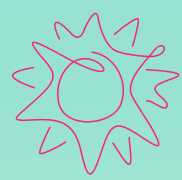


Keshet Friday Night Siddur Insert





Dear reader,

We're so proud and excited to present this siddur insert, created by thirteen incredibly creative individuals by and for LGBTQ+ Jews. This siddur insert would not have been possible without them, or without the support of the wider Keshet community. These creatives all shared not just their pieces, but what inspires them about Shabbat and the twenty-five hour time period for Jewish people around the world to rest.

When we met as the creative team behind this project, we wanted to help create something that would build more connections within our community, but also to help give LGBTQ+ Jewish people a more personal connection to Shabbat. The queer perspective has historically not been sought out in the creation of many materials including siddurim and we hope that Jewish people of all backgrounds can relate to the pieces within this insert. For some communities, pride is celebrated year round! However, for a lot of communities, we hope that this insert is one of the many steps involved in keeping pride as a year-round fixture, so that LGBTQ+ Jews have a community of belonging outside of June.

We also hope that this siddur insert helps personalize and make your own siddur feel a bit more special. We wanted to fill our own Keshet Shabbaton Siddur with art, and to share that magic with any and all who may want that as well. We hope you'll enjoy this siddur insert as much as we do.

With love and care,
Shabbat Shalom!
Aryeh, Fayvel, and Yael

How to use this insert

This is a collection of art, poetry, and contemporary renderings of the prayers that begin Shabbat: Kabbalat Shabbat and Ma'ariv (also called Arvit). It is meant to provide additional thoughts and reflections to supplement the traditional Hebrew liturgy based on that same liturgy. We hope that it offers additional insight from queer and trans Jews for you in your prayers.





Inspired by Yedid Nefesh:

This song was written by Kabbalist Rabbi Elazar Azikri in the 16th century. There are many different versions of the original manuscript, meaning that there are slight variations in the text across different prayer books.

It is also an acrostic – the first letter of each verse spells out god’s name, the Tetragrammaton.

What Pronouns Does God Use

Alyx (she/her)

When I was growing up, my God was always like Zeus: old and bearded (and cranky). God was my father and my king, intimate yet incomprehensible. But most importantly, he was a man.

So when I first heard Yedid Nefesh, I was utterly confused.

Yedid Nefesh literally means soulmate. It is a love letter to God as our healer, our parent, our monarch, and our lover.

There are more than a few variants of the manuscript of Yedid Nefesh. In the siddur I had, all of the traits and objects belonging to God end in “-akh”, which means your. But “-akh” is feminine. “Compassionate father, draw (feminine) your servant...” I was utterly confused. How could their version of my old bearded man be a woman? I looked at another siddur. Their God was a man again, always referred to by “-kha”, the masculine your.

Complicating this story further was a question of language. Though Yedid Nefesh is written in Hebrew, many scholars believe the language “Aramaicized,” replacing the Hebrew masculine -kha ending with the Aramaic “-akh” ending. The words slip across language and gender, blurring the line between both.

I found my answer to all of this in Genesis 1:27. “God created humanity in God’s image, male and female he created them.” How could my God fit into our binary gender norms? How could my God who created all of humanity in God’s image be just male? God is male, and female, and nonbinary, and none of the above. My God is everything we are, and so much more.

What pronouns does God use? As Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg said, “The pronoun for God is God.”

Inspired by Psalm 95:

Psalm 95 begins with the words “Come Let Us Rejoice!” Inspiring a sense of joy to start off Kabbalat Shabbat with. It is an emotional celebration coming from a place of exultation and gratitude.



Sawyer (they/them)



Inspired by L'Cha Dodi:

L'cha Dodi was written by Kabbalist Rabbi Shlomo Halevi Alkabetz in the 16th century, and the verses form an acrostic of his name. In it, we welcome the Shabbat Bride, or Queen – a personification of Shabbat itself.

Shabbes Queen Joanna Ware (she/her)

What do you picture when you imagine the Sabbath Queen?

