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Nonbinary Liturgy: Gender-expansiveness in God and Ourselves

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Abstract

Liturgy is an ever-evolving tool for Jewish spirituality. From our ancestors, we have inherited traditions and customs of prayer. Many of the liturgical traditions we've inherited still speak to our needs as pray-ers today, giving us language as we seek connection with the Divine, with sacred community, and with our innermost selves. However, some of our needs have shifted since the creation of these liturgical traditions. Our praying communities, once solely men, have become tapestries of many gender identities. The liturgy of our ancestors, or even of two generations ago, which described God and all humanity as solely masculine, no longer encompass our conceptions of the Divine or the many genders of those who make up our praying communities. We must seek to revolutionize our language of prayer, in Hebrew as well as in English, so that it continues to be a tool for spirituality rather than a relic of tradition from generations past.

The work of liturgical revolution has already begun, primarily in the realm of feminist liturgy and theology. This project of Nonbinary Liturgy seeks to further revolutionize our liturgy, building on the foundations of feminist scholars. This project consists of two parts. The first is a rationale that makes the case for nonbinary liturgy as a tool for reimagining ourselves and God in prayer, and as a counterbalance to the millenia of patriarchal liturgical traditions. The second is a practical, annotated resource of nonbinary liturgy. Using the grammatical systems of the Nonbinary Hebrew Project, this project transforms the liturgy of Kabbalat Shabbat, select prayers from Shabbat Ma'ariv, and a life-cycle ritual to expand our gendered metaphors for God and reflect the reality of our multi-gendered Jewish communities today.

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Rationale

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My Story

I remember vividly the first time I was called up to Torah as myself. I was a second-year student at HUC-JIR and I had recently come out to the whole school community as nonbinary. Among the student body at the time, there were no other trans or nonbinary students. Nor were there any trans or nonbinary faculty, administrators, or staff at the college. I was told there had been one other student who identified as transgender and studied in New York for a single semester. That had been over a decade previous. In short, I was alone. Surrounded by well-meaning students and professors, I nevertheless fell into the role of educator in many of my interactions, explaining my gender and the concept of nonbinary genders over and over until I felt more like a topic than a person. I longed to feel understood and seen, to simply exist as myself rather than working to carve out a space that did not yet exist.

One day, a friend who was scheduled to read Torah gave me the honor of an aliyah for an upcoming tefilah. With a week's notice, the gabbai came up to me in the hallway and asked how I'd like to be called up to Torah. That question alone was shockingly validating. No one had ever asked me that before. I told her I wanted to do some research and that I'd let her know. I knew that the binary of "ya'amod" and "ta'amod" didn't work for me. I also knew the common workaround of negating gender through using "na la'amod" also felt rather lackluster. I didn't want to take gender out, I wanted to put gender in, but a description of gender that felt like me. I had become aware of the Nonbinary Hebrew Project through the transgender Jewish social circles and I visited their website which included a Grammar and Systematics page with verb charts

and commonly used words, laying out in detail the specifics of this grammatical system. I scrolled down to the future tense verbs. Using their grammatical system, I landed on the word “ya’amdeh”. Finally, an alternative to the binary of “ya’amod” and “ta’amod” that was as full of gender, and therefore full of the potential for validation. Writing to the gabbai, I offered her this word. She happily agreed and made a large sticky note to put on the lectern, knowing the language would be new for her and wanting to get it right.

That day in tefilah, I sat close to the back, wrapped in my tallit and having to redirect my thoughts back to the prayers at hand over and over in the half hour of tefilah preceding the Torah service. I was worried she’d stumble or forget and default to one of the binary ones. I was worried people would respond with confusion or derision. “That’s not Hebrew,” I imagined them saying to each other. I was worried people would roll their eyes. “There goes Ze’evi, always needing things to be different,” they’d whisper. But my worries were unfounded. As hakafah ended, the Torah was placed on the lectern, and we all sat, I held my breath.

“Ya’amdeh, Ze’evi mibeit Elisheva v’Yosef Tzvi” the gabbai said, fluently and without difficulty, smiling at me. I stood up on shaky legs and walked to the bimah. Turning around and looking out at the kahal, I was met with the smiling faces of my professors and classmates. Some looked up in curiosity at the new language, but no one looked upset. No one seemed to begrudge me this moment of gender validation. I was so full of shock, pride, and affirmation that when I opened my mouth to begin the Torah blessing, the words felt unfamiliar in my mouth. I scrambled for a nearby siddur and opened it quickly to remind myself of the words I’d chanted so many times. As I returned

to my seat, bolstered by words of praise and congratulation from my community, I realized that this was the first time I'd ever prayed using language that reflected my true self.

The Challenge of Gender in Hebrew

Many Jews might take for granted their ability to pray with words that describe who they are. Those validated by masculine language in prayer can find their gender in most every page of the siddur. We pray, “Modeh ani” in the morning, translated as “[I, masculine] am grateful”. We recite the ancient words of the priestly benediction: “Y’varech’cha Adonai v’yishm’recha”, May God [bless, masculine] [you, masculine] and [keep, masculine] [you, masculine]. Almost all of our prayers assume a masculine gender for the one who has come to pray. They also describe God in almost exclusively masculine language¹. It is easy, however, to obscure this fact in translation, as evidenced by the italicized gender marking necessary in the preceding translation. In English, first and second person isn’t gendered in the way it is in Hebrew. In English, when we speak of “I” or “we” or “you”, we aren’t obligated to describe gender using pronouns or the verbs following them. Only in third person, with pronouns like “he” or “she” or “they”, do we specify gender in English. Hebrew, in contrast, obligates gender designation in a much greater capacity.

Regarding pronouns in Hebrew, first person is not gendered but second and third person are. Regarding verb forms, present tense and imperative are gendered in both the singular and the masculine. Past and future tense are gendered in second and third person; but not in first person. Hebrew adjectives and nouns are always gendered. It is important here to note the distinction between grammatical gender of an object and descriptive

¹ There have been strides made by feminist liturgists to introduce the feminine into liturgy, which will be addressed in depth in following sections of this rationale.

gender of a person. In Hebrew, different from English, all nouns have grammatical gender. This is simply a characteristic of Hebrew language and not a barrier of entry for nonbinary people. The gendered aspect of Hebrew that can pose a barrier includes words that describe the gender of human beings.

The question of how to address a group of many genders is a prime example. Some argue that the masculine plural ending “ים”, used in present tense verbs as well as adjectives and nouns, can be used as a catch-all for many genders of people. However, this is based on an unequal usage of feminine and masculine plural endings wherein the feminine plural is used to describe a group of solely female individuals and the masculine plural is used to describe a group of individuals in which there is at least one male individual. Put plainly, I hope all would recognize the patriarchal roots of this practice and see the flawed logic in assuming the masculine plural to be a suitable form for many genders.

There has been a growing movement in Hebrew to use both feminine and masculine plural endings to describe a group of many genders rather than defaulting to the masculine. This is evidenced by the work of graphic design student Michal Shomer². As her capstone project in graphic design at her college in Tel Aviv, Shomer created עברית רב-מגדרית, “multi-gendered Hebrew” to subvert the notion that the masculine should be regarded as neutral in Hebrew. She created a set of eleven new consonants and one vowel, which, added to the twenty-two consonants and five vowels of traditional Hebrew, allow written Hebrew to be ambiguously gendered. These new letters do not have

² Michal Shomer, “עברית רב-מגדרית,” multigenderhebrew.com.

prescribed pronunciations but are instead hybrid options of masculine and feminine together, allowing the reader to read Hebrew words as either masculine or feminine. This written system has become popular in Israel at secular schools, on written invitations, and in select offices of the Knesset. This system, a pushback against the concept of masculine plural being a suitable neutral in Hebrew, provides a way to incorporate both masculine and feminine gender into written Hebrew. However, this system has two main drawbacks. The first is that it does not address the issue of spoken Hebrew. The second is that it does not provide a solution to those seeking to describe gender outside the binary of masculine and feminine.

Not every Israeli shares Shomer's goal to provide an alternative to the default masculine. The Academy of the Hebrew Language, in charge of deciding which new words, grammar, orthography, transliteration, and punctuation are allowed to be used in all Israeli governmental agencies, rejects the idea of a nonbinary option in Hebrew. The Academy is mainly concerned with conserving the historical continuity of Hebrew and believes binary gender to be a part of the Hebrew heritage³. This stands in contrast to the recent adoption of the singular "they" by authorities on English grammar. In 2019, the Merriam-Webster dictionary, reflecting American English, made "they" their word of the year, reflecting a dramatic 313% rise in searches for this word over that year⁴. The

³ Renee Ghert-Zand, "In an increasingly nonbinary world, is gendered Hebrew willing to adapt?" *The Times of Israel*, December 9, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-an-increasingly-nonbinary-world-is-gendered-hebrew-willing-to-adapt/>.

⁴ "'They' Is Merriam-Webster's Word of the Year 2019," *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/woty2019-top-looked-up-words-they>.

Oxford English Dictionary published a brief history of singular “they” in 2018, citing a usage of this pronoun in writing in 1375 and suggesting that this pronoun is even older as written language usually reflects trends already found in spoken language⁵. The contrast between Hebrew language authorities and English language authorities on the importance of nonbinary language is stark. Perhaps the difference stems from the historical nature of singular “they” in English and the lack of a historical nonbinary pronoun in Hebrew. Perhaps it is because of the sacred origins of Hebrew, though the Academy of the Hebrew Language is secular in nature. Perhaps the adoption of a nonbinary singular pronoun by formal English language authorities characterizes a shift in language which formal Hebrew language authorities will arrive at in time. Whatever the reason, it is a fact that nonbinary people are raising the need for gender-neutral language in both English and Hebrew.

Faced with this need, undergraduate Lior Gross and their Hebrew professor Eyal Rivlin responded by creating the Nonbinary Hebrew Project. In Gross and Rivlin’s written account of the creation of the Nonbinary Hebrew Project, they cite the Jewish precedent of the third category of gender in Mishnah, a rabbinic text scholars believe to have been written in the first and second centuries CE⁶. Mishnah describes six distinct categories of gender, only two of which match up with the masculine/feminine binary the

⁵ “A Brief History of Singular ‘They’,” *Oxford English Dictionary*, September 4, 2018, <https://public.oed.com/blog/a-brief-history-of-singular-they/>.

⁶ Lior Gross and Eyal Rivlin, “Nonbinary Language in Hebrew,” https://docs.google.com/document/d/1V0oG9_If3__Y0BRWFrSpA5j9pVVpRiqKlFouacbkIM/edit?usp=sharing.

Academy of Hebrew Language asserts is a part of Hebrew heritage. The other four describe genders outside this binary. Two of these describe genders that have transformed over the course of an individual's life, including "saris", a person assumed to be male at birth but who later develops feminine or female traits, and "aylonit", a person assumed to be female at birth but who later develops masculine or male traits. The other two describe gender that is indeterminate, "tumtum", or gender that is a combination of both masculine and feminine or male and female traits⁷. Important to note in this description of the six categories of rabbinic gender is the historical difference between how the rabbis viewed gender in the first and second centuries CE and how we view gender today.

Influenced by the groundbreaking work of Judith Butler, many gender theorists today make a distinction between sex, describing biological characteristics, and gender, describing socio-political identity⁸. The rabbis made no such distinction so these six categories of gender encompass both what we would consider sex as well as what we would consider gender. It is important to note here that some gender theorists, such as Kate Bornstein, reject the duality of sex and gender and advocate for the use of gender as an umbrella term for all distinctions of physicality and identity⁹. Modern gender theorists also underline the importance of self-determination of gender identity. The writings of the

⁷ These definitions come from the critical scholarship of Rabbi Elliot Kukla: Elliot Kukla, "Terms for Gender Diversity in Classical Jewish Texts," *TransTorah*, 2006, http://www.transtorah.org/PDFs/Classical_Jewish_Terms_for_Gender_Diversity.pdf.

⁸ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 1990).

⁹ Kate Bornstein, *My New Gender Workbook: a Step-by-Step Guide to Achieving World Peace through Gender Anarchy and Sex Positivity*, (New York: Routledge, 2013).

rabbis, being texts written by supposed cisgender men about the genders of other people, do not allow for this self-determination. Instead, as was the social and religious norm in this rabbinic era, the rabbis acted as Jewish lawmakers by observing and describing society as they viewed it. Because we do not have the luxury of reading first-person accounts of those the rabbis described as saris, aytonit, tumtum, or androgynos, our view of gender in this ancient Jewish society is limited by the writings of the cisgender male elite. However, even with these disclaimers, it is not anachronistic to assert, as Gross and Rivlin do, that there is precedent for gender beyond the binary in Judaism dating back at least nineteen centuries.

Gross and Rivlin also cited the need for nonbinary Hebrew called for in contemporary responsa from the Reform¹⁰, Conservative¹¹, and Reconstructing Judaism¹² movements. These responsa signal a growing understanding of the need to make space in Judaism for transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people. However, without the ability to describe nonbinary people in Hebrew, these efforts can only go so

¹⁰ The Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, “Resolution on the Rights of Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming People,” *Union for Reform Judaism*, January 19, 2016, www.urj.org/what-we-believe/resolutions/resolution-rights-transgender-and-gender-non-conforming-people.

¹¹ “Resolution Affirming the Rights of Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming People,” *The Rabbinical Assembly*, April 6, 2016, www.rabbinicalassembly.org/story/resolution-affirming-rights-transgender-and-gender-non-conforming-people.

¹² “Resolution Affirms Full Inclusion of Transgender, Non-Binary Jews,” *Reconstructing Judaism*, March 29, 2017, www.reconstructingjudaism.org/news/statement-support-transgender-non-binary-inclusion.

far. Gross and Rivlin acknowledge a few existing ways that Jewish communities have made space for nonbinary Jews in Hebrew, including the use of “na la’amod”. This de-gendered phrase used in Torah services was first codified in Fort Tryon Jewish Center’s Torah service liturgy guideline prepared by Rabbi Guy Austrian in March 2017¹³, and later in Kehilat Hadar’s nonbinary guidelines¹⁴. Around the same time, the Habonim Dror North American youth movement pioneered the use of Hebrew gender neutral endings “-ol” and “-imot”¹⁵.

Added to these efforts are the common practices among nonbinary and genderqueer Israelis of combining masculine and feminine gender in spoken Hebrew. Sarah Benor et al. write about the practice of combining suffixes like “-imot” and “-otim”¹⁶. Orit Bershtling writes about the practice of alternating between masculine and feminine gendered words, either within a single sentence or within the context of a single

¹³ “A Torah Service liturgy for honorees of all genders,” *Fort Tryon Jewish Center*, March, 2017, <https://images.shulcloud.com/878/uploads/PDFs/All-Gender-Torah-Service-Liturgy---Fort-Tryon-Jewish-Center---Final.pdf>.

¹⁴ “Gender-Inclusive Ritual Guidelines,” *Kehilat Hadar*, May, 2018, <https://www.kehilathadar.org/system/files/resources/kehilat-hadar-gender-inclusive-ritual-guidelines-may-2018.pdf>.

¹⁵ Julie Zauzmer, “A Camp Tries to Reinvent the Hebrew Language, so Transgender Kids Can Fit In,” *The Washington Post*, August 11, 2016, www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2016/08/11/what-does-a-gender-neutral-kid-call-themselves-in-a-gendered-language/?utm_term=.735c04fc438c.

¹⁶ Sarah Bunin Benor, Jonathan Krasner, and Sharon Avni, *Hebrew Infusion: Language and Community at American Jewish Summer Camps*, (Rutgers University Press, 2020), pp. 244-245.

conversation¹⁷. However, the efforts of Fort Tryon Jewish Center, Kehilat Hadar, and the Habonim Dror North American youth movement, while wonderful first steps, are incomplete solutions, and the practice of combining gendered language in Hebrew speech can be confusing even to native Hebrew speakers. Hillai Peli, a 24-year-old Hebrew University sociology and anthropology student who identifies as nonbinary, agender, and transgender, describes her own experience as a native Hebrew speaker alternating between masculine and feminine in speech saying, “I did this for a while, but I stopped because people had trouble understanding what I was saying.”¹⁸ Through these examples, an even greater need becomes apparent for a complete and consistent system of nonbinary Hebrew grammar. This is the project that Gross and Rivlin took on.

The Nonbinary Hebrew Project was first tested in an introductory Hebrew course at the University of Colorado in Boulder with success. This system follows some of the precedents set in the examples previously given, such as the ending “-imot”, expanding them to apply to adjective-gendering, declension, and verb conjugation. One notable exception is the choice not to continue with the “-ol” ending in examples such as past tense third person plural verbs. They instead chose to retain the “-u” ending, claiming it as a neutral. While this may be an acceptable choice in modern Hebrew, it does not work

¹⁷ Orit Bershtling, “‘Speech Creates A Kind of Commitment’: Queering Hebrew,” in *Queer Excursions: Retheorizing Binaries in Language, Gender, and Sexuality*, ed. Lal Zimman, Jennifer L. Davis, and Joshua Raclaw, (Oxford Scholarship, 2014).

¹⁸ Renee Ghert-Zand, “In an increasingly nonbinary world, is gendered Hebrew willing to adapt?” *The Times of Israel*, December 9, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-an-increasingly-nonbinary-world-is-gendered-hebrew-willing-to-adapt/>.

in liturgical Hebrew, as evidenced by the distinction between masculine plural (“ya’amdu”) and feminine plural (“ta’amodna”). Projects such as this one, Nonbinary Liturgy, as well as brin solomon’s *Siddur Davar Hadash* disagree with the assumption that the masculine plural ending “-u” is an acceptable neutral and have reverted back to the precedent of “-ol”, stemming from the Hebrew word “kol”, meaning “all”¹⁹.

The use of the Hebrew vowel segol, the “eh” sound, is one of the benchmarks of the Nonbinary Hebrew Project, such as in the words “תלמיד, talmid, masculine”, “תלמידה, talmidah, feminine”, “תלמידה, talmideh, nonbinary”. In the plural of nouns, adjectives, and present tense verbs, the Nonbinary Hebrew Project has chosen to combine the masculine and feminine endings creating, “ימות, -imot” as a nonbinary suffix. Similarly, in second and third person plural pronouns, the Nonbinary Hebrew Project combines the masculine and feminine endings, creating the suffix “עמן, -emen”. In cases when the “eh” sound already denotes the masculine, such as in the case of “מורה, moreh, masculine”, “מורה, morah, feminine”, the Nonbinary Hebrew Project uses a ת taf for the nonbinary form: “מורת, moret, nonbinary”. A complete study of the grammar of the Nonbinary Hebrew Project can be found under the Grammar and Systematics tab on their website²⁰.

A person familiar with Hebrew might pick up on the fact that the written, unvocalized nonbinary form will look similar to the feminine form in certain singular nouns and some verbs. The majority of written Hebrew is unvocalized, written without

¹⁹ brin solomon, *Siddur Davar Hadash*, (New York City: Self published, 2021).

