful. The liturgy spoke to us. It was all familiar, but yet so different than what we grew up with. We knew we had come home.

- Steve and Florence Nacamulli

Okay, so my sexuality may be mainstream, but I've always felt that not much else about me is. I've so often felt that I don't fit in. But here, in this community, where there is no 'normal,' where we value our different-ness at every level - the deep inner level where our sexuality lies and every other level too. Here: that part of me that isn't mainstream, that doesn't fit in, that part of me is celebrated and nourished, that part of me is glorious and special, and it flowers and grows. And that is glorious, because that is the part of me that has something to contribute to our world.

And that's why I love my Sha'ar Zahav community.

- Deborah Levy

At Home with Sha'ar Zahav

sink into sanctuary  
commune with calm  
contemplate covenant  
come for kvelling, for kvetching  
we share the same mother  
glimpse G-d's reflection in one another  
a reclamation, a celebration  
and why not get all f'pitzed a few times a year?

- Lydia Radovich-Zinn

where would I go  
a place  
a home  
for belonging  
and hope and love

I knew that I was different  
not like other people  
I felt like a stranger  
not belonging anywhere

two women  
invited me here  
to see and meet  
others on a path

I was not sure  
I belonged here  
I stayed and wondered  
was this the place  
the home I ached for

I heard a story here  
of a woman  
who left her home  
and adopted a people  
and a faith not her own

that story  
that woman  
changed me  
I realized that  
I was home

My name is Saadia Gershon  
Son of Ruth and Naomi  
I am home

- Kevin Johnson

Congregation Sha'ar Zahav

Kehillah, Makom, Ruach.  
Community, Place, Spirit  
Of Love, Laughter and Caring  
Of Learning, Leading and Prayer.

How you help sustain me every one of my days.

Where else can I be loved and accepted as my whole self?  
Where else can I always be welcomed as an old friend?  
Where else can I openly and proudly mourn and pray for non-Jewish family members and  
friends who are gravely ill?

You remind me that it is not only okay, but beautiful and wonderful to be gay -- that it is a  
blessing.  
You remind me that each of us on this earth is made in God's image, and deserves to be treated  
as such.  
You remind me why I love being a Jew.

Congregation Sha'ar Zahav

You are a true blessing.  
May God continue to shine Her face upon you in the years to come.

- Patricia Lin

Freedom. Love. Gratitude. I think that's where Jewish leadership comes from: the freedom to  
help those who are oppressed and those who oppress themselves; the self-love enough to  
fearlessly love others; the gratitude to share oneself with one's community. We at CSZ are all  
leaders who guide each other along many paths of understanding.

Moses brought our people out of oppression, but he did not lead the people into the land of  
Israel. He already had Israel inside of him. His people, however, were just beginning to learn  
about freedom, love and gratitude, and therefore needed the promise of the land fulfilled, for  
their own sense of  
well-being.

Moses had grown up wealthy, privileged and secure, whereas they hadn't. As LGBT Jews, we  
lacked the privilege and security of growing up heterosexual, and for a time had to build  
pyramids for our oppressors. May we each find our own Israel inside of us, and help lead others  
toward finding theirs. Chag sameach.

- Chanah Harei-Or



When the world is about to crush me with all of its weight,  
I find safety here.

When people have been too cruel because of their ignorance,  
I find compassion here.

When my government tries to silence me,  
I find my voice here.

When I feel a sense of helplessness during these uncertain times,  
I find peace here.

When I am lost and tossed-about in the day-to-day maze of activity,  
I find direction here.

When loneliness slowly creeps into my life like the evening mist,  
I find community here.

When I feel isolated at times,  
I find comfort here.

When friends seem nowhere to be found in the daily grind,  
I find good friends here.

When I sometimes lose sight of what I can do for the community,  
I find purpose here.

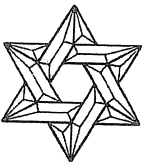
When I feel that my family is scattered—hundreds of miles away,  
I find the nearness of family here.

When the cacophony outside is too much and I need to be soothed,  
I find beautiful music here.

When I run around and take the simple things for granted,  
I find meaning here.

When I am gone and have left only my name,  
I know that I will be remembered here.

- Robert Bernardo



## THE RAINBOW BLESSINGS

On this night of joy we celebrate a rainbow's worth of blessings. Let's dip a finger into water for each one and lick it off, water mixed with the taste of our living flesh, to remind us that the blessings of life are always present, waiting to be tasted, again and again.