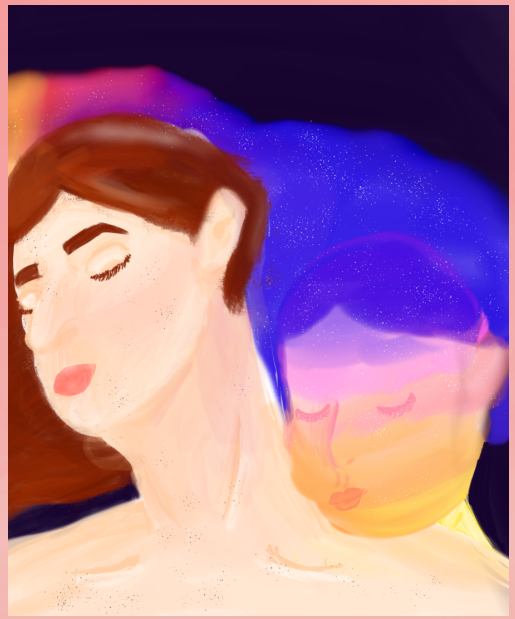
Does your Shabbat HaMalkah strut and sashay, with long legs and eyelashes for days? Is she prim and proper, or is she unapologetic and brash, bringing Shabbat in whether you are ready or not? Is she a pansy peacock, with flowing tail feathers and a proud puff to her chest? Does she leave lipstick marks on the rim of your Kiddush cup?

Does she drop a trail of glitter when she comes and when she goes, so that even at 4pm on Wednesday afternoon, when it feels like Shabbat is impossibly far away, you will spot a glint of glitter stuck in your floorboards, and remember that beauty, celebration, and exaltation are just around the corner?

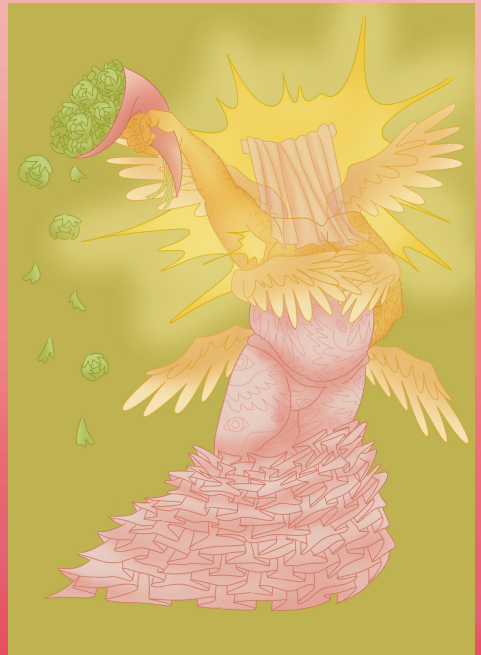
Does your Shabbat HaMalkah shine and sparkle whether she is beneath bright lights or in dark alleyways?

Is she too much? Too big, too bold, too bright to believe?

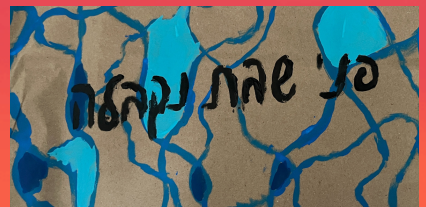
What is the Sabbath Queen, if not the best, brightest, most fabulous reigning Queen of the Ball, come to dance for you each and every week?



Eden (they/she)



Fayvel (he/she)



P'nai Shabbat N'Kab'lah - Let Us Welcome the Sabbath

Sawyer (they/them)

Inspired by Psalm 92: The Psalm for Shabbat

According to Midrash (rabbinic folklore), this psalm was said by Adam, the first human being, who was created on the sixth day of creation. It is said that Adam spoke this psalm as Shabbat was beginning. While the psalm does not speak about Shabbat itself, this was Adam's first day on Earth and was spoken as Adam marveled at the work of God.