²⁰ Lior Gross and Eyal Rivlin, “Nonbinary Hebrew Project,” *Nonbinary Hebrew*, <https://www.nonbinaryhebrew.com>.

vowels. This is where context plays an important role, not just for nonbinary forms but for many Hebrew words which share the same consonants but are vocalized differently and hold different meanings. Take the word “teacher” for example. The masculine and feminine forms look identical in unvocalized written Hebrew. So how can one tell which it is? By looking at the surrounding words for context. This same principle applies when the nonbinary form resembles the feminine form. Context clues in the rest of the sentence or surrounding sentences will allow the reader to know how to pronounce the word in question.

Due to the extensiveness of the Nonbinary Hebrew Project, unmatched by any other attempt to include nonbinary genders in Hebrew language, and the consistency of the grammatical system, I have chosen the Nonbinary Hebrew Project as the basis for all liturgical adaptations within this capstone project and recital.

Feminist Liturgy as a Foundation

There is a rich history of liturgical adaptation and innovation in Reform Judaism. Tracing the development of Reform liturgy through the generations of siddurim and machzorim we find innovation, restructuring, and sometimes even rewriting of traditional liturgy. One of the most important driving forces of liturgical innovation is feminism. Feminist scholars, theologians, and liturgists created the foundation upon which all gender-expansive liturgical innovation now rests. The efforts of this project to create space for nonbinary genders in prayer are continuations of the work of feminist liturgists who created and implemented the idea of more than the one masculine gender in prayer.

Sara Smith describes the addition of the imahot into the Amidah, a huge shift in the inclusion of women in Jewish liturgy, which began in the early 1970s²¹. Influenced by second-wave feminism, Jewish feminist liturgists sought to add imahot alongside avot in the Amidah to reflect a move toward greater gender equality in Judaism. This occurred side-by-side with the emergence of the first female Jewish communal leaders. Cantor Barbara Ostfeld was the first woman ordained as cantor in 1975 by the Reform movement²². Rabbi Sally Priesand, the first American female rabbi, was ordained in 1972 by the Reform movement²³. The first rabbi ordained by the Reconstructionist movement

²¹ Sara Smith, "The Imahot in the Amidah: A History," *Contemporary Jewry*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (October 2012): pp. 309. 327.

²² "Barbara Jean Ostfeld (1952 -)," *Jewish Virtual Library*, July 12, 2020, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/ostfeld-barbara-jean>.

²³ Rabbi Amy Eilberg, "Honoring the Real First Woman Rabbi," *Jewish Women's Archive*, <https://jwa.org/rabbis/regina-jonas-remembered/honoring-real-first-woman-rabbi>.

was Rabbi Sandy Sasso, two years later in 1974. The Conservative movement lagged behind substantially, their first female rabbi, Rabbi Amy Eilberg, ordained thirteen years later in 1985²⁴. Important to note is the historical precedent of Rabbi Regina Jonas, an orthodox woman born in Berlin in 1902, who is widely credited as the first female rabbi in history, ordained by the association of liberal rabbis in Berlin in 1935. She served several synagogues before she was deported to Terezin and eventually murdered in Auschwitz in 1944. One might wonder how the history of feminist Judaism may have evolved had not the Shoah destroyed so much of Jewish culture and eradicated so many Jewish communities.

The inclusion of the imahot marked not only a reversal of the notion that liturgy should remain static and unchanged throughout time, but also of the notion that change should be instituted only by those with the most power and knowledge, namely rabbis. Although the ordination of the first female rabbis in progressive American Jewish movements illustrated widespread efforts toward gender equality in Jewish life, it was not simply the efforts of women in power who initiated the liturgical changes. The charge to include the imahot in the Amidah, especially in the Reform movement, began in the youth movement and at camp, argues Smith. Jewish songwriters such as Debbie Friedman and Cantor Jeff Klepper were driving forces for liturgical innovation as their creative, and often gender-expansive, adaptations of Jewish liturgy paved the way for future liturgical changes.

²⁴ Lila Corwin Berman, ed. Helene Herman Krupnick, "Amy Eilberg," *Jewish Women's Archive*, June 23, 2021, <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/eilberg-amy>.

Though many communities began independently incorporating the imahot into the Amidah in their services in years previous, the first printed additions in siddurim include the Reconstructionist siddurim V'taher Libenu, published in 1981, and Kol Haneshama, published in 1989. In V'taher Libenu, the imahot were listed with the avot as units, "Avraham v'Sara, Yitzchak v'Rivka, etc", and in Kol Haneshama, the imahot are listed as separate individuals not bound to their husbands. The first Reform siddur to include the imahot was Gates of Prayer in 1992, more than a decade after its adoption in Reconstructionist liturgy.

Throughout the 1970s-1990s when women were, for the first time, reflected in ordained Jewish leaders and included as named matriarchs in Jewish prayer, women's participation in synagogue life in America grew. Smith asserts that, with this rise in participation, the institution of the American synagogue began to be defined by women. This led to a rise in inclusive ritual life cycles as well as feminine language in prayer. Put bluntly, when women could participate in Jewish life, they did to such an extent that they reshaped progressive Judaism as a whole.

Notable for this project is the fact that there exist only three current out transgender and/or nonbinary rabbis ordained by the Reform movement. There are currently no known out transgender or nonbinary cantors ordained by any movement. I and two of my cantorial classmates will be the first three transgender and nonbinary cantors ordained from any movement, to our knowledge, this coming May. Just as second-wave feminism created momentum for the first female Jewish clergy and the innovations of feminist liturgy, there exists now social and political efforts to recognize

the existence and importance of nonbinary and transgender individuals which is creating momentum for the first transgender and nonbinary cantors and the innovations of nonbinary liturgy.

Feminist liturgy opened the door for liturgical innovation, creating the concept of gender in prayer outside of the masculine. Bolstered by the second-wave feminist movement, Jewish communities began pushing for the inclusion of women in both liturgy and Jewish life. Only decades later was this need codified in siddurim by the governing bodies of progressive Jewish movements, perhaps because by then there was a critical mass of female clergy who could push for such changes. Continuations of this first liturgical innovation, the inclusion of the imahot, can be found in both the Modeh Ani and Nisim B'chol Yom prayers of *Mishkan Tefilah*, the current Reform siddur. Alongside the masculine, “מודה, Modeh”, exists the feminine “מודה, Modah”, allowing the one who is praying to choose which gendered first-person language describes them best²⁵. In Nisim B'chol Yom, within one of the blessings for daily miracles, the traditional phrase “בְּחַיֵּינוּ” has been expanded to read “בְּחַיֵּי בֵּית חַיֵּינוּ”, offering both masculine and feminine options²⁶. This creates space for women and those who are affirmed by feminine language in Jewish prayer and is an important step in creating communities in which women and feminine Jews are a full and integral part of Jewish life.

²⁵ ed. Elyse D. Frishman, *Mishkan Tefilah*, (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 2006), pp. 24.

²⁶ Frishman, *Mishkan Tefilah*, pp. 40.

We have the blueprint now, thanks to feminist liturgy. But there is more work to do. When nonbinary Jews open our siddurim and see these binary options, they are left wondering how they should pray. By only offering masculine and feminine language in prayer, we are asking nonbinary Jews to misgender themselves in order to participate in Jewish ritual and Jewish life. If we wish to create communities in which nonbinary Jews can bring their full selves and participate meaningfully in Jewish life, we must offer ways for them to pray using language that affirms who they are. When Jewish feminism created a place for women in Judaism, they became such active participants in Judaism that they changed Jewish life as a whole for the better. When we create space in Judaism for transgender and nonbinary individuals, so many more trans and nonbinary Jews will have access to Jewish community for the very first time. With their active participation in Jewish life, they will help us reshape Judaism for the better.

De-gendered versus Gender-expansive Liturgy

Many efforts to include nonbinary and transgender individuals in the language of prayer have involved removing gender from liturgy: the creation of de-gendered prayer. This can be found in the common use of the phrase “na la’amod” to call up a nonbinary or otherwise gender-expansive individual for a Torah aliyah. This formation pulls from the infinitive verb form which is already non-gendered in Hebrew, combined with the word “na” which is commonly translated as “please” and signals a request.

In Reform Jewish communities, the use of “na la’amod” has become commonplace. Keshet, a nonprofit organization working for the rights of LGBTQ+ Jews, cites this form as the most commonly used in the United States and Canada²⁷. The Reform movement has not put out a formal teshuvah on how to call nonbinary Jews to Torah. This may be attributed to the Reform movement’s belief in choice through knowledge, underlining the individual and communal right to choose how to practice Judaism according to varying needs and customs. The Conservative movement, which does consider itself bound by halachic rulings written by its Rabbinical Assembly, recently approved a teshuvah that codified the use of “na la’amod to call up nonbinary individuals to a Torah honor²⁸. This teshuvah, approved on May 25, 2022, and

²⁷ “Celebrating the Age of Mitzvah: A Guide for all Genders, Concrete suggestions and best practices to design and support affirming b’mitzvah celebrations,” *Keshet*, תשק: *For LGBTQ equality in Jewish life*, <https://www.keshetonline.org/celebrating-the-age-of-mitzvah-a-guide-for-all-genders/>.

²⁸ Rabbi Guy Austrian, Rabbi Robert Scheinberg, and Rabbi Deborah Silver, “Calling non-binary people to Torah honors,” *The Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly*, The Rabbinical Assembly, May 25, 2022, https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/non-binary-torah-honors_0.pdf.

co-authored by Rabbi Guy Austrian, Rabbi Robert Scheinberg, and Rabbi Deborah Silver, names on its first page the challenge that arose when The Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly set out to create a standardized guide for calling nonbinary Jews to Torah honors: namely, that there wasn't a single nonbinary individual on this committee.

The teshuvah authors acknowledge, almost right away, that this teshuvah should have been written by a nonbinary clergyperson whose lived experience would be the foundation of the teshuvah recommendations. This lack of nonbinary representation in the Rabbinical Assembly is reflective of the lack of transgender and nonbinary rabbis ordained by the Conservative movement at that time.

The same month this teshuvah was published, May 2022, marked the ordination of the first three out nonbinary rabbis from the Jewish Theological Seminary. There are at least two JTS-ordained rabbis who have come out as transgender and/or nonbinary in years following their ordination. As of February 2023, the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies has not ordained any out trans or nonbinary rabbis. It is important to note here that the authors of this teshuvah did consult with the three nonbinary rabbis ordained by JTS while they were still in school as they wrote this teshuvah.

Some may say that there are only a small number of Conservative trans and nonbinary rabbis simply because there are few trans and nonbinary Jews who aspire to be rabbis. However, one only needs to look at the number of transgender and nonbinary rabbis ordained by Hebrew College and the Reconstructing Judaism movement to know that this is not the case. We cannot attribute the small number of Conservative trans and

nonbinary rabbis to a lack of transgender and nonbinary Jews wanting to become rabbis. We must then question the Conservative movement's ability to create safe and respectful spaces for nonbinary and transgender Jews. In short, if the Conservative movement wants a teshuvah about nonbinary people to be written by nonbinary clergy, it needs to become a movement that actively protects and values nonbinary Jews.

The Reform movement, compared to the Reconstructing Judaism movement and the nondenominational Hebrew College, has also ordained shockingly few transgender and nonbinary rabbis. As of February 2023, there have been three out transgender and/or nonbinary rabbis ordained from HUC-JIR. This illustrates a similar need for the Reform movement to transform to meet the needs of nonbinary Jews.

The lack of any nonbinary and/or transgender cantors ordained in any movement speaks to an even more prohibitive barrier for nonbinary and transgender cantors than nonbinary and transgender rabbis. This may be attributed to the hyper-gendered nature of vocal music programs or to the barrier of vocal dysphoria, common among many transgender and nonbinary individuals, that makes singing an uncomfortable or painful activity in which the sound of one's voice does not reflect that individual's perception of their voice or their gender.

The first barrier for transgender and nonbinary cantors, the hyper-gendered nature of vocal music programs, can be addressed by using voice parts to distinguish groups of singers, rather than grouping them by assumed gender. The second barrier is more difficult. In cases of vocal dysphoria that are primarily social, describing a discomfort that stems primarily from the way an individual's gender is assumed by others based on

the pitch and timbre of their voice, a shift in cultural understanding of gender could be beneficial. If it were possible to unlink the trait of having a high voice with the assumed identity of woman, and the trait of having a low voice with the assumed identity of man, we could manage the harmful effects of social vocal dysphoria. In cases of vocal dysphoria that are primarily internal or personal, describing a discomfort that stems primarily from the sound of one's voice not matching their internal and personal gender, there is no way to alleviate this barrier through shifting cultural understandings of gender.

As a part of the project to make Reform and Conservative Jewish spaces safe and respectful places for nonbinary and transgender Jews, there is a long overdue need to update our liturgical language to reflect the many genders of Jews who come to pray. As stated earlier, singular “they” has gained widespread acceptance among English grammarians in recent years. Nonbinary individuals have begun to be open about their genders, and many if not most progressive Jewish communities have at least one nonbinary congregant. Progressive Jewish synagogues, seeking to provide accurate language for these individuals in the context of prayer, have turned to their movement leaders looking for answers. Although many communities have found or created their own liturgical customs for nonbinary Jews, it is shocking that it took until the middle of 2022 for the Conservative movement to issue a formal answer to these calls for clarity and inclusivity in liturgical language.

The Conservative teshuvah acknowledges the assertion made earlier, that the masculine plural in Hebrew cannot be treated as analogous to the singular “they” in English, as it is still masculine in nature and cannot be considered a true neutral. The

Nonbinary Hebrew Project is mentioned in the footnotes of this teshuvah, along with a quote of mine when I was interviewed by Tablet Magazine, detailing how I use “modet ani” both personally and professionally as a nonbinary alternative to the masculine and feminine options found in our siddur²⁹. The teshuvah draws a boundary, however, choosing to limit itself to what they term “standard Hebrew grammar”.

Avoiding embarrassment and disrespect are stated as the primary rationale for this teshuvah, citing that the historical minhag of calling people to the Torah by name is for the purpose of avoiding embarrassment and disrespect. This value of derech eretz, civility in interpersonal relations, is a solid starting point to frame these additions to codified Conservative practice. However, a future teshuvah may wish to expand upon the value of b'tzelem Elohim, honoring the sacred in each individual, and focus on the potential for joy and belonging in this liturgy, rather than the absence of shame.

The use of the neutral phrase “na la'amod” has been adopted by some communities as a blanket phrase used for people of any gender who get called up to Torah. This can simplify the job of the gabbai and is the surest way of avoiding the awkwardness or pain of misgendering an individual, but it also removes all possibilities for creating a moment of personal sanctification through using gendered words that are authentic and resonant with each individual. The Conservative teshuvah chooses to maintain the use of masculine and feminine language and add the neutral “na la'amod” as a third option. This decision was guided by the aim to not “eliminate or flatten gender

²⁹ Marie-Rose Sheinerman, “Outside the Gender Binary: How nonbinary Jews navigate gendered spaces,” *Tablet*, January 14, 2021, <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/community/articles/outside-the-gender-binary>.

differences, but rather to lift up the diversity of human gender identities.” One might remark here that the use of “na la’amod” does just the opposite of this aim for nonbinary individuals: it negates gender rather than lifting up gender. Whereas the masculine and feminine options of “ya’amod” and “ta’amod” are the third person singular masculine and feminine verb forms, respectively, the nonbinary option is simply the infinitive. If the goal is to lift up as holy all the genders of Jews who have come to pray, the nonbinary option should be as specifically gendered as the masculine and feminine options.

The alternate, but similarly de-gendered, verb phrase for calling up nonbinary individuals to Torah, is offered in the footnotes of this teshuvah: “ekra la’amod”. This phrase relies similarly on the infinitive “la’amod” but replaces “na” with “ekra”, a first person verb that is already not gendered. This first person verb refers to the gabbai, the one calling an individual up to Torah, not the one receiving an aliyah. The teshuvah dismisses this option as it shifts attention from the one receiving the aliyah to the gabbai. For the purposes of expanding gender, it is as de-gendered as the more commonly used “na la’amod”.

To replace the commonly found “ben” or “bat” in the middle of a Hebrew name preceding the names of one’s parents, this teshuvah offers the use of “mibeit” (from the house of) and “l’veit” (of the house of) as nonbinary options. This form has precedent in traditional ketubot, marriage contracts. Max Strassfeld was the first to use “mibeit” in their commitment ceremony, officiated by Rabbi Camille Angel in 2006. The writers of the teshuvah appropriately stressed the importance of a gabbai repeating verbatim the name given to them by a person being called to Torah. It is up to each person which

gendered word to use as a part of their name and it is not within a gabbai's power to assert a change to someone's articulated identity.

In Keshet's "Guide for all Genders: Concrete suggestions and best practices to design and support affirming b'mitzvah celebrations", "mibeit" and "l'veit" are suggested, as well as "mimishpachat" (from the family of) or "bet", the Nonbinary Hebrew Project's gender-expansive term meaning "child of". Although this guide does not cite an author, Keshet's team has included multiple nonbinary educators and staff for at least a decade, so it is reasonable to assume this guide was created by or with the guidance of nonbinary Jews.

It is notable that "mibeit" as a third option to "ben" and "bat" is an example of the same de-gendering found in "na la'amod". The Nonbinary Hebrew Project offers "bet" as an alternative to the first and "ya'amdeh" as an alternative to the second, both gender-expansive options that are as specifically gendered as the traditional masculine and feminine options.

The difficulty of "bet," the Nonbinary Hebrew Project's suggestion for the nonbinary form of "ben" and "bat," lies in its written unvocalized form. As mentioned earlier, nonbinary Hebrew that uses the Nonbinary Hebrew Project grammar often looks like the feminine in unvocalized written Hebrew. In these cases, a reader would rely on context to determine the gender of the subject and pronounce the words accordingly. However, a Hebrew name often lacks any additional context beyond the verbiage used preceding it in the case of an aliyah. On Hebrew documents, for example, one's name may stand alone without any surrounding contextual words. In these cases, the written

unvocalized “bet” is indistinguishable from the written unvocalized “bat”. Justifiably, this makes some nonbinary Jews feel nervous about the potential for being misgendered. For purposes of aliyot, many progressive Jewish communities may transliterate names so that gabbaim will be able to read them faster and more fluently. In these cases, “bet” would be less problematic. In Jewish documents for marriage, baby naming, conversion, or other events, the unvocalized Hebrew would continue to present a problem. Seeking clarity in written, unvocalized Hebrew, many nonbinary Jews opt for “mibeit” rather than “bet” to honor and acknowledge their nonbinary genders.

Perhaps this challenge, specific to contexts of Jewish religious practice, rather than to contexts of secular, conversational Hebrew, can be raised to the authors of the Nonbinary Hebrew Project and an alternate form can be created using existing grammatical patterns of the Nonbinary Hebrew Project. It is understandable why the de-gendered option is most attractive for many nonbinary Jews in ritual contexts. But if there could be an intentionally gender-expansive option, this would certainly hold more potential for affirmation than an option without any gender at all.

