

LGBTQIA+

PRIDE MONTH

2021

- ABOUT THE MONTH · HOW TO CELEBRATE IN COMMUNITY? ·
- BLESSINGS FOR A LGBTQIA+ SHABBAT ·



WHAT IS THE LGBTQIA+ PRIDE MONTH?

In June, the “pride month” is celebrated in honour of the LGBTQIA+ population that, in the 28th of this month in 1969, had the landmark Stonewall Revolt in New York City. In this month, around the world, several progressive institutions keep marking and celebrating this date in hope of an inclusive and just society.

The Reform Jewish Movement, since the 1960s, is a defender of and celebrates diversity within the Jewish world to show that any Jew has a place in Judaism, independent of their sexual orientation, gender, skin colour, or any other identity factor, because those are fundamental parts of who we are and we consider every person, within their own identity, as a blessing.



INCLUSION AND JUSTICE: JEWISH VALUES

Inclusion and social justice aren't just some of the pillars of the Reform Movement, but also values intrinsic to Jewish tradition as a whole. From the Exodus from Egypt to the civil rights demonstrations, we, as the Jewish People, fight for the appreciation of each person's humanity and, wherever there is inequality, it's our duty to repair it.

This is why, in our Pesach sedarim, we recite "Avadim Hayinu" (We were slaves), to remember our responsibility of not allowing the oppression of any group. We are guided by the principles of B'tzelem Elohim (in the image of God) that makes us see every person as created in the Divine's image, thus seeing humanity and dignity in all.

Also in the aphorism Veahavta Lereachah Kamocha (Love your fellow as yourself) that instructs us to love, to accept our everything and therefore to create the ability of extending that love and acceptance to others.

חֵבִיב אָדָם שֶׁנִּבְרָא בְּצֶלֶם

"Beloved is humanity, for it was created B'tzelem (Elohim) [in the image of God]." Pirkei Avot 3:14

וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ

"Love your fellow as yourself"
Vayikra 19:18



HOW TO CELEBRATE THE LGBTQIA+ PRIDE MONTH IN MY COMMUNITY?

It's important for our communities that we demonstrate our commitment of not only accepting any Jewish person in our spaces, but to also include them, to make them feel at home. Celebrating this month is reinforcing that commitment.

There are several ways to celebrate, from study meetings and gatherings to approach the theme, up to the celebration of thematic Shabbatot where the liturgy is focused on this content of inclusion and equality. Bring out and listen to voices of the community who may speak about their experiences, bring knowledge and help to build a diverse and inclusive environment.



LGBTQIA+ INITIATIVES IN LATIN AMERICA



GA'AVAH is a LGBTQIA+ Jewish collective, linked to Instituto Brasil-Israel, that has among its objectives the visibility and diffusion of the LGBTQIA+ question and community in Israel and in the Brazilian Jewish community. The collective seeks to build a national LGBTQIA+ inclusion network in the Brazilian Jewish life: promoting empowerment spaces for such experiences, educating about anti-Semitism and LGBTphobia, and dialoguing with local, national and international partner organisations.

We welcome the plural paths of life of all people that have an intersectional Jewish LGBTQIA+ experience.



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LGBTQIA+ INITIATIVES IN LATIN AMERICA



Hineni is the LGBTQIA+ committee of FIESP (the São Paulo State Israelite Federation), built and designed to include and integrate youth and adults of the São Paulo Jewish community. The rainbow is also one of the expressions and beauties of our community that is anchored in the coexistence of identities and the beauty of human diversity.

Hineni, from the Hebrew “I am here”, demonstrates our willingness to build welcomeness, respect and dignity for all.



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LGBTQIA+ INITIATIVES IN LATIN AMERICA



MOV.LGBTQIA+ is a group of young LGBTQIA+ Jews, linked to MOV.2035, the young adults nucleus of Congregação Israelita Paulista (CIP). Through the study of Jewish sources, they seek to debate the intersection between the Jewish and LGBTQIA+ community, building thus knowledge and content of all sorts about the subjects, deepened with support from intellectual and rabbinical authorities.