Ollie (they/he)

Shabbat (2018) Liel (they/them)

Shabbat provides me with the opportunity to slow down. It allows me to look down at my feet, to see where I am standing, to notice how my body is holding me up, to grow deep roots down in the ground.

The slowness of Shabbat also provides me with the opportunity to not only look down at my feet but to look around me, from my left side, to my right, from my front, to my back; to notice the glowing people that surround and support me, that take deep breaths with me, that I cook Shabbat meals, sing niggunim (wordless tunes), doven (recite liturgical prayers), create blessings, dance, share shabbos glitter and makeup, and feel holy and sacred with.

Shabbat allows me to connect and root in both the land and location I am standing on and to the people I am growing in community with. Through nourishing roots and providing a taste of the world to come each week, Shabbos has empowered and continues to empower Jewish people to vision and build Jewish futures.

Celebrating shabbos with my chosen family empowers me to imagine and create queer Jewish futures where pleasure is embraced, rituals are continually created and innovated, matzah ball soup fountains exist, and collective liberation is divine, possible, and happening.



Inspired by Barchu:

Barchu is the formal call to prayer that begins the Ma'ariv service, noting the start to the formal prayer service. It begins communal worship, and helps us recognize that we are God's gifts and have hearts full of compassion.

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם שככה לו בעולמו
Blessed are you, Adonai our God, King of the Universe who
has such beauty in this world
הנה מה טוב ומה־נעים שבת אחים גם־יחד
How good and how pleasant it is for people to dwell together
ואין אחד מהן דומה לחבירו לפיכך כל אחד ואחד חייב
לומר בשבילי נברא העולם
Therefore each and every person is obligated to say: The world
was created for me
אור זרע לצדיק ולישר־לב שמחה
Light is sown for the righteous, joy for the upright

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם שככה לו בעולמו
Blessed are you, Adonai our God, King of the Universe who
has such beauty in this world
הנה מה טוב ומה־נעים שבת אחים גם־יחד
How good and how pleasant it is for people to dwell together
ואין אחד מהן דומה לחבירו לפיכך כל אחד ואחד חייב
לומר בשבילי נברא העולם
Therefore each and every person is obligated to say: The world
was created for me
אור זרע לצדיק ולישר־לב שמחה
Light is sown for the righteous, joy for the upright

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם שככה לו בעולמו
Blessed are you, Adonai our God, King of the Universe who
has such beauty in this world
הנה מה טוב ומה־נעים שבת אחים גם־יחד
How good and how pleasant it is for people to dwell together



B (they/them)

Inspired by Ahavat Olam:

Ahavat Olam is one of two versions of the blessing preceding Shema. We say Ahavah Rabah in the morning, declaring God's great love for us. In the evening, we say Ahavat Olam, representing God's everlasting love for us. God loves us no matter who or what we are, and in this prayer, we thank God for that.



Ash (they/them)



Inspired by Hashkiveinu:

Hashkiveinu is a prayer asking for protection as we head into the unknown of nighttime. It also asks to protect us from evil and any hatred that may come upon us.

In the Shade of Her Wing Aniel (they/them)

She came to my window, time on her back
I lay down my sword and she picked up her sack
Her mountains and valleys beckoned me to her side
As she lay in my head, her heart open wide

I feel at home here 'neath the curve of her wing
Outstretched and holy, bringing sweet things
Her hand seemed to whisper
"Rest now my child"
Her hand seemed to shout
"MY NATURE IS WILD"

I chose to trust her shield for the night
Come morning she's gone, but that's alright
For I know that her soul does dance through the sky
Tonight she'll be back, though I do not know why
She is our birds, trees, our yard
She is our nature, destruction, our guard

Inspired by Amidah - Gevurot:

Gevurot praises God's might as we recognize God's wondrous acts: supporting the fallen, healing the sick, freeing the captive, and giving life to all.

For the final project in my tenth grade Jewish studies class of the 2022-2023 school year, we were asked to select five Jewish practices that are meaningful to us and to create illustrations that represent the practices and their values.