An exploration of de-gendered liturgical language would not be complete without studying the work of Marcia Falk³⁰. Falk, like many of us, grew up envisioning God as male, directed by descriptions of God in both stories (Torah, midrash) and prayer. This calls to mind the common image of God as an old man with a beard in the clouds, one parroted by many young Jewish learners influenced by both Christian imagery that has

³⁰ Marcia Falk, “Notes on Composing New Blessings toward a Feminist-Jewish Reconstruction of Prayer,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1987): pp. 39–53.

seeped into our secular pop-culture as well as the way we gender God in our Jewish stories and prayers. Through this theology, Falk began to see herself, in her femaleness, as inherently other. If God is male, then masculinity and maleness is closer to God. However, her commitment to justice work, born from the Jewish teaching to pursue justice, prevented her from abandoning Judaism entirely on account of its patriarchal God-language.

Falk ultimately chose the path of de-gendering prayer after first trying to depict God as solely feminine. At first she began feminizing God-language in prayer in an attempt to uproot the masculine imagery that is so deeply entrenched in Jewish liturgy. She eventually became dissatisfied with either masculine or feminine language for God, describing both as partial images that don't accurately convey the multiplicity of the Divine. These efforts toward feminist liturgy stand in harmony with the works of Jewish feminist theologians, such as Judith Plaskow, and feminist halachists and Talmud scholars, such as Rachel Adler.

Judith Plaskow describes three phases of feminism in theology³¹. The first, the critical phase, critiqued sexism in Jewish texts and rejected androcentrism and misogyny. The second, the historical phase, focused on the history of women and their contributions to Judaism. The third, the re/constructive stage, examined what Jewish traditions, movements, concepts, and doctrines would look like if conceived from a feminist perspective. Plaskow clarifies that each of these stages examined the same core Jewish

³¹ Judith Plaskow, "Transing and Gendering Religious Studies," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, Vol. 34, No. 1, (Spring 2018): pp. 75-80.

texts and, while they began as consecutive phases, they eventually transformed to be concurrent. Falk's journey as a creative liturgist follows these three phases closely. First came her discontent with patriarchal and androcentric God-imagery in prayer and Jewish stories. Then came her experiments with using "she" and feminine imagery for God in prayer, exploring the idea of the sacred feminine in Jewish tradition and raising up the importance of the divine feminine. Last came her discontent with any specifically gendered God-language, recognizing that, for her, the creation of feminist liturgy was the creation of de-gendered liturgy.

Plaskow argues that these three phases can also be seen clearly in queer and trans theology. Additionally, Plaskow believes that the experiences of transphobia and sexism are inherently linked. The liberation of Jewish women is intrinsically tied to the liberation of transgender and nonbinary Jews. This importantly raises the topic of intersectionality, a term created by Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe how interconnected systems of power affect those who are marginalized in multiple ways³². Intersectionality reminds us that not all transgender Jews experience transphobia in equal measure. Transgender women and transfeminine nonbinary people (transgender people whose genders are feminine but who do not identify as binary women) experience a uniquely intersectional form of discrimination.

³² Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," in *The Public Nature of Private Violence*, ed. Martha Albertson Fineman and Rixanne Mykitiuk (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 93-118.

Julia Serano created the term “trans-misogyny” as a way to describe the uniquely intersectional discrimination transgender women and transfeminine nonbinary people experience³³. Serano identifies four separate strands of discrimination that come together to form trans-misogyny. The first is transphobia, discrimination against people whose gendered identities, appearances, or behaviors deviate from societal norms. The second is cissexism, the belief that transgender people’s identified genders are inferior to, or less authentic than, those of cisgender people. The third is oppositional sexism, the belief that female and male are rigid, mutually exclusive categories, each with a unique set of characteristics. Oppositional sexists attempt to punish or dismiss those who fall outside of gender norms because the existence of those people threatens the belief that women and men are “opposite”. The fourth is traditional sexism, the belief that maleness and masculinity are superior to femaleness and femininity.

These four types of discrimination explain why the gendered experiences of cisgender women, transgender men and transmasculine nonbinary people, and transgender women and transfeminine nonbinary people are different. Whereas cisgender women experience traditional sexism, and sometimes experience oppositional sexism if they deviate from traditional gender norms, they do not experience transphobia and cissexism. Similarly, whereas trans men and transmasculine people experience transphobia, cissexism, and oppositional sexism, they do not (to the same extent, on account of their social or medical transitions) experience traditional sexism. Trans

³³ Julia Serano, *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity*, (Berkeley, California: Seal Press, 2007), pp. 14-15.

women and transfeminine people experience all four simultaneously. We see in this discourse two truths. The first is how feminist liberation and trans liberation are intrinsically linked. The second is how important it is for us to recognize that not all transgender people experience discrimination to the same degree. As in all liberation work, we must look for those who suffer the most discrimination and work for their liberation. Only then may we all be liberated. In this case, we must look to the lived experiences of transgender women and transfeminine nonbinary people and reshape our communities around their needs for safety and belonging so that they may bring their authentic selves to Jewish community.

Rachel Adler, a feminist halachist and Talmud scholar, emphasizes the importance of creating a connection between Jewish tradition and the self³⁴. For us to live as embodied Jews, the stories of our tradition must mesh with the stories of who we are. Her work as a Jewish feminist is primarily in understanding the stories of Jewish tradition and the stories of selfhood in such a way that they are harmonious conceptualizations, enriching each other rather than fighting each other. This closely mirrors Falk's interest in reversing the "otherness" she felt as a feminine person raised on images of a male God. For Falk, the creation of de-gendered liturgy allowed her to see herself in the Divine, rather than defining divinity as solely masculine.

Adler also identifies the responsibility of both the reformers and the traditionalists to create the future of Jewish practice. She does not believe our Jewish future can exist

³⁴ Rachel Adler, "Feminist Judaism: Past and Future," *CrossCurrents*, Vol. 51, No. 4, (Winter 2002): pp. 484-488.

without the buy-in of each party. The reformers must gain a sense of what has come before so they can add meaningfully to the history of tradition. The traditionalists need to understand that Jewish tradition must be fluid and adaptive to the needs of current-day Jews. This is the only way Judaism and Jewish practice will stay alive and relevant. Falk's work, especially seen in *The Book of Blessings*, her compilation of creative Jewish liturgy in Hebrew, draws strongly from tradition³⁵. Rather than building a framework of prayer from the ground up, Falk draws from the rich history of Jewish liturgy, adapting it to move from masculine Divine images to de-gendered metaphors for the Divine. Falk and Adler seem to agree on the importance of balancing tradition with innovation, making sure that efforts to reform do not leave behind all the wisdom that has been passed down to us from past generations of Jews.

In her creative Hebrew liturgy, Marcia Falk brought us reformation in the form of de-gendered language for God in prayer. She urged us to think expansively when choosing metaphors for God, offering ones like “ein hachayim”, source of life, rather than the tradition “melech ha'olam”, king of the world. She relied on default non-gendered Hebrew grammar, such as infinitives and first person verbs, to de-gender prayer language that describes God, using forms like “n'vareich”, may we bless, rather than “baruch”, the masculine singular adjective meaning “blessed” that is used in traditional blessings.

³⁵ Marcia Falk, *The Book of Blessings*, ספר הברכות: *New Jewish Prayers for Daily Life, The Sabbath, and the New Moon Festival*, (CCAR Press: New York, 2017).

Through Falk, Plaskow, and Adler's work we can see the importance of choosing our God-language carefully for it affects the way we view the self in relation to Judaism. In Falk's de-gendered liturgy we can see the foundations of conceptualizing God outside the gender binary, as something more than either masculine and feminine. But is de-gendered prayer the only response to millennia of patriarchal God-language?

Our societal constructs of gender are deeply connected to the ways we construct our language for God in prayer. Patriarchy has been a cornerstone of Jewish ritual since its creation, so it is no wonder that our traditional metaphors for God are solely masculine. But liturgy is a human construct, like gender. This means that, not only do we have the capacity and the responsibility to adapt our liturgical language to mirror our shifting values, but that liturgy reflects only the ways we speak about God rather than the nature of God Godself. We must lean into this idea of metaphor, understanding that it is impossible to fully conceptualize God in our human prayers and deciding instead to express the multifaceted nature of God through intentionally expansive metaphoric liturgical language.

If we choose to de-gender God rather than using gender-expansive metaphors for God, we cannot assume that each person who encounters that prayer will also conceptualize God without gender. That is to say, removing gender from God-language is not always an effective way to fight against patriarchal understandings of God. You cannot push against patriarchy by negating gender altogether. A better way to uproot the image of the old guy with a beard in the sky is to replace it with metaphors for God that resonate deeply with the selfhood of individual Jews. Gender is an intrinsic part of self,

and the ways we gender God relate deeply to the ways we understand holiness in ourselves. Therefore, we must intentionally gender God as multi-gendered, reinforcing the truth that all genders are holy. As all of us were made in the Divine image, all of our genders are representations of the holiness inherent within us. Our God-language can be a reflection of all of us, which is to say, as gender-full as we are collectively. When we gender God in expansive ways, we are creating space for transgender and nonbinary Jews in our theologies, our prayers, and our communities, and we are teaching all Jews that, in their uniqueness, they too are reflections of God's holiness.

Cisgendering and Transing of Religion

As we embark on the task of reshaping our Jewish communities to reflect the needs and values of transgender and nonbinary Jews, we must be intentional in how we frame our work. Max Strassfeld coined two terms that are key to framing this important task of reform: the “cisgendering” of religion and the “transing” of religion³⁶.

Cisgendering, defined by Strassfeld, is how specific subjects, traditions, spaces, and communities are hostile to trans people because they are created using cisgendered logic. In other words, if Jewish spaces are built with the expectation that they will serve solely cisgender Jews, trans people will experience these spaces as hostile. Unfortunately, this is the case with the majority of Jewish spaces. More and more Jewish communities are becoming attuned to this disparity between the assumptions their community foundations rest upon and the realities of the Jews they are currently hoping or trying to serve. This is where we find the common framing of “inclusion” work.

Inclusion work describes a need to bring members of a marginalized group into a community with little or no representation from this marginalized group. However, the framing of inclusion can only be helpful in the initial stages of shifting a community culture to reflect the needs and realities of marginalized Jews. This is because, when we speak about inclusion, we are naming two groups: those who are already a part of the community whose job it is to be inclusive, and those who wish to become a part of the community but do not currently feel safe or comfortable enough to join. One might say, this is a helpful binary in defining the roles of those who need to be inclusive and those

³⁶ Max Strassfeld, *Trans Talmud: Androgynes and Eunuchs in Rabbinic Literature*, (Rutgers University Press, 2022).

who need to be included. It is certainly helpful in clarifying that the work of change rests solely on the shoulders of the current community members, and not those marginalized people wishing to join the community. The trouble in using this frame begins after the initial stage, in which community members make the effort to include marginalized people into their community, when the binary distinction continues to exist. If inclusion is our only framework of this necessary culture shift in Jewish communities, we are unable to step outside the binary thinking of those who include and those who are included. Even once marginalized Jews become a part of our communities, we still see their role as included outsiders, not as integral members of the community itself.

The framing of “inclusion” defines the completion of the work as simply the presence of marginalized members in a community. Inclusion work does not ask us to reimagine how our cultural norms and practices sit with those we have welcomed into our spaces. Inclusion work allows the foundations of our systems, built without the needs of marginalized Jews in mind, to remain unchanged. We need a deeper methodology. It is not enough to include marginalized Jews in our communities without doing the work to fundamentally change the systems and assumptions our communities were built upon.

This is where the term “cisgendered”, describing that which is created solely for cisgender people and is therefore hostile to trans people, becomes helpful. Rather than simply including transgender and nonbinary Jews in our communities and patting ourselves on the back for our allyship, we must first examine how our community is cisgendered. We must ask ourselves: how are our traditions, communal norms, and Jewish practices hostile to transgender and nonbinary Jews? It is not enough to simply

welcome trans Jews in. We must reshape our communities to become places where trans Jews can thrive and find a sense of belonging.

“Transing” religion, a term also created by Max Strassfeld, is the act of reclaiming spaces and traditions that are cisgendered. To “trans” Judaism is to reshape Jewish communities and practices to reflect the experiences and needs of trans Jews. One relevant example of “transing” Judaism is found in the work of Zohar Weiman-Kelman who, building on the work of Max Strassfeld, takes a critical look at one of the most objectionably gendered prayers in Jewish liturgy and reshapes it by viewing it through a trans lens³⁷.

Weiman-Kelman focuses on the traditional blessing which ends “who has not made me a woman,” and its counter blessing, written later for women, “who has made me as He willed.” In progressive denominations, these two blessings have been shifted into a single blessing recited by all genders, ending with “who created me in His image.” To trace the progression of the blessings, first we had only a blessing for men which was openly misogynistic. Second, we had two blessings for the binary genders. The one for men maintained its misogynistic language. The one for women failed to address or counteract the misogyny found in its counterpart and simply stated that women were created according to the will of the masculine God. Third, we have a progressive Jewish blessing that does not distinguish between genders. This one seems to pull primarily from the concept of the blessing for women, choosing to focus on human beings as a reflection of God’s will or image, rather than blessing what one’s gender is or is not. On the surface,

³⁷ Zohar Weiman-Kelman, “Transing Back the Texts, Queering Jewish Prayer,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, Vol. 34, No. 1, (Spring 2018): pp. 80-84.

this seems to be a solid way to trans Jewish liturgy. Faced with a cisgendered liturgical practice, Jewish progressive liturgists did away with gendered distinctions and reframed the blessing around the concept that each person is a reflection of God.

However, Weiman-Kelman points out that this third, progressive blessing is not without gender. God is referred to with masculine pronouns, bestowing the masculine divine image upon us all. It should be noted that, in some progressive prayer books, the phrase “b’tzalmo, in His image” has been changed to “b’tzelem Elohim, in the image of God”, making use of “Elohim” as an ungended proper noun for God, rather than using the third-person masculine singular possessive suffix. However, even when this specific phrase is changed, one only has to look to the beginning of the blessing to find gender: “*Baruch atah Adonai eloheinu, melech ha’olam*, Blessed (masc) are you (masc) Adonai our God, king (masc) of the universe.” Masculine words for God in liturgy are so pervasive that they make up the blessing sequence used for almost all Jewish blessings. Weiman-Kelman laments that masculine God language in prayer is unavoidable. When they wrote this article, they did not see a way to trans this cisgendered practice. However, there is a compelling solution to this problem: nonbinary Hebrew.

Nonbinary Hebrew Liturgy

Nonbinary Hebrew can serve as a solution to three main challenges of gender in progressive liturgy: creating space for nonbinary Jews in prayer and ritual, subverting the masculine perception of God in traditional liturgy, and blessing groups of people of many genders with appropriate gendered words.

When we create prayer opportunities for Jewish communities it is imperative that we have language that reflects the lived experience of all genders of Jews, including nonbinary Jews. As referenced earlier, feminist liturgists have made large strides to create feminine language in prayer, including but not limited to adding the imahot in the Amidah and offering feminine options for first-person prayer language in Hebrew. We must continue to expand our language of prayer and add language for nonbinary people. Currently, nonbinary Jews who open *Mishkan Tefilah*, the Reform siddur, will not find any language that reflects who they are. In practice, this requires nonbinary Jews to either misgender themselves or not participate in a section of prayer. This is most important in first-person prayer language, a prime example being “Modeh ani, מודה אני”, meaning “I am grateful”, our morning prayer of gratitude. Currently, as mentioned earlier, *Mishkan Tefilah* includes two options: “Modeh ani” (the masculine form) and “Modah ani” (the feminine form). In the next Reform siddur it is imperative that we also include an option for nonbinary people. We cannot ask nonbinary people to participate in Jewish prayer if we do not provide them with gendered language to refer to themselves. I suggest “Modet ani, מודת אני”, the nonbinary form created using the grammar of the Nonbinary Hebrew Project.

The relevance of nonbinary liturgy for nonbinary Jews doesn't stop at the liturgy in our prayer books. There is a growing need for nonbinary Hebrew also for Jewish life-cycle rituals. In life-cycle rituals, as opposed to communal prayer, the focus is on one or two individuals. Therefore, the possibility for validating language and the consequences of invalidating language are much greater. For rituals such as weddings, conversions, b'nei mitzvah, and funerals, among many others, it is imperative that we create and use language, both in Hebrew and in English, that reflects the genders of those whom the ritual is for. Added to the list of traditional Jewish life-cycle rituals, there are also new Jewish rituals specific to the experiences of nonbinary and transgender Jews. These include renaming ceremonies, in which nonbinary or transgender Jews choose gender-affirming Hebrew names different from the ones they were given, and mikvah immersions to mark gender transition. I myself have had both a renaming ceremony and a mikvah immersion for my gender transition³⁸. In my renaming ceremony, built around a havdalah service and drawing from themes of transition in Jewish liturgy, I adapted all the Hebrew liturgy to use nonbinary language, according to the grammar of the Nonbinary Hebrew Project, for both myself and God. Through these adaptations, I was able to connect with the liturgy from an authentic personal place and see my gender-full nature as a reflection of the holiness of the divine. When we offer nonbinary Jews the opportunity to participate in both traditional and new Jewish rituals using nonbinary liturgy, we are offering them the opportunity to connect their sense of self with their

³⁸ Ze'evi Berman, "Honoring My Nonbinary Gender," *Jewish Boston*, June 18, 2019, <https://www.jewishboston.com/read/honoring-my-nonbinary-gender/>.

Jewish beliefs and practices (a vitally important connection according to Rachel Adler, as mentioned earlier).

When I began the process of choosing a topic for my thesis and cantorial recital, I knew I wanted to shape it around nonbinary Hebrew liturgy and the ways we can create meaningful Jewish experiences for nonbinary and transgender Jews. I decided to focus on Shabbat evening liturgy, as this is when the majority of Jews experience prayer in Hebrew. I also wanted to include liturgy for a short renaming ceremony, created using nonbinary Hebrew, to sanctify the specific experiences of nonbinary and transgender Jews. What followed was a widening of my perspective on gender in liturgy: what if we did not stop at creating language for nonbinary Jews in prayer? What if we questioned all of the ways we default to the masculine in prayer and offered nonbinary Hebrew as a worthy alternative? From these questions came the project of nonbinary liturgical adaptation that follows this rationale.

Following in the footsteps of Marcia Falk and Zohar Weiman-Kelman, I too found myself deeply unsatisfied with the solely masculine imagery for God in our liturgical texts. However, the solution I created stands almost directly opposite the one created by Marcia Falk. Whereas Marcia Falk chose to de-gender prayer, relying on the parts of traditional Hebrew grammar that are naturally gender-less, I chose to re-gender prayer, based on the grammar of the Nonbinary Hebrew Project, in order to replace the traditional masculine language with something as equally gender-full.