אָדָם

RED

AH-DOHM

For the blessing of our bodies, all of them made in the image of God, and for rootedness and our connection to the sacred Earth in all its beauty and abundance.

כָּתָם

ORANGE

KAH-TOHM

For the joint blessing of our sexuality and our creativity, for all the ways in which we can be fruitful and multiply, in joy and pleasure, crying out in bliss.

צְהֹב

YELLOW

TSAH-HOV

For the blessing of our strength, our will, our capacity to survive and endure and move forward in a sacred way, with centeredness and clarity, alone and for all the world.

יָרֵק

GREEN

YAR-ROHK

For the blessing of heart-connection, and for the holy blessing of the trees of life, their rich green leaves offering shelter to lovers, their branches a tabernacle of joy.

כָּחֹל

BLUE

KAH-KHOL

For the blessing of speech, words pouring forth like water, psalms, prayers, songs of celebration, which echo back to the One who spoke all things into existence.

סָגֹל

PURPLE

SA-GOHL

For the blessing of spirit, of soul, the holy blessing of our connection to the Source of Life, the Creator of all that is. Blessing upon blessing, to speak, to share, to celebrate, to taste, again and again, and let us say: **Amen.**

## THE FUTURE

### THE FIFTH CUP

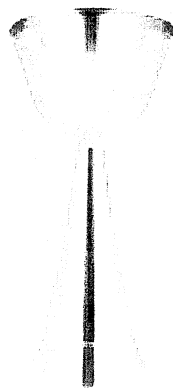
This cup is for those yet to come. The water in this cup is clear, but this isn't the cup of invisibility. It's a cup that holds clarity of sight, clear hearts, clear minds, clear action. This cup flows out from Stonewall and all of our attempts at liberation. It flows out from the deepest springs of our own hearts' yearnings. It flows out from what we are doing here tonight, and it celebrates those who will follow us in this journey, our children and their children, physical and spiritual. This cup we drink with certainty, knowing that our journey is right, our path is given, our purpose is strong, and our fulfillment is inevitable.

Let all who are thirsty come and drink.  
This is the water of life,  
which comes to us from the Source of Life.

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת עֵין הַחַיִּים יוֹצֵרֶת הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵאת מַיִם חַיִּים.

Ne-va-rekh et Ein ha-kha-yim  
Yo-tzer-et ha-olam  
Bo-reit ma-yim cha-yim.

Let us bless the Wellspring of Life  
Creator of the Universe  
Who made living waters



A few years ago on Kol Nidre I delivered a sermon on the power of diversity to my congregation in Toronto. Afterwards, in the swirling crowd I felt someone tug at my jacket. I turned around to find a nine-year old boy in lavender shiny 'Powerpuff s' sneakers. "I really liked your sermon," he whispered before disappearing into the crowd. During Sukkot his moms told me that he had been hassled about his shoes at school all week, but after hearing my sermon he had decided to keep wearing them. I don't really think it was my words that impacted him, but the visual power of a transgender, flamingly queer, gender ambiguous rabbi on the bimah.

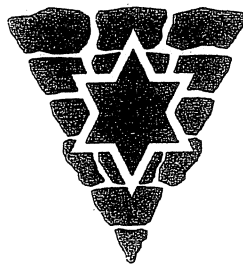
I couldn't help compare the range of options that the boy in my congregation had to be a full person, with the limited scope of choices that had been available to Ronnie Paris Jr., a boy in Florida who was beaten to death by his father in 2005 for acting like a "sissy." I also couldn't stop dreaming of a world where everyone has the option to grow up with the ability to choose their clothes, hobbies, and behaviors without the threat of violence or humiliation. A world where every size, shape, ability, age, and gender is celebrated as yet another manifestation of holiness.

What if from the moment a child was born instead of asking is it a boy or a girl we said 'It's a baby image of God'? What if we all supported each other in being our shiniest, sexiest, fiercest, most authentically quirky selves instead of collaborating to suppress each other? This is the future I imagine for all of us and I can tell you right now, it looks fabulous.