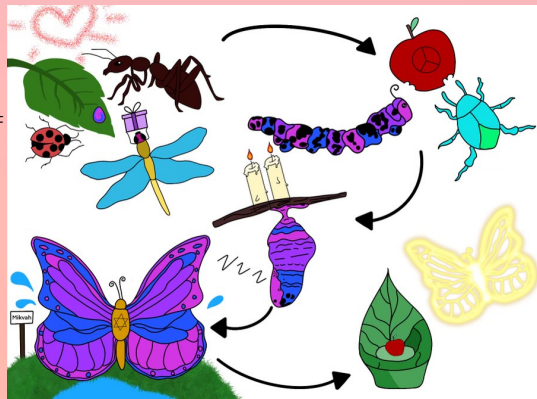
The first Jewish practice I chose is a baby naming ceremony. This practice is a significant part of Jewish culture for many because it is a public declaration of love from caretaker to child. Accordingly, my drawing portrays an egg surrounded by three loved ones; the heart fireworks in the background are meant to represent this expression of love. I have also read about Jewish re-naming ceremonies for people who want to change their name and I think it is a beautiful adaptation to modern Judaism!

My next drawing is of a caterpillar and a beetle sharing an apple. This and the peace sign on the apple are intended to represent generosity and harmony in the community through the act of sharing food and eating together. I think food is a very important part of Judaism because it unites communities and displays the diversity of Jewish people and culture. Sharing food with others is an important way to practice Tzedakah and the Torah is proof of this: it was Jewish law for farmers to leave the corners of their fields unpicked so that people in need could eat it. I also think the symbolic meanings of different foods are important and interesting to think about. The art of cooking allows people all over the world who have access to food to express their Judaism in meaningful ways, even in times or places where it is otherwise unsafe to practice the Jewish religion freely.

The third drawing features a chrysalis hanging off a branch which has shabbat candles on top, connecting the practice of Shabbat with the chrysalis of a butterfly's life. A metamorphosis is more a period of transformation than resting. But on Shabbat we rejuvenate our body and soul in order to be able to reach our full potential in the coming week, and in a way the metamorphosis stage mirrors this idea.

My fourth drawing is of a butterfly emerging from a mikvah. (Ironically, the word "emerging" is also one of the common terms used to describe a butterfly coming out of a chrysalis.) If you are not familiar with the word Mikvah, it is a special body of water in which Jews immerse themselves when seeking purity, redemption, rejuvenation, or to celebrate new beginnings. These values are represented by the butterfly which has emerged from her chrysalis in a new form. In Judaism, the soul and the body coexist and work together but are separate parts of every living creature; it is thought that while the body dies, the soul continues to live on.

My fifth and final Jewish practice is leaving a chair out for an ushpizin. This is a way to honor and seek wisdom from a righteous figure or a loved one after their body has died. A personalized item is typically left on the ushpizin's chair in order to attract their soul. In this drawing, the butterfly's soul floats above a chair made out of leaves where the offering is an apple, a sentimental object from her relationship with the beetle.

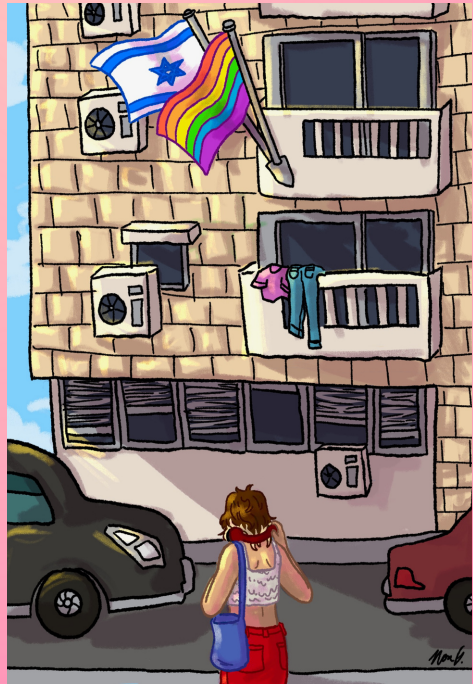


Shoshana (she/her)



Inspired by Amidah - Shalom:

This is the final blessing of the Amidah, and is another prayer with two variations: one for morning and one for evening, the Shalom portion of the Amidah asks God to grant peace among the people Israel (the Jewish people) at all times of day.