All our descriptions of God in liturgy are metaphors. As human beings, we cannot comprehend the incomparable muchness of God all at once so we must use a collection

of metaphors to develop our conceptions of and deepen our connections to God. Even though the metaphors we choose are not actual descriptions of God, they are vital to our understanding of divinity. The ways we describe God influence not only our conceptions of the Divine but of holiness as a broad concept. When we continuously describe God as masculine, by using solely masculine gendered words for God or by painting images of God as King or Father, we associate divinity solely with masculinity. The ways we conceptualize divinity influence the ways we understand what is holy in the world and in human beings. With only masculine God-language, we create an inherent bias in which we are more likely to see holiness in masculine people. This strengthens the patriarchal norms already found within many Jewish communities, both historically and currently, in both progressive and traditional denominations. If we aim to reduce patriarchal norms in our Jewish communities and build spaces of belonging for Jews of all genders, we must consider the role our God-language is playing in upholding them.

The concept of “b'tzelem Elohim”, commonly described as a value in Reform Jewish communities, explains that all human beings were created in God's image³⁹. Therefore, we must treat everyone in accordance with their inherent holiness. In other words, each of us is a reflection of God. But how can we all see the reflection of God within us if our metaphors for God are only masculine? When we intentionally use gender-full language for God, we are creating metaphors that reflect the multifaceted nature of our Jewish communities. Using nonbinary Hebrew, our language for God can shift the ways we conceptualize holiness. When we describe God in gender-full language,

³⁹ Genesis 1:27

we are living the value of “b’tzelem Elohim”, allowing each person to see the spark of divine holiness reflected within them.

This shift away from the masculine is already evidenced in the English of our prayer books. Using *Mishkan Tefilah* as an example, acknowledging that there are many progressive siddurim with similar language, we can see that masculine God-language has been edited out of the English translations. Masculine pronouns are translated as “God” or “God’s” rather than “he” or “his”, and masculine imagery such as מלך, meaning “king”, has been translated as “Sovereign”. In this we see an discomfort for masculine God-language and God-imagery. However, obscuring the existence of masculine language in the Hebrew through artful translation is not the fix that some might see it as. Many, if not most, Jewish congregants, do not understand Hebrew and rely on English translations to give them an accurate sense of what they are saying in Hebrew. Changing the English and not the Hebrew is, in a way, intentionally misleading the majority of Jews who do not understand the Hebrew. If the English represents our values but we continue to pray using the unchanged Hebrew, we are not being honest and we are not living our values. As we have already adapted the English of our prayer books, so must we adapt the Hebrew as well.

Some might say, changing the English is simply changing our interpretations of prayer, but we must not touch the traditional Hebrew. To them I would respond that adapting Hebrew prayer has been a cornerstone of progressive Jewish denominations since their beginnings. Through feminist liturgical innovations we have transformed our prayers to reflect the existence of women throughout our Jewish stories and communities.

We must boldly reform that which does not reflect our values. Reform liturgists have rewritten whole prayers to make them into reflections of Reform Jewish values. The tenth benediction in the weekday Amidah is a prime example. Reform liturgists rewrote it, changing it from a prayer for the ingathering of the exiles from the four corners of the earth to a prayer about spreading justice to the four corners of the earth, in order to reflect the value the Reform movement places on both diasporic Judaism and justice work. We have proven through the progression of the English in our siddurim that we are uncomfortable maintaining an entirely masculine conception of God. It is time we reflect that in the Hebrew as well.

This is why, following this rationale, you will find that I chose to use entirely nonbinary Hebrew for God in all my adaptations. I am not suggesting that we do the same in all Reform siddurim. I believe that using intentionally varied gendered metaphors for God is the best solution to the millennia of patriarchal God language we have inherited from Jewish tradition. I chose to use solely nonbinary Hebrew throughout for two reasons: to provide a resource of nonbinary and gender-full God language for those looking to vary their metaphors for God in prayer, and to fully immerse those attending my recital and reading my thesis in the novel idea of God as a reflection of the collective of all human genders.

During the process of liturgical adaptation, I deliberated on how to address God by name in prayer. There are a variety of gender-neutral options: *M'kor Chayim*, Source of Life, and *Makom*, the Place, to name two existing ones. However, choosing a single metaphor for God seemed too narrow given my goal of multifacetedness, and choosing

specific metaphors for different prayers seemed too prescriptive. Ultimately, I chose to maintain the tetragrammaton, the four-letter name of God found in Torah, for God's name in all of my adaptations. Through using this unpronounceable name, I intentionally opened space for any who use these adaptations to insert their own chosen metaphor for God. Functionally, having a consistent proper noun for God also makes these adaptations easier to use and understand, especially because the nonbinary Hebrew is still so new for most of us.

I also decided to adapt the language we use for unidentified human beings and for groups of people of many genders. In traditional liturgy, any unidentified human is gendered in the masculine. This is more of a reflection of patriarchal norms than it is a reflection of our Jewish values today. Therefore, I adapted the liturgy to use nonbinary Hebrew for any unidentified individuals, just as we would default to the singular "they" in English for anyone whose gender is unknown.

When we refer to groups of people in Jewish prayer, the traditional liturgy defaults to the masculine plural. As discussed earlier in reference to Michal Shomer's work, the masculine plural is no longer a suitable option when referring to a group of people of many genders. Shomer's innovations, while a response to the need for creative solutions in the ways we gender groups of people in Hebrew, do not convey an understanding of gender beyond the binary of masculine and feminine and include varied gendered options only in written, not in spoken, Hebrew. Therefore, I chose to use the Nonbinary Hebrew Project for this project of liturgical adaptation as it is the most comprehensive and consistent system of nonbinary Hebrew grammar. I did make one

large change to the grammatical system, specifically in plural future-tense verbs. Whereas the Nonbinary Hebrew Project maintained “-u” as a gender neutral ending, I chose to use “-ol”, a form pioneered by the Habonim Dror North American youth movement, stemming from the word “כל - kol” meaning “all”. My decision was based on the existence of both a masculine plural and a feminine plural in liturgical Hebrew, proving that “-u” is a masculine ending and therefore not suitable as a plural for a multi-gendered group.

Through this meticulous work of liturgical adaptation, my ultimate goals were to uproot the patriarchal God language that has pervaded our liturgy for millennia, to offer a suitable gender-full option for blessing groups of people of many genders, and to carve out a space in Jewish liturgy for nonbinary and transgender Jews. Through our God-language, may we widen our conceptions of the Divine and affirm the holiness inherent in each of us. In our collective prayers, may our descriptions of the collective be as complex and gender-full as we are together. And may we create space in our liturgy and our rituals for nonbinary and transgender Jews to bring their whole, holy selves to prayer, for with their authentic selves they have the capacity to reshape our Jewish future for the better.

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Kabbalat Shabbat

Nonbinary adaptation of Reform Liturgy

All liturgical references to God and unspecified human beings have been adapted from the traditional masculine Hebrew to be gender-expansive using the grammar of the Nonbinary Hebrew Project. Red bolded text indicates which words have been adapted. Traditional Hebrew and a translation from *Mishkan Tefilah* are included in a smaller type at the end of each prayer. Psalm texts follow precedent of *Mishkan Tefilah*, including only those verses which are standard in Reform liturgy. The heading of each psalm includes a note on which verses have been adapted. Throughout these adaptations, I have cross-checked both the Nonbinary Hebrew Project as well as grammatical precedents in the feminine and plural forms of each word to maintain consistency, especially in the vocalization.

Key

MT: *Mishkan Tefilah*, the current Reform siddur

3ms: describes a verb in the third-person masculine singular

2np: describes a verb in the second-person nonbinary plural

May we use these words in prayer to sanctify the infinitely expansive Divine as well as our ever-expanding understanding of gender in Jewish community.

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Psalm 95

לְכוּל¹ נְרַנְנָה לַיהוָה², נְרִיעָה לְצוּר יִשְׁעֵנוּ
 נִקְדָּמָה פְּנִיָּה³ בְּתוֹדָה, בְּזִמְרוֹת נְרִיעַ לָהּ⁴
 כִּי אֵל גְּדוּלָּה⁵ יְהוָה, וּמַלְכָּה⁶ גְּדוּלָּה עַל-כָּל-אֱלֹהִים
 אֲשֶׁר בִּידָהּ⁷ מַחְקְרֵי-אָרֶץ, וְתוֹעֲפֹת הָרִים לָהּ

¹ Plural imperative of pa'al verb ללכת. Changed from masculine plural to nonbinary plural. In the absence of a convention from Nonbinary Hebrew Project, I used the convention of לִלְ to replace לוֹ derived from the word כל, “all” in plural verb forms such as imperative and future. This is already being used in Nonbinary siddurim such as brin solomon’s Siddur Davar Hadash and this ending can be traced back at least a decade within the nonbinary North American Jewish community. This convention will be used throughout these adaptations.

² For the purposes of this project, I am treating the tetragrammaton, אֱלֹהִים, and אֵל as ungendered names for God, essentially proper nouns. For this reason they are remaining unchanged in this adaptation. As the tetragrammaton is unpronounceable, this gives us the freedom to pronounce it however we wish when uttering God’s name aloud during prayer.

³ Possessive suffix for God, ms (masculine singular) → ns (nonbinary singular), Mishkan Tefilah translation: “God’s presence”

⁴ Preposition with direct object referring to God, ms → ns. Mapik added according to the precedent set in the feminine. MT translation: “for God”, “to God”, “God’s”

⁵ Adjective for God, ms → ns, MT: “great”

⁶ Noun ms → ns, describing God. Patach vowel “מִ” is important to denote this word as a noun rather than a verb (which would have a kamatz). MT: “ruler”

⁷ Possessive suffix for God, ms → ns, MT: “God’s hand”, “God’s care”

אֲשֶׁר-לָהּ הֵימָּה ⁸וְהָאֵל עָשָׂה⁹, וַיִּבְרָא יָדָיָהּ¹⁰ יָצְרוּ
 בְּאוֹלָם¹¹ נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִכְרַעָה, נִבְרָכָה לְפָנֶי-יְהוָה עָשָׂה¹²נוּ
 כִּי הָאֵל אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְאֶנְחֵנוּ עִם מְרַעֲיָהּ¹³ וְצֵאן יָדָהּ
 הַיּוֹם אִם-בְּקִלָּהּ¹⁴ תִּשְׁמָעוּ¹⁵

⁸ Pronoun for God, originally masculine singular, changed to nonbinary singular. MT: “God”

⁹ Past tense singular of pa'al verb לעשות with masculine singular direct object suffix. Verb is an action by God, direct object is הֵימָּה, therefore direct object suffix remains unchanged. Verb: ms → ns. MT: “God made it”

¹⁰ Possessive suffix for God, mp (masculine plural) → np (nonbinary plural). MT: “God’s hands”

¹¹ Plural imperative of pa'al verb לבוא, mp → np, MT: “Come”

¹² Present tense/participle (ben-oni) singular of pa'al verb לעשות with first person plural direct object suffix. Verb is an action by God, suffix refers to the Jewish people. Because first person direct object suffixes are already nongendered in Hebrew suffix remains unchanged. Verb: ms → ns. MT: “our maker”

¹³ Possessive suffix for God added to noun, ms → ns. MT: “God tends”, more accurate translation “God’s flock” as מְרַעֲיָה is a noun that means “flock”

¹⁴ Possessive suffix for God, ms → ns. MT: “God’s charge”, literally “God’s voice”

¹⁵ Jussive form of pa'al verb לשמוע. Verb refers an action by a collective group of human beings. 2mp (second-person masculine plural) → 2np (second-person nonbinary plural). MT: (including the אִם earlier in the phrase) “if you would but heed”

Psalm 95 Translation (Mishkan Tefilah)

Come let us sing joyously to God,
raise a shout for our rock and deliverer
let us come into God's presence with praise,
let us raise a shout for God in song

For God is a great God,
the great ruler of all divine beings
In God's hand are the depths of the earth,
the peaks of the mountains are God's
God's is the sea God made it,
and the land, which God's hands fashioned

Come let us bow down and kneel,
bend the knee before God our maker
for God is our God,
and we are the people God tends
the flock in God's care
O, if you would but heed God's charge this day

Psalm 95 (masculine, for reference)

לְכוּ נִרְנְנָה לַיהוָה
נְרִיעָה לְצוּר יִשְׁעֵנוּ
נִמְדָּמָה פָנָיו בְּתוֹדָה,
בְּזִמְרוֹת נְרִיעַ לוֹ

כִּי אֵל גָּדוֹל יְהוָה,
וּמֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל עַל-כָּל-אֱלֹהִים
אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ מְחַקְרֵי-אָרֶץ,
וְתוֹעֲפֹת הָרִים לוֹ
אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ הַיָּם וְהוּא עֹשֶׂהוּ,
וַיִּבְשֹׁת יַדָּיו יָצְרוּ

בָּאוּ נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִכְרָעָה,
נִכְרָעָה לִפְנֵי-יְהוָה עֹשֵׂנוּ
כִּי הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
וְאֶנְחֵנוּ עַם מִרְעִיתוֹ
וְצֹאן יָדוֹ
הַיּוֹם אִם-בְּקִלּוֹ תִשְׁמָעוּ

Psalm 96*Verses 1-6, 11-13 (following precedent of Mishkan Tefilah)*

נִשְׁרֹל¹⁶ לִיהוָה שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ, שִׁירֹל לִיהוָה כָּל-הָאָרֶץ
 נִשְׁרֹל לִיהוָה בְּכֹל¹⁷ שְׁמָה¹⁸
 בְּשִׁרֹל¹⁹ מִיּוֹם-לְיוֹם יִשׁוּעָתָה²⁰ סִפְרוּ²¹ בְּגוֹיִם כְּבוֹדָה²²,
 בְּכָל-הָעַמִּים נִפְלְאוֹתֶיהָ²³
 כִּי גְדוֹלָה יְהוָה וּמְהֻלָּלָה²⁴ מְאֹד
 נִרְאָה²⁵ הָאֵל עַל-כָּל-אֱלֹהִים²⁶
 כִּי כָל-אֱלֹהֵי הָעַמִּים אֱלִילִים, וַיְהוָה שָׁמַיִם עָשָׂתָה²⁷

¹⁶ Imperative plural of pa'al verb לִשְׁרֹל directed at humanity/Jews, mp → np, MT: "sing"

¹⁷ Imperative plural of pi'el verb לְבַרֵךְ directed at humanity/Jews, mp → np, MT: "bless"

¹⁸ Possessive suffix for God, 3ms (third-person masculine singular), 3ns (third-person nonbinary singular), MT: "God's name"

¹⁹ Imperative plural of pi'el verb לְבַשֵּׁר directed at humanity/Jews, mp → np, MT: "proclaim"

²⁰ Possessive suffix for God, 3ms → 3ns. MT: "God's victory"

²¹ Imperative plural of pi'el verb לְסַפֵּר directed at humanity/Jews, mp → np, MT: "tell"

²² Possessive suffix for God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: "God's glory"

²³ Singular possessive suffix for God with plural noun (unchanged), suffix 3ms → 3ns, MT: "God's wondrous deeds"

²⁴ Present tense/participle of pu'al verb לְהִלָּל describing God, ms → ns. Two segol vowels (rather than a vowel shortening) following the precedent in the feminine. MT: "acclaimed"

²⁵ Adjective describing God, ms → ns, MT: "held in awe"

²⁶ Plural noun for other gods, leaving this unchanged as the scope of this project does not include interpreting gender in other religions' gods

²⁷ Past tense of pa'al verb לַעֲשׂוֹת, action by God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: "made"

הוד-וְהָדָר לְפָנֶיהָ²⁸, עֹז וְתַפְאֶרֶת בְּמִקְדָּשָׁהּ²⁹
 יִשְׁמְחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ, יִרְעֶם הַיָּם וּמִלְאוּ
 יַעֲלֹז שָׂדֵי וְכָל-אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ, אֲזִי יִרְנְנוּ כָּל-עַצֵּי-יַעַר
 לְפָנֵי יְהוָה כִּי בָּאָהּ³⁰, כִּי בָּאָהּ לְשִׁפְט הָאָרֶץ
 יִשְׁפֹּטָהּ³¹-תִּבֵּל בְּצֶדֶק, וְעַמִּים בְּאַמוּנָתָהּ³²

²⁸ Preposition לפני with object suffix describing God, 3ms → 3ns. MT: “before God”

²⁹ Possessive suffix for God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “God’s temple”

³⁰ Present tense/participle of pa’al verb *lamed-bet-vav-aleph* describing God, ms → ns, MT: “God is coming”

³¹ Future tense of pa’al verb לשפוט describing God, 3ms → 3ns, vowel shortening פֹּט to פָּט following precedent of third-person masculine plural form of the same verb. MT: “God will rule”

³² Possessive suffix for God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “in faithfulness” (literal: “in God’s faithfulness”)

Psalm 96 Translation (Mishkan Tefilah)

Sing to Adonai a new song
sing to Adonai all the earth
Sing to Adonai bless God's name
proclaim God's victory day after day
Tell of God's glory among the nations
God's wondrous deeds among all peoples
For Adonai is great and much acclaimed
God is held in awe by all divine beings
All the gods of the peoples are mere idols
but Adonai made the heavens
Glory and majesty are before God
strength and splendor are in God's temple

Let the heavens rejoice and the earth exult
let the sea and all within it thunder
the fields and everything in them exult
then shall all the trees of the forest shout for joy
at the presence of Adonai, for God is coming,
for God is coming to rule the earth
God will rule the world justly
and its peoples with faithfulness

Psalm 96 (masculine, for reference)

שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ
שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה כָּל-הָאָרֶץ
שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה בָּרוּךְ שְׁמוֹ
בְּשִׁירוֹ מִיּוֹם-לְיוֹם יְשׁוּעָתוֹ
סִפְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ
בְּכָל-הָעַמִּים נִפְלְאוֹתָיו
כִּי גָדוֹל יְהוָה וּמְהֵלֵל מְאֹד
נוֹרָא הוּא עַל-כָּל-אֱלֹהִים
כִּי כָל-אֱלֹהֵי הָעַמִּים אֱלִילִים
וַיהוָה שְׁמַיִם עָשָׂה
הוֹד-וְהָדָר לִפְנָיו
עוֹז וְתַפְאֶרֶת בְּמִקְדָּשׁוֹ

יִשְׁמְחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ
יִרְעַם הַיָּם וּמְלֵאוֹ
יַעֲלִז שָׂדֵי וְכָל-אֲשֶׁר-בוֹ
אֲזִי יִרְנְנוּ כָּל-עֵצֵי-יַעַר
לִפְנֵי יְהוָה כִּי בָא
כִּי בָא לִישְׁפֹּט הָאָרֶץ
יִשְׁפֹּט-תִּבְלָה בְּצֶדֶק
וְעַמִּים בְּאַמּוֹנָתוֹ

Psalm 97*Verses 1-2, 10-12 (following precedent of Mishkan Tefilah)*

יהוה מִלְכָּה³³ תִּגַּל הָאָרֶץ, יִשְׁמְחוּ אֲיִים רַבִּים
 עֲנֹן וְעֶרְפֹּל סְבִיבֶיהָ³⁴, צֶדֶק וּמִשְׁפָּט מְכוֹן כִּסְאָהָ³⁵
 אֶהְבֹּתֶיהָ³⁶ יהוה שְׁנֹאוֹל³⁷-רָע
 שֹׁמֵרָה³⁸ נִפְשֹׁת חַסִּידוֹתֶיהָ³⁹
 מִיַּד רָשָׁעִים מוֹת⁴⁰ יִצִּילָתֶמָּן⁴¹