Formed by 15 people of different Brazilian states, they meet twice a month to debate, learn, share and exchange between themselves and the community. MOV reaffirms through study that the LGBTQIA+ subjects should be taken to the communities with dignity and qualification.



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LGBTQIA+ INITIATIVES IN LATIN AMERICA



JAG (Judíos Argentinos Gays) are a Jewish LGBTQIA+ group that began in 2004 in the Framework of the Fundación Judaica, celebrating the different Jewish festivals and the Shabbat. Throughout the years we, as a node in the Red Judaica, have joined several organisations and institutions and have also offered training courses. Currently we are working towards the full acceptance of Sexual Diversity in all instances of Society.

In JAG, we offer tools to all those Jewish people and Jewish institutions in Argentina who wish to work with inclusion, understanding that it's not easy to be a minority within a minority; as Jews we have been often rejected and discriminated against, but we learned to listen and understand that we don't all think alike, and as such we can build community spaces where all can feel proud to be in and to be a part of.



jagargentina.blogspot.com



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BLESSINGS FOR A LGBTQIA+ SHABBAT

ברכות לשבת הגאווה



The “Pride Shabbat” is celebrated in June as part of a world programme of events that celebrate the beginning of the LGBTQIA+ liberation movement in June 1969. Since then, the LGBTQIA+ Pride Month includes parades, demonstrations - and prayers. Many different formats can be chosen for a LGBTQIA+ Pride Shabbat, and it is important to choose the format most appropriate for your community.

In the next pages, we offer several suggestions to adapt and add to Shabbat prayers. Some communities may opt to include two or three additional sections to the regular service, while others may prefer to change the whole service structure altogether. The sermon or Dvar Torah on Pride Shabbat can be dedicated to questions relevant to the LGBTQIA+ community (ideally, the Dvar Torah should be given by someone from the community).

You can honour the LGBTQIA+ members with Aliyot on Pride Shabbat to mark significant events in the past year. We recommend working together with LGBTQIA+ organisations and collectives in your area and plan Pride Shabbat together from the outset.



LITURGY

This section offers some liturgical suggestions for Pride Shabbat, used mainly by Israeli Reform communities. It's important to plan a service that is adequate to your community. The format of Pride Shabbat service doesn't have to 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 LGBTQIA+ community.
- Blessings and prayers can be added to the service on Pride Shabbat.
- Readings, songs and poems that can be included in the service.
- Blessings for significant events in the life cycle of LGBTQIA+ community members (they can be included in the "Mi Sheberach" prayer for those that receive Aliyot on Shabbat morning, or presented in other moments during service).
- Adapting the Haftarah reading for Shabbat morning. After the Torah reading, an alternative Haftarah can be chosen to complement the Pride Shabbat theme. Examples include the story of David and Yonatan (1 Samuel 19:1-4, 20:1-4; II Samuel 1:16-27), the story of Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1:8-19); and the image of God that challenges gender in Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:3-28).



CANDLES BLESSINGS

Siddur Sha'ar Zahav – Page 104

MASCULINE LANGUAGE (TRADITIONAL)

Baruch ata Adonai,
Eloheinu Melech haOlam,
asher kideshanu bemitzvo-
tav, vetzivanu lehadlik ner
shel Shabat.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק
נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Lord of the Universe, who has sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us to light the Shabbat lights.

FEMININE LANGUAGE

Bruchah at Yah, haShechi-
nah tiferet haOlam, asher
kideshtinu bemitzvotah
vetzivitinu lehadlik ner shel
Shabat.

בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ יְהִי הַשְׁכִּינָה
תְּפָאֶרֶת הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר
קִדְּשָׁתִינוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיהָ
וְצִוִּיתֵנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר
שֶׁל שַׁבָּת

Blessed are You, Shechinah, the Glory of the World, who has sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us to light the Shabbat lights.

COMMUNAL LANGUAGE

Nevarech et Beer ha-
Chayim, Yotzeret haOlam,
notenet et yecholet hake-
dushah laasot mitzvah
lehadlik ner shel Shabat.