Noa



Inspired by Reflections on the Amidah:

The moment after the silent Amidah is often seen as a time for personal prayer, reflection, and meditation. Below is one such reflection.

King David adds words to my lips

Willow Aviva (they/she)

King David wrote his thoughts into verse and to this day we sing
The words he chose we speak aloud into the heavens they go
For all of Eternity hear oh as he speaks your praise
And through his lips we acclaim

With 3 steps forward and 3 steps back we find ourselves in a similar space
and yet a journey explored into a new life we go
We follow the motions of our ancestors and we walk into their place
We see the world through their eyes and the gifts you made just for us to
enjoy and speak your praise



Inspired by Kiddush:

The blessing over a grape product said before the Shabbat meal, acknowledging the sanctity of the day to come.



Rivka (they/them)



Inspired by Havdalah:

Havdalah, the Hebrew word for separation, marks the end of Shabbat, where we sanctify the holiness of Shabbat and remember it as we head into the every day week.

I like the term ("Nivrah Bein HaShmashot") "נברא בין השמשות" Created between the suns" to describe the queer Jewish experience. "Bein HaShmashot" is a concept in Midrash, describing the liminal time between the end of the Sixth Day of Creation and the Seventh Day of Creation. It is said that during this time certain important objects, creatures, and concepts were created. The rainbow, Bilam's talking donkey, and the manna are among those created in this time. The entities created during this time mostly follow themes of not fitting into certain binaries and/or not being able to be fully explained or rationalized, hence they were created "Between the suns", between day and night, because they did not fit neatly into one category or another. All these incredible things that defy binaries and explanation were created between the "suns" as Friday evening turned into the very first Shabbat. The beginning and the end of Shabbat are all about transitions. We welcome the Shabbat Queen into our homes Friday evening after we light the Shabbat candles and sing 'Lecha Dodi'. We escort her out and welcome Eliyahu HaNavi back every Motzei Shabbat during Havdalah, after we lit yet another flame

Shabbat is a day embodying the traditionally feminine qualities within Judaism: the mitzvot of Challah and Shabbat candles were commanded to women (although men can do it too). Shabbat becomes Shabbat because of women, because of Sarah and Rivkah whose candles never extinguished and whose cloud of glory never left their tents. We sing 'Eshet Chayil' during Shabbat, praising the strength and valor of Jewish women. We sing Lecha Dodi, welcoming the Shabbat Bride.

The rest of the week is dominated by masculinity. Adam, the first man, was cursed to work for six days and rest on the seventh. The week is filled with labor, traditionally, the man's curse. But masculinity rests on Shabbat and allows femininity to dominate. Eliyahu takes a step back and the Shabbat Queen takes his place. Or, perhaps, Eliyahu- not the historical figure- but the idea he has come to represent- becomes the Shabbat Queen.



Eitan (he/him)

The time "between the suns", as Friday evening becomes Shabbat and as Shabbat becomes Saturday night, are times of transition, where gender is blurred and Eliyahu HaNavi and the Shabbat Bridal Queen stand as equals. The time "between the suns" is neither the mundanity of the week nor the holiness of Shabbat, it is neither masculine nor feminine, neither day nor night. Simultaneously, it is both the mundanity of the week and the holiness of Shabbat, it is both masculine and feminine, both day and night. It is neither and both and everything else: it just is.