³³ Past tense of pa'al verb למלוך, describing God, 3ms → 3ns. Considered shifting to לשמור, as per precedent in MT Hashkiveinu, but decided to keep original verb to be consistent with other imagery in this psalm (such as God's throne). Kamatz vowel ה is important to denote this word as a verb rather than a noun. MT: "is sovereign" (literal translation: "rules")

³⁴ Possessive suffix for God attached to adverb סביב, suffix: 3ms → 3ns, MT: "around God"

³⁵ Possessive suffix for God attached to noun, 3ms → 3ns, MT: "God's throne"

³⁶ Construct chain (smichut) using participle of pa'al verb לאהוב connected to name for God. Participle describing human beings: mp → np, MT: "O you who love [God]" (literal translation: "lovers [of God]")

³⁷ Imperative of pa'al verb לשנוא describing human beings, mp → np, MT: "hate [evil]"

³⁸ Present tense/participle of pa'al verb לשמור describing God, ms → ns, MT: "God guards"

³⁹ Noun (humans), possessive suffix (God). Noun: mp → np. Suffix ms → ns. MT: "God's loyal ones"

⁴⁰ Plural noun describing human beings, mp → np, MT: "the wicked"

⁴¹ Future tense of hif'il verb להציל (describing God) with direct object suffix (describing human beings). Verb: 3ms → 3ns, which without a suffix would be יצילה. The ה shifts to ת (according to precedent of nonbinary construct chains) when combined with a suffix. Suffix: 3mp → 3np. MT: "saving them" (literal: "God will save them")

אור נִרְעַ לַצְדִּיקָה⁴², וּלְיִשְׁרֹתֵי⁴³-לֵב שְׁמִחָה
שְׁמִחוּ⁴⁴ לַצְדִּיקִימוֹת⁴⁵ בִּיהוּה, וְהוֹדוּ⁴⁶ לְזִכֵּר קֹדֶשׁ⁴⁷

Psalm 97 Translation (Mishkan Tefilah)	Psalm 97 (masculine, for reference)
Adonai is sovereign! Let the earth exult the many islands rejoice Dense clouds are around God righteousness and justice are the base of God's throne	יְהוָה מְלִיךְ תִּגַּל הָאָרֶץ יִשְׁמְחוּ אֲיִים רַבִּים עָנָן וְעַרְפֶּל סְבִיבָיו צֶדֶק וּמִשְׁפָּט מְכוֹן כְּסֹאוֹ
O you who love Adonai, hate evil God guards the lives of God's loyal ones saving them from the hand of the wicked Light is sown for the righteous radiance for the upright O you righteous rejoice in Adonai and acclaim God's holy name	אַתֶּבֶי יְהוָה שֹׁנְאוֹ-רָע שׁוֹמֵר נַפְשׁוֹת חֲסִידָיו מִיַּד רָשָׁעִים יַצִּילֵם אֹר נִרְעַ לַצְדִּיק וּלְיִשְׁרֵי-לֵב שְׁמִחָה שְׁמְחוּ צְדִיקִים בִּיהוָה וְהוֹדוּ לְזִכֵּר קֹדֶשׁ

⁴² Noun for one unspecified person, ms → ns, MT: “the righteous”

⁴³ Construct chain (smichut) of ישרים (mp noun of adjective ישר, describing humans) and לב (remains unchanged). First noun: mp → np construct chain form, MT: “upright”

⁴⁴ Imperative of pa'al verb לשמוח directed at humans, mp → np, MT: “rejoice”

⁴⁵ Plural noun, describing humans, mp → np, MT: “O you righteous”

⁴⁶ Imperative of hif'il verb להודות, directed at humans, mp → np, MT: “acclaim”

⁴⁷ Possessive suffix for God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “God's holy [name]”

Psalm 98

Verses 1-9 (following precedent of Mishkan Tefilah)

מְזִמּוֹר **שִׁירוֹל** לַיהוָה שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ כִּי-נִפְלְאוֹת **עָשְׂתָה**
הוֹשִׁיעָה-לָּהּ יְמִינָה⁴⁸, וַיִּזְרַע קֶדֶשׁ **שָׁה**
הוֹדִיעָה⁴⁹ יְהוָה יְשׁוּעָתָה
לְעֵינֵי הַגּוֹיִם **גְּלָתָה**⁵⁰ צִדְקָתָה⁵¹
זָכָרָה⁵² חֲסִדָּה⁵³ וַאֲמוּנָתָה, לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל
רָאוּ כָל-אֶפְסֵי-אָרֶץ, אֵת יְשׁוּעַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ
הָרִיעוּל⁵⁴ לַיהוָה כָּל-הָאָרֶץ, **פָּצְחוּל**⁵⁵ וַרְנְנוּל⁵⁶ וַזְמִרוּל⁵⁷
זְמָרוּל לַיהוָה בְּכִנּוֹר, בְּכִנּוֹר וְקוֹל זְמָרָה
בְּחִצְצָרוֹת וְקוֹל שׁוֹפָר, **הָרִיעוּל** לִפְנֵי הַמַּלְכָּה יְהוָה

⁴⁸ Possessive suffix describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “God’s right hand”

⁴⁹ Past tense of hif’il verb להודיע describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “[Adonai] has manifested”

⁵⁰ Past tense of pi’el verb לגלות describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “has displayed”

⁵¹ Possessive suffix describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “God’s triumph”

⁵² Past tense of pa’al verb לזכור, describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “[God] was mindful”

⁵³ Possessive suffix describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “God’s steadfast love”

⁵⁴ Imperative of hif’il verb להריע for human beings, mp → np, MT: “raise a shout”

⁵⁵ Imperative of pa’al verb לפצוח for human beings (the pa’al form of this shorash doesn’t exist in some dictionaries but it cannot be the pi’el לפצה because that would change the vocalization to be *patzchu*), mp → np, MT translation: “break into”

⁵⁶ Imperative of pi’el verb לרנן for human beings, mp → np, MT: “[break into] joyous songs of praise” (literal translation: “give/sing praise”)

⁵⁷ Imperative of pi’el verb לזמר for human beings, mp → np, MT translation: “[break into] joyous songs of praise” (literal translation: “give/sing praise” — both זמר and רנן hold meanings of joy, song, and praise)

יִרְעֵם הָיִם וּמַלְאוּ, תִּבְּל וַיִּשְׁבּוּתֵי⁵⁸ בָּה
 נְהָרוֹת יִמְחֲאוּ-כָּה, יַחַד הָרִים יִרְנְנוּ
 לִפְנֵי יְהוָה כִּי בָּאָה, לִשְׁפֹט הָאָרֶץ
 יִשְׁפֹּטָה-תִּבְּל בְּצֶדֶק, וְעַמִּים בְּמִישְׁרִים

Psalm 98 Translation (Mishkan Tefilah)

A psalm: Sing to Adonai a new song
 for God has worked wonders
 God's right hand,
 God's holy arm has won God victory
 Adonai has manifested God's victory
 has displayed God's triumph
 in the sight of the nations
 God was mindful of God's steadfast love
 and faithfulness toward the house of Israel
 all the ends of the earth beheld
 the victory of our God

Raise a shout to Adonai all the earth
 break into joyous songs of praise

Sing praise to Adonai with the lyre
 with the lyre and melodious song
 With trumpets and the blast of the horn
 raise a shout before Adonai, the ruler
 Let the sea and all within it thunder
 the world and its inhabitants
 let the rivers clap their hands
 the mountains sing joyously together
 at the presence of Adonai
 for God is coming to rule the earth
 God will rule the world justly
 and its peoples with equity

Psalm 98 (masc, for reference)

מְזִמּוֹר שִׁירֵי לַיהוָה שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ
 כִּי-נִפְלְאוֹת עָשָׂה
 הוֹשִׁיעָה-לוֹ יְמִינוֹ
 וַיִּזְרַע קִדְשׁוֹ
 הוֹדִיעָה יְהוָה יְשׁוּעָתוֹ
 לְעֵינֵי הַגּוֹיִם
 אֲלֵה צִדְקָתוֹ
 זָכַר חֲסִדּוֹ
 וַאֲמוֹנָתוֹ לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל
 כָּאוֹ כָּל-אֶפְסֵי-אָרֶץ
 אֵת יְשׁוּעַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ

הֲרִיעוּ לַיהוָה כָּל-הָאָרֶץ
 בְּצִנּוֹר וְרִנְנוּ וְזָמְרוּ

זָמְרוּ לַיהוָה בְּכִנּוֹר
 בְּכִנּוֹר וְקוֹל זָמֶרָה
 בְּחִצְצָרוֹת וְקוֹל שׁוֹפָר
 הֲרִיעוּ לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוָה
 יִרְעֵם הָיִם וּמַלְאוּ
 תִּבְּל וַיִּשְׁבּוּ בִּי בָּה
 נְהָרוֹת יִמְחֲאוּ-כָּה
 יַחַד הָרִים יִרְנְנוּ
 לִפְנֵי יְהוָה כִּי בָּא
 לִשְׁפֹט הָאָרֶץ
 יִשְׁפֹּט-תִּבְּל בְּצֶדֶק
 וְעַמִּים בְּמִישְׁרִים

⁵⁸ Plural noun for human beings, mp → np, MT: “inhabitants”

Psalm 99*Verses 1-5, 9 (following precedent of Mishkan Tefilah)*

יהוה מִלְכָּה יִרְגְּזוּ עַמִּים, יִשְׁבֶּה⁵⁹ כְּרוּבִים תָּנוּט הָאָרֶץ
 יהוה בְּצִיּוֹן גְּדוֹלָה, וְרָמָה⁶⁰ הָאֵל עַל-כָּל-הָעַמִּים
 יוֹדוּל⁶¹ שְׁמֶךָ⁶² גְּדוֹל וְנוֹרָא, קְדוּשָׁה הָאֵל
 וַעֲזַ מִלְכָּה מְשַׁפֵּט אֶהָב, אֲתָה⁶³ פּוֹנֵנֶתָה⁶⁴ מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל
 מְשַׁפֵּט וּצְדָקָה, בִּיַּעֲקֹב אֲתָה עֹשִׂיתָה⁶⁵
 רוּמָמוֹל⁶⁶ יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹל⁶⁷ לְהֵדֶם רַגְלֶיךָ⁶⁸
 קְדוּשָׁה הָאֵל
 רוּמָמוֹל יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹל לְהֵר קְדוּשָׁה
 כִּי-קְדוּשָׁה, יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ

⁵⁹ Present tense/participle of pa'al verb לשבת describing God, ms → ns, MT: "enthroned"

⁶⁰ Adjective describing God, ms → ns, MT: "exalted"

⁶¹ Future tense of hif'il verb להודות for people, 3mp → 3np, MT: "they praise" (literal: "they will praise")

⁶² Possessive suffix for God, 2ms → 2ns, MT: "Your name". Note: גדול ונורא remain unchanged as they are connected to the subject שם and therefore take its grammatical gender

⁶³ Pronoun for God, 2ms → 2ns, MT: "You"

⁶⁴ Past tense of pi'el verb לכונן describing God, 2ms → 2ns, MT: "established"

⁶⁵ Past tense of pa'al verb לעשות describing God, 2ms → 2ns, MT: "worked"

⁶⁶ Imperative of pi'el verb לרומם describing people, mp → np, MT: exalt"

⁶⁷ Imperative form of hitpa'el verb להשתחוות describing people, mp → np, MT: "bow"

⁶⁸ Singular possessive suffix for plural noun, describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: "God's footstool"

<p>Psalm 99 Translation (Mishkan Tefilah) Adonai enthroned on cherubim is sovereign peoples tremble the earth quakes Adonai is great in Zion and exalted above all peoples They praise Your name as great and awesome God is holy Mighty ruler who loves justice it was You who established equity You who worked righteous judgment in Jacob Exalt Adonai our God and bow down to God's footstool God is holy</p> <p>Exalt Adonai our God and bow toward God's holy hill for Adonai our God is holy</p>	<p>Psalm 99 (masculine, for reference) יהוה מלך ירגזו עמים ישב כרובים תנוט הארץ יהוה בציון גדול, ורם הוא על-כל-העמים יודו שמה גדול ונורא קדוש הוא ועז מלך משפט אהב אלה פוננת מישרים משפט וצדקה ביעקב אלה עשית רוממו יהוה אלהינו והשתחו ליהוה רגליו קדוש הוא</p> <p>רוממו יהוה אלהינו והשתחו ליהוה קדשו כי-קדוש, יהוה אלהינו</p>
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Psalm 29

Verses 1-11 (following precedent of Mishkan Tefilah)

מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד, הַבּוֹלֵךְ⁶⁹ לַיהוָה בְּנוֹתֵי⁷⁰ אֱלֹהִים
הַבּוֹלֵךְ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד וְעֹז
הַבּוֹלֵךְ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד שְׁמָהּ
הַשֹּׁמֵחַ לַיהוָה בְּהַדְרַת-קִדְשׁ
קוֹל יְהוָה עַל-הַמַּיִם, אֶל-הַכְּבוֹד הָרַעֲמָה⁷¹
יְהוָה עַל-מַיִם רַבִּים
קוֹל-יְהוָה בִּפְתָח, קוֹל יְהוָה בְּהַדָּר
קוֹל יְהוָה שֹׁבֵר⁷² אֲרָזִים, וַיִּשְׁבְּרָה⁷³ יְהוָה אֶת-אֲרָזֵי הַלְבָנוֹן
וַיִּרְקֵדָתָם⁷⁴ כְּמוֹ-עֵגֶל לְבָנוֹן וְשָׁרִין כְּמוֹ כּוֹ-רֵאמִים
קוֹל-יְהוָה חֹצֵב, לַהֲבוֹת אֵשׁ
קוֹל יְהוָה יַחֲזִיל מִדְבָּר, יַחֲזִילָהּ⁷⁵ יְהוָה מִדְבַּר קִדְשׁ
קוֹל יְהוָה יַחֲלִיל אֵילֹת, וַיַּחֲשֹׁף יַעֲרוֹת

⁶⁹ Imperative of pa'al verb יָה"ב, directed at humans, mp → np, MT: "ascribe"

⁷⁰ Plural construct form of nonbinary noun בָּת connected to plural noun, describing divine beings, mp → np of construct form, MT: "divine beings"

⁷¹ Past tense of hif'il verb להרעים describing God (אל-הַכְבוֹד), which I'm treating as a divine name: "God of Glory"), 3ms → 3ns, MT: "thunders"

⁷² Verbs with subject קוֹל יְהוָה take the grammatical masculine of קוֹל rather than the gender of יְהוָה

⁷³ Future tense of pi'el verb לשבר describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: "shatters" (literal: "will shatter")

⁷⁴ Future tense of hif'il verb להרקיד describing God, with suffix describing Lebanon and Sirion (remains unchanged), verb 3ms → 3ns, MT: "makes [Lebanon... Sirion] skip" (literal: future tense)

⁷⁵ Future tense of hif'il verb להחיל describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: "convulses"

וְבֵהִיכָלָהּ⁷⁶ כָּלָהּ⁷⁷ אָמְרָהּ⁷⁸ כָּבוֹד
 יְהוָה לַמַּבּוּל יִשְׁבָּהּ⁷⁹
 וַיִּשְׁבָּהּ⁸⁰ יְהוָה מַלְכָּה לְעוֹלָם
 יְהוָה עֹז לְעַמָּהּ⁸¹ יִתְּנָהּ⁸²
 יְהוָה יְבָרְכָהּ⁸³ אֶת-עַמָּהּ בְּשָׁלוֹם

⁷⁶ Possessive suffix for God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “God’s temple”

⁷⁷ Inclusive noun for humans with traditionally masculine suffix changed to nonbinary suffix, MT: “all”

⁷⁸ Present tense of pa’al verb לומר describing humans, ms → ns, MT: “say”

⁷⁹ Past tense of pa’al verb לשבת describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “sat”

⁸⁰ Future tense of pa’al verb לשבת describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “sits enthroned”

⁸¹ Possessive suffix for God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “God’s people”

⁸² Jussive of pa’al verb לתת describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “may [Adonai] grant”

⁸³ Jussive of pi’el verb לברך describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “may [Adonai] bestow”

Psalm 29 Translation (Mishkan Tefilah)

A psalm of David

Ascribe to Adonai, O divine beings
 ascribe to Adonai glory and strength
 Ascribe to Adonai the glory of God's name
 bow down to Adonai majestic in holiness
 The voice of Adonai is over the waters
 the God of glory thunders
 Adonai, over the mighty waters
 The voice of Adonai is power
 the voice of Adonai is majesty
 the voice of Adonai breaks cedars
 Adonai shatters the cedars of Lebanon
 God makes Lebanon skip like a calf
 Sirion like a young wild ox

The voice of Adonai kindles flames of fire
 the voice of Adonai convulses the wilderness
 Adonai convulses the wilderness of Kadesh
 the voice of Adonai causes hinds to calve
 and strips forests bare
 while in God's temple all say, "Glory!"
 Adonai sat enthroned at the Flood
 Adonai sits enthroned, sovereign forever
 May Adonai grant strength to God's people
 may Adonai bestow
 on God's people wellbeing

Psalm 29 (masculine, for reference)

מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד
הָבוּ לַיהוָה **כְּבוֹד** אֱלֹהִים
הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד וְעֹז
הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ
הַשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לַיהוָה בְּהַדְרַת-קִדְּשׁ
 קוֹל יְהוָה עַל-הַמַּיִם
 אֵל-הַכְּבוֹד הַרְעִים
 יְהוָה עַל-מַיִם רַבִּים
 קוֹל-יְהוָה בִּפְתָח
 קוֹל יְהוָה בְּהַדָּר
 קוֹל יְהוָה שֹׁבֵר אֲרָזִים
וַיִּשְׁבֹּר יְהוָה אֶת-אֲרָזֵי הַלְבָנוֹן
וַיִּרְקֹדֵם כְּמוֹ-עֵגֶל
 לְבָנוֹן וְשִׁירֵן כְּמוֹ בֶן-רָאמִים

 קוֹל-יְהוָה חֹצֵב, לַהֲבוֹת אֵשׁ
 קוֹל יְהוָה יַחֲלֵל מִדְבָּר
יַחֲלֵל יְהוָה מִדְבָּר קִדְּשׁ
 קוֹל יְהוָה יַחֲלֵל אֵילֹת
 וַיַּחֲשֹׁף יַעֲרֹת
 וַבְּהִיקָלוֹ כָּלֹ אָמַר כְּבוֹד
 יְהוָה לַמִּבּוֹל **יָשָׁב**
וַיֵּשֶׁב יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ לְעוֹלָם
 יְהוָה עֹז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן
 יְהוָה יְבָרֵךְ
 אֶת-עַמּוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם

L'chah Dodeti*Nonbinary adaptation of L'cha Dodi*

לְכֶה⁸⁴ דוֹדֶתִי⁸⁵ לְקִרְאָת כָּלָה פָּנִי שַׁבָּת נִקְבְּלָה

נִשְׁמָר וְזָכוֹר בְּדַבּוּר אֶחָד, הַשְּׁמִיעַתֵּנוּ⁸⁶ אֶל הַמִּיחָדָה⁸⁷
יֵהוּה אֶחָד⁸⁸ וְשִׁמָּה אֶחָד, לְשֵׁם וּלְתַפְאֶרֶת וּלְתִהְלָה

לְקִרְאָת שַׁבָּת לְכוּל⁸⁹ וְנִלְכָה, כִּי הִיא מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה
מֵרֹאשׁ מְקֻדָּם גְּסוּכָה, סוּף מַעֲשֵׂה בְּמַחְשָׁבָה תִּחְלָה

מְקֻדָּשׁ מִלֵּכָה עֵיר מְלוּכָה, קוּמִי צְאִי מִתּוֹךְ הַהִפְכָה
רַב לָךְ שַׁבָּת בְּעֵמֶק הַבְּכָא, וְהָא יִחְמָלָה⁸⁹ עָלֶיךָ חֲמָלָה

הַתְּנַעֲרִי מֵעֶפֶר קוּמִי, לְבָשִׁי בְּגָדֵי תִפְאֶרֶתֶךָ עָמִי
עַל יָד בֶּן יִשְׂרָאֵל בֵּית הַלְחָמִי, קָרְבָּה אֶל נִפְשִׁי גְּאֻלָּה

⁸⁴ Pausal imperative of pa'al verb ללכת directed at human beings, ms → ns, MT: “come” (literal: “go”)

⁸⁵ Noun for a person with first person singular (1s) possessive suffix, ms → ns, MT: “my beloved”

⁸⁶ Past tense of hif'il verb להשמיע (describing God) with first person plural (1p) object suffix (describing human beings), verb: ms → ns, MT: “[God] caused us to hear”

⁸⁷ Adjective for God, ms → ns, MT: “only”

⁸⁸ Number describing God, ms → ns, MT: “One” (this nonbinary number created by combining masculine and feminine forms of same number)

⁸⁹ Future tense of pa'al verb לחמול describing God, ms → ns, MT: “[God] will shower”

הַתְּעוֹרְרִי הַתְּעוֹרְרִי, כִּי בָּא אוֹרֶךְ קוֹמִי אוֹרִי
 עוֹרִי עוֹרִי שִׁיר דְּבָרִי, כְּבוֹד ה' עָלֶיךָ נִגְלָה
 לֹא תִבְטֵשׁ וְלֹא תִכָּלֵּם, מָה תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וּמָה תִּתְהַלֵּל
 בָּךְ יִחְסֹל⁹⁰ עֲנִיּוֹתֵי⁹¹ עָמִי, וְנִבְנְתָה עִיר עַל תִּלָּה

וְהָיִל⁹² לְמַשְׁפָּה שְׂאֵסוּתֵיךָ⁹³, וְרָחֵקוּל⁹⁴ כָּל מְבַלְעוֹתֶיךָ⁹⁵
 יַעֲשִׂישֶׂה⁹⁶ עָלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ, כְּמַשׁוֹשׁ נֶפֶשׁ עַל יְדִידָה⁹⁷

יָמִין וּשְׂמָאל תִּפְרָצִי, וְאֵת יְהוָה תִּעְרִיצִי
 עַל יַד אִישׁ בֶּן פֶּרֶצִי, וְנִשְׁמָחָה וְנִגִּילָה

⁹⁰ Future tense of pa'al verb לחסות describing “the afflicted”, 3mp → 3np, MT: “find respite”

⁹¹ Construct chain (smichut) of עניים (mp noun, describing humans) and עמי (remains unchanged). First noun: mp → np construct chain form, MT: “afflicted”

⁹² Past tense of pa'al verb להיות describing “the scavengers”, 3mp → 3np, MT: “are [scattered]” (literal: “were [scattered]”)

⁹³ Noun describing people with 2fs suffix describing the city (remains unchanged), noun: mp → np, MT: “scavengers” (literal: “your scavengers”)

⁹⁴ Past tense of pi'el verb לרחק describing “devourers”, 3mp → 3np, MT: “have fled” (literal: “distant”)

⁹⁵ Noun describing people with 2fs suffix describing the city (remains unchanged), noun: mp → np, MT: “devourers”

⁹⁶ Future tense of pa'al verb לשוב describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “takes joy” (literal: “will rejoice”)

⁹⁷ This phrase changed from חתן על כלה to step away from cisheteronormative, patriarchal assumptions. Two replacement words chosen from phrase נפש ידידת, also found in liturgy. New phrase can be translated: “[your God takes joy in you, like the joy of] a soul in its beloved”

בְּאֵי בְּשָׁלוֹם עֲטֶרֶת **תְּכַאֲרָה**⁹⁸, גַּם בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְצִהָלָה
 תּוֹךְ אֱמוּנֹתֵי⁹⁹ עַם סִגְלָה, בּוֹאִי כָּלָה בּוֹאִי כָּלָה

⁹⁸ This word changed from בעלה to step away from the cisheteropatriarchy. Instead of “[crown of] her husband” this phrase now reads: “crown of splendor”

⁹⁹ Construct chain (smichut) describing people, mp → np, MT: “the people that keeps its faith”

L'cheh Dodeti Translation (Mishkan Tefilah)	L'cha Dodi (masc, for reference)
Beloved, come to meet the bride beloved come to greet Shabbat	לְכֶּה דוּדִי לְקִרְאָת פִּלָּה פָּנֵי שַׁבָּת נִקְבְּלָה
“Keep” and “remember”: a single command the Only God caused us to hear the Eternal is One, God’s Name is One Glory and praise are God’s	שְׁמוֹר וְזָכוֹר בְּדַבּוּר אֶחָד הַשְׁמִיעֵנוּ אֵל הַמִּי־חֵד יְהוָה אֶחָד וְשֵׁמוֹ אֶחָד לְשֵׁם וּלְתַפְאֳרָת וּלְתִהְיֶינָה
Come with me to meet Shabbat forever a fountain of blessing Still it flows as from the start the last of days for which the first was made	לְקִרְאָת שַׁבָּת לְכוּ וְנִלְכֶּה כִּי הִיא מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה מֵרֵאשׁ מִקֶּדֶם נִסּוּכָה סוּף מַעֲשֵׂה בְּמַחְשָׁבָה תַּחֲלָה
Royal shrine, city of kings Rise up and leave your ravaged state You have dwelt long enough in the valley of tears now God will shower mercy on you	מִקְדָּשׁ מְלִיכָה עִיר מְלִיכָה קוּמִי צְאִי מִתּוֹךְ הַהִפְכָּה רַב לָךְ שָׁבַת בְּעַמְּקֵי הַבְּכָא וְהוּא יַחֲמוּל עָלֶיךָ חֲמָלָה
Lift yourself up! Shake off the dust! Array yourself in beauty, O my people! At hand is Bethlehem's David, Jesse's son bringing deliverance into my life	הַתְנַעֲצֵרִי מֵעָפָר קוּמִי לְבָשִׁי בְּגָדֵי תִפְאֳרָתְךָ עַמִּי עַל יָד בֶּן יִשִׁי בֵּית הַלְחָמִי קֹרֶבָה אֵל נַפְשִׁי גְּאֻלָּה
Awake, awake your light has come! Arise, shine, awake and sing: the Eternal’s glory dawns upon you	הַתְעוֹרְרִי הַתְעוֹרְרִי כִּי בָּא אוֹרְךָ קוּמִי אוֹרִי עוֹרִי עוֹרִי שִׁיר דְּבָרִי כְּבוֹד ה' עָלֶיךָ נִגְלָה
An end to shame and degradation forget your sorrow, quiet your groans The afflicted of my people find respite in you the city renewed upon its ancient ruins	לֹא תִבָּשִׂי וְלֹא תִפְלָמִי מֵהַ תִּשְׁתַּחֲוִי וּמֵהַ תִּתְהַמֵּי בְּךָ יִחְסוּ עַנְיֵי עַמִּי וְנִבְנְתָה עִיר עַל תִּלְהָה
The scavengers are scattered your devoursers have fled as a soul rejoices in its beloved your God takes joy in you	וְהָיָה לְמִשְׁפָּה שְׂאִסְיָה וְרִחְקוּ כָּל מְבַלְעֵי־יָד יִשְׂשִׁישׁ עָלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּמִשְׁוֹשׁ חֲתָן עַל פִּלָּה

<p>Your space will be broad your worship free await the promised one we will exult, we will sing for joy!</p> <p>Enter in peace, O crown of splendor enter in gladness, enter in joy Come to the people that keeps its faith Enter, O Bride! Enter, O Bride!</p>	<p>יָמִין וּשְׂמֹאל תִּפְרָצִי וְאֵת יְהוָה תַּעֲרִיצִי עַל יָד אִישׁ בֶּן פִּרְצִי וְנִשְׁמְחָה וְנִגִּילָה</p> <p>בָּאִי בְּשָׁלוֹם עֲטָרַת בְּעִלָּה גַּם בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְצִדְקָה תּוֹךְ אַמּוּנָי עַם סִגְלָה בּוֹאִי כְּלָה בּוֹאִי כְּלָה</p>
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Psalm 92

Verses 1-7, 13-16 (following precedent of Mishkan Tefilah)

מְזִמּוֹר שִׁיר לְיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת
טוֹב לְהַדוֹת לַיהוָה וּלְזַמֵּר לְשִׁמְךָ עָלֵינוּ
לְהַגִּיד בַּבֶּקֶר חֶסֶדְךָ וְאַמּוּנַתְךָ בַּלַּיְלוֹת
עָלֵי-עֲשׂוֹר וְעָלֵי-נֶגֶל עָלֵי הַגִּיוֹן בְּכַנּוֹר
כִּי שִׁמְחָתָנִי¹⁰⁰ יְהוָה בִּפְעֻלָּתְךָ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יָדֶיךָ אֲרִיזֹן
מֵה-גָדְלוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יְהוָה מְאֹד עֲמָקוֹ מִחֲשֻׁבְתֶּיךָ
אִישָׁה-בַּעֲרָה¹⁰¹ לֹא יֵדְעָה¹⁰²
וְכִסִּילָה¹⁰³ לֹא-יְבִינָה¹⁰⁴ אֶת-זֹאת
צְדִיקָה¹⁰⁵ בַּתָּמָר יִפְרֹתָה¹⁰⁶ כְּאֶרֶז בַּלְבָּנוֹן יִשְׁגָּאָה¹⁰⁷
שְׁתוּלֵימּוֹת¹⁰⁸ בְּבֵית יְהוָה בְּחִצְרוֹת אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִפְרִיחוּ¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁰ Past tense of pi'el verb לשמח describing God, object suffix 1s (nongendered), 3ms → 3ns, MT: “gladdened me”

¹⁰¹ Noun-adj describing a person, ms → ns, MT: “a brute”

¹⁰² Future tense of pa'al verb לדעת describing a person, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “cannot know”

¹⁰³ Noun for a person, ms → ns, MT: “a fool”

¹⁰⁴ Future tense of pa'al verb להבין describing a person, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “[cannot] understand”

¹⁰⁵ Noun for a person, ms → ns, MT: “The righteous”

¹⁰⁶ Future tense of pa'al verb לפרוח describing “the righteous”, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “bloom”

¹⁰⁷ Future tense of pa'al verb לשגות describing “the righteous”, 3ms → 3ns, as per Nonbinary Hebrew Project grammar ל"ה verbs take אה as an ending, MT: “thrive”

¹⁰⁸ Passive verb of shoresh שת"ל describing “the righteous”, mp → np, MT: “planted”

¹⁰⁹ Future tense of pa'al verb לפרוח describing “the righteous”, 3mp → 3np, MT: “flourish”

עוֹד יִנּוּבּוֹל¹¹⁰ בְּשִׁיבָה דְּשִׁנִּימוֹת¹¹¹ וְרַעֲנִימוֹת¹¹² יְהִיּוֹל
 לְהַגִּיד כִּי-יִשְׁרָה¹¹³ יְהוָה צוּרִי וְלֹא-עוֹלָתָהּ בָּהּ¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Future tense of pa'al verb לָנוּחַ describing “the righteous”, 3mp → 3np, MT: “produce fruit”

¹¹¹ Adjective describing “the righteous” (metaphor: as trees), mp → np, MT: “full of sap” (literal: fat)

¹¹² Adjective describing “the righteous”, mp → np, MT: “freshness” (literal: moist, green, fresh)

¹¹³ Adjective describing God, ms → ns, MT: “upright”

¹¹⁴ Preposition with direct object (referring to God), ms → ns, MT: “in whom”

<p>Psalm 92 Translation (Mishkan Tefilah) A psalm, a song for Shabbat It is good to praise Adonai to sing hymns to Your Name, O Most High to proclaim Your steadfast love at daybreak Your faithfulness each night, with a ten-stringed harp, with voice and lyre together You have gladdened me by Your deeds, Adonai I shout for joy at Your handiwork How great are Your works, Adonai how very subtle your designs A brute cannot know A full cannot understand this</p> <p>The righteous bloom like a date-palm they thrive like a cedar in Lebanon planted in the house of Adonai they flourish in the courts of our God In old age they still produce fruit they are full of sap and freshness attesting that Adonai is upright my Rock, in whom there is no wrong</p>	<p>Psalm 92 (masc, for reference) מְזֹמֹר שִׁיר לַיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת טוֹב לְהַדוֹת לַיהוָה וּלְזַמֵּר לְשִׁמְךָ אֱלֹהִים לְהַגִּיד בַּבֹּקֶר חֲסִדֶּךָ וּבַלַּיְלָה נֶאֱמוּנֹתֶיךָ עֲלִי-עֲשׂוֹר וְעֲלִי-נֶגְל עָלַי הַגִּיוֹן בְּכִנּוֹר כִּי שִׁמְחַתְּנִי יְהוָה בְּפַעְלֶיךָ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יָדֶיךָ אֲרַנֵּן מַה-גָּדְלוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יְהוָה מֵאֵד עֲמָקוֹ מִחֻשְׁבֹּתֶיךָ אִישׁ-בַּעַר לֹא יָדַע וְכָסִיל לֹא-יָבִין אֶת-זֹאת</p> <p>צַדִּיק בְּתִמְרָה יִפְרֹחַ כְּאַרְזֵי בְלִבְנוֹן יִשְׁגֶּה נִשְׁתַּלֵּים בְּבֵית יְהוָה בְּחֻצּוֹת אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִפְרִיחוּ עוֹד יִנּוּבּוֹן בְּשִׁיבָה דְּשֻׁנִּים וְרַעֲנָנִים יִהְיוּ לְהַגִּיד כִּי-יֵשֶׁר יְהוָה צוּרִי וְלֹא-עוֹלָתָה בּוֹ</p>
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Psalm 93*Verses 1-5 (following precedent of Mishkan Tefilah)*

יהוה מְלֶכָה, גִּאֲוֹת לְבָשָׁה¹¹⁵

לְבָשָׁה יהוה, עֹז הַתְּאֻזָּרָה¹¹⁶

אֶרֶץ-תְּכֹן תִּבֵּל, בַּל-תִּמּוּט

נִכּוֹן כְּסֶאֶד מֵאֵז, מַעֲוִלִם אֶתָּה

נִשְׂאוּ נְהָרוֹת יְהוָה

נִשְׂאוּ נְהָרוֹת קוֹלָם

יִשְׂאוּ נְהָרוֹת דְּכָיִם

מִקְלוֹת מִיָּם רַבִּים

אֲדִירִים מִשְׁכְּרֵי-יָם

אֲדִירָה¹¹⁷ בְּמָרוֹם יְהוָה

עֲדֹתֶיךָ נֶאֱמָנוּ מְאֹד

לְבֵיתֶךָ נִאֲוָה-קֹדֶשׁ

יְהוָה לְאַרְךָ יָמִים

¹¹⁵ Pa'al verb ללבוש (present would be לֹבֵשׁ, past would be לָבַשׁ, this looks to be a pausal form, likely past tense by context, describing God), 3ms → 3ns, MT: "robed"

¹¹⁶ Past tense of hit'pa'el verb להתאזר describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: "girded"

¹¹⁷ Adjective describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: "majestic"

Psalm 93 Translation (Mishkan Tefilah)

Adonai is sovereign, God is robed in grandeur
 Adonai is robed, God is girded with strength
 The world stands firm, it cannot be shaken

Your throne stands firm from of old
 from eternity you have existed

The ocean sounds, Adonai
 the ocean sounds its thunder
 the ocean sounds its pounding
 Above the thunder of the mighty waters
 more majestic than the breakers of the sea
 is Adonai, majestic on high
 Your decrees are indeed enduring
 holiness befits Your house Adonai
 for all times

Psalm 93 (masc, for reference)

יְהוָה מְלֶכֶךְ, גְּאוּת לְבָשׁ
 לְבָשׁ יְהוָה, עֹז הַתְּאֵזָר
 אֶף-תִּפְּוֹן תִּבְּל, כָּל-תִּמּוֹט

נָכוֹן כְּסֵאָךְ מֵאֶז
 מֵעוֹלָם אֵתָה

נִשְׁאֹו נְהָרוֹת יְהוָה
 נִשְׁאֹו נְהָרוֹת קוֹלָם
 יִשְׁאֹו נְהָרוֹת דְּכִיָּם
 מְקַלּוֹת מִיָּם רַבִּים
 אֲדִירִים מִשְׁבְּרֵי-יָם
 אֲדִיר בְּמָרוֹם יְהוָה
 עֲדֹתֶיךָ נֶאֱמָנוּ מֵאֶד
 לְבֵיתֶךָ נִאֲוָה-קִדְּשׁ
 יְהוָה לְאֶרֶץ יָמִים

Y'didet Nefesh

Nonbinary adaptation of Y'did Nefesh

יְדִידֶת¹¹⁸ נֶפֶשׁ מְקוֹר¹¹⁹ הֶרְחֵמֶן
 מִשְׁכָּה¹²⁰ עֲבָדְךָ¹²¹ אֶל רְצוֹנְךָ
 יְרוּצָה¹²² עֲבָדְךָ כְּמוֹ אֵיל
 יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶאֱה¹²³ אֶל מוֹל הַדָּרְךָ
 יַעֲרֹב לָהּ יְדִידוֹתֶיךָ
 מִנִּפְתַּת צוּף וְכָל טַעַם

הַדּוּרָה נֶאֱתָ¹²⁴ זִיו הָעוֹלָם
 נִפְשֵׁי חוֹלֶת אֶהְבֶּתְךָ
 אֲנֵא אֵל נָא רַפְּאֵה¹²⁵ נָא לָהּ
 בְּהִרְאוֹת לָהּ נַעַם זִיּוֹךְ