*-Rabbi Elliot Kulka*

and here's the thing for  
many of us Jews who  
- whether on account of sexuality, gender,  
or a virulently progressive attitude –  
have made a home outside the fence:  
access to the bimah  
isn't enough  
we want what happens there  
*to reflect our lives*  
we want to refill the glass,  
write the midrash, create the rituals,  
use the new blessings,  
produce our own liturgy,  
keep the door absolutely open,  
never run short of questions,  
make the work go on

if the world only spins forward  
as Tony Kushner tells us,  
then we want to be part  
of a Jewish tradition that  
honors the past and yet,  
always moves willingly into  
the arms of that ever unfolding future  
and we won't accept just bread,  
the basic sustenance;  
we want our world  
- our quirky, non-traditional world -  
to blossom like roses  
of such dazzling color  
and fragrance  
that all will see and know  
how right it is,  
how just it is  
*and everyone will be the better for it*





It is not your duty to complete the task, nor are you free to desist from it.  
- Pirke Avot 2:2

Once Honi the Circle-Maker was walking on the road and saw a man planting a carob tree. Honi said, "You know a carob tree takes 70 years to bear fruit. Are you so sure you will live 70 years so as to eat from it?"

"I found this world provided with carob trees," the man replied, "so will I plant for my offspring."

Honi then sat down and was overcome with sleep. As he slept, a small cave formed around him, so that he was hidden. And thus he slept for 70 years. When he awoke, he saw a man gathering carobs from the same tree, and eating them? "Do you know who planted this carob tree?" Honi asked.

"My grandfather," the man replied.

"I must have been like a dreamer for 70 years!" Honi exclaimed.

- *Babylonian Talmud, Ta'anit 23a*

I say to you today, my friends, even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream.

- *Martin Luther King Jr., August 28, 1963*

## BIRKAT

We say these ancient words of Grace after Meals – “Blessed are you, Eternal One, Creator of the universe, who feeds the whole world with Your goodness, with grace, with lovingkindness and tender mercy. You give food to all flesh, and Your lovingkindness endures for ever.”

We say these ancient words, knowing that our people, Jewish and different, have often lacked food, comfort, safety, and spiritual sustenance. But we say these ancient words of thanksgiving tonight at this seder, after telling our stories and sharing this meal, we say these ancient words of praise with a commitment to do our part to make them true.

Blessed are You, the Source of Life, who has blessed us with this meal and with this gathering. As we have been given food and drink, may all who are hungry and thirsty be nourished, in body and in spirit, through Your bounty and through our actions.

And let us say, Amen.

בְּרִיךְ רַחֲמָנָה מַלְכָּה דְּעֵלְמָה מְרִיבָה דְּהַאי פִּיתָא.

*B'rich rachamana malka d'alma ma-reh d'hai  
pi'ta*

You are the Source of Life for all that is, and  
Your blessing flows through me

## HAYDALAH

Evening falls cool and deep  
Bringing out the daily blessings buried under the screens and noise of  
day  
Slowly these gifts appear: the stillness, the peace, the sway of music  
Whatever the day's anger and fear, we see its waning powers at night  
Silent and open, darkness provides the true time for reflection

Blessed are you, the world! Functioning still under the heavy weight of  
movement,  
                    hate and frenzy  
Blessed are the Scriptures in which we find solace. The songs of laughter,  
light and  
                    sorrow; you too are blessed

Whatever troubles the day creates, I know to look for the night for peace

- Kailin Koch

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Creator of the Universe, who made living waters for  
us to drink.

Blessed are You, Source of Life, Ruler of time and space, who guided us to that which  
we honor through the symbols of this Seder.

Blessed are You, Holy Oneness, Enlivening Spirit of Your creation, who made the lights  
of the rainbow to bless us with.

Blessed are You, Source of Life, Creator of the Universe, who varies the forms of Your  
creatures.

Blessed are we, the fruit of Your creation, on this night and all other nights.

At Passover we open our doors to Elijah the Prophet. Tonight our doors are open to everyone, and we are gathered here, out and proud. We are the elders and prophets the world has been waiting for. We are the ones who stand tall and announce to the world a new way of living. Let us reach out hands, so that everyone in this room is woven together in sacred touch. And after a long night of words, let us breathe together for a moment in silence, and feel the blessings of who we are flow through us.