Just like the time between the suns, as queer Jews we embody the union and rejection of binaries. We don't fit neatly into the boxes the gentile queer world and the mainstream Jewish world try to put us in. We loudly scream that 'no, our identities are not contradictory, they are not mutually exclusive!' For those of us with non-heteronormative sexualities or non-cisnormative gender identities and expression, we know what it's like to be "both" and "neither". The question of whether the time between sunset and nightfall is part of the day before or the next day has been a long-time Halakhic debate, which is why we add the extra hour to Shabbat. We recognize that binaries are not impenetrable, just by virtue of the Halakhic "Bein HaShmashot" time existing. We do not have to choose if we cannot be defined.



Queer Priestly Blessing

Bennett (he/him) & Alex (she/her)

יְשִׁמְכֶם אֱלֹהִים כְּדָוִד, כְּיִהוֹנָתָן, כְּרֵישׁ לְקִישׁ, כְּרַבִּי
יֹחָנָן, כְּנְעוּמִי, כְּרוּת, וְכַדְבוֹרָה. יְבָרְכֶךָ ה', וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ.
יָאֵר ה' פְּנֵיו אֵלֶיךָ, וְיִחַנֶּךָ. יִשָּׂא ה' פְּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וְיִשֶּׂם לְךָ
שְׁלוֹם.

*Y'simchem Elohim k'David, k'Y'honatan, Reish
Lakish, Rabi Yochanan, k'Na'omi, k'Rut, uchi'Dvora.
Y'varech'cha Adonai v'yishm'recha. Ya'eir Adonai
panav eilecha vichuneka. Yisa Adonai panav
eilecha, v'yasem l'cha shalom.*

May God make you like David, like Jonathan, like Reish Lakish, like Rabbi Yochanan, like Naomi, like Ruth, and like Deborah. May God bless you and protect you. May God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May God's face be turned towards you, and may God give you peace.



Harachaman to bless queer community

Willow (they/she)

הַרְחֵמֵן הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת מִי שֶׁאֲהַבְתֶּם אֵינָה תְלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר שְׂוִיתְחַדְשׁוּ
לְבַחֲוֹר בְּחַיִּים שְׁמְרוּ עַל הַלֹּו בְּשִׁים אֶת בְּגָדֵי נְשָׁמְתֵם

*Harachaman hu yivarech et mi shea'ahavtem einah t'luyah bedavar
sheyitchadsho labachor baachayim shamru al helo b'sim et bigdai
n'shamatem*

May the merciful one bless those whose love depends on nothing. May they be renewed to choose life, guard those who wear the garments of their soul.

In community, we are known to feed each other. This nourishment is our holy portion as humans, and is sanctified Jewishly in the consumption of bread. The grains of wheat, barley, oats, spelt, and rye have sustained the Jewish people as primary foodstuffs for millenia. This miracle, of simply being able to see sprouts growing and eventually renewing our people, is potent. The time of the Birkat Hamazon, the blessing after bread, is thus known as an Eit Ratzon, a desirable moment for connection to Hashem. The table is the source of blessing for the body and a time to tune in to the needs of Jews everywhere. In this time of increased violence for gay and trans people, the need for a bracha is strong. This bracha is intended to strengthen the pursuit of building a holy life, without fear, as we are and with those we love. It is not enough to think it silently- it is my hope that a verbal declaration of LGBTQ affirmation at the place of sustenance can remind ourselves and our communities that we, too, are an integral part of the Jewish experience. This prayer does not require a minyan, or other Jews- this is simply an ancient request of the One who requires justice. Insert with the other hacharachamanim prayers.

In sacred remembrance of those lost in the Pulse Massacre and of my mother, my teacher Susan Freedman-Noa z"l who never wavered in her pursuit of justice for me.

Thank You To

B (they/them)

Alyx (she/her)

Sawyer (they/them)

Joanna (she/her)

Eden (they/she)

Fayvel (he/she)

Liel (they/them)

Ollie (they/he)

Ash (they/them)

Aniel (they/them)

Shoshana (she/her)

Noa

Willow Aviva (they/she)

Rivka (they/them)

Eitan (he/him)

Bennett (he/him) & Alex (she/her)

Willow (they/she)