¹¹⁸ Construct form of noun describing God + nongendered noun, ms → ns, MT: “heart’s delight” (literal: my soul’s beloved)

¹¹⁹ Original אב → expansive מקור. Rather than inventing a nonbinary parent title, I chose to use the MT translation “source” in the Hebrew text. The following adjective הרחמן remains in the masculine as it takes the grammatical gender of מקור

¹²⁰ Imperative of pa'al verb למשוך describing God, ms → ns, MT: “draw”

¹²¹ Noun describing a person ms → ns, possessive suffix describing God 2ms → 2ns, MT: “Your servant”

¹²² Noun describing God, ms → ns, MT: artful translation omits this word (literal: ancient one)

¹²³ Future tense of hit'pa'el verb להשתחוות describing אבדך, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “to stand in awe” (literal: they [singular] will bow)

¹²⁴ Two adjectives describing God, ms → ns, MT: “shining glory” (literal: beautiful x2)

¹²⁵ Imperative of pa'al verb לרפוא, ms → ns, MT: “heal”

אֲז תִתְחַזֵּק וְתִתְרַפֵּא
וְהִיְתָה לָּהּ שְׂמֵחַת עוֹלָם

וְתִקָּה¹²⁶ יְהִמּוּ נָא רַחֲמֶיךָ
וְחוּסָה¹²⁷ נָא עַל בֵּית¹²⁸ אֱהוֹבֶךָ
כִּי זֶה כַּמָּה נְכֻסֶּה נְכֻסְפִּי
לִרְאוֹת בְּתַפְאֶרֶת עֲזֶיךָ
אֲנִי אֵלֵי חֲמֻדָּת לְבִי
חוּסָה¹²⁹ נָא וְאַל נָא תִתְעַלְמָה¹²⁹

הַגִּלֵּת¹³⁰ נָא וּפְרֹשֶׁה¹³¹ חֲבִיבָה¹³² עָלַי
אֶת סִכַּת שְׁלוֹמְךָ
יֵאִירָה¹³³ אֶרֶץ מִכְבוֹדֶךָ
נְגִילָה וְנִשְׁמָחָה בְּךָ

¹²⁶ Noun for God (from adj), ms → ns, MT: “O Faithful one” (literal: ancient one)

¹²⁷ Imperative of pa'al verb לחוס directed toward God, ms → ns, MT: “pity” (literal: spare)

¹²⁸ Noun for a person, “son” changed to “child”, ms → ns, MT: “child”

¹²⁹ Future tense of hit'pa'el verb להתעלם describing God, 2ms → 2ns, MT: “hold back”

¹³⁰ Imperative of nif'al verb להיגלות directed at God, tzeirei vowel is maintained according to Nonbinary Hebrew Project grammar, ms → ns, MT: “show yourself”

¹³¹ Imperative of pa'al verb לפרוש directed at God, ms → ns, MT: “cover”

¹³² Noun for God (from adj), ms → ns, MT: “Beloved”

¹³³ Future tense of hif'il verb להאיר describing God, 2ms → 2ns

מְהֵרָה¹³⁴ אֱהוּבָה¹³⁵ כִּי בָא מוֹעֵד
וְתִגְנוּ¹³⁶ כִּימֵי עוֹלָם

¹³⁴ Imperative of pi'el verb למהר describing God, ms → ns, ה changed to ה according to precedent in the feminine and plural imperative forms, MT: “hurry”

¹³⁵ Noun for God (from adj), ms → ns, MT: “Loved One”

¹³⁶ Imperative of pa'al verb לחון directed at God ms → ns, object suffix 1p (nongendered), MT: “show us grace”

Y'didet Nefesh Translation (Mishkan Tefilah)	Y'did Nefesh (masc, for reference)
<p>Heart's delight, Source of mercy, draw Your servant into Your arms I leap like a deer to stand in awe before You Your love is sweeter to me than the taste of honey</p>	<p>יְדִיד נֶפֶשׁ אֵב הַרְחֵמֵן מְשׁוּף עֲבָדְךָ אֶל רְצוֹנְךָ יְרוּיִן עֲבָדְךָ כְּמוֹ אֵיל יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֶל מוֹל הַדָּרָךְ יַעֲרֹב לוֹ יְדִידוֹתְךָ מִנֶּפֶת צוּף וְכָל טַעַם</p>
<p>World's light, shining glory, my heart is faint for love of You Heal it, O God: help my heart show me Your radiant splendor Let me return to strength and have joy for ever</p>	<p>הַדּוֹר נֶאֱהָ זֵיו הַעוֹלָם נִפְשֵׁי חוֹלֵת אֶהְבֶּתְךָ אֲנֵא אֶל נָא רַפָּא נָא לָהּ בְּהִרְאוֹת לָהּ נֶעַם יְיָ אֲזִי תִתְחַזַּק וְתִתְרַפָּא וְהִיְתָה לָהּ שְׂמֵחַת עוֹלָם</p>
<p>Have compassion, O Faithful One, pity for Your loved child How long have I hoped to see Your glorious might O God, my heart's desire, have pity and hold back no more</p>	<p>וְתִיָּק יְיָמוֹ נָא רַחֲמֶיךָ וְחֻסֶּה נָא עַל בְּנוֹ אֶהְיֶיךָ כִּי זֶה כְּמָה נִכְסֶיךָ נִכְסֶפְתִּי לְרְאוֹת בְּתִפְאֶרֶת עֲזֶיךָ אֲנֵא אֵלִי חֲמַדָּת לִבִּי חֻסֶּה נָא וְאַל נָא תִתְעַלֵּם</p>
<p>Show Yourself, Beloved, and cover me with the shelter of Your peace Light up the world with Your Presence that we may exult and rejoice in You Hurry, Loved One, the appointed time has come Show us grace as long ago</p>	<p>הַגִּלָּה נָא וּפְרוּשׁ חֲבִיבִי עָלַי אֶת סִפְת שְׁלוֹמְךָ תֵּאִיר אֶרֶץ מִכְבוֹדְךָ נְגִילָה וְנִשְׂמָחָה בְּךָ מִהֵרָ אֶהוּב כִּי בָא מוֹעֵד וְתִגְנוּ כִּימֵי עוֹלָם</p>

Lifecycle: Renaming Ceremony

Written using Nonbinary Hebrew

To demonstrate how nonbinary Hebrew can be useful in lifecycle events for nonbinary individuals, I created this short renaming ceremony, intended for use as a part of a larger service. This renaming ceremony is composed of three distinct pieces of liturgy. The first prayer I wrote in nonbinary Hebrew especially for this occasion. The second prayer is an adaptation of transgender liturgy written by a trans liturgist Ariel Tovlev and published in *Mishkan Ga'avah: Where Pride Dwells* (a book of LGBTQ+ liturgy published by the Reform movement's CCAR Press), included here with the author's permission. The third prayer is an adaptation of a traditional blessing. Red bolded Hebrew text indicates specifically nonbinary Hebrew words. In literal English translations, bolded text indicates translations of nonbinary Hebrew words.

Key

3ms: describes a verb in the third-person masculine singular

2np: describes a verb in the second-person nonbinary plural

May we use this ritual to sanctify the inherent holiness of nonbinary Jews. May these words help us create spaces of belonging for nonbinary Jews in Jewish liturgy and Jewish life.

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Mi Shebeircheh

A new blessing written by Ze'evi Tovlev,

loosely based on the traditional Mi Shebeirach prayer in a baby naming ceremony

מִי שֶׁבִּרְכָה¹ קְדָמוֹתֵינוּ²
 הָאֵל³ יְבָרְכָה⁴ אֶת הָאִשָּׁה⁵ הַזֹּאת⁶
 וַיְקַרְאָהּ שְׁמָהּ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
 [שָׁם]⁷
 הַשֵּׁם הַזֶּה יִהְיֶה מְקוֹר שְׂמִיחָה וְגִאּוֹנָה
 כּוֹחַ וְשָׁלוֹם, חֲכָמָה וְאַהֲבָה
 (כֵּן יְהִי רָצוֹן)⁸
 הַשֵּׁם הַזֶּה יֵאָשֶׁר אֶת מְקוֹמָהּ⁹ בְּבִרְיִית

¹ Past tense of pi'el verb לברך describing God, 3ns, translation: “who blessed”

² Noun to replace “אבותינו ואמותינו”, forefathers and foremothers”, derived from word קודם, translation: “ancestors”

³ Pronoun for God, 3ns

⁴ Jussive form of pi'el verb לברך describing God, 3ns, translation: “bless”

⁵ Noun describing the person being named, nonbinary singular, translation: “person”

⁶ Demonstrative pronoun referring to the word “אִשָּׁה”, the person being named, nonbinary singular, translation: “this”

⁷ Options for nonbinary Hebrew name formation include מִבֵּית or בֵּית (“from the house of” or “child of,” respectively), replacing the binary בֶּן or בַּת, following the nonbinary person’s Hebrew name and preceding their parents’ Hebrew names. See rationale for further explanation.

⁸ This phrase in italics is meant to be a congregational response (meant as an affirmation)

⁹ Possessive suffix referring to the person being named, 3ns, translation: “their place”

[שם] יְהִי־אָהָה¹⁰ לָנוּ בְּרָכָה בְּשִׁלְמוֹתָהָ¹¹
(כִּן יְהִי רְצוֹן)

May the one who **blessed our ancestors**

Bless this person

and may they be called among the Jewish people

[HEBREW NAME]

May this name be a source of joy and pride,
strength and peace, wisdom and love

(May it be God's will)

May this name establish **their place** in the sacred covenant

May [NAME] **be a blessing** for us **in their wholeness**

(May it be God's will)

¹⁰ Jussive form of pa'al verb להיות describing the person being named, 3ns, translation: "may they be"

¹¹ Possessive suffix for the person being named, 3ns, translation: "in their wholeness"

A Blessing for Transgender Jews

*Written by Ariel Tovlev, originally published in Mishkan Ga'avah: Where Pride Dwells
Hebrew liturgy adapted by Ze'evi Tovlev from masculine to nonbinary Hebrew*

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, who has molded
my soul from contradictions. From apparent
opposites you have created me, and from within dichotomies
I can see the plurality of your creation

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בּוֹרֵאָה¹² הָעוֹלָם שֶׁעָשִׂתָּנִי¹³ טְרַנְס

Blessed are you Adonai our God **creator** of the world **who has made** me trans

¹² Present tense/participle of pa'al verb לברוא describing God, 3ns, translation: "creator"

¹³ Past tense of pa'al verb לעשות describing God, 3ns, direct object suffix describing the nonbinary person reciting the prayer describing themselves, 1s (not gender-specific)

Shehechetenu

Nonbinary adaptation of Shehecheyanu

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ חַי הָעוֹלָמִים¹⁴
שֶׁחַיֵּתָנוּ¹⁵ וְקִמָּנוּ¹⁶ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ¹⁷ לְזֶמַּן הַזֶּה

Interpretive translation by Ze'evi Tovlev:

May we be blessed with time, with space
to feel fully alive in these bodies, in this life

Literal translation:

Blessed are you Adonai our God, life of the universe
who has kept us alive and sustained us and enabled us to reach this moment

¹⁴ While this name for God wasn't adapted using the Nonbinary Hebrew Project, it replaces the masculine "מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם (King of the world)" with an existing expansive name for God, "חַי הָעוֹלָמִים", which means "life of the universe".

¹⁵ Past tense of hif'il verb לְהַחְיֶה describing God, 3ns, with 1p suffix describing people (not gender-specific), translation: "kept us alive"

¹⁶ Past tense of pi'el verb לְקַיֵּם describing God, 3ns, with 1p suffix describing people (not gender-specific), translation: "sustained us"

¹⁷ Past tense of hif'il verb לְהִגִּיעַ describing God, 3ns, with 1p suffix describing people (not gender-specific), translation: "enabled us to reach"

Shabbat Ma'ariv Selections

Nonbinary adaptation of Reform Liturgy

All liturgical references to God and unspecified human beings have been adapted from the traditional masculine Hebrew to be gender-expansive using the grammar of the Nonbinary Hebrew Project. Red bolded text indicates which words have been adapted. Traditional Hebrew and a translation from *Mishkan Tefilah* are included in a smaller type at the end of each prayer. Liturgy is selections from Shabbat Ma'ariv. For a few prayers, traditional liturgical text is included in brackets alongside the Reform adaptations.

Key

MT: *Mishkan Tefilah*, the current Reform siddur

3ms: describes a verb in the third-person masculine singular

2np: describes a verb in the second-person nonbinary plural

May we use these words in prayer to sanctify the infinitely expansive Divine as well as our ever-expanding understanding of gender in Jewish community.

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Bar'chol*Nonbinary adaptation of Bar'chu*

בְּרוּכוֹ¹ אֶת יְהוָה הַמְּבָרָךְ²
 בְּרוּכָה³ יְהוָה הַמְּבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד

Bar'chol Translation (Mishkan Tefilah)	Bar'chu (masc, for reference)
Praise Adonai to whom praise is due forever	בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְהוָה הַמְּבָרָךְ
Praised be Adonai to whom praise is due	בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה הַמְּבָרָךְ
now and forever	לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד

¹ Imperative of pi'el verb לברך directed at humans, mp → np, MT: “praise”

² Pu'al form (present tense) of root בִּר"כ directed at God, ms → ns, MT: “to whom praise is due forever” (literal: the one who is praised)

³ Adjective for God (katul pattern), ms → ns, MT: “praised”

Ma'ariveh Aravim*Nonbinary adaptation of Ma'ariv Aravim*

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה⁴ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶכָה⁵ הָעוֹלָם
 אֲשֶׁר בְּדַבָּרָה⁶ מַעְרִיבָה⁷ עֶרְבִים
 בְּחֶכְמָה פּוֹתֶחֶה⁸ שְׁעָרִים
 וּבִתְבוּנָה מְשַׁנֶּה⁹ עֵתִים
 וּמַחְלִיפָה¹⁰ אֶת הַיָּמִים
 וּמַסְדֵּרָה¹¹ אֶת הַכּוֹכָבִים
 בְּמַשְׁמְרוּתֵיהֶם בְּרָקִיעַ כְּרִצּוֹנָה¹²
 בּוֹרְאָה¹³ יוֹם וְלַיְלָה

⁴ Second person pronoun for God, 2ms → 2ns, MT: “You”

⁵ Noun for God, ms → ns, note: patach is important as מֶלֶכָה is a noun whereas מְלָכָה is a verb, MT: “Ruler”

⁶ Possessive suffix for God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “who speaks” (literal: God’s words)

⁷ Present tense/participle of hif’il verb להעריב describing God, ms → ns, MT: “[who speaks] the evening into being” (literal: “who causes the evening to be evening”)

⁸ Present tense/participle of pa’al verb לפתוח describing God, ms → ns, MT: “opens”

⁹ Present tense/participle of pi’el verb לשנות describing God, ms → ns, MT: “alters”

¹⁰ Present tense/participle of hif’il verb להחליף describing God, ms → ns, MT: “changes”

¹¹ Present tense/participle of pi’el verb לסדר describing God, ms → ns, MT: “arranges”

¹² Possessive suffix for God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “according to plan” (literal: God’s will)

¹³ Present tense/participle of pa’al verb לברוא describing God, 3ms → 3ns, this vocalization chosen to match the לִיָּה irregular verb construction of the Nonbinary Hebrew Project in future tense because the usual adaptations (segolation, or addition of a ת) were already too close to the masculine and feminine forms of this verb in the present tense, MT: “Creator”

גוללה¹⁴ אור מפני חשך וחשך מפני אור

ומעבירה¹⁵ יום ומביאה ליזה ומבדילה¹⁶ בין יום ובין לילה
יהיה צבאות שמה¹⁷

אל תהיה¹⁸ וקמה¹⁹ תמיד ומלכה²⁰ עלינו לעולם ועד
ברוכה אתה יהיה המעריכה ערבים

¹⁴ Present tense/participle of pa'al verb לגלול describing God, ms → ns, MT: “rolling”

¹⁵ Present tense/participle of hif'il verb להעביר describing God, ms → ns, MT: “transforming”

¹⁶ Present tense/participle of hif'il verb להבדיל describing God, ms → ns, MT: “distinguishing”

¹⁷ Possessive suffix for God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “Your name” (literal: God’s name)

¹⁸ Present tense/participle of pa'al verb להיות describing God, ms → ns, MT: “Ever-living”

¹⁹ Adjective for God (kattal pattern) describing God, ms → ns, MT: “Ever-living”

²⁰ Future tense of pa'al verb למלוך describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “reign”

Ma'ariveh Aravim Translation (Mishkan Tefilah)

Blessed are you Adonai our God
 sovereign of the universe
 who speaks the evening into being
 skillfully opens the gates
 thoughtfully alters the time
 and changes the seasons
 and arranges the stars in their heavenly courses
 according to plan
 You are creator of day and night
 rolling light away from darkness
 and darkness from light
 transforming day into night
 and distinguishing one from the other
 Adonai Tz'vaot is your name
 Ever-living God may you reign continually
 over us into eternity
 Blessed are you Adonai who brings on evening

Ma'ariv Aravim (masc, for reference)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
 אֲשֶׁר **בִּדְבָרוֹ מַעְרִיב** עֶרְבִים
 בְּחִכְמָה פּוֹתֵחַ שְׁעִים
 וּבְחַבּוּנָה מַשְׁנֶה עֵתִים
 וּמַחְלִיף אֶת הַזְּמַנִּים
 וּמַסְדֵּר אֶת הַכּוֹכָבִים בְּמִשְׁמְרוֹתֵיהֶם
 בְּרָקִיעַ פְּרָצוֹנוֹ
בוֹרָא יוֹם וְלַיְלָה
גּוֹלֵל אוֹר מִפְּנֵי חֹשֶׁךְ
 וְחֹשֶׁךְ מִפְּנֵי אוֹר
 וּמַעְבִּיר יוֹם וּמַבְיֵא לַיְלָה
 וּמַבְדִּיל בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה
 יְהוֹה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ
 אֵל חַי וְקַיָּם תָּמִיד יְמִלּוּךְ
 עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה **הַמַּעְרִיב** עֶרְבִים

Ahavat Olam

אַהַבַּת עוֹלָם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ ²¹ אַהֲבָתְךָ ²²
 תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים
 אוֹתָנוּ לְמִדָּתְךָ ²³
 עַל כֵּן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 בָּשָׁכְבֵנוּ וּבְקוּמֵנוּ
 נְשִׁיחַ בְּחֻקֶּיךָ
 וְנִשְׁמַח בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ
 וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ ²⁴ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד

 כִּי הֵם חַיֵּינוּ
 וְאַרְךָ יָמֵינוּ
 וּבָהֶם נִהְיָה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה
 וְאַהֲבָתְךָ ²⁵ אֶל תְּסִירָה ²⁶ מִמֶּנּוּ לְעוֹלָמִים
 בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְהוָה אוֹהֲבָה ²⁷ עַמָּה ²⁸ יִשְׂרָאֵל

²¹ Possessive suffix for God, 2ms → 2ns, MT: “Your people”