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת בְּאֵר הַחַיִּים
יוֹצֶרֶת הָעוֹלָם נוֹתֶנֶת
אֶת יְכֹלֶת הַקִּדְּשָׁה
לַעֲשׂוֹת מִצְוָה לְהַדְלִיק
נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת

We bless the Fountain of Life, Creator of the Universe, who makes it possible for us to reach sanctity as we respond the call to light the Shabbat lights.

Three different versions of the same blessing to light the candles are offered in this page. The version in masculine language sees God as a Sovereign, while the version in feminine language invokes a Kabbalistic image of the Presence of God. The communal version is an invitation for us to worship as a community and also contains feminine references to God.

ADAPTING THE SIX PSALMS FOR SHABBAT

Six Psalms, one for each day of the week, are combined with the six colours of the Pride flag that make up a rainbow. Each strip of the rainbow celebrates a human quality. The Zohar attributes different colours to the spheres that discuss these qualities. The person reading is invited to reflect on the past week through this prism of several colours.



RED – THE SPHERE OF HEROISM

This sphere represents the virtues of justice, critic, fear and self-discipline.

למנצח מזמור לדוד שיר

Psalms 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 יי

Psalms 104:1, 2, 23, 24, 33, 44, 45



YELLOW – THE SPHERE OF SPLENDOUR

This sphere represents the virtue of mercy.

בך יי חסיתי

Psalms 71:1-8



GREEN – THE SPHERE OF FOUNDATION

This sphere represents the ability of creating connections between the ethereal and mundane worlds.

תפילה לדוד, הטה יי אזנך

Psalms 68:1-8



BLUE – THE SPHERE OF COMPASSION

This sphere is full of love and commitment to good.

שאלו שלום ירושלים

Psalms 122:6-9



PURPLE – THE SPHERE OF ETERNITY

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

מכתם לדוד שמרני אל כי חסיתי בך

Psalms 16:1-11

ADAPTING LECHA DODI

Israeli Movement for Progressive Judaism Pride Shabbat

In the traditional version of Lecha Dodi, the ending of the seventh verse excludes members of the LGBTQIA+ community. We propose the following ending for the versicle, substituting the traditional text כחשׁוּשׁ חֲתָן עַל כְּלָה [as a groom (rejoices) with his bride]:

Yasis alayich Elohayich
Kimsos lev beahavah.

יָשִׁישׁ עָלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ
כְּמִשּׁוֹשׁ לֵב בְּאַהֲבָה

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



SPECIAL BLESSINGS



Blessings extracted from “Siddur Mishkan Ga'avah:
Where Pride Dwells”, edited by Rabbi Denise L. Eger.

A BLESSING BEFORE AFFIXING A FLAG, STICKER, POSTER OR OTHER LGBTQIA+ VISIBILITY SYMBOL

Baruch Ata Adonai,
Eloheinu Melech haOlam,
asher natan lanu hizdam-
nut kedoshah likboah simlei
nirut kuirit.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ
הִזְדַּמְנוּת קְדוֹשָׁה לְקַבּוֹעַ
סְמִלֵי נִרְאוּת קְוִירִית

*Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who gave us the holy
opportunity of affixing queer/LGBTQIA+ visibility symbols.*

BLESSING AS ONE SEES A NON-BINARY PERSON

Baruch Atah Adonai,
Eloheinu Ruach haOlam
shebarah od briot kamoni.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁבְּרָאָה
עוֹד בְּרִיּוֹת כְּמוֹנִי

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Spirit of the Universe, who created other people like me.

BLESSING FOR THOSE WHO HAVEN'T YET COME OUT

Optional text to add if you are a person who hasn't yet come out:

Please, God, help me overcome my stress, fear and anxiety that hiding my sexuality/gender identity causes. One day, I will find the strength to come out and share my truth; however, for the moment, help me diminish the discomfort of anxiety, allowing me to lead a happier and freer life. Make those tensions and worries that now oppress me strengthen me for the rest of my life.

Baruch Atah Adonai, podeh
ashukim.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ פוֹדֶה
עֲשׂוּקִים

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, who redeems the oppressed.

TEXT AND COMPILATION

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