## CLOSING THE WAY

*Let all spirits who have joined us for this sanctified time,  
this ritual meal of remembrance, go now with our blessings.  
Be satisfied that some of your stories have seen the light of telling;  
be assured that your lives were worthwhile.  
And those whom we were honored to know in person,  
know you will always be remembered –  
far, far beyond this night.  
Understand that though we now close the door  
- in ritual recognition of your leaving -  
that this mishkan, this home away from home,  
is always open.*

## THE SEAL OF COMPLETION

*Though neither the work nor the remembering  
will ever be finished in our lifespan,  
we have completed this seder.*

*May our words here tonight  
have meaning throughout the coming year;  
may all of us  
- of every gender and sexual orientation –  
feel a more thoughtful, more intense sense of pride  
when the calendar next swings to the end of June.*

*May we recognize that liberation is not a destination,  
but an on-going labor of love  
and that no one is free  
until all the bonds are cut.  
may it be so,  
speedily and soon,  
and let us say, Next year in...*

Not next year: Now. Not anywhere else, but here and now,  
everywhere and always.  
Amen. Amen. Selah.

## OD YAVO SHALOM ALEINU

Od yavo shalom aleinu  
Od yavo shalom aleinu  
Od yavo shalom aleinu v'al kulam.  
Salaam, aleinu v'al kol haolam, salaam, salaam.  
Salaam, aleinu v'al kol haolam, salaam, salaam.  
Od yavo shalom aleinu  
Od yavo shalom aleinu  
Od yavo shalom aleinu v'al kulam.

Peace will yet come to us.  
Peace will yet come to us.  
Peace will come to us and everyone.  
Salaam, peace for us and for all the world, peace, peace.  
Salaam, peace for us and for all the world, peace, peace.  
Peace will yet come to us  
Peace will yet come to us  
Peace will yet come to us and everyone.

- words and music by Sheva



## THE STORY OF THIS SEDER AND THIS HAGGADAH

In July of 1995 at the 6th Aleph Kallah in Colorado there was a meeting of the “Gay and Lesbian Mishpocha.” One of the members, Ray Schnitzler, brought along copies of the Berkeley Queer Minyan’s “Queer Pride Seder,” which he’d written with Susie Kisber. Mark Horn, from New York City, thrilled with the idea, took home a copy of that haggadah, which he shared with the members of the Gay and Lesbian Committee of his synagogue, B’nai Jeshurun, a Conservative congregation in Manhattan that has many queer members.

Under Mark Horn’s direction, a haggadah unique to B’nai Jeshurun was written, using elements of the “Queer Pride Seder.” A core evolving text called “The Stonewall Shabbat Seder,” was first used in 1996. Each year a catered kosher dinner was held on the last Friday night in June, the Shabbat before Gay Pride Day in New York. In 1999 reporters from The Forward and The Jewish Telegraphic Agency covered the event. B’nai Jeshurun’s Guests of Honor have included Congressman Barney Frank; co-founder of the Lesbian Herstory Archive, Joan Nestle; and Sandi DuBowski, director of *Trembling Before G-d*, the documentary about lesbian and gay hasidic and orthodox Jews.

In 2004 CSZ member Andrew Ramer gave copies of B’nai Jeshurun’s “The Stonewall Shabbat Seder” to Rabbi Angel and Joss Eldredge of the Program Committee. They were both captivated by that haggadah, as Mark Horn had been by the “Queer Pride Seder.” Inspired by the words and concept, Joss Eldredge, who was also an active member of CSZ’s Queer Torah Study Project, began writing a new text for use in our community. When she passed on her work to Andrew Ramer, he dived in himself, and along with guidance and inspiration from Rabbi Angel, they created the core text that we’ll be using tonight. Wanting the text to include voices of many of our members, lesbian, gay, bi, trans, straight, a call was put out to the community via weekly email, and many of our family responded with the moving words that you’ll find in the pages that follow.

We thank everyone who contributed to this work, starting with the Queer Minyan, the Gay and Lesbian Mishpocha in Colorado, and especially the inspiring Mark Horn and his friends at B’nai Jeshurun. In our own community we want to thank Andrew Ramer and Joss Eldredge; Andréa Guerra and Karen Schiller for their editorial contributions to this new edition; Stephan Angelides and Gabby Volodarsky for their assistance in producing the first edition; Janis Portal who created the beautiful scrolling borders used in previous editions of this text; Avi Goldberg for the redesigned layout of this edition; Michael Tyler for Hebrew typography; Jim Van Buskirk and Kevin Johnson for their research assistance, and Greg Lawrence and Shaun Hannan for their support. Our very special thanks go to everyone who contributed words to this haggadah. And we thank all of our tribe, known and unknown, named and anonymous, who had the vision, strength, and courage to leave the slavery of our historical oppression in order to claim a place for all of us at the Jewish table.

The core text of this hagaddah was written by Joss Eldredge and Andrew Ramer, based upon *The Stonewall Seder*.