²² Past tense of pa'al verb לאהוב, 2ms → 2ns, MT: “offered” (literal: You loved)

²³ Past tense of pa'al verb ללמוד, 2ms → 2ns, MT: “teaching” (literal: You taught)

²⁴ Possessive suffix for God, 2ms → 2ns (same as other two in previous lines), MT: “Your”

²⁵ Possessive suffix for God attached to noun אהבה, 2ms → 2ns, MT: “Your love”

²⁶ Future tense of hif'il verb להסיר describing God, 2ms → 2ns, (when combined with אל) MT: “never remove”

²⁷ Present tense/participle of pa'al verb לאהוב describing God, ms → ns, MT: “loves”

²⁸ Possessive suffix for God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “Your people” (literal: God's people)

Ahavat Olam Translation (Mishkan Tefilah)	Ahavat Olam (masc, for reference)
<p>Everlasting love You offered Your people Israel by teaching us Torah and mitzvot laws and precepts Therefore Adonai our God when we lie down and when we rise up we will meditate on Your laws and Your commandments We will rejoice in Your Torah for ever</p>	<p>אַהֲבַת עוֹלָם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל עָמְךָ אַהֲבָתְךָ תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים אוֹתָנוּ לְמִדָּתְךָ עַל כֵּן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּשֹׁכְבֵנוּ וּבִקְוִמָנוּ נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶיֶךָ בְּחֻקֶיךָ וְנִשְׂמַח בְּדִבְרֵי תּוֹרָתְךָ וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד</p>
<p>Day and night we will reflect on them for they are our life and doing them lengthens our days Never remove Your love from us Praise to You Adonai who loves Your people Israel</p>	<p>כִּי הֵם חַיֵּינוּ וְאֵרֶךְ יָמֵינוּ וּבַהֲמָם נִהְיֶה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה וְאַהֲבָתְךָ אֵל תָּסִיר מִמֶּנּוּ לְעוֹלָמִים בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אוֹהֵב עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל</p>

Sh'meh Yisrael*Nonbinary adaptation of Sh'ma Yisrael***שְׁמֵהּ 29 יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד 30**

Sh'meh Yisrael Translation (Mishkan Tefilah) Hear, O Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai is One!	Sh'ma Yisrael (masc, for reference) שְׁמַע 29 יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד 30
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²⁹ Imperative of pa'al verb לשמוע directed toward Jewish people, ms → ns, MT: “hear”

³⁰ Number describing God, ms → ns, MT: “One” (this nonbinary number created by combining masculine and feminine forms of same number)

Mi Chamocheh*Nonbinary adaptation of Mi Chamochah*

מִי—כְּמִכָּה ³¹ בְּאֵלִים יְהוָה
 מִי כְּמִכָּה נִאֲדָרָה ³² בְּקִדְשׁ
 נִוְרָאָה ³³ תְּהִלַּת עֲשִׂית ³⁴ כִּלְא

 מְלִכּוּתֶךָ ³⁵ רְאוּל ³⁶ בְּנוֹתֶיךָ ³⁷
 בּוֹקֵעָה ³⁸ יָם לְפָנַי מַעֲשֶׂה וּמַרְיָם
 זֶת ³⁹ אֵלֵי עֲנוּל ⁴⁰ וְאֶמְרוּל ⁴¹
 יְהוָה יִמְלֹכָה ⁴² לְעֵלָם וָעַד

³¹ Possessive suffix for preposition כמו describing God, 2ms → 2ns, MT: “like you”

³² Adjective for God (niktal pattern) ms → ns, MT: “majestic”

³³ Adjective for God (niktal pattern) ms → ns, MT: “awesome”

³⁴ Present tense/participle of pa'al verb לעשות describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “working”

³⁵ Possessive suffix for God, 2ms → 2ns, MT: “Your sovereignty”

³⁶ Past tense of pa'al verb לראות describing people, 3mp → 3np, MT: “witnessed”

³⁷ Noun describing God's children with suffix describing God, noun mp → np, suffix 2ms → 2ns

³⁸ Present tense/participle of pa'al verb לבקוע describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “splitting”

³⁹ Pronoun for God (אל), ms → ns, MT: “that”

⁴⁰ Past tense of pa'al verb לענות describing Jewish people, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “they cried”

⁴¹ Past tense of pa'al verb לומר describing Jewish people, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “they cried” (two verbs in this line translated as one, literally “they answered and said”)

⁴² Future tense of pa'al verb למלוך describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “reign”

וְנֶאֱמַר: כִּי פָדָתָהּ⁴³ יְהוָה אֶת-יַעֲקֹב
 וַיִּגְאֹל⁴⁴ מִיַּד הָזֶק מִמֶּנּוּ
 בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְהוָה גִּאֲלֵה⁴⁵ יִשְׂרָאֵל

Mi Chamocheh Translation (Mishkan Tefilah)	Mi Chamochah (masc, reference)
Who is like you O God among the gods that are worshipped Who is like You majestic in holiness awesome in splendor, working wonders	מִי-כְמוֹכָהּ בְּאֵלִים יְהוָה מִי כְמוֹכָהּ נִאֲדָר בְּקִדְּשׁ נוֹרָא תְהִלַּת עֲשֵׂה כְלָא
Your children witnessed Your sovereignty the sea splitting before Moses and Miriam “That is our God” they cried “Adonai will reign forever and ever”	מְלֻכּוּתָהּ רָאוּ בְנֵיהָ בּוֹקֵעַ יָם לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה וּמִרְיָם זֶה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנֶאֱמָרוּ יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד
Thus it is said: “Adonai redeemed Jacob from a hand stronger than his own” Praised are You Adonai for redeeming Israel	וְנֶאֱמַר: כִּי פָדָהּ יְהוָה אֶת-יַעֲקֹב וַיִּגְאֹל מִיַּד הָזֶק מִמֶּנּוּ בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה גִּאֲלֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל

⁴³ Past tense of pa'al verb לַפְדּוֹת describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “redeemed”

⁴⁴ Past tense of pa'al verb לַגְאוֹל with vowel shortening on first syllable due to suffix, verb describes God: 3ms → 3ns, suffix describes Jacob (unchanged), “redeemed Jacob”

⁴⁵ Past tense of pa'al verb לַגְאוֹל describing God, 3ms → 3ns, MT: “redeeming” (literal: who redeemed)

Hashkivetnu*Nonbinary adaptation of Hashkiveinu*

הַשְׁכִּיבְתָּנוּ⁴⁶ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְשָׁלוֹם
וְהַעֲמִידְתָּנוּ⁴⁷ שׁוֹמְרֵתָנוּ⁴⁸ לְחַיִּים
וּפְרֹשֶׁה⁴⁹ עָלֵינוּ סֶכֶת שְׁלוֹמְךָ⁵⁰
וְתִקְנֵתָנוּ⁵¹ בְּעֶצֶה טוֹבָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ
וְהוֹשִׁיעֵתָנוּ⁵² לְמַעַן שְׁמֹךְ
וְהִגָּנָה⁵³ בְּעֵדְנוּ וְהִסִּירָהּ⁵⁴ מֵעָלֵינוּ
אֵיב דָּבָר וְחָרֵב וְרָעַב וְיָגוֹן
וְהִרְחִיק מִמֶּנּוּ עוֹן וּפְשָׁע⁵⁵

⁴⁶ Imperative of hif'il verb להשכיב describing God, ms → ns, object suffix 1p describing people (genderless), MT: “grant... that we lie down”

⁴⁷ Imperative of hi'fil verb להעמיד describing God, ms → ns, object suffix 1p describing people (genderless), MT: “raise us up”

⁴⁸ Noun for God ms → ns, possessive suffix 1p describing people (genderless), MT: “our Guardian”

⁴⁹ Imperative of pa'al verb לפרוש describing God, ms → ns, MT: “spread”

⁵⁰ Possessive suffix for God attached to unchanged noun שלום, 2ms → 2ns, MT: “Your peace”

⁵¹ Imperative of pi'el verb לתקן describing God, ms → ns, object suffix 1p describing people, MT: “Guide us”

⁵² Imperative of hif'il verb להושיע describing God, ms → ns, object suffix 1p describing people (genderless), MT: “be our help” (literally: save us)

⁵³ Imperative of hif'il verb להגן describing God, ms → ns, MT: “shield”

⁵⁴ Imperative of hif'il verb להסיר describing God, ms → ns, MT: “defend”

Reform liturgy (created to replace line below in brackets likely to avoid mention of

⁵⁵ Satan)

⁵⁶ [וְהִסִּירָה שָׁטָן מִלִּפְנֵינוּ וּמֵאַחֲרֵינוּ]

וּבְצֵל כְּנָפֶיךָ תִּסְתִּירֵנוּ⁵⁷

כִּי אֵל שׁוֹמְרָנוּ וּמַצִּילֵנוּ⁵⁸ אַתָּה

כִּי אֵל ⁵⁹[מְלָכָה] חַנוּנָה וְרַחוּמָה⁶⁰ אַתָּה

וְשֹׁמְרָה⁶¹ צִאתָנוּ וּבֹאֵנוּ

לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם יַמְעֲתָה וְעַד עוֹלָם

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְהוָה

הַפּוֹרֵשֶׁה⁶² סִכַּת שָׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ

וְעַל כָּל עַמָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלָּיִם

⁵⁶ Traditional liturgy (read or chanted instead of preceding line “להרחיק”)

⁵⁷ Future tense of hif'il verb להסתיר describing God, 2ms → 2ns, object suffix 1p describing people, MT: “shelter us”

⁵⁸ Present tense/participle of hif'il verb להציל describing God, ms → ns, object suffix describing people 1p (genderless), MT: “deliver us”

⁵⁹ Traditional liturgical word omitted in Reform liturgy, noun describing God ms → ns

⁶⁰ (this word and preceding one) two adjectives describing God ms → ns, MT: “gracious and merciful”

⁶¹ Imperative of pa'al verb לשמור describing God ms → ns, ו conjunction changed to ך due to vowel shift in next syllable of שׁ to שׂ, MT: “Guard”

⁶² Participle of pa'al verb לפרוש describing God, ms → ns, MT: “is spread over us” (literally: the one who spreads)

Hashkivetnu Translation (Mishkan Tefilah)	Hashkiveinu (masc, reference)
<p>Grant O God that we lie down in peace and raise us up our Guardian to life renewed Spread over us the shelter of Your peace Guide us with Your good counsel for Your Name's sake be our help Shield us and defend us against enemies, illness, war, famine and sorrow Distance us from wrongdoing *[Remove Satan from before us and behind us] Shelter us beneath the shadow of Your wings For You God watch over us and deliver us For You God [Sovereign] are gracious and merciful Guard our going and coming to life and to peace evermore Blessed are You Adonai Guardian of Israel whose shelter of peace is spread over us over all Your people Israel and over Jerusalem</p>	<p>הַשְׁכִּיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְשָׁלוֹם וְהַעֲמִידֵנוּ שׁוֹמְרֵנוּ לְחַיִּים וּפְרֹשׁ עָלֵינוּ סֶכֶת שְׁלוֹמְךָ וְתַקֵּנֵנוּ בְּעֶצֶה טוֹבָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ וְהַגֵּן בְּעַדֵּנוּ וְהִסֵּר מֵעֲלֵינוּ אוֹיֵב דָּבָר וְחָרָב וְרָעָב וְגֹזֶן וְהִרְחִיק מִמֶּנּוּ עוֹן וְכָשָׁע [וְהִסֵּר שָׂטָן מִלְּפָנֵינוּ וּמֵאַחֲרֵינוּ] וּבְצֵל כְּנָפֶיךָ תִּסְתִּירֵנוּ כִּי אֵל שׁוֹמְרֵנוּ וּמַצִּילֵנוּ אַתָּה כִּי אֵל [מֶלֶךְ] חַנוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה וְשִׁמּוֹר צִדְקָתֵנוּ וּבֹאֲנוּ לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה הַפּוֹרֵשׁ סֶכֶת שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלַיִם</p>

*Brackets indicate traditional liturgical text

Modimot Anachnu L'chah*Nonbinary adaptation of Modim Anachnu Lach*

מודימות⁶³ אֲנַחְנוּ לְךָ שְׂאֵתָהּ הָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 וְאֵלֵהֶי קְדָמוֹתֵינוּ⁶⁴ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד
 צוּר חַיֵּינוּ מִגֵּן יִשְׁעֵנוּ אֵתָהּ הָאֵל לְדוֹר וָדוֹר

נוֹדָה לְךָ וְנִסְפָּר תְּהִלָּתְךָ עַל-חַיֵּינוּ הַמְּסוּרִים בְּיָדְךָ
 וְעַל גְּשָׁמוֹתֵינוּ הַפְּקוּדוֹת לְךָ וְעַל נִסֶּיךָ שְׂבָכָל יוֹם עֲמָנוּ
 וְעַל נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְטוֹבוֹתֶיךָ שְׂבָכָל עֵת עָרַב וּבֹקֶר וְצַהֲרָיִם

הַטּוֹבָה⁶⁵ כִּי לֹא כָלוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ
 וְהַמְּרַחֲמָה⁶⁶ כִּי לֹא תָמוּ חֲסִדֶיךָ מֵעוֹלָם קוּיֵנוּ לְךָ

וְעַל-כֵּלָם יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִתְרוֹמַם שְׁמֶךָ מְלִכָתָנוּ תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד

וְכָל הַחַיִּימוֹת⁶⁷ יוֹדוּלְךָ⁶⁸ סֵלָה וַיְהִלְלוּ⁶⁹ אֶת-שְׁמֶךָ בְּאַמָּת

⁶³ Present tense of hif'il verb להודות for people mp → np, MT: “we acknowledge with thanks”

⁶⁴ Noun to replace “אבותינו ואמותינו” with single word for ancestors, derived from word קודם

⁶⁵ Noun for God ms → ns, MT: “Good One”

⁶⁶ Noun for God from root רח"מ, ms → ns, MT: “Compassionate One”

⁶⁷ Noun for people (and possibly other living things) mp → np, MT: “all who live”

⁶⁸ Future tense of hif'il verb להודות describing “all who live” 3ms → 3ns, object suffix describing God 2ms → 2ns, MT: “affirm You”

⁶⁹ Future tense of pi'el verb להלל describing “all who live” 3ms → 3ns, MT: “praise”

הָאֵל יְשׁוּעָתֵנוּ וְעֶזְרָתֵנוּ סֶלָה
בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְהוָה הַטּוֹבָה שְׁמֶךָ וְלִךְ נָאֶת⁷⁰ לְהוֹדוֹת

Modimot Translation (Mishkan Tefilah)

We acknowledge with thanks
 that you are Adonai our God
 and the God of our ancestors forever
 You are the Rock of our lives
 and the Shield of our Salvation in every generation

Let us thank and praise You
 for our lives which are in Your hand
 for our souls which are in Your care
 for Your miracles that we experience every day
 and for Your wondrous deeds and favors
 at every time of day: evening, morning, and noon

O Good One whose mercies never end
 O Compassionate One whose kindness never fails
 we forever put our hope in You

For all these things, O Sovereign, let your name
 be forever praised and blessed

Let all who live affirm You
 and praise your name in truth
 O God our Redeemer and Helper
 Blessed are You Adonai, Your Name is Goodness
 and You are worthy of thanksgiving

Modim (masc, for reference)

מוֹדִים אֲנִיחֵנוּ לָךְ
שְׁאֵתָהּ הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד
 צוּר חַיֵּינוּ
 מִגֵּן יְשׁוּעָנוּ **אַתָּה הוּא** לְדוֹר וָדוֹר

נוֹדָה לָךְ וְנִסְפָּר תְּהִלָּתְךָ
 עַל-חַיֵּינוּ הַמְסוּרִים בְּיָדְךָ
 וְעַל נְשְׁמוֹתֵינוּ הַפְּקוּדוֹת לָךְ
 וְעַל נִסֶּיךָ שֶׁבְּכָל יוֹם עִמָּנוּ
 וְעַל נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְטוֹבוֹתֶיךָ
 שֶׁבְּכָל עֵת עָרֵב וּבֹקֶר וְצַהֲרָיִם

הַטּוֹב כִּי לֹא כָלוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ
וְהַמְּרַחֵם כִּי לֹא תָמוּ חֲסִדֶיךָ
 מִעוֹלָם קִוִּינוּ לָךְ

וְעַל-כֵּלָם יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִתְרוֹמַם שְׁמֶךָ
מִלְכֵנוּ תָמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד

וְכָל הַחַיִּים יוֹדוּךָ סֶלָה
 וַיְהִלְלוּ אֶת-שְׁמֶךָ בְּאֵמֶת
 הָאֵל יְשׁוּעָתֵנוּ וְעֶזְרָתֵנוּ סֶלָה
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה הַטּוֹב שְׁמֶךָ
וְלָךְ נָאֶת לְהוֹדוֹת

⁷⁰ Adjective for God ms → ns, MT: “worthy”

Y'varechetche*Nonbinary adaptation of Y'varech'chah (Priestly Benediction)*

יְבָרְכֶתֶךָ ⁷¹ יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמְרֶתֶךָ ⁷²
 יָאֵר ⁷³ יְהוָה פָּנָיֶךָ ⁷⁴ אֵלֶיךָ ⁷⁵ וַיַּחֲנֹתֶךָ ⁷⁶
 יִשָּׂא ⁷⁷ יְהוָה פָּנָיֶךָ אֵלֶיךָ
 וַיִּשְׁמָה ⁷⁸ לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

Y'varechetcheh Translation (Mishkan Tefilah)	Y'varech'chah (masc, reference)
May God bless you and keep you	יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ
May God's light shine upon you	יָאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ
and may God be gracious to you	וַיַּחֲנֹךְ
May you feel God's presence within you always	יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ
And may you find peace	וַיִּשְׁמָה לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

⁷¹ Jussive form of piel verb לברך, action by God 3ms → 3ns, direct object suffix describing person 2ms → 2ns, MT: “May God bless you”

⁷² Jussive of pa'al verb לשמור, action by God 3ms → 3ns, direct object suffix describing person 2ms → 2ns, MT: “and keep you” (literal translation: “guard you”)

⁷³ Jussive form of hif'il verb להאיר, action by God 3ms → 3ns, MT: “May [God's light] shine”

⁷⁴ Possessive suffix describing God 3ms → 3ns, MT: “God's light” (literal translation: “God's face”)

⁷⁵ Direct object suffix describing person 2ms → 2ns, MT: “upon you”

⁷⁶ Jussive form of pa'al verb לחון, action by God 3ms → 3ns, direct object suffix describing person 2ms → 2ns, MT: “and may God be gracious to you”

⁷⁷ Jussive form of pa'al verb לשאת, action by God 3ms → 3ns, MT: “May you feel” (literal translation: “May God lift up”)

⁷⁸ Jussive form of pa'al verb לשים, action by God 3ms → 3ns, MT: “may you find” (literal translation: “may God